

# **REPATRIATION PROCESS IN AN ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT**

*A case study*

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<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Tämä laadullinen tapaustutkimus tarkastelee ulkomaankomennukselta paluuta organisaation näkökulmasta. Paluuta tutkitaan ulkomaankomennukselta Uruguaysta Suomen kotiorganisaatioon takaisin palavaan työntekijäryhmän näkökannalta.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen päätavoitteena oli selvittää palaajien tyytyväisyyttä organisaation paluuprosessia kohtaan sekä tunnistaa mahdollisia kehityskohteita organisaatio paluuprosessille. Tämän lisäksi tarkoitus oli antaa palaajille mahdollisuus antaa palautetta työnantajalleen sekä tuottaa tietoa akateemiselle tutkimusalalle liittyen paluumuuttoon.</p> <p>Tutkimus hyödyntää teoreettista viitekehystä liittyen paluunsopeutumiseen, jonka on kehittänyt Black, Gregersen ja Mendenhall vuonna 1992. Lisäksi viitataan muihin soveltuviin tieteellisiin tutkimuksiin.</p> <p>Tutkimusaineisto pohjautuu kyselylomakkeeseen, jonka seuraa johdonmukaisesti teoreettista viitekehystä. Tutkimuksen tulokset on raportoitu kahdella tavalla: yritysrapportina, joka on tämän tutkielman liitteenä ja tutkielman empiirisessä osiossa teoriajohteisesti.</p> <p>Tämä tutkimus osoittaa hyvin rakennetun ja selkeästi viestityn paluuprosessin tärkeyden kansainvälisessä organisaatioissa. Ulkomaantyöstä palaavat henkilöt ovat tärkeä voimavara yritykselle ja heidän osaamistaan tai arvoaan ei tule vähätellä.</p> <p>Tämä laadullinen tapaustutkimus tarjoaa mahdollisuuden tarkastella paluuprosessia työntekijäryhmän näkökannalta ja antaa uutta tietoa paluuprosessin sujuvuuden ja toimivuuden tärkeydestä tälle kohderyhmälle. Tutkimustuloksia ei voida yleistää ja lisätutkimukselle onkin vielä tarvetta.</p>	
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<p>Abstract</p> <p>This study is a qualitative case study, which explores repatriation in an organizational context. Repatriation is studied from a viewpoint of a group of expatriates returning from their international assignment in Uruguay back to their home organization in Finland.</p> <p>The main goal of this study was to find out the satisfaction of the repatriates towards their organizations' repatriation process as well as to recognize potential development areas in terms of repatriation process in an organizational context. Furthermore, the aim was to enable the repatriates to give feedback for their employer as well as produce information for the academic field of repatriation research.</p> <p>This study utilizes the theoretical framework of repatriation adjustment developed by Black, Gregersen and Mendenhall 1992. In addition, other relevant scholarly studies are also referred to.</p> <p>The empirical data of this study is based on a questionnaire and which following the logic of the main theoretical framework. The findings of the study are reported in two ways: in a company report attached to the thesis and in the empirical part of the thesis utilizing theory-guided presentation.</p> <p>This study indicates the importance of well-structured and clearly communicated repatriation process in an international organization. Repatriates are important assets for organizations and their knowledge and value should not be understated.</p> <p>This qualitative case study offers a possibility to observe the repatriation process in the point of view of a group of repatriates and offers new information on the importance of a smooth and well organized repatriation process for this focus group. The generalization of the results of this study are limited and therefore there is a need for further research in this field.</p>	
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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this study is to review and contemplate repatriation process in an organizational context. In the first part of this introduction some key words and concepts are explained and the repatriation is positioned in the context of international human resource management and some key terms and concepts are introduced. This is followed by an overview of the research context. In this study repatriation process is examined in an organizational context and the aim is to obtain an overall picture of how repatriates themselves experienced the repatriation process provide by their employer, thus it does not go in-depth analysis of the psychological process of repatriation adjustment itself on an individual level.

### **1.1 Key words and concepts**

According to Dowling, Welch, and Schuler (1999, p. 204) the term “repatriation” indicates “the activity of bringing the expatriate back to the home country”. Sussman (2000, p. 360) states that repatriation “simply the closure of the transition cycle”. Black, Gregersen, and Mendenhall indicate (1992b, p. 737) “repatriation adjustment” as the adjustment back to the home country and home office.

Adler (1981, p. 343) defines cross-cultural readjustment as “the transition from a foreign culture back into one’s home culture”. Black and Gregersen (1991) indicate that repatriation adjustment is the adjustment after overseas assignment. The embedded assumption is that repatriates are returning to a familiar place, to one’s home country, and that this should be relatively easy (Adler, 1981, p. 344).

According to Caligiuri, Tarique and Jacobs (2009) the term expatriate or international assignee refers to a national of a country sent by the parent company or organization to live and work in a foreign country. In this study repatriate refers to an

employee returning back to his home country and company after working abroad for a certain period of time and repatriation process is simply the process taking place during this transition.

### **1.2 Repatriation process and international human resource management**

There are several studies that argue repatriation process to be taken into careful consideration in a multinational company. The world is becoming more international and people are crossing borders increasingly. According to OECD (2013) approximately 232 million people live and work in outside their country of origin. During 2000-2010 the global migrant stock doubled compared to the prior decade. In addition, for the last few decades we have witnessed a continuing trend of businesses rapidly globalizing and employees with international management skills are becoming a critical asset for companies (Kraimer, Shaffer & Bolino, 2009).

There is an exponential growth in globalization (Baruch, Altman & Tung, 2016) which suggests stable increase of global mobility. Brookfield (2016) global mobility trends survey states that 75 percent of the companies surveyed expected the number of international assignees to either increase or remain the same. Increased globalization has brought more attention to the value of global knowledge gained through international assignments and its knowledge transfer implications.

Studies on international human resource management (IHRM) have been dominated by international assignments for several years. However, the concept of global staffing is broader. (Collins & Scullion, 2009). Today scholars (Baruch et al., 2016) suggest repatriation to be framed in the context of global careers and to be viewed through a wider lens of career theory. Harvey (1996) has also argued that one of the key elements of

competing in the global marketplace has been for decades already the staffing of vital expatriate positions with talented and skillful persons.

The importance of management of human resources during and after an international assignment is crucially important for a multinational company. The importance of retaining returning expatriates is crucial for organizations as the competition of internationally talented employees is high. Expatriates have obtained knowledge of doing business abroad. If companies lose their experienced and skilled human resources after repatriation, this could be fatal for the success of the company's future international operations (Harvey, 1996). Therefore, multinational corporations must proactively solve repatriation dilemmas in order to retain key personnel and to encourage the consent of international assignments (Harvey 1982).

Often companies implement internationalization by sending people abroad to carry out business functions. However, international assignment experience is still atypical, precious and difficult to emulate (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2000). Organizations make significant financial investments in international assignments. The cost of an expatriate is estimated to be two to five times more than the cost of employing a local person with similar skills (Harvey, 1996; Hellsten, 2009). This investment can be considered somewhat lost when a repatriating employee leaves the organization due to issues related to repatriation (Cox, 2004). In addition to high remuneration of the assignee there is a risk of failure, under performance or resignation shortly after repatriation (Baruch et al, 2016), where the major investment is lost. In order for companies to successfully carry out repatriation, they need to consider the whole assignment process from the beginning until the end (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2000).



In addition, the costs of not paying attention to repatriation problems might be high, while the cost of solving some of the problems may remain relatively low. Several repatriation problems could be avoided by creating a repatriation plan (Harvey, 1982). Poor management of repatriation issues may impact the willingness of future personnel to accept international assignments (Linehan & Scullion, 2002a).

According to earlier studies (Baruch, Steele & Quantrill, 2002; O'Sullivan, 2002), the repatriate turnover is high. Hyder and Lövblad (2007) argue that the motivation for a company to for a repatriation program is to retain repatriates within the organization. By losing repatriates a company suffers for financial setback as well as losing employees with international skills, competencies and experience.

The factors that justify the importance of repatriation could be summarized as follows: Firstly, globalization is growing and people are crossing borders increasingly. Secondly, repatriation is part of international human resource management and one phase of a global career. Thirdly, employees are increasingly working across borders and retaining employees with a global skillset remaining is essential. Fourthly, international assignment are significant investments for companies and repatriate turnover is high.

More attention to the importance of repatriation needs to be paid. According to Chiang, Esch, Birtch and Shaffer (2018) repatriation continues to be and under-researched stage of international assignment and conclude that greater understanding of repatriation contributes to motivate and retain repatriates as well as encourages personal and professional development of repatriates, one of the most valuable resources for organizations.

This thesis consists of 6 Chapters. After this introductory Chapter, an overview of literature is provided in Chapter 2. The following Chapter, Chapter 3, consists of methodological aspects of this study. In Chapter 4 the results of this study will present by

using a theory-guided presentation and Chapter 5 consists of discussions. Conclusions of this study is be presented in Chapter 6.

## **2 THEORETICAL OVERVIEW**

In this Chapter, the theoretical overview of this thesis is presented. The aim is to review, explore and summarize the writings of other researchers in the field of repatriation. In addition, the main theory of the study and the rationale behind the selection of this particular theory will be explained. However, as the results of this study will be introduced by a theory-guided presentation in Chapter 4, the main theory will be explained more in detail and in relation to the findings of the study. At the end of this Chapter the research questions of the study are presented.

### **2.1 Literature review**

During the past decades the literature on expatriation has grown steadily. However, in contrast with expatriation, research focused on repatriation has been more limited in scope and profusion (Furuya, Stevens, Bird, Oddou & Mendenhall, 2009; Kraimer et al., 2009). Repatriation literature and field has been seen as fragmented with little comprehensive overview.

Repatriate return neither to the world they once left nor the world they are anticipating. During the assignment the expatriate changes, the organization changes, and the country changes. In addition expatriates often idealize their home county and recall only the enjoyable aspects of home country. When repatriating, expatriates face the changes in the way it used to be and the way it is as well as the cap between their idealized memories and reality. Repatriates tend to describe re-entry more difficult transition than initial entry into the new country. (Adler, 1997; Linehan & Scullion, 2002a).

However, here are a few studies in which re-entry literature and research have been introduced systematically. Firstly, Szkudlarek (2010) has reviewed over 150 articles, book chapters, conference papers and other publications and produced a narrative review of the field of cross-cultural re-entry. In this review Szkudlarek (2010) has divided reentry into three subsequent sections; process, people and practices.

Secondly, Chiang et al. (2018) have published a meta-analysis on repatriation literature where they have concentrated on the leading peer-reviewed academic journals that consistently publish articles on expatriation and repatriation research (excluding articles that solely focus on expatriation) with a background of corporate repatriation or self-initiated expatriation (SIE) and leaving out other forms of repatriation (e.g. students, missionaries, migrants). According to their study, literature on repatriation remains fragmented and inadequate and there is a derived need for improved understanding of repatriation. The amount of research concentrating on repatriation has been increasing. According to this meta-analysis altogether 91 articles have been published during 1980-mid 2017.

## **2.2 Repatriation adjustment process and re-entry**

As the world is globalizing and businesses are performed in different parts of the world people are performing their work in different countries. Even a new term has emerged among scholars in career mobility “self-initiated expatriation (SIE)” describing people who relocate to another country at their own initiative for the purpose of work (Baruch et al., 2016).

Repatriates face the changes upon return. Against their premature expectations they do not return to the same kind of a place they left nor to a place they are expecting to return. This is due to fact that while they were abroad change has taken place in organization and in country as well as they have gone through changes themselves (Adler, 1997).

Re-entry to the original culture proceeds through different phases. The first phase of the adjustment process is very short, lasting from few hours to a month and therefore the second phase, the low mood period occurs earlier in repatriation than in expatriation. The lowest period is during the second and third month from return and by the sixth month the repatriates have agreed to the situation and state feeling “average”. (Adler 1981, 345–346.)

Linehan and Scullion (2002a) have emphasized the importance of closing the gap between expectations and reality in repatriation phase and the meaning of effective repatriation program to facilitate the adjustment back home and retaining repatriates within the organization. They also argue that weak and inadequate handling of repatriation may lead to unwillingness of future managers to accept international assignments.

