

# LEX MUNDI

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## PRO BONO FOUNDATION

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### **Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation Expands on Success of First Three Years**

#### ***Substantial New Grants in 2009 Enable Foundation to Continue to Play Leading Role in Supporting Social Entrepreneurs Around the Globe***

(Houston, March 5, 2009) Three years since its inception, the Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation has far surpassed expectations and has made a solid impact on the global social entrepreneurship movement. Through the work of the Foundation, more than 200 social entrepreneurs have been connected with vital pro bono legal services to carry out 400 separate projects aimed at bringing about positive social change and helping improve the lives of the poor and disenfranchised around the globe. More than 75 Lex Mundi member firms in 40 countries and 30 US states have provided pro bono legal assistance on these projects.

The success of the Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation has been made possible through the work and generosity of Lex Mundi member firms and their lawyers as well as through seed money provided in 2006 by several leading foundations. The Foundation is pleased to announce that substantial new grants in 2009 from three foundations will enable it to continue to play a leading role in supporting the global social entrepreneurship movement. These grants will also enable the Foundation to embark on the following new initiatives:

- As a result of a grant from The Lemelson Foundation, the Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation will identify and provide pro bono legal services to invention-based social entrepreneurs around the world;
- Through a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation will provide pro bono legal services to winners of the Knight's News Challenge, an international contest to find the best ways to deliver news and information in the digital age. The foundation also will work with Ashoka Innovators for the Public to provide pro bono legal services to Ashoka Fellows in the 26 Knight Communities in the US and to the group's Journalism Fellows throughout the world; and
- The Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation will create an innovative on-line interactive legal resource to support and strengthen the social sector called "LawForChange™". This unique project is funded by the Knight and Lemelson Foundations and the Kellogg Action Lab.

Chloe Holderness, Managing Director of the Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation, said, "The social entrepreneurship movement is receiving increasing support and enhanced prominence around the world. The Foundation aims to be and remain the premier provider of legal services and resources to the global community of social change makers."

The Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation is a nonprofit affiliate of Lex Mundi, the world's leading association of independent law firms. By calling upon Lex Mundi's global network of 160 top-tier commercial law firms to provide legal assistance to social entrepreneurs on a pro bono basis, the Foundation strives to

improve the lives of the world's poor and disenfranchised. Because Lex Mundi member firms are leading, full-service law firms, they have the experience and expertise to provide critically needed legal assistance to social entrepreneurs, thus helping them become successful agents of positive social change.

Examples of two of the Foundation's most recent projects, one with mothers2mothers and the other with Recycla Chile, highlight the pro bono work being done by Lex Mundi member firms and their lawyers and the impact they are having on the lives of the poor and disenfranchised around the globe.

mothers2mothers (m2m) is an organization that offers an effective, sustainable model of care that provides education and support for pregnant women and new mothers in Africa living with HIV/AIDS. To date, lawyers from Richards, Layton & Finger, P.A., Lex Mundi's member firm for Delaware, and Bowman Gilfillan, Lex Mundi's member firm for South Africa, have provided invaluable pro bono legal support that is helping m2m achieve its great success.

David Torres, Director of Special Projects for m2m, has praised the fantastic working relationship developed with the teams from Richards, Layton & Finger and Bowman Gilfillan. "Overall, we cannot say enough about how valuable this help has been to our organization."

Recycla Chile ("Recycla") is the first social entrepreneur organization in Latin America to develop a sustainable business model to address and properly recycle the growing amount of electronic waste in Chile.

Claro y Cia, Lex Mundi's member firm for Chile, has been critical in providing Recycla with much needed pro bono legal assistance. Recycla has also worked with Lex Mundi member firms Day Pitney LLP (New Jersey, US) and Hwang Mok Park, P.C. (Korea) to resolve other legal matters.

Commenting on the valuable legal support provided by Lex Mundi's member firms, Fernando Nilo, the Founder and CEO of Recycla, stated, "Our dreams of social and environmental change would not be possible without the support of the Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation and the Lex Mundi member firms. With a partner like Lex Mundi, we can scale up and make progress in Chile and throughout Latin America."

The Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, headquartered in Washington, D.C. The Foundation is a "matchmaker" and does not practice law; instead, it identifies effective social entrepreneurs through referrals by its partners/collaborators. These collaborating organizations include the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, Skoll Foundation, Ashoka Innovators for the Public, Acumen Fund, Draper Richards Foundation, Global Fund for Children, Echoing Green, Lemelson Foundation and Mercy Corps.

The Foundation is unique in that there is no other global organization that is focused exclusively on providing pro bono legal services to social entrepreneurs. To learn more about the Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation and its current projects, please visit [www.lexmundiprobono.org](http://www.lexmundiprobono.org).

Lex Mundi is the world's leading association of independent law firms. The association has more than 160 member firms around the world, representing approximately 21,000 lawyers. Membership in Lex Mundi provides member firms with a trusted network of law firms that share similar values and a similar focus on quality through which they can access global legal resources that enable them to serve their clients better and to improve continuously all aspects of their firms. Member law firms are located throughout North America, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East and Africa. For more information, please visit [www.lexmundi.com](http://www.lexmundi.com).

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