



L. Murphy/Mercy Corps

CRITICAL CHOICES

Assessing the Effects of Education and Civic Engagement on Somali Youths' Propensity Towards Violence

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Executive Summary

For far too long, evidence on “what works” has evaded practitioners working on violence reduction, particularly Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). While a vast literature exists on the drivers to violence and violent extremism, few rigorous evaluations have been done to figure out what works to prevent or reduce individuals from engaging in violence. Many existing strategies and programs are based on conventional wisdom or anecdotal information on what are perceived to be the drivers of violence. Among these, lack of equitable, quality education and political marginalization are often cited as drivers for youth joining violent groups. However to be able to effectively address the growing threat of political violence and violent extremism in fragile and conflict affected contexts, empirical research testing the impact of programs meant to reduce violence is needed.

To respond to this evidence gap, Mercy Corps carried out a rigorous mixed-methods impact evaluation of a youth-focused stability program in Somaliland, funded by USAID, known as the Somali Youth Leaders Initiative (SYLI). The research tested the impact of increasing access to formal education and civic engagement opportunities on youth participation in and support for political violence. Education, in particular, and engagement with civil society are prominent priorities in the Somali National Strategy and Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.

The research findings challenge some common assumptions. Although improving access to secondary education through this program reduced youth participation in political violence by 16%, it increased support for political violence by 11%. However, when combining secondary education with civic engagement opportunities that allow youth to carry out community action campaigns, both participation in and support for violence drop significantly, by 14% and 20% respectively.

Giving youth in schools the ability to participate in civic engagement activities alongside formal education, it seems, fulfills a common desire among youth—the desire to do something positive, meaningful and impactful. Addressing this need, our research indicates, is one way to steer youth away from a path towards violence. Creating a sense of empowerment for youth and giving them hope in the possibility of making a difference through nonviolent actions are pathways through which civic engagement activities can support stability-related outcomes.

As violence reduction, particularly CVE, is a key priority for many governments, the results from this study have potentially far reaching and significant policy implications. Our findings signal that increasing access to education by itself does not fully address the underlying drivers of potentially destabilizing actions such as support for political violence. By increasing young people’s concern about future employment prospects and their dissatisfaction with government’s provision of education, schooling does not relieve youths’ frustrations; rather it can compound them. What matters to youth is not just having an opportunity to learn, but also being able to use their capabilities to achieve their ambitions and shape their future and the trajectories of their communities and nation.

Based on the results of this study, Mercy Corps is urging international donors, development agencies, and the Government of Somalia to:

1. Put political will and investment into the youth education and civic society pillars of the Somalia National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism.
2. Ensure that youth education programs with violence reduction goals work to simultaneously improve access to school, enhance the quality of education, and increase access to community or civic engagement opportunities.
3. Provide greater support to initiatives to improve the quality of education in Somaliland, and other transitional parts of Somalia.
4. Increase government investment, engagement, and visibility in development projects, particularly in education.

Introduction

Hargeisa, the sprawling, dusty capital of Somaliland, is an oasis in the harsh desert terrain. The bustling city boasts new development. Money flows from client to vendor through cutting-edge mobile cash transfer technology at every corner of the city—from the most expensive hotels to everyday stores. Somaliland is on the rise. It has achieved what most independent African countries have failed to accomplish: competitive and democratic elections leading to peaceful transitions of power. The focus now is on spurring the fledgling democracy's economy. Relative to neighboring regions in Puntland and South Central Somalia, Somaliland has been able to maintain a semblance of peace and stability over the past few decades.

Despite all of Somaliland's success, the threat of violent extremism and clan based political conflicts threaten to reverse much of the progress to date. Though the region has largely escaped the scourge of the violent extremist group, Al Shabaab (the 2008 Hargeisa bombing being the last major attack) the danger that violent extremism might spread to Somaliland is not negligible. Al Shabaab recruits from Somaliland have been implicated in recent attacks, including the Daallo Airline and African Union base attacks in the past year.¹ In response, the Government has arrested suspected Al Shabaab cell members in Somaliland and has cracked down on radical clerics promoting the use of violence, concerned that disgruntled youth may heed these calls to take up arms.² In addition to the threat of extremist violence, clan based grievances over resources and governance have at times been exploited to foment violence, presenting another threat to stability.

In the midst of these developments, Somali youth are often at the center of ongoing debates. Youth, who account for over 75% of the population in Somalia³, are a significant force in the country's trajectory. They are simultaneously seen as the hope for a bright future and a possible source of instability. The Government of Somalia, recognizing the importance of youth in building stability, has invested in opportunities to help youth gain the skills they need to become positive and productive citizens with an underlying objective of also countering violent extremism. Chief among these investments has been formal education. For example, the Government of Somalia's new National Strategy and Action Plan for Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism states that "education is an essential part of preventing violent extremism" and calls on the need for more educational programs to help youth resist radicalization.⁴ Moreover, in recent years, the Government of Somalia, with support from international donors, has ventured on an ambitious effort to increase access to secondary education for youth through programs like the Somali Youth Leaders Initiative (SYLI), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Mercy Corps.

Yet, education can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, education offers opportunities for youth to gain knowledge and skills that are meant to help them advance economically and socially. On the other hand, education can also create awareness of historical injustices and raises expectations, which, if unmet, can turn into frustration and anger. If youth have no peaceful alternatives to shape their futures or seek redress for perceived injustices, then frustration and anger can lead to violence. Oftentimes gifted, ambitious and conscientious yet powerless to

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- 1 Ismail Akwei, "Al-Shabaab Says Former Somali MP Was Suicide Bomber in Tuesday's Attack," All Africa News, 27 July 2016, <http://www.africanews.com/2016/07/27/al-shabaab-says-former-mp-was-a-bomber-in-amisom-base-attack>.
 - 2 Morgan Winsor, "Somalia Daallo Airlines Explosion: Suspected Suicide Bomber Meant to Be on Turkish Airlines Flight," *International Business Tribune*, 8 February 2016, <http://www.ibtimes.com/somalia-daallo-airlines-explosion-suspected-suicide-bomber-meant-be-turkish-airlines-2297953>.
 - 3 "Somaliland Police Arrest Cleric for Inciting Violence," *Hiiraan Online*, 4 May 2016, http://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2016/May/105307/somaliland_police_arrest_cleric_for_inciting_violence.aspx. "Somaliland Captures Al-Shabaab Suspects Sneaking into Hargeisa," *Somali Update*, 12 July 2015, <http://somalupdate.com/articles/7090/Somaliland-Captures-Al-Shabaab-Suspects-Sneaking-into-Hargeisa>.
 - 3 Pilirani Semu-Banda, "Youth in Somalia Plan for a Better Future," *United Nations Population Fund*, 14 March 2015, <http://somalia.unfpa.org/news/youth-somalia-plan-better-future>.
 - 4 "National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism," *Federal Republic of Somalia*, 27 June 2016, 12, <http://www.radiomuqdisho.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/CVE-Strategy-26-August-English.pdf>.

realize their dreams, these youth have been catalysts for change, both positive and negative.⁵ For Somalia and other developing countries, the trajectory of having an increasingly educated youth population with persistent high unemployment, social inequality and political grievances, may increase the risk of political violence.

As the Government of Somalia moves towards actualizing its strategy on CVE, there is need to understand the effectiveness of specific interventions and approaches in reducing support and participation in violence. Understanding the effects of education on stability is particularly important given the Somali government's significant emphasis on education within its CVE policy. This study aims to contribute to the refinement and effective implementation of this policy. It does so by presenting evidence on the impact of increasing access to secondary education, and civic engagement opportunities on reducing propensity towards violence amongst youth. By evaluating an ongoing youth-focused stability program, this research helps shed light on what types of CVE approaches and interventions are empirically proven to work and thereby worth further investment.

The Al-Shabaab Threat

Formally known as "Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen", which translates to the "Young Jihadi Movement", Al-Shabaab ("the youth") for short is a terrorist organization operating within parts of Somalia, with cells in some areas of Northeastern Kenya. The origins of the group can be traced back to the civil war and political vacuum that Somalia fell into after the collapse of the Siad Barre military regime in 1991. Many of the founding members of Al Shabaab were part of an earlier Salafist group known as Al Ittihad Al Islamiya (AIAI). In the early 2000s, a hardline faction of AIAI joined with an alliance of Sharia courts (known as the Islamic Courts Union (ICU)) and gained control of many parts of the country that had been ruled by warlords. Al Shabaab effectively emerged as the youth militia under the ICU. In 2006 neighboring Ethiopia, with support from the U.S. Government, invaded Somalia to oust the ICU and re-establish a transitional government. The Ethiopian invasion was a significant turning point for Al Shabaab. Experts believe this is when the group became more radical and established itself as a full-fledged guerrilla movement. During the years following the Ethiopian invasion, Al Shabaab's membership grew from a few hundred to a few thousand and the group gained control of much of southern and central Somalia.⁶