In reverse culture shock the adjustment process concentrates on the difficulties of re-adapting and re-adjusting to individuals own home culture after returning from e.g. international assignment (Gaw, 2000). According to Adler, repatriates experience low mood period earlier in re-entry than in the original entry. The lowest moods usually occur during the second and third months back in the home country. (Adler, 1997). Transitions, both entry and re-entry, engage managing the stress that accompanies moving into foreign environment. (Adler, 1997)

There are specific patterns that appear among repatriates in re-entry. Firstly, re-entry to the original culture was more challenging than the move to the foreign culture. Secondly, everyone suffered from re-entry shock despite of overseas location or the type of assignment. Thirdly, home organizations tended not to recognize nor exploit the valuable managerial skills learned abroad. Fourthly, stance on effective re-entry behavior varied between home country managers and repatriates. (Adler, 1981)

Previous research has recommended several factors in order to retain repatriates within the organization. “Closing the gap between expectations and reality” for repatriates is an important feature of successful return i.e. demands, limitations, and level of discretion in the repatriation work position as well as information on changes in nonwork matters e.g. housing, financial and social conditions. (Stroh, Gregersen & Black, 1998)

Linehan and Scullion (2002b), in their study of repatriating female executives, highlight the importance of closing the gap between expectations and reality and preparing effective repatriation programs for repatriates to facilitate the retention of employees as well as adjustment back home.

Dowling, Welch and Schuler divide the repatriation process into four stages; preparation, physical relocation, transition and readjustment. At preparation stage an expatriate develops plans for the future and gathers information about the new position. Companies may e.g. provide checklist of different items to be taken care of. (Dowling, Welch & Schuler, 1999)

### **2.3 Repatriation process and organizations**

According to Adler (1981, 354) in order the organization to benefit fully from its investment in international assignment both the repatriate and the organization must comprehend the re-entry transition.

One of the key problems for companies of the re-entry of their assignees is the loss of key personnel (Adler, 1981). Smith (1975 cited in Adler, 1981) found that repatriation might be the toughest assignments of all and that re-adaptation to corporate life is even more difficult for the repatriate. Smith has put it “In some respects the more outstanding a performer the executive was overseas, the more uncomfortable his return will be” (Smith cited in Adler, 1981, 344).

Baruch et al. (2002) found in their qualitative study of repatriates a strong association with promoting employees upon repatriation and repatriate retention in contrast with not promoting and leaving the company.

The key to retention after repatriation is an appreciative environment of international experience. Organizations need to provide support to the expatriate during the whole assignment process from before expatriation to after repatriation. Furthermore, expatriation and repatriation are not distinct processes. On the contrary, repatriation is the culmination of the same process (Lazarova & Caligiuri, 2000).

The importance of repatriation process is also emphasized to significantly improve the ability of a company to compete in the global market and that multinational companies that have implemented these policies successfully have benefited all the levels; the organization, the expatriate, and the family (Martin & Anthony, 2006).

The empirical study of Harvey (1989) among personnel administrators on repatriation suggests that the reasons behind the lack of having a repatriation training programs are; shortage of expertise in establishing, cost of these programs and lack of a perceived need for programs by top management. The importance of repatriation process or a plan is as important that it is to train the executives for international assignments. In order for companies to retain important employees and to have a cadre of personnel for future international assignees a company needs to solve repatriation dilemmas. (Harvey, 1982)

Martin and Anthony (2006) present a four phase repatriation and retention program. This program suggests that a successful program commences prior to expatriation follows through during expatriation phase and the period before repatriation and finishes up with the fourth and the last phase, repatriation. However, Suutari and Brewster (2003) found

in their research on repatriation by Finnish expatriates that most of the companies did not see the need for explicit repatriation policies.

Interesting research results can be found in a study by Stevens, Oddou, Furuya, Bird and Mendenhall (2006) on Japanese repatriate managers. In this study it became evident that repatriates' level of self-adjustment was even more significant factor in repatriation job satisfaction and attachment than in overall HR practices. Repatriation programs should support and train repatriates to be proactive in career planning (MacDonald & Arthur, 2004).

Martin and Anthony. (2006) define a formal repatriation program as a major part of the process. As implementation factors they refer to Royal Dutch Shell Group where the major business groups have their own resource planner (HR professional), who match employees and positions as well as evaluate the performance of each. In addition resource planners take interest in expatriate's adjustment abilities and keep them updated about future assignments possibilities.

Research shows that companies that make preparations for repatriation e.g. repatriation training and realistic expectations have success in retaining these employees and in adjusting them back home (Stroh, Gregersen & Black, 1998). On the other hand In the study of 134 repatriates Burmeister and Deller (2016) conclude that organizations offer mainly administrative repatriation support, whereas more strategic and knowledge transfer-related support is absent.

Martin and Anthony (2006) introduce implementations of different phases by using real life company examples. They argue that repatriation and retention process can be executed in a manner that is beneficial for the organization, the expatriate and the family. Planning for the process and program is inevitable, however, the results are reliant on how the program is executed by the different members of organization.



Suutari and Välimaa (2002) found in their study on Finnish repatriates several interesting factors. Firstly, adjustment seemed to consist of four facets of adjustment instead of the three that Black et al. (1992b) found previously (i.e. general, work, and interaction adjustment) Suutari et al. (2002) argue that work adjustment is divided in two dimensions; job adjustment and organizational adjustment.

Secondly, Suutari and Välimaa (2002) initiated that general adjustment related to six dimensions; age of the repatriate, the duration of an assignment, timing of the position negotiations, adjustment problems during expatriation, expatriate's own maintenance of events at home country, and conflicts on the new role. Thirdly, that organizational adjustment consisted on three antecedent variables; timing of the role decision, motivation to relocate internationally and role conflict (Suutari & Välimaa, 2002). One factor that significantly facilitated general and job adjustment was the length of time that was between the awareness of the new role and starting point of the new role; the more time one has the better adjustment occurs (Suutari & Välimaa, 2002).

Suutari and Välimaa (2002) found out in their study of Finnish repatriates a new phenomenon that job adjustment and organizational adjustment looked as if they were separate facets of adjustment and continued that if that were true these two facets should be treated independently. They also argue (argues that repatriation adjustment can be aided by individual's own activity by keeping track on events in the home country (Suutari & Välimaa 2002).

Greer and Stiles (2016) have investigated repatriation in the light of Human Resource Development (HRD) journals and came to a conclusion that repatriation motivation and failure may be addressed by creating and implementing an Organization Development Strategy, which would then help organizations to manage the repatriation process effectively

and ultimately leading to improved organizational outcomes. Furthermore, Greer and Stiles (2016) encourage HRD professionals to approach repatriation with the same alertness as expatriation preparation.

Suutari and Välimaa (2002) point out several factors which facilitate or hinder a successful repatriation process. Firstly, additional support for expatriates with longer assignment is needed. Secondly, lack of personal interest in international experience affects repatriation negatively. Thirdly, supplementary support is needed for repatriates who have struggled abroad while they tend to have difficulties when returning to home country. Fourthly, it is important for repatriates to know about the job situation well in advance. Job clarity seems to facilitate various facets of adjustment (Suutari & Välimaa, 2002).

Lazarova and Cerdin (2007) introduce an integrative model of repatriation which combines company repatriation support programs as well as individual career activism and found out that both views contribute repatriate retention.

Oddou, Osland and Blakney (2009) introduce repatriate knowledge transfer model and argue that few multinational enterprises harvest the learning and the knowledge repatriates have. They manifest that repatriate knowledge should be seen as a resource of competitive advantage in global economy (Oddou, Osland & Blakney, 2009).

Gregersen and Stroh (1997) indicated in their study of Finnish expatriates' and spouses' repatriation adjustment that time since returning home related extensively to work and general adjustment. However, Black and Gregersen (1991) found that time related only to work adjustment. A formal repatriation and retention program is important in retaining the experienced workforce within the company (Martin & Anthony, 2006).

When an open-ended question was asked enquiring U.S. managers returning home their advice to firms to enhance repatriation adjustment, 75% of the remarks advised strongly

that companies provides training and career counseling before and after repatriation to the U.S. In the study of U.S. managers returning home as much as 75% (Black & Gregersen, 1991).

In order to examine more densely repatriation and retention Martin and Anthony (2006) have divided the overall process into four phases, which are: pre-expatriation, during expatriation, prior to repatriation, and repatriation. Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) have integrated theoretical and empirical work concerning international and domestic adjustment literature. This integration enabled them to develop a more substantial theoretical framework to comprehend international adjustment.

Black et al. (1992b) argue that even though repatriation adjustment may be related to other facets of adjustment it is substantially a different phenomenon and worthy of distinct theoretical and empirical attention as well as research. Black et al. (1992b) have developed a comprehensive theoretical framework for repatriation adjustment. This Basic Framework of Repatriation Adjustment theory enables the examination of theoretical relationships between specific variables and specific facets of repatriation adjustment (Black et al., 1992b). This theory will be utilized as the grand theory for this research and it will be further explained in the following section.

#### **2.4 Theoretical framework of repatriation adjustment**

Black et al. (1992b) have integrated international and domestic adjustment and argue that this integration gives a through and comprehensive framework for understanding international adjustment. By researching the domestic adjustment literature, anticipatory adjustment was found as an important predictor of international adjustment (Black, Mendenhall & Oddou,

1991). Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) point out that if appropriate anticipatory adjustments are made, the actual adjustment in the novel international setting will be easier and faster. They also state that a key to successful anticipatory adjustment and actual adjustment is the accurate expectations of an individual. Anticipatory adjustment is a major factor in the Basic Framework of Repatriation Adjustment as it consists of two temporal dimensions; anticipatory adjustment and in-country adjustment. Anticipatory adjustment is the adjustment made prior to returning home and in-country adjustment is the adjustment after returning to home country. See Figure 1.

**Basic Framework of Repatriation Adjustment**

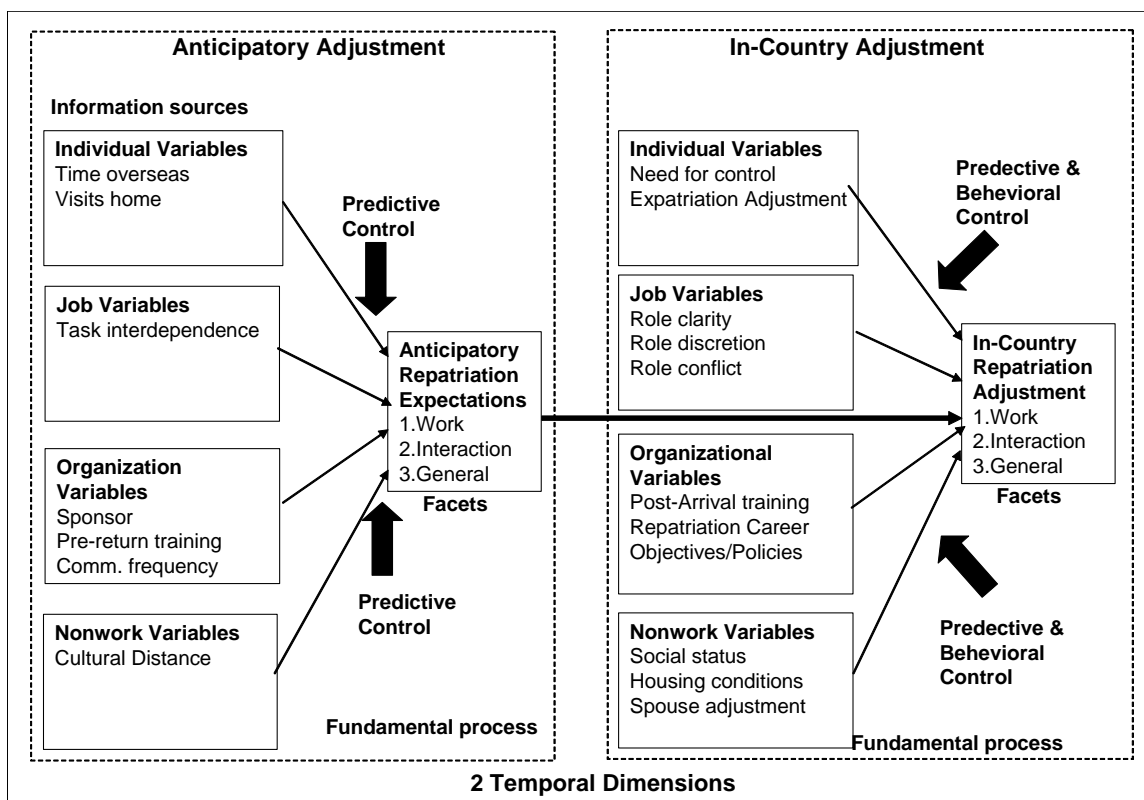


Figure 1 Basic Framework of Repatriation Adjustment (Black, Gregersen & Mendenhall 1992b, 745)

Anticipatory adjustment consists of four information sources. These Information sources are individual variables, job variables, organizational variables, and nonwork variables. These four different variables will each relate to three specific facets of anticipatory repatriation expectations which are the aspect of work, interaction, and general expectations.

In-country adjustment consists of four variable categories which are similar to anticipatory adjustment information sources; individual, job, organizational, and nonwork variables. However, the content of these variables is different in anticipatory adjustment and in in-country adjustment. According to Black et al. (1992b) factors that decrease uncertainty facilitate adjustment and factors that enhance uncertainty restrain adjustment.

