

# *Modern mobility:* Moving women with purpose

*Creating gender  
inclusive global  
mobility*

*March 2016*

*#MobilityEnvisioned*





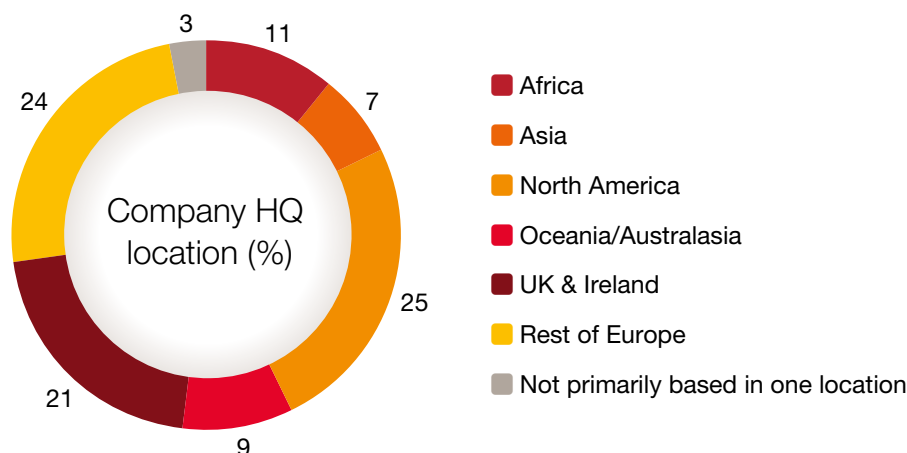
# About the research

In 2008, PwC<sup>1</sup> began digging deeper into an observed shift in thinking among younger employees and in the years since then we've conducted numerous research studies focused on the millennial generation, which we define as people born between 1980 and 1995. The theme of unprecedented demand among millennials for international experience runs through all of our studies. With our latest study showing that 71% of female millennials want to work outside their home country during their career, female demand for international mobility has quite simply never been higher.<sup>2</sup>

Yet women only account for a meagre 20% of current international assignees<sup>3</sup>, making them vastly under-represented amongst the internationally mobile population. In fact, a closer examination demonstrates that the majority of international employers have mobility demographics that do not reflect the wider demographics of their workforce as a whole.

In light of such findings, we chose to conduct further exploration of the intersection between gender diversity and global mobility. To do this, we commissioned Opinium Research to carry out an in-depth international survey focused on the executives with responsibility for global mobility within their organisations. The resulting study, conducted between 24 November and 31 December 2015, included 134 respondents representing international organisations with headquarters in 23 different countries and a combined workforce of some four million employees.

## Company HQ location (%)

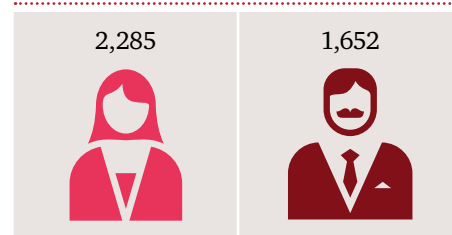


## Tracking the experiences of internationally-driven employees – female and male

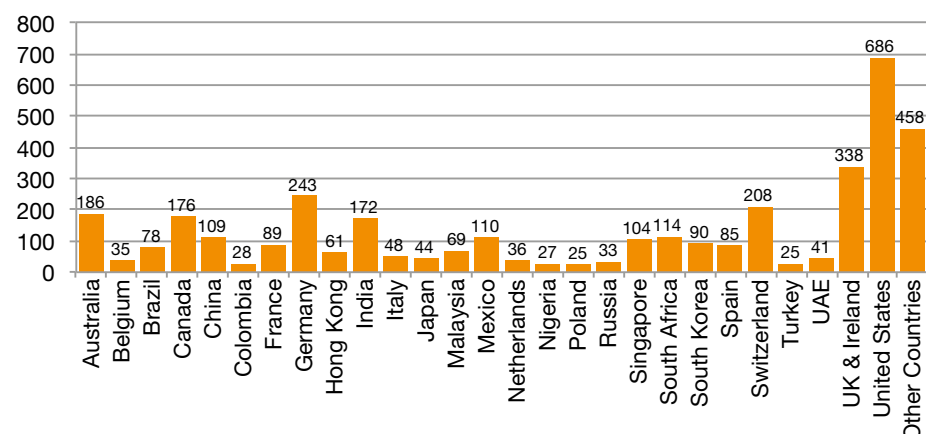
In parallel, we also commissioned Opinium Research to conduct a cross-generational online survey among internationally-driven professionals. This strand of the research – undertaken between 2 December 2015 and 12 January 2016 – covered a total of 3,937 respondents from over 40 countries. All of the respondents were currently employed, with females accounting for 58% of the total (2,285) and males for 42% (1,652). In terms of international mobility, 25% (992) were interested in a mobility experience; 31% (1,236) were currently undertaking an international experience; and 39% (1,551) had completed an international experience.

Drawing on the combined findings from these two studies, this report aims to provide some compelling insights into the current trends around global mobility, talent management and diversity in international employers. It also provides insight into the evolving mindset and attitudes of female talent. We hope these insights will help you position your organisation, mobility and talent strategies towards the engagement and development of the significant, and growing female talent pool.

## Respondents by gender



## Respondents by country



1 PwC refers to the PwC network and/or one or more of its member firms, each of which is a separate legal entity. Please see [www.pwc.com/structure](http://www.pwc.com/structure) for further details

2 The female millennial: A new era of talent, PwC 2014

3 Talent mobility: 2020 and beyond, PwC 2012



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# Executive summary

Picture this scenario: A leading multinational company established a niche business operating in its headquartered market three years ago. It has proven to be a high-profit, high-growth business and they have identified one of their developing markets to grow the business internationally. They need to select someone with the right skills to establish this first overseas division and there are two strong contenders, both high-performing, high-potential talent – identical in grade, tenure and experience. Susan had just got married, so with the best of intentions, leadership decided without consulting her that she was likely to be starting a family. Of the two rising stars the opportunity was offered to Alan.

## Fast forward 12 months...

*“My new husband and I were excited to get our wedding out of the way so we could finally pursue our aspirations to work overseas. All feedback at my employer had suggested that I was a key talent on the leadership development track so I was really shocked when they didn’t even discuss the international opportunity with me. When I told them I wanted to work overseas they explained that with my colleague Alan going overseas they needed my skills in the founding division more than ever. I couldn’t believe they didn’t even consider me for the opportunity. It all worked out for me in the end, I’m six months into my new job working overseas for one of their competitors. It’s everything I expected, challenging, developmental and exhilarating all at the same time.”*

Susan



*“I couldn’t believe it when they asked me to head up our first international division. Although I always knew a stint overseas was going to be required at some point in my career, it couldn’t have come at a worse time. My wife and I were two weeks away from being able to tell our family and friends we were expecting our first baby. But, I couldn’t say no to the opportunity: how would that make me look? After many stressful conversations with Hannah to try to convince her it was the right thing to do for us all, she agreed. But it was so tough when we got there, Hannah ended up being sick through the whole pregnancy and when Alex was born she had no support network. I tried to be there for her as much as I could but the stress really had an impact on my role. I just wasn’t able to perform like I could back home. In the end they brought me back after ten months, their decision, not mine. I’m not sure if my career with them will ever recover.”*

Alan



Sound familiar? Is the prevalence of gender stereotypes having an impact on your organisation’s decision making? In this case the employer over-associated Alan with work, and over-associated Susan with family, a family she didn’t even have yet. Despite good intentions, could your organisation be letting blindspots drive adverse business outcomes when it comes to your best talent – and to their detriment, as with Susan and Alan?

To create a sustainable talent pipeline, employers must focus actively on attracting and retaining female talent. Greater gender diversity in leadership will not happen by accident – and to make progress towards it, employers must implement inclusive talent strategies that support the advancement, engagement and development of this significant and growing talent population. An inclusive global mobility programme is an important component of such strategies, but as yet it’s failing to deliver. In fact, only 20% of current international assignees are female.

PwC’s ground-breaking research will clarify this pressing business challenge and opportunity. Ten critical themes arise from this research, with each generating business opportunities to enhance the gender inclusiveness and overall effectiveness of corporate global mobility programmes.

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## ***Sky-high demand***

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We are experiencing a time of unprecedented – and as yet unmet – female demand for international mobility. 71% percent of female millennials want to work abroad during their career, but only 20% of the current internationally mobile population are women. Faced with today’s fast-changing workforce demographics, global mobility strategies that do not fully include women will simply not deliver to their full potential.



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## ***Battling the barriers***

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Women in the trenches are feeling this inequity; they are 19% less likely than their male peers to believe that men and women have equal opportunities to undertake international assignments with their current employer. For example, organisations might hold outdated beliefs that women with children don’t want to work abroad; this report challenges such assumptions. 41% percent of the women who told us they want to undertake an international assignment are parents, compared with 40% of men. Meanwhile, men consider women’s concern of putting their partners’ higher-salary income at risk as the second highest barrier to female mobility (27%). Of the female respondents to this research, 82% that are in a relationship are part of a dual career couple, and 77% of those earn equal to or more than their partner or spouse. This higher income risk may well be a challenge when deploying women, but it will be equally challenging when deploying men. To overcome the barriers to more gender-inclusive mobility, international employers must first identify and understand the actual – not assumed – barriers confronting them. Using data analytics to gain a clear view of their current mobility and wider workforce demographics, and the mobile readiness of their workforce will be crucial; combining these enhanced data analytics with process and behavioural interventions to address any uncovered barriers are all critical steps for achieving gender-inclusive mobility.



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## ***An international talent brand***

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Today, female talent matters more than ever: female millennials, for example, are more highly educated and are entering the workforce in larger numbers than any of their previous generations. Employers cannot afford to miss out on this significant and growing talent pool. 64% percent of women said opportunities to undertake international assignments were critical in attracting them to, and keeping them with an employer. To be successful in attracting, hiring and retaining female talent, it’s imperative that international organisations have a talent brand that incorporates international experience as a core part of their employee value proposition.



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## ***Diversity disconnects***

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Done well, global mobility is a positive driver of business success and a powerful way to develop senior leadership talent. However, these benefits will not be realised if global mobility strategies are operationalised in a silo. Only 22% of global mobility leaders said their organisations’ mobility and diversity strategies were aligned, and the same low proportion – 22% – said they were actively trying to increase their female international mobile populations. Yet, as many as 69% of global mobility leaders agree they move employees to develop their succession pipeline of future leaders. The way many organisations currently manage global mobility is characterised by a significant number of diversity disconnects. Global mobility, diversity and talent strategies must converge to support the successful realisation of international business and people strategies.



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## ***A culture of mobility***

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Creating a culture of international mobility will be fundamental to achieving more gender-inclusive mobility, yet 57% of global mobility leaders said their organisations don’t articulate an expectation of international mobility to their key talent populations. Meanwhile, 65% of women said they would like opportunities to work overseas to be made more transparent at the companies they work for.



To instil and embed such a culture, international employers will need to clearly articulate an expectation of international mobility to their employees; visibly share the positive international experiences of past and current assignees; ensure their international opportunities are transparent; and actively seek out opportunities to increase their number of mobile employees, particularly women.

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## Female role model gap

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International organisations are currently facing the challenge of a significant role model gap, with less than half of women (49%) agreeing that their organisation has enough female role models with successful international assignment experiences. This shortcoming is negatively impacting companies' wider female talent and global mobility programmes. Organisations must take active measures to drive awareness of the positive experiences of successful female assignees within their organisations. We've very purposefully profiled a diverse range of amazing female role models with successful international experiences throughout this report.



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## Early mobility

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Early mobility is in high demand: 74% of respondents (women and men) said the most preferential time to complete a mobility experience is in the first six years of a career – yet 33% of organisations don't currently offer early mobility opportunities. It is critical that international employers get early mobility right: those that do will have an edge in the war for talent attraction and retention, will be more successful in leveraging millennial mobility demand, and will reap the long-term benefits of developing a more gender-diverse leadership pipeline. Early mobility also provides international organisations with opportunities to influence employees' mindsets towards a mobility culture that associates global mobility with *both* female and male talent.



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## Understanding mobile readiness

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Only 25% of global mobility leaders have a real-time understanding of the mobile readiness of their complete workforce. By mobile-ready, we mean an understanding of who from the workforce is willing and prepared to be internationally mobile. To create an environment conducive to the inclusive selection of international assignees, international employers must have a clear understanding of their mobile-ready population. This presents organisations with opportunities for improved diversity in their mobile population, while also offering wider benefits for global mobility programmes and workforce planning.



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## Location, location, location

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Some 75% of global mobility leaders said their assignment destinations match their organisation's priority destinations for growth. However, organisations face the challenge that their priority destinations are often those least favoured by employees seeking assignments. 48% of women and 35% of men said they would never relocate to the Middle East, while 43% of women and 39% of men said the same about Africa. It's clear that location challenges are not limited to women. Organisations will need to undertake a focused action plan to tackle these challenges, while also identifying any specific location barriers to female moves. Efforts in this area will pay dividends by supporting increased mobility to more challenging locations, for both men and women.



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## Duration, benefits and repatriation

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To attract, retain and develop female talent, international employers must adopt a modern, more flexible approach to mobility. Of the top four professional concerns females identified around embarking on mobility assignments, three concerned repatriation. Concern over what their return role would be upon repatriation comes in top (44%). 80% of women said flexibility and choice in assignment packages would make international moves more appealing at their organisations and while long-term assignments are highest in demand (49%) women and men have broad preferences when it comes to their favoured mobility durations. A gender-inclusive mobility programme will include a world-class repatriation programme, together with a wide array of mobility solutions that include flexibility, choice and options around the assignment duration and package. These elements will meet the diverse range of employee preferences represented in today's workforce – shaped by demographic shifts such as the rise in dual-career couples, increased workforce participation rates among females in developing markets, and increasing eldercare responsibilities due to an ageing population.



