



# Annual Report

2019

*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, President of the Law Society of Singapore  
and 2019 Global Forum Host Committee Chair*

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## PILnet's offices sit in three cities that each experienced remarkable political developments in 2019.

In **New York**, PILnet witnessed a national political scandal implicating American power, foreign influence, and corruption. In **Hong Kong**, unprecedented public protest reflected concern around shifting geopolitical power and the consequences for local governance. And in **Budapest**, civil society continued to stand as a bulwark for engagement in contrast to a government defined by a culture of exclusion.

The conditions in each region in which PILnet works reflect society's responses to a *rapidly changing world*. To respond to political, social, and economic outcomes that are more skewed and inequitable than in many years, PILnet helps to put the legal tools and strategies used by the wealthy and powerful into the hands of the poor and vulnerable.

In Southeast Asia, PILnet marshaled corporate legal skills and tools to help victims of trafficking. Across Europe, PILnet channeled pro bono corporate legal expertise into supporting civil society organizations with the know-how to face onerous data regulations. In Eurasia, PILnet developed novel legal projects for expert lawyers to support local civil society organizations and educated young lawyers in the use of public interest law. In Hong Kong, PILnet mentored law students to design public interest projects with the support of pro bono lawyers. And in Singapore, PILnet convened lawyers and advocates from around the world to connect, share, and inspire one another's public interest work at its first annual Global Forum to be held in Asia.

PILnet has **great hope** in the ability of law to work not just for the powerful but for the poor and vulnerable too. Thank you for supporting us this year in our effort to put that vision into practice.



**Garth Meintjes**  
Executive Director



# MAKING LAW WORK FOR ALL

## Inspiring a New Generation of Change Lawyers

PILnet's **Law for Change Student Competition** helps law students in Hong Kong implement public interest law projects with support from PILnet and its network of expert corporate lawyers.

PILnet's **Legal Ethics Trainings**, a series of highly-rated workshops and seminars on pro bono, professional responsibility, ethics, and compliance, run by highly-qualified academics and practicing lawyers, has educated over 300 Russian law students to date.



## Supporting People on the Move

PILnet mobilized its extensive global networks to **build relationships between local lawyers and anti-trafficking organizations** in Cambodia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Myanmar, and Vietnam to protect and support trafficked persons.

As part of the **Global Refugee Forum**, PILnet mobilized **27** law firms, bar associations, and corporations to commit **125,230 pro bono hours** per year to protect and find legal solutions for refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons, and other forcibly displaced persons.

PILnet organized **legal workshops for migrant workers in Hong Kong** with EmpowerU, a nonprofit educational and empowerment platform, to raise awareness of trafficking and avenues for legal redress for victims of trafficking.

## Standing Up for Free Speech

PILnet is a member of Protect the Protest, a U.S. alliance of nonprofit organizations fighting against meritless lawsuits that seek to intimidate, silence, and drain the coffers of organizations.

## Convening Lawyers to Collaborate and Innovate

PILnet organized a **European Convening** and **Access to Justice & Technology Summit** in London, which brought civil society members together with PILnet's network of lawyers and tech experts to explore strategic innovations to expand access to justice and support civil society.

PILnet's annual **Global Forum** convenes lawyers and advocates to forge alliances and develop strategies for using the law to protect the poor and vulnerable. The 2019 Singapore Forum, PILnet's first in Asia, drew 293 participants from 37 countries.





# PILNET CLEARINGHOUSES

Eurasia  
Global  
Hong Kong  
Hungary

141  
CSOs

48  
jurisdictions

92  
law firms

The clearinghouse mechanism is a PILnet strategy to cultivate lasting, sustainable, and mutually beneficial partnerships between law firms, the private sector, and organizations working in the public interest.

**While PILnet Clearinghouses operate across four different geographic areas, they are united by one guiding principle: ensuring that law works not only for the rich and powerful, but for the poor and vulnerable as well.**

## Resilience on All Fronts

Private lawyers engaged through the clearinghouses work on a diverse range of legal concerns brought by civil society organizations, from operational assistance, such as help with nonprofit registration, to litigation. Helping civil society build resilience on all fronts is key to creating and maintaining just societies.



