These leaders represent over 60 companies, professional service firms and nonprofit organizations from more than 15 countries, who come together in this intimate, invitation-only event to engage in interactive discussions and design sessions that enable the sharing of best practices and spark field changing ideas for the pro bono movement.

This year, for the first time, the four-day conference was held simultaneously with the 17th annual BMW Transatlantic Forum, which empowers Responsible Leaders to champion pro bono within their professions, making pro bono service an expectation in all fields. Additional participant tracks of the 2014 Summit included US-based nonprofit pro bono providers (referred to as intermediaries), corporate pro bono program leaders, and this year’s cohort of Global Fellows. The Global Pro Bono Fellows program is a network of independent nonprofits from around the world, who have been inspired by the Taproot Foundation to develop their own pro bono programs.

The Summit aims to grow the global pro bono movement by identifying barriers and bright spots common across markets & industries. By strategically addressing key topics, the Summit creates a venue to share expertise and set clear next steps to make more, high-quality pro bono service available to social change organizations around the world.

Here’s what we found...
THE GLOBAL NETWORK OF PRO BONO PROVIDERS IS GROWING – AND WORKING WELL TOGETHER

BRIGHT SPOT

There is a global network of pro bono providers that exists and is growing.

HOW CAN WE MAKE IT SHINE BRIGHTER?
Global Fellows discussed creating regional working groups to continue to foster and strengthen existing relationships.

Attendees also discussed the shared value of industry-wide guidelines and standardization for measurement and benchmarking.

CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION

How can we take collective action to collaborate and serve the whole pro bono movement?

How can we empower pro bono practitioners to move beyond just knowing about each other and toward engaging one another in collaborative, field-building initiatives?

HEARD AROUND THE SUMMIT

Many Global Fellows are the only ones in their country doing pro bono work, but in coming to the Summit, they feel part of the greater pro bono movement. For them, attending the Summit was valuable because it showed them that they are not alone, but instead key part of a larger global network.

BRIGHT SPOT

The current players in the pro bono space know about each other, collaborate well, and share a commitment to quality.

Competition among pro bono providers was notably absent at this year’s Summit. Attendees acknowledged that there is a lot of experience in this sector, and sharing that experience enhances the quality and impact of the pro bono services.

HEARD AROUND THE SUMMIT

The pro bono field is a sector to itself - and we should harness its collective power.

Pro bono providers collaborate well, but the next step is to work together toward more concrete goals. Partnerships, city collaboratives or joint-dollar asks, for example, are ways to harness the power of the network to achieve individual market goals.
KEY TAKEAWAYS AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE 2014 GLOBAL SUMMIT

THE GLOBAL NETWORK OF PRO BONO PROVIDERS IS GROWING – AND WORKING WELL TOGETHER

BRIGHT SPOT
Pro Bono Week brought the whole pro bono movement together in a concentrated week to create and showcase a critical mass of pro bono service across industries, regions and program models.

Pro Bono Week 2013 was a national and international success. 85% of Summit attendees said they participated, including breakthrough collaboratives that launched for the first time. Business and legal pro bono thought leaders joined forces to learn from one another and build a more cohesive professional movement.

HOW CAN WE MAKE IT SHINE BRIGHTER
Pro Bono Week is now an annual tentpole event for the pro bono movement. It shines a spotlight on our cause and gathers momentum on our cause and gathers momentum each year.

Save the Date: Pro Bono Week 2014 will be October 19-25, 2014
How are you planning to celebrate Pro Bono Week?
Have you made your commitment yet?

THERE IS A GLOBAL PRO BONO MOVEMENT ALREADY, MADE UP OF ALL THE FOLKS IN THIS ROOM.

PRO BONO IS ALIVE AND WELL ACROSS THE GLOBE.

INTERMEDIARIES, GLOBAL FELLOWS, AND CORPORATIONS CAN HAVE VERY DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON PRO BONO, WHAT THE PROCESS ENTAILS, AND WHAT IT TAKES TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

BARRIER

Intermediaries, Global Fellows, and corporations can have very different perspectives on pro bono, what the process entails, and what it takes to be successful.

CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION

How can we share best practices and standardize project outlines to avoid redundancy and maintain quality of service?

How can we standardize the skills for which we recruit, manage, and use in our pro bono projects?

HEARD AROUND THE SUMMIT

Intermediaries, Global Fellows, and corporations each have a different touch-point into the pro bono process. Common language for assessing skills and describing our work needs to be a long-term priority.

TOPIC

HEALTHCARE

MEG GARLINGHOUSE, HEAD OF LINKEDIN FOR GOOD

ANN BURROUGHS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TAPROOT FOUNDATION LOS ANGELES
BUT WE NEED TO COLLABORATE EVEN MORE TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS

BARRIER
Models, expectations and understanding of pro bono can vary across cultures.

HEARD AROUND THE SUMMIT
Cultural translations can be a challenge. Many Global Fellows reported trouble adapting pro bono models to local cultural norms and across tech barriers.

In some countries, for example, the charity and volunteering culture is there, but not discussed. In Europe and Asia, in particular, people and companies make donations, but don’t advertise it.

Global Fellows had an interesting debate about whether and how to charge for pro bono services. In some countries, charging a fee to corporations - and even to pro bono consultants and volunteers - is standard practice. Elsewhere, the dynamic between the public and private sectors can be more of an obstacle.

The Summit is a reminder that we are not alone in our challenges. Especially among the global community, more collaboration is essential to overcome these cultural barriers.

CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION
How can we share best practices, models, and lessons learned across cultures while still leaving room for experimentation, cultural relevancy, and growth?
BARRIER
Measuring and demonstrating pro bono’s impact and ROI is essential, but challenging.

WHERE IS IT MANIFESTED?
This barrier is a challenge for all of the participants of this year’s Summit: Corporate, Intermediaries, Global Fellows.

Among corporate attendees, the #1 priority for the coming year is unraveling the mystery around tracking, reporting and/or evaluating program metrics.

CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION
How can we best define and capture the value of our pro bono work?
What are feasible measures?
How can we work together to collect data and benchmark?

THE BIG QUESTION IS WHAT IS THE ROI, BUT IT’S HARD TO MEASURE THE IMPACT AND IT SOMETIMES TAKES MORE THAN A YEAR TO FIND OUT.

PEYTON ROWE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CREATEATHON

HEARD AROUND THE SUMMIT
Intermediaries are craving common standards and unifying metrics across the pro bono field. It is important to measure impact in simpler ways – but how do we communicate the return on investment for the business professional donating their skills?

Corporate attendees need ways to measure, evaluate, and report on the pro bono they are doing. There are tools through which we can measure the dollar value of pro bono services – but how do we evaluate the impact of that pro bono service on the community?

Both corporate attendees and intermediaries felt that there needs to be more collaboration and that companies and intermediaries need to work together on standard benchmarking and impact measurement platforms.
WE NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE PRO BONO BRAND

WHERE IS IT MANIFESTED?
This barrier is a challenge for all tracks who attended the Summit: Corporate, Intermediaries, Global Fellows.

BMW Foundation asks the question: Why would anyone do pro bono? in this video that explores the illogicality of working for free, which you can access here.

BARRIER
Pro bono doesn’t yet carry clear brand power outside our small group of pro bono practitioners.

HEARD AROUND THE SUMMIT
Everyone in our peer group understands the power and potential of pro bono. It’s the Swiss Army knife of nonprofit and corporate business: it brings concrete capacity building benefits; it’s about employee engagement, development, and retention; it improves both business practice and community. But outside this room, pro bono doesn’t carry such clear brand power. We need to rebrand pro bono so that everyone outside this room gets how valuable pro bono is, in a really tangible way.

People think of pro bono as a massive undertaking, but it is a lot more accessible than most people realize. Companies are interested in doing pro bono, but there is still confusion around the definition of pro bono, billable hours, and legal implications.

