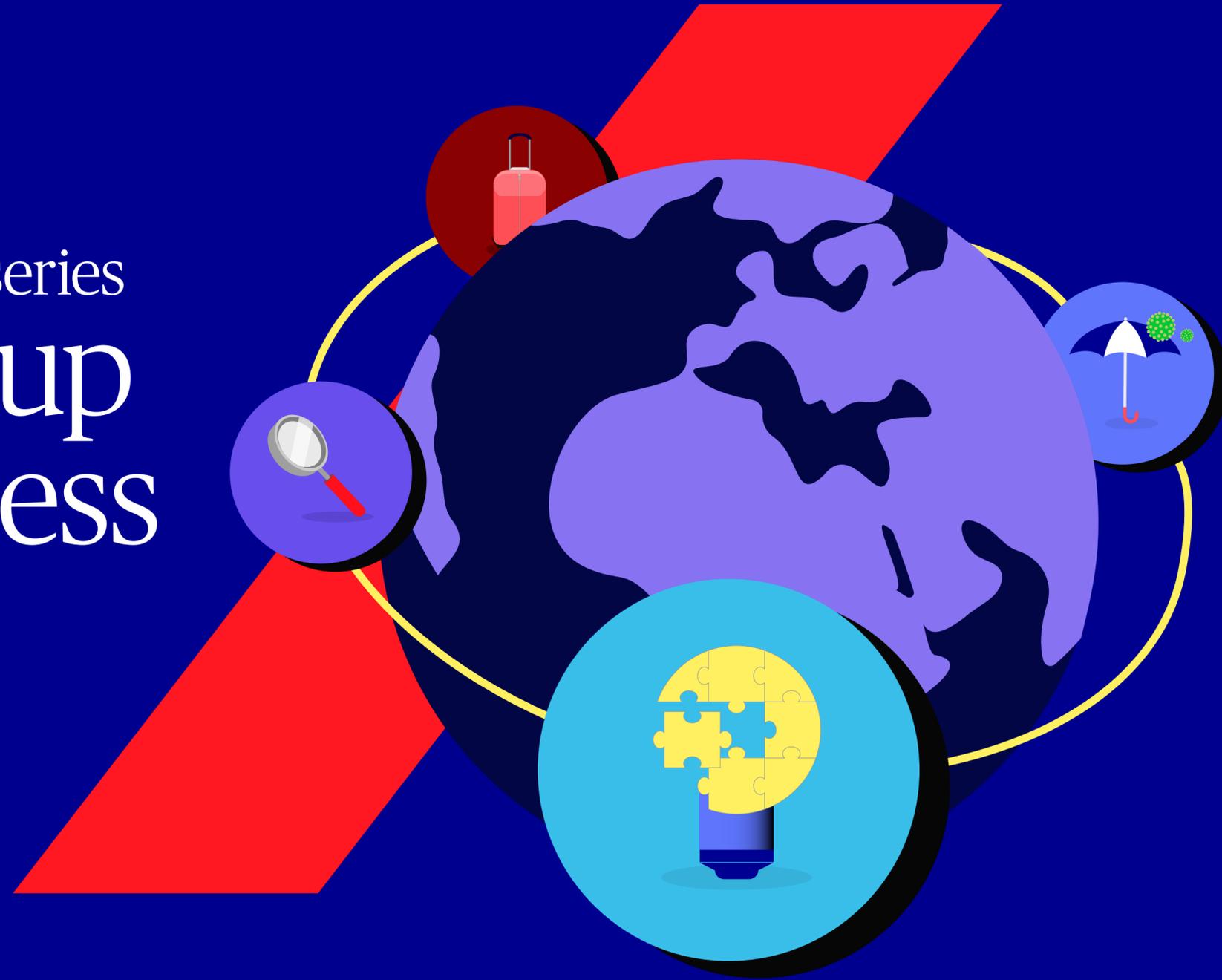




World of Work series  
**Setting up  
for success**



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### About the research

The findings shared in this report are based on research conducted with 689 HR decision-makers and 641 non-native assignees across 10 markets and three continents.\*



## Foreword

### Ellen Hughes, Chief People Officer, AXA Health Business

Global mobility has always been about opportunity – for organisations, for teams and for the individuals who take on the challenge of relocating. But it is also, fundamentally, about people. Behind every assignment is a personal transition: a shift in culture, routine, identity, and support systems.

When we think about mobility strategies, the focus should not only be on business outcomes but on how well we prepare people and their loved ones for change.

Having experienced international assignments myself and supported many others through it since, I have seen first-hand how effective preparation can ease the transition and shape the trajectory of an assignment. Although the practical elements will always remain a pillar of support, it's the social, cultural and psychological aspects of relocation, as this report explores, that are becoming increasingly critical and complex.

In fact, AXA Global Healthcare's research demonstrates that cultural readiness, family support and social integration all play a defining role in whether individuals are equipped to thrive, not just adapt. Of assignments that fail, for example, one in three now do so due to difficulties adapting to local culture.

For organisations, preparation has therefore evolved far beyond the legalities and logistics of relocation and is now the foundation for building resilience, wellbeing and, ultimately, performance.