The same variables will simultaneously relate to three facets of in-country repatriation adjustment; work, interaction and general adjustment. The fundamental process of anticipatory adjustment is in predictive control and the fundamental process of in-country adjustment is in predictive and behavioral control.

In order to conclude this theoretical framework of repatriation adjustment three different theoretical perspectives are combined; expatriation and repatriation adjustment as well as individual control (Black et al., 1992b).

In their repatriation theory Black et al. (1992b) use individual control theorists' findings in order to describe how control is reestablished during repatriation. When individuals are placed in a novel environment they have a need to reinstate a certain level of control. This occurs mainly in two ways – by predictive control and behavioral control. Predictive control is the capacity one has to foresee the anticipated behavior and the ability to comprehend how rewards and punishments correlate certain behaviors. Behavioral control is the power one has over one's own behavior which is vital in the existing surroundings. (Black et al., 1992b).

This grand theory will be introduced in more detail with the results of this study in Chapter 4. The rationale for the selection of the main theory as well as the research questions fill form the end of this Chapter.

### **2.5 The rationale for the selection of the main theory**

This theory was chosen as the grand theory for this study as it illustrates repatriation comprehensively as a process where both anticipatory adjustment, the adjustment made prior to returning home, as well as in-country adjustment, the adjustment made after returning to home country, are equally defined as the main elements of repatriation adjustment. Furthermore, it distinguishes between different variables of the readjustment; individual, job, organizational and non-work variables. This clear distinction enabled the researcher to code each variable and facet of repatriation adjustment and ensure that all the factors were taken into account when formatting the questionnaire.

### **2.6 Research questions**

The research of this study are as follows:

1. How did the repatriates themselves experience the repatriation process built by their employer?
2. What the repatriates were satisfied with and what not in their repatriation process?
3. What are the potential development areas in terms of repatriation and repatriation process?

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

This Chapter of the research paper is dedicated to describing the methodology and to explain the research process. First the context of the research will be explained followed by the introduction to the selection of the research method. Then a case study method with its benefits and challenges will be described and an introduction to the questionnaire of the study as well as the description of the implementation of the survey are presented. The analysis of the research data concludes this Chapter.

#### **3.1 Research context**

This study examines the repatriation of employees returning from an international assignment. The study was conducted in collaboration with Metsä-Botnia (Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab, nowadays Metsä Fibre Oy) an international company operating in the paper and forestry industry. The target of this study is a group of international assignees that were sent to set up a factory and enabled its start-up in Uruguay. This study examines the repatriation phase of this assignment, when the expatriates returned back to their home organization in Finland.

Metsä-Botnia plant in Fray Bentos, Uruguay, was one of the largest private investments in the history of Uruguay (2007). Metsä-Botnia started building the mill in 2005 and the production of pulp started in 2007. Metsä-Botnia wanted to know how the repatriation of their assignees returning from Uruguay went. KPMG was selected as a partner to carry out the research and Annika Varjonen<sup>1</sup> as the researcher. It was agreed with Metsä-Botnia that Varjonen will use the research data for her thesis. Therefore the empirical part of the research was created according to academic procedures as well as customer needs.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note a name change from Annika Varjonen to Annika Sandblom

The researcher has had an academic as well as professional interest in expatriate matters for over two decades. She carried out her Diploma Project for Bachelor Degree about expatriate adjustment and has had an interest in the other half of the picture of international assignment, in repatriation. The researcher has been working with international assignment matters in career-wise: expatriate and repatriate trainings, support and research functions, as well as international transfer policies. In addition, she has initiated and carried out several repatriation programs for multiple international companies. During this time repatriation has been raising more interest and companies have started to realize repatriation is an important part of the whole expatriate process and international human resource management.

The research project was initiated in late 2007 by discussing with Metsä-Botnia to co-operate in repatriation issues for their assignees returning from an assignment in Uruguay. The suggested repatriation program consisted of implementation of Repatriation Workshops as well as carrying out a survey on their repatriation program. The repatriation workshops were implemented during January 2008-January 2009 and the participants had remained in Finland 1-4 months. The amount of the Repatriation workshops held amounted to 6 with 41 participants.

The survey questionnaire was created in October-December 2008 and it was carried out with on-line based tool. The link to repatriation survey questionnaire was sent to repatriates in December 2008 and the target group consisted of 23 repatriates. 19 repatriates responded to the survey, which equals to 83% response rate.

A contemporary literature review was initiated 2007 and simultaneously the evaluation and the selection of the most suitable theory took place. The results of the survey were reported to Metsä-Botnia in February 2009. The writing of the thesis took place



periodically due to personal reasons of the researcher and the final step of this thesis was written during 2018.

This Master's thesis is written for scholars, HR professionals as well as for business people, specifically to those involved with expatriation or repatriation issues. The more business orientated version of the structure and findings of this study are presented in Appendix 5. This is the company report called "Functionality and quality analysis of Repatriation process".

### **3.2 Selecting the research method**

The aim of this research was to understand the repatriates and the repatriation process better, enable the repatriates to give feedback for their employer as well as produce information for the academic field of repatriation research. The research questions of this study were: How did the repatriates themselves experience the repatriation process built by their employer? What the repatriates were satisfied with and what not in their repatriation process? What are the potential development areas in terms of repatriation and repatriation process?

The topic of this research suits well to be studied qualitatively as questions starting with "what" and "how" are typical in qualitative research (Creswell, 1998). The focus of qualitative studies are processes instead of outcomes or products (Creswell, 1998). In addition, qualitative studies can produce a detailed view on the topic.

A researcher needs to decide whether to send questionnaires or interview the respondents, not only based on the research problem but also on the basis of sample size, location, funding and complexity of information. (Ghauri & Gronhaugh, 2005).

The selection of research method was limited from the beginning of this study as the case was based on the customer need for a repatriation program and its evaluation. This was found challenging and advantageous.

Qualitative business research can concentrate on practical matters, however, it should integrate or rely on a theory or theoretical concepts. This theoretical framework is the “grand” theory as it is consistent and stable and well known and implemented among scholars (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Furthermore, one underlying principle for a single case study is in order to test a significant theory. A single case study may meet all requirements e.g. confirming, challenging or extending, for testing the theory. (Yin, 2003).

For this research, a main or grand theory was selected. This theory, Basic Framework of Repatriation Adjustment by Black, Gregersen and Mendenhall (1992b) is widely known among IHRM scholars and regularly referred to. It is also a comprehensive theory which takes into account different stages and facets of repatriation adjustment. This theory was extensively utilized throughout this research from formatting the questionnaires to theory guided presentation of the research findings. In this study one could argue that a theory was challenged, however, testing a theory was not the main or the original purpose of the study.

Eriksson et al. (2008) point out that the justification of a research method should primarily be based on what the researcher wants to know on the basis of the research (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The aim of this research was to understand the repatriates and the repatriation process better, enable the repatriates to give feedback for their employer as well as produce new information for the academic field of the repatriation research.

According to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005) the underlying reason for choosing a qualitative method should be the research problem and the focus and purpose of the study.

Qualitative research is typical in social and behavioral sciences as well as among those researchers whose desire is to understand human behavior and functions.

In qualitative research the purpose of the study is often to understand, gain insights and create explanations (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). Accordingly, the focus of intent of qualitative research is to understand the complexity of a single idea or phenomenon (Creswell & Plano 2007).

Creswell and Plano (2007) define mixed methods research as that it involves both collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data comprises of closed-ended information and qualitative data includes open-ended information. However, surveys, which are traditionally quantitative source of data, are being used in ethnographic qualitative research (Creswell & Plano, 2007).

The data collection of this study was utilizing both methods as the questionnaire consisted of both close-ended information and open-ended information. A survey method was selected, as it seemed as the most accurate and best fitted to the needs; the aim, the sample and the funds. According to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005) surveys as well as interviews have challenges: with surveys it is the high rates of non-response and with interviews is the risk of interviewer bias. A survey is a valuable instrument in order to obtain opinions, attitudes or descriptions in addition to acquire cause-and-effect relationships. (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005).

### **3.3 Case study**

Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005) point out that a case study method is not synonymous with qualitative research and in fact can include quantitative methods or be completely quantitative. Especially in business studies, students tend to make a decision on the method

they will use first and then formulate their problem. However, it is argued that the research problems should form the method (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). Case study method is habitually used when studying a single organization and in an event that a researcher wants to identify some aspects or behavior of an organization or smaller unit (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005).

When carrying out business research, the researcher makes the case “a case” by transforming the object or objects of the study into an object of interpretation and understanding. By doing this the researcher defines the boundaries of the case and from this angle, it is crucial, that a special attention is paid to the criteria used when defining boundaries. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). However, according to Stoecker (1991) a case study is beyond the quantitative –qualitative debate and may utilize the best of both methods.

Case studies aim at examining “a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context “ (Yin 2003, 13). According to Yin (2003), one of the main rationales for choosing a case study is uniqueness. The aim of this research was to gain understanding of the whole phenomenon in this particular context.

Yin introduces different kind of methods of data collection in case study research. One of the principles of data collection is creating a case study database. One of the advantages to have a separate database is that it enables the data to be a subject of secondary analysis. The distinguishing of separate database and the case study report is rare among case studies and case study tends to use narrative telling. (Yin, 2003).

Case study research offers possibility to combine qualitative and quantitative materials. These both types of materials and methods can be used alongside to enrich the case description. Researchers should utilize both methods in the view of the research questions.

This form of combining methods is called complementarity. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 127).

Best practice reporting does not exist for case study research. The main task of the case study report is to bear in mind the research question and pursue to answer it by developing a firm connection between argument and evidence (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 131).

The audience of the case study should be taken into account when making decisions on the report part of the study. As case studies are frequently used for their potential appealing to business practitioners a researcher should carefully consider how to make the report interesting, readable and understandable for both parties, the academics and the business practitioners. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 131).

Stoecker (1991) argues strongly for the case study research and shows evidence why case studies are needed in academic research and profession. Mitchell (1983) asserts that the reason for choosing case study should be for "its explanatory power rather than for its typicality"(p. 203).

Stoecker (1991, 97 - 98) integrates other researchers (Yin, 1984; Mitchell, 1983; Runyan, 1982) definition of case study and adds an historical element by concluding that "the term "case study" should be reserved for those research projects which attempt to explain holistically the dynamics of a certain historical period of a particular social unit ".

Stoecker (1991) also manifests that a case study is a frame determining the boundaries for gathering the information. Giving specific structural and historical boundaries is crucial for the success of an effective case study research. He constitutes that "within this frame [case study] we may survey, interview, observe, participate, read, visit archives, dig

through garbage, or even count” (Stoecker, 1991, 98). Stoecker (1991) argues also that by determining the frame of the case means, in fact, determining the boundaries for the case.

By case study, Stoecker (1991) argues, we are able to enhance general theory and relate valuable interventions in complex situations. In a case study, theory implies how to acknowledge cause and effect as well as creates a question (Stoecker, 1991). Typically a case study is utilized when a specific scientific entity needs to be enlightened or a problem needs to be solved and practical action applied (Runyan, 1982).

Case study may enable to deepen our understanding of social processes by demonstrating the positive role of exceptions to generalizations. (Mitchell, 1983). According to Runyan (1982, 443) the case study method is especially useful for “developing context specific predictions, plans and decisions”.

Runyan argues that assessment of the case study should not be a debate of qualitative vs. quantitative nor subjective vs. objective. The case study is free of any definite data collection method and may, indeed, use a variety of techniques. (Runyan, 1982)

A theoretical framework has been given a structure and frame for this research process. The main theory has been utilized when developing the questionnaire as well as presenting the research results. However, the aim of this research was not to enable generalizations but to understand repatriates and repatriation process better in this unique case.

Dyer and Wilkins argue for a single case study (context) against a study of multiple cases (contexts). They argue that single case studies are more in-depth and include deep descriptions of a single case and offer a deep understanding of a particular social setting. (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991)

As any form of research method also case study method has received criticism. Mitchell (1983) indicates that the single case becomes meaningful and important only when presented with underlying theory as well as the accumulated knowledge of the analyst or a researcher and that, this in fact, settles the amount to which generalizations can be made.

Case studies have been criticized being subjective descriptions and lacking scientific rigour (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) and in some research method literature (e.g. Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005) case study and survey method are set against survey method. There is also strong critique against case studies. First of all maintaining objectivity in a case study is challenging, criteria of falsity is more difficult to sustain and making generalizations is not possible (Stoecker, 1991).

### **3.4 Questionnaire**

When a researcher, in case study research, is grounding his study in existing theory or testing the theory coding may be used. The researcher may derive the codes from theory. In addition to coding, case study analysis tends to include a general description of the case in chronological or thematic order (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

The case under investigation is quite unique, as there was a specific time frame, sample and resources, however, those were limited. Each variable and factor of the main theoretical framework was given a code in order to ensure that all the factors were considered when forming the survey questionnaire. Beyond everything, the customer need was the most important factor that determined the course of action for this company ordered research.

