

# Peace & Recovery

*Evidence for Stability*



PHOTO: GLENNA GORDON

In the coming decades, most of the poor will live in fragile states, yet rigorous evidence on how to build peace and stability is still limited. What helps communities heal and prosper after a crisis? How can peace and stability be maintained after war?

IPA works with academics from top research institutions to generate evidence on how to facilitate peace and mitigate the negative social and economic impacts of conflicts and crises. We evaluate programs that aim to strengthen state capacities, prevent or reduce violence, or alleviate the fallout from crises ranging from health to natural to human-made. IPA works in fragile states and countries that have recently experienced conflict, violence, or disaster. IPA also collaborates with decision-makers to ensure that this evidence is both useful and implemented at scale.

## Key Policy Lessons

1. Cognitive behavioral therapy can reduce crime and violent behavior.
2. Some programs aimed at helping communities heal should be redesigned to avoid unintended negative effects.
3. Desirable job opportunities for high-risk men can improve economic and social stability.

## Policy Impact: Using Data to Inform the Ebola Response in West Africa

*In mid-2014, when West Africa was hit with the worst outbreak of Ebola ever recorded, IPA collected and disseminated real-time data to policymakers and first responders on to what extent the virus was driving up food prices, limiting the movement of people and goods, slowing international trade and tourism, and disrupting the financial system. IPA also worked to develop a paperless, mobile contact tracing system that was ultimately adopted by a non-profit organization.*

# Key Findings

We have conducted more than a dozen studies in the field of Peace & Recovery with our partners and research affiliates. Explore a few of our key findings below and find all of our Peace & Recovery findings at [www.poverty-action.org/peace](http://www.poverty-action.org/peace)

## A truth and reconciliation program increased forgiveness, but worsened mental health in Sierra Leone<sup>1</sup>

A community-based reconciliation program increased forgiveness toward perpetrators of crimes and significantly increased trust in ex-combatants, but it also worsened psychological wellbeing—increasing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety. *Read more » [www.poverty-action.org/study/reconciliation-conflict-and-development-field-experiment-sierra-leone](http://www.poverty-action.org/study/reconciliation-conflict-and-development-field-experiment-sierra-leone)*

## Behavioral therapy and cash transfers reduced criminal behavior among high-risk young men in Liberia<sup>2</sup>

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) led to a significant fall in crime, drug use, and violence among high-risk urban men in Liberia. These results were greater for participants who received both CBT and one-time unconditional cash grants, but cash grants alone had no impact. *Read more » [www.poverty-action.org/study/impact-cognitive-behavior-therapy-and-cash-transfers-high-risk-young-men-liberia](http://www.poverty-action.org/study/impact-cognitive-behavior-therapy-and-cash-transfers-high-risk-young-men-liberia)*

## Cash transfers increased income for youth in post-conflict Uganda<sup>3</sup>

In Northern Uganda, the government program that offered cash transfers to groups of youth resulted in a shift from agricultural work to skilled trades and strong increases in income. Women in particular benefitted from the cash transfers, with incomes of those in the program 84 percent higher than women who were not. There were no differences, however, in social outcomes such as community participation, aggression, and social cohesion. *Read more » [www.poverty-action.org/study/northern-uganda-social-action-fund-youth-opportunities-program](http://www.poverty-action.org/study/northern-uganda-social-action-fund-youth-opportunities-program)*

## Dispute resolution workshops in Liberia helped communities resolve disputes, but produced more extrajudicial violence<sup>4</sup>

Communities that received alternative dispute resolution (ADR) workshops were more likely to resolve land disputes, experienced less violence, and had higher levels of satisfaction with the dispute resolution process—especially for long-standing disputes. However, the workshops produced a serious



negative side effect—more extrajudicial punishment. *Read more » [www.poverty-action.org/study/peace-education-rural-liberia](http://www.poverty-action.org/study/peace-education-rural-liberia)*

## An employment program in Liberia increased incomes and reduced illicit activities for high-risk men<sup>5</sup>

An intensive agricultural training program for high-risk men increased average wealth and participants' employment in agriculture, and decreased the amount of time they spent on illicit activities. *Read more » [www.poverty-action.org/study/ex-combatant-reintegration-liberia](http://www.poverty-action.org/study/ex-combatant-reintegration-liberia)*

## Sources

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5. Blattman, Christopher, and Jeannie Annan. "Can employment reduce lawlessness and rebellion? A field experiment with high-risk men in a fragile state." *American Political Science Review*. (2016).

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Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) is a research and policy non-profit that discovers and promotes effective solutions to global poverty problems. IPA designs, rigorously evaluates, and refines these solutions and their applications together with researchers and local decision-makers, ensuring that evidence is used to improve the lives of the world's poor. Our well-established partnerships in the countries where we work, and a strong understanding of local contexts, enable us to conduct high-quality research. This research has informed hundreds of successful programs that now impact millions of individuals worldwide.

