



International Initiative for Impact Evaluation

Building Social Cohesion in Fragile Communities: A Systematic Review

Key findings and implications

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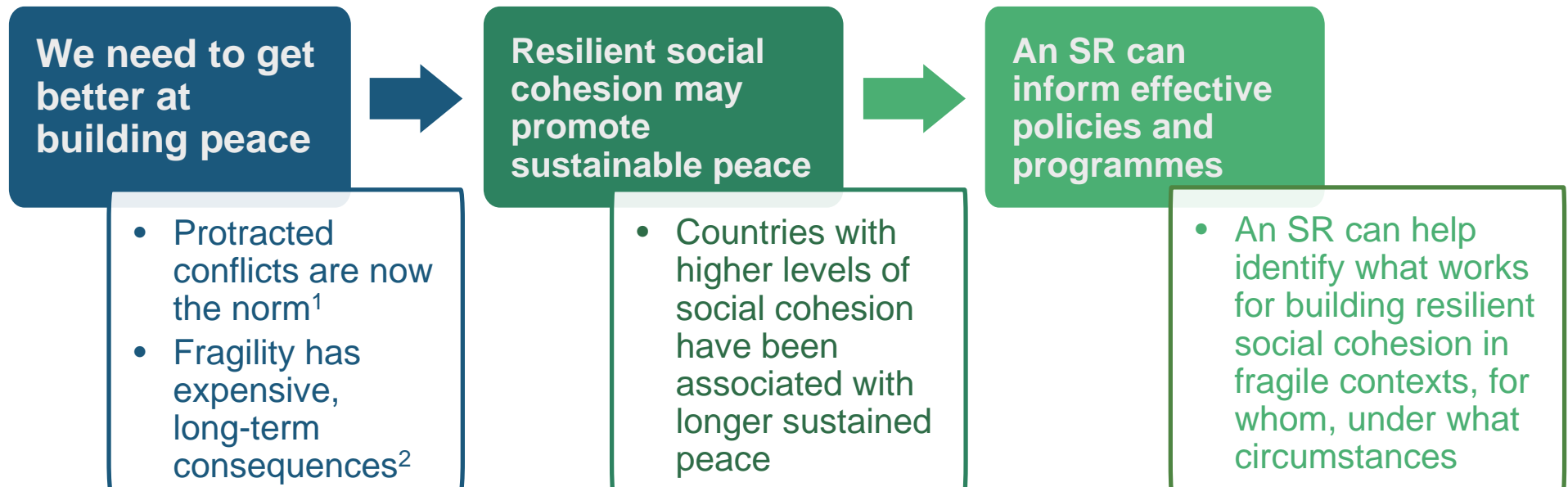