**Explore our full report to learn more about the findings of this research and each of the ten critical areas that provide opportunities for your organisation to create and benefit from gender inclusive mobility.**



**Percentage of CEOs that agreed their organisation has reaped the following benefits from its strategy to promote diversity and inclusion**

**90%**

Attract talent



**85%**

Enhance business performance



**83%**

Strengthen our brand and reputation



**78%**

Innovate



**78%**

Collaborate internally/externally



**77%**

Enhance customer satisfaction



**75%**

Serve new and evolving customer needs



**63%**

Leverage technology



**55%**

Compete in new industries/geographies



Source: 18th Annual CEO Survey, PwC 2015

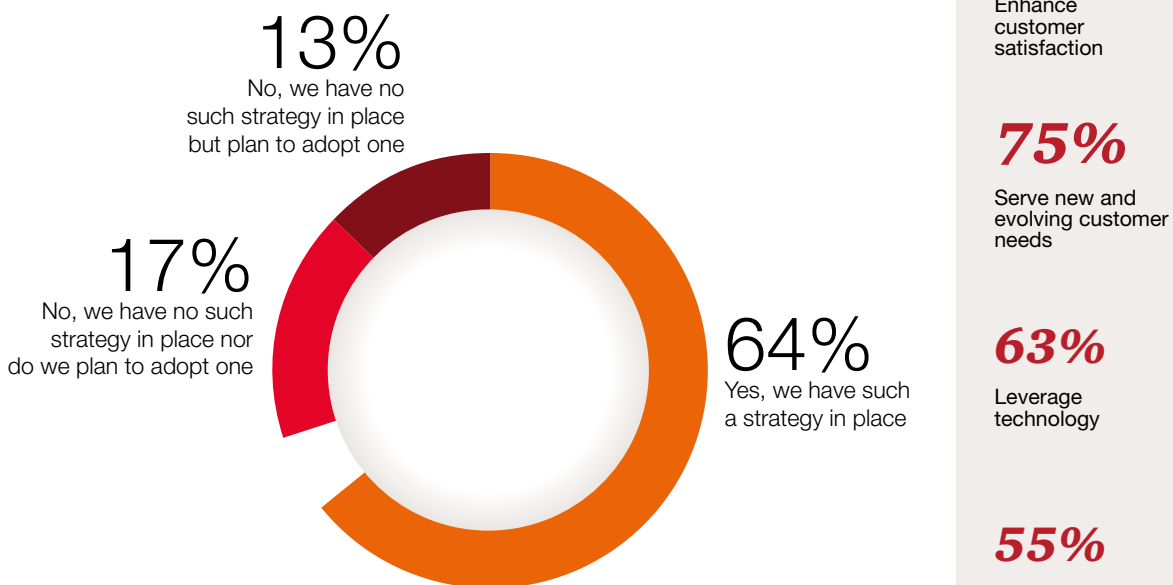
# Introduction: A new urgency for talent diversity...

Organisations the world over are currently challenged with a lack of women in leadership positions, and fast becoming concerned with the financial and competitive toll this could mean for their organisations.

In 2011, PwC's *Annual Global CEO Survey* told us that only 12% of CEOs saw poor retention of female talent as a key business challenge over the coming three years, and that only 11% were planning significant policy changes to attract and retain more female employees.<sup>4</sup> Yet, fast-forward just four years, and a growing number of CEOs are concerned with the impact talent diversity means for their business with 64% of all CEOs globally confirming they now have a diversity strategy and 13% planning to adopt one over the next 12 months.<sup>5</sup>

We've reached an inflexion point and the tide has turned. Talent diversity is now widely acknowledged as both a business challenge and an opportunity, with CEOs identifying significant benefits arising from diversity and inclusion in their organisations: benefits such as better talent attraction (90%), enhanced business performance (85%) and more innovation (78%). CEOs have finally woken up to the fact that they have immense talent pools under their noses, which they have failed to fully leverage for too long, with women forming one of those most significant talent pools. But the question remains: has this realisation filtered through into the DNA of their organisations – and impacted, for example, their global mobility strategies? Leading organisations across the world are starting to think about their longer-term global workforce needs, not

## Does your organisation have a strategy to promote talent diversity and inclusiveness or have plans to adopt one?



<sup>4</sup> Growth reimaged. The talent race is back on. 14th Annual Global CEO Survey, PwC 2011

<sup>5</sup> A marketplace without boundaries? Responding to disruption. 18th Annual Global CEO Survey, PwC 2015

Source: 18th Annual CEO survey, PwC 2015

just reacting to what is needed in the short-term. Mobility is a crucial tool to help them enter fast-growing markets and forge the global mindsets needed by today's business leaders and employees. They're also tapping into talent pools in new geographies and new demographic segments, to develop an agile workforce that can thrive in an increasingly fluid global landscape.

## **...but action continues to lag behind awareness**

As these efforts gain momentum, it's clear the world of work is changing, and fast. The ability to access these new talent pools – and in parallel, strategically manage *existing* talent into the right roles, in the right locations, at the right cost – is a source of real and growing competitive advantage. However, while the benefits are clear, it's equally evident that many organisations are still failing to capitalise fully on their existing sources of talent. In particular, while women currently make up almost half the global workforce they continue to be one of the most underutilised talent pools. Despite continual growth in their levels of workforce participation<sup>6</sup> and being awarded the majority of bachelor's degrees worldwide<sup>7</sup>, women remain under-represented at leadership levels, both in senior management positions and on boards. Currently only 4.8% of Fortune 500 CEOs are female – and the fact that this proportion is actually a historic high merely underlines the scale of the problem.<sup>8</sup>

This dramatic under-representation of female talent continues when we look at global mobility activity. To achieve its full potential for the business, mobility should be a driver of business success and a way of developing senior leadership talent. But until mobility populations mirror wider workforce demographics, this aspiration will remain unfulfilled. A siloed approach to global mobility will no longer suffice. Instead, global mobility, talent management, and diversity and inclusion must converge under the sponsorship of the CEO, if the business is to succeed in attracting, developing and retaining the workforce of today and tomorrow.

We've produced this report to help companies deepen their understanding of the dynamics of global mobility and how these relate to diversity and talent management. In particular, we hope to inform and enhance companies' decision-making by giving them greater insight both into the minds of female and male international assignees and the views of global mobility executives from across the globe. Whatever industries your organisation is active in, and wherever in the world, we hope these insights will help you position and fine-tune your talent strategies to foster the attraction, retention, deployment, development and engagement of female talent across the globe.

6 World Bank

7 World Atlas of Gender Equality in Education, UNESCO, 2012

8 Fortune (<http://fortune.com/2014/06/03/number-of-fortune-500-women-ceos-reaches-historic-high/>)





# Sky-high demand



In an increasingly globalised world, multinational businesses are placing a growing value on international experience and global acumen as core competencies among their employees, as they seek to establish leadership teams and an employee base that can work seamlessly and effectively in markets worldwide. And this demand works both ways: members of the millennial generation have a strong appetite for working abroad, and view international experience as a vital component of a successful career.

However, PwC research shows that women still only make up a meagre 20% of current international assignees<sup>9</sup> – a figure that serves to underline the need for employers to realise that the sky-high demand for mobility is not a solely male phenomenon. Those businesses that don't see through this misconception risk their international assignee populations being permanently skewed towards men. The result being a global mobility programme that does not fully capitalise on or reflect the talent demographics of the modern workforce.

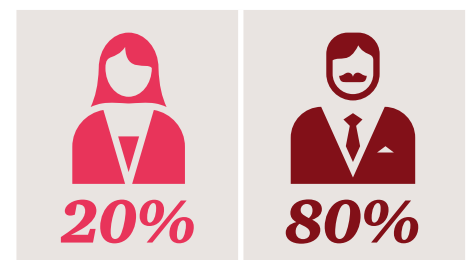
In fact, female demand for global mobility has quite simply never been higher. When we asked this question to almost 9,000 female millennials in over 70 countries last year, 71% stated their desire to work outside their home country during their career.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, 84% of the women in this cross-generational survey view international experience as critical to furthering their career progression. Women working in the Banking & Capital Markets (91%), Industrial Manufacturing (91%) and the Oil & Gas (89%) sectors consider it most critical to furthering their careers. This ringing endorsement of mobility is hardly surprising, given that 80% of women said their international experience had positively influenced their career progression, by helping them secure a promotion at the time of relocation, during the assignment, or upon repatriation.

There is clearly an urgent imperative to eradicate outdated views on gender roles, and international assignment practices established on the premise that it's easier to move men than women. To make the most of their talent, international employers must adopt a modern approach that fosters a mobility culture that does not over-identify international assignments with male international assignees. We are at a time of unprecedented mobility demand from both female and male millennial talent. For the 89% of organisations planning to increase their numbers of internationally mobile workers in the coming two years, it is critical they seize upon this sky-high mobility demand to achieve these expansion goals.<sup>11</sup> Overall, the message is clear: global mobility strategies that do not fully include women will fail to deliver to their full potential.

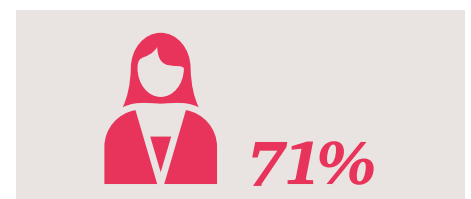
<sup>10</sup> The female millennial: A new era of talent, PwC 2015

<sup>11</sup> Moving people with purpose: Modern mobility survey, PwC 2015

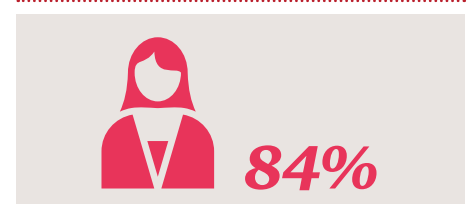
## Current international assignee population



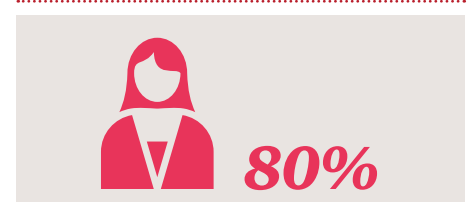
## I want to work outside my home country during my career



## I feel international experience is critical to further my career



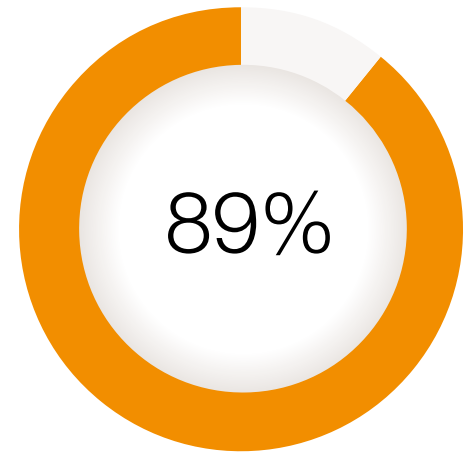
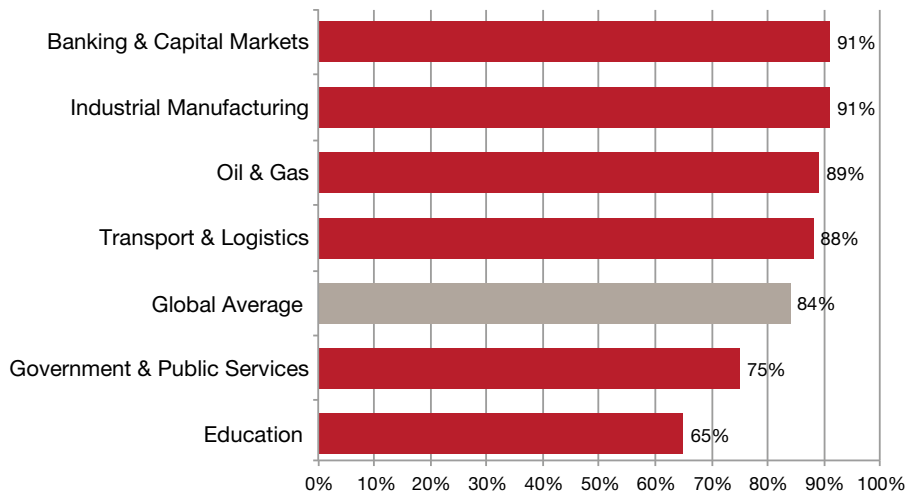
## My international assignment has positively influenced my career progression



<sup>9</sup> Talent mobility: 2020 and beyond, PwC 2012

**Industry insights: I feel gaining international experience is critical to furthering my career (females that agree)**

**89% of organisations plan to increase their numbers of international mobile workers in the coming two years.**



Note: includes sectors with 25 or more female respondents only. Aerospace, Asset Management, Automotive, Capital projects and infrastructure, Chemicals, Defence, Engineering and construction, Entertainment and media, Forest, Paper and packaging, Metals, Real Estate sectors excluded.

Source: Modern Mobility Survey, PwC 2015

***Voice of the female international assignee***

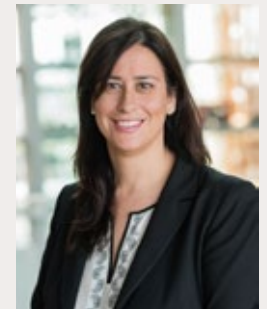
***Anna Muniesa Cardona, Director, PwC Spain***

“I have always had a passion for meeting new people and experiencing other cultures. So, when I started my career, having the opportunity to work with international clients, be part of international teams and undertake an international assignment early in my career was high on my agenda. For me, this was one of the big advantages that a global network of firms like PwC could offer – and it was a critical factor in my decision to join PwC Spain. During the PwC recruitment process I got to learn a lot about the firm’s global mobility programme, including by meeting PwC people who shared their international assignment experiences with me and gave me a sense of how internationally-focused a role with PwC can be.

Several years into my career, I can say with certainty that PwC has delivered. In 2002, I undertook my first two-year international assignment, to Paris. The experience was so enriching, and exceeded my expectations to such an extent, that some years later – in 2013 – I joined the Luxembourg firm for another two-year assignment.

New clients, new teams, new office, new city, new friends... Although it is not easy at the beginning, each international assignment has presented me with great opportunities to grow as a PwC professional and also as a person. My international assignments have exposed me to new cultures, fresh ideas and different ways of doing things, while also permitting me to share my own experiences and knowledge with clients and peers, and enabling me to bring different perspectives and add value both in the host and home countries. I have worked with people from different industries and PwC lines of services, helping me to improve my skills and expertise and be more open-minded to changes and challenges.

Now that I’m back home again, I feel really lucky to have had the opportunity to participate twice in the global mobility programme. For sure, it’s one of the best things PwC has ever given me.”



***Tough questions about sky-high mobility demand***

Does your organisation have the right talent structures in place to enable female talent to thrive?

How are you adjusting your global mobility strategy to consider the unprecedented and as yet unmet female mobility demand?

How will you tap into a more diverse talent pool to support your projected increases in mobile workers?

How will you evolve your mobility strategy and policies to meet the dual demands of an increasingly diverse talent pool and a rapidly changing work landscape?

