



**UDO UDOMA &
BELO-OSAGIE**

2023

**PRO BONO AND
SOCIAL IMPACT
REPORT**



www.uubo.org



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In **2023**, we spent

407.5 hours
rendering pro bono services



This represents more than ~~£~~ **£100 million**
worth of **legal advice.**



INTRODUCTION

We are thrilled to welcome you back to another exciting edition of our annual *pro bono* newsletter! Here, we showcase our passion for making a difference in our community. *Pro bono* service isn't just a checkbox for us – it is a part of who we are!

At Udo Udoma & Belo-Osagie (**UUBO**), we are not just about billable hours (as great as these are!); we believe that we have a vital role to play in strengthening and developing our community and one of the ways we are able to achieve this is through our *pro bono* work.

From our bespoke offices in Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt, Nigeria to the global stage, our dedicated *pro bono* team is on a mission to provide top-tier legal support where it is needed most. We employ a multi-pronged approach that involves providing ongoing legal support to local non-profit entities as well as collaborating with reputable international *pro bono* organisations that receive requests for free legal support and working with a network of local and international charities. While we are always on the lookout to expand this network and take on new projects, we welcome opportunities where our services can be of maximum benefit and confer meaningful social impact.

Over the years, we have collaborated with several organisations, including TrustLaw, Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation, the Thomson Reuters Foundation's global *pro bono* legal programme, Sidley Austin (under the Sidley Emerging Enterprises Pro Bono Program), Center for Collaborative Investigative Journalism, and Advocates for International Development (A4ID). Through these partnerships, our firm has had the opportunity to impact our communities by providing free quality legal services, helping organisations and social enterprises to achieve their social mission, and extending their reach far beyond their borders.

So, as you flip through the pages of this newsletter, we invite you to join us on this journey of impact and purpose.

If you missed last year's edition, no worries, you can find a copy [here](#).



At **UUBO**, we believe that we play a vital role in applying our legal expertise to strengthen and develop our community. *Pro bono* is an integral part of UUBO's firm culture and one of the ways that we are able to strengthen and develop our community. By focusing on various Sustainable Development Goals (**SDGs**) that align with the UUBO ethos, we are able to align our *pro bono* contributions with the global agenda and local needs.

Our *pro bono* activities, which are highlighted in this newsletter, have mostly aligned with the following SDGs that we believe embody the ethos of our firm:



We leverage our extensive expertise as a full-service commercial law firm to effect positive change by providing accessible legal support through research initiatives, access to justice, and a broad spectrum of legal services. Our vision and mission are aligned to contribute to a more just and equitable world, beginning with our community. Our vision is to contribute to a legal landscape where fairness and equity prevail, empowering advocacy groups, individuals, social enterprises, non-governmental and non-profit entities alike, with the law serving as a catalyst for holistic societal advancement. Our mission is to harness our legal expertise for the betterment of society, striving to provide impactful support across a broad range of legal services.

To this end, we collaborate with reputable local and international *pro bono* organisations that align with our SDG objectives.

PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Our Pro Bono Activities in 2023

In 2023, we contributed to the following research projects:



Gun-Free South Africa

In 2023, we provided responses to additional enquiries on the legal framework of firearm ownership and safety laws in Nigeria. These responses were used in developing the Gun Free South Africa ("GSA") impact story. Additionally, the research project aimed to advocate for stricter gun laws in alignment with South Africa's international obligations. The research covered various jurisdictions, namely Colombia, Jamaica, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Along with the other law firms that advised on this project, we were nominated for the TrustLaw Collaboration Award at the 2023 TrustLaw Awards hosted by Thomson Reuters Foundation.



Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East Africa and Southern Africa [CIPESA]

We were engaged through the TrustLaw network to research the access of persons with disability (PWD) to ICT. The research spanned various jurisdictions, namely – Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, Cameroon, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Rwanda, England & Wales. Our role involved acting as the international coordinating counsel in relation to the multi-jurisdictional research project across these countries. In addition, we researched the rights of PWDs and their access to ICT in Nigeria. The report served as a resource for global advocacy and awareness in connection with the rights of PWDs and was launched in Q1 2024.

We participated in a webinar organised by CIPESA to celebrate the International Day for PWDs and to discuss the progress of African countries in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with a particular focus on the digital inclusion of PWDs in society. Our senior associate, Titilola Olatunde-Fasogbon, was one of the speakers at the webinar where CIPESA also launched its "Disability and ICT Accessibility Framework Indicators".



Caritas Spain

We were engaged by Caritas Spain (through the TrustLaw network) to conduct research on the legal framework for proof of origin by displaced or trafficked Nigerians abroad. Our research was set out in the form of a memorandum. The final memorandum will be used in Caritas Spain's campaigns and publications through which it denounces situations of injustice and invites everyone to work toward a society that respects the dignity of all people.