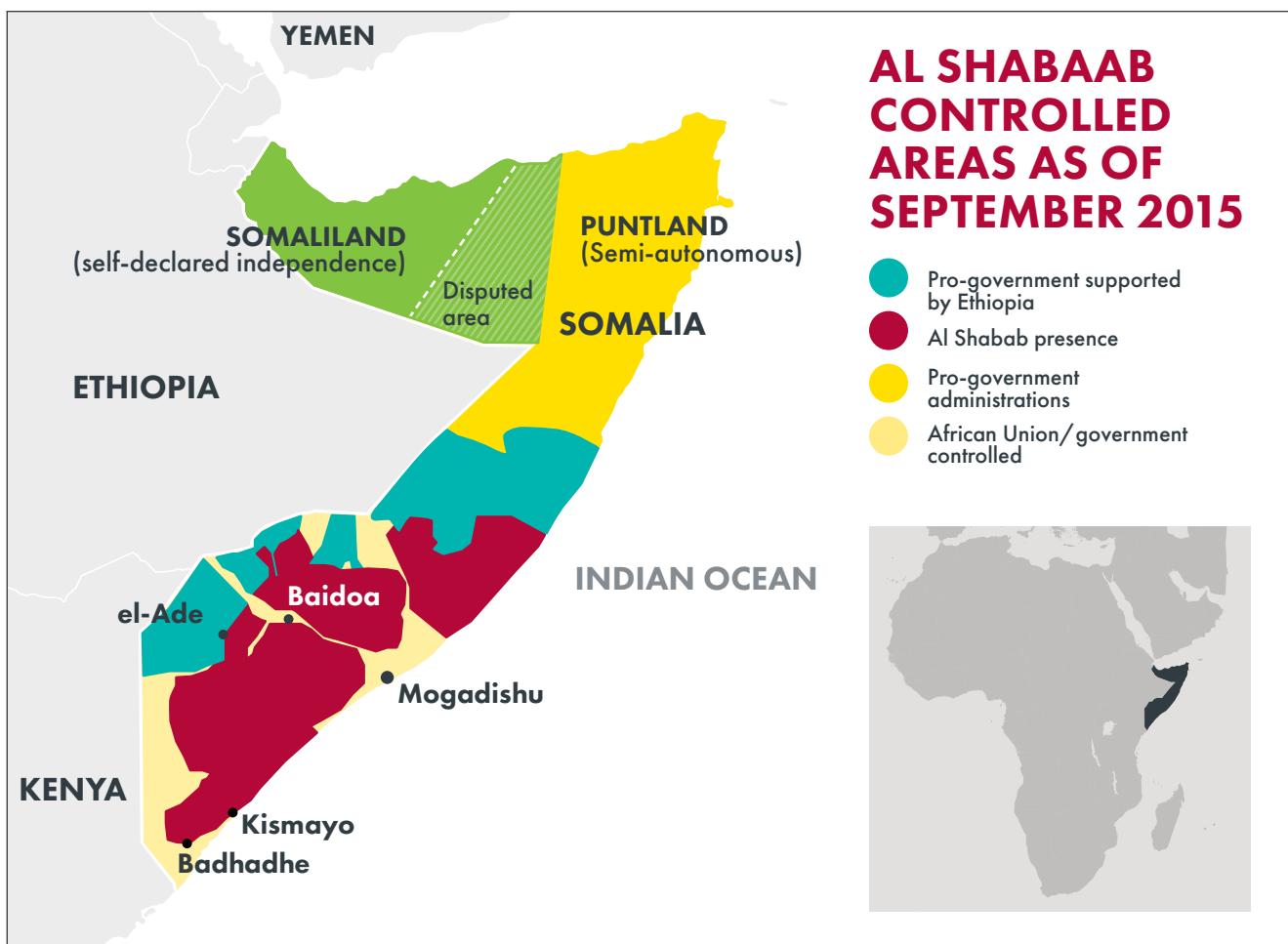
Youth, who account for over 75% of the population in Somalia, are a significant force in the country's trajectory. They are simultaneously seen as the hope for a bright future and a possible source of instability.



5 Though no one cause can be given for the political upheavals in countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and Syria during the Arab Spring, experts point to the high rates of educational attainment with high rates of unemployment and social inequalities as being a primary culprit. See Ana Adams and Rebecca Winthrop, "The Role of Education in the Arab World Revolutions," *Brookings Institution*, 10 June 2011, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/the-role-of-education-in-the-arab-world-revolutions/>.

6 Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 13 March 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>.

Al-Shabaab’s membership is multinational and includes diverse clans. A number of youth have joined from the Somali diaspora in the United States and other countries, but the majority of recruits tend to be local or ethnic Somalis from neighboring Kenya. The most common profile of Al Shabaab members are vulnerable and deprived youth with few family ties and little education. For instance, a recent capture of 100 members in Puntland revealed that the large majority were young children less than 13 years of age, many of whom were abducted or forced to join the group.⁷ According to the Government of Somalia, Al Shabaab also targets minority or less powerful clans by exploiting “ethnic, tribal and sectarian tensions to build support.”⁸ In Kenya, the group has also recruited street children between the ages of 12 and 16 in slums of Nairobi and the coastal region, luring them through promises of housing, clothing, and food in addition to a sense of family, purpose and belonging.⁹ In addition to these “easy targets”, however, the group has also intentionally tried to bring in more educated youth into its ranks, including university graduates, who are promised salaries of \$700 per month and other economic and spiritual benefits for joining.¹⁰



Source: Who are Somalia's Al Shabaab". BBC. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-15336689>

7 Robyn Kriel and Briana Duggan, “Al-Shabaab Child Soldiers Captured in Somalia Firefight,” CNN, 1 April 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/31/africa/al-shabaab-child-soldiers>.
 8 “National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism,” 10.
 9 Senguta West, “Al-Shabaab Recruitment from Kenyan Universities Alarms Officials,” *Terrorism Monitor* 14, no. 1 (2016): 6-8. <https://jamestown.org/program/al-shabaab-recruitment-from-kenyan-universities-alarms-officials>.
 10 Ibid.

A study conducted by the Institute for Security Studies in 2014 further shed light on the profiles and motivations of Al Shabaab youth in Somalia by interviewing 88 former members of the group. Of those interviewed 70% were under the age of 24 years and 50% had lost at least one of their parents during their childhood. According to former members, the leading reason for joining Al Shabaab was primarily economic (27%) followed by a combination of economic and religious reasons (25%).¹¹ A large number of recruits had received no education (40%) or only a religious education (43%). While roughly 50% of those interviewed were unemployed at the time they joined, all who were employed had low-income jobs, and many saw Al Shabaab as a benefactor claiming that they were paid between \$150 and \$500 per month by the group.¹²

The common recruitment strategies of Al-Shabaab described above—the use of financial incentives, targeting of minority clans, and mostly uneducated youth—put many young people at risk if the group were to focus its efforts in Somaliland. As with most violent extremist groups, Al Shabaab feeds on the frustrations and grievances of youth that feel excluded from society and opportunities for upward mobility. With this in mind, it is important to consider what approaches and interventions are able to counter the appeal of groups like Al Shabaab from drawing more youth to join in violence. Since education has been proposed as a key pillar in the Government of Somalia’s Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism National Strategy, it is important to test to what extent and under what conditions education can be used to successfully prevent and counter violence and violent extremism.

Research Gaps

This study seeks to shed light on effective approaches to strengthen stability and prevent politically motivated violence in Somaliland, broader Somalia and other comparable contexts using empirical data. As mentioned above, conflict and instability have plagued Somalia for the past three decades. Lawlessness and the disintegration of the Somali state have made it possible for violent extremist groups, like Al Shabaab, to emerge and take control of large parts of the country. Effectively responding to and addressing the root causes of political violence, including violent extremism, requires an understanding of its drivers and antidotes, particularly for Somali youth. Existing research on political violence and conversations with Somali youth have provided insights as to what the key drivers are. However, causal evidence on what policies and programs work to address these drivers remains sparse. To fill this gap, this study evaluated the effectiveness of two youth-focused development interventions – education and civic engagement – in reducing political violence and violent extremism. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the impact of providing access to secondary education on support and participation in political violence amongst youth?
2. What is the impact of providing access to secondary education and civic engagement opportunities on support and participation in political violence amongst youth? In other words, is there a marginal effect of civic engagement activities when added to secondary education?

Existing Theories on Education and Political Violence

Research globally has proliferated theories around the drivers of political violence and violent extremism, particularly around what leads young people—who form the majority of recruits—to participate in this form of violence. The lack of access to equitable, quality education is amongst the most commonly cited drivers of violent extremism. Evidence on the relationship between education and political violence, including violent extremism, is

11 Anneli Botha and Mahdi Abdile, “Radicalisation and al-Shabaab Recruitment in Somalia – ISS Paper 266,” Institute for Security Studies, September 2014, 5, <https://issaf-rica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/Paper266.pdf>.

12 Ibid, 8.

mixed, and most research demonstrates that demographic profiles of youth who join violent groups globally are diverse in terms of education and socioeconomic levels.¹³

Two theories linking education to a reduction in violent extremism have been explored in the literature. First, evidence strongly supports the theory that government's inability to provide education (and other basic services), may decrease populations' perceptions of government legitimacy and effectiveness.¹⁴ Research has found a strong relationship between a lack of infrastructure (including schools) in communities in the Niger Delta and an individual's willingness to participate in violent rebellion, suggesting that communities in which there are more services, presumably government services, are less vulnerable to participating in violent insurgency.¹⁵

The second theory linking education to a reduction in violent extremism is that youth with an education have more opportunities for economic and social advancement, and thus are less vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists. Specifically, lack of economic opportunities can play a role in youth's decisions to join violent extremist organizations, either because it functions as a grievance—youth are frustrated because they do not have the means to support themselves—or because it creates vulnerability to recruitment if violent extremist organizations offer economic opportunities or financial incentives directly. In Somalia, while research showed that few members of Al Shabaab mentioned education as a driving factor, many cited missed career opportunities as factors in their joining the group.¹⁶

However, the education-as-opportunity theory also has negative implications for vulnerability to violent extremism. If youth increase their expectations of career opportunities but these are not met, they risk disillusionment, which could be a push factor for participation in violent extremism.¹⁷ In Tunisia, for example, unmet expectations and underemployment among the highly educated youth population has been linked to the recent rise in violent extremism.¹⁸

Another pathway connecting education and violence is group belonging and isolation. Specifically, the need for community and group membership catalyzes youth who feel social exclusion and isolation to join violent groups, as recent research has revealed. The United States Institute for Peace (USIP) developed a dataset of 2,032 male foreign fighters who professed an affiliation with Al Qaeda. Researchers categorized their motivations for joining Al Qaeda through interviews, captured documents, statements from family and friends, and public records. By far "identity seekers"—those seeking to fulfill their desire to be part of an identity group or community—comprised the largest number of foreign fighters with approximately 40%.¹⁹ Youth who are isolated and excluded may be particularly vulnerable to this pull as they lack the safety net of a social network or group that they can identify with. To the extent that being in school reduces isolation among youth by allowing them to form positive social bonds with students, teachers and others in their community or by giving them social standing and acceptance, it may be able to undermine recruitment and participation in violent extremist groups.

Existing Theories on Civic Engagement and Political Violence

Similarly, research on the links between civil society-led civic engagement activities and violence outcomes is mixed and warrants further study. Decades of research have shown that a civically engaged citizenry will lead to more peaceful and more effective political expression. Political scientists have shown that citizens who are

13 Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, "Violent Radicalization in Europe: What We Know and What We Do Not Know," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 33, no. 9 (2010): 805.

14 Harriet Allan, Andrew Glazzard, Sasha Jespersen, Sneha Reddy-Tumu, and Emily Winterbotham, "Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature," *Royal United Services Institute*, 16 October 2015, 6, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899d40f0b64974000192/Drivers_of_Radicalisation_Literature_Review.pdf.

15 Aderoju Oyefusi, "Oil and the Probability of Rebel Participation Among Youths in the Niger Delta of Nigeria," *Journal of Peace Research* 45, no. 4 (2008): 542.

16 Muhsin Hassan, "Understanding Drivers of Violent Extremism: The Case of Al-Shabaab and Somali Youth," *Combating Terrorism Center Sentinel* 5, no. 8 (2012): 19.

17 Allan et al, "Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature," 7.

18 Anoma Bhat, Jen Heeg and Beza Tesfaye, "Tunisia Violent Extremism Risk Analysis: Desk Study" (unpublished report, FHI 360 and Mercy Corps, 2016), 7.

19 Col. John M. Venhaus, "Why Youth Join Al Qaeda," *United States Institute of Peace*, May 2010, 10, <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR236Venhaus.pdf>.

civically engaged in their community, such as through volunteerism and participation in associations, feel a sense of mutual trust, reciprocity, and shared responsibility.²⁰

Furthermore, citizens who engage in associational life gain experience in things such as tolerance, compromise, and solidarity; all prerequisites to peaceful political expression.²¹

Political self-efficacy is another mechanism that has been shown to connect civic engagement to decreased propensity towards violence and broader political stability. Where youth feel alienated from political processes and believe they cannot influence government decisions, they may turn to violence to have a voice.²² Alternatively, citizens' belief that they can influence the political process through nonviolent means can support stable democracies. Many CVE interventions are designed to foster youth political participation and political efficacy. These are often based on the assumption that by participating in civic groups and actions, youth gain awareness of and confidence to use established channels to voice grievances, rather than relying on violence to achieve political objectives.

Mercy Corps' research among youth in Kenya demonstrates that youth who were civically engaged and took action to try to address local or national governance problems were less likely to engage in or be disposed towards political violence.²³ This indicates that when youth have more avenues to express themselves peacefully and believe they can make a difference through nonviolent actions, they are less likely to be drawn to political violence, including violent extremism.

Despite evidence supporting a positive correlation between civic engagement and lowered propensity towards political violence, other research points to an opposite relationship. Mercy Corps' analysis of survey data from Somalia in 2013 revealed that youth who were more civically engaged were more likely to have participated in political violence, probably because they had a better sense of their political goals and higher expectations for their government.²⁴ Other research has indicated that some non-violent civil society organizations turn violent when their political objectives are not met; similarly, if non-violent groups are met with repressive tactics by the government, then they are more likely to radicalize in the face of such opposition.²⁵ As with education, the risk of increasing youth's expectations—specifically around government response and participation in the political processes—could exacerbate, rather than reduce, grievances that can contribute to political violence, including violent extremism.

Despite improvements in our understanding of why youth participate in violence, globally and particularly in Somalia, data on what works to prevent their participation or support for violence is still scarce. As civil society actors and governments embark on CVE programs that seek to contribute to broader stability, they have little evidence to inform what types of interventions work best, and under what circumstances. In Somalia, research on effective ways to prevent youth participation in violent extremist groups—and in violence broadly—is sorely needed.

20 Theda Skocpol, "Social Provision and Civic Community: Beyond Fragmentation," in *The Fractious Nation? Unity and Division in Contemporary American Life*, eds. Jonathan Reider and Stephen Steinlight (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 187-205. And Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

21 Ibid

22 Lyndsay McLean Hilker and Erika McAslan Fraser, "Youth Exclusion, Violence, Conflict, and Fragile States," *Social Development Direct*, 30 April 2009, <http://www.gsdr.org/docs/open/con66.pdf>.

23 Jon Kurtz, "Understanding Political Violence Among Youth: Evidence from Kenya on the Links Between Youth Economic Independence, Social Integration, and Stability," Mercy Corps, June 2011, https://d2zyf8ayvg1369.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/full_report_-_kenya_youth_and_conflict_study.pdf.

24 Rebecca Wolfe and Jon Kurtz, "Examining the Links Between Youth Economic Opportunity, Civic Engagement, and Conflict: Evidence from Mercy Corps' Somali Youth Leaders Initiative," Mercy Corps, January 2013, https://d2zyf8ayvg1369.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/somaliabrief_2_13_13.pdf.

25 Allan et al, "Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypotheses and Literature."

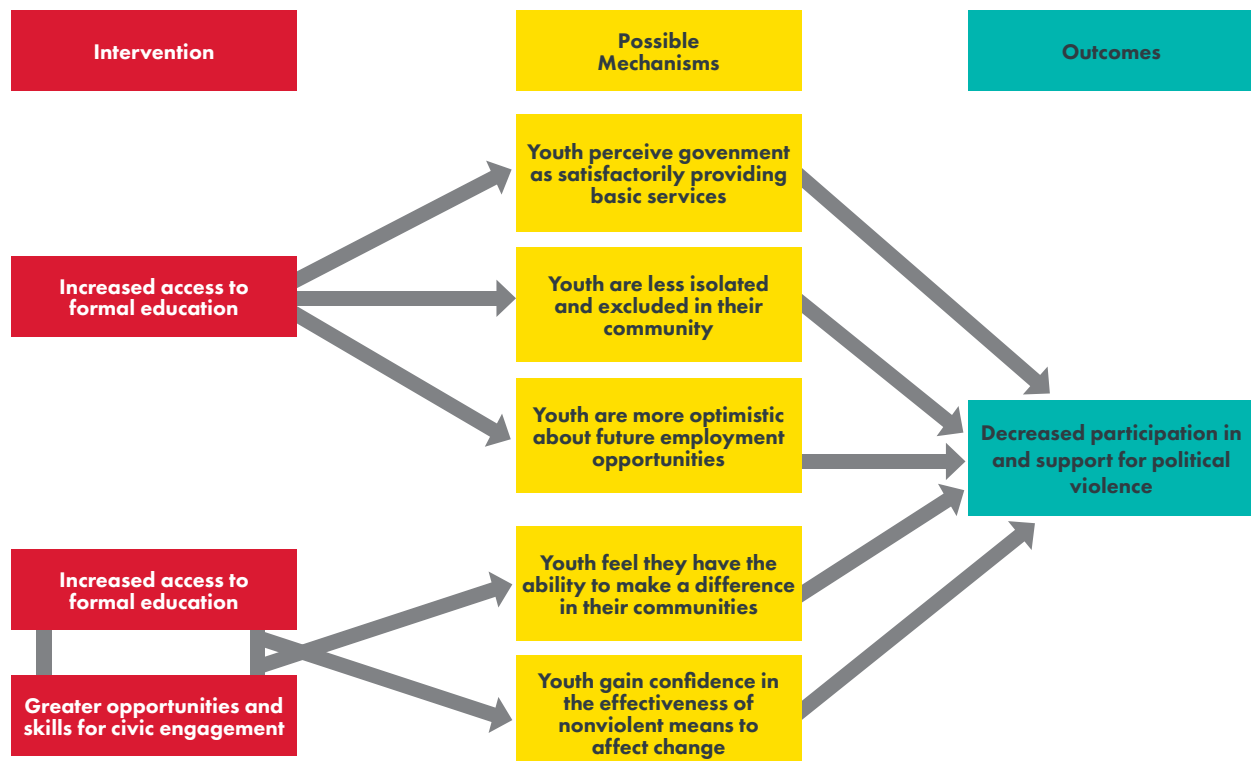
Hypotheses Tested

Mercy Corps' youth programming in Somalia, founded on the theory that both improved access to education and civic engagement can contribute to stability, provides a promising case study for research to fill this evidence gap. Specifically, this study sought to compare and contrast the degree to which access to secondary education by itself and coupled with civic engagement activities can contribute to reduced participation and support for political violence and, by extension, violent extremism. In doing so, the research sheds light on what types of youth-focused interventions can help promote stability in places like Somalia and beyond.

The study tested the following hypothesis around the possible impact of the SYLI program:

- › **H1:** Participation and support in political violence among Somali youth will decrease as a result of increased access to formal education if youth perceive their government is satisfactorily providing basic services
- › **H2:** Participation and support in political violence among Somali youth will decrease as a result of increased access to formal education if youth are less isolated and excluded in their community
- › **H3:** Participation and support in political violence among Somali youth will decrease as a result of increased access to formal education if youth are more optimistic about future employment opportunities
- › **H4:** Participation and support in political violence among Somali youth will decrease as a result of increased access to formal education and civic engagement activities if youth feel they can make a difference in their community
- › **H5:** Participation and support in political violence among Somali youth will decrease as a result of increased access to formal education and civic engagement activities if youth gain confidence in the effectiveness of nonviolent means to affect change.

