INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDEBOOK

This is a guidebook on "what works" to prevent violence and atrocities. The purpose of the guidebook is to help funders, policymakers, practitioners and others to make evidence-informed decisions, and also to find easily the evidence relevant to the decisions they need to make.

The guidebook summarises the evidence on what works, and what does not work under six broad categories:

- Safe environments
- Diplomacy, law and accountability
- Conflict management and mediation
- Civil Society
- Governance and justice institutions
- Socio-economic foundations

Each category has a number of sub-categories.

The guide provides an overview of what evidence is available and high-level summaries of the evidence. The annexes, available separately, give detailed summaries for the effect of each intervention sub-category on each outcome (Annex I), and a numerical overview of the database of studies (Annex 2).

The basis of the guidebook is an Evidence and Gap Map (EGM) of studies examining various interventions aimed at preventing violence and atrocities. This EGM is structured as a matrix, with rows representing interventions and columns representing outcomes. Each study included in the EGM assesses the impact of at least one intervention on at least one outcome. Therefore, a study analyzing the effect of Intervention X on Outcome Y would be placed in cell XY; if the study evaluates multiple interventions and/or outcomes, it appears in all relevant cells.

The EGM includes a wide range of study designs. To produce the cellwise summaries we followed the following procedure:

- If a cell contains only reviews, the summary is based on those reviews.
- If a cell contains both reviews and qualitative studies, the summary is based on the reviews.
- If a cell contains both reviews and quantitative studies, both types are summarized.
- If a cell contains only quantitative studies, the summary focuses on those studies.
- If a cell contains only qualitative studies, the summary is based on those studies.

The guide has been commissioned by the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth& Development Office (FCDO).

The structure of the guidebook

Section number	What is this section about?
Section 1- About Guidebook- What Is the Rationale and Methodology Behind This Extension Project?	This section combines the background and objectives of the guidebook and EGM on which it is based. We outlines the methodological approach used both in the EGM, including effect size calculation and synthesis methods.
Section 2: What Does the Evidence Say? Overall Findings from the Extension Project	This section presents overarching findings from the evidence base, including descriptive trends and synthesis results from both qualitative and quantitative studies. It highlights key findings across intervention types and outcome categories.
Section 3: Where Is the Evidence, And What Does It Say Across Interventions? – What Do the Row-Wise Summaries Reveal?	This section presents detailed findings at the intervention sub-category level, summarizing evidence across all relevant outcomes. Each summary highlights the strength, direction, and nature of the findings for that intervention type
Annexure 1: Detailed Syntheses of Cellwise Findings	This annexure contains over 250 summaries of cells that combine qualitative studies and impact evaluations. Cells are organized first by study type and then by intervention sub-category. .
Annexure 2: Summary Tables of Included Studies .	This section provides summary tables showing the distribution of studies, methodologies, geographies, outcomes, effect sizes and confidence assessment included in the evidence base

ABOUT THE GUIDEBOOK

WHAT IS THE CONFLICT AND ATROCITY PREVENTION STRATEGIES GUIDEBOOK?

The Conflict and Atrocity Prevention (CAP) Guidebook is a "what works" resource for strategies to prevent violence and atrocities. It compiles existing research on 37 sub-categories of interventions related to creating safe environments, conflict management, and mediation and other approaches. The guidebook provides robust evidence to support decision-making across a spectrum of direct and indirect intervention strategies, including socio-economic foundations.

WHAT IS THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE PROJECT?

Global conflicts have intensified since 2011, with 56 active conflicts and over 50,000 battle-related deaths in 2020 alone—the highest since 1945 (UCDP). Atrocities have occurred both in and outside of warzones, including the persecution of the Kurds across several countries, Christians in Sudan, Uyghurs in China, Rohingya in Myanmar, and widespread human rights abuses in many countries including Iran, Egypt, and North Korea. Civilians, especially women and children, suffer disproportionately, with over 10 million conflict-linked child deaths (Bendavid et al., 2021), and sexual violence further worsening trauma (Masset, 2022). Gallagher (2022) identified 37 countries affected by mass atrocities since 2000, driven by factors such as economic decline and ethnic divisions (Collier, 2006; Blattman, 2022). Global commitments like SDG 16 and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) highlight the need for both rapid response and structural prevention.

The UK's FCDO established the Office for Conflict, Stabilisation and Mediation (OCSM) to support evidence-based strategies. The team commissioned the Conflict and Atrocity Prevention (CAP) Evidence and Gap Map (EGM), cataloguing 573 studies including 460 quantitative, 89 qualitative, and 25 systematic reviews. An extension to that project – and the basis for this guidebook - provides narrative, cell-wise summaries that synthesize what the evidence says.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS PROJECT?

The CAP EGM presented the evidence on what works in an interactive, online EGM.

This extension project had three main objectives:

- To develop a simplified version of the CAP EGM, in which selected rows and columns are consolidated to enhance usability (see Annexure 1). Each cell includes a narrative synthesis of the available evidence, incorporating effect sizes where reported.

- To calculate and report effect sizes from eligible quantitative primary studies. These are reported as standardized mean differences (SMDs) or odds ratios (ORs) and hosted in a public database. This will enable quicker evidence synthesis and help prevent duplication of data extraction efforts across teams globally.

- To launch an open-access digital platform, the Conflict and Atrocity Prevention Evidence Portal which houses the EGM, cell summaries, effect size data, and related outputs. This portal will support researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in using evidence to design effective, context-responsive prevention strategies.

WHICH OUTCOMES AND OTHER OUTCOMES APPEAR ON THE GUIDEBOOK?

The Guidebook assesses the strength of evidence for interventions across a set of four conflict and atrocity prevention strategies outcome domains:

1. Violence and atrocity prevention
2. Social cohesion
3. Community and state governance
4. Human security

We grouped these outcomes into two groups: core (violence conflict and atrocities; social cohesion), and secondary (state and community governance; human security) outcomes. (Annexure 1)

The core outcomes such as violence and atrocity prevention with five sub- domains diplomatic relations merged with peaceful dispute resolution, justice, nature and scale of violence and atrocity, sexual and gender- based violence, social norms about violence/atrocity. The second core outcome social cohesion has three sub- domains feeling of trust merged with acceptance of diversity, sense of belonging and willingness to participate or help.

The secondary outcome state and community governance has five sub- domain access to justice, rights, services, civil participation, government performance, social safety nets and transitions of power. The human security outcome has seven sub- outcomes such as economic, education, food and nutrition merged with health, physical security, political security, environmental and intermediate social cohesion.

Each study in the EGM is categorized under an outcome category and sub- category. The cell summaries are focussed on particular outcome sub- category. The cells refer to the outcome sub-categories and outcome level effect is also extracted sub- category wise. The direction of the effects, positive, negative or null are clearly mentioned in the cells.

In the map, the cell summaries also include more detail, with the specific outcomes evidenced in each study. In the full evidence description, downloadable in a PDF, all measures used in a study and outcome – whether positive, none, or harmful– are mentioned. This allows users to see the details of each cell.

HOW ARE INTERVENTIONS SELECTED FOR INCLUSION ON THE GUIDEBOOK?

Interventions are selected for inclusion on the Guidebook from the first edition of the EGM. For the extension project some of the interventions merged (Annexure 1).

We adapted the approach taken in Cramer et al. (2016) and Sonnenfeld et al. (2020) to group interventions as either direct or indirect. "Direct" interventions are prevention efforts that directly respond to an escalating conflict or atrocity by strengthening social well-being, empathy and conflict resolution, supporting State diplomacy, law and accountability processes, oversight and post-conflict justice, and ending violence to build a safe and secure environment. "Indirect" interventions provide the supportive environment for peace, including building a strong and inclusive civil society, inclusive and accountable governance and justice institutions at national, subnational, and local levels, and sustainable economic foundations to support capabilities. Indirect interventions are therefore "upstream" prevention efforts that address aspects such as socio-economic factors that may or may not lead to conflict or atrocities. We included all studies of policies or programmes that had explicit CAP aims. Where CAP aims were not explicit in reports, we still included some studies based on the combination of interventions and outcomes evaluated.

Interventions are grouped into six categories (sub-categories): safe environments (e.g., policing, early warning systems); international diplomacy, law and accountability (e.g., support for peace processes & negotiation, sanctions, aid conditionalities); conflict management and mediation at community level (e.g., intergroup dialogue); support to civil communication, digital and media); support to governance and justice institutions (e.g., support for elections); and economic foundations (e.g., job creation, in-kind and cash transfers).

Ineligible interventions were those targeting intra- or interpersonal violent conflict, such as those to address intra-household violence, or those targeting criminal or gang inter-group violence, as defined above.

WHAT KIND OF EVIDENCE ARE INCLUDED IN OUR GUIDEBOOK?

The map includes completed and ongoing primary studies and evidence syntheses pertaining to the effectiveness of CP and AP interventions in L&MICs. Eligible primary studies used quantitative, and qualitative designs, appropriate to the interventions being evaluated, to assess the effectiveness of the intervention(s). Impact evaluation designs use methods like randomised assignment of individuals or groups to intervention (randomised controlled trials, RCTs) or quasi-experimental designs (QEDs) such as encouragement design, discontinuity design, difference-in-differences, statistical matching, synthetic control and reflexive control (outcomes data collection among participants before versus after intervention only).

We also included qualitative research with a study design that was able to identify causal relationships between interventions and outcomes. Studies using established theory-based qualitative methodologies to evaluate effectiveness were included, but we also incorporated case studies with theory-based designs. The studies including Realist Evaluation, General Elimination Methodology (GEM), Process Tracing and Contribution Analysis. Group II approaches use participatory data collection methods, such as Most Significant Change (MSC), Success Case Method (SCM), Outcome Harvesting (OH) and Method for Impact Assessment of Programs and Projects (MAPP), which were included where they explicitly sought to identify a causal relationship between the intervention(s) and outcome(s) of interest.

Systematic evidence syntheses, including systematic reviews and meta-analyses, systematic scoping reviews and rigorous literature reviews.

HOW DOES THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS WORK?

The guidebook and EGM address questions such as *what the evidence says* by focusing on the analysis stages. It uses the studies included in the first edition of the Evidence and Gap Map (EGM). Therefore, for this guidebook and the extension EGM, we did not repeat the processes of searching, screening, and coding studies. The focus was solely on analysis.

The evidence in the original EGM was identified through searches of multidisciplinary electronic databases and donor evaluation repositories. We also searched organisational repositories, registries of trials and evidence syntheses, online repositories of books, book chapters, theses, and dissertations, and hand-searched relevant journals.

The work was carried out in parallel phases:

- For impact evaluation studies, coders extracted effect size data.
- For qualitative studies and systematic reviews, coders produced narrative syntheses of each included study or review.

GUIDELINES FOR CELL-WISE SUMMARIES

The following established guidelines were used for cell-level synthesis:

- If a cell contains **only reviews**, the summary is based on those reviews.
- If a cell contains both **reviews and qualitative studies**, the summary is based on the reviews.
- If a cell contains both **reviews and quantitative studies**, both types are summarized.
- If a cell contains only **quantitative studies**, the summary is based on those studies.
- If a cell contains only **qualitative studies**, the summary is based on those studies.

Based on this classification, we identified the cells where summaries are based on **quantitative studies** and extracted all relevant **effect sizes**. The coders were trained in two days online training course and briefed on the project objectives. They initially conducted a pilot phase, extracting data from 20 studies. Following the piloting stage, they proceeded to extract effect sizes from 460 quantitative studies.

Parallel to the quantitative work, other teams worked on the **narrative summaries**, particularly for cells that included **qualitative studies and systematic reviews** that did not involve effect size extraction.

From each study, we extracted data related to:

- Main findings related to the research question
- Intervention classification and description
- Outcome description
- Theory of change, causal mechanisms, barriers, and facilitators
- Contextual factors

We then developed **cell-level summaries** consistent with the format used for quantitative summaries.

WHAT ARE EVIDENCE STANDARDS?

