



Developing effective probation

with Penal Reform
International



For over 25 years Penal Reform International (PRI) has been working with a wide range of stakeholders to improve criminal justice systems and reduce the unnecessary use of imprisonment, including by promoting and developing effective probation systems. International standards and good practice collected from across the globe are the foundation of our work.

PRI's project-funded reform work on probation systems is based on partnerships with government authorities, probation departments and NGO partners.

Effective probation services can have a transformative impact on the lives of offenders and the justice system. They reduce stigmatisation, contribute to successful reintegration and build skills and resilience to break the prison-poverty cycle, as well as reducing recidivism rates.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 16 IS CLOSELY LINKED WITH CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM.

FAIR AND EFFECTIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS BUILD TRUST BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THE STATE, WHICH IS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT FOR A PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.



PRI, *The Sustainable Development Goals and Criminal Justice*, 2017.

Evidence-based and impactful

We are committed to strengthening our ability to capture and communicate what does and does not work and to learn from experience.

Significant successes and sustainable impacts have been evidenced in external evaluations of our work, through the voices of probationers and criminal justice actors who work with us to improve practice.

IN PRACTICE:

→ In various countries including Tunisia, PRI initiated the establishment of probation systems as a means of reducing prison overcrowding.

→ Community service orders increased significantly and compliance levels for such orders reached above 90 per cent in three pilot regions of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania during a project implemented by PRI.

Innovative

We identify gaps and propose innovative solutions. We test, measure and document creative approaches to criminal justice reform.

IN PRACTICE:

→ In the Tunisian city of Sousse, the first probation office was opened in 2013 as part of a PRI project to pilot a probation system with local authorities. Following its success, in 2017 six more offices will be opened around the country. Priority interventions were identified through a needs assessment and this has included small grants for 24 placements for offenders, to increase community services and drafting policies to progress towards a child-friendly and gender-sensitive approach.



Human rights-based and benefitting from international expertise

We base our work on internationally agreed standards on human rights and criminal justice, including the UN Tokyo Rules and Bangkok Rules.

Our work at the international, regional and national level allows us to benefit from best practice globally and react to emerging trends.

IN PRACTICE:

→ Through a pilot project in Kenya, PRI developed a model for gender-specific probation in line with the UN Bangkok Rules on women offenders, representing the first of its kind.

→ Work in Armenia, Georgia, Jordan, Kazakhstan and Tunisia led to policies and practices on child-friendly probation systems in line with international standards, including pre-sentence report templates for improved decision-making by courts in children's cases.



Experience in different contexts

Our work spans various regions, and includes working with countries at different levels of development and with varying levels of resources. We are responsive to different political and social contexts, and adapt how we work accordingly. Our approach is culturally sensitive.

IN PRACTICE:

→ Practical assistance, including training, is delivered by PRI across various countries, from Pakistan and Algeria to Georgia and in East Africa.

→ In Yemen, despite the ongoing war, PRI has been able to work on reducing the impact of criminal justice processes on children and women through early diversion programmes with police.

NOW I KNOW MORE ABOUT MY RIGHTS AND MY OPPORTUNITIES. I HAVE CHANGED MANY THINGS IN A POSITIVE WAY AS A RESULT OF THE TRAINING.

Woman serving probation in Georgia, commenting on a training workshop organised by PRI with partner organisation Women in Business.

PRI'S IN-COUNTRY OFFICES HAVE THE VITAL ABILITY TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN LOCAL CULTURES AND INTERNATIONAL THINKING.

Martin Seddon, independent expert.



“IF PRI DOESN'T KEEP PUSHING
FOR ALTERNATIVES, NO ONE
WILL BE TALKING ABOUT IT.”

Tunisian judge, PRI's 2014 *Annual Report*.

Sustainable

PRI ensures that systems and approaches can continue beyond our intervention. We focus on both the operational side (ensuring practical needs are met) and changing the mindset and attitudes of stakeholders, from the judiciary and senior officials to probation officers. Our approach involves adapting tools and systems already in place so that they can be more effective, as well as training using best practice.

IN PRACTICE:

→ In the Moroccan city of Al-Mouhamdieh, PRI's work with authorities to set up a probation system included developing IT software so community services could function beyond PRI's intervention.

In partnership

We work in cooperative partnerships with governments, the judiciary, probation departments and officers, and civil society.

Our approach ensures work is locally-led and consultative.

PRI also facilitates study visits between countries for probation officers, judges and prison officials to enable experience to be shared with counterparts.



