

Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Cameroon

Introduction

The provision of pro bono legal services in Cameroon is not commonplace as part of the legal tradition and there are no legal instruments regulating pro bono legal services. However, there is an unmet need for pro bono legal services (and legal aid) in Cameroon, especially for socially disadvantaged citizens and people living with disabilities.

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?
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No

The landscape

Professional regulation	
<p>1. 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.</p>	<p>In Cameroon, the legal profession is regulated by law number 90/059 of 19th December 1990 which organizes legal practices at the Bar (the “Law”) and the Internal Regulations of the Cameroon Bar implemented by order number 41/DPJ/SG/MJ of 12th April 2005 of the Minister in charge of Justice (the “Internal Regulations”).¹</p> <p>Broadly, the Law and the Internal Regulations set out the conditions required to become a lawyer in Cameroon, as well as the rules of the Cameroon Bar Association, the procedural rules for disciplinary proceedings and ethical standards which apply to all Cameroon registered lawyers.</p> <p>The provision of legal services is not limited to lawyers.² However, Article 2 of the Law provides that only advocates may represent parties before the law courts. Article 3 states that parties may</p>

¹ See <https://barreaucameroun.org/fr/> (last visited on 14 February 2025).

² See <https://barreaucameroun.org/fr/en/law-n-90-059-of-1990/> (last visited on 14 February 2025).

	<p>be assisted or represented by any other representative of their choice, where, in the jurisdiction of the court to which the cause has been referred, there are less than four chambers.</p> <p>To become a lawyer in Cameroon, the following conditions of Article 5 the Law must be satisfied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameroonian nationality; • The lawyer must be 23 years or older; • LLB qualification or equivalent; • Obtain the “certificate of proficiency to practice at the Bar”; • Passage of the swearing in ceremony by the bar association; • Proof of adequate office premises, as approved by the Cameroon Bar Association; • Proof of professional indemnity insurance; and • Enrolment in the bar register.
Regulatory landscape for pro bono	
<p>2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.</p>	<p>In Cameroon, there is no specific law that regulates pro bono legal services. The Internal Regulations are binding on all advocates of the Cameroon Bar and on all foreign advocates who are received by the Cameroon Bar Association, and these will also apply to pro bono legal services.</p> <p>Law number 2009/004 of 14th April 2009³ sets out the provision of legal aid in Cameroon (“Law on Legal Aid”). Legal aid is intended to ensure that underprivileged individuals can pursue and enforce their rights by covering, in whole or in part, procedural costs such as court registration fees, bailiff services, and related expenses. It enables those without sufficient resources to obtain judgments and have them executed without prepaying all or part of the required fees.⁴</p>
<p>3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>Lawyers in Cameroon do not require a license to provide pro bono legal services beyond the usual local qualification to practice law.</p>

³ https://minjustice.cm/download/loi-n2009-004-du-14-avril-2009/?utm_source (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

⁴ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/392516484_Smearing_the_trundles_of_legal_aid_in_Cameroon_reconsidering_the_need_in_appraising_the_legal_framework (Last viewed on 7 March 2026).

<p>4. Do foreign-qualified lawyers need any additional license to provide pro bono services (beyond their foreign qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>Foreign lawyers in Cameroon do not require any additional license(s) to provide pro bono legal services beyond their foreign qualification to practice law. Subject to reciprocity with their country of origin, a lawyer registered with a foreign bar may be authorised by the president of the court to plead in a particular case.⁵</p>
<p>5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?</p>	<p>Lawyers in Cameroon are not required to work a minimum number of pro bono hours.</p>
<p>6. Are aspiring lawyers required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers?</p>	<p>Aspiring lawyers in Cameroon are not required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services in order to become licensed lawyers.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>No aspirational pro bono hours targets are set by the Cameroon Bar Association or any other regulatory body.</p>
<p>8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?</p>	<p>“Continuing Legal Education” or equivalent credit are not recognized in Cameroon.</p>
Insurance and advertising	
<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>To be admitted and maintain status as a practicing lawyer in Cameroon, an individual must show proof of professional liability insurance covering their legal practice. A lawyer or a professional partnership of lawyers is required to take out a policy with an approved insurance company to cover his or her professional risks and a receipt is given to the President of the Bar at the beginning of each judicial year.⁶</p>
<p>10. Are there any rules that limit or prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients?</p>	<p>There are no rules that specifically prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients. Personal publicity of an advocate is allowed in so far as it provides necessary information to the public. However, in</p>

⁵ https://barreaucameroun.org/fr/fr/loi-n-90-059-de-1990/?utm_source (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

⁶ https://barreaucameroun.org/fr/fr/loi-n-90-059-de-1990/?utm_source (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

