



THOMSON REUTERS
FOUNDATION

CHAMPIONING PRO BONO

A Guide to Assessing
and Strengthening Your
Pro Bono Work

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INTRODUCTION

TrustLaw is the Thomson Reuters Foundation's global pro bono legal network.

We connect lawyers in more than 180 countries with NGOs and social enterprises requiring pro bono legal assistance. It is free to join TrustLaw: our mission is to connect people and spread the practice of pro bono around the world. By engaging in pro bono, lawyers can help the social sector leverage the power of the law to tackle some of the most challenging problems facing society.

We work with legal teams, both law firms and in-house teams, globally to achieve this mission – assessing what pro bono the legal teams are doing already (if any) and finding ways in which we can help them to do more. This work has ranged from partnering with large international law firms with dedicated staff to coordinate and work on pro bono matters full-time, to small one-person law firms that help their local community organisations or initiatives on an ad hoc basis with free legal advice.

TrustLaw has a unique insight into the global pro bono landscape through our regional teams based around the world. Our global benchmark report, the TrustLaw Index of Pro Bono, maps the scale and trends of the pro bono legal sector internationally. Through this unique tool we have collected vital data on pro bono which has helped legal teams to build robust and sustainable pro bono practices and to understand how to get the greatest impact from their pro bono work.

This "Championing Pro Bono Guide" is designed to help legal teams globally with their pro bono work. It is our aim that the Guide can be used by legal teams of all sizes and at all stages of their pro bono work. We set out ways to assess and strengthen pro bono work, and include resources on debunking common myths associated with pro bono as well as tips on how to make the most of your pro bono experience. Conscious of not trying to re-invent the wheel, we have also included a non-exhaustive list of other global pro bono resources which may also help legal teams on their pro bono journey.

▶ WHAT IS PRO BONO?

Pro bono literally translates as “for good”. Legal pro bono work has been defined in a variety of ways across the globe. TrustLaw’s definition of pro bono, which aligns with the thinking of many legal service providers globally, is:

The provision of free legal advice, assistance, representation and research by a qualified lawyer for persons of limited means or organisations that have a social, environmental, humanitarian, cultural or community focus.

Pro bono can be seen as a professional obligation arising from the privileged position of lawyers in society and their critical role in access to justice.

Pro bono can take varied forms. It does not include non-legal assistance, such as lecturing or publishing articles, or non-legal volunteer work, such as serving on a board or assisting your local non-profit to paint their new building. Pro bono work can include:



CORPORATE & COMMERCIAL ADVISORY WORK

Corporate and/or commercial legal advice for organisations. This offers the chance to advise in a specific legal area, such as intellectual property, employment or corporate governance. This work is hugely valuable to support the resilience and capacity of non-profits or social enterprises that, often, might otherwise need to go without the advice.



LEGAL RESEARCH

Legal research to support advocacy activities of pro bono clients, for example, to create “know-your-rights” guides or feed into advocacy to change laws. Lawyers can use their legal research skills to take a more in depth look at a topic, like human rights.



CONTENTIOUS MATTERS & STRATEGIC LITIGATION

Representation of organisations or individuals in legal proceedings, for example in court or at arbitration hearings. This provides an opportunity to develop advocacy skills while providing access to legal services to, and enforcing rights on behalf of, those who might otherwise be denied or unable to take advantages of such services. Strategic litigation can be used to achieve significant changes in legislation, policy and practice by bringing specific test cases before the courts.



LEGAL CLINICS

Running or attending a pro bono clinic to allow in-person advice to be provided, either to a defined audience, or on a defined topic. This also allows for time-limited support to be provided and can be particularly beneficial for junior lawyers to develop their client engagement skills and confidence.

WHAT IS NOT PRO BONO?

Pro bono is not the same as “low bono” i.e. when legal services are provided at reduced fees. It is also important to understand the difference between “pro bono”, “corporate social responsibility (CSR)”, and “legal aid”.

LEGAL AID

Legal aid is the provision of legal advice or representation in court proceedings for people who are unable to afford legal services and is usually funded by the government or state agencies. It is essential to guaranteeing equal access to justice for all. The rules around the provision of state legal aid vary globally, with many countries differentiating between “civil” and “criminal” legal aid and most adopting some sort of ‘means and merits’ testing to access legal aid. It is widely acknowledged that pro bono cannot replace a well-funded legal aid system.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Corporate social responsibility or “CSR” is a broad business concept that describes a company’s commitment to carry out their business in a socially accountable way. CSR can include a range of volunteer, philanthropic and ethical initiatives to give back and carry out a company’s core business in a more ethical, responsible way. Pro bono can form part of a law firm or company’s commitment to CSR, but CSR is a much broader concept. Some countries have gone as far as making CSR activities mandatory under law.



TrustLaw can help!