Evidence standards are applied to assess the level of confidence we have in the findings of the studies included in each cell, and the overall cellwise assessment. We used standardized tools to assess the confidence ratings of individual studies and developed specific guidelines to summarize these ratings at the cell level.

The confidence ratings of the individual – study was assessed using appropriate tools tailored to the study design. This included both large-n studies (e.g., RCTs and quasi-experimental designs) and small-n qualitative designs (e.g., theory-based case studies and contribution analyses), as well as existing systematic reviews and evidence syntheses.

- Systematic reviews were assessed using the AMSTAR 2 tool (Shea et al., 2017).
- Large-n quantitative studies were evaluated using an approach developed by the Campbell Secretariat. This approach considered elements such as study design, intervention and outcome descriptions, sample size, attrition, quality of measurement, and clarity of the evaluation question.
- Small-n qualitative studies were assessed using a framework developed by Sharma Waddington et al. (2023), which includes factors such as use of a theory of change, clarity in data collection and analysis, sample selection, triangulation, and strategies to reduce bias.

The cell-wise confidence assessment depends on the type of evidence used for the summary (type of study), critical appraisal of included studies and consistency. To assess we use the 'mark down' principle. The first two criteria establish the rating. The rating may be marked down based on the second two criteria.

Each cell is categorized into one of the following confidence levels: high confidence, medium confidence, low confidence, no confidence, or harmful confidence.

These confidence levels are determined using the criteria outlined in Table 2.

Table 2- Confidence Rating of Cells		
Systematic review	One review	Same rating as systematic review
	More than one review	All reviews have same rating: use that
		Reviews have different ratings: use rating from review most relied upon in the summary
		Plus, mark down one rating if review findings not consistent
Large n studies	All studies rated low	Rate low
	Fewer than 4 studies	Rate low
	4-7 studies	Medium
	8 or more	High
		Plus mark down rating if majority of studies not rated high
		Plus mark down one rating if review findings not consistent
Small n	Low confidence	
Assessing consistency	Consistent	All study-level effect sizes for the outcome in same effect band
		OR All study effect sizes are within +/- 0.1 of each other

For cells containing narrative studies, effect sizes were not available. Therefore, we used a predefined set of criteria to assess the confidence in findings. The appraisal of each cell is based on the confidence ratings of the included studies.

Mostly. small-n qualitative studies were also rated as low confidence, primarily due to limited discussion of triangulation and insufficient information on measures taken to mitigate key sources of bias.

UNDERSTANDING IMPACT ON THE GUIDEBOOK

Impact is the change in outcomes resulting from an intervention's ability to reduce conflict, atrocities, and related prevention outcomes. In simple terms, it asks: *To what extent has an intervention contributed to reducing conflict and atrocities? Has it brought about a significant change or only a minor one, if any?*

It is important to distinguish impact from strength of evidence. While *impact* refers to the magnitude of change brought about by an intervention, *strength of evidence* indicates how confident we can be that the observed change was actually caused by the intervention. The strength of evidence is based on the size and consistency of the evidence base, and the confidence we can have in the findings in the studies in that evidence base.

Approaches to Calculating Effect Sizes

Effect size is a standardized measure used in impact evaluations to assess the change in outcomes associated with an intervention. Various metrics can be used, such as:
- Standardized Mean Difference (SMD or *d*)
- Odds Ratio (OR)
- Correlation Coefficient (*r*)

Regardless of the specific measure, effect sizes should:
- Be comparable across studies, even when different measurement instruments are used.

- Reflect the magnitude of an intervention's effect, rather than being influenced by factors like sample size or study design.

To compute effect sizes, we extracted key statistical data from studies, including sample sizes for treatment and control groups, standard deviations for continuous outcomes, and other relevant metrics (see: Lipsey & Wilson, 2001; Waddington et al., 2012; Higgins et al., 2021).

The three most commonly used effect size measures in the CAP EGM are:

1. Standardized Mean Difference (d): For continuous outcomes (e.g., number of days on probation).
2. Odds Ratio (OR): For binary outcomes (e.g., arrested vs. not arrested).
3. Correlation Coefficient (r): For continuous treatment variables (e.g., dose-response studies).

Qualitative Studies and Systematic Reviews

For qualitative studies and systematic reviews where quantitative data was unavailable, impacts were assessed using narrative synthesis. This involved analyzing and summarizing the direction and nature of reported effects (positive, none, mixed, or harmful), based on how the intervention influenced outcomes in various contexts.

HOW DOES THE GUIDEBOOK REPORT IMPACT?

The guidebook reports the impacts of interventions based on the methodology of the studies in a cell, using two primary approaches:

Quantitative Studies: For quantitative studies, we extracted effect sizes using the unit of measurement reported in the original studies—such as Cohen's d, Hedges' g, Odds Ratio, or Risk Ratio. These were all converted to Cohen's d to enable comparability. The magnitude of the effect was categorized using the following ranges:

Table 1: Effect Size Ranges for Conflict and Violence Outcomes

Effect size ranges

Table 1: Effect size ranges for conflict and violence outcomes	
<-0.01	Harmful effect
-0.01 - 0.01	No effect
0.01-0.1	Small effect
0.1 - 0.2	Moderate effect
Above 0.2	Large effect

Qualitative Studies and Systematic Reviews: Where quantitative effect sizes were not available, the impact of interventions was assessed qualitatively, based on the reported direction of effect. The interpretation is as follows:

Positive:
- If the presence of XYZ has been reported as necessary in achieving the outcome, with a direct effect on the outcome, then the effect is assessed as positive. For example, in case of the effect of peace processes and diplomacy on food security, nutrition, and health security, we find that the presence of The presence of United Nations involvement was crucial in achieving lasting peace in Mozambique which had a direct effect on the outcome.

None:
- if the presence of XYZ has been reported as having a positive effect but it is not achieving the outcomes for lasting effect. For example, in case of assessing the effect of peace processes and diplomacy on transitions of power, we find that the presence of Independent Election

Observers increase the legitimacy of the election and acceptance of the result, but they are unlikely to achieve the structural changes necessary for lasting peace (Skinner, 2012).

-

Moderate

- Another example where there are two studies in one cell reporting on the effect of peace processes and diplomacy on economic security, we find a mixed impact with limited and uneven economic gain that often fails to reach the broader population (Adedokun, 2019; Richmond, 2009)

Harmful:

- if the presence of XYZ has been reported as negative in achieving any outcome(s). For example, in case of assessing the effect of Foundational state design processes, Transitional political processes & Election support on a Sense of belonging we find that it is attributed to a lack of effective state design, transitional processes, and credible elections (Gilbert, 2019).

WHERE DOES THE GUIDEBOOK REPORT EFFECT SIZES?

Effect size information, where available, is reported in several places in the EGM. It is first presented in the top entry in the list of studies of each cell-wise summary, offering a quick reference to the magnitude of the intervention's impact. Further details are provided in the narrative section of the cell summaries under "evidence findings," which elaborates on the context and interpretation of the effect sizes. Additionally, a screenshot from the meta-analysis application is included at the end of each cell summary to visually represent the data. Each of these cell summaries is also available for download as a PDF from the interactive evidence map interface. Finally, all cell summaries, including effect size details, are compiled and included in the annexure section of the guidebook for comprehensive reference.

Interactive Map interface

Cell Summaries

Effect of Military operations on Diplomatic relations & Peaceful dispute resolution

The cell shows that support for rebels and government-backed interventions have moderate effect on negotiations and enhance agreement durability. However, interventions favoring one side can undermine peace efforts, making outcomes highly context-dependent.

Geographical region: Global

Effect: Moderate effect (g = 0.107)

Confidence in study findings: Low confidence

Short summary

Military interventions aim to prevent, de-escalate, or resolve conflicts and may affect diplomatic relations and dispute resolution by shaping negotiations and agreement stability. Findings suggest that while external interventions generally support agreements, those favoring one side reduce negotiation likelihood. Rebel-backed interventions have a moderate effect on negotiations but weaken agreement stability, whereas government-backed interventions hinder negotiations but strengthen agreements. Mediation and security guarantees have the most positive effects. Military support for the government makes agreements more likely to be upheld, while support for

HOW SHOULD THE COLOUR CODING IN CELL SUMMARIES BE INTERPRETED ?

The colour coding in the cell summaries provides a quick visual reference for interpreting the strength and direction of evidence. For quantitative studies, the colour of the cell box reflects the magnitude of the reported effect: green indicates a large or medium positive effect, amber represents a small positive effect, grey denotes no significant effect, and red signals evidence of an adverse or harmful effect. For qualitative studies and systematic reviews, the colour is determined by combining the study's critical appraisal rating with the direction of the effect. Studies rated as low confidence are marked grey regardless of the reported effect. Medium and high confidence studies reporting positive effects are shown in orange, while those indicating harmful effects are marked red. Studies with medium or high confidence but reporting no effect remain grey. This colour-coding scheme helps users interpret both the strength of findings and the quality of underlying evidence in each cell.

Colour coding of Quantitative studies

Effect	Colour
Large/medium effect	Green
Small	Amber
No	Grey
Adverse	Red

Colour coding of qualitative and Systematic review

Critical Appraisal	Effect		
	Harmful	None	Positive
Low	Grey	Grey	Grey
Medium	Red	Grey	Orange
High	Red	Grey	Orange

Effect of Military operations on Diplomatic relations & Peaceful dispute resolution

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HOW SHOULD EVIDENCE RATINGS BE INTERPRETED AND APPLIED?

Each cell summary in the map has been assigned an **evidence rating**, which reflects the overall strength and consistency of evidence of the studies falling within that cell. These ratings are the result of the critical appraisal of each individual study. Critical appraisal provides an assessment of the design, conduct and reporting of a study, and so the confidence we can have in the study findings. The cell-wise evidence rating is based on the number of studies in a cell, the consistency of their findings, and the rating of the individual studies. Evidence ratings are not recommendations; rather, provide indication of where the evidence is strongest and where caution or further investigation may be needed in the use of evidence..

WHAT OUR EVIDENCE DOESN'T COVER

What the evidence doesn't cover falls into two categories: interventions excluded from the EGM, and interventions included in the EGM but for which we found very few eligible studies.

The following fall into the first category, that is interventions not included in the map:

- Gang-Related or Gang-Motivated Violence
  Interventions that specifically target gang-related or gang-motivated violence are excluded, even when the violence may superficially resemble intergroup conflict.
  - *Gang-related violence* is defined as incidents involving at least one gang member, including any self-reported or confirmed affiliation at any point (adapted from Winfree et al., 1992; Esbensen et al., 2001).
  - *Gang-motivated violence* refers to acts driven by gang-specific objectives such as territorial control, retaliation, or enforcement of gang norms (adapted from Decker & Pyrooz, 2010).

- Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, or Household-Level Violence The map does not include studies that focus on individual or domestic violence. This includes:
  - *Interpersonal violence* (e.g., intimate partner violence)
  - *Intrapersonal conflict* (e.g., self-harm or suicide)
  - *Violence within households* (e.g., child abuse or elder abuse)
    These forms of violence are outside the remit of intergroup or collective conflict.

- Protection and Rehabilitation-Focused Interventions
  This map is intentionally limited to *prevention* strategies. Interventions focused on *protection* (e.g., safe shelters, emergency aid, or shielding vulnerable populations during conflict) or *rehabilitation* (e.g., trauma counselling, reintegration of ex-combatants) are excluded—unless they are directly and explicitly linked to broader violence prevention objectives.

- High-Income Country (HIC)-Focused Interventions
  We exclude studies conducted solely in HICs unless the intervention explicitly seeks to mitigate conflict involving LMIC populations. For example, a peace education intervention targeting Israeli citizens to reduce tensions with Palestinian communities would be included; a similar programme aimed only at reducing domestic polarization within a HIC would not.