Still, in order for preparation to deliver the best outcomes, accountability must be shared. Businesses should design mobility strategies which recognise the full experience of relocation, and individuals must actively engage with the support available to them. Only then can the value and investment at this stage of an assignment be realised.

As the world of global mobility continues to evolve, and placements become shorter, more agile and globally dispersed, setting people up for success has never been more important. By strengthening preparation at every level, we can create the conditions for mobility to deliver on its promise: growth for our organisations and meaningful opportunities and experiences for our people.

“Preparation for assignments has evolved far beyond the legalities and logistics of relocation and is now the foundation for building resilience, wellbeing and performance.”



## The changes we've seen to global mobility over the last eight years have been largely driven by two forces: **rising costs** and **shifting needs**.

The average investment required has increased by more than 50%, while the benefits employees need for overseas assignments to feel both viable and desirable have also evolved.

Together, these factors are now redefining what it takes to make international placements a success, while also creating new opportunities for businesses to strengthen their mobility strategies.

In this edition of the World of Work series, we explore the role preparation plays in this success. The period when expectations are set, support structures are established and the foundations for an effective assignment begin to take shape.

The average cost of sending an employee on international assignment (over and above their salary)



## Where does success start?

The findings from our executive summary report ‘[Global mobility on the move](#)’, show that the first three months of an international assignment are often the hardest for assignees, with as many as 54% reporting this as the period when wellbeing challenges peak.

The leading drivers of these challenges according to HR decision-makers are:



In fact, they report that family concerns and cultural adjustment are currently the two main reasons employees end their assignment early. A strong indicator that an assignee’s most significant challenges are experienced at a personal level and not driven by work-related factors.

For businesses, therefore, the key to assignment success is now multifaceted. As well as the occupational and logistical elements they already manage well, it’s also essential that they deliver the same focus and level of support to the emotional, relational and social aspects of an individual’s relocation journey.

This is where preparation becomes a powerhouse and can firmly set the foundations for success. From family readiness and cultural orientation to expectation-setting and emotional support, the period before departure plays a defining role in improving the assignee experience, wellbeing, and the long-term value of international placements.

“To ensure expatriates are satisfied, organisations need to focus on clear communication, cultural support, and practical assistance. This includes thorough pre-departure briefings, ongoing check-ins, relocation help, and access to local resources. Encourage regular feedback and ensure integration both professionally and socially.” (HR decision-maker)



## Preparing the family unit

The value of preparation becomes immediately clear when we look at how it affects the family dynamic. After all, the lived reality of relocation is the impact on who comes along for the journey and who stays behind.

When we reported on the [World of Work in 2020](#), family preparation needs were largely administrative and financial. For employees moving with their families, relocation support and health insurance, for example, were highly valued and also expected. And for employees moving alone, support with costs to keep them connected to their loved ones, such as travel expenses, were equally important.

But five years on, expectations have shifted. While administrative and financial support continue to underpin the success of international assignments, employees are looking to their organisations to provide more holistic preparation. Specifically, the type of support that goes beyond the legalities of their move, such as visa sponsorship, and helps their families get practically ready for everyday life in their new country.

For example, when we asked assignees about current and future assignment support, gaps begin to emerge when preparation moves beyond paper to their family's lived experience. Currently falling short is the practical help that enables assignees and their loved ones to settle and feel grounded in the work country. When asked, only 20% said their family received help with relocation services for their current assignment, as did only 20% with finding somewhere to live. Yet a third say they would now expect this type of support from their employer for future placements.

This gap in future expectation not only suggests that some of the most valuable forms of support are only fully recognised once the assignment is underway, but also reinforces that businesses have the opportunity to address these needs earlier. This can be especially important in the case of supporting assignees to find accommodation, as the home is often one of the first means of creating family stability and a sense of belonging in a new location.



## Local vs international health insurance

Another element of support which can't be overlooked is the growing distinction between the type of health cover assignees value for themselves and their family in preparation for their move abroad.

