

After the violence: Crafting effective public policy in post-conflict settings

By Colin Felsman

IPA Colombia and [J-PAL Latin America & Caribbean](#), and Universidad de los Andes' Center for the Study of Security and Drugs ([CESED](#)), recently convened policymakers, researchers, and civil society members to discuss proven solutions and pressing questions surrounding conflict and post-conflict contexts.

Divided into three sessions, following a welcome by IPA Colombia Country Representative Sebastian Chaskel and CESED Director Daniel Mejía, the conference began with presentations of available evidence. These included a presentation by [Chris Blattman](#), Director of the [IPA Peace and Recovery Program](#) and J-PAL affiliate, on the [combined impact of cognitive behavior therapy and cash transfers on high-risk young men in Liberia](#); initial results from [Daniel Mejía's](#) evaluation of interventions in crime hotspots in Medellín; and Adriana Camacho's, CESED-UniAndes, investigation of the health consequences and effectiveness of aerial spraying campaigns as a means combatting the production of illegal drugs.

The second panel outlined strategies for policymakers and NGOs to apply evidence in decision-making. Dylan Ramshaw, IPA Country Director and Marta Garnelo, J-PAL LAC Senior Policy Associate, shared insights from the work of IPA and J-PAL to help governments and civil society learn and apply lessons from impact evaluations. [Jeannie Annan](#), Senior Research and Evaluation Director at the International Rescue Committee (IRC), then drew on the IRC's experience incorporating existing research into program design and producing evidence through impact evaluations as a call to action for NGOs to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their interventions. Maria Eugenia Morales, Director of Reparations for [Unidad Víctimas](#), and Johanna Villareal, Deputy Director of the Colombian Agency for Reconstruction, provided context on the reintegration process for demobilized individuals and victims, as well as offered perspective on challenges faced by civil society in applying evidence to post-conflict programs.

During the final session, researchers presented lessons and questions drawn from ongoing impact evaluations. [Andres Moya](#), Assistant Professor at Universidad de Los Andes, described early findings from an intervention that works with mothers to improve early childhood development in contexts of violence, while [Juan Vargas](#), Associate Professor at Universidad del Rosario, discussed the intervention and evaluation design of a justice administration program in areas with low state presence in Colombia.

Presentations were followed by panel discussions, encouraging active participation from the

audience of about 60 individuals. As Colombia enters a post-conflict environment, IPA and J-PAL remain committed to their mission to promote evidence-based decision-making and expect such gatherings will continue to serve as important sources of knowledge that inform the public policy debate in this sector.

Read more on the event [here](#) (in Spanish) and video from the event available here soon

Colin Felsman is a Graduate Intern in IPA's Colombia Country Office

September 21, 2015