

Learning report

Participation in the event

PILnet (The Global Network for Public Interest Law) organizes pro bono Global Forum on an annual basis. The team (OUTLET) participated in PILnet's Global Forum 2018 in Berlin, in the capacity as the Champion of the worldwide inaugural PILnet Law for Change Student Competition 2018. The Forum is also attended by pro bono lawyers, NGOs, law professors etc.

We hosted a panel to share our experience in joining the inaugural PILnet Law For Change Student competition 2017 (The Competition), how we worked with our team mentors - an international law firm and an in-house counsel; and also shared the outcome of the competition - our successful launching of Project OUTLET (Outreach Legal Talks Initiative), in which the team mobilizes law students to receive training from practitioners and engage in outreach legal talks at community level, at NGOs' centres, on topics that the underprivileged groups in Hong Kong would hope and need to know. Through interactive session with the audience, we could share more of our insight in student motivation and legal mentor engagement, while receiving valuable feedback on our projects aims and challenges.

Apart from sharing our experience during the panel about the Competition and Project OUTLET, the team participated in other panel discussion sessions and networking events. Panels we visited included: pro bono practices in different jurisdictions, effective mobilization, how law schools' legal clinic cooperates with law firms, and analyses on legal needs of specific underprivileged groups of LGBTQ and refugees in Europe.

How we participated in applied learning

We are able to put what we learnt at law school in practice by engaging in the Competition and the Forum as we launched Project OUTLET to provide a platform and means for us and our fellow law schoolmates in public legal education. Currently we are teaching legal knowledge in relation to elderly wills and probate, advance medical directives, co-ownership of properties etc; and teaching subdivided flat tenants obligations and leasehold covenants of landlords and tenants. We were able to share our experience in collaborating with NGOs and legal practitioners, student participant recruitment and management, and other learnings of ours during the Forum. Having an opportunity during the Forum to actually meet, formally and informally, those who are on the forefront in the legal pro bono industry not only inspired us as a team, but also as individuals. The Forum itself provided us with an opportunity, not only to share our experience, but most of the time we benefited from a mutual exchange. By having discussions with experts in the field, they provided us with valuable insight and we were able to get a better understanding of the practicalities surrounding pro bono.

What we have benefited from the event

After the forum all of us flew back to Hong Kong with a renewed passion for public interest law and pro bono work. In particular the team was pleased to learn how universities and law firms around the world cooperate to give hands-on pro bono experience to students in order to build within them a sense of community and pro bono spirit, acquire in-depth study on particular body of law, and provide them with a genuine experience to realize what they have done. The Forum also left us feeling hopeful about the world and inspired, bringing new ideas to the table to our own project. By participating in the event, not only did we get to meet accomplished peers and professionals, participated in intellectually stimulating conversations regarding pro bono and the practise of it, we were also inspired as individuals. Each of us came to Berlin with a set of expectations, we left with a heart full of inspiration and mind cluttered with ideas for the future.