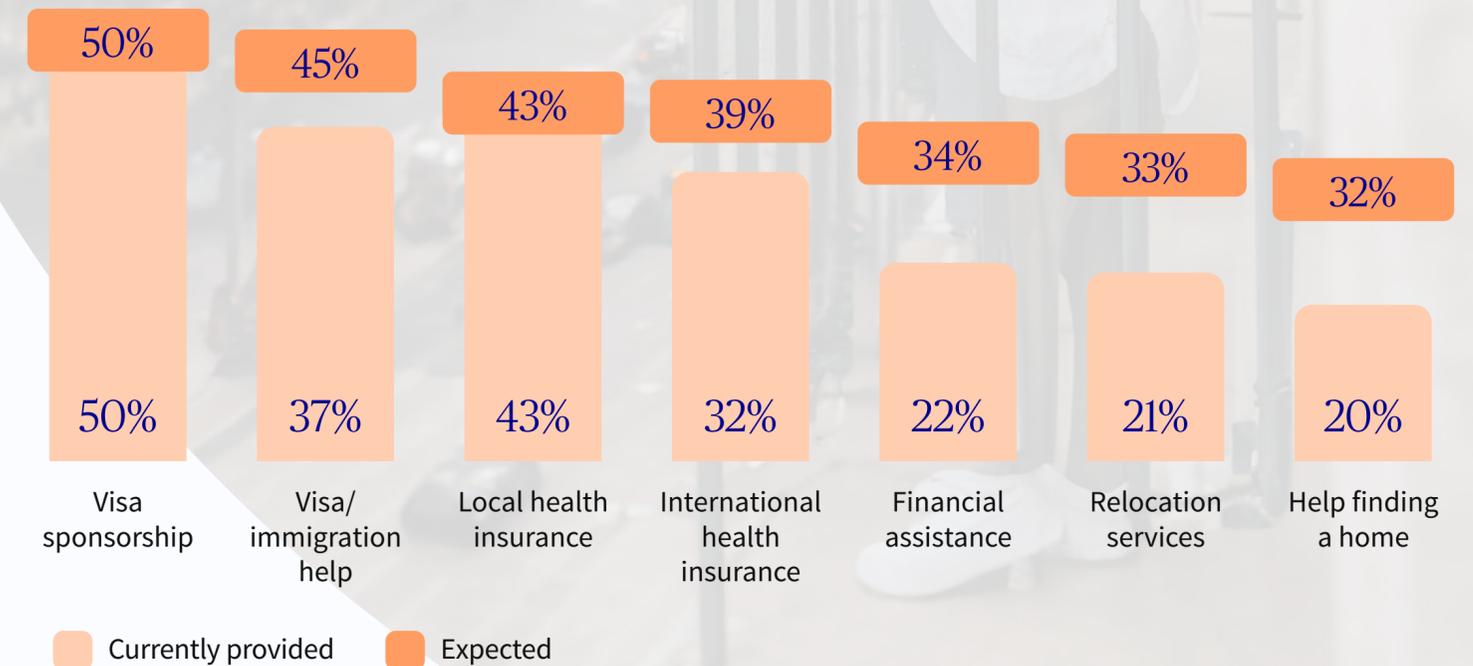
While expectations around local health insurance have remained relatively stable since 2020, demand for global medical cover is rising. Our latest findings show a gap between the international health insurance assignees and their families currently receive and what they would expect for a future placement. In terms of preparation, this gap can be significant, especially as health protection is an integral part of making sure assignees and their families feel secure before relocating.

However, what makes this benefit particularly important is its relationship with broader global mobility trends. From our findings, nearly three quarters (73%) of HR decision-makers expect more digital nomadism in their workforce over the next five years – a strong indicator that benefits will need to have more focus on location-fluidity and flexibility in order to give international workers, and their families, consistent health protection wherever they're based.

With this insight in mind, and as the landscape of global working evolves, international health insurance is not just essential but also an increasingly strategic investment. After all, should digital nomadism continue to grow as expected, worldwide health cover will help businesses to future-proof their mobility strategies, while signalling readiness and reassurance to assignees and families considering location-independent roles.

### Expected vs. provided: Gaps in practical support for families in assignment country

#### International assignees



## Risk or opportunity?

Together, these findings make clear that despite the many other benefits and support mechanisms in place for assignees, a lack of early family preparation and support can become a vulnerability within even the most well-designed mobility strategies.

For many businesses, this lack of preparation also risks eroding the commercial goals they set out to achieve. For example, when asked what prompts them to send employees on assignment, HR decision-makers cite their top two priorities are to:

Improve the performance of their overseas operations

61%

Build the skills and experience within them

55%

When it comes to shaping their mobility packages, delivering a level of benefits that attract (46%) and retain (45%) top talent is also a primary focus.

Reassuringly, even in an environment where supporting assignees and their families now involves multiple moving parts, our findings present an opportunity for organisations to confidently meet their ambitions. By treating family preparation – whether at home or away – as an early driver of assignment success, they will not only protect wellbeing, but also strengthen performance, retention and the value of their investment.

“Employers could help by [...] supporting family connections, such as special leave for commuting home or activities that connect employees with loved ones. Additionally, creating a workplace culture that is open, empathetic, and takes feedback seriously helps employees feel secure and valued.” (International assignee)



## Culturally fit

Cultural adaptation support is another form of preparation which requires greater attention. According to HR decision-makers, one in three assignments that end early do so because of difficulties adjusting to the local culture. And perhaps more concerningly, this issue has ranked among the top three reasons assignments end early for the past eight years.

As a recurring concern for businesses, early intervention should now be considered essential. Not only because the lack of support in this area is clearly detrimental to assignment success, but because cultural orientation and integration is equally critical to individual wellbeing.

### Living up to expectations

Part of the reason cultural adjustment is a consistent challenge may be due to the gap between current provision and expectation. From our findings, only 29% of assignees received language and cultural support for their current placement, yet 39% say they would expect this for their next assignment.

