



**Karen Ann Widess, J.D.**  
**International Law**

Karen Ann Widess has over 20 years of experience in international development in a variety of roles. She served as Head of Program Development and Compliance for the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) from 2006 through 2010, where she oversaw the design of program and projects involving numerous countries and rule of law development issues. Ms. Widess has wide experience in various common law, civil law and "post-Soviet" legal systems, as well as substantial experience in project design, management, monitoring and evaluation. She has worked in the practical aspects of democracy assistance, human rights, rule of law, free market reform, institutional strengthening and NGO strengthening.

Ms Widess has extensive experience in the fields of international law, development, democracy assistance, poverty reduction, privatisation and post-conflict stabilisation and reconstruction, grant making, project design, management, monitoring and evaluation, especially in the fields of democratic development, human rights, rule of law, market reform, institutional strengthening and NGO strengthening. Her fluency in French, Russian, Italian and Haitian Creole has enabled her to work and manage teams successfully in multi-cultural and multi-linguistic settings such as Afghanistan, Caucasus (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia), Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan), Ukraine, Bosnia, Russian Federation, Haiti, Egypt, Dominican Republic and the Palestinian Territories.

As Legal Adviser in Ukraine Ms Widess was responsible for the launch of a USAID-funded judicial training programme where she intimately worked with judges from the Higher Arbitration Court, Regional Arbitration Courts, and Supreme Court to prepare training materials (written and audio-visual materials, and instructions to trainers) for a series of centralised and regional training seminars.

Ms Widess as Legal adviser to PHARE-funded Agricultural Strategy and Programming Unit in Bosnia and Herzegovina researched and advised on legal frameworks affecting the market in rural and agricultural land including a survey of legislation on land titling, land use planning, land restitution and privatisation and recommended new and amended legislation necessary to stimulate rural land markets.

As Legal adviser to TACIS-funded Support to Rural Banking Project in Azerbaijan, Ms Widess researched and offered policy advice on the Azerbaijan legal framework for banking and financial sector which included survey of law and regulation of financial institutions and securing transactions, recommendations on structure(s) for a new agricultural and rural lending institution, advice and comments on new and amended legislation. Ms Widess also drafted constituent documents for new financial institution(s) and designed strategy for collecting outstanding debts, supervision of local lawyers.

As Legal Liaison in Almaty, Kazakhstan Ms Widess administered a law reform assistance programme of the American Bar Association, advising the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the Government of Kazakhstan on legislative planning and drafting, court procedure, governmental organisation, law school curricula reform; lectured on U.S. and international business law, briefed western companies, NGOs and government representatives on the status of Kazakhstan legal reform and law.

Ms Widess holds a Juris Doctor from the University of Southern California Law School, a Post Graduate Diploma in International Law from the London School of Economics and a B.A. in Political Science (International Relations/Soviet Studies) from the University of California.