



Work Attachment Experience with Pro Bono SG: Family Justice Support Scheme

From 17 July 2023 to 11 August 2023

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Outline



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Our Pro Bono Stories

'I don't know whether I would win or lose the lawsuit, so I was very worried about it. Then, when I met the lawyers, I was reassured, and they gave me a lot of strength. I believe the lawyers will fight the best case for me, and I could trust and rely on them. I am very grateful for them.'

Su Su Mar, Ad Hoc Pro Bono Scheme Beneficiary

Brief Introduction to Pro Bono SG

Pro Bono provides three different types of services:



Legal Awareness

Understand the law and your rights with our free resources and events.



Legal Guidance

Legal consultation at our legal clinics, virtually or in-person.



Legal Representation

Be represented in Court by our lawyers for certain criminal charges and civil cases, including family justice matters.

Criminal Legal Aid Scheme

Family Justice Support Scheme

Adhoc Pro Bono Scheme

Family Justice Support Scheme (FJSS)

I did my work attachment with Pro Bono SG and worked with the team for the Family Justice Support Scheme, which aims to help their potential client with their family matters such as divorce, family violence, maintenance and children-related issues.

For more information:

Pro Bono SG Website: <https://www.probono.sg>

What Pro Bono SG Does: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLhUN0vEuBA>

My Professional Development Plan

My Learning Needs

Through this attachment, I hoped to understand

- ways in which the ecosystem, i.e., family, could impact the well-being of students;
- the needs and challenges faced by foreign spouses with Singaporean children; and
- the impact of matrimonial issues on all parties involved, especially on children in relation to their performances and welfare in the school.

Opportunities

I was interested to

- learn about the Family Justice Support Scheme, including its referral system, and application and review processes; and
- form connections and collaborate with other services from external agencies that could cater to the specific needs of foreign spouses and their children.

My Professional Development Plan

My Learning Goals

Context: Citizen marriages involving non-resident spouses have been hovering around the 25% mark in the past decade. In line with this societal trend, there is a significant number of foreign students and/or students with at least one non-resident parent in schools.

Understanding some of the issues faced by families with non-resident spouses could help me

- better understand how schools could establish a more holistic ecological framework for such students, e.g., care-givers' roles and their worldviews, spoken languages at home, availability of social support for students with SEN;
- understand students' circumstances and design targeted appropriate intervention plans for at-risk students; and
- be culturally sensitive and communicate more effectively with students and stakeholders in such unique family circumstances.

On a personal front, I aimed to develop general skills in case management and means testing administration, as well as soft skills such as interviewing applicants and liaising with different stakeholders, which are applicable in my daily work as a Special Educational Needs Officer; and explore the role of restorative practice when implementing behaviour intervention measures for students with SEN.

My TWA+ Experience

During my attachment, I was involved in the following:

Administration/ Coordination



- Checking Jot Form for applications
- Maintaining case data
- Drafting emails
- Following up on missing documents
- Conducting means tests
- Drafting case summaries
- Assisting applicants with document submission

Interviews



- Conducting online interviews with applicants and/or social workers

Calls



- Engaging in conversations with panel lawyers to allocate cases
- Contacting Family Service Centres (FSCs) for counselling support
- Reaching out to applicants and social workers for information gathering
- Managing hotline calls to address concerns and channel enquiries

Translation



- Providing on-the-spot translation for officers
- Translating (English to Chinese) subtitles in promotional video

1. Applying Restorative Practice (RP) and Community-Based Sentencing Concepts to School Discipline for SEN Students

- Therapeutic justice in RP

Schools can assist in the reconciliation between offenders and victims as part of the therapeutic processes.

- Community-based sentencing options such as
 - *Mandatory Treatment Order (MTO),*
 - *Day Reporting Order (DRO), and*
 - *Community Service.*

These can serve as guidelines when considering disciplinary measures for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Corrective work and community service (e.g., cleaning classrooms and common areas) can be employed as logical consequences for damaging school property.



My Learning and Application

2. Understanding and Collaborating with Diverse Stakeholders

- Students and Parents with Diverse Backgrounds
We can seek to understand the worldviews of students and parents from diverse backgrounds, including their perceptions of SEN conditions and the principle of meritocracy, to better support their needs and expectations.
- Different roles: School, Family, and External Agencies
Recognising that it takes a village to raise a child, we will work collaboratively with schools, families, and external agencies to ensure comprehensive support for students with SEN.
- School Personnel
Learning is presented at Case Management Team meetings, enhancing collective strategies for supporting students with SEN.



My Learning and Application

3. Importance of Multilingualism

In FJSS, commonly used legal terms are translated from English to Chinese and compiled into a list to help team members engage clients. Similarly, a 'cheat sheet' for commonly used SEN terminologies can be compiled for staff/SENOs to better engage with parents.

4. Emerging work environment, culture, and technology

During my attachment, I observed modern workplaces adopting flexible arrangements and hot desking. Virtual meetings facilitate communication with various stakeholders. Schools can adopt collaboration tools like Microsoft Teams, enabling staff to access real-time student data and enhancing information sharing and decision-making.



My Learning and Application