Of assignments that end early **1 in 3** do so because of difficulty adapting to local culture

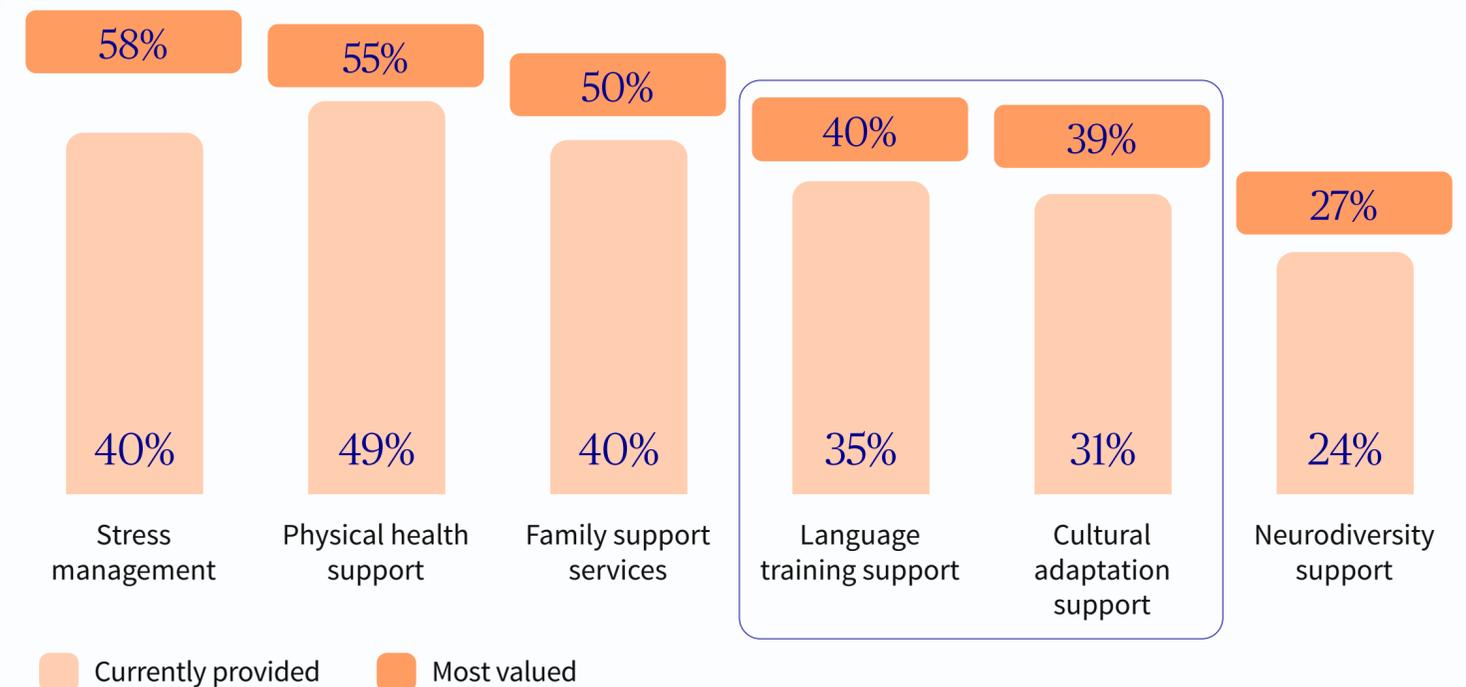
This gap is also visible in terms of what assignees value. When asked, they ranked language and cultural adaptation support among their top five most valued wellbeing services from their employer, but provision is still lagging behind. Language training support, for example, currently falls 12.5% short of expectation, while cultural adaptation support falls further behind, at around 20%.

In response, many assignees may be turning to digital tools to fill these gaps and supplement their preparation, with language tools, in particular, emerging as the most valuable. As many as 54% are turning to translation apps to help them get ready for relocation, while two thirds (66%) say they were one of the most useful tools for preparation. A similar picture appears for language learning apps, which 59% say are the most useful. Investing in more of these digital solutions might be key to not only bridging some of the existing gaps, but also helping assignees build confidence in their new country more independently.

However, despite these perceived shortfalls, businesses are still largely providing cultural adaptation support for assignees before relocation. And our findings show that their emotional and psychological wellbeing is scaffolded by robust mental health support should they struggle.

However, the gaps still point to potential vulnerabilities in mobility strategies, especially around prevention. If left unaddressed, organisations risk placing individuals into unfamiliar environments without the tools they need to integrate confidently and perform effectively.

### Valued vs provided: Gaps in wellbeing services International assignees



“Before departure, we provide comprehensive cross-cultural training, language support, and destination-life guidance while working locally. We also provide mental health counselling and actively assist in resolving work or life problems to help assignees integrate into local life.” (HR decision-maker)

## Family integration

For families living in the host country, cultural support is integrated at pre-assignment stage and certainly not neglected. Where gaps do appear is, again, around experience and expectation. Just over a quarter of assignees (28%) say their family received cultural orientation and language support for their current assignment, yet 39% would expect it if they were relocating with their family again in the future.

HR decision-makers, however, see this offering quite differently. Just over half (51%) report that they already provide cultural and language support.

This includes:

- cultural awareness training
- briefings on local customs
- working styles
- language lessons or learning support.

