



VISION 2030 RESEARCH

SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL CAREERS



SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL CAREERS

VISION 2030 SCENARIO ANALYSIS - III

In January 2025, the RES Forum released a research paper that considered many of the challenges and possibilities that mobility might encounter by the year 2030.

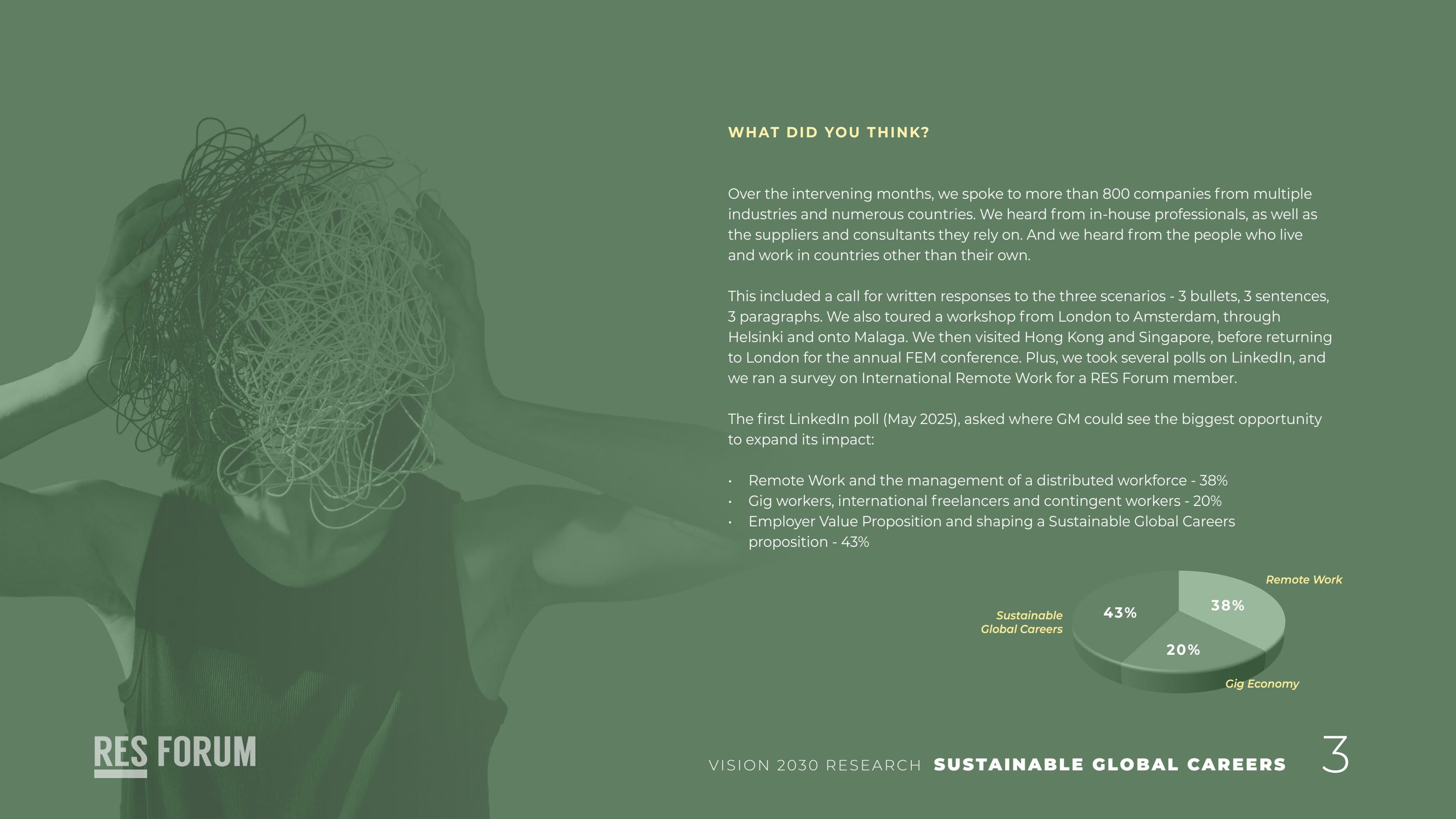
Vision 2030 - the future of Talent Mobility

The key output from this research was a focus on three scenarios:

- The remote-first world
- Gig economy dominance
- Sustainable, global careers

Based on interviews with a broad mix of Global Mobility (GM) and HR experts and leaders, each scenario attempted to predict the world of international work in 2030. Written as a guide for mobility professionals to help them navigate this potential future, each scenario came with its own set of self-assessment criteria. These were intended to gauge readiness for the given scenario, and help mobility professionals devise effective strategies to manage under those circumstances.





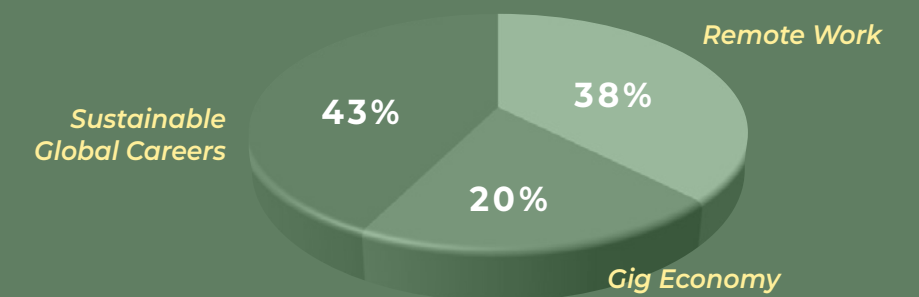
WHAT DID YOU THINK?

Over the intervening months, we spoke to more than 800 companies from multiple industries and numerous countries. We heard from in-house professionals, as well as the suppliers and consultants they rely on. And we heard from the people who live and work in countries other than their own.

