

An interview with Dianna Kempe JP QC



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

I was born in London in 1948 but have lived in Bermuda since my early twenties. Throughout my career I worked for a law firm called then **Appleby, Spurling and Kempe (ASK)** (now known as Appleby) and retired in 2003. I practiced in the area of multi-jurisdictional insolvency and obtained much of my continuing legal education by being a member of the International Bar Association (the IBA). I was fortunate that ASK, as part of its business culture, believed in corporate social responsibility projects for its lawyers so that, when an offer was made to me to become involved in the IBA's leadership, the firm agreed I could undertake this work. I ultimately became **President of the IBA**. During my presidency I founded the **IBA's Women's Interest Network** and held the first International Women Lawyers Conference. Both of these institutions are alive and well today.

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?

From the beginning of my work on the leadership side of the IBA I chose to be involved in the work of the IBA itself within developing countries' bar associations. I had myself had the personal experience of running the Bermuda Bar Association which was newly formed with little or no funds and therefore felt equipped to pass on this knowledge. My work in the area of sharing experiences and best practices grew substantially and so did the number of other lawyers who were similarly interested in helping bar associations and lawyers from developing countries. Two of those lawyers were **John Morrison OBE** from Chicago and **Leslie Wolfson** from Glasgow. I was very fortunate that both of them worked and contributed to the efforts of the IBA in those days. Lex:lead was effectively Leslie's brain child as he was determined to help lawyers from the least developed countries in the world and I was very happy to support him as best I could.

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

Lawyers frequently have poor reputations when it comes to giving back to their communities. I hope the lawyers who have experienced the work of Lex:lead and its leader Anne Bodley will be inspired to pass on the benefits of their knowledge to young lawyers and to their countries.