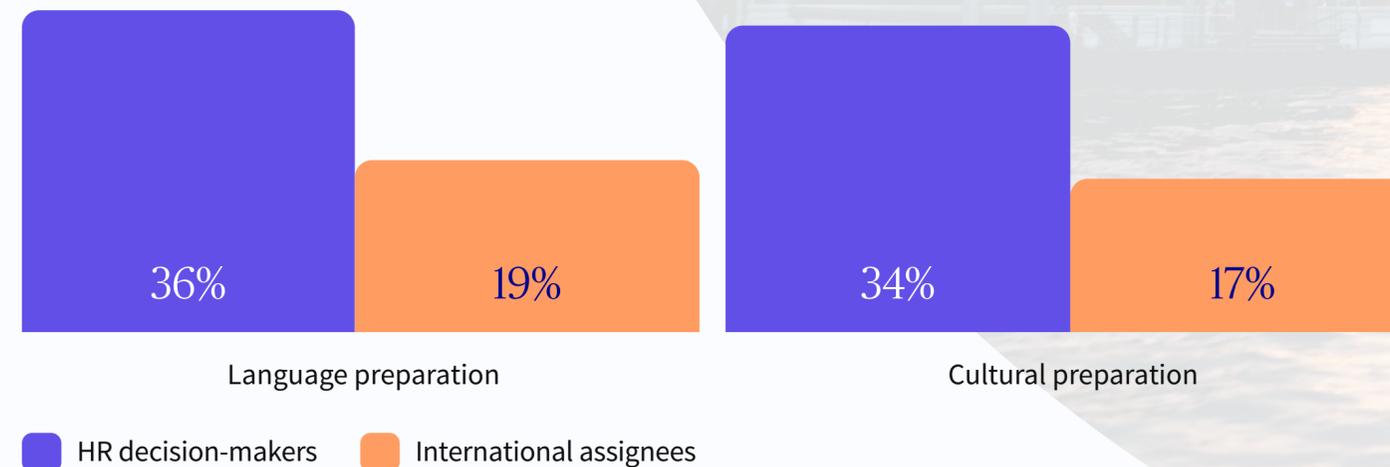
This difference in perspective may indicate that support exists but is not always clearly communicated. Or it may be that, once again, assignees only recognise what they need from their employer once the realities of an overseas placement set in.

Nevertheless, the demand for cultural preparation has increased by 24% since our last report in 2020, so these expectations from assignees may simply reflect an evolution of need. Perhaps what assignees and their families need to thrive post-pandemic doesn't begin in the workplace. Instead,

it's the early personal experiences that promote integration and belonging, and relieve stress and isolation for the whole household, that are now more essential to success.

This is especially interesting if we consider that expectations have stayed largely the same for the past five years for families who stay in their home country. Indicating, perhaps, that the support mechanisms intended to keep them connected are working as well today as they were amidst a global pandemic.

### Cultural preparation provided for families in assignment country HR decision-makers vs. International assignees



## Expert voice

### In conversation with intercultural specialist Sean Dubberke

International assignments are often framed as professional opportunities – for career growth, leadership development, and global exposure. But intercultural specialist, Sean Dubberke, shares how relocation is as much a personal transition as it is a professional one.

#### Tell us about yourself

I'm the Chief Learning Officer for RW3 CultureWizard, so I oversee everything related to learning, including strategy, content development, design and delivery. A large part of that work involves supporting businesses and international assignees by delivering learning experiences that help them prepare before departure, during assignment, and upon return, including repatriation training. Our focus is on cross-cultural dynamics and how people can learn to bridge cultural differences.

I'm originally from Los Angeles but have lived in New York City for about 17 years now. I grew up in an intercultural family – Italian and Cuban on my mother's side, and my father from Hamburg in Germany – so there were many different influences around me. That's how I naturally found myself in this space. I've also studied in the UK,

Germany, US and Japan, and have travelled widely, so it's also this exposure to different cultures and diversity of experience that has shaped my work.

#### Getting ready

##### What does personal preparation for an assignment mean to you?

Preparation is extremely important and should really consider all aspects of how life will change, from daily routines to life outside work.

The first thing that comes to mind is social connections, including how you tie up your life before departure. Whether that's making sure that friends and family understand why you're relocating or establishing channels of communication so they know how you'll stay in touch. It's also important to think about social connections in your destination country. Is there someone who could help you get going socially beyond your job? What hobbies might you continue or develop? And, of course, there's learning the local language. Even learning a few phrases can be incredibly helpful in the early days.

Another important element of preparation is anticipating the stress of transition – what people often call culture shock. That means thinking about your level of resilience

and healthy coping strategies, which might include speaking with someone who has already moved to that location or finding someone within the destination team who can act as a cultural mentor.

You can't prepare for everything, of course. So much about relocation is about fortifying your mental equipment. I'd say that's number one, and the rest follows from there.

##### When should cross-cultural training begin?

As soon as the idea of an international assignment becomes a possibility. So for employees, this should be before they apply. For example, we provide assignees with a decision-making assessment that tells them if they're a good candidate based on a host of personality traits that are vital to crossing cultures, and this is designed to help them make informed decisions.

And it shouldn't matter where an assignee is moving to. It could be from the US to Canada or Singapore to China – there are still many things that pop up for people in seemingly 'culturally similar' places that can cause real stress.



## What do organisations and employees commonly misunderstand about cultural readiness?

At an organisational level, companies often misunderstand how to identify candidates for international assignments. They sometimes assume that earlier international experience, cultural affinity, or even international business travel is predictive of readiness to live and work abroad.