- Through our projects, you can provide pro bono support within your usual corporate/commercial area of expertise, from employment to intellectual property to corporate finance and beyond.
- We also facilitate pro bono work on impactful national and cross-border research on, for example, digital rights, modern slavery or women’s rights—sometimes resulting in changes in law or policy.
- We facilitate pro bono research that can feed into strategic litigation—however, keep in mind that TrustLaw does not offer opportunities to represent individuals directly.
- We encourage lawyers to participate in and facilitate workshops, webinars and roundtables with TrustLaw’s broad network of non-profit, social enterprise and legal members.
- We work with lawyers to draft guides on relevant topics that affect non-profits and social enterprises, for example, our data protection guide for charities and non-governmental organisations.



► **ASSESSING AND
STRENGTHENING
YOUR PRO BONO
WORK**

**1. DOES YOUR
LEGAL TEAM DO
PRO BONO?**

YES?

Excellent! The practice of pro bono differs worldwide and it is a good idea to check with your local Law Society or Bar Council to find out about the local regulatory requirements, such as insurance. TrustLaw has resources that can help on this, such as the Global Corporate Pro Bono Map in the [“Other Pro Bono Resources” section](#).

NO?

Don’t worry, it is never too late to start! There are studies (listed in the “Other Pro Bono Resources” section) showing that pro bono is good for business and staff, as well as for the surrounding community. We summarize the main benefits on the next page.

► REASONS WHY YOUR LEGAL TEAM WILL BENEFIT FROM DOING PRO BONO



GOOD FOR COMMUNITY

- Give back to your local community by using your legal skills to improve the lives of those around you.
- Be part of enabling full access to the legal system. Help organisations working to create social and environmental change to streamline operations, expand into new countries and scale their impact.



GOOD FOR BUSINESS

- Develop deeper relationships with other legal teams, including in-house teams (including clients) and law firms, through collaboration on pro bono projects.
- Work with new potential clients. Often in-house teams use pro bono projects as a way of getting to know law firms. Many corporates are starting to include questions about pro bono work in their tender documents for legal work.
- Improve staff retention. Pro bono matters can be among the most rewarding projects lawyers work on. Pro bono also enables your company or firm to stand apart in graduate recruitment.
- Stand out against competitors. Local pro bono can build your company or firm's reputation as a responsible member of your local business community. Cross-border pro bono can help build profile and relationships with legal teams in other markets.



GOOD FOR STAFF

- Create a sense of pride and boost morale.
- Enable training and skills development especially for junior lawyers—including legal, project management, communication and leadership skills.
- Build collegiality and relationships amongst colleagues by encouraging work with other departments and colleagues in all office locations.



TrustLaw can help!

- **TrustLaw is the biggest pro bono network in the world and is an entirely free service!**
- **As a member, you will receive a list of our global pro bono opportunities each week,** sorted from our global network of amazing non-profits and social enterprises working on issues from women's rights to human trafficking, from climate change to media freedom. Whatever the background of your legal team, there will be a TrustLaw project that will meet their interests and expertise.
- **TrustLaw welcomes in-house teams in our network, including some of the biggest companies in the world.** We can facilitate partnerships between law firms and in-house teams and we create special resources for in-house teams that are interested in pro bono, available on our [website](#).

- 
- ASSESSING AND STRENGTHENING YOUR PRO BONO WORK
 - 2. DO YOU COORDINATE YOUR PRO BONO ACTIVITIES?

YES?

Brilliant! If you want to bring your pro bono work to the next level or assess how your current structure is working, you can refer to our latest TrustLaw Index of Pro Bono for useful insights. For instance, from data gathered over five years, we found that having a dedicated Pro Bono Coordinator or Pro Bono Committee can have a significant impact on the average pro bono hours done by a law firm.

NO?

Not a problem, many legal teams do not have dedicated resources to oversee their pro bono activities, and still have an important impact in their community. However, as teams grow, coordination can be useful and there are many options – we list the most common on the next page.

► OPTIONS FOR COORDINATING PRO BONO



NO SUPERVISION

Plenty of legal teams do pro bono work without formal supervision or coordination and manage to achieve considerable impact. However, the lack of coordination might make it hard to monitor the pro bono activities and evaluate the overall impact.



PRO BONO COORDINATOR

A dedicated resource is appointed to coordinate pro bono activities. This might be a fee earner, non-fee earner or a full time or part time employee. Pro Bono Coordinators normally ensure pro bono matters are sourced, allocated and undertaken effectively. A central point of contact and coordination makes it easy to keep track of the team's pro bono work, evaluate engagement and impact, and collect feedback for internal and external communications.



PRO BONO COMMITTEE

A Pro Bono Committee may be comprised of partners or managers, or a mix of staff from across levels. Appointing a Committee reflects a strong commitment to pro bono and can be a very powerful way to encourage lawyers at all levels to take up pro bono work. Pro Bono Committees are not normally involved in day-to-day administration, but instead set strategic direction and priorities. The Committee will usually be responsible for creating and updating the company or firm's pro bono policy.