Media Legal Defence Initiative

We supported the Media Legal Defence Initiative (through the TrustLaw Network) to conduct research on the legal framework for privacy and online safety, platform liability and internet shutdowns. Our task was to research on the applicable laws, forms of liability and the available enforcement mechanisms under Nigerian law.



Cyrus R. Vance Centre for Human Rights

Cyrus R. Vance Centre for Human Rights (through Morrison Foerster LLP) engaged us to act as co-ordinating counsel and research on health care laws in Nigeria, including gender-affirming care and transgender rights in Nigeria. This research cut across countries in West Africa, specifically, Nigeria and Ghana.



World Bank Group

We assisted the World Bank with research on labour law, violence against women and family law from a Nigerian law perspective. Our contribution was provided through detailed responses to a questionnaire.



11

Charitable Organisations

received free corporate advisory services



10+

litigation cases

handled on a pro bono basis



1

Charitable Organisation

received company secretarial services on a pro bono basis

Achievements



The UUBO Pro bono team has been ranked consistently by our networks and beneficiaries over the past years. In 2023, we achieved the following:



UUBO was a recipient of the Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation Award together with other awardees, Clarke Gittens Farmer, Davis Graham & Stubbs LLP, Pestalozzi Attorneys at Law, and Romulo Law Offices.

At the award ceremony, which took place in San Francisco on 4th May 2023, attended by our managing partner, Aniekan Ukpanah, we were lauded for our exceptional pro bono contributions and support in providing critical pro bono legal services and support to social impact organisations.



UUBO was nominated for its collaborative work with counsel in Colombia (Philippi Prietocarriozza Ferrero DU & Uría Colombia), Kenya (ALN), Uganda (TASLAF Advocates and Consultants), Zambia (Mweshi Banda & Associates), Brazil (Machado, Meyer Sendacz e Opice) and India (F5 Networks, Inc) on a comparative research project on firearm ownership and safety laws for Gun Free South Africa. The research project focused on the legal framework of firearm ownership and safety laws, as part of Gun Free South Africa's objective to strengthen gun control policy in South Africa.



As part of our commitment to the nation and in alignment with our pro bono policy, our partner, Ozofu 'Latunde Ogiemudia, led the Technical Sub-committee of the 29th Nigerian Economic Summit themed "Pathways to Sustainable Economic Transformation and Inclusion", which has engendered new perspectives to policy-making in Nigeria. She was supported by our associates, Dumebi Anike-Nweze and Aidelohi Omo Eboh who were members of the secretariat of the Technical Sub-Committee.

Our Social Impact

The UUBO Pro bono team has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to societal growth through our impact-driven initiatives. In 2023, the team executed several significant projects aimed at addressing critical issues such as hunger, gender-specific workplace recognition, education, and health awareness. Notable among these efforts were the UUBO/ULAW Food Bank Project, UUBO Internship Program, International Men's Day, and the Pink October Breast Cancer Campaign.

Each of these initiatives not only aligned with broader global goals but also created substantial positive impacts within the local community and workplace. This section highlights the execution and outcomes of these initiatives, showcasing UUBO's dedication to fostering community support, gender inclusivity, education and health consciousness.



UUBO/ULAW Food Bank Project

On July 22, 2023, the UUBO/U-Law team, in partnership with Lagos Food Bank (LFB)—a leading non-profit organisation dedicated to combating hunger, reducing food waste, and addressing malnutrition in Nigeria—undertook a transformative outreach initiative. Through this project, themed "A Time to Share", we provided essential food items and relief supplies to underserved households in the Ikeja area of Lagos State, Nigeria. This project directly touched on Goal Number 2 of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals: Ending Hunger, Achieving Food Security, and Improving Nutrition. The positive impact on the community was notable, as over 100 indigent families received not only essential food items, non-food items, and cash gifts but also a renewed sense of hope and support during challenging times.



International Men's Day

"Thank you, Mr. Upanah, for approving this session. It is uncommon for men to be specially celebrated in the workplace. I also found your tips on investments and market intelligence to be profound and very valuable. Thank you, Sir." - Kelechi Ibe, one of the attendees, expressed his appreciation.

To mark the 2023 International Men's Day, on 30th November 2023, UUBO organised a special event for all the gentlemen in the firm, and this was truly remarkable because, not only was it uncommon to specially celebrate Men's Day, it also presented an opportunity to interact freely on issues that were peculiar to men. This event was particularly noteworthy as it highlighted a rare yet important acknowledgement of men in the workplace within Nigeria. The session was enlightening and empowering, as partners shared invaluable advice and insights on a variety of topics, including financial management, investments, relationships, marriage, healthy living, personal development, and career growth. The feedback from our male employees was overwhelmingly positive. This event not only fostered a sense of inclusion and appreciation among our male colleagues but also equipped them with practical knowledge to enhance their personal and professional lives.



