

Editorial

The European Law Faculties Association (ELFA) and The Law School Global League (LSGL) are delighted to present this special issue of the European Journal of Legal Education dedicated to Global Legal Education.

ELFA was founded to enhance the quality of legal education in Europe by providing a platform for discussion and exchange. Its primary objective is to foster cooperation among European universities and beyond. In turn, LSGL unites law schools from all over the world that are committed to the globalization of law, integrating global law into their learning outcomes and research endeavours. The league's mission is to promote global legal education and scholarly research in response to the increasing globalization of law. This special issue brings together expertise from ELFA and LSGL faculty members from around the world. It engages with an array of issues and practices core to global legal education.

In our increasingly interconnected world, global legal education has emerged as an essential framework for preparing future lawyers to navigate complex legal landscapes that transcend national boundaries. Legal education today must equip students not only with a foundational understanding of law and its social impact but also with the ability to critically assess and engage with different legal traditions and cultures.

This special issue brings together authors who represent a global voice of legal academia and explores the significance of global legal education in our interconnected society, with a particular focus on (a) the importance of a values-based education, (b) the promotion of inclusive and diverse learning environments, (c) the role of clinical legal education, and (d) insights from collaborative processes of curriculum reform to promote social responsibility locally, nationally, regionally and globally.

A Values-based Global Legal Education

A values-based global legal education is crucial for cultivating legal professionals who are not only skilled but also socially responsible. As legal systems interact across borders, lawyers, judges, and policymakers must

possess a deep understanding of ethical principles to promote justice and uphold the rule of law. Empathy occupies a central stage and is a fundamental quality that enables legal professionals to understand the perspectives and experiences of those they serve. A lawyer with empathy can better advocate for marginalised groups, ensuring that legal systems do not reinforce existing inequalities. This is particularly relevant in the context of global law where the needs of vulnerable populations, such as refugees and victims of corporate exploitation, must be addressed with compassion and sensitivity. Jacome's article on law and literature reflects on the opportunities for embedding empathy in legal education using the framework of law and literature. Through the narrative of a particular novel, *Ceniza en la boca*, by Brenda Navarro, the story of a young Mexican woman as a migrant in Spain, the author focuses on the role of law and advocacy in challenging the dominant narratives on illegal migration. The paper offers interesting insights on the use of literature in legal education particularly to mobilise students to become active member of their social and political communities. This is pivotal as lawyers play an important role in shaping societal structures, not only through litigation but also through policy-making, legislative drafting, and public administration. Global legal education must instil a critical awareness of the legal profession's ethical responsibilities and its potential to either perpetuate or challenge systemic inequalities. Legal ethics and professional responsibility courses should incorporate discussions on global challenges such as corporate accountability, access to justice, and the ethical dilemmas posed by emerging technologies. This approach ensures that future lawyers are equipped with a conscientious understanding of their role in advancing justice and democratic governance on a global scale.

Diverse and inclusive learning environments in transnational education

As recognised by Balan in his paper, fostering diverse and inclusive learning environments is of key importance in global legal education. The paper explores assessment methods for an increasingly diverse student population. It analyses the challenges and opportunities of traditional assessment and feedback practices, identifying how factors such as student background, unfamiliarity with legal concepts and cultural sensitivities can influence what students can gain from the feedback given, leading to incomplete or skewed evaluations. Reflecting on his experience in Kings College London, the article advocates for a more multifaceted approach to teaching evaluation that foster

continuous engagement, self-reflection and lifelong learning. Interestingly this article calls for a shift toward collaborative and human-centred evaluation systems that promote deeper learning and fairness in a diverse academic landscape, enriching the legal education experience for all stakeholders.

Haidari and Hervey report on their learning experience gained in relation to the initiative entitled *Gender Equality and Law: Transnational learning and co-producing research with students from Udayana University and City, University of London*. As explained in the paper the main aims of the initiative, rolled out in 2024-2025, lie in developing the knowledge, legal research and transferable skills in relation to gender equality and law, in international law, Indonesian law, and the law of England and Wales.

