

Innovations for Poverty Action Peace & Recovery Program Guiding Principles and Funding Priorities



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IPA's Peace & Recovery program, launched in 2017, is designed to support field experiments and related research in several broad areas:

- Reducing violence and promoting peace
- Reducing “fragility” (i.e. fostering state capability and institutions of decision making)
- Preventing, coping with, and recovering from crises (focusing on conflict, but also including non-conflict humanitarian crises)

The funding for the Peace & Recovery Program comes from DFID, which has approved £12m of UK Aid for three initiatives, together with our partners at J-PAL. The funding includes an increase in support for J-PAL's [Governance Initiative](#) and funding for new research, particularly experiments, in crime, violence, and conflict through J-PAL's [Crime and Violence Initiative](#) and IPA's [Peace & Recovery Program](#).

The Program supports research at all levels: individual, group, community, and country. P&R will not only support full randomized trials, but also pilot studies, exploratory and descriptive work, travel grants, and (in rare but deserving cases) non-experimental evaluations such as regression discontinuities.

This document highlights the aims, core themes, research questions, and focus countries for our ongoing calls for proposals which will take place in 2017-2019 (see timeline section below).

I. Beyond simple program evaluation: Generalizability and Innovation

First and foremost, this initiative aims to support the most innovative and generalizable studies in the study of peace and conflict.

Naturally, it is difficult to generalize the results of any single evaluation. That said, some studies have more general lessons than others. We believe it is the studies that pursue “basic science” while at the same time answering important policy questions that will have the greatest intellectual and policy impacts in the long run.

For example, P&R prioritizes studies that help to develop, illustrate, or test fundamental theories of peace, violence, and recovery. This includes studies that illustrate or test foundational theories that have limited evidence. Take for example the idea of conflict arising from imperfect information, including a failure to

internalize the costs of conflict. Saumitra Jha and Moses Shayo recently used experimental variation in exposure to stock markets in Israel-Palestine to argue that [financial market exposure leads to learning and reevaluation of the economic costs of conflict](#). Another example comes from Chris Blattman, Alexandra Hartman and Rob Blair's [study of rural land disputes](#), and how interventions can foster skills and norms that reduce the information asymmetries, commitment problems, and bargaining breakdowns that lead to interpersonal violence.

This also includes studies that try to challenge common prior beliefs, and which would lead to new understandings of peace and recovery, new theories, or new programs and priorities. For example, [recent studies in Chicago and Liberia](#) used evaluations of cognitive behavioral therapy to show that skills of self-control and social identity are not only drivers of inter-personal violence, but also that these skills and identities are malleable in adults. Another example using random assignment comes from Sierra Leone. A common view holds that communities will self-heal and recover from conflict with the passage of time. Yet, [truth and reconciliation implemented 10 years after the end of conflict were still found to reinstate social capital](#), challenging the idea that communities simply self-heal.

An alternate way to increase the generalizability of the study is to pioneer new techniques. For example, Betsy Levy Paluck and coauthors used an anti-violence program in high schools to [study how social norm change moves through a social network](#). Abhijit Banerjee and coauthors recently studied the crime displacement effects of enforcement, structurally estimating the [strategic response of criminals \(drunk drivers\) to police presence in Rajasthan](#). And, [Leonardo Bursztyn, Michael Callen and coauthors elicited expressions of anti-Americanism](#) in conflict-affected Pakistan. Other frontiers of experimentation include the measurement of spillovers, multi-country trials, and so forth. Thus we will also prioritize new techniques that could and would likely be copied by other researchers.

Importantly, innovation can mean producing evidence where little exists, especially where little experimental work has been done. The past decade saw some of the first panel studies and randomized trials in areas with active or recent conflicts. There are still places and questions with little micro-level evidence, let alone experimental work. For example, [Gary King, Jennifer Pan and Margaret Roberts studied Chinese repression \(censorship\) of social media postings](#) through experimentation. Additional experimental work with militaries is another promising example, building on the quasi-experimental and theoretical work by [Eli Berman, Jacob Shapiro and Joe Felter](#). To name just a few other examples, there is currently little international experimental research on: refugees; the psychological and behavioral roots of aggression, protests; non-violent social movements; building state capability in fragile states; ethnic and sectarian violence; humanitarian crisis response; de-radicalization; and the internal organization of armed groups.

