Around the world in 1000 treks

Our KPMG Tax Trek participants share their top global memories.

kpmg.com/taxtrek
What is Tax Trek?

Tax Trek is KPMG’s unique global mobility program that enables KPMG tax professionals to gain global experience and knowledge early in their careers. Senior associates, assistant managers and managers can participate in short-term international assignments that enable KPMG member firms to resource client-facing assignments or business building project work.

Available to all KPMG member firms internationally, Tax Trek enables high-performing tax professionals who have worked with a KPMG member firm for at least two years to embark on a 3-6 month international assignment with another tax practice.

Since Tax Trek was launched in 2006, 1,000 KPMG tax professionals have expanded their global mindset, skills and international network through this exceptional employee mobility program.
Marking 1000 Tax Treks across the globe

Personal and professional growth, life-long friendships, and even strange, exotic foods – those are some of the messages that resonate through this special collection of Tax Trek stories, in the words of our past program participants.

In 2013, we marked an impressive milestone: since we first piloted this truly ground-breaking mobility program in 2006, one thousand KPMG tax professionals have ‘trekked’ between member firms across the continents, building remarkable relationships, strengthening technical and personal skills and acquiring unforgettable memories.

For me, these stories reinforce the great value of developing global career experience, for personal enrichment, to support business success, and to drive career advancement. The words of my colleagues on the following pages make me proud to work for KPMG, and provide our emerging and ambitious tax professionals with the chance to broaden their horizons and explore new frontiers during once-in-a-lifetime international assignments.

I hope these profiles of past Trekkers inspire you to think about setting out on your own career journey in the exciting and evolving world of tax, by taking advantage of the remarkable growth and development opportunities available with KPMG Tax and our worldwide network of member firms.

Greg G. Wiebe
Global Head of Tax
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Trekkers from the Americas
Ashley Maher Fagan

Today: Tax Managing Director, KPMG in the US

The Trek: In 2006, Ashley went as a Senior Associate to KPMG in Ireland.

Any highlights from your Trek?
While the duration was short, I was exposed to basic tax compliance and consulting engagements specific to the host country’s tax regime and client base, and I worked on engagements for companies such as Pepsi and Pfizer. Personally, I really hit the jackpot during one weekend trip to Galway, Ireland. While travelling with a co-worker, I met the love of my life and now husband, Aidan. We have been married for nearly five years and have a one-year-old daughter.

How did your global experience help your career?
The experience gained through Tax Trek has afforded me a greater understanding of the global marketplace and the impact the ever-changing environment has on our clients. I certainly acquired a greater appreciation for how global business is conducted, and I understand that there are so many more ways KPMG firms can service clients given the global nature of our brand.

“The experience gained through Tax Trek has afforded me a greater understanding of the global marketplace and the impact the ever-changing environment has on our clients.”

The River Liffey at night, Dublin.
Daryl Sider

**Today:** Tax Manager at KPMG in Canada

**The Trek:** As a Senior Tax Consultant, Daryl trekked to KPMG in Russia in 2013.

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"Being a tourist is great but being able to live, work and feel like a local in a foreign country is even better."

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**How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?**

I expanded my technical knowledge through exposure to new and different tax issues that I did not have in my home practice.

**How did your global experience help your career?**

I expanded my professional network by building relationships with colleagues in Russia as well as other Tax Trekkers, including new friends from firms in the UK, Germany, Czech Republic and Singapore. I also gained valuable manager-level experience by being placed in a position to review and delegate work.
María Elena Ramírez Cruz

Today: Transfer Pricing Manager, KPMG in Mexico

The Trek: As a Senior Supervisor, María Elena went to KPMG in the US in 2011.

How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?

The principal benefit I obtained was acquiring international experience in Transfer Pricing. I analyzed different transactions and clients from those in our local practice, which increased my technical knowledge. Upon return to Mexico, I am adapting such knowledge for the benefit of home office clients.

I also saw another perspective, since in my home office I only analyze the operations of subsidiary companies, but during my Trek I analyzed the transactions of the parent companies.

