

A4ID Annual Conference

Doing Pro Bono the International Development Way

26 June 2021

A. Case study – to be read in advance of the workshop

This note outlines a case study which we will refer to and work on during the workshop. Please read this case study in advance.

Case study

- Country:

Located in East Africa, Kakora is a low-middle income country, with 30 million inhabitants. Named by the African Development Bank as one of the fastest growing economies in the region, many business opportunities have emerged in Kakora, particularly with the discovery of rare metals deposits in the Western part of the country.

In Kakora, corporate activity is vital for economic growth and poverty alleviation, with businesses providing jobs and services, as well as contributing to public funds by way of taxation. In parallel, however, the operations and activities of businesses have had a sizeable and harmful impact on human rights. Such impacts include, but are not limited to, exploitation of land rights, discrimination, poor labour conditions, child labour, a lack of safety and security, and failure to meet the living wage.

- Partners:

- Peters & Smith LLP (P&S) is a global law firm headquartered in London. It is one of the ten largest law firms in the world measured both by number of lawyers and revenue. P&S delivers advice and support to its clients across a wide range of sectors and practice areas. Within its Environment and Regulatory Law practice, a group of lawyers have strong expertise in Business and Human Rights. Through P&S's Global Pro Bono programme, lawyers have the chance to share their knowledge and experience for pro bono and community work.
- The Kakora Law Society (KLS) is Kakora's premier bar association, with a membership of over 10,000 practicing lawyers. One of the KLS's main missions is to develop a skilled and empowered legal profession and to promote its members' professional development and ethical conduct.

- Partnership:

For years, P&S has delivered trainings to other lawyers in various parts of the world, on a range of legal skills. These trainings are usually delivered by partners or senior associates, providing their time and skills on a pro bono basis.

Since early March 2020 and mainly due to the suspension of international travel because of the COVID-19 pandemic, P&S has increasingly worked to develop an alternative approach to delivering international trainings. Further, the firm has also sought to have a more strategic approach to its pro bono work, as it had recently felt that providing one-time "fly in, fly out" trainings might not be the most sustainable approach or the best use of its resources.

The new P&S pro bono strategy focuses on forming long-term partnerships with relevant bodies, especially national law societies, in selected countries and on specific legal issues. This approach is believed to enable a wider and deeper model of support.

P&S will attempt this model with KLS, as the partners have been in close contact for over 2 years and lawyers of P&S undertook a scoping visit to Kakora in October 2019. This led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, identifying several areas of collaboration with a focus on capacity-building on Business and Human Rights.

- Request for technical assistance:

Earlier this week, the Head of Pro Bono at P&S received an email from the KLS Programme Manager asking the firm to organise and deliver a Business and Human Rights training session for legal practitioners in Kakora. The primary target audience would be commercial lawyers advising businesses on regulatory issues; the KLS will be responsible for shortlisting the participants.

P&S specialists will organise a high-quality and participative training series on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to 60 commercial lawyers from Kakora to equip them with the knowledge and skills to advise their business clients on their human rights obligations.