



Tax & Legal Trek class of FY18 yearbook

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Welcome



Jane McCormick
Global Head of Tax
KPMG International

It's a pleasure to bring you the 2018 Tax & LegalTrek yearbook, a dynamic publication which nicely highlights KPMG's flagship global mobility program for tax and legal professionals around the world.

In the past year, 163 'Trekks' enlisted in life-changing assignments to more than 40 member firms, bringing the total number of program participants to over 1,700 since the program was first launched 12 years ago. I'm also pleased that Tax & LegalTrek's impact continues to grow, with more than a third of our 2018 participants having shared their experiences in this publication.

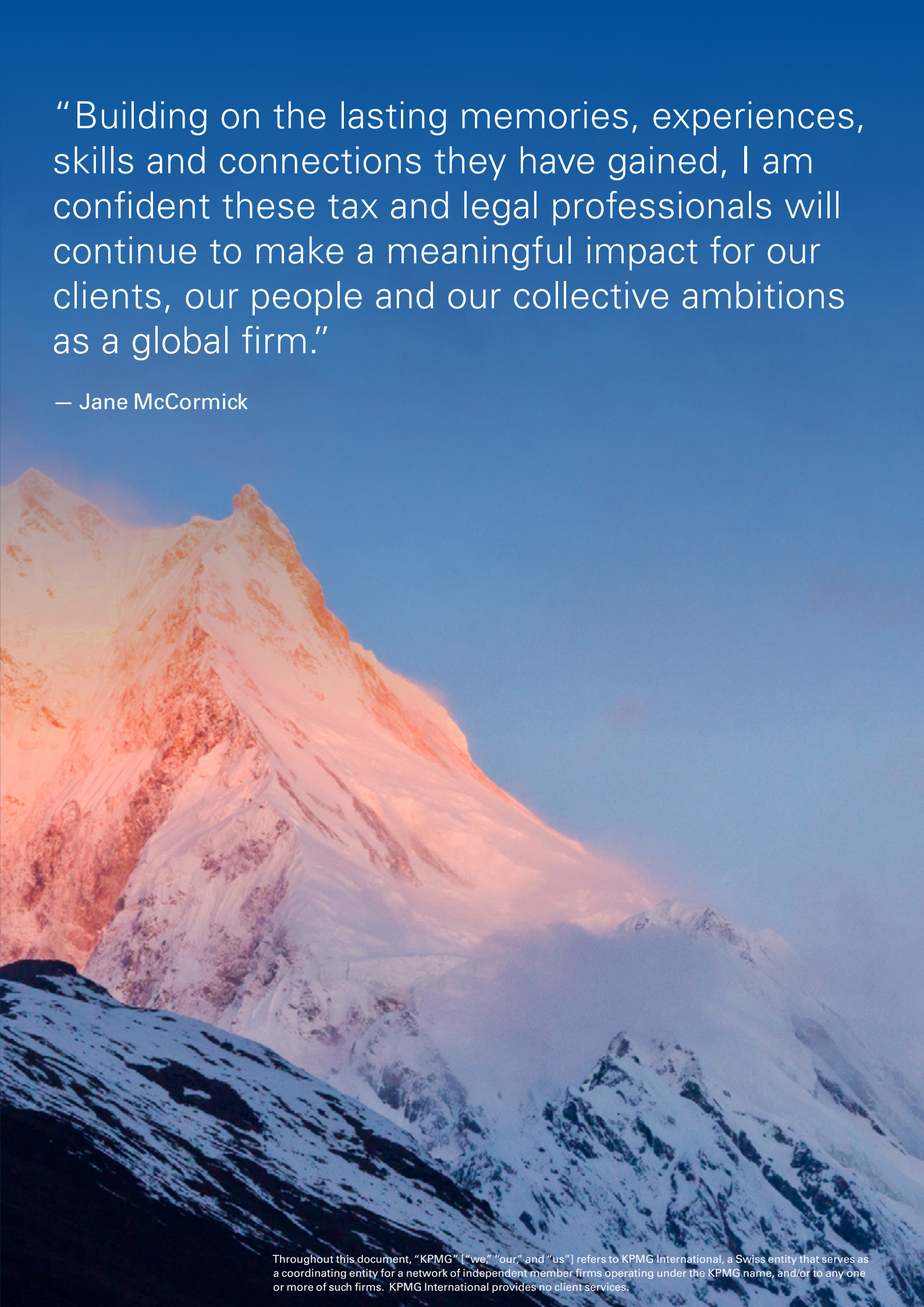
The transformative experience of a global assignment is revealed by the stories submitted by our Trekkers. They describe this as "a dream come true," and cite the program as a deciding factor in their choice to join KPMG. Others note how their assignment has become a major career achievement, enabling them to take on stretch projects and expand their skills. Many Trekkers detail the value of the knowledge-sharing aspects of their assignments, recounting the ways in which they contributed best practices to their host firms and gained new insights and approaches to bring back to their home firms.

These comments truly capture the spirit of the program—a program that enables our people to develop a global mindset that can transform an individual on both personal and professional levels. I invite you to journey with our Trekkers and discover their wonderful stories and images of memorable travel moments: from eating appetizers within 20 feet of

African lions, to helping sea turtles hatch in Sri Lanka, to cheering on the World Cup through the lens of a different culture.

I want to congratulate each of our Trekkers for embracing the opportunities availed through their assignments, to discover new places, explore new ideas and make new friendships across continents. Thank you for helping us chronicle your experiences in this yearbook and for serving as program ambassadors, spreading the word across our network.

Building on the lasting memories, experiences, skills and connections they have gained, I am confident these tax and legal professionals will continue to make a meaningful impact for our clients, our people and our collective ambitions as a global firm.

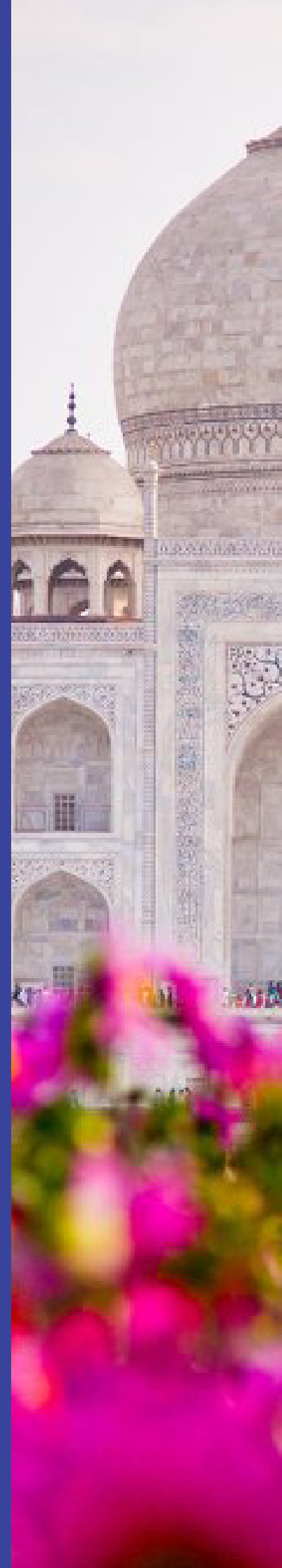


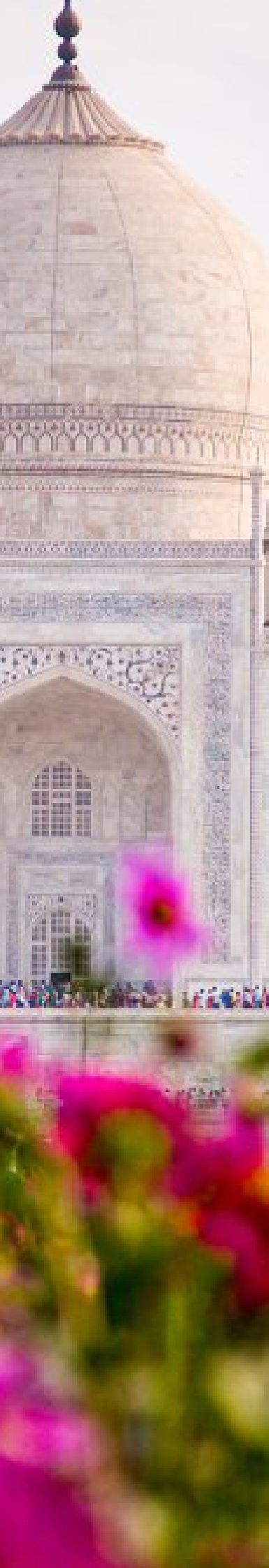
“Building on the lasting memories, experiences, skills and connections they have gained, I am confident these tax and legal professionals will continue to make a meaningful impact for our clients, our people and our collective ambitions as a global firm.”

— Jane McCormick

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Deirdre Allen
Corporate Tax

Exceeding expectations: Life in Italy

KPMG in Ireland → KPMG in Italy

“It truly was
la dolce vita
in Italy.”

TaxTrek was something I had always been interested in since I had joined KPMG. I had previously lived in a number of foreign countries and, after spending 4 years sitting exams and working in Dublin as part of my training contract, I was itching to travel again. In my opinion, there is certain knowledge and life skills that only travel and experiencing other cultures can teach you.

In Milan, I was assigned to the Business Taxes team but, during my 3-month secondment, I spent a large part of my time working with the Mergers and Acquisitions team. I was involved in the preparation of a vendor tax due diligence (VDD) for the sale of many global subsidiaries of an Italian client. As the work on the due diligence (DD) and the advice was in English, I was able to offer real assistance. The VDD provided me with invaluable experience working with the Italian tax team and learning how they undertake DDs. It was also valuable to contribute to the coordination of the KPMG tax teams across 11 jurisdictions, including managing language and time difference barriers for the project. The experience helped to develop my coordination skills to prepare for my new role as a manager once I returned to my home office.

I had been to Italy once before for a weekend break in Rome so I was excited to go back. What I liked best about Italy can't be summarised into a few words. The country is a kaleidoscope of colour and an array of experiences, tastes and scents.

There are so many fantastic things about Italy: the food, wine, weather, people, architecture, towns and cities, the coastline and surrounding islands. I took it all in, from tasting zesty lemons and yachting off the Amalfi Coast, trekking Mount Vesuvius and feasting on pizza in Naples, Limon deliziosa and the beaches of Sicily, gladiators and the Vatican in Rome, Michelangelo and leaning towers in Florence and Pisa, hiking and pasta trofie in Cinque Terres, gondolas and Prosecco in Venice, lakes in Como and Garda, to gelato and scaling terraces in il Duomo in Milan and lots more in between.

My Italian experience far exceeded my expectations. I was able to travel and see so much of the country on weekends. I met many fantastic people in Italy, including my colleagues and two other TaxTrekks. I made friends for life while I was there and will return for a wedding this year! I learned so much about food, wine and history, and I enjoyed every last minute of it. And, as Italy wasn't very far from home, I had lots of visitors! Geographically and culturally, the differences aren't too vast from Ireland but the language was a challenge for me, especially in the beginning.

My key piece of advice for future TaxTrekks would be to make a real effort to learn the local language before you go. You will make friends far easier and be able to enjoy much more of the country.

Some of my Tax colleagues in KPMG Milan.





Clockwise from top:

Swanning around Capri;

Gondola-ing around Venice;

I love CinqueTerres;

My parents and I at the Colosseum.



An enriching opportunity in Japan

KPMG in Romania → KPMG in Japan

Alina Putica
Global Mobility
Services (GMS)

“Make friends
everywhere,
work hard and
play harder. ”

I work in the Global Mobility Services team in Bucharest and I consider myself very lucky for being part of the Tax Trek program. Since I meet frequently with a lot of assignees in Romania, I wanted to try this experience to help me in my daily work.

At the end of the 3-month assignment in beautiful Tokyo, Japan, all I feel is gratitude, as this opportunity enriched me spiritually and professionally.

While in Tokyo, I had the chance to work on several projects and with different clients. I read about Japanese and US taxation from official websites and other materials put at my disposal by my Japanese colleagues. I helped draft emails for clients and participated in conference calls. Also, I helped draft advice related to the Japanese residence concept. Additionally, I shared my knowledge with my team in Tokyo by preparing a presentation about Romania and individual Romanian taxation.

In my free time, I travelled to other cities as well such as Hakone, Kamakura, Yokohama and Kyoto. The greatest adventure was climbing Mount Fuji – 3,776 meters – at night to see a sunrise that I will never forget.

Japan has a fascinating history, civilization, religion and culinary art. Tokyo is an impressive city full of lights, color and good atmosphere.

The food in Japan is absolutely amazing: fresh, healthy and extremely delicious. I became a very

big fan of the Japanese cuisine. My favorite dish is Yakiniku. This is basically grilled beef that you can eat with rice and soy sauce.

I met with very diligent, friendly, cheerful and hard-working people at the KPMG office. Everyone I interacted with was open to sharing everyday work, and everyone was very curious to learn about Romania and the taxing of individuals in Romania. I also had the opportunity to interact with colleagues from other KPMG offices such as the UK, US, Germany, the Philippines, Mexico, Italy, Vietnam, Nigeria and Mongolia, sharing the good practices in each country.

The Tax and Legal Trek program is about the KPMG network. People who participate in this program will understand other cultures better and, at the same time, will develop technical skills. However, the program is more about people. Everyone who tries it becomes more confident, friendly and open to new opportunities. I believe this program can change lives. For me, it was an extremely beautiful period and I kept a daily journal to remember details of my assignment.

I definitely encourage everyone to apply for a Tax or Legal Trek assignment, to have the courage to go to a different country and explore the unknown. Make friends everywhere, work hard and play harder. These may be the words to describe Tax Trek. I definitely did and I won't forget a second of it.

KPMG Trekkers in Tokyo.





Clockwise from top:

Farewell lunch with my colleagues in Tokyo;

Yakiniku - one of my favourite Japanese dishes;

Japanese Torii gate. Lovely Shinto shrines everywhere.



Chizoba Madu
Financial Services

Ninety days in the land of the rising sun

KPMG in Nigeria → KPMG in Japan

“The world
is limitless;
explore it
while you
can.”

Being nominated as a Tax Trekker was one of the highlights of my career at KPMG. Senior colleagues talked about their Tax Trek experiences in the past and I always wished that I could someday share my experience too. You can imagine my joy when I found out that I was going for a Tax Trek in Japan. Although I was excited, I was also nervous about what to expect but I jumped at the opportunity. I do not have any regrets whatsoever!

My voyage in Japan started with some trouble initially. I was not able to communicate in Japanese with the cab driver so I had trouble finding the apartment because I was dropped in a wrong location. Plus, I could not make calls as a result of certain restrictions in Japan. When I finally arrived to my apartment in one piece, I was primed for my 3-month experience.

KPMG's Tokyo office is a very friendly place. During my stay, my new colleagues did everything they could to make me feel at home, helping me both at work and outside of it. They gave me hints about places to visit, recommended the best places to eat and invited me to several informal hangouts. The head of HR in the Tokyo office even organized some Japanese lessons for all the trekkers in Tokyo to make it easier to settle in.

One of the projects that I helped the Tokyo team with was a tax opinion for a US company that was proposing to set up a Japanese subsidiary. I helped the team prepare the draft opinions, and I am glad that I could provide assistance with the job in some way. Working as a team member provided me with an opportunity to broaden my knowledge about international taxation and also apply the skills and experience I had gained in Nigeria. I observed and adapted to a different work

culture, especially with respect to how the team interacted with clients and colleagues.

Tax Trek really helped me expand my network within the KPMG world as I met with colleagues in KPMG Tax Japan as well as trekkers from other jurisdictions like Germany, the Philippines, US, UK, Germany, Romania and Mexico. I learned cultural sensitivity through my interactions with the Japanese people and other internationals. I also made so many memories that will stick with me for life.

I now consider Japan as a home of sorts because I developed many essential survival skills as I explored the country. My friends and I often bring up memories of our time in Japan because we all miss it so much. I was fortunate to be given the opportunity of a lifetime by KPMG. There were so many awesome experiences, like visiting numerous temples, trying out different cuisines, visiting the Great Buddha, seeing the Japanese Statue of Liberty in Odaiba, and going to Hakone to visit an onsen (hot springs)!

Of course, I miss my friends and colleagues so much. I miss the fun train rides in and around Tokyo city and I still have a list of places in Japan that I've yet to see. I hope to visit again in the future.

Being part of KPMG is like being a member of a large community of people with shared values and a shared story. My advice to anyone who has the opportunity to go for a Tax Trek is to jump at the opportunity to visit places, eat new food, make new friends and just enjoy the experience. Three months goes by quickly.

Thank you very much, Japan. Arigato gozaimasu!

At the Meiji Shrine.





Clockwise from top:

At the Tsurugaoka Hachiman-gu Shrine;

With my colleagues;

At the Great Buddha;

My favourite meal!



Unforgettable memories and new friends in Indonesia

KPMG in Germany → KPMG in Indonesia

Laura Beck

Global Mobility Services

“Tax Trek opened my mind to another culture, both professionally and personally.”

As I work in the Global Mobility Services (GMS) department, I am constantly in touch with assignees from all over the world, advising them on their personal tax implications during their work abroad. When I had the chance to apply for the Tax Trek program, I suddenly realized that it was a once-in-a-lifetime chance. Being assigned to a country like Indonesia was challenging to me as an European, especially living in Jakarta, the largest city in South East Asia with the highest traffic volume in the world.

During my Tax Trek, I helped my Indonesian colleagues with German tax compliance work, attended a meeting with a German taxpayer and learned basics about the Indonesian income tax system. I also worked for other tax departments such as the Transfer Pricing team by writing an article about the raise of import taxes in Indonesia, which was published in the Indonesian Tax Flash newsletter.

Shortly after the time of my Tax Trek, the leading German business event in Asia-Pacific – the Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business – took place in Jakarta. In this context, I assisted the German audit partner of KPMG in Indonesia by preparing an article that was published in a whitepaper (“German economy in Asia”) and attended meetings and conference calls with the German Chamber of Commerce in Indonesia. I also helped with the KPMG Business in Asia Roundtable which was held at the KPMG office in Jakarta. Additionally, I represented KPMG in Indonesia at several events organized by the German Chamber of Commerce in Indonesia, British Chamber in Indonesia, European Chambers and the German Embassy where I was able to make many international business contacts.

Everyone at KPMG in Indonesia welcomed me warmly, especially the GMS team. They made feel like part of their “GMS family” from the very beginning by offering to help, showing me delicious Indonesian food and sharing information about the Indonesian culture, for which I am truly grateful. I can definitely say that I have made new friends with whom I will keep in touch and visit in the future.

During my Tax Trek, my colleagues organized a weekend trip to Ciwidey for me, including visiting crater Kawah Putih, trying traditional Indonesian

food and snacks and glamorous camping. The temperatures overnight in the mountains were so low compared to the general climate in Indonesia that my colleagues called me “half-Indonesian” after the trip because I was cold just like them. Another highlight during my Tax Trek was attending the KPMG outing in Bandung, the biggest event of the year. I joined my colleagues in a choreography competition between the Tax, Audit and Consulting groups. Our Tax division won the competition for the first time in many years.

Nearly every weekend I travelled to almost any place within a two or three-hour flight from Jakarta. My personal highlight was the jungle trek in Bukit Lawang on Sumatra, where I had the chance to get in close contact with wild orangutans. To me, it was the most thrilling experience ever! Another incredible experience was climbing the Mount Ijen volcano. In the middle of the night, in deep darkness, we climbed hundreds of meters steeply uphill, wearing a gas mask to avoid inhaling the sulfurous steams, to be honored with the most breathtaking sunrise ever.

I never knew that Indonesia had so many beautiful cultural places to visit, the most delicious food in the world and incredibly friendly people everywhere. My Tax Trek opened my mind to another culture (both professionally and personally) and has been one of the best experiences in my life.

My advice to any Tax Trekker is to be open-minded, curious and not be afraid to try new things. There will be a lot you are not familiar with and you never expect, but you have to make the best out of it. You will be rewarded with unforgettable memories, impressive experiences and new friends.



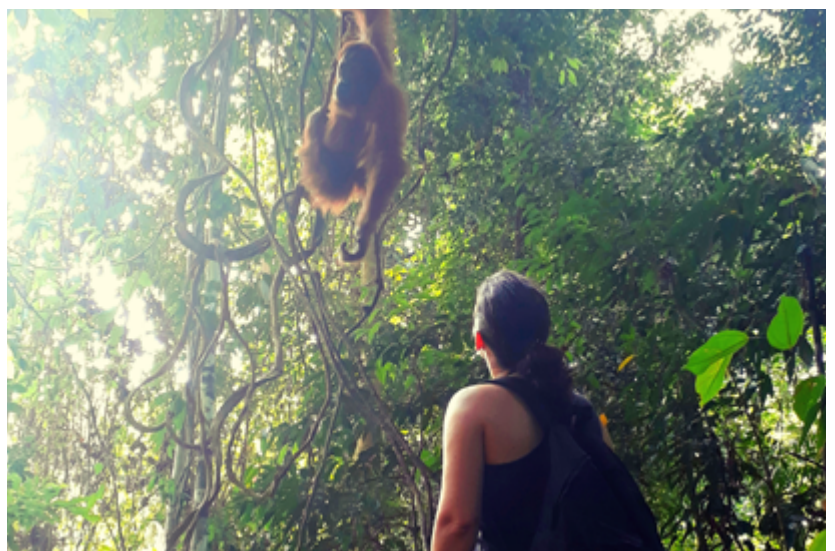
Clockwise from top:

Beautiful beaches on Belitung island;

GMS team at the KPMG outing in Bandung;

Most incredible experience ever – close encounter with wild orangutans in Sumatra;

Prambanan temple in Yogyakarta which is the largest Hindu temple site in Indonesia.





Tax Trek: Just do it

KPMG in Italy → KPMG in Japan

Fabio Urbinati
Global Transfer
Pricing Services

“Tax Trek is a great expression of global mobility and the international perspective KPMG offers, take it!”

Being an expatriate can be frightening. Life in a new place, even in short-term assignments, usually brings all kinds of new things, such as different habits, food and drinks, cultural differences and, sometimes, loneliness.

Thanks to KPMG’s international organization, the Tax Trek program is radically different.

It is a life-changing experience and any concerns were wiped out at the beginning of the assignment.

The short-term assignment is grounded on two pillars: connections and cultural experiences. The KPMG Tax Trek program lets you experience both – the chance to live, work and socialize as a local.

The welcoming attitude of colleagues gives a deep understanding of living in another country.

Let’s be honest, landing in a different country can be confusing but, due to the organization, you immediately feel “home.” Thanks to the experience and the expertise of KPMG’s network, you will feel constantly supported with local language courses, fantastic accommodations and ongoing support.

Trekkers are immediately introduced to the KPMG team with several welcome lunches, dinners and outings. Trekkers feel immediately part of the host KPMG office. This approach to creating connections is the best and fastest way to create personal bonds and successful future working collaborations.

Tax Trek provides the opportunity to leverage a reasonable amount of spare time to enjoy the host country through visiting and experiencing places of interest.

During my stay in Tokyo, I worked with my host colleagues on several transfer pricing projects, mainly related to transactions between Japan and Italy. I was amazed by their organization, accurateness and accountability. Tax Trekkers to KPMG’s Tokyo office really have the chance to take away an overwhelming work experience, which I will definitely keep with me, along my entire career.

Thanks to all the tax and Transfer Pricing partners I met during my assignment, I came back to Italy with cultural and technical knowledge, different perspectives and a wider way of thinking that will be important in my profession. Especially for advisors like me who are involved in international matters, Tax Trek was crucial in understanding how tax issues are addressed in different jurisdictions, so as to improve our work performance back home.

I strongly recommend a Tax Trek assignment. I found this to be one of the most valuable experience in my professional and personal life. I developed reciprocal professional relationships with the colleagues, clients and people in my host country.

Lastly, a couple of comments about my host country, Japan. I was extremely lucky to be assigned to such an incredible place, where the ancient culture, the dazzling modernity and the breathtaking natural landscapes live together in harmony. These, and thousands of other things, are definitely worth another visit.

Tax Trek is a great expression of global mobility and the international perspective KPMG offers, so take it!

KPMGTax & Legal in Okinawa!





Clockwise from top:

Adventures in Okinawa;

Farewell dinner;

Rooftop with other Trekkers;

Fuji-san from the airplane.



My Tax Trek in Germany: A dream come true

KPMG in Singapore → KPMG in Germany

Gui Shurong

Personal Tax &
Global Mobility
Services

“Just keep an open mind and be ready to try something new. Never doubt yourself until you take the first step.”

Going on the TaxTrek program was one of my goals when I joined the firm back in 2014. I told myself that I would have to apply for it and I am thankful that my managers were very supportive. The day I received confirmation from our partner that I was selected for the TaxTrek program will always be one of my happiest days. It was a dream come true.

I planned for the journey to happen after my peak period and anxiously waited for the day to come. I flew 16 hours to Düsseldorf, where the KPMG host office is based, and my second home for the next 3 months. It was one of the hottest days in Germany and I was literally sweating non-stop upon my arrival. It was surprising that there was no air conditioner in the apartment or office, which is unusual in Singapore. But, over the next few months, the weather started changing and it got quite chilly.

I was introduced to the Global Mobility Services team that I would be working with. We had a gathering around the pantry that included Singapore's famous Irvin's salted egg yolk fish skin and potato chips.

My colleagues tried their best to make me feel comfortable during my stay. Since their first language is German, it was a challenge to understand the documents, but my colleagues were patient and tried their best to answer my questions. There was a case where an employee held a dual employment contract and was seconded to another country. His remuneration was paid by the different entities and we had to analyse the taxability of the items in Germany. It looked complicated but it was interesting to study a real-life case. Through this opportunity, I learned about the tax preparation process and services provided to our clients. It was very interesting to see how the tax systems work in different countries. It can be so similar yet different. We also had a mini-celebration for a new win with champagne and ice cream.