Flagship programs of great national and international importance are also strong candidates for funding, although even here we encourage applicants to carefully consider generalizability. Strong examples include Mike Callen and James Long's [study of election fraud prevention in Afghanistan](#), or the studies on [women's empowerment](#), [political candidate selection](#), and [direct democracy](#) that emerged from a series of experiments on Afghanistan's largest reconstruction program, by Andrew Beath and coauthors.

Finally, bringing new types of data or measurement to bear is also an important contribution, especially when those data will become available to others, they can be replicated in other contexts, or the measurement strategy can be mimicked by others. For example, Luke Condra and coauthors used [high-precision data on Afghan insurgents, tracking activity by hour and precise location](#), allowing the authors to innovate in order to understand the production of election violence and how insurgent violence strategically undermines governments' ability to function. James Habyarimana and coauthors [pioneered a](#)

[variety of behavioral games for distinguishing between different mechanisms for inter-ethnic cooperation](#). And Dan Corstange has demonstrated how [small cues and interviewer identity affect polling outcomes](#), including the role of anti-Americanism in the Middle East. Other frontiers include new datasets, new forms of data (including “big data”), new behavioral measurement, and new survey modules. Note, however, that new data and measurement are definitely not necessary for funding, and are usually not sufficient. They will strengthen proposals where most needed or relevant.

II. Core Research Themes and Questions

“Peace and recovery” covers a huge number of questions, objectives, and programs related to violence, its prevention, and its response, as well as other types of “recovery” responses after human and natural disasters. The “micro-level” quantitative evidence is still modest, and there have been few randomized trials.

As a result, at the outset we expect this initiative to be broad in its focus. We outline themes and questions of interest here, but this is not a comprehensive or even the correct list.

There is no “white paper” to guide research at this time. Indeed it is difficult to imagine an organizing framework for all the relevant themes and questions (let alone answers). We hope this kind of framework and white paper will be an outcome of the first years of this initiative.

The initiative is focused on prevention, mitigation, responses to, and recovery strategies for most forms of social and political violence as well as humanitarian emergencies, including:

- International and internal wars
- State-supported violence and repression, from mass killings to police brutality
- Electoral violence
- Riots, protests, strikes, and other collective action (violent and nonviolent)
- Intergroup violence, including ethnic and sectarian violence
- Terrorism
- “Recovery” responses after violence or destruction, such as after civil war or natural disaster.

Violent crime, individual aggression and hostility, interpersonal fights, and domestic violence are less of a focus (see Section VI. “Relationship with other funding initiatives” below), but we will consider applications on these themes.

Some important question areas include (but are not limited to) the following:

Participation and organization of violence. One of the most common research questions is “who participates in violence?” or other forms of collective action, or alternatively what rehabilitates those who participated in the past. The bulk of existing evidence focuses on how economic incentives (wages, employment, etc.) affect individual decisions to participate. While we welcome further research along these lines, we especially encourage research along less explored lines, including:

- The role of relatively non-material incentives:
 - collective decision-making and rewards (such as club goods)
 - psychological and behavioral factors and interventions
 - the role of social relationships, networks, group dynamics, and social norms
 - social alienation, dislocation, and injustice
- The internal organization of social movements and groups (armed or nonviolent), including questions of leadership, funding, organization, and internal principal-agent problems.
- The meaning and process of “radicalization”, under what circumstances extreme political views lead to violent actions, and whether extremist views and actions can be mitigated or prevented.

Social order without the state. Another important area of research is how social order is established and disputes resolved in the absence of external enforcement by third parties. Whether the subject is property disputes between households, rival ethnic groups, neighboring gangs, or communal governance of natural resources, people can compete peacefully without resorting to violence. Order arises from many sources, including social norms and other informal institutions, in-group policing, methods and practices of communication, systems and rules of formal dispute resolution, and so forth.

State and institution building. While institutional reforms may be difficult to study using field experiments, we encourage innovation and attempts. Relevant topics include:

- Reforms in the security, police and justice sectors
- Strengthening the capability of state organizations and structures
- Civil service reforms in fragile states
- Formal and informal institutions to promote peaceful bargaining
- Forms of international order, including peacekeeping and justice systems

Service delivery and development in unstable or violent contexts. We will consider proposals that study a different development process or outcome (health, education, good governance, etc.) but where violence or political instability fundamentally change the nature of the problem. In particular, we will seek to fund those studies that for some reason would be unlikely to be funded by “regular” sources because of the violent context, or can address some question of fundamental importance to the study of peace and recovery. This could include:

- Aspects of effective public service delivery in fragile or violent contexts
- Political participation, elections, corruption or leakages in fragile or violent contexts

Refugees and internal displacement. As the number of refugees grows, in both developing and developed countries, we aim to support social and political research on the subject. In some sense, the key issues and broad questions have yet to be defined. But some important questions likely include:

- How can societies absorb large number of migrants socially and economically?
- What are the impacts of refugees on local economies and political situations?
- How does refugee service delivery differ from standard service delivery in local government and foreign assistance?
- What methods of tracking and data collection are required for effective refugee research?

