



EAR for Yourself

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[NEW 2023 Dates Added](#)

15 November 2022—[Club 100 Network Huddle](#)—London

23 November 2022—[BDO & Expat Academy - Assignments to African countries](#)—Virtual

24 November 2022—[Project Management](#)—Virtual

07 December 2022—[Site Briefing](#)—London

GMPD Trends

What are our GMPD learners talking about the most right now?

1. Tax
2. Policy
3. Costing
4. DE&I
5. Sustainability

In This Week's EAR

US Network Huddle
Symposium Network Huddle
Benchmarking



Intro

As you can see from the contents section, Expat Academy have been very busy Huddling with members, and that doesn't include Singapore, which our team members haven't arrived back from yet! It never ceases to amaze us how much knowledge there is in our networks. So, what's the word in GM Street?

US Network Huddle

This was our first in-person US Huddle and it was such a fantastic debut! Firstly, 50th floor of the **Rockefeller Center**—thank you very much Deloitte! And the content and discussions were equally impressive, obviously!

BAL kicked us off with an **immigration** update. There is a huge backlog of applications in the US right now (11 million or so!), but things are getting better. The waiving of wet signatures is staying, which helps! Employers are offering more support with regards to Green Card Sponsorship to the point now where a company would be uncompetitive if it didn't. What we love at Expat Academy is **pragmatic advice**, and it doesn't get much better than being told to send your people to Brazil if you want a superfast consulate appointment and deployment speed is imperative!

Next, Deloitte gave us a sneaky peak at a yet-to-be-released **Remote Work Survey**. And guess what, it's not going anywhere! The whole topic cannot be solved overnight, but what is clear is that if no steps have been taken so far, baby steps are needed and it's unavoidable. Unsurprisingly, and no doubt as a consequence, there's a strong trending increase in companies talking about **Global Employment Companies (GECs)**.

While we debated some controversial statements designed to provoke discussions, an interesting question came up around **DE&I**, which is: what does this mean in each region and country and how is it defined there? Something to think about when working in **Global Mobility**, right?!

AIRINC were up next. We know the conversation around **shipping delays** mixed with **sustainability** desires often concludes—rightly or wrongly—in switching shipments for **cash-in-lieu allowances**. What was interesting was a live poll for those in the room asking them if they would choose all cash, all support, or a mix of both with a choice, 60% wanted partial support and partial cash with the ability to choose; no one chose all cash. Granted, that's around relocation as a whole, but don't forget GM and its partners have years of **experience** in making things go smoother that cannot be simply replaced with money.

Last but not least, Altair updated us on what they are seeing in the market and it's safe to say (as we all know), it's been quite a year! In the **shipping** space, labour shortages, and materials and equipment shortages have created a perfect storm. Labour shortages aren't helped by 'the Amazon effect', whereby truck drivers are choosing the well-paid local driving Amazon can offer over the anti-social long-distance driving. **What can we do?** Provide advance notice, be flexible with dates, and be flexible with shipment types.



“

Quote of the week...

If you change nothing, nothing will change

”



On the **housing and accommodation** front, the well-documented low inventories and prices surges are bringing about some creative approaches; one of which is a trend in companies securing their own long-term housing in their name and using it on a rotational basis for assignees.

But what are Altair themselves working on? A program allowing clients to weight a number of factors important to them in a supplier, **including ESG, into KPIs**. Thus, if sustainability is a strong factor for your company to select which shipper you'd like your RMC to use, you can increase the weighting of ESG for you and it is therefore entirely possible that such a change in approach can result in a different supplier winning that work.

Symposium Network Huddle

Back together in-person! And we wasted no time getting stuck in and debating some meaty topics. Are **lump-sums** like furniture allowances the best way for GM to tackle climate change? It's at least one way. But it was clear that it's not a silver bullet and we have to go deeper down the timeline and ensure we know (and potentially control) the end of assignment phase. Otherwise, we are just kicking that can further down the road towards new furniture purchases (more carbon) and dumping or waste later on. Consider **furniture rentals, furnished properties, discard and donate** companies, and long-term rotational **corporate leases**, for example. Yes, flexibility is key, but with guardrails (the new buzzword!).