According to Yin (2003) a critical reader may not be satisfied with a narrative presented case study report but value more the possibility to inspect the raw data in order to

see what brought the researcher to the conclusions of the case study. A case study database increases noticeably the reliability of the entire case study. Yin (2003) also argues that not having a proper database is the main weakness of the case study research.

A pilot survey was carried out in advance in order to find out possible inaccurate or faulty matters as well as difficulties when answering the questionnaire. Both the questionnaire and the introductory letter were tested. Pilot group consisted of two people of the target group, who answered the questionnaire and in addition the questionnaire was commented and appraised by Metsä-Botnia HR Director and HR Manager. In addition a group of specialists gave their comments on the questionnaire too; Anni Beech, KPMG Global Mobility Advisor; Marja Tahvanainen, Phd. Economics, Docent, Aalto University. Anita Varjonen, Human Resource Director, Nordea, emerita, Master's Degree in Social Sciences. As a result of the pilot survey some of the questions in the survey were modified in order to better serve their purpose.

The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The questionnaire consisted of background information, statements and five open-ended questions. Background information consisted of 21 questions. Statements were divided into four categories chronologically according the repatriation process; before the assignment in Uruguay, during the assignment in Uruguay, repatriation to Finland, and future prospects. In addition, repatriation to Finland was divided into two subcategories. The first category being work and organization and the second being life and adjustment. 37 of the statements were closed-ended questions and they were answered in the scale of: totally agree, agree, partly agree, partly disagree, disagree, and totally disagree.



### **3.5 Implementation of the survey**

In order to receive as many answers as possible to the questionnaire a few preparations were made. The introductory letter was made motivational and was sent by Metsä-Botnia's HR personnel. The respondents were reminded two times to answer the questionnaire.

The participants answered the questionnaire during December 2008 with on-line based tool. Metsä-Botnia delivered a list of expatriates who had worked in Uruguay to KPMG. The participants received an introductory e-mail letter with a link to the questionnaire. KPMG People Services sent an e-mail to the subjects of the survey with instructions and a link to the survey. KPMG reminded the participants once. In addition, Metsä-Botnia's HR representative reminded participants to respond.

According to Ghauri et al. (2005) in order to get the data a researcher needs to communicate with the subjects, however, this communication is not required to be direct or face to face. Due to technical reasons, three people were unable to respond to the survey. They did not have access to Internet pages outside Metsä-Botnia's own Internet pages and therefore their responses are missing.

All the data were collected and saved in e-format and is available in Windows Excel Worksheet and according to Yin (2003) this can be called as the case study database.

### **3.6 Analysis of the data**

The answers of the questionnaires were analyzed by utilizing the case study. In order to serve the need of the client company some issues were added to the questionnaire that were not part of the main theory. The answers of the closed-ended questions were collected in the database and analyzed from there in conjunction with the open ended questions. All the data and

answers were translated into English by the researcher and translations were proof read by an individual of KPMG support team.

The aim of this ordered research for Metsä-Botnia was to find out, in this specific case, with what the repatriates were satisfied with and what not in their repatriation process as well as to discover potential development areas in terms of repatriation and repatriation process. The aim was to obtain answers that would enable better understanding of the repatriates point of view towards the repatriation process of Metsä-Botnia and to ultimately have some improvement suggestions for the company in their forthcoming repatriation process. The practical objectives were guiding the analyzation of the data. The empirical part of the thesis was organized in the sequence of the main theory by Black et al. (1992b) and the data in the company report was structured in a chronological order of the international assignment.

The following Chapter, Chapter 3, consists of the findings of the study.

## **4 FINDINGS**

The focus and frame for this Chapter comes from a theory, Basic Framework of Repatriation Adjustment, by Black, Gregersen and Mendenhall (1992b). The main elements of the theory and the Figure (Figure 1) of the theory have been presented in Chapter 2. The presentation of the findings of this study will be carried out by using a theory-guided presentation, thus the presentation will follow the logic and the sequence of the dimensions of the main theory.

First, the background of the subjects are presented followed by a short summary of the theoretical framework. At the end of this chapter the findings of the study are presented. For a swift, non-academic review of the findings please see Appendix 5.

### **4.1 Background of the subjects**

Subjects of the survey were employees of Metsä-Botnia and Botnia Mill Service (BMS) who had been on assignment in Uruguay for over 6 months between November 2007 and December 2008. The number totaled up to 23 people. The assignment duration of the respondents vary between 7 and 27 months. First assignees belonging to the target group left to Uruguay in April 2006 and the last assignees returned in December 2008. 19 people responded to the questionnaire which equals 83% as response rate.

17 respondents had Metsä-Botnia as they home organization and two respondents BMS. 9 of the respondents had a family accompanying them to Uruguay. 10 respondents were on the assignment alone. 5 assignees left their family in Finland. Only one respondent had previously lived abroad for over a period of 6 months.

## 4.2 Summary of the theoretical framework

The Basic Framework of Repatriation Adjustment (Black et al., 1992b) is formed by two temporal dimensions of adjustment: anticipatory adjustment and in-country adjustment. Anticipatory adjustment and in-country adjustment are both divided to four information sources; individual variables, job variables, organizational variables, and nonwork variables. Furthermore there variables relate to three facets of anticipatory repatriation expectations; work, interaction and general expectations.

The consistence of these variables is different in anticipatory adjustment and in-country adjustment. In anticipatory adjustment individual variables consist of *time orverseas* and *visits home* and job variables consist of *task interdependence*. Organisational variables consist of *sponsor*, *pre-return training* and *communication frequency* and nonwork variables consist of *cultural distance*.

In in-country adjustment individual variables consist of *need for control* and *expatriation adjustment* and job variables consist of *role clarity*, *role discretion*, and *role conflict*. Organizational variables consist of *post-arrival training*, *repatriation career* and *objectives/policies* and nonwork variables consist of *social status*, *housing conditions* and *spouse adjustment*.

Now a more thorough explanation of the variables of the main theoretical framework in conjunction with research results will be presented.

### 4.2.1 Anticipatory adjustment and repatriation expectations

The primary focus of anticipatory repatriation adjustment is on predictive control and accurate expectations. Predictive control allows an individual to know what is expected of him as well as how the environment disposes towards a certain kind of behavior. (Black et al., 1992b)

Anticipatory changes will mainly consist of cognitive adjustments. When conceptualizing repatriation adjustment in terms of three facets of adjustments it seems that the most significant anticipatory expectation would be the ones dealing with work, interacting with others, and concerning the general environment back home (Black et al., 1992b).

In this theoretical framework of repatriation it is theorized that each of the facets of anticipatory repatriation expectations has the most solid influence on its counter party facet of adjustment in in-country repatriation adjustment (Black et al., 1992b).

Bandura (1977 cited in Black et al., 1992b) argues, that information is the fundamental force in forming or modifying anticipatory expectations.

Anticipatory adjustment is therefore dependent of how much accurate information a repatriate has. Information accuracy would logically be dependent on period of time spend abroad and the rate of change in the home country or home organization. The longer the assignment period is the greater is the rate of change in the home country and therefore the greater is the possibility that repatriates expectations are inaccurate. (Black et al., 1992b).

#### **4.2.1.1 Individual Variables consists of Time overseas and visits home.**

##### *Time overseas*

It is possible that factors that facilitate expatriation adjustment may restrain repatriation adjustment. In addition, the length of an expatriate assignment may affect the repatriation adjustment; the longer the overseas assignment is the more complicated is the work adjustment upon return. In addition, the longer expatriate remain overseas the more difficult will their work adjustment in repatriation phase be (Black & Gregersen, 1991).

The assignment duration of the respondents vary between 7 and 27 months. First assignees belonging to the target group left to Uruguay in April 2006 and the last assignees returned to Finland in December 2008.

#### *Visits home*

Yet, another variable that could influence accurate anticipatory expectations is home leave or other visits back to the home country and home office. The information a sojourner gathers or receives during these trips could become a means of anticipatory predictive control, and the experiences could be a source of anticipatory behavioral control. Ultimately, it could be that the amount and length of visits back home and the home office would determine the potential of anticipatory predictive and behavioral control (Black et al., 1992b).

13 assignees visited Finland during the assignment as 6 did not. Assignees that did not visit home during their stay in Uruguay had somewhat shorter assignment, time varying between 7 and 10 months.

#### **4.2.1.2 Job Variables**

Job Variables consists solely on Task interdependence.

#### *Task interdependence*

Another variable that could have an impact on anticipatory expectations is task interdependence between the sojourner and the home country operations. It could be expected that the greater the interdependence between the expatriate and the home country operations the greater the information exchange between them. The assumption is that, the greater the information flow between the two parties (sojourner and home organization) the more accurate the expectations of job related matters would be. The outcome of this would then most strongly relate to work repatriation adjustment (Black et al., 1992b).

When assessing this variable one has to bear in mind the extraordinary circumstances of this case i.e. a group of Finnish expatriates in Uruguay setting up a first foreign factory of Metsä-Botnia with significant investment both in financial terms as well as in terms of future production capacity as well as the certain time limit (these assignees were there to enable the start-up of the factory and where then to return home) this project had. Therefore, based on my experiences as well as comments on the behalf of Metsä-Botnia Human resources department, it can be assumed that communication was much greater between the organizations (in Finland and in Uruguay) than usually is in individual expatriate assignments.

Task interdependence was referred to in questionnaire with several statements; smoothness of communication between the expatriate and home organization; amount of information on organizational changes in Finland; information in advance on repatriation work task.

9 respondents totally agreed or agreed that communication with home organization was smooth. In addition 5 respondents partly agreed. Only one disagreed and 4 partly disagreed with the smoothness of communication. However, only 3 repatriates totally agreed or agreed that they received sufficient information on changes that took place in the home organization and 7 partly agreed. 3 respondents totally disagreed or disagreed that information on changes in home organization was sufficient.

There was much variance between the respondents on the level of satisfaction with the information given in advance about their repatriation work task i.e. 6 persons agreed totally and 5 agreed or partly agreed. It was assumed that the 6 persons that agreed totally that the information level was satisfactory in advance about their repatriation work task were the ones who either repatriated to the same work that they had before the assignment or the

ones whose work task was confirmed well before their return to Finland. These assumptions proved to be inaccurate in most cases while there was little correlation between the factors.

#### **4.2.1.3 Organization Variables**

Organizational Variables consist of Sponsor, Pre-return training and Communication frequency.

##### *Sponsor*

Another facilitator in forming accurate anticipatory expectations is a possible sponsor or mentor during the assignment. Customarily, this would be an individual in the home office whose assignment is to keep in touch with a specific expatriate and to convey important information to him. Having a sponsor would be expected to relate positively to work expectations and work repatriation adjustment (Black et al., 1992b).

According to Metsä-Botnia HR function in Finland assignees had no official sponsor or facilitator during their assignment. Therefore a decision was made not to include a question about this matter in the survey. Even though there was no official sponsor pointed for an assignee, it is still possible that some of the assignees had an unofficial sponsor informing them on important matters taking place in home organization. This would have then affected the outcome of the accuracy of work or organizational expectations. In order to find out more of this in-depth interviews with repatriates could have been carried out.

##### *Pre-return training*

One facilitator in attaining information and forming accurate expectations would be training and orientation prior to repatriation or the return home. Should the training rigor be sufficient and the content extensive, covering all three different facets of anticipatory repatriation



adjustment - work, interaction, and general- so would the formation of accurate expectations of the above mentioned facets to be more likely to take place (Black et al., 1992b).

Before the assignees left for their assignment to Uruguay Metsä-Botnia offered them pre-departure training. This training included information on repatriation too. However, the precise content of the training remains unknown while the trainings were carried out by a third party. Out of the 23 repatriates who returned the questionnaire 17 took part in the pre-departure training organized before the assignment and 2 did not.

There was a statement in the questionnaire “I was told in advance about challenges related to repatriation” and 14 repatriates more or less agreed with this statement. We cannot be sure whether they received this information in the pre-departure training initiated, however this is possible.

Black and Gregersen argue (1991) that repatriation adjustment could be enhanced through training prior to or soon after repatriation adjustment. In Metsä-Botnia’s repatriation process, repatriation workshop was included. However, this took place after repatriates return back to Finland from their assignment and therefore the details of this workshop and its outcomes will be explained under the heading “Post-Arrival training”.

#### *Communication frequency*

The third variable in facilitating accurate expectations and reducing uncertainty is the communication frequency between the subsidiary and the home office. One would assume that, the greater the communication frequency, the greater the information flow which would result diminished uncertainty. However, the content of the information received would determine in which of the different facets (work, interaction or general) the reduction of uncertainty would effect. (Black et al., 1992b).