	<p>general, advocates are prohibited from canvassing or entreaty—meaning offering services without prior invitation or by personally approaching (or via agents) individuals at their homes, workplaces, places of rest or treatment, in public places, or through electronic communications—and from advertising consultations, drafting, or pleading via tracts, letters, cinematographic stickers, radio, or television. Permissible publicity includes organizing colloquia, seminars, and professional refresher events, and participating in professional gatherings.⁷</p>
<p>Pro bono practice and culture</p>	
<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>Cameroon has major unmet needs for the provision of legal services. 37.7% of the population lives below the poverty line, meaning that there is a huge demand for legal services provided on a pro bono (or legal aid) basis.⁸</p> <p>The main areas of law which require or present opportunities for the provision of pro bono legal services in Cameroon are: (i) human rights law⁹; (ii) criminal procedure (a majority of Cameroon’s prisoners are awaiting trial); (iii) criminal defense; (iv) child protection; (v) immigration law (Cameroon hosts nearly 500,000 asylum seekers and refugees)¹⁰; and (vi) equality for women.</p>
<p>12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?</p>	<p>NGOs play a prominent role in providing pro bono legal services¹¹ in Cameroon for refugees and vulnerable people such as detainees. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Is Right runs a legal clinic, and provides legal advice, representation, and support to vulnerable groups, and helps facilitate access to legal aid.¹² • FIDA Cameroon (International Federation of Women Lawyers) offers legal aid clinics and counseling services, particularly for women

⁷ https://barreaucameroun.org/fr/en/internal-regulations/?utm_source (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

⁸ https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099062225204519576/pdf/P179778-63e8f093-b382-451b-bf70-fdd8bccfcb7e.pdf?utm_source (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

⁹ https://www.mdtcameroon.org/projects/access-to-justice?utm_source (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

¹⁰ See <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/countries/cameroon> (last visited 14 February 2025).

¹¹ <https://rightsinoxile.org/legal-assistance-by-country/cameroon-legal-assistance/#l-a> (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

¹² https://www.hisrcameroon.org/legal-assistance/?utm_source (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

	<p>and girls, including free legal advice and court representation for indigent clients.¹³</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AFVMC - Association Aide aux Familles et Victimes des Migrations Clandestines, which help refugees;¹⁴ • Refugees Welfare Association (REWAC) Cameroon provides legal services to refugees and internally displaced persons;¹⁵ and • Some local law firms in Cameroon, such as Citadel, provide pro bono legal services, however, the Thomson Reuters Foundation reported that few local law private law firms in Cameroon are prepared to work on a pro bono basis.¹⁶ Some international firms have also engaged in pro bono legal work in Cameroon.¹⁷
<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>At present, there are no specific examples of innovative technology or artificial intelligence being used in pro bono cases or matters.</p> <p>More broadly, some legal tools are emerging such as Digital Assistant Cameroon, a local platform that uses an AI chatbot called <i>Cam</i> to answer questions about Cameroonian law, administrative procedures, and justice processes in English and French.¹⁸</p>
Sources of Pro Bono Opportunities and Key Contacts	
<p>14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.</p>	<p>Cameroon provides free legal assistance through a state legal aid system (assistance judiciaire), especially in criminal defense and to financially eligible persons.¹⁹ However, there is no dedicated government-run pro bono program.</p> <p>The above NGOs can also be contacted.</p>
<p>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>	<p>There is no public or private organization in Cameroon with which a local or foreign attorney can register in order to be made aware of pro bono opportunities.</p>

¹³ <https://www.fida-cameroon.org/> (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

¹⁴ See <http://afvmc.free.fr/> (last visited 14 February 2025)

¹⁵ See <https://rewac.org/protection/> (last visited on February 14, 2025)

¹⁶ See <https://news.trust.org/item/20101116153900-pni7r#:~:text=There%20is%20a%20huge%20need%20for%20free,set%20aside%20funds%20for%20pro%20bono%20services>

¹⁷ <https://www.sidley.com/en/probonolanding/sidley-emerging-enterprises-pro-bono-program/projects/grassland-cameroon> (last visited on February 14, 2025)

¹⁸ <https://www.sidley.com/en/probonolanding/sidley-emerging-enterprises-pro-bono-program/projects/grassland-cameroon> (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

¹⁹ <https://www.votre-compagnon-cameroun.com/> (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

¹⁹ https://lawjournals.celnet.in/index.php/Jolj/article/view/385?utm_source (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).

	There are global pro bono clearinghouses and legal services providers such as TrustLaw, PILnet or A4ID. ²⁰
16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?	There are no specific awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work in Cameroon.

Acknowledgements

Name of law firm: Jing & Partners

Name of lawyer: Marie-Claire Manga

Learn more

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

²⁰ See <https://www.trust.org/trustlaw/>, <https://www.pilnet.org/> and <https://a4id.org/> (Last viewed on 9 March 2026).