- Timeframe Limitations
  We include only studies published from the year 2000 onwards, ensuring the relevance of evidence to contemporary contexts and methods.
  - Interventions must have been implemented in or after 1990, reflecting a post-decolonisation landscape.
  - An exception is made for studies relating to the 2001 and 2003 invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, which are excluded due to their distinct geopolitical and military nature.

Regarding the second category of what is not covered, that is evidence gaps in the map, we found:

1. Few studies focus solely on atrocity prevention (5%).
2. Limited research on interventions in emerging or pre-crisis conflicts.
3. Long-term and systemic prevention strategies are underrepresented.
4. Integrated approaches combining conflict and atrocity prevention are not well-covered.
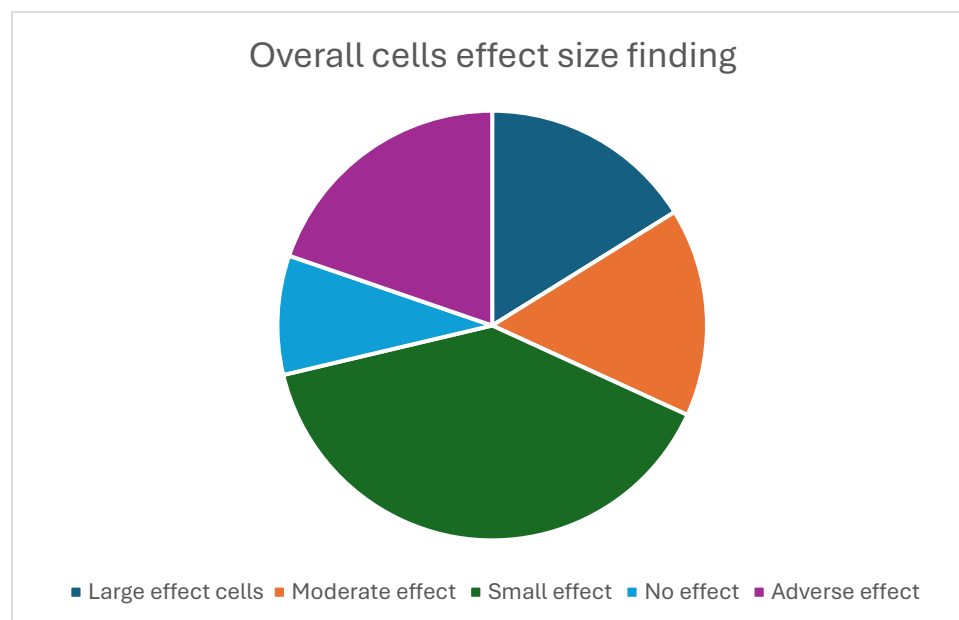
Overall findings in the Guidebook: What that evidence says

Cells with only Quantitative studies, cells with quantitative studies, and systematic review/ qualitative studies

The distribution of studies across cells reveals a significant concentration of evidence in a few areas while highlighting substantial gaps in others:

- Three cells contain more than 20 studies, including one examining disarmament, demobilization and reintegration's (DDR's) effects on the nature and scale of violence or atrocities and two related to sanctions—one on violence and atrocities and the other on economic security.
- Seven cells have more than 10 studies, covering topics such as military operations, diplomatic relations, intergroup relations, social funds, foundational state design and training, and job creation.
- One cell contains exactly 10 studies, focusing on the effects of social funds/community-driven development, reconstruction intervention on the feeling of trust.
- 31 cells have fewer than 10 studies, 13 contain exactly five studies, 87 cells have fewer than five studies.
- 81 cells contain only one study and the majority of cells (168 cells) have fewer than five studies, highlighting significant evidence gaps in these areas.

Among the total cells, there were 16% with large effects; 15% with moderate effects; 39% with small effects; 8% with no effect and 19% with adverse effects.

Overall cells effect size finding

■ Large effect cells ■ Moderate effect ■ Small effect ■ No effect ■ Adverse effect

Among the total 223 cells, 84% (n=187) have low confidence in study findings, primarily due to the limited number of studies, the confidence rating of individual studies, and the lack of consistency in findings. Sixteen percent of the cells (n=36) have medium confidence in study findings, and there are no cells with a high confidence rating.

Table 3 – Overall What Evidence Says

Effect	Range	Number of Cells	Low confidence study rating	Medium confidence study rating
Large effect cells	Above 0.2	44	29	7
Moderate effect	0.1 - 0.2	20	32	3
Small effect	0.01-0.1	88	73	15
No effect	-0.01 - 0.01	35	17	3
Adverse effect	<-0.01	36	37	7

INTERVENTIONS WHICH HAVE LARGE EFFECTS

We identified a total of 36 cells where interventions had large effects on outcomes. One cell with six studies, found the large pooled effects of social funds, community-driven development and reconstruction on access to justice, rights, and public services. Four cells, each with five studies, found large effects in the following areas: mental health and psychosocial support on food security and nutrition and health security, peace processes and diplomacy on diplomatic relations, sanctions on government performance, and training and job creation on feelings of trust and acceptance of diversity. A cell, with four studies, shows large effects of dispute resolution on diplomatic relations and peaceful dispute resolution. Furthermore, nine cells, each with three studies, highlighted large effects in areas such as transitional and restorative justice on sense of belonging and government performance. Seven cells with two studies and 13 cells with one study also showed large effects, including findings from dispute resolution, market development, and land reform interventions. Among them 80% of the cells have a low confidence rating in study findings.

For instance evidence from six studies on the effects of social funds and CDD on access to justice, rights, and public services showed improvements in local governance structures, with increased village development committees and access to counseling services. However, broader governance transparency and accountability effects remained weak. Public service infrastructure, particularly in education, water, and electricity, demonstrated significant gains, with higher school attendance, improved water access (15–34% increase), and expanded electricity coverage (26%). However, irrigation and transportation projects had limited or no lasting impact. Women's empowerment outcomes were mixed, with modest increases in association membership (6.4%), but little progress in local governance participation or legal rights. Service utilization, particularly in health access, remained unchanged in several cases. The effectiveness of these interventions was highly dependent on institutional stability, community participation, and long-term governance engagement.

Land reform interventions demonstrated the most significant large effects, appearing in seven cells. Evidence from three studies highlighted that land reform and natural resource management (NRM) initiatives enhanced economic security by improving tenure security, promoting long-term investments, and fostering financial stability. However, their effectiveness varied depending on contextual and implementation challenges. Evidence from one study found that land reform and NRM projects, particularly community-driven watershed restoration initiatives, contributed to educational security, increasing secondary school enrollment rates for girls. Another cell highlighted large effects on food security, nutrition, and health security, as community-driven watershed restoration initiatives improved dietary diversity and meal frequency. However, no significant improvements were observed in household access to drinking water.

A cell with three studies found large effects of land reform and NRM on feelings of trust and diversity. In Bolivia, participatory mapping increased trust levels, while in Indonesia, payments for ecosystem services (PES) fostered cooperation but did not significantly alter trust toward outsiders. In Mozambique, information campaigns improved trust in governance and civic engagement, but localized interventions led to elite capture. These findings emphasize that while NRM interventions can promote trust and inclusion, their success depends on equitable implementation, active community participation, and safeguards against elite control.

Evidence also suggests that dispute resolution interventions showed large effects in four cells. Evidence from four studies found significant impacts on diplomatic relations and peaceful dispute resolution. Programs such as CONCUR, IPNN, ECPN, RLS-I, and legal empowerment initiatives improved dispute resolution processes and trust in mediation. Additionally, IBN training, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms, and interfaith initiatives enhanced negotiation skills and reduced coercion in conflict settings.

INTERVENTIONS STUDIES HAVE SHOWN MODERATE EFFECTS

We identified a total of 35 cells where interventions had moderate effects on outcomes. Among these, 12 cells were based on a single study, indicating limited evidence. Fifteen cells contained evidence from fewer than five studies, while five cells had findings from five to nine studies. Only three cells included evidence from more than 10 studies. Among these, the cell with the highest number of studies comprised 17 studies on the effects of intergroup contact and peace education on willingness to participate or help. Other notable examples include 15 studies on job training and economic security and 11 studies on social funds and community-driven development (CDD) on willingness to participate. Among them 88% of the cells have a low confidence rating in study findings.

For instance, evidence from 11 studies on social funds and CDD showed a pooled moderate effect on willingness to participate. Some interventions successfully increased civic engagement, participation in community groups, and contributions to public goods, particularly when emphasizing communication, democratic decision-making, and collaboration. However, several studies reported minimal or no sustained impact, with behavioral changes often limited to membership rather than active involvement.

Similarly, 15 studies examining the effects of training and job creation on economic security found moderate pooled effects. These programs—ranging from vocational training and business mentorship to financial assistance—generally led to higher employment rates and increased incomes. Notable cases include Liberia's agricultural training program, where 77% of participants engaged in farming, and Tanzania's RukaJuu! initiative, which raised earnings by 146% through entrepreneurship training. Additionally, public works programs like India's NREGA played a critical role in stabilizing incomes during economic shocks. However, the impact was mixed in fragile and gender-unequal settings, where access to decent work remained constrained despite training opportunities.

The largest cell, with 17 studies, examined the moderate pooled effect of intergroup contact and peace education on willingness to participate or help. The evidence suggests that intergroup contact interventions can improve attitudes and increase engagement, though the effects vary. Longer programs incorporating behavioral reinforcement led to more sustained changes, while short-term interventions often resulted in temporary attitudinal shifts. Structural and perspective-taking interventions had only modest effects, indicating that the success of such programs depends on their design, duration, and context.

These findings highlight that while interventions with moderate effects can contribute to positive outcomes, their impact often depends on program design, contextual factors, and sustained engagement.

INTERVENTIONS STUDIES HAVE SHOWN SMALL EFFECTS:

Most of the interventions studied showed a small pooled effect, with 88 cells indicating small effects. These include one cell with 26 studies on DDR programs and their impact on violence, another with 15 studies on military operations, eight cells with 10 or more studies, 16 cells with fewer than 10, six cells with five, 28 with fewer than five, and 25 with a single study. Among them 82% of the cells have a low confidence rating in study findings.

One cell, containing 26 studies on the effects of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs and Peace Support/Keeping Operations on the nature and scale of violence or atrocities, showed small pooled effects. DDR programs and peacekeeping operations influence conflict dynamics by reducing violence and stabilizing postwar environments. UN peacekeeping presence shortens conflicts in fragmented settings and decreases battle deaths, while UN police effectively lower postwar violence. However, while peacekeeping reduces violence, it does not end conflict, as violence often

transforms into other forms of instability. The success of interventions depends on mission size, mandate, and coordination with mediation efforts. Peacekeeping reduces electoral violence and atrocities, but its long-term impact on sustaining peace remains uncertain, particularly in complex conflicts with persistent security challenges.

Similarly, the cell with 10 studies on the effects of social funds, community-driven development, and reconstruction on trust and acceptance of diversity showed small effects. These interventions—ranging from block grants and infrastructure projects to civic engagement initiatives—produced localized improvements but no sustained impact on broader social cohesion. Trust levels remained largely unchanged, with slight increases reported toward specific groups like NGOs or local leaders. Acceptance of diversity showed localized improvements, particularly in interethnic and interreligious relations, but effects were often short-lived.

The cell with three studies on security sector reform interventions and their effects on the nature and scale of violence or atrocities also indicated small pooled effects. Security-focused strategies—such as Security-Only, Sequential, and Simultaneous approaches—were examined, along with sector security reforms like transitioning from international to local forces and Colombia's ComunPaz program, which replaced rebel governance and improved justice in FARC-dominated areas. Security-Only and Sequential strategies were more effective in terminating conflicts and maintaining peace than Simultaneous approaches. ComunPaz reduced community disputes, and violence decreased by 10% under Afghan local security initiatives.

The cell with two studies on the effects of foundational state design processes, transitional political processes, and election support interventions on social norms regarding violence and atrocities showed small effects. Election support interventions, including election education events and civic engagement activities, influenced voter empowerment and willingness to use political violence. Town meetings, popular theatre, and door-to-door material distribution promoted electoral participation and governance legitimacy while discouraging violence. Studies in Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of these interventions.