We know from research and experience that people can learn to adapt to new cultural environments. After all, cultural values and working styles are acquired through socialisation and can evolve over time. But what's really hard to change is the hardwired – what psychologists call – immutable traits. A couple that are really key to successful assignments, are: tolerance for ambiguity, cultural curiosity and humility, and the ability to form relationships with people from different cultural or ethnic backgrounds. Those things are hard to teach, so you just have to see if they exist in any pool of candidates for assignment.

On the employee side, misunderstanding is often related to excitement. People can approach relocation as an adventure and assume they'll figure things out once they arrive. That enthusiasm can delay the perception that you need to prepare for the practical and psychological realities of living in a new cultural environment.

## With access to social media and online information, has preparation become easier for assignees today?

Yes and no. Social media can help, but it doesn't always prepare people for life on the ground. The version of life presented by influencers is often very different from

your everyday work with Company X in the suburbs of Paris, for example.

I'd say the key is to diversify your sources of information: head to Netflix to watch films from that country or read books, even travel books, which have helpful cultural tips.

## How does cultural adjustment differ when someone relocates with family?

Family adjustment is critical to assignment success. Research consistently shows that if a partner or family member struggles to adapt, the assignment itself can fail.

Helping families understand daily life in the new culture – from schools to healthcare systems – can significantly ease the transition. Many families want to know how healthcare works, what is normal in medical interactions, or how to access services such as childcare or therapy. Addressing these practical concerns helps reduce stress and makes the relocation experience more positive for the entire household.

## The importance of cultural curiosity

### What do you think surprises people most about relocating, culturally or otherwise?

I'd say assignees and their families are often, and I experienced this too, disappointed that the people they meet in the destination don't really take much notice of how monumental the relocation was for them. And they may not care to understand their adjustment or cultural challenges until maybe they have a relationship with them.

“Preparation is extremely important and should really consider all aspects of how life will change, from daily routines to life outside work. But so much about relocation is about fortifying your mental equipment. I'd say that's number one, and the rest follows from there.”

People can also be quite inflexible about their understanding of cultural differences. Even when they think they understand a culture because they've visited before, seen media representations, or worked virtually with colleagues there, actually living in that country can challenge those assumptions. That's where cultural curiosity becomes important, as it helps people approach differences with interest rather than judgement.

Another surprise is how your own values can change after living abroad. For example, when I spent time in Japan, I developed a deep appreciation for the Japanese concept of impermanence – the idea that everything changes and that you shouldn't let it wear you out. It's influenced by Buddhist philosophy and is visible in everyday life there.

### What does cultural agility mean in practice?

I define cultural agility as the ability to pivot between cultural contexts without losing sight of who you are. In practice, it means being able to work comfortably and effectively with people from different cultures by adjusting your own behaviour and your interpretation of behaviour in a new environment.

For example, when I worked in Japan, I sometimes received subtle negative reactions when I used my more direct American communication style, so I had to start observing and copying non-verbal behaviours. I saw different levels of bowing, nodding, avoiding direct eye contact to reduce tension, pausing for silence before responding, and receiving physical objects with two hands. I didn't always understand the meaning behind these behaviours, but observing and mirroring them helped me adapt. It sounds really simple, but it's actually one of the best things assignees can learn to do when they first arrive.

## Some thoughts on the future

### We know short-term assignments are on the rise. Do you think cross-cultural training will evolve to support this trend?

Assignments have certainly evolved in the 17 years that I've been doing this work. I've seen training move from multi-day briefings to 90-minute express sessions or, in some cases, just a country profile and maybe a cultural values assessment.

Digital forms of support are quite useful for short-term assignments, especially for Gen Z and millennials, so we're currently experimenting with AI models that are trained to act as a cultural mentor or intercultural coach.

I'd say an AI agent or bot that can accompany the assignee and family day in, day out is something that's going to be important, but people still really value human-led learning experiences. Having a human to talk to is very important to lots of people, especially if the assignment is shorter in nature.

## Combatting loneliness and isolation

By nature, global mobility is temporary, so forming meaningful relationships can be challenging. People may struggle to invest deeply in making long-term connections if they know they're moving on again soon. Equally, the people around them may be reluctant to build bonds that may not last.

If we add hybrid-working into this equation, which many international organisations have adopted, we can see how opportunities for connection drop even further and how loneliness and isolation can quickly develop as a result.

As one of the biggest wellbeing challenges facing assignees and HR decision-makers, it's certainly an area which requires greater attention and more awareness prior to relocation if businesses are to reduce the friction with assignment success and see the real return on their mobility investments.

### Creating connections

Throughout the pandemic, we witnessed the cost of prolonged social disconnection: rising rates of depression and anxiety, reduced productivity, and increased burnout to name a few. And while international assignments are very different from a global health crisis, they can still create similar

emotional conditions for assignees if their wellbeing isn't considered early on. For example, distance from support networks, the abrupt loss of everyday connections, limited – or lack of – in-person conversations with loved ones, and fear and uncertainty can be very pronounced for assignees, particularly if they're relocating alone.