Moving to another country is challenging as we need to leave our comfort zone, family and friends. I learned to do everything independently and to adapt to a different culture. In Singapore, you will never see shops close for a month but this is common in Germany, especially during the summer break. One of the simplest things, such as taking a train, could be difficult for me. It was all

in German and I didn't know which direction to go. I was lucky enough to meet Kerstin, who willingly offered to bring me around the Altstadt.

Germans are very friendly and they made me feel welcome during my stay there. As you may already know, cycling is common in Germany and the team organised a cycling trip to which I had to decline (though I am spontaneous, I cannot cycle). I will always remember them saying, “No Shu, we need to teach you. You are coming along with us!” I was so nervous on the day of our road trip but they were there for me and kept me safe from cyclists and runners. It's definitely very challenging to cycle so much in a day for a newbie like me, but it was one of the most amazing things on the trip. I learned a lifelong skill that is going to follow me for the rest of my life.

My colleagues also recommended countries that I should visit over the weekends and I managed to travel to Munich, Cologne, Amsterdam, Paris and London. It was amazing to venture out and meet people around the world.

Even when I was away in Germany, I was thankful that the friends and colleagues in Singapore often checked on me. We stayed in touch despite the 6-hour time difference. This allowed me to stay connected with my home country and keep up to date of the changes in the office.

This has been an enriching experience and I value the friendships I built while I was there. I am thankful to them for keeping me in mind for possible work opportunities. Last but not least, keep an open mind and be ready to try something new. Never doubt yourself until you take the first step. You will cherish every moment.



Clockwise from top:

- Kerstin and myself;
- Paris - Louvre;
- Sabrina - My German Manager;
- My office buddies.



Trek to the fog city: A place like home

KPMG in Nigeria → KPMG in the U.S.

Tosin Sunmola
Consumer and
Industrial Markets

“Nothing is a barrier unless you make it one!”

I had longed for this opportunity right from the first time I heard of TaxTrek in KPMG. My dream, however, seemed more elusive by the day when I got married and had a baby. As luck would have it, I was informed that I had been nominated for the 2018 TaxTrek. I was elated that I finally had the opportunity to embark on such a wonderful adventure, but weighed down by how to embark on this journey with a barely 12-month old infant. Family demands appeared to be the major motivation to say “no” to my long-awaited dream. I am glad that I finally accepted the challenge. My son coped well in my absence and I felt I was already raising an independent child who smilingly waved bye to me on video calls.

Many thoughts raced through my mind when I was informed that I would work on State and Local Taxes (SALT) during the assignment. Though I had no prior work experience in U.S. tax system, the research skills garnered over the years in KPMG in Nigeria eased my transition process. I was involved in different aspects of a typical engagement – engagement letter, billing, advisory opinion, exposure analysis and report writing. My responsibilities spanned profiling potential clients, characterization and taxability of products/services in terms of sales/use tax. I was able to deliver quality output with an inquisitive and open mind. There is no doubt that this TaxTrek boosted my self-confidence as a problem solver who navigates through available resources to deliver assigned tasks within a reasonable time.

I also had the opportunity to facilitate a training session on the basics of Value Added Tax in Nigeria. I felt good knowing that I added value in a new environment.

My TaxTrek story cannot be complete without giving credit to my SALT colleagues who made my transition easy as a breeze. Right from my Performance Manager, Lindsay McAfee, with whom I had wonderful mentoring/check-in sessions to my wonderful buddy, Nolan Shutler, and my amiable seat partner, Nate Gould. With the support of my SALT colleagues, I received five Encore Awards in recognition of my professionalism and performance. I await to hear of any other person who had a better TaxTrek!

It was not just about the work. The 3-month Trek was like a working vacation as my family came on holiday in the last month of the assignment.

San Francisco is a hilly city located in northern California and is known for its year-round fog. However, the weather was favorable throughout my stay which made it easy to survive through the windy mornings and nights. The city is filled with diverse and tech-savvy people. San Franciscans are always ready to make you feel at home. Things I definitely miss about the fog city include going to the office in business casual attire, the liberal mindset of the residents and numerous events and places that tourists visit. Aside from the burgers, my favorite snack during the assignment was a Mexican delicacy (tacos) and I also had the opportunity to savor an Indian delicacy – Masala – for the first time.

Apart from office work, I walked through one of the steepest streets in the western hemisphere (Filbert St. of over 400 stairs) to the Coit Tower, which took my breath away! An exciting event I will also not forget was walking halfway through the famous Golden Gate Bridge with my family. This I would not do normally. Other great stops included the famous Golden Gate Fortune Cookies Factory, California Academy of Sciences, Cable Car Museum (hopping on the iconic cable car), Chinatown and Pier 39.

This TaxTrek has transformed me to be a better professional with improved interpersonal skill and global perspective. I believe I would be able to leverage my knowledge of U.S. sales tax in advising my clients with operations in the United States. In addition to this knowledge, I cannot put a figure to the benefits that KPMG in Nigeria would derive from the working relationship I have built with my SALT colleagues. Furthermore, my experience is useful in making meaningful contributions to improve VAT administration in Nigeria.

Ultimately, an international work experience is definitely worth the cost of leaving your comfort zone. My advice to anyone considering a TaxTrek opportunity is to take up the challenge and get involved. Involvement is the key to a successful TaxTrek!



Clockwise from top:

Welcome to San Francisco office with a few colleagues;

With my family at Golden Gate Bridge;

A ride on the Iconic Cable Car.



**Tatsiana
Hliatsevich**
Business Tax
Services

“The Tax
Trek rotation
expanded my
horizons and
taught me
to be more
open to new
opportunities
and new
people.”

An adventure filled with new experiences and new people

KPMG in the U.S. → KPMG in South Korea

Some of the best things in life happen when you least expect them, just like the TaxTrek rotation to South Korea happened to me. I was hesitant to apply, as I didn't have a high expectation of actually being selected. I did anyway, and it ended up being one of the best things that had ever happened to me.

Traveling is one of my greatest passions. I love experiencing different places and cultures, and making friends around the globe. The advantage of TaxTrek is that it provides an opportunity to live in a country like a local and not like a tourist, build relationships with many people, gain a broader understanding of the culture and work in a completely different environment.

I was thrilled to go to Korea. I didn't know much about the country prior to my rotation. Watching the 2018 Olympics, I could have never imagined I would be skiing the Olympics slopes myself a year later. I knew I'd be in a place completely different from what I am used to, with a language I could not speak, and the food that I had very limited exposure to prior to this trip. So, I was excited to embrace new experiences and get out of my comfort zone.

The best part of my rotation was undoubtedly all the people I met. My colleagues in Korea taught me a lot about hospitality and how to make someone feel welcome. Their kindness and openness were astounding to me. From day one, my colleagues helped me with settling into my new life, overcoming the language barrier, experiencing an amazing variety of food that Korea has to offer, giving me tips on places to visit and things to do, taking me to various places and enjoying experiences with me. The way they welcomed me into the office and their lives made my heart full with gratitude and appreciation.

During my rotation, I worked in the Global Tax department, assisting with inbound and outbound clients that had US tax implications, performed tax research and helped with drafting and reviewing proposals. I had an opportunity to connect my colleagues in Korea with international tax specialists in my home office to assist with a project. I was able to gain a better understanding of Korean work culture and learn about various projects.

As for my free time, every weekend was packed with trips and activities. I explored Seoul, visited many historic sites, hiked several mountains (including Hallasan, the tallest one in Korea), travelled to Jeju island and Busan, skied in PyeongChang, did a temple stay in Guinsa, made traditional pottery, sang karaoke, wore a traditional Korean dress, experienced Korean sauna, visited DMZ and peaked into North Korea, worked on my K-pop dance moves with a professional instructor, visited my coworker's home town and family home, tried archery, drank soju and ate a lot of amazing food. In short, I experienced a profound level of cultural immersion during my TaxTrek rotation.

The TaxTrek rotation expanded my horizons, taught me to be more open to new opportunities and new people, be more proactive in reaching out to others, be brave, positive and adventurous. It showed me how we are all connected as one firm and how we all are more alike than unlike. I am grateful to have had this opportunity to experience Korea, and I will forever cherish the friendships and memories made.

My advice to KPMG colleagues would be to embrace the opportunities that the firm has to offer and apply for a TaxTrek rotation. Such an experience is life changing and very personally and professionally enriching. I also advise my colleagues to always believe in yourself, be positive and open to others, and go after your dreams and aspirations.



Clockwise from top:

Temple Stay in Guinsa;

Gangnam Style!;

Wearing hanbok at Gyeongbokgung Palace;

Skiing Olympic slopes in PyeongChang.



Roisin Porter
Corporate Tax

“Beyond improving my technical knowledge, the experience improved my confidence and resilience.”

UK to India: A once-in-a-lifetime experience

KPMG in the UK → KPMG in India

I have always loved travelling and experiencing new and exotic cultures so the Tax Trek program was one of the reasons I joined KPMG as a graduate. It's a fantastic and rare opportunity to experience living and working overseas. As I have personal commitments in the UK, I felt that a 3-month Trek assignment would be the perfect amount of time for me to get a good feel for working somewhere else. After 5 years of working at KPMG, I was ecstatic when I got the email to tell me I'd be going to India, somewhere I had always dreamed of going, and I immediately began researching all the amazing places to visit.

After months of anticipation, I set off for Delhi and threw myself in the deep end by spending 3 weeks exploring Rajasthan and Sri Lanka before joining my team. Despite the extreme heat (over 40 degrees Celsius!) I had a fantastic time exploring the beautiful forts and temples of Udaipur, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer. Highlights were riding a camel through the Thar Desert, seeing a wild tiger in Ranthambore National Park and eating lots of amazing food.

I was placed in the international tax team in Gurgaon, just outside Delhi, and worked on a number of advisory projects for multinational clients investing in India. My team were really supportive and welcoming. They were keen to share their culture with me – especially their food. I sampled an array of their homemade lunches as well as their recommendations from the staff canteen. My team buddy in particular looked after me really well and showed me around some of the sights on the weekend, including the beautiful and serene Gurudwara Bangla Sahib temple – a welcome break from the chaos of Delhi. While in India, I also took the opportunity to visit KPMG Global Services (KGS) in Bangalore, which I have worked with previously. It was really useful to meet some of the team in person and learn more about how KGS operates.

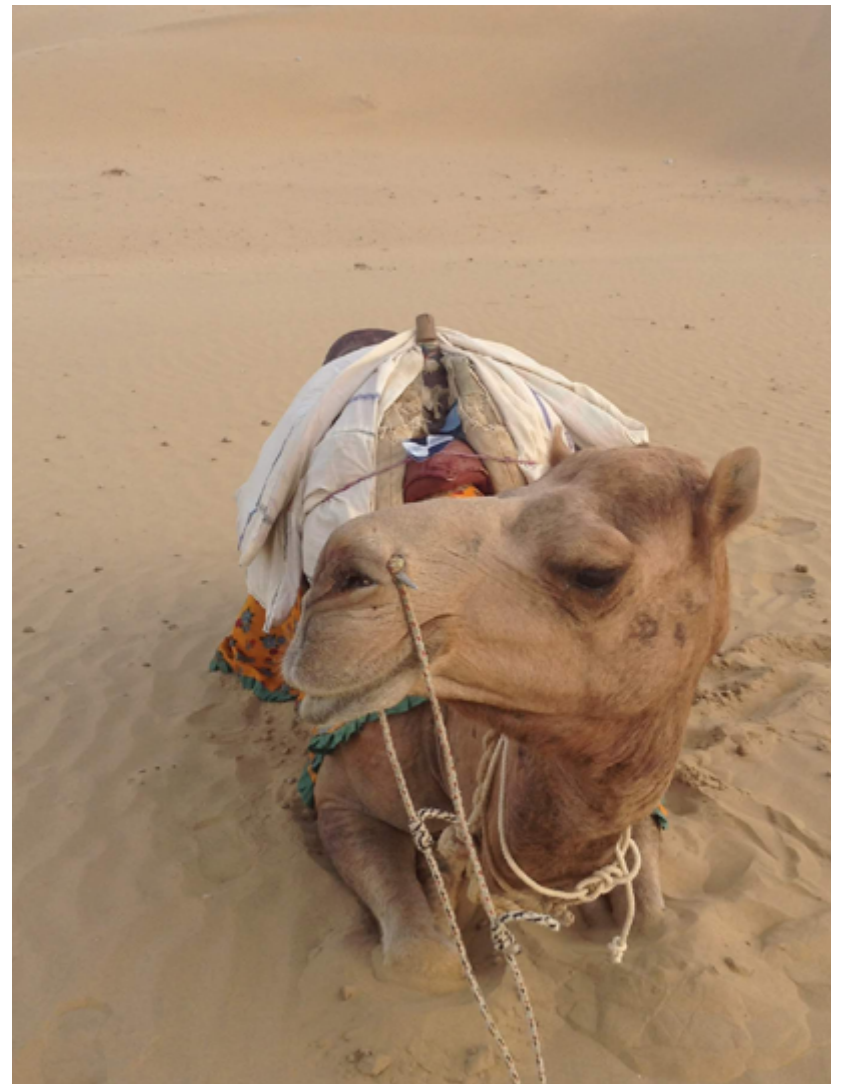
India is the world's fastest-growing economy and, in recent years the government has been pushing to improve ease of doing business and liberalise foreign investment, so it's a really exciting time to advise clients on Indian tax. As well as learning about the Indian tax regime, I improved my international tax knowledge more generally through researching base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) and tax treaties which I have not previously looked at in detail as part of my role in the UK. This technical experience was invaluable and I have

been able to share it with my team back in the UK since returning. The team at KPMG in India were diligent, committed to client service and technically strong so it was fantastic to learn from them. I was also inspired by the positive mind-sets of the team – everyone seemed to be an optimist and took time to celebrate successes and achievements.

As well as improving my technical knowledge, the experience improved my confidence and resilience. My hope is that it will have a long-lasting impact and make me a better and more rounded tax professional. I have also made lots of new friends and contacts in India with whom I hope to continue working.

I spent most weekends visiting different places around India and was amazed at the diversity and scale of the country. I also read lots of Indian novels which gave me a great insight into the culture and how India is changing. There are so many cultures, languages and landscapes that it often felt like a continent rather than a country. Among my highlights were staying in the Neemrana fort palace in Rajasthan, sunrises at the Taj Mahal and Golden Temple, as well as boat rides on the Ganges and the Cochin backwaters. I also managed to squeeze in trips to the neighbouring countries of Nepal, Myanmar, Malaysia and Singapore during and after my Tax Trek.

To anyone considering Tax Trek, just go for it. It's a once-in-a-lifetime experience that will take you out of your comfort zone but you won't regret it and KPMG will support you all the way.



Clockwise from top:

Visiting Jaipur;

Dawn at the Taj Mahal;

Thar Desert Jaisalmer;

Getting close to the wildlife.



Vietnam? The best life experience ever.

KPMG in Mexico → KPMG in Vietnam

Eduardo Guzmán Rico

Corporate Business
Tax Services

“The
experience
and the
friends you
make are your
real reward!”

In 2016, I applied for my first Tax Trek hoping I could make that trip. I wasn't selected so, from that day on, it became a goal for me. I wanted to have the experience of solo travel for more than just a holiday, in a completely different place where the culture and the language were the opposite of my home country.

After my second Tax Trek application, the partners called me for a meeting to tell me that I had been selected as a Tax Trekker. They told me that my Tax Trek was going to be in Vietnam, so I asked myself: Vietnam? After that meeting, I did some research about Vietnam and I was shocked.

I had never been in an Asian country before, so this represented a real challenge. The cultures are completely different, such as religion, customs, housing and especially the food.

I joined the International Integrated Tax (IIT) team in Hanoi, Duong (IIT Partner in Vietnam) and his team were really good to me. They helped me with my stay and the places I should visit during my Tax Trek.

My first challenge was the language because very few Vietnamese people speak English so, while I was learning some words in Vietnamese, I used hand and body expressions to communicate.

When I arrived at the Hanoi office, Phuong, my performance manager, told me that the IIT team and the legal team had planned a trip to Da Nang city. I joined them on that trip and we went rafting in Hoa Phu Tha. We also went to Hoi An city, which is a colorful and beautiful little town near Da Nang.

During the trip, they showed me the city and some things to do and see.

During my time in Vietnam, I was invited by Nguyen to his wedding, it was completely different than weddings I am used to but was very nice to be there with the happy couple.

While traveling, I didn't waste my time. I took every opportunity I had to visit all around Vietnam, having many adventures, meeting fantastic people from many countries, making the experience even bigger. I also flew to Siem Reap in Cambodia for a couple of days to visit the world biggest temple of Hinduism, Angkor Wat.

In my last week in Vietnam, I had the opportunity to participate in the "community day" with my colleagues. We went to a school for kids with mental disabilities to give them some presents and play with them.

In this journey, I thought I was going to grow more in the professional way, but I was very wrong about that. This experience made me grow more in a personal way.

If anybody is interested in taking this opportunity, please do not hesitate because this kind of experience can change your mind, your life and your future. This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that you must do.

I just want to say thanks KPMG and thanks to KPMG in Vietnam for hosting me. It was the best life experience ever.

Attending a Vietnamese wedding.





Clockwise from top:

Visiting Hoi An;

Golden Bridge, Ba Na Hills, Da Nang;

Fansipan Mountain, Sapa;

The Bund in Shanghai, China.



Oxygen shortage, new heights and transformation

KPMG in the Philippines → KPMG in Japan

Frylen Y. Manacio

International
Corporate Tax

“True to my
colleagues’
promises,
I became a
transformed
being.”

I found myself smiling as I watched the sky turn into a symphony of vibrant colors when the sun made its way to the top of Mount Fuji. A few days before the end of my stay, I haphazardly decided to make a symbolic exit from my TaxTrek assignment with a trek to the world-renowned volcano, because why not? I was silently congratulating myself for indulging in that crazy idea as I reached the summit. With its towering height of 3,776 meters, Mount Fuji is not at all easy to climb. The entire 12 hours spent trekking to its summit seemed like eternity given that I also had to overcome the fear of oxygen shortage caused by high altitude and hypothermia. Fatigue eventually became the main hurdle, as I found myself walking on uneven and dangerous terrain, with the constant threat of falling debris from volcanic rocks as I made my way downhill.

Looking back, I can’t help but think that the trek was exactly how I would describe my Tax Trek journey – scary at first but rewarding and memorable at the end. It was, in a sense, a trek that pushed me to new heights. It was Tax Trek in Japan personified.

I was always curious why every time my colleagues shared their TaxTrek experiences, I saw in them a transformed individual. I remember telling myself that it was a challenge that I wanted to face someday, that I would have my own version of that transformation. When the opportunity presented itself, I immediately handed in my application and jumped with joy when I was accepted and assigned in Japan.

For a young professional who had never been outside her country, who would be travelling alone, and who only knew a handful of local phrases such as “Arigatou!” and “Sumimasen,” it was my excitement and bravery that surprisingly became my aces for survival.

I was privileged to work in a team with strong work ethics and professionals who are passionate to serve their clients above and beyond what is required of them. They even helped me realize an important insight in my career as I soon learned that taxation was not a one-person job after all. I eventually learned that a tiny change in a country’s tax reform can create significant effects to clients’ global businesses. I later understood that taxation can never be isolated on its own: it affects everyone else in this highly globalized world.

The after-office bonding with my Japanese colleagues and co-Tax Trekkers, sharing our stories and life lessons over delicious barbeque by the river, or the euphoria we all experienced as we were cheering for the Japan football team in the FIFA World Cup are a few of the things I surely miss. My short stay with them made it bearable to endure my homesickness. In a way, they became my family away from home.

The Land of the Rising Sun also offered its culture with open arms to me. The kid in me would always get ecstatic as I visited museums to learn about the run-of-the-mill lives of Japanese people way back in Edo Period or how every time I tried my luck at omikuji, I would be blessed with “Great Fortune.”

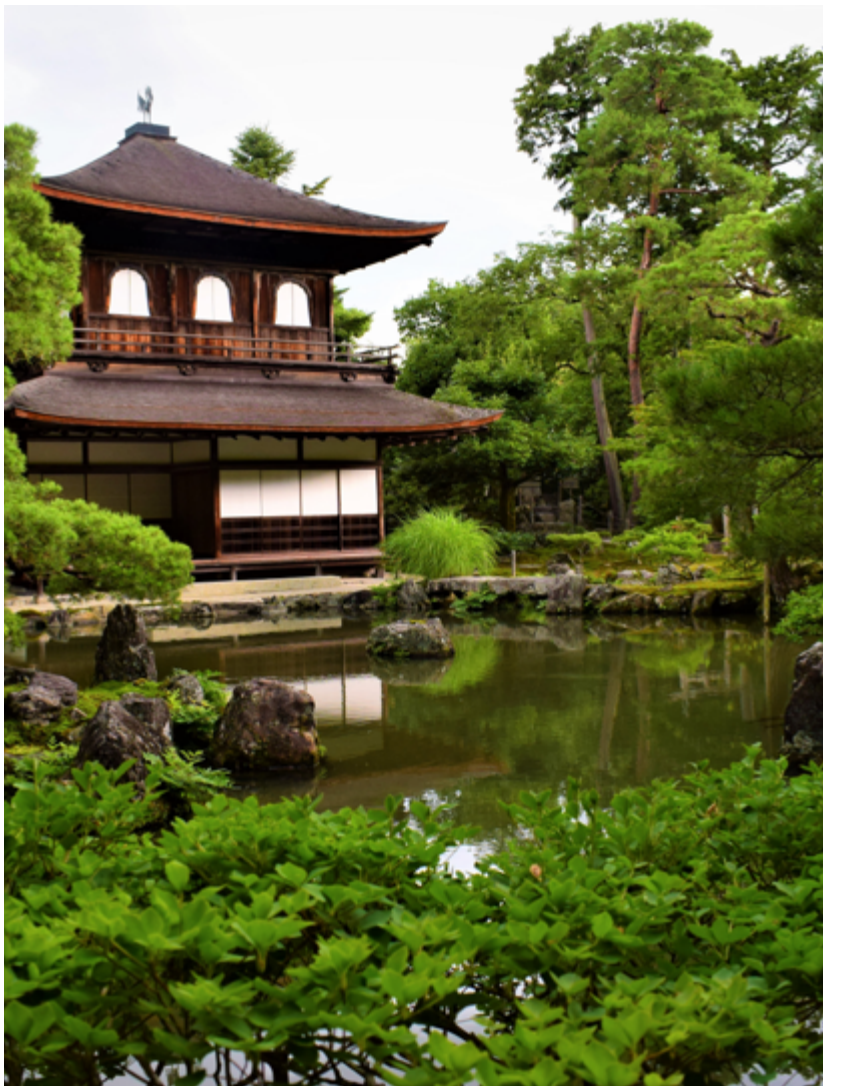
It was interesting how easy it was to ask for directions every time I found myself in the wrong alley, or how they would greet me with their trademark and respectable demeanor. Japanese people won’t hesitate to go beyond their way to help those in need. I, for certain, can attest to this when I lost my phone while visiting sites in Nara. A family helped and even accompanied me to the bus station despite being exhausted from their trip and from the weight of carrying their two children under the blazing heat of the summer sun. It was truly a magnificent experience to be able to connect with another human being in the most authentic and honest way despite the language barrier.

True to my colleagues’ shared stories and promises, I became a transformed being – professionally and personally.

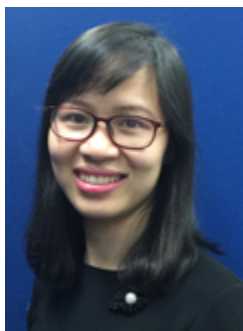
To those who aspire to experience this once-in-a-lifetime transformation, be bolder than your inhibitions. This initiative of KPMG Global will help you develop talents and skills you will need to become a better professional and you will find yourself imbibing KPMG values with a global outlook.

They say that experience is always the best teacher. The Tax Trek will surely take you to new heights, and you will see yourself on top of the clouds with a full 360 degree view of the world.

Be ready to be transformed.



Clockwise from top:
Kyoto -Yakasaka dori;
Tokyo Edo Museum;
Ginkakuji - Silver Pavilion Kyoto;
Tokyo Station at night.



Trang Nhu Nguyen
Tax and Legal
Services

Travelling to places I've only dreamt of. My German Tax Trek.

KPMG in Vietnam → KPMG in Germany

I was lucky to be selected for the TaxTrek program to the KPMG Frankfurt Office from June to August 2018. This journey provided valuable experiences and brought a new source of inspiration to my life.

Like most people, my first days in Frankfurt were confusing. The summertime weather was very pleasant with the bright sun. I happily took out an umbrella and used it when walking on the street. Most people looked at me in a weird way as I was so different from others. Realizing that, I soon put the umbrella aside and then enjoyed the sunshine and the green grass in a nearby park. I could smell the grass in such a pure atmosphere. I felt like it was truly the time for me to slow down and feel the beauty of nature. That moment distracted me from workload worries in the home country. Going shopping was also interesting. I bought things which I did not aim to buy since most of the descriptions were in German. I soon realized that a German/English dictionary was necessary. I really enjoyed the fresh fruits there, especially apples and grapes.

From a professional perspective, the working environment was much bigger than in Vietnam. The passionate and energetic partner in the KPMG Frankfurt office inspired me to grow my passion and contributions. My colleagues were supportive and friendly, and made me feel at home even though I was far away from home. After work, we had drinks together and shared our thoughts about culture differences and life opinions. On such occasions, I tried specialties in Frankfurt like Handkas mit Musik, apple wine, etc.