Are GM policies helping in the **DE&I** space at all, or actually making things worse? We give everything to execs, for example, and they get the most exceptions approved too! Is that just life? Should we accept it's not our job to fix society? Are we encouraging **talent colonialism** (credit to Michael Grover for that phrase!)? Some companies are happy to pay for kids' schooling, but not ship pets for someone who doesn't have kids. Why? Told you it was meaty!

It led nicely into the Graebel update on updates and trends they are seeing, asking how GM leaders can enhance and advance DE&I. For a start, get to know your **DE&I representative** if you have one! As with any topic in life, build successful relationships. Moving from 'representing' to 'understanding' (diversity), 'access' to 'empowerment' (equity), and 'belonging' to 'performance' (inclusion) are the next steps for all functions, not just GM.

It was interesting to see some stats that should get GM teams thinking, especially in light of the narrative that assignments are on the decline (we know traditional ones may be, but not our workload!): 80% of responders to a recent survey said they would stay with an organisation if offered relocation, while 85% of baby boomers are willing to relocate. This shows that we should not just talk about the younger generations in the **'talent war'**, but all generations, to capitalise on this sentiment and **stay relevant**.

Staying on the theme of challenging conversations, we had Kate Gondouin, expat mentor and an expat spouse herself. Her personal story certainly woke people up after lunch! The emotional kick in the face was intentional and designed to get people really thinking about whether the 'soft' benefits of **cultural adaptation training, language training**, and general **wider family support** really are that soft, or in fact necessary. These items don't necessarily cost much money, and don't have to cost extra time in many instances (even just appreciation that these are people and not numbers), but have the potential to make huge differences. GM teams know this already, but such a personal story shows how important it is to relay the message to the business.



Our new **hot potato** section was a great opportunity for members to use the breadth and depth of knowledge in the room to help them with a particular challenge or share their own knowledge and experience. It didn't disappoint as we discussed **housing challenges mixed with immigration challenges** when moving someone from a low-salary country to one that has a comparatively high-salary immigration threshold. Some countries' immigration rules won't allow the housing cost to be counted as part of the salary, which makes it hard to comply! Suggestions in the room included helping select the right quality of house as normal, but paying the allowance in payroll as opposed to directly to the landlord.

A fantastic question asking what others are doing on **EU Posted Workers** raised great debate. What do you realistically do when someone books last minute to go from Poland to France, but doesn't meet the minimum salary requirements? Can you really be expected to file a notification and fix their salary in 24 hours? While we continue to grapple with how to use technology (and there are some great tools out there), or how to use vendors, it was suggested by Graebel that we lobby governments wherever possible to help them realise how unrealistic their expectations are sometimes. While all-too-many companies are still burying their heads in the sand, there are a good few genuinely trying to comply and finding it impossible, especially given the 'directive' nature and no consistency across countries. At least we have one single notification system to look forward to, although who knows when?!

Benchmarking

In the three times and 10 years I was a corporate member of Expat Academy, I used the **benchmarking service** a lot! You wouldn't know that, of course, because it's anonymous! And why not use it a lot? It's all part of your membership and we now have more members than ever, by far! So, switch your notifications on ([here if you need help](#)), and get involved! But not just by asking; please do answer other people's questions because it's kind and it's the right thing to do ;)

I guess we should be careful what we wish for though...there has been a recent surge in people using the service and October alone has 23 questions published! I simply can't summarise them all here, so you'll just have to [take a look](#) to see whether any of the following topics appeal to you and dive in yourselves!

Author



Greg Smith, Head of Client Services – Symposium Network. Can you tell what my lapel pin is in this pic? The first person to guess it right will get a small Christmas treat at our Bite Size Briefing (just to prove someone actually reads this section)

Benivo - Assignment Management Tool	Increased Sponsorship requirements
Dayforce - Assignment recording	India Lump Sum Relocation Allowance - Domestic Relocation
Dependent visa support	Laptops and IT Equipment for Children
Devaluation of GBP	Partner/spouse support
Dubai - Expat Benefits - Local Expat Hires	Permanent transfer - Temp accommodation as a taxable benefit
Employer-provided housing for Japan local+ employees	Remote working with no office/entity
Exception management process	Remote working- India/Indonesia
Exchange rate covered for allowance	Sustainability practices
FX rates used to set/review CoLA	Tax return support for trailing income - permanent transfers
Global Tax and Immigration Vendors	UK Expat payment of local mobility allowances and expenses
Home country social security registration	US leases for local transfers
Home Leave - Long-Term Assignments	