

¹⁶ Akoma Ntoso in detail – What is it? <<http://www.akomantoso.org/akoma-ntoso-in-detail/what-is-it>> accessed 10 September 2014

¹⁷ World eParliament Report 2012, <<http://www.ictparliament.org/VVePReport2012.html>> accessed 10 September 2014

¹⁸ Parlmirani, Monica: Akoma Ntoso implementations, Legal Informatics blog, posted 27 January 2014, <http://legalinformatics.wordpress.com/2014/01/27/palmirani-akoma-ntoso-implementations/> accessed 10 September 2014

¹⁹ <http://kenyalaw.org/kl/index.php?id=115> Accessed 10 September 2014

²⁰ <http://www.africanlawlibrary.net>

²¹ Mafukidze, Tererai, Sustainability models for LLI in Africa http://www.africanlawlibrary.net/https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4i4RTO_M0g Accessed 10 September 2014

²² Smith, David: Internet use on mobile phones in Africa predicted to increase 20-fold. The Guardian, 5 June 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/05/internet-use-mobile-phones-africa-predicted-increase-20-fold> accessed 10 September 2014

Biography

Ruth Ward started her career in Law Libraries at the University of the Witwatersrand in the late 1980s. She served on the OSALL committee, (Organisation of SA Law Libraries) in various roles for several years, and has a general interest in free access to law. Ruth is currently the head law librarian at Webber Wentzel in Johannesburg, South Africa.

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The 10th Anniversary of GlobaLex: A Portal Dedicated to Foreign, Comparative and International Law Research

Abstract: Since it was established, GlobaLex has become a recognised and heavily accessed worldwide database of international, foreign, and comparative law research articles. As Mirela Roznovschi explains, GlobaLex represents a valuable component of legal research in today's cyberlegal environment. In February 2015 GlobaLex celebrates a 10 year anniversary. This article celebrates the success of the service.

Keywords: legal research; free legal information; GlobaLex

If you type into any search engine the words, *foreign international comparative law research*, in any order or even just one of the first three words followed by *law research*, you will retrieve hundreds of thousands of records linked directly, or indirectly (through the site's own search engine or evident links), to GlobaLex, <http://www.nyulawglobal.org/GlobaLex/>. Published on the platform launched ten

years ago by the New York University School of Law Hauser Global Program, <http://www.law.nyu.edu/global/>, these articles have become a recognised and authoritative resource for the international community at large. Authored by highly experienced and qualified scholars, lawyers, and legal information specialists from about one hundred and fifty jurisdictions, these legal research

