In just societies, law works for all.
“As a legal profession, we are only as strong as our weakest links. But PILnet strengthens all links to create opportunities for social change by using a golden key: Law.”

Gregory Vijayendran, Law Society Pro Bono Services, Singapore
In a time of global challenges like climate change, mass migration, and rising inequality, the mission of making law work for all becomes ever more pressing. In this clearinghouse report, PILnet presents how it implemented this mission over the last year.

PILnet’s clearinghouses help civil society organizations (CSOs) pinpoint their legal needs and matches these needs to qualified lawyers for strategic partnerships for sustained impact. Pro bono legal assistance provided by lawyers through the clearinghouse network is not limited by jurisdiction, region or area of law.

While some projects serve the CSOs’ operational or basic needs, others call for more sophisticated legal advice or research on specific program related issues. This represents the diversity of the kinds of legal needs experienced by CSOs, as well as the range of legal assistance that PILnet can help secure for CSOs though the clearinghouses.

PILnet’s clearinghouses act as strategic intermediaries between the public and private sectors, and successfully harnesses the legal resources of international and local law firms for the benefit of the public interest.

**Eurasia**
**Global**
**Hong Kong**
**Hungary**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>NGOs helped</th>
<th>Law firms engaged</th>
<th>Jurisdictions served</th>
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<td>133</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>55</td>
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In 2019, PILnet’s maintained a critical focus on three strategies to make law work for all:

**Civil society resilience**
**Access to justice**
**Sustainable partnerships**

Here is how we made law work for all in 2019.

Images L-R: Russian Legal Ethics Training, Psychoanalytical Association, Russian Legal Ethics Training
HOW PILNET CLEARINGHOUSES MAKE LAW WORK FOR ALL

1. SECURING OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE LEGAL SUPPORT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

PILnet’s clearinghouses accept pro bono matters that address the unmet legal needs of organized civil society. In addition to assisting with programmatic matters, the clearinghouses also help to build civil society resilience by securing legal assistance for the operation and administration of CSOs.

2. SECURING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

By helping to secure pro bono legal assistance for CSOs, PILnet’s clearinghouses ensure that the vulnerable and marginalized have access to justice.

3. BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

PILnet’s clearinghouses also build long-term engagements between the private sector and civil society, resulting in lasting and successful partnerships that serve the public interest.

4. INNOVATING NEW STRATEGIES TO BUILD RESILIENT CIVIL SOCIETIES

In addition to brokering matters, PILnet’s clearinghouses are at the forefront of innovation in the pro bono ecosystem. PILnet’s Hungarian clearinghouse used partnerships forged in the clearinghouse to host a series of webinars for civil society members.

5. CULTIVATING GLOBAL NETWORKS FOR THE PUBLIC INTEREST

The clearinghouses are the focal points of PILnet’s unique global network, connecting civil society and pro bono lawyers across borders and jurisdictions to make law work for all, everywhere.
PILnet’s clearinghouses serve to advance the interests of vulnerable populations and ensure that they have access to justice. In 2019, the clearinghouses mobilized private sector legal expertise to ensure that law works for the most vulnerable in our societies.

**Affirming the rights of people with disabilities**

Nothing engages the question of access to justice as clearly as the issue of legal capacity for persons with mental disabilities. In 2019, PILnet’s Eurasia Clearinghouse enabled the Kazakhstan civil society organization, Psychoanalytical Association, to further its advocacy efforts with crucial legal research and support for its programs, which serve people with cognitive disabilities.

Using expert legal expertise from PILnet’s clearinghouse and in partnership with White & Case, the association was able to bring legal challenges to defend the rights of persons with cognitive disabilities in Kazakhstan. Drawing on the expertise of lawyers across three continents, the clearinghouse was also able to secure legal analysis on a number of questions relating to the treatment of persons with cognitive disabilities and the rules on legal capacity in jurisdictions including Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, the United Kingdom, Norway and Finland. This legal analysis will assist the association in its advocacy for persons with cognitive disabilities in the future, helping to ensure that its work is as effective and impactful as possible.

**Teaming up for victims of trafficking in persons**

Strategies for improving access to justice for victims of human trafficking must keep in step with changing legal, social, and political landscapes. In 2019, PILnet piloted a new approach to securing legal assistance for victims of trafficking in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia with partners White & Case, Gibson Dunn & Crutcher, Reed Smith, Liberty Shared, and Kay Chan to ensure that at all stages of the process, victims are supported holistically by a range of different professionals.

