

## Intergroup contact and peace education: row summary

Intergroup contact and peace education lead to moderate to large improvements in reduced violence, dispute resolution and non-violent norms, but small or harmful effects for some security, economic, and governance outcomes. Confidence in study findings is generally low.

Intergroup contact and peace education brings members of socially divided groups into structured interaction and combines this with content on non-violent conflict resolution and coexistence.

In the included studies, formats range from school and after-school curricula and workshops, to community-based civic education and alternative dispute resolution training, to facilitated dialogue and reconciliation activities (including volunteering and forum theatre). Some programmes also bundle psychosocial or economic elements such as mentoring, small transfers, or women's empowerment services.

How the intervention is meant to work: Programmes aim to reduce prejudice and perceived threat through repeated, facilitated contact, perspective-taking, and narrative exchange, while building skills in mediation, negotiation, and informal dispute resolution. Peace education components seek to shift norms by increasing rejection of violence and strengthening knowledge of rights and responsibilities. Risks include surfacing latent disputes, provoking backlash when hierarchies are challenged, and limited effects on trust in state institutions when grievances are structural.

Evidence of effects: Pooled estimates suggest moderate reductions in violence and atrocities ( $g = 0.15$ ; 8 studies) and large improvements in peaceful dispute resolution ( $g = 0.203$ ; 3 studies), with several Liberia-focused ADR and civic education programmes reporting fewer unresolved land disputes and less property destruction. However, adverse effects are also reported in some settings, including increased interpersonal fights, extrajudicial punishment, and youth-elder tensions, indicating that some interventions may displace conflict or make it more visible. Social norms regarding violence show a large positive shift ( $g = 0.442$ ; 13 studies), and intermediate social cohesion outcomes (for example, empathy and conflict-resolution skills) also show a large pooled effect ( $g = 0.316$ ; 30 studies), but results are heterogeneous and often short-term. Participation-related outcomes are mixed: civic participation improves moderately ( $g = 0.108$ ), while political engagement shows a small harmful directional effect in the same election-campaign study ( $g = -0.04$ ). Economic security is slightly negative overall ( $g = -0.089$ ), and perceptions of government performance show a very large harmful effect in one study ( $g = -2.029$ ). Other outcomes show small effects on sense of belonging ( $g = 0.089$ ) and educational security ( $g = 0.086$ ), and near-zero harmful directional findings for perceived physical security ( $g = -0.046$ ). Evidence on social safety nets is qualitative and suggests informal peer support networks, but pooled effect sizes are not reported.

Confidence in findings: Confidence is generally low across outcomes due to few studies in several cells, substantial variation in interventions and measures, and frequent reliance on self-reported indices and short follow-up periods. Some studies have unclear attrition reporting or limited external validity. Given the presence of null and adverse effects alongside positive findings, implementation

should include realistic expectations, attention to context, and monitoring for unintended consequences.

### Effect sizes for intergroup contact and peace education

Outcome	Effect size (g)	Interpretation	Studies (n)	Effect sizes (k)
Food, nutrition and health security	0.535	Beneficial - Large	2	10
Norms about violence and atrocities	0.442	Beneficial - Large	13	54
Intermediate social cohesion outcomes	0.316	Beneficial - Large	30	190
Peaceful dispute resolution	0.203	Beneficial - Large	3	24
Willingness to participate or help	0.189	Beneficial - Moderate	17	87
Violence and atrocities (nature and scale)	0.150	Beneficial - Moderate	8	47
Civic participation	0.108	Beneficial - Moderate	1	8
Sense of belonging	0.089	Beneficial - Small	5	14
Educational security	0.086	Beneficial - Small	4	13
Political security	-0.040	Harmful - Little or no effect	1	2
Physical security	-0.046	Harmful - Little or no effect	1	3
Economic security	-0.089	Harmful – Small	3	67
Government performance	-2.029	Harmful – Large	1	7
Social safety nets (presence and quality)	Not reported	Positive (narrative)	1	Not reported