

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Final Technical Evaluation of the Project:

“Connecting Stories Beyond Bars”

Funded by Porticus Foundation

1. Introduction

These ToR specify the details for the final technical evaluation of the above-mentioned project implemented by Prison Insider in 6 countries (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, France, Mexico and the United Kingdom), and financed by the Porticus Foundation. The evaluation will focus on the assessment of the implemented activities (in accordance with the Agreement between the donor and Prison Insider) and whether the activities lead to the achievement of the planned results as well as to the project objectives. As a result of this evaluation, recommendations from the evaluator are expected in order to improve the quality of future projects.

2. Background Information

The organisation

Prison Insider is an information platform on prisons in the world. Its objective is to inform, compare and share testimonials on conditions of detention, with regards to fundamental rights. Its work contributes to the fight against torture and the prevention of human rights violations. The platform collects, verifies and synthesizes existing data. It produces knowledge and makes it accessible to the greatest number of people – in accessible language and in English, French and Spanish. All its information is made public via its website, with dissemination via newsletters and social media. Prison Insider also facilitates a diversified network of actors involved throughout the world. Its purpose is to make information available for action.

Brief description of the project

The Connecting Stories Beyond Bars project aims to empower and amplify the voices of organisations of the relatives of people in prison in six countries: Argentina, Brazil, Canada (Quebec), France, Mexico, and the United Kingdom.

The project will help to promote the recognition of organisations of the families of people in prison as advocates of change. It is based on the ideas that their voices must be heard and that they can play a unique role if they are empowered, trained, and well equipped.

Connecting Stories Beyond Bars has two objectives:

- To strengthen the capacity of organisations of the families of people in prison and networks by providing training in partnership with partner organisations
- To address prejudice against people in prison and their loved ones by producing and disseminating multimedia content in collaboration with the partners, in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

The project began by mapping out organisations of the families of people in prison. Bilateral and group meetings were then organised to kick off the collaboration and carry out a needs assessment, which established a collective framework for the training sessions to be organised in each country. The editorial line as well as the formats and content (interviews, testimonials) are developed with the partners.

The project takes place between November 2023 and October 2025.

Other than incarcerated individuals themselves, millions more people experience the impact of incarceration from the other side of the bars: they are family members, loved ones, communities. In many countries, families of people in prison are affected by imprisonment and the stigma attached to it. But family members can also be agents of change. Around the globe, they are increasingly organising themselves in social movements, working alongside lawyers on litigation activities, advocating for change in the criminal justice frameworks, engaging in the fight against torture and inhumane treatments. They are becoming more organised at local, national, regional and international levels.

Connecting Stories Beyond Bars is a project that was set up in coherence and as a natural expansion of Prison Insider's experience, networks, and achievements. Its vision for the future is that organisations of the families of people in prison are recognised and empowered as advocates of change, once equipped with tools to feed into policy reform. The ultimate beneficiaries of the positive social change that this project aims to contribute to are people deprived of liberty and their loved ones, civil society organisations and policy makers.

Problem analysis

We need to talk about prison systems. Over the course of history and in a very short time, deprivation of liberty became the benchmark punishment. During the 18th century, the punitive prison institution put an end to arbitrary practices and replaced corporal punishment, first in the United States and then in Europe. The prison model, part of the humanist vision of the Enlightenment, quickly showed its flaws. However, it was largely exported to the colonies of the time, where it proved to be particularly unsuited to local cultures. Today, more than 11 million people are incarcerated around the world. The inequalities are multi-layered in local, territorial, racial, and socio-economic terms: not everyone is equal when it comes to incarceration. The majority of those behind bars are poor, political opponents and/or come from ethnic and racial minorities. All are most vulnerable. Prison is at the end of a penal chain that targets, directly or indirectly, specific categories of people.

From one region to another, from a country to another, sometimes within the prison, the treatment of those incarcerated varies considerably: access to legal assistance, to activities, to healthcare, to decent hygiene conditions. After completing their sentence, the conditions of their release further hinder their ability to reintegrate society. Without preparation and support, without financial resources, and with the stigma of imprisonment, the return to society is complicated. Involving communities and raising awareness in the general public are key to allow change: prisons are not an external element, but an integral part of the society.