PRO BONO LEAD

Great pro bono programmes are usually characterised by a strong commitment of senior management and their understanding of the many benefits of pro bono. A Pro Bono Lead (or, in the law firm context, Pro Bono Partner) ensures that pro bono is prioritised in strategic and management-level conversations and is deeply engrained in the company or firm's values and activities.



TrustLaw can help!

- **We vet all non-profits and social enterprises before we connect them with your legal team.** We have strict vetting criteria to ensure only impactful, financially-sustainable organisations become TrustLaw members, so your pro bono assistance can go further. Our non-profit and social enterprise eligibility criteria are listed on our [website](#).
- **We have an in-depth call with the non-profits or social enterprises about their legal needs.** A lawyer within the TrustLaw team always has a scoping call to understand the pro bono client's legal request, engage in early issue-spotting, and prepare a short, coherent summary of the scope of work. This process saves your team time and effort and helps all parties understand the scope (and limits) of the pro bono engagement.
- **Our online portal makes offering to an organisation easy.** Any lawyer within a legal team can log on to the TrustLaw portal, review and filter the available opportunities by area of law and jurisdiction and submit an offer of assistance within minutes.



► ASSESSING AND STRENGTHENING YOUR PRO BONO WORK

3. DO YOU HAVE GUIDANCE ON THE TYPE OF PRO BONO YOUR LEGAL TEAM CAN DO?

YES?

Great! We find that firms and in-house teams of all sizes often adopt one or a combination of documents, such as a Pro Bono Policy, Mission Statement, or formal criteria. We will go into more detail on each on the next page.

NO?

No problem! Setting out your vision for pro bono can be a great first step to creating your pro bono programme. It can be as simple as an informal focus on types of non-profits or social enterprises your team particularly wants to support, to a formal resource like a mission statement or pro bono policy. You can also check out the [“Other Pro Bono Resources”](#) section for helpful examples.

► TYPES OF GUIDANCE



PRO BONO POLICY

A formal policy can be a great tool to articulate the team's approach to pro bono in a clear, comprehensive way. A policy can include a definition of pro bono and types of pro bono the team can support, roles of the pro bono coordinator(s), procedures for onboarding pro bono clients, recognition of pro bono work, and expectations about providing the same level of service to pro bono clients as to other paying clients.

See the "Other Pro Bono Resources" section, for sample pro bono policies and engagement letters.



MISSION STATEMENT

A pro bono mission statement is simpler and less operational than a policy but can still be a powerful public statement of your commitment to pro bono. A mission statement can sit alongside a pro bono policy or be adopted on its own.



PRO BONO CLIENT AND MATTER CRITERIA

Formal criteria – for instance, on the type of organisation that you can support, or their size – are often found in pro bono policies but can also exist as standalone statements. The main benefits of adopting criteria are clarity, transparency and consistency. Having a cohesive approach can support more effective use of time and leveraging of resources for higher impact.



TrustLaw can help!

- **TrustLaw works with a broad range of non-profits and social enterprises** across areas as varied as media freedom, climate change, rights of women and girls, social innovation and others. If your company or firm wants to focus on pro bono clients working in certain areas (e.g. environment and energy), you will often find them represented in our non-profit and social enterprise membership.
- **TrustLaw offers a variety of pro bono opportunities, from the simple to the complex.** Depending on your capacity and articulated priorities, you can focus on smaller everyday legal matters, complex corporate or commercial projects, large multi-jurisdictional legal research programmes or a mix of the three



► ASSESSING AND STRENGTHENING YOUR PRO BONO WORK

4. DO YOU ENCOURAGE YOUR LEGAL TEAM TO DO PRO BONO?

YES?

Great! There is no secret formula to encouraging lawyers to take on more pro bono matters but the most successful legal teams will use a combination of the practices on the next page to ensure lawyers are inspired to undertake pro bono work.

NO?

Don't worry, it's never too late! Rewarding lawyers for undertaking pro bono work and embedding pro bono in your business activities and indicators are key to spread the practice of pro bono within your legal team. Consider the practices on the next page to encourage your team to do pro bono.

► OPTIONS TO ENCOURAGE PRO BONO



MANDATORY OR ASPIRATIONAL TARGET FOR PRO BONO HOURS

Many legal teams find a pro bono target is a powerful tool to encourage lawyers to undertake a minimum number of pro bono hours every year.

TREAT PRO BONO HOURS AS FEE-EARNING HOURS OR WORK

Many legal teams find this encourages lawyers to perform pro bono and ensures lawyers do not feel penalised for taking on pro bono matters.

Sometimes this is capped up to a maximum number of hours or projects, or only kicks in once a minimum fee-earning hours threshold is reached.

