

# Assessing the impact of a school-based peace building intervention: results from the Living Side by Side program in Kyrgyzstan

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# “Living Side By Side”

- 6-8 week (36 hours) after-school training program for youth to foster inter-personal/ethnic/religious/racial understanding, , perspective taking, leadership and conflict resolution skills
- Training of youth preceded by Training of trainers (TOT) (8 days) where school teachers are trained to teach the LSBS curriculum
- Training sessions consisted of structured interactive learning activities, such as games, discussions, teamwork challenges, readings, and skill practice exercises
- Program ended with development and implementation of a school or community project, working in multi-ethnic groups and serving multi-ethnic audiences, to demonstrate and practice the skills learned during the training

# Theory of Change

- Why and how could a program like LSBS work?
- Why – intergroup contact – structured increased interactions among members of different groups decreases prejudice, improves intergroup tolerance, reconciliation with (violent) past
- Strong evidence that intergroup contact interventions reduce prejudice
- How – 3 channels identified/tested
  - Knowledge (themselves, others, unbeknown similarities)
  - Anxiety reduction (interact with relative strangers/outgroup members)
  - Empathy/ perspective taking (transformative thinking, recognizing prejudice, mediation)

# Mapping ToC to LSBS

- Groups - mixed ethnic & gender
- Interactive training
  - Lectures/discussion of own values, culture, respectful disclosure of feelings/beliefs
  - Interactive fun & problem-solving activities to reduce anxiety
  - Role-plays and projects to increase perspective taking, practice new mediation skills
- Intergroup contact theory stipulates 4 conditions
  - equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation & authority support

# Evaluation design (1)

- Qualitative evidence of positive impact of LSBS across settings but how do we know whether it works in this context?
- No statistical evidence of LSBS impacts – difficult to compare effectiveness against other projects
- Rigorous evaluation needed to answer these questions
  - Qualitative interviews prone to social desirability bias - people say what they think the interviewer wants to hear
  - Plus respondents may feel different when asked directly but deeply rooted attitudes and beliefs may be (more) difficult to change

# Evaluation design (2)

- Pilot intervention → pilot evaluation (small sample precludes testing mechanisms/heterogeneous effects)
  - e.g. group composition, varying curriculum etc.
- 10 schools randomly selected from sampling frame of 31 schools – individual lottery determined who “got in” and who did not (among population of applicants)
- Best way to identify causal effects –assignment is determined by random chance unrelated to respondents’ characteristics
- LSBS implemented in 3 consecutive rounds

# Evaluation design (3)

Schools selected based on criteria (31)

**Criteria:**

- Public schools
- Russian language of instruction
- Multiethnic
- Sufficient number of youths in 9-11 grades



Pilot schools (10)