Specialized anti-trafficking in person (ATIP) teams provide legal representation to potential victims and support them throughout criminal, administrative and civil proceedings. Each time a case is brought to its attention, PILnet creates an ATIP team comprised of experts in trafficking, NGO representatives, and pro bono lawyers who work together for the client in a victim-centered approach. PILnet connected ATIP NGOs and their clients to experts and law firms through the ATIP team approach and is expanding the practice in 2020.
CIVIL SOCIETY RESILIENCE

Fulfilling the administrative and operational needs of CSOs is a necessary but sometimes overlooked aspect of bolstering the resilience of civil society against threats to its survival. PILnet’s clearinghouses have successfully assisted CSOs in gaining support from law firms on the legal status of the organization, tax law, employment law, and data protection regulations.

Building Resilience

Harnessing the expertise of private sector lawyers through PILnet’s Global Clearinghouse, German NGO Human Rights Matter (HRM) obtained support to determine its compliance with German labor and tax laws. HRM supports human rights defenders in Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe against systematic threats and dangers by appealing to international and regional mechanisms for their protection.

Such expertise is often lacking in small non-profit organizations like HRM, but the private sector can bridge this gap in these organizations’ legal resources, and help ensure that a group like HRM can continue its vital work of upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and protecting those who risk their safety to defend the rights it enshrines.

With pro bono support from Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe, brokered through PILnet’s clearinghouse, HRM was registered in Berlin and began its activities. HRM is continuing to work with Orrick to ensure its compliance with German labor regulations.

Resilience through innovation and technology

Across Europe, PILnet channeled pro bono corporate legal expertise into supporting civil society organizations and social enterprises with webinars for establishing stricter cybersecurity standards and offering practical ideas on how to secure the processing of personal data belonging to vulnerable groups and other beneficiaries.

Five banks, corporations and law firms partnered to publish online compliance tool-kits and related webinars for civil society organizations and social enterprises.

38 civil society beneficiaries
11 topics
5 law firms
2 languages

Lecturing partners: CMS, Mayer Brown, Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton, Avast, and Dentons
PILnet aims to build sustainable partnerships between civil society and the private sector in order to strengthen the global pro bono ecosystem. Through the clearinghouses, PILnet helps facilitate long-term partnerships with both law firms and civil society organisations to benefit all.

Implementing human rights decisions

One of PILnet’s longest-standing partners is the International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR). IPHR works to promote respect for the rights of marginalized communities by partnering with local civil society. In 2019, PILnet supported IPHR in partnering with three law firms on a project laying the groundwork for identifying systemic gaps in the implementation of European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) decisions in certain European countries, and drafting submissions to the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers.

Lawyers from DLA Piper and WilmerHale, along with practitioner Ferdinando Lajolo, embarked on an in-depth project to research the implementation of the ECtHR decisions and the impact of these decisions on the societies as a whole.

Facilitating art and culture

The Hong Kong Photographic Culture Association (HKPCA) is dedicated to promoting photographic art and culture in Hong Kong. The association is the organizer behind the Hong Kong International Photo Festival (the HKIPF). HKIPF focuses on a different theme in each edition, introducing noteworthy photographers, trends, and movements every year.

Leveraging PILnet’s extensive network of corporate lawyers with relevant expertise, PILnet facilitated a long-term legal partnership between the association and law firm Ropes & Gray. Through this partnership, the association was able to benefit from ongoing pro bono legal services and advice, allowing the association to concentrate on what it does best: promoting photography and culture in Hong Kong and beyond.

Partnerships like these enable private sector legal expertise to be used for the public good, and allow civil society organizations to operate with peace of mind, knowing that their legal needs are in the hands of long-term legal partners.
BY THE NUMBERS

PILnet’s network of pro bono lawyers and NGO partners extends around the globe and is concentrated around four locations: New York, Hungary, Hong Kong, and Eurasia. Working in collaboration with each other, PILnet’s clearinghouses ensure that regardless of location or legal issue, NGOs around the world can access critical legal assistance, for free.

In 2019, PILnet clearinghouses consolidated existing networks and established new ones. PILnet’s Eurasia Clearinghouse, which serves jurisdictions in Central Asia, was launched in June 2019 and has helped grow the organization’s networks in the region. In addition, from Hungary to Hong Kong, PILnet clearinghouse staff have taken on pressing global challenges like human trafficking and data protection.

From PILnet’s office in New York, the Global Clearinghouse serves jurisdictions around the world. PILnet’s Hungary Clearinghouse has developed a particular focus on data protection, privacy, and children’s rights.

The Hong Kong Clearinghouse also serves as the hub for PILnet’s anti-trafficking pro bono projects.

The Eurasia Clearinghouse launched in June 2019 and operates bilingually in Russian and English.

Total pro bono hours: 4,269
Total valuation of hours: $2.7 million