Pinto examines the discourse surrounding spoken language in Australian legal education as a case study of the global classroom. The seeks to uncover the sources, characteristics and underlying discourses surrounding oral communication skills in national policy, accreditation requirements, and university learning outcomes. This is an area of scarce research in relation to legal education and the author advocates for further research in this regard.

In relation to India, one of the most diverse countries in the world, the article by Popovski, Mehrotra and Pundir argues that the human capabilities approach towards legal education is necessary to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, building lifelong skills, and allowing citizens access to justice, making institutions effective, accountable, and inclusive. The article demonstrates opportunities and challenges in applying the human capabilities approach to legal education. It explores the case of Jindal Global Law School as a successful example of involving law faculty and students through legal clinics, public service, outreach, and direct work with local communities to raise awareness, disseminate legal know-how, empower people, build capacity to achieve better accomplishment of human rights, access to justice, development, and peace.

In turn, Silver and Giri bring to this issue newly available empirical data about nationalities of students in US law schools, to analyse what they frame as individual US law schools' global identities. Insights drawn from the data analysis indicate what is perceived by the authors as configuring distinctive global identities of individual US law schools. Bearing in mind the global

approach to recruitment of students in US law schools, the authors highlight the importance of analysis like the one they offer for comparative studies of differences ‘global’ host countries for legal education. They emphasize the timelines of these studies in times ‘when the US government experiences a seismic shift in its orientation towards international students’. A central argument of the paper is that despite the focus on home country diversity as part of the ‘globality’ advertised by US law schools, research has found that home country *commonality* and the shared experiences that accompany it serves as an important foundation for building a sense of community among international students. These communities, the authors argue, can profoundly shape not only experiences during the student experience at US law schools, but even future opportunities. Their analysis shows that the choice of law school can be a significant differentiator in the networks that students can develop in their overseas studies and consequently, since ‘law is a relationship-driven profession, networks that are both deep and broad have particular value in this field’.

The Role of Clinical Legal Education in Global Legal Training

Clinical legal education is a pedagogical approach that bridges theoretical knowledge and practical legal skills. By immersing students in real-world legal problems, at times within underserved communities, clinical programs provide experiential learning that enhances their professional competencies. Globally, clinical legal education fosters legal pluralism by exposing students to diverse legal traditions and socio-economic contexts. Clinics that focus on international human rights, refugee law, and transnational business disputes provide students with a comparative legal perspective, preparing them for careers that require engagement with multiple legal systems.

This issue brings together experiences and initiatives on clinical legal education in Kenya, South Africa, and in Brazil. Kankindi’s article takes as an example an ongoing initiative from the University of Strathmore in Kenya that started in 2022, the student civic engagement initiative, devised to translate theoretical knowledge acquired in the law school into direct civic engagement at the service of society. The paper explains the multifaceted problem the initiative set out to solve, its main aim and objectives, especially in relation to finding remedies to social injustices, as well as the results of its initial phase of execution. The paper also envisages the scalability of the initiative as well as the investigative potential it opens regarding the many ways in which

experiential learning enhances competencies and skills development in legal learning. In turn, South Africa has twenty-one recognised University Law Clinics that form part of the South Africa's University Law Clinic Association. Effendi in her paper in this issue examines the lessons learned by South African law clinics during the Covid-19 pandemic and analyses the use of technology in South African law clinics. Guimarães and Pacheco da Silva focus on a case study of FGV São Paulo Law School's copyright clinics from 2021-2023. These clinics are part of the compulsory undergraduate curriculum offered in this Brazilian law school. The findings highlight the innovative features of this learning and teaching model, raising students' awareness of the importance of commitment to others, ethical skills crucial to global legal education.

Furthermore, clinical legal education enhances students' understanding of the role of law as a tool for social change. By working on cases involving access to justice, human rights advocacy, and community legal aid, students gain a deeper appreciation of the societal impact of legal interventions. This training is especially relevant in transnational litigation, where legal professionals must navigate both domestic and international legal frameworks to protect the rights of marginalised communities.