# Battling the barriers

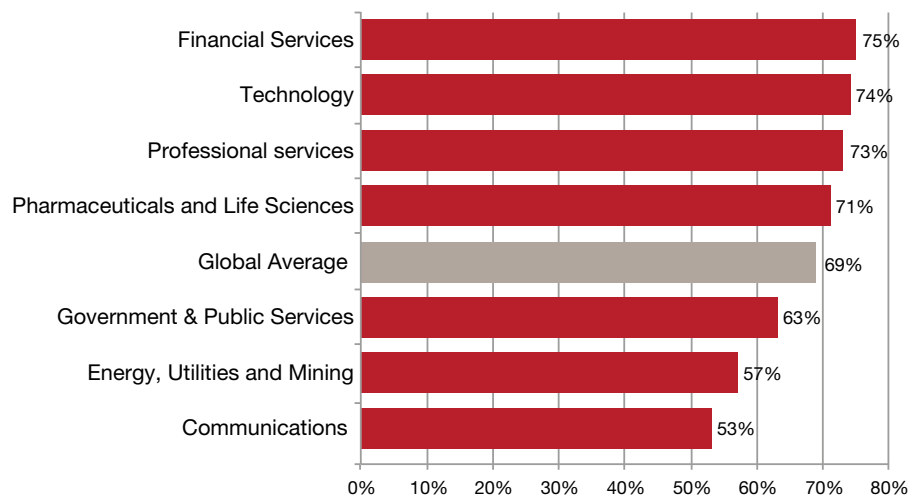


Research shows that gaining international experience advances the careers of both men and women further and faster – yet the best and brightest female talent is still overlooked for these opportunities compared to their male peers.<sup>12</sup> This study further underlines these trends. Women interested in international experiences (62%) are 19% more likely than their male peers (81%) to believe that men and women have equal opportunity to undertake international assignments at their current employer. While the difference of opinion is narrower between women and men who have experienced an international assignment, there is still a gap of 13%. Furthermore, the more senior our female respondents were, the less likely they are to believe they have equal opportunities to undertake an international assignment. Women working in the Communications (53%), Energy, Utilities and Mining (57%) and Government and Public Services (73%) were least likely to agree. While the Financial Services (75%), Technology (74%) and Professional Services (73%) sectors came out on top for equal opportunities.

## I feel women and men have equal opportunity to undertake international assignments at my organisation

|  | Agree | Neutral | Disagree |
|--|-------|---------|----------|
|  Women interested in an international experience        | 62%   | 19%     | 19%      |
|  Women who have experienced an international assignment | 74%   | 14%     | 12%      |
|  Men interested in an international experience         | 81%   | 16%     | 3%       |
|  Men who have experienced an international assignment | 87%   | 9%      | 4%       |
|  Global Mobility Leaders                              | 62%   | 16%     | 22%      |

## Industry insights: Women and men have equal opportunity to undertake international assignments at my current employer (females that agree)



Note: includes sectors with 25 or more female respondents only. Aerospace, Asset Management, Automotive, Capital projects and infrastructure, Chemicals, Defence, Engineering and construction, Entertainment and media, Forest, Paper and packaging, Metals, Real Estate sectors excluded.

<sup>12</sup> Good intentions, imperfect execution? Women get fewer of the 'hot jobs' needed to advance, Catalyst

Interestingly, global mobility leaders were more likely than either male or female employees to disagree, with 22% disputing that women and men have equal mobility opportunities at their organisation. So, what barriers are causing these perceptions and driving the underrepresentation of women in global mobility? We asked respondents to both our corporate and talent survey to rank what they saw as the top three barriers causing the underrepresentation of women on international assignments in their own organisations.

### Lack of understanding of mobile-ready population

By a significant margin, the organisation having no clear view of employees who are willing to be internationally mobile was ranked as the number one barrier by global mobility leaders (45%). This was also cited as the number three barrier by both women (32%) and to a lesser extent men (22%); on a positive note, this is a process rather than a behavioural barrier, meaning process interventions can be put in place to mitigate it. Visit the *Understanding mobile readiness* section of this report to learn more.

### Lack of role models

A lack of female role models for whom a global mobility experience has been part of their career success was ranked the second highest barrier by both women (35%) and global mobility leaders (34%). Given that women are vastly underrepresented in organisations' internationally mobile populations, this barrier will remain a challenge that cannot be fixed overnight. However, once again, there are opportunities for organisations to put strategies in place to help overcome it. You can learn more in the *Female role model gap* section of this report.




### Prevalence of stereotypes associating women with family

The top barrier identified by both women (43%) and men (43%) was that women with children do not want to undertake international assignments. This was also identified as the third-ranked barrier for global mobility leaders. This research tells us that 41% of women who told us they wanted to undertake an international assignment were parents, compared with 40% of men. It also shows that men and women equally (70%) agreed that the most preferable time to undertake an assignment during their career was before they have children. So far, the views of men and women on international experience revealed in this research

largely harmonise with one another. Where gender differences do present themselves, they relate to the findings concerning actual mobility trends. Of the respondents who have completed an international assignment, women (63%) are much more likely to have relocated on their own than men (36%); and only 17% of women relocated with children compared to 40% of men.

These insights appear to highlight a discrepancy between women's unprecedented desire for international experiences, today's reality of female mobility, female mobility aspirations, and the perceived barriers to mobility. For example, it may well be the case that women with children may be less inclined to accept an assignment at particular times, such as after the birth of a new child. But it may also be the case that this is exactly the same for men. It may well also be the case that mothers are less likely to be asked to go on an international assignment than fathers. International employers must understand whether this barrier is real or simply an assumption that needs to be debunked – and to help them find out which is the case, they can use process interventions that determine the mobile readiness of their complete employee population. Again you can read more on this in the *Understanding mobile readiness* chapter.

## Top barriers causing the underrepresentation of women on international assignments at your organisation

|  | <br><b>Global Mobility Leaders</b> | <br><b>Women</b> | <br><b>Men</b> |
|--|---|--|---|
| Organisation has no clear view of employees who are willing to be internationally mobile               | <b>No.1 barrier cited by 45%</b>  | No. 3 barrier cited by 32%   | No. 3 barrier cited by 22%  |
| Women with children do not want to undertake international assignments                                 | No. 3 barrier cited by 33%  | <b>No.1 barrier cited by 43%</b>   | <b>No.1 barrier cited by 43%</b>  |
| Lack of female role models for whom a global mobility experience has been part of their career success | No. 2 barrier cited by 34%  | No. 2 barrier cited by 35%   |   |
| Women do not want to put their partner/spouse's higher-salary income at risk                           |   |  | No. 2 barrier cited by 27%  |

A significant difference of views emerges around the perceived barrier that women do not want to put their partner/spouse's higher-salary income at risk. Men identified this as their second biggest barrier to higher female representation among international assignees (27%), while it ranks as only the fifth highest barrier both for female employees and mobility leaders, behind – in fourth place – traditional mindsets that typically associate men with international assignments. Twenty per cent of women identified the risk of putting their partner/spouse's higher-salary income at risk as a personal concern when embarking on an international assignment, while the same can be said for 19% of men. Furthermore, of the 2,285 female respondents to this research, 82% that are in a relationship are in a dual-career couple, and 77% of those in a dual-career couple earn equal to or more than their partner. So, while the risk posed to partner/spouse's higher income may well be a challenge when deploying females, it will equally be a challenge when deploying men.

**82% of women in a relationship are in a dual-career couple**



**77% of women in a dual-career couple earn equal to or more than their partner**



## Survey insights:

*“People of talent are attracted to other people of talent. The majority of our key talent come from dual-career families. If we want to be seen as an employer welcoming to dual-career families, and entice our key talent to be internationally mobile, we have to have a solution for the partners and spouses of the employees we send on international assignments.”*

Global Mobility Leader, France, Retail and Consumer industry

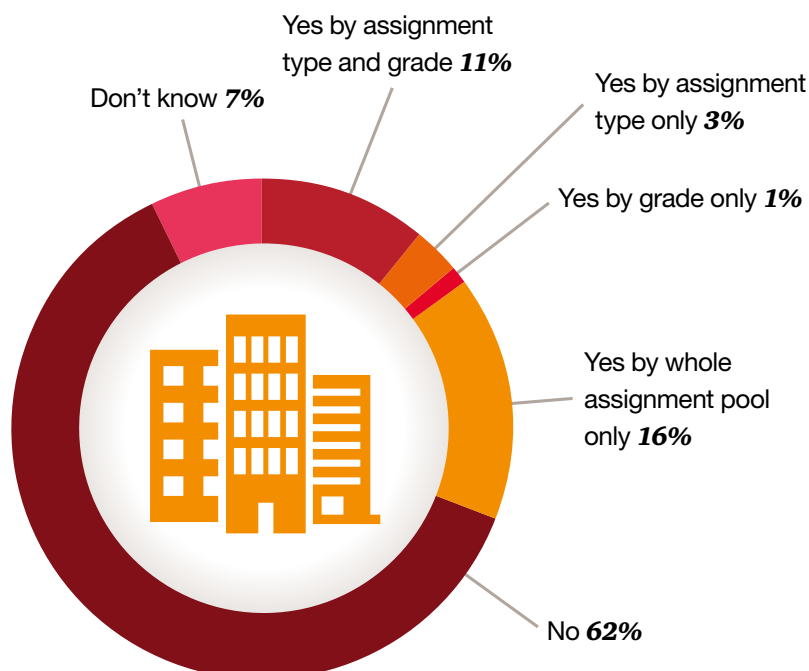
All of this suggests that outdated views – and international assignment programmes or practices established on the premise that it is easier to move men than women – must become a thing of the past. Employers should understand the demographic make-up of their workforce, including what proportion of talent comes from dual-career households, so that they can illustrate the business case for a comprehensive spousal support policy and package. Those that don't take these steps risk creating barriers to both female and male mobility.

The use of data analytics is widespread and increasingly vital in today's organisations. Yet our research shows that 62% of global mobility leaders don't monitor whether their number of female international assignees is proportionate to the percentage of women in their wider employee population. Of those that do this, 16% do it only by whole assignment

pool, and only 11% go to a sufficiently granular level to track by assignment type and grade. It is critical employers shift to leveraging analytics to understand the gender make up of their populations. Employers must have a clear and granular view of the gender demographics of their mobility assignments. Armed with this data, they can gain a comprehensive understanding of which grades, business areas, assignment types, and geographies are getting things right – and which of them require a stronger focus to accelerate progress towards gender equality.

Those international employers primed to make strides towards more gender-inclusive mobility will use data analytics to understand their current mobility and wider workforce demographics and the mobile readiness of their workforce – in combination with process and behavioural interventions to address the barriers to more gender-inclusive mobility.

**When tracking your international assignment populations, do you assess whether the number of female international assignees is proportionate to the wider employee female population?**





## ***Voice of the female international assignee***



### ***Sandy Stash, Group Vice President - Safety, Sustainability & External Affairs, Tullow Oil Plc.***

“Working in oil & gas for my entire career, I’ve always been a woman working in a man’s world. And while gender can sometimes be a barrier to women taking international opportunities in this industry, I’ve managed to gain international experience on six continents and have been lucky enough to have direct managerial experience in over 25 countries in Europe, Asia, South and North America, and sub-Saharan Africa.

I joined Tullow Oil about two-and-a-half years ago, before which I worked for various other leading natural resources companies. The nature of these jobs means I’ve been located in many different countries during my career: for example, I worked with a joint venture company in Russia for three years, and over the years I’ve gained experience in places that span the spectrum – from Norway to Papua New Guinea.

Tullow Oil is headquartered in London, and is a leading independent oil exploration & production company in Sub-Saharan Africa. This geographical focus was a big attraction for me to join the group, as Africa was somewhere I hadn’t previously worked. Tullow is a hugely internationally-oriented business, and I think my international experience made me interesting from their point of view.

Speaking as a woman working in oil & gas, I would say international experience brings you a degree of credibility that you might not otherwise get. When I graduated as a petroleum engineer in 1981, my class of 250 students included just two women – but interestingly, we both graduated among the top five academically. Back then, the negative was that a lot of men simply didn’t think we belonged in the industry. But the upside was that, as women, we were much more likely to be noticed and remembered. Working internationally has made my career experience a lot richer and has got me on to shortlists for jobs that I wouldn’t otherwise have made.

Overall, I think international experience is invaluable both professionally and personally. When it comes to taking international postings, the tricky thing for both women and men today is that they often have a spouse or partner who may have a career to factor in. So in my view, companies need to work to accommodate dual placements for couples. I’m fortunate in that my husband is really supportive of my career – he’s even taken early retirement to accompany me on my last two postings, which is great – but it won’t be the solution for everyone.”

### ***Tough questions about battling the barriers***

What are you doing to make sure your best and brightest female employees are not overlooked for mobility opportunities compared to their male peers?

How will you utilise data analytics to understand the current inclusiveness of your mobility programme and identify the real barriers to female mobility in your organisation?

What process and behavioural interventions will you implement to deliver visible diversity action and results?

Do you have a clear understanding of your wider workforce demographics, enabling you to ensure that your mobility programme is in tune with the make-up of your employee-base?

What will it cost your organisation, if you get your talent pipeline wrong?



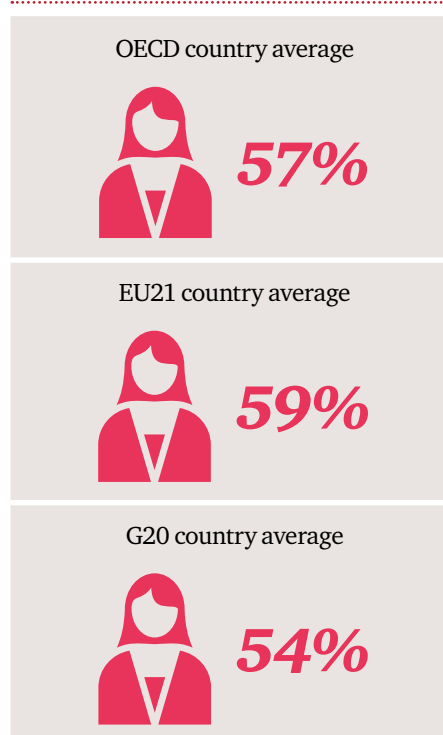
# An international talent brand

Our recent *Moving people with purpose* report identified a seismic shift in businesses' mobility strategies – away from the traditional approach of using it as a way of deploying people to fulfil tactical business needs, and towards using mobility to attract and develop top talent and create a more global mindset in the company.<sup>13</sup>

Our female millennial research made one thing very clear: when it comes to the millennial generation, we're dealing with a new era of female talent. Female millennials are more career ambitious and more career confident – and are entering the workforce in higher numbers than their previous generations.<sup>14</sup> Their level of participation in tertiary-level education has also soared. Globally, women now account for the majority of students in 93 countries while men are ahead in only 46. Women also earn more bachelors' and masters' degrees than men.<sup>15</sup> Clearly, this is a talent pool that international employers can simply not afford to ignore.

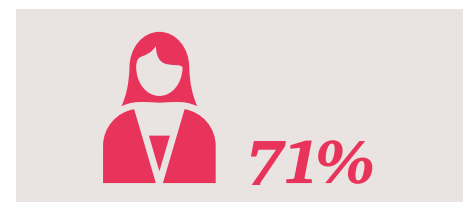
The women in our research study clearly identified international mobility as an attraction and retention tool. Sixty-four percent of women agreed that the opportunity to complete an international assignment was a key factor in *attracting* them to work for their current employer, and 64% also agreed it was a key factor in their *remaining* with an employer. Employers must recognise this in union with the unprecedented demand from female millennials for international mobility. Overall, the message is clear: to attract, hire and retain female talent, it's imperative that international organisations have a talent brand that incorporates international experience as a core part of their employee value proposition.