Apart from time in the office, I enjoyed travelling to places I had only dreamt of, such as the Eiffel Tower, Vatican, Colosseum, Switzerland, top of Europe, Neuschwanstein castle, and Rothenburg ob der Tauber. I even had leisure time to visit museums such as the Louvre, Van Gogh Museum, Picasso Museum, and the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya.

I made a lot of friends during those journeys. I was so excited to appreciate the tranquil life, clean environment, ancient history and the more developed countries in Europe. I treasure the moments of sitting on the river banks of most places I went to. Someone said that each city in Europe had a river flowing through it. It is definitely true. I felt totally relaxed when sitting near the river, looking at water move and observing activities alongside the two river banks, which I have never seen in Vietnam.

Travelling developed my habit of reading. I also enjoyed walking so I walked a lot from my apartment to the train station and then to work.

Time flew by fast and, finally, I said goodbye to my small apartment with the view of the beautiful garden, my lovely colleagues at the Frankfurt office and the tranquil life of Europe. The trip has provided me a lot of experiences. I was so grateful to the firm for giving me a chance to explore Europe and myself.

“A time to slow down and appreciate the tranquil life.”

A trip to Munich. It looks like the Little House on the Prairie - my favorite film since I was a child.





Clockwise from top:

Admiring the beauty of Spiez in Switzerland;

Green mountains -The scene is so majestic and reminds me of the lovely story - Heidi in the Mountains;

Me with a UK girl meeting in Vienna. We share a lot of things in common like love for Pride and Prejudice;

Traditional Frankfurt food - Handkas mit Musik - Its flavor is unforgettable.



Following my Tax Trek dream to Australia

KPMG in Russia → KPMG in Australia

Olga Dolgusheva

Corporate Tax

“If you have the courage to follow your Tax Trek dream, wherever it may lead, just take off and you will discover that there’s almost nothing you cannot do.”

“The universe falls in love with a stubborn heart.” That was my first thought after I saw the results of the TaxTrek contest when I realized that I was not chosen. A year passed and there I was again, ready to fight for my Aussie dream. Always believe in your dreams - they have the real power!

In mid-March 2018, I took off for my 35-hour and three-plane trip to the great unknown in another corner of the world. While I had anticipated an opportunity to simply observe how KPMG works abroad and to improve my English, it turned into 3 fantastic months full of wonders of work, people, nature, dancing and travelling.

At KPMG Sydney, I did not just observe. The team trusted me to actively participate in real projects, research new Australian tax laws, analyze Maltese tax legislation and prepare presentations for business development. Until the first week at KPMG Sydney, I had never imagined how unique our knowledge is and how universal the skills we acquire at KPMG are.

My International Tax team in Sydney mixed different kinds of work and lifestyles from around the globe. They helped me easily adapt, not only at work, but also outside the office, advising me where to hug a koala, which coastal walk is the longest, where to get the safest Sunday dose of “vitamin sea” and how to correctly eat a Tim Tam cookie (life hack: freeze it first!).

After a week struggling with the Australian accent, I fell in love with the country, its beauty, diversity and delicious tastes.

Among the three amazing states I visited, Sydney became my pearl and Byron Bay absolutely conquered my soul.

In just a couple of weeks, I realized that I already had “the usual” in the neighboring cafés and got addicted to Australian cappuccinos because I was open to sharing the experience with the friendly staff working there.

Being a salsa dancer, I found a substantial Latin dancing community in Sydney. It helped me introduce dancing to a part of my KPMG team, with live music salsa parties as the cherry on top.

TaxTrek helped me develop in so many ways. The experience made me more confident and flexible at work, and helped me discover new skills. We absolutely have no limits, both personally and professionally, if we have a dream.

If you have the courage to follow your TaxTrek dream, wherever it may lead, just take off and you will discover that there’s almost nothing you cannot do.

By bringing back the memories of my 3 months in Sydney, a moment of nostalgia induced me to write the following acrostic:

- T**he trick is to value every minute
- A**ppreciate the delicious taste of life
- X**tremely pushing past your limits with three amazing months of drive
- T**ough projects can crack in an instant
- R**esearching issues with new teams
- E**xploring cultures from no distance
- K**PMG can help you live that dream.

Most easterly point of the Australian Mainland (Byron Bay, NSW).





Clockwise from top:

Travelling along the coast of the Pacific Ocean with local students (Wollongong, NSW);

View of Harbour Bridge and City Centre from Taronga Zoo (Sydney, NSW);

Puffing Billy Railway (Melbourne, Victoria);

Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary (Brisbane, Queensland).





**Sugandha Dutt
Giri**

Global Transfer
Pricing Services

“Tax Trek helped me grow my personality, add value to my career path with the firm and gain advanced international experience.”

Go the distance, make the difference.

KPMG in India → KPMG in Russia

It's not every day that you get to fly to the other side of the world to work in a Big Four!

The email inviting applications for TaxTrek was thrilling. The idea of travelling to another country for 3 months and being part of KPMG's global network was extremely appealing. I believed Tax Trek would help me build a stronger connection with the right people in the global network and also help me get a global perspective of KPMG. The concept of TaxTrek was also in line with the firm's focus on “team work makes the dream work.” I was sure that TaxTrek would help me collaborate and learn from the experience of my overseas counterparts.

Once I was selected for TaxTrek to Moscow, Russia office, I realized that Moscow would help me to explore my untapped potential.

Settling in Moscow was not difficult due to: a) the buddy assigned to me was very approachable, helpful and, most importantly, well-versed in the English language; b) there was another TaxTrekker from Germany who provided me with insights on being a TaxTrekker; and c) with FIFA world cup football's fever all around and fans travelling across locations, the city, including the KPMG office, was open to welcoming people from other countries. Acclimatizing to the new work culture and adopting the habit of using Google translator to beat the language barrier was slightly difficult but, with the help of friendly colleagues, it happened effortlessly. Also, I was lucky to attend team outings twice.

Outside the KPMG office, the world was a little different, as lack of language knowledge (Russian for me and English for Russians) appeared to be the biggest hurdle in approaching people. In spite of the language barrier, the love of Russians towards India – Raj Kapoor from Mera Naam Joker, the song “Jimmy Jimmy aaja,” Sharukh Khan (Russians pronounce it as Shakarukh Khan) – and me being Indian, made my life easy.

Although being vegetarian feels like a crime in Moscow, a Russian vegetarian colleague who is also a fan of Indian cuisine ensured that my stomach was always filled with rich vegetarian food.

So, adapting to my host country in and out of the office was not a big task.

All my hopes while applying for the TaxTrek slowly turned to be true once I started to connect with colleagues and get involved in assisting the Moscow team on some of their assignments. While on TaxTrek, I realized that I was doing things I had never done before and those things would have a long-lasting impact on my career. For example, I presented before the Moscow team about Indian tax laws and KPMG's tax practices in India, knocked on a partner's door across tax service lines to apprise them with Indian tax environment and aspects of doing business in India, shared technical experiences and learned different perspectives of resolving issues common to all tax jurisdictions and clients.

TaxTrek helped me grow my personality, add value to my career path with the firm and gain advanced international experience. By successfully completing my TaxTrek, I got a global mindset of KPMG, explored a new culture and built my global network. The results are already visible as the Moscow team started reaching out to me.

On a personal front, within a very short span of time, I made lifelong friends, connected with members from all over the world and travelled to parts of the world I thought I would never see. The most thrilling part of my TaxTrek was the bike ride on a Moscow road; it was a dream come true.

My memories of Moscow and St. Petersburg are still alive in my mind. When I receive calls from my Moscow colleagues, it reminds me that I have created another work family through TaxTrek.

I encourage my colleagues to apply for TaxTrek as it is the best opportunity to expand your perspective and explore the possibilities. In this era of globalization, with the increasing cross border reach of business and tax issues, TaxTrek experience can strengthen your confidence, credibility and business acumen. It enables one to discover new strategies that add real value to clients. It is a chance to develop the skills and tools to make an impact in an ever-changing and increasingly competitive global marketplace, now and beyond.

When on Tax Trek, unlike joining a new company, one might often be expected to work on projects of the home country alongside of the host office team, so one would probably need to bring out their multi-tasking skills to manage the work pressure. If you are adaptable and aspire to developing new skills and areas of expertise, you will thrive and hopefully be offered exciting career development opportunities along the way. The multi-tasking and work management skills have been one of the greatest developments of my personality.

Another important advice to my colleagues aspiring for TaxTrek will be to have a clear understanding of on-going assignments and your future career growth post-return from Tax Trek.

Overall, my Tax Trek to Moscow has been a life-changing experience!

Спасибо (thank you)



Clockwise from top:

Tax Retreat - a wonderful time with the Moscow tax team;

FIFA football world cup fever all around at the famous GUM mall of Moscow;

The beautiful Moscow river;

"I love Moscow" sign.



Noah Bastock
Tax Advisory
Services

“In my view,
the benefits
of the Tax Trek
program are
immeasurable.”

A truly life-changing experience

KPMG in Australia → KPMG in Kenya

I had always hoped to pursue an international opportunity early in my career and was incredibly excited to be accepted into the Tax Trek program for 2018. Of the three locations presented – Kenya, Japan and Germany – I applied to KPMG in Kenya in the hope of embarking on a distinctly unique professional and personal experience. Kenya appeared to offer a rapidly growing and unique economy quite different from my own, presenting an opportunity for exposure to different work with different clients facing different challenges. Kenya had also captured my imagination due to its cultural diversity, breathtaking landscapes and wildlife, and its welcoming and warm reputation. From the moment I stepped off the plane at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Kenya indeed provided a truly life-changing experience.

Kenya has a reputation for being an incredibly welcoming and warm country, yet the team from KPMG in Kenya managed to exceed all expectations. From the first day, the team went to incredible lengths to accommodate both my partner and me. We were patiently taught the basics of Swahili and how to cook the local delicacy of roast goat meat and ugali. We were invited into homes for family meals. We were shown around the city of Nairobi, taken to musical festivals and events, invited into one of the local schools (to which KPMG provides financial support), and involved in team paintballing events and table tennis tournaments. The team even convinced me to run the annual Nairobi marathon, thankfully accompanied by more capable athletes. Without question, my fondest memories are spending time with the wonderful team from KPMG in Kenya.

From a professional perspective, the program offered exposure to meaningful work and opportunities. The team kindly introduced me to various local and international clients from different industries. I worked on engagements covering areas such as international tax, restructuring and transactions, and interactions with the local tax authority. The program not only required me to navigate a new taxation system, but also provided exposure to different forms of taxation (e.g. VAT, transfer pricing and employment taxes) and different industries. Tax Trek also provided an opportunity to analyze our business, noting observations to take back to my

home office and (where possible) provide insights and experiences to my host office. Whilst naturally challenging, the team were incredibly supportive and keen to develop my skills and knowledge.

In terms of travel, we were very fortunate to extensively explore both Kenya and the broader east-African region. In Kenya, we climbed for 5 days to the snow-capped peak of Mount Kenya, the second highest mountain in Africa at over 5,000 metres. We explored the beautiful beaches of the Kenyan coast, visited the world's last two northern white rhinos and learned about the conservation efforts to save the species, and danced in a traditional tribal village in the Maasai Mara National Park. In the broader region, we trekked with gorillas in Rwanda, went white-water rafting down the Nile River in Uganda, took a hot air balloon safari over the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania, swam to the edge of Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, and explored the ancient island trading port of Zanzibar. It truly was the trip of a lifetime.

In my view, the benefits of the Tax Trek program are immeasurable. On a technical level, the opportunity to navigate a foreign tax system and gain international experience is hugely beneficial. From a commercial perspective, the opportunity to consider transactions and businesses from a different perspective and immerse yourself in a different economy and culture leads to a more commercial and pragmatic mindset. With respect to future opportunities, the additional network of colleagues and clients around the world should not only help to foster a global mindset, but should hopefully lead to tangible future opportunities. The general challenges that invariably come with stepping outside of your comfort zone and living and working in an unfamiliar country, facilitate rapid, meaningful personal and professional growth.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to KPMG for continuing to support and promote the Tax Trek program and particularly to the KPMG in Kenya team for being such welcoming and wonderful hosts. In the local Swahili language – “asante sana.” It was truly an incredible experience and I would wholeheartedly encourage anyone considering an international opportunity to apply for the Tax Trek program.



Clockwise from top:

Taking a dip at the edge of the world's largest waterfall (Zimbabwe);

Hot air balloon safari over the Serengeti National Park (Tanzania);

Farewell celebrations on my last day in the office (Kenya);

The world's last two remaining Northern White Rhinos (Kenya);

Visiting a traditional maasai village in the Maasai Mara National Park (Kenya).





Hot pot and durians — Tax Trek in Singapore

KPMG in Germany → KPMG in Singapore

Julia Kamm
Corporate Tax

“I have expanded my professional network and developed new skills which will help me be more open-minded, culturally sensitive and provide better services to my clients.”

My TaxTrek in Singapore was a great experience in every way! New culture, new people, insights into another tax system, delicious food and many weekend travels.

I first read about TaxTrek when preparing for my KPMG job interview and I knew I wanted to apply for it. My first preference was Singapore and I am so thankful that I got selected for it. In addition to the city being very clean, safe and the primary language being English, Singapore has interesting tax structures. I had never been to Asia and the geographical location of Singapore was perfect to explore many other Asian countries as well.

My first day at work included HR welcome presentations, online training and many introductions. KPMG in Singapore has approximately 2,900 employees, with 380 sitting within the tax department. The KPMG office is located in one of the first skyscrapers of Singapore in the center of the financial district. I was assigned to the International Tax team, which is located on the 28th floor. My colleagues were very welcoming and I made some really good friends. Not only did they introduce me to their favorite lunch places, but we also had regular wine and dinner nights together. Workwise, I was involved in several projects with German tax issues, attended client meetings and several conference calls. I also assisted in international tax projects and obtained insights regarding the Singapore tax system.

Singapore is considered as the “gateway to Asia”. Compared to other Asian countries, Singapore

is a very westernized city. Due to jetlag and the hot, humid weather, it took me some time to adjust. However, I really began to enjoy my time in Singapore after the first few days. The city offers many leisure time opportunities and the food variety is amazing. Locals made me try all kinds of Singaporean food, such as durians (an extremely smelly but delicious fruit), hot pot, kaya toast and carrot cake. On the weekends, I had the chance to travel to Vietnam, Malaysia, Bali, Hong Kong and Cambodia. Each trip was filled with new experiences about the local culture and heritage, meeting new people, experiencing city life and amazing nature (jungle, beaches and rice terraces).

TaxTrek opened my mind to another culture, both personally, in terms of the people and customs and professionally, in terms of Singapore tax law and the way KPMG conducts business in the host country. TaxTrek also gave me an opportunity to think about my goals and values in life. I have expanded my professional network and developed new skills which will help me be more open-minded, culturally sensitive and provide better services to international clients.

If you are considering applying for TaxTrek, go for it! You will not regret it. TaxTrek is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Be open minded and step out of your comfort zone. This way, you will be able to see and experience so many great things. No matter which country you are assigned to during TaxTrek, you will have the most memorable and rewarding three months!

Drinking tea in Vietnam.





Clockwise from top:

International Tax Team in Singapore;

TreeTop Walk in Singapore - the monkey wants to grab my KPMG backpack;

Trying durians for the first time;

Bali rice terraces.





What it's like to work and live in 'God's own country'

KPMG in the U.S. → KPMG Global Service (KGS) Center India

Devan Squires

Business Tax Services

Step outside your comfort zone early and often."

"What are all these people doing?" We screeched to a deadlocked stop on the highway that skirts the city of Kochi, India. On the other side of the road was mile after mile of parked, empty buses. Only 4 days into my KGS rotation, I had no reference point for this. We decided to get out and walk the last half mile. As we crossed a bridge, we joined a throng of people wearing all red and waving hammer and sickle flags. Drummers were pounding a beat, a man bought a bright red balloon for his little son and people were marching. I had joined a Communist Party of India parade. I was a long way from my quaint Salt Lake City, Utah neighborhood.

Five years earlier, I sat at the same table as Rob Lang during an intern recruiting dinner. At the time, he was the partner over KGS. He told stories about India and he talked about rotations available to staff. I thought "if I get this job with KPMG I am definitely doing that!" During my first 2 years at KPMG, I worked with KGS on nearly every project. Shortly after being promoted to senior associate, I decided it was time to "just ask!" The support from my whole team was fantastic, and 4 months later, I stepped out of the airport into a hot, sticky Kochi night.

As a KGS secondee, I helped professionals with all kinds of questions. The questions were astute and related to software, tax laws and workpapers, but most often I was asked to clarify instructions sent by the US group. Through answering these questions, I learned what works and what doesn't work when addressing questions and concerns. I also learned how to use KGS better by improving instructions and communication.

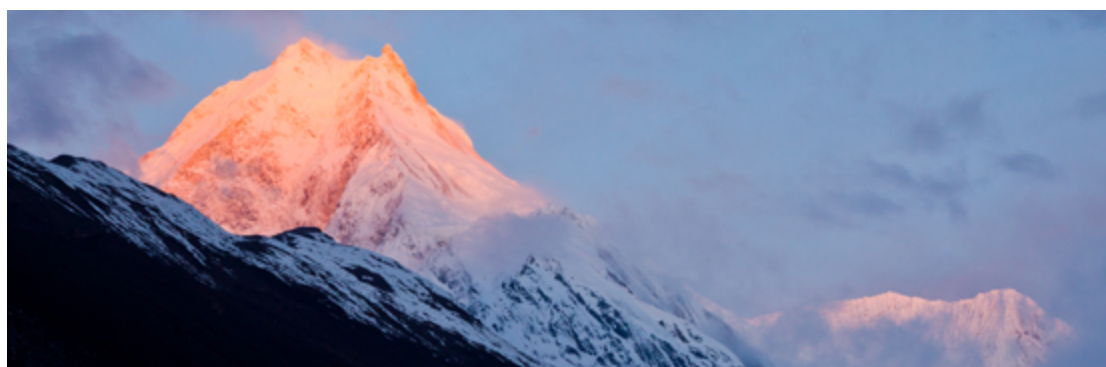
The beginning of the Trek assignment is the hardest. Adapting to a new place isn't easy, no

matter how much you love travelling. It's different when you live and work there for several months. Getting out as much as possible in the first month is key. If I were to do another Trek assignment I would intentionally plan outings and small trips during the first month so that when I arrived — and felt paralyzed by the newness of it all — I would have a plan to fall back on.

Step outside your comfort zone early and often. This seems so obvious at the end of your Trek assignment, but at the beginning it is so hard. You just got off a long flight, you're bleary-eyed and jet lagged. The last thing you want to do is ask to sit next to someone at lunch, let alone talk to them. I feel like I missed a lot of opportunities because I didn't do simple things from the start. For a more introverted person, I recommend reading a novel about the place you will be living. During the first few weeks in Kochi I read a novel about Kerala (the state Kochi is in) which was by an author from there. I learned some simple Malayalam words, and about the area's culture and history.

Although Kochi isn't much of a tourist destination, it is surrounded by incredible places. I took a canoe tour through the Kerala backwaters, captained by a local; attended a cooking class focused on local, Southern Indian food; saw the Taj Mahal and Angkor Wat at sunrise; visited ruins of many temples in Cambodia; and trekked for 2 weeks through the Himalayas in Nepal after the rotation. I learned so much about the food, lifestyle, art and culture of this area. My eyes opened to a part of the world I previously knew little about. At the end of my rotation, I understood why the people of Kerala are proud to call their home "God's own country."

Early morning glow on Manaslu (the 8th highest peak in the world) while backpacking in Nepal.





Clockwise from top:

A quick weekend trip to see the Taj Mahal and other sites in Agra;

Angkor Wat at sunrise;

Visiting Agra Fort wearing local garb;

Learning about how locals live during a canoe tour in the backwaters of Kerala.



Dang Duc Giang
Global Mobility
Services

My Tax Trek to Australia.

My experience of a lifetime.

KPMG in Vietnam → KPMG in Australia

“The Tax Trek program is a unique and enriching experience; an opportunity to work in a completely different environment.”

Australia is famous for its three Rs. The Rocks, an urban locality and historic area in Sydney’s city center. The Reef or the Great Barrier Reef is the world’s largest and breathtaking coral reef system. The Road, one of the world’s most scenic coastal drives in the southeastern coast of Australia. Besides those three Rs, during my three-month Tax Trek I was even luckier to enjoy the fourth R of Australia: Rubix. Rubix is a brand new technology launched on 27 August 2018 in support of Australian income tax return preparation developed by KPMG in Australia. It promises to be a game changer, making tax preparation quicker, faster and more accurate.

I started a three-month Tax Trek assignment in the Deal, Delivery Excellence department at the Sydney office in Barangaroo – a completely agile office – a week after the software was launched. As a local Global Mobility Services tax specialist, I was a bit worried about working in a completely new tax environment with different tax practices, technology and colleagues. I was encouraged to work with Rubix and all other related systems in preparing Australian tax returns for individual taxpayers, both inbound and outbound.

With just three months in the Sydney office, I learned a heap about Australian income tax regulations through a lot of on-the-job training with real cases in my day-to-day work. Rubix, of course, played a core part of my work as it is designed to help me, a newbie to Australian tax regulations, to catch up with what/where/how to import sourced information into the system for tax return processing. Such amazing experiences gave me ideas for the Global Mobility Services in Vietnam as we develop a new software for income tax return preparation, which is planned to go live in the coming months.

My colleagues in the Sydney office also played another important part during my Tax Trek. They were very welcoming, friendly and helpful in giving guidance, support, encouragement and answers to all my questions about Australian tax regulations, as well as other tips. The Tax Trek program gave me the chance to meet incredible colleagues, such as my project manager, who had endless energy and a positive attitude in everything she did; my Canadian colleague, who was so nice and offered me great help when I travelled around Australia after my Trek assignment; my lovely Indian friend who gave me great support and encouragement when I faced challenges at work; and all other colleagues in the Sydney office, who were very patient and supportive during my work there.

In addition to expanding my KPMG network, the Tax Trek program was a great way to work overseas, adapt to a new environment, make new friends and explore new cultures and landscapes. Also, it opened my mind and gave me an amazing chance to step out of my comfort zone and challenge my limits, from which I grew both personally and professionally.

Besides my work-life in Sydney, I also explored the beauty of Australia on weekends and after the Tax Trek assignment. Among many highlights, I visited the three Rs and other places whose allure is simply undeniable such as the scenic Skyrail in Kuranda, Mornington Peninsula and Blue Mountains.

Personally, the Tax Trek program is a unique and enriching experience to work as an expatriate in a completely different working environment. For those who are considering Tax Trek, you will never regret what you can gain and grow in just three months away from your comfort zone.

A scenic view of Bondi Beach.





Clockwise from top:

DDX team gathered at
Melbourne cup day;

Exploring the rocks in
Sydney;

Visiting Watson Bay.



Cristina Spirescu
Corporate Tax and
M&A

“I gained invaluable global knowledge, learned about new cultures that are so different from mine and, last but not least, made new amazing friends.”

Put on your Tax Trek glasses and discover the world!

KPMG in Romania → KPMG in Brazil

When I got to Brazil, people asked me whether I had chosen to have the TaxTrek in this country or if it had been chosen for me. The truth was somewhere in the middle. I had set out a list of options for my TaxTrek and had, indeed, put Brazil in first place. However, I hadn't thought about the list too much since I knew it depended on which countries were available.

However, as it turned out, this was the best country I could have gone to for my TaxTrek. When my colleagues from Brazil asked the question, I could spot their modesty, which is also a trait of some Romanians. In a way, I felt I could relate.

Brazil is a very welcoming country. People always smile, laugh and do a great job at focusing on the good things in life. There is samba, the food is amazing, there are exotic fruits and natural juices everywhere, the music is great and the sun is almost always out.

Speaking of food, I have never eaten such delicious, natural and tasty food. Everything is delicious and there is huge diversity. You can find amazing sushi, meat, Italian food and the list could go on forever. I have never heard of some of the exotic fruits I discovered, such as caja (it is not caju!), mangaba (it is not mango!), acerola or graviola amongst others. By far, my favourite thing to eat in Brazil is brigadeiro, the national sweet of Brazil, which I also learned to prepare with the help of two amazing Brazilian friends.

The climate is very pleasant and there are a lot of places to visit. Initially, I thought of travelling a bit in South America, but then I discovered the diversity of Brazil and, although I tried, I only managed to visit just few of the amazing places in Brazil. The landscapes are just breath-taking and, like the people living here, they are also amazingly diverse. There are great beaches, mountains, the Amazon, the Iguazu falls and a lot of different regions, each with its beauty, such as Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Maragogi and Recife.

The amazing thing about these places is that they are actually not all very touristy, so I felt like I was discovering secluded landscapes.

Although there is a lot of bad publicity about security issues in Brazil, and I admit it is a rather delicate matter, I have learned that it is not quite as bad as reported. Of course, you need to be careful, but I felt safe.

People say that the US is a melting pot. However, having lived in both the US and Brazil for short periods of time, I consider Brazil to be more diverse. There are literally no two people who are alike. There are people here with origins from not only Portugal and Spain, but also Japan (1.6 million Brazilians of Japanese descent, amounting to 1 percent of Brazil's population) or even Lebanon (7 million Brazilians of Lebanese descent). This happened because, from the 19th century, Brazil opened its borders to immigration. About 5 million people from over 60 countries migrated to Brazil between 1808 and 1972. Although there is a huge mix of cultures, as my colleagues from KPMG in Brazil say, “Even though we are different, when we travel abroad, we immediately spot the Brazilians.”