Reforming Legal Curricula towards Competency-based Intercultural Legal Education

Some very interesting papers in this issue engage with curricula transformation in law schools. Programmes around the world are being created, adapted, and transformed to provide law students with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate a rapidly changing global legal landscape. In this issue we learn from the processes of curriculum transformation at Strathmore law school in Kenya, at ITAM law school in Mexico, at the law school of the Universidad de Los Andes (Unianandes) in Colombia and at the University of Pretoria in South Africa.

Mwanza reflects on the Strathmore process and shares interesting insights in relation to the means of resolving dilemmas when it comes to prioritisation of content in law schools. Sadka and Zorrilla Noriega present the objectives and results of the most recent revision of the law degree curriculum at ITAM, Mexico, initiated in 2022, a reform which responded to the need for modernisation and that counted with broad international external and internal consultations. The detailed analysis of the different adjustments considered and

implemented in the newly adopted curriculum, highlights the significance of open collaborative dialogue between stakeholders when approaching curriculum reform to enable graduates to become agents of social transformation.

Lozano Rodríguez examines the curricular transformation of the undergraduate programme at the Uniandes School of Law, highlighting the creation and implementation of the *Eje Transversal de Aprendizaje Jurídico Experiencial* (AJET). She explains how this innovative educational proposal is framed within a new competency-based curriculum that emphasises experiential learning, drawing on the theories of David Kolb, John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and others. Through three key types of courses or stages —projects, litigation, and clinics— AJET integrates active methodologies such as problem oriented project-based learning (PO-PLB), simulations, and law clinics training. The analysis highlights the advantages of this approach that not only responds to the demands of an ever-changing legal environment but also nurtures ethical and socially-responsible graduates. One of the six key competencies identified an embedded in Uniandes curriculum design is a *global and intercultural vision* enabling students and graduates to develop solutions to societal problems based on global, local, and regional legal debates. This includes the ability to integrate dialogue that leads to recognising diversity and promoting equality in legal strategies.

Thutse and Maimela describe how technology has impacted teaching and learning and, in particular, assessment methods at the University of Pretoria. They analyse the challenges that technology and AI represent in assessing students highlighting the benefits and arguing in favour of assessments that can foster critically thoughtful and reasoning graduates who are able to deal with real life scenarios and problems.

All in all, the papers in this special issue emphasise that globally relevant legal education must prioritise intercultural competence and analytical skills that prepare students to engage with different legal traditions, cultures, and perspectives. Legal systems are deeply embedded in historical, cultural, and political contexts, and legal education must equip students with the ability to transverse, to overcome, and to adapt. An intercultural approach is particularly significant in global legal education.

Conclusion: The Need to Find Common Ground

Global legal education is integral to preparing the next generation of legal professionals for the complexities of transnational legal practice and the evolving demands of societal engagement. By incorporating clinical legal education, intercultural analytical skills, and a critical understanding of the legal profession's societal role, law schools can nurture lawyers who are not only competent in their technical expertise but also committed to social justice and global legal cooperation. Moreover, by fostering expertise in transnational litigation and public interest litigation, global legal education ensures that legal professionals are equipped to address some of the world's most pressing legal and ethical challenges, from corporate accountability to climate change litigation. As legal education continues to evolve, its global orientation will remain essential in shaping a just and equitable legal order.

Given the current international political and social climate, it is more essential than ever for academic institutions to focus on what unites us rather than what divides us. Teaching, researching, and engaging in discussions that transcend local issues enrich the academic community and enhance the value of legal education. Law schools and legal professionals bear the responsibility of providing solutions that foster greater understanding. By offering programs grounded in intercultural and international perspectives, law schools prepare professionals who can better understand diverse legal traditions, leading to a broader appreciation of global challenges.

We hope this issue of the *European Journal of Legal Education* contributes to the promotion of the key values and competencies of global legal education. Bringing together very interesting insights from faculty members across the world who offer diverse perspectives on global legal education, we aim to inspire faculty, university leaders, legal professionals, and students to collaborate in advancing a more emphatic, globalised, and inclusive approach to legal education.

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