

HOW IALS GETS HERE?

By:

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Introduction

I first came into contact with founder members of IALS when I attended the Hawaii conference 2004. I did not know of AALS at that time but I was a member of International Society of Family law and a friend in the society informed me of the Hawaii conference on 'Educating Lawyers for Transnational Challenges' I was given an email contact – Carl Monk. I emailed him the abstract of my paper and it was accepted.

Hawaii was a great challenge. I have to make three trips to the American Embassy in Kuala Lumpur to get my visa and I almost gave up. It was Carl Monk who kept emailing me and said, 'please don't give up. You will get your visa.' I finally got a 10 years visa to USA, something of a blessing in disguise as thereafter I have no problem of travelling to Washington for IALS Board Meeting.

It was in Hawaii that the idea of setting up IALS came about. I was amongst the 19 people from 17 countries selected to a meeting in Istanbul where the IALS Charter was drafted. As founder Board Members I was very fortunate to have been able to work with Norman Dorsen, Carl Monk, Stephen Parker, Frank Wang, Monica Pinto, Craig Scott and Roger Burrridge, to name a few.

Montreal Conference

The Montreal Conference was historical as it was held in conjunction with the first General Assembly of IALS. Prior to Montreal, IALS had organized IALS Educational Conference on Learning from Each Other: Enriching the law School Curriculum in an Interrelated World, in Soochow University, Suzhou, China (2007) and the International Business Transaction: Global Perspective in Hamburg, Germany (2008).

The Montreal Conference was a follow up from the China Conference. The theme chosen namely "Effective Techniques for Teaching about Other Cultures and Legal Systems" was premised on the belief that ordinary legal problems admit of many solutions, which may be equally functional and in context, culturally appropriate. The whole idea was to find out ways in which law school embarked on teaching legal system like common law and civil law legal system when the law school comes from a different legal system. The question that was also asked was how other forms of legal system like Islamic legal system and indigenous African systems survive under these circumstances. Are teaching techniques method employed would be very different in various law schools in particular when teaching legal systems. The conference stressed the importance of training lawyers and leaders of the future to learn from structures and experiences of other legal systems and be ready to understand diverse ways of thinking. IALS may be the institution or association to bridge between people and places and offers access to up to date resources and innovative thinking.

The Milan Conference

The Conference in Milan is different as it carried a different theme. The usual themes for all of IALS Conference which coincide with the general assembly were on legal education. In Milan it was a specialized theme: Labour law and Labour Market in the New World Economy. IALS Board had a long debate as to themes of conferences and Milan was a special exception. Even if its specifically focused on labour law and world economy , it still encompassed a wide range of areas including issues of human rights, discriminations family economy and how to teach labour and employment law.

Both conferences brought together participants from all the members' schools from various fields and interest. As the conference coincided with general assembly, many participants were also deans or head of schools that were able to contribute to ideas on legal education and law teaching. In Milan there were a mixture as many participants were labour law specialist and there were also Deans who came for the general assembly.

What IALS do for its members?

Apart from the general assembly and the legal education conference, IALS also organized specialized conference such as the Constitutional law conference in Washington and the Business Transaction Conference in Hamburg, Germany. IALS provide a great opportunity for members to meet and discussed common issues in particular legal education in a globalised world. Members are able do agreed on twinning or exchanged programs. Members of staff form one university are able to visit another university and learnt from one another about the legal system and legal education.

IALS have also planned for joined research and publications and these are amongst the many things that interest member schools. The best of IALS is to learnt from each other, and from learning, being able to respect and understand our differences. IALS are rich with resources and human capital which could be shared and explored.

Where is IALS heading?

IALS was set up "to foster mutual understanding of and respect for the world's varied and changing legal systems and cultures as a contribution to justice and a peaceful world." In order to achieve this objective IALS needs to be more independent of AALS and should be seen to be running its own programs. As such it is timely that IALS start off the following projects/activities for members:

- a. Journal –whether the conventional one or e-journal where it will be a medium for academics all over the world to write;
- b. Joint research
- c. Fellowships;
- d. Student and staff exchange
- e. Conferences –national, regional and world conferences.

Conclusion

IALS was established to foster mutual understanding and respects amongst law schools. It is hope it will flourish to become a world association of law schools that will transform the way we teach, research and write as well as they way we treat each other in our daily life.