## Percentage of tertiary degree qualifications awarded to women

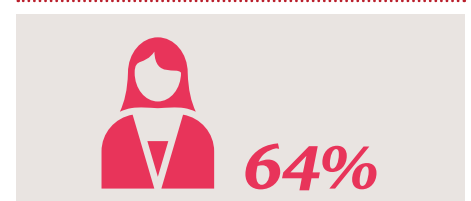


Source: Education at a Glance, 2012, OECD

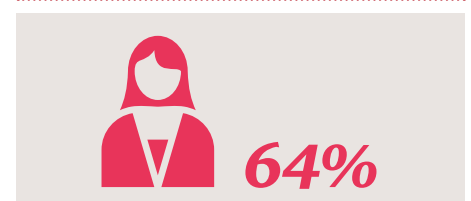
## I want to work outside my home country during my career



## The opportunity to complete an international experience was a key factor that attracted me to my employer



## The opportunity to complete an international experience is a key factor in me remaining with my employer



<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> The female millennial: A new era of talent, PwC 2015

<sup>15</sup> World Atlas of Gender Equality in Education, UNESCO, 2012

# British American Tobacco case study

## Modern mobility: International talent brand

As a global leader with more than 200 brands in over 200 markets, British American Tobacco is in the business of attracting the best global talent.

The success of our day-to-day operations across the world depends critically on our ability to be agile, in particular the capacity to be open-minded and apply an international lens. Fortunately, the best global talent is very internationally driven and focused – which is why it's vital that we make the importance of mobility to our business crystal clear in our employee value proposition.

We focus especially on attracting the best millennial graduate talent through our world-class Global Graduate Programme – a 12-month, fast-track pathway to management geared specifically for high-potential individuals. From day one the programme provides our graduate joiners with opportunities to make an impact on our international business. They also have the chance to work on an international project as part of a virtual team that can span the globe, as well as participating in two one-week residential academies where they come together with other BAT graduates from across the world. During these academies they also get opportunities to learn from and network with many of our global and regional senior leaders.

Our talent brand goes well beyond the clear articulation of the exciting international experiences that are on offer. We also make sure our attraction collateral profiles the diversity of our graduate hires – so that no matter who or where they are, the best potential recruits know that BAT is a place where they can bring their difference and start an incredible career. To ensure we engage and connect with internationally driven millennial talent as effectively as possible, we also leverage social media. For example, right now we're running a comprehensive campaign to promote our Global Graduate Programme on Facebook.

Getting graduates on board is obviously just the beginning. Once they've completed the initial 12-month programme, their career with BAT offers a vast array of exciting international opportunities, as we equip and empower them to make a real impact on our business across the world.

## PwC Germany Case Study

### Modern mobility: International internship

At PwC Germany, we recognise that to both attract and hire the campus talent we need to succeed, it's imperative that we provide opportunities and a working environment that are in line with the aspirations of the millennial generation. Eight years ago, we introduced our Stairway programme to create a pipeline of campus hires that will bring the right skills to our more internationally-focused business areas, while also responding to the millennial generation's growing demand for early international opportunities.

This international internship programme is open to high-performing Economics or Law students with particular business specialisms after the mid-point of their degree. During the programme, they get to experience two-to-six month internships working within an international team in one of many PwC member firm offices abroad. To date, we've had 143 outstanding interns who have worked in offices in 15 different countries, and in cities like Paris and Istanbul, Barcelona and Prague, to as far afield as Shanghai and Tokyo. Last year we offered a total of 26 internships, and 15 of the successful applicants were women.

To appeal to the digital savvy millennial, we promote Stairway on social media – and as part of the opportunity we ask each of our interns to share their experiences on our Stairway micro-blog. This has had many beneficial results for our employer brand, helping the number of Stairway applicants to increase year-on-year. In fact, we've had such great success with the programme that we now offer internships in all three of our core business areas.

Since 2009 we've gone on to convert some 70% of Stairway alumni to graduate positions or further PwC Germany internship opportunities – and given that some of our alumni are still in the midst of their studies, this is a number that we are very proud of. Overall, the programme is a win-win: we get to build a critical campus pipeline of exceptional talent with the required global acumen, while Stairway interns get the practical experience needed to put them one step closer to the international professional career they desire.



## ***Voice of the female international assignee***

***Xiaoxiao Xu, Senior Associate, PwC China***



“I was born and raised in China, and obtained my finance degree there, but I’ve always had a fascination with the Western world. So in 2009 I entered the one-year Masters of Accounting programme at the College of William & Mary in Virginia. It was amazing experiencing academia in a different culture, and the experience introduced me to lots of new perspectives and helped me to broaden my mindset. I knew that when I started my professional career I wanted to work for an employer who would allow me to stay true to my cultural roots but also expand on my international experience. So when I began to research potential employers, it quickly became clear that PwC was going to be the place for me. In fact, during my graduate studies, I was able to have an interview with PwC in New York through the China Sourcing Initiative (CSI).

PwC hired me through the CSI programme, and I began my career in PwC’s Beijing office in 2010. Three years later, I was ready to complete the global mobility component of the programme and moved to the US. Combined with the insights I gained while living and studying in the US, I’ve found that my experience with Chinese pharma companies – which operate in a very different regulatory environment – has been extremely valuable. It’s helped me particularly with business development for clients I’ve been advising in the US on opportunities in mainland China. I try to seize every opportunity to transfer my technical skills and business acumen across borders –and working at PwC affords me the opportunity to do this. It’s like having the world on my doorstep every day.”

### ***Tough questions about an international talent brand***

What are you doing to adapt your employer brand to make sure it stands up to the international demands of the modern workforce?

How are you communicating the positive aspects of this international talent brand in a gender-inclusive manner?

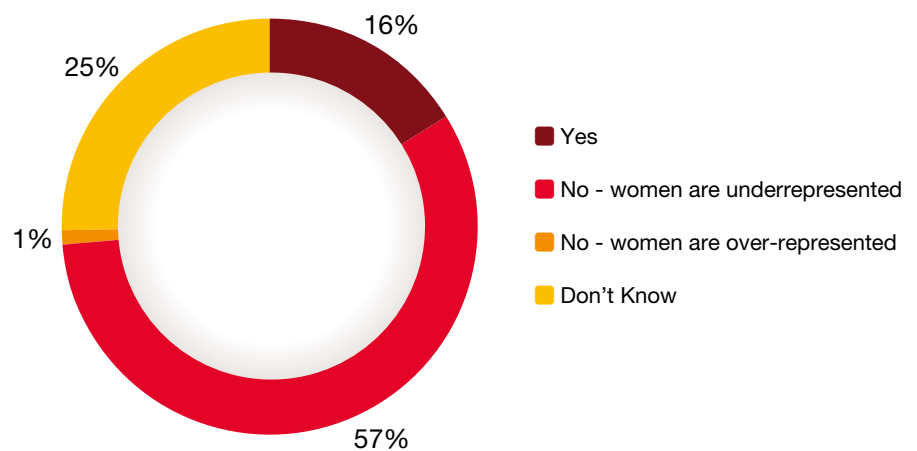
How will you make sure the positive messages you put out stand up in reality?

# Diversity disconnects



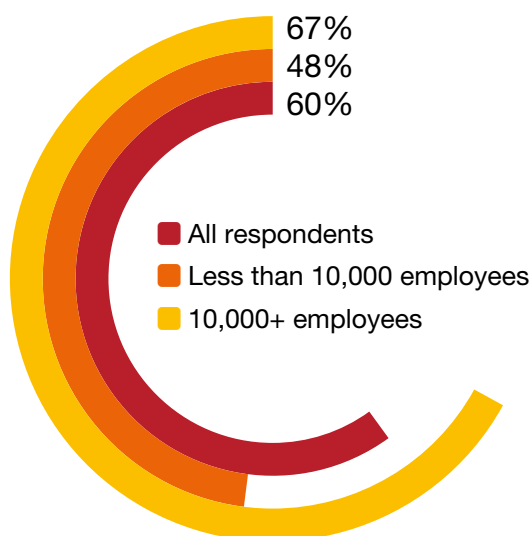
Our research has revealed a number of glaring disconnects between what companies say about mobility and diversity– and what they actually do in practice. For example, 60% of global mobility leaders – rising to 67% in organisations with 10,000-plus employees – confirmed they have a diversity strategy, while 14% didn't know. Yet only 22% agreed that their organisation's global mobility and diversity strategy were aligned, and only the same low proportion – 22% – said they were actively trying to increase their female international mobile populations. Meanwhile, 57% of global mobility leaders said the number of females in their international assignee populations was lower than the number of females in their wider workforce populations.

## Are the number of female international assignees in your organisation proportionate to their representation in your organisation's workforce population?



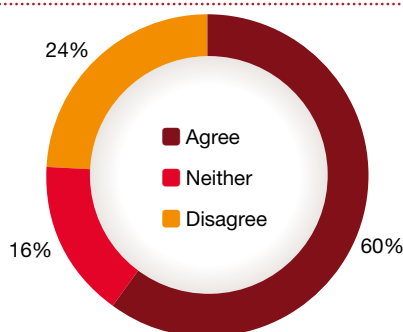
## Does your organisation have a diversity strategy?

Global mobility leaders that agree

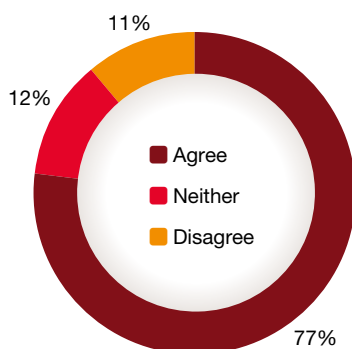


Other findings included the fact that 60% of global mobility leaders agreed they move employees to develop their succession pipeline of future leaders (69% in organisations with 10,000-plus employees). And 77% agreed that global acumen – achieved through an international assignment or other international experience and exposure – is a critical skill requirement for advancement into leadership within their organisations.

### We move employees to develop our succession pipeline of future leaders



### Global Acumen is a critical skill requirement for advancement into leadership positions within my organisation



### A need for alignment

Such findings underline that many international employers are currently challenged with a lack of alignment and integration between diversity and mobility. While the majority of organisations surveyed have a diversity strategy, only a minority have aligned their global mobility strategy with their diversity goals.

In light of this diversity disconnect, organisations seeking to enhance the gender diversity of their succession pipelines and leadership must ensure that female talent is provided with the necessary opportunities and experiences to advance. Here again our research reveals a clear disconnect. The majority of employer mobility programmes are being used to develop a succession pipeline of future leaders, yet only a minority are actively trying to increase their female international mobile population – and women are under-represented in their current mobility populations. This leadership diversity disconnect must be addressed if international employers are to utilise the full capabilities of their workforce, develop a succession pipeline that reflects the talent within their wider workforce, and reap the benefits that stem from greater leadership diversity.

Done well, mobility is a positive driver of business success and a way of developing senior leadership talent. However these benefits cannot be realised if global mobility strategies are operationalised in a silo, disconnected from diversity strategies. Clearly, the way global mobility is currently managed needs to change. Global mobility, diversity and talent strategies and processes simply must converge to support the successful realisation of organisations’ international business strategies – if they are to have the right talent in the right roles, in the right place, at the right time.





## ***ANZ Generalist Bankers case study***

### **Modern mobility: Inclusive leadership development**

At ANZ, we recognised several years ago that we needed to create accelerated development opportunities for future leaders of our bank, if we were to succeed in building an internal future pipeline of International Bankers with the right skills and experiences. Responding to this challenge, we established our Generalist Banker programme in 2010.

This 15-year programme provides our high-potential staff – at a comparatively early stage in their career - with the experiences required to make them well-rounded bankers with broad experience across ANZ's Asia Pacific regional footprint. Instrumental to the success of the programme are an ethos and focus combining global mobility, talent diversity and talent management.

The programme begins with a two-year international rotation

cycle around our major business units. After this, the individual is placed in a permanent role in one of our 34 markets, moving every two to three years to build experiences across different markets (developed and emerging) and banking disciplines.

By applying a rigorous, objective selection process, and identifying high-potential female leaders at an early stage of their career, we're maximising the opportunity for our women to get vital international and leadership development experience. Currently 48% of our international assignments for Generalist Bankers are being undertaken by women. While the programme is only in its seventh year, the feeling within ANZ is that it is already making a positive contribution to our pipeline of future leaders – and will in particular help to improve the level of gender diversity in our future leadership.

## Voice of the female international assignee

### Susie Babani, Chief Human Resources Officer, ANZ



“Having kick-started my career in London, where I grew up, I’ve since enjoyed numerous long-term international relocations with employers in Jersey, Vancouver, New York, Shanghai, Manila and Melbourne. It might sound like I’ve been on the move my whole career – but in fact my first international opportunity didn’t come about until I was 32, and my only regret is that I didn’t start earlier!

I recommend moving out of your comfort-zone and learning new perspectives. I feel my international experiences have put me in charge of my own destiny and instilled the ‘make it happen’ attitude and competencies that have driven my career success. It was the vast range of generalist and specialist HR knowledge I’ve gained through experiences ranging from people strategy management to mergers and acquisitions, aggressive international growth strategies and crisis support in response to 9/11, that gave me the opportunity to venture into new territory both geographically and technically by taking on a COO position stationed first in Shanghai, and then Manila.

Eight years ago I ventured back into HR as ANZ’s Chief HR Officer – the longest I’ve stayed living in one city since my first move from London. I manage my thirst for international exposure with regular visits to our overseas locations to meet with local leadership teams and talent, and to spread the messages we might want everyone to understand more fully, such as “All roles Flex”. On a couple of occasions I have also spent one-month stints working out of Singapore and Hong Kong. This has helped me to really understand our people, their work practices and customs, so I can lead an international people strategy that I know can be implemented locally. My time in Asia has helped me appreciate that the Western approach is not always the best or only way. It’s also enabled me to be an inclusive and agile leader, getting the best from others anywhere in the world.

At ANZ we have a primary presence in Australia, New Zealand, Asia and the Pacific. To be successful we need to understand our customers – so creating a culture with international mindsets and exposure is critical. My own experiences have been instrumental in shaping our international people strategy: we encourage our talent pools to take overseas opportunities, and we value those that have this experience.

I understand going on an international assignment for the first time can be daunting, so I suggest people undertake one-to-two month experiences in another country. After that initial taste, they’re usually ready and eager to take on a longer assignment. I’m also very passionate about inclusion, and we focus on talent pools that are 50:50 so our women are just as likely to be considered for international assignments as our men. Overall, I’ve had an incredibly interesting and rewarding international career - and I highly recommend people jump in and grab these kinds of life-changing opportunities when they come up.”

