

## Interview with Lex:lead judge Dr Petra Butler, Victoria University Wellington

Petra—please describe your general background and 1-2 highlights of your career:

I grew up in West Germany during the Cold War next to the border with East Germany in what today would be described as a global household. I have travelled extensively and have lived in parts of Africa among other places, immigrating to New Zealand [over 20 years ago initially to study and staying on with Victoria University in Wellington]. I am dual qualified as a lawyer in both Germany and New Zealand. I feel I have been very fortunate with many highlights from which to choose, some of which include representing New Zealand before the UN Human Rights Committee, attending the Commonwealth Law Ministers' conference, and leading an annual small states conference through the Institute of Small and Micro States (ISMS) of which I am the Director.



What in your life has led you to an interest in development and how do you think law can shape positive development trends? What do you think are the most important law and development trends currently?

Living and working in developing countries, I am always extremely humbled by the enthusiasm, the thirst for knowledge, and the resilience my students have. I strongly believe that education is the key to development. One positive effect of globalisation has been a better connection between universities and, with that, more educational opportunities for students from developing countries. Another positive development is the ever-increasing recognition of the right to development.

When were you first introduced to Lex:lead and what are your thoughts on the initiative?

I was introduced to Anne Bodley and to Lex:lead through a mutual friend of Anne's and mine, and was immediately struck by the initiative since it embodies my core belief—that education is key.