This included a call for written responses to the three scenarios - 3 bullets, 3 sentences, 3 paragraphs. We also toured a workshop from London to Amsterdam, through Helsinki and onto Malaga. We then visited Hong Kong and Singapore, before returning to London for the annual FEM conference. Plus, we took several polls on LinkedIn, and we ran a survey on International Remote Work for a RES Forum member.

The first LinkedIn poll (May 2025), asked where GM could see the biggest opportunity to expand its impact:

- Remote Work and the management of a distributed workforce - 38%
- Gig workers, international freelancers and contingent workers - 20%
- Employer Value Proposition and shaping a Sustainable Global Careers proposition - 43%





VISION 2030 / SCENARIO 3: SUSTAINABLE, GLOBAL CAREERS

In this scenario, the focus on sustainability has extended beyond environmental concerns to encompass the wellbeing, career development, and long-term satisfaction of employees. Organisations recognise that supporting sustainable careers - those that balance personal fulfilment, continuous learning, and job security - is essential for attracting and retaining top talent in a competitive global market. As a result, GM programmes are being redesigned to prioritise employee wellbeing, mental health, and career growth. This approach ensures that employees are not only productive but also happy and engaged over the long term. In a world where work/life balance, mental health, and job satisfaction are paramount, organisations must develop strategies that align with these evolving priorities while still achieving business objectives.

VISION 2030 CONCEPT GRID

To help guide the conversation during our in-person workshops, we shared a concept grid that picked key points from each of the three scenarios. This both summarised some key trends, and spelled out some useful opportunities. Some of these topics will feature heavily throughout the paper. Others are worthwhile considerations to bear in mind as you read through the opportunities and challenges identified among the many contributions we received.

PILLAR	KEY CHALLENGES / TRENDS	AI OPPORTUNITIES	SUPPLIER ECOSYSTEM EVOLUTION
SUSTAINABLE, GLOBAL CAREERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and generational expectations • Mental health and resilience • Cost pressures vs. duty of care • EVP, retention and ROI pressures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI-enabled career pathing and talent analytics • Sentiment / wellbeing monitoring • Personalised mobility packages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendors offering wellbeing, coaching and reskilling • Integration of learning, mental health and benefits • Data-sharing linking productivity, wellbeing and retention

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is, arguably, the broadest and least tangible of the three scenarios. Remote and hybrid work are generally understood. Similarly, the gig economy is well-known, if not universally experienced. The concept of sustainable, global careers, on the other hand, is less clear. During the Vision 2030 workshop at the London FEM conference in October 2025, one comment simply said it's "too big a conversation."

This was further demonstrated through the breadth and variety of responses. Some focussed on the human aspect, while others gave more attention to the environmental aspects of sustainability. The latter was particularly common among service providers, who are facing pressure to reduce the carbon footprint of international moves.

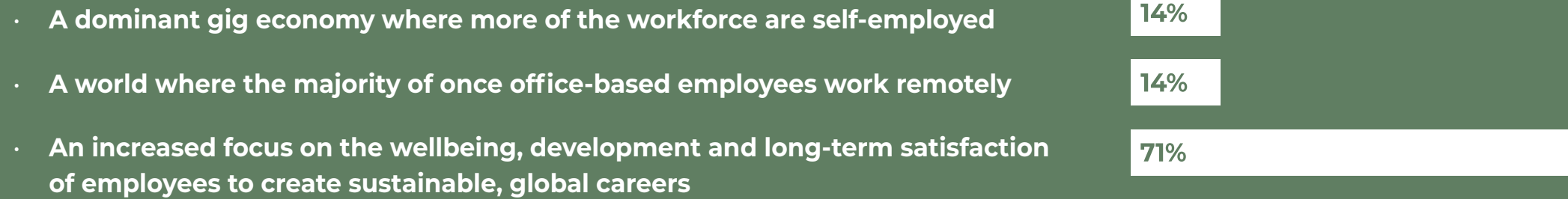
Elsewhere, our polls rated this as the scenario where Global Mobility (GM) could see its greatest impact. What's more, when asked which of the scenarios represents the biggest opportunity for the organisation in 2030, sustainable, global careers received 71% of the vote.

Based on that, you'd be forgiven for thinking that there was almost universal support for, and agreement with, this scenario. However, as we've seen throughout this research, nothing is so clear cut as that. Indeed, as you'll learn over the coming pages, several commentators believe this scenario to be largely unlikely. At least, for the majority of people.

It's a broad and fascinating topic. One we'll be returning to throughout the coming months.

WHICH OF THESE THREE SCENARIOS REPRESENTS THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUR ORGANISATION IN 2030?

(From a LinkedIn poll we ran in July 2025)



"My vote, always, to whatever brings organisations closer to the realisation that they employ people. And to form effective (work) relationships, recognising the needs and wellbeing of these people is essential."

Karlijn Jacobs, Expat Valley



ARE SUSTAINABLE, GLOBAL CAREERS EVEN CREDIBLE?

Despite presenting what many consider to be the biggest opportunity of the three scenarios, several commentators believe this to be either unrealistic, or outright implausible. At least on a broad scale. One contributor, a GM leader in the tech sector, asks directly whether this scenario represents a paradigm shift or just a pipe dream.

"A progressive evolution from traditional employer-employee relationship," they see sustainable, global careers as a move towards "more holistic workforce strategies." With it comes challenges and contradictions, adding complexity to large-scale implementation. Overlaid with a continually turbulent geopolitical outlook, their claim is that this vision feels "particularly fragile."

Expanding the theme, an HR Director in the APAC region cites changes in the automotive industry as an example. With specific focus on a large European manufacturer, they talk about the "end of many of the old certainties" linked to traditional employment models.

"Stable employment terms, clearly defined roles, predictable career ladders, and long-term collective agreements."

These hallmarks of the postwar industrial model, they say, feel inadequate in this era of "fast-evolving technology, shifting consumer expectations, and mounting geopolitical uncertainty."