### Tough questions about diversity disconnects

Are you fully leveraging mobility as a means to develop senior leadership talent?

What are you doing to ensure global mobility, talent management and diversity strategies are not operated in a silo?

How will you deliver the alignment you need between mobility, diversity and talent management?

How will you drive a proactive rather than reactive approach to capitalising on the diversity opportunity when challenged with a myriad of growing day-to-day requirements?





# A culture of mobility

Forward-looking businesses are developing a more agile and strategic approach to mobility, while ensuring they have the strong operational foundations to deliver against their goals. However, a strong mobility strategy and operations function alone might not be enough. Both of these must exist within an organisational culture that fosters, encourages, embraces and rewards international mindsets and experience. Put simply, creating a culture of mobility is critical.

To develop a culture of mobility, it's vital that members of senior leadership have the right attitudes towards global mobility. There must be buy-in from the top to the fact that mobility plays a critical role in creating value for the business and moving it forwards. In combination with this, the workforce must understand that developing internationally focused competencies is a critical requirement for effective day-to-day delivery and career advancement in the organisation.

Sixty percent of global mobility leaders confirmed that they move employees to develop a succession pipeline of future leaders, almost as many – 57% – said their organisation does not articulate an expectation of international mobility to its key talent populations. This raises a clear question: if an organisation's employees are unaware that international mobility experience is a requirement for their career advancement, what will incentivise them to plan for, seek out, or accept such opportunities during their career? To reduce the gender leadership gap, women must know what is expected and required to advance in their organisations and international employers must make it clear from day one if international capabilities and experiences are expected to succeed and progress.

## We move employees to develop our succession pipeline of future leaders



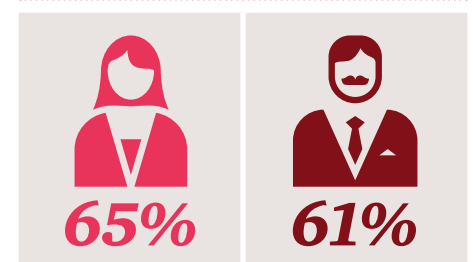
## We articulate an expectation of international mobility to our key talent populations



## Boosting transparency and accessibility

It's also important that global mobility opportunities are transparent and readily accessible. Our research suggests more effort is required on this front, with 65% of female and 61% of male respondents saying they would like opportunities to work overseas to be more transparent at the companies they work for. The lack of transparent mobility opportunities and clear policies on mobility diversity are likely to reinforce barriers to the inclusion of underrepresented talent groups, including women.

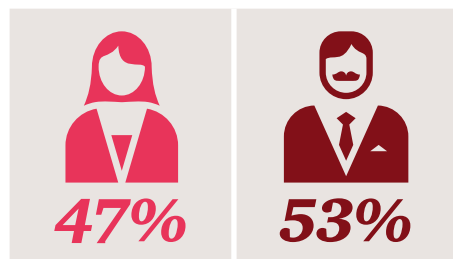
## I wish that opportunities to work abroad were more transparent at the company I work for



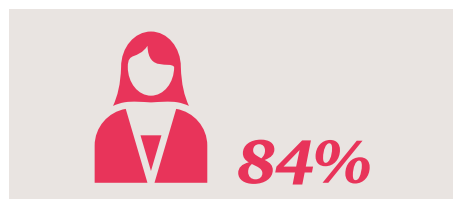
On a more positive note, our research found that mobility breeds mobility. Of the 2,787 respondents who had already had access to an international experience, 47% of the female and 53% of the male respondents confirmed they had completed more than one international assignment. Furthermore, based on their most recent international experience, 84% of women said that they would undertake another international assignment, and 93% said that they would recommend an international assignment to a colleague. Increasing the level of female assignees can only help to foster and grow an organisation's mobility culture.

Successful employers will be those who create a culture that clearly articulates an expectation of international mobility to their employees; visibly share the positive international experiences of past and current assignees; ensure their international opportunities are transparent; and actively seek out opportunities to increase their number of mobile employees, particularly women. In combination, these steps will instil an organisational culture of international mobility that is gender-inclusive to all talent.

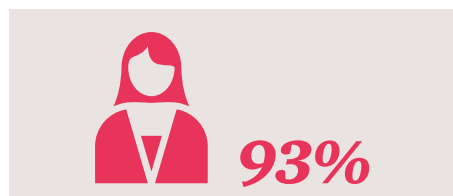
### **I have completed more than one international assignment**



### **Based on my most recent international experience I would undertake another international assignment**



### **Based on my most recent international experience I would recommend an international assignment to a colleague**



## **Voice of the female international assignee**

**Alica Pavukova, Assurance Partner, PwC Slovakia**



“If you were to pick out a theme running through my career, then I think it would have to be international experience. My love for crossing borders all began when I finished university and set off on a personal adventure to California, where I worked in various temping jobs and travelled widely across the US. This experience helped me develop an understanding of – and a deep interest in – different cultures and behaviours. I knew then that, for me, having one country to live in and explore would never be enough.

When I joined PwC Slovakia, I quickly let them know that I wanted to undertake an international assignment. They listened, and soon after starting my career I went on my first international assignment – a short-term placement in Russia. This first experience of global mobility merely served to increase my desire for more international experience. So I went on to seek out opportunities in more developed markets, with a view to learning and returning with skills and experience that would bring added value to the Slovakian firm.

I subsequently completed a six-month assignment in our UK firm and a longer-term assignment in our Australian firm. The latter was a very different personal experience for me, as my husband and two-year-old son came with me. It was amazing living in Melbourne as a family – and while we were there my son got to learn English and began to develop his own international mindset.

It was also a different professional experience. I was promoted to senior manager while I was in Australia – which was a big deal, because at the time it was quite rare to get promoted while abroad, especially after only 18 months. As a result I became something of a role model for my colleagues including women in PwC Slovakia and our wider Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) region. I take this role seriously, including by actively promoting mobility and sharing my experiences. And, like me, most of my team who go abroad come back and say it was their best career decision and experience ever.

My international mindset and ability to be mobile, agile and flexible were all important factors in my admission to the partnership in 2006. I have no doubt that my international experiences have been key to my career success and self-development – as well as enabling me to realise my personal dream of travelling the world.”

# *PwC Case Study*

## **Modern mobility: Building Global acumen**

At PwC, we recognise that today's globalised world is one where countries, economies, companies and individuals are more interconnected and interdependent than ever before, with the scale and pace of change increasing. This is why we introduced the PwC Professional, our global leadership development framework for defining and encouraging leadership at all levels. It describes who we need to be and the behaviours we need to adopt in order to meet the expectations of our clients, colleagues and communities in today's fast-evolving global marketplace.

Recognising the impacts of accelerating globalisation and social change, together with global shifts in economic power and demographics, Global acumen is one of the five critical attributes included in the PwC Professional. This means people joining our firms understand from day one the importance of demonstrating leadership by working and collaborating with a mindset that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries – whatever the grade level at which they operate.

Our first-year associates, for example, are encouraged and expected to be open to learning about others' cultures and how they are different from their own – while our people at senior manager grades are expected to actively support global experiences for themselves and their team members. These are just two of the behaviours and skills expected of our people within our Global acumen attribute.

We regard this attribute of the PwC Professional as fundamental to creating the culture of global perspectives, international mindsets and international experiences that are critical if we are to solve the world's most important problems and create value for our clients. Our people know that having an open mind and being exposed to international experiences – whether by working with different cultures locally, on a virtual team, or on a cross-border engagement or international mobility assignment – are important in their day-to-day success and career progression within our network of member firms.

We are certainly seeing the effects; last year at least 50,000 of our people conducted international business travel, 971 short term assignments have been initiated so far this fiscal year, and 2,732 of our people are currently experiencing a long term assignment, 36% of whom are women. Furthermore, when we look at our leadership teams we see growing levels of global acumen, in fact, 100% of the leaders on our executive leadership teams in Brazil, China, Germany and Singapore have held international roles and/or undertaken international mobility experiences.

### ***Tough questions about a culture of mobility***

How will you create wide-scale international competencies and mindsets in your organisation?

Are you articulating an expectation of international mobility to your employees?

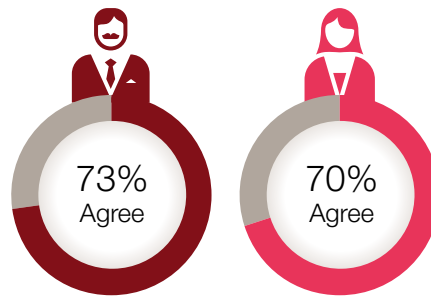
Are your organisation's global mobility opportunities transparent to all employees?

# Female role model gap

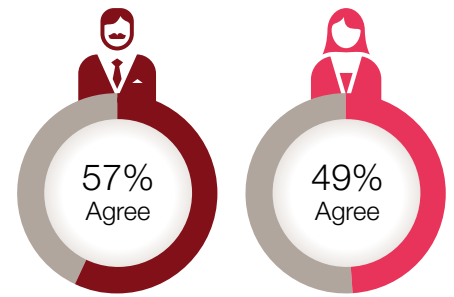


Less than half of women agree that their organisation has enough successful female role models for international assignments. The older women are, the less likely they are to agree that there are enough female role models – with only 43% of generation X females saying this is the case. From a geographical perspective, women in Africa (39%) were least likely to agree, followed by women in Europe (46%). Interestingly the role model gap is much smaller in South America, with 66% of women agreeing there are enough female role models. Women working in the Industrial Manufacturing (59%), Banking & Capital Markets (56%), and Pharmaceuticals and Life Sciences sectors were most likely to agree; while women working in Energy, Utilities and Mining (34%) and Communications (39%) were least likely to feel there are enough successful female role models with international experience in their sectors.

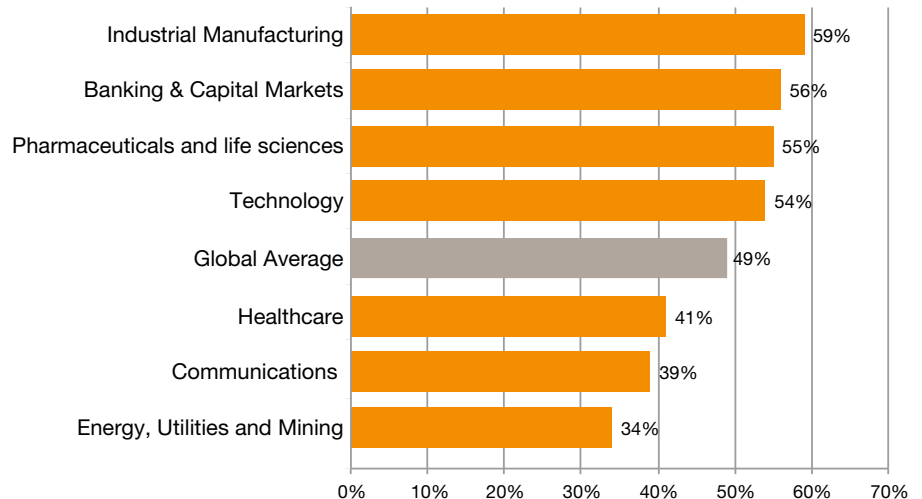
**Do you feel there are enough male role models of successful international assignees in your organisation?**



**Do you feel there are enough female role models of successful international assignees in your organisation?**



**Industry insights:** There are enough female role models of successful international assignees in my organisation (females that agree)



Note: includes sectors with 25 or more female respondents only. Aerospace, Asset Management, Automotive, Capital projects and infrastructure, Chemicals, Defence, Engineering and construction, Entertainment and media, Forest, Paper and packaging, Metals, Real Estate sectors excluded.

## Women are underrepresented in our mobility populations



Given that 57% of global mobility leaders confirmed women are underrepresented in their mobility populations it is critical that organisations make efforts to role-model the experiences of those women who have international mobility experience. International employers must become familiar with the expression ‘you can’t be what you can’t see’ as a catalyst to drive efforts that will channel more gender inclusive mobility. The 71% of female millennials who desire international experience will want to be able to look up and around them and see women who have had international experience opportunities at your organisation, and have seen their careers benefit as result. If this is not what they see, then you may struggle to attract or retain this talent cohort as they look to other employers to pursue such opportunities.

### Changing mindsets across the workforce

It is not just female employees who will benefit from better female role-modelling; it will help to change mindsets across the whole workforce on what an international assignee looks like at your organisation. Opportunities that may have historically been implicitly associated with male employees will have a greater likelihood of being associated with either gender if leaders and employees are easily able to visualise female assignees. And while this will obviously be critical for your female talent who are focused on gaining international experience, it will also foster a culture of mobility that is more likely to convince those who – for whatever reason

– are less keen on international experience to become more inclined to accept such an opportunity.

In developing and publicising female role models, it’s important to ensure they don’t all look the same. This means asking yourself whether your role models will resonate with all your female talent – or just a select few? It’s vital to profile a diversity of female role models. For example, women who have had international experience early in their career, and when their careers are more established; women who have been deployed to geographically diverse markets, both developed and emerging; women who have deployed on their own,

with their partners and with their families; and women who have undertaken widely differing types of assignment – whether they be business- or developmental-focused, or long- or short-term.

Role modelling successful female international assignees won’t fix the role model gap overnight. But it’s certainly one of the most simple, yet effective actions an organisation can take to support the move towards a more gender inclusive mobility programme. Throughout this report, we’ve purposefully showcased profiles of a diverse group of current and past international female assignees so our readers can read about their experiences and achievements.

## Voice of the female international assignee

### Joni Edwards, Tax Partner, PwC US

“As a tax director based in our US firm’s Stamford, Connecticut office, I must admit that an international assignment – let alone one to Japan – was not really something I’d ever planned for in my career. When approached with the opportunity I really struggled. Quite simply, I just couldn’t picture myself, my husband and my four young children living, working and going to school in Tokyo. In fact, I turned it down twice before I said yes.

After I declined the offer for the second time, our global mobility team arranged for me to undertake an exploration trip to Japan. This was game-changing. Even though I knew it meant big change, suddenly I found I could visualise myself and my family living in Tokyo. Looking back now, I’m so glad that they stuck with me and the opportunity didn’t go to someone else. For me, the experience was career-changing and a critical milestone in my admission to the partnership, which happened during my five years in Tokyo. The experience was also life-changing for my whole family, and a real cultural awakening.

However, I do wish there had been someone in my shoes who had already been through a similar experience, whom I could have talked to when first presented with the opportunity. This is one of the main reasons why I’m very happy to be a female role model today, and always make time to talk to women considering an assignment in Japan or women with families considering an international assignment anywhere in the world. It’s reward enough to know that I get to play a small part in what I know from experience will be a life-enhancing experience for them.”



### Tough questions about the female role model gap

How are you communicating the positive aspects of your mobility programme through the experiences of successful women?