This Organizational Variable of Communication frequency was referred to in questionnaire with several statements; smoothness of communication between the expatriate and home organization; amount of information given on organizational changes in Finland; the amount of information in advance on repatriation work task. In fact these are the same factors that were referred to in task interdependence of job variables. The reason is that communication frequency factor is said to consist of two aspects of communication; the frequency of communication i.e. how often the communication takes place as well as the content of communication i.e. what is communicated. More attention should have been paid to this factor, communication frequency, in the questionnaire. Especially the regularity of communication should have been asked more precisely while the questions cover more of the content than the frequency aspect of communication.

Out of the repatriates 9 totally agreed or agreed that communication with home organization was smooth and 5 partly agreed. Only one disagreed and 4 partly disagreed with the smoothness of communication. However, only 3 repatriates totally agreed or agreed that they received sufficient information on changes that took place in the home organization and 7 partly agreed. 3 respondents totally disagreed or disagreed that information on changes in home organization were sufficient.

#### **4.2.1.4 Nonwork Variables**

Nonwork Variables consists solely on Cultural Distance.

##### *Cultural Distance*

This nonwork variable cultural distance in not explained in the same manner than other variables. In the questionnaire there was a statement to be referred “Life in Uruguay differed greatly from life in Finland” referred to this expatriation adjustment and 13 respondents

totally agreed or agreed that life in Uruguay differed greatly from life in Finland and 5 of them partly agreed or disagreed. No one disagreed totally.

This paper now commences to the open comments given by the survey participants regarding anticipatory adjustment. The statement in the survey was “Further comments on time before the repatriation to Finland”. Please note that the comments were originally given in Finnish and been translated into English subsequently.

Best information on repatriation process could be received from previous repatriates.

In terms of work task after the assignment, the company operated really well and the discussions on the future work task was carried out in good time.

Apartment, school issues etc. during the assignment the company dealt really well and that really helped the family to be happy. It helped the assignee to push forward when you knew that everybody were happy at home.

Project assignees were forgotten when informing about the changes in home organization. Information flow was not good.

I have done project related work 100% of my time during the year after repatriation.

In the assignment contract, it was agreed that I would return to same work task and shift. The contract was also drawn in the way that I should have paid for the costs of my family to accompany me.

#### **4.2.2 In-country Adjustment and repatriation adjustment**

The primary focus of in in-country repatriation adjustment is on both predictive and behavioral control, unlike in anticipatory adjustment. Predictive control means, as explained before, foretelling how behavior is received by an environment. Behavioral control is also essential i.e. exhibiting behaviors that are appropriate to home environment. The more accurate anticipatory expectations are, the more undemanding it will be to adjust to cognitive

and behavioral setting and have a successful repatriation. (Black, Gregersen & Mendenhall 1992b).

Bandura (1977 cited in Black et al.,1992b) introduced the Social Learning Theory (SLT) that combines cognitive and behavioral theories. According to SLT people make adjustments through trial and error. Through this process people also learn over time what is expected of them (Black et al., 1992b).

#### **4.2.2.1 Individual Variables**

Individual Variables consists of Need for control and Expatriation Adjustment.

##### *Need for control*

The extent of individual variables and characteristics is immense, though, only some of the characteristics have been systematically tested or their relative importance examined. From a control theory perspective only two characteristics seem to be distinctively important; need for control or belief of control. The variable that determines how much predictive control one has is how much control one desires that is to say need for control. It can be supposed, that typically the greater the efforts to obtain predictive control, the greater the actual predictive control would be, and therefore, as a result, the better in-country repatriation adjustment would be. (Black et al., 1992b).

The need for control can be assessed by looking at how much control the individual desires and it can be expected that usually the more efforts of gaining predictive control are made the bigger the actual predictive control occurs and therefore the better in-country repatriation adjustment. (Black et al., 1992b).

One crucial individual determinant of behavioral control is the persistence in gaining behavioral control. Therefore, the more an individual tries to gain behavioral control

and the more effort he makes in attempting to readjust to the home country, the more successful is his repatriation adjustment. (Black et al., 1992b).

It seemed difficult to find out this factor, need for control, already when forming the questionnaire. It was decided to refer to it with the statement “It was (or would have been) important to me to receive information on general conditions in Finland before my actual repatriation to Finland (e.g. “economical situation”)”. Perhaps this factor should have been referred to with some other statements as well.

12 respondents (63%) totally agreed, agreed or partly agreed that it was or would have been important to receive information on conditions in Finland before repatriation to Finland and 7 respondents did not consider this information important to them.

#### Expatriation adjustment

Studies also show that factors that facilitate adjustment in expatriation phase may, in contrary, hinder repatriation adjustment (Black & Gregersen, 1991).

According to Ashford and Taylor (1990) the greater the degree of the change required of individuals to adjust, the more difficult is the adjustment. When considering repatriation adjustment, two variables should be taken into account. First, the magnitude of the differences between the host country (e.g. culture, organization, task) and the home country, and second, the degree of adjustment an individual makes during the international assignment. By integrating these two factors we could ultimately conclude that the greater difference between the current behavior and the future predicted behavior, the greater the difficulty of adjustment. (Black et al., 1992b).

In this case of Metsä-Botnia the start-up of the factory in Uruguay employed a group of Finnish expatriates one could assume that when Finns were working together they continued working in the way they were used to do in Finland. However, there were also

international people e.g. South Americans working at the factory and the actual place of working and living for these expatriates was Uruguay. Almost all of the respondents private housing was in the same area and according to information most of them spent lived in the same area of Fray Bentos, Uruguay.

The statement in the questionnaire “Life in Uruguay differed greatly from life in Finland” referred to the magnitude of difference between the two countries. 15 respondents agreed that life in Uruguay differed greatly from life in Finland and only 3 partly disagreed.

#### *Expatriation Adjustment*

Black and Gregersen (1991) found out that there is a possibility that the factors that facilitate expatriation adjustment may consecutively restrain repatriation adjustment. The degree of adjustment, in assignment was referred in questionnaire with statements saying “I adjusted well to Uruguay”. 18 of the respondents agreed with this statement. In addition, everyone who could relate to the statement “My spouse/children adjusted well to Uruguay” somewhat agreed with it.

Black et al. (1992b) also introduce a perspective that past adjustments might facilitate future adjustments while one learns how to be better at adjusting. This point of view might create inconsistency when assessing this expatriation adjustment factor as well as lead to a potential paradox of the transfer and adjustment of international personnel (Black et al., 1992b). More research is needed in order to comprehend these factors.

Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) point out that the same factors that facilitate adjustment in expatriation phase may indeed, inhibit repatriation adjustment e.g. superior housing, conditions abroad may cause difficulties upon return to the home country and that the longer the expatriation period the more harsh the work adjustment in repatriation phase.

#### 4.2.2.2 Job variables

Job variables consist of Role clarity, Role discretion and Role conflict.

Degree of adjustment is subjectively the level of comfort the person feels in the new role and the degree of which he feels adjusted to the role requirements. Objectively the degree of adjustment is the level which one masters the role requirements and is able to exhibit the adjustment through his performance (Black, 1988).

Black and Mendenhall (1990) noted that previously in literature adjustment was constructed as one measurement and therefore the former research was unable to explain enough anomalies of different adjustment e.g. work-adjustment (Black & Mendenhall 1990).

There are three particular job variables that seem to have a substantial impact on job-related uncertainty, hence, they would effect on repatriation adjustment; role clarity, role discretion, and role conflict (Black et al., 1992b).

##### *Role clarity*

Role clarity deals with the degree that an individual knows what is anticipated of him in his job. Role clarity can be explained individual's level of knowledge of what is expected of him on the job. The more clear work expectations are, the better the predictive control is.

Therefore, role clarity reduces uncertainty associated with work settings and as a consequence, facilitates repatriation work adjustment. (Black et al., 1992b).

15 respondents agreed that their expectations on their work task in Finland proved to be true and 4 disagreed.

##### *Role discretion*

Originally role discretion in the expatriate literature was researched by Black in 1988 when he and he discovered that role discretion has a significant positive impact on work adjustment.

Black et al. (1992b) argue that greater role discretion enhances the utilization of previous behavioral patterns and therefore consecutively reduces uncertainty in novel situations as well as facilitates adjustment in new surroundings. (Black et al., 1992b). Kauppinen (1994) has also concluded that role discretion increases job satisfaction and therefore facilitates adjustment.

According to Black et al. (1992b) adjustment theorists suggest that role discretion enables the individual to change their work role in a way that fits the individual best. When doing this an individual is able to utilize precedent, common roles of oneself.

In order to find out from the participants their role discretion a following statement was made in the questionnaire: "I felt that I had enough opportunities to influence my work task after my repatriation to Finland". Most of the respondents (14) agreed with this statement.

#### *Role conflict*

Role conflict is dependent on conflicting signals of the expectations of an individual in the new work role. Role conflict would be expected to inhibit repatriation work adjustment. (Black et al., 1992b).

The four respondents that disagreed with the statement that "My expectations on my work task in Finland proved to be true" had some degree of role conflict. Also the four respondents who disagreed with the statement "I felt that I had enough opportunities to influence my work task after my repatriation to Finland" had some conflicting experiences of their work role.



#### 4.2.2.3 Organizational variables

Organizational variables consist of Post-Arrival training, Repatriation Career and Objectives/Policies.

##### *Post-Arrival training*

While, in anticipatory adjustment phase, pre-departure training and orientation could facilitate predictive control, so could, in-country adjustment, post-return training too (Black et al., 1992b).

Should the rigor of the training be adequate and the post-return training comprise of all three facets of adjustment - adjustment to work, adjustment to interacting with home nationals, and adjustment to general environment and culture, then the training be expected to affect all three facets of adjustment as well (Black & Mendenhall 1990; Black et al., 1992b).

However, should the training focus only on one of the facets of adjustment e.g. work adjustment, it could be expected that only work adjustment would be positively influenced and possibly other facets of adjustment would not be influenced at all (Black et al., 1992b).

In order to facilitate the repatriation adjustment all the respondents of this survey, including their spouses, were offered the possibility to participate in Repatriation workshop provided by Metsä-Botnia and carried out by KPMG People Services. The main features of the workshop will be now introduced, continued by illustrating two other organizational variables; repatriation career and objectives/policies.

##### *Repatriation Workshop - participants and facts*

Out of the assignees 18 took part in the repatriation workshop organized in Finland and only one assignee did not. Out of the accompanying spouses, 6 took part in the repatriation workshop as 3 did not.

The workshop duration was one day and it was held in Metsä-Botnia's premises in Espoo, Finland. The facilitator of the workshop was from KPMG People Services, a specialist in expatriate and repatriate issues. There were altogether 6 workshops held during January 2008-January 2009. For each workshop there were 2-12 participants either repatriates and/or their spouses. The language of the workshops was Finnish.

#### *Repatriation Workshop - goals*

The intention of the training was to give information, encourage interaction and activate one's own thinking as well as enable the participants to undergo their assignment and repatriation experiences. The goals of the workshops were as follows: 1. give a realistic picture of repatriation and facilitate the adjustment to Finland. 2. Ease down the culture shock and frustrations associated with re-entry. 3. Offer a possibility to give feedback and development suggestions in international assignment issues. 4. Exhibit motivation towards work and work performance.

#### *Repatriation Workshop - program*

The training day started with looking at the international assignment process as a whole and briefly going through each facet of the process i.e. selection, training performance management, support and repatriation by giving out facts and figures on each facet. The participants were encouraged to comment on their experiences of different stages.

The next step was a group work for resolving the assignment experiences. The participants carried this out in small groups by sharing their own assignment experiences with each other. They also discussed about the similarities and differences that they underwent during expatriation.

Repatriation was then introduced by going through a selection of repatriation research facts, reviewing some of the most common difficulties repatriates face and tools for a

successful repatriation. In addition, different repatriation profiles were introduced and each participant was also requested to choose a repatriation profile that best fitted his own experience of repatriation.

Adjustment process was then presented by using the U-curve theory and going through each step of the process. Participants were asked to discuss their experiences and feelings of different stages of the process in small groups.

In the end of the training SWOT -analysis was shortly presented. Participants were given instructions to use the SWOT -analysis as a tool for self- assessment and career planning. The aim was to activate the repatriate and the spouse to go through the assignment in such a way that would encourage them to see their own assignment experiences and gained knowledge in a way that would enable them to better utilize their learnings in the future.

*Repatriation Workshop - feedback*

All the participants of the Repatriation Workshop were asked to give feedback. Here are the main results and opinions of the participants of the Repatriation Workshops.

<b>Summary of the Repatriation Workshop Feedback Forms (41 participants)</b>	
1=totally disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=do not know, 4=somewhat agree, 5=totally agree	
	Average
Content of the workshop was good	<b>4,5</b>
Workshop gave valuable and practical information to me	<b>4,4</b>
Workshop contents will be useful to me in my work	<b>4,2</b>
Total evaluation of the workshop	<b>4,4</b>

Table 1      Summary of the Repatriation Workshop Feedback Forms

Almost all of the repatriates of this survey participated in the Repatriation workshop and the participants evaluated the workshop as a good one. All three facets of repatriation adjustment (work, interaction and general) were anticipated in the Repatriation workshop. It can be therefore assumed that this post-return training facilitated repatriation adjustment on every facet of repatriation adjustment i.e. work, interaction and general adjustment.

In the repatriation questionnaire there was a statement about Repatriation workshop “Repatriation workshop that I participated has been worthwhile” and 14 people more or less agreed with this statement.

The next section provides an explanation of organizational variables for in-country adjustment: repatriation career and objectives/policies.

#### *Repatriation Career*

Clear and compatible career objectives between the individual and the organization will affect positively to work adjustment and repatriation career. (Black, Gregersen & Mendenhall, 1992b)

9 of the assignees returned to the same work (same working environment and same duties) than prior to the assignment. Majority of the respondents were satisfied with their work task in Finland after the assignment. Two respondents were clearly unsatisfied. These two returned to the same work task as prior to the assignment.

Negotiations for the work task after repatriation started on average approximately 6 months before the end of the assignment. Work task after repatriation was confirmed approximately 5 months before the end of the assignment so on average work task after repatriation was solved relatively quickly. New work tasks were decided on average 4 months prior to the repatriation. On the other hand 3 respondents did not disclose their answer and

one respondent told in the open questions that work task were not decided by the time of repatriation.

When assessing this factor (repatriation career) we must still keep in mind that even though the career objectives were clear it does not necessarily mean that an individual is satisfied with his work (Black et al., 1992b).

A statement in the questionnaire that also refers to this matter is "I consider/have seriously considered changing my employer before or after repatriation". 8 respondents more or less agreed with this statement.

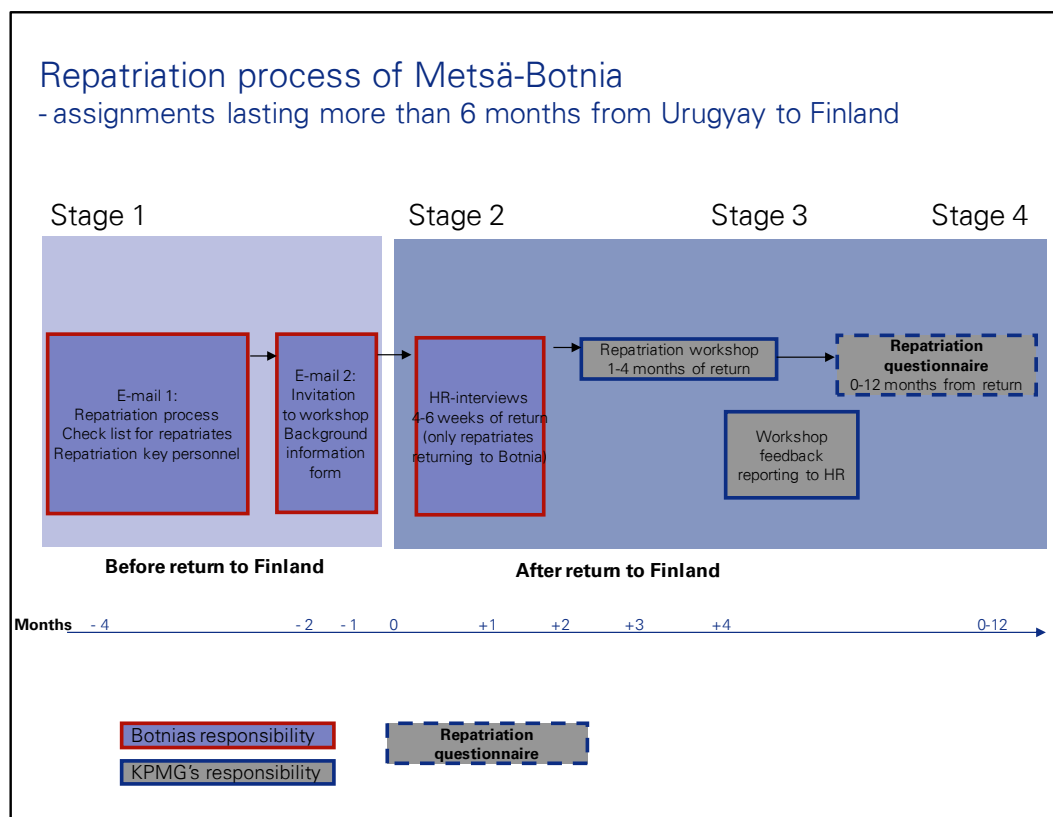
When looking at the case study database those repatriates that returned to different work task after assignment half had considered changing an employer. Majority of the repatriates agreed that the organization in Finland values their know-how, however 4 respondents thought that they cannot utilize the skills learned in Uruguay in their current work. Majority of the respondents were of the opinion that adjustment to working environment in Finland is/has been challenging.

One factor that could also explain the successfulness of the international assignment or repatriation process is the opinion repatriates have when stated "I would most likely go to a new international assignment if it was offered to me". All the repatriates of this survey more or less agreed with this statement.

#### *Objectives/Policies*

Formation of accurate expectations upon repatriation is facilitated by clear organizational repatriation policies and processes (Black et al., 1992b).

At this stage Metsä-Botnia's repatriation process from Uruguay to Finland will be introduced. This repatriation process consisted initially of 4 stages.



1

Figure 2 Repatriation process of Metsä-Botnia from Uruguay to Finland. Assignments lasting more than 6 months.

Metsä-Botnia Human Resource department wanted to organize a process for expatriates returning from an assignment from Uruguay. Together with KPMG People Services a four phased repatriation process was formed. The process was chronologically divided into two sections; prior and after the return to Finland.

Different tasks were allocated to Metsä-Botnia and KPMG. The program was carried out in close co-operation with one another.

The initial stage comprised of two different e-mails. The first e-mail was, an informative e-mail to the target group on (1) Metsä-Botnia's repatriation process, (2)

Checklist for repatriates, and (3) contact information of key personnel at repatriation. The second e-mail with an invitation to repatriation workshop for the repatriate and his/her spouse as well a background information form to the workshop to be filled in by the expatriate.

The second stage consisted of repatriation workshop and reporting the outcomes of the workshop to Metsä-Botnia's HR department. In the third stage of the repatriation process Metsä-Botnia's HRM department intended to interviewed the repatriates. At the end of the assignment, representative from human resource department interviewed 15 assignees, of which 13 were interviewed in Finland, 1 in Uruguay and 1 in both countries. At the time the questionnaire was answered 4 assignees remained without being interviewed.

As the last phase of the repatriation program the repatriation questionnaires were sent to repatriates.

In order to carry out the program two parties were involved – Metsä-Botnia and KPMG. This multifaceted Repatriation process of Metsä-Botnia had several arrangements, before and after the return to Finland, which can be predicted to have facilitated repatriation adjustment. The respondents experienced that the organization in Uruguay supported them more than home organization in Finland in matters concerning repatriation. Support given by the home organization in Finland was inadequate for some of the repatriates.

#### **4.2.2.4 Nonwork Variables**

Nonwork Variables consist of Social status, Housing conditions and Spouse Adjustment.

##### *Social status*

Social status is referred to in the questionnaire with three statements which relate to social life, lever of satisfaction toward life and the accuracy of repatriation expectations.

16 respondents agreed that their social life in Finland has returned to the way it was before the assignment. When the repatriates were asked about their satisfaction towards the current life in Finland 17 were pleased with it. 15 repatriates agreed that their expectations on repatriation and related matters proved to be true.

#### *Housing conditions*

Black and Gregersen (1991, 685) argue that some nonwork variables have an important association with work adjustment e.g. by providing information on housing could facilitate work adjustment.

Almost all of the repatriates agreed that housing arrangements in Finland worked out well so they were generally satisfied with housing arrangements.

#### *Spouse adjustment*

According to Black and Stephens (1989 cited in Black et al., 1992b) research suggests that cross-cultural adjustments of expatriates and spouses related considerably to each other. Gregersen and Stroh (1997) found that repatriates work adjustment related to spouses' interaction adjustment. Black and Gregersen (1991) suggest that there is a high correlation between the expatriate and the spouse repatriation adjustment a company needs to pay attention to spouse repatriation adjustment too.

Repatriation workshops provided by Metsä-Botnia were tailored to repatriate spouses too. Out of the accompanying spouses, 6 took part in the repatriation workshop as 3 did not.

#### *Other variables in In-Country Adjustment*

The repatriates were asked about their own repatriation adjustment with two statements. First statement "At first I felt that adjustment back to Finland and the way of life in Finland was a bit challenging" referred to the initial adjustment after return. The second statement "In my



own opinion I have adjusted well back to Finland” referred to one’s own opinion about the level of adjustment. For the first statement about the initial adjustment 14 repatriates more or less agreed with the statement and 4 disagreed. With the second statement concerning adjustment 18 respondents agreed with.

Now the open comments given by the survey respondents to in-country adjustment, the adjustment after returning to Finland will be provided. The statements in the survey were; “Further comments on work or organization during or after repatriation”, “Further comments on life and adjustment during or after repatriation”. Please note that the comments were originally given in Finnish and later translated into English.

#### Comments on work or organization during or after repatriation

Work task especially in the beginning was not clear. During the assignment, I got used to having more responsibility and making independent decisions, so that needed adjusting.

Botnia has forgotten about the know-how and new views of the project employees. This information could be utilized and it could be rather significant in certain areas.

Work task was not decided by the time of repatriation.

#### Comments on life and adjustment during repatriation or after that

Abroad communication to Finland decreased and was not naturally at the same level. It has not returned to the same level, but I did return to different city than where I lived before. That does matter a lot.

When I returned, I thought that repatriation isn’t that big a deal, but in practice it is much more challenging. Social network has decreased due to some kind of jealousy. On the other hand, that kind of friendships, which were not ok anymore, may go, if they cannot handle this.

I left in the middle of a construction project of my own home. After repatriation I was ”homeless” for a long time, but that was mainly my own choice. Life after repatriation has evolved mainly around the construction project. Maybe that has also greatly affected to the repatriation challenges. There has not been a lot of social life.

Health check has not been carried out after repatriation and nobody has really asked after it either.

Customs problems with our container.

Finally, the respondents were asked to give their opinion on repatriation in general and opinions how Metsä-Botnia should develop their repatriation process. The statements were; “Further comments on repatriation in general” and “in my opinion repatriation process of Botnia should be developed as follows”. Please note that the comments were originally given in Finnish and were subsequently translated into English.

#### Comments on repatriation in general

I would put more effort into learning the local language prior the assignment. It could even be mandatory.

I have not a clear picture whether this assignment was useful or not to my career. I have been allowed to continue at work, so i guess it did not go too bad. Personally I consider the assignment as a good experience professionally and otherwise as well. I did consider changing employer a lot at the end of the assignment and after returning to Finland, because I had a strong feeling that my assignment failed in respect to my work.

I have missed a lot those wonderful times in Uruguay. Even so much, to have seriously considered with my wife if we would like to move there during the winter season when we have retired.

Repatriation workshop was extremely good.

Physically it was hard to return directly back to work, because we did such long shifts during the assignment.

#### Comments on how repatriation process of Botnia should be developed

One workshop is not enough. Repatriation is not easy, motivation is less than normally and that does not disappear in a month.

There should be a development discussion at the end of the assignment to discuss how it went, what could have been developed etc. Sure it is good to get feedback throughout the assignment, so that everything is not left to last minute if there was some things which could have been done differently.

In my case, everything was fine. Therefore I do not see any development needs. Botnia took good care of us as well as all the other co-operation partners.

Not only repatriation process, but remembering the project personnel during the assignment should be taken into consideration.

Receiving managers should be coached to be able to receive the repatriates and to understand their new thoughts. Managers should think together with the repatriate how things and skills learnt during the assignment, could be taken forward and what new tasks the repatriate could start to do. On the assignment the pace is very hectic and in factories in Finland very easy-going. That change managers might not understand.

The main findings of the study are summarized in the next Chapter.

## **5 DISCUSSION**

In this discussion Chapter a summary of repatriates' opinions towards repatriation process is presented first, followed by revision suggestions to the main theory of the study. At the end of the discussion part practical implications and limitations of this study as well as suggestions for future research are introduced.

### **5.1 Main Findings of the study**

First part of this Discussion is dedicated to the summary of the main findings that emerged from the study, followed by the suggestions to revisions of the main theoretical framework utilized in the study. After this, evaluation of the study and methodology including limitations of the study, ethics as well as research validity and reliability will be presented.

All in all, according to the survey answers the repatriation process of Metsä-Botnia was handled well and repatriates were satisfied with most parts of their repatriation programme.

Majority of the respondents and their families were pleased to take on an international assignment and the adjustment to Uruguay went relatively well for the assignees, spouses and children. The assignees were generally satisfied with the assignment in Uruguay, however, more information about general conditions in Finland before repatriation was desired. Communication between assignee and home organization could have been improved and more information about changes taking place in the home organization could have been provided.

Majority of the assignees were aware of the work task after repatriation in good time. However, some assignees would have liked to have received more information in

advance about the work task in Finland. In case of couple of the assignees, the decision on the work task was finalized just shortly before or after repatriation.

Repatriates were relatively satisfied with the information they received in terms of different stages of repatriation process. Respondents felt that the organization in Uruguay supported them more than the home organization in Finland. Majority of the respondents thought that adjustment to working environment in Finland had been challenging. On the other hand, many repatriates also felt that the home organization in Finland appreciates their know-how.

Majority of the respondents felt that they had had a chance to impact the work task after repatriation and most of them were also satisfied with the work task after repatriation in Finland. 2 respondents were clearly unsatisfied with their work tasks. These two returned to same work task than before the assignment. Most respondents experienced adjustment back to Finland slightly challenging, but had according to their own opinion, adjusted well back to Finland. Spouses and children of all the respondents had adjusted well back to Finland.

According to the participants of the survey, practical arrangements during repatriation and apartment issues were handled extremely well. The repatriates were also satisfied with the fact that they had been informed about the challenges related to repatriation in advance. Most of them thought that the repatriation workshop was useful, although 3 people were of different opinion. Repatriates were also satisfied with the information provided in advance for them on the challenges of repatriation. 8 people had seriously considered changing an employer at the end of the assignment or after returning to the home country. This fact should be taken seriously. It could be taken as a sign of dissatisfaction towards the company, new task or repatriation itself. The fact that half of the repatriates who

received a new work tasks had considered changing the employer. Perhaps this could be interpreted in a way that Job Variables (role clarity, role discretion and role conflict) do play an important role in successful repatriation and repatriates commitment towards their employer.

The satisfaction with the assignment to Uruguay was on a good level and assignees had adjusted well to the host country. One of the factors that could be improved is the communication between the assignee and the home organization. Repatriates were also eager to know about the changes that took place in home organization, however, the communication was somewhat insufficient. Repatriates were also relatively satisfied with the information received of the repatriation process. It seems that repatriates were satisfied with the repatriation workshop that they participated and felt that it enhanced the repatriation adjustment. Still there were quite many repatriates that had considered to change the employer upon return.

## **5.2 Revision suggestions for the theoretical framework**

In the Basic Framework of Repatriation Adjustment (Black et al., 1992b) two factors of Anticipatory Adjustment seemed to resemble each other i.e. task interdependence and communication frequency. However, task interdependency belongs in job variables and therefore affects the work expectation and communication frequency belongs in organizational variables and affects both work and interaction expectation. When preparing the questionnaire for the repatriates this was not clear to the researcher and therefore more attention should have been paid on this matter in order to obtain accurate information from the repatriates, as task interdependency refers especially in the dependency between two parties.

In order to obtain this kind of information one would need to find out the point of view of both parties in question - the individual and the organization. In this study only the individual point of view has been taken into account. Therefore the outcome of this variable remains unresolved. This could be done by e.g. interviewing human resources department in Finland.

Role novelty, as such, is not included in Basic Framework of Repatriation Adjustment. Role novelty is the degree to which the current role is different from past roles (Black et al. 1991). Generally in today's business world the work role is constantly changing. Stagnant work roles are history and professionals must adjust to new job demands and altered roles at least every year if not quarterly or every day.

It can be assumed, that for these reasons, repatriates of today do not automatically expect to return to exactly same position as before the assignment. However, being far away from the office and the home country and in this case in different continent, one could expect to be a bit challenging to keeping up with changes with the organization in Finland and with career possibilities emerging in Finland.

### **5.3 Practical implication of the study**

To this section, the researcher has gathered some practical development suggestions which emerged as a result of this study. Metsä-Botnia and similar organizations may utilize these suggestions to further develop their repatriation processes.

When these development suggestions were created various aspects were considered: the results of this survey, the special features of Metsä-Botnia, the notes made by the professionals during the repatriation workshops and KPMG's as well as researchers own benchmarking information on repatriation processes of similar companies. The aim was to

form even more comprehensive repatriation process for Metsä-Botnia, so that it would benefit both the repatriates and the organization in the best possible way in the future.

It is recommended that Metsä-Botnia and similar companies create a comprehensive repatriation process including a clear process also for the expatriate phase of international assignments. This process should be detailed and transparent and include information on a very practical level. The communication should be enhanced for example by having negotiations on work task after repatriation well in advance as well as performance development discussion during repatriation. These development discussion could contain going through the assignment and updating know-how and considering and planning utilization of the know-how gained during the assignment.

To enhance the practical implementation of the repatriation process the roles of different parties involved in repatriation process should be clearly identified and the tasks of each party should be clearly defined. There could be a clear distinction of responsibilities between human resource departments in home and host organizations. The managers in the home country should be more involved with the expatriation and repatriation process of an assignee. This could enhance the communication between the assignee and the manager and could therefore perhaps improve the work task identification after repatriation.

#### **5.4 Evaluation of the study and future research**

The results of this study should, however, be seen as tentative because of several limitations. The first limitation is that in this research the factors were considered only from the repatriates' subjective perspective to assess their repatriation process and for example HR and Superiors were left out. The rationale for this approach was that it effectively reflects individuals' perception of the entire process of repatriation experience. For future studies,



however, it is suggested that more attention should be paid to include different parties involved in assignment process to give their views towards the repatriation process.

The second limitation is that all the data were collected at one point of time and as previous research has indicated that repatriation adjustment takes up to 12 months (Adler, 1981) a longitudinal study could be beneficial. Furthermore, this study focuses mostly on repatriation phase of the assignment process, and thus takes only partially into account the expatriation stage of the process. It would be valuable to consider experiences of both, pre expatriation and the early stages of expatriation, simultaneously with repatriation with the same group of assignees.

The third limitation is that before the assignment this group of individual knew that this is a specific project that would take place in specific location for a limited period of time and that these people would be relatively working with each other and that they would eventually repatriate back to Finland. However, they did not know which position they would have upon return nor how much the organization and the economy in Finland would change during their absence. Due to the unique circumstances the results of this study are limited

Fourth limitation is that this is an ordered research from a company. This sets up certain frame and some restrictions for example how much time the participants can dedicate for the study, when the results of the questionnaires need to be reported to the company and what kind of data can be collected. This serves well the purpose for the company, however, more rich academic research could be created by using multiple methods such as interviews and different focus groups in a case study.

### **5.5 Validity, reliability and ethics of the study**

One way to determine the validity of case study analysis within a frame is to estimate whether the research leads to accurate prediction and another is, whether the explanation matches the facts (Stoecker, 1991). A third way to determine the validity, both internal and external validity, is the clarity and coherence of theoretical analysis (Mitchell, 1983). This case study is bound to many specific factors; a certain group of people, a certain place, at a certain time, at a certain company, with certain nationality and with a certain repatriation place. It may be assumed that different background variables may result a different research result.

On aspect to be consider is ethics. According to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005, 22) the most significant feature of ethics is to report the findings of the study objectively and truthfully. Respondents could freely decide on the participation to the study. In addition, it was emphasized that KPMG and the researcher will fully protect the anonymity of the participants.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

The research method was a qualitative case study and the main purpose for the study was to find out with what the repatriates were satisfied with and what not in their repatriation process as well as to discover potential development areas in terms of repatriation and repatriation process.

It is important to note that when organization is willing to put efforts into building a successful repatriation process, the whole international assignment process should be considered, not only the repatriation stage of the assignment, as the entire assignment from the beginning until the repatriation stage influence the outcome of the repatriation.

International assignments are investments and investments need to be fostered and should have return of the investment too during assignment as well as after repatriation. Repatriates and their superiors should also be aware of the valuable asset repatriates are for the company.

To be able to succeed in a global market an international company needs to have a cadre of personnel with international skillset. International assignees have the experience working in international surroundings and are therefore valuable assets for an international company. To be able to retain these people with international expertise is one important aspect of successful international strategy. It seems that when a company is forming its international assignment policy an essential part of it is the repatriation phase of the assignment. In fact, by taking into account all the different facets of the process from the beginning to the end (selection of expatriates, training them and the family, managing their performance, supporting them during assignment, assisting with pre- and post-repatriation) enable a company to be successful in its international assignments and enhance the return on their investment.

One of the challenges upon repatriation is the availability of a suitable work position at the time of the return. The constant and rapid changes in business create possibilities and challenges for this. How much of that responsibility relies within the company and how much with each individual. Both parties are in key position for the forthcoming career move or job placement. Organization should indicate, by offering various support methods, that the repatriate is valuable to them and should perhaps create and offer assistance in job search. However, the role of the repatriates themselves should not be understated. Repatriates should be very active themselves in finding a repatriation work position, after all, who would be more interested in one's career than the person himself.

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## APPENDIX 1 PALUUKYSELYN SÄHKÖPOSTISAATE TESTIKÄYTTÄJILLE

Hei!

Metsä-Botnia tekee yhteistyössä KPMG People Servicen kanssa kyselyn Uruguaysta ulkomaankomennukselta palaaville työntekijöilleen. Alla on lisätietoja kyselystä.

Nyt kysely on valmis ja ennen kyselyn lähettämistä kaikille palaajille toivoisimme, että te kaksi vastaisitte kyselyyn. Maarit Herranen ehdotti teitä kyselyn testihenkilöiksi. Teidän vastauksenne otetaan mukaan kyselyn tuloksiin. Sen lisäksi, jos kyselyssä ilmenee teknisiä ongelmia tai teillä on huomautettavaa kyselyn sisällöstä, pyytäisin teitä ottamaan minuun yhteyttä.

Olisiko teillä mahdollisuutta vastata kyselyyn näinkin pikaisella aikataululla kuin ke 10.12. mennessä?

Kiitos jo paljon etukäteen arvokkaasta panoksestanne kyselyn onnistumiseen.

Alla saatesähköposti kaikille palaajille.



## APPENDIX 2 PALUUKYSELYN SAATE URUGUAYSTÄ PALAAJILLE:

Uruguaystä palaaja,

Metsä-Botnia haluaa selvittää Uruguaystä ulkomaankomennukselta palaavien työntekijöidensä kokemuksia ja mielipiteitä liittyen kotiinpaluuseen. Kyselyllä pyritään selvittämään, mihin työkomennukselta palaavat olivat tyytyväisiä ja mihin eivät. Lisäksi kyselyn tavoitteena on tunnistaa mahdolliset kehittämiskohteet liittyen paluuseen ja paluuprosessiin.

Kyselyn toteuttaa riippumaton osapuoli KPMG People Services, joka käsittelee kaikki vastaukset ehdottoman luottamuksellisesti. KPMG raportoi vastaukset Metsä-Botnialle anonymisoidussa muodossa niin, että yksittäisiä vastauksia ei voida identifioida.

Kyselyyn vastaamalla annat arvokasta palautetta, jota hyödynnetään Metsä-Botnian paluuprosessin kehittämiseksi.

Kyselyn tulokset raportoidaan kaikille osallistujille alkuvuodesta 2009.

Kehittämistoimenpiteiden suunnittelun kannalta on tärkeää, että vastaat myös avoimiin kysymyksiin ja kerrot kehitysehdotuksiasi paluuprosessiin liittyen. Kysymyksiin vastaaminen kestää noin 15 minuuttia. Huomioithan, että kysely tulee täyttää kerralla valmiiksi ja lähettää saman tien, sillä sitä ei valitettavasti pysty tallentamaan.

Vastaathan mahdollisimman pian, kuitenkin 12.12.2008 mennessä. Kiitos jo etukäteen aktiivisuudestasi ja arvokkaista kommentteistasi!

Tässä linkki kyselyyn

Mahdollisissa kysymyksissä liittyen kyselyn sisältöön ota yhteyttä KPMG/Annika

Varjonen puh. 020 760 3261.

Jos sinulla on teknisiä ongelmia lomakkeen täyttämässä tai lähettämässä,  
ota yhteyttä KPMG/Jukka Kantola, puh. 020 760 3921 tai [jukka.kantola@kpmg.fi](mailto:jukka.kantola@kpmg.fi)

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Annika Varjonen

KPMG People Services

## APPENDIX 3 MUISTUTUSSÄHKÖPOSTI PALUUKYSELYSTÄ

Hei!

