The 2019 Global Forum—our first in Asia—was held in Singapore amid much excitement and enthusiasm from the local pro bono community. This year’s Forum was organized around the tripartite themes of engaging lawyers, empowering innovation, and enabling change. Thanks to the many dedicated participants, inspiring speakers, and generous sponsors, the spirit of those themes was evident.

**293 participants from 37 countries for 3 days attending 36 events with 105 speakers**

**37 countries, including:**
- Belarus
- Ghana
- Ireland
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- Nigeria
- Myanmar
- Russia
- Singapore
- Slovakia
- Thailand

**3 days of opportunities for engagement, including:**
- 26 workshops, panels, and roundtables
- 12 organizations represented in the pro bono marketplace
- 5 sector-specific and regional meetings
- 2 opening speakers
- 2 spark talks

**238 participants attended their first Global Forum**

**55 participants have attended a Global Forums before, and 30 have attended all of our Global Forums**

**4 invite-only meetings to create platforms for in-depth, targeted discussions:**
- Global Meeting of In-House Pro Bono Managers
- Global Meeting of Pro Bono Clearinghouses
- Global Meeting of Law Firm Pro Bono Professionals
- Joint Global Meeting of Pro Bono Clearinghouse, Law Firm, and In-House Pro Bono Professionals

**1 inspiring keynote speech from Sarah Belal, Founder and ED at Justice Project Pakistan**
Forum Highlights

PILnet continued to hold sector-specific and joint meetings to facilitate conversations between both peers and across professions. The attendance of an unprecedented number of in-house counsel and Asia-based pro bono experts at these meetings exemplified the rapidly developing field of public interest law in the Asia Pacific region.

We engaged lawyers to serve the public interest by sharing how they could better provide strategic legal help to achieve the greatest impact for vulnerable communities. For example, speakers from PILnet and Liberty Shared ran an interactive workshop with NGOs and law firm representatives to explore the nuances of creating a client-centered anti-trafficking clearinghouse.

We empowered innovation by presenting new tools to address the changing needs of civil society and increase access to justice. During one panel, PILnet and Justice Connect discussed how pro bono can be re-envisioned for a digital future and announced an innovative new partnership to deliver a tech solution that can connect legal needs with pro bono capacity more strategically worldwide.

We enabled change through strategic partnerships that were formed in our workshops and panels. In one panel, three law firm partners demonstrated how private lawyers could work to promote climate justice by engaging law students in a climate change clinic in Australia, bringing strategic litigation in the EU, and developing model legislation for deep decarbonization in the U.S.

“We’ve all heard the famous African proverb that it takes a whole global village to raise a child. In our profession, it takes a whole global village to raise the standards of justice everywhere.”

— Gregory Vijayendran, Law Society Pro Bono Services, Singapore
“The challenges faced by human rights defenders worldwide are becoming more and more complicated, and as lawyers this is a situation we can address.” — Christina Triantafyllidi, Justice and Peace Netherlands

Sarah Belal, this year’s keynote speaker, shared her experiences of disrupting assumptions and demonstrated that being emotionally invested in her cases has led her to be a stronger advocate. She encouraged all lawyers to think outside the box and to be prepared to represent the interests of clients in both courts of law and the court of public opinion.

PILnet was pleased to give this year’s Publico Award to Chinese lawyer Tong Lihua for his vital work in upholding the public interest. For nearly 20 years, Tong Lihua has worked tirelessly to defend the rights of children, people with disabilities, and migrant workers in China.

PILnet’s Pro Bono Marketplace provided a meeting place for local and international civil society organizations to highlight their work and explore pro bono collaborations with lawyers and other organizations. The Marketplace exemplified the spirit of the Forum: providing the opportunity for pro bono lawyers and civil society organizations to make valuable connections and build partnerships to strategically employ pro bono for the public good.
Forum Statistics

Compared to previous years, the participants were overwhelmingly from the Asia region. The number of participants from Australia also doubled compared to previous years.

Top countries represented:
- Singapore: 75
- United States: 38
- Hong Kong: 37
- China: 19
- Thailand: 18
- Australia: 16
- United Kingdom: 15
- Cambodia: 13

Countries from select regions:
- **Africa**: Ghana and Nigeria
- **Asia**: Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Thailand, South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia
- **Eurasia**: Russia
- **MENA**: Saudi Arabia
- **Europe**: United Kingdom, Hungary, Germany, France, Ireland, Netherlands, Spain

Participants by Region

This was the first year that more than half of the participants were from NGOs. There was also an increase in corporate participation, with three times the number of attendees compared to last year. Of the number of professional bodies that were represented:
- **25%** (46) were law firms, down from **30%** in 2018
- **54%** (97) were NGOs, up from **48%** in 2018

Participants by Sector
Overall, 90%* of respondents rated the Forum as positive.

Which of the following is true of your participation at this year’s Forum and its relevance to your pro bono or public interest work? (Measured in number of people)

- 93% developed a new project idea and/or learned a new concept
- 100% of respondents made new contacts
- 93% say they will do more pro bono than last year
- 90% will reach out to PILnet for support more often this year

In terms of improving your pro bono or public interest work, what kind of support, information, or guidance can PILnet provide that would be most useful? (Measured in number of people)

*All statistics from Global Forum Evaluation Survey as of 12/11/19