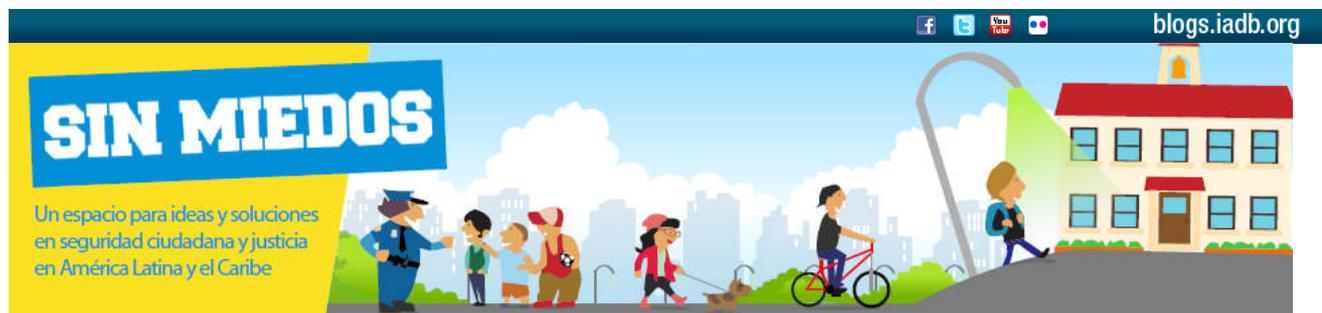


- [Home](#)
- [All blogs](#)



16 JUN 2014

Categories

- [SPANISH Tickets](#) (60)
- [Entries in ENGLISH](#) (17)
- [Tickets PORTUGUESE](#) (6)
- [General](#) (26)
- [Police](#) (28)
- [Social rehabilitation](#) (23)
- [Reports and studies](#) (17)
- [Judicial system](#) (1)
- [Prison systems](#) (4)
- [Domestic violence](#) (9)

## Why crime journalism has to change

By [Guest blogger](#)

Like  Tweet  [g+](#)

Measuring the impact of violence prevention

tags  
[Alcatel IDB](#) [security citizen](#)  
[Colombia](#) [counter narcotics](#) [david Waisburd](#)  
[crime statistics](#) [studies](#) [Fonseca](#)  
[Guatemala](#) [innovation](#)  
[latin america](#) [police](#)  
[reviews](#) [public health](#) [seattle](#)  
[seguimiento](#) [situational prevention](#) [tel](#)  
[aviv](#) [WUF](#) [Africa](#)

By Stephen Handelman

Recently, in New York City, a group of public health professionals and crime experts came together at a [conference](#) to discuss how to apply public health concepts to the "epidemic" of mass incarceration in the United States. "Public health, incarceration and justice issues are inextricably linked, in Both the causes of the incarceration rate, and in the solutions we need to put together," Linda Fried, Dean of Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, Told the group.

It was another example of the profound change in attitudes towards crime and punishment now underway in the U.S. With the world's largest prison population-some 2.2 million adults-increase increasing numbers of people from all political ideologies have Begun to not realize that the "tough on crime" policies of previous Decades Have Been counter-productive. They've destroyed families, sent some of America's poorest communities into a cycle of decay and neglect, and not have had a disproportionate impact on African Americans and Latinos.

There Were not almost Journalists conference at the Columbia University. And that's a problem.



Milton Jung - Flickr / Creative Commons

While a number of U.S. reporters have Begun to Deepen Their coverage of These issues, too many news outlets still feed the public a sensational daily diet of murder and scandal.

That I suspect the situation is much the same in Latin America. Pablo Bachelet, in his recent [No Fears](#) [blog](#) , Set out the problem very well: Journalists have a hard time convincing Their editors (and sometimes

Twitter: [bid\\_seguridad](#)

- RT [@ PortalSocialBra](#) : População Carcerária no Brasil passa 715 thousand diz CNJ <http://t.co/SjcB04afgK> [agenciabrasil @ cc @ BID Segurid](#) " 6:08 PM June 09, 2014
- Are we addicted to plastic bags? In Brazil alone 1.5 million of them are distributed every day. (In Portuguese) [10:30 a.m. June 07, 2014](#)
- RT [@ InSightCrime\\_es](#) : Most violent robberies in Nicaragua are committed with weapons such as knives or machetes. <http://t.co/l7aNsOApTi> 2:01 PM June 06, 2014

Records

- [June 2014](#)
- [May 2014](#)
- [April 2014](#)
- [March 2014](#)
- [February 2014](#)
- [January 2014](#)
- [December 2013](#)
- [November 2013](#)
- [October 2013](#)
- [September 2013](#)
- [August 2011](#)

Poll

Sorry, there are no polls available at the moment.  
Disclaimer

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this blog are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Inter-American Development Bank, its policies, the Board of Governors or its member countries.

The views Expressed in this blog Are those of the authors and do not Necessarily Reflect the views of the Inter-American

Follow [@bid\\_seguridad](#)

Authors



[Pablo Bachelet](#)

Senior Communications Specialist, IDB



[Mauricio García Mejía](#)

IDB Specialist MOS



[Nathalie Alvarado](#)

Coordinator IDB Citizen Security and Justice



[Jorge Srur](#)

Public Safety Specialist

Development Bank, its Management, its Board of Executive Directors or its member Governments.

