

FOREIGN TRAINED LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

Justice Has No Borders.

Talent Has No Nationality.

Opportunity Should Have No Limits.



An Introduction to the Association

New York City · 2026

Welcome

The Foreign Trained Lawyers Association is a not for profit professional organization dedicated to supporting foreign trained lawyers and facilitating their professional integration into the United States legal environment. We are a community of attorneys, students, and legal professionals who share a single conviction: that the legal profession becomes stronger when it embraces the voices, experiences, and brilliance of lawyers from every corner of the world.

We were established to address the professional, academic, structural, and practical challenges faced by lawyers educated outside the United States, while also fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and professional development among U.S. trained JD attorneys and the broader legal community. The Association supports the integration of diverse legal backgrounds within the U.S. legal system and promotes sustainable legal careers through education, mentorship, networking, and cross jurisdictional engagement.

Our Mission

To transform challenges into pathways, and uncertainty into confidence, for lawyers who earned their legal education outside the United States and aspire to build meaningful, sustainable careers within the U.S. legal system. We do this by providing structured education, mentorship, peer support, and professional development; by convening practice oriented Working Groups and country specific Chapters; and by maintaining a global community in which every member is supported as a professional and recognized as an individual with a unique background and story.

Our Vision

A United States legal profession that reflects the world it serves. A profession in which foreign trained legal talent is welcomed, integrated, and empowered to contribute at every level. A profession in which education is empowerment, access is real, and belonging is the rule rather than the exception.

What We Do

The work of the Foreign Trained Lawyers Association is organized around four interconnected pillars. Together they form the institutional architecture through which we support our members and contribute to the legal profession.

Country Chapters

Country Chapters bring together members from specific jurisdictions and legal systems, providing a structured framework for peer support, mentorship, and collaboration on jurisdiction specific topics, including comparative legal systems, credential recognition, and adaptation to the U.S. legal environment. All Chapters operate under the central governance of the Association and contribute to its overall mission.

Working Groups

Working Groups are organized around legal practice areas and professional interests. They bring together members from different countries and legal traditions to collaborate on shared areas of interest within the U.S. legal framework, through research, programming, training, and policy oriented activities. Participation in at least one Working Group is required of every member.

Journals and Publications

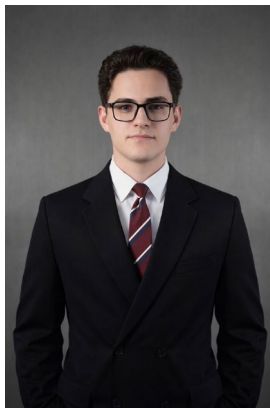
The Association supports scholarly and professional publication by its members, contributing to legal discourse on comparative law, cross border practice, and the integration of internationally trained attorneys into the U.S. legal system.

Events

We convene members through professional events, including seminars, panels, networking gatherings, and mentorship programs that connect foreign trained lawyers with U.S. trained colleagues and senior practitioners across the legal community.

Our Founders

The Foreign Trained Lawyers Association was founded by three internationally trained attorneys whose combined experience spans corporate practice, financial institutions, immigration law, public interest law, and comparative scholarship. Each Founder brings a distinctive professional contribution to the Association's mission.



Kalenike Uridia, LL.M.

Co Founder

Kalenike Uridia is a co founder of the Foreign Trained Lawyers Association and a legal scholar whose work concentrates on corporate governance, federal securities regulation, and the fiduciary obligations of boards in U.S. operating corporations. He completed his Master of Laws at the University of Washington School of Law as a Barer Fellow, the institution's most selective fellowship for international legal scholars, and previously earned the Bachelor of Laws degree, equivalent to a U.S. J.D., *summa cum laude* with a concentration in Business and Corporate Law. His comparative training includes scholarly residencies at the University of Limerick, the University of Münster, and Université Lumière Lyon 2. Professionally, he has served as a corporate and litigation attorney handling mergers and acquisitions and complex commercial disputes, and in legal roles at the Constitutional Court of Georgia and at non governmental institutions. His published work addresses, among other subjects, the application of the Caremark standard to environmental, social, and governance commitments and the comparative regulation of corporate human rights performance.

Contribution to the Association

Within the Foreign Trained Lawyers Association, Kalenike Uridia leads the substantive program directed at building U.S. based advisory and institutional leadership capacity to strengthen the integrity, accountability, and cross border compliance of U.S. capital markets and U.S. operating corporations through corporate governance, fiduciary oversight, and federal securities and investment regulation. The work concentrates on the areas that increasingly define modern American corporate practice and is delivered through the Association's scholarship, working groups, and continuing professional development.

The substantive focus is organized around four interconnected areas. Corporate governance addresses the system of legal duties, structural relationships, and institutional practices through which the boards and officers of U.S. operating corporations are held accountable to shareholders, regulators, and the public interest. Fiduciary oversight examines the duties of directors and trustees as those duties are applied to global businesses, including the Caremark duty to monitor and the more recent decisions emphasizing oversight of mission critical risks. Federal securities and investment regulation engages the architecture administered by the Securities and Exchange Commission and related federal authorities, including the application of that architecture to cross border activity. Cross border compliance addresses the obligations imposed by the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, the OFAC sanctions regime, anti money laundering rules, the CFIUS process, and federal export controls.

