

## **SOME THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF IAM**

### The Challenge

We want to maintain the current very high standards required of new members, we want them to have significant experience in commercial mediation and we also wish to preserve the collegial nature of the organisation.

However, if we always require this of new members, we potentially restrict geographical areas since for much of the world commercial mediation is not well advanced. Additionally commercial mediation is often interpreted differently in some areas from the more established jurisdictions like North America and the United Kingdom.

If we are serious about increasing the international reach of IAM we need to address these issues. The challenge is to do so without losing the collegiality and fellowship that many of us value so highly.

### A Suggestion

I would like to suggest the following as a way forward

I do not believe that we should reduce the criteria required to join IAM. I think we should strive to remain an elite association that mediators aspire to become part of, wherever in the world they practice.

I also believe the application of the existing criteria is already being interpreted more liberally by the Board and the Membership Committee in respect of those wishing to join from certain regions where mediation is less well established, than in respect of those applying from North America and the UK. This isn't a bad thing and I think this flexibility should continue.

However, it seems to me that even if we relax to a greater or lesser extent how the criteria required to join the organisation are applied, this will still not lead to a significant increase in members from those jurisdictions. There is inevitably going to be a significant gap between the experience of those in the established jurisdictions and those where mediation is still in its early stages.

The challenge is how to encourage and enable those in such regions to develop their practices so that they can genuinely join IAM on their own merits and not simply because we have flexed the rules.

The IAM Board is currently considering more generally the concept of Regional Retreats and I think that this concept could be expanded to include Regional Workshops. Whilst a Retreat would normally provide an opportunity for experienced mediators to meet, share thoughts and ideas from their own practices in the region where the Retreat is being held and enjoy each others company, a Regional Workshop would be somewhat different.

The concept would be to hold these Workshops within various jurisdictions or regions across the world, but in particular in those areas where commercial mediation is still relatively new or where the IAM has relatively few members compared to the size of the mediation market. These Workshops would not be conferences and the speakers or facilitators would hopefully be drawn from amongst the existing membership of IAM and not be external to the organisation.

I would expect them to be set up, at least in part, by the individuals in the region who are likely to be either existing Fellows or Mentees of IAM. In some instances the IAM may wish to take the lead but an essential aspect to these workshops should be the wish of our local members or mentees to have a workshop in their region and to encourage local mediators to attend. The Workshops would be low key, the degree of specialisation would vary and they would obviously be held in a safe and appropriate environment.

Potential new Fellows from those jurisdictions would have to have attended at least two of these Workshops before being eligible for membership of IAM. In addition, such potential new Fellows would also have to show, in the usual way, that they had the appropriate skills and were developing their own mediation practise. Those IAM Fellows helping with the workshops would have had the opportunity to meet these potential new members and could provide useful feedback to the Membership Committee. It would be important to state that there would be no expectation that by attending such workshops one automatically became eligible for membership of IAM.

It seems to me this concept could sit nicely with two other strands that we are currently considering. The first is how to encourage the development of commercial mediation internationally and the Resource Allocation Committee did, I believe, consider expenditure on this type of project to be something that would be consistent with the aims of IAM.

Additionally, there is a developing discussion amongst our Fellows as to what the next stage of our practise might be when we start to wind down our day to day mediations. It seems to me that a number of our Fellows might be interested in sharing their expertise and knowledge with mediators in other parts of the world and a number are likely also to have the financial resources to be able to do so without requiring financial assistance from IAM or the local jurisdiction..

It probably goes without saying, but these would not be money making ventures. Indeed, it may be that locals will require some kind of subsidy or contribution by those who are speaking or possibly by IAM as an organisation in order to travel and attend such workshops..

Linked to this but as a separate issue should be the intention that the Board only admits new Fellows once or twice a year so that we can ensure consistency in how the admission criteria is applied.

Jonathan Lloyd-Jones  
22/5/23