Practical and comprehensive

Our work on probation varies from country to country, taking into account the national institutions, legal framework, and social and cultural context. We give detailed and comprehensive technical assistance on law reforms, fund necessary equipment for probation officers to be able to carry out their duties, develop and help to change systems, as well as skill development and training for professionals.

IN PRACTICE:

→ In three Georgian cities, rehabilitation centres for children were established with NGO partners, providing access to legal, psycho-social and recreational services.

→ PRI's work to develop a child-friendly probation system in Kazakhstan, with UNICEF, represented the first of its kind in the region and led to the adoption of key legislation and the opening of child-friendly rooms where children received help from social workers for the first time.

Gender-specific systems for women

As the leading NGO with expertise on the UN Bangkok Rules and implementation of gender-specific criminal justice systems, PRI developed a Toolbox of materials to assist in the implementation of the Rules and has gathered extensive experience on technical assistance and training criminal justice stakeholders.

IN PRACTICE:

→ PRI developed and co-implemented a pioneering pilot project in Kenya which resulted in a model for reform, *Gender-sensitive community service and probation orders*.

→ In Georgia, we have worked with NGO partners to provide rehabilitation services to women serving probation who have experienced violence, stigma and discrimination.

FROM CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT TO IMPLEMENTATION, THE PROJECT HAS BEEN OURS, AS THOSE WITH THE RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE. WE AND PRI HAVE THE SAME GOALS. WE ARE TOGETHER.

Clement Okech, Assistant Director, Kenya Probation and Aftercare Service, remarking on working with PRI.



[I] WAS VERY IMPRESSED WITH THE CLEAR PASSION SHOWN FOR ENSURING THE BEST OUTCOMES FOR WOMEN AND HOW ALL PROBATION OFFICERS HAD EMBRACED THE NEW [GENDER-SENSITIVE] APPROACH.

Omar Phoenix Khan, Justice Focus, External Evaluator on PRI's pilot project in Kenya on gender-sensitive community sanctions.

Design of replicable models and approaches

From concept to evaluation, PRI is committed to ensuring that the impact of its work is measured and documented so that feasible models can be replicated elsewhere.

IN PRACTICE:

→ Internationally, PRI shares solutions, models and information on effective probation at forums including the UN Crime Commission and World Congresses on Probation.

→ Published models include a resource pack: *On probation: models of good practice for alternatives to prison*, and a model for reform: *Gender-sensitive community service and probation orders*.



Contributing to the achievement of the sustainable development goals

PRI's work to establish and improve probation systems contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals.

As well as Goal 16, which recognises peaceful and inclusive societies and access to justice as essential to sustainable development, other relevant goals include Goals 1, 4, and 8 – on poverty, education and economic growth.

Implementing these Goals in an integrated way helps prevent crime and reduce recidivism through building skills and social reintegration of offenders.

Goals 5 and 10 on gender equality and inequality within and among countries are also directly relevant to probation services, based on economic empowerment of offenders and improving lives.

THANKS TO PRI, ALTERNATIVES IN SOUSSE ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK. SOUSSE IS BECOMING A GOOD PRACTICE THAT OTHER GOVERNORATES WILL FOLLOW.

Abdel Hamid Obada, General Prosecutor, Sousse Governorate, Tunisia.

DONORS WHO HAVE GENEROUSLY FUNDED OUR WORK ON PROBATION:

British Embassies in Astana, Bishkek and Rabat
Embassy of the Netherlands to Kazakhstan
Embassy of Norway to Kazakhstan
European Union
European Union Delegation to Kazakhstan
Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO)
US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL)
The Netherlands
NORLAG (Norwegian Mission of Rule of Law Advisers to Georgia)
Open Society Institute
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ)
UK Government (DFID)
UNICEF
UN Women
United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF)

Penal Reform International (PRI) is an independent, non-governmental organisation that develops and promotes fair, effective and proportionate responses to criminal justice problems worldwide.

We currently have programmes in the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the South Caucasus, and work with partners in South Asia. To receive our monthly e-newsletter, please sign up at www.penalreform.org/keep-informed.

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Photos: **Cover:** Rehabilitation project, Kyrgyzstan, Maxim Shubovich 2013. **Page 3:** National Probation Agency, Georgia, 2014. **Page 4:** Training for probation officers, Kazakhstan, 2016. **Page 5:** Training on the Bangkok Rules, Kenya, 2015. **Pages 6–7:** Community service project in Uganda, Will Boase 2015. **Page 8:** Roundtable meeting on early conditional release, Armenia, 2015. **Page 9:** Training workshop for probation officers, Kazakhstan, 2012. **Page 10:** Training programme for probation officers, Georgia, 2013.

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