

A smiling man and woman are positioned in the upper right quadrant of the image. The man is on the left, wearing a dark jacket over a light blue shirt. The woman is on the right, wearing a white top. They are both smiling and looking towards the camera. Behind them is a city skyline, with the Empire State Building being the most prominent feature. The background of the entire image is a light blue sky with some clouds. The left side of the image features a white background with a repeating geometric pattern of interconnected triangles.

ENABLING DUAL CAREERS IN THE GLOBAL WORKPLACE



PERMITS
foundation

Enabling dual careers in the global workplace

www.permitsfoundation.com

WE ARE AN INDEPENDENT, NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATION CAMPAIGNING GLOBALLY TO IMPROVE WORK PERMIT REGULATIONS FOR PARTNERS OF MOBILE EMPLOYEES ON INTERNATIONAL ASSIGNMENT.

More than 40 international companies and organisations worldwide support Permits Foundation. These diverse organisations show the breadth of concern and quality of support for international dual careers in both, the private and public sector.

Since our start-up in 2001, we have been progressively successful in influencing change throughout the European Union, as well as in the USA, Brazil and Asia (Hong Kong, India

and Japan). More than 30 countries now allow accompanying spouses or partners to work. Countries are also increasingly adopting a broader definition of family members, including unmarried and same-sex couples or partners. We continue to promote best practice and monitor legislative improvements, as well as setting up new projects, for example, in South Africa and China in our global campaign.

“In a period when free trade is being questioned and immigration is under scrutiny from governments, the ability of business to continue to operate world-wide will depend on it’s capacity to attract mobile top talent to facilitate business relationships in international operations. Top talent will not be mobile if partners are excluded from the workplace in an age when women are increasingly part of the professional workforce. Today’s communication technology and social media can not replace the experience of living and working in another country and culture. Permits Foundation has made significant progress and merits all our encouragement and support”.

- Andrew Gould, Board member of Occidental Petroleum and McDermott International. Former Chairman and CEO of Schlumberger, and board member Saudi Aramco.

“Now that I am back in the workforce and have resumed my career, it would be psychologically very difficult to take another break. It would be very hard for me to go to a new location where I couldn’t work... It has made an incredible difference to how my children see me (a mother, a wife, and now a professional) and to their expectations of what they, as women, will be able to do with their own lives. My daughter’s comment to me- “I didn’t realise girls could work too, Mum” - was a huge wake up call”.

-Permits foundation Global Spouse Survey.

WHY ENABLING DUAL CAREERS IS IMPORTANT

Concern over partner employment is one of the top reasons employees turn down an international assignment. This is a real issue for companies that rely on mobile staff to transfer knowledge, skills and technology; fill the temporary shortages and create the “corporate glue” that binds an international organisation together and with demographic changes, more women in the workplace and diversity in families (unmarried partners, same-sex couples), concern will only continue to grow unless we develop sustainable solutions.

Compelling evidence

Permits Foundation conducts periodic surveys of employers, employees and partners to get their perspectives on dual careers and the impact that restrictions on partner employment have on family life, on business and the economy. Our 2018 Brexit survey of HR and mobility managers and our 2015 survey of 1,100 highly skilled international employees and partners in the UK showed resounding support for maintaining dependants’ right to work.

Earlier, in 2012, we surveyed 177 leading global organisations in the private and public sector with very compelling findings. More than half of HR managers reported that employees had turned down an international assignment because of the difficulty of partner employment. Strikingly, 70% felt their company needed to do more to support dual careers.

In 2008, we surveyed 3,300 expatriate partners of 122 nationalities, accompanying employees in 200 companies and 117 host countries. 70% of partners said that their own employment was important in the decision to relocate, while almost 60% said they would be unlikely to relocate to a country where it would be difficult to get a work permit.

“In supporting Permits Foundation, international companies can convince governments with one voice that they need to allow a continuation of careers for partners if they want experts working in their countries”.

-Leena Nair, Chief HR officer and member of Unilever Leadership Executive.

A ‘triple win’ for governments, employers and families

The good news is that the 96% of respondents said that countries that do allow partners to work are desirable destinations for relocation. We don’t expect significant change here in our upcoming widescale survey planned for september 2021. So there is a real incentive for host countries to create a competitive and attractive environment for international investment and highly skilled mobile employees to support economic growth. What’s more, as many partners are highly qualified, they too can contribute their skills and revenue to the local economy if they work.

Our surveys also highlighted that being able to work in the new country often has a positive impact on adjustment, health and well-being, and family relationships, as well as the willingness to complete or extend the assignment.