“A Tax Trek assignment is a wonderful experience, both professionally and personally.”
How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?
Tax Trek increased my global awareness and I was able to leverage my experience at the Q Center back in my home office. My Trek was a big factor in my decision to do a two-year assignment in the UK in 2009.

Any personal highlights outside the office?
Travelling throughout India and trekking in a tiger reserve was really memorable.

“My Trek was a big factor in my decision to do a two-year assignment in the UK.”
Alexander Low

**Today:** Manager, KPMG in the US

**The Trek:** As a Senior Associate, Alexander went to KPMG in Hong Kong in 2013.

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**How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?**

It has given me newfound courage and confidence whenever I am tasked with something that is new or unfamiliar. It has shown me that I can not only handle curve balls and various unknowns, but also that these moments can be the most exciting and rewarding.

**How did your global experience help your career?**

It has opened my eyes to the opportunities to offer US tax expertise to international companies and how valuable our services are to companies that are expanding into the US marketplace. I also realize how valuable relationships/resources within KPMG firms can be, and how essential they are when providing clients with advice in the timely fashion.

“neih sÈkméhsák góng yìngmán a?” which is “Do you speak English?” in Cantonese.
How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?

I made important connections – including a random chance encounter with KPMG in India’s CEO at a Mumbai restaurant – and got firsthand experience with what works and what doesn’t in off-shored processes.

I gained a lot of insight that has helped me to better manage initiatives I am currently working on that are wholly unrelated to my initial assignment in India.

How did your global experience help your career?

I am better able to address matters from a broader point of view, rather than the narrower, local perspective we are all prone to fall back on.

“You will learn more than you expect, and it will benefit you in ways you are not yet aware of. And there is no time like the present.”

The ancient Qutb Minar complex in New Delhi, which dates to the 8th century AD.
Advice to potential trekkers:
Don’t expect anything to be the same as what you are used to, but enjoy all the differences and be open to learning new procedures that may be useful back home.

Any personal highlights outside the office?
Being located in Frankfurt, a major transportation hub, I travelled almost every weekend to a new place in Europe. There was also plenty of time to enjoy German food, explore the old apple wine taverns by the river and enjoy the Christmas markets that start in November.

“One’s destination is never a place, but rather a new way of looking at things.”
What was the highlight of your Trek?
Being able to walk out everyday into a completely different culture, knowing that there was something I had never experienced. Whether it was a new assignment, a new acquaintance, a new food, or a new place, every day gave me the opportunity to learn something.

How did your global experience help your career?
Having worked only in the Federal Tax practice for the first few years of my career, Tax Trek gave me the opportunity to explore a different service line. Because of my positive experience in Japan, I will be transitioning to our International Corporate Services group.
How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?

I worked with some very smart people who challenged me throughout and encouraged me to learn. I gained additional perspective on different viewpoints. I also further developed my networking skills and obtained new contacts that led to new work for the US firm.

“Ian P. Petropoulos

Today: Managing Director, KPMG in the US

The Trek: As Manager in 2007, Ian went to KPMG in the UK.

“An unbelievable experience that I still look back on today and am amazed I was afforded the opportunity.”

In front of the London Eye.

Visiting Big Ben.
What was the highlight of your Trek?

The experience allowed me to build not only a global and professional network, but also to build true friendships with foreign colleagues. For instance, when I got married recently, I was incredibly fortunate to welcome two of my Tax Trek colleagues from the US and Netherlands to my wedding party.

How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?

My three months in Canada were a real challenge for me since my role involved “road shows” on Brazilian tax issues, coordinating work for many engagements involving Brazil, and attending meetings with potential investors in Brazil. The experience gave me the chance to execute activities and roles that I would perform a few years later as a tax manager in my local firm.
How did your global experience help your career?

I realized that KPMG could satisfy most of my career aspirations – whether it was gaining more international experience, working on larger clients with a global presence, or expanding my network by working with people in advisory and audit, as well as specialty practices within tax. Tax Trek made me appreciate that KPMG was supportive of me pursuing new opportunities to develop professionally and meet my career goals.

Advice to potential trekkers:

The most important thing is to get out and meet as many people and see as many things as you can in the host country.