**“Loneliness was an issue and it would have been greatly beneficial to have a buddy to support me.”** (Male, US, 47)

Our findings show that this is especially true during the first three months of their placement, when wellbeing challenges peak. It may be that it's at this early stage, when everything is new and unfamiliar, that individuals feel the most vulnerable in terms of their social needs and so struggle more. Or it could be that the findings are uncovering a deeper issue – that assignees aren't fully equipped with the social scaffolding they need to integrate into their new life before they move.

In either scenario, organisations have an opportunity to mitigate issues with loneliness and isolation, but timing matters. Although many already have preventative mental health measures in place for assignees during their placement – such as regular check-ins (59%), counselling sessions (51%) and wellbeing programmes (41%) – which are all working well, similar measures need to be embedded earlier, into the pre-departure stage.

### This could look like...



**Introducing assignees to peer networks before departure** – so connections can start forming in advance. Over half (51%) of assignees who used local community integration apps found them useful, yet our findings show that they're looking for more support from their employer for future assignments in the form of access to expat support groups (23%) and forums (27%). However, given that 45% of HR decision-makers say these networks are already in place, there may simply be a gap in communication.



**Implementing psychological preparation** – including having open conversations about the emotional realities of life on assignment, the extent of the support they'll receive from the business, and the level of accountability they'll need to have for their own social integration.



**Clearly communicating available counselling and wellbeing services to assignees prior to relocation** – whether it's face-to-face or virtual support, knowing what support they have access to will feel more reassuring and less reactive.



**Using buddy or mentoring systems more consistently** – to provide pre-departure support but also a pre-established social connection in the workplace. Just over half (46%) of HR decision-makers say these are currently used as a preventative mind health measure for social isolation, compared to just over a quarter of assignees (28%).

## Hybrid working

### Another area of focus and preparation could be on hybrid working models and their effect on wellbeing.

While the shift towards this way of working has been largely positive, with as many as 78% of assignees saying it's had a beneficial impact on both their work-life balance and productivity, 37% say it has been less positive in terms of feelings of isolation and disconnection. One in ten assignees, for example, say that hybrid working has had a negative effect on their mental health, and this is even more pronounced for those on short-term placements (14%).

As this model reduces opportunities for connection and social bonding, these findings aren't surprising. However, they do suggest that hybrid-working may be a more nuanced benefit for people on placement. After all, what works for native employees who likely have established social networks outside work, may not be suitable for employees who are yet to build those networks in their new location.

To support with this difference, HR decision-makers could have open conversations with their assignees about how hybrid-working may affect their mental health, and discuss alternative working options with them, should they want to build more connection into their week before they move.

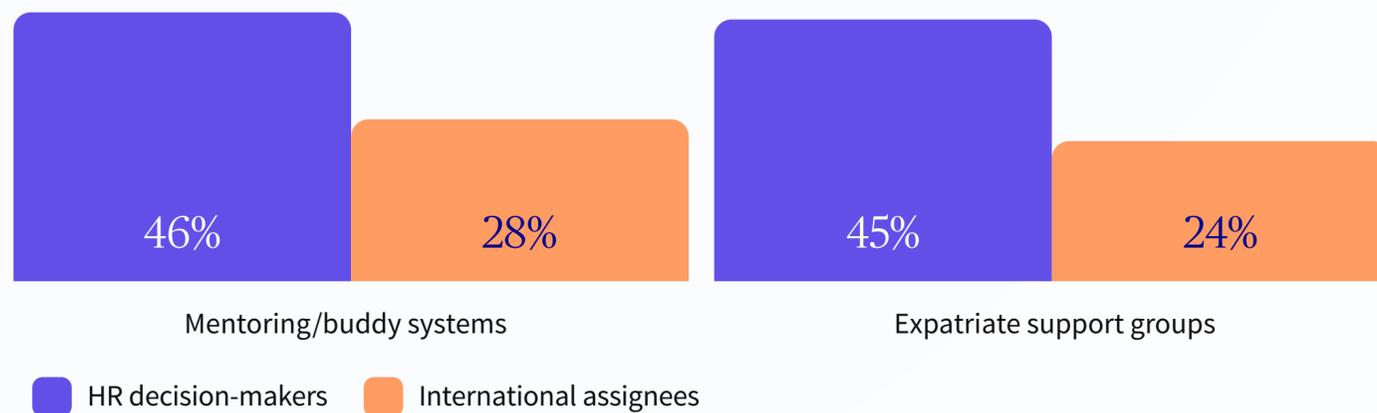
These alternatives could involve:

- Providing access to co-working spaces to create opportunities for social interaction beyond the home and office.
- Increasing in-office presence where managers and peers are encouraged to prioritise face-to-face onboarding, team lunches or activities, and in-person collaboration to support relationship building.
- Dedicated budgets to help assignees join networking groups, language classes or community events outside their workday.
- Upskilling managers on how to integrate assignees into teams that use a hybrid working model.

If we take all these findings together, it's clear that when connection is treated as part of assignment strategy, rather than left to chance, businesses can have a real influence on one of the most damaging but also preventable risks to mobility success and individual wellbeing.

