

7<sup>th</sup> June 2016

## **Diversity and VUCA Issues are Key Global Mobility Challenges**

*Leading independent community for Global Mobility professionals with more than 1,000 members from over 500 organisations in 40 countries conducts industry leading research project among its members*

Employee diversity (specifically gender pay and career gap) and VUCA issues are just two of the key challenges facing Global Mobility (GM) professionals according to the 2016 Annual Report from The RES Forum, the world's largest and most active independent community for GM professionals.

Written by Professor Michael Dickmann, Professor of International Human Resource Management at Cranfield University School of Management, the Annual Report, looks in depth at the most relevant HR challenges facing the GM function today.

### **The Gender Issue**

Looking specifically at gender related issues, current thinking in the domestic context suggests that there are four main areas which contribute to the gap:

- Historical job segregation and 'woman's work'
- Impact of family/caring
- Lack of part-time flexible work in better paid positions
- Lack of women in senior roles

However, the research has highlighted that historically gendered behaviours may also contribute to the gap. For example, men typically take more risks, so men go to riskier assignment locations. Higher stakes in potentially higher growth markets with greater opportunities tend to deliver greater scope for career development and men earn greater career capital from their 'gamble.' The RES Forum research shows that men are more likely to achieve career benefits through an international assignment than women who have been through the same international assignment process.

International assignments provide a unique 'test tube' environment to test such ideas and build hypotheses. If we believe this evidence, then is it safe to

conclude that in the domestic context men are more likely to take career challenges such as stretch projects or even jumping from one function (say finance) to another (say marketing) and therefore reaping the benefits of those riskier but broadening assignments? The evidence from the international assignment perspective certainly suggests so.

And what of the gender pay gap (career capital) relating to international assignments - if it actually exists? Does it impact the employer's reputation in any different way to a domestic pay gap? The truth is it depends. If mobility is a key part of your employee value proposition, as it is for many RES Forum members, then the existence of such a gap for international assignees can reduce the value of the employer brand. If you are selling the appeal of international assignments and international career development as something to attract candidates then it is not to be dismissed lightly.

## **VUCA**

VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous) is an interesting subject and it might even represent the last frontier for the 'legacy' world of international assignments. In the world we live in, where companies are continuing to chase growth and margin (all in a low inflationary environment), the stakes could not be higher. But how does this tie into the earlier point about gender related behaviours and risk taking driving greater career rewards? And are men the biggest beneficiaries of this new VUCA world? It might be too early to answer these questions, but we can conclude that VUCA factors are becoming more relevant and important in the way we look at international assignments.

Much more on these issues and findings are contained within the full Annual Report which consists of five key chapters that look specifically at the following areas:

- Gender diversity and its effect within multinational corporations
- Pertinent organisational development and talent management considerations in GM
- Programme management and compliance within GM. These are key areas at the heart of service and value delivery
- Reward package design - which has experienced increasingly complex and varied GM approaches
- VUCA factors and their effects on business and global mobility

## **ENDS**

*For further information or to request a copy of the report please contact:  
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