

# Mediating Around the World



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# Peace at Work

The “Peace at work” project aims at producing a series of short interviews with the Office of the Ombudsman’s team, the Global Mediation Panel mediators and the Board Members, and other conflict resolution professionals with the goal to provide helpful insights regarding workplace mediation. The interviews are available to all personnel of the Funds and Programmes that the Office serves and can be viewed after the registration process on our website at <https://fpombudsman.org/what-we-do/mediation/>

**A Mediation Case**  
Laila Ollapally



▶ Click to watch

**Pre-Mediation Meetings**  
Andrew Lee



▶ Click to watch

**A Sexual Abuse Case**  
Geoff Sharp



▶ Click to watch

**the Best Interest of a Child in Mediation**  
Thomas Samsø Bloch



▶ Click to watch

**Mediation Techniques**  
Allison Attenello & Thomas Samsø Bloch



▶ Click to watch



# Developing systems for conflict resolution inside organizations



**Giorgi Tsertsvadze**

Mediator of the Global Mediation Panel

Conflict tends to occur in workplaces that comprise people from diverse backgrounds that have different views and values. In order to decrease tensions before they escalate into something more damaging, designing an internal organizational system for workplace conflict management is essential.

A well-thought-out conflict management system enables organizations to proactively identify the emergence of conflict and improve how conflict is managed in its earliest stages. Such a system helps companies to build well-functioning, sustainable and long-lasting workplace relations.

As an example, I helped to develop a system for conflict management that was integrated into the internal labor regulations of businesses. Instead of disciplinary procedures, the system provides for an efficient and flexible approach that focuses on adapting the dispute resolution process to the conflict at hand. This procedure has significantly reduced the number of disputes. For example, in 2016, before implementing the process, the number of disputes in one of the companies reached 200, including both in-house disputes and litigations. Thanks to the newly developed system, currently this number has been reduced to 15.

Mediation can play an important role in proactive dispute management systems. I represented an employer in a collective bargaining dispute that involved around 500 employees who went on strike. The dispute was mediated by a mediator appointed by a state agent.<sup>1</sup> Through open dialogue and collaboration, we managed to deal effectively with the conflict and reach an agreement that addressed the interests of both sides.

As a lawyer, negotiator, and mediator, I have learned valuable lessons in such cases. First, there is a difference between a stated position and an underlying interest. If during the process of mediation/facilitation the main focus is only on the parties' stated positions or demands, the process will inevitably end in failure as the positions are the source of the conflict. The parties in conflict may have a common interest to resolve the dispute promptly and preserve relationships with co-workers that transcend their positions within a company, regardless of their relative seniority and power imbalances. A mediator/facilitator will help distinguish positions from interests and place the emphasis of negotiations on interests. Nobody wants to be under tension and feel neglected at the workplace. It is essential for co-workers to reach a resolution as soon as possible, given that they need to work productively with one another in the future. A mediator will shift the focus of discussions from blame and resentment to what can be done to identify and resolve the issues.

Relational struggles between co-workers can be effectively managed by collaborative and problem-solving conflict management processes. ADR methods are an important tool in service of such systems. A responsive process can avoid conflict and help to restore relations even after grievance procedures.

<sup>1</sup> Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia

# Importance of Conflict Coaching as a Leadership Skill



**Anuroop Omkar**  
Mediator of the Global Mediation Panel

Social researchers like Brene Brown have shown how vulnerability and acknowledging emotions are essential to being an authentic leader. Leaders should likewise foster an environment in which team members can be vulnerable by creating space for making and accepting mistakes and learning from them. To some this may seem like opening a can of worms. Mediators have hilarious and horrific stories of venting disputants in closed mediation meetings involving even the most sophisticated business disputes. International organizations dedicated to making the world a better place may consider that they have enough work outside of their offices to manage chaos in-house that could flow from expressions of vulnerability.

Yet vulnerability can be productive in the controlled chaos of conflict coaching in feedback meetings. Feedback sessions can be an important means of imparting tips on handling emotions in the workplace. With protracted pandemics and raging wars taking over our world, addressing emotions and exchanging ideas to deal with them have become as acceptable as crying babies or barking dogs on conference calls. In my workplace mediation experience, engaging with emotions is even more important for the new workforce joining post pandemic after two years of only online training.

In conflict coaching, the leader rises from being an assessor to being a coach. A coach identifies and amplifies an athlete's strengths while seeking to manage or eliminate an athlete's weaknesses. In conflict coaching, the leader serves the same role. The leader might, for example, give the team members pointers about social dynamics in the workplace or advise the team member about how to improve their style of communication.

An easy way to begin conflict coaching is to institute feedback meetings and to suggest tools, applications, or courses that team members can use to improve their ability to engage in feedback. The more intensive the feedback, the more important it is to ensure the engagement of the members and to impress upon them that feedback sessions are confidential. The leader may begin feedback by setting minor, achievable goals with short timelines and identifying tools for achieving these goals. The leader should subsequently seek feedback from members about whether the tools worked in follow-up meetings.