CONSIDER PRO BONO IN PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS AND CAREER PROGRESSION

This helps ensure lawyers take pro bono matters seriously. It also allows lawyers to be better recognised for their work. Considering pro bono as part of performance reviews ensures fuller evaluation and reflection of a lawyer's progress and career path. In the long term, partners and senior managers will be familiarized with pro bono and better able to lead through example.

ESTABLISH INTERNAL AWARDS OR RECOGNITIONS FOR TAKING PRO BONO MATTERS

This can be as simple as including pro bono accomplishments in the firm's internal newsletter or creating a sticker or pro bono diploma to celebrate your best and most committed lawyers.

INVOLVE PARTNERS OR SENIOR MANAGERS IN PRO BONO WORK

This shows that the firm has a deep commitment to giving back and pro bono; and it means that partners or senior managers can use stories from their pro bono work when talking to potential new clients, therefore helping with business development.

MAKE PRO BONO PART OF YOUR INDUCTION PROCESS

First impressions are important. Including a session on your team's approach to pro bono can go a long way to make clear your commitment to pro bono and encourage new joiners to take up pro bono projects.

ORGANISE LUNCH AND LEARN EVENTS

They are a great way to show how the firm has helped in the past and inspire lawyers to take up new projects. In our experience, the best presentations include pro bono clients or their stories to showcase how the work furthered a meaningful social goal or objective.



TrustLaw can help!

- **We send you a weekly email with global pro bono opportunities.** Every Monday, we collect all the available pro bono projects and send them over email to our legal members, ensuring you always know what the newest and most exciting pro bono opportunities are.
- **We collect feedback and information from non-profits and social enterprises.** We help you share the best feedback with your lawyers and celebrate success and great pro bono work internally.
- **We organise legal roundtables and tailored Lunch and Learn events.** Our legal roundtables allow firms with well-established pro bono programmes to share their systems and past activities with other firms; and TrustLaw lunch and learn events are held at law firms, often with past pro bono clients.



YES?

► ASSESSING AND
STRENGTHENING
YOUR PRO BONO
WORK

5. DO YOU
EVALUATE
THE PRO BONO
WORK YOUR
LAWYERS DO?

Great! Evaluation is especially critical in the pro bono context because a good evaluation of a pro bono project can be used to spread the practice within your legal team. Pro bono evaluations should measure lawyer and client satisfaction, social impact and professional development, rather than only tracking the number of pro bono hours or completed projects.

NO?

Don't worry, you can always start! Evaluation should be tailored to the legal team's pro bono objectives, and can relate to your entire pro bono practice, or to specific projects. Consider the actions on the next page when planning your evaluation process.

► ELEMENTS OF A PRO BONO EVALUATION



IDENTIFY THE OBJECTIVES OF YOUR PRO BONO WORK

Evaluation looks at the original objectives and measures the success in achieving those objectives.



IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE

It could be an internal evaluation that can be shared with your current staff, partners, etc. or an external evaluation for the pro bono clients to show your lawyers added value.



IDENTIFY THE SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION AND WHAT ARE YOU EVALUATING

Decide if you will evaluate the entire pro bono program or a single project, then establish the purpose of the evaluation. Decide if you are evaluating, for example, the efficiency of your pro bono processes, progress against specific pro bono objectives, and/or the social impact of your pro bono work.



IDENTIFY THE PERIOD OF YOUR EVALUATION

You might be interested in a specific period of time for a project, or in an annual evaluation.



PLAN THE DATA YOU WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN FOR YOUR EVALUATION

You might want to look at either quantitative (for example, number of pro bono projects) or qualitative data (for example, stories of the lawyers involved in a pro bono project), or both; this will help you determine whether the questions in your evaluation are designed to collect the right data and information, and how to measure it.



