

# Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

## Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Bangladesh

### Introduction

Bangladesh is a developing country in South Asia, and its legal system has been developed and updated since its independence in 1971. However, pro bono in Bangladesh has remained a niche idea and pro bono participation is inconsistent. An absence of forward-looking pro bono legislation hinders efforts to solidify a pro bono regime in Bangladesh. While Bangladesh citizens are entitled to “equal protection of law” under Article 27 of the Constitution of Bangladesh, the question remains as to how this can be ensured for those who are unaware of their rights or are economically disadvantaged. In addition, pro bono in Bangladesh is not accessible as engagement and exposure to free legal services is inconsistent, particularly for people from rural areas.<sup>1</sup>

### At a glance

| Minimum pro bono hours requirement for lawyers? | Specific pro bono licence required? | May foreign lawyers practice pro bono? | Insurance required for law firm pro bono? | Insurance required for in-house pro bono? | Rules to limit advertising pro bono work? | Does pro bono work count to CLE credit? | Limitations for in-house lawyers to do pro bono? |
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| No  | No                                  | No                                     | No  | No  | No  | No                                      | No   |

### The landscape

| Professional regulation   |   |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of legal services, including any licensing required to provide legal services. Please highlight any differences for lawyers working as in-house counsel.</li> </ol> | <p>In Bangladesh, the provision of legal services is primarily regulated by the Bangladesh Bar Council (the “<b>Council</b>”), constituted under the Bangladesh Legal Practitioners and Bar Council Order, 1972, which is the statutory body responsible for the regulation of the legal profession in Bangladesh.</p> <p>To practice law in Bangladesh, an individual must hold a recognised law degree and be enrolled as an advocate with the Bangladesh Bar Council. Enrolment requires successful completion of the Bar Council Examination and fulfilling other criteria set by the Council. Once enrolled, advocates can practice in various courts across Bangladesh, starting from the lower courts and,</p> |

<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.trust.org/impact-story/pro-bono-yet-to-go-mainstream-in-bangladesh/> (last accessed on February 13, 2025).

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|  | <p>with completion of the qualifying practice period and further permission by the Council, in the High Court Division and the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh.</p> <p>The Legal Practitioners and Bar Council Order, 1972 and the Bangladesh Legal Practitioners and Bar Council Rules, 1972 are the primary legislative instruments governing the legal profession. These regulations cover aspects such as the conduct of advocates, disciplinary procedures, and the overall administration of the legal profession. Additionally, the Canons of Professional Conduct and Etiquette issued by the Bangladesh Bar Council set out the standards of appropriate behaviour that advocates are expected to uphold in their interactions with fellow legal professionals, clients, the judiciary, and the general public.</p> <p>Lawyers working as in-house counsel in Bangladesh are typically not required to hold a practicing license from the Bar Council if they are not representing their employer in court or not providing legal services that require advocacy. However, they must still possess a law degree and may benefit from being enrolled with the Bar Council for professional recognition and development. However, in accordance with the Canons of Professional Conduct and Etiquette issued by the Bangladesh Bar Council, an advocate is generally prohibited from engaging in any other profession or business, whether as an active partner, salaried official, or employee in connection with such activities.<sup>2</sup></p> |
| <h3>Regulatory landscape for pro bono</h3>   |  |
| <p>2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.</p> | <p>In Bangladesh, there are no specific laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services. However, lawyers providing pro bono legal services are subject generally to the Canons of Professional Conduct and Etiquette issued by the Bangladesh Bar Council, which, among others, states that it is the duty of every advocate to uphold at all times the dignity and</p>  |

<sup>2</sup> See Paragraph 8, Chapter 4 of the Canons of Professional Conduct and Etiquette, available at: <https://www.barcouncil.gov.bd/canons-of-professional-conduct-and-etiquette/> (last visited on March 3, 2025)