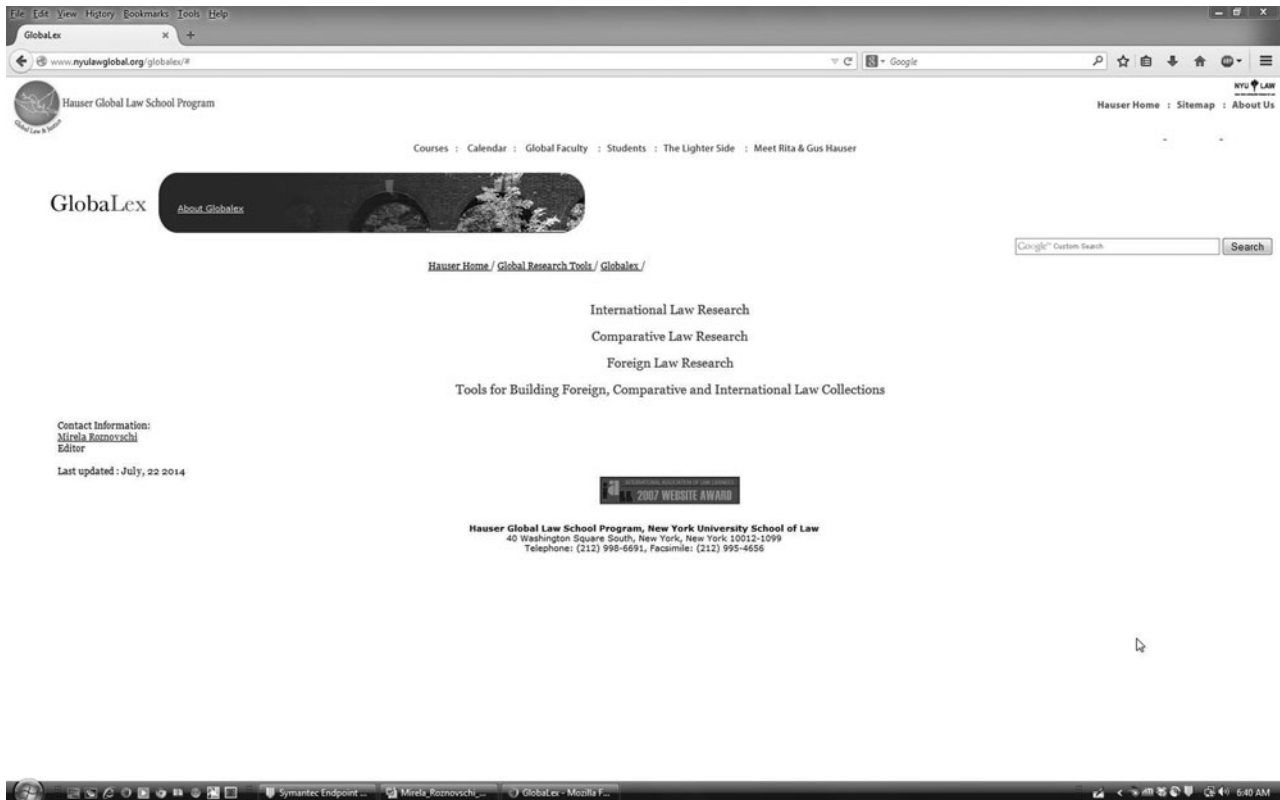


Figure 1: The GlobaLex homepage.

articles are regularly updated. The authors' email is displayed at the beginning of the 'bio' field which gives the readers the assurance of an expert hand ready to help with a broad range of issues from international treaties' *travaux préparatoires*, Vietnam's cases, Kenya's or South Africa's law reports, to Malaysia's Islamic law, India's courts, comparative civil procedure or European Union legislative history, and so on.

GlobaLex's content is reliable, free and ubiquitous. Its articles are immersed in the recent history of online access and reflect the legal evolution and changes in international legal concepts and foreign legal systems of the world. Soon, they will be downloaded on tablets, iPods, and iPhones through the GlobaLex app. Hot subjects include: international nuclear law, maritime waste laws, human trafficking, indigenous people, terrorism, climate change and the Kyoto protocol, comparative civil procedure, criminal civil procedure, and domestic issues such as Spain's constitutional relationship with national debt, the law in Egypt after the revolution, Hong Kong's ongoing 'drama', the continuing debate on changing of the Turkish constitution, corruption in Zambia, and minorities language issues in Africa, and so on; and these subjects are analysed in monographic essays. Gathered on the same platform, these contributions encourage readers to see these topics in a different way. With no other presence than the computer code, these articles are part of a revolution that has redefined the field of law research giving it the prefix of 'meta' or 'cyber'.