I even met a colleague at KPMG in Brazil who had Romanian roots as his grandparents emigrated there during the Second World War. I travelled with him to a meeting with the tax authorities in a city near Sao Paulo.

As in Romania, people work a lot in KPMG in Brazil but they know how to party too. The team socializes a lot after work and this is something I will now try to do in Romania.

The technical knowledge and exposure gained during the TaxTrek will prove invaluable for my career with KPMG. The Brazilian tax authorities are digitalized, so I gained insights on how the Romanian tax authorities' practices are likely to evolve. These skills will be necessary to remain relevant and take advantage of new opportunities.

As a response to the digitalization of the tax authorities, KPMG in Brazil developed a series of automation and tax intelligence systems. Romania is well known for having many IT specialists, so during my TaxTrek I initiated discussions and organized meetings about the exchange of technological products between our two offices.

Right from the first week, my new colleagues included me in various activities, such as drafting proposals, presentations on tax optimization structures and many more. I also attended a raining seminar on digitalization in relation to tax organized at the German-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce.

Soon it will be 10 years since I joined KPMG. After so much time in an organization, it is not easy

to reinvent yourself. TaxTrek really gave me that opportunity. After a while, we all need to take a step back and look at the big picture. Otherwise, we might get stuck and not even know it! We have a saying in Romania: Focusing too much on the trees makes you miss the forest. I think Brazil cleared my glasses and made me see the beautiful forest.

The TaxTrek program is a wonderful project with a lot of advantages and benefits for KPMG, for KPMG employees, and with direct returns for our clients too. It helps us become tax and legal advisors who can understand and address cross-border challenges and many more issues.

Programs like TaxTrek ultimately promote collaboration, a cooperative mindset, diversity and acceptance, understanding of other nations and their wonderful cultures and celebration of our differences as humans.

I am extremely grateful for this experience! I gained invaluable global knowledge, learned about new cultures that are so different from mine and, last but not least, made new amazing friends. My TaxTrek helped me rise to the challenges of the new global business economy!

Note: When I count how many times I used the word "amazing" in this post, I am "amazed," but I think this is just what I needed – an amazing experience in Brazil.



Clockwise from top:

Warm winter decorations;

Helicopter view in Rio;

Birthday celebration with my host colleagues;

Ipanema beach.





Don't let this incredible opportunity pass you by

KPMG in Taiwan → KPMG in Germany

Ashley Wang

Outbound Tax and Investment Services

“A life-changing program that cannot be missed!”

Ever since I joined KPMG, I have always been interested in participating in a global assignment to work with people from different cultural backgrounds. Immediately after I was informed of the TaxTrek program, I expressed my deep interest to my Tax Partner. Thanks to the opportunity, I was fortunate to start my unforgettable journey. This proved to be the best decision I ever made.

Working

During the assignment, I was in charge of leading various international projects where I coordinated and collaborated with different KPMG member firms with different cultural backgrounds. The most interesting and fascinating part of my work is that I not only had to deal with problems related to professional knowledge, I also had to deal with problems related to the management of project progress, customer expectation and so on. What turned out to be the most challenging was ‘cross-culture’ communication. Being able to digest the information delivered by member firms and correctly express it in an understandable way to clients requires not only professional knowledge, but also culture experience. Thanks to the assignment, I had the chance to expose myself to different working styles and understand the working culture of different member firms. It greatly helped to improve my negotiation techniques.

Experiencing

Apart from working, I also made some great friends and experienced different cultures through the TaxTrek program. One of those friends was also a Tax Trekker who was assigned to KPMG in Taiwan from KPMG in Germany. Thanks to the

TaxTrek program, we had the chance to work together. During that time, we exchanged working cultures (Asian vs. European) and became lifelong friends. During my assignment in KPMG in Germany, she invited me to her hometown and showed me the German culture and lifestyle. I spent several days with her family, where I experienced German Christmas traditions with some historical background. It was an unforgettable and wonderful experience for me. I loved the atmosphere when families gather on Christmas Eve to have dinner. I was also surprised by how German people cherish the time spent with their families and remember the little details and habits of what their family loves to do during Christmas. I really loved this tradition!

Transforming

The TaxTrek program has truly widened my vision and elevated my career! The assignment gave me the opportunity to develop new interpersonal skills and be exposed to different cultures, company environment, etiquette, and lifestyles. Since my job back in my home country was related to international taxation, where collaboration with teams around the world is my everyday job, the exposure during my assignment in KPMG in Germany will certainly benefit me in various ways. Among other things, it has already greatly improved my soft skills such as communication and flexibility. These skills are just as important as professional knowledge.

Piece of Advice

Never limit yourself! Be eager. Open your heart and mind to experience and learn as much as you can!

Lunch meeting in KPMG Germany.





Clockwise from top:

At the German Christmas Market;

KPMG year end party with colleagues;

Chinese practice gathering.



Eat, Pray, Mole!

KPMG in Canada → KPMG in Mexico

Zach Little

Canadian Corporate
Tax

“Tax Trek:
Networking
without
borders”

TaxTrek opens your eyes to the global reach of KPMG. It's an inspiring feeling to travel the world knowing that in any major city, there is a KPMG office where members of the KPMG family work. In that way, we are connected to every major city in the world, so it is clear a global mindset becomes increasingly important to our future.

Why TaxTrek?

Within days of arriving in Mexico City, I was introduced to various friend groups of my KPMG colleagues and, almost instantly, my TaxTrek experience was made memorable both inside and outside the office. I was one of many Trekkers in Mexico City. In 3 months, I connected with KPMG'ers from Japan, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Germany, Venezuela and Vietnam. These are connections I brought back with me to Canada and relationships I will continue to cultivate throughout my career. For precisely that reason, TaxTrek is an essential program for making our global presence a connected one.

The opportunity to build relationships with KPMG'ers around the world is what inspired me to apply for TaxTrek and it was the highlight of my experience. Meeting people from different cultures and upbringings exposed me to new ways of doing things, both personally and professionally. It introduced a fresh perspective. The more our firm can connect globally, the more we grow and the quicker we innovate. We also become more agile in addressing the needs of our clients which often extend beyond borders.

Trekking outside the office

To summarize my top five experiences outside of the office, I will use an acronym, which in itself highlights a very important cultural experience in Mexico City:

T – Touring the pyramids at Teotihuacan

A – All aboard the river boats at Xochimilco

C – Culinary experiences (specifically, authentic mole sauce!)

O – Observing Mexico's rich history and culture celebrated in the city's 180 museums

S – Sightseeing during the famous Mexican cultural holiday: Dia de los Muertos

The truth is, every day in Mexico City is charged with adventure. It is a city that would take years

to explore. A typical day (on the weekends) would include a morning bike ride through Bosque de Chapultepec, followed by a tour of the city's markets where local artisans proudly display their crafts, grabbing lunch (always at 2pm in Mexico City) at a local taco joint, and spending the evening with new friends or taking in a Lucha Libre wrestling match.

Greatest of all are the Mexican people. The warm embrace I experienced upon arriving in Mexico City, and that carried me through my 3-month excursion, is something to admire and learn from. It was not uncommon to be invited to Sunday family dinner after meeting a new friend or showered with offers of weekend activities with colleagues and their friend groups. It is what I will most remember Mexico for, its people and their hospitality.

At the office

While on assignment, I was placed in the international tax practice of KPMG in Mexico. I worked with my peer-level group on international tax projects, reviewed technical memos and prepared presentations on Canadian tax concepts. I learned new processes and best practices of KPMG in Mexico and, more than once, made notes for recommendations to bring back to the Canadian firm. Collaborating in this way was a major growth opportunity.

My advice

For anyone considering TaxTrek, my advice is DO IT! Beyond that, remain curious. Meet new people. Get to know them outside of the office. Ask questions. And then when you return to your home office, nurture the friendships you made abroad. Become the liaison for all projects your home office enters into with the host country you visited during TaxTrek. The relationships you build in your host country are unique to you and make you a valuable resource.

A global mindset

TaxTrek is one of the greatest opportunities I have had in my time at KPMG. It is a profound, eye-opening experience to the interconnectedness of the global firm. It altered my perspective. Today, I consider myself more part of a global team rather than a local one. And perhaps this was my greatest “a-ha” moment.

Again, more than anything, I return to the people I met and the relationships we built. This is the single, greatest achievement of my Trek. More than a dozen new friendships spanning seven different countries.

We have to adapt and grow with a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected. It is essential to create opportunities to network without borders as we evolve from our local teams into one global team.



Clockwise from top:

Touring the pyramids at Teotihuacan;

An evening at Ballet Folklórico de México;

Local art work on display during Día de Muertos;

Aztec calendar at the Anthropology Museum;

Enjoying front row seats at the Day of the Dead parade.





Clara Bailey
International Tax

Embracing every aspect of being a Londoner in London

KPMG in the U.S. → KPMG in the UK

Although I am admittedly a homebody and a creature of habit, I have always felt a strong desire to work and live outside of the United States. My first taste of life abroad came via a 6-week program in Paris, offered by my university. That experience inspired a number of decisions, including choosing to pursue international tax as a focus in my career with KPMG and submitting myself for programs like the Tax Trek. I feel it is important to spend time outside of my comfort zone and I saw the Tax Trek as an opportunity to do so literally and figuratively while gaining invaluable career and life experience.

The Tax Trek afforded me the opportunity to work in a Corporate Tax Advisory group in London for 3 months. I joined a small team that worked on tax advisory and compliance projects. The team also often acted as a project manager in organizing other service lines. I was able to see a broad range of clients and industries, and interacted with multiple teams in the London office. I never imagined English could sound so foreign to me but adjusting to the British accounting jargon was a great learning experience that provided fresh perspective on problems I face every day. Luckily, I found my UK team to be very accommodating. To my pleasant surprise, they were also quite social, so there were countless occasions in which we went out after work.

I won't be the first or last person to say that London is a delightful place to live and work. However, it was a surprising treat to experience the city from my apartment in Canary Wharf. The convenient access to the office and the underground, combined with the distinctly downtown quality of the area made it a perfect home away from home. I found it easier than I expected to find a domestic rhythm with things like laundry and groceries, which pleased my inner homebody, but I never felt limited in my ability to access the rest of London. In fact, the nearby Canary Wharf underground station was the starting point of nearly every excursion, near or far.

I found the diverse array of cultural experiences available to me in London nearly overwhelming. Fortunately, I spent plenty of time before my trip researching potential activities and destinations.

I used Google Maps to save anything that interested me and essentially created my own personal wish list that became instrumental in planning my weekends and free time. My co-workers in the UK obviously made for a great resource as well and helped me refine my map. That map guided me throughout my entire time abroad. I would highly recommend applying a similar strategy to anybody planning an extended trip to unfamiliar territory.

I had a pint on a patio with a view of a castle. I picnicked on Primrose Hill. I found the hidden gem Thai restaurant in a hole-in-the-wall pub named after Winston Churchill. I experienced the excitement of cheering for England in the World Cup, and people singing "It's Coming Home" on the tube. I took lunch outside with my co-workers when it was nice out because they never missed an opportunity to bask in even the slightest bit of sunshine. I ate baked beans with my breakfast and drank tea instead of coffee. I did my best to embrace every aspect of being a Londoner while I was in London, but I also took every chance I could to visit Europe.

I travelled to Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium, Switzerland (twice) and the Netherlands. Some of the places I had been to before, many I had not, but I felt so fortunate to be in an international hub like London which allowed me relatively easy access to all of these destinations. Weaving these trips in between weekdays spent in this stimulating work environment was extremely satisfying and educational on both a personal and professional level. I do feel that this Tax Trek taught me a great deal about myself and how I interact with the world around me – family, friends, co-workers and strangers. Upon returning, I felt more excited than ever to continue to challenge myself with new foreign experiences. I cannot recommend the Tax Trek highly enough! Apply and do not look back!

"I cannot recommend the Tax Trek highly enough! Apply and do not look back!"



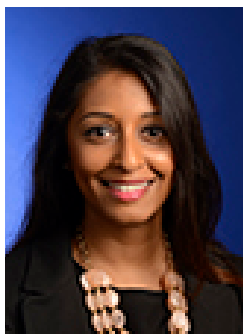
Clockwise from top:

Paragliding in Switzerland;

Exploring one of my favorite London neighborhoods;

One of my first views of London;

Best pub & Thai restaurant.



Preema Patel

Stamp Taxes Group

“It is a unique opportunity for both professional and personal development. You get to foster new relationships, test your transferable skills, provide and (take home) insight and truly get a snapshot of how another KPMG member firm works.”

Filling my heart with happiness: Sawadee ka (hello) Thailand

KPMG in the UK → KPMG in Thailand

TaxTrek: Why not?

Since joining KPMG in February 2015, my work has always related to UK stamp taxes, leaving little opportunity to work internationally and meet colleagues from across the global firm.

My lifelong flight of fancy was working and living abroad in a hot country. My dream was to work on weekdays (obviously) in a vibrant new environment and frolic to an idyllic beach on weekends. The TaxTrek assignment struck me as the perfect route to make that fantasy a reality and broaden my perspective of KPMG as a global firm rather than a UK one.

KPMG Thailand: The work

I joined the International Tax team in the Bangkok office and was greeted by many welcoming faces. I was delighted to research other areas of tax that I wouldn't normally have had an opportunity to work on in the UK. In particular, I relished any opportunity to research and advise on Thai stamp duty.

One of the biggest challenges I encountered was interpreting and applying the Thai Revenue Code to transactions. The actual code itself is written in Thai. There isn't a government-endorsed English translation of the code. Instead, my non-Thai colleagues would refer to an industry-acknowledged textbook interpretation, which even then was open to interpretation. I really had to question the translation, discuss my findings with a colleague who was able to read the code and check if I was on the right track. I was definitely outside of my comfort zone. However, this gave me a boost of confidence to build upon my interpretation and analysis skillset.

In addition to client work, I assisted with drafting training slides and a submission for various industry awards. Our Thai colleagues have been very active in running discussions on the draft e-commerce legislation, Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) and other fast-changing developments in tax. I had to sell KPMG in Thailand on paper, no pressure at all! It was great to hear the submission I assisted with secured a win for the firm!

Surveying the scenery

Adapting to my new environment wasn't a problem. Thankfully, many locals I encountered

spoke English, but KPMG in Thailand equipped me with Thai language classes just in case. I felt a sense of a strong community, in and outside of the office

On Valentine's Day, for example, KPMG in Thailand immersed itself in spreading the love by decorating the office with balloons, banners and placing out teddy bears dressed in pink KPMG t-shirts. The HR team even danced around the office playing music from their phones, whilst handing out bespoke Valentine's Day lollipops to the staff at their desks. I certainly felt the love.

The Thai New Year, or the Songkran festival, was a public holiday like no other. The entire country takes to the streets to celebrate by engaging in a mass water fight. To walk out of the apartment unscathed was wishful thinking so I decided to participate. I purchased a water gun and hosed down anyone (adult or child) who saw me as a target. It was definitely one of my highlights from the TaxTrek.

Endless adventures

Thailand offers mind-blowing food, whether it be street food or at high-end restaurants. This prompted me to unleash my inner chef by taking a Thai cooking class.

The tourism options are endless and the hospitality sees no boundaries. Having never lived abroad or travelled solo, I was keen to explore. I climbed a waterfall and visited an elephant sanctuary in Chiang Mai, popped into Laos during my visit to the golden triangle in Chiang Rai, swung my legs off a Canyon and bathed in hot spring waters in Pai, visited many temples, and that is just covering the north of Thailand.

On my jaunts to the south, I visited the James Bond Island, kayaked and snorkelled near unspoilt caves and mountains, and marvelled at the idyllic beaches that Thailand has to offer in the Phi Phi Islands, Krabi and Koh Lanta. I watched Muay Thai boxing matches and countless sunsets that I would never tire of. I also threw in frequent spa treatments for good measure and a cheeky trip to Cambodia during the public holiday weekend.

To finish it off, I took 3 weeks off and headed to Vietnam and the Philippines. The whole experience was an adventure of a lifetime.

My take away

The TaxTrek has unlocked an alternative way to test the existing skillset I have developed in the UK, which I now feel I have broadened as a result of the Trek. I was able to engage a global mindset and gain an insight as to how another country sits within the global tax industry. This has now piqued my interest in other areas of tax outside of stamp taxes.

I developed my photography skills and took thousands photos, became a culture vulture, met some wonderful people in and outside of the office and developed meaningful relationships. To top it off, I developed a killer tan!

TaxTrek: Don't flirt with the idea, just go for it!

It is a unique opportunity for both professional and personal development. You get to foster new relationships, test your transferable skills, provide and (take home) insight and truly get a snapshot of how another KPMG member firm works. I can't thank KPMG enough for the opportunity. It was the best decision of my career to date.



Clockwise from top:

Maerim Elephant Sanctuary in Chiang Mai;

Swimming at Maya Beach;

International tax team;

Thai cooking class.



Tax Trek India – Just do it! You won't regret it!

KPMG in the U.S. → KPMG Global Services (KGS) in India

Jill E Smith
Business
Tax Services,
Alternative
Investments

“Don't tell me how educated you are, tell me how much you have travelled.”

- Mohammed

I had known about the rotation to India since I started working at KPMG in 2014. Several managers in my group had done short-term rotations and seemed to really enjoy it. I've always loved to travel and thought doing a rotation would be a great experience. After thinking about it for a few years, I decided that I needed some adventure in my life and applied for the TaxTrek rotation in India. I chose India for several reasons. I had heard a lot about it already from my other managers and they all had positive experiences. I work closely with KGS staff in Bangalore and Kochi on all of my engagements so I was eager to meet them and work with them in person. Also, I had never been to that part of the world and the opportunity to see it was enticing and exciting!

Everything about my rotation in India was wonderfully unexpected! I thought I would leave after 3 months with experience to boost my resume, some nice memories and a few interesting stories to talk about at cocktail parties. I certainly got all of that, but I came back with so much more.

While I was in India, I worked on a variety of tasks and projects that centered on improving KGS. I provided training and feedback to staff. I was also involved in a project with management that focused on how best to organize the resources. This was a great opportunity to see how the KGS office functions on a high level and gave me new insight into their practices.

The thing I will miss most is the people I worked with while in Bangalore and Kochi. I was warmly welcomed my first day and made friendships I

hope will last a lifetime. The work environment is one filled with a sense of teamwork and fun. Some of my best memories come from lunches spent laughing with colleagues, walks around the courtyard filled with conversations about life and culture and dance parties in the office on Sundays to ward off the tax season blues.

I also took the opportunity while I was on that side of the world to do a lot of travelling. In India, I took trips to New Delhi and the Taj Mahal, spent a weekend at a beach resort in Kovalam, and took the train to Mysore. I also spent 2 weeks working in the Kochi office. Once I found out how easy it was to travel around the entire region, in addition to spending 3 months in India, I made plans to visit Dubai, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and the Maldives. I spent a day on the beach in Dubai getting over my jetlag on the way to Bangalore, which I highly recommend. Toward the end of my rotation, I spent 5 days travelling across Sri Lanka. After my rotation ended, I spent 3 weeks island hopping in Thailand, trekking the Annapurna region in Nepal and bathing in the crystal-clear waters of the Maldives. I made lasting friendships with people from all over the world, rediscovered my passion for hiking, conquered challenges I didn't think possible, gained confidence and saw some of the most beautiful places on earth.

A key piece of advice I would give to someone considering a TaxTrek is just do it! You won't regret it. Take advantage of the opportunity to travel and see as much as you can!

Annapurna region trekking in Nepal after my rotation.





Clockwise from top:

Spice market in Mysore, India;

Me in front of the Taj Mahal;

Beach in Kovalam, India;

Sunday office dance party at KGS in Bangalore, India.



#DS_Deutsch_Trip. My 89 days in Germany.

KPMG in Russia → KPMG in Germany

Dmitry Sytov

Global Mobility
Services
(People Services)

“Learning I
was chosen
for Tax Trek
was like
fireworks.”

Being chosen for a TaxTrek assignment was a great reward and opportunity for me. I remember the day I received the news. I was on vacation so I was not even at the office. When my colleagues congratulated me and said, “Germany is yours,” I did not even understand it at first. However, when I realized what happened, it was like fireworks.

A few months later, it was finally time to take the plane to start my assignment. I was excited imagining what would happen next.

I decided to choose Frankfurt-am-Main among several proposed German offices because I already had close relationships with the team and I wanted to see the financial capital of Europe.

I did not have to work during the first couple of days, so I had enough time to explore the place where I was living. It was the city center near the Central Station and quite close to the river, which was great because I could continue my running after work. Speaking of the city in general, Frankfurt is definitely the city of contrasts. The river has a great view of skyscrapers on one side and a more traditional museum embankment on the other. The banking block is near Asian and Middle-Eastern - street food and the red lights district just next to it.

I was surprised that the office is close to the airport. In fact, it is a kind of tradition in Germany and some other European countries because it is easier for

clients to travel to the office. With regards to the work itself, I was focused on coordinating work for some of the global clients I also worked on at home. It was a valuable experience to see how it works on the other side and understand the bigger picture of serving the client. However, one thing was even more valuable: the experience exchange with colleagues. For example, we discussed each other’s views on people, motivation and IT solutions.

Apart from the work, I tried to see as many places as I could on weekends. I even decided to write a little diary – you can check it out on Instagram under #DS_Deutsche_Trip. Trains seem to be quite fast in Germany. There were 10 more places I went during my Trek assignment: Nurnberg, Bamberg, Cologne, Munich, Heidelberg, Mannheim, Rudeshaim-am-Rain, Wiesbaden, Mainz and Amsterdam. It would be too long to describe all of these places.

Nevertheless, my 89 days in Germany came to an end. Now, writing this essay, I would say the most valuable experience from this trip is being three months out of my comfort zone: doing tasks I’d never done before, seeing places I’d never seen, trying new food (how about a burger from crocodile meat at a street festival?), seeing things from a different dimension and, of course, finding new friends. I advise everyone to try this and participate in the TaxTrek program.

A palace in Munich.





Clockwise from top:

Heidelberg view;

Amsterdam canal;

Rudesheim am Rein;

Main river in Frankfurt.



Eoin Fitzpatrick
Domestic Tax

The most enjoyable challenge I have ever faced

KPMG in Ireland → KPMG in the U.S.

I have always loved travelling. When I heard about the TaxTrek program and the opportunity to spend time working in a new international culture, I was excited by the challenge. Although I knew that working in a different country would be difficult, I appreciated that it would be an amazing opportunity for my career at KPMG and my personal development.

I worked in the International Tax department in New York City while on TaxTrek. I advised multinational clients on the tax implications of their worldwide operations. This was a new experience for me and I enjoyed the steep learning curve that it involved.

My host office and colleagues were great at getting me settled in and experiencing culture. During my time in the U.S., we went to see the New York Mets play a baseball game and the New York Giants play at Met Life Stadium. These were very enjoyable opportunities to socialize with colleagues and also to experience American culture.

One of the highlights of my TaxTrek was a trip to an army veteran hospital in Manhattan, where we served lunch to injured US soldiers. This was an incredibly worthwhile experience and I learned a lot from talking with the patients.

While in New York, I made sure to take in all the famous sites the city has to offer: the Empire State Building, 9/11 memorial and museum, Brooklyn Bridge, Central Park, Broadway and Times Square. These were great experiences that I will remember and cherish for the rest of my life.

Outside of the office, my host country colleagues welcomed me and invited me to social events such

as birthday parties, sporting and cultural events. I took the opportunity to travel as much as possible on weekends and holidays. I visited Boston, Washington DC, Texas, Nashville and New Orleans during my TaxTrek. This helped me gain a broader understanding not just of New York but also the cultures of different parts of the U.S.

My TaxTrek will definitely benefit my career at KPMG. By working in New York, I got to work with different kinds of clients than I would have in Ireland. Therefore, I gained valuable experience that I will apply to my day-to-day work in Dublin. I also developed relationships with members of both the U.S. and foreign firms. These contacts should be vital in the future for collaboration and communication between Ireland and other KPMG member firms.

Since returning from my TaxTrek, I noticed how the experience developed me both from a professional and personal perspective. I have been able to apply the knowledge I gained on TaxTrek to my daily work life while my improved communication skills and understanding of other cultures have also helped me greatly.

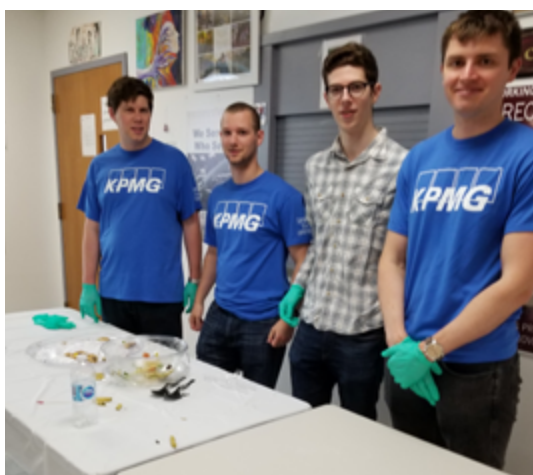
My key advice for someone considering TaxTrek is:

- Do a TaxTrek. You won't regret it!
- Don't be too daunted by the challenge of TaxTrek.
- When you are there, don't be afraid to try new things and make the absolute most of your time in your host country.

“ My TaxTrek will definitely benefit my career at KPMG. By working in New York, I got to work with different kinds of clients than I would have in Ireland. ”

Never short on visitors in New York – my friends from Ireland over visiting.





Clockwise from top:

The Capital Building, Austin, Texas – I loved travelling around USA;

Quicker to get around than the subway...;

Making a new friend at the Mets game;

Serving lunch - Anyone hungry - The army veteran's hospital was an amazing experience.