Bringing lived experience to the table to inspire change. Prison Insider takes a multimedia approach to information and combines factual information with lived experience. One of the three pillars of our organisation's missions is to share testimonials of those who have experienced incarceration, be it from inside or outside prison walls: people in prison, loved ones, prison staff. Prison Insider invites stories of resistance, resilience and change and provides a space where the silent voices of those impacted by incarceration can be heard.

Family members can also be agents of change. Around the globe, they are increasingly organising themselves in social movements, working alongside lawyers on litigation activities, advocating for change in the criminal justice frameworks, engaging in the fight against torture and inhumane treatments. "They" are most often women: mothers, wives, sisters, daughters of people in prison. In this sense, the gender lens is crucial to understand the impact of imprisonment on different communities. The voices of people in prison's family members, however, are still vastly underheard. Their issues are often overlooked when discussing prison reform, human rights and gender, as noted by the [Red Internacional de Mujeres Familiares de Personas Privadas de la Libertad](#). We observe a momentum where more initiatives are being developed by incarcerated people's loved ones. They are becoming more organised in different levels: local, national, regional and international. Voices are raising and this project will elevate their platform.

Target group

The ultimate beneficiaries of the positive social change that this project aims to contribute to:

- People deprived of liberty and their loved ones
- Civil society organisations
- Policy makers

The direct beneficiaries and participants of the project activities:

- Organisations led by families of people in prison in Argentina, Brazil, Canada (Quebec), France, Mexico and United Kingdom: (one organisation per country).

Summary of the action

LOGIC MODEL				
Social change goal	Outcomes	Outputs	Activities	
Prisoner's families' organisations are recognised and empowered as advocates of change. They are equipped with the tools to feed into policy reform.	1. Capacity of prisoners' families' organisations and networks is strengthened.	1.1 Prisoner's families' organisations and networks are identified and accompanied by the project team in the countries and regions covered.	1.1.1 Mapping prisoners' families' organisations and networks (regional and global), including Porticus partners	
			1.1.2 Organising bilateral and group meetings with these organisations and networks and needs assessment	
		1.2 Prisoner's families' organisations and networks are provided with necessary training	1.2.1 Offering training on issues identified with the partner organisations and networks	
	2. Prejudice is addressed through multimedia content produced and disseminated in collaboration with the partner organisations and networks, and is made accessible in four languages (EN, FR, ES, PT)	2.1 Multimedia content is produced on the basis of the editorial line built in collaboration with the partner organisations.	2.1.1 Elaborating an editorial line with the partner organisations, and establishing the formats and the content	
			2.1.2 Producing the multimedia content (recording and editing)	
		2.2 Multimedia content is translated in four languages.	2.2.1 Subtitling in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese	
		2.3 An online event launching the multimedia content is organised involving partners of the project and main stakeholders.	2.3.1. Organising an online event launching the multimedia contact involving partners and key stakeholders (policy makers, CSOs, foundations)	
		2.4 A social media campaign in line with the project editorial line is implemented and increases the global reach of the project results.	2.4.1 Planning and implementing a media and social media campaign to disseminate the findings	

3. Purpose of the evaluation

An independent external evaluation is to be carried out at the end of the project to assess the relevance and coherence of the results in relation to the initially established objectives. The purpose is to make an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of the above-mentioned project, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both Prison Insider and the donor.

Principles underpinning the approach to the evaluation are:

- Impartiality and independence of the evaluation process from the programming and implementation functions
- Credibility of the evaluation, through use of appropriately skilled and independent experts and the transparency of the evaluation process, including wide dissemination of results; and
- Usefulness of the evaluation findings and recommendations, through timely presentation of relevant, clear and concise information to project management and stakeholders involved in future strategic planning and potential funding decisions. This includes contributing to the analysis of end-of-project monitoring and evaluation indicators and providing actionable suggestions to strengthen M&E systems.

The evaluator/s will have access to the following information:

- Agreement and pre-agreement documents.
- Minutes of the meetings and other events relevant to the project implementation
- Interim reports
- Financial reports
- Monitoring & Evaluation tools
- Materials produced throughout the project
- Other documents produced during the implementation of the project.

