



## EXAMPLES OF GLOBAL PRO BONO

### The Growth of Global Pro Bono

The globalization of law practice, the growth of emerging democracies based on the rule of law, and heightened international consensus about fundamental human rights have fueled efforts to explore and establish pro bono legal traditions in many nations around the world. As a result, major in-house legal departments are increasingly eager to engage in global pro bono. Just this summer, Corporate Pro Bono (CPBO), the Association of Corporate Counsel's\*\* partnership project with the Pro Bono Institute (PBI), launched the first In-House Pro Bono Task Force on Global Best Practices. And, empowered by tailored consultative services, guidance, training, and support from CPBO, a growing number of legal departments and law firms are enhancing their pro bono and corporate social responsibility (CSR) schemes by adding a global element.

Global pro bono is uniquely appealing for a variety of reasons. Some legal departments use global pro bono to engage their attorneys posted to offices abroad by offering them local pro bono opportunities similar to those available to stateside staff. Others use it as a vehicle to promote cross-border teambuilding and improve communication by engaging multiple offices in collaborative pro bono projects. And, still others do global pro bono to engender trust, and build reputation, and positively impact the countries and communities where they maintain a physical presence or do business. Global pro bono enhances employee recruitment and retention, builds saleable skills and expertise, fulfills certain social, ethical and professional obligations, and boosts the bottom line.

Some in-house attorneys are excited at the prospect of an employer-sanctioned opportunity to work or travel abroad to improve the lives of people in places they have only read about. Others prefer legal research and other projects that allow them to alleviate distant suffering without ever leaving their desks. Some are attracted to international law and legal development work that allows them to acquire unique, saleable, new legal skills, exposes them to professional experiences not available in their every day domestic practice, or empowers them to positively impact international law and policy. Others are compelled to apply their existing core legal skills and competencies for the greater good. Whatever the form or the impetus, the private bar is clamoring for opportunities to do global pro bono, and opportunities exist for any lawyer, anywhere, with any skill set.

### Global Pro Bono Opportunities

Direct Legal Services and Litigation: Direct services and litigation opportunities are popular among legal departments and law firms looking to engage their attorneys posted to offices abroad in pro bono. Opportunities range from helping a victim of domestic violence obtain a restraining order or serving as a child's guardian ad litem to representing a person unfairly denied his government disability benefits. For example, the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC)\*\* delivers pro bono direct services on *both* sides of the U.S.-Canada border:

- Royal Bank of Canada (Ontario). Ontario-based members of RBC's legal department participate in a pro bono program called Money Matters, which provides legal assistance to individuals living with cancer who have encountered employment and disability legal issues.

Volunteer lawyers offer advice on human rights, disability insurance coverage, and other employment related topics to individuals participating in the program.

- Royal Bank of Canada (New York). New York-based members of RBC's legal team volunteer with *Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)*, a non-governmental organization (NGO) that finds pro bono legal representation for unaccompanied immigrant children. RBC partners with Paul Hastings LLP\* to provide representation to these children.

Commercial and Transactional Work: NGOs that work to alleviate extreme poverty, combat disease, hunger and malnutrition, protect the environment, or deliver post-disaster relief are cropping up in every corner of the globe. Providing transactional pro bono legal support to emerging social enterprises is a richly rewarding way to use pro bono to improve the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable and marginalized people. Empowering individuals and communities to lift themselves out of poverty is a particularly satisfying brand of pro bono. Transactional opportunities range from mentoring fledgling micro-businesses or social entrepreneurs, to helping well-established NGOs expand their reach to additional countries. Legal expertise in intellectual property, tax, contracts, employment, and nonprofit formation and governance is in particularly high demand.

- Caterpillar, Inc.\*\*. Caterpillar's legal department has partnered with two Africa-based NGOs – Malawi Connection (Malawi) and Opening Village Doors Foundation (Kenya) – to provide pro bono legal assistance in structuring, trademark registrations and identity development. Developing brand identity around their mission helps guide the activities of small, community-based NGOs and provides a firmer funding base as they become known.
- Hewlett-Packard Company\*\*. Hewlett Packard's global pro bono program is increasingly engaging the company's legal teams in forty-five countries. One of HP's global pro bono emphases is empowering small business entrepreneurs around the world. HP's United Kingdom legal team members volunteer with an organization to advise young entrepreneurs on how to navigate employment, property, litigation, and commercial matters. HP's pro bono helps local small businesses to grow, creating employment opportunities for innumerable local community members.
- Goodwin Procter LLP\*. Lawyers at Goodwin Procter provide pro bono legal services to Vitamin Angels, an NGO that works to reduce child morbidity and mortality by increasing the availability and use of essential micronutrients by children less than five years of age. Goodwin Procter's legal assistance runs the gamut from nonprofit law, corporate governance, contract and lease negotiations, tax issues, and international expansion, to employment law and trademark issues.

