

Lobbying for change

Spouses, partners and working age children accompanying an employee on an international assignment may be keen to work. Being unable to take up employment due to host country visa rules can act as a major disincentive to assignment acceptance.

WORK AUTHORISATION BEST PRACTICE

According to Permits Foundation over 30 countries allow spouses to work and there is an increasing trend towards recognising unmarried partners and allowing working age children to work. The situation, however, is complex: while some countries allow direct employment access to the spouse or

partner, others place conditions on employment access and there are still a number of countries that do not allow access to employment via dependant status. Some countries recognise spouses but not unmarried partners and/or same-sex spouses/partners.

Permits Foundation describes best practice as “an ‘open’ work permit or authorisation for legally resident partners of international employees. This gives them immediate access to the employment market for the same duration as the main work permit holder, once they have obtained their accompanying family member residence status”. www.permitsfoundation.com/agenda/

Currently there is a long way to go to achieve this objective.

WHAT EMPLOYERS CAN DO

For many spouses and partners being able to work and pursue career continuity is of immense importance. If employers are going to facilitate their employees to undertake global mobility, action will be needed to support accompanying spouses/partners to obtain the right to work. Lobbying is a key action that can help to change the dual career landscape within the arena of global mobility.

While some major employers may have effective and valuable government contacts in their host countries of operation, there is no doubt that lobbying strength lies in numbers. Working with other employers who similarly wish to relocate employees abroad and who face dual career barriers as part of this process can be an effective strategy. Joining a lobbying organisation as a sponsor can give an employer the opportunity to put forward their specific concerns and play a direct part in making change happen.

Lobbying organisations such as Permits Foundation have a long track

record of success in their dealings with host country governments across the world where their sponsor firms have business operations. Local sponsor networks and steering committees work to plan approaches to be taken with local government ministries and are cognisant of local social and economic conditions in their approaches to bring about change.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Global mobility professionals support a broad definition of accompanying family members in relation to them being able to access host country employment. Spouses, partners, and same sex spouses/partners should all be afforded support under international assignment policy as to not do so can lead to early return/assignment failure. Efforts to lobby for change in work authorisation rules should progress the interests of all accompanying family members.

Dual career assistance is regarded as underpinning international mobility, talent retention, employee wellbeing and demonstrating a family-friendly culture that aids the employer brand. Employers that show they are actively lobbying for change demonstrate a strong social imperative under their Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) strategies.

To access the Mini Factsheet series visit thinkglobalpeople.com and find out about events, webinars and podcasts. Contact us info@thinkglobalpeople.com

For comprehensive information on managing Global Mobility visit our sister website relocateglobal.com