In the words of Theodore Geisel (aka Dr. Seuss):

“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose.”
How did your global experience help your career?

My experience was absolutely fantastic since it changed my mindset and gave me many new contacts. Since I became a manager, several of my colleagues in the US contacted me to introduce me to new clients.

“One experience, a new life!”

Danilo dos Santos Leal

**Today:** Senior Manager, KPMG in Brazil

**The Trek:** In 2012, the Senior Associate trekked to KPMG in the US.
How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?

The assignment helped me get a better understanding of some of the tax issues that non-US based companies deal with. It was very helpful from a professional standpoint to get first-hand exposure to these issues.

As a result of Tax Trek, I developed a working knowledge of VAT principles and have put them to use working with many of these professionals on client engagements.
How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?

A few days or week long vacation in a foreign country is not the same as actually living somewhere and have your day to day work integrated as well. The opportunity opened my eyes to the rest of the world and gave me a global outlook of the world we live in.

“I’m now more in tune to what KPMG in the US can offer our Houston clients and this helps with cross selling our various service lines and global connections. I can now reach out and collaborate better with our network of global professionals.”
How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?

It expanded my network, and also my global awareness. It was great to experience being new to a culture and appreciating both the differences and the similarities.

How did your global experience help your career?

When I work with ex-patriots, I now have additional insight into their concerns, having experienced some of the same things myself.

Any personal highlights outside the office?

Definitely going on safari in Kruger National Park and shark-diving in Cape Town.
Parveen Sidhu

**Today:** Owner, PKS Accounting Group Inc.

**The Trek:** As a Senior Manager from KPMG in Canada, Parveen trekked to KPMG in the UK in 2007.

“How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?”

I became more confident in my knowledge and expertise. Even if I don’t have an answer for my clients immediately, I have the skill set and know-how through my resources and network to provide clients with the answers they seek.

“How did your global experience help your career?”

The assignment provided me with access to tax professionals around the world, many of whom I have kept in touch with. It made me realize just how small the world of business is, and the more links you have as a professional in other countries, the better able you are to assist your clients.

“Challenge yourself to excel in a new environment. You will be surprised at the growth you will achieve if you push yourself out of your comfort zone.”

Visiting a sugar beet farm near Lausanne, Switzerland.

With my Mom in front of Big Ben.
Hoa Trinh

**Today:** Manager, KPMG in the US  
**The Trek:** In 2013 Hoa trekked to KPMG in Vietnam.

**How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?**

I learned about the Vietnamese tax system, which allows me to see the differences, and the pros and cons in comparison with the US tax system and vice versa. When you put things in a global perspective, you see things differently and that helps open doors to more ideas, as well as more opportunities, when dealing with multi-national clients.

“If you take part in Tax Trek, be open to accept the challenges and learn new things. Even if they are not directly related to your current job or experience, they will benefit you and make you a more rounded professional.”
How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?
I work directly with KPMG in the US’s clients’ expatriots to assist in their tax and global mobility needs, so my short experience as an expat helped me relate with our clients and their employees and heightened my perspective on what it must be like for them to work outside their home country.

How did your global experience help your career?
I definitely feel that the experience I gained on Tax Trek helped equip me for my promotion to manager. I was forced to adapt to a different culture, work environment and the work itself, which prepared me for the challenges that awaited me as a manager.

“I definitely feel that the experience I gained on Tax Trek helped equip me for my promotion to manager.”

Teresa Quinteros

Today: Manager, Tax at KPMG in the US

The Trek: As a Senior Associate in 2009, she trekked to KPMG in Switzerland.

Wetterhorn Mountain.
“Tax Trek helped me become more confident as a person and as a professional. The experience of living in another country and meeting new people is terrific.”
Tessa A. Criticos

Today: Senior Manager, Federal Tax, KPMG in the US

The Trek: As Senior Associate, Federal Tax, Tessa trekked to KPMG in Germany in 2008.

How did your global experience help your career?
For me, the term “global economy” went from being a phrase to a relatable concept. I have a greater appreciation of working with multinational clients and member firms.