**“We organise social activities among expatriates, such as regular dinners and outdoor activities, to enhance interaction and a sense of belonging among staff.”**  
(HR decision-maker)

### Mind health support provided HR decision-makers vs. International assignees



**+** work-life balance (78%)



**-** isolation and disconnection (37%)

## An eye on the future

In the context of pre-assignment preparation, we can't ignore how global mobility is evolving. If we consider that short-term placements have increased by 59% in five years and are predicted to become even shorter and more transient with the rise of digital nomadism, then preparing employees for what to expect will become more fundamental to success and wellbeing than ever before.

Preparation, therefore, is now increasingly a form of prevention: prevention of isolation, cultural disconnection, and family separation, all of which put assignments at the greatest risk.

But for prevention to be effective, organisations must look beyond practical preparation support by redirecting some of their focus towards the personal, social and psychological realities of relocation, however temporary it may be.

It's clear from our overall findings that this support is far from absent and, encouragingly, 57% of HR decision-makers say preventative health measures are already built in at pre-departure stage. However, our research has revealed that there is still room to embed these more consistently and intentionally.

A significant part of this is not about finding solutions for every benefit gap or fixing every feeling an assignee may experience on placement. Instead, it's about equipping them with the tools and support before they leave to help them build resilience and navigate challenges more easily.

### For HR decision-makers, this now relies on strengthening two areas.

The first, and most important, is making social, family, and cultural support the cornerstone of pre-assignment strategy. If placements are designed to deliver success, and return on ever-increasing investment, then prioritising preventative measures and improving readiness will be critical in years to come.

The second is reinforcing shared accountability for assignment success from the start, and communication is central to achieving this. As although HR decision-makers are primarily responsible for putting the right pre-assignment support in place, assignees must also hold up their end of the deal by actively engaging with what's available, whether that's committing to language learning or participating in cross-cultural training. Only when this shared responsibility is communicated can assignments really set out with clear expectations on both sides.



Ultimately, this investment into preparation should no longer be viewed as an add-on, but rather as a pivotal and strategic stage of the assignment lifecycle – one that plays a decisive role in determining overall wellbeing and, therefore, overall success.

**57% of HR decision-makers say preventative health measures are already built in at pre-assignment stage.**

## Preparation in practice

### An HR-insider's view

Hear from HR decision-makers around the world about how they set their placements and people up for success. From having open conversations and delivering intensive language classes to conducting pre-departure interviews.



We provide comprehensive welfare, **cross-cultural training**, regular feedback and support [to] meet personal and professional needs, ensure expatriates adapt to the environment, and promote satisfaction and happiness.

We will **pre-research employee needs to customize welfare packages** covering housing, medical care, and children's education; regularly visit to collect feedback, dynamically optimize welfare content to fit actual needs, and make employees feel thoughtful support.

We always ensure the overall wellbeing of overseas assignees from deployment through to return home. Cross-cultural training and **intensive language classes** can help.

We focus on transparency and alignment: have **open conversations** with assignees upfront about what's offered (housing, travel, healthcare, family support) and ensure it matches actual needs.

We provide cultural training, language support, and a **thorough pre-departure briefing** to help assignees feel prepared and confident.

We will conduct: cross-cultural training and life arrangements in advance during the assignment, regular care and communication to resolve work-life issues, and **organize community activities** to foster a sense of support and belonging.

Before expatriation, my department and I use surveys/interviews to understand core concerns (e.g., children's education, spouse employment); customize welfare; hold **quarterly 1-on-1 welfare experience discussions**, and adjust policies.



## The World of Work series

Over the past eight years, we've been monitoring and listening to the experiences of HR leaders and assignees across the world to understand how international placements are evolving.

Shared through a collection of reports, our **World of Work series** explores the challenges and opportunities facing organisations and their people during this time of change.

Starting with an Executive summary report, each edition in the series focuses on a different stage of the assignment journey – every one unique but equally essential to success.

Explore the World of Work series and download the latest reports [here](#).

### Executive summary: Global mobility on the move



Explore the key insights from the World of Work research, including the current experience of international placements and what businesses can do to further support assignees at every stage of the journey – from preparation and life on assignment to repatriation.

[Read the report.](#)

### Pre-assignment: Setting up for success



Looking more closely at the findings, the 2nd edition in the World of Work series examines the role preparation plays in protecting against family stress, cultural isolation, and loneliness – now the three main reasons assignments end early.

### Coming soon

### On assignment: Keeping people brilliant



The 3rd edition in our series looks at what assignees need while they're on placement, and where the opportunities are for businesses to do even more. From increasing family support to improving work-life balance, our findings highlight what life on assignment is really like eight years on.

### Coming soon

### Post-assignment: Bringing talent home



Repatriation is a risky period in the assignment journey. If it isn't managed well, talent and investment could be at risk. The 4th and final report in the series explores this defining stage for assignees and organisations, and how investing in post-placement wellbeing support could be the answer to a positive return home.



[axaglobalhealthcare.com](https://axaglobalhealthcare.com)

\*Research conducted in June 2025 by Savanta. A total of 689 HR decision-makers (US:110, UK:109, France:53, Germany:54, UAE:55, Kenya:52, Hong Kong:50, Singapore:50, Thailand:53 and China:103) and 641 non-native assignees (US:106, UK:114, France:51, Germany:52, UAE:59, Kenya:66, Hong Kong:49, Singapore:52, Thailand:51 and China:41) were surveyed.

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