Figure 1: Hypotheses for Impact of Somalia Youth Leaders Initiative on Stability



Program Overview

Access to secondary education in Somalia is among the worst in the world with only 52,000 students enrolled in 195 secondary schools (64 public schools); this amounts to roughly 2% to 6% secondary gross enrollment rate as of 2008.²⁶ To address this problem, since 2011, Mercy Corps has been implementing a youth-focused stability program in Somalia known as the Somali Youth Leaders Initiative (SYLI). This program directly supports USAID/ East Africa's Assistance Objective: Somalia's stability increased through targeted interventions that foster good governance, economic recovery, and reduce the appeal of extremism. To achieve this, the program sets out as its goal to reduce instability through increased education and civic participation opportunities for Somali youth.²⁷

Table 1: Summary of SYLI Program Achievements from Somaliland as of June 2016

Number of schools constructed or rehabilitated	22
Number of classrooms constructed or rehabilitated	102
Number of students enrolled in 22 Somaliland schools	11,370
Number of youth leaders trained on civic engagement	921
Number of civic action campaigns organized	39

The program targets youth ages 15 to 24 years in the Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia. It aims to directly benefit more than 150,000 youth with the potential to reach and impact millions of Somali youth, educators, and communities through radio, media and advocacy campaigns. The existence of this program offers a unique opportunity to test the impact of youth-focused programming on stability outcomes. Though the program has several inter-related components, the evaluation focused on two interventions

- › **Increased access to formal secondary education:** Under this component, the SYLI program has expanded secondary school access to youth across Somalia, through the construction and rehabilitation of schools, training of teachers and development of Community Education Committees. In total, the program will have opened 60 secondary schools in Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia, which provide access to education for an estimated 45,000 Somali youth. In addition, the program has also equipped the new schools with teaching and learning materials, desks and other necessary supplies and equipment. Community Education Committees have been established to oversee the maintenance of all schools. SYLI provides training on community mobilization and participation in education, as well as monitoring and supervision of schools to members of these Committees. To ensure high standards for the quality of education provided in schools, SYLI also provides training to teachers on curriculum development and pedagogical skills and supports some teachers to complete two year teaching diplomas.
- › **Youth empowered to contribute positively and productively to society through civic engagement:** This component of the program focuses on helping youth in schools to be leaders in their

²⁶ UNESCO, Programme of Education for Emergencies and Reconstruction. 2009. "Survey of Secondary Education in Somalia 2008."

²⁷ Initially economic and livelihood activities were included in the program, but during phase II—the period during which we conducted the research—economic and livelihood activities were not included.

community through skills building and organizing community action campaigns. Specifically, the program identified 22 youth leaders in each of the new secondary schools, to serve as peer mobilizers. These youth were trained in the areas of conflict analysis, peacebuilding, teambuilding and leadership. Youth leaders then apply their leadership, teambuilding and mobilization skills to work on concrete issues at the local level that are drawn from their own daily experiences. Specifically, youth leaders have mobilized their peers to plan together and carry out student-led community action projects that highlight the value of civic participation and civic responsibility, and model the principles of good governance and peaceful action. This exercise has given students first-hand experience on how to identify, plan and execute projects working with the wider community for a social impact.



Examples of Recent Civic Engagement Activities

- › Youth construct small gardens, clean compound and plant trees to beautify school areas
- › Youth organize event with over 200 people during International Peace Day to discuss issues affecting youth, peace and importance of civic responsibility
- › Youth conduct district-wide sanitation and hygiene campaign
- › Youth conduct sensitization campaign in communities to discourage risky, illegal migration.

METHODOLOGY

We employed a mixed-methods impact evaluation to test the abovementioned hypotheses and generate robust evidence on what, if any, impact the SYLI program has had on stability. Specifically, we used an ex-post quasi-experimental matched design, relying on survey data from youth in Somaliland, supplemented by Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with in and out of school youth (both males and females), teachers, Ministry of Education officials, and members of Community Education Committees. The study focused on Somaliland because SYLI has been implemented there the longest, making the interventions most ready to evaluate. In addition, due to logistical and security constraints, the study was unable to collect data from areas in Puntland and South Central Somalia where the program is being implemented.²⁸

For the quantitative survey, participants were selected through a two-stage sampling process. First, we purposively sampled schools that were built or reconstructed through the SYLI program in three different regions: Hargeisa, Burao and Sanaag. The schools were selected based on: (1) intervention type—i.e. educational activities alone or educational and civic engagement activities and (2) location—rural vs. urban settings. Given the preponderance of work in urban areas in Somaliland, four schools in urban areas and three in rural areas were originally selected to provide a representative view of the participants in Somaliland. Table 2 below indicates the composition of schools in our study.

²⁸ A second phase of the study is currently being planned for South Central Somalia.

Table 2: Sample of SYLI Schools

Region	Hargeisa	Sanaag	Burao	Total
Type of schools (Intervention)	2 education only; 1 education + civic engagement	2 education only	2 education + civic engagement	4 education only; 3 education + civic engagement
Location of schools	3 rural	2 urban	2 urban	3 rural; 4 urban
Sample sizes	228- Treatment 146-Control	161-Treatment 71-Control	115-Treatment 81-Control	504-Treatment 298-Control

Once schools were identified, we then randomly selected students within the schools and out of school youth in the same communities, to serve as the treatment and control groups, respectively. A total of 802 youth were surveyed, including 504 in school youth (treatment) and 298 out of school youth (control).

To estimate the average treatment effect of the interventions, we use stabilized Inverse Probability of Treatment Weighting (s-IPTW) to achieve balance between the treatment and control units, which allows us to mimic a Randomized Control Trial. Using this technique, we matched the treatment and control participants based on outcomes that influenced participation in the program and the key outcomes, including: age, poverty, exposure to violence, marital status, number of children, experience of displacement, and household characteristics, as well as baseline levels of political engagement (i.e. interest in politics). Once balance was achieved, we relied on a linear regression to estimate the difference-in-means for the treatment versus control group, using weights estimated by s-IPTW (see Annex 1 for details on estimation method). In addition to the abovementioned covariates, we controlled for whether or not someone was one of the trained student leaders in the impact analysis, thereby improving comparability between the treatment and control group.

Given the sensitive nature of the survey, which touched on issues such as individuals' attitudes and behaviors towards political violence, social desirability bias presented a concern. To avoid this problem, in addition to direct questions, we employed a survey experiment known as a random response experiment, to get at attitudes around sensitive issues in an indirect way. This approach asks respondents to use a randomized device (in our case, a spinner) whose outcome is unobserved by the enumerator. By introducing random noise, the method conceals individual responses and consequently protects respondent privacy, thus increasing respondents reporting on their true beliefs or actions on sensitive issues.²⁹

To test the hypotheses around why the program may or may not have impacted on violence outcomes, the use of mediation analysis would have been ideal. However, the design of our evaluation did not meet the requirements necessary for conducting a mediation analysis. As such, we simply examine whether participation in one of the two interventions impacts the violence outcome variables, and whether participation in one of the two interventions impacts the intermediate variables hypothesized to be the mechanisms. If we see program impact on both types of variables in the manner that we expected for each hypothesis, we surmise that there is support for our hypothesis. If we do not see both impact findings in the direction we expect, we question the validity of the hypothesis.

The qualitative component of the research consisted of Key Informant Interviews. Twenty-five key informants, fifteen of whom were youth, were interviewed to understand the perceptions of people engaged in the project

29 Graeme Blair, "Survey Methods for Sensitive Topics," Comparative Politics Newsletter 25, no. 1 (2015), 12.

at its different phases of implementation. The key informants described the realities on the ground and social barriers as well as structural challenges that hampered access to education and undermined stability in the region. Qualitative interviews were recorded and then transcribed in English. The transcriptions were analyzed using thematic coding through an inductive approach. Key themes that were explored include experiences in school, future aspirations and concerns, perceptions of the government, and engagement in violence.

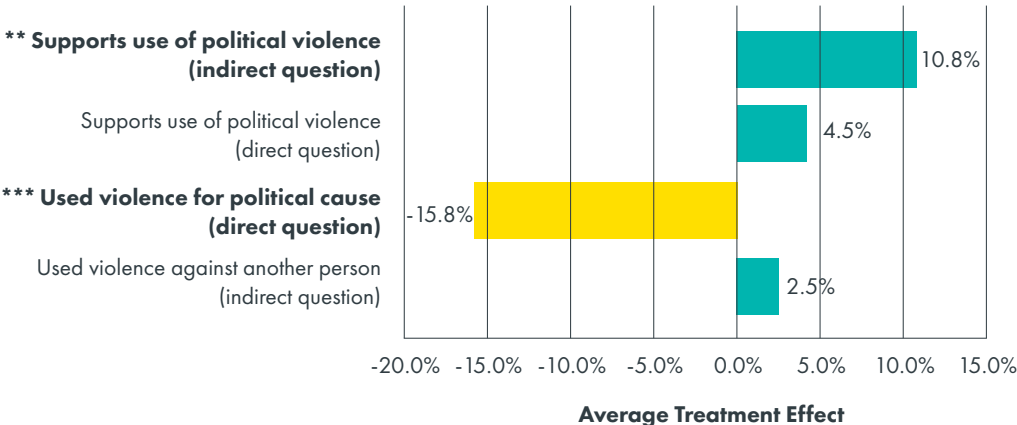
Key Findings: Program Effects on Stability

Does Improved Access to Secondary Education Impact Youth Propensity Towards Political Violence?

To understand the impact of the SYLI program on stability related outcomes, we compared youth who were enrolled in schools reconstructed, equipped and capacitated through SYLI with similar youth who were out of school, as described in the methodology section. We first tested this component’s (education alone) impact on attitudes and behaviors related to political violence using both direct and indirect (random response) questions. Our analysis produced mixed results across these outcomes. When examining direct violence questions, we find that the program decreased the likelihood of youth reporting **participating** in political violence by 16% while it had no impact on support for political violence. The indirect (random response) questions, however, revealed that youth’s access to secondary education *increased* their likelihood of **supporting** the use of violence for a political cause by 11% while having no statistically significant impact on having used violence against another person for reasons that might have been political, tribal, or other. The latter finding corresponds with what we found in our baseline study of youth in Somalia in 2013—youth who were in school were more likely to express support for the use of political violence.³⁰

The seemingly divergent findings around participation and support for political violence are not wholly counterintuitive. Our theory of change on how education may reduce propensity towards violence and other forms of negative and harmful behaviors centered on three mechanisms: (1) via an improvement in perceptions of government responsiveness, (2) via a reduction in isolation and exclusion, and (3) via an increase in optimism about future employment prospects. Figure 3-4 illustrates the results from testing the program’s impact on these mechanisms.