How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?
It helped me realize that my development at KPMG is potentially limitless. I learned that I could succeed away from my home office, and this increased my confidence as a tax professional. I have been on two rotations since my Trek assignment, and my Tax Trek experience gave me the boost to pursue and accept these opportunities.

“For me, the term “global economy” went from being a phrase to a relatable concept. I have a greater appreciation of working with multinational clients and member firms.”
How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?

A modern tax professional has to be prepared to face different situations and approaches, and a Tax Trek assignment provides that. During my assignment in London I had an opportunity to work globally, connecting with other KPMG member firms and clients worldwide. I improved my technical and personal skills and I am now better prepared to assist our clients, support the Brazilian team and share my skills.
Ally Wu

Today: Senior Financial Analyst, KPMG in the US

The Trek: Ally trekked to KPMG in Japan in 2013.

How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?
By working with a global commercial client with operations in over 50 jurisdictions, I gained a deeper awareness of the cross-border workings of large multinationals. I was able to get valuable M&A and project management experience, and further develop my client facing and interpersonal skills.

How did your global experience help your career?
I realized that the key to becoming a successful tax professional is not just about possessing the right technical knowledge but also being able to think globally and work effectively with colleagues from other member firms. My assignment in Tokyo really helped me gain confidence in my ability to manage a multi-country project, work under pressure, and adapt to new situations.

Any personal highlights outside the office?
Exploring the Japanese culture, from attending a Japanese tea ceremony to watching Sumo wrestling. I remember getting lost in the hustle and bustle of Tokyo streets, and eating my way through the city.

“I gained a deeper awareness of the cross-border workings of large multinationals.”

Strolling through history in Kyoto
– admiring the beauty of the vibrant green and red Heian Shrine.
How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?

I improved not only my technical skills but also my personal skills. It’s amazing how much you can learn about yourself when you are in a foreign country with very few contacts. I also gained exposure to another working environment, which allowed me to bring new ideas back to my home office and expand my international network, which is extremely valuable.

Any personal highlights outside the office?

I absolutely loved being completely submerged in a different culture. I enjoyed many free events in Montreal, discovered amazing bands at their jazz festival and even a Jean Paul Gaultier fashion show in the streets all for free! Even though I hadn’t mastered the language at the end of my Trek, I felt like a local.
How did your global experience help your career?
Since I was posted at the Q-Center, I got to see first hand the functions they can perform, interact with professionals from the US and support many global projects. I also met visiting senior partners and was invited to discuss how firms could use the Center in the most efficient and expanded manner. I have been able to stay in touch with many of these senior leaders to this day.

Any personal highlights outside the office?
The friendships I made with the Indian employees were a highlight, as was travel to see the Taj Mahal, have a Singapore Sling in Singapore and go skiing at an indoor resort in 117 degree Fahrenheit Dubai.

“I got to see first hand the functions they can perform, interact with professionals from the US and support many global projects.”

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How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?
I got to see how the tax world crosses borders and how KPMG firms work together. I gained confidence by learning how to communicate and apply my skill set in a different part of the world.

Any personal highlights outside the office?
The food, the people you meet, the travelling, experiencing the culture, all of it is great. I went to places I never imagined possible and made friends that’ll last a lifetime. Although I learned an invaluable amount at work, the entire package is what makes the experience something I’ll never forget.
How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?

I worked on transactions involving cross-border taxation between Canada and Germany for large multinationals. It required me to research different tax implications of the transactions, as well as subsequent reporting obligations, which I drafted as opinion letters to the client, developing my knowledge of cross-border taxation but also my writing skills.

I also worked on international tax service contract proposals for current and target clients of the host country, growing my knowledge of structuring contract proposals as well international taxation in European countries.

How did your global experience help your career?

I gained confidence in my ability to step outside my comfort zone and establish valuable personal and professional relationships across the globe. This has benefited my career as I have leveraged these relationships to generate international client work back in my home country office.

“I became fully immersed in the German office culture including socializing with colleagues over savory lunches and daily espressos. My Munich colleagues became my life-long friends and my family away from home.”

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How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?

Overall, I believe the most valuable portion of my development is related to the soft skills I developed while on my assignment, both inside and outside the office. My trek helped me to become a well-rounded person. I am much more open to new ideas and different points of view.