The cell with one study on public sector provision, governance, and institutionalization interventions and their effects on food security, nutrition, and health security also showed a small effect. The Armed Forces of the Philippines' Peace and Development Teams (PDT) program reduced child malnutrition in conflict-affected areas by 30% within three years, with lasting effects observed for at least seven years.

Finally, the cell with eight studies examining the effects of market development and macroeconomic policy on the nature and scale of violence or atrocities showed small pooled effects. While foreign aid and economic liberalization can reduce violence by addressing economic grievances and fostering stability, they may also exacerbate violence by increasing inequalities, fostering dependency, and becoming targets for insurgents. The effectiveness of these interventions depends on aid allocation, governance capacity, and complementary security measures. Some interventions successfully reduced violence, while others contributed to prolonged conflict. Economic policies such as trade liberalization promote long-term growth but may heighten short-term inequalities, increasing conflict risks. Tailored, well-coordinated approaches are necessary to ensure economic policies contribute to sustainable peace and development.

INTERVENTIONS STUDIES HAVE SHOWN NO EFFECTS
We found 20 cells where interventions had no effect on outcomes. Among these, six cells were based on a single study, while nine cells had fewer than five studies. Additionally, four cells contained fewer than ten studies, and one cell, with 11 studies, examined the effects of diplomatic recognition and other diplomatic efforts on the nature and scale of violence and atrocities. Among them, 85% of the cells have a low confidence rating in study findings.

The diplomatic interventions cell, which analyzes evidence from 11 studies, assessed the impact of advocacy, sanctions, compensation, blacklisting, and economic programs on violence and atrocities. The findings revealed no pooled effect—while some studies reported a reduction in violence, others found that such interventions exacerbated repression or caused unintended economic and social disruptions. However, diplomatic scrutiny that combines both positive and negative feedback appeared to hold some promise for human rights improvements. The variation in outcomes stemmed from

differences in intervention scale, type, and context, with some cases leading to increased violence or economic instability, particularly in fragile regions.

Similarly, policing and public security interventions also showed no significant effect on the nature and scale of violence and atrocities, based on evidence from six studies. For instance, integrated policing in Iraq successfully reduced ethnic tensions and support for anti-government violence by signaling fairness, while an increase in police presence in Afghanistan failed to curb election-related violence. Moreover, community policing initiatives across six countries demonstrated no measurable reductions in violence, trust, or cooperation.

Additionally, eight studies examined the effects of social funds, community-driven development (CDD), and reconstruction interventions on the nature and scale of violence and atrocities. The findings indicated no significant impact on reducing violent incidents, insurgent attacks, or conflict casualties. While some studies suggested weak reductions in violence under specific conditions—such as small-scale aid projects or targeted governance support—others found that certain programs inadvertently increased conflict casualties, highlighting the potential unintended consequences of development interventions in fragile settings.

These findings underscore the complex and context-dependent nature of interventions, where factors such as implementation design, local conditions, and political dynamics can influence their effectiveness or lead to unintended outcomes.

INTERVENTIONS STUDIED HAVE SHOWN ADVERSE EFFECTS:

A total of 44 cells identify adverse effects of interventions. Among them 84% of the cells have a low confidence rating in study findings. The largest cell, with 24 studies, indicates that sanctions have adverse effects on the nature and scale of violence and atrocities. Another cell, containing 21 studies, highlights the sanctions have adverse pooled effect on economic security. Additionally, 11 studies suggest that foundational state design has adverse effects on nature and scale of violence and atrocities. Further, there are three with less than 10 studies, 18 cells have five and fewer than five studies and 17 cells contain only one study. For instance, media and communication interventions have an adverse impact on economic security (one study). A study on radio programming under the Peace through Development II (PDEV II) program negatively impacted economic security, as the focus was more on political and social transformation rather than economic stability (Finkel, 2018).

Similarly, civil society capacity-building and civic engagement initiatives have shown adverse effects on the nature and scale of violence and atrocities. This finding is based on a single study examining poverty alleviation transfers in Xinjiang under China's 8-7 Plan (1994–2000). While the transfers led to increased local government spending on security (15%) and administration (10%), ethnic tensions persisted (Cheng, 2021).

Furthermore, civil society capacity-building pooled findings from five studies indicate that the intervention had adverse effects on civic participation. While local political engagement and voter coordination improved, leading to increased awareness and participation in civic activities, some initiatives reduced parochial voting and vote monopolization. Conversely, national-level political participation remained unchanged, and effects on democratic values, institutional trust, and decentralization support were limited or even negative.
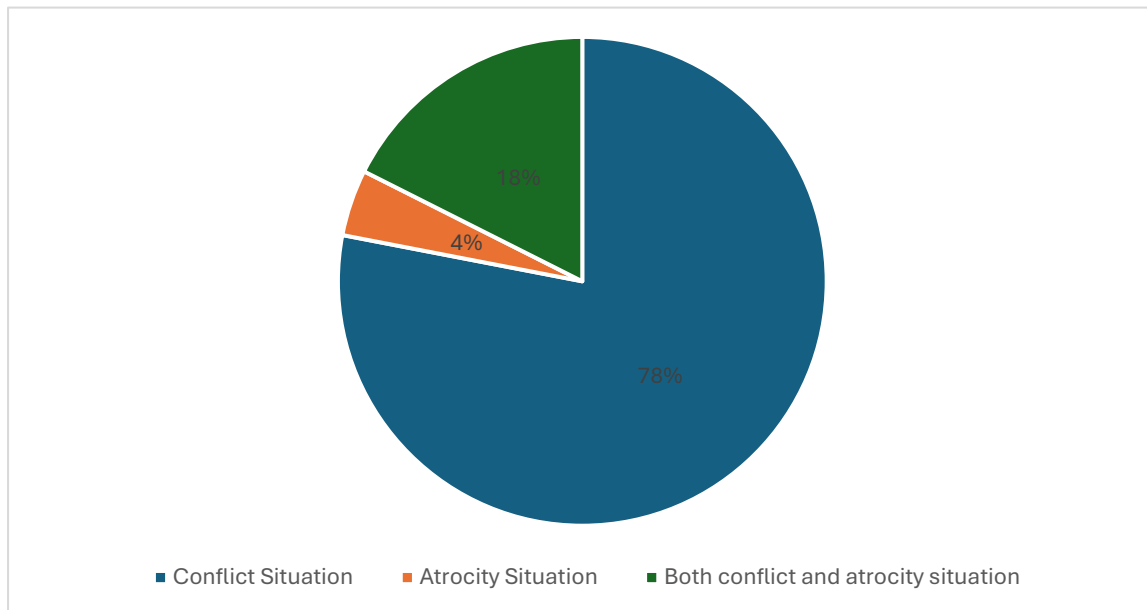
Evidence on dispute resolution interventions also shows pooled adverse effects on social norms regarding violence or atrocities. Findings from two studies on the YE Peace Program in Niger and Conflict Management for Syrian Refugees in Jordan indicate that while these interventions aimed to reduce violence by fostering social cohesion and intergroup cooperation, they inadvertently supported political violence in certain contexts and revealed a tendency to accept violence.

Additionally, findings from three studies suggest that intergroup contact and peace education interventions have pooled adverse effects on economic security. In Lebanon and Liberia, these interventions did not lead to significant employment or investment gains, nor did they enhance property security or economic investment in Liberia. However, studies in Uganda reported modest improvements in business profits and household well-being, highlighting the mixed and uncertain nature of these economic impacts.

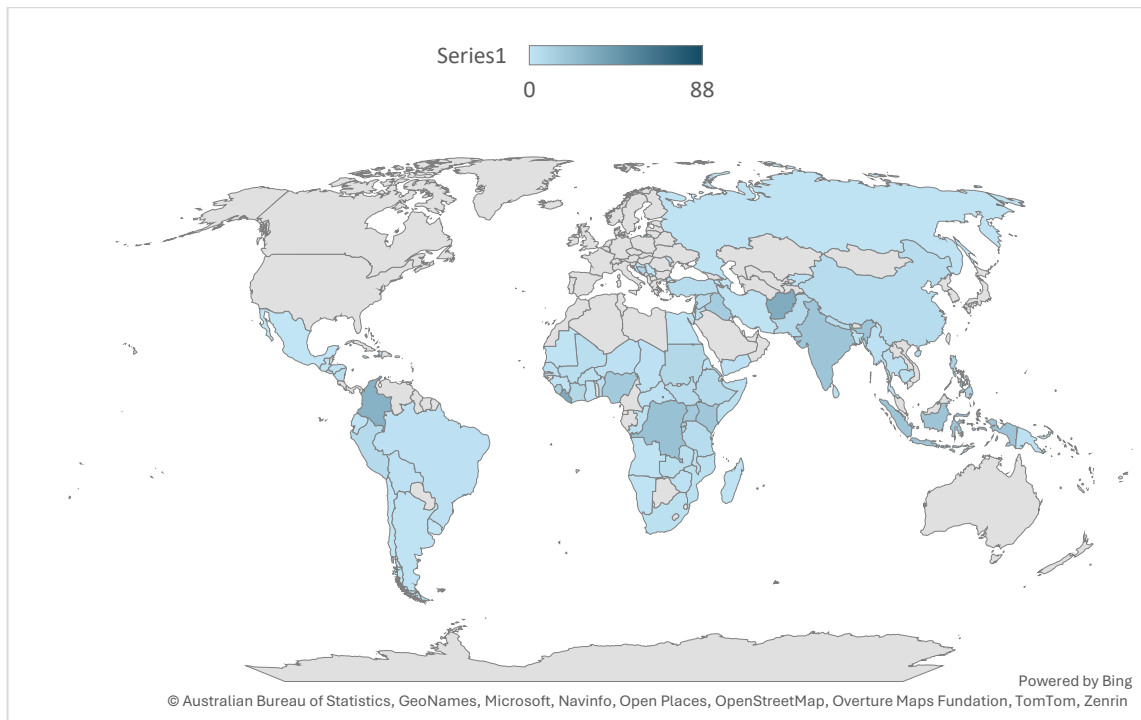# WHERE IS EVIDENCE CONCENTRATED ACROSS INTERVENTION TYPES?

CAP aims and stage of conflict: The majority of studies (n=444; 78%) were of interventions with explicit conflict prevention (CP) aims (Figure 7). A significant proportion of studies were conducted of interventions that implicitly aimed to prevent both violent conflict and atrocities (CP/AP) (n=100; 18%). Only 25 studies (4%) were of interventions with solely atrocity prevention (AP) aims.