Do your female international assignee role models resonate with your wider workforce?

# Early mobility





There is a strong perception that women prefer to have international experiences early in their careers. While our research confirms that this is the case, it also shows that *the same applies for men*. Seventy-four per cent of both female and male respondents said the most preferential time to complete an international assignment is in the first six years of a career. Similarly, equal proportions of men and women ranked the time before starting a family (70%) and before having eldercare responsibilities (65%) as preferential life stages for undertaking an international assignment. Early mobility was also in higher demand from our male and female millennial respondents than from the generation X and baby boomer employees in our survey.

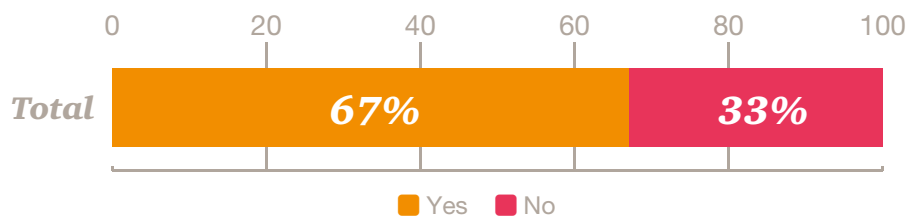
In a nutshell, early mobility is the most favoured timing to undertake an international assignment by both female and male talent. The good news is that 67% of mobility leaders say they offer international mobility opportunities to employees early in their career. However, the findings certainly present food for thought for the remaining 33% of international employers that don't currently offer early mobility.

## Thinking ahead or looking back with regard to your career:

Is/would there have been a preferential time to undertake an international assignment?

|   |  |  |
|---|---|---|
| Early in my career (first 6 years)  | 74%   | 74%   |
| Before starting a family  | 70%   | 70%   |
| Before I have eldercare responsibilities  | 65%   | 65%   |
| Would be happy to undertake an international assignment at any stage in my career | 69%   | 67%   |

## Does your organisation offer international mobility opportunities to employees early in their career?



When it comes to increasing female participation in mobility, the benefits of offering early mobility will go well beyond the immediate impact of providing opportunities at the time when demand is highest. The potential behavioural impacts on the make-up of your international assignment population driven by stereotypes and unconscious bias will be less prevalent before women – and men – advance in their careers and their personal circumstances change. Ultimately, early mobility options mean employers will face fewer barriers to gender inclusive mobility – as well as creating a cadre of female role models and the potential for repeat mobility from these women later in their careers.

## Long-term benefits in leadership diversity

In cases where early mobility is not yet being offered or is not fully effective, organisations should look to create cost-effective developmental options such as talent swaps, or offer short-term assignments that will appeal to more junior talent. Initiatives such as these will provide your organisation with longer-term opportunities to create a future pipeline of female talent, with the skills and experience required to undertake more strategic and business-critical international assignments later in their careers.

Focusing specifically on female talent, early mobility also has the potential to create wider benefits for your organisation and female talent. Research indicates that women are more risk-averse when it comes to career decisions than men.<sup>16</sup> We know from this research that being exposed to international mobility makes women much more likely to accept further international assignments. It's also likely that such distinctive and out-of-comfort-zone experiences will make women more likely to pursue other stretch opportunities throughout their careers. The impacts mean that early mobility will ultimately support the completion of the critical development milestones required to increase the level of female representation in future leadership succession pipelines.

International employers who get early mobility right will have an edge in the war for talent attraction and retention, will be more successful in leveraging millennial mobility demand, will channel the benefits of repeat mobility and will experience more gender diverse leadership pipeline development.

<sup>16</sup> Individual Risk Attitudes: Measurement, Determinants, and Behavioral Consequences. Journal of the European Economic Association. Dohmen et al. 2011

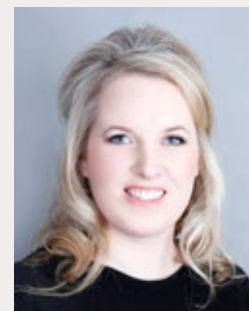
# PwC Case Study

## Modern mobility: Early mobility

This year, we in PwC have reached the workforce demographic landmark of almost 80% of our people being millennials. We know that international experience is high on the agenda for our current millennial talent, in addition to the more than 20,000 millennial graduates PwC firms recruit each year from across the globe. Back in 2007, we began to recognise that the demands of the millennial generation were reshaping – and would continue to reshape – both our workplace and our international mobility programme. It was at this stage that we made an active choice to broaden our mobility culture to one that decisively incorporated and encouraged early mobility. What we perhaps didn't predict was the influence this in turn would have on the demographic make-up of our international assignees. Female millennial interest and demand for international assignments, coupled with the fact that early mobility is in highest demand, have led to powerful results at PwC. In a nutshell, early mobility opportunities mean greater numbers of female international assignees. For the past six years, at least 44% of our long-term assignments below manager level have consistently been female, with over 1,317 female talent deploying to, and from, 95 countries. And our female leaders consistently cite a mobility experience as one of their top three developmental milestones. So these results are something that we at PwC are very proud of.

## Voice of the female international assignee

### Aoife Flood, Senior Manager, PwC Ireland



“When I was 25, I had the opportunity to go and work in our US firm's Boston office for six months. It was an amazing experience and, to this day, it is unparalleled in terms of the level of accelerated personal and professional growth I gleaned from the experience. But it was hard. Yes, Boston is probably the most Irish place I could have gone on an international assignment, but believe me it was not without its challenges.

Never mind it being my first time living overseas, it was my first time living outside of my family home. I was moving into a completely new role of which I had no prior experience, and I didn't know a single person in Boston. So yes, it was tough, but I will never forget how I felt when I got back to Dublin. The whole experience literally made me feel 'career invincible'. Like, wow, if I survived that, I could survive anything my career might throw at me. Without doubt, getting that experience early in my career made me much less 'career risk-averse', and was instrumental in establishing a pattern where I consistently seek out challenging opportunities that keep me inspired, motivated and engaged. Quite simply, I wouldn't be where I am in my career today had it not been for my international assignment experience.”

## Tough questions about early mobility

How will you respond to millennial employees' sky-high demand for international experiences early in their careers?

What are you doing to incorporate early mobility effectively into your mobility programme?

How will you channel the wider benefits early mobility has to offer – such as repeat mobility, a more gender-inclusive mobility programme, and the development of future female leaders?

# Understanding mobile readiness



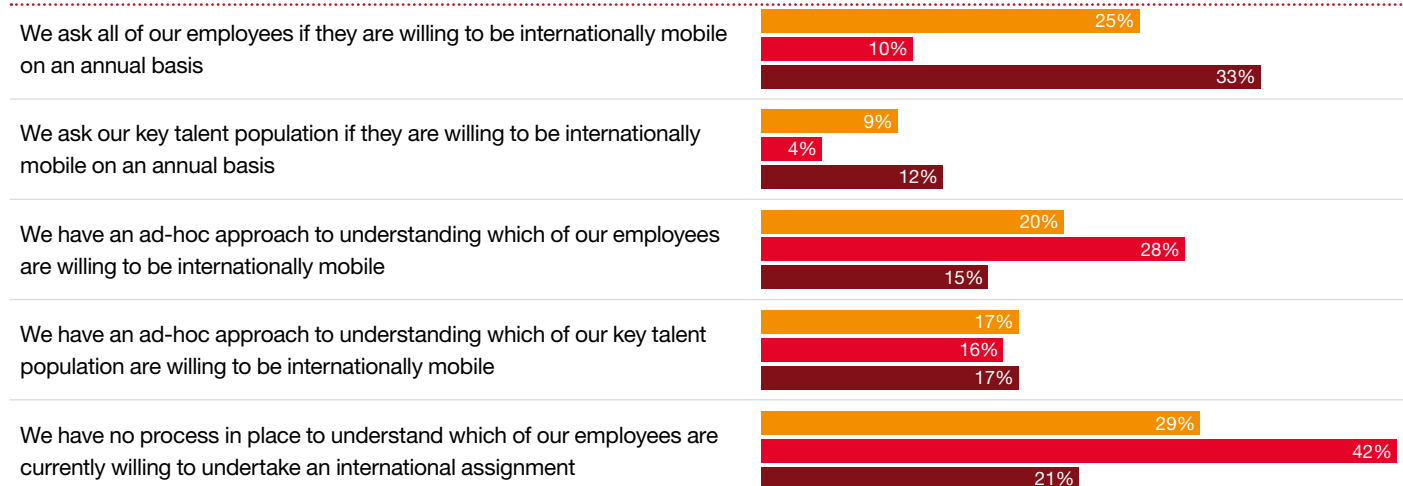
For an international employer to create a global mobility programme that is both effective and gender-inclusive in today's modern work world, it's critical that the mobile readiness of their workforce is understood. By 'mobile readiness' we mean having a clear and real-time picture of how many and which of their employees are willing and prepared to go on an international assignment – and while an accurate view of this is vital, most companies do little to gain one. Just 9% of international employers currently ask their key talent population – and only 25% their complete workforce – whether they're willing to be internationally mobile on an annual basis. As a formal process, assessing mobile readiness is much less prevalent in organisations with less than 10,000 employees, of which only 4% track mobile readiness for their key talent populations and 10% for all their employees. These findings provide a clear indication that there is significant work to do – and significant potential gains to be made – in this area.

Interestingly, however, these sub-10,000 employee businesses are 13% more likely to be taking an ad-hoc approach to understanding the mobile readiness of their complete workforce than those with 10,000-plus employees. Overall, 20% of international employers have an ad-hoc approach to understanding which of their employees are willing to be internationally mobile, compared with 17% who do the same for their key talent populations only.

Most worryingly, almost 30% of international employers currently have no process at all in place for understanding which of their employees are mobile-ready. When we asked global mobility leaders what they felt was the most significant barrier causing the underrepresentation of women in international mobile populations, 45% said it was because the organisation had no clear view of those employees who were willing to be internationally mobile – positioning this as the number one barrier to increased female mobility.

We know from this research that men are the dominant gender represented in most organisations' international mobility programmes. There's a clear risk that this imbalance – combined with a dearth of knowledge on which talent is actually mobile-ready – will continue to reinforce barriers to higher female mobility. If decision-makers look around them and see predominately male international assignees, then when the time comes for them to select a new international assignee, despite their best intentions the environment may well have conditioned them to unconsciously and intuitively select a male talent. Being able to pull up an active real-time list of those employees who are mobile-ready is an effective safeguard against potential gender bias in the assignment selection process. Decision-makers can review this list and make decisions based on objective and concrete data, rather than on who they think of first or know best.

## Does your organisation formally monitor if your employee population is willing to go on an international assignment?



All respondents   Fewer than 10,000 employees   10,000+ employees



Skills tracking technology is another valuable asset for organisations looking to develop an effective global mobility and workforce planning strategy. A real-time understanding of the skills that exist throughout your organisation – such as competencies, language, project exposure, technical expertise, and also whether the employee is mobile-ready – helps employers find and deploy the right talent, at the right time, for the right role in the right location. Ultimately it will also be good for diversity, enabling enhanced utilisation of talent across all demographics in the workforce.

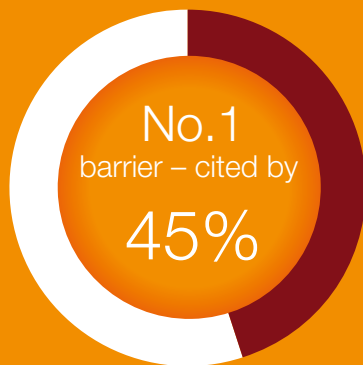
However, while the benefits of adopting skills tracking technology are substantial, the significant investment and effort involved in implementing it may limit some employers from pursuing it in the short-term. To overcome this issue, they should be positioning their leadership towards a workforce planning and mobility approach that will evolve in that manner, while also pursuing shorter-term adoption of alternative approaches to understanding mobile readiness. This could take the form of incorporating a mobile readiness question into their performance management process. Or it

could mean driving behaviours whereby people decision-makers keep an active list of their own function's mobile readiness, so when an opportunity arises they know which employees are interested and can objectively identify the most suitable candidate.

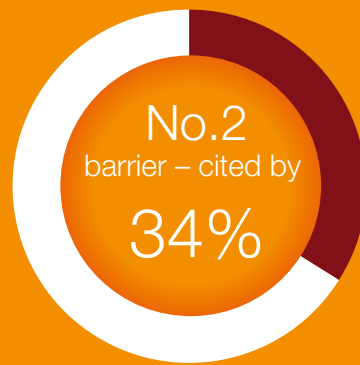
Successful international employers will have a clear understanding of their mobile-ready population – and will use this both to drive more inclusive mobility, and also to reap wider benefits in their global mobility programmes and workforce planning.

## What are the top barriers causing the under-representation of women on international assignments at your organisation?

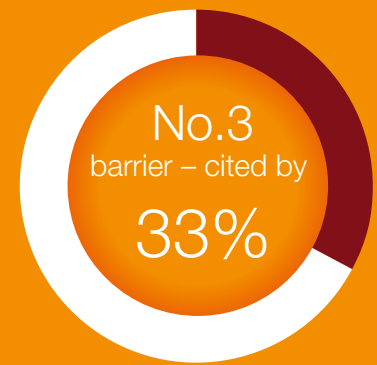
Organisation has no clear view of employees who are willing to be internationally mobile



Lack of female role models for whom a global mobility experience has been part of their career success



Women with children do not want to undertake international assignments



(Global mobility responses)

## Telstra Case Study

### Modern mobility: Objective assignee selection

At Telstra we are actively focused on pursuing opportunities beyond Australia and recognise global mobility is critical to achieving international expansion and future growth. Unconstrained by legacy mobility processes, we've been able to build our global mobility function on a solid base of global best practices. We're also heavily committed to gender equality, with a comprehensive diversity strategy and a strong focus on female representation at all levels of our organisation.

We focus strongly on objective assignee selection, acknowledging that choosing the right talent for international assignments cannot come down to "who you know". To further support our objective assignee selection approach whilst also enhancing our global mobility programme more generally,

we're implementing a new platform that will hold a centralised talent database with information about each of our employees. Information such as skills, experience, location, education, and whether they're interested in international opportunities will all be captured.

The proportion of female employees across the Group was 30.2% for the year ended 30 June 2014, with over 35% of our current international assignees being women. The fact that our female expatriate percentage is higher than the percentage of women in our workforce as a whole is unusual – and we believe it's a positive reflection of our approach to managing candidate selection.

## Voice of the female international assignee

### Siobhan O'Brien, Managing Director – FINPRO Practice, Marsh

"I'm originally from Ireland, and in 2000 I joined the London office of Marsh, a global leader in insurance broking and risk management that now has 27,000 people in over 130 countries. After 14 years' experience of insurance broking in London, I moved to Marsh's head office in New York in 2006 as the national placement and advisory head for the financial institutions business in Marsh FINPRO.