Rehabilitation and recovery from violence, and building peace. In addition to understanding the causes and prevention of violence, we welcome studies that change our understanding of the effects of violence, how those shape behavior, and how the worst effects are mitigated. Violence cannot be experimentally evaluated, of course, but we can study these questions using interventions that prevent or treat exposure to violence. Applicants may also identify other new ways to shed light on some important questions:

- The effects and treatment of traumatic and sexual violence
- Rehabilitation of violent offenders---socially, psychologically, or economically
- Promoting reconciliation and justice, and other forms of social healing and peace building
- The relationship between violence and socio-political attitudes and behavior
- Educational and labor market impacts of violence (to the extent that large theoretical or conceptual advances over the large existing literature can be demonstrated)

Crisis prevention, response, and recovery. This program also supports more political and economic research into humanitarian crises in general, not only those that feature violence. For example, this may include studies on disaster preparedness, first response, famine prevention, or innovative insurance mechanisms.

We encourage applicants to link their research into questions that they believe are of fundamental importance to our understanding of peace and recovery, rather than simply frame their study within this incomplete list of question.

III. Having Impact

We believe this initiative will have been successful if the studies we fund change the conversation around peace and recovery. This means policymakers thinking differently about the problem and its solution. Or academics changing their understanding of the subject and their research direction.

Examples include studies that challenge the conventional wisdom on a subject, especially the theoretical priors that academics and policymakers typically bring to the problem. Also, studies that generate many imitators and replications, as well as more research to understand the breadth of application, mechanisms, program design, etc.

The conversation does not change simply because of the power or persuasiveness of an academic article. We will expect grantees to work to change the conversation in both academic and policy circles. In addition

to the usual publishing of an academic journal article and presenting in academic forums, we will expect grantees to budget both time and funds for timely and general distribution of ideas, and we will support grantees in achieving this goal.

Examples include: Short, accessible policy briefs available on the IPA or J-PAL websites in a timely manner; participation in IPA and J-PAL policy conferences; large-circulation newspaper op-eds; large-circulation podcasts or blog posts.

IV. Funding Opportunities and Criteria

Types of Funding. Naturally we will fund a small number of “full randomized trials” of particular interventions. We will also encourage the submission of other types of proposals, including:

- Pilot studies for the purpose of informing full randomized trials
- Follow-up studies to assess the long run impacts from previously published trials
- “Downstream studies” that use a randomized trial studies for one purpose and use it to answer a question of relevance for peace and recovery
- Exploratory and preparatory work, including travel, relationship development, descriptive analysis, observational analysis, and exploratory data collection
- “Infrastructure” and “public goods” for evaluation (and other) research, including administrative datasets, panel datasets, other new data, software, measurement strategies, and so forth
- Reviews and meta-analysis of relevant literatures (including but not necessarily limited to the program evaluation evidence)
- In exceptional cases, studies that use high-quality natural experiments when a randomized experiment is not possible will be considered.

Strong applications will not only emphasize the policy relevance of a specific evaluation, but also the study’s contribution to basic science, our understanding of the issues, and the broader literature.

Please note that exploratory and preparatory funding are primarily meant for PhD students, junior faculty, and other researchers who do not have other sources of funding for travel and exploratory work. Tenured professors from major research universities are discouraged from applying for these start-up funds. Practitioners and institutions that implement interventions should partner with academics with strong track records implementing similar research studies in order to apply for funding. IPA’s P&R program is available to support matchmaking with researchers.

Researcher Qualifications. Researchers must be affiliated with a research institution or a university and either hold a PhD, or be currently pursuing a PhD, in a relevant discipline. They must demonstrate experience in field research and randomized evaluations, and have sector expertise. Successful applications will come from researchers with a track record of published field experiments in top outlets.

Research Management. Submissions proposing to conduct field-based data collection should specify the research implementing partner organization that will assist the research team with the management

and implementation of the study. The organization must demonstrate experience implementing field experiments and have a presence in the country.