PRECIS OF HISTORY

I was privileged to work as foreign and international law librarian amongst the legal-world elite at the New York University School of Law and to understand what legal materials were urgently needed from the perspective of legal research. Eminent law professors and law librarians constituted my colleagues and highly experienced librarians and researchers such as Gretchen Feltes, Joan Liu, Deborah Paulus-Jagric, Radu Popa, Annmarie Zell became GlobaLex contributors. The interdisciplinary vision of my background as writer, journalist and literary critic¹ gave me a fresh perspective of the field. I was able to see what others – in that very moment – did not. Once I fell in love with the internet I realised its enormous potential in the legal research field; it was the year of 1996 when I created the first research and online teaching tool at the NYU School of Law Library called Guide to Foreign and International Legal Databases². Whilst dreaming of a reliable online collection of foreign, comparative and international law legal materials, I wrote and published an article considered by many to be just a dream.³

In 1999 a few unusual things happened: USAID sent me to teach international and foreign law research at the Yerevan State University School of Law (Armenia)⁴ and I was also invited to teach on the same topic at the Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute of the Open Society Institute in Budapest (Hungary). In the Armenian Law Library of the Yerevan School of Law I found about

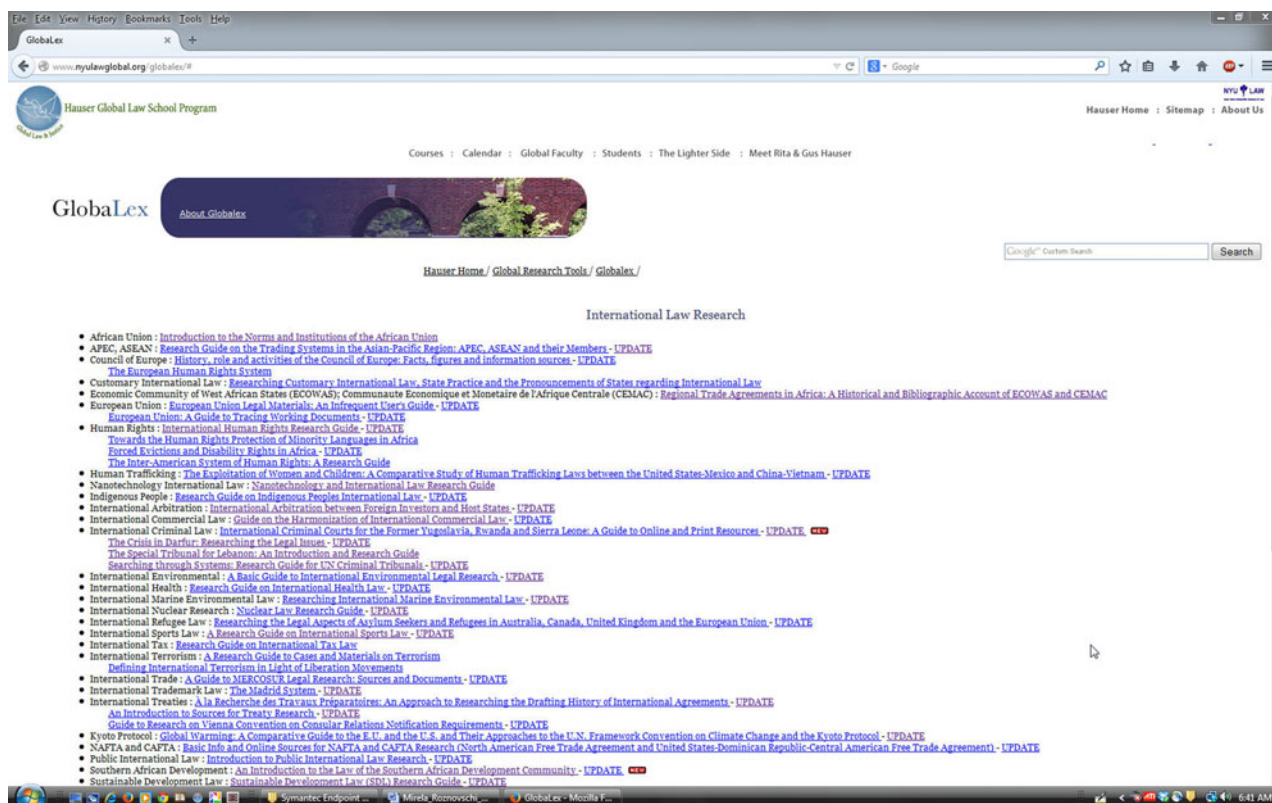


Figure 2: GlobaLex: International law research.