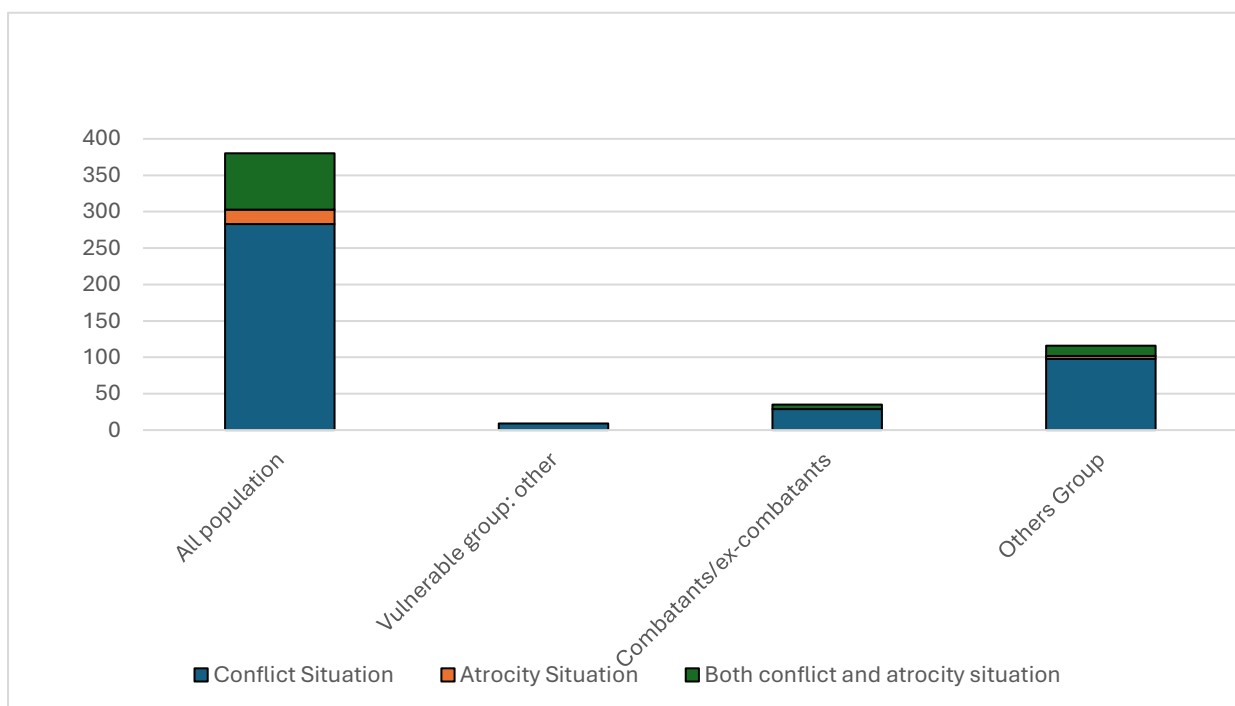Figure 1: Distribution of studies by conflict and atrocity aims

Geography: By far the largest number of studies in any single global region were of interventions in sub-Saharan Africa (n=204; 36%), the greatest being in Liberia (n=37; 6%), reflecting the relatively greater number of active and dormant violent conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa than elsewhere.[1] However, when examining studies by country, we found relatively large numbers of studies of interventions with explicit conflict prevention aims in other parts of the world including Palestine (n=49; 9%), Afghanistan (n=32; 6%), and Colombia (n=29; 5%). A further 88 studies (15%) were conducted using global or regional data. Of the studies conducted with atrocity prevention aims, either explicitly or implicitly, 66 (12%) were done using global or regional data, while the largest number of studies in a single country was in Rwanda (n=19; 3%).

Figure 2: Global distribution of studies

Targeted populations: The majority of the studies were conducted among the general population, targeting and collecting data from civilians. Although a significant minority (n=52; 9%) were conducted among vulnerable groups (13 studies (2%) of women, 25 (4%) of children, 9 (2%) of displaced persons) and 35 studies (6%) collected data from combatants or ex-combatants (Figure 11).
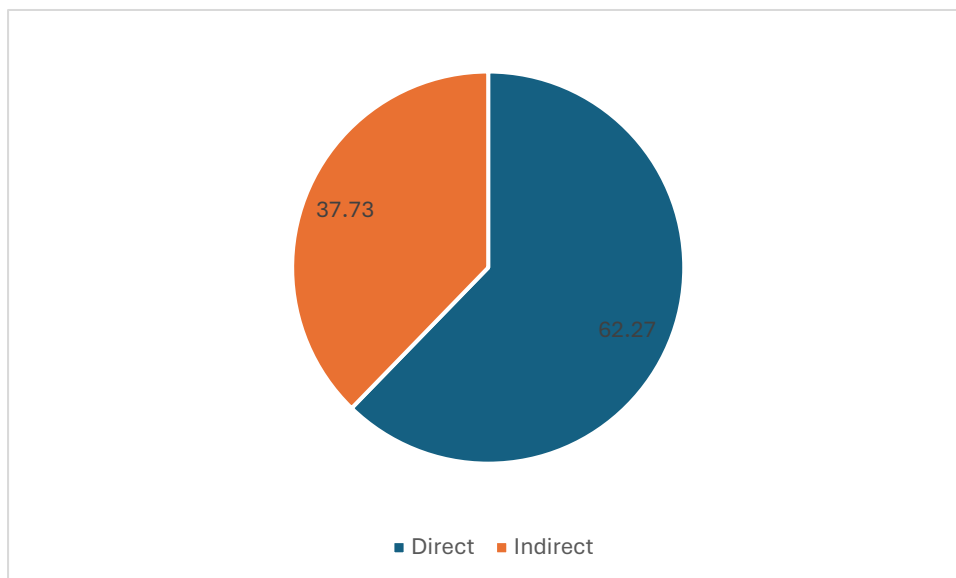
Figure 3: Distribution of studies by study target group

Interventions

Intervention type: The majority of interventions evaluated were direct in nature (n=373; 62.27%), that is, most evaluated interventions that sought to respond to a specific violent conflict or atrocity directly (Figure 12).. In total, 226 studies (37.73%) evaluated the effects of indirect interventions that sought to address wider drivers of violent conflict and atrocity.

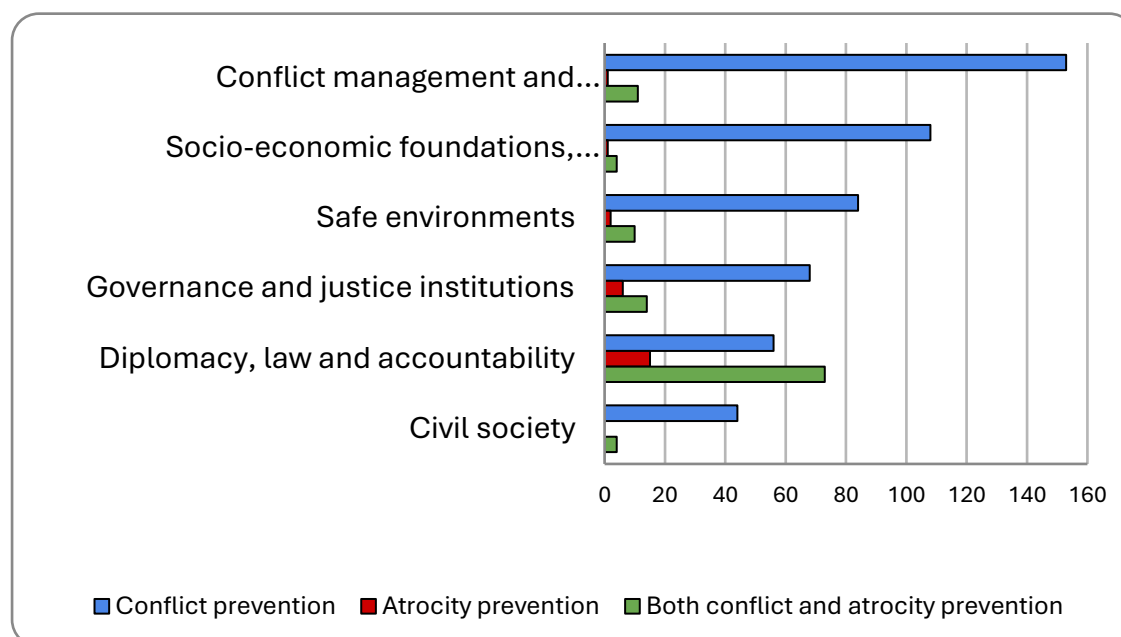Figure 4: Distribution of studies by type of intervention

Note: N=603 because some studies evaluated the effects of multiple-component interventions, which could be coded as both direct and indirect.

Intervention groups: Across the six intervention groups specified in the framework, the most common intervention group evaluated was conflict management and mediation (n=165; 29%), followed by diplomacy, law, and accountability (n=146; 25%), socio-economic foundations (n=114; 20%), and safe environments (n=96; 17%) (Figure 13). Notably, we found the fewest studies within the civil society intervention group (n=48; 8%). ost common interventions largely following the overall trend identified above.

Intervention strategies: The most common interventions evaluated were intergroup contact (n=70; 42% of the conflict management and mediation group).For example, Alan et al. (2020) evaluated the impact of an educational intervention to build inter-ethnic cohesion in Turkish school. This was followed by peacekeeping operations (n=47; 49% of the safe environments intervention group. For example, Fjelde & Smidt (2022) evaluated the effects of a peacekeeping operation on the risk of electoral violence globally. These were largely interventions with CP aims. Sanctions (n=57; 39% of the diplomacy, law and accountability group) was the third most intervention, which was also the most common approach with explicit AP aims (n=13; 50% of the all 26 AP studies). This was followed by peace processes and diplomacy (n=40; 27% of the diplomacy, law and accountability group), and peace education (n=47; 28% of the conflict management and mediation group). Under socio-economic foundations, the largest numbers of studies were in the areas of cash transfers (n=28; 25% of this intervention group), land reform (n=23; 20%), market development and macro-economic policy (n=19; 17%), training (n=17; 15%) and employment creation (n=18; 16%).

Figure 5: Distribution of studies according to intervention groups

Chart categories (top to bottom): Conflict management and..., Socio-economic foundations,..., Safe environments, Governance and justice institutions, Diplomacy, law and accountability, Civil society. X-axis: 0 to 160. Legend: Conflict prevention, Atrocity prevention, Both conflict and atrocity prevention.
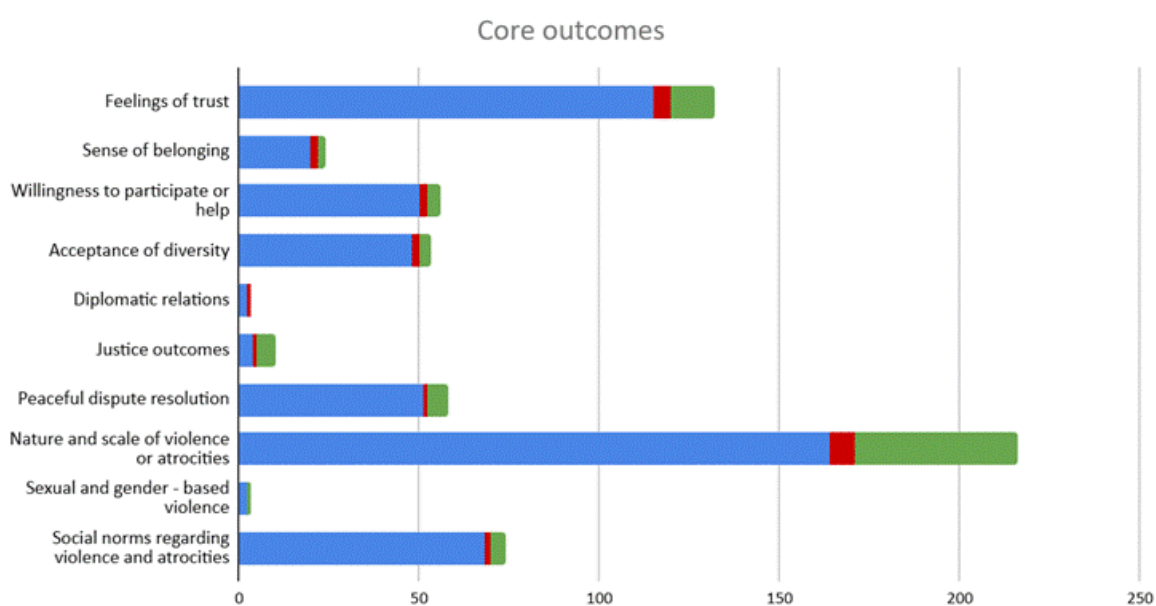
Outcomes

