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## *Future of pro bono is cross-border*

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Following on from a "fantastic turn out" at last week's pro bono conference in Santiago, Shearman & Sterling LLP partner **Antonia Stolper** says the future of pro bono for Latin America lies in large institutional projects and crossing borders.



More than 200 delegates from across Latin America and beyond attended the [Strengthening Access to Justice Conference](#) held over 7 and 8 April, which was co-organised by Chile's Fundación Pro Bono and the Cyrus Vance Center of New York City Bar.

How to cross borders and bringing together large groups of lawyers were the main thrusts of the conference, at which Chile's Minister of Justice, Felipe Bulnes, was a key speaker.

"For the next phase we are thinking hard about substantive projects that incorporate large groups of lawyers; things that people can bring together and work on collaboratively across the pro bono chain and across borders," explains Stolper, who is chair of the Vance Center's committee for international justice initiatives. "Now we have this huge network geared up and ready to go, it's about helping people to develop projects."

"Doing pro bono for individuals is clearly one key goal of the pro bono movement, but in so many countries the need far outstrips supply so more institutional approaches are more necessary," she continues.

Alongside a large turnout from Chile – including [Barros & Errázuriz Abogados'](#) **Pablo Guerrero**, chair of the Fundación Pro Bono – lawyers came from Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil, Mexico, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Venezuela, as well as Puerto Rico, Spain France, Canada outside of the region. They were joined by a large contingent of US lawyers including **Todd Crider** from Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP and **Taisa Markus** from Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy LLP, who both spoke at the conference.

The event included a meeting of law firms' pro bono coordinators, who discussed the "nuts and bolts" of getting law firms to institutionalise pro bono. As well as a large Chilean presence, Stolper says there was also a very large contingent from Argentina, where she says law firms are getting very organised. There was also a "speed dating" exercise, where non-profit organisations had the opportunity to compare the type of projects going on around the region, providing critical cross pollination of ideas.

Delegates were also organised into functions – law firms lawyers met together, as did NGO attendees and those from bar associations allowing them to focus on core issues such as transparency and the environment.