11th Asia Pro Bono Virtual Conference Report (2022)

We, the Asia Pro Bono Consortium, at this successful conclusion of the 8th Asia Pro Bono Conference, based on the collective shared knowledge and experiences over the past three days, recognize that Access to Justice for All is essential to liberty, fairness, dignity, progress, development, and the Rule of Law.

Based upon this recognition, the Consortium Declares the following:

The 11th Asia Pro Bono Virtual Conference (11APBVC) was held virtually between 16-18 September 2022. The theme of the Conference was “Institutionalizing Pro Bono and Access to Justice Systems”. It was an inspiring exhibition of a strong commitment to institutionalize pro bono and access to justice systems in the region and internationally. The Conference was co-organized by BABSEACLE, assisting in a secretariat role, along with an international consortium comprised of law firms, law societies, legal education institutions, access to justice-related organizations and others. The Conference represented a global collaboration of pro bono champions; we had over 139 presenters who contributed to the exciting and dynamic conference program and over 60 organizations that supported and helped make this genuinely incredible event possible. The participants participated in the Conference to continue and propel the momentum of the Asia Pro Bono Movement and to recognize the successes and connections established by the previous ten conferences.

The Conference drew a total of 494 registrants from 32 countries, namely Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Cambodia, Canada, Denmark, France, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, Laos, Malawi, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippine, Poland, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom, USA, and Vietnam. The participants were from across legal community, including ambassadors, United Nation representatives, lawyers, legal service providers, legal educators, judges, students, government officials and civil society professionals.

The 11APBVC hosted a multitude of diverse sessions, interactive workshops and presentations, all led by experienced local, regional and international participants engaged in supporting and strengthening pro bono initiatives. In addition, the 11APBVC offered a genuine opportunity to be an integral part of the Asia and Global Pro Bono Movement and contribute to improving access to justice for the most vulnerable populations. This year’s Conference also focused on demonstrating
many of the impacts and transformational changes that have come about as a result of the preceding events.

The three-day Conference comprised extensive 32 sessions including:

- Opening Ceremony;
- What is Pro Bono and Why Should Legal Service Providers Do It;
- Working Pro Bono in Lao PDR;
- Institutionalizing Access to Justice Through Large Law Firm Pro Bono Collaborations;
- Combating GBV through Pro Bono and Access to Justice service focusing on Legal Aid and Paralegal in Nepal;
- Sustaining Access to Justice through Pro Bono Legal Aid Networks in Myanmar;
- Collective Collaborations Achieving Greater Access to Justice;
- Asia Pro Bono Roundtables: Institutionalizing Pro Bono to Assist in Achieving the SDG and ESG;
- Pro Bono Capacity Building;
- Affordable Law Firm – the Solution for the Sandwich Class in the Community;
- Supporting survivors of Gender Based Violence through a Pro Bono and Access to Justice Partnership;
- Interviewing Victims of Human Trafficking- Simulation Exercise for Lawyers and Paralegals Providing Pro Bono Services;
- Strengthening Collaborations: The United Nations and Pro Bono Legal Service Providing Workshop;
- Pro Bono Support for Persons Living with Disabilities;
- Business and Human Rights for Human Security in Asia;
- Strategic Pro Bono Programs for Vulnerable Groups;
- The Regional Asia Clinical Legal Education Mock Pre-Trial Workshop and Event: Pro Bono in Practice;
- Increasing Access to Justice: Regional Experiences of Pro Bono and Legal Aid Working Together;
- The Institutional Role of Bar Associations in Supporting and Strengthening Pro Bono;
- Institutionalizing Pro Bono and Access to Justice Systems Through Justice Education;
The Role of Clearinghouses in Institutionalizing Pro Bono – Developing and Strengthening Pro Bono Infrastructure;
Enhancing Access to Justice Through Collective Impact;
Institutionalizing Pro-bono Legal Service and Access to Justice System in Nepal;
Pro Bono Reporting: A Benefit and a Must;
Access to Justice Through Paralegal Support;
Sustaining Pro Bono Legal Service Providing Through Communities of Practice Groups in Myanmar;
Limiting the Use of The Death Penalty Through Pro Bono & Access to Justice Services;
Practical and Ethical Legal Skills Virtual Trainings for Legal Service Providers;
Pro Bono Law in India and Singapore: Building Sustainable Practice; and
Pro Bono Pledges and Closing Ceremony.

The Conference provided simultaneous interpretations from English to Myanmar and Laos languages. This helps ensure many participants would be able to effectively engage without language barriers.

We would like to thank all conference supporters and partners for their support and hard work before and during the Conference. Furthermore, we would like to thank all the 139 presenters who kindly shard their pro bono experiences and helped guide and create interesting and creative discussions on institutionalizing and strengthening Pro Bono and Access to Justice systems. Finally, we would also like to thank everyone who participated and actively engaged in the multitude of sessions. We look forward to meeting many of you again next year in the Philippines.
Conference Supporters: