

# Next Gen GM

KEEPING  
ASSIGNEES SAFE  
ACROSS THE  
WORLD



## **“Hi, do you have any hand sanitizer left?”**

I was asking the shop assistant at Warsaw airport. It was the very beginning of March 2020 and I was heading for a Global Mobility conference in the Netherlands. I was supposed to speak at the event, so I was determined to get there although the word virus was more and more often mentioned in the news and there were no hand sanitizers in the pharmacies I'd visited the other day.

The whole issue seemed so distant for me as I was pretty sure Asia was the only part of the world affected by the spread of COVID-19. Some updates started to appear with regards to Italy but still the situation in many EU countries seemed to be OK. OK enough to travel. OK enough to speak at the conference. OK enough to have hope that we will not be impacted.

If the event was scheduled for the following week, I would not have made it.

## **When I got back to Poland, people started to work from home and a sort of panic developed.**

I think everybody was afraid the shops might become closed shortly so all the toilet paper, rice and pasta disappeared from the shopping shelves.

Over basically one weekend a great part of the world had shut down their borders. Until then, we had all been collecting some pieces of puzzles but at that time we saw the big picture. The COVID-19 crisis was everywhere and first thing Global Mobility professionals had in minds was: how to make sure our assignees and their families are safe? Global Mobility is a tricky little thing as it involves so many stakeholders to co-operate; tax, immigration, relocation, finance, payroll, HR and finally the business.



**Global Mobility experts are kind of officers standing in the middle of a busy intersection and advising which vehicles should head which way, which should go first, which should wait or when to turn the red light.**

If everybody knows the rules, which are consistent and thoroughly designed, and if these vehicles have been driving through the intersection for years than the process is smooth and everybody gets to their destination. COVID-19 unfortunately is a huge meteorite which fell in the middle of this intersection and everything is disorganized. Global Mobility experts are like the officer who needs to instantly figure out the new rules and the stakeholders are the vehicles who needed to cooperate with each other more than ever.

**Beginnings were all about co-operation and support.**

Both from professional and private perspective. Myself and my husband are now working from home and setting up new routines for our family. Whoever has important video conferences scheduled, gets to work in a separate room. Whoever has a call with their own team, it's OK for our two year old to be jumping in front of the camera.

I suppose Global Mobility professionals have had lots of calls at this time, with relocations consultants in order to confirm the location of the assignees, with immigration consultants in order to check what's happening with the visa centres and the documents being processed and with corporate tax consultants in order to verify the tax implications for people who happened to get stuck in a country which went into the lockdown. I strongly believe this is the hardest time for us because we need to adjust to a totally unknown situation that has never occurred before for the Global Mobility industry.

It has never occurred before for our families. With time, we have got used to our new normal. Some of the things are quite nice, we spend more time as a family as we save time we'd normally spend commuting to the office. The gyms are closed but I work out even more than before with my weights at home. The restaurants are closed but my husband found his new passion for baking so we get to eat such delicious food anyway.

**Has Global Mobility got used to the new normal? I think so.**

I hope majority of the companies have introduced the new process in place, new guidelines and the industry has proven its value for the business as never before. Long may it continue!

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