International Human Rights and Humanitarian Work: Through pro bono, the global legal community is helping to deliver on the promise of universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. Pro bono assistance ranges from direct victim advocacy to helping research and draft national implementing legislation to bring countries in line with their treaty obligations.

- The Clorox Company\*\*, McDonald's Corporation\*\*, Microsoft Corporation\*\*, and Baker & McKenzie\*. Attorneys from Clorox, McDonald's, and Microsoft, in partnership with Baker & McKenzie, are working with Ashoka Fellows, who are selected by Ashoka for their

innovative proposals to address social problems with the potential to change patterns across society and who work in more than 60 countries. Volunteer attorneys assist Ashoka Fellows to develop and implement the legal strategies necessary to advance their initiatives. Legal advice includes intellectual property, governance, employment, data privacy, diversity, and sustainability. Pro bono legal services are delivered by conducting webinars and videoconferences on each legal topic of interest and providing on-the ground support.

- Accenture plc\*\*, Caterpillar, Inc., Merck & Co., Inc.\*\*, and Baker & McKenzie. Accenture, Caterpillar, and Merck, in partnership with Baker & McKenzie and Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI), developed an innovative, collaborative cross-border approach to address humanitarian issues. The resulting program united nearly 70 lawyers in 11 countries, all working to help PILI position International Public Interest Law Fellow Sarmila Shrestha, to advance efforts to reduce socioeconomic and sexual exploitation of women in the workplace in Nepal. Based on a public interest case brought by Shrestha, the Supreme Court of Nepal issued a decision decrying the harmful practices and directing the enactment of legislation to address the issue. PILI sought legal advice about fashioning model legislation predicated on international normative best practices and mechanisms for educating employers about the nature and scope of their legal obligations. Together, the team analyzed international legal mechanisms and best practices designed to deter sexual harassment; promote principled approaches to wage and hour, equal pay, and minimum hour regulation; foster occupational health and safety, and incorporate fundamental rights under international law to empower women in the workplace in Nepal.

Democracy Building and Rule of Law Initiatives: Pro bono attorneys are helping developing and post-conflict states to establish and strengthen fledgling democracies, economies, and justice systems. Opportunities range from training judges and setting up jury systems to helping draft national legislation.

- Caterpillar, Inc. Caterpillar partners with international development agencies and major multinational law firms to provide legal services to targeted constituencies in developing countries. Caterpillar attorneys provided input to strengthen the inheritance rights of women and children in Kenya, and provided guidance and draft legislation to the government of Nepal to help regulate working conditions for women and girls employed in small local nightclubs and facing pressure to engage in prostitution. The Nepal project involved assembling a survey of similar domestic laws to inform the draft legislation.
- DLA Piper LLP\*. By invitation from the Government of Guyana, a cross-disciplinary team of attorneys representing multiple offices of DLA Piper helped Guyana strengthen its justice system. The team drafted “best practices” manuals and conducted simulation-based training workshops for Guyanese magistrate judges and prosecutors.

Disaster Relief: When natural disasters strike, particularly in developing countries, millions are left hungry, homeless, and vulnerable to an array of grave violations of their rights. After massive quakes devastated Japan and Haiti, and in the aftermath of Pakistan’s deadly floods, civic-minded lawyers around the world stepped up to lend a helping hand through global pro bono.

- Reed Smith LLP\*. A delegation of law firms led by Reed Smith traveled to Haiti to conduct a fact-finding mission into the lack of security and surge in gender-based violence following

the 2010 earthquake. Reed Smith attorneys also identified and represented individual candidates seeking humanitarian parole and other U.S. immigration relief.

- The Boston Consulting Group. The “Rebuild Japan Initiative,” set up by BCG, delivers pro bono legal services to NGOs like Save the Children Japan that in turn provide relief and developmental support to people in devastated areas of Japan.