Themselves) That it is worth the extra effort and expense to go beyond the headlines to uncover the deeper stories of violence prevention.

Judging from the headlines alone, Latin America is awash in murderous drug cartel wars, corruption and other forms of official malfeasance.

Sure, that's part of the reality. But it's not the only reality-as I discovered When our Center on Media, Crime and Justice Organized, With the support of the Tinker Foundation, a special workshop for Mexican and Central American Journalists on "Justice Challenges in the Americas" in Washington DC in April.

Journalists arrived with laptops bulging with projects for examining the play in play Reforms In Their country clubs on sentencing, corrections and Judicial Procedures, in police strategy, and violence prevention Efforts-to name just a few. They Were eager to compare notes with U.S. reporters and experts about the challenges facing very like the U.S. criminal justice system.

But in order for them to succeed-that is, to get Their Stories printed, published or broadcast online-justice Authorities (and yes, NGOs) Also need to change attitudes towards the traditional Their press.

Here are a few of the basic principles That need to be part of re-thinking the relationship Between criminal justice reporters and the state-and by implication with civil society in general:

1. Transparency: Everyone makes mistakes. But covering them up is poor public policy. Judges, prosecutors and police chiefs Too Often Perceive Either the press as an "enemy" or a force to be manipulated. Providing wider access to official records and institutions, similar to "sunshine" laws in many U.S. states, is the only healthy That approach can buttress democracy.
2. Partnership: The press and government will always have, and Rightly so, an uneasy relationship. But keeping Journalists perpetually "outside the gates" Ensures That worthy innovations and Reforms will be Reported superficially. Authorities need to Recognize the media's critical role in develop developing public understanding and support for the "new thinking" at work in many Latin American justice ministries and think tanks.
3. Education: The changing media environment in Both the U.S. and Latin America Often busy newsrooms leaves with few resources or time to Develop the skills needed to report the "new" story-such as justice statistics. This can lead to misleading or, worse, undermines Reforms That destructive coverage. A good example is the recent [U.S. reporting](#) on the so-called heroin epidemic. Training In These new skills is crucial.

There are no easy answers to Developing and Fostering the kind of reporting required to address the complex issues of 21<sup>st</sup>-century justice systems. But without Such reporting, the effort to create safer and more equitable societies will be crippled from the start.

*Stephen Handelman is director of the Center on Media, Crime and Justice at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York; and managing editor of Americas Quarterly. He is a veteran journalist and author.*

0

Tags: [crime](#) , [journalism](#) , [media](#) , [police](#) , [reporting](#)

Tags: [crime](#) , [journalism](#) , [media](#) , [police](#) , [reporting](#)

### Comment on this article

|                      |                                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | Name (*)                          |
| <input type="text"/> | Email (will not be published) (*) |
| <input type="text"/> | Website                           |



[Andres Restrepo](#)

Lead Specialist in Public Safety



[Roberto Obando](#)

Consultant in Public Safety

IDB



[Jennifer Peirce](#)

Consultant in Public Safety



[Lina Marmolejo](#)

Consultant in Public Safety

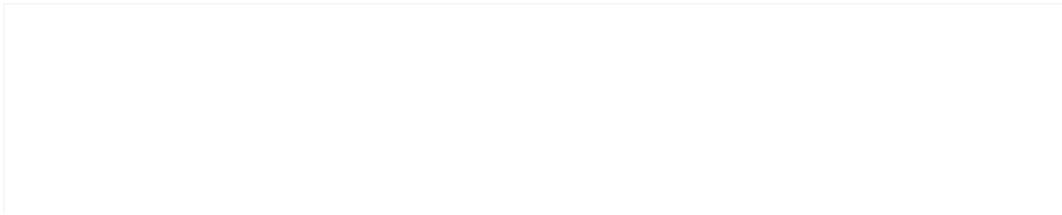
Recibe nuestras alertas instantáneas via Feedburner

### Recent Posts

- [The changes we need in covering crime](#)
- [Why crime journalism has to change](#)
- [Sleeping with the Enemy: Lessons to prevent violence against women](#)
- [Five reasons not to have firearms in your home](#)
- [Let's talk about journalism and violence prevention](#)

### Recommended links

- [IDB Citizen Security](#)
- [Regional System of Standardized Safety Indicators \(SES\)](#)
- [Justice Studies Center of the Americas \(CEJA\)](#)
- [Center for Studies on Public Security, University of Chile \(CESC\)](#)
- [Alertamerica, Hemispheric Security Observatory](#)
- [WikiCrimes: Mapping crimes collaboratively](#)
- [Central American Observatory on Violence \(OCAVI\)](#)
- [Research Institute of the United Nations Crime and Justice \(UNCRI\)](#)
- [Justice Initiative of the Soros Foundation](#)
- [International Security Studies - Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars](#)



Add Comment

- Notify me of follow-up comments by email.
- Notify me of new posts by email.

[View all communities](#)

© 2014 [Inter-American Development Bank](#)

»