**Xiao Ling
(Lisa) Pan**

Alternative
Investment, Tax

“Every
day of my
assignment
was an
enjoyable and
rewarding
moment of
my life.”

My Tax Trek with KPMG: Open minds and open hearts.

KPMG in the U.S. → KPMG in Germany

Working abroad is a challenging but exciting adventure! I love to experience different cultures, both professionally and personally. Before going on this journey, I hoped to learn and develop a global mindset of intercontinental tax transactions and meet some interesting people along the way.

I was assigned to the International Corporate Team led by Markus Kastner. Everyone at the KPMG Frankfurt office made me feel welcome and treated me as if I were a part of their team. I sat in a room with my colleague, Sven Oehmcke, who helped me transition to the German work environment and culture along with my host Performance Manager, Markus Herbener, Markus' assistant Jasmin Elms and many others. We had lunch together almost every day.

On my first day in the office, I joined a client conference call with my German director along with other colleagues to discuss the base erosion for service performance for related party payments. In Germany, there is a public central platform called the Company Register - Unternehmensregister for saving legally relevant company data. I used this web platform often during my assignment period to search the German companies' business background and their financial information. Another helpful platform I used was the IBFD Tax Research platform, which is an international tax research tool that allowed me to look up double tax treaties.

I was also engaged in some special projects, such as creating a transfer pricing documentation report on the extraordinary business transactions on the sale of intellectual property. I also assisted with preparing overviews and calculation models for German tax audits. In addition, I provided assistance to a target operating model of a plan migration of certain financial services to a shared service center.

I assisted in engagements across a broad range of industries, from a manufacturer of water measurement devices, to a large market research institute, and distributors of professional beauty supplies. Most of my clients were German corporations and US multinational corporations with German subsidiaries.

I was fully engaged at work. Every week there were some new interesting tasks waiting for me. I learned it's always important to explore the

fact pattern and to see if there are any additional circumstances before making a conclusion. This experience taught me to think critically and ask more questions when there is a new project assigned to me.

The TaxTrek rotation also provided me with the global awareness and knowledge of different lines of businesses. The exposure to the new, complex fact patterns and legal environments helped me learn to make more sensible decisions. It also gave me a venue to learn different work techniques and business processes and exposed me to new business contacts which will greatly benefit my career at KPMG.

Since the 2014 FIFA World Cup, I always wanted to come to Germany to experience the local football culture. During my assignment, I attended the Mainz vs RB Leipzig football match, which was a dream come true! In addition, I also travelled during the weekends to visit nearby cities, immersing myself in the German culture by tasting local food and visiting historical attractions.

The one key piece of advice for someone considering a TaxTrek assignment is to have an open mind and open heart. If you do, you'll learn many things. Until I came to Germany, I didn't realize the German system for waste separation is so complicated! I also learned that crossing the street at the red traffic light would be frowned upon in Germany, whereas in New York City, we cross the street as soon as the light turns red. Every day of my assignment was an enjoyable and rewarding moment of my life. I had a great time with the KPMG Frankfurt team and really appreciate this wonderful opportunity. What an experience! I absolutely loved it!



Clockwise from top:

Watching the football match between Mainz vs. RB Leipzig in Opel Arena;

Travelling with my Tax Trekker backpack in Europe;

Travelling with another Tax Trekker, Nguyen Nhu Trang to Neuschwanstein Castle;

Last day in the KPMG Frankfurt office holding my lovely farewell card from my teammates!.





My Tax Trek in Hungary. Taking that leap of faith.

KPMG in the U.S. → KPMG Global Services Hungary (KGSH)

Chulin Geng
International Tax

“My Trek experience taught me to continue being curious, modest and open-minded.”

Why I applied

I have always had a passion for travel and an appetite to experience different cultures. Professionally, as a second-year senior in Business Tax Services, I was looking for ways to expand my core U.S. federal tax knowledge and broaden my overall skillset. The TaxTrek program seemed to be the perfect opportunity for me to satisfy both my professional development ambitions as well as my personal interests. So, I took the initiative and filled out the application to give it a try. I was very fortunate to be accepted by KPMG Global Services Hungary (KGSH). As it turned out, the 3 months I spent working with the team there, living in Hungary and travelling around Europe was one of the best experiences of my life!

What I did

Located in Budapest, KGSH is KPMG's center of excellence for EU VAT compliance. During my Tax Trek, I was assigned to the Marketplace team, mainly serving the third-party sellers of online retail giants, such as Amazon and eBay. I helped the team by handling daily communications with clients including any basic VAT-related questions, registration process and status, information requests and compliance inquiries. Additionally, I helped introduce KGSH's service offerings to potential new clients and deal with tax authorities' inquiries and notifications. I also contributed to the business requirements and process write-up for the enhanced online client portal designed by IT, and developed a system for tracking pending VAT registrations temporarily replacing the functionalities of the online portal under development.

How I adapted

TaxTrek was my first time visiting Hungary. Budapest is such a stunning city that it took very little for me to fall in love. Adapting to the local culture, food and work environment was surprisingly easy. Because of the need to communicate with international sellers and deal with tax authorities of various European countries, my team is comprised of a diverse group of individuals from different countries. Everyone was so friendly and welcoming that I quickly made friends and felt a sense of belonging to both my work family and the local community. I got to participate in charitable events, such as gardening

day and the office cake sale as well as many social events. My team introduced me to their favorite restaurants, local markets, shops and ruin bars. My favorite parts about Budapest that I miss the most are the thermal baths, goulash soups and pálinka!

How I benefited and developed

Not having prior experience in the field of Indirect Tax, I learned a great deal about EU VAT from a technical aspect through trainings and on-the-job learning. I gained further understanding of the full capabilities of KGSH as a compliance center, their technologies, automation tools used and the overall VAT compliance process. I shared what I learned at KGSH with my home office Indirect Tax team during and post my assignment. To say the least, I feel more confident as a more well-rounded tax professional coming back from my Tax Trek. The friendships and relationships I built with the local teams will be long-lasting and invaluable going forward as I further develop my career.

I was fortunate enough to be able to travel to many nearby countries on the weekends during my TaxTrek, such as Croatia, Austria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland and Germany, to name a few. The beauty of traveling and experiencing different cultures is that it reminds me of how little I know and how little of the world I have seen. Most importantly, my TaxTrek experience taught me to continue being curious, modest and open-minded.

Why you should go on a TaxTrek

To anyone who is considering a TaxTrek assignment, I highly encourage you to take that leap of faith. Just start by filling out the application. If you are a curious explorer like myself, I guarantee it will be an eye-opening experience of a lifetime! The question is, why not?



Clockwise from top:

Weekend trip to the beautiful Hallstatt, Austria when my husband visited;

My team surprised me with this sweet photo as a goodbye gift on my last day;

Being a tourist for the day featuring Budapest signature skyline;

Charity gardening featuring all the quinces we harvested.





'Tax Trek' for the soul

KPMG in Uganda → KPMG in Romania

Hellen Akakisiima Mugambwa

Tax and Regulatory Services

“Tax Trek is not just about the technical skills; it’s also about the soft skills, personal development, self-awareness and growing your network.”

I knew 2018 was my year to own, so to be selected as a Tax Trekker was a testament to that. I have always yearned for an opportunity to work in another country, to get to know how the professional life and culture differs from those in Uganda and also to grow my network. Yet, I was never ready to pack my bags and relocate for a very long period of time, leaving behind my family, friends, relatives and everything else that I hold dear. For me, the Tax Trek program was my chance to gain the experience I desired.

I was super excited about the entire process, but nobody prepared me for the somewhat tedious process of preparing and getting my travel documents approved. After a series of back and forth, I was finally ready to go for the Tax Trek in June 2018 in the Bucharest office. I simply couldn't wait to arrive in Bucharest and write about my experience from day one. Well, here I get the chance.

My work experience

Upon arrival, I was warmly welcomed by Sabina (the HR personnel) who had helped me with the paperwork process so, safe to say, I felt like I knew her already and I was meeting a long-lost friend. Sabina took me through what was expected of me, how to get to and from the office as well as giving me a tour of the office and various departments like IT, HR and Corporate Tax.

I was welcomed by the Corporate Tax team and shown where I would spend most of my work hours.

Given the difference in the tax regimes and the short period of time (yes, 3 months is a short time for one to get involved in the different work projects of a foreign jurisdiction), I was not expected to have much to do on my plate. However, for the period I was in the Bucharest office, I facilitated a training highlighting the differences and similarities between the tax regime in Uganda and that of Romania to my colleagues, I attended a number of tax trainings such as international taxation and the digital economy and transfer pricing. I was also involved in the review of corporate tax computations as well as a few research assignments. The experience and knowledge I garnered was invaluable as a number of the principles were relevant to my home practice.

Acclimatizing to the new culture

Adjusting to Romanian culture was no mean feat. Being the girl from the southwestern side of Uganda, I knew I had what it took to adapt. True to that, I soon learned a few Romanian words to get me around the city and, thanks to Google Translator, I was able to get around and find my way.

Fitting into the office space was not a challenge as the people in the office had pleasant personalities and were always willing to help me find my way around. Not long after, I joined the workout team to help keep me in shape and get to know more about my colleagues.

Interestingly, adapting to Romanian food was my biggest test. I was not used to having soup or vegetables as a full meal. In Uganda, a meal is made of several foods of which soup and vegetables are just a component but I was introduced to a totally different diet. For my stay, McDonalds, KFC and Subway restaurants were my food solace as I found food familiar to my taste buds. That said, I actually ventured into culinary tourism during my stay. On several occasions I tried different Romanian dishes and I fell in love with the famous mici, mamaliga and I can never forget the papanasi desert for which I took the recipe as a must-try at home.

To give my colleagues a taste of the luscious Ugandan food, I hosted them at my apartment where I prepared a native finger-licking meal.

My different tours

To me, Romania was an out-of-reach country and yet, there I was. I just had to take advantage of my time there to appreciate the different history, cultures, sites and geography of the beautiful country. During my 3-month period, other Trekkers and I travelled to several cities in Romania. We made a tour to the Transfagarasan area where we hiked and also appreciated the beauty of the Fagarasan Mountain. We went to street shows and concerts and I was impressed at how organized and peaceful they were. We visited a number of sites, experienced the rich history of the country, saw the beautiful palace and also the wonderful cultural dances that we found in the different cities we visited. Not to forget, I got to attend my first air show. My travel and adventure experience in Romania was such a thrill.

Merit of the TaxTrek experience to my career at KPMG

During my TaxTrek, I interacted with several professionals from about seven countries such as Romania, German, Italy, Vietnam, India, Japan and China. It was interesting to learn about different professional practices across these countries. Interacting with these professionals at different levels helped broaden my view of how to approach situations, both on a personal and professional level. I got to make new friends with whom I keep in touch and we keep sharing our different experiences.

Whereas the tax laws are jurisdiction-based, some principles apply across both countries. I am glad that I was able to use some of the knowledge gained in my work at KPMG in Uganda.

Most adorably, the TaxTrek experience helped me appreciate the beauty of humanity simply because of the amount of invaluable help I received, not only from fellow colleagues but also from strangers (in malls, train stations, and streets) that I did not know and whom I had only met for a couple of minutes.

My advice to someone considering a Tax and LegalTrek assignment

The TaxTrek program is a unique experience. I'd encourage anyone to apply and take part in it. But remember, going for the TaxTrek is not just about the technical skills; it's also about soft skills, personal development, self-awareness and growing your network.



Top to bottom:

With my colleagues on my last day in the Bucharest office. And of course I was rocking my Romanian traditional dress that was given to me as a gift by the team;

Hiking at the Fagaras Mountain;

At the beautiful Pelese Castle.



Experiences I will treasure forever

KPMG in Singapore → KPMG in Russia

Nurdiyana Irajaya

Corporate Tax
Planning &
Compliance

“Sincere relationships that will last a lifetime.”

Ever since I joined KPMG’s tax department and learned about the TaxTrek program, I knew it was something I wanted to experience. It was an opportunity to be exposed to another country’s culture and working environment and to challenge myself in other ways apart from technical rigour. Where KPMG in Singapore helped develop my technical expertise in my country’s taxes, I wanted to learn other work and life skills by living by myself in a foreign land.

I was thrilled to learn that I was chosen for the TaxTrek to KPMG’s Moscow office. Over there, I was able to assist the local teams in advisory projects, such as debt structuring and shipping, and conducted a sharing session on my country’s taxes. These projects gave me wonderful opportunities to interact with my colleagues and have heartfelt conversations on the differences and similarities between our cultures. I learned a lot of things from the time spent with my colleagues who I feel happy and proud to call my friends. My main takeaways from working in Russia are:

1) Russians are all about sincerity. There are stereotypes of Russians not being the friendliest people and I’ve learned that’s sometimes true! However, once they get to know you, they are sincere, impossibly kind and invest the utmost in their cherished relationships. Thanks to the friends I’ve gotten to know, I experienced Russia not just as a tourist, but a local. I’ve learned Russian childhood stories, bargained with street vendors and enjoyed beautiful Russian architecture on late nights by the riverside.

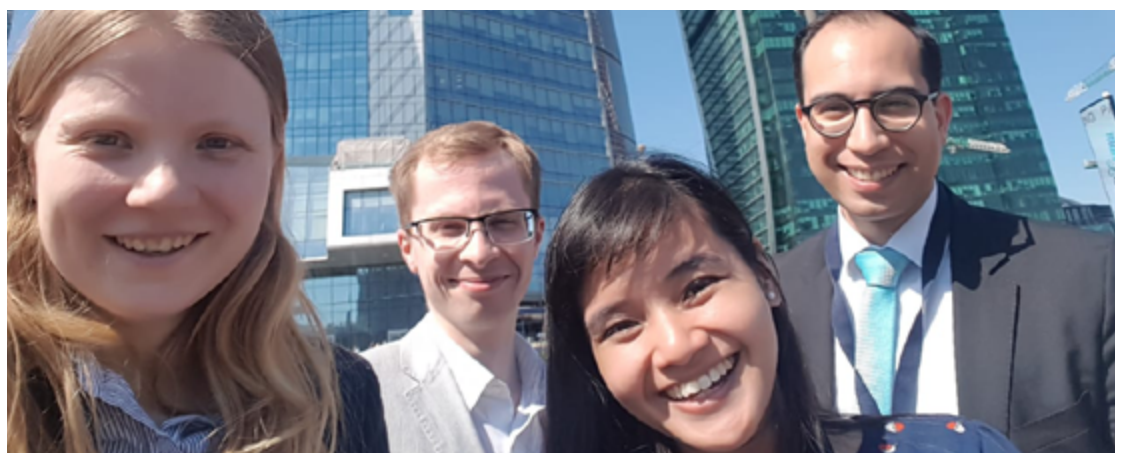
2) It’s not just important to work hard at work, but also to work hard for yourself. While my friends shared the challenges they faced working to meet tight deadlines, the whole team celebrates a victory for a job well done afterward fostering the spirit of teamwork. They also know how to enjoy a good party, so we watched the FIFA World Cup matches after a hard day at work. Did I mention I caught a live match in the stadium too?

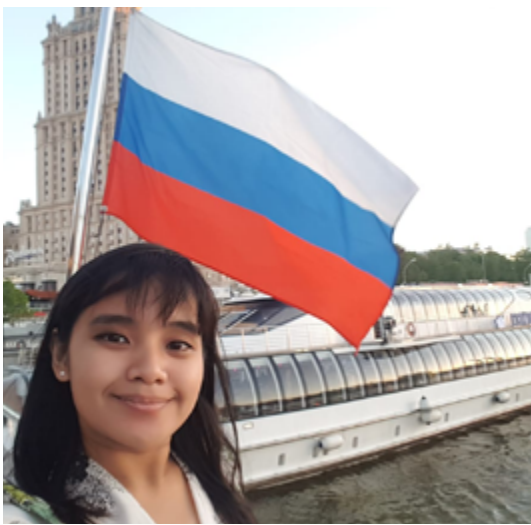
3) Russians love and care about the community. My friends and I were involved with a couple of community projects, including cleaning up an orphanage activity center and a hospice care center for terminally ill patients. The experience was truly humbling and made me reflect on what I could do more for the community back home.

The 3 months on my TaxTrek to Russia was unforgettable. Immersing myself in a country where English was not a common language made me realize the importance of communication beyond just words. This had undoubtedly improved my communication and empathy skills which I will carry with me in my next step of my career as a manager in KPMG.

Travelling and living alone within the country taught me that I was more independent and adaptable than I gave myself credit for! I’ve come away a more confident person than I was when I first boarded the plane from Singapore to Europe, with experiences I will treasure for a lifetime. Thank you, GlobalTax for this fantastic opportunity!

Lunch with colleagues in Moscow CBD.





Clockwise from top:

- Sharing Asian cuisine with colleagues;
- World cup fever in Russia
- Moscow famous lollipop church;
- Boat ride through the Moscow city river;
- My final lunch with colleagues and friends.



Jeffrey Brum
Transfer Pricing
Services

Building community through smiles and shared experiences

KPMG in the U.S. → KPMG in Tanzania

Reflecting back on the experience, TaxTrek is a risk. You're throwing yourself into a foreign environment with the only constant being your work. As all transfer pricing professionals know, high allocation of risk deserves premium reward and premium reward is exactly what I got from Trekking to KPMG in Tanzania from June through September.

I was fortunate enough to join the KPMG in Tanzania Transfer Pricing practice at a unique time. They had been executing transfer pricing analyses for about 3 years when I arrived. This allowed me the perfect opportunity to introduce the KPMG in the US concept of "highest and best use" of project team members on recurring engagements. Through implementation of standardized templates and processes, I was able to leave the Tanzania firm with some tools that will hopefully allow the staff in Tanzania the ability to focus on the most fun portions of their transfer pricing engagements.

Personally, it was a great career boost to be able to undertake overall project and engagement management opportunities. These opportunities, coupled with the deliverance of more academic transfer pricing training sessions, allowed me to demonstrate to myself that I had developed a working knowledge of my practice area. It was a great confidence boost that has stayed with me through my return to my home office.

During my Tax Trek, I lived one street away from the beach so I swam in the ocean most days, I went on a safari with my family, who were able to come to Tanzania for a week, I ate appetizers within 20 ft. of

a lion and I got to see 268 sea turtles hatch and run from their nest into the Indian ocean. Every night, I watched the beautiful East African sunset fill with soothing purple and glowing orange. I spent several days lounging on islands, enjoying fresh-caught fish and mangoes that had been picked minutes before I ate them. But, for all the amazing experiences that I had while on TaxTrek, the most memorable ones were the non-headline inducing moments with my new lifelong friends from KPMG in Tanzania.

Whether it was playing a quick game of foosball or walking up on the helipad after lunch (yes, the KPMG Tanzania office has a helipad), taking a bajaj (a tuk tuk or three-wheeled motorcycle carriage) to the movies after work, spending Saturday night watching the World Cup at a local bar, or even just driving from place to place, the time spent with my colleagues and the relationships I formed is what really made my experience. I had a fantastic Tax Trek because of the KPMG'ers in Tanzania. They left a lasting impression on me and they all have an open invitation to come visit whenever they would like as long as it is soon!

To anyone going on Tax Trek, keep a journal. Write down what you saw and ate, what it felt like to be afraid of certain situations and what it felt like to be confident in that same situation a month later. Write down the questions that people ask you and the things that you ask them. It's amazing to see how quickly strange things become normal and how fast you can build a little community through smiles and shared experiences.

"Don't worry
about it...
it will get
sorted."

– Everyone in
Tanzania

My wife (then fiancé), sister and I on the Helipad at KPMG in Tanzania.





Clockwise from top:

Saba Saba, literally 77, a business fair and public holiday in Tanzania on July 7;

Day trip to Mbudia Island with colleagues, fresh fish and mango for lunch (notice the backpack!);

Amiri Abdallah's birthday, he had just fed me some cake, Donasia Massambo, Suzana Kilele and Cecilia Otaru laughing in the background were a common sight in the KPMGTZ office;

Ereneus Shirima and I at the KPMG Budget Dinner, one of KPMGTZ's largest client marketing events for the year.





Justin Roberts
Global Mobility
Services

Better Together. #Indistinguishable

KPMG in the U.S. → KPMG Global Services India

“KPMG’s Tax Trek program is the perfect opportunity to do something exciting and different, and come out a better-rounded individual on the other side.”

Having transferred from KPMG in South Africa to the U.S. in 2014, I’ve experienced firsthand the personal and professional perspective an international opportunity brings. When I heard about KPMG’s TaxTrek program, I knew it was something I had to take advantage of!

As KPMG seeks to increase its integration of the U.S. and KGS teams, there is a need for U.S. folks to travel to India and play an active role in this implementation. With the support of my Boston home office and encouragement from the GMS practice, I raised my hand and found myself on a 3-month TaxTrek to Bangalore, India.

From the moment I arrived, I was greeted with this sensory overload that never really goes away. I only adjusted and learned to appreciate its brazenness. The cacophony of sound has a strange but noticeable rhythm to it – an orchestra of people, animals, traffic – all vying for attention, while at the same time, oblivious to my presence. Yet this hustle bustle of activity comes together to create an adrenalin-rushing pulse to a city that is full of energy and opportunity.

My immediate goal was to assist in contributing to the success of our Boston team’s 2017 tax compliance season. On a broader scale, I was excited to be the link between our U.S. and KGS team – to share knowledge about the U.S. team, such as our team culture, give insight into our client dynamics and the different aspects of an engagement lifecycle, provide visibility into our business development and better understand and get to know our KGS team. I wanted to explore some of the challenges they face and the goals they have, for the overall purpose of integrating our

two teams, and improving the quality of information and task-sharing.

The theme for our U.S. and KGS integration is #Indistinguishable and, from a business perspective, it makes a lot of sense. KGS and U.S. team members that are indistinguishable from each other and work as a synchronized unit will allow us to deliver consistent service to our clients in an efficient way, paving the way for continued success. On a personal level, the truth is our KGS colleagues are completely distinguishable from any other group of people I’ve ever met. I experienced a unique connection so genuine in its friendliness, so personal in its caring, and so proud in its want for me to spend less time in the office and more time exploring this beautiful country. From wedding celebrations, to weekend road trips, to delicious home cooked meals and to a cracking cricket match that reminded me of home, I went to India hoping to connect better with colleagues. I left with friendships I will forever cherish.

It’s fair to think that international travel experiences broaden a person’s horizons, both professionally and personally. KPMG’s TaxTrek program is the perfect opportunity to do something exciting and different, and come out a better-rounded individual on the other side.

Go for the fun. Go for the food (seriously, it’s like being punched in the mouth with flavor!). Go for the color run of sights and sounds. But, above all else, go for the people. You will be reminded that it’s the people that makes KPMG a great place to work and, when we come together, we are all the better for it, both professionally and personally

A must visit - the Taj Mahal.





Clockwise from top:

The Red Fort;

A visit to Mysore Palace;

A photo with my team in traditional Indian wear;

Watching a Cricket match.



Nancy Mwangi
Business Tax
Services

“This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, so don’t over-think it. Go see all the beauty in the world. I promise you will not regret it!”

No regrets. An unforgettable experience.

KPMG in the U.S. → KPMG in Thailand

It was the day before Thanksgiving when I got the email confirming that my application had been approved. I was so exhilarated, I even bought a calendar to mark off the days as I started counting down to Thailand. Even as a young girl, I had always wanted to travel the world. I was born and raised in Kenya, then grasped the first opportunity to move to the U.S. for further studies. I guess I can say I love immersing myself in different cultures. So applying for Tax Trek was a no-brainer. I wanted to experience KPMG from a different perspective. I wanted to experience living and working in Asia, as I have always been fascinated by the culture there.

Fast forward, it was May and I had less than a month to go. I was excited and scared at the same time. Excited because it was my first time in Thailand and scared because I did not know what to expect. After a very long flight, I was finally at Suvarnabhumi Airport. Oh my, I was not ready for the humidity. It felt like I was in a sauna. It did take me some time to adjust to the weather, but I finally got used to it.

How is my home office different from other offices? How do all KPMG offices connect? What can I learn from my host office and how can that knowledge be transferred to my home office? These are some of the questions I had as I settled into my new role at the Bangkok office. I was blessed to be a part of the International Tax group, which was group of people with diverse experiences. Since my team handled a wide array of international clientele, it was not difficult getting assigned to projects. I mainly worked on individual tax compliance and foreign fillings. These are some things that I work on in my home office, but from a different perspective. It was a great opportunity to learn from my colleagues and share my expertise.

TaxTrek gave me firsthand exposure to cross-border taxation while building dynamic experiences that helped me develop a global mindset which will in turn benefit my clients. It was also an opportunity to be immersed in a different culture and build international relationships with other colleagues and locals, while sharing my experiences.

Although living in Thailand was different from my everyday life in Texas, it was not difficult adapting to life there. The people made it easy as they were always willing to help. Thai’s are some of the most kind-hearted people I have ever met. I also took some Thai language classes, provided by the Bangkok office. This was especially helpful when it came to ordering street food and negotiating prices, which happens a lot in Thailand.

On weekdays, I took Muay Thai boxing classes, which was an opportunity to meet people and on the weekends I was ready to explore every corner of Thailand. Every Friday I made sure that my KPMG Tax Trek bag was packed and ready for the next adventure. I wanted to experience Thailand like a local, so I did it all. From taking flights to Phuket to riding tuk tuks and songthaew. I was fortunate enough to visit Thailand around the same time the Tax practice was holding their team outing in Phuket. So that meant a memorable experience in one of most sought-after destinations in the world.

Spending the last 3 months in one of the world’s most culturally rich countries has been mind-blowing. The everyday interactions with Thai people, traveling to different provinces, going on team-building events with colleagues, participating in different local tours, was an unforgettable experience.