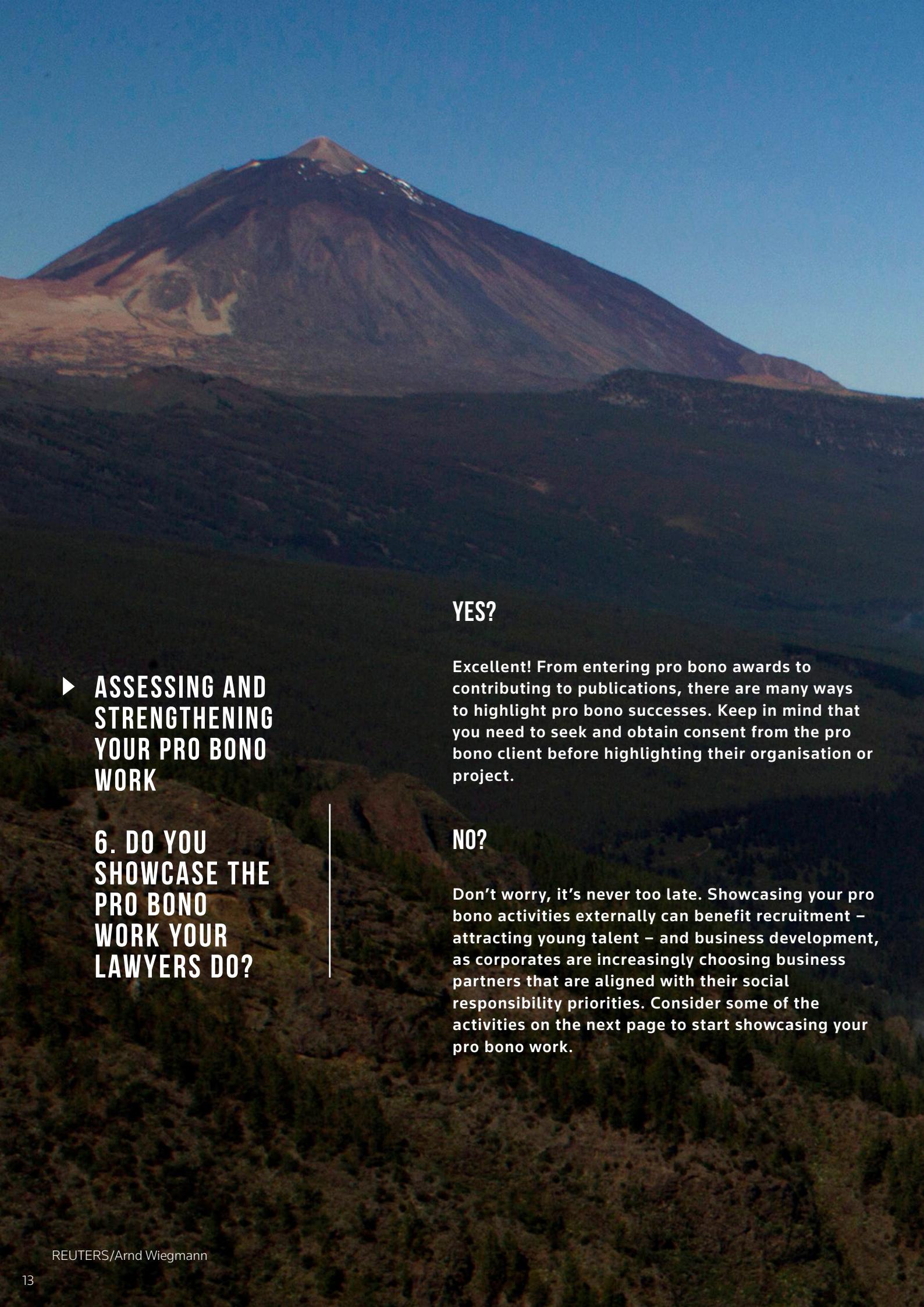
DECIDE HOW YOU ARE GOING TO DELIVER THE EVALUATION

It could be a standalone internal report, or part of a wider, public, CSR report for the whole firm or company.



TrustLaw can help!

- **We collect feedback from both the lawyers working on a project as well as the non-profit or social enterprise pro bono client**, so you can use this information for your evaluation process. You could share the client's feedback with your lawyers and reward great pro bono work. Negative feedback can be used for learning and internal accountability.
- **Every year we collect information on the number of pro bono hours our legal members provide to pro bono clients.** This process will help your legal team analyse the hours invested in TrustLaw projects.
- **The TrustLaw Portal enables you to track your pro bono work.** Through the online portal, you can review all the projects you have offered to help on and their status, so you have all your pro bono activities at a glance.



► **ASSESSING AND
STRENGTHENING
YOUR PRO BONO
WORK**

**6. DO YOU
SHOWCASE THE
PRO BONO
WORK YOUR
LAWYERS DO?**

YES?

Excellent! From entering pro bono awards to contributing to publications, there are many ways to highlight pro bono successes. Keep in mind that you need to seek and obtain consent from the pro bono client before highlighting their organisation or project.

NO?

Don't worry, it's never too late. Showcasing your pro bono activities externally can benefit recruitment – attracting young talent – and business development, as corporates are increasingly choosing business partners that are aligned with their social responsibility priorities. Consider some of the activities on the next page to start showcasing your pro bono work.

► OPTIONS FOR SHOWCASING YOUR PRO BONO WORK



PROFILE PRO BONO WORK THROUGH THE USUAL CHANNELS

Many companies and firms highlight their pro bono work on their website, in bulletins and newsletters, in bids and proposals, and through their social media presence. This is the easiest and most common approach.



INCLUDE PRO BONO IN YOUR ANNUAL OR CSR REPORT

Some companies and firms report on their pro bono work and highlight successes as part of their wider annual or CSR report. This helps clients and other stakeholders stay informed about the pro bono work the company or firm does.