one thousand books and journals of international law, many of them outdated. In Budapest⁵ I taught for ten days to a group of librarians coming from sixteen countries, mostly from the former Soviet Union republics. All of them were confronted with the same scarcity of legal materials and reference tools in their home libraries. In 1999 I also accepted Sabrina Pacifici's invitation to become the co-editor of a new section on the LLRX database on foreign, comparative, and international law research⁶; it was my enthusiastic way of creating a venue to online and print resources for worldwide disadvantaged law librarians. Although my relationship with LLRX was short, the quality of contributions persuaded the International Journal of Legal Information to reprint many of them.⁷

Subsequently, in 2001 after coming home from Moscow where I taught in the same program organised by the Constitutional and Legal Policy Institute from Budapest⁸, I decided to write a book for my students; I wanted to reinforce that language was no longer a barrier, that international and foreign/domestic legal documents were not the sole property of a publisher and lastly that a lack of ambition, not currency, was the only absolute detriment to obtaining legal resources.⁹

When, in the spring of 2003, LLRX announced the ending of the foreign and international section, many colleagues – and I name one of them, Lyonette Louis-Jacques from the University of Chicago Law

School – urged me to archive whatever had been already published and find a way to continue the project. Professor Joseph Weiler (by then Chair and Faculty Director of Hauser Global Law School Program, presently the President of the European University Institute in Florence) was the main sponsor. He approved my idea, and backed it up to its final stage, and gave to the new born database the name of GlobaLex¹⁰. During the following years the full support for GlobaLex was given by, the former NYU School of Law Dean, Richard Revesz; and the actual Dean, Trevor Morrison; Chair and Faculty Director, Hauser Global Law School Program, Professor Richard Stewart; and Vice Dean for Global Affairs, Professor Kevin Davis.

STATISTICS AND RECOGNITION

The field of international and foreign law research operating on this scale is open to cultural, anthropological, and philosophical connections. It was not easy to gather legal professionals from so many different jurisdictions, speaking so many languages and to ask them to share their knowledge in a sort of unified vision. Translating their articles into the legal English has not been an easy task. Many contributors were reluctant to use the English language because they were taught that it was the language of capitalism. Others considered that the legal western world was adverse to their legal system. An example that comes

to mind are the countries belonging to the Islamic legal family. Some African scholars even displayed a degree of suspiciousness; some felt that the legal world had neglected them purposely. Sadly, some Chinese contributors from the Mainland did not have a sense of authorship because plagiarism as a concept did not exist in their vocabulary.

The identification of a reliable format of online primary legal materials was the next task; a legal document in this age of legal research might also be a video on YouTube or an audio tape. Even though governments, universities, legal institutes and legal organisations participated in the open-resource movement, many courts or universities did not accept online legal documents in html and pdf until recently when the criteria of reliability and electronic signature made it acceptable. Articles written about GlobaLex emphasised this issue.¹¹ The field of meta-research became slowly accustomed to use legal collections on different formats and a non-traditional way of identifying the wealth of reliable legal resources replaced the previous one.

Over the past ten years, GlobaLex has published more than 260 articles and more than 300 updates (articles about jurisdictions such as Argentina, Australia, Canada, France, Italy, Kenya, were updated no more than twice while the Philippines jurisdictions have been updated four times because of substantial legal changes in the country's legal system). GlobaLex received the 2007 Award of the International Association of Law Libraries¹², while the 2013 Daniel L. Wade FCIL-SIS Outstanding Service Award of Foreign, Comparative and International Law Research had been awarded mainly in relation to GlobaLex.¹³

UPDATING AND CONNECTING

GlobaLex publishes an average of 4 – 6 new, or updated articles, per month, which is quite a formidable task given the numerous variables that each update must take into consideration. Unlike anything else seen in the publishing environment, GlobaLex articles are updated on a systematic basis while their generous contributors (with the majority agreeing to display their contact information, i.e. their email address) have created a unique network able to help legal professionals from all over the world. When the crisis in Ukraine started in November 2013, the update of the Ukraine article on GlobaLex followed and was published on March 2014. Talks about Scotland's move towards independence in 2013, particularly the referendum scheduled for September 18, 2014, were reflected by the February 2014 update to the Scottish article.

