

Pro Bono HK



Notice

These slides were prepared for the Asian Law Students Association A2TW Pro Bono Conference 2021 - A2TW 2021 Panel Discussion: **Pro Bono in Crisis Situations: Covid-19** held on 27 June 2021.

The material contained in these slides is of a general nature only and does not constitute any advice of any kind.

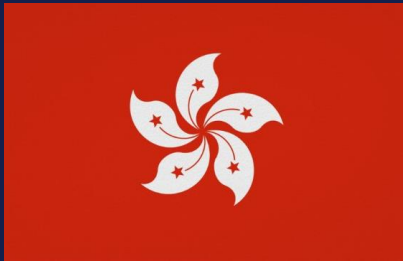
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Hong Kong's legal assistance landscape



- ✦ Hong Kong has a very large and sophisticated legal profession
- ✦ Law firms, barristers' chambers, academics acting on an individual basis
- ✦ Bar Association and the Law Society schemes
- ✦ Government Legal Aid scheme
- ✦ Duty lawyer services and unrepresented litigant's centres (Judiciary)
- ✦ Specialised NGOs like **Pro Bono HK**, Equal Justice, Justice without Borders, PILNet, Trustlaw who work in this space providing clearinghouses and community legal clinics
- ✦ Unions, social welfare organisations and others who provide some legal assistance to the public with their services

Our Mandate

For the benefit of the HK community,
assist impoverished, distressed or vulnerable
individuals and groups, including:

- The homeless or those living in poverty
- Prisoners or detainees
- Elderly, minors and children
- Ethnic, racial, religious or sexual minorities
- Physically or mentally challenged

**For advancement of education, to
broaden access to justice and improve
understanding and exercise of legal
rights**



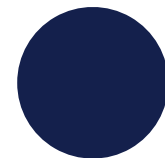
Source: Articles of Association

Community Legal Clinics

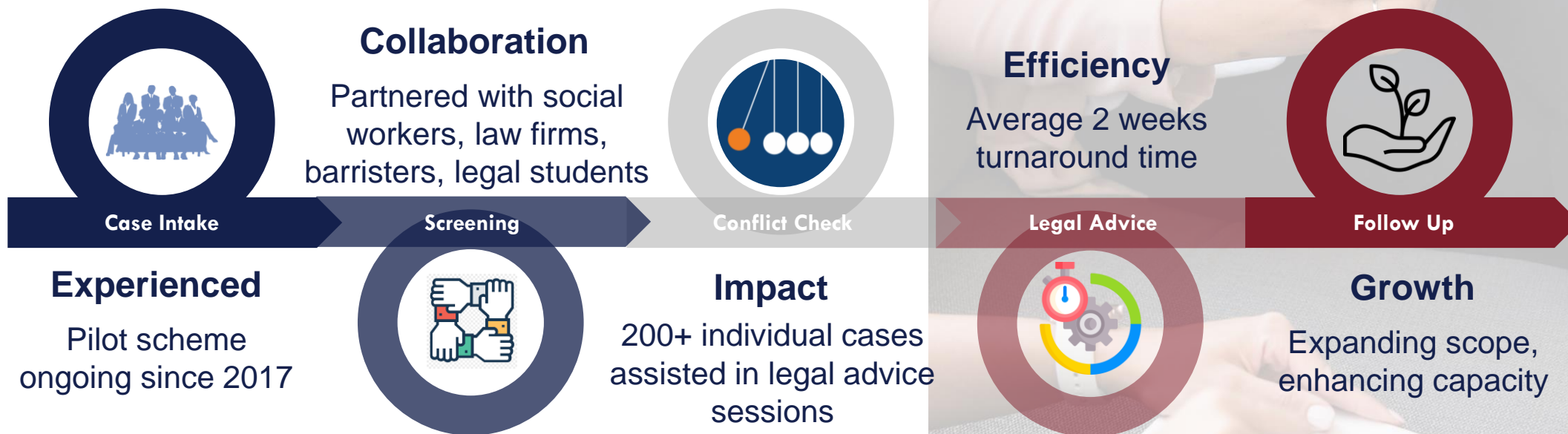
Launched 2017



ImpactHK Clinic Services for the homeless



Community Legal Clinics - Highlights



Types of advice sought:

Marriages
Immigration
Social welfare
Tenancy & property rights

Custody of Children
Refugee Claims
Legal aid applications & appeals
Wills & Probate Employment

Prisoner's rights
Medical Negligence

Criminal appeals
Traffic accident
Guardianship orders
Comprehensive Social Security Assistance



Capacity Building Professional Development

We work closely with:

- ✦ Law students, universities and schools
- ✦ Individual Solicitors, Barristers, In-House Counsel, Academics and Government lawyers through training and programs such as 'Lunch and Learn' events
- ✦ Law firms, Chambers, Corporates
- ✦ Law Society of Hong Kong and Bar Association
- ✦ Association of Corporate Counsel
- ✦ Other NGOs such as PILNet, SoCO, ImpactHK and many others
- ✦ Informal interest groups such as the Law Firm Roundtable, APBC and Global Pro Bono



Legal Literacy for the Public

Seminars, Research, Publications

- ✦ Talks on legal rights for different sectors of the community on different topics: tenancy law, family law, employment law etc
- ✦ Material for publication on legal rights/ resource kits for communities or groups in need
- ✦ Research and advocacy for law reform and improving access to justice

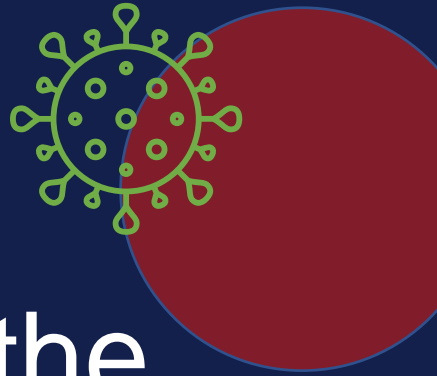


Global Connections and Outreach

- ✦ Connect with Pro Bono organisations in other jurisdictions
- ✦ Outreach with local universities, NGOs
- ✦ Member of the Global Pro Bono Network
- ✦ Participation in and support of local, regional and global groupings, schools, and conferences
- ✦ Supporting organisations such as ALSA to promote regional sharing



Pro bono and the Pandemic



- ✦ The pandemic has hit vulnerable communities the hardest and created new pockets of disadvantage in the community (such as newly jobless, stranded travellers)
- ✦ Increased demand for certain types of requests (such as family and employment related)
- ✦ New types of requests such as NGO liability for covid/infectious diseases, working from home policies, holding AGMs virtually etc. and online scams and cybersecurity.
- ✦ Generally there has been an increase in needs compared to 2020 for legal related services (in the range of 15% to 50%)
- ✦ Law firms, individual lawyers, and law students have remained actively involved, and large number of new volunteers
- ✦ One challenge was that many lawyers were actually very busy during the pandemics

How Hong Kong lawyers have responded



Responding quickly to the changing environment

- Focusing on priority areas as many NGOs were trying to get through the pandemic themselves. Multiple challenges for both for their own teams and resources, as well as their service delivery models
- Discussion and collaboration between providers and organisations. New relationships and initiatives established to promote more collaboration and experience sharing, such as the Regional Pro Bono Roundtable that was established between PILnet, SG LSPBS, Trust Law, iProbono and BABSEACLE. (Next one is scheduled for 8 July).
- Increased technology investment. Moving online and using technology to deliver pro bono services
- Now that the worst of the pandemic is over, helping NGOs with issues that emerged during covid but are more long term such as resilience planning (such as new models of delivery, fundraising, reserves)

Find out more at
www.probono.org.hk

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