Projects taking place in countries where IPA has a country program (see list at the bottom of this document) are expected to be run through the local IPA Country Office, as these offices have the experience and long-term presence to ensure that projects meet excellent research quality standards, maintain strong partner relationships, and that the studies are well-integrated with the work of the P&R Program and IPA as a whole. Please make sure that you reach out to the local IPA Country Office as early as possible in the project development process so the Country Office can assist with research design, project planning, and support with partner development. Pending review and approval of your proposed project(s) by the country office staff, they will work with you on the budget and application materials. If you need assistance in reaching out to IPA Country Offices, please email us at pd@poverty-action.org. Research applicants should provide a clear motivation in case they elect to work with another implementing organization in a country where IPA is present.

In order to implement a project that includes fieldwork in a country where IPA does not have a country office, another research implementing partner organization will need to be involved in order to manage fieldwork. If the applicant is not already in touch with an implementing partner, the P&R Program may be able to assist in identifying an appropriate research implementing partner organization.

Funding. Funding will be for research costs. Implementation costs are expected to be covered from other sources, except when adequate justification is provided for their inclusion in the study budget. The Program strongly discourages funding for the salary or time of researchers from institutions in developed countries. Funding under the study budget for the salaries and/or time of researchers from institutions in developing countries will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the selection committee.

V. Focus Countries

As funding for this program will come from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), no funds can be spent in high-income countries (generally defined as the US, Canada, Western Europe, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, and wealthy Middle Eastern countries) and a majority of funds must be spent in [DFID priority countries](#).

The P&R Program will prioritize projects in fragile states, or fragile regions in moderately stable states as well as DFID priority countries. We will be able to consider studies in non-DFID countries, but these studies will have a lower probability of funding.

As noted above, projects taking place in countries where IPA has a [country program](#) are generally expected to be run through the local IPA Country Office, and applicants should reach out to these country offices early in the proposal stage.

Please refer to the last few pages of this document for a list of DFID priority countries, countries in which IPA has a country office, and the overlap between the two.

VI. Relationship with other funding initiatives

The funding for the Peace & Recovery Program comes from DFID, which has approved £12m of UK Aid for three initiatives, together with our partners at J-PAL. The funding includes an increase in support for J-PAL's

[Governance Initiative](#) and funding for new research, particularly experiments, in crime, violence, and conflict through J-PAL's [Crime and Violence Initiative \(CVI\)](#) and IPA's Peace & Recovery program.

The P&R and CVI funding rounds are overlapping in some respects, and will attempt to coordinate. Indeed, P&R academic lead Chris Blattman is also the academic co-lead of CVI.

As can be seen from the [CVI guidelines](#), the two funding initiatives share the same geographic focus and emphasis on supporting innovation and basic research that maximizes generalizability (and with it broad policy relevance). The priority questions are highly overlapping, although the CVI has a much greater emphasis on crime and criminal justice issues, and P&R has a broader focus on state and institution building, humanitarian crises, and so forth.

A major difference is that applications to IPA funding are open to all qualified researchers, whereas J-PAL applications are restricted to J-PAL affiliates and special invitees. This is one reason that the focus of the two initiatives overlaps. CVI and P&R may issue joint funding calls in future, but at present will stagger funding calls throughout the year. If you are uncertain about which initiative to apply to, email peace@poverty-action.org.

VII. Timeline and Application Process

P&R's first call for proposals closed in November 2017. The following is a tentative timeline for P&R's second call for proposals. P&R expects to have two calls for proposals per year during 2018 and 2019.

- January 15, 2018 Expression of Interest (EOI) form released
- March 2, 2018 EOIs due
- April 16, 2018 P&R will respond to all EOIs
- May 25, 2018 Full applications due
- July 13, 2018 Awards announced

As a first step, applicants are strongly encouraged to submit an EOI for three reasons:

1. This will allow the P&R Program to let the applicant know whether the project may or may not be a good match for P&R before the researchers invest time in the full application.
2. The P&R Program may grant travel or pilot funding based on EOIs and discussion with the applicants even before the full applications are due.
3. In rare cases, the P&R Program may be able to provide feedback to applicants.

The full application forms will be posted on the IPA website on April 16, 2018, once the P&R program responds to EOIs either encouraging or discouraging the research teams from submitting a full application. Full applications will also be considered for projects that were not submitted in the EOI stage.

Off-cycle proposals. While most of the funding will be disbursed through scheduled funding rounds, we understand that some research projects face a significant time constraint and need to receive funding

before the end of a regular funding round to make use of an unanticipated opportunity (e.g., a newly-announced policy change that will go into effect soon, creating an opportunity for an evaluation). The maximum amount awarded to off-cycle proposals is \$50,000. We encourage researchers in those situations to reach out directly to peace@poverty-action.org.

