



Promoting fair and
effective criminal justice

Penal Reform International's approach to organisational learning

Why PRI is committed to organisational learning

PRI's work is dependent on learning from our own experience, our partners and the wider criminal justice sector. We seek to share our experience and analysis with others and aim to use our learning to influence policy-making and practice. In other words, we recognise the importance of organisational learning and are committed to developing our capacity to learn and share across the organisation.

In order to take a more systematic approach to learning and sharing, we have developed a strategy to provide our staff, partners and other stakeholders with a clear statement of how we take a learning approach in all of our work and what this means for PRI.

We believe that taking a more strategic and systematic approach to organisational learning will help PRI strengthen its resilience; support the implementation of our Strategic Plan 2015-2020; be more innovative; and strengthen our profile as a leading organisation in the field of penal reform and criminal justice. We also believe that learning supports good management practice.

Taking a strategic approach to organisational learning

Our vision for learning in PRI is a key element of our Learning and Sharing Strategy and is characterised by the following:

- We are better able to achieve our mission and build our reputation as a result of what we learn and share internally and externally.
- Our work is based on good practices concerning human rights and criminal justice that are developed within PRI and influenced by good practices globally and international human rights and criminal justice standards.
- Our knowledge and expertise influences the design and implementation of all our work.
- We recognise that learning involves complex inter-connections between our work at local, national, regional and global levels.
- We are able to retain and draw on our organisational memory making it much less likely that we repeat mistakes and more likely that we build on our successes.
- PRI's learning influences and is influenced by other actors in the penal and wider criminal justice systems making us more influential and closely networked.
- We learn from unplanned outcomes as well as our successes.
- Knowledge and expertise is shared freely between Regional Offices and with Head Office and our partners.
- There is a rich web of interconnections between staff. There is no place for silos.
- Learning thrives individually and collectively – all staff are willing to share their knowledge and teamwork is particularly valued.

- Knowledge and expertise are shared up, down and across the organisation

To work towards this vision, we have identified five main outcomes that we want to achieve through all the work we do:

1. PRI has a strong profile and plays an active role in the wider sector drawing on evidence of high impact work.
2. A reflective and strategic approach to programme development that helps to strengthen PRI's financial resilience.
3. Policy work draws on as well as informs PRI's project work to create a strong two-way connection between policy and projects.
4. A learning and reflective approach to project cycle management that increases the quality and impact of PRI's projects.
5. Skills, knowledge and capacity of staff are continuously developed and every PRI staff member is a reflective practitioner.

For each of these outcomes we have devised a set of practical action points, indicators and a road map to achieve them. Recognising the importance of an enabling environment for learning, we are committed to strengthening our learning culture and making sure the necessary infrastructure, systems and support mechanisms and where necessary other resources for learning are in place.

The Project Management Cycle

Learning, particularly from our own (and our partners') experience, makes a crucial contribution at each stage of the project cycle: project development, project inception, project implementation and project evaluation. At the project development stage, we use 'peer assist' and 'failure avoidance' sessions to learn from our own and our partners' experience; at the project inception stage we aim to include a Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) budget line for a MEL plan in every project application. During project implementation we use stakeholder meetings and mid-term critical learning workshops with our implementation partners to identify learning points and put them into practice. Finally, at the project evaluation stage, we use the MEL plan developed at the inception stage to shape the design of our evaluations and ensure we include broader learning questions to help us capture good practice models and recommendations for current and future programmes.

In these ways, by using organizational learning to strengthen the linkages between policy, projects, people and resources we hope to strengthen our ability to improve the impact of our work and to achieve our mission.

September 2016