It's here, in this very modern form of uncertainty, that the contributor raises some questions:

- How do we build sustainable career pathways in a world where fewer workers will spend their entire professional lives inside one company, let alone one country?
- How do we offer meaningful development to contractors or remote contributors who are integral to our success, but sit outside traditional HR structures?
- And how do we maintain fairness, inclusion, and continuity in a workforce that is increasingly fragmented?

DECLINING LEVELS OF PEOPLE MOBILITY

Another question to add to this list is whether people are even interested in pursuing global careers? One contributor certainly doesn't think so.

A HR VP based in Europe argues that "the notion of ever-increasing people mobility has been discussed for many years." At least, that is, between those with a vested interest. "HR professionals, talent managers, policymakers, and organisations focused on global mobility."

Their piece hones in on four reasons behind the decline in people mobility.

1. Dual career households
2. The comfort of inherited wealth
3. Nationalistic movements
4. Economic and social stability

Although not intended as a curtain call for international mobility per se, these four factors offer important considerations for those who subscribe to "the notion of ever-increasing people mobility."

1. DUAL CAREER HOUSEHOLDS

It's no longer the case that one partner does the paid work while the other does the home and family work. It's also no longer a safe assumption, necessarily, that the male partner will typically pursue international opportunities. Although, it would be interesting to understand just how safe an assumption that still is. A question for the next stage of this paper.

The point is, the world has moved on - some way - and an international move means something different to even 20 or 30 years ago. Dual career households are more common, and that means the impact lands differently. While one partner is realising their ambitions, the other may be forced to curtail theirs. And that's a lot to ask. Alternatively, two careers need to be accommodated by an international move. And that's also a lot to ask.

2. THE COMFORT OF INHERITED WEALTH

Generational wealth is, according to this contributor, becoming increasingly widespread, with more people inheriting financial assets, as well as real-estate and family run businesses. With this comes the kind of stability that means international moves, with all their disruption and unfamiliarity, seem much less appealing.

"The security and sense of privilege afforded by managing existing family assets can outweigh the potential advantages associated with geographical mobility."

There's an emotional aspect that goes alongside security and stability. A sense of ownership, pride and, in some cases, obligation comes with inherited property and businesses in particular. This invites pressure - internal and external - to stay put for the sake of legacy.

3. NATIONALISTIC MOVEMENTS AND CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY

Bringing tighter immigration policies and stricter border controls, an "observable escalation in nationalism" also plays a part in limiting cross-border mobility. With public discussions around job security, cultural identity and national sovereignty fueling the rise of nationalistic sentiments, the international job market feels "increasingly challenging and less enticing."

While the nationalist discourse can include "overt hostility," some governments are actively prioritising domestic labour markets. In this bid to preserve national interests, "the barriers to cross-border movement have steadily intensified."

4. ECONOMIC STABILITY

For those fortunate enough to live with economic and social stability, the desire to move decreases. Community, healthcare, education and social services all make staying put the preferable option. Naturally, these same factors also offer a draw for migration into those countries that enjoy such stability.

However, where employees already experience social and economic comfort, relocations - with all their upheaval and disruption - are far less appealing. As we've already seen, stability, familiarity and continuity are hugely attractive, particularly where there is so much uncertainty in the unknown. If you're to encourage people to give those up, you need to make it worth their while. Some contributors believe there's only so much employers can (and should) do in this regard.

LIMITED SCOPE FOR SUCCESS

During RES Connect Helsinki, the very definition of employee satisfaction and happiness was called into question. "My happiness may not be your happiness," is tied to the idea that the employer's obligations need only extend so far. Conversely, during the FEM session in London, one person stated that mental health and employee happiness is the employer's responsibility.

However, according to one commentator, involved in HR Strategic Design and Project Management, employee engagement is the extent of the employer's remit. Their satisfaction is not ("and maybe should not be") the employer's responsibility. In other words, so long as the employee is delivering against their objectives, their satisfaction is secondary. They argue that employee development and global careers should only be pursued in the long-term interest of company goals.

"i.e. employees are and will be selected for suitable development paths based on the impact in their current role and the expected impact in their future role."

It's company-first, with the gloves off. 'Show that you can deliver for us and we'll put some money behind your development.'
Though not quite the antithesis of this scenario, it's very much a different take.



GM'S BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY AND THE LEAST FEASIBLE SCENARIO

Our GM lead in the tech sector sums this concept up as "a lofty idea with grounded challenges." More vision than prediction, they say, with good principles at its core.

"A much-needed departure from traditional practices that often prioritised profit over people."

In reality, this commentator is among several who fail to see the possibility. At least at scale. Too many factors mean too many trade offs. Only Europe, with its "generally more liberal employees and governments" shows any promise.

"It will likely require one or two truly visionary companies to achieve this ideal, yet it is unlikely this will ever be available to the majority of people around the world."

So, you might think this paper is unnecessary. That it doesn't impact enough people to make it worth pursuing.

However, as we saw both with the remote-first and gig economy pieces, nothing in this research is quite so straightforward. Least of all this scenario.



RETHINKING RELOCATION: FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE TALENT MOBILITY

WRITTEN BY LIIS VALDSALU,
HEAD OF GLOBAL TALENT MOBILITY AT BOLT

Too often, international relocation is tied to a single job. A business need arises, a role opens abroad, and someone is sent to fill it. Mission accomplished, right?

Not quite.

While tactical relocations can serve immediate needs, they often lack a long-term vision for the person being moved. What happens when the role evolves, the company restructures, or the individual outgrows the position?

If relocation is designed only for the now, both the organisation and the talent risk losing more than just time and budget. It can mean missed opportunities, early attrition, and frustrated people.

RETHINKING RELOCATION: FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE TALENT MOBILITY

BY LIIS VALDSALU, BOLT



THE VISION OF SUSTAINABLE RELOCATION

Sustainable relocation means empowering individuals not just to succeed in a role, but to build a life and a career in their new country. It's a deliberate process that goes beyond simply relocating someone from country A to country B and hoping for the best. It involves asking crucial questions:

- Is this the right person, not only technically, but also personally and culturally?
- Are we supporting their integration beyond the workplace?
- Are we enabling them to build a future, even if it extends beyond our organisation?