VIII. About Innovations for Poverty Action

Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) is a research and policy non-profit that discovers and promotes effective solutions to global poverty problems. IPA brings together researchers and decision-makers to design, rigorously evaluate, and refine these solutions and their applications, ensuring that the evidence created is used to improve the lives of the world's poor. Since its founding in 2002, IPA has worked with over 400 leading academics to conduct over 500 evaluations in 51 countries. This research has informed hundreds of successful programs that now impact millions of individuals worldwide.

IPA is present in 20 countries through 18 permanent offices. Applicants are expected to contact the relevant country office in order to coordinate project development and application submission processes. If you are interested in developing a project in countries where IPA does not have an office, please contact the Peace and Recovery Program directly (peace@poverty-action.org) for further information before submitting your application.

VIII. DFID Priority Countries and IPA Country Offices

Below is a list of DFID priority countries, countries in which IPA has a country office, and the overlap between the two. Please note, as mentioned in Section V, that the P&R Program will prioritize projects in fragile states, or fragile regions in moderately stable states as well as DFID priority countries. Projects taking place in countries where IPA has a country office are generally expected to be run through the local IPA Country Office, and applicants should reach out to these country offices early in the proposal stage.

Country	DFID Priority Country	IPA Country Office	IPA Contact Name	IPA Contact Email
Afghanistan	Yes	No	-	-
Bangladesh	Yes	Yes	Ashraf Haque	mahaque@poverty-action.org
Bolivia	No	Yes	Juan Manuel Hernández-Agramonte	jmhernandez@poverty-action.org
Burkina Faso	No	Yes	Estelle Plat	eplat@poverty-action.org
Colombia	No	Yes	Kyle Holloway	kholloway@poverty-action.org
Cote d' Ivoire	No	Yes	Henriette Hanicotte	hhanicotte@poverty-action.org

Democratic Republic of Congo	Yes	No	-	-
Dominican Republic	No	Yes	Kyle Holloway	kholloway@poverty-action.org
Ethiopia	Yes	No	-	-
Ghana	Yes	Yes	Madeleen Husselman	mhusselman@poverty-action.org
India	Yes	No	-	-
Iraq	Yes	No	-	-
Jordan	Yes	No	-	-
Kenya	Yes	Yes	Suleiman Asman	sasman@poverty-action.org
Kyrgyzstan	Yes	No	-	-
Lebanon	Yes	No	-	-
Liberia	Yes	Yes	Osman Siddiqi	osiddiqi@poverty-action.org
Malawi	Yes	Yes	Carly Farver	cfarver@poverty-action.org
Mali	No	Yes	Estelle Plat	eplat@poverty-action.org
Mexico	No	Yes	Juan Manuel Hernández-Agramonte	jmhernandez@poverty-action.org
Mozambique	Yes	No	-	-
Myanmar	Yes	Yes	Ricardo Morel	rmorel@poverty-action.org
Nepal	Yes	No	-	-
Nigeria	Yes	No	-	-

Occupied Palestinian Territories	Yes	No	-	-
Pakistan	Yes	No	-	-
Paraguay	No	Yes	Juan Manuel Hernández-Agramonte	jmhernandez@poverty-action.org
Peru	No	Yes	Juan Manuel Hernández-Agramonte	jmhernandez@poverty-action.org
Philippines	No	Yes	Nassereena Sampaco-Baddiri	nbaddiri@poverty-action.org
Rwanda	Yes	Yes	Doug Kirke-Smith	dkirke-smith@poverty-action.org
Sierra Leone	Yes	Yes	Osman Siddiqi	osiddiqi@poverty-action.org
Somalia	Yes	No	-	-
South Africa	Yes	No	-	-
South Sudan	Yes	No	-	-
Sudan	Yes	No	-	-
Syria	Yes	No	-	-
Tajikistan	Yes	No	-	-
Tanzania	Yes	Yes	Rachel Steinacher	rsteinacher@poverty-action.org
Uganda	Yes	Yes	Damien Kirchhoffer	dkirchhoffer@poverty-action.org
Yemen	Yes	No	-	-
Zambia	Yes	Yes	Kris Cox	kcox@poverty-action.org
Zimbabwe	Yes	No	-	-

For work in Latin America outside of Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Paraguay, and Peru, you may also contact Prathap Kasina at bpkasina@poverty-action.org.