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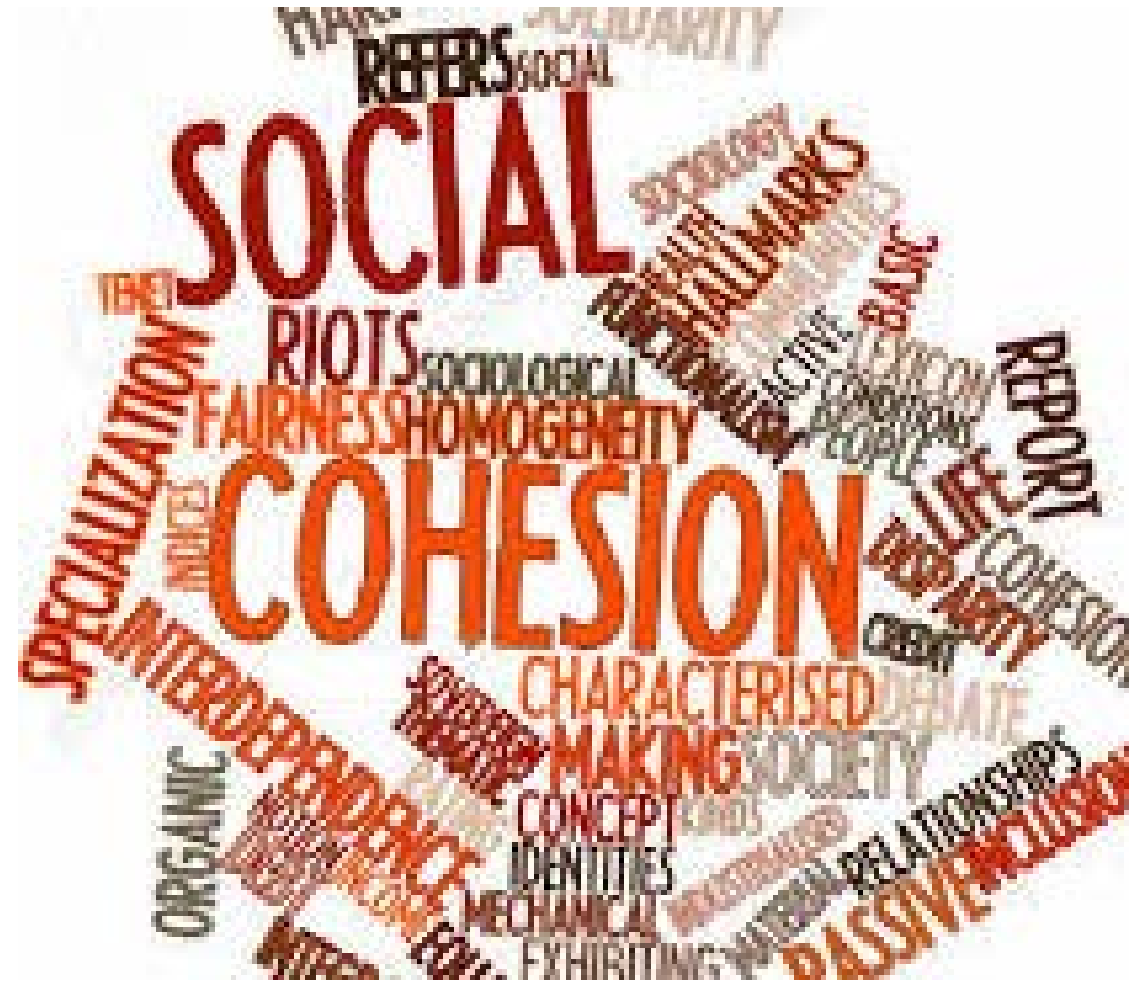
Why is this review needed?

- Building Peaceful Societies EGM identified cluster of evidence on social cohesion
- Broad range of different interventions
- Theory posits that higher social cohesion may promote sustainable peace