GDPR webinar courtesy of Jalsovszky Law Firm



Photo courtesy of Human Rights Matter



## Not Just Pro Bono Matters

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

38      11      5      2  
CSOs      topics      law firms      languages

As part of a PILnet project in Hungary, banks, corporations, and law firms partnered to publish online compliance tool-kits and related webinars for civil society organizations and social enterprises.

*Thanks to CMS, Mayer Brown, Cleary Gottlieb, Avast, and Dentons.*

# 2019 FINANCIAL BRIEF

In 2019, PILnet was grateful to have received generous assistance from its many supporters. With these funds, PILnet delivered valuable legal support to civil society organizations around the world.

*PILnet is global non-profit organization and is legally registered in the United States, Hong Kong, and Hungary.*

In 2019, law firms provided more than

## 4,000

pro bono hours

worth

## \$2.7 million

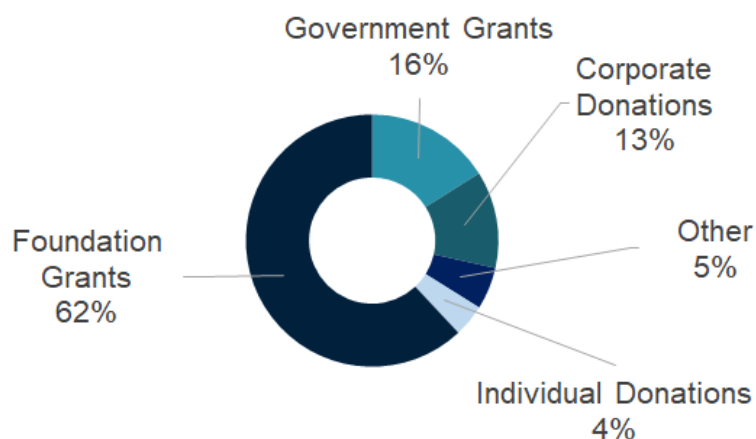
## 2019 Financial Year

Total Support and Revenue	\$ 3,119,158
Total Expenses	\$ 2,555,008
Change in Net Assets	\$ 564,150
Net Assests (Beginning)	\$ 1,745,885
Net Assests (Ending)	\$ 2,310,034

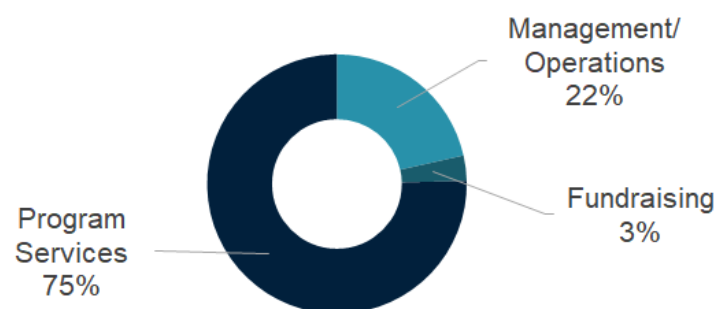


Image courtesy of Psychoanalytical Association, which PILnet supported.

## Support and Revenue



## Expenses



## Thank you to our generous sponsors

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2019 PILnet Global Forum

"PILnet plays an important role in affirming the importance of pro bono legal work worldwide, especially as a convener of lawyers across sectors through its annual forum and by sparking local clearinghouses where there is no tradition of pro bono."

*- Jo Giessler Weiss, Head of Global Citizenship, White & Case*

"Lawyers from the Global Clearinghouse assisted us in collecting information on the right to legal capacity by people with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities... Based on this analysis we have applied for funding to support the development of legal decision-making support for people with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities."

*- Psychoanalytical Association, Kazakhstan*

**Help PILnet**  
*make law work for all*  
**in 2020 and beyond.**



Clients of the Kazakh organization Psychoanalytical Association, which PILnet supported.





[pilnet.org](https://pilnet.org)



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