Strategic relocation is an investment in people who can stay, grow, and thrive. They become long-term contributors to the local talent ecosystem, even if they eventually move on from our company.

THE ROLE OF CULTURAL AWARENESS

You can't build a sustainable relocation strategy without investing in cultural understanding, and not just for the expat.

Cultural training should be part of how we prepare:

- The relocating employee
- Their direct manager
- The hiring team
- Their local peers

Why? Because cultural gaps, misunderstandings, and unspoken norms often derail even the most skilled professionals. Sustainable relocation means that local teams are equipped to support the newcomer, both professionally and as a person adjusting to a new society.

Global talent won't thrive in environments where they feel isolated, misunderstood, or undervalued because of cultural blind spots.

RETHINKING RELOCATION: FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE TALENT MOBILITY

BY LIIS VALDSALU, BOLT

HIRING EXPATS ALREADY IN THE COUNTRY

Want a low-effort way to support sustainable mobility? Hire expats already living in your country.

These individuals have already adapted or are at least in the middle of adapting. They've invested in learning the local culture and language, building a network, and navigating life in the country.

Too often, companies overlook this group in favour of relocating someone externally. But hiring in-country expats supports:

- Long-term integration
- Lower relocation and integration costs
- Diversity of thought and global experience

It's a win-win and a key part of a sustainable talent strategy.

WHO THRIVES IN RELOCATION?

Not everyone wants to build a life abroad. That's okay.

But sustainable relocation means selecting and supporting people who:

- View relocation as a lifestyle and identity shift, not just a career step.
- Are emotionally prepared for change and uncertainty.
- Want to connect locally and contribute beyond the office.

It also means having systems in place to help them integrate fully, from onboarding and mentorship to mental health support, family inclusion, and local career mapping.

RETHINKING RELOCATION: FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE TALENT MOBILITY

BY LIIS VALDSALU, BOLT



REDEFINING SUCCESS: WHEN "THEY LEAVE" ISN'T FAILURE

Consider a shift in mindset. If someone you've relocated remains in the country but transitions to another company, this is not a failure. It signifies that you helped cultivate a globally minded, locally integrated professional. They continue to represent your brand and strengthen the international workforce you helped build.

This is the future of talent mobility.

FROM ROLE-FILLERS TO FUTURE-BUILDERS

Sustainable mobility is about moving from reactive to strategic. It's about people-first planning with future-first thinking.

Stop thinking of relocation as a short-term assignment. Start seeing it as a chance to invest in long-term, borderless careers.

It's good for individuals. It's good for business. It's good for global society.

SUSTAINABLE, GLOBAL CAREERS - THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITY FOR GLOBAL MOBILITY

(From a LinkedIn poll we ran in July 2025)

The focus on sustainability has extended beyond environmental concerns to encompass the wellbeing, career development and long-term satisfaction of employees.

Organisations recognise that supporting sustainable careers - those that balance personal fulfilment, continuous learning and job security - is essential for a strong EVP. In turn, a strong EVP helps organisations attract and retain top talent in a competitive global market.



We would like to know which of the following four areas you think would offer the greatest opportunity to strengthen your Global Mobility programme?

- **Mental Health support and developing programmes to support globally mobile employees and their families**
- **Career Integration and alignment of your GM programme with broader career development initiatives**
- **Sustainability practices and alignment with your company's broader sustainability goals**
- **Employee happiness and productivity, and a holistic approach to supporting international employee experience and their unique needs and preferences**

THE RESULTS...

Mental Health support and developing programmes to support globally mobile employees and their families

28%

Career Integration and alignment of your GM programme with broader career development initiatives

56%

Sustainability practices and alignment with your company's broader sustainability goals

6%

Employee happiness and productivity, and a holistic approach to supporting international employee experience and their unique needs and preferences

11%



A PEOPLE-FIRST APPROACH TO MOBILITY

Break taboos - we are humans first and employees second - Vision 2030 workshop, RES Connect Helsinki

As mentioned previously, employee satisfaction is one of the core tenets of sustainable, global careers, alongside wellbeing and career development. Together, this forms a people-first approach that throws its arms around the employee (and their family), and nurtures them throughout their time with the organisation. During RES Connect Helsinki, it was said that this should extend to all employees, including those employed via Employer of Record (EOR).

Of the many written pieces relating to this scenario, several focussed on this aspect, with high praise for the attention we gave to the topic. Whether or not the scenario itself is feasible, it feels as though there is a groundswell of support within HR and GM for a people-first approach. There is, however, a predictable nuance even to this conversation.

Responding to the LinkedIn poll shared above, a senior HR exec and founder in the GM industry commented that "it's difficult to pick just one of the four options - because all of them are deeply interconnected."

Wellbeing is about more than good mental health, they say.

"It also means creating the conditions for:

- Meaningful, purpose-driven international careers
- Sustainable performance and personal growth
- Resilience and motivation through change
- Happy, engaged, and productive global employees"

GM strategies that align with the needs of people - "not just processes" - enable assignments that enrich the individual and benefit the business.

"Let's move beyond logistics and carbon metrics," they continue, "and toward a truly human-centered, future-ready vision of international work."

Tellingly, however, as much support as there is for this scenario, "Career Integration and alignment of your GM programme with broader career development initiatives" is the most popular response to the above poll, with 56% share of the vote. Very much in line with the first section of this report.

This begs the question, *is people-first mobility actually a priority? And if so, how does it benefit the organisation?*

WHY DOES EMPLOYEE WELLBEING MATTER ANYWAY?

More and more people present their 'whole person' at work - Vision 2030 workshop, IBIS 2025.