As a result, the small but important concession of allowing partners to work creates a ‘triple win’ for host countries, employers and families.

“With a view to removing an important obstacle to accept an assignment in the EU, family members will ... have the right to be employed or self-employed in the host member state throughout the duration of the transfer”.

- Council of the European Union, on adoption of the EU Directive on intra-corporate transfers.



Together we are making a difference

To help us plan our approach to governments, we form local networks of sponsors and other stakeholders. And as our success grows, we are extending this to other countries in Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East.

- **BRAZIL:** Following our proposals to members of the National Congress and Government departments, a decree on the legal status of foreigners issued in May 2016 and effected in 2017, included a clause that dependants of temporary work visas can work in Brazil.
- **CHINA:** In 2016, we started to explore the rights of dependants under new and developing federal and regional regulations. Having consulted our network and in follow-up to of our 2020 Sponsor Round Table we are stepping up our work in China in 2021.
- **EUROPEAN UNION:** Provisions for non-European family members to work were included in the EU 'Blue Card' Directive. We campaigned for further improvement in the revised EU Blue Card which is due for adoption in 2021. We also campaigned successfully for family members to be allowed to work under the EU Directive on Intra-Corporate Transfers and are now monitoring it's implementation in practice.
- **INDIA:** Our work resulted in a change of regulations, permitting spouses of intra-company transferees to apply for an employment visa in India. We continue to advocate full access to employment and self-employment and have steadily built consensus on the need for change. Over recent years and with our sponsor network, we have written to, and met with Ministers of State for Home Affairs and External Affairs to seek support for a new visa regulation on Intra-Corporate Transfers, including the right of dependants to work. The proposal is under consideration.
- **JAPAN:** As a resoult of efforts, improvements were made to work permit requirements for professional spouses. We continue to promote full work authorisation.

- **SOUTH AFRICA:** In 2016 and 2018, we submitted a response to the Green and White Paper on International Migration, in which we called for work authorisation for the family members of intra-company transferees and others with critical skills. We responded to the 2021 critical skills list consultation and will continue to promote access to employment for family members as legislation develops.
- **UK:** In the past decade, we successfully argued against a tightening of regulations for dependants of intra-company transferees and other skilled workers. We provided valuable evidence and insights from our global and UK surveys and the right of dependants to work was retained. We are also promoting the rights of family members in the context of Brexit.
- **IRELAND:** We continue to advocate for direct work access for dependants in Ireland. We are now focusing on spouses and partners of ICTs following the welcome 2019 government decision to enable work access for family members of critical skills employment permit holders.
- **USA:** In the US, having advocated in favour of retaining H4 work authorisation, we were pleased to see plans to rescind the H4 EAD withdrawn in January 2021. In March 2021 we launched our US position paper, making recommendations to government that would improve direct employment access for L2, H4 and O3 visa holders, as part of a streamlined and more inclusive system.

"Fundamentally, this is about ensuring Ireland's continued competitiveness as a place in which to live, work and invest".

- Heather Humphreys, Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation announcing in 2019 that spouses and partners of Critical Skills Employment Permit holders will be able to directly access the Irish labour market.

HOW WE PROMOTE LEGISLATIVE CHANGE IN HOST COUNTRIES



Key steps in a local campaign

Success:
Work authorisation
(employment/self-employment)
for recognised partners of internationally mobile staff

Each country needs an individual approach, though there are common steps in planning a campaign.

RESEARCH: We start by researching the status of family members in the host country's immigration legislation and clarify which employment visa categories should qualify for dependants' working rights. We consult our sponsor companies and local experts on the prospect for policy change and whether the time is right to approach the authorities, taking the economic, social and political climate into account. We also investigate whether policy change would require a ministerial decision or an act of parliament.

IDENTIFY RESOURCES: If our initial research is positive, we form a local network of sponsor companies and expert advisers who can guide us on government relations and legal aspects as well as potential press and media contacts.

PLAN THE CAMPAIGN: Next, we identify the key decision makers and processes in government. Work permit policy normally falls under a ministry of home affairs, with input from other ministries such as external affairs, employment and trade or commerce. We build in consultations with other stakeholders such as employers' associations, chambers of commerce and trade unions, as well as international organisations and embassies. We also develop a media plan, when relevant.

IMPLEMENT THE PLAN: We prepare a position paper or proposal, write letters and organise meetings with policy staff, members of parliament and ministers of state, as necessary. When appropriate, we include detailed draft legislative clauses. We approach governments in a constructive, transparent and diplomatic way, sharing best practice from other countries and providing examples and evidence from our surveys to show both the economic and social impact of allowing partners to work.

