

Welcome To The Future: Showcasing The Next Generation of Mediators Stepping Up And Stepping Out

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[Future by Nick Youngson Creative Commons]

The ICC International Commercial Mediation Competition is over and these pages have been full of reflections from a number of bloggers who were there and experienced 'aha' moments.

In particular, [Greg Bond's thoughtful post](#) about the Intergenerational RoundTable promoted a lot of discussion about what we should be doing to sponsor and encourage the next generation of mediators. One young participant challenged me (ever so politely) to share what I was doing to make a difference. Greg's blogpost reports the outcome of the conversation at the table - however the conversation has stayed with me.

I have continued to think about what I could do in these pages to support the next generation and it struck me that telling some success stories would be a great start. I thought about 3 new entrants to mediation who had made a great impact on me and I thought interviewing them might reveal great stories and they might share some lessons other young mediators might find helpful.

I was right.

Introducing my trio

Meet three outstanding members of 'NextGen' who are at interesting and different stages of building their mediation careers.



Zeynep Selcuk

Zeynep is the furthest along in her mediation career of my trio. Her path to mediation has been far from linear. Her initial degree in Business Management was interrupted by the receipt of an offer too good to refuse which took her via television into the film industry and finally the Australian Film Commission (AFC).

Her international experiences sparked her interest in humanitarian work. She joined the famous bicycle ride through the Middle East focussing attention on the suffering of women and children caught in conflict - now immortalised in the documentary '[Follow the Women](#)'.

Seeking opportunities to contribute to humanitarian causes prompted enrolment in a Masters of Arts (Development) and a departure from the AFC to pursue employment as a humanitarian worker engaged in facilitation and training at Caritas.

A role in the UN was part of her plan which in turn led her to undertake a Juris Doctor and the opportunity to be selected in the UNSW team for the ICC International Mediation Competition and the CDRC Vienna. Her love affair with mediation was ignited and she decided to abandon her UN ambitions for a mediation career.

An offer from a senior mediator, facilitator and trainer led to a role in his practice where, as a result of his generosity and sponsorship, she gained significant experience and began to build her own profile in the ADR field. She now runs her own thriving practice and coaches the CDRC team for UNSW and this year was a judge in the ICC Final in Paris. She supports new entrants through her work at [Voluntas](#), a pro-bono mediation service.

Zeynep's lessons:

- Finding the right people as mentors is vital
- Be opportunistic and look for opportunities everywhere
- Be persistent in marketing and reminding people you are there.

What a great story!



Angela Herberholz

Angela's path to mediation has been similarly unexpected and non-linear.

Her university studies (Bachelor of Applied Science and a MA in European Cultural Studies) give no hint of the passion she was to develop for mediation.

Beginning her career in Germany as an exhibition organiser, she undertook mediation training with her Bachelors degree. A practical module required her to organise a conference. Choosing a mediation conference she encountered Calliope Sudborough, Deputy Manager at the ICC International Centre for ADR. Calliope immediately saw the potential to combine events organisation with mediation.

A role as Project Manager, Events at the ICC Centre for ADR followed her internship there and experiences included the Mediation Competition and its outstanding student competitors. This enhanced her understanding of mediation and the international community of mediators.

In 2010 Angela also became the co-founder of the Young Mediators' Initiative (YMI) established under the umbrella of IMI with a charter to:

- connect newly trained mediators and mediation advocates worldwide and create [a platform](#) to exchange ideas and experiences, and
- facilitate interaction with experienced mediators who can offer experience-generation and learning opportunities

Angela returned to the exhibition industry in 2014 to organise global events 'but as [part of] a people industry, filled with potential conflict and suitable ground for amicable dispute resolution'. She is now program Manager at the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry.

Her passion for mediation remains. Following her double interest in both the exhibition industry and mediation, in her day job she deals with education and training while in her free time she supports YMI. She has actively encouraged its mentorship program to deal with the challenge of many young trained mediators who discover significant barriers to entry. It is a 'vicious circle where you can't get mediations unless you have experience and you can't get experience unless you get mediations'.

This year, Angela joined supporters on the stage at the ICC Competition to announce that YMI has partnered with 5 other international mediation bodies to create the Worldwide Mediation Mentorship Program as a global effort to advance the mediation profession and its new entrants.

Angela picked up the award for Best Judge's Feedback along the way.

In her free time, Angela enjoys teaching ADR and mediating. She encourages other mediators, young in experience, to work on building a portfolio career allowing mediation enough space to grow.

Angela's lessons:

- be opportunistic
- there are many different paths to mediation - **'the more diverse your day to day experience the more you add value'**.

She has certainly proved a valuable addition to our profession.



Anna Howard

Of my trio, Anna is at the earliest stage of her mediation career. She tells a great story of how it all began ...

'It all started 14 years ago, though I didn't know it then. I was practising competition law at an international firm in London and was working on a highly technical and protracted dispute. After about 1 and a half years, my client called me and said "Anna, we've worked things out." I asked him how and he said "We met for a drink and we decided to split the difference: 50, 50. I came off the call wondering how I might have helped my client to have had that conversation sooner. I felt frustrated that it had taken so long for the parties to have that important conversation. Fast forward to 2014 and I found myself sitting in a mediation training course and one of the phrases used on the website for that course was: "I wish we'd had this conversation earlier..." I joined up the dots.'

Anna is modest about her stellar accomplishments. Like the other members of this trio, mediation was not her career goal. Daughter of a Brazilian mother and English father, it is not surprising that she is a linguist and took modern languages at Oxford. However, earning one of the prized sponsorships from a top tier London law firm encouraged her to pursue law and enter legal practice. A career in anti-trust and trade law followed - but something was missing.

Anna describes this by reference to [Susan Cain](#):

"The secret to life is to put yourself in the right lighting. For some, it's a Broadway spotlight; for others, a lamplit desk."

She knew the law firm 'lighting' was not the right lighting and did not deliver the sense of purpose she needed.

Fate intervened.

A family move to Singapore gave her professional freedom to rethink a career and take a risk that perhaps she would not have taken in London.

Applying to teach at Singapore Management University she met Ian Macduff, another contributor to these pages, who talked enthusiastically about mediation.

Then came an unexpected return to the UK - legal practice did not beckon. She followed Ian's advice, training with John Sturrock, and found herself reflecting that 'this feels like the right lighting'. Ian also encouraged her to apply for the role of Associate Editor of this Blog.

University teaching beckoned and an opportunity arose at Queen Mary University of London to do a Ph.D. The dots continued to join up as she realised she could combine research and mediation, choosing a subject based on the EU mediation directive.

Now in the last year of her doctorate, Ian Macduff and John Sturrock remain generous mentors who continue to give her opportunities including as a mediation observer and facilitator.

Her future combines university teaching in mediation and exploring possibilities to mediate, perhaps in the company of another young mediator. Watch this space!

Anna's lessons

- the dual themes of simplicity and complexity experienced in mediation are engaging challenges
- generous mentors and sponsors make a great difference
- the enthusiasm of students for mediation is infectious and encouraging

My learning

We old hands don't need to worry. We do need to be generous sponsors but we can be confident.

The future is safe.