Having the opportunity to be involved in a lot of different consulting projects allowed me to notice the similarities and differences between business in Japan and the United States and how our offices work. I now have the chance to share what I learned there and improve our office in a variety of ways.

Any personal highlights outside the office?

We had great outings to Mt. Fuji and the famous shrines in Tokyo, but one of my favorite outings was going to a Japanese traditional Karaoke bar with some of my colleagues/friends. I really enjoyed how free and expressive the Japanese people can be during social gatherings.

“My trek helped me to become a well-rounded person. I am much more open to new ideas and different points of view.”
How did your global experience help your career?

Before my Trek, I worked in the State and Local Tax department. However, during my Trek, I worked as part of the International Tax department in Sao Paulo. I thoroughly enjoyed the type of work so I made a big change in my career path upon my return to Dallas by transferring into International Tax. That decision has turned out to be a great one and I haven’t looked back since.

Any personal highlights outside the office?

I became such good friends with the people I worked with during my Trek that my wife and I have visited Brazil twice this year to attend weddings, and we plan to return many more times.

“In addition to changing my career path, Tax Trek greatly increased my tax and business knowledge, taught me to work with co-workers and clients from various backgrounds, and helped me build a large network of contacts spread across the globe.”

Jordon Holmes

Today: Senior Manager, International Tax, KPMG in the US

The Trek: As a Senior Associate, State and Local Tax, in 2008, Jordon went to KPMG in Brazil.
How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?

It increased my creativity and my knowledge of the firms’ standard processes. Today, I use these skills daily to help integrate new procedures. As a Q Center liaison, I became aware of different types of projects that were beneficial in improving the efficiency of my home firm. Since my Trek we have been utilizing the Q Center for different projects improving our ability to serve our clients.
How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?

It developed my sense of accountability and the confidence to help the Q Center team. I learned how to take charge and make decisions as needed. I also learned to be flexible in the way I work with others. Different cultures have different working behaviors and I discovered to adapt to it.

Any personal highlights outside the office?

Hiking the tea plantation mountains of Munnar, India was truly memorable.

Celebrating Holi (festival of colors) at the office.

In front of the Taj Mahal.
How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?

I realized that the business world has become increasingly connected, and networking and learning new developments are important to succeed in a career. I now see that although tax law in another country may be different from the US, there are numerous elements that tend to connect global tax law and opportunities together.

How did your global experience help your career?

When I returned from my Trek, the partners from my host and home office got in touch so that our two offices could start collaborating more. I now continuously keep in touch with my colleagues in Milan. We will always use each other as ambassadors for questions and issues that arise when US or Italian tax advice is needed.

“I realized that the business world has become increasingly connected, and networking and learning new developments are important to succeed in a career.”

Adam DiMedio

Today: Manager, M&ATax, KPMG in the US

The Trek: In 2012, Adam took an assignment in KPMG in Italy.
How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?

Working at the Q Center, there is a laundry list of skills you learn because there is work coming in from every office and you have to learn all the nuances for each team. Additionally, you can help with training, which provides ample opportunity to work on speaking/presentation skills.

How did your global experience help your career?

Conceptually, outsourcing is not going away, so embracing this practice and helping others to do so is very beneficial. The insights you gain on how things actually work can be helpful and I’ve gained technical knowledge to help my US team explain items in technical terms and figure out how to handle client issues.
How did your Trek develop you as a tax professional?

It strengthened my skills and global mindset for future cross-border M&A engagements. For example, by working on several China outbound deals I saw how buyers must consider domestic issues and regulatory approvals as well as cross-border matters, including holding structure, tax treaties and planning opportunities. Understanding issues and details like these are key to satisfying clients.

How did your global experience help your career?

I became mindful of different cultures, working styles and client expectations, especially in China’s competitive M&A market. I realized how keeping connected in this global world is more important than before. For instance, a friend you made in Atlanta might meet you for coffee in Shanghai and introduce you to a client from Dubai who needs help from the Beijing office.

"I became mindful of different cultures, working styles and client expectations, especially in China’s competitive M&A market.”