In what is an uncompromisingly critical review of the three scenarios, the Head of GM at a North American tech firm speaks strongly about the importance of looking after the person, not just the employee. Too often, they say, organisations treat employees merely as workers. Instead, they should see them as a distinct person. One with a life that extends beyond the job. As well as being the ethical thing to do, businesses should "take care of the whole person," because, in return "they will be loyal and take care of your organization."

The co-founder of a relo company built around people-first mobility writes more comprehensively on this topic. They begin by pointing out that many organisations have "landed on solutions that support the optics of wellbeing," without really delivering anything that deals with "the core factors of employee wellbeing."

Next, they point to a piece of research by Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, MIT, and Erasmus University. Conducted over a six month period, this research found that "happy employees are 13% more productive." Perhaps more tellingly, another study, this one by Deloitte, "estimates that poor employee mental health costs businesses in the UK £56 billion annually." The report shows a sizable return on any investment in employee health and wellbeing, with an average £4.70 productivity increase for every £1 spent.



WELLBEING ON ASSIGNMENT

The same commentator turns their attention to the importance of employee wellbeing during an assignment. Here, they reference the "multiple additional stress factors," that accompany a relocation. Not just for the employee, but for their family as well.

"It would be relatively safe to assume that if a non-relocating employee is unhappy and unproductive, as a relocatee, they could be even less productive."

Considering the cost of relocation, this loss of productivity would significantly impact the value of any assignment. They go on to offer a stark warning for any organisations tempted to reduce the cost of relocations by stripping back wellbeing related services and benefits.

"This can be short-sighted," they say, "as the elements removed, while individually expensive, can be insignificant in the overall cost but significantly impact the assignee's ability to deliver on their objectives." In contrast, benefits and services that improve wellbeing (and, by extension, productivity), can substantially increase the ROI of the assignment.

A GM consultant continues the theme in their brief analysis of the scenarios.

"Being away from your support network and adapting to a new culture can be tough," they say. Many companies don't provide sufficient support for the mental health and wellbeing impacts of this. "That's going to have to change if they want to keep employees engaged and healthy."

PUTTING FAMILY FIRST

One standout comment from RES Connect Helsinki is that family is integral to this scenario. Particularly the assessment criteria that sits alongside it.

If people-first mobility is about seeing employees as an entire person, then their family must be a fundamental part of that consideration. Karlijn Jacobs, founder of Expat Valley, says that, in this scenario, managing the mental load of cross-border work sits alongside the need to balance family life. This means tailoring relocation packages to suit the specific needs of the family.

That might involve accommodating single parents or multi-generation households. It could mean making allowances for "spousal career continuity and children's educational needs." It should, in theory, include provisions for mental health support across the entire family unit.

Central to this is an understanding of how policies can be adapted to suit different life phases. "Tailored relocation packages for young children, teenagers, or families with aging parents are key to maintaining satisfaction and engagement," says Karlijn.

Assignment success is closely tied to the impact of a relocation on the broader family unit. An HR Specialist from Finland shares their experience of employees going on assignments without considering the loss of social and family networks. "We tend to see that they start with a lot of enthusiasm," they say, "but they often forget that they can't just go to their family and friends."

As Karlijn concludes, "holistic initiatives that address stress, relocation challenges, and cross-cultural adaptation for employees and their families can significantly enhance assignment success."

If people-first mobility is central to sustainable, global careers, the family must be a core consideration. Otherwise, the assignment could easily fail, costing the organisation time, money and, potentially, the employee. And, as we saw in the opening section of this report, often, the employees who are selected for assignments are chosen for their long-term potential benefit to the organisation. If you don't consider the employee as a complete person (including family), then you put that potential benefit at risk.

GENERATIONAL VARIANCES

If we're to consider the entire person, and their family, then generational differences must be taken into account. This is a topic that came up in several Vision 2030 workshops, including Hong Kong, where Gen X and Gen Y were put under the spotlight.

Written as part of a mini-series from Weichert Workforce Mobility, Laura Levenson explores the subject of generational variances at length. This piece, along with the other two articles in the series, was shared on the [RES Forum's LinkedIn](#) page in October 2025.

"One of the key factors in ensuring the sustainability of careers in global mobility is leveraging the unique assets of different generations," says Laura. "Understanding and harnessing the diverse skills and perspectives" of the many generations now active in the workforce, "can create a more resilient and effective GM strategy."

Laura goes on to outline some characteristics of the different generations:

- Baby Boomers are loyal and bring a strong work ethic,
- Generation X value independence and self-reliance,
- Millennials embrace technology and collaboration,
- Gen Z adds fresh perspectives, adaptability and digital fluency to the mix.

Each generation has unique strengths and abilities that can be harnessed individually. Together, they amount to more than the sum of their parts, for the benefit of everyone, including the organisation.

"As the workforce continues to evolve," concludes Laura, "embracing generational diversity will be essential for building a sustainable and successful global mobility career."



A journey through borders and balance - **BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL CAREER**

SVP - GLOBAL LIFESTYLE BRAND

My international career has taken me from a quiet village in Germany to the vibrant streets of Amsterdam and, today, to family life in Switzerland. Along the way, I've led global supply chain transformations, navigated crises, and grown as a professional and as a person. What I've learned is that sustainable global careers are not just about where you work, but how you live, grow, and stay grounded through it all.

A JOURNEY THROUGH BORDERS AND BALANCE - BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL CAREER

SVP, GLOBAL LIFESTYLE BRAND

I started my journey in Herzogenaurach, Germany, as a young, single newcomer at adidas. Living above a bakery in a small village, I found connection through a local football club - my first lesson in the importance of community and integration. Professionally, I was focused on working hard and smart, eager to prove myself and climb the ladder. But life had more to teach.

Later, in Amsterdam, I entered a new phase, living as a couple in a dynamic, international city. The pace was fast, the workload intense, but the social energy was invigorating. Evenings and weekends with colleagues became a source of camaraderie and balance. It was a time of acceleration, both personally and professionally, as I took on more responsibility and began shaping global operations.

