

7. COVID-19

In March 2020, COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic and it has had, and continues to have, significant implications for the legal and pro bono sectors. In some cases, people working at law firms were furloughed or lost their jobs altogether, while other firms adjusted to working from home as offices and courts were closed to comply with lockdowns and physical-distancing measures.

This year, we included a question about how COVID-19 impacted firms' pro bono activities over the chosen 12-month period⁸. Only 5 percent of firms indicated there was no impact on their practice. Meanwhile, 22 percent of firms reported an increase in pro bono activity, including 26 percent of Large Firms reporting an increase. On the

other hand, 20 percent reported a decrease in pro bono activities, including 25 percent of Small Firms reporting a decrease in their pro bono activities. 19 percent of firms said COVID-19 was one of their¹ focus areas of work in the reported period.

More than 20 percent of firms in Asia and the Pacific, Europe, the United States, and England and Wales reported an increase in pro bono activity, with firms from the Americas reporting the highest increase in pro bono activity at 29 percent. The data suggests that the most significant impact of COVID-19 was on firms in Africa and the Middle East, where 26 percent of firms reported reducing pro bono activity.

IMPACT OF COVID-19

5% Not at all



13% Very limited impact



20% Reduction in pro bono activity



22% Increase in pro bono activity



18% Change in pro bono priorities



6% Others



*Q.21 To what extent did COVID-19 impact your firm's pro bono activities over the chosen 12-month period? Multiselect/unlimited options

⁸ Data reported in this section is derived from self-reported and qualitative response submitted by the representative completing the survey on behalf of the responding firm. We did not verify the answer with actual numbers from the firm to support the firm's response.