SUBMIT AN ENTRY TO PRO BONO AWARDS

There are several awards celebrating pro bono work. Submitting an entry to these awards and attending the ceremony can be a great recognition of good work for the lawyers involved and the company or firm can benefit from the external exposure.



PARTICIPATE IN SURVEYS AND WIDER PRO BONO REPORTS

Some companies and firms also choose to share details of their pro bono work as part of wider reports on pro bono in different countries, such as the TrustLaw Index of Pro Bono. These reports are a great way to keep an eye on what other companies and firms are doing and work collectively to expand the practice of pro bono.

Important

All public communications should be subject to the same confidentiality requirements as for any other client. You should always seek consent from the pro bono client before highlighting their organisation or project. Non-profits and social enterprises are often delighted to have information about pro bono research and non-sensitive advice shared more broadly.



TrustLaw can help!

- **The TrustLaw Awards celebrate remarkable pro bono projects** undertaken by legal teams with non-profits and social enterprises around the world. We award three outstanding pro bono projects, in addition to the international firm, domestic firm, and in-house team of the year, and the esteemed Lawyer of the Year award. In preparation for the TrustLaw Awards, we make videos of the winners that you can use to showcase the work done by your legal team.
- **The TrustLaw Index of Pro Bono identifies global trends in the pro bono marketplace** and looks at the amount of pro bono work law firms are undertaking on a country-by-country basis.
- **We publish stories describing the impact of the pro bono work provided by our legal members.** We use the feedback we receive from our non-profit and social enterprise members and the legal members involved in a project. These impact stories can be used within your company or firm to inform performance appraisals and to showcase pro bono work.

PRO BONO CHECKLIST

► RESOURCES

These general questions are designed to help you work out whether you need to consider developing some resources to strengthen your pro bono practice. Further detailed explanations can be found in the [Championing Pro Bono Guide](#).

	YES	NO
1. DO YOU DO PRO BONO? If yes, what types of projects? <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate & commercial advice <input type="checkbox"/> Legal research <input type="checkbox"/> Contentious matters or strategic litigation <input type="checkbox"/> Legal clinics <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ For what kinds of clients? <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profits <input type="checkbox"/> Social enterprises <input type="checkbox"/> Individuals in need <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		Comments:
2. DO YOU HAVE A DEFINITION OF PRO BONO? The TrustLaw definition is: The provision of free legal advice, assistance, representation and research by a qualified lawyer for persons of limited means or organisations that have a social, environmental, humanitarian, cultural or community focus.	YES	NO
3. DO YOU COORDINATE YOUR PRO BONO ACTIVITIES? If yes, how do you coordinate? <input type="checkbox"/> Pro bono coordinator <input type="checkbox"/> Pro bono committee <input type="checkbox"/> Pro bono lead or partner <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	YES	NO
4. DO YOU HAVE GUIDANCE ON THE TYPE OF PRO BONO YOUR LEGAL TEAM CAN DO? If yes, what type of guidance? <input type="checkbox"/> Pro bono policy <input type="checkbox"/> Pro bono mission statement <input type="checkbox"/> No policy, but formal criteria on types of pro bono matters or clients you will support <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	YES	NO

5. DO YOU ENCOURAGE YOUR LEGAL TEAM TO DO PRO BONO?		YES	NO
If yes, how do you encourage?		Comments:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pro bono target (mandatory or optional) <input type="checkbox"/> Pro bono hours count as fee-earning hours <input type="checkbox"/> Pro bono considered in performance appraisals and career progression <input type="checkbox"/> Internal recognition or awards <input type="checkbox"/> Partners or senior managers take part in pro bono <input type="checkbox"/> Pro bono is covered in induction for new starters <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch and learn events <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____			
6. DO YOU EVALUATE THE PRO BONO WORK YOUR LAWYERS DO?		YES	NO
If yes, what is being evaluated?		Comments:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Overall pro bono programme <input type="checkbox"/> Individual pro bono projects <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____			
What are you evaluating?		<input type="checkbox"/> Process and operation <input type="checkbox"/> Progress against set pro bono objectives <input type="checkbox"/> Social impact of pro bono work <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
When do you evaluate?		<input type="checkbox"/> Annual <input type="checkbox"/> Ad hoc or project-by-project <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
What data are you seeking?		<input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative (e.g. # of projects or hours) <input type="checkbox"/> Qualitative (e.g. stories of impact) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
What format?		<input type="checkbox"/> Pro bono report (standalone) <input type="checkbox"/> Part of CSR report <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
Who is the audience?		<input type="checkbox"/> Internal <input type="checkbox"/> External <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
7. DO YOU SHOWCASE THE IMPACT OF YOUR PRO BONO WORK?		YES	NO
If yes, how do you showcase?		Comments:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Highlight on website, internal bulletins or newsletters <input type="checkbox"/> Share on social media <input type="checkbox"/> Highlight in annual or CSR report <input type="checkbox"/> Submit entries to pro bono awards <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in broader pro bono sector surveys and reports <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____			
8. ARE YOU A TRUSTLAW MEMBER?		YES	NO
Joining as a member is free and easy. Check out our online application at: http://www.trust.org/trustlaw/			
Comments:			