4. Evaluation criteria

- **Relevance:** the appropriateness of project objectives to the problems that it was supposed to address, and to the physical and policy environment within which it operated. Was the project designed in a way that is relevant to reach its goals? It should include an assessment of the quality of project preparation and design – i.e. the logic and completeness of the project planning process, and the internal logic and coherence of the project design.
- **Efficiency:** the fact that the project results have been achieved at reasonable cost, i.e. how well inputs/means have been converted into activities, in terms of quality, quantity and time, and the quality of the results achieved. Was the project run in an efficient way? This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same results, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted.
- **Effectiveness:** an assessment of the contribution made by results to achievement of the project purpose, and how assumptions have affected project achievements. To which degree did the activities meet the objectives and results set out in the project (as outlined in the logical model)?
- **Impact:** the effect of the project on its wider environment, and its contribution to the wider policy or sector objectives (as summarised in the project's social change goal).
- **Sustainability:** an assessment of the likelihood of benefits produced by the project to continue to flow after external funding has ended, and with particular reference to factors of ownership by beneficiaries, policy support, economic and financial factors, socio-cultural aspects, gender equality, environmental aspects, and institutional and management capacity.

5. Additional evaluation themes and reporting requirements

The final report should also discuss and provide conclusions and recommendations on the following questions:

- **Matching needs:** did the project/activities meet the relevant needs of the beneficiaries?
- **Internal coherence:** were the result indicators and their means of verification adequate? What possible adjustments would the evaluator/s recommend?
- **Gender mainstreaming:** to what extent did the project succeed in including a gender perspective?
- **Spillover:** were there any unforeseen positive or negative effects of the activities?
- **Synergies:** to what extent were synergies achieved with other activities, as well as with local/international stakeholders?
- **Unmet needs:** which unmet needs did the evaluators identify that would be relevant for Prison Insider to look into in an eventual continuation of the project?
- **Lessons learned:** identify lessons learned and provide recommendations.

6. Methodology of the evaluation

The consultancy will be based primarily on a desk review complemented by remote interviews and consultations.

- Desk review:
 - Project contractual documents and amendments
 - Project reports, including mid-term and progress reports
 - Monitoring & Evaluation tools and collected data, including project indicators
 - Multimedia content produced during the project
 - Relevant external documents related to prison systems, family advocacy, and human rights
 - Stakeholder feedback and communication collected during the project
- Remote consultations and interviews:
 - Interviews with key project stakeholders, including Prison Insider staff and partner organisations, conducted remotely when needed
 - Remote interviews or focus groups with representatives of organisations of families' of people in prison, where feasible and ethically appropriate
- Data analysis and triangulation:
 - Qualitative analysis of multimedia content and qualitative data
 - Quantitative analysis of monitoring data and project indicators
 - Triangulation of findings from multiple sources to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability
- Ethical considerations:
 - Ensure informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for sensitive information during data collection
 - Follow ethical guidelines concerning research with populations in a situation of vulnerability, including people in prison and their families
- Validation and reporting:
 - Presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations to Prison Insider and relevant stakeholders for feedback and validation
 - Submission of a final report including conclusions, lessons learned, and actionable recommendations for project improvement and potential future phases.

7. Deliverables

All deliverables are to be submitted to Prison Insider in English, electronically.

Deliverables include:

- An inception report, to be submitted one week after the beginning of the evaluation, explaining the evaluation methodology, detailed work plan and timetable for the consultancy
- A draft of the final report, to be submitted for review and feedback by Prison Insider and key stakeholders. The timeline for this will be agreed upon during the inception phase
- A final report to be submitted at the end of the evaluation.

The results will be presented by the service provider to Prison Insider project team, in person or by videoconference, in winter 2025/2026.

8. Structure of the final evaluation report

The final evaluation report will be structured as follows:

0. Executive summary

1. Main section:

a. Introduction:

i. Project description

ii. Evaluation objectives and methodology

b. Analysis of the findings according to the evaluation criteria

2. Conclusions and recommendations

3. Lessons learned

4. Annexes:

a. ToR Evaluation

b. Names of the evaluators

c. Logical framework of the project

d. Map of the project area

e. List of actors consulted

f. Literature and documentation consulted

g. Other technical annexes

9. Indicative Timetable

The consultancy will last 10 to 12 weeks and it is expected to start at the end of September 2025.

The final external evaluation will be conducted primarily during the concluding phase of the project and may extend shortly after the official project end date to allow for comprehensive data collection, analysis, and reporting.

While key data collection and stakeholder consultations are expected to take place during the last one to two months of the project implementation period, the evaluation report will be finalised and submitted within a few weeks after project completion.

