

As we say goodbye to a very fruitful 2016, we look with inspiration and enthusiasm into a 2017 full of promises and challenges as well. The world public policy and leadership challenges now more than ever require that we strategically think about where we can best contribute. P&I is undergoing that reflection and we have defined some good causes to get engaged in.

Celebrating our achievements

During 2016 we have been inspired by the following challenges:

1) Enhance our understanding on how context at the level of government institutions enables or hinders chance to use knowledge to inform policy.

2) Help policymakers enhance their capacities to promote the use of knowledge in policy making, with a special emphasis on agents of change.

3) Help think tanks strengthen their capacity in what we consider crucial organisational issues: funding, monitoring, evaluation and learning on policy influence, designing a policy relevant agenda, developing innovative data visualisations, writing publications for impact, and managing and governing their institutions.

4) Deepen our commitment to improve how we collaborate with others and how we share our thinking and experience with a wider community.

Achievements

To address these challenges, we have happily developed the following activities, thanks to good partnerships with others inspired by similar intentions:

1) We published the study [“Going beyond ‘Context matters’”](#), supported by INASP. This knowledge systematization effort was carried out with the crucial help of others: [four mentors from Africa, Canada and Latin America](#), and more than 50 policy makers, practitioners and donors worldwide that have been interviewed by the research team.

This effort resulted in 3 products:

- [A conceptual framework](#) composed by 6 main dimensions
- [A practical paper](#) with concrete implications for diverse users and emerging practices to improve the link between knowledge and policy
- [An interactive product](#) that summarizes the main content and lessons of the study

The study was launched in a [webinar with 50 policy makers, researchers, practitioners and donors worldwide](#). It was also presented in the «[What Works Global Summit](#)» in London, and in the Symposium «[Approaches to Capacity Building for Evidence-Informed Policy Making](#)», organized by INASP in Accra.

A free series of webinars was launched to explore in depth the six main dimensions of context and discuss how we can concretely incorporate them into our interventions and work. The series counts with the participation of experienced policy makers who shared lessons on each dimension with a community of colleagues.

So far, two webinars of the series took place:

- [Webinar #1 on the Dimension “Macro-context”](#)
- [Webinar #2 on the Dimension “Resources”](#)

2)

Building on the [2015 course for Latin American policy makers](#), with the collaboration of the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), and the support of INASP, we adapted and delivered the course “[Leaders of change: helping African policymakers develop their capacity to promote the use of knowledge in policy](#)”.

20 policy makers in Ghana, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe enhanced their capacity to use and promote the use of knowledge in policy making and public management.

We conducted a light touch review of the course delivered in 2015 to identify and understand occurred changes and potential for new actions.

The main lessons of both courses were shared in a panel on capacity building at the Symposium «[Approaches to Capacity Building for Evidence-Informed Policy Making](#)», organized by INASP in Accra.

‘Extremely relevant course content and grounded in the realities of the policy space’ (African policy maker, participant of the course “Leaders of change”)

‘The course was of great assistance in improving how my department is functioning’ (African policy maker, participant of the course “Leaders of change”)

3)

We delivered the innovative “[Online course on doing policy relevant research](#)”. 22 members of 17 think tanks in Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America reflected on their own research agendas and enhanced their capacity to design and implement research agendas that is policy relevant.

The course counted with the support of the Think Tank Fund and the Think Tank Initiative.

We also partnered with the On Think Tanks School to deliver the [Evolving Think Tanks Series](#).

