

# CAIPD

Cellule d'analyse d'impact des politiques  
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## Preventing Islamic radicalisation and conflict

Pedro C. Vicente

Professor of Economics, Nova School of Business and Economics; FNR Visiting Researcher at LISER

Established at the initiative of the Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs, CAIPD brings together researchers from LISER and J-PAL Europe to equip the Luxembourgish Cooperation with methodological tools for impact evaluations and programme monitoring in cooperation projects.



## Summary

In recent years, violent conflicts have been concentrated in Muslim-majority countries, many of them linked to Islamist insurgents, especially in the Sahel. Our studies in Mozambique focus on preventing Islamic radicalisation and conflict. Since 2017, Cabo Delgado in northern Mozambique has faced an Islamist insurgency. In partnership with local religious organisations, we tested ways to reduce radicalisation and thus lower anti-social behaviour and violence. This work builds on an initial trial showing that community information campaigns in Cabo Delgado reduced conflict in the first year.

### Religious Sensitisation Intervention

We started by partnering with a local Muslim NGO which sponsored a randomised intervention targeting young men from local mosques in Pemba, the capital city of Cabo Delgado. It was conducted by religious leaders, who provided information about the lack of theological foundation of typical claims by Islamist insurgents. We compare this intervention to training on entrepreneurship and employment, which aimed to raise the opportunity costs of conflict. As impact measurement we focus on anti-social behaviour by running a Joy-of-Destruction lab game, which allows observing participants' anti-social behaviours - including in our case 1,520 experimental decisions.

### Scaling-up Through the Radio

After the first study, we expanded our partnership to two other religious NGOs, which sponsored a pan-religious radio campaign favouring peace, which was broadcast province-wide in Cabo Delgado during 2021. We analyse impacts of the radio broadcasts on incidence of violence province-wide in Cabo Delgado measured through independent reports of geo-referenced violence involving Islamist actors. We also study a sample of close to 1,400 individuals in 146 villages in the province, which were surveyed by phone and observed in behavioural activities aimed at measuring anti-social behaviour, trust, support for peace, and tolerance.

## Main Takeaways

Analysis of the data reveals several important findings:

- **Religious sensitisation in Pemba reduced anti-social behaviour in the Joy-of-Destruction game:** the magnitude of the effect is 8-9 percentage points on the probability that subjects in our main Muslim sample undertake anti-social behaviour. Differently, we observe no effects of the training module on entrepreneurship and employment.
- **The radio campaign consisting of the joint pro-peace religious message decreased the probability of a violent event perpetrated by Islamist insurgents** in the six months following the end of the radio campaign. There is an impact on political/religious attitudes in the direction of supporting more socially progressive and non-violent views.

**With potential implications for the Sahel, our experience in Northern Mozambique indicates that community sensitisation and information work effectively to prevent conflict.** Importantly and specifically, we have shown that religious organisations can counter Islamic radicalisation and, in that way, decrease anti-social behaviour and violence. This type of policy is low-cost, does not rely on fragile state actors or involve clear political interests, and can be implemented safely through the radio.

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