

International ADR Development Service: South Africa



In October 2007 ADR Group attended the Lord Mayor of London's Official Trade Visit to South Africa as a business delegate member. The visit was organised through the IFSL (International Financial Services, London) which is a private sector organisation with 30 years experience of successfully promoting the UK-based financial services industry throughout the world.

This was ADR Group's first formal international trade mission to promote the activities of the group and assist in raising the level of commercial mediation awareness to a specific target audience in an international jurisdiction.

In addition to attending a number of high level meetings and seminars connected with the Lord Mayor's visit, ADR Group delivered a Seminar Series entitled Commercial Mediation in South Africa at five major cities over five days:

Port Elizabeth
Durban
Johannesburg
Bloemfontein
Cape Town

Following the success of the Trade Mission ADR Group created a commercial partnership with Equillore, a leading provider of arbitration, mediation and dispute management services within South Africa and University of Stellenbosch Business School.

Through this partnership ADR Group has been involved in the development and delivery an International Mediator Training Programme contextualised to the Southern Africa environment. The programmes have been designed to build a strong and credible base of commercial mediation knowledge in South Africa and a panel of highly skilled professional mediators to resolve local and international disputes.

Dr John Fletcher, ADR Group's Projects Director and Senior Member of the ADR Group Training Faculty has led the development of the South African Project.

In 2007, the University of Stellenbosch Business School set up the Africa Centre for Dispute Settlement (ACDS). ADR Group has been instrumental in the development of this centre and continues to actively support this programme. Whilst we are helping to realise the potential for alternative disputes in a European context, the exploration of mediation in Southern Africa has positive and fundamental opportunities which could help draw an end to the local conflicts and violence which have erupted in this progressive culture.

ACDS' patron – the Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu states "Mediation and dialogue are vital skills in our society" and we have been working with the ACDS to create training modules which are now incorporated into the Business School's MBA. This is vital, as Terry Bell writes in his article a "Fountainhead for Peace" (see link below) in finding a permanent solution to the tragic outbreaks of local hostilities in South Africa.

Most hostilities can be attributed to misunderstandings. An environment which stimulates talking and listening as a means to finding a resolution (for which Terry Bell cites mediation as being the vital catalyst) is essential in the development of stable and

sustainable local communities. The centre is also looking into traditional and local means of resolution; its research focusing on how traditional mediums have worked and how they might work in a modern context. This adds to our international portfolio as we strive to support different cultural needs in both theory and practice.

If you would like more information about ADR Group's work in South Africa or have an interest in ADR Group delivering Mediation Development in your country, please contact Michael Lind, Managing Director of ADR Group on [**mike.lind@adrgroup.co.uk**](mailto:mike.lind@adrgroup.co.uk) or on +44 (0) 117 946 7180.