Types of outcomes: Studies evaluated both core (n=629; 110%) and secondary outcomes (n=499; 87%), which suggests some interest in analysis of causal pathways. The most common outcome group reported on was violence and atrocity prevention (n=335; 58%). This was followed by human security (n=233; 41%), social cohesion (n=191; 33%), and community and state governance (n=133; 23%)[3]. This trend was largely due to evaluations of programmes with explicit CP aims. Studies evaluating AP programming largely considered human security outcomes (n=14; 54% of all the AP studies).
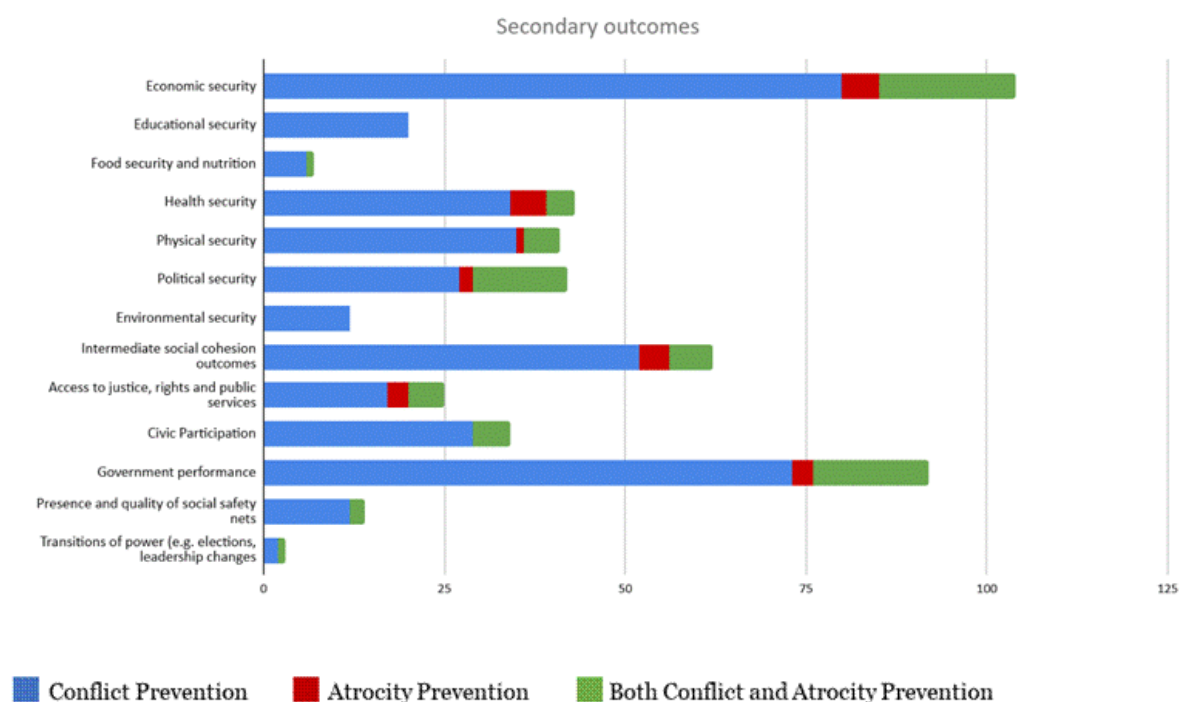
Core outcomes: The largest number of core outcomes reported were on the nature and scale of violence and atrocities (n=206; 64% of the violence and atrocity prevention outcome group); 164 (48%) were for CP aims and (15%) were for AP or mixed AP/CP aims. For example, Corboz et al. (2019) focused on violence against children in war-affected Afghanistan reporting two measures: 'nature and scale of violence or atrocities' and 'sexual and gender-based violence', under the outcome domain violence and atrocity prevention. Relatedly, 74 studies (22% of the violence and atrocity prevention outcome group) reported on social norms around violence. Changes in social cohesion outcomes were also reported in many studies, especially feelings of trust (n=132; 69% of the outcome group) and willingness to participate or help others (n=56; 29%).

The least common core outcomes evaluated by studies were changes in the nature and level of diplomatic relations (one of the exceptions being Ruggeri et al. (2013), which evaluated the effect of UN peacekeeping missions in Africa on levels of cooperation at different levels), and sexual and gender-based violence, each which were evaluated by only three studies (1% of the violence and atrocity prevention outcome group). In the case of AP-interventions, several core outcome gaps were identified, including peaceful dispute resolution, sexual and gender-based violence.[4]

Secondary outcomes: The most common secondary outcomes evaluated by studies were economic security (n=104; 45% of the human security outcome group) and government performance (n=92; 69% of the community and state governance group). These secondary outcomes also reflect those evaluated in studies of interventions with AP explicit aims. Food security and nutrition (n=7; 3% of the human security group) and transitions of power (n=3; 2% of the community and state governance group) were the least common secondary outcomes evaluated by the evidence base. Again, secondary outcome gaps for interventions with AP aims were found, including social safety nets, educational security and political security.

Figure 6: Distribution of studies by core and secondary outcomes evaluated

Secondary outcomes

Legend: ■ Conflict Prevention ■ Atrocity Prevention ■ Both Conflict and Atrocity Prevention
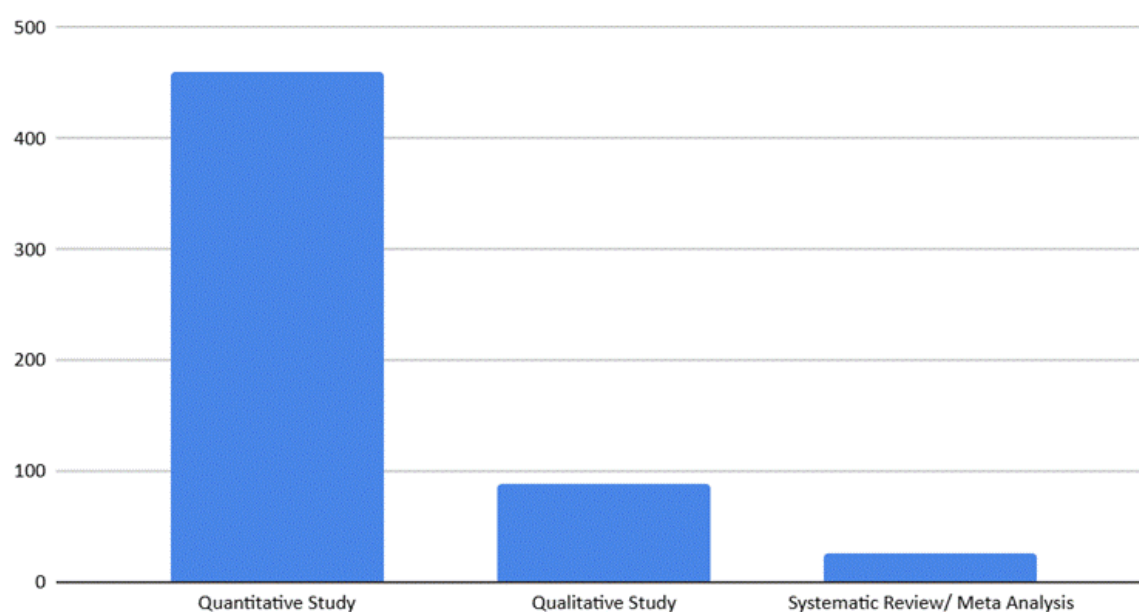
Confidence in research design and conduct

We found 25 evidence syntheses (4%). Primary studies used a range of designs, most commonly large-n quantitative approaches (459 studies; 80%) including randomised controlled trials, of which we included 127 RCTs (22%), and 333 quasi-experiments (58%; e.g., Best et al., 2011) (Figure 7). However, a significant minority of studies (n=89; 16%) used small-n theory-based qualitative approaches to measure the causal effect of the intervention strategy.

Figure 7: Types of study designs in EGM

Evidence synthesis studies

We used AMSTAR2 (Shea et al., 2021) to appraise evidence synthesis studies (Figure 8). There are 16 total categories across seven critical domains, and overall confidence based on the assessment in the critical domains. We have modified the critical domains and include five critical items (1) adequacy of the literature search, (2) justification for excluding individual studies, (3) risk of bias from individual studies being included in the review, (4) appropriateness of meta-analytical methods, and (5) consideration of risk of bias when interpreting the results of the review.
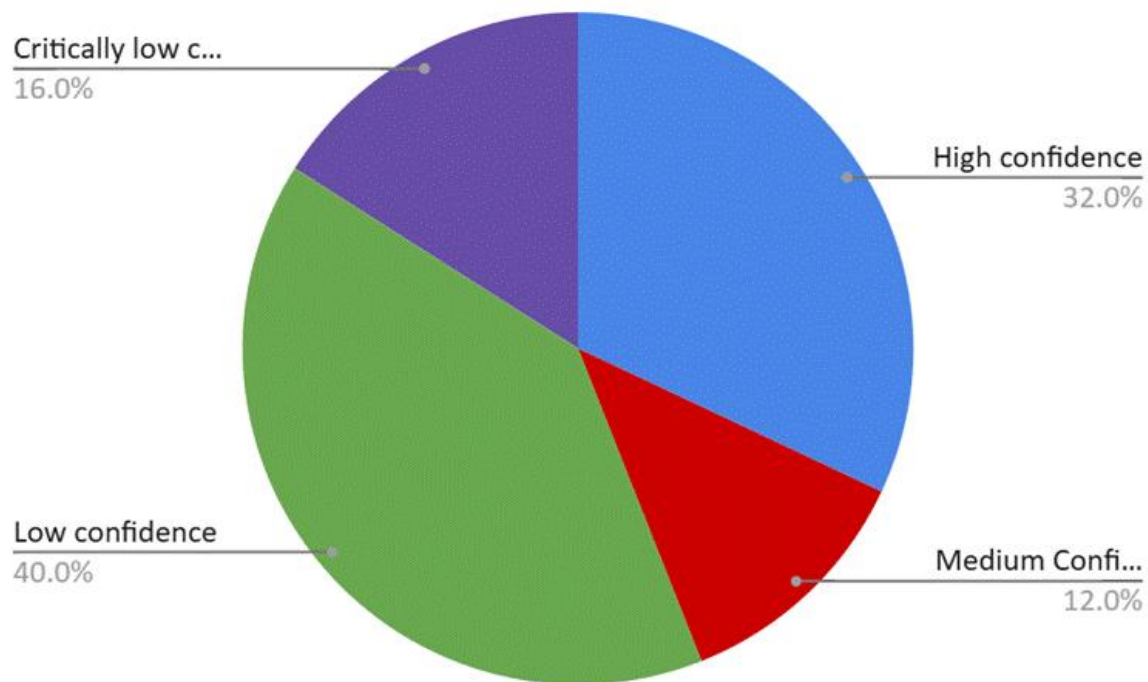
Figure 8: Assessment of evidence synthesis studies

Eight studies (32% of the 25 completed synthesis studies) were assessed overall as at 'high confidence' based on the critical domains in the tool (Figure 9). Three studies were assessed as being of 'medium confidence' which meant more than one non-critical items, but ten (40%) studies were of 'low confidence' meaning that there was one critical flaw with non-critical weaknesses. A further four studies were rated as of 'critically low confidence', meaning that there were multiple critical flaws. Overall, the included evidence synthesis studies clearly reported the PICO components and search strategies and the list of databases and grey literature searched, but did not always transparently and adequately assess the risk of bias in the evidence included in the studies. Most studies also did not report important aspects of evidence synthesis including publication of a study protocol, reporting of funding sources or assessment of publication bias.

