



Ignacio Obando

Ignacio has over 12 years of experience working with social organisations and startups. He served on the board of Fundación Beneciclo and has recently focused on consumer experience in Toronto, Canada, and advising tech startups.

He currently serves as Co-Coordinator of Red Pro Bono De Las Americas.

How would you measure the impact of the work that you do as an organisation?

We're actively grappling with how to measure the impact of our work, it's a major challenge right now. So far, our approach has been largely quantitative: counting who benefitted, how many hours were worked and how many lawyers participated.

However, we know that doesn't tell the full story. We don't yet have a method for measuring long-term or qualitative impact, like how the work has changed lives or influenced systems. That's what we're working toward, finding a methodology that works for us and for our member initiatives, which also lack the resources to do this on their own. There's a real gap at the moment.

How do you measure the impact of the pro bono lawyers who volunteer with your organisation?

To measure the impact of pro bono lawyers, we mainly rely on reports from the member initiatives in our network. While we do some individual follow-up with the lawyers, the initiatives provide most of the data, like hours worked and project involvement.

Our work is more focused on coordinating international or transnational projects, and although we don't have precise metrics or detailed studies, we've noticed increased engagement in some firms, especially after handling meaningful cross-border cases. Thus, we're still developing

“ When we talk about empowering, promoting, strengthening pro bono work; I need to determine how I tell the person who volunteers to do pro bono work that the impact of their work is not just that five people benefitted, but that there was also a change in behaviour.”

more effective ways to measure long-term impact and participation. Ultimately, we want to make sure that both the volunteer lawyer and the client are deriving something significant from the case.

Who is your audience for the results of these measurements?

We see three main target groups. First, the legal community, especially lawyers, because showing the impact of their work can promote and motivate greater levels of involvement. Second, funders and donors, including foundations and companies, who need to see concrete outcomes to justify financial support. And third, the broader public and civil society, to demonstrate that our network delivers meaningful, professional contributions to social good.

Ultimately, sharing these results supports credibility, sustainability, and collaboration across sectors, and positions pro bono work as an important part of broader social responsibility efforts.





Are there methodologies of impact measurement that you would like to use (especially those that are qualitative) but do not, because they are burdensome or raise issues of confidentiality, etc?

There are definitely methodologies we'd like to use, particularly ones that involve tracking the long-term impact of a pro bono case, what we might call the 'life cycle' of the consultancy. Ideally, we'd follow up with both the lawyer and the beneficiary six months, a year, or even three years later to understand the ongoing effects. But limited staff time and resources make this hard to implement.

We've also yet to identify a methodology that fits our dual audiences. For now, our measurement remains mostly quantitative, and we know we need better tools, especially technological capacity to get a deeper impact evaluation.

This is an abridged version of an interview with Ignacio Obando.