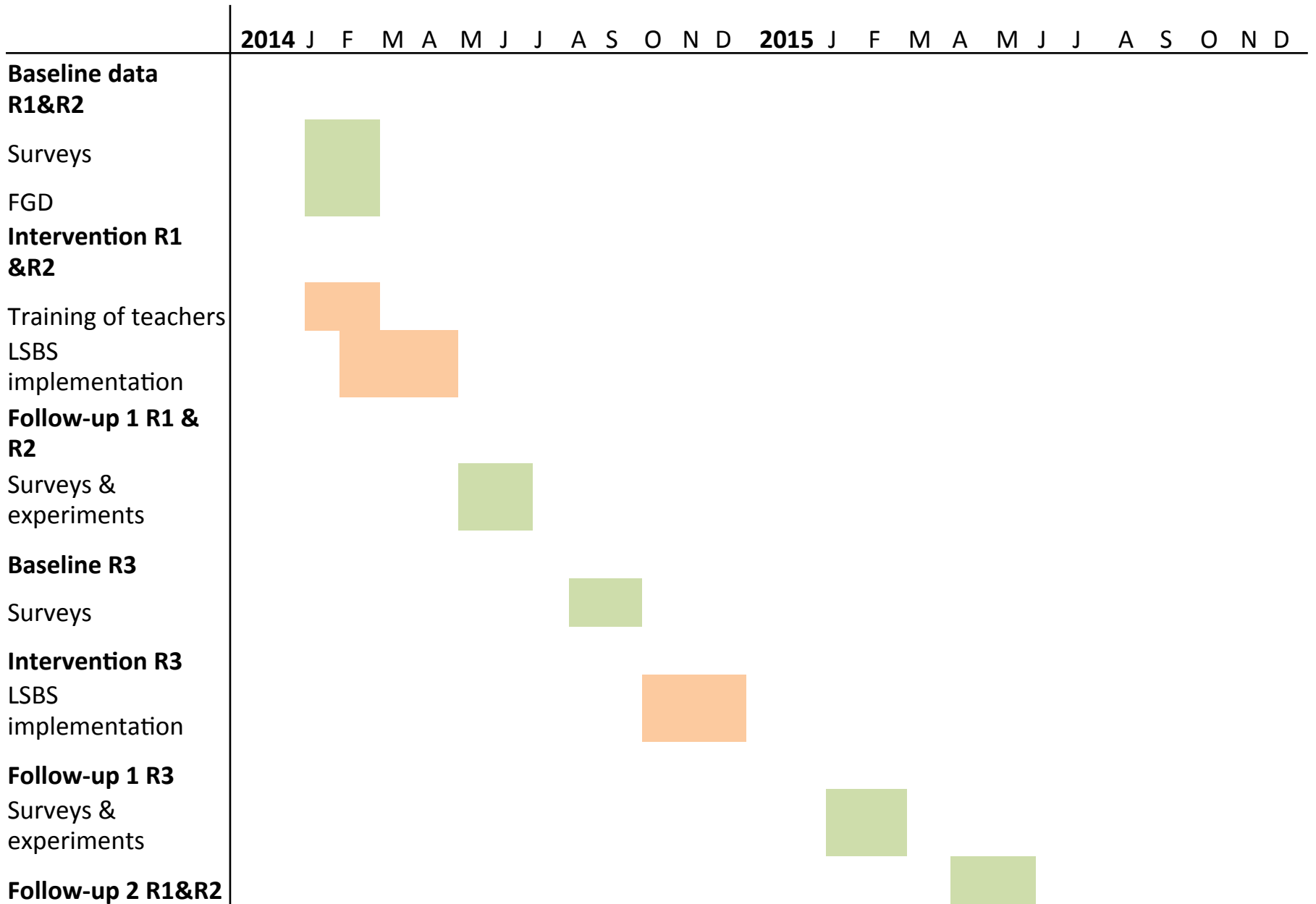


Control schools (10)

# Data sources

	Baseline	Endline	1-year follow-up
<b>Data collection instruments</b>			
Household survey	X	X	
Student survey	X	X	
FGDs students		X	
FGDs trainers	X	X	
Behavioural experiments		X	X
School administrative records			X
Network survey			X





# Sample characteristics

Variable	N	Mean	Std.Dev	Min	Max
Age	1,636	15.30	0.90	13	18
Male	1,675	0.41	0.49	0	1
Majority ethnicity	1,672	0.52	0.50	0	1
Minority ethnicity	1,672	0.48	0.50	0	1
Average self-reported grade	1,428	4.28	0.63	2	5
Plans to study at university / vocational school	1,458	0.68	0.47	0	1
Trust to people of the same ethnicity	1,429	2.57	0.90	1	4
Trust to people of another ethnicity	1,431	2.28	0.88	1	4
Trust to people of other religion	1,427	2.09	0.90	1	4
Trust to people seeing 1st time	1,431	1.86	0.85	1	4
Average self-efficacy: confidence	642	75.42	11.83	43	100
Average locus of control	642	0.41	0.18	0	1
Kyrgyz language should be the only official language	1,429	3.73	0.87	1	5
We need to protect our culture, religion & language from others	1,428	4.04	0.76	1	5
I feel myself at home in Kyrgyzstan	1,427	4.12	0.86	1	5
My school creates safe & non-discriminatory environment	1,429	3.71	0.85	1	5
I was bullied in school	1,426	0.05	0.21	0	1
I did fight in last 12 months	1,381	0.08	0.28	0	1

# Estimating impact

- Despite lottery – T & C differ on some characteristics
- We control for that in our statistical analysis
- How do we estimate impact? We compare mean outcomes in the treatment group with mean outcomes in the control group AFTER the program – any change should be attributed to the program
- We compare averages of treated and non-treated students within the same schools (school environment is kept constant)

<b>Outcome variable</b>	<b>Coeff.</b>	<b>SE</b>	
Self-reported average grade across subjects	0.04	0.04	
I was bullied in school	-0.03	0.02	*
I did fight in last 12 months	0.01	0.01	
Trust to people of the same ethnicity	0.17	0.06	***
Trust to people of another ethnicity	0.04	0.07	
Trust to people of other religion	0.03	0.07	
Trust to people seeing 1st time	0.32	0.09	***
Average self-efficacy: confidence	-2.50	1.55	
Average locus of control	0.00	0.02	
Kyrgyz language should be the only official language	0.03	0.05	
We need to protect our culture, religion & language from others	-0.06	0.07	
I feel myself at home in Kyrgyzstan	-0.19	0.06	***
My school creates safe & non-discriminatory environment	-0.03	0.06	
Trust (experimental)	0.00	0.11	
Cooperation in Game 1	0.27	0.15	*
Cooperation in Game 2	0.41	0.22	*
Cooperation in Game 3	0.16	0.20	
Altruism (experimental)	0.10	0.17	
Answered correctly to what mediation skills are	0.00	0.03	
Answered correctly on behaviour of unequal treatment	0.04	0.08	

# Results & interpretation (1)

- Trust towards strangers – robust (+) impact
- Cooperation in games also (+)
- Some attitudes (-)
- Subgroups – hypothesis that girls/boys and ethnic majorities/minorities benefit differently
  - Differential impacts for girls & boys: boys trust more –girls cooperate more and learn more –but at expense of self-confidence
  - Results for ethnic minorities weaker than for ethnic majorities

# Results and interpretation (2)

- Medium term impacts – do results sustain/need time to sink in?
  - Trust towards people of other religion increased
  - Altruism & general trust also increased
  - More friends and higher % of non-co-ethnics in social networks
- Complementing quantitative results with outcomes from FGDS
  - Students were positive about the program – felt they learned useful new skills & became more “open”
  - Suggestive “bonding” effect

# Conclusion

- Trust towards strangers most robust –and arguably closest to what the program hopes to achieve “to teach adolescents to be open and non-judgmental towards strangers of a different ethnic, religious or cultural background”
- Neg. outcomes related to self-confidence & attitudes may suggest program “stirs” up values/beliefs – leads to introspection
- Such outcomes are amenable to change as a result of even a short, low-intensity peace education programme

# Caveats

- Effects estimated for students that voluntarily signed up for extra-curricular programme
- May be far from target population: vulnerable young people who feel marginalized and excluded and who express their dissatisfaction through intolerance and, possibly, violent acts
- What in case of obligatory peace-building programme as part of the school curriculum? – Our study cannot answer this question



# Recommendations

- Pilot suggests impacts – test effectiveness & mechanisms for a longer intervention & larger sample
- Implementers carefully define ToC – relevant outcomes – assumptions (e.g. careful monitoring)
- Think about how to get vulnerable people on board – they may stand to gain the most!