I stayed in New York until 2013 – and with the global financial and banking crisis happening during that time, it was an amazing period to be there. It was also a time when my career progressed significantly: I arrived in New York as a senior vice-president, and while based there I was promoted to managing director and put in charge of a large team.

The assignment also gave me the opportunity to build on my previous experience wholesaling US business in the UK market, and develop key client relationships in the US. The strength of these relationships, coupled with the work I had done for our clients during the financial crisis were key to me winning the Risk & Insurance magazine Power Broker awards in the Financial Institutions category three years running, from 2009 to 2011. Recently, I was named the Advisen Executive Risk Awards European Industry Person of the Year in 2015 – with the judges crediting my international experience and perspectives as a factor in their decision.

Looking back on my experience of international mobility, I think the greatest thing it has given me is a more rounded perspective. We all grow up in a certain environment – and our mindsets are framed by it.

When you spend time living and working somewhere very different, your mindset, preconceptions and expectations adjust, and you gain a broader perspective on how different parts of the world operate.

Before I moved to New York, one of my concerns was that I would be surrounded by some phenomenal peers – so how would I shine? But on thinking about it more deeply, I realised I would be bringing qualities and experience they didn't have. That certainly proved to be the case. So when going on an international assignment, it's important to think about the value you can bring to the people you're joining – not just the other way round.

Today I'm a strong advocate for international mobility for everybody in Marsh. I'm talking to a female colleague right now who's considering an international secondment, and I've been discussing the personal relationship and career aspects with her. I hope she goes for it – and I think she will."



## Voice of the female international assignee

### Magdelene WZ Chua, Partner, PwC Singapore

"The experience of undertaking an international assignment in the UK firm's London office as a 28-year-old manager was instrumental in broadening my horizons and supporting my career progression at PwC.

The main benefits stemming from my two years in London came from being placed in a completely new and different environment, both professionally and culturally. I was frequently amazed by the fact I was having lunch or working on project teams with colleagues who came from seven to nine different international cities. My personal global acumen skills developed and benefited hugely from this experience. In addition, I had the opportunity to start building a very extensive global network, which was critical during this mid-phase of my career.

On a personal level, working in a very different professional environment provided me with the opportunity to meet many interesting people, have lots of fun and enjoy many memorable experiences. On a

professional level, it has definitely shaped my leadership style: I feel it has made me more agile and appreciative of different points of view, and this has influenced how I engage with, and provide services to, my clients. It was also a critical experience when it came to my admission to the Singapore partnership in 2013."



## Tough questions about understanding mobile readiness

How will you leverage technology to enable better workforce planning?

What are you doing to make sure you always have a current picture of your mobile-ready talent pipeline?

How will you drive the behavioural change needed to support more inclusive mobility talent decisions?



# Location, location, location






As today's increasingly globalised economy brings more countries into the talent exchange, mobility is evolving. We're no longer in a world where movement is primarily West-to-East, or from mature to emerging markets. Similarly growth locations are changing. The focus of global investment and growth is shifting beyond the once dominant G7 – a fact evident not only in the rise of the BRIC economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China, but also in the fast growth of the F7 'frontier' markets, stretching from the Philippines to Peru. As a result, businesses are casting their net ever wider as they look for new growth opportunities. This fast-changing business landscape demands a rethink of what kind of talent you need across the world, and how you can source, deploy, manage and motivate that talent more effectively. More resourceful engagement of female talent must form part of this rethink.

A key challenge for employers is that markets targeted for growth may be low down the list of employees' favoured destinations. Given that 75% of global mobility leaders agree that assignment destinations match their organisation's priority destinations for growth,<sup>17</sup> what's the best way to manage this mismatch?

Global mobility leaders told us that Africa (23%), Asia-Pacific (21%) and South America (17%) were the three most challenging regions to move people to.<sup>18</sup>

And from a talent perspective we see some clear overlaps. When asked if there were any regions to which they would never consider relocating to as an international assignment location, women ranked the Middle East (48%) top, followed by Africa (43%), and then Eastern Europe and South America (both 16%). For men the pattern was very similar; Africa (39%), Middle East (35%), Eastern Europe (16%) and South America (14%). Interestingly, in contrast to the perceptions of mobility leaders, only 11% of women and 6% of men said they would never relocate to the Asia-Pacific region.

Strikingly, in most cases, the results for men and women are very similar, with the same destinations being almost equally unappealing to both – with the exception of the Middle East (13 point gap) and Asia-Pacific (5 point gap). And when we focus on the top results for female employees, their least favoured locations are indicative of more traditional patriarchal cultures that are less open across the spectrum of gender equality, compared to the more popular and developed regions.

|  |  Global Mobility Leaders |  Female Employees  |  Male Employees |
|--|--|---|--|
| <i>Region</i>                                      | Top five locations that are most challenging to move people to   | Top five regions respondents would never consider relocating to as an international assignment location |  |
| Africa   | <b>23%</b>   | <b>43%</b>  | <b>39%</b>   |
| Middle East  | <b>11%</b>   | <b>48%</b>  | <b>35%</b>   |
| South America                                      | <b>17%</b>   | <b>16%</b>  | <b>14%</b>   |
| Eastern Europe                                     | <b>10%</b>   | <b>16%</b>  | <b>16%</b>   |
| Asia-Pacific                                       | <b>21%</b>   | <b>11%</b>  | <b>6%</b>  |
| None – I would consider relocating to any of these |  | <b>31%</b>  | <b>45%</b>   |

<sup>17</sup> Moving people with purpose: Modern mobility survey, PwC 2015

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

It is clear that organisations face many challenges that can make it difficult to move talent to some of the most in-demand locations. These challenges span the spectrum, from high employment taxes, health and safety concerns, political instability, social isolation and concerns over the distance from home, to cultural differences and worries about gender and racial inclusion. This brings a number of implications. As organisations focus more clearly on creating an expectation of mobility in their workforces, they should ensure that the discussion includes the locations to which international moves are expected, in line with their international business and growth strategy.

Positive interventions to make some locations more attractive in addition to access to role models who have had successful experiences in these locations will be critical. Some employers may also choose to provide enhanced benefits to make some locations more attractive – but it's important to remember that additional financial rewards are not the only incentive that can be offered. For example, there is an opportunity to capitalise on millennials' keen interest in corporate social responsibility; including a paid four-to-six week sabbatical on successful completion of the assignment to work on a charitable project could be very appealing to this generation of talent. Mentoring and exposure to senior leadership can also be attractive to employees with aspirations to progress within the company.

On a more positive note, almost one-third of the women in our study said that they would relocate to *any* region – and while this is not as high as among men (45%), it is still a very encouraging finding. It's also clear that location challenges are not limited to women. So putting a focused action plan in place to manage these challenges, while also paying close attention to unearthing any specific location barriers to female moves, will pay dividends in terms of driving increased mobility levels to more challenging locations, for both men and women.

## Survey insights:

### **You said you would never consider relocating to the following locations. Please tell us why?**

*“South America is too far away from my family in Asia”*

Female Senior Manager, Banking and Capital markets, Singapore

*“Australia is too far away from my home country”*

Male Director, Healthcare, Russia

*“Taxes are too high in Western & Central Europe, and the lifestyle is not desirable to me”*

Female Senior Manager, Financial Services, Singapore

Referring to Africa: *“Exposing my family to health and safety risk (poor infrastructure and hospitals); political instability; large cultural distance – increased likelihood of isolation”*

Female Manager, Professional services, UK

*“Language and safety concerns for Northern Africa”*

Male Director, Asset Management, Australia

*“I don't think they're safe for women right now. The Middle East I just wouldn't go to, because where my company has contracts (in Saudi Arabia), women aren't treated the same as men – they can't be in charge. My company doesn't even send women over there, even though we have highly skilled women that could do the work.”*

Below manager level female, Aerospace, Canada

*“I would not relocate to Eastern Europe for safety reasons”*

Below manager level male, Pharmaceuticals and life sciences, Germany

*“I would consider Dubai because it is developed and westernised.”*

Below manager level female, Oil & Gas, US

*“In Europe there are limited prospects for dark-skinned people”*

Below manager level female, Education, Nigeria

## **Voice of the female international assignee**

**Samar ElMnhrawy, VP Human Resources, Baker Hughes, United Arab Emirates.**



“I am a dual national Egyptian/American. While I was growing up, I enjoyed overseas vacation travelling, but I didn’t really have an ambition to work outside the Middle East, but when I first joined Baker Hughes in 2003 I got a short-term assignment in Europe, and I was hooked to the international exposure. Baker Hughes is a hugely international oil & gas services business, with 43,000 people in 80 countries, and the international opportunities here are brilliant. So after working on a short term assignment in Europe, I returned to Dubai for a while, and then transferred to the US for eight years. I’m now based back in Dubai, and my international experience is very valuable in my role.

While in the US I had the privilege of working in several different roles, starting in HR, then moving into M&A, then operations, and finally back to HR. It was a fantastic experience, and gave me a very wide range of skills – a big plus in today’s environment. Having people with international experience also brings Baker Hughes a big competitive edge: we identify our high-potential people early in their careers, and mobility is a key attribute in their progression.

I would add that international experience brings benefits that cross over between your personal and work life. It takes you outside your comfort zone and enables you to learn about new cultures, encounter different points of view and deal with different types of personality. All experiences that helped me grow and develop as a person, and have been hugely advantageous to me in my leadership roles. Working and living here in the Middle East, I’m aware that some women in other parts of the world might wonder whether they would want to work in this region. But wherever you go, there’s a risk factor about embracing change and going outside your comfort zone – and I honestly feel it’s worth the risk.

Currently I’m quite mobile: my husband is here with me in Dubai, and we have one of our sons living here in Dubai and two other sons living in the US in different states, i.e. we are an international family. The advice I give to my female field engineers is that if they’re going to get married, they should choose someone who’ll support their career, not hinder it. Having a supportive family and social structure around you is a huge help for a woman looking to progress in her career and when the time comes for an international assignment.”

### **Tough questions about location**

How will you ensure your mobility destinations match your organisation’s priority destinations for growth?

What are you doing to create clarity on the locations to which international moves are expected at your organisation?

What information and feedback channels will you leverage to understand which locations are the most difficult to move your employees to? And how will you ensure the information covers both the nature of employees’ concerns and also any legal, cultural and societal/environmental barriers?

What elements (policy, package, communication) will you focus on to make your priority destinations more attractive to your key talent?

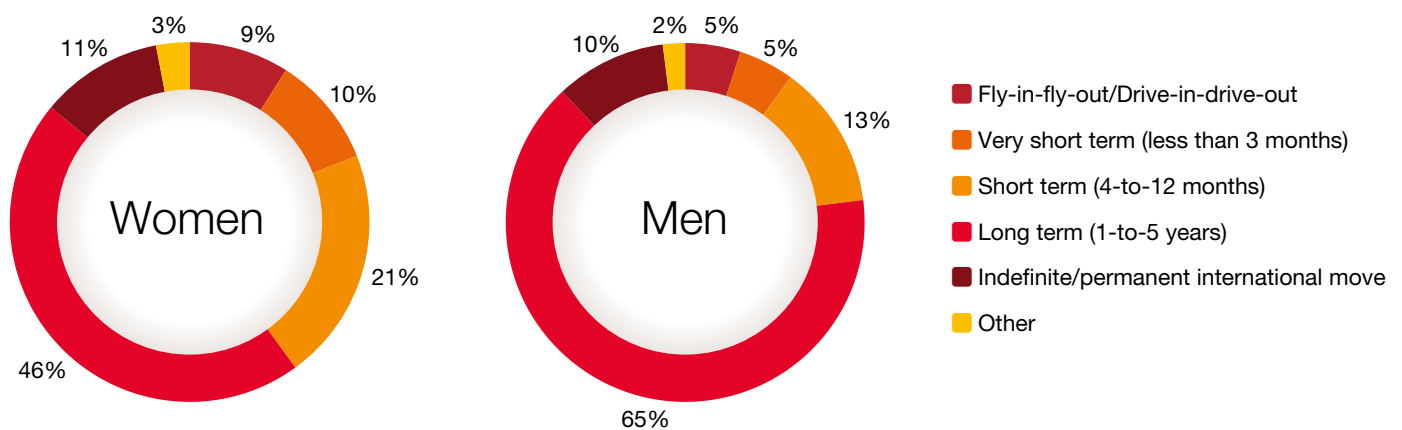


# Duration, benefits and repatriation

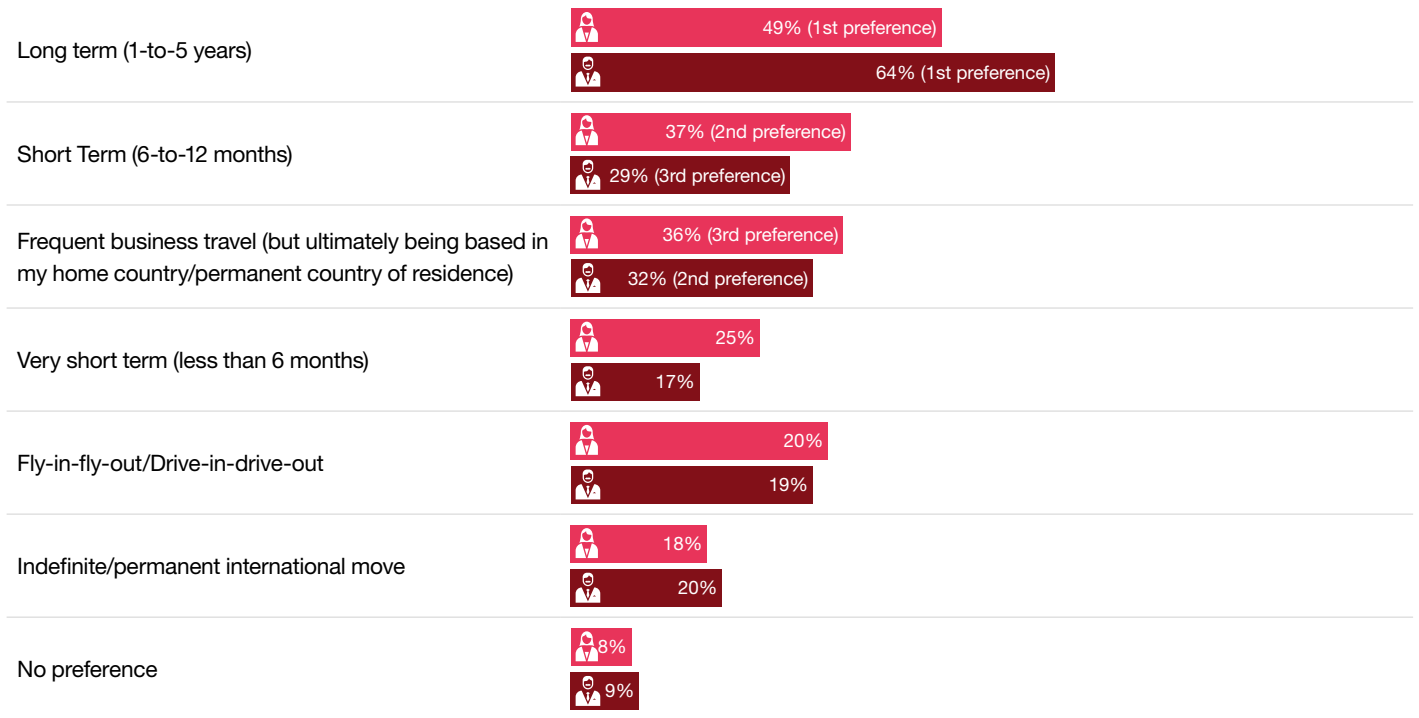
According to our research, women are 13% more likely to have experienced short-term mobility assignments than men, while men are 19% more likely to have experienced long-term assignments. When we look at the preferences of men and women, we find that women are 16% more likely to prefer mobility experiences of less than a year, while men are 15% more likely to prefer mobility experiences of one to five years.