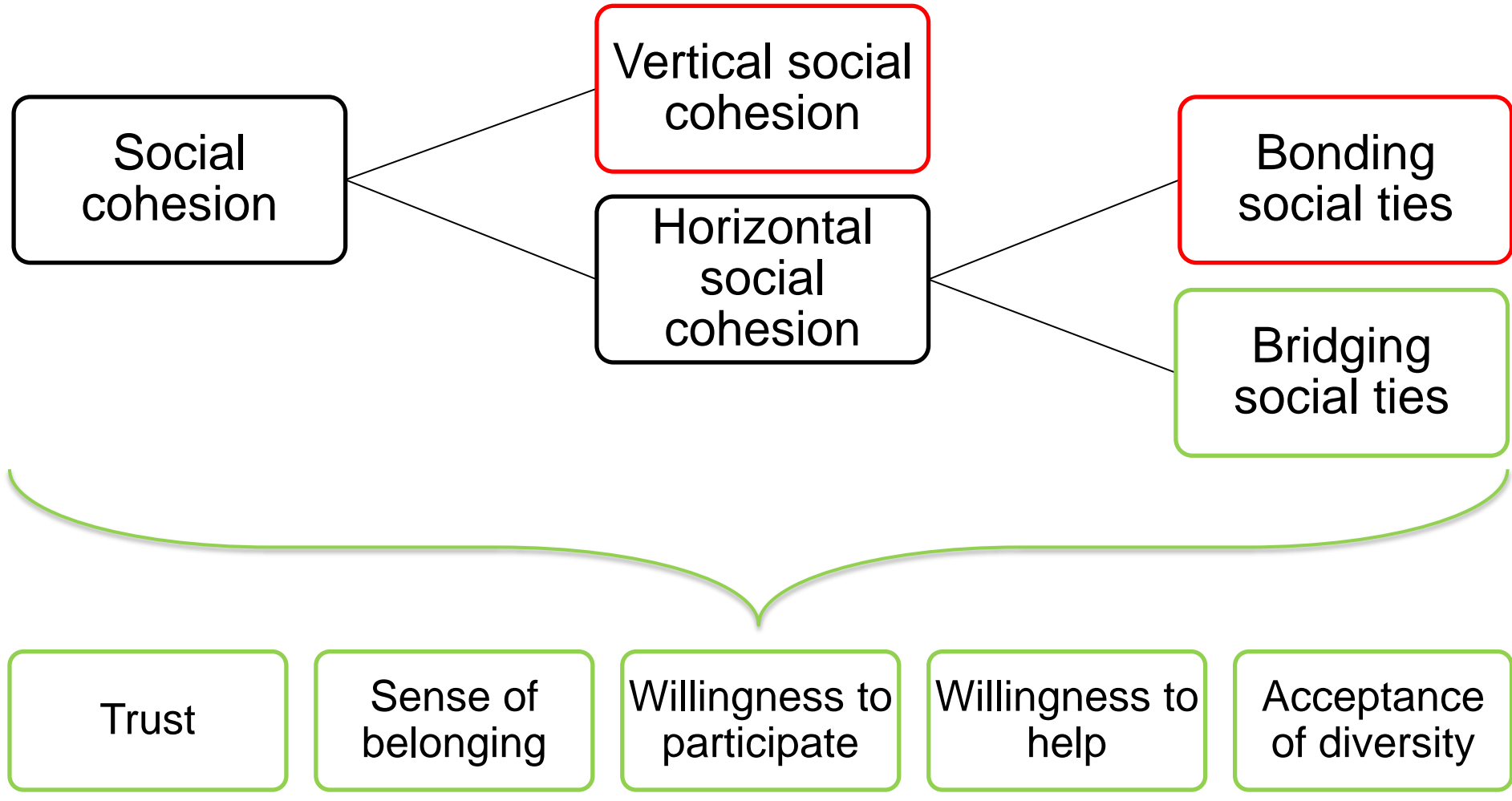


Review objectives and research questions

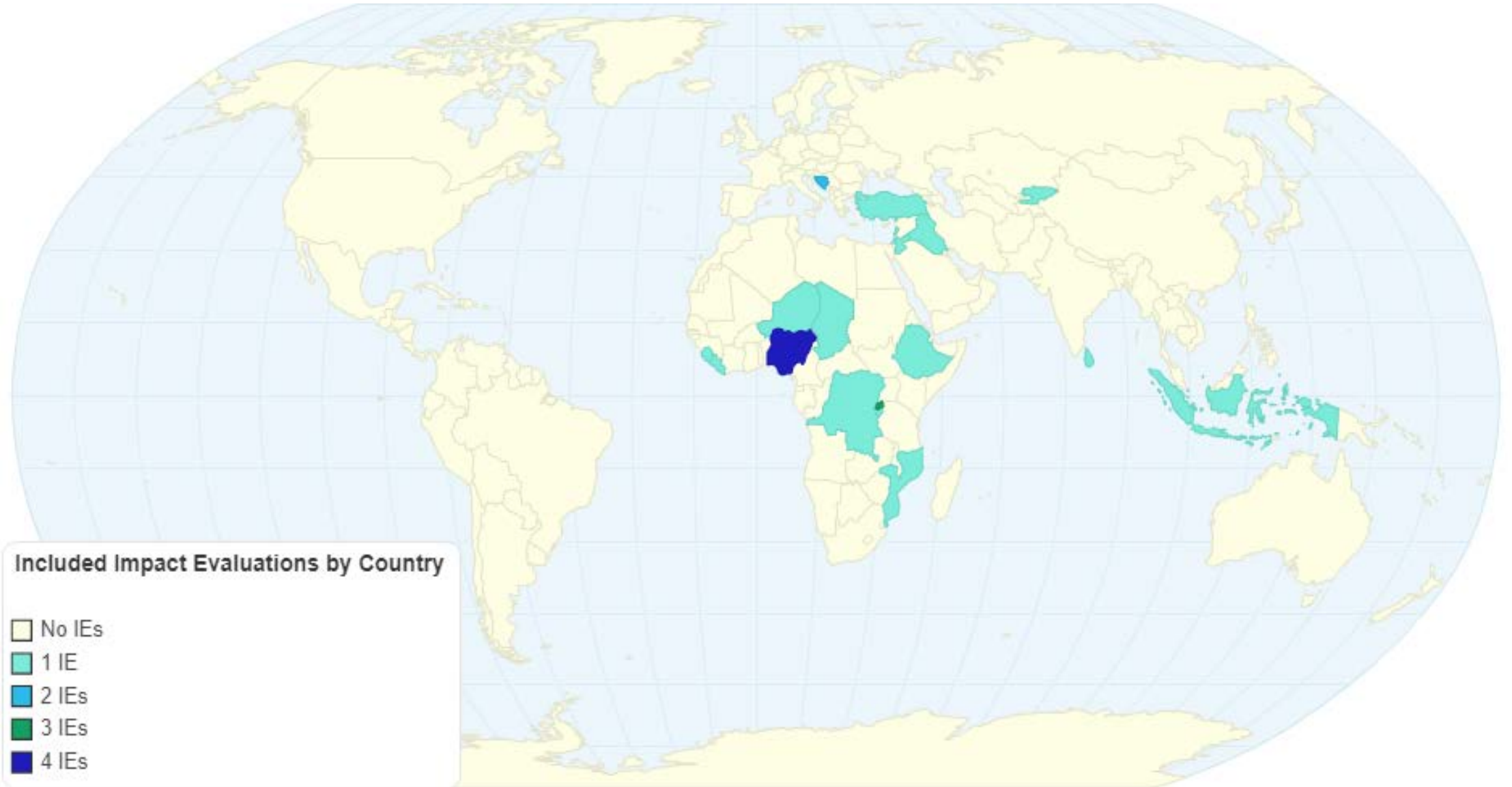
- ❑ Objective: to **identify, appraise and synthesise** evidence on the **effects of interventions** that aim to promote **intergroup social cohesion** for sustainable peace in **fragile communities**
- ❑ Primary research questions:
 - ⇒ What are the effects of interventions that aim to promote intergroup cohesion in fragile communities on social cohesion outcomes?
 - ⇒ What factors relating to programme design, implementation, context, and mechanism are associated with better or worse outcomes?



