

Expat Academy Round-up

With memories of summer holidays disappearing as fast as the warm weather, the Expat Academy events schedule has been busy once again. Alongside our fortnight of partner pre-conference events in September we had eight Expat Academy events including a clinic, a demo, a hangout, Huddles and culminating in the Conference on 28th September. This week saw members from around Europe join us for a European Network Huddle. So, what has changed over the summer?

Current Challenges

From the discussions we've had there are some continuation of hot topics as well as some new ones:

- Displaced workers are still top priority for many. Whilst some organisations are insisting employees return to their location of employment, others are looking to accommodate additional requests to remain in the displaced location where possible. Aside from the original regulatory concessions at the start of COVID-19 there seems to be little additional guidance from authorities. Therefore, organisations need to factor in the additional tax costs of employees who continue to work outside their country of employment. For some organisation this has proved costly and, like Google (recently reported in the [Irish Times](#)), have requested that employees return to the country where they are employed.
- A1 certificates for displaced workers. As travel restrictions have eased, a number of European authorities have been phasing out their concessions and require individuals to have A1 certificates as proof of continuing exemption from their social security system. Whether the move is business driven or for personal reasons our members are reviewing cases to ensure their employees remain compliant.
- There was discussion in the European Network Huddle on the topic of compensation whilst working in a displaced location. Support was mixed across the members that attended with some offering very little additional benefit or taking away assignment related allowances. Whilst others were looking to help assignees in more creative ways such as converting their home leave budget into a lump sum as a makeshift hardship allowance thereby allowing assignees to meet unexpected costs at this time.
- Remote working policy updates. Many of our members have been working with HR to update the working from home policy to provide guidance when 'home' is cross border. Organisations are certainly trying to navigate their way through the new normal of working from home. One organisation has introduced more flexibility into their policy by stipulating that, going forward, employees had to only be in the office for 2 days per week. However, they had to be able to come into the office with 24 hours' notice. Perhaps a clever way to reduce the risk of employees working cross border without GM being made aware!
- Virtual Assignments are never very far from the hot topic list at our events. It was interesting to note, during a discussion about closer ties with Talent, that some Global Mobility professionals see Virtual Assignments as a way to support the Talent agenda and expand the recruitment pool.
- Some organisations are using the current situation to work on closer links with Talent so that Global Mobility can more successfully support business priorities. Although in discussions at our recent events it was quite clear that to do so required clear employee performance data in HRIS

as well as good governance around assignee selection and a clear business case for an assignment.

Benchmarking

The Expat Academy online benchmarking has certainly been busy over the summer. Unprecedented times have led to an increase in questions asked and guidance requested on a range of topics. Questions have ranged from the practicalities of supporting assignees in a different location to business communication strategies and also whether assignees compensation should be adjusted when they are now working from home in another city with a lower cost of living. To review the latest benchmarking, ask a question or answer a question members can log on [here](#).

Keep Calm & Get ready for the future.

Our recent conference, albeit virtual, was still able to capture the essence of an Expat Academy event with a thought provoking and inspiring keynote, a great interactive session on the future of Global Mobility and some pearls of wisdom from three of our Global Heads. All rounded off with the chance to recognise those that have greatly contributed to the EA community throughout the year and the winners of the EA 90 Day Challenge. The virtual event guide with some great articles from our sponsors can be found [here](#).

In addition our keynote, [Annalie Howling](#), promised to share after the conference some more information and resources to effectively manage the current unprecedented work challenge and remain fit and well:

TV: Social Dilemma – Netflix

Podcasts: Esther Perel – for romantic / family “Where should we begin?”

Esther Perel – for work ‘How’s Work?’

Books: ‘Everybody Lies’ - Seth Stephens-Davidowitz

‘Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance’ - Angela Duckworth

‘When the Body Says No: The Cost of Hidden Stress’ - Dr. Gabor Mate

‘The Way We're Working Isn't Working’ - Tony Schwartz

Supplements: Annalie also highlighted that supplements can reduce inflammation which is the number one indicator of mental health issues. Reducing inflammation will also fight off other bugs we may be fearful of. She recommended taking a good quality pro & pre-biotic (best you can afford), high strength turmeric capsules, high strength Vitamin C and for anyone struggling with anxiety in particular, Rhodiola Rosea is a ‘truly magical’ supplement that makes a big difference quickly.

The Future of Global Mobility

The conference provided a great opportunity to work with Mercer and run an interactive digital focus group to gather insights on how COVID-19 has impacted Global Mobility and the changes that

our members see emerging within their organisations and the GM space more broadly in 2020 and beyond.

Outcomes from the session suggested relatively consistent experiences across the group.

In the short-term, the impact of COVID-19 has seen the majority of organisations putting assignments on hold (often with the exception of permanent transfers), increasing virtual assignments and international remote work, and heightening focus on employee health & wellbeing.

In the longer term, participants expect their organisation to take a more strategic approach to mobility on account of the economic pressure that will follow from COVID-19: focusing on fewer but more targeted assignments for business critical roles, more innovative assignment options and awareness and measurement of cost implications and ROI to balance risks.

Looking to the future, GM professionals will require a more multi-faceted skill set, partnering with the business and managing stakeholders strategically to respond to change as it occurs. Those responding felt that adaptability and resilience will be key, together with more specific skills around data, technology and policy, while collaborating more closely with the HR, Finance, and Legal / Compliance functions within the organisation. Thanks to all those that took part. We had some great insights and the full report can be found [here](#).

Impact of COVID-19 on Global Leaders across Cultures

In a recent report one of our technical partners, NetExpat, asked an intriguing question – “Is the impact of COVID-19 and working from home the same across cultures?” With so much changing for all of us over the last few months, one of the biggest changes has been in the way we work. With stay at home orders issued worldwide, we have had to tackle the challenges that come with working from home, but has it been the same for all? The full article can be found [here](#).

The Latest PwC Pulse Survey

In light of the fact that Coronavirus (COVID-19) is understandably having a significant impact on how companies view workforce mobility, organisations are reassessing the support and care they provide to their mobile employees, the impact of extensive international travel on the health of their workers and the planet, and the opportunities arising from the success of remote working. PwC ran a second Pulse Survey to understand how companies are adapting to the ‘here and now’ and the full report from the survey can be found [here](#).

Flexibility and agility post COVID-19 – Global Mobility enters a new reality

We’re delighted to see a recent article from one of our members, Louise Worbey, Global Mobility Lead at KPMG looking at how COVID-19 provides Global Mobility with a perfect opportunity to adapt and think differently. For some years it has been commented by those working in the Global Mobility sector that most Global Mobility functions are often behind the curve in adapting to the changing world of work. This article looks at what the new reality post COVID-19 should look like and how successful Global Mobility functions should be able to confidently adapt and thrive in such rapidly changing environments. The full article can be found [here](#).

MyGMPD

With all the recent events don't forget to log your learning for each one you attended at <https://mygmpd.com> to earn your MyGMPD points. If you've not yet signed up go to <https://mygmpd.com/register-for-my-gmpd> to do so, quoting the member discount code EA-818-199 (offer ending May 2021).

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Myrianthe has more than 15 years' experience in the Global Mobility industry, both in house and as a provider across a variety of industries, from Banking through to Oil & Gas. Myrianthe aims to bring her Global Mobility knowledge and experience to ensure great content virtually and at the training sessions, Bite Size briefings, Huddles, Super Huddles and Conference.