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|  | high standing of his profession, as well as his own dignity and high standing as a member thereof. <sup>3</sup>  |
| 3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?  | Lawyers do not need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond the usual local qualification to practise law).   |
| 4. Do foreign-qualified lawyers need any additional license to provide pro bono services (beyond their foreign qualification to practice law)?                       | In Bangladesh, save as otherwise provided in the Legal Practitioners and Bar Council Order, 1972, no person shall be entitled to practise the profession of law unless he is an advocate. <sup>4</sup> Therefore, foreign-qualified lawyers are not allowed to practise Bangladeshi law unless he or she is an advocate. Consequently, he or she is not allowed to provide any pro bono services in relation to Bangladeshi law, unless he is an advocate. |
| 5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?   | Lawyers are not required by the Legal Practitioners and Bar Council Order, 1972, and the Bangladesh Legal Practitioners and Bar Council Rules, 1972 to work a minimum number of pro bono hours in Bangladesh.  |
| 6. Are aspiring lawyers required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers?  | In Bangladesh, aspiring lawyers are generally required to complete a pupillage for a period of 6 (six) months under the mentorship of a practicing advocate of at least 10 years standing in the profession. However, there is no requirement to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers.   |
| 7. Aside from mandatory targets (if any), are there aspirational pro bono hours targets for lawyers set by the local bar association, regulatory body or other body? | There is no mandatory pro bono hours target set by the Bangladesh Bar Council or any other regulatory body for lawyers. Similarly, there is no officially established aspirational pro bono hour target.   |
| 8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?   | Bangladesh currently does not have continuing legal education requirements for its lawyers. Bangladeshi lawyers therefore do not receive any CLE or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked.   |

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.barcouncil.gov.bd/canons-of-professional-conduct-and-etiquette/> (last visited on February 13, 2025).

<sup>4</sup> See section 19(1) of the Legal Practitioners and Bar Council Order, 1972, available at <http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-details-387.html> (last visited on February 13, 2025).

## Insurance and advertising

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| <p>9. Do lawyers need professional indemnity legal insurance cover for pro bono legal services they provide? Does the requirement differ for in-house lawyers?</p> <p>If insurance is required, can lawyers meet the requirement by working under the cover of another pro bono provider, e.g. in partnership with a private law firm or organization working on the same pro bono project?</p> | <p>Lawyers in Bangladesh do not need professional indemnity legal insurance cover for pro bono legal services they provide. This requirement does not differ for in-house lawyers.</p>   |
| <p>10. Are there any rules that limit or prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients?</p>   | <p>While there are no specific rules exclusively addressing the advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting pro bono clients, the general principles of professional conduct apply. Under the Canons of Professional Conduct and Etiquette issued by the Bangladesh Bar Council, an advocate shall not solicit professional employment by advertisement or by any other means. However, this does not prohibit the publication or use of ordinary professional cards, name plates or conventional listings in directories, so long as the information contained therein is limited to professional and academic qualifications and public offices currently held, and does not contain any matter which would constitute advertisement. In addition, an advocate shall not employ any other person to solicit or obtain professional employment for him.<sup>5</sup></p> |

## Pro bono practice and culture

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| <p>11. What are the main areas of law which require or present opportunities for pro bono? What are the major unmet legal needs?</p> | <p>The main areas of law which require or present opportunities for the provision of pro bono legal services in Bangladesh are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Criminal Law</b> – poor and underprivileged people typically do not have adequate means to hire advocates to represent them in a court of law. Lack of representation also leads to denial of justice which may end up with such</li> </ul> |
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<sup>5</sup> See paragraphs 2 and 3 of Chapter 1 of the canons of professional conduct and etiquette issued by the Bangladesh Bar Council available at <https://www.barcouncil.gov.bd/canons-of-professional-conduct-and-etiquette/> (last visited on February 13, 2025).

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|   | <p>persons being imprisoned for longer durations than otherwise prescribed for convictions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Matrimonial / Family Law</b> – pro bono services are often needed in family law matters, including divorce, child custody, and domestic violence cases, where individuals (in particular, Bangladeshi women, who may be economically reliant on their partners) may lack the resources to secure legal representation.</li> <li>• <b>Human Rights Law</b> – pro bono assistance is often required to be provided to victimized individuals facing discrimination, unlawful detention or unfair treatment.</li> <li>• <b>Land / Property Law</b> – poor and underprivileged people typically require representation regarding their rights to land, housing and property.</li> <li>• <b>Public Interest Litigation</b> – pro bono assistance is also required in public interest litigation, involving amongst others, environmental issues, social justice, educational rights, road safety, government accountability and transparency.</li> </ul> <p>Pro bono legal services could also be offered to the elderly (also referred to as senior citizens), including in aiding them to recover their pension and insurance claims. Limited resources, lack of knowledge and continuous changes in the regulatory requirements often result in elderly persons being unable to take legal recourse on their own and accordingly, pro bono legal services could greatly benefit them.</p> <p>Overall, the major unmet legal needs in Bangladesh revolve around raising awareness of legal rights and having access to justice for economically disadvantaged and rural communities.</p> |
| <p>12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?</p> | <p>The main providers of pro bono legal services in Bangladesh include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Private law firms and individual attorneys:</b> Alongside the governmental endeavours, several renowned law firms in Bangladesh have teamed up to make pro bono more accessible. The 2020 survey conducted by</li> </ul>  |