A key challenge that intermediaries and corporations alike face is leadership and employee buy-in for pro bono projects. Buy-in is directly related to how we communicate the value of pro bono.

CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION
How can we improve the pro bono brand and make it more tangible and accessible, especially among the social change organizations that need these services?
POPULAR DISCUSSION TOPIC
What is the role of HR in engaging companies and employees to buy into pro bono?

WHERE IS IT MANIFESTED?
This topic popped up in discussions among everyone who attended the Summit, from Corporate, to Intermediaries, to Global Fellows.

Global Fellows discussed strategies for convincing HR of the value of pro bono, and corporate attendees focused on ways to integrate pro bono programming into their company’s HR goals.

HEARD AROUND THE SUMMIT
There is a burgeoning trend of partnership between HR and CSR on employee engagement issues.

Pro bono programs that bubble up from the employee level are “stickier” than those implemented from the top down. Successful pro bono engagements often have employee leadership to build on the ground buy-in so the program doesn’t seem forced.

HR departments, millennial employees, and young leaders can be important pro bono champions within companies and can be important channels to empower the company to do pro bono.

CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION
How can we better integrate pro bono into employee training?
How can we gain more buy-in from or integration with HR departments in various companies?

PRO BONO ISN’T WORKING FOR FREE, IT’S WORKING FOR PURPOSE.
RESPONSIBLE LEADER, BMW FOUNDATION TRANSATLANTIC FORUM

HOW IS YOUR HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT INVOLVED IN YOUR PROGRAM?
(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY: SELECT THE EXPECTED FUTURE APPROACH IF NOT YET LAUNCHED)

HR runs the program 10%
HR is involved in employee selection / vetting 20%
HR is involved in program strategic planning, design and/or goal-setting 25%
HR is involved in integrating participation into existing 20%
HR is involved in integrating participation into existing performance review or professional development processes 20%
HR is not involved at all 50%

*Survey of corporate attendees
Nonprofits need support preparing for impactful pro bono engagements.

**WHERE IS IT MANIFESTED?**

When corporate attendees were asked about their top priorities of issues to tackle in the upcoming year, their #3 concern was: Finding appropriate and ready recipient organizations.

According to Taproot’s 2014 report, the State of Intermediary-Led Pro Bono, the most common reason for turning away a nonprofit applicant was that the intermediary did not think the nonprofit was prepared to manage the pro bono engagement or implement the deliverable in a sustainable way.

**BARRIER**

Nonprofit organizational readiness is essential - and challenging.

**HEARD AROUND THE SUMMIT**

Nonprofit readiness - or the ability of a nonprofit partner to fully and effectively engage pro bono services - is a problem that crossed all tracks at the Summit. Nonprofits need support in managing pro bono effectively, and leveraging the deliverable for maximum impact.

The State of Intermediary-Led Pro Bono report discusses the concept of nonprofit readiness at length. Based on Taproot Foundation’s field research, 92% of nonprofits say they could use more pro bono. But, intermediaries, Global Fellows, and corporate partners all identify nonprofit readiness as a top challenge they face. According to the report, general awareness about pro bono - and the availability of pro bono services - could contribute to the gap.
WHAT’S NEXT?

CORPORATE ATTENDEES COMMITTED

Think big about pro bono possibilities
Identify how to use pro bono as a career accelerator
Develop a pilot pro bono program for social entrepreneurs
Work with at least three people I met today
Ask about pro bono experience during recruitment screening calls
Make it easier for employees to say “yes” to volunteering

WHILE INTERMEDIARIES AT HOME AND ABROAD AND RESPONSIBLE LEADERS, PLEDGED TO THEIR PEERS

Convene an Asian Pro Bono Forum in Tokyo
Commit technology support to the online pro bono marketplace
Deploy BMW Foundation’s Responsible Leaders around the world to promote pro bono
Encourage design students to do pro bono design work
Popularize the pro bono philosophy in China
Collaborate on one or more projects with another intermediary present at the Summit

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