Figure 2: Effect of Secondary Education on Violence Outcomes

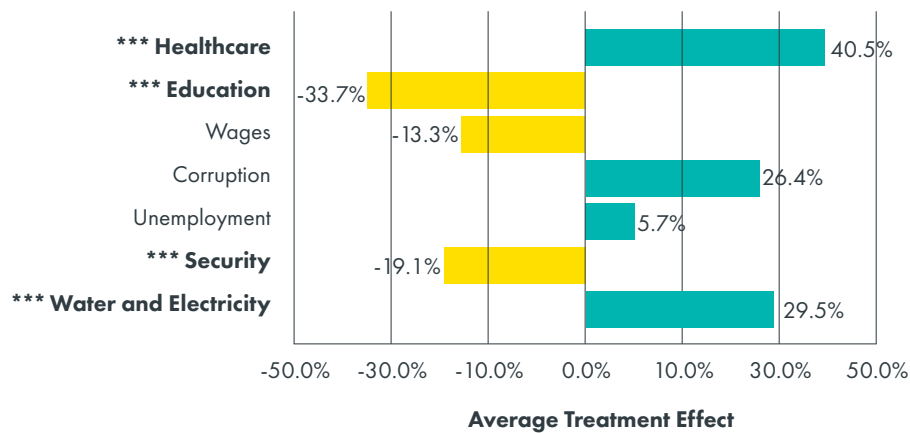


Note: The graph presents coefficients from linear regression models shown in Annex 2 for binary outcomes. For instance, if positive, the coefficient displayed represents an increase in likelihood of reporting supporting violence or participating in violence; if negative, it represents a decrease in likelihood of reporting supporting violence or participating in violence by that percentage. Statistically significant effects are in bold. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01 are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

30 Rebecca Wolfe and Jon Kurtz, “Examining the Links Between Youth Economic Opportunity, Civic Engagement, and Conflict,” 3

We observe that the educational component of the SYLI program increased youth’s perceptions of government doing a good job in providing services like water and electricity and healthcare, but decreased the perception that government is performing well in its provision of education. Compared to out of school youth, those in the program were over 30% less likely to be satisfied with the government’s provision of education. Likewise, young people who benefited from increased access to secondary school were less likely to give credit to the government for their education (we found no statistically significant effect on this outcome).

Figure 3: Effect of Access to Secondary Education on Favorable Rating of Government Performance in Basic Services



Note: The graph presents coefficients from linear regression models shown in Annex 2 for binary outcomes. Statistically significant effects are in bold. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$ are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

One reason why satisfaction with government provision of education is low is due to the poor quality of education. As one teacher from Burao put it “Access to education is not a problem but access to good quality education is the problem.” Though programs like SYLI attempt to address education quality by training teachers, key informants indicated that low salaries for educators, a reluctance of teachers to being stationed in rural areas, and the phenomenon of “ghost” teachers (a situation where education officials take the salaries of teachers who do not show up to teach) continue to be key challenges to improving the quality of education in Somaliland. Continued dissatisfaction with the education system may fuel frustrations towards the government and contribute to support for violence among youth.

Analysis of the two other hypotheses helps complete the narrative around the impact findings. Figure 4 shows that youth who participated in SYLI-supported schools were nearly 16% less likely to feel optimistic about future employment opportunities than out of school youth. In other words, while education can raise expectations and create aspirations in young people, youth in school are more keenly aware that they may still end up unemployed. This finding was elaborated on in qualitative interviews. Many youth expressed fear and concern when describing the future. The leading cause of anxiety among youth was the possibility of not being able to realize one’s goals because of limited opportunities to engage in economic and political life. In particular, youth expressed concern that they may not be able to find a job or livelihood, with over 70% of those who were surveyed saying unemployment was the biggest challenge in the country. Given the high rates of unemployment in Somaliland (some estimate as high as 75%³¹), youth who are entering working age are faced with the reality that the odds of finding a job are not in their favor. The significance of employment in Somaliland is not only the

31 “Unemployment Fuels Youth Exodus in Somaliland,” IRIN, 22 November 2011, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/94285/somalia-unemployment-fuels-youth-exodus-somaliland>.

financial security that comes with it but also the respect and status derived from being able to provide for oneself, one's family and one's broader community. Without a livelihood, youth are impeded from making the critical transition into adulthood and reaching their aspirations.

Young people's concerns about their inability to provide for themselves in the future can turn into a grievance leading to support for political violence, if youth believe that their government is not doing enough to address their needs. In key informant interviews with youth, while many commended what the elected Government of Somaliland has done in terms of development, they also expressed frustrations at unmet expectations. Many youth said that the government responds as much as it can to citizens' needs, but limited foreign investment related to the territory's contested status constrains the government. However, not everyone believes that the lack of recognition is the reason behind slow development and limited opportunities. According to one young man, "The decision-makers are more concerned about their personal interests than by public interests. And I don't think things are going to change anytime soon. It's about corruption". Whether substantiated by evidence of corruption, the more youth fail to see opportunities, particularly economic opportunities, the more likely it is that frustration against the government will increase. The same applies for support for armed opposition groups like Al Shabaab who offer youth economic and social benefits for joining.

While being in school decreased the likelihood of reporting participating in political violence by 16% it increased the likelihood of supporting the use of political violence by 11%



Our analysis of isolation and exclusion showed the SYLI program had a positive impact on reducing the sense of marginalization experienced by participating youth. Young people who participated in SYLI-supported schools are close to 15% less likely to say they feel isolated and excluded in their communities compared to similar youth who are not in school. As noted in the previous section, research shows that youth who are isolated and excluded tend to be pulled more easily into violent groups that can provide a sense of community and belonging. Because attending school reduces this perceived isolation and exclusion, youth may be less likely to be allured by violent groups and engage in violence.

Taken as a whole, these results help to clarify why education can both increase support for political violence and decrease participation in it. Essentially, in-school youth see a bleak future and expect government to do more to address educational concerns. These frustrations can help explain the increase in support for political violence. However, being in-school appears to deter youth from actually acting on these frustrations because they are less isolated and vulnerable to recruitment.

Figure 4: Treatment Effect of Access to Secondary Education on Optimism about Employment Prospects and Perception of Marginalization

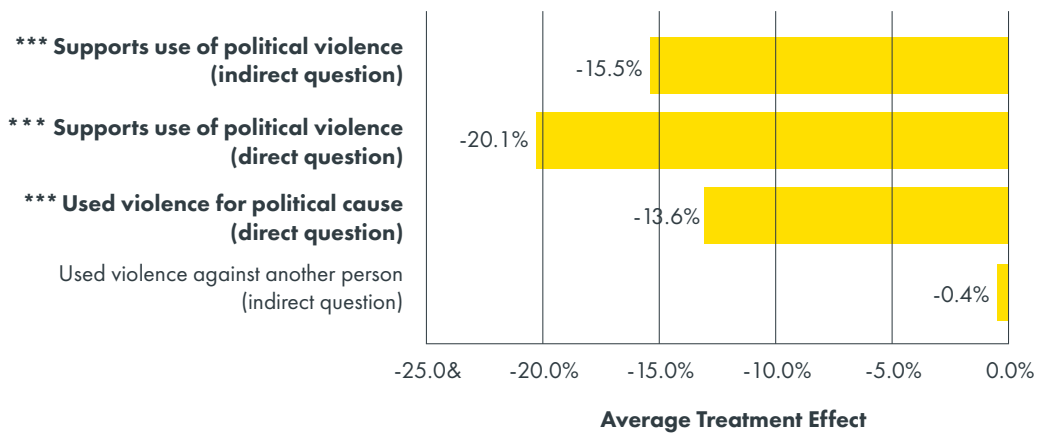


Note: The graph presents coefficients from linear regression models shown in Annex 2 for binary outcomes. Statistically significant effects are in bold. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$ are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

How Does the Provision of Civic Engagement Opportunities and Access to Secondary Education Impact Youth Propensity Towards Political Violence?

We now turn to assessing the effects of adding civic engagement activities to formal education in the SYLI program on violence reduction outcomes. The civic engagement activities examined in this study encompass student-led community action campaigns involving youth in schools built or reconstructed by the SYLI program. According to our findings, the combination of these student-led community action projects and access to secondary education reduced the likelihood of youth reporting **participating** in political violence by 14% and decreased the likelihood that youth think political violence is “sometimes necessary” by 20%. The indirect survey questions validated this positive impact on stability outcomes as seen in Figure 5. Specifically, the combined interventions decreased the likelihood of youth **supporting** political violence by 16%.

Figure 5: Effect of Secondary Education and Civic Engagement on Violence Outcomes



Note: The graph presents coefficients from linear regression models shown in Annex 2 for binary outcomes. Statistically significant effects are in bold. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$ are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

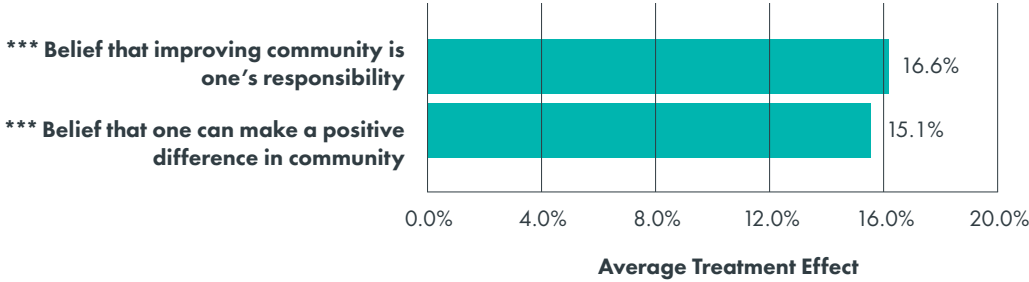
Juxtaposing these findings with the 2013 SYLI baseline research conducted in Somaliland and Puntland, which showed that civically engaged youth were *more* likely to support political violence³², raises questions about how and in what cases civic engagement activities are effective at reducing support for violence. One explanation for this divergence is that the baseline study examined pre-existing levels of civic and political

32 Rebecca Wolfe and Jon Kurtz, “Examining the Links Between Youth Economic Opportunity, Civic Engagement, and Conflict,” 3.

activity, which may have reflected youths’ general proclivity towards activism, including violent activism. The SYLI program, however, intentionally creates non-violent opportunities for young people to contribute to change and improvement in their communities. This is intended to help channel youth’s frustrations with systemic inequality or injustice into energy to better themselves and their societies. Thus, the positive program impacts on reduced support for violence can be explained by the opportunities provided by the SYLI program for young people to engage positively, productively, and peacefully in their communities. This in turn appears to have built participants’ sense of agency over their future, which tempered or reduced their potential dissatisfaction, frustration, and perceived injustices.