However, this doesn't mean women are only interested in short-term mobility. In fact almost half of the women we surveyed (49%) identified long-term assignments as their preferred assignment type, making this the assignment duration most in demand from both female and male employees. Women favour 6-to-12 month durations as their second preference (37%) and frequent business travel as their third preference (36%), while men favour frequent business travel second (32%) and 6-to-12 months third (29%). Overall, 8% of female and 9% of male respondents are open to all duration types, saying they have no preference.

## What duration of assignment did you most recently experience?



## Is there a specific international mobility experience you would prefer/have preferred to undertake?

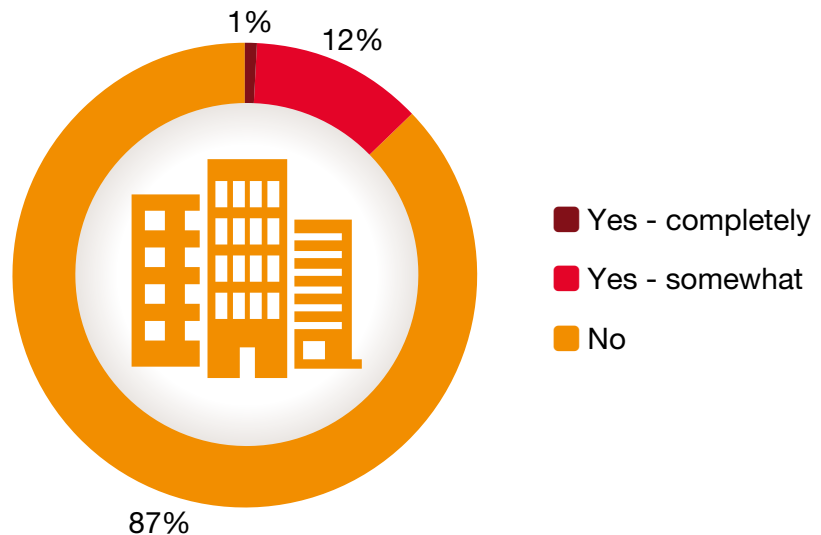


Global mobility programmes that include a range of mobility options and durations will be better positioned to attract, retain and deploy a diverse range of talent, while also allowing the organisation to respond with greater agility to evolving international business needs. Also, being careful not to associate one particular gender with one particular assignment duration – women with short-term mobility, for example – will foster great gender inclusivity.

### Enhancing mobility policies with greater choice for assignees

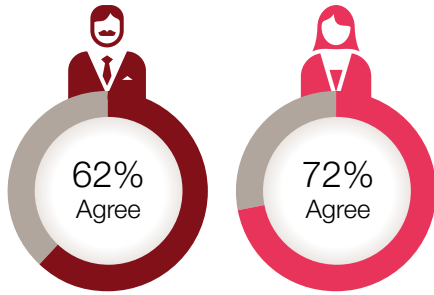
There's also a need for flexibility and choice in the assignment package. Of the 28% of assignee respondents who said their mobility package provided them the option to select personally from a menu of benefits, 71% of women and 62% of men said this made them more likely to accept the international assignment. And 80% of all respondents – both female and male – said that if their organisation offered the option to select personally from a menu of benefits, this would make international moves more appealing. Yet only 13% of global mobility leaders said their assignment packages currently include an element of employee choice.

## Does your organisation's global mobility assignment package include an element of employee choice?

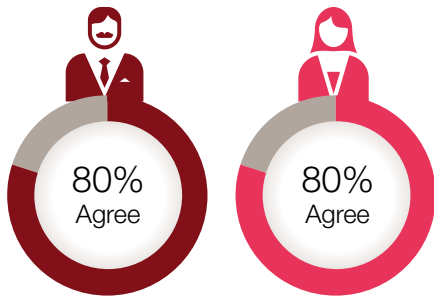




**The option to personally select from a menu of international assignment package benefits made me more likely to accept my international assignment.**



**If the option to personally select from a menu of international assignment package benefits was available at my organisation it would make international moves more appealing.**



**82% of women in a relationship are in a dual-career couple**



**77% of women in a dual-career couple earn equal to or more than their partner**



Offering potential assignees a menu of benefits enables them to choose the benefits they value most highly, reflecting their own unique personal preferences and family unit. For example, the assignee may prefer benefits associated with property management, or may prefer to have visits from friends and family or even an additional home leave trip. This flexible approach allows a more value-adding, customised and attractive solution for assignees. And it doesn't necessarily mean more cost for the employer; in some cases the overall programme costs may even decrease.

Turning to assignees' professional concerns when considering an international move, female (34%) respondents in our research cited the level of international assignment support that would be provided by their employer as their second highest professional concern. Given the importance of the assignment package and the preference for employee choice, it's not surprising that many organisations looking to tackle their mobility gender gap are doing so with a focus on their mobility policies and packages. One organisation said it was looking to make its policy more transparent, while others were trying to make policies more appealing to women in general and women in dual-career couples.

## Survey insights

**Have you put in place any specific interventions to increase the diversity of your international assignee population?**

*"Introduced different policies according with different types of assignments, to include all our professionals opportunity to moving."*

Global Mobility Leader, Spain, Technology

*"Specific exceptions from our normal rules to support women with small children."*

Global Mobility Leader, The Netherlands, Retail & Consumer Industry

*"Making our policy more open – in particular to discourage self-deselection."*

Global Mobility Leader, UK, Retail Industry

*"Introducing maternity provisions in the healthcare framework."*

Global Mobility Leader, Singapore, Financial Services

*"We are investigating if our spousal support is hindering female assignments."*

Global Mobility Leader, Denmark, Consumer Industry

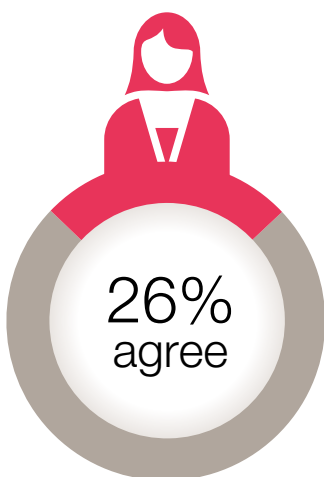
Reviewing mobility policy and packages through the lens of female talent, and introducing greater choice, transparency and awareness around global mobility policies and packages, will increase the attractiveness of mobility programmes to women and men alike.

### The importance of getting repatriation right

While accepting an international assignment is a critical choice for any employee, what happens when they come back is also vital. Of the top four professional concerns female respondents identified around embarking on mobility assignments, three concerned repatriation.

Repatriation is often the least developed area of the mobility assignment 'life cycle', partly because once the assignee returns they no longer have a link to mobility. But organisations looking to enhance the effectiveness of global mobility must ensure they have a comprehensive repatriation strategy that kicks into effect from day one of the assignment 'life cycle' and has a more rigorous approach 6-to-12 months prior to the return. Simple measures like the allocation of a mentor in the home firm to mitigate concerns over being out of sight and out of mind can have a big impact; yet only 26% of the women in our research were allocated a mentor in their home location to support them through the international experience.

### Were you allocated a mentor in your home location to support you through your international assignment?



### Did you have any professional concerns about embarking on an international assignment?



Female Respondents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| What my return role would be upon repatriation   | 44% |
| The level of International Assignment support that would be provided by my employer (financial and instrumental) | 34% |
| Being out of sight out of mind and potential negative impacts on my career prospects upon repatriation           | 30% |
| How my repatriation would be managed   | 30% |
| The implications of taking the role are not clear for my career prospects  | 27% |
| Losing professional network in home location   | 25% |
| I do/did not speak the host country language   | 24% |
| The location of the international assignment is/was not professionally appealing                                 | 20% |
| Very satisfied with career and position (prior to accepting international assignment)                            | 18% |
| My gender is not strongly represented in the expat community in the host location                                | 13% |
| None of these  | 14% |

Overall, our findings suggest that international employers need to pay as much attention to reboarding returning repatriates as they do to onboarding new employees. To achieve this, close engagement between global mobility, the business, talent management and wider human capital is critical. As demand for talent with international experience continues to rise, a repatriation plan that addresses the concerns of potential assignees and ensures that skills acquired during the assignment will be utilised in the home country can greatly increase the chance of retaining these repatriates. And retaining this talent will in turn help organisations to drive mobility programmes that demonstrably deliver business outcomes, return on investment and talent development. Also, as more organisations make diversity a leadership

priority, the war for female talent with international experience and skills can only intensify. A strategic approach to repatriation is critical for both genders – but is particularly relevant for driving higher levels of female mobility and longer-term retention of female assignees.

Overall, a gender-inclusive global mobility programme will be one that involves a world-class repatriation programme that is initiated from day one of the international assignment lifecycle – and in collaboration with functions beyond global mobility. This must be delivered together with a wide array of mobility solutions that include flexibility and choice around the assignment duration and package, thus enabling the programme to meet the diverse range of employee preferences represented in the modern workforce.

## **Voice of the female international assignee**

**Avril O’Flynn, Human Resources Director,  
EMEA, Kerry Group**



“While studying I lived in France for a year – and once I began to establish my career back in Dublin, I knew that I wanted to continue to broaden my international horizons. So at the age of 25 I went to live and work in Australia for two years. Both of these experiences helped to broaden my horizons – and, to be honest, when I returned to Dublin I didn’t anticipate any further stints abroad. That all changed when I joined Kerry Group in 2011.

As a company serving the food, beverage and pharmaceutical industries and a leading supplier of added-value brands, our mission at Kerry is to be a world leader in taste and nutrition. Our focus is very much on international growth – and particularly on expanding into developing regions such as Asia Pacific, the Middle East and Latin America. So, here at Kerry, being internationally savvy is business-critical.

In 2013, I got the opportunity to relocate to Singapore for six months and given the international growth focus of our business, I knew the experience could only be good for me, and good for my career. Working in Asia presented me with cultural challenges that I hadn’t experienced in France or Australia. I was also the first HR assignee in the region, and our HR practices were much less developed than back home. Trying to build personal and professional networks proved tough, as the role required significant travel and spending time in Indonesia, Malaysia and China.

While all these factors were challenging, in combination they provided me with the perfect environment to accelerate my leadership skills and build my resilience. Being in Asia also gave me a platform to excel and grow my career. After six months I was promoted to HR Director, APAC which meant spending a further 18 months in Singapore. Throughout the whole assignment I remained very connected to my home office and I returned to Dublin two years later as an EMEA HR Director.

Now that I’m back in Dublin, the experience has given me a much more global perspective on our business, and provided me with professional tools that will benefit me throughout my career. A further positive outcome is that I can now share my experiences with others at Kerry who are considering similar experiences. And the good news is that we’re now seeing growing numbers of our female talent take up assignment opportunities in Asia Pacific.”

### **Tough questions about duration, benefits and repatriation**

Is your repatriation programme good enough? And is it initiated in alignment with the initial stages of the assignment lifecycle?

How are you increasing the effectiveness of your repatriation programme by aligning it with your wider business and Human Capital strategies?

Do you allocate mentors to your female assignees in the home location, and make provision for formal visits to the home office during the assignment?

Are your global mobility packages operating as cost-effectively as possible? And are you capitalising on the opportunities to offer greater flexibility and employee choice around packages?

Does your mobility programme include a diverse range of mobility assignment types and durations, so it can be agile in responding to the needs of the business and the varied preferences of your key talent?

# Summary

CEOs from across the world have told us that talent diversity is both a business priority and important driver of business performance, generating benefits including higher innovation and an enhanced ability to attract talent.<sup>19</sup> A particular priority for CEOs globally is to increase female representation in senior management and leadership roles.

In our *Moving people with purpose* report, it was clear that organisations have a strong appetite for global mobility change.<sup>20</sup> Actions such as implementing better assessment of business needs, creating a strong talent mobility brand, centralising and simplifying operations, adopting a 'high-tech, high-touch' approach to mobility and strategically leveraging the modern workforce across borders can all help to put organisations ahead of the game.

The results of our research demonstrate clearly that global mobility is instrumental in the career advancement and the development of future leaders. Yet they also confirm that women are still vastly underrepresented among the growing ranks of internationally mobile workers. Furthermore, our findings are out of sync with the career aspirations of women across the globe, who are exhibiting unprecedented, but as yet unmet, demand for international mobility. The research also reveals glaring disconnects between mobility, talent management and diversity strategies – meaning that many organisations are not sufficiently aligned and joined-up internally to capitalise on the full breadth of skills and talent that make-up the modern workforce.

For international employers to capitalise successfully on the strengths of the expanding pool of female talent, the status quo will no longer suffice. Organisations must position and equip themselves to respond to the core learnings and tough questions that are raised throughout this report. Without a systematic approach to identifying the right skills and people needed to execute global business plans, and the agility to assemble them quickly and accurately, businesses will miss out on valuable opportunities and lose out in the war for talent. To succeed, your mobility programmes must be aligned to capitalise on the workforce of today, and be prepared for the workforce of the future. Overall, the message is clear: global mobility strategies that do not fully include women will simply not deliver to their full potential.

A commitment to an inclusive culture and an inclusive global mobility programme, processes and policies will help to create a business model in which all talent can prosper – including women. When the best talent rises to the top, everybody wins.

To learn more about our report '*Modern mobility: Moving women with purpose*', please visit: [www.pwc.com/movingwomenwithpurpose](http://www.pwc.com/movingwomenwithpurpose)

<sup>19</sup> A marketplace without boundaries? Responding to disruption. 18th Annual Global CEO Survey, PwC 2015

<sup>20</sup> Moving people with purpose: Modern mobility survey, PwC 2015





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*Please feel free to contact us to discuss the report in more detail.*

## *Special thanks to our featured role models*

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ANZ  
British American Tobacco  
Telstra

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|                    |                            |                            |
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