The **conceptual scope** of the review is the **subset of horizontal social cohesion** that relates to **bridging social ties**, i.e. intergroup cohesion



The majority of included studies took place in sub-Saharan Africa (n=16)



Intervention categories

Intervention group	Core components	Included studies
School-based peace education	Peace education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aladysheva et al. (2017) – Kyrgyzstan Alan et al. (2020) – Turkey Biton and Salomon (2006) – Palestine Cleven (2020) – Bosnia and Herzegovina
Collaborative contact	Collaborative contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alaref et al. (2019) - Lebanon Mousa (2018) – Iraq Okunogbe (2018) – Nigeria Scacco and Warren (2013) – Nigeria
Intergroup dialogues	Intergroup contact + facilitated dialogue sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cilliers et al. (2018) – Sierra Leone Hartman (2018) – Liberia Lonergan (2017) – Sri Lanka Rime et al. (2011) – Rwanda Schiller (2012) – Indonesia Svensson and Brouneus (2013) – Ethiopia
Workshop-based peace education with intergroup contact and economic support (workshops-contact-econ)	Peace education + intergroup contact + economic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Causal Design (2016) – Nigeria Ferguson (2019) – Jordan Finkel et al. (2018) – Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger IMPAQ International 2017 – Bosnia and Herzegovina Dawop et al. (2019) – Nigeria
Media for peace	Edutainment (radio programmes) or media campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bilali et al. (2016) – Burundi Bilali and Vollhardt (2015) – DRC Bilali and Vollhardt (2013) – Rwanda Paluck (2009) – Rwanda Vicente and Vilela (2019) – Mozambique

Summary findings: Overall pattern of small, positive effects on five dimensions of social cohesion

Bubble key: Each bubble represents a single effect size, based on the size of Hedges' g, the direction of effect, and if it crosses line of no effect (grey if yes)

Shading key: Absolute value of 95% confidence interval. Smaller range = more precise estimate.

<0.1	0.1 - 0.2	0.2 - 0.4	>0.4

<0.2	<0.2	<0.2
0.2-0.4	0.2 - 0.4	0.2-0.4
0.4-0.6	0.4 - 0.6	0.4-0.6
>0.6	> 0.6	>0.6

Intervention group	Trust	Sense of belonging	Willingness to participate	Willingness to help	Acceptance of diversity	Social cohesion index measures
School-based peace education						
Collaborative contact			 g = 0.06 [0.01, 0.10]		 g = 0.03 [-0.02, 0.46]	
Intergroup dialogues	 g = -0.06 [-2.05, 0.84]				 g = -0.42 [-1.52, 0.67]	
Workshops – contact – econ	 g = 0.08 [0.00, 0.16]	 g = 0.10 [-0.01, 0.21]	 g = 0.06 [-0.05, 0.16]			
Media for peace	 g = 0.10 [0.02, 0.18]				 g = 0.07 [-0.02, 0.17]	



Barriers and facilitators to effectiveness

- Programmes that **accurately identified local bottlenecks** to intergroup social cohesion tended to have **larger and more positive effects**.
- **A lack of conflict assessments** may be a **barrier to better targeting** of programme participants and key intervention strategies.
- Intergroup social cohesion interventions **may not be sufficient** for sustainable social cohesion **without structural changes** addressing threats to human security outcomes.
- **Smaller-scale interventions** may not provide **sufficient intensity** of treatment to have effects beyond direct participants.
- **Long and non-linear causal chains** may be a barrier to substantive improvements in social cohesion.
- A lack of substantive changes in **intermediate social cohesion outcomes** may be a barrier to larger improvements in final social cohesion outcomes.

