

Lawyers & Access to Justice: Challenging Pro Bono



Participants of the 'Lawyers & Access to Justice: Challenging Pro Bono' Symposium.

Jurisdictions around the world face challenges in access to justice raised by indigent persons who cannot afford legal assistance. This project, *Lawyers & Access to Justice: Challenging Pro Bono*, brings together a group of scholars from a variety of jurisdictions to expand our understanding of the way different countries approach a lawyer's role in access to justice. Scholarship in primarily western countries identifies pro bono as a central issue, and while in some jurisdictions this phrase has meaning, in others it does not. This project focuses on Asia and other key jurisdictions whose access to justice environments are compelling but not well documented or which provide useful comparative case studies.

In a research Symposium at NUS Faculty of Law, scholars discussed the relationship between lawyers and access to justice in their country and explored key factors which influence this relationship. The speakers aimed to:

- Accurately present the current state of legal aid and professional obligations regarding access to justice in their jurisdictions, and how lawyers and other stakeholders interact;
- Contribute, to the access to justice literature, a critique of how access to justice is conceptualised and the different ways it is implemented, including strategies such as voluntary and mandatory pro bono, participation in government-funded schemes, and law firm foundations; and

- Provide a basis for comparing access to justice across jurisdictions, thereby enhancing understanding of access to justice on a global scale and supporting the policy-making process.

The 'Lawyers & Access to Justice: Challenging Pro Bono' Symposium, organised by the Centre for Asian Legal Studies (CALS), was held on 8 & 9 June 2017 at the Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore (Bukit Timah Campus).



Professor Simon Chesterman, NUS Law Dean giving the Welcome Address while Associate Professor Helena Whalen-Bridge, the symposium convenor, presented the research project overview.



Ms Helen Kruse, Senior Lecturer from Rhodes University, raising a question for discussion.



Professor Fu Hualing (right) from The University of Hong Kong presenting a paper on ‘Pro Bono, Legal Aid, and the Struggle for Justice in China’ while the commentator cum moderator, Associate Professor Michael Dowdle from NUS Law (left), looked on.



Dr George Radics, Lecturer from NUS Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences (left) having a discussion with Ms Alpha Pontanal, Program Manager from People in Need, Philippines (centre) and Associate Professor Sarasu Esther Thomas from National Law School of India (right).



Mr Lim Tanguy, CEO of Singapore Law Society Pro Bono Services (right), commenting on the paper at the panel session on the Singapore jurisdiction presented by Associate Professor Helena Whalen-Bridge. Associate Professor Gary Chan from School of Law, Singapore Management University (left) was the moderator for the session.

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