This timing ensures that:

- All relevant project documentation and monitoring data are available and up to date;
- Stakeholders have sufficient time to provide feedback and reflections on the project outcomes;
- The evaluation captures the most complete and accurate picture of the project's achievements and challenges.

The anticipated timeline for the evaluation activities will be agreed upon during the inception phase, with the final report expected approximately 4 weeks after the project end date (October 31st 2025).

The tentative schedule is as follows:

- Week 1: contract signing and onboarding, initial briefing with Prison Insider team. Preparation and submission of inception report;
- Week 2-3: validation of the inception report. Desk review of core documents, reports, multimedia content, M&E data;
- Week 4: desk review and initial meetings with Prison Insider;

- Week 5-6: interviews with project staff, partners and key stakeholders; development of a survey for impact measurement, according to M&E tools;
- Week 7-8: data analysis and triangulation; drafting of evaluation findings
- Week 9-10: submission of draft final report to Prison Insider for review
- Week 10-12: review period and finalisation and submission of the final evaluation report.

10. Budget

Financial proposals must be below a maximum of 10 000 €, taxes included, and must distinguish between fees and per diems from other expenses. All other unforeseen costs will be borne by the evaluator/s.

11. Expected profile

The evaluator/s is expected to:

- Have sound knowledge of the issues involved in the information/awareness-raising/international solidarity sectors and the promotion of human rights
- Have extensive experience on similar evaluations of civil society projects in the field of human rights on an international scale, with a proven record delivering professional results
- Have sound knowledge of evaluation and data-collection methods
- Be able to communicate effectively in French, English and Spanish. Portuguese is a plus
- Have process management skills, such as facilitation skills
- Excellent ability to analyse, summarise, listen and observe
- Postgraduate degree (Master's or equivalent) in project management or law, political science with significant experience in project management
- At least 5 years' professional experience in project design, implementation and evaluation.

12. How to apply

Interested candidates are requested to submit an electronic copy of their expression of interest/proposal by June 30th 2025, with the subject REF: 10/2025 Final Evaluation Connecting Stories Beyond Bars to Nathália Keller Rorato: programmes@prison-insider.com.

Candidates must forward:

- 4 pages (max) letter of motivation indicating:
 - o The consultants' suitability for the assignment and match with previous work experience, qualifications etc.
 - o A methodology section
 - o A work plan section and suggested timetable.
 - o A detailed financial proposal, including all costs related to the execution of the evaluation (consultancy fees, travel if applicable, translation, etc.)
 - o Provisional availability to fulfil the consultancy as per the timeframes indicated in these Terms of Reference
 - o Any other element deemed useful.
- Curriculum Vitae of the consultant(s) involved, outlining relevant experience.

The following conditions apply:

- The selected evaluator/s must not have held a salaried or voluntary management position at Prison Insider for at least 3 years
- The selected evaluator/s must not have been directly involved in the design and/or implementation of the project.

Enquiries regarding the expression of interest/proposal process may be directed to Nathália Keller Rorato, Head of projects and development: programmes@prison-insider.com

Evaluation Criteria

The selected evaluator/s will be chosen according to the selection method based on:

- Technical offer: understanding of the terms of reference, methodology, experience of the candidate/s
- Financial offer: rates, overall offer corresponding to the available budget.

The technical evaluation will respect the following evaluation grid:

Criteria	Points
Technical offer	
Understanding of the terms of reference, presentation of the methodology	10
Profile and experience of the evaluator/s, including:	
Expertise and skills	4
References	3
Provisional timetable for work / estimated costs	3
Financial offer	10
Total	30

Once the bids have been received and analysed, Prison Insider reserves the right to negotiate the proposals with the pre-selected service providers.

Prison Insider also reserves the right not to select any service provider if no offer is deemed satisfactory.

On request, Prison Insider may provide documents relating to the project, which must be treated as strictly confidential by the service provider.

In the same way, any document provided by the service provider will be considered confidential.

Calendar

- 30 June 2025: deadline for receipt of bids
- 1 to 18 July 2025: selection and choice of service providers
- September 2025 to November 2025: duration of consultancy

Contact

Nathália Keller Rorato, Head of projects and development

programmes@prison-insider.com

All information about the structure is available on the website:

www.prisoninsider.com.