DEBUNKING PRO BONO MYTHS

► RESOURCES

Below are some of the common reasons cited by legal teams globally on why they cannot do pro bono, as well as ways TrustLaw can help you address those challenges:

...BUT I DON'T HAVE THE TIME OR CAPACITY

TrustLaw pro bono projects are pre-scoped with a TrustLaw lawyer, and legal teams only commit to help within the scope of that project. Lawyers can take up projects as and when they have capacity, and if issues arise the TrustLaw team can provide ongoing support.

...BUT I DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT RESOURCES

Through TrustLaw projects, all that you are giving is your time and legal skills. You are not expected to cover any costs e.g. if there are registration costs involved, we make it clear that the organisations cover these. We also make finding the right projects very easy via our weekly email of pro bono opportunities. In larger legal research projects, we manage the project by following up with all the parties involved.

...BUT I AM A CORPORATE/COMMERCIAL LAWYER AND CAN'T ADVISE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

90% of TrustLaw projects involve day-to-day corporate/commercial legal issues and our non-profits and social enterprises hugely value this support. We also offer desk-based research opportunities where you can use your transferable skills and learn about new and interesting legal issues.

...BUT I WOULDN'T KNOW WHICH NON-PROFITS OR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES MY FIRM SHOULD WORK WITH AND THE FIRM WOULD PROBABLY BE CONFLICTED ANYWAY

TrustLaw has eligibility criteria we use to vet all non-profit and social enterprise members for structure, social mission and financial sustainability. All offers from your legal team to assist with a given pro bono project are subject to your internal conflict checks.

...BUT I WOULDN'T BE INSURED

While TrustLaw does not offer insurance, we can help facilitate partnerships between in-house teams and law firms to ensure insurance coverage for pro bono matters. Many in-house teams update their insurance to cover pro bono matters to be able to work on pro bono projects directly.

...BUT WHY SHOULD I BOTHER, NO-ONE WILL KNOW ABOUT IT

Your pro bono work can be championed through a number of ways. The annual TrustLaw Awards showcases the remarkable achievements of our TrustLaw members globally and the impact which the legal advice and assistance has had. Some companies and firms also highlight the pro bono work of their legal teams internally to colleagues to show they are champions of pro bono, but also externally to clients to promote the great work which their teams are doing.

...BUT SOCIAL ENTERPRISES MAKE A PROFIT, WHY SHOULD WE PROVIDE THEM WITH FREE LEGAL ADVICE?

Social enterprises are businesses driven by purpose, balancing the need to make a profit and be sustainable and tackling a social or environmental challenge – for example, a coffee shop that trains and employs people who are homeless to help them improve their life chances. When grants and donations are hard to come by, social enterprise models can allow organisations to access other sources of investment. At TrustLaw, we vet our social enterprise members every two years to assess their impact and to ensure they are reinvesting more than 50% of profits back into their social mission.

Early stage social enterprises often lack resources to pay for legal advice, so providing them with pro bono support enables them to focus more attention and resources on their social purpose. Social enterprises also frequently have legal needs in new and niche areas of the law, thus offering opportunities for professional development.

...BUT THE GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING LEGAL AID, WHY SHOULD I HAVE TO DO PRO BONO?

Legal aid plays a critical role in access to justice, but it is not a panacea. In many countries, legal aid is limited to indigent individuals and non-profits and social enterprises do not qualify. Legal aid also tends to cover only a narrow range of mostly litigation-related legal representation (e.g. criminal and family law). As such, a thriving pro bono sector—including one that serves non-profits and social enterprises with advice and research—plays a crucial complementary role to a strong legal aid system.

...BUT DOESN'T PRO BONO TAKE PAID WORK AWAY FROM LAWYERS, ESPECIALLY SMALLER FIRMS?