I believe this exposure has changed my mindset. I have grown both personally and professionally. I have a better understanding of how people in Thailand relate to each other. Stepping out of my comfort zone and having the opportunity to learn has been really rewarding.

For anyone considering a Tax or Legal Trek assignment, this is once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, so don’t over-think it. Go see all the beauty in the world. I promise you will not regret it! It will not only push you out of your comfort zone, but it will widen you mindset as you meet some of the most amazing people and explore a different culture. I would do it over again if I could.



Clockwise from top:

Burma Railway,
Kanchanaburi;

My team in the
Bangkok Office;

Snorkeling for a team
building outing at Coral
Island in Phuket;

Feeding elephants
near Bangkok.



Naomi Liang

Local Tax

“My Romanian colleagues were all supportive, welcoming, and made sure I had a great time.”

The last Jedi: Keep up! Run for your dream

KPMG in China → KPMG in Romania

I have known about the TaxTrek program ever since my first year at KPMG. I tried to maintain my high performance in order to apply for it. When the time came, I was so excited when I knew I was assigned to KPMG in Romania.

You may wonder why the title of my essay is “The Last Jedi.” The reason is that the TaxTrek program has been cancelled in China since 2017. Due to a foreseeable long time for my Romania visa, it was recommended to postpone my start date to 2018, which officially made me the last Trekker of this program in China. The 3-month secondment in Romania was an even more precious opportunity for me.

A special element of the TaxTrek program in Romania is that they accepted quite a lot of Trekkers in 2018. When I was there, there were five Trekkers! Since we were all away from home, we became close friends. I went traveling with them and we had a great time exploring Romania.

Working

I joined the Indirect Tax team. The team members were so supportive and welcoming, they made sure I had a great time in Romania. During that time, I needed to write an article about “Tax digitalization,” so my colleagues provided some reference materials, which were very helpful. The idea was raised by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), so discussing the topic with tax colleagues in European countries and understanding their insights were very helpful to my article.

I attended the KPMG gala at the KPMG in Romania office. It's like a high-level award ceremony for employees. The event was in Romanian (without subtitles), so I barely understood a thing. However, the experience was very interesting and I quite enjoyed it. Everyone was dressed up and the team, which did a great job during the year, could win an award trophy like an Oscar.

Travelling

I am not a fan of travelling but I am a fan of the seaside! So Mamaia in Constanta, which is the Black Sea, was a must-see. It was summertime, so there were quite a lot of people spending their summer holiday there. The fancy hotels had been fully booked on weekends, so I was lucky to book a hotel very close to the seaside (thanks to my

colleague Dan Florin Verescu). The seaside was so beautiful and my friend and I decided to wake up early the next day to enjoy the sunrise. It's kind of a crazy thing for me, because I am not an early bird. We checked the time of the sunrise and woke up around 5:30 a.m. It was dark and windy in the early morning. We found out that there were quite a lot of people coming to see the sunrise as well. Later, the first signs of the dawn appeared on the horizon. It was the most amazing view I have even seen. One day, I will go back.

Life

Romanian people are very friendly to foreigners and they were keen to know how I felt about Romania. I am pleased to say out loud that I like Romania. The people, weather and atmosphere are quite good, plus the wine is not expensive. If you asked me to pick one thing I don't like, I will probably go for the food. My Asian stomach prefers Asian cuisines, so I would look for five-star restaurants recommended by Google. Sometimes, the taxi drivers would recommend some restaurants to me. Most of the time, I would consult my colleague, Andrei Novac.

I have been back to my home office for 3 months. I often catch up with my Romanian colleagues, and sometimes we just talk about stupid things. It makes me feel that we are not that far away and we are still in touch.

I will definitely visit Romania again!



Clockwise from top:

Trip to Mamaia;

Sunset at Mamaia;

Last day in KPMG Romania.



Rachel Gold

Tax Law

Trek to Mongolia: The Land of the Blue Sky

KPMG in Canada → KPMG in Mongolia

When I share with people that I have not only travelled to Mongolia, but also worked there for 3 months, their eyes widen in awe. With curiosity and excitement in their voices, they ask why I choose Mongolia, what I was working on, and what the weather was like.

I'd been intrigued with working abroad since my university days. I joined KPMG in Mongolia on the Tax Trek as an assistant manager to help service one of KPMG's global clients during the busy season. The weather was extremely cold, yet surprisingly sunny with clear blue skies.

Why a global assignment?

Travelling and experiencing different cultures is at the core of my being. I get really excited at the thought of visiting a country I've never been to, take in the sights, sample the local cuisine and navigate my way around. I also really enjoy meeting new people from different walks of life and building relationships with them.

So when I heard about KPMG's Tax Trek program and spoke to a colleague who participated in a Trek, my interest was piqued. I imagined that working aboard for a short time as a tax professional would be a wonderful mix of giving myself a new work challenge and indulging in my love of travel. I submitted an application and hoped for a unique, off-the-beaten-path Trek. Sure enough, KPMG in Mongolia answered my call for adventure.

Work and play

My role involved managing Mongolian personal tax compliance of business travelers and expatriates working in Mongolia. With just 10 tax professionals, I was part of a team of five who made up the firm's Global Mobility Services (GMS) team. I was eager to take on other tasks too, which led me to writing articles for the GMS monthly newsletter and updating the KPMG Mongolia 2018 global tax profile report. I was exposed to the country's tax system. Even though their tax laws are written in Mongolian, my team got me up to speed on the relevant rules and answered my ongoing questions.

Before I got into the swing of things, I was nervous. I had travelled there alone (a 15-hour journey) and had no family or friends in Mongolia. I didn't know

the language or anything about the culture. On my first day, my peer advisor took me out for brunch and we hit it off.

I soon discovered that the city of Ulaanbaatar was brimming with diverse restaurants, indoor shopping markets and many expats. It wasn't long before I joined the fringes of a closely knit expat community – thanks to my expat manager – and established a routine. Despite some language barriers, my colleagues were also interested in showing me the ropes around the office and the city. I went for lunch with my team regularly even started attending weekly yoga classes with some of them.

My free time was spent road-tripping to the countryside, sleeping in a ger (a traditional Mongolian dwelling), visiting the Genghis Khan Equestrian Statute or tubing at a nearby skiing resort. During those times, I felt the extreme cold winter that Ulaanbaatar is known for. My -50 degree Celsius winter boots were hands-down the best thing I packed. I also remember the taste of buuz (a Mongolian steamed mutton or beef dumpling) and celebrating Tsagaan Sar (the Mongolian Lunar New Year) at the Tax group leader's home.

Career and personal development

Coming out the other side of this Trek, I gained a newfound appreciation for managing a team with varying degrees of fluency in English and learned the art of patience. This has been immensely helpful in my interactions with colleagues at other KPMG member firms on multi-firm engagements, especially where the other team members have English as a second language. The Trek made me realize that taking a moment here or there to find personal connections with the people you work with makes a big difference in how the team worked together and produced timely deliverables for our clients.

It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that taught me about the kindness of the human spirit and that I am part of this awesome, global network of tax professionals who are not as far away as you might

“I am so grateful to KPMG for this opportunity. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that broadened my horizons and imbued me with new perspective on work, life and everything in between.”

think. My former colleagues have Skype, so they are just a click away.

Advice for future Trekkers

I have two pieces of advice. First, don't be discouraged from applying if your loved ones are not going to travel with you. It is possible to have a long-distance relationship in our digital age (the hardest part is coordinating in different time zones). Second, be flexible and open yourself up to the unknown. Consider trying different opportunities, foods, activities, etc. Believe me that 3 months will



Clockwise from above:

Chinggis Khaanii
Khuree ger camp;

Genghis Khan
Equestrian Statute;

KPMG tax team in
Mongolian dress;

Dog sledding with
the COO.



¡Mi casa es su casa!

Manchester to Mexico City

KPMG in the UK → KPMG in Mexico

Ruth Winter

International Tax
(Corporate Tax)

“Working in Mexico gave me the opportunity to experience a more relaxed style of working compared with the UK. ”

After studying languages at university, the opportunity to work abroad was one of my main reasons for joining KPMG back in 2012. I was keen to combine my passion for travel and learning about other cultures with the technical knowledge I had picked up during my 5 years in the International Tax team in Manchester.

As part of my degree, I had lived in France and Italy but hadn't had chance to spend time in a Spanish-speaking country. So, when I was offered the opportunity to go to Mexico on Tax Trek, I was particularly excited! At the time, we were hosting Karina, a Trekker from Mexico, in Manchester so I knew I would find a friendly face when I landed in Mexico City the following July. As it turned out, all Mexican faces are friendly!

On my first day, we went for lunch and Karina introduced me to quesadillas. I spent the next 3 months checking out Mexican cuisine, including all the familiar staples (tacos, posole, guacamole, etc.) as well as some more exotic things like mole (chicken with a chocolate chilli sauce) and chapulines (crickets!).

KPMG arranged for a relocation company to give me a tour of Mexico City and a cultural briefing, which aimed to dispel stereotypes and provide some more accurate information on the country's history, politics and economy.

My first week ended with a house party hosted by a colleague, which featured plenty of cervezas, some very spicy chicken wings and a spot of Mexican salsa to end the evening! This was typical of the hospitality I received throughout my time in Mexico. “Mi casa es su casa” (my house is your house) is a phrase that they really do live by, and it works both ways. I was constantly overwhelmed by the warmth and openness of the Mexican people. Every weekend, I was invited to join colleagues for barbecues, baseball games and birthday parties (featuring mariachi bands at midnight). In return, I, along with the other Trekkers from Brazil, Canada and Japan, hosted parties for our Mexican colleagues and shared some of our own cultural traditions (Pimm's, Eaton mess and cucumber sandwiches in my case).

Venturing out into the huge metropolis, I found that Mexico City had so much to offer: everything from beautiful parks and castles to art galleries and museums showcasing the rich Mexican heritage, which is a source of great pride. I especially enjoyed visiting Teotihuacán, the ancient pyramids to the north of the city. Other highlights included an afternoon on the trajineras (brightly painted boats) at the floating gardens of Xochimilco and multiple trips to watch the lucha libre Mexican wrestling. It is recommended that you wear a mask to support your favourite luchador and shout Spanish insults at the top of your lungs to relieve the stresses of the week (not that my time at KPMG in Mexico was at all stressful).

I worked on the International Tax team along with Karina who had the dubious honour of being my “peer advisor.” On my first day, I was presented with a leather-bound copy of Mexican tax laws, which I was relieved to see was somewhat more compact than our UK tax legislation, and easier to read too. Despite having a new tax system to learn, many of the international tax concepts are transferable and we used some of the same tools, so I felt right at home. I got involved in lots of different projects and was able to add some real value using my experience of UK and European rules. I also spoke at the team's monthly meetings and gave a presentation on international tax to the Transfer Pricing department, which was a great experience.

Working in Mexico also gave me the opportunity to experience a more relaxed style of working compared with the UK. The office was a sociable and enjoyable place to be and there was always somebody with whom to have a chat and a joke. During my time there, I became much more confident, having integrated into a new team, learned a new tax system and rekindled my love for the Spanish language. Along with the technical knowledge, this cultural awareness and increased confidence are great attributes to bring back to the UK with me and will be particularly helpful when working on projects with overseas teams in the future.

Living on the other side of the world from family and friends is not without its challenges, especially as I had only got married two months before heading off on my Trek, but it did offer me the opportunity to explore both Mexico (visiting Playa del Carmen with my dad and brother) and the US (meeting friends in New York for a long weekend and spending two weeks touring the national parks with my husband). I also met a fantastic group of people and am fortunate to now have friends and colleagues in countries all around the world, not just in Mexico.

If you're up for the challenge of an international secondment, I would wholeheartedly encourage you to apply. TaxTrek is such an incredible opportunity and it will change your life in ways you can't imagine!



Clockwise from above:

Trajineras at the floating gardens of Xochimilco;

Lucha Libre with Zach, the Canadian trekker, and friends;

Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacan;

Traditional Mexican cuisine.



Fernando Danelis dos Santos

R&D Tax Benefits

“I am sure I will always remember all the good moments that I had here. They will help me in my career and in my personal life!”

Knowledge, experience and culture on the other side of the world!

KPMG in Brazil → KPMG in Japan

In the beginning of 2018, I started my Tax Trek at the Tokyo Tax office. I was interested in increasing my capacity to work in different environments and situations, developing my networking skills and having a clear vision of the KPMG Global structure and all the services that KPMG provides.

In the Transaction Advisory group (TAG), I worked with real estate advisory and international tax treaties. I also had the opportunity to work with the Mergers & Acquisitions team, working with an automotive client and Brazilian tax benefits.

With the TAG team, I understood how the international tax treaties work and, with other members of TAG team, was responsible for creating a database with information of tax treaties between Japan and 68 countries. Experienced members of team helped me understand the details of the treaties. With the M&A team, I got involved in a project for a Japanese automotive client. This project was being developed between Brazilian and Japanese tax offices. In this project, I took part in some meetings with the client and was responsible for creating presentations, reports and explanations about Brazilian tax benefits (my main knowledge) and the incentives used in Brazil.

At the beginning of my assignment, I went to a KPMG innovation seminar. Because it was in Japanese, a colleague helped me understand what was being discussed and introduced me to some KPMG partners. At the end of the seminar,

I had a brief conversation about innovation in Brazil with them.

I also volunteered at a soccer Cup for the blind, organized by KPMG. I was responsible for building tents and access control. It was an amazing experience!

About cultural aspects, I went to the main temples and shrines in Tokyo, did three guided walking tours through Tokyo's central area, Shinagawa and Mount Takao, where I had the opportunity to see a fire-walking festival. I visited Kamakura to see the great Buddha statue, to Nikko to visit the main temples and the famous waterfalls and to Kyoto to enjoy the first spring weekend. It was wonderful!

I studied a little bit of Japanese (main words, expressions and the Hiragana alphabet) with my colleagues' help. They helped me to get into the local culture. They took me to restaurants to try all sorts of Japanese food, brought me different sweets and answered all my questions and doubts.

I would like to thank KPMG for the opportunity given to me, to the Japanese and Brazilian mobility teams and their support to make this Tax Trek possible and to all TAG members that helped me in my assignment. I am sure I will always remember all the good moments and learnings that I had here. They will help me in my career and in my personal life!

At the famous Nikko lake.





Clockwise from top:

Kamakura Giant Buddha;

Colleagues from
Tokyo office;

Tokyo Tower at night;

Sakura (Cherry Blossom)
at KPMG Office Street.



Tax Trek: Just do it and think about the rest later

KPMG in Australia → KPMG in Germany

Ben Harrison

Corporate Tax – Tax
Advisory Services,
Deals Tax and Legal

“The magic
starts
where your
comfort
zone ends.”

However unconventional this may be, I want to start my story by sharing an extract from an email I sent home to my team during the final month of my 3-month Tax Trek to Stuttgart, Germany. Please forgive the corny first-person prose!

Ben, 21 years old, walks into a QUT accounting association careers fair, nervously approaches the KPMG stand and discovers the concept of ‘Tax Trek’ for the first time. “Whoa,” he thinks as he approaches the PwC stand and is almost put off professional services firms altogether. “What an amazing concept! If I ever get a job at KPMG, I will definitely apply for Tax Trek.”

Fast forward 6 years, Ben applied for the job at KPMG, got it, and has been working at KPMG for more than 2 years. One morning, whilst perusing the Brekky News over two slices of vegemite on rye, Ben discovers that Tax Trek applications are now open. Finally, his time has come.

Ben goes home and apprehensively raises the topic with his partner of 7 years, Kierin, who unreservedly encourages him to apply. Ben spends the next week or 2 agonizing over his application before finally submitting it.

At this point, Ben doesn’t really know what to expect. He always knew he would, so he did. But what has he done! He has never travelled by himself, hasn’t been away from his partner or his exceedingly cute French bulldog, Buzz, for more than a week, has never been to Europe and doesn’t know a word of German. What will he do if he is actually successful!?

Ben got his Tax Trek and all of those unknowns resulted in a period of immense personal and professional growth, the pace of which was unmatched by any other experience in his life. Twenty-one year old Ben could not have been more right; it really is an amazing concept.

The moral of the story is, if you’re considering applying for a Tax or Legal Trek and have any reservations, just do it and think about the rest later. You will not regret it!

Now for some of the details. Stuttgart is a manufacturing hub of Germany and is the home of Mercedes-Benz, Porsche, Bosch and a number of other big household names.

I was placed in the International Tax team, which presented unique exposure to both German tax

law and certain aspects of the Australian tax law I previously hadn’t had the opportunity to explore in detail. Unsurprisingly, German tax law is written in German, however my colleagues all spoke great English and a number of projects I was involved in even involved English deliverables.

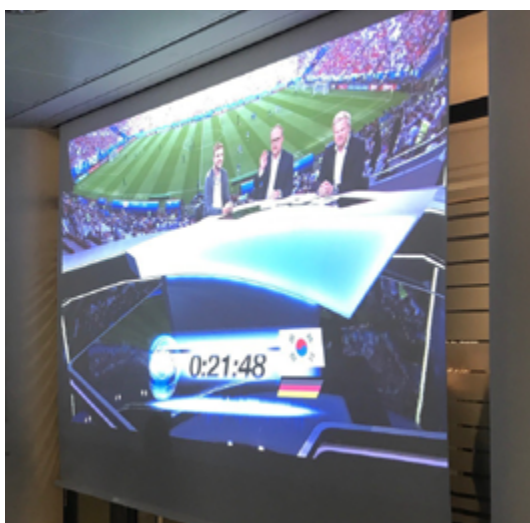
While not without its challenges, I quickly fell comfortably into the German way of life, attributable in no small part to the overtly friendly nature of the German people. Germans have a certain *je ne sais quoi* about the way they ‘do’ life that is very appealing (you can be sure the term *je ne sais quoi* was not in my vocabulary before a trip to France during my Tax Trek). Summer meant the days were long, the weather was beautiful, and it was hard to say no to post-work adventures (not always conducted in a bier garden!).

Having never been to Europe, Stuttgart was the perfect home base for travelling on the weekends. I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to visit four other European countries, most of the big cities in Germany and the many offerings of Baden-Württemberg, the German state in which Stuttgart sits.

The whirlwind combination of work, travel and social activities meant the 3 months flew by and, before I knew it, I was on a plane back to Brisbane, reflecting on the experience.

I’ve always been a believer in the power of stepping outside your comfort zone in order to grow, whether that be personally or professionally. Boarding a plane to Stuttgart for 3 months was the biggest step outside of my comfort zone I have ever taken and it certainly substantiated my belief.

When I left Brisbane, I had absolutely no idea what the next 3 months would hold. I knew I was leaving behind my routine, my partner, my dog and my family and friends (which was very “uncomfortable”). What I didn’t know is that I would return a different person in so many ways. Being outside my comfort zone meant I developed independence, confidence, perspective, resilience and maturity. I learnt new technical skills and new ways of communicating with people. Perhaps most importantly, I formed new friendships and strong professional relationships with my colleagues. In synergy, all of these things have not only had a profound impact on my personal life but also made me a better tax advisor and team member.



Clockwise from top:

Enjoying the Cultural Festival with my colleagues;

Magnificent view of Stuttgart from the hill behind my flat;

In front of the Nymphenburg Palace in Munich (Schloss Nymphenburg);

Watching Germany's last game in the Soccer World Cup with the whole office. The mood was very sombre when they lost and were eliminated from the Cup.





Lilla Borbála Antal
Indirect Tax Services
- Projects

“Just grab this opportunity. It is a big investment in your personal and professional life.”

My 6-month journey in Asia

KPMG Global Services Hungary → KPMG in Malaysia

After 3 months back in Budapest, I can say that I spent my most challenging, intense and memorable period in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the destination of my TaxTrek assignment.

How did I end up there? I always wanted to participate in a program like TaxTrek where I could see how other member firms operate and learn from colleagues from different cultural and professional backgrounds. It was not easy to turn this dream into reality as I do not work in the Tax Compliance team. I used to be a client coordinator so I know a lot about indirect tax compliance processes, however, in the past years I have been working on strategic and business development projects. Still, I worked very hard to prove that I could be worthy of being awarded this opportunity.

I still remember the day when I came back from my holiday and realized that I literally had a few hours to apply for the TaxTrek program. I already knew that there would be a project between KPMG Global Services Hungary and KPMG in Malaysia. When I saw that one of the host offices was KPMG in Malaysia, I felt that it was my time to apply as I could not only discover Asia, but also work on a project which is really my area of expertise and can represent my home office as well. A few months later, I was on a plane to Kuala Lumpur with a little notebook in my pocket full of plans and clear expectations about what I needed to achieve during my assignment.

It was not always easy, as I had to adhere to challenging deadlines, implement KPMG Global Services Hungary's processes and collaborate with local colleagues and other member firms. I was not on my own and I received full support from my home office, the team in Kuala Lumpur and also from Cristina Alvarez who I consider now as my mentor. During my stay, Cristina involved me in a very important Kick Off meeting in Singapore where I learned a lot. Working together with multinational professionals taught me how to better respect others, especially people from different cultural backgrounds and with different working methods.

It was not even in my wildest dreams that, besides completing a successful project, I would discover Malaysia and get together with another adventurous secondee from KPMG in Kenya to discover Kuala Lumpur together. I even helped her find her wedding dress for her upcoming ceremony

and we also cheered each other up when we felt far from our beloved friends and families.

I was in Kuala Lumpur during a historic outcome in a general election when the opposition won for the first time in 61 years, which was a significant event for Malay people. I also celebrated Hari Raya by attending several open-house ceremonies in a traditional dress and was invited to a huge wedding. I shared these memories with my colleagues who were very open and supportive. From day one, they taught me a lot about Malay and Chinese cultures, which included their passion for food, so I was taken to the best nasi lemak and dim sum places in town.

As I travelled to a different continent, my bucket list became longer day by day and Singapore became a second home during my stay, maybe because it had the most similarities with Europe. Vietnam was the biggest surprise for me, while the coastal walks and nature of Australia just amazed me as no place before. I often took myself out of my comfort zone by trying out things such as climbing or calligraphy which I hadn't done before to further strengthen these memories and experiences of my stay in Asia.

I brought back many experiences and knowledge I gained during those 6 months. I now have more practice in interviewing professionals, working in a different environment or joining a volunteer program which is very common in Asia. In fact, just a month ago I co-ran my first charity cake sale at KPMG Global Services Hungary with great success and I believe it inspired even more people to help others in need.

To close, I am back to my usual and lively surroundings. I feel way more active than before and cannot be more grateful that I was given this unique chance. I am especially thankful that I was involved in such an exceptional project which further developed my career at KPMG and helped me grow as a person. I would encourage anyone who has ever thought about visiting another member firm and discovering a new culture through TaxTrek to go for this unique once-in-a-lifetime experience as it will be surely worth it.



Clockwise from top:

The Grand Palace in Bangkok, Thailand;

Kayaking at Ha Long Bay, Vietnam;

Petronas Tower in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia;

Marina Bay, Singapore.



My Vietnam Tax Trek: So 'Pho'-nomenal!

KPMG in the U.S. → KPMG in Vietnam

Catherine Lake

State and Local Tax
("SALT")

"One of the biggest takeaways is that the more you put into the experience, the more you are going to get out of it."

Shortly after I joined KPMG, my colleague was getting ready for their own Tax Trek. At that time, I had no idea what a Tax or Legal Trek was but, after learning more about the program, I immediately knew that I wanted to participate in one.

I could not have been more excited to submit my application and then find out that I was headed to Vietnam. One of the biggest reasons I was interested in participating in a Tax Trek was for the opportunity to fully immerse myself not only in another country's culture, but also further develop an appreciation and understanding of what it is like to work outside the U.S.

Co-workers, scooters and hidden lunch spots

KPMG's culture and people are one of the primary reasons I originally joined KPMG. So having the chance to see what the KPMG culture was like in Vietnam and meet a new team was something I was definitely excited about.

As no surprise, my colleagues in the Ho Chi Minh office could not have been more welcoming and helpful when it came to providing tips on navigating the city. Ho Chi Minh is said to have more scooters than people, meaning that traffic can get pretty congested. My co-workers had mastered the art of dodging oncoming scooters and could seamlessly direct me across the street at lunch time as we headed to their favorite spots (which I would never have found on my own).

New work, new responsibilities

One of the most interesting parts of my Tax Trek was the ability to work on a variety of projects that were very different from what I traditionally do in the U.S. I leveraged my experience of some U.S. best practices to help facilitate discussions around strengthening policy and procedure manuals, the design of market updates, and the infrastructure and functionality of a documentation retention and collaboration tool.

From spring rolls to summer rolls

Participating in a Tax Trek was such a unique opportunity as it really allowed me to discover a whole new side of the world, while also challenging my own personal development and growth. During my Tax Trek, it was my goal to travel and explore as much as possible on the weekends. In order to try and maximize my weekend visits, I read up on the most popular

dish in the city/country and made a point to try it. Eating and drinking your way through a new place is one of the best ways to experience it. I can safely say that I had my fair share of spring rolls and Vietnamese summer rolls.

Say goodbye to comfort zones

My Tax Trek pushed and empowered me from both a career and individual perspective. This opportunity allowed me to step into a whole new work role and environment. It also challenged me by forcing me outside my comfort level because I was navigating new cities, trying to understand archaic visa rules and requirements and deciphering menus with pixelated and washed-out images.

You're up next

In addition to highly recommending a Tax or Legal Trek as a truly phenomenal experience, one of the biggest takeaways is that the more you put into the experience, the more you are going to get out of it. The more you take advantage of different opportunities, the more diverse and interesting experiences you'll have. And who doesn't love a good travel mishap story?