Switzerland brought yet another transformation: family life. As SVP Global Product Supply, I now lead a global team of 240 professionals.

But at home, I'm a father of three, deeply embedded in the local community. Our children attend local schools and sports clubs, and we've built friendships through neighborhood events and shared experiences. This stage has reinforced my belief that sustainable careers must support not just the individual, but the family unit.

But perhaps the most profound shift came during a period of intense professional pressure, when the demands of work nearly consumed my life. It was a wake-up call.

A JOURNEY THROUGH BORDERS AND BALANCE - BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL CAREER

SVP, GLOBAL LIFESTYLE BRAND

I realized that true sustainability isn't just about strategy or structure, it's also about self. That's when I began to embrace a new mindset. That of the corporate athlete.

Today, I prioritize daily routines that support my mental and physical wellbeing. Yoga, journaling, regular sports, sleep tracking. These practices have helped me stay centered, resilient, and more present as a leader, colleague, and parent. They've also deepened my empathy for others navigating similar pressures.

In my leadership roles, I've worked to embed these values into our global mobility and talent programs, ensuring that international assignments are not just career milestones, but opportunities for growth, wellbeing, and purpose. We've integrated mental health support, flexible work models, and clear reintegration paths to help our people thrive across borders and life stages.

As we look toward 2030, I believe sustainable global careers will be defined by how well we balance performance with presence, ambition with awareness. My journey has shown me that success is a series of evolutions, shaped by the places we live, the people we meet, and the choices we make to care for ourselves and others.

Because when we grow as people, we lead with purpose. And that's the foundation of any truly sustainable career.





ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

While this scenario extends the idea of sustainability to include long-term career prospects, there remains an emphasis on environmental sustainability across many contributions. This is no more prevalent than in the articles submitted by some service providers and vendors.

Here, there are multiple, potentially conflicting pressures that suppliers must balance. On the one hand, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) initiatives often impose strict sustainability targets on suppliers, particularly at the RFP stage. However, as our previous LinkedIn poll demonstrates, "Sustainability practices and alignment with your company's broader sustainability goals" is the lowest priority for all respondents, at a meagre 6%.

The President of a French relocation company puts the focus on their "journey to carbon neutral." This ongoing process of continuous improvement comes from a combination of external pressure, both from corporate clients and RMC partners, as well as a broader industry drive to reduce historically high CO2 emissions.

Meanwhile, Dominic Offer (whose full piece is included below), posits that "sustainable relocations shouldn't be in question."

Sustainability Manager at Harmony Relocation Network, Dominic looks to collaboration as the answer. Although nothing new to the industry per se, the kind of collaboration required from an environmental sustainability point of view, is new for everyone. This includes alignment on goals, education for assignees and agreement on meaningful measures.

“We are now at 15 minutes from crashing into the mountain and people are still ordering margaritas!”

According to Dominic, and many others within the industry, now is the time to act. Together, towards a common goal. Before it's too late.



**Sustainable relocations
shouldn't be in question.
COLLABORATION IS THE ANSWER.**

**WRITTEN BY DOMINIC OFFER, SUSTAINABILITY
MANAGER, HARMONY RELOCATION NETWORK**

After attending a few conferences this year, I have found that sustainability has often been described as a buzzword. I wonder why people say this in a forum or on a stage where they are described as an expert. I think of the endless scientific proof, correctly predicted up to now, and what is predicted for 2030 and beyond.

One of the principal leads of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHGP) - a measurement that 90% of companies use to calculate carbon emissions - likened climate change to being onboard a passenger plane when it is announced that the plane will be crashing into a mountain in one hour and nobody asks to change direction. In fact, nobody does anything but order another drink.



SUSTAINABLE RELOCATIONS SHOULDN'T BE IN QUESTION. COLLABORATION IS THE ANSWER.

BY DOMINIC OFFER, HARMONY RELOCATION NETWORK

“We are now at 15 minutes from crashing into the mountain and people are still ordering margaritas!”

THERE IS HOPE

Climate change is not something that is **going** to happen, it **is** happening. Our aim is now to mitigate the worst of the impacts, which are becoming more real day by day. Heatwaves across 2025 have caused 2,300 deaths this year. 1,500 of these can be directly attributed to the impacts of climate change.

Our immediate response to this information is “well, it’s ‘not happening to me,’ or “its not in high volume locations.” The statistic above is from cities in Europe. The top 5 are Milan, Paris, Barcelona and London, where 2/3rds of heat related deaths could be linked to climate change.

Whilst most scientific institutions now agree that the 2016 Paris agreement (to limit the impact of climate change to 1.5C against post-industrial levels by reducing emissions by 43% by 2030) is now out of reach. However, there is still hope.

SUSTAINABLE RELOCATIONS SHOULDN'T BE IN QUESTION. COLLABORATION IS THE ANSWER.

BY DOMINIC OFFER, HARMONY RELOCATION NETWORK

UNDERSTANDING SUSTAINABILITY

With this hope in mind, we need to look towards how our industry can transition to a new way of doing business. One that will give our children a world that is not constantly fighting for their existence. Floods, fires, droughts and many other ways, the world is indicating that it cannot take any more of our misuse of its natural resources and atmosphere.

I have spoken to many, many leaders in the relocation industry, from some of the largest corporate clients, to small Household Goods movers in remote locations, and everything in between. There is a disconnect when it comes to both the knowledge to develop sustainable actions and collaboration between clients and suppliers on a level that will deliver the change needed.

Knowledge on sustainability and enabling collaborative solutions from anywhere in the supply chain is key to making the right choices. We are seeing many companies taking actions, like removing household goods shipments from policy, under the impression that it is a more sustainable action. This can actually be worse for the environment, while restricting investment, which in turn means solutions are harder to come by. This is not only because the emissions are normally lower with shipping, but also because reuse, regenerative practices and the circular economy are core principles of sustainability. This can contradict the need to eliminate all emissions right now. Rather, it takes a view that investment into better processes will move things quicker, and with more positives, whilst supporting the global economy over the long term.

