



PILnet: The Global Network for Public Interest Law envisions a world where the rule of law delivers justice and protects human rights. PILnet collaborates with local partners around the globe to develop the legal landscape essential to rights-respecting societies. It provides lawyers with the tools they need to challenge injustice, strengthens the ability of citizens to shape law and policy, and connects a global community of activist lawyers who are using law to advance change.

PILnet’s GLOBAL PRO BONO CLEARINGHOUSE

PILnet’s Global Pro Bono Clearinghouse is an access-to-justice matchmaking service for NGOs and pro bono lawyers. PILnet works with independent nonprofit organizations to help them pinpoint their legal needs and connects them through its global legal network with pro bono lawyers who have the relevant skills and expertise to help. Our Global Clearinghouse has unlocked the power of pro bono for more than 400 NGOs.

WHAT KIND OF PRO BONO SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

Pro bono support comes in many unexpected shapes and sizes, and, contrary to popular perceptions, usually takes place outside of the courtroom. Pro bono projects fall into four broad categories:

**Legal Advice
and Advocacy**

**Legal
Research**

**Legal Analysis
and Drafting**

**Legal
Training**

Legal Advice

Every NGO has governance and administrative needs that require the assistance of a lawyer. From providing help with registering as a charity/nonprofit, giving advice on compliance with employment or tax laws, and drafting contracts to legalize relationships with partner organizations, pro bono lawyers can help sustain the work of your NGO.

NGOs may also need legal advice to directly support their activities and programs. Pro bono lawyers can advise on the drafting of legislative proposals, the legality of policies, or the risks of defamation litigation. They can also volunteer their legal advocacy skills by representing NGOs and their clients in strategic litigation.

Formalizing Partnerships for Strategic Litigation

Strategic litigation works best when done in partnerships, and those partnerships work best when all partners understand their roles and responsibilities. This is why an anti-discrimination organization reached out to pro bono lawyers to draft a memorandum of understanding to structure its strategic litigation partnerships.

Reviewing Human Resources Policies

For NGOs, keeping human resources policies up to date and in line with current laws can be time consuming and difficult. PILnet introduced a number of NGOs in its network to pro bono lawyers who provided advice and reviewed the NGOs’ internal policies for compliance with national and regional laws.

Legal Research

Pro bono lawyers can provide research on local, national, European, or international laws, legal cases, or best practices. This type of assistance can range from country-specific research regarding the protection of children to multi-national comparative research on the implementation of an E.U. directive.

Transforming Derelict into Community Space

Advocating for derelict buildings to be used as a community arts space is easier when you can provide examples of how it can work in practice. For this reason, a group of pro bono lawyers gathered research on laws governing squatting in a number of European countries. This information was used to bolster the campaign of an arts NGO advocating for a law permitting the use of derelict buildings for community arts space in Hungary.

Strengthening Gender Equality

In order to strengthen gender equality in Croatia, a human rights NGO partnered up with two leading law firms to look into the implementation of the E.U. Equal Treatment Directive. By examining the approach of other E.U. countries in transposing the directive, the NGO was better equipped to make concrete proposals for improving the gender equality framework in Croatia.

Legal Analysis and Drafting

Ever-changing laws and legal processes can be hard to keep up with and are often difficult to understand. Pro bono lawyers can be on hand to provide analyses of legislation, to translate complex laws into accessible briefings, and to explain their practical implications for the work of your NGO. These lawyers can also review proposals for new laws or legislative amendments being drafted by NGOs.

Legislating for Stronger Disability Rights

A disability rights organization received an analysis of Swedish laws on guardianship (a model of best practice) from a team of pro bono lawyers. This analysis was used to inform proposals for legislative amendments in Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic.

Protecting Victims of Domestic Slavery

When the existing legal framework proved insufficient to protect victims of domestic slavery in France, one NGO looked to pro bono lawyers to help draft proposals to amend the law. These proposals were ultimately used to strengthen the protection available.

Legal Training

Pro bono lawyers can transfer their unique legal skills and knowledge to your NGO through bespoke training sessions on a particular area of law or on available legal mechanisms. This could include training on copyright laws for the staff of your NGO or on bringing a case before the European Court of Justice.

Empowering Female Lawyers in Nepal

Women advocates in Nepal don't necessarily have the same career opportunities as their male counterparts. With the support of the Global Clearinghouse, a Canadian NGO has partnered with three global law firms to design a one-year legal skills course and a range of continuing legal education seminars to boost the careers of these female lawyers.

Schooling Young Lawyers in Legal Ethics

In Hungary and Russia, law students get little practical guidance on the ethical issues they will face as professional lawyers. In collaboration with corporate lawyers, PILnet organized three-day trainings on topics such as anti-corruption and conflicts of interest, helping students become socially aware lawyers ready to use their skills for the greater good.

UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF PRO BONO FOR YOUR NGO

Follow these simple steps to join PILnet's NGO network and start to receive free legal assistance:

- 1. Complete PILnet's NGO screening form and send it to the Global Pro Bono Clearinghouse coordinator (details below).**
- 2. Work with the coordinator to prepare a pro bono request. The request will then be sent to PILnet's network of pro bono lawyers in more than 120 law firms and companies around the world.**
- 3. Make contact with the pro bono lawyers that PILnet has lined up to collaborate with you. Provide them with any further information that they will need.**
If more than one firm is interested in assisting your NGO, the coordinator will work with you to select the firm that best suits your needs.
- 4. Provide feedback to PILnet and to the pro bono lawyers working with you during and after the completion of the project. Clearinghouse staff is always on hand to help keep the project on track, and feedback from you is essential to improve PILnet's pro bono services and to increase their impact.**

Please note that the clearinghouse provides an opportunity for legal assistance but cannot guarantee that every request will receive help. Each lawyer participating in the clearinghouse makes the final determination to accept or decline the individual request(s) submitted.

Global Pro Bono Clearinghouse Coordinator

Marieanne McKeown

PILnet, 1061 Budapest, Paulay Ede u. 50, Hungary

mmckeown@pilnet.org

Tel: +36 1 461 5700

Fax: +36 1 461 5701

www.pilnet.org