

YPA 9 Action Plan: Building Peace through Pro Bono Activities

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Problem Statement

Generally, people find it difficult to understand legal procedures. Because of high expenditure, some are afraid to seek legal remedy when they are required to do so. Youths have a responsibility to help them to overcome this fear and help them. While I will be pursuing my Bar Professional Training Course in London, UK I will engage myself in Pro Bono activities as a member of the Personal Support Unit (PSU) and will try to engage other students in the same.



What is Pro bono?

- **Pro bono publico** (English: for the public good; usually shortened to **pro bono**) is a Latin phrase for professional work undertaken voluntarily and without payment or at a reduced fee as a public service. Pro bono service, unlike traditional volunteerism , uses the specific skills of professionals to provide services to those who are unable to afford them.



What is the Personal Support Unit (PSU) ?

- The Personal Support Unit (PSU) is an independent charity, which provides non-legal, practical and emotional support to litigants in person, witnesses, family members and other supporters. Their service is free, confidential and independent. PSU does not give legal advice, but volunteers accompany them through the court process.



What are the volunteers roles?

- This is an exciting opportunity to participate in a unique project, see the effects of law and court cases on individuals, learn the inside workings of the court system and meet court staff, and to help individuals with their legal problems on a one to one basis.
- Volunteers will be providing assistance to litigants in person by helping them to fill in forms, guiding clients around the building, telephoning other support agencies and by accompanying litigants into court.



Targeted people

- The PSU's service is free, independent and confidential and the service is offered equally to everyone who asks.
- The PSU commits itself to:
 - * The principle of providing services for all litigants in person, their families, friends and supporters
 - * Ensuring that minority/disadvantaged groups are welcomed to and involved in all aspects of the service.



Challenges

- Volunteers need to be able to deal with people on all levels, have lots of initiative and the ability to empathise with people going through a stressful and difficult time. Most PSU clients are anxious, upset or confused. To be able to pick up the essentials of their case and to be able to support them effectively is a hugely challenging and extremely rewarding task for volunteers. At the same time as Law is a very intense course it is difficult for the students to give time in other activities other than study.



How it will be done?

- The unique service is free, confidential and independent. The PSU does not give legal advice, but volunteers invest their time, skills and energy to solve clients' problems and accompany them through the court process.



Goals

- . The volunteers will gain the following skills:
 - . Ability to work as part of a managed team
 - . Willingness to work within the framework of equal opportunities
 - . Willingness to adhere to a policy of confidentiality
 - . Ability to listen and communicate with a wide range of people
 - . A caring, mature and supportive attitude
 - . Ability to communicate in English, both orally and in writing
 - . Willingness to explore attitudes and feelings towards litigants in person



Indicator

- The success indicator relies on how many people are getting benefitted.
- The development of the perception of youths towards volunteerism is another success indicator .



Stakeholders

- Students
- General Public
- NGO
- Media
- Judiciary



Timeline

- Pro Bono services from my part will be provided during my stay in UK from September ,2014 to August,2015. Generally , PSU student volunteers are required to give 20 days over the academic year to provide practical and emotional support to clients.




Budget

- It is a voluntary work and volunteers are expected to pay their own cost. Some expenditure (e.g: transportation , logistics etc.) may be provided by the PSU in special circumstances.



Sponsors

- Though Volunteers in PSU works voluntarily and there is no budget requirement but for raising the funds in special circumstances the following sponsors may be attracted:
- Law Firms
- Corporations

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- “Those who are voluntarily giving the help provided by the Unit are making a real difference and we must support them so that they can carry on their good work... Now the PSU is in place it is difficult to understand why we did not have it earlier.”

**Lord Woolf,
Former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales,
Patron of the PSU**

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