There exist significant unmet legal need in the non-profit and social enterprise ecosystem, with lots of demand for both fee-paying and pro bono support. In our experience, pro bono tends to benefit organisations working within tight budgets that, without the benefit of pro bono support, would often go without any legal advice at all. Moreover, not only international firms do pro bono: many smaller firms offer pro bono work and find it a rewarding way to give back, engage in professional development, and work collaboratively and build relationships with local and international law firms and legal teams.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR PRO BONO EXPERIENCE

► RESOURCES

IN OUR EXPERIENCE, LAWYERS WHO REALLY ENJOY AND ARE SUCCESSFUL AT PRO BONO STRIVE TO:

LISTEN AND LEARN

- Get to know the mission of the non-profit or social enterprise and ask questions about their current campaigns and initiatives
- Get to know the ecosystem – non-profits and social enterprises have similar legal needs to for-profits, but their legal and operating reality can be quite different (e.g. different regulators, focus on collaboration and social impact over profit-generation, etc.)
- Understand staff are often stretched for time and resources and board members are typically volunteering. This is not an excuse for non-responsiveness but might mean it takes a little longer to receive instructions or comments

TREAT PRO BONO CLIENTS LIKE FEE-PAYING CLIENTS

- Set realistic timelines together and stick to them
- Provide regular updates and if a deadline will not be met, reach out early and decide together on a new delivery date
- Be responsive

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT AND ADJUST STYLE ACCORDINGLY

- Opt for plain-language and shorter contracts, MOUs and letter agreements, etc., whenever appropriate
- Adopt a friendly negotiating-style, especially with government funders, donors and fellow non-profits and social enterprises
- Recognise dynamics that may change bargaining power, especially with donors and funders (e.g. indemnities you might not accept in a commercial negotiation are sometimes common when accepting donor or government grant funding)

PROMOTE PRO BONO WORK

- Spread the word with colleagues about pro bono work you are doing.
- Promote pro bono work and impact outside your organisation, through LinkedIn blogs, legal association newsletters, pro bono award nominations and otherwise. All usual client-lawyer confidentiality requirements apply, and external communications are always subject to the client giving prior explicit consent

EVEN THE SMALLEST PRO BONO PROJECT CAN HAVE AN IMPACT!



Template employment agreements allowed a social enterprise to launch a new programme to provide skills training and employment opportunities to people from vulnerable backgrounds.



A template sexual harassment policy was shared through a broader non-profit network and was adopted by dozens of organisations, with follow-on training and increased recognition of the issue of workplace sexual violence and harassment.



Tax advice enabled a charity to fundraise to open new safe houses for homeless and vulnerable individuals.

► RESOURCES

INTERNATIONAL:

- [TrustLaw Global Corporate Pro Bono Map](#)
- [International Trademark Association \(INTA\). 2015.](#)
- [Latham & Watkins LLP. "A Survey of Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in 84 Jurisdictions". \(2016\).](#)

NORTH AMERICA

- [American Bar Association Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service. "Supporting Justice, a Fourth Report on the Pro Bono Work of America's Lawyers". \(2018\).](#)
- [Pro Bono Institute. "Global Due Diligence Manual". \(2019\).](#)
- [Fordham Law Review. "Managing Pro Bono: Doing Well by Doing Better". \(2010\).](#)
- [PILNet & Association of the Bar of the City of New York - Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice. "Pro Bono Handbook: A Guide to Establishing a Pro Bono Program at your Law Firm". \(2015\).](#)
- [Association of Pro Bono Counsel \(APBCo\). "APBCO Statement on the Eligibility of Non-Profit Entities, For-Profit Small Business Entities, Social Enterprise Entities and Impact Finance Transactions for Pro Bono Legal Services". \(2015\).](#)
- [New York State Bar Association Pro Bono Resources](#)

LATIN AMERICA

- [Fundación ProBono Colombia. "Manual de Prácticas para la Implementación del Programa Pro Bono en Firmas de Abogados y Grupos Legales Empresariales". \(2019\).](#)
- [Comisión Pro Bono Argentina. "Compromiso de Buenas Prácticas Pro Bono". \(2017\).](#)
- [PILNet & Association of the Bar of the City of New York - Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice. "Manual Pro Bono: Una guía para establecer un programa Pro Bono en su firma de abogados". \(2018\).](#)

EUROPE

- [The Law Society of England & Wales. "Pro Bono Manual: A practical guide and resource kit for solicitors". \(2016\).](#)
- [PILnet "The Growth of Pro Bono in Europe". \(2016\).](#)
- [The Law Society, LawWorks, the Collaborative Plan and the UK In-House Pro Bono Group "Pro bono guide for in-house solicitors and legal teams" \(2019\)](#)

ASIA PACIFIC

- [Australian Pro Bono Centre. "The Australian Pro Bono Manual". \(2016\).](#)
- [Australia Pro Bono Centre. "Pro Bono Legal Work: A Guide for In-house Corporate Lawyers". \(2017\).](#)
- [DLA Piper and Association of Corporate Counsel Hong Kong. "Pro Bono Legal Work in Hong Kong: A Guide for In-house Counsel". \(2018\).](#)
- [Law Society of Singapore. "Pro Bono Guide for Law Practices". \(2012\).](#)

AFRICA

- [Latham and Watkins Pro Bono Guides for select African countries \(Angola, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda\)](#)
- [Karam Jeet Singh, Project Coordinator, Lawyers for Human Rights. Access to Justice: Developing a Pro Bono Practice for South Africa.](#)

NOTES

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