Clockwise from top:

Celebratory week in the Vietnam Office when KPMG was named as one of the “Best Places to Work”;

Managed to convince a Vietnamese colleague to visit me in Chicago, U.S.;

Exploring the Mekong Delta.



Tax Trek: Take a leap of faith.

KPMG in the U.S. → KPMG Global Services (KGS), India

Andrew Schneider
Business Tax
Services (BTS)

“Tax Trek
was the most
rewarding
experience of
my life.”

I have always had a global mindset, something that is important in today’s business world. The feeling I get during my first hours in a new country is my favorite feeling in the world. I enjoy navigating a city with signs in another language, admiring different architecture and passing people going about their everyday lives. India has always been a country I understood to be very different from my home in the U.S. When I interned with KPMG in Minneapolis in 2014, I knew I would do a Tax Trek rotation with KPMG’s Global Mobility Services (KGS) in India someday.

In the Kochi office, I had a lot of similar responsibilities as I do back home. My days were mostly filled by answering questions related to tax rules or the tax compliance process. Additionally, my responsibilities included doing quality reviews of tasks that were sent to KGS from U.S. offices, as well as select international offices with U.S. tax practices.

I had been to India one time before. That trip was with a friend and we took a direct flight from Chicago to New Delhi, the capital of India. Needless to say, Delhi is the craziest city I have been to in all of the 34 countries I have been to so far in my life. The way traffic flow works or the concept of bargaining while shopping left a strong impression on me. As a result, I had minimal culture shock when I arrived to India for this rotation.

Most people outside of tax do not know that there is a second busy season at the end of the summer. Most people assume tax season is just the January to April frame, but the majority of our clients extend their returns to September and October due dates. Thus, I worked the majority of my days in India through 15 October, the corporate return deadline. Fortunately, the week after 15 October had two Indian national holidays before the weekend, so I was able to take the long weekend to travel to India’s Golden Triangle and to Punjab in northern India.

One piece of advice I would give to someone considering a rotation is to take a leap of faith and get outside of your comfort zone. Experiencing new cultures and how other people around the world live is one of the most rewarding things you can do. You will likely be uncomfortable at first and yearn for home, but after a little time you appreciate how other people spend their everyday lives and value the life you have at home more too.

Onam Celebration in Kochi, celebrating the year’s harvest.





Clockwise from top:

OtherTax Seconded, Delwyn, taking a selfie of me and other India professionals;

Fort Kochi, an old Portugese fort from the 1400s and the city I spent most of my rotation;

Taj Mahal;

KPMG office in Bangalore. The nicest office park I have ever seen.



Claudia Avalos Hernandez

Transfer Pricing

“I encourage everyone to go out and apply for the Tax Trek program; make a lot of friends and let your destination surprise you.”

A new adventure: Discovering the Lion City.

KPMG in Mexico → KPMG in Singapore

Being part of the Tax Trek program was on my mind since I joined KPMG 5 years ago. Looking back, it seemed I had to wait a long time to apply, but it happened sooner than I thought. I have always wanted to travel and have work experience abroad, so I knew this was something I had to do. I knew KPMG was a global firm that could take me as far as I wanted but I never imagined how far. When I heard I was going to Singapore I was shocked – it was so far away! This turned out to be an advantage because, although it was far, Singapore was incredible.

Singapore is one of the most exciting places in the world. The country offers a lot of diverse food, culture and entertainment. You can either go to the fanciest shopping mall or go for a walk in a giant park in the middle of the city. Even better, you can do both on the same day as long as the rain doesn't stop you.

People there are very friendly and respectful. Adapting to my host country was easy, and everybody in the office welcomed me and made sure I had a good stay. I thank everyone for all the fun lunches and barbeques we had together. I even had a birthday cake and a lovely lunch in a Korean BBQ restaurant. My colleagues introduced me to lots of delicious food; the dumplings are outstanding! I loved the unique way they prepare coffee too.

As a Tax Trekker, I got the best of both worlds: the working experience and the fun. I really enjoyed walking every morning between the tall buildings towards the office, drinking a morning coffee (or kopi, how locals name it) while assisting my colleagues with business proposals and advice emails. I was one of the few Spanish speakers there, so I helped with some translations occasionally or any questions regarding Mexican transfer pricing regulation. At end of the day, I liked to walk around Marina Bay to enjoy the view and the lightshow. I always thought how lucky I was to be there. When I wasn't at the bay, I had dinner in

one of the hundreds of restaurants Singapore has in the finance district. Every day, you can go for the famous satay in Lau Pa Sat, try the traditional chicken rice or, if you want to try something new, you can go to the local bars that offer international cuisine to relax on a Friday night. Seafood is also very popular and exceptionally good.

I really gained a lot of experience, not only in my technical skills but in my soft skills too, such as analysis and problem-solving. I remember reading a lot. I had the chance to assist some clients with transfer pricing implications for their business restructuring so I made sure I gave my best. I met fabulous people, lifelong friends and colleagues who helped me on a daily basis and who inspired me with their professional experiences. I realized how easy it is to move around and that most of the time our limits are in our head. Having this international program definitely developed my professional network and has brought business opportunities to assist new customers with our global services.

Traveling around Southeast Asia was another great thing about my Trek assignment. I visited a few nearby countries like Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Laos. I loved every part of my journey. I was overwhelmed with the diversity of traditions and cultures; Southeast Asia is very spiritual, so this was a nurturing experience. Through my getaways, I got the chance to see beauty in so many ways, like the magnificent Buddhist temples in Bangkok, ruins of Angkor Wat, Hindu temples, street markets and, most of all, in the kindness of the people.

My growth wasn't only professional. Being in new a place pushes me to explore, fall, learn and challenge yourself. This is what the Tax Trek program is all about. I encourage everyone who has a feeling to go out and walk the world to do it, apply for the Tax Trek program, make a lot of friends and let your destination surprise you.



Clockwise from top:

Walking by the Marina Bay;

Gardens by the Bay view from the top of the Marina Bay;

Elephant rescue center in Chiang Mai, Thailand;

Ruins of Bayon in Angkor Wat.



Bevis Field
International Tax

Unreal Montréal

KPMG in the UK → KPMG in Canada

“Embrace KPMG’s unique opportunity, step away from your usual routine and leap into the unfamiliar. The rewards are lasting.”

The email pops up in your inbox and it tells you that you have gained a place on KPMG’s TaxTrek global assignment program. Surprised and thrilled, it’s the news that you have been hoping for. Slowly it begins to sink in, you are a going overseas on assignment. Fantastic!

Before long, with work permit paperwork complete, you get the final green light. Your flights are booked and, armed with your KPMG Trek backpack and supported by your home and host Global Mobility teams, you step into the unfamiliar.

For me, I have always sought to work internationally and being able to experience living and working abroad, immersed in a foreign culture, has been a personal goal. It was one of the main reasons I joined KPMG. As soon as I heard about KPMG’s unique TaxTrek program, I made it a key goal and, fortunately, I was offered a place.

I was assigned to the International Corporate Tax team in KPMG’s office in Montreal for my Trek assignment.

I landed in Montreal and was greeted by a bright, warm spring day, which was a pleasant contrast to the grey sky of London. As I stood in line for passport control, the fascinating blend between French and English immediately hit me. I was whisked from the airport to a fantastic apartment located above Centre Bell, home of the Montreal Canadiens (Montreal’s famous ice hockey team) and only a short walk away from the office.

On arrival to KPMG Tower, KPMG’s skyscraper in Montreal, I met my new colleagues who showed me my own office, a novelty for me as I have only ever worked in open plan, before taking me out to lunch and advising me on what I should do while I was in Montreal.

Montreal is a vibrant city, particularly in the summer when it welcomes the heat after a piercing cold winter. Terraces pop up on every street and every week there is some sort of event or festival, be it music, food, drink, sport, art, fireworks or public holiday celebrations. In particular, parts of the city are completely transformed when the Canadian Grand Prix, Montreal Jazz and Comedy Festivals roll into town. Summer in Montreal is brilliant. Though, as I quickly found out, summer in Montreal is also extremely hot and humid.

My Trek assignment started a few weeks before a statutory filing deadline, so I hastily completed

some Canadian tax training and then rolled up my sleeves to assist the team with tax returns. This was a great opportunity to gain insight and hands-on experience in Canadian tax as well as build an appreciation for its differences with the UK tax code. Now I know why certain information is requested by the Canadian tax team on our multi-firm engagements. During my Trek assignment, I also worked on international tax advisory projects, advising on corporate restructures and cross-border transactions, which were comparable to the work I do in my home team in London, but with the added complexity of French.

I would like to say my proficiency of French, which is basic at best, improved during my assignment. However, when it comes to considering complex tax issues, both my colleagues and I were grateful the majority of my contributions could be performed in English. Certainly, my attempt to discuss the ratification of the Multilateral Convention in French would have been more humorous than informative.

That said, everyone I worked with was very supportive and took the time to get me involved with some interesting work, as well as provide me with endless recommendations for things to do, see or eat while in Montreal. We also chatted about England’s notable performance in the then ongoing football World Cup.

On the weekends, I experienced as much of Montreal and the surrounding area as I could. Then, at the end of my assignment, I took the opportunity to travel further afield and explore the rest of Quebec and Eastern Canada, as well as step across the US border into Vermont. From canoeing scenic lakes and cycling forest trails to watching whales and sampling world famous seafood, summer in Canada is spectacular.

Looking back at my Trek assignment, I appreciate that I got so much from the experience. On a professional level, I not only gained useful practical experience of applying a different tax code, but I also developed transferable skills and long-term benefits, including new ways of working and lasting relationships. On a personal level, being immersed in a different culture has made me more adaptable and open-minded.

My advice to anyone considering TaxTrek is to embrace KPMG’s unique opportunity. It offers an experience with numerous benefits in a



well-supported framework. You will learn new skills, become more confident, build long-term relationships and gain a fresh perspective. Over those 3 months you will develop, both professionally and personally, considerably more than if you stay at home. So, step away from your usual routine, leap into the unfamiliar and get on a Trek assignment. Go with an open mind, accept every invitation and pursue each recommendation. Without doubt, your Trek assignment will be a career highlight and you will come away with lasting memories.

As for Montreal, je me souviens.



Top to bottom:

The Big O - Montreal's 1976 Summer Olympic Stadium (the tallest leaning tower in the world);

Hosting visiting colleagues from KPMG UK;

Bagel battle – Montreal vs. New York.



Ignacio Ortiz
Legal Services

“Enjoy each week as if it were the last of the assignment.”

Legal Trek: An amazing experience.

KPMG in Mexico → KPMG in Germany

“He who reads much and travels much sees and knows a great deal” (Don Quixote, Part II, Chapter XXV).

Not all knowledge is obtained from books. The main reasons why I was interested in a global assignment were to learn other ways of working and thinking, travelling, and living in another country.

When I found out I would spend my Legal Trek assignment in Leipzig, Germany, I was pleased at the thought of living in the immortalized city as the “Little Paris” in Fausto, the masterpiece of J. W. Goethe. I couldn’t contain my excitement when I realized I would see places I imagined and enjoyed years ago, thanks to reading.

My assignment was from January to April. Winter in Germany would not be easy coming from Mexico City and its beautiful weather, so I packed my best winter clothes and left all my fears behind. After all, it was about experiencing every opportunity.

While it was not my first time in Europe, it was my first trip to Germany. I had always thought that going to Germany was not a matter of a few days but of at least a couple of weeks to enjoy how much that great country offers. Now, I’d have 100 days there to enjoy a period of learning, professional growth and, of course, fun.

The flight from Mexico City to Frankfurt to Leipzig was the slowest part of those 100 days. I could not wait to experience Germany. When I arrived at the airport and saw a person waiting for me with a sign that read, “Mr. Ramirez – KPMG,” it was overwhelming. It was the first of many emotions; I was thousands of miles from my country, born in a very small town in the north of Mexico, so I never imagined that, on the other side of the world, there would be a person waiting for me in an airport. That’s how my experience began.

My first day in the office was unforgettable. The people of KPMG Law in Leipzig made me feel at home. Being a small office – the legal team was composed of no more than 30 lawyers – I felt the great human warmth of my colleagues. They helped me adapt to the new culture, whether it was helping with the new language, translating conversations or going to a local favorite place to eat. I felt so blessed to experience such hospitality from fellow co-workers.

As a corporate lawyer, and considering how different my profession can be in one country to another, my main concern was wondering if I would be able to adapt. Fortunately I soon understood the benefit of being part of a global firm like KPMG, so it was not difficult to catch projects in which I could contribute.

From the first day, I was involved in various international projects. I was exposed to new approaches and learn about best practices, compliance, and migration services. It was an exciting time being in Germany from a professional point of view. The strong relationships I built will allow me to add value to proposals and new German projects. One of the many benefits of my career was working with Thomas Wolf, Head of Global Immigration Services, who invited me to spend one week in Berlin and be part of his amazing team. In KPMG in Mexico, we do not provide immigrations services, so I think it is a great opportunity to start that practice in the near future.

Outside of work, Germany really is an incredible country and Leipzig is a beautiful city. I loved walking around and looking for the best places to eat in the city. My colleagues, the most amazing office mates, supplied me with endless lists of restaurants to try and, as a foodie, this was heaven for me.

Apart from my gastronomic experiences, I travelled around Germany from the south to the north, visiting Dresden, Berlin, Cologne, Munich, Frankfurt and other beautiful cities. Travelling by train was a wonderful experience which allowed me to see a lot of natural beauty and landscapes. The Black Forest and the Rhine were definitely among my favorites.

I also used my days off to travel to countries around Germany to see the culture and eat the dishes of each country. During my 3 months, I was able to travel to seven countries, including Turkey and Azerbaijan, the latter to enjoy a weekend of Formula 1.

A memorable experience for me was going to the Allianz Arena stadium to see the Champions League’s Bayern Munich vs. Real Madrid semi-final match and watch my favorite soccer player, Cristian Ronaldo.

Beyond work, my best (and weirdest) experiences include:

- For a week, I looked for two rabbits (yes, two rabbits) belonging to the daughters of one of my colleagues during the winter holidays.
- I bought resale tickets outside the stadium for a Bundesliga match.
- I had a traditional German picnic at Clara Zetkin Park.
- I attended concerts of Dua Lipa, Bob Dylan, Christina Aguilera and the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra.
- I listened to the St. Thomas Choir of Leipzig, which was directed for almost 30 years by Johann Sebastian Bach.
- I discovered how it feels to walk outside at -20 degrees Celsius.

In my humble opinion, this kind of international assignment provides career development and, depending on the area of work, opportunities to learn completely new skills. This will improve the Trekker's CV and help them build a solid career. This is why I always advise other colleagues to take advantage of this opportunity and everything KPMG has to offer. Legal and Tax Treks provide an amazing experience to push yourself out of your comfort zone and learn, both personally and professionally.



Clockwise from top:

Brandenburg Gate in Berlin;

Dresden Frauenkirche and old buildings;

Munich - Allianz Arena – Bayern vs Real Madrid;

Visiting the Berlin wall.



Tax Trek in Milan - La dolce vita Italy: Not such an obvious choice.

KPMG in Poland → KPMG in Italy

Iwona Krzeminska
International and
Corporate Tax
Advisory

“Tax Trek is not just about travelling, but also about enhancing cooperation in the KPMG network.”

Poland is granted only one TaxTrek place per year. When it turned out that in 2018 there was an outbound TaxTrek to Italy, I was not really interested in applying for it. I would rather go to Luxembourg or the Netherlands where I could get more experience and connections for my daily work in international and corporate tax advisory. However, it turned out that the allocation could not have been better.

Italians surprised me

I joined the local Corporate Tax team in the Milan office, which was more like dealing with compliance than advisory. I also had contact with colleagues from the transaction team seated close to us. For the time I was in Milan, the hottest topic in local tax was VAT e-reporting. Frankly, I was surprised when I received a presentation from the partner in charge of my Tax Trek even before coming to Milan. I also attended a client meeting on the first day in the office after arrival. Apart from getting into details of Italian VAT e-reporting, I served Italian clients expanding to Polish market.

Italians have the unfortunate reputation of not being seen as the most hard-working. However, I was really surprised with the pace of the work. July is such a busy month because Italians leave for holidays in August.

Strong network

I was warmly welcomed by colleagues in the Milan office. I shared the office with two local colleagues and another Tax Trekker from Ireland. Already, just after coming back to Warsaw from my Tax Trek, we had a chance to be in touch for a client project. I quickly had the chance to experience the

potential of the TaxTrek, which is not just about travelling but also about enhancing cooperation in the KPMG network. Of course, the important part of every business day in Milan were lunches in fantastic local restaurants (Napule being my favorite) followed by espresso in a coffee bar. I also participated in some team appetitivo after works, and organized Polish appetitivo for colleagues. In 3 months, I made fantastic relationships that I believe will last for years.

La dolce vita

As I was on a 3-month TaxTrek, I decided that the best way to profit from the weekend would be to travel in northern Italy. However, my first trip was to the Italian part of Switzerland – Lugano. For me it was a must-go as I spent 10-months in Switzerland on my Master’s exchange. Later, I visited Liguria (my favourite region) several times with unforgettable Cinque Terre, the three biggest lakes (Como, Garda and Maggiore) and Venice on my birthday. I visited northern Italy’s major cities such as Torino, being more French; Modena, the city of Ferrari and Pavarotti; Florence, with its art; and calm Bologna, guided by my colleague from the team.

My biggest takeaway from the TaxTrek is the Italian way of life. Personally, I think all Poles (and other more ‘serious’ nations) should experience a quarter in Italy to bring more positivity, joy and distance to their everyday life. We can still be efficient at work and enjoy it even more. With all this experience, I would not ever wonder twice whether to go on a TaxTrek.

Grazie mille KPMG Italia for hosting me!

My first trip to the Italian part of Switzerland (Lugano).





Clockwise from top:

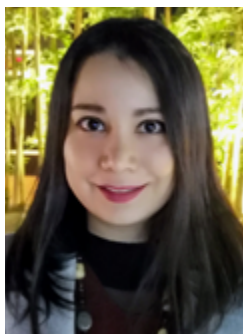
Visiting the Museum of Ferrari in Modena and Maranello;

Celebrating my b-day on a boat ride in Venice;

Farewell photo together with my best lunch companions from KPMG Milano;

Sightseeing tour in the old city of Bologna with my friend from Poland and guided by a local colleague from KPMG;





Yadhira Uvalle Benavides

Customs Trade and Excise Duties

“It was an amazing chapter in my professional career and an experience that has enriched me culturally and provided invaluable memories.”

My K-Trek: The amazing and eclectic Seoul.

KPMG in Mexico → KPMG in South Korea

While I am writing these lines, I'm still experiencing my TaxTrek, so this is the picture of what I have enjoyed and learned so far.

So it began

When I joined KPMG 6 years ago, the first I heard about the TaxTrek opportunity were comments from my co-workers because some of them had this experience and they encouraged us to apply for it. Living and working abroad was a goal that I set since college. I wanted to enhance my approach to cross-cultural business and, of course, challenge and improve my skills by immersing myself in the lifestyle of a different country.

When I heard about this program, I knew that it would allow me to achieve my goal. Indeed it would be a milestone for my professional career. In hindsight, it was a boost for my professional development at KPMG.

Some months after applying, I got the call to participate in an international assignment in KPMG in Korea, in Seoul. Well, I was astonished when I realized that this experience was awaiting on the other side of the Pacific Ocean. Nevertheless, it was precisely the kind of opportunity that I wanted to pursue so, once I (and my family of course) overcame the initial shock, I positively embraced it and in a few months I travelled to Seoul to start my TaxTrek.

Living in Seoul

Seoul is an incredible city, modern, but also with beautiful historical sites. The way in which these structures are linked to each other to create the sights of Seoul led me to realize the existing balance between high-tech development, traditions and nature. Walking in the city or going by metro or bus to the big stores, the traditional markets, the museums, galleries, parks and palaces, the Seoul Tower and the Han River, allow you to live the city and to feel part of its eclecticness.

However, I could tell that the soul of the city is in its people. I had very kind experiences with them. For instance, they helped me to arrive safely to my destination by giving me the correct address and tips to transport me in the city. Also, I have been invited to a wedding! I am very excited about it as it is the wedding of one of my colleagues. It has also been wonderful to share our family customs and

traditions and realize that we are more similar than we thought.

My colleagues have been so kind and attentive with me. They invited me to some of the most iconic places in Seoul, such as Gyeongbok Palace, where I was able to live the full experience of wearing the Hanbok, which is a traditional Korean dress. Also, every meal was a perfect chance to taste the delicious Korean food. I am delighted with the flavors, variety of ingredients and, of course, the kimchi which is one of the most famous dishes of the Korean cuisine. My personal favorite is Jok-bal (seasoned pork dish) along with all its side dishes.

From the beginning I felt so welcomed in KPMG in Korea. I was assigned in the Domestic Tax 2 department as a part of the team of Soo-Jin Cho and Tae-Sun Hong, the director and the senior manager, respectively. The first day I was introduced to my colleagues and without further ado, they invited me to have lunch with them. I really appreciated it because as a newcomer I did not know exactly what to expect, so that consideration from my colleagues made it easier for me. It was day one and we were talking in a very friendly way and it has been the same ever since. It has been wonderful to talk about our family customs and traditions and realize that we have more in common than we thought. My teammates are one of the main reasons I have enjoyed my TaxTrek experience.

I also had the opportunity to attend some of the firm's events. I went to a conference organized by the TALK initiative which explored topics of interest for the women in KPMG. The conference was conducted mainly in Korean (which I do not speak), however, some of the content was also in English so I could talk with other attendees. I was able to share with the speakers that, although we belong to different cultures which are miles apart, I felt entirely related with each one of the topics. As a result, I am interested to keep in touch with them and look or pursue for this kind of project in my country. Besides that, thanks to that event I could meet co-workers from other practices and establish a very good relationship with them.

I appreciate how the values and purpose of KPMG are practiced both in Korea and in Mexico. In our daily work, those are our drivers. Thus, it was great

when I realized that this year KPMG in Korea is turning 50 years old, which is a long road and I see them ready to go for more. Currently I am part of the celebration and I admire their example of how to thrive despite change, just like the city is loyal to its values and traditions but with an open door to modernity.

Once I arrive to my country and my office, I will share what I have learned about this amazing culture and its eclecticism. We have similar concerns and can look at our capabilities with a global mindset. Through this, I look forward to helping my firm with the projects that the Korean companies are developing in Mexico.

If I could tell you

To my dear colleagues in every KPMG office, if you have the opportunity to be part of the Tax or Legal Trek programs, go for it! Being part of the TaxTrek would be an amazing chapter in your professional career and a once-in-a-lifetime experience that will challenge your paradigms while enriching your cultural baggage and give you invaluable memories.



Clockwise from top:

Full experience in Gyeongbokgung Palace (we are wearing the Hanbok);

Visit to the Aquarium, I learned a lot of the different species that lived in seas of Korea;

Enjoying traditional food Jok-bal;

The bright Seoul Tower. It was very cold but the view of the city was totally worth it.



Another day, another piece of cake

KPMG in the UK → KPMG in Sri Lanka

Joana Gana

Transfer Pricing

“Choose a location outside your comfort zone – this will lead many adventures. Some of the best experiences you have are those that are unexpected, unknown or unplanned.”

Interest in a global assignment

Traveling is one of the most important things to me. Therefore, the opportunity to combine work with travel was undoubtedly appealing. There's only so much you can learn about a country's culture while on holiday. However, being able to immerse yourself on a day-to-day basis, experiencing life as a local, understanding its politics and way of life (not to mention incredible food) gives a unique insider view. It is also a great way to expand your personal and professional network.

Type of work on assignment

Whilst in Colombo, I worked in the Transfer Pricing (TP) team. Transfer Pricing in Sri Lanka is still a relatively new practice and the country has yet to implement the OECD Base Erosion and Profit Shifting Action Plan. I helped run training sessions covering each chapter of the OECD transfer pricing guidelines which were led by individuals in the team. I supported my colleagues' understanding and shared our approach in the UK. In addition, I helped prepare transfer pricing documentation for a variety of clients, including a major bank in Sri Lanka. This involved supporting or leading discussions with the client to understand how they price financial instruments, a subject in which I had no prior experience. This required a lot of prior reading (I even felt tempted to reach for a “Financial Services for Dummies” book).

My experiences outside the office

TaxTrek offers an abundance of experiences and adventures. Within hours of landing in Colombo, I was already at my first party, making friends and building my local and expat network exponentially. I spent almost every evening out, immersing myself within the local culture and every weekend traveling across Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Kuala Lumpur. Highlights of these adventures included:

- being bit three times in one night by a mosquito as I slept;
- nearly missing a flight and having to convince people in the immigration queue to let me queue-jump;
- arriving in Colombo airport only to be told by the Head of Immigration that I “have to return back to my country” because my visa had expired;

- travelling by boat, as we rode to our Maldivian paradise island with honeymooners;
- travelling by train and hanging out the doors for that classic Instagram shot;
- travelling by bus, fearing for my life on numerous occasions whilst sweating gallons because air-conditioning is seemingly non-existent;
- careering close to the cliff edge in a van;
- dodging the tuk tuks mounting the pavements to overtake already speeding buses;
- and if that wasn't enough, climbing up Abuluwawa Tower in torrential rain with no visibility, due to thick mist, fearing my life yet questionably filming the climb on my phone;

These experiences, crammed into a 3-month window, will stay with me for a lifetime.

There certainly some differences in office life too. For example, on day one I glanced across the office and to my shock and amazement, watched a colleague take a mouthful from a white wine bottle. I later realized this was common practice to avoid the use of plastic water bottles. Soon, I too was taking mouthfuls (of water) from my bottle of cognac.