Both the qualitative and quantitative data showed that increased youth agency is an important mechanism connecting the positive program effect on civic engagement with impacts on violence reduction. According to a student leader in Hargeisa “I believe civic engagement is one of the most fulfilling and personally rewarding activities that I was involved in. Our projects may be small, but they are meaningful. Now I see more than just my own self-interest and I feel that I become a whole-community member.” Data from our survey further illuminate this point. We find that youth who took part in the civic engagement projects were 15% more likely than the control group to believe they have the power to make a positive difference in their community. Similarly, the combination of the two components of the program increased citizenship responsibility, the perception that youth have a responsibility to improve their community, by 17%.

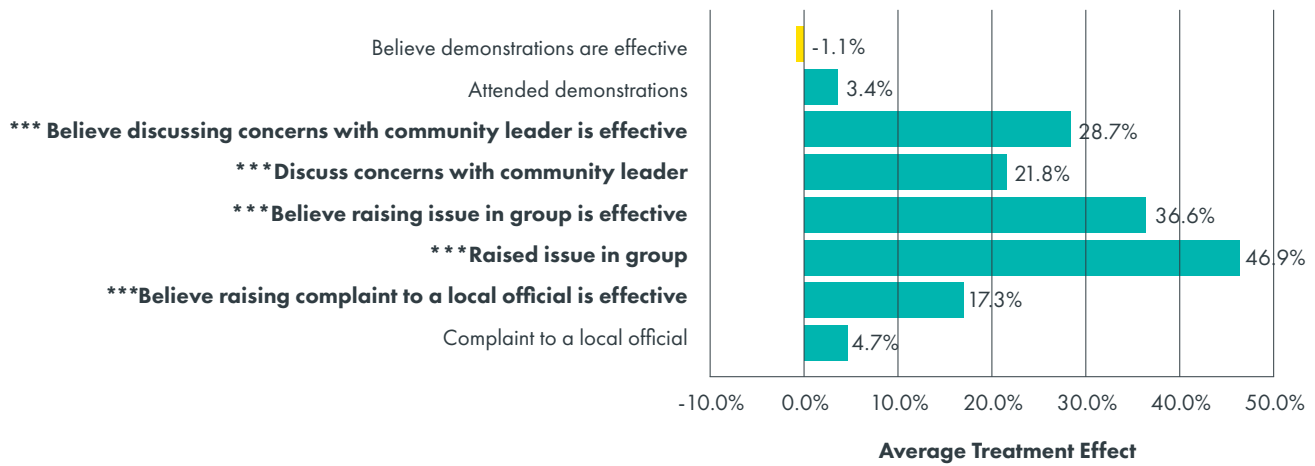
Figure 6: Treatment Effect of Access to Civic Engagement Opportunities and Secondary Education on Perceptions of Agency and Civic Responsibility



Note: The graph presents coefficients from linear regression models shown in Annex 2 for binary outcomes. Statistically significant effects are in bold. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$ are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

Another important mechanism through which civic engagement activities can help reduce support for political violence is by building young people’s faith in the effectiveness of non-violent actions. As illustrated in Figure 7, youth who were involved in student-led community action projects were more likely than the control group to believe in the effectiveness of lodging a complaint with local officials, raising an issue in a group, or discussing concerns with community leaders in bringing about a desired change. For example, youth in civic engagement activities were 17% more likely to believe that lodging a complaint with a local official was an effective way of bring about a desired change. The program not only increased the perceptions that these nonviolent actions were effective but also the likelihood of youth actually employing them. These findings indicate that participating in student-led community action projects can increase the belief that nonviolent alternatives to address concerns exist and are effective, reducing the likelihood of youth supporting the use of political violence.

Figure 7: Effect of Access to Civic Engagement Opportunities and Secondary Education on Civic Actions and Attitudes



Note: The graph presents coefficients from linear regression models shown in Annex 2 for binary outcomes. Statistically significant effects are in bold. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$ are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

Conclusions

This study set out to generate evidence on the impacts of a youth-focused stability program on reducing youth engagement in violence and improving stability through education and civic engagement. Using the Mercy Corps’ SYLI program as an example, we tested the effects of improving access to education and civic engagement opportunities on young people’s propensity toward political violence. Our results show that when education is combined with student-led community action projects, it can promote stability more than just education by itself. School plays a critical role in creating an environment where youth are engaged in learning, and feel less isolated and excluded. However, this by itself does not address young people’s frustrations about being unable to realize their future aspirations and to make a positive difference in their communities. We found that the addition of civic engagement activities to formal education alleviates some of this frustration by giving youth opportunities to engage positively in their communities and increasing confidence in their ability to achieve change through nonviolent means. Hence, a combination of formal education and civic engagement activities that focus on community action projects appears to be an effective pathway to support stability-related outcomes. Importantly, these interventions were found to reduce young people’s vulnerability to being drawn into violent groups, as well as address their frustrations about not being able to make a difference in their communities and lives, which for some can be a motivator for supporting the use of political violence.

Lessons from this study can be extracted and applied to settings beyond Somaliland to development and programs focused on promoting stability and CVE in other fragile and conflict-affected places. First, the addition of civic engagement activities can amplify the benefits of educational and other youth-focused programs. Youth development programs can have greater impact on promoting stability by building young people’s internal assets through formal and informal education and other skills-building programs while also providing them with opportunities to use these skills to be active and productive citizens. Essentially, to reduce violence youth development programs must address both the lack of skills and the lack of opportunities that hinder youth from succeeding.

A second policy implication from this study is the need to ensure that, in order for development projects to help build stability, governments need their citizens to view them at the forefront of improvements in basic services. One reason why access to SYLI-supported schools increased support for political violence may be because

government was not credited for the improvements made in the education sector, as expected. In Somaliland and other comparable settings, visibility for the government in development projects is a way to gain legitimacy, thereby deterring support for political violence. However, visibility must always be linked to actual government investments and improvements in their capacities to fulfill essential functions in a transparent and equitable way.

As policymakers, donors, and the government of Somaliland and Somalia embark on charting a strategic roadmap for the country's future, youth must be considered as a critical partner in peace and development. The Government of Somalia has recognized this, putting youth at the center of its National Strategy and Action Plan on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and recognizing that "we should not only work for young people—we should work with them" to address violent extremism.³³ Our research shows that young people desire to be positively engaged in social, economic and political life. Expanding opportunities for young people to play a role in these key sectors—along the lines of the SYLI program model—is fundamental to strengthening stability. Failing to do so, however, may lead this generation of youth to take desperate risks and use violence to be recognized. Young people will inevitably make an impact in their countries—the question is what type of impact will it be?



A combination of formal education and civic engagement activities that focus on community action projects appears to be an effective pathway to support stability-related outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, Mercy Corps is urging international donors, development agencies, and the Government of Somalia to:

- 1. Put political will and investment into the youth education and civic engagement pillars of the National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism:** Somalia's CVE strategy is one of the first plans passed in the world since the UN Secretary General's call on world governments to create such plans. Donors and aid agencies should support its implementation by investing developmental assistance in programs focused on reducing youth engagement in violence. Specifically, increase funding to address the drivers of violence rather than responding to its symptoms, using the data from this study and others as empirical examples of the effectiveness of developmental approaches to reducing violence and violent extremism. This recommendation is in line with Mercy Corps'

³³ "National Strategy and Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism," 12.

call to increase investments as a percentage of overall aid spending in targeted violence reduction and peacebuilding programming by at least two fold within the next two years.³⁴ As part of this greater investment, the Government of Somalia should increase the budget allocation to the Ministry of Youth to ensure they can play a key role in the implementation of the National CVE Strategy.

2. **Ensure that youth education programs with violence reduction goals work to simultaneously improve access to school, enhance the quality of education, and increase access to community or civic engagement opportunities:** Donors, national governments, and operational agencies should design youth-focused violence reduction and CVE programs to take multi-pronged approaches that: (a) reduce feelings of hopelessness, isolation, and exclusion that can increase youth's likelihood of engaging in violent organizations; (b) reduce the drivers of grievance related to governance — be they government provision of quality education, corruption, or biased service delivery; and (c) provide platforms for youth to engage in their communities and with governments in order to transform their perception of grievance. The Government of Somalia should incorporate civic engagement activities centered on community service into its education strategy and curriculum.
3. **Provide greater support to initiatives to improve the quality of education in Somaliland, and other transitional parts of Somalia:** There is strong link between the quality of education schools offer, the graduates it produces, and the potential for education to be a stabilizing force. To date, investments in education have focused primarily on increasing access, but our research indicates that resources need to be shifted more towards improving quality. Donors and the government can do this by investing more in training teachers and addressing teacher absenteeism, for example through camera monitoring which has been successful in places like rural India.³⁵ Somalia should also consider increasing teacher salaries and other ways to incentivize better performance so that young people gain the skills they need for social and economic advancement.
4. **Increase government investment, engagement, and visibility in development projects, particularly in education:** Donors should ensure local and national ownership of all development projects that seek to reduce violence or improve state-society relations, including by eliminating donor and (I)NGO branding on development projects and prioritizing partner capacity building. The Somalia government should improve the vertical linkage of education programs with investments in good governance, improved service delivery, and corruption reduction.

34 According to Mercy Corps' analysis of 2014 OECD-DAC statistics, just one percent of all Official Development Assistance is dedicated to conflict prevention and resolution, or peace and security.

35 Esther Dufflo, Rema Hanna, and Stephan P. Ryan, "Incentives Work: Getting Teachers to Come to School," *American Economic Review*, 102 (2012) 102: 4, accessed November 8, 2016, <http://www.poverty-action.org/sites/default/files/publications/incentives-work-getting-teachers-come-school.pdf>

Annex 1

Estimation Method

The s-IPTW is a propensity score approach to causal identification. Since we did not control assignment of subjects to treatment, on average, individuals in the treatment group are systematically different from those who did not receive the interventions (control group) on measured baseline characteristics. Our use of s-IPTW allows us to mimic a randomized control trial. That is, it allows us to generate treated and control units that have similar treatment probabilities conditional on our measured covariates.