One of my favourite conflict coaching tools is storytelling. You can begin by asking the member to narrate an incident involving a problem or challenge from their perspective. Then ask the member to step back and imagine themselves as a storyteller telling a fictional story. Ask them which parts of the story they do not like. Make a list. Then ask why the member does not like those parts of the story. Write the reasons next to the list items. Give the member artistic freedom to re-write parts of the story, as if stepping into a time machine, that was within the member's control to change. Actively listen to the narrative, and ask how the new story makes the member feel about themselves. Jointly work on small steps that the member can take to integrate lessons from the revised narrative into the member's life. In follow up meetings, if the member feels demotivated, ask the member to retell themselves the revised narrative daily and believe it to be true.

# Mediators Green Pledge



**Anna Doyle**  
Mediator of the Global Mediation Panel

## WHAT IS THE MEDIATORS' GREEN PLEDGE?

It is a commitment that mediators around the world are making to mitigate the effects of climate change by providing mediation in an environmentally friendly manner.

## WHAT DOES THE PLEDGE ENTAIL?

The (illustrative) text of the pledge encourages signatories to incorporate creative measures, tailored to suit individual practices, such as:

*"As a mediator committed to ensuring that I minimise the impact on the environment of every mediation I am involved in, I will ensure that, wherever possible:*

- If screen sharing/video technology is appropriate, accessible and acceptable to all concerned, I will encourage its use in all aspects of my mediation practice;*
- At all times during the mediation process, I will consider the most environmentally friendly way to travel, if travel is necessary;*
- I will offset the carbon emissions of any flights I make to and from mediations while recognising that this is not in any way a substitute for avoiding flying and will only fly when it is necessary to do so;*
- At all times during the mediation process I will only correspond through electronic means, unless hard copy correspondence is expressly required in the circumstances, while recognising that electronic communication itself is carbon emitting and should be limited to what is necessary;*
- I will not request hard copies of documents to be provided to me unless there is a special need to do so and I will discourage the use of hard copy documents generally;*

- I will encourage parties and their advisers to consider the necessity of participants attending mediation in person if that attendance involves significant travel and is not necessary;*
- Wherever possible, I will encourage parties and their advisers to consider the most environmentally friendly venue for their mediation. At mediation venues, in rooms in which I am mediating I will encourage, wherever possible, an environmentally friendly approach to the use of consumables (for example the avoidance of single-use plastic) and the use of energy (for example reviewing the level of air conditioning and heating);*
- I will consider the appropriateness of travelling to, and my mode of travel to and from, conferences and other events and wherever possible will encourage and use live streaming/remote participation options;*
- I will take steps to reduce the environmental impact of my office/workplace; and*
- I will seek to raise awareness of this pledge, for example by referring to it on my website and/or email footer."*

## HOW MANY SIGNATORIES ARE THERE?

Approaching its second anniversary, the pledge (available in over 15 languages) has almost 700 signatories. Many professional bodies and organisations also support it and are developing a corporate green pledge. A few of the GMP mediators have also signed the pledge, and it seems there is a growing interest among the GMP mediators to join this green movement.

## WHERE CAN MEDIATORS SIGN THE PLEDGE?

Mediators sign on [www.womacc.org](http://www.womacc.org) – the website of the World Mediators' Alliance on Climate Change (inspired by [Pledge for Greener Arbitrations](#)).



# Conversation with a Mediator



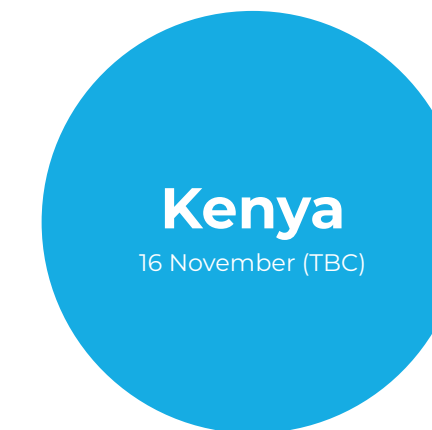
## Dear Colleagues,

The Office of the Ombudsman for UN Funds and Programmes is inviting you to participate in the series of “A Conversation with the Mediator” events. The events include:

- A mediation training session for all personnel (1-1.5 hours). No registration is required.
- A confidential individual session with a mediator to explore the suitability of mediation for your workplace concerns or disputes, should you wish to schedule such a session.

If you would like to book one of the limited slots that will be offered after the training session, please register here (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CWM2022>) before the day of the event. After the registration, someone from the Office of the Ombudsman will reach out to you so that you can select the slot that is most convenient for you.

You can find the flyer of the program in the following link (<https://fpombudsman.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Conversation-with-the-Mediator-Flyer-2022.pdf>).



**We would greatly appreciate your feedback to our mediation services.**

PROVIDE FEEDBACK

**OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN  
FOR UNITED NATIONS  
FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES**

If you'd like to reach out to the Mediation Unit, you can contact us at:

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