Eating cake (picture being hand-fed by the celebrant) and savoury treats quickly became my everyday office routine because every day was a birthday. I even made the faux pas of returning from Kuala Lumpur and only buying treats enough for 25 people (there were about 50 in Tax). I learned from my mistake and bought seven very large cakes on my last day in the office. In the end I forced people to take seconds and thirds!

The TaxTrek experience and my career at KPMG

Having no prior experience working with financial services clients meant a very steep learning curve when preparing for and attending client meetings to discuss financial transactions, something I am now more comfortable with (although I am no expert). Beyond this, the flexibility required to adapt to different working practices, cultures and even language obstructions has helped develop me far beyond any training or text book could. This has enriched my ability to form relationships and network effectively since my return. These are skills that become more and more important as you progress in your career.

Nothing helps you grow as a person like interrupting your safe and comfortable routine.

I often found networking awkward and difficult at times, however since TaxTrek this now comes more naturally to me. I stepped out of my comfort zone, attended meet-ups and fended for myself. I made lots of friends from all over the world, from South Korea to Palestine, and learned about their experiences, motivations and lives. Friends working for embassies, NGOs, the UN, musicians and artists, engineers and young entrepreneurs – I have never made such a diverse group of friends in such a short period of time.

Key piece of advice

Choose a location outside your comfort zone – this will lead many adventures. Some of the best experiences you have are those that are unexpected, unknown or unplanned.

TaxTrek was the highlight of my 2018 and possibly the best experience I've ever had!

Lova Pradhakeemen pragnāva soyaganne, loosely translated in Sinhala means, "travel the world to find wisdom."



Clockwise from top:

Discovering the sights of Colombo -The Red Mosque;

Nine Arches Bridge;

Supporting SeaTurtle conservation in Sri Lanka;

Living life on the edge of Little Adam's Peak.



Dreams do come true and create opportunities

KPMG in India → KPMG in Romania

Shazia Khatri
Transfer Pricing

“Tax Trek:
Amazing
journey,
amazing
experience
and amazing
learnings.”

Year 2014. There I was, sitting on my bed at 2:30am and wondering about the dream I just had. Not only was it exciting but also terrifying. The dream was about travelling alone to a completely different country. I had never travelled overseas nor spent 24 hours alone all by myself, so this dream was completely different. It made me want to try living in a totally different country and experience what it is like to become a part of the local culture and people. But, like many others, there were various financial and other considerations to think about that held me back.

Year 2016. One fine afternoon, I was called in for a meeting by my performance manager but I had no clue why. I kept thinking what I could have done wrong? “Would you like to go on a Tax Trek?” he asked. My mouth literally fell open and my eyes were twinkling. Tax Trek was the answer! I immediately grabbed this opportunity without a second thought and said, “yes!” I was going to travel internationally for work but, for the first time, all alone.

I was successfully selected for the program and had the opportunity to be seconded to KPMG in Romania (Bucharest office) Transfer Pricing team for 3 months. My assignment started on 14 May 2018. I got to experience late spring as well as the summer, which is probably the best possible weather to travel to Romania as I enjoyed sunshine and comfortable temperatures.

I fell in love with Bucharest, the city called “little Paris,” at first sight and realized at that very moment the city would give me the time of my life, professionally and personally.

My stay was much more complex in the beginning (being an introvert complicated it further), as I needed to understand a different language, eat different food and live a culture completely different from India. That is the beauty of Tax Trek; it puts you outside of your comfort zone and lets you evolve. Around every corner lies excitement and exploration, but only if one overcomes all hurdles and moves forward with confidence or at least an air of trust.

My colleagues in Romania were very warm, welcoming and kind to help from my first day on. With regards to work, I was a part of some of

the exciting and challenging projects including attending a tax hearing in Palace of Justice (Romania Court). TaxTrek provided me with an opportunity to share my knowledge in transfer pricing audit. As most of the areas of litigation in India and Romania are similar, it was enriching to share perspective of both the countries’ tax authorities and ideas for strengthening arguments. I also got an opportunity to not only acquaint myself with recent debate on digital taxation but also assist in writing an article on that topic. It was one of the most interesting and worthwhile professional challenges that I have had so far. I was also lucky enough to be a part of various client meetings including taking a tour of the shipbuilding yard in Constanta to understand the shipping and logistics industry there.

My free time in Romania was consistently an eye-opening adventure. I had something new and exciting to explore every weekend. I visited museums, palaces, castles, a salt mine and, yes, the Black Sea. The most exciting was a “trek” in Făgăraş Mountains. I am not a “trek” person so that experience was a completely different challenge for me. I was first to start the trek and last to reach the camp. I don’t really remember if I could figure out my life, but it boosted my confidence and gave me the feeling that I could face anything with courage. On top of the mountains, I saw snow for the first time and mesmerizing landscapes. During my stay, there were other Tax Trekkers from Germany, Italy, China, Vietnam and Uganda. We talked about culture and the working environment in each country. This information will be valuable to me for cross-border projects in the future.

Tax Trek is like diving in the ocean of all the global possibilities KPMG has to offer. Being a part of Tax Trek gave me a chance not only to meet new people, develop professional relationships and network across geographies, but also live a different culture and make lifetime memories. It was also invaluable for developing my soft skills and building self-confidence. I hope to apply the wisdom and skills gained during Tax Trek in the days to come.

My advice to someone considering a Tax Trek assignment: Just go for it and have a life-changing experience!



Clockwise from top:

At the shore of Black Sea
backdrop Cazinoul din
Constanța;

Bucharest International
Air Show 2018;

View from the top -
Transfăgărășan Highway;

Tour of the shipbuilding yard in
Constanta with team members;



Liliya Khasanova

Corporate Tax

“My advice is to remember that Tax Trek allows you to explore a new culture with the comfort of a host office to support you.”

Do not lose a chance to share YOUR story

KPMG in Russia → KPMG in the U.S.

I think that the idea of a global assignment was the reason why I decided to become a part of a Big Four company. I am very glad that this opportunity came true at KPMG.

Everything started in summer 2017 when I received an announcement that anyone who was a senior associate and employed by KPMG for at least 2 years could apply for a 2018 TaxTrek assignment. I was upset because at the time I had less than 2 years, but I decided to apply because by 2018 I would gain the required 2 years. It worked! I won the opportunity and now can share my unique experience with all KPMG specialists interested in short assignments.

The first time I traveled in a taxi around Philadelphia, I was astonished to see the historic cultural monuments of Philadelphia: City Hall and William Penn (founder with a belligerent look), Independence Hall, which stores the original Declaration Independence, and the unforgettable Swann Memorial Fountain Swann. I fell in love with Philadelphia at first sight because of high-rise office buildings and two-story apartment buildings, and its small neighborhoods in narrow streets and wide avenues.

I was very lucky that the KPMG office was located in the very center of the city. The KPMG office occupies 10 floors of the building with an excellent view of City Hall and William Penn. Once I even made a presentation there for my hosting tax group named Business Tax Services (BTS) about our Tax & Legal practice and Russian tax legislation.

It is important to note that you never know which practice you will join as a Tax Trekker. Before the assignment, I found a CV of my hosting Performance Manager Leader detailing his experience in compliance, and I suggested that I might not work in a direct line of specialty such as corporate tax.

Until the last moment, I doubted I could apply my experience in a new area of tax compliance. The fear passed immediately after completing my first tax forms for a tax return. Andrey Sedletsky, as my mentor, quickly explained the tasks and

gave me hints about working in the team. Now, I understand that in order to effectively participate in the TaxTrek program, it is necessary to have certain work experience, and experience in the project. This will help to adapt quickly in other offices.

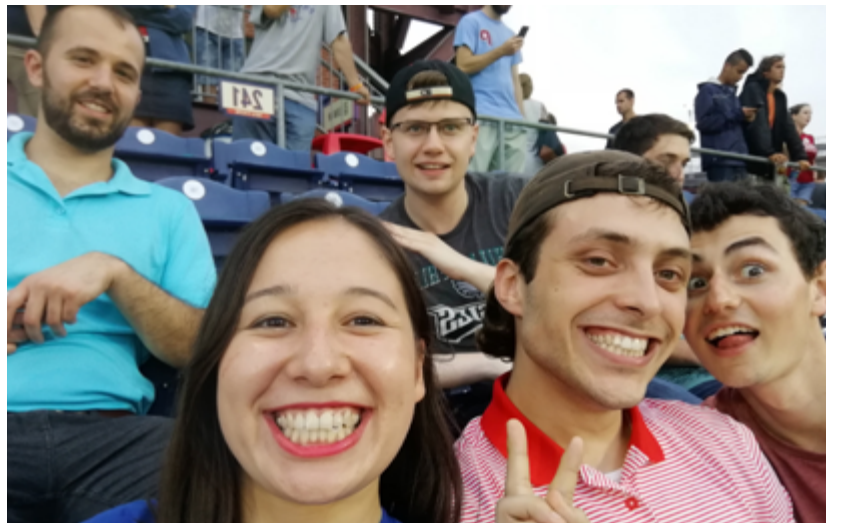
I was also impressed by the internal office procedures on engagement allocation, which helped apply my skills from international corporate projects in a proper manner. As a result, I was able to work on projects with international involvement, in particular, applying the new US tax law called “Tax Reform.”

Being a part of BTS-core tax practice for me was not only about work. It was about the internal events, like happy hours, tailgating and various competitions, and the way in which the KPMG Philly office takes care of its employees (monthly birthday cakes, baby showers, Thursday family dinners and “Sweet Fridays”). I tried various things for the first time: cheesesteaks, s’mores, and dots ice-cream, watching the Phillies game, and playing Urban Axes.

Thanks to my colleagues and friends who repeatedly took me to baseball, basketball and hockey games and exposed me to the magic of tailgating. I even became a big fan of American football, and I am very loyal now to Philadelphia Eagles (go Birds!).

On the professional side, participation in the program not only raised my self-confidence, but also gave me a deep understanding of worldwide tax principles I can apply elsewhere. After the TaxTrek program, I shared my experience with my colleagues at the Russian KPMG offices and helped some of them to apply to the program.

My advice is to remember that TaxTrek allows you to explore a new culture with the comfort of a host office to support you. Do not lose your chance to share YOUR story!



Clockwise from top:

Tailgating with my colleagues;

Swan Fountain;

Baseball game with my colleagues;

My PML - Andrey Sedletsky;

Me and Rocky.





México lindo y querido

KPMG Global Services Hungary (KGSZ) → KPMG in Mexico

Jennifer Moreno

KGSZ – Indirect Tax
Compliance

“The chance to explore and squeeze Mexico into your life in this way only happens once in a lifetime and it’s thanks to Tax Trek.”

No language issues

I’m originally from Spain and consider myself a global employee because I have been working at KPMG in Budapest for more than 5 years but I’m a Spanish tax advisor. This is the main reason, as a foreigner, that I don’t see any boundaries when I visit other countries or about living abroad. I always try to learn as much as possible from every place I go.

Just thinking about the opportunity to spend 3 months in another KPMG office was exciting, but going to a Spanish-speaking country was the icing on the cake. A Spanish girl in Mexico!

People, pre-Hispanic roots, culture and food

When people talk about Mexico, there are always some intrinsic or recurrent topics such as paradise in many different areas, rich culture, good weather, colours, food, tequila and warm-hearted people.

Honestly, all the places I discovered were amazing, but the rich cuisine was even better and their beverages are like a religion. Nevertheless, nothing compares to their people.

Being there, they included me as a friend. My dentist even invited me to a barbecue for her sister’s birthday (or an “carne asada”). It’s very typical to be invited to these kinds of social events. My colleagues invited me to their houses with their family and friends. I travelled with them and we shared many special, epic and meaningful moments. It was unforgettable.

Even though I speak Spanish, I admit that I didn’t know much about Mexican culinary vocabulary and flavors. There are more kinds of tacos than any non-Mexican mind can imagine, millions of spicy and hot sauces, as well as other very exotic typical dishes or “platillos.” My favourites were the ones with a sauce called mole; the “chile en nogada,” chile stuffed with meat, spices and a delicious walnut sauce; all kind of insects like “chapulines” (toasted grasshoppers), “escamoles” (ant larvae) and worms of maguey; tamales (corn dough generally with meat steamed in a corn husk or banana leaf); nopales; pozoles; tlayudas and tortas; plus many drinks impossible to find somewhere else like, excellent tequila, mezcal or different types of micheladas.

Colours of Mexico

I travelled almost every weekend. I went from the north (where I was) to the south (the perfect Oaxaca) and from the west (the Pacific coast) to the east (the famous Riviera Mayan).

I climbed the gorgeous Mayan pyramids, swam at their white beaches and wonderful cenotes, released turtles to the sea and practiced canyoning. Many of my colleagues said that I travelled more in 3 months than they did in their entire lives. Mexico is one of the most complete countries in the world.

I could talk about the landscape of Monterrey for hours. That city is amazing and surrounded by a huge chain of mountains that guides you and doesn’t let you get lost wherever you are. It’s an authentic paradise for mountain lovers.

Mexicans are very attached to their families, religion and traditions. I was lucky that I could enjoy some special festivals there, such as the autumnal equinox in Chichen Itzá, the independence festivity of “El Grito” in Guadalajara and the “Día de Muertos” in Oaxaca.

In Oaxaca, I enjoyed “Día de Muertos,” which was very shocking to me as it was full of flowers, the typical being the orange flower Cempasúchil. There were also colourful small chopped paper flags all around the cities, people with skull-like makeup and music all day long.

Monterrey: My family doubted I went there for work

I was very lucky to be in México, as I could understand the Mexican tax law and go deeper than usual with the Mexican VAT mechanism. I helped them when needed and they offered me the opportunity of knowing some of their clients with businesses in the EU. Actually, I still can see a great opportunity of cooperation between the Monterrey and KGS Hungary offices and I think that we complement each other quite well.

Furthermore, I was included in several projects of data automation and was even invited to collaborate in a session about VAT in the EU at the University of Monterrey. My stay there was super interesting and I learned a lot from all colleagues.

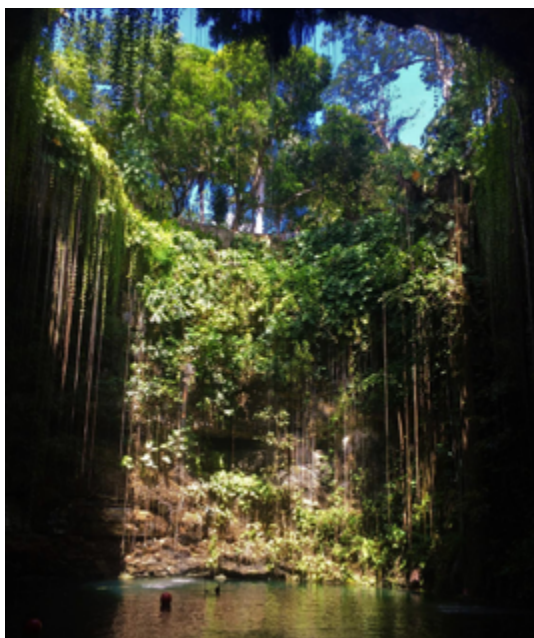
Career opportunity

The TaxTrek experience gave me the opportunity to get to know many colleagues. The environment in Monterrey's office is amazing. I think that we, as KPMG people, have a special touch or essence which makes us different. In Monterrey there exists the same familiar spirit that we have at KGSH.

This experience is priceless, like a diamond that KPMG offers. I adapted myself very well there not only professionally, but personally too. It was a pity it ended so soon!

Some keys for future Trekkers

Go for it! Talk to everyone, learn from people, go out, try all the food possible, travel (even alone), accept suggestions and advice from locals and connect with families and communities.



Clockwise from above:

Cenote Ik-Kil in the State of Yucatan, Mayan Riviera;

Hierve el Agua in the State of Oaxaca, a set of natural rock formations, with a natural swimming pool and waterfalls;

The holy city of Teotihuacan ('the place where the gods were created') in the State of México City;

Playa Bacocho in the State of Oaxaca, unique beach with baby turtle release.





Beyond Experience

KPMG in Thailand → KPMG in the U.S.

**Tanakorn
Jennanachok**
Global Mobility
Services

“Grab a chance and just do it. Don’t wait until tomorrow.”

First of all, I would like to thank KPMG for granting me this exceptional opportunity to participate in the TaxTrek Program. Since the very first year of my career at KPMG, I had been discussing this program with my Partner, mentioning that I was very interested and keen to join the program one day.

Eventually, the opportunity came! The Sponsoring Partner for TaxTrek in Thailand informed me that I was qualified to enrol and get an opportunity to work in the USA. At the moment, I just could not believe my ears. I was extremely excited since I usually deal and work with the USA team on a daily basis.

Before going to work in the USA, I had to complete a language test which included writing, listening and speaking tests provided by Inlingua as part of the qualification process for working in the USA. Then, I received an invitation letter from the USA to work in the New York office for 3 months, which blew me away.

I have gained so many experiences from working and living in New York for 3 months and the topics that I would like to share are my work, travel, food, and my thoughts.

My work

I was a member of the GMS Japanese and Korean Practice team. My duties and responsibilities were to review, prepare legal documents, deal with compliance work and coordinate meetings between clients and other KPMG Global teams.

During the 3-month assignment, my work went quite well and smoothly because of the great support and assistance from my colleagues at the NY office, as well as working with an open-mind and enthusiasm. My job tasks were always exciting and challenging which made it enjoyable and exciting every single day. All I knew and realised at that moment was I could overcome all these challenges no matter how difficult it would be if I put my heart into it. As a result, these experiences would groom and improve me to be capable of doing anything and prompt me for further development.

Travel

The USA is one of the most popular destinations that people dream of visiting once in their lifetime. Before going to New York, I did some research about tourist attractions, restaurants and famous

historical places and must-see places in New York. During my Trek assignment, I visited places such as Central Park, Statue of Liberty, Top of the Rock at Rockefeller Center, World Trade Center, New York Library, Grand Central Terminal, Coney Island, and much more. Outside of New York, I also travelled to Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Florida. When I visited each city, I learned some different cultures and lifestyle of the local people. These have accordingly inspired me to travel around the world in the future to see and learn more.

Food

Speaking about American food, what we inevitably think of are American breakfast (with sausages, fried eggs and bacon strips), bagel, hamburger, hot dog - you name it, I have tried it all. As part of my self-preparation, I also did a research on the top 20 restaurants to eat at in New York. I have tried them all and found that most American food seemed to have quite a sweet taste. However, I have shortened the list and would like to share some of my favourite spots; Shake Shack Burger, Peter Luger, Levaine Bakery, Katz’s Delicatessen, Juliana’s Pizza, Ess a Bagel and Halal Guy Truck Food. Should you have further interest on these restaurants and keen for more details, feel free to reach out to me.

My thoughts

In joining the TaxTrek Program, I have learned enormously and gained a load of experiences in working in different cultures, environment and technology which is not currently available at the Thailand office. I got the opportunity to work directly and closely with other KPMG Global teams. What I have experienced, I will share with my home office colleagues and encourage them to use the new technology in order to ease our working process and smooth our workflow.

I tremendously appreciate the opportunity to participate in this program and would like to thank to my friends and colleagues who were always so supportive.

Last but not least, do not be afraid of doing it, become a part of this program and share the memorable experiences you’ll gain from your Tax & LegalTrek assignment.



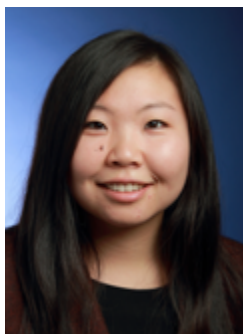
Clockwise from top:

Exploring the Hudson Valley;

The Brooklyn Bridge with a night view of the city;

Fall - Thanksgiving and Pumpkins;

At the New York Library.



Khaliu Solongo

People Services Tax
– GMS

“My Tax Trek experience gave me a greater sense of our one firm ethos and made me realize that wherever you go, you will always have colleagues ready to welcome you. I feel very fortunate to be part of this firm.”

The adventures of a “gringa” in Brazil

KPMG in the UK → KPMG in Brazil

Growing up in Mongolia in the 90s, I remember watching a music video of a Brazilian song called Lambada that was in an unfamiliar language and set on a beach, something I’d never seen before. I remember thinking that the place in the video seemed so exotic and far away. Never in my wildest dreams would I have imagined then that, fast forward to the summer of 2018, I would land in the sprawling metropolis of Sao Paulo to spend 3 months living and working in that very same exotic place I’d seen in that video.

Why Tax Trek?

Having grown up in two very different countries, I have always been interested in travelling and learning about different cultures. When I heard about the Tax Trek program, I knew I wanted to take part as soon as I was eligible. The opportunity to travel, explore new cultures and to do it through work was too good an opportunity to miss.

Given my role within the Global Mobility Services tax team, which involves providing cross-border tax advice to expatriates and assignees while working closely with my global colleagues, taking part in Tax Trek was essential. It would allow me to finally meet some of my global colleagues I normally correspond with via email/Skype and it would also give me the opportunity to be in my clients’ shoes and understand their experience first-hand.

Work

During my Trek assignment, I was assigned to the Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) tax team in Brazil who provide corporation tax advice on mergers and acquisitions. I was initially a little worried about being assigned to a different department of which I did not have any knowledge of, however, I soon realized that this was actually a great opportunity.

By being in the M&A tax team, not only did I get the opportunity to learn about and understand the day-to-day work of a different part of the business and how it could link to the work we do in GMS, I also got the opportunity to expand my KPMG global network beyond my own department.

As well as getting to know the M&A and international tax teams, I also made sure that I spent as much time as possible with the Global Mobility Services team in Brazil. It was important for me to get to know my colleagues there, how

the income tax system works, and to understand the team’s best practices and challenges so we could work more effectively together. It was therefore great to get the chance to have numerous knowledge-sharing sessions with so many of my colleagues.

One of the most memorable professional highlights of my Trek assignment was giving a presentation on UK taxation to my colleagues. Being a particularly nervous public speaker, this was an important step for me in my professional development and I feel privileged to have achieved this during my Tax Trek in front of my Brazilian colleagues.

People

Before heading on my Trek, I’d heard about how friendly the Brazilian people were but hadn’t quite expected just how warm, welcoming and friendly they would be. Having not travelled alone before, I was a little anxious about spending 3 months on my own halfway around the world. My worries disappeared the moment my new colleagues greeted me with great big hugs on my first day in the office.

One of the key aspects that made my Trek assignment such a wonderful and unforgettable experience was the KPMG colleagues I met during my Trek who looked after me so well. From the many wonderful lunches, happy hours and churrascos, to their kind invitations for me to join them and their families and friends at every opportunity, I’m truly grateful for their generosity. I feel so fortunate to have made some fantastic friends.

Experiences

I had not quite grasped how big a country Brazil was until I got there and realized that travelling to almost anywhere would require a flight, especially if you wanted to get there fast. I had to quickly get over my fear of flying to make the most of my Trek and I managed to visit some wonderful places such as Foz Iguazu and Argentina.

Just some of the unforgettable memories I will cherish from my Trek:

- the surreal experience of standing under the Christ the Redeemer statue in the early morning sun before the crowds arrived;

- being soaked head to toe by the breathtaking Iguazu waterfalls during a boat trip somewhere between Brazil and Argentina;
- island-hopping and trekking through the rainforests of the lush Atlantic coast;
- every Brazil game during the World Cup, especially every goal, when the whole country would erupt with the sound of fireworks and cheers to a level I've never experienced before;
- accidentally winning the department World Cup sweepstake and throwing a "happy hour" for the team to celebrate;
- practicing my broken Portuguese with the shuttle bus driver on my trips to the office;
- becoming used to being called a "gringa" by everyone;

For me, TaxTrek was an eye-opening, once-in-a-lifetime experience that gave me a newfound confidence in myself professionally and personally, and gave me the opportunity to make some fantastic friends.

My Trek experience gave me a greater sense of our one firm ethos and made me realize that wherever you go, you will always have colleagues ready to welcome you. I feel very fortunate to be part of this firm.



Clockwise from above:

At Foz de Iguacu waterfalls;

Christ the Redeemer;

With my host team – M&A tax;

On Sugar Loaf mountain.



Is there a Tax or Legal Trek in your future?

Working at a foreign office, meeting new colleagues and tackling new projects are only a few of the incredible things Trekkers get to experience. The amazing memories of the FY18 Trekkers show that Tax & Legal Trek is really a once-in-a-lifetime way for tax and legal professionals to gain invaluable global knowledge, experience and life-long colleagues and friends.

In this global business economy, clients seek tax and legal advisors who can understand and address their cross-border challenges. Not only does Tax & Legal Trek prepare KPMG professionals to rise to these challenges, it also results in real added value for clients and colleagues, helps our member firms attract and retain top talent and strengthens the KPMG organization's ability to achieve global growth.

For all these reasons, there is no better time than now to consider making TaxTrek or Legal Trek part of your future plans.

For member firms

Whether your member firm is a veteran of the programs or you are considering participation for the very first time, engaging in the Tax or Legal Trek program is simple. We launch the programs annually at the beginning of Q2 by asking your firm's tax and legal service leaders how they would like to get involved. Take a moment to review the program brochure for more details and discuss with your firm's leadership how participating can benefit your people.

For would-be Trekkers

Inspired by the class of FY18? Speak to your performance manager to advise them of your interest, and your local HR representative will be able to inform you of the application process in your country.

Keep building global careers

To the FY18 participants in Tax & Legal Trek, thank you for taking us along on your journeys, congratulations on your accomplishments during your Trek, and our best wishes in continuing to build your global career with KPMG.

Nisha & Obie

Contact us

You can find out more about the Tax & Legal Trek program by reviewing the [program brochure](#), visiting the [Tax & Legal Trek homepage](#) (where you can also locate a full list of program Alumni), or by contacting:

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