



# **The Journal of Mediation & Applied Conflict Analysis**

**Editorial**

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# Challenging our complacency

## Editorial

by Treasa Kenny, Editor

This edition of our Journal brings together a fascinating collection of six articles and one book review. Among the topics covered are:

- lessons for mediators from the war in Ukraine
- protection of the media in armed conflicts
- a reflection on impartiality and neutrality in mediation
- research findings on balancing confidentiality and transparency in an Ombudsman Mediation Service
- the personal story of one of the ‘early settlers’ of Family Mediation in the UK
- personal transformation in a mediation and conflict intervention learning programme through reflective practice and
- a review of Bernie Mayer and Jackie N Font-Guzman’s book on ‘The Neutrality Trap: Disrupting and Connecting for Social Change’.

**Ken Cloke’s** article on ‘The War in Ukraine: Lessons for Mediators’ shares many reflections on war and peacebuilding. He invokes mediators to contribute to the ‘mediation butterfly effect’ and to strengthen people’s sense of each other as human. Ken offers practical steps that mediators can take to initiate and sustain dialogue.

**Sebastian Kasper** in his article ‘Protecting the messenger - an international humanitarian law perspective’ discusses the importance of protecting the members

of the media so that the information needed to negotiate and settle armed conflicts is accurate and available. This is particularly evocative following the deaths of journalists in Ukraine and Shireen Abu Akleh during the continuing Israel-Palestine conflict.

**Imelda Gaffney's** article 'Impartiality and neutrality in mediation' reflects on the conflict, in practice, that can arise for mediators between the principles of neutrality and impartiality echoing some of the thoughts in Cloke's article, and Mayer and Font-Guzman's book.

**Deirdre Curran and Margaret Bouchier**, in their article 'The challenge of balancing confidentiality and transparency in an Ombudsman Mediation Service', explore the role of ombudsman services. The article outlines the distinctive features of confidentiality and transparency within mediation – and how these principles work in practice. Their insights are drawn from both a review of the literature and empirical data from in-depth interviews with Ombudsman services.

**Tony Whatling's** article on 'The Development of Family Mediation in the UK: My personal story as one of the 'Early Settlers'' offers his narrative on the creation of the College of Mediators. It focuses on the developments and the conflicts. This article sets out to inform us of the development of the mediation profession and associated organisations over a period of 40 years.

The final article, by **Andrea O'Neill** 'Personal transformation in a mediation and conflict intervention learning programme', shares her findings from qualitative research she undertook as part of her MA in Mediation and Conflict Intervention in Maynooth University. The article considers the personal transformation that takes

place throughout the learning process of this Masters course. It also considers the importance of reflective practice in recognising our learning, not only in education but also as we engage in conflict situations as mediators and facilitators of dialogue.

Also in this issue, **Geoffrey Corry** reviews the book 'The Neutrality Trap: Disrupting and Connecting for Social Change', by Bernard Mayer and Jacqueline N Font-Guzman. This book resonates with many of the themes addressed through other articles.

Please feel free to share the knowledge we offer in the **Journal of Mediation and Applied Conflict Analysis**. Details on the submission of articles are on our home page or contact me at [Treasa.Kenny@mu.ie](mailto:Treasa.Kenny@mu.ie)