



CEDR Accreditation: 2005
CEDR Panel: 2007
Languages: **Fluent:** English, German.
Conversational: French, Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian
Location: United Kingdom

Dr Isabel Phillips

“I am confident that the settlement would not have been secured without her persistence.”
Mediation Feedback

Overview

Isabel Phillips brings an unrivalled range of experience in escalated situations at the intersection of commercial, civil and social issues. She mediates in a range of sectors with particular emphasis on IGOs, NGOs, employment, commercial contract, professional negligence, construction and has considerable experience in dealing with situations involving highly contentious, emotional situations.

Isabel became a CEDR accredited mediator in 2003, having qualified in 2000 in Germany as a conflict specialist. She has divided her career between the civil-commercial and IGO contexts as a CEDR mediator, lead faculty and consultant, and in the processing and management of escalated and violent conflict in fragile and post-conflict environments in emerging economies. Isabel is an expert in dispute resolution. In addition to having worked with leading Dispute Resolution bodies such as CEDR and CIArb over the last 20 years, she has a PhD in Alternative Dispute Resolution and Conflict Resolution and a Masters in International Relations and has consulted, taught and trained widely on these topics in the UK and globally with individuals, multinationals and NGOs.

Expertise

- Employment & Workplace
- Professional Negligence
- Violent & Fragile Environments
- ICT
- Property
- Sale of Goods & Services

Dispute Experience

Stakeholder dialogue

- On-going systemic third-party neutral interventions within IGOs.
- Escalated situation between team members within IGO about behaviours and priorities.
- Violent international conflict between diverse community groups in land and resource conflicts.
- Escalated conflict with threats of violence between NGO stakeholders from different identity groups.

Employment & Workplace

- High emotion NGO dispute involving hunger-striking, policy and employment issues.
- Claim against multi-national for victimisation where original claimant had died in connection with the employment
- Dispute between multiple members of the executive on an NGO
- Dispute between manager and employee leading to the breakdown of working relationships with the whole team
- Dispute between team members working in extreme environment involving high levels of intercultural conflict
- Experience involving work with highly emotional parties, including hunger-strike, drug addiction and sexual harrassment

Property

- Dilapidation case between those owning a share of the freehold in a large property, relating to technical specifications and works done on joint and individual parts of a property.
- Landlord – tenant dispute involving pet ownership and health and safety issues.
- Multiple disputes between tenants relating to noise and harassment.

Construction / Sale of Goods & Services

- Dispute involving non-payment of invoices, delay and consequential loss arising from site conditions and staff conduct.
- Claim relating to the supply of specialist building materials with counter-claim relating to quality of goods and workmanship.
- Purchase and supply of bulk timber orders – dispute over quality of goods and non-payment of invoices.

ICT - Information, Communication & Technology:

- Dispute relating to unpaid invoices with counterclaims relating to software development and contract obligations and negligence.

Professional Negligence

- Claim against solicitors for failure represent client adequately, leading to wrongful eviction and an extended period of homelessness.
- Claim against local authority for alleged failure to provide adequately for a child with special educational needs.
- Multi-party dispute arising from alleged negligence on the part of architect, engineer and contractors relating to the technical specifications of a building project.
- Telephone mediation relating to non-payment of invoices with counter-claims of negligence and malpractice.

Other Dispute Resolution Experience

- Stakeholder dialogue across cultural boundaries (professional, linguistic etc. – ex-UK context)

Personal Style

Isabel has an attentive style, with a willingness to listen and be facilitative. However, this is balanced by the requisite skills to manage challenging situations. These include creative use of the process and the willingness to challenge and reality test to assist in the development of creative and sustainable solutions for those involved.

Professional Background

Corporate & Intergovernmental Mediation and Consulting: Isabel has mediated a wide variety of disputes within and between corporate and intergovernmental organisations. As a mediator, consultant and trainer she has delivered bespoke processes of conflict needs analysis, dispute systems, training needs analysis, design, programme delivery and evaluation for clients from all over the world including the World Bank, UNHCR, Intel, and AXA.

International Civil Conflict: Isabel has led conflict interventions in fragile and post-conflict environments for GIZ and ForumZFD with multi-year residencies in Ethiopia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Her work include leading mediation and dialogue processes as well as designing and evaluating dialogue and civil processes in volatile settings.

Training & Coaching: A Lead Faculty member for CEDR's Mediator Skills Training, Isabel has trained and assessed mediators globally. She has designed internal training for lawyers, HR professionals, insurers, and civil servants across sectors such as construction, investment, energy,



and government. Her coaching draws on Solution Focused Brief Therapy and supports professionals in high-pressure roles.

Policy Advice and Leadership: Isabel provides strategic policy advice to organisations and firms on conflict and disputes management systems, mediation and dialogue processes, and capacity-building frameworks. As Director of Policy at the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, she led the development of the first integrated competence frameworks for arbitration, adjudication, and mediation. She has advised on policy relating to skills development in conflict management and dispute resolution, and represented CI Arb at UNCITRAL, IMI, and CMC. Isabel also co-led a joint intervention with CEDR and CMC on the Churchill case, contributing to reforms in the Civil Procedure Rules to promote mediation in England and Wales.

Academic and Research Profile

Isabel's research bridges ADR and Conflict Resolution theory and practice, with a focus on high-conflict interventions. She has published peer-reviewed articles in the International Journal of Arbitration, Mediation and Dispute Management, these include: Writing a Field into Existence: The Divergence and Compartmentalisation of CR and ADR (2021). The CI Arb ADR Competence Frameworks, Competence Statements & Membership Levels (2022). She is currently working on an edited interdisciplinary book on peace and a monograph on dispute and conflict resolution.

As a part-time visiting lecturer at the University of Westminster, Isabel has taught and developed curricula in Mediation, Negotiation, ADR, and Applied Conflict. Her academic record includes:

- PhD on ADR and CR, (No corrections) University of Bradford
- PGDip Research Methods (Distinction), University of Bradford
- MA International Relations (Distinction), UEA
- BA History (First Class Hons), University of Liverpool

Feedback

Tone and Clarity

- I thought Isabel was good and she explained everything well. She was very pleasant and patient. She moved things along quickly.
- She explained the process very well and kept suggesting different options and ideas to the parties.
- She was very good and very professional.
- We would definitely use her again.

Persistence and Momentum

- I am confident that the settlement would not have been secured without her persistence.
- Easy-going, but didn't allow the momentum to dissipate.
- She didn't let the momentum drop.

Professionalism and Neutrality

- ...with amazing professionalism and subtle strategies she has, without doubt, forged the beginnings of what I deem to be the start of a possible resolution.
- ...kept calm at all times, even when the situation turned really heated, and managed to maintain a proper tone and level to calm us all.
- I would like to express how impressed I was with how the session was conducted which included Isabel's patience and a steadfast unbiased stance.
- She managed the parties expectations pretty well, always in line with what was happening.
- ...managed the parties' expectations well, aligning them with what was happening.
- She is very professional and a highly skilled mediator and conflict specialist.
- I was impressed by her professional attitude to commit to the process and do whatever is needed, as well as her motivation to detail, which overall makes you feel that you are in very good hands.
- This knowledge and experience combined with a strong motivation to help and support people in their situation, make her very adaptable, a great person to work with and creates trust in her skills.
- On the one side she has a very good understanding about theoretical concepts in conflict resolution and keeps herself up-to-date, on the other side she has practical experiences in mediation and capacity building, combined with knowledge in organizational development. So she can combine theory and practice, to make it fit into the context and respect the different situations that people are in.