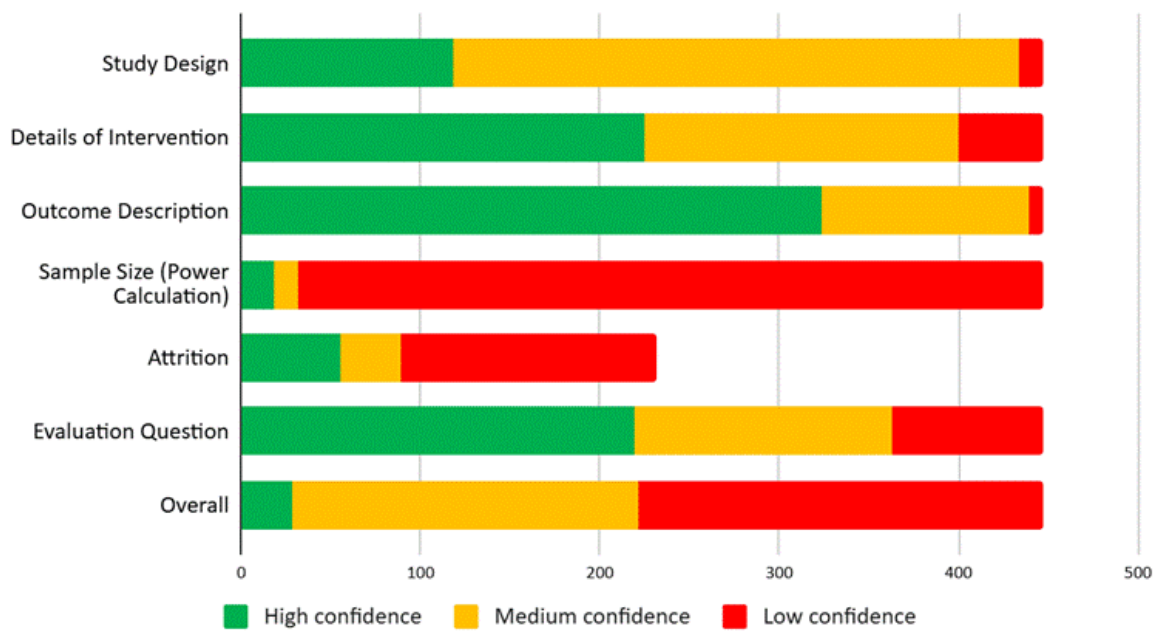Figure 9: Overall confidence in evidence synthesis studies

Figure: Pie chart showing — High confidence 32.0%; Medium Confi... 12.0%; Low confidence 40.0%; Critically low c... 16.0%

Large-n quantitative studies

We assessed the confidence in findings of the included studies based on key features including study design, methodology and reporting. The confidence assessment tool was developed by the Campbell Collaboration for EGMs. The tool contains critical dimensions of the evaluation, each of which is marked as 'high confidence', 'medium confidence', and 'low confidence'. The overall score uses the 'weakest link in the chain' (or maxi-min) principle. Hence, the confidence in study findings can only be as high as the lowest rating given to the nine critical items in effectiveness studies.

In this map, 6 percent of the completed large-n quantitative studies (n=28) were rated as of 'high confidence', 43 percent (n=193) were rated as of 'medium confidence' and 51 percent (n=226) were rated as of 'low confidence' (Figure 22)[6]. The studies scored highly in terms of framing the evaluation questions, detailing the intervention and the outcomes, and regarding attrition (losses to follow-up or drop-outs) of study participants. Attrition is not always a relevant factor in impact evaluations, as in the case of studies that use cross-sectional evidence; these studies were not scored against attrition.

Thirty-two percent of the completed large-n quantitative studies (n=143) were rated as of 'low confidence' due to the absence of reporting on attrition (losses to follow-up). However, we did not consider reporting about power calculations as a critical item in the assessment. Many studies relied on existing data sources and hence did not need to perform tests to determine whether sample sizes were sufficient for detecting effects beforehand, in order to define the optimum sample size for data collection (i.e. power calculations). While power is still relevant in these studies (e.g., power to estimate effects overall or for particular population sub-groups) we opted not to mark down these types of studies if they did not report test of this nature for the purposes of our confidence assessments.
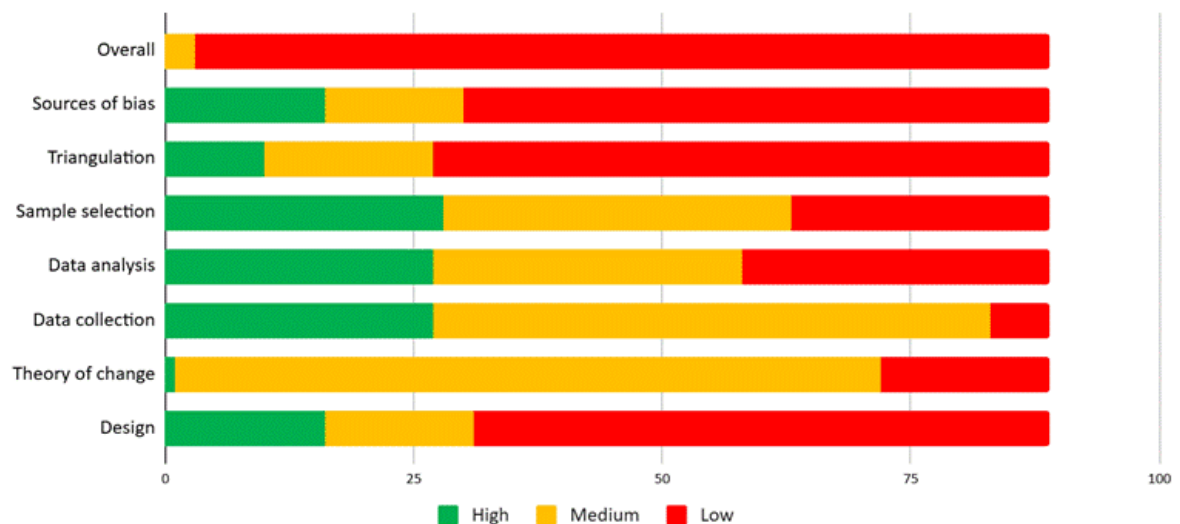
Figure 10: Assessment of large-n quantitative studies

Small-n qualitative studies

There were in total 89 small-n studies included in the evidence map (16%). As shown in Figure 11, based on our assessment criteria, three studies (3% of the small-n studies) were rated overall at 'medium certainty': these studies were coded as at either 'medium' or 'high certainty' on each of the seven criteria. The other 86 studies (97%) were of 'low certainty' overall, meaning that they were assessed as at 'low certainty' for at least one of the seven items. No study was rated as at 'high certainty' overall (i.e., none was rated as at 'high certainty' on all items).

Figure 11: Assessment of small-n qualitative studies

WHERE IS THE EVIDENCE AND WHAT DOES IT SAY ACROSS INTERVENTIONS?

WHAT DO THE ROW-WISE SUMMARIES REVEAL?

Among the 27 subcategories across under six main intervention categories, we identified key areas where evidence was particularly policy relevant. Row-level summaries were developed for these areas to provide a thematic overview of the available evidence across different outcome domains. These summaries help highlight where interventions have shown promise and where significant gaps remain. The selection was guided by both the density of studies and their relevance to atrocity and conflict prevention.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT- DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION, AND REINTEGRATION (DDR)

Row summary

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and peace support/keeping operations

Peacekeeping is most effective in establishing stability which allows delivery of services, including a functioning justice system, which usually not possible during conflict. Access to justice, rights and public services is the only outcome with a large positive effect.

Peacekeeping also supports a achieving a peaceful dispute resolution – though this depends on providing mediation together with peacekeeping. Diplomatic relations & peaceful dispute resolution and transitions of power both have moderate positive effects.

Table 4 - Effect sizes from Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)

Outcome Category	Effect size	No. of studies	No. of effect sizes
Access to justice, rights and public services	0.351	1	4
Diplomatic relations & peaceful dispute resolution	0.160	8	32
Transitions of power	0.138	2	6
Sense of Belonging	0.094	1	8
Social norms regarding violence and atrocities	0.094	3	7
Educational security	0.078	2	11
Food security and nutrition	0.070	1	6
Economic security	0.061	7	33
Intermediate social cohesion outcomes	0.060	1	3
Social cohesion	0.060	1	6
Nature and scale of violence or atrocities	0.058	9	54
Feelings of trust and acceptance of diversity	0.041	2	17
Physical security	0.034	2	6
Civic participation	0.024	2	5
Government performance	-0.066	3	12
Sexual and gender- based violence	-0.295	1	2

Note: A positive sign indicates an improvement, e.g. less violence, and a negative sign an adverse effect.

Whilst there are positive effects from DDR and PKOs/PSOs in reducing violence, the effects are small and there are several moderators. The success of interventions depends on mission size, mandate, and coordination with mediation efforts.

Overall, a UN peacekeeping presence shortens conflicts especially in fragmented settings (i.e. with a large number of combatant groups) and decreases battle deaths, while UN police lower post war violence. But average effects are small partly as peacekeeping reduces violence but does not end it. After a ceasefire or peace agreement violence often transforms into other forms of instability. Police officers rather than military are more effective in post-conflict settings. But there is a very small effect on physical security. And, there is a large adverse impact on sexual and gender-based violence, which is mainly - though not solely - perpetrated by rebel forces.

Peacekeeping reduces electoral violence and atrocities, but its long-term impact on sustaining peace remains uncertain, particularly in complex conflicts with persistent security challenges, e.g. Sudan and Somalia.

Peace support/keeping operations, particularly, peacekeeping operations and the presence of peacekeepers have a positive effect on the feelings of trust in the rule of law and acceptance of diversity. The presence of peacekeepers increased reliance on state authorities over non-state mechanisms for resolving crime and violence and increased cooperative decision-making and equitable resource allocation among ethnic groups. And DDR can achieve a short run effects on cohesion but less on feelings of belonging but these do not last. These interventions work better with women, and less with more educated rebels, especially leaders.

There is low confidence in most findings in this row, both because of the low number of studies most cells and because of low confidence in the included studies.

DIPLOMACY, LAW, AND ACCOUNTABILITY – AID ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

Aid assistance and aid conditionalities

Aid is used directly to address conflict through a range of causal mechanisms. Aid can support the legitimacy of government, and so support stability, by strengthening institutions, improving governance, and a "hearts and minds" approach of providing public services. However, aid projects are usually concentrated around the capital, whereas conflict occurs in more outlying areas.

The evidence suggests that in general aid is not effective in reducing conflict, and may increase it. The four included studies, and the one narrative review, conclude there are adverse effects. The overall effect size for all studies is a small, adverse effect.

There is heterogeneity by type of aid and context. Military aid increases conflict. Aid is more likely to be more effective in relatively stable environments, but more likely to fuel it in unstable settings when combatants may seize aid, or attack aid-supported facilities. One study reports that "easily lootable aid" is associated with higher civilian fatalities.

In contrast, withholding aid is effective in persuading governments to comply with the condition which has triggered the sanctions – such as democratic transition. However, this effect weakens over time.

Table 5 - Effect of Aid assistance and conditionalities

Outcome sub-domain	Effect size	No. of studies	No. of effect sizes
Diplomatic relations	0.347	1	1
Economic security	0.052	1	11

Nature and scale of violence and atrocities	-0.018	4	35

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND MEDIATION – MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION.

The effects of media and communication interventions were summarized from 18 included studies, mostly conducted in sub-Saharan Africa region. Radio was identified as the primary medium for media and communication interventions, as seen in programs like Peace through Development II (PDEV II) and Voices for Peace, which combined broadcasts with community activities and facilitated discussions on governance, corruption, and police-community relations. Other interventions, such as Kumbuka Kesho in the DRC and Pro-Peace Messaging in Burkina Faso, used role-modeling radio dramas and religious sermons to promote tolerance and collective action. In Mali, peace radio programs were integrated with governance initiatives, while FM broadcasts during the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency encouraged defections through logistical guidance and reassurances of reintegration. Additionally, various media formats—including video campaigns, storytelling, social media messaging, and paradoxical thinking interventions—were used to challenge extremist narratives, foster dialogue, and promote active civic engagement. Initiatives like the Rwanda Threshold Program (RTP) and Wuro Potal in Burkina Faso further emphasized the role of media in governance awareness and accountability.

Media and communication effects on access to justice, the Rwanda Threshold Program had a moderate effect, as submission boxes gained acceptance, signaling a shift toward indirect engagement with law enforcement. Media-driven efforts to enhance willingness to participate and help had moderate effects, with programs like Musekeweya radio soap operas in Rwanda promoting reconciliation but showing inconsistent influence on prosocial behavior.