Implications for policy & practice

- Intergroup social cohesion interventions **alone may be insufficient** for building resilient social cohesion in fragile contexts; more **complex interventions drawing on complementary strategies** addressing key household needs alongside socio-behavioural factors may be needed
 - Though the **isolated effects are small**, it is **possible to improve outcomes** through targeted intergroup social cohesion interventions; they are but **one piece of the puzzle** to build sustainable peace
 - More **theory-building work is required** to understand how different strategies interact
 - **Realistic timeframes are needed** to allow substantive changes to social cohesion to materialise
- **All five dimensions** should be measured when evaluating horizontal intergroup social cohesion interventions
- There is a need for better **context analysis to identify bottlenecks** during programme and policy design, to **ensure alignment** between context, target groups, bottleneck, and thereby identify the most appropriate intervention
- More work is needed to build the **theories of change** for intergroup social cohesion interventions, based on context and conflict analyses, with **locally-relevant indicators** that map onto a **common framework** including both **intermediate and impact outcomes**
- **Appropriate procedures for addressing ethics**, including through formal review and ethics approval, are essential, to ensure interventions and research **do no harm**.



Thank you



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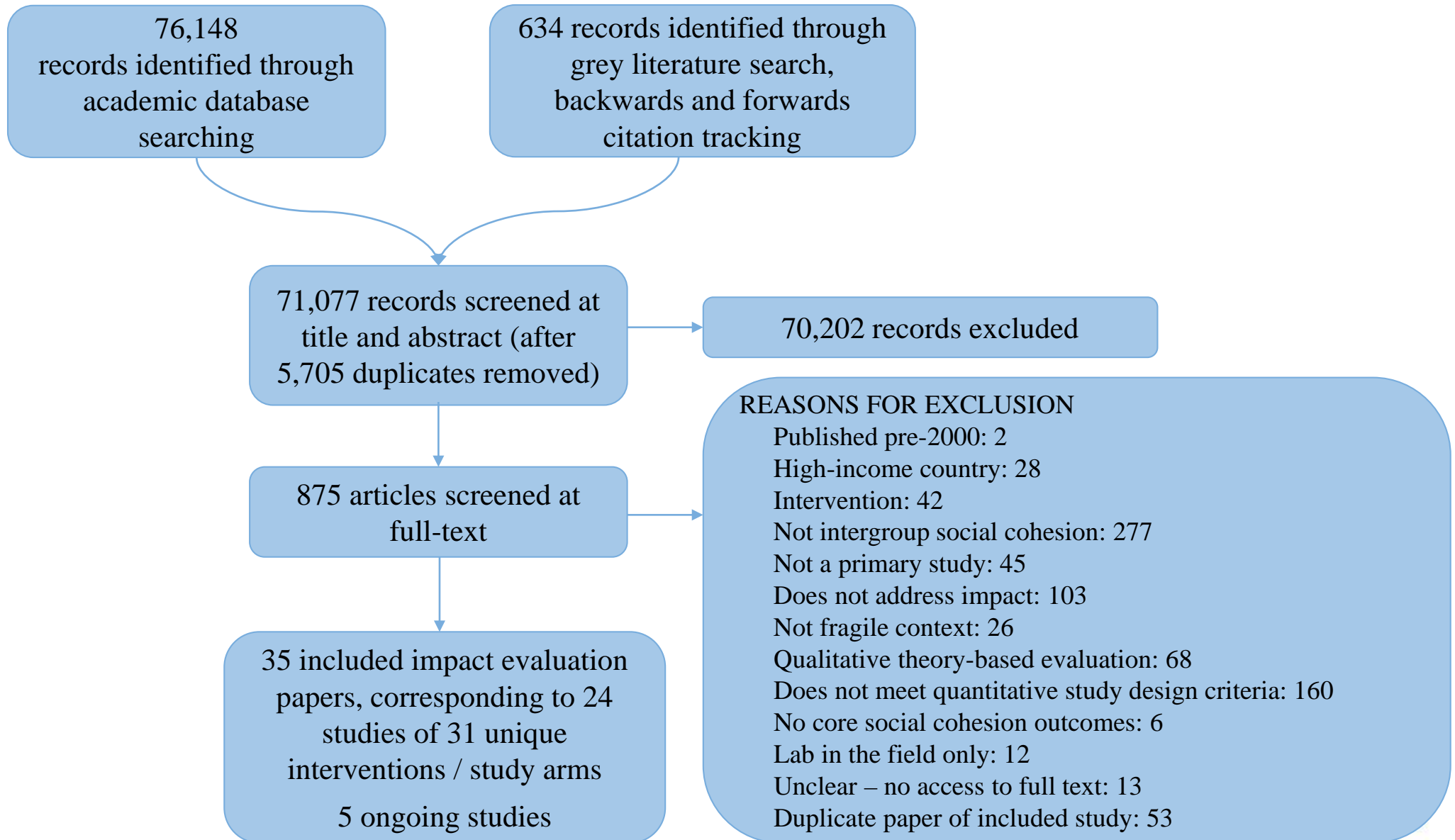
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We included studies that met detailed, pre-defined criteria