2023 Pink October Breast Cancer Campaign

In October 2023, the firm launched the Pink October breast cancer awareness campaign, a heartfelt initiative uniting our firm to raise awareness about an issue affecting countless individuals and families globally. We organised several events to mark this occasion:

<p>The Lights Go Pink</p> <p>Our office was adorned with pink lights, symbolising our support for breast cancer awareness and serving as a daily reminder of our campaign's significance.</p>	<p>Pink Notes</p> <p>We sent regular pink notes to employees' mailboxes, providing breast cancer-related updates.</p>	<p>Donation Drive</p> <p>Our employees successfully raised over N1,000,000.00 for the campaign, which was doubled by the firm. The funds were donated to Sebecly Cancer Care, a cancer organisation, to conduct free breast and cervical cancer screening for women within the Lekki environment. The total number of women screened for both breast and cervical cancer was 83.</p>
<p>Breast Cancer Awareness Session</p> <p>On 11th October 2023, we hosted Dr. Omolola Salako from Pearl Oncology at our offices as part of our 2023 Pink-October Campaign. The discussions bordered on early detection and prevention of breast cancer. The cancer awareness session was followed by a clinical breast examination in partnership with St. Nicholas Hospital.</p>	<p>Breast Examination for Employees</p> <p>Female employees were offered free breast examination sessions by qualified healthcare professionals at St Nicholas Hospital.</p>	<p>Pink Fitness Day</p> <p>A day of fun physical activities was organised to promote a healthy lifestyle, which is vital in reducing the risk of breast cancer.</p>



Empowering Future Legal Leaders: UUBO's Internship Program

In July 2023, we hosted 15 aspiring lawyers in our Lagos office as part of our renowned 3-week internship program. Our internship program attracts and trains some of the most promising students from esteemed Nigerian and international universities, providing them with unparalleled training opportunities. During the time that they spend with us, these bright minds interact closely with our lawyers and, through these interactions, gain invaluable knowledge and essential skills, setting a strong foundation for their future success in the legal profession.

Our program included an open-day event, where we welcomed students from Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, Edo State. During this event, our experienced partners shared insights into the diverse roles of a lawyer and offered guidance on building a successful legal career. By investing in the next generation of legal talent, we are committed to fostering excellence and shaping the future of law



Legacy Endowment

As part of our 40th-anniversary initiatives, we set up an endowment scheme in honour of our founders at the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, and the University of Ghana, Legon. Under the scheme, we will sponsor one male and one female law student from each institution in line with our commitment to SDGs 4 (Quality Education) and 5 (Gender Equality).

Our 2024 Plans



Activities



Project NAS

1

Provide legal advice and representation to inmates in Nigeria



Make a widow smile

2

Donate towards the World Widows Day 2024 initiative in partnership with Lagos Food Bank.



Pro Bono Connect

3

Host a virtual event on pro bono partnership



Linking Hands Foundation

4

Support the rebuilding of schools for kids in resettlement areas.

Collaboration and Communication



Knowledge Sharing

1

We are committed to sharing our pro bono experiences and insights by publishing articles related to pro bono work and the legal issues our pro bono clients face, contributing to the collective discourse on social justice, equity and legal empowerment.



Local Collaboration

2

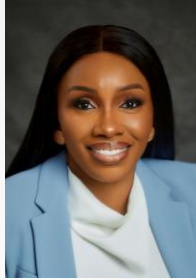
We plan to increase our collaboration with local pro bono organisations that connect legal professionals with individuals and organisations in need of free legal support. This collaboration will allow us to contribute our expertise to a wider range of pro bono matters.

Through these comprehensive plans and initiatives, we are confident that we can make a significant and lasting positive impact in 2024 and beyond. We are dedicated to utilising our legal expertise and resources to empower individuals, communities, and organisations in need while contributing to a more just and equitable world.

Our Team



Yinka Edu



Ozofo 'Latunde Ogiemudia



Chisom Ndubuisi



Titilola Olatunde-Fasogbun



Kelechi Ibe



Itorobong Udom



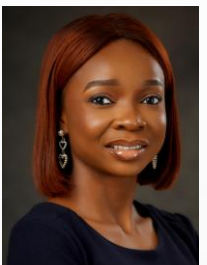
Noble Chiwendu



Dumebi Anike-Nweze



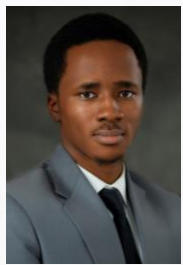
Toluwalope Adedokun



Aniekan Udo-Okon



Mujeeb Azeez



Adeyemi Akinyemi

FURTHER INFORMATION

We are eager to expand our network and reach and are therefore always on the lookout to collaborate with impact-driven local and international *pro bono* organisations. If you know any of such organisations that may be of interest to us, please send an email to probono@uubo.org.



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