Legal Research and Policy Advocacy: Legal research projects hold special appeal because they draw upon a skill set that every lawyer already possesses, and because many pro bono legal research projects offer attorneys the opportunity to alleviate distant suffering without ever leaving their desks.

- Starbucks Corporation\*\*. Starbucks’ European legal team is working with the Public International Law and Policy Group on a project in Uganda. In partnership with attorneys at Baker & McKenzie, the Starbucks team researched international best practices and drafted a memorandum on the means different states use to ensure independent truth and reconciliation mechanisms.
- General Electric Company\*\*. In-house attorneys from General Electric have partnered with UNICEF and Appleseed Mexico on a project to advocate for policy changes to provide a timely, accessible and universally free civil registration process for persons born in Mexico. In Mexico, one out of every six children is never registered after birth. Without being registered, a child’s existence and citizenship is not recognized, and he or she has no access to education or public health services, scholarships, access to the courts and more. The team is conducting a study to assess the harmful consequences of non-registration, and formulate recommendations.
- Appleseed Mexico. In partnership with Appleseed Mexico, a team of 32 pro bono lawyers from six major law firms spent two years investigating injustices against children occurring along the U.S.-Mexico border. Their research revealed that thousands of children are needlessly exposed to human trafficking by drug cartels and criminal gangs, or repatriated to potentially abusive and dangerous situations without having a reasonable chance to assert their rights to protection. The bi-national initiative culminated in a comprehensive report, *Children at the Border: the Screening, Protection, and Repatriation of Unaccompanied Mexican Minors*, detailing observations and recommending bilateral solutions to significantly reduce the risks faced by these children.

Legal and Clinical Education: Pro bono attorneys are partnering with law schools around the world to promote the emerging global clinical movement as a more socially relevant means of educating lawyers and a vehicle for advancing social justice through legal education. Opportunities range from helping a law school establish its first legal clinic to partnering with well-established clinics in direct representation and policy work.

- Accenture plc and DLA Piper LLP. Attorneys at Accenture and DLA Piper partnered with Northwestern Law School to launch a major pro bono project in Ethiopia to assist the Addis Ababa Law School recover its former status as a leading law school in Africa. Years of civil war in Ethiopia had left the school severely hampered by a lack of financial resources – textbooks were decades out of date, facilities were aging dismally, and the law school’s

ability to attract and prepare the country's next generation of legal minds was compromised. Accenture and DLA Piper, in cooperation with Northwestern University School of Law, sent the first of many groups of lawyers to Addis Ababa to teach courses in international taxation, business negotiations, international arbitration, and corporate crime at the law school. Pro bono attorneys delivered seminars and continuing legal education courses on the same topics to the law school faculty and Ethiopian lawyers, as well as, assisted the law school to sponsor and host a conference on law and economic development. In addition, both organizations invested resources to enhance the law library and create a research center for law and economic development.

- Bridges Across Borders Southeast Asia. The Community Legal Education Initiative at NGO, Bridges Across Borders Southeast Asia, engages pro bono lawyers, professors and law students in Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam in initiatives to promote social justice through clinical legal education.

The legal community is rapidly recognizing the manifold benefits and rewards of doing good on a global scale. Global pro bono can go a long way to redress extreme poverty and egregious human rights violations, increase access to justice, and introduce pro bono culture in places with little or no prior history of pro bono. Engaging in global pro bono is an effective way for in-house legal departments to build reputation abroad, attract clients and consumers, and recruit and retain employees by projecting a socially responsible public image worldwide. A carefully crafted, institutionally supported global pro bono program enhances the communities where firms and corporations do business while simultaneously improving internal performance and efficacy. While global pro bono should neither diminish nor supplant domestic pro bono, incorporating a global element can exponentially increase the impact of an existing pro bono or CSR scheme.

To obtain information about Corporate Pro Bono (CPBO) or to become a CPBO Challenge<sup>SM</sup> Signatory, please contact CPBO at [cpbo@probonoinst.org](mailto:cpbo@probonoinst.org). For information about the Pro Bono Institute's Global Pro Bono Project, contact Sri Katragadda, at [skatragadda@probonoinst.org](mailto:skatragadda@probonoinst.org). To explore pro bono practices and opportunities in other countries, visit PBI's [Global Pro Bono Atlas](#).

*\*denotes a Signatory to the Law Firm Pro Bono Challenge<sup>®</sup>*

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