Criteria	Inclusion and exclusion criteria summary
Year	The study must have been published in 2000 or later .
Geographic Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Programme participants in fragile contexts in L&MICs are included.▪ Programme participants in high-income countries are excluded.
Study design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Impact evaluations that use a rigorous design and analysis method to attribute observed impacts on outcomes of interest to a relevant intervention are included.
Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Interventions designed to improve relationships between different social groups are included, e.g. between different ethnicities, religions, etc. This may be done in many ways, e.g. peace education; media campaigns; inter-group dialogues; reconciliation programmes; sports or art for peace; etc.▪ We exclude interventions that focus solely on livelihoods or financial support; the relationships between men and women as social groups; interpersonal relationships; or vertical cohesion (relationships between citizens and government).
Comparisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Populations that receive ‘business as usual’ programming or an unrelated intervention are included.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Studies that measure an outcome of at least one component of social cohesion: trust, sense of belonging, willingness to help, willingness to participate, and/or acceptance of diversity.

We identified studies through a rigorous search and screening process that systematically applied the inclusion criteria



There was substantial heterogeneity in the outcome measures reported by included studies, overall and within intervention groups

Number and proportion of studies reporting outcomes for different dimensions of social cohesion, by intervention group

	Total 'n' studies	Trust	Sense of belonging	Willingness to participate	Willingness to help	Acceptance of diversity
<i>All studies</i>	23*	61%	52%	52%	39%	74%
School-based	4	3	2	2	2	3
Collaborative contact	4	1	2	3	3	4
Intergroup dialogues	5	3	3	1	1	4
Workshops-contact-econ	5	4	3	4	1	2
Media for peace	5	3	2	2	2	4

* We could not calculate effect size data from one study, due to missing data

Outcome typology

To measure effects on social cohesion, developed the following typology:

Social cohesion dimensions: Specific constructs identified	Intergroup focus	Type of measure	Direction of effect	Measurement method	Framing
Trust: (sense of own or others') Trusting, Mistrust, Trustworthiness	Generalized	Behaviour	Positive	Self-reported	Positive
Sense of belonging: Shared, Separate, Divisions	Intergroup	Attitude / Belief	Negative	Behavioural game (explicit)	Negative
Willingness to participate: (own or others') Active measure, Openness, Anxiety, Perceived value, Refusal	Intragroup	Knowledge		'Natural' game	Mixed (index)
Willingness to help: (own or others', either to receive or give) Active measure, Openness, Perceived value, Refusal (game), Refusal (other)	Mixed (index)	Feeling			Unclear
Acceptance of diversity: (own or others') Tolerance, Intolerance, Acceptance / Rejection of multiple perspectives, Inclusive / Exclusive victimhood, Bias					

Source: Sonnenfeld et al. (forthcoming)

Risk of bias

We considering the following domains:

- Random assignment
- Correct unit of analysis
- Confounding
- Deviations from intended outcomes
- Performance bias
- Outcome measurement bias
- Analysis bias

Risk of bias results

- Majority issue categories are:
 - Selection bias, especially for radio studies
 - Deviations due to spillover, especially for school-based interventions
 - Outcome measurement bias, especially related to social desirability bias