GlobaLex is a cited source in HeinOnline's *World Constitutions* online library, the *Foreign Law Guide* (founded in 1988 by editors Thomas H. Reynolds and Arturo A. Flores, lately taken over by Brill and becoming a component of BrillOnline Reference Works), *Social Science Research Network*, *Cambridge Journals Online*, *ProQuest*, *Oxford*

Journals, and so on; and, consequently, it is part of teaching materials used in classrooms and scholarly publications. Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com/>) retrieves more than six hundred and fifty records related to GlobaLex. The *World Legal Information Institute* (WORDLII) (<http://worldlii.org/>) indexes and links to GlobaLex articles. In 2013, GlobaLex became a member of the finest network in the world, the *Free Access to Law Movement*: <http://www.falm.info/>. The server statistics show that GlobaLex constantly has between 300,000 and 400,000 hits per month. Furthermore, GlobaLex is among the first five keyword and key phrase searches on the NYU School of Law Hauser Global Program portal.

CROSSING BORDERS

By nature GlobaLex reflects the state-of-play in the fields of international, comparative and foreign law research provided in the English language. Many articles are translations from the primary language of contributors, coming from different jurisdictions, with corresponding equivalent legal concepts, though in a very few instances I accepted to publish in French (Benin and Togo) because it was impossible to find another solution.

The epic journey of GlobaLex inspired similar projects. Recently, the French-speaking hemisphere of legal research launched a project designed after GlobaLex. The French Ministry of Justice (Service of International and European Affairs, Office of Comparative Law) and the Francophone Network of Legal Diffusion (RF2D) created LegiGlobe¹⁴, a kind of GlobaLex in French. As disclosed on the first page of this project, "Un site offrant cette possibilité existe en anglais. Globalex est une initiative de la faculté de droit de l'Université de New York. Ce projet est alimenté par les contributions de juristes et professionnels du droit d'une centaine d'États. Les contenus de LegiGlobe suivront le même modèle éditorial, ils pourront également être repris sur d'autres espaces souhaitant disposer de contenus juridiques fiables. Des liens réciproques entre Globalex et LegiGlobe seront ajoutés progressivement, notamment lors des mises à jour des fiches pays respectives."

A NOTE TO READERS

In February 2015 GlobaLex will celebrate ten years of its amazing venture of discovery and innovation. The truth is that despite the attention this project received at the beginning I could not have anticipated its impact and how much it would enrich the field of foreign, comparative, and international law research. Publishing the best, in the spirit of freedom and accuracy, has been the legacy of GlobaLex and I am confident this will work seamlessly in the years to come.

Footnotes

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- ⁶ <http://www.llrx.com/category/1050> (last visited August 24, 2014)
- ⁷ Bernal, Marie-Louise H. (2001) Editorial Comment. *International Journal of Legal Information* 29(1),Xiii; (2003) *International Journal of Legal Information* 31(1) lx-x
- ⁸ <https://files.nyu.edu/mr24/public/Mirela%20Roznovschi.htm> (last visited 30 November 2014)
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- ¹³ <http://www.aallnet.org/sections/fcil/grants-awards/Awards/Docs-Vault/danwadeaward.html> (last visited September 15, 2014)
- ¹⁴ LegiGlobe <http://legiglobe.rf2d.org/> (last visited September 15, 2014)

Biography

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