THERE IS CARBON AND THEN THERE IS EVERYTHING ELSE

I have been looking at sustainability in the relocation industry for 5 or 6 years now. In previous roles, we brought companies like Planet Mark and Watershed into the industry. Now everyone and their granny has a carbon calculator, the question is, are we solving the problem by calculating carbon emissions instead of developing holistic processes?

Don't get me wrong, counting carbon and developing net-zero strategies is vital to instigating change, and should be an integral part of the process. However, even if we solve the issues surrounding carbon, it doesn't solve the problems around water and food shortages, around waste, and around essential minerals and metal running out. It doesn't solve the social issues around housing shortages or lack of infrastructure. These need more collaborative solutions.

All of this sounds extreme, yet there are solutions. Some might say, "Our role is global mobility, how can we influence food or water issues? That might be the suppliers' job, lets ask them."



SUSTAINABLE RELOCATIONS SHOULDN'T BE IN QUESTION. COLLABORATION IS THE ANSWER.

BY DOMINIC OFFER, HARMONY RELOCATION NETWORK

Which brings us to...

WORKING TOGETHER

Collaboration is not a new concept to the industry. Far from it. However, the type of collaboration that is needed to become sustainable is new for everyone. Collaboration needs forward thinking, collective goals and timelines reaching beyond 2030. It doesn't need mandated short-term results that are always ignored for lower price points.

Policies are needed to educate assignees about the impact of their moves and their movements, These policies support action beyond just their carbon emissions. They also develop the assignee's understanding of the local challenges in their new home, and encourage positive change through integration and education. In turn, this helps assignments become more successful and rewarding.

Working with suppliers to support education of expats at all levels - from assignment agreement to packing materials, local independent shops to bank choice - can create change that is hard to even imagine, let alone measure.

Measuring our impact is vital. That includes measuring the emotional impact on a child who moves to a foreign country and is able to take their bed from home. Buying new and better stuff doesn't create those kinds of emotions. And the response may be, "but Dom, we have a budget, I can't go to my boss and talk about children wanting their Spiderman bed on assignment." That is fair enough. In return, I'd say, "70% of assignments fail due to family issues." And that's a measurement you can literally take to the bank.

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VISION 2030

By 2030, we are going to see significant climate impacts. We are already seeing Harmony members give climate adaption support in the form of water, food and blankets, as well as moving vital supplies to where they are most needed during fires, floods and events that require mass movement.

We have seen that our governments are trying to develop change. However, like many companies, they are held back by conflicting goals and budget constraints. We cannot look only towards legislation to make the change that is needed. With the gap closing every day, we don't have the opportunity and wait to find out which political party or company has sold our futures down the river, as we often do in these times.

The hardest fact of sustainability is that everyone is waiting for someone else to save them. Or rather, to blame others for inaction. We can only own our future with the information we have available to us.

The information is there. As are the solutions.

HOW DO WE DELIVER AND WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HR AND GM?

IF ORGANISATIONS WON'T ADAPT, THEY'LL SUFFER

We opened this report with some questions from an HR Director in the Automotive industry:

- How do we build sustainable career pathways in a world where fewer workers will spend their entire professional lives inside one company, let alone one country?
- How do we offer meaningful development to contractors or remote contributors who are integral to our success, but sit outside traditional HR structures?
- And how do we maintain fairness, inclusion, and continuity in a workforce that is increasingly fragmented?

While these questions won't unlock the secrets to flawless GM programmes, they do offer some important considerations for GM managers looking to embrace the opportunities provided by sustainable, global careers.

"The answer may lie in how we reconceive the idea of belonging in a company."

Career progression no longer links to tenure or geography, they say. Instead we look at "skills-based progression, modular learning and cross-functional project experiences." This includes offering access for gig workers to internal training, with the view to potentially bringing them on-board as full time employees.

In terms of cross-border mobility, they talk of seamless inter-country moves, where bureaucracy and immigration 'hurdles' are replaced with a "fluid, global talent system." Similarly, a senior HRBP in the life sciences industry talks of virtual cross-border assignments as an aspect of this. This means that "talent anywhere in the organization, anywhere in the world can grow and develop into international roles," without the glass ceilings and disruption associated with physical relocations.

The real test, according to our Automotive HR Director, comes in delivering equitable opportunities. "In developed markets, employees have access to clear career paths, support structures, and benefits." Developing markets, which are often integral to growth and innovation, require equal investment to remove the "barriers to visibility, influence and progression." In other words, "not just hiring globally, but developing and promoting globally as well."

A STRATEGIC SOLUTION FOR TALENT MANAGEMENT

Several commentators advocate for a more strategic approach to global talent management. Where "mobility has long been reactionary," there has never been a better time to sell the GM function as a strategic solution for talent management. So says a Senior Global Talent Mobility Manager in the technology sector, among others.

Here, data can play a key role. From cost to hire vs. relocation / assignment costs, to employee sentiment data around career development, GM can use the information already available within the organisation to demonstrate the value in pro-active global mobility. This sits neatly with the opening section of this paper, where the emphasis is placed on selected employees who have the potential to deliver substantial value to the organisation.

A quote from IBIS 2025 supports this notion. "The costs of supporting Global Mobility compare favourably against the costs of rehiring / backfilling for leavers." In other words, looking after your international employees, and their families, delivers benefits for the organisation. Not looking after them can result in expensive recruitment and retraining. If they leave anyway, you're better off sending an advocate into the world than a detractor. Social proof, after all, is a powerful recruitment tool.

CAREER INTEGRATION - THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY

Career integration includes future planning, interactions, relocation and assessment - RES Connect Helsinki

"I've always seen ... career integration, especially reintegration, as the biggest challenge for both companies and expats, which also makes it a high-impact area for meaningful improvement." This contributor, a solopreneur within the mobility industry, is not alone in seeing career integration as the biggest opportunity for GM to make an impact.