‘Now I have a much better overview of the complexity of planning and designing a research project. I am more aware of the various aspects and can reflect on them more consciously and systematically’ (Participant of the course “Doing policy relevant research”)

160 members of think tanks worldwide enhanced their capacity on critical organisational issues by participating in the following eight courses delivered by highly qualified trainers:

- [Short Course on Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning about policy influence: are results worth the effort?](#)
- [Short Course on Re-thinking funding models](#)
- [Short Course on Think tank publications: writing to achieve policy impact](#)
- [Short Course on Doing policy relevant research](#)
- [Short Course on Data visualisation: taking communication to the next level](#)
- [Short Course on Think Tank Governance: getting the foundations right](#)
- [Long course Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for think tanks](#)
- [Long course Re-thinking your funding model](#) (in Spanish)

In partnership with Enrique Mendizabal from On Think Tanks, we started a mentoring process to help the Latin American Initiative for Public Policy Research (ILAIPP, for its acronym in Spanish) reflect on its funding model and identify opportunities for sustainability of the network in the mid and long term.

We performed as a [panel of experts](#) to advice the Chilean think tank Rimisp on the [self-evaluation of the program “Policy Processes for Large Scale Impact”](#), supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

4)

We participated in several events where we met several colleagues and organisations working on innovative initiatives to link knowledge with policy:

The [What Works Global Summit](#), organized by The Campbell Collaboration, the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, Sense about Science, and the Centre for Evidence and Social Innovation of the Queen’s University.

The [Evidence Works 2016: A Global Forum for Government](#), organized by the Alliance for Useful Evidence, Nesta and Results for All / Results for America.

The Symposium 2016 [Approaches to Capacity Building for Evidence-Informed Policy Making](#), organized by INASP and hosted by the Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing (GINKS).

The International workshop “Facilitating Social Innovation: Appreciating critical junctures in multi-stakeholder processes for development”, organized by International Support Group and the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM).

We published [more than 50 blog posts at P&I’s website](#) on a broad spectrum of issues: Research and Ideas, Politics, Funding, Communications, Policy Influence, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, and Capacity development. 16 of these blog posts were written by individual contributors and organisations (think tanks, donors, NGOs, public institutions) worldwide.

We strengthened partnerships with the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications; the Think Tank Initiative; the Think Tank Fund; On Think Tanks; Southern Hemisphere in South Africa; the Center for Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP) in India; Rimisp in Chile; the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency of South Africa; the Alliance for Useful Evidence; Results for All; ILAIPP in Latin America, and many more organisations and networks around the world.

Connecting with our desires for 2017

A new year is always a good moment to refresh our commitments and be more clear about our intentions. This is what we will look for in 2017:

- Increase our work with policymakers and public institutions to jointly build cultures and capacities for a more solid interaction between knowledge and policy.
 - Support public institutions through mid-term processes to enhance their capacity to generate and use evidence, taking advantage of our framework to bring knowledge into policy and other tools and methodologies developed by colleagues.
 - Expand the scope of our course for policy makers and varied capacity building offer (online and face to face) to new regions, countries and organizations.
- Deepen our collaboration with policy research institutes and help them strengthen key organizational decisions and actions that enable a larger policy influence.
- Help think tanks, public institutions and international organizations make better evidence based decisions on their work and initiatives through engaging in monitoring, evaluation and learning efforts.
- Contribute to develop the emergence of a new generation of leaders in think tanks and public institutions who are eager to become real agents of change to transform their organisations and make them healthier, more aligned with global possibilities and challenges, and with a larger and deeper contribution to their people and communities.
- Engage with different organizations, facilitating decision making processes, incorporating complexity and systemic thinking into their work, by giving special emphasis to articulation with others and paying more attention to emerging opportunities.
- Catalyze debates and exchanges of experiences, ideas and challenges related to the interaction between knowledge and policy among policymakers and researchers in Southern countries so that there is more horizontal learning and community building.

Interested in our approach and ideas?

Seeking for a partner to work collaboratively with agents of change in developing countries?

Please contact us:

- **Vanesa Weyrauch**, Co-founder of P&I (v_veyrauch@politicsandideas.org)
- **Leandro Echt**, General Coordinator of P&I (leandroecht@politicsandideas.org)

...and let's jointly explore what we can do together in 2017!