This program is grounded in a simple proposition. The U.S. legal profession is being asked to do work that is more cross border, more regulated, and more institutionally consequential than at any prior period, and that work cannot be done well without the comparative capacity that foreign trained lawyers bring to it. The Association's contribution is to organize that capacity into something more than the sum of individual practitioners. It is to build it into institutional form.



Mariami Zhorzholiani, LL.M.

Co Founder

Mariami Zhorzholiani is a co founder of the Foreign Trained Lawyers Association and serves as a Law Clerk in Brooklyn, New York, where she works on immigration matters and supports client representation throughout the legal process. She is a commissioned Notary Public for the State of New York, authorized to perform official acts within the limits of the law. She earned her Bachelor of Laws with distinction at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University before pursuing her legal studies in the United States, and she holds a Master of Laws from Penn State University. Her field of specialization includes corporate law, immigration and migration, and public interest law. Her academic background reflects a profound knowledge of civil and common law traditions, together with the ethical commitments that guide the legal profession. She has further undertaken coursework at Harvard Law School, the University of Pennsylvania, and the World Intellectual Property Organization. Her perspective is shaped not only by academic achievement but by her direct experience navigating the U.S. legal system as an internationally trained attorney.

Contribution to the Association

Within the Foreign Trained Lawyers Association, Mariami Zhorzholiani leads the substantive program directed at expanding access to U.S. legal education and removing the structural barriers that internationally trained lawyers face when entering the American legal profession. The work addresses a problem she has both observed and lived through: foreign trained attorneys frequently find themselves navigating LL.M. coursework, credential evaluations, licensure examinations, and other professional obligations without organized informational support. These challenges do not arise from inadequate skills. They arise from the absence of structured guidance, and the Association exists in part to resolve them.

The program is organized around four interconnected areas. Educational pathways addresses the academic side of integration, including LL.M. and advanced degree options, credential recognition, and the academic requirements that govern entry into the U.S. legal profession. Licensure and admissions guidance addresses the bar examination, character and fitness review, and jurisdiction specific licensure obligations that internationally trained lawyers must navigate to practice in the United States. Mentorship and community development connects newer members with established practitioners and builds the peer support framework through which professional identity is sustained over time. Public interest and access to justice grounds the work in the recognition that the legal profession carries not only technical and professional obligations but also ethical and social responsibilities to the communities it serves.

This program is grounded in the conviction that talent is universal but opportunity is not, and that an organized professional community can do for foreign trained lawyers what no individual, however gifted, can do alone. The Association's work in this area is the practical expression of that conviction.



Sopiko Gugava, LL.M.

Co Founder

Sopiko Gugava is an internationally recognized legal professional and entrepreneur and a co founder of the Foreign Trained Lawyers Association. She holds a Master of Laws from Chicago Kent College of Law, where she was awarded a competitive merit based scholarship, and she is sitting for the New York Bar Examination. Her professional background spans corporate law, immigration law, and regulatory strategy, with particular emphasis on complex case management and legal system development. Prior to her work in the United States, she held senior legal and financial roles at TBC Bank, one of the leading financial institutions in Georgia, where she contributed to multi million dollar transactions across the healthcare, education, and real estate development sectors and played a central role in regulatory compliance and large scale infrastructure financing. She is also the co founder of She Leads Peace, Inc., an international non profit organization focused on women’s leadership in law, business, and global security.

Contribution to the Association

Within the Foreign Trained Lawyers Association, Sopiko Gugava leads the substantive program directed at developing innovative, technology informed legal solutions to support foreign trained lawyers as they integrate into the U.S. legal system, and at advancing the cross sector partnerships through which the Association engages financial institutions, regulators, and the broader business community. Her work draws on direct experience at the intersection of law, finance, and regulatory strategy, and on the entrepreneurial discipline of building professional platforms from the ground up.

The program is organized around three interconnected areas. Bar examination and professional integration addresses the practical needs of foreign trained candidates, including structured preparation, study resources, and the sustained mentorship that converts academic credentials into professional admission. Cross sector engagement extends the Association's reach into financial institutions, corporate clients, and regulatory bodies whose work intersects with the practice of internationally trained attorneys. Women's leadership and global security, advanced in cooperation with She Leads Peace, Inc., reflects a broader commitment to expanding the role of women in law, business, and the institutions that sustain democratic order.

This program is grounded in the recognition that the future of the U.S. legal profession will be shaped by lawyers who are not only technically skilled but globally trained, technologically literate, and committed to the public good. The Association's work in this area is the institutional expression of that recognition.

Join Us

The Foreign Trained Lawyers Association exists for the lawyer who has crossed borders to build a career, for the student preparing to make that crossing, and for the U.S. trained colleague who recognizes that the profession is stronger when it is global. Membership in this Association is an investment in your professional development, in the connections you will need, and in the broader project of building a legal profession that reflects the world it serves.

We invite you to join us. The path is clearer when it is walked together, and the destination is more meaningful when it is shared.

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

At the Foreign Trained Lawyers Association, we believe in your dream. We are here to help you build it.

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