To calculate the s-IPTW for each unit, we first use a logistic regression to estimate the probability of being treated (i.e., propensity scores). Each subject's score is based on the measured baseline covariates that are understood to influence treatment. For each subject, the s-IPTW is estimated as follows:

$$sIPTW = \frac{P(D_i)}{P(D_i|X_i)} = \frac{(D_i) P(D_i=1) + (1 - D_i)(1 - P(D_i=1))}{D\pi_i + (1 - D)(1 - \pi_i)}$$

where $P(D_i)$ represents the probability of an individual being treated. $P(D_i)$ is estimated as the proportion of treated individuals in our sample assigned, and D_i is the treatment status of individual i . X_i is the set of covariates for individual i that we use to calculate the propensity scores. π_i represents the propensity scores for individual i estimated from the logistic regression. Covariate balance using the s-IPTW is shown in the Figure 8 and 9 below. We show balance before and after the s-IPTW weighting in Columns (1) and (2), respectively.

Once balance was achieved, to estimate the weighted difference-in-means (i.e., ATE) for our outcome variables, we use a linear regression model as follows:

$$Y_i = a + \beta_1 * Treatment + \beta_i * X_i + \varepsilon_i$$

where Y_i is the outcome of interest (DV) and β_1 represents the treatment effect. We include X_i the set of covariates used in the estimation of our propensity scores to improve the efficiency of our estimates. In cases where we fail to achieve balance between treated and control units, the inclusion of X_i allow us to hold constant the influence of these possible confounders. We also include the regional fixed effects in our model to reduce omitted variable bias in our estimates. In our estimation, each unit is weighted by its s-IPTW which allows us to interpret β_1 as the ATE of the intervention.

Figure 8: Distribution of Unweighted and Weighted Pcores (Education)

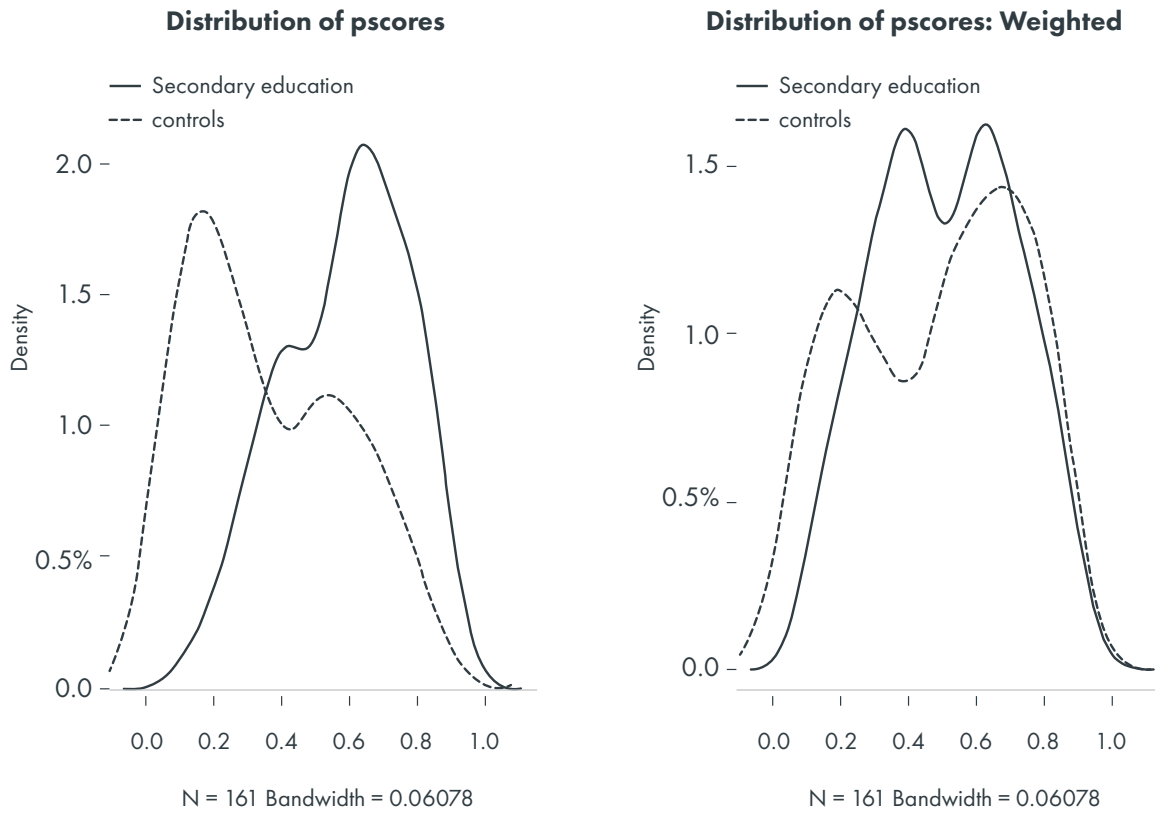
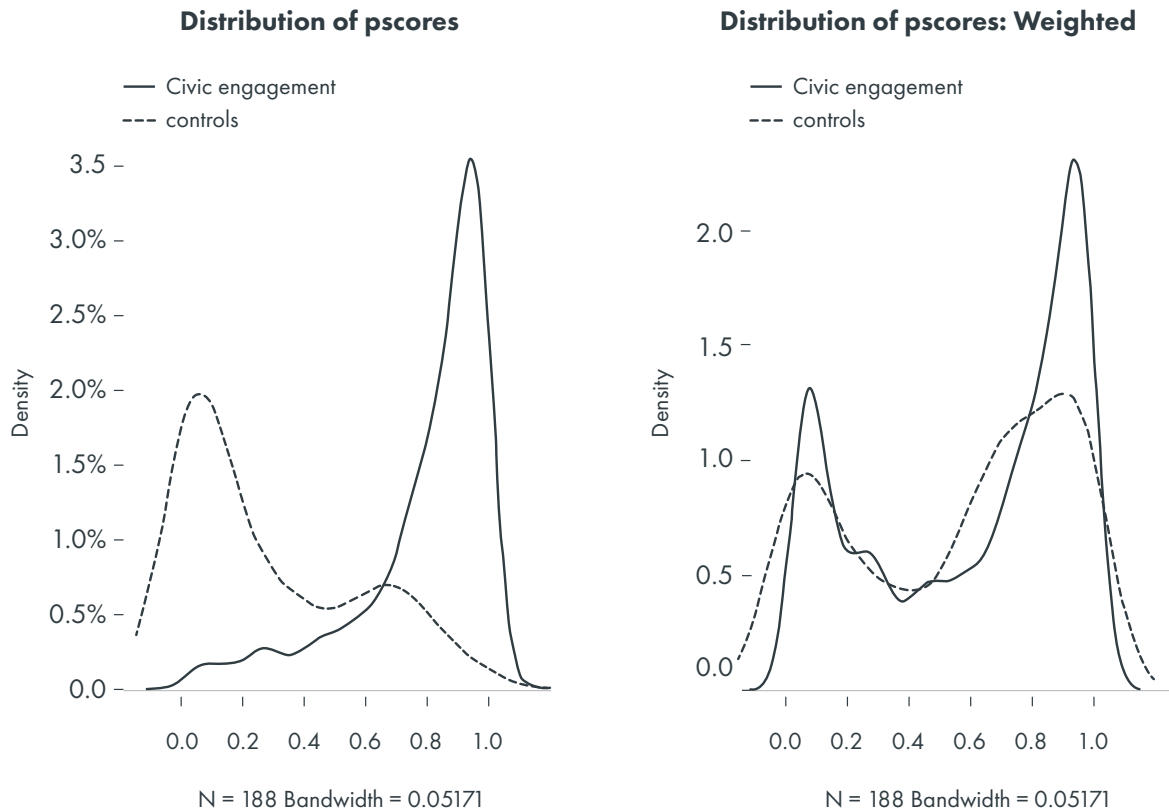


Figure 9: Distribution of Unweighted and Weighted Pcores (Civic Engagement)



Annex 2

Table 1: Effect of Secondary Education on Violence Outcomes (Direct Questions)

	Dependent variable	
	Support Political Violence	Used Political Violence
	(1)	(2)
Secondary Education	0.045	-0.158***
	(0.062)	(0.050)
Observations	346	346
R ²	0.063	0.148
Adjusted R ²	0.015	0.104

Note: Table 1 reports the average treatment effect of secondary education on violence outcomes. In the estimation of the ATE, we use the inverse-probability-weighted (IPW) estimator. Accordingly, each observation is weighted by the inverse probability of being treated. The models controlled for gender, age, marital status, poverty index, number of children, violence in the community, victim of violence, safety, displacement, size of household, interest in politics, group membership, school leadership, and location. For each dependent variable, the table shows the difference in means adjusted for pre-treatment covariates. Dependent variables: 1) Used political violence: Has used force or violence for a political cause; and 2) Support political violence: Believe it is sometimes necessary to use violence for a political cause *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01 are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

Table 2: Effect of Secondary Education on Violence Outcomes (Indirect Questions)

	Dependent variable	
	Support Political Violence	Used Violence in Dispute with Another Person
	(1)	(2)
Secondary Education	-0.108**	0.025
	(0.054)	(0.063)
Observations	346	346
R ²	0.137	0.097
Adjusted R ²	0.092	0.050

Note: Table 2 reports the average treatment effect of secondary education on violence outcomes. In the estimation of the ATE, we use the inverse-probability-weighted (IPW) estimator. Accordingly, each observation is weighted by the inverse probability of being treated. The models controlled for gender, age, marital status, poverty index, number of children, violence in the community, victim of violence, safety, displacement, size of household, interest in politics, group membership, school leadership, and location. For each dependent variable, the table shows the difference in means adjusted for pre-treatment covariates. Dependent variables: 1) Used violence in a dispute with another person: In the past 12 months has had a violent dispute with another person; and 2) Support political violence: Support the use of violence for a political cause. Significance level indicated by * p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01 are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

Table 3: Effect of Secondary Education and Civic Engagement on Violence Outcomes (Direct Questions)

	Dependent variable	
	Support Political Violence	Used Political Violence
	(1)	(2)
Secondary Education and Civic Engagement	-0.201 ***	-0.136 ***
	(0.056)	(0.034)
Observations	322	322
R ²	0.112	0.245
Adjusted R ²	0.065	0.206