Indeed, the above quote is in reference to a LinkedIn poll where "Career Integration and alignment of your GM programme with broader career development initiatives" received 56% of the vote. Meanwhile, during IBIS 2025, one participant in our Vision 2030 workshop highlighted the importance of "opportunities for growth within an organisation."

What does this mean in practice? An HR VP in the Automotive sector offers some valuable tips to building, what they call sustainable, global career pathways:

Equitable access:

Ensuring that diverse employees - across geographies, age groups, and remote capabilities - have equal development opportunities.

Green literacy:

Embedding environmental awareness into training programs, role design, and evaluative criteria.

Social protection:

Extending benefits, retirement planning, insurance, and stability - even to contingent or freelance contributors through thoughtful inclusion.

CSR synergy:

Integrating sustainable employment into wider CSR strategies boosts employee engagement, lowers turnover, and strengthens the employer brand.

Whether you consider sustainable, global careers as a core aspect of your mobility programme, or merely a niche opportunity for a select few high-potential employees, it's clear that broad, long-term strategic thinking is essential. In this case, your vision should extend way beyond 2030, even if the future is deeply uncertain. For that reason, we will return to this topic in much more detail over the coming months.

Until then, we offer some advice for Global Mobility professionals seeking sustainable, global careers of their own, courtesy of Sean Collins, Director of ESG at the Asia Talent Mobility Alliance (ATMA).



THE RISE OF SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL CAREERS IN GLOBAL MOBILITY

WRITTEN BY SEAN COLLINS, DIRECTOR OF ESG,
ASIA TALENT MOBILITY ALLIANCE (ATMA)

Global Mobility (GM) has always been a conduit to developing talent and enabling a rich and diverse career, whether that be talent rotation programs, project moves or executive assignments. But what about the GM professional's career?

Mobility often works in a silo within HR and, due to the specific technical skillsets of the function, are often bookmarked in the role and overlooked for talent development programs or cross function career opportunities within the organization. This can be career limiting and when GM professionals find themselves out of a job it can be difficult to break into HR or other business roles outside of the GM function. This is despite having significant exposure into many aspects of HR and skill sets that could easily transition into broader roles.

THE RISE OF SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL CAREERS IN GLOBAL MOBILITY

BY SEAN COLLINS, ESG, ASIA TALENT MOBILITY ALLIANCE (ATMA)

ADVICE FOR GM MANAGERS LOOKING TO GROW YOUR CAREER

At Talent Mobility Search, a recruitment firm specialising in GM and HR roles, Managing Partner, Sean Collins, offers the following career guidance to GM managers who are looking to grow their career:

1. Build strong relationships with your key HR stakeholders. Make sure they know who you are and how talent mobility can play into and impact the company's talent strategy. This will enable you to get involved in strategic HR projects early and build your credibility.
2. Seek out stretch projects and assignments within HR. This could be a broader C&B project, workforce planning, M&A or new country expansion. This will push you outside your comfort zone but will help build your broader HR skills and strengthen key HR relationships. These projects also help differentiate yourself from others on your resume.
3. Speak to your manager and HR leader about your ambition to grow your broader HR career. It will be much easier to transition into a broader HR role within your current organization than to apply externally (where you would not have built the same relationships and credibility).
4. Invest in external HR courses, especially those that offer accreditation recognised within your country. Some companies may offer financial support for learning programs related to your role.
5. Build your commercial and business acumen by truly understanding and immersing yourself in the business you are in. How it makes money, its established and new growth markets, the competitive landscape, how a new product or service is developed and taken to market (and the regional differences / requirements). This will allow you to add more strategic value to the organisation and build your personal brand.



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6. As ESG becomes a greater focus across all organizations an opportunity exists for GM managers to support their company's ESG strategy and build their career capital. This can be across all three pillars:
 - a. Environmental – tracking CO2 emissions from the program and developing a strategy to reduce the carbon footprint of global mobility.
 - b. Social – how global mobility can support the DE&I initiatives of the company as well as the wellbeing and employee experience within the program (including supporting diverse employee groups).
 - c. Governance – ensuring compliance and ethical standards across the GM program.
7. As GM evolves, ensure your skillsets are future proofed by embracing and taking on all forms of talent mobility such as extended business travel, remote work and virtual assignments.

Following the guidance above will better place Global Mobility Managers to secure roles within the broader HR space, in roles such as DE&I, C&B / Rewards, and Governance, as well as generalist HR roles such as HRBP, HR Manager, etc. By building HR skillsets, GM Managers also increase their chances of securing blended HR / Mobility roles in smaller organisations that do not warrant a full time GM headcount. This is a great opportunity to leverage existing GM experience and build out the broader HR experience.

In summary, the onus is on the individual to drive their own career path, by seeking out opportunities for growth, learn new skills and build strong networks both internally and externally. This will ensure better job security, a sustainable career and personal wellbeing and fulfilment.

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As part of Gallagher Multinational Benefits and HR Consulting, our Global Mobility advisory teams are specialists, who can help clients translate intent into practice, by simplifying the complex, fast moving, costly and time-consuming world of Global Mobility. We work with our clients to identify opportunities for implementing the most practical approach for their company when redefining and developing agile strategies.

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The RES Forum has the **tools, knowledge** and **community** to help mobility professionals keep pace with changes in the industry, and help the industry keep pace with the needs of mobility professionals.

Through research, analytics, eLearning, events, and policy templates and consultancy, we provide support and guidance to help mobility professionals navigate the ever-changing GM landscape.

We enjoy the exhaustive knowledge of our consultants, academics, Strategic Advisory Board and Technical Partners, as well as our international community of senior in-house HR and GM professionals, which includes 1,000 members in over 45 countries.

In conversation with leaders and experts from across the industry, our academics study the most pressing topics within the world of GM and cross-border working.

Then we share their collective insight to provide clarity, tools and advice to help our members through the many challenges they face.

The RES Forum is an independent organization. We are not influenced by external parties or third-party vendors.

References available on request.

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