REVIEW AND REFINES: Throughout the process of consultation, raising awareness and building support, we review feedback and respond to questions, for example about any impact on local employment and comparable rights of local citizens working abroad. Immigration is a sensitive topic and it can take several years to secure legislative or regulatory change. However, the employment of dependants increasingly gains broad support as it appeals to employee and human rights as well as business and the needs of the country.

SUCCESS: With more than 30 countries allowing spouses, partners and in some cases children to work, it is clear that working together through Permits Foundation gets results.

“I’ve witnessed first hand the emotional trauma that harsh immigration rules have on a family when it’s impossible for a partner to work. That’s why I’m passionate about supporting work for partners”.

- Julia Onslow-Cole, Partner, Global Government Strategies and Compliance, Fragomen, UK.

THE BENEFITS OF SPONSORING PERMITS FOUNDATION

“Many companies do not like approaching governments individually about immigration matters. By working together through Permits Foundation, companies are in a better position to convince governments of the value of partner work authorisation. At the same time, being a sponsor sends a strong message to employees that companies care about an issue that affects their mobile career and family life”.

- Gill Gordon, Chair, Permits Foundation Board.

Governments are responding positively to our proposals. The success we have achieved shows that, together, we can reduce legislative barriers and improve global mobility.

When we contact governments and ministries, it is important to show a broad base of support from different sectors and countries of origin, as well as both private and public organisations.

Becoming a sponsor will support your global HR strategy and add to your company’s initiatives in the field of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

In particular, you will:

- Bring about sustainable improvements to work permit legislation for accompanying mobile partners, thereby increasing global staff mobility.

- Demonstrate your support for international dual careers and family-friendly policies.
- Underpin your recruitment image as an attractive, best practice, international employer.
- Reduce the cost and upheaval of assignment refusal and early return amongst highly skilled mobile employees.
- Support diversity and gender initiatives.
- If you are a service provider, it will demonstrate to your clients how you are helping to improve global mobility.

Each year we ask you about your countries of importance, where you currently have international staff or where you expect growth in the future. Your plan and the countries where we will input helps us to refine our longer term strategy focus our resources in the next three years.

“ I lived twice in USA. The first time spouses were not allowed to get a work visa. The second time was after your organisation had contributed to implementation of a law that allowed spouses of intra-company transferees to obtain work authorisation. That created many opportunities for spouses. I benefited from it as well. I think you are doing a great job”.

- Permits Foundation Global Spouse Survey.

HOW TO BECOME A SPONSOR

Sponsors pay an annual donation, which, in line with our non-for-profit status, is a contribution to the work of the foundation, rather than a contractual fee. The actual level is at your discretion. As a guide the board currently recommends a donation of € 7,000. When you become a sponsor, we will ask you to give us:

- * A list of your countries of interest.
- * A main contact or relationship manager with whom we can discuss our country plans and activities, your role as a sponsor and donation procedures.
- * Additional contacts to receive our e-newsletter and sponsor meeting invitations.
- * Permission to add your logo and corporate link on our website.

Getting more involved

If you wish to be more actively involved, we encourage your local representatives to take part in our country networks, or to help set up a new network in a country of your choice. These networks help us to build local knowledge as to when and how we should approach the relevant government ministries and other key stakeholders.

You can also help in other practical ways by spreading the word, writing articles, blogs or referring to our work in presentations, and inviting us to speak at conferences.

We particularly recommend that you highlight your support for Permits Foundation in your organisation. This helps to show mobile employees and potential recruits that you recognise and support dual career aspirations. And we invite you to post our web link on your intranet and external (careers) website, and in your briefing packages, so that your mobile employees and their partners have easy access to our web resources and our [World Map](#) of mobile spouse and partner work authorisation.

Sponsors can nominate a board member or patron of the foundation. The board of directors meets quarterly and approves strategy and finances. Companies represented on the board help with a range of pro bono support in addition to their annual donation. In strategic matters, the foundation operates independently and consults regularly with all its sponsors.

“Thales needs staff to move from any country to any other country. This is part of our business and also our employee’s development. Thanks to its hard work advocating change to governments, and with the support of its sponsors, Permits Foundation has improved the track record of successful expatriations”.

- Philippe Cabanettes, Director, Permits Foundation Board. Representative Thales Group.

OUR SPONSORS



CONTACT US

If you would like to speak to us about becoming a sponsor, or if you have any questions or suggestions, please contact:

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Visit our website for our latest news and developments in legislation and regulations on family member employment. We have pages focusing on employers and global mobility experts, relocating families and government policy makers as well as useful resources and links.