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|  | <p>TrustLaw<sup>6</sup> shows that fee earners in the Bangladesh law firms who had participated in the survey by them performed an average of 39.4 hours of pro bono work over the self-selected 12-month reporting period, and impressively, 87 per cent. of fee earners contributed 10 or more hours.<sup>7</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NGOs:</b> NGOs have been instrumental in providing pro bono legal services in Bangladesh. They work together with some law firms, individual attorneys, law clinics, bar associations, law schools, governmental and other non-governmental organizations to meet the demand for pro bono legal services. Notable organizations include Ain o Salish Kendra (“<b>ASK</b>”)<sup>8</sup>, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (“<b>BLAST</b>”)<sup>9</sup>, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers’ Association (“<b>BNWLA</b>”)<sup>10</sup>, Lawyers Beyond Borders Bangladesh<sup>11</sup>, Rupantar<sup>12</sup> and BRAC<sup>13</sup>.</li> <li>• <b>Law clinics organized by law schools:</b> Certain law schools in Bangladesh offer legal services clinics and student activities focused on providing legal advice, offering dispute resolution services, and promoting legal awareness among disadvantaged communities.</li> </ul> |
| <p>13. Are there any noteworthy examples of how innovative technology or artificial intelligence is being used to enable access to pro bono or otherwise as part of pro bono cases or matters?</p> | <p>While artificial intelligence and technology integration in pro bono work in Bangladesh is still evolving, initiatives like digitising the court system by the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and the digital applications, such as, “Sromik Jigyasha” developed by BLAST<sup>14</sup> and “Shongjog” developed by BRAC<sup>15</sup> are setting important precedents for enhancing access to justice. These technologies are not only making it easier for Bangladeshi citizens to access legal information, but also increasing the efficiency of legal professionals</p>   |

<sup>6</sup> <https://pbi.trust.org/introduction/?year=2020>

<sup>7</sup> See <https://pbi.trust.org/data/?year=2020> (last visited on February 13, 2025). Note that the survey was not conducted in Bangladesh again for TrustLaw’s 2024 Index.

<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.askbd.org/ask/> (last visited on February 13, 2025).

<sup>9</sup> See <https://blast.org.bd/> (last visited on February 13, 2025).

<sup>10</sup> See <https://bnwla-bd.org/> (last visited on February 13, 2025).

<sup>11</sup> See <https://lbb-bangladesh.org/> (last visited on February 13, 2025).

<sup>12</sup> See <http://rupantar.org/> (last visited on March 03, 2025)

<sup>13</sup> See <https://www.brac.net/program/social-empowerment-and-legal-protection/> (last visited on March 03, 2025)

<sup>14</sup> See <https://blast.org.bd/resources/sromik-jigyasha/> (last accessed on 19 December 2025).

<sup>15</sup> See <https://shongjog.brac.net/?ln=en> (last accessed on 19 December 2025).

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|   | who provide pro bono services.  |
| <b>Sources of Pro Bono Opportunities and Key Contacts</b>   |   |
| 14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.   | <p>iProbono connects charities, NGOs, advocacy organisations, social enterprises, not-for-profits and community groups with legal assistance they may need.<sup>16</sup></p> <p>Other notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in Bangladesh include, but are not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ASK;</li> <li>2. BLAST;</li> <li>3. BNWLA; and</li> <li>4. BRAC.</li> </ol>   |
| 15. Is there any public or private organization with which a local or foreign lawyer can register to be made aware of pro bono opportunities? | <p>In Bangladesh, while there is no centralized public or private organization specifically dedicated to registering lawyers for pro bono opportunities, several organizations and networks facilitate pro bono work and may serve as points of contact for interested lawyers, both local and foreign:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):</b> NGOs such as ASK, BLAST, BNWLA and BRAC are actively involved in providing pro bono services. Lawyers can reach out to these organizations to express their interest in contributing.</li> <li><b>2. National Legal Aid Services Organization (“NLASO”):</b> As a government body coordinating legal aid services, NLASO works with lawyers who volunteer to provide pro bono services. Lawyers interested in participating can contact NLASO for potential opportunities.</li> <li><b>3. University Legal Clinics:</b> Law schools with legal clinics may offer opportunities for lawyers to mentor students or participate in pro bono projects. Engaging with academic institutions can be a way to get involved.</li> </ol> |

<sup>16</sup> See <https://i-probono.com/> (last visited on February 13, 2025).

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| 16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work? | In Bangladesh, there is no widely recognized national awards, lists, or rankings specifically dedicated to pro bono work. |
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## Acknowledgements

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## Learn more

[Navigate the full Global Pro Bono Guide](#) to explore the global landscape and pro bono practices and opportunities across 100+ jurisdictions.