Note: Table 3 reports the average treatment effect of secondary education and civic engagement on violence outcomes. In the estimation of the ATE, we use the inverse-probability-weighted (IPW) estimator. Accordingly, each observation is weighted by the inverse probability of being treated. The models controlled for gender, age, marital status, poverty index, number of children, violence in the community, victim of violence, safety, displacement, size of household, interest in politics, group membership, school leadership, and location. For each dependent variable, the table shows the difference in means adjusted for pre-treatment covariates. Dependent variables: 1) Used political violence: Has used force or violence for a political cause; and 2) Support political violence: Believe it is sometimes necessary to use violence for a political cause *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01 are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

Table 4: Effect of Secondary Education and Civic Engagement on Violence Outcomes (Indirect Questions)

	Dependent variable	
	Support Political Violence	Used Violence in Dispute with Another Person
	(1)	(2)
Secondary Education and Civic Engagement	-0.155***	-0.004
	(0.044)	(0.056)
Observations	322	322
R ²	0.205	0.166
Adjusted R ²	0.163	0.123

Note: Table 4 reports the average treatment effect of secondary education and civic engagement on violence outcomes. In the estimation of the ATE, we use the inverse-probability-weighted (IPW) estimator. Accordingly, each observation is weighted by the inverse probability of being treated. The models controlled for gender, age, marital status, poverty index, number of children, violence in the community, victim of violence, safety, displacement, size of household, interest in politics, group membership, school leadership, and location. For each dependent variable, the table shows the simple difference in means adjusted for pre-treatment covariates. Dependent variables: 1) Used violence in a dispute with another person: In the past 12 months has had a violent dispute with another person; and 2) Support political violence: Support the use of violence for a political cause. Significance level indicated by * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$ are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

Table 5: Effect of Secondary Education on Favorable Rating of Government Performance

	Dependent variable						
	Favorable Ratings of Government Performance						
	Water and electricity	Security	Unemployment	Corruption	Wages	Education	Healthcare
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Secondary Education	0.295**	-0.191*	0.057	0.264	-0.133	-0.337***	0.405***
	(0.136)	(0.105)	(0.130)	(0.162)	(0.147)	(0.120)	(0.125)
Observations	281	281	281	281	281	281	281
R ²	0.258	0.240	0.169	0.179	0.242	0.218	0.291
Adjusted R ²	0.204	0.185	0.109	0.119	0.186	0.161	0.240

Table 5 reports the average treatment effect of secondary education on the ratings of government performance in the provision of public service and corruption. In the estimation of the ATE, we use the inverse-probability-weighted (IPW) estimator. Accordingly, each observation is weighted by the inverse probability of being treated. The models controlled for gender, age, marital status, poverty index, number of children, satisfaction with living situation, violence in the community, victim of violence, safety, displacement, size of household, housing, head of household, interest in politics, group membership, school leadership, and location. For each dependent variable, the table shows the difference in means adjusted for pre-treatment covariates. For each dependent variable, respondents rated the performance of government as very bad, somewhat bad job, neither good nor bad, somewhat good job and very good. For each dependent variable we generate a dummy that takes 1 somewhat good job and very good, and 0 otherwise. Thus, we estimate the proportion of respondents who have favorable view of government performance. Dependent variables: 1) Water and electricity, 2) Security; 3) Unemployment, 4) Corruption, 5) Wages, 6) Education, and 7) Healthcare. Significance level indicated by * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$ are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

Table 6: Effect of Secondary Education on Respondents' Perception of the Education System

	Dependent variable		
	Community education situation	Provider of education: Government	Satisfied with education system
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Secondary Education	0.093***	0.049	0.145**
	(0.045)	(0.067)	(0.060)
Observations	281	281	281
R ²	0.259	0.198	0.256
Adjusted R ²	0.205	0.139	0.202

Table 6 reports the average treatment effect of secondary education on government provision of education in community and satisfaction with education system. In the estimation of the ATE, we use the inverse-probability-weighted (IPW) estimator. Accordingly, each observation is weighted by the inverse probability of being treated. The models controlled for gender, age, marital status, poverty index, number of children, satisfaction with living situation, violence in the community, victim of violence, safety, displacement, size of household, housing, head of household, interest in politics, group membership, school leadership, and location. For each dependent variable, the table shows the difference in means adjusted for pre-treatment covariates. Dependent variables: 1) community education situation: Happy or satisfied with education situation in community; 2) Provider of education: government: Government provides secondary school in our community; and 3) Satisfied with education system. Significance level indicated by * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$ are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

Table 7: Effect of Secondary Education on Employment Prospects

	Dependent variable
	Employment prospects
	(1)
Secondary Education	-0.157**
	(0.063)
Observations	281
R ²	0.143
Adjusted R ²	0.081

Table 7 reports the average treatment effect of secondary education on employment prospects. In the estimation of the ATE, we use the inverse-probability-weighted (IPW) estimator. Accordingly, each observation is weighted by the inverse probability of being treated. The models controlled for gender, age, marital status, poverty index, number of children, satisfaction with living situation, violence in the community, victim of violence, safety, displacement, size of household, housing, head of household, interest in politics, group membership, school leadership, and location. For each dependent variable, the table shows the difference in means adjusted for pre-treatment covariates. Dependent variables: Employment prospects: Respondent is happy or satisfied with employment possibility in the future. Significance level indicated by * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$ are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

Table 8: Effect of Secondary Education on Perception of Marginalization in the Community

	Dependent variable
	Feel isolated and excluded
	(1)
Secondary Education	-0.145**
	(0.063)
Observations	285
R ²	0.139
Adjusted R ²	0.077

Table 8 reports the average treatment effect of secondary education on perceptions on feeling of isolation and exclusion from community. In the estimation of the ATE, we use the inverse-probability-weighted (IPW) estimator. Accordingly, each observation is weighted by the inverse probability of being treated. The models controlled for gender, age, marital status, poverty index, number of children, satisfaction with living situation, violence in the community, victim of violence, safety, displacement, size of household, housing, head of household, interest in politics, group membership, school leadership, and location. For each dependent variable, the table shows the difference in means adjusted for pre-treatment covariates. Dependent variables: Feel isolated and excluded: Respondent strongly agree or somewhat agree that he/she is isolated and excluded from their community most of the time. Significance level indicated by *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01 are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

Table 9: Effect of Secondary Education and Civic Education on Civic Responsibility

	Dependent variable
	Community improvement is my responsibility
	(1)
Secondary Education and Civic Engagement	0.166***
	(0.039)
Observations	274
R ²	0.164
Adjusted R ²	0.105

Table 9 reports the average treatment effect of secondary education and civic engagement on civic responsibility. In the estimation of the ATE, we use the inverse-probability-weighted (IPW) estimator. Accordingly, each observation is weighted by the inverse probability of being treated. The models controlled for gender, age, marital status, poverty index, number of children, satisfaction with living situation, violence in the community, victim of violence, safety, displacement, size of household, housing, head of household, interest in politics, group membership, school leadership, and location. For each dependent variable, the table shows the difference in means adjust for pre-treatment covariates. Dependent variables: 1) Community improvement is my responsibility: Respondent strongly agree or agree that it is his or her responsibility to help improve his/her community. Significance level indicated by *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01 are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

Table 10: Effect of Secondary Education and Civic Education on Empowerment

	Dependent variable
	Can make a positive difference
	(1)
Secondary Education and Civic Engagement	0.151 ***
	(0.035)
Observations	274
R ²	0.235
Adjusted R ²	0.181

Table 10 reports the average treatment effect of secondary education and civic engagement on sense of empowerment. In the estimation of the ATE, we use the inverse-probability-weighted (IPW) estimator. Accordingly, each observation is weighted by the inverse probability of being treated. The models controlled for gender, age, marital status, poverty index, number of children, satisfaction with living situation, violence in the community, victim of violence, safety, displacement, size of household, housing, head of household, interest in politics, group membership, school leadership, and location. For each dependent variable, the table shows the difference in means adjusted for pre-treatment covariates. Dependent variable: Can make positive difference: Respondent strongly agree or agree that he or she can make a positive difference in the community. Significance level indicated by *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01 are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

Table 11: Effect of Secondary Education and Civic Engagement on Belief in Efficacy of Civic Action Over Violence to Improve Community

	Dependent variable							
	Complaint to LO (CLO)	CLO effective	Raised issue in group	RIG Effective	Discuss concerns with CL	DCLO effective	Attended demo/protest (DP)	DP effective
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Secondary Education and Civic Engagement	0.047	0.173 ***	0.469 ***	0.366 ***	0.218 ***	0.287 ***	0.034	-0.011
	(0.050)	(0.062)	(0.059)	(0.057)	(0.052)	(0.058)	(0.060)	(0.058)
Observations	274	274	274	274	274	274	274	274
R ²	0.534	0.381	0.469	0.498	0.535	0.492	0.459	0.488
Adjusted R ²	0.501	0.337	0.431	0.462	0.502	0.456	0.420	0.452

Table 11 reports the average treatment effect of secondary education and civic engagement on belief in efficacy of civic action over violence to improve community. In the estimation of the ATE, we use the inverse-probability-weighted (IPW) estimator. Accordingly, each observation is weighted by the inverse probability of being treated. The models controlled for gender, age, marital status, poverty index, number of children, satisfaction with living situation, violence in the community, victim of violence, safety, displacement, size of household, housing, head of household, interest in politics, group membership, school leadership, and location. For each dependent variable, the table shows the difference in means adjusted for pre-treatment covariates. For each dependent variable, respondents are first asked if they have engaged in such civic activity in the past and then whether they thought such activity was effective. We report the treatment effect of the former in the odd numbered columns and the latter (follow up) even numbered column. Dependent variables: 1) Complaint to LO: Complaint made to local government officials; 2) Raised issue in Group: joined others to raise an issued in school or community; 3) Discuss concerns with CL: Discussed concerns with community leaders; and 4) Attended demo/protest: Have attended a lawful/peaceful demonstration or protest march. Significance level indicated by *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01 are based on two-sided hypothesis test.

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Mercy Corps is a leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible. In disaster, in hardship, in more than 40 countries around the world, we partner to put bold solutions into action — helping people triumph over adversity and build stronger communities from within. Now, and for the future.



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