Media and communication interventions had small effects on political security and civic participation. While programs like Peace through Development II (PDEV II) improved political knowledge among radio listeners, they had limited impact on broader political engagement. Civic participation initiatives, including Voices for Peace in Burkina Faso and Kumbuka Kesho in the DRC, showed small effects, with some interventions increasing collaboration with security forces, though results varied across contexts. In nature and scale of violence and atrocity prevention outcomes, FM radio broadcasts encouraging defections from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) had a small effect in reducing fatalities but led to unintended consequences, such as increased looting. Efforts to shift social norms around violence had small effects—while some reduced in-group superiority and promoted tolerance, others failed to change deep-seated ideological beliefs, with long-term interventions proving more effective. Intervention had a small effect on intermediate social cohesion outcome, improving fairness-based reasoning and intergroup trust in some cases, but persistent biases, trauma, and external conflicts often constrained impact. Effects on trust-building, feeling of trust and acceptance of diversity also showed small effects, with some radio dramas fostering reconciliation, enhanced intergroup trust, reduced social distance though others reinforced ethnic divisions. Media interventions had no effect on government performance, as efforts to improve transparency and institutional trust, such as the Rwanda Threshold Program, did not significantly influence public perceptions. Finally, media interventions had an adverse effect on economic security, as programs like PDEV II had no measurable impact on livelihoods, employment, or financial stability. Overall, while media interventions show promise in influencing civic engagement, trust, and social norms, their effectiveness depends on sustained efforts, targeted messaging, and contextual relevance.

Overall, while media interventions showed promise in influencing civic engagement, trust, and social norms, their effectiveness depended on sustained efforts, targeted messaging, and contextual relevance.

Table 6 - Effect sizes from Role of Media and Communication

Outcome Category	Effect size	No. Of studies	No.of Effect sizes
Political Security	0.05	1	4
Civic Participation	0.049	6	13
Nature & scale of atrocity prevention	0.014	1	6
social norms of violence or atrocity prevention	0.014	9	54
Intermediate Social Cohesion Outcome	0.025	6	40
Feelings of trust & Acceptance of diversity	0.015	9	49
Government Performance	0.006	2	14
Willingness to participate or help	0.108	4	19
Access to Justice, right & Public Services	0.148	1	9
Economic Security	-0.013	1	3

CIVIL SOCIETY – SOCIAL FUNDS, COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT, AND RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS.

Social funds, community-driven development (CDD) programs includes interventions such as local governance initiatives, and infrastructure projects. Programs like NSP, GoBifo, and Tuungane promoted local governance and economic empowerment, while CERP focused on rapid-response reconstruction.

These interventions had no effect on diplomatic relations and peaceful dispute resolution. While NSP initially increased disputes due to block grant competition, this effect faded over time. Similarly, there was no pooled effect on the nature and scale of violence and atrocities—some interventions had effects in reducing violence, others had no impact, and a few increased conflict casualties.

The programs had large effects on access to justice, rights, and public services, significantly improving education, water, and electricity access. However, governance effects were weak, women's

empowerment was limited, and there was no improvement in irrigation, transportation, or health services. Local governance participation increased in some cases, but broader transparency and accountability remained weak.

Civic engagement saw a moderate effect, with increased governance participation, women's inclusion, and electoral engagement, though gains were often temporary. It showed a small effect on economic security, with minor increases in income, expenditures, and asset ownership but no effect on long-term employment or productivity. It also had a small effect on educational security, improving infrastructure but failing to enhance learning outcomes, school attendance, or institutional accountability.

The intervention has no effect on environmental security, with some irrigation and land-use projects leading to unintended degradation. Security perceptions improved slightly, but actual violence and insurgent activity were not reduced.

Overall, while these interventions had large effects on public services and small effects on economic and educational security, their long-term impact on governance, security, and stability remained limited. Sustainable outcomes depended on institutional stability, community involvement, and governance engagement.

Table 7 - Social funds, community-driven development, and reconstruction efforts.

Outcome Category	Effect Size	No. of studies	No of Effect size
diplomatic relations & peaceful dispute resolution	0.004	1	2
nature and scale of violence and atrocities	-0.005	8	27
social norms regarding violence and atrocities	-0.001	2	6
feelings of trust & acceptance of diversity	0.037	10	40
sense of belongingness	0.0464	1	1
willingness to participate or help	0.167	11	38
access to justice, rights and public services	0.28	6	30
civic participation	0.171	7	28
government performance	0.043	8	147
economic security	0.028	11	57

educational security	0.07	6	23
food security and nutrition and health security	0.08	8	22
physical security	0.031	3	13
political security	0.028	5	21
economic security	0	1	2
intermediate social cohesion outcomes	0.095	2	35

GOVERNANCE AND JUSTICE INSTITUTIONS – ELECTION SUPPORT INITIATIVES.

Impact of Election support interventions on various outcomes

There were eight studies in the intervention sub-category foundational state design processes, transitional political processes, and election support studying election support across 6 sub-outcome categories. These include the nature and scale of violence or atrocities, social norms regarding violence and atrocities, civic participation, government performance, physical security, and political security. The election support interventions across these studies include capacity building through training and education and attitude transformation strategies, moderation of election-related violence by courts, anti-violence campaigning, exposure to electoral programming from broadcast radio on the women's political behaviors and attitudes in the context of general elections, presence of international election observers on electoral violence, election education events and anti-fraud interventions. The effects for 1 study of 8 were not extracted due to lack of data.

Overall, the effect of election support interventions has a small effect across all the outcomes (g=0.057, no of studies = 7, no of effects = 64). However, election support interventions have an adverse impact on civic participation (g= -0.032) and the nature and scale of violence or atrocities (g= -0.032) outcomes. The civic participation outcomes include political freedom, voting behavior, and gubernatorial. In the nature and scale of violence or atrocities, 30 outcomes were studied across 6 studies. These studies were conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Global context.

The social norms regarding violence and atrocities outcomes were studied across 2 studies and 5 effect sizes. These studies were conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa. The intervention had a small effect (g= 0.032) on empowerment against electoral violence, crime perception and experience, and willingness to use political violence outcomes.

The studies assessed the effects of election support interventions on government performance, physical security, and political security outcomes. The intervention had a moderate effect across these outcomes. The government performance outcomes including attitudes index, government index, and legitimacy index were studied in the South Asian context (n=1 study; g= 0.121; no of effects = 3). The intervention studied anti-fraud intervention on citizens' attitudes toward the government and their willingness to comply with its authority.

The evidence shows that election support interventions including election campaigns, election education events and security, economic recovery, and political reintegration operations have an impact on physical violence and the perceived threat of violence during the election campaign as physical security outcomes (n = 2 studies; g = 0.137; no of effects = 2). These studies were conducted in Sub Saharan Africa region.

The studies that assessed political security outcomes studied electoral education campaigning and governance-strengthening mechanisms as interventions in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. Evidence shows that electoral programming from UNMIL broadcast radio affected the women's political behaviors and attitudes in the context of the 2011 general elections in Liberia and election education reduced fears of violence and increased the frequency of contact with the government (n = 2 studies; g = 0.165; no of effects =15).

Table 8 – Election Support Initiatives

Outcome	Average effect size	No. of studies	No. of effect sizes
Civic participation	-0.032	1	9
Government performance	0.121	1	3
Nature and scale of violence or atrocities	-0.032	6	30
Physical security	0.137	2	2
Political security	0.165	2	15
Social norms regarding violence and atrocities	0.032	2	5

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS – TRAINING AND JOB CREATION PROGRAMS.

Training and job creation programs, such as vocational training, business mentorship, and financial assistance interventions, summarize the evidence from 27 impact evaluation studies. The evidence shows that these interventions improve economic security by increasing employment rates, stabilizing income, enhancing psychosocial well-being, fostering trust and acceptance of diversity, and improving physical security. However, they have limited effects on food security and willingness to help and may have an adverse impact on educational outcomes.

These interventions have a large pooled effect on social cohesion by integrating economic opportunities with psychosocial support. Programs like INVEST in Afghanistan and L.A.C.E.S. in Liberia show that vocational training alone has limited effects on self-efficacy, while sport-based programs improve social responsibility and a sense of purpose. The interventions also have a significant effect on trust and acceptance of diversity outcomes. Vocational training and business mentorship programs promote economic stability and social cohesion. In Uganda, inclusive refugee policies increased support for refugee rights, while in Somalia, employment programs promoted cohesion across clans and genders. However, in South Sudan, unmet expectations from a cash grant program eroded trust, and in Mozambique, economic training worsened perceptions of aggression.

The interventions have a moderate pooled effect on economic security, physical security, and a sense of belonging. Evidence from 15 impact evaluation studies suggests these interventions generally increase employment rates, stabilize incomes, and reduce reliance on illegal work. Notable examples include Liberia's agricultural training program, which led to 77% engagement in farming, and Tanzania's RukaJuu! initiative, where entrepreneurship training increased earnings by 146%. Public works programs, such as India's NREGA, successfully stabilized incomes during economic shocks. However, their effects were mixed in fragile and gender-unequal settings where access to decent work remained limited. One systematic review found that technical and vocational training improved women entrepreneurs' capacities and access to assets, credit, and income. Employment programs also have a moderate effect on physical security by reducing fear of crime and promoting stability, particularly in African countries. In Burundi, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, and Uganda, job programs in vulnerable areas aimed to deter criminal activity and foster social cohesion. A pseudo-meta-analysis using a difference-in-differences (DID) approach found that these programs consistently lowered fear of crime, suggesting a positive effect on perceived security.

The interventions have a small pooled effect on shifting social norms regarding violence and atrocities. While job training can reduce support for violence by improving economic security and social cohesion, its effectiveness in changing attitudes toward violence varies. Some programs decrease justification for violence, while others show limited or no impact. Some positive associations were found between willingness to help and connectedness to other tribes. Studies in Liberia and Afghanistan show mixed results: in Liberia, participants were less likely to engage with armed recruiters but showed no increase in civic participation, while in Afghanistan, positive effects were found on social connectedness, particularly across tribal lines.

Training and job creation programs have small effects on perceptions of government performance. While some initiatives improve trust in government, others have no effect or even reduce institutional confidence. Programs such as the ILO's Youth Employment Somalia (YES) and Youth for Change (Y4C) initiatives, along with employment programs in Africa, show that while economic stability improves, governance perceptions remain varied.

The interventions have no pooled effect on the nature and scale of violence or atrocities. While some programs, such as cash-for-work initiatives and guaranteed employment schemes, reduce conflict intensity and improve stability, their effectiveness depends on governance capacity, security conditions, and economic factors. In Iraq, the ICRRP reduced grave violations against children, while India's NREGS significantly lowered Maoist conflict violence. However, in some cases, job creation efforts correlated with increased state-led counterinsurgency operations, leading to temporary rises in violence.

Some adverse effects were observed. Training and job creation programs, particularly technical and vocational education (TVET), negatively impacted interest in politics while moderately improving women's political participation. In Mozambique, employment training reduced political engagement

among young Muslim men. Additionally, labor-intensive public works programs led to increased school absenteeism, reflecting trade-offs between short-term employment and educational security. The Sierra Leone Cash-for-Work (CfW) program improved economic outcomes but diverted time from education, showing no long-term employment or skill development benefits.

Overall, evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Latin America, and global studies underscores that while training and job creation programs enhance economic security and stability, their impacts on social cohesion and governance remain limited,no effect on reducing the violence and atrocities, and have adverse effects on education and political.

Table 9 - Effect of training & job creation:

Outcome Sub-domain	Effect size	No. of Studies	No. of effect sizes
Social norms regarding violence and atrocities	0.1	6	41
Willingness to participate or help	0.064	2	3
Government performance	0.051	5	29
Food security and nutrition & health security	0.036	3	6
Nature and scale of violence or atrocities	0.01	7	41
Economic security	0.188	15	190
Physical security	0.154	1	1
Sense of belonging	0.114	2	13
Intermediate social cohesion	0.26	3	40
Feelings of trust & Acceptance of diversity	0.239	5	43
Political security	-0.577	1	1
Educational security	-0.027	1	2