



Local & National Knowledge: The DNA of successful implementation



End Violence
Against Children



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH





In 2019, Colombia joined the End Violence Partnership as a Pathfinding Country. In 2020 – even in spite of COVID-19 conditions – the Government of Colombia embarked on an ambitious plan to reduce violence against children. The Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (ICBF) is the main body overseeing the country’s efforts to build a safer world for children. ICBF has taken a multi-pronged approach to ending violence against children:

- Developing a robust National Action Plan based on recently collected Violence Against Children Survey (VACS) data
- Building off existing implementation efforts captured in an INSPIRE mapping exercise
- Training and upskilling INSPIRE competency for policy-and decision-making authorities engaged with implementation, monitoring and scale-up of INSPIRE interventions.

Thanks to co-investment by USAID’s HEARD project, a programme dedicated to improving implementation research worldwide, the End Violence Lab is co-creating the Colombia INSPIRE Coordination Course (CICC) with the ICBF to ensure the translation of skills required for INSPIRE adaptation and scale up are nationally informed and owned.

In this real-time piece, we chat about the power of national knowledge with Dr Arturo Harker Rao, Associate Professor in the School of Government at the Universidad de los Andes, who also serves as an advisor to the ICBF. An economist by training, Arturo has long been evaluating the impact of interventions to improve children’s well-being in Colombia.

While encouraging progress has been made translating INSPIRE evidence-based research into evidenced-based practice, practitioners will often point to a complexity of pathways that characterize research-to-practice processes. Local knowledge plays an important role in ensuring local adaptation of evidence-based practices.

Why is local knowledge in Colombia so important?



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Engaging stakeholders in assessing vulnerability and implementing adaptation interventions is widely regarded to be an important factor for adaptation implementation and success. So too is the idea of fidelity, explains Dr Harker—or remaining ‘faithful’ to the core components of the original INSPIRE strategy. Figuring out how much one can adapt and still maintain good outcomes for children is always a challenge.





What are some concrete examples of how we can use local knowledge in Colombia?

The INSPIRE mapping conducted in Colombia revealed over 150 active INSPIRE interventions, but many of these interventions are not evaluated even though they have been shown to be sustainable.



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This is why impact evaluations are so important.



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What role can local knowledge producers play in the Colombia context?

It takes a multidisciplinary team of researchers, practitioners, implementers, and consumers (parents, service providers and young people themselves) to truly leverage local knowledge.



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In the meantime, supporting more studies that examine how interventions are adapted to improve the fit between interventions and contexts would go a long way to informing strategies for adaptation within the context of implementation. Ideally, such information would not only inform practice but also highlight areas in need of additional research or knowledge development in order to advance the science of adaptation, implementation, and ultimately guide the development of better INSPIRE interventions in the future that can be designed to evolve over time.

Stay tuned to progress in the inspiring Pathfinding Country!