Muistuttaisin vielä paluukyselyyn vastaamisesta. Aikaa vastata on ma 15.12. saakka. Jos olet jo vastannut, niin jätä tämä viesti huomiotta. Kiitos jo näin etukäteen osallistumisesta kyselyyn.

Terveisin, Annika Varjonen

## APPENDIX 4 PALUUKYSELY

Metsä-Botnia haluaa selvittää Uruguaysta ulkomaankomennukselta palaavien työntekijöidensä kokemuksia ja mielipiteitä liittyen kotiinpaluuseen. Kyselyyn vastaamalla annat arvokasta palautetta, jota hyödynnetään Metsä-Botnian paluuprosessin kehittämiseksi.

Kyselyn toteuttaa riippumaton osapuoli KPMG People Services, joka käsittelee kaikki vastaukset ehdottoman luottamuksellisesti. KPMG raportoi vastaukset Metsä-Botnialle anonymisoidussa muodossa niin, että yksittäisiä vastauksia ei voida identifioida.

### OHJEET

Kysymyksiin vastaaminen kestää noin 15 minuuttia. Huomioithan, että kysely tulee täyttää kerralla valmiiksi ja lähettää saman tien, sillä vastauksia ei pysty tallentamaan väliaikaisesti.

Aloita kyselyyn vastaaminen klikkaamalla alla olevaa KPMG:n logoa. Jotta pääset varsinaiselle kysymyslomakkeelle, syötä ensimmäiseen ikkunaan nimesi ja paina Lähetä -nappia. Kyselyssä pääset eteenpäin painamalla alapalkin Next -painiketta. Jos Next -painiketta ei näy näytölläsi, pienennä ikkunaa vetämällä hiirellä sitä pienemmäksi. Päästyäsi loppuun lähetä vastauksesi painamalla Send -nappia. Kiitos jo etukäteen aktiivisuudestasi ja arvokkaista kommentteistasi!

Mahdollisissa kysymyksissä liittyen kyselyn sisältöön ota yhteyttä KPMG/Annika Varjonen, annika.varjonen@kpmg.fi tai puhelin 020 760 3261.

Jos sinulla on teknisiä ongelmia lomakkeen täyttämässä tai lähettämässä,  
ota yhteyttä KPMG/Jukka Kantola, jukka.kantola@kpmg.fi tai puhelin 020 760 3921.

#### TAUSTATIEDOT

1. Komennus Uruguayssa alkoi
2. Komennus Uruguayssa päättyi
3. Työnantajani ennen Uruguayn komennusta

Metsä Botnia

BMS

4. Työpaikkakunta ennen komennusta
5. Asuinpaikkakunta ennen komennusta
6. Työnantajani Uruguayn komennuksen jälkeen

Metsä-Botnia

BMS

7. Palasin samaan työhön (sama työympäristö ja sama työtehtävä) kuin ennen komennusta

Kyllä/Ei

7. a Jos Ei, niin työpaikkakunta komennuksen jälkeen

8. Asuinpaikkakunta komennuksen jälkeen

9. Olen perheellinen Kyllä/Ei (Valitse tämä jos puoliso tai lapsesi ei ole ollut mukana tai on ollut mukana komennuksella alle 6kk.) Huom! Jos valitset tämän vaihtoehdon, niin jätä perheeseen liittyvät kyselyn kohdat vastaamatta. Kiitos

10. Olen asunut ulkomailla yli 6 kk jakson ennen Uruguayn komennusta

10 a. Missä olit

10 b. Kuinka kauan

11. Neuvottelut paluun jälkeisestä työtehtävästä alkoivat kk ennen paluuta Suomeen

12. Paluun jälkeinen työtehtävä Suomessa selvisi kk ennen paluuta Suomeen

13. Osallistuin lähtövalmennukseen ennen komennusta

14. Puolisoni osallistui lähtövalmennukseen ennen muuttoa

15. Lähtövalmennuksessa puhuttiin myös kotiinpaluuseen liittyvistä asioista

16. Kävin komennukseni aikana Suomessa

16 a. Kuinka monta kertaa

16 b. Vierailuni Suomessa kestivät (keskimäärin)

16 c. Suomen vierailujen aikana kävin myös lähtöorganisaatiossani

17. Osallistuin itse Suomessa järjestettyyn paluuworkshopiin

17 a. Paluuworkshop johon osallistuin

8.1.2008

15.4.2008

13.5.2008

20.5.2008

26.8.2008

17 b. Miksi et osallistunut

18. Puolisoni osallistui Suomessa järjestettyyn paluuworkshopiin

19. Henkilöstöosaston edustaja haastatteli minut ennen paluuta

20. Henkilöstöosaston edustaja haastatteli minut paluun jälkeen

21. Lisätietoja taustatietoihin

## ENNEN URUGUAYN KOMENNUSTA

Lue väittämät huolellisesti. Merkitse jokaisen väittämän kohdalle

vaihtoehto, joka kuvaa parhaiten omaa mielipidettäsi ja kokemustasi

nykyisessä tilanteessasi. Pyri käyttämään koko asteikkoa ja ottamaan kantaa rohkeasti.

22. Lähdin mielelläni Uruguayn komennukselle

1. Täysin samaa mieltä
2. Samaa mieltä
3. Osittain samaa mieltä
4. Osittain eri mieltä
5. Eri mieltä
6. Täysin eri mieltä

23. Perheeni lähti mielellään mukaan Uruguayhyn

#### KOMENNUSAIKAN URUGUAYSSA

24. Olen tyytyväinen Uruguayn komennukseeni

25. Ennako-odotukseni Uruguayn komennuksesta osoittautuivat oikeanlaisiksi

26. Minulle oli (tai olisi ollut) tärkeää saada tietoa Suomen yleisistä olosuhteista ennen varsinaista paluuta Suomeen (esim. taloudellinen tilanne)

27. Elämä Uruguayssa erosi paljon elämästä Suomessa

28. Sopeuduin omasta mielestäni hyvin Uruguayhyn

29. Puolisoni sopeutui mielestäni hyvin Uruguayhyn

30. Lapseni sopeutui/sopeutuivat mielestäni hyvin Uruguayhyn

31. Yhteydenpito minun ja Suomen kotiorganisaation välillä oli mielestäni sujuvaa

32. Sain riittävästi tietoa Suomen kotiorganisaatiossa tapahtuvista muutoksista komennukseni aikana

33. Uruguayn organisaatio tuki minua ja perhettäni paluuseen liittyvissä asioissa riittävästi

34. Suomen kotiorganisaatio tuki minua ja perhettäni paluuseen liittyvissä asioissa riittävästi

35. Neuvottelut komennuksen jälkeisestä työtehtävästä Suomessa aloitettiin riittävän ajoissa ennen Uruguayn komennuksen päättymistä
36. Sain tarpeeksi tietoa jo ennakkoon paluun jälkeisestä työtehtävästä Suomessa
37. Sain Metsä-Botnialta riittävästi tietoa paluuprosessista ja sen eri vaiheista ennen komennuksen päättymistä
38. Lisäkommentteja liittyen aikaan ennen paluuta Suomeen

## PALUU SUOMEEN

### Työ ja organisaatio

39. Olen/olen ollut tyytyväinen Suomen kotiorganisaatiolta saamaani tukeen paluuvaiheessa
40. Sopeutuminen takaisin Suomen kotiorganisaatioon sujui ongelmitta
41. Minulla oli mahdollisuus vaikuttaa paluun jälkeiseen työtehtävään riittävästi
42. Ennakkokäsitykseni paluutyöpaikasta osoittautui oikeaksi
43. Olen tyytyväinen komennuksen jälkeiseen työtehtävääni Suomessa
44. Sopeutuminen Suomen työympäristöön on/on ollut haasteellista
45. Koen, että Suomen organisaatio arvostaa osaamistani
46. Pystyn hyödyntämään Uruguayssa oppimiani taitoja nykyisessä työssäni
47. Lisäkommentteja liittyen työhön tai organisaatioon paluun yhteydessä tai sen jälkeen

### Elämä ja sopeutuminen

48. Paluun käytännönjärjestelyt Suomeen sujuivat hyvin
49. Asuntoasiat Suomessa järjestyivät ilman suurempia kommelluksia
50. Koin sopeutumisen takaisin Suomeen ja suomalaiseen elämäntapaan aluksi hieman haasteellisena
51. Olen omasta mielestäni sopeutunut hyvin takaisin Suomeen
52. Puolisoni on mielestäni sopeutunut hyvin takaisin Suomeen



53. Lapseni on/ovat mielestäni sopeutunut/sopeutuneet hyvin takaisin Suomeen
54. Olen tyytyväinen tämänhetkiseen elämääni Suomessa
55. Minulle oli kerrottu etukäteen paluuseen liittyvistä haasteista
56. Sosiaalinen elämäni on palautunut entiselleen Suomessa
57. Ennako-oletukseni kotiinpaluusta ja siihen liittyvistä asioista pitivät hyvin paikkansa
58. Paluuworkshop, johon osallistuin Suomessa on ollut hyödyllinen (jätä vastaamatta, jos et ole osallistunut workshopiin)
59. Lisäkommentteja liittyen elämään tai sopeutumiseen paluun yhteydessä tai sen jälkeen

#### TULEVAISUUDEN NÄKYMIÄ

60. Harkitsen/harkitsin vakavasti työnantajan vaihtamista komennukseni loppuvaiheessa/jälkeen
61. Lähtisin todennäköisesti uudelle ulkomaankomennukselle, jos minulle tarjottaisiin siihen mahdollisuutta
62. Muita mahdollisia lisäkommentteja liittyen yleisesti kotiinpaluuseen
64. Botnian ulkomaankomennuksen paluuprosessia kannattaisi kehittää seuraavasti

APPENDIX 5 COMPANY REPORT, FUNCTIONALITY AND QUALITY ANALYSIS  
OF REPATRIATION PROCESS OF METSÄ-BOTNIA, FEBRUARY 2009  
(TRANSLATED VERSION)



PEOPLE SERVICES

# Oy Metsä-Botnia Ab

Functionality and quality analysis of Repatriation process

February 2009

## The most important remarks

Subject	Remark	Report
<b>Satisfaction and adjustment</b>	<b>Satisfaction and adjustment on the assignment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfaction with the assignment was great.</li> <li>• Assignees and family members had adjusted well to Uruguay.</li> </ul>	Pages 13 and 15
<b>Communication</b>	<b>Communication with the home organisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication with the home organisation could be improved.</li> </ul>	Page 16
<b>Work task</b>	<b>Work task after the assignment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information in advance of the work task after repatriation.</li> </ul>	Page 18
<b>Employer</b>	<b>Changing employer</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are several people who have considered changing employer.</li> </ul>	Page 33

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# Background of the survey and the participants

## Structure of the report

### Structure of the report

- This report is divided into four sections.
- In the first section, the background of the survey and the participants is being discussed. The first section is divided into four categories; background for the project, aim and objectives, implementation and content of the survey, Metsä-Botnia's repatriation process for repatriates from Uruguay to Finland as well as target group, respondents and background information for the survey.
- In the second section, the questions and answers have been discussed individually and answers have been analysed. The questions have been divided into four categories; prior to the assignment to Uruguay, during the assignment in Uruguay, repatriation to Finland and future prospects. This section also includes answers to open questions, which can be found at the end of each category.
- Summary of the analysis can be found in the third section.
- The fourth section consists of development suggestions in terms of repatriation process.

## Background aim and objectives for the project

### Background

- Metsä-Botnia has made significant investments into the project in Uruguay and it has been the most significant single project of the company abroad.
- As a part of the assignment process, Metsä-Botnia has wanted to pay attention to the repatriation process.
- In order to find out about the Uruguay's repatriation experiences, Metsä-Botnia has wanted to carry out a repatriation survey together with KPMG's People Services.

### Aim and objectives

- Metsä-Botnia has wanted to find out experiences and opinions of their repatriates relating to their return to home.
- The aim of the survey is to find out what the repatriates were satisfied with and what not.
- In addition, the aim of the survey is to recognise potential development areas in terms of repatriation and repatriation process.



## Implementation and content of the survey

### Implementation

- The survey questionnaire was created in October-December 2008 and it was carried out with on-line based tool.
- The questionnaire was tested with two people belonging to the target group and their responses were included in the results of the repatriation survey.
- The survey was carried out during December 2008.
- Metsä-Botnia delivered a list of expatriates who had worked in Uruguay to KPMG. The target group of the survey was 23 repatriates.
- KPMG People Services sent an email to the target group with instructions and a link to the questionnaire.
- KPMG reminded the participants once. In addition, Metsä-Botnia's HR representative reminded participants to respond.
- Due to technical reasons, three people were unable to respond to the survey. They did not have access to Internet pages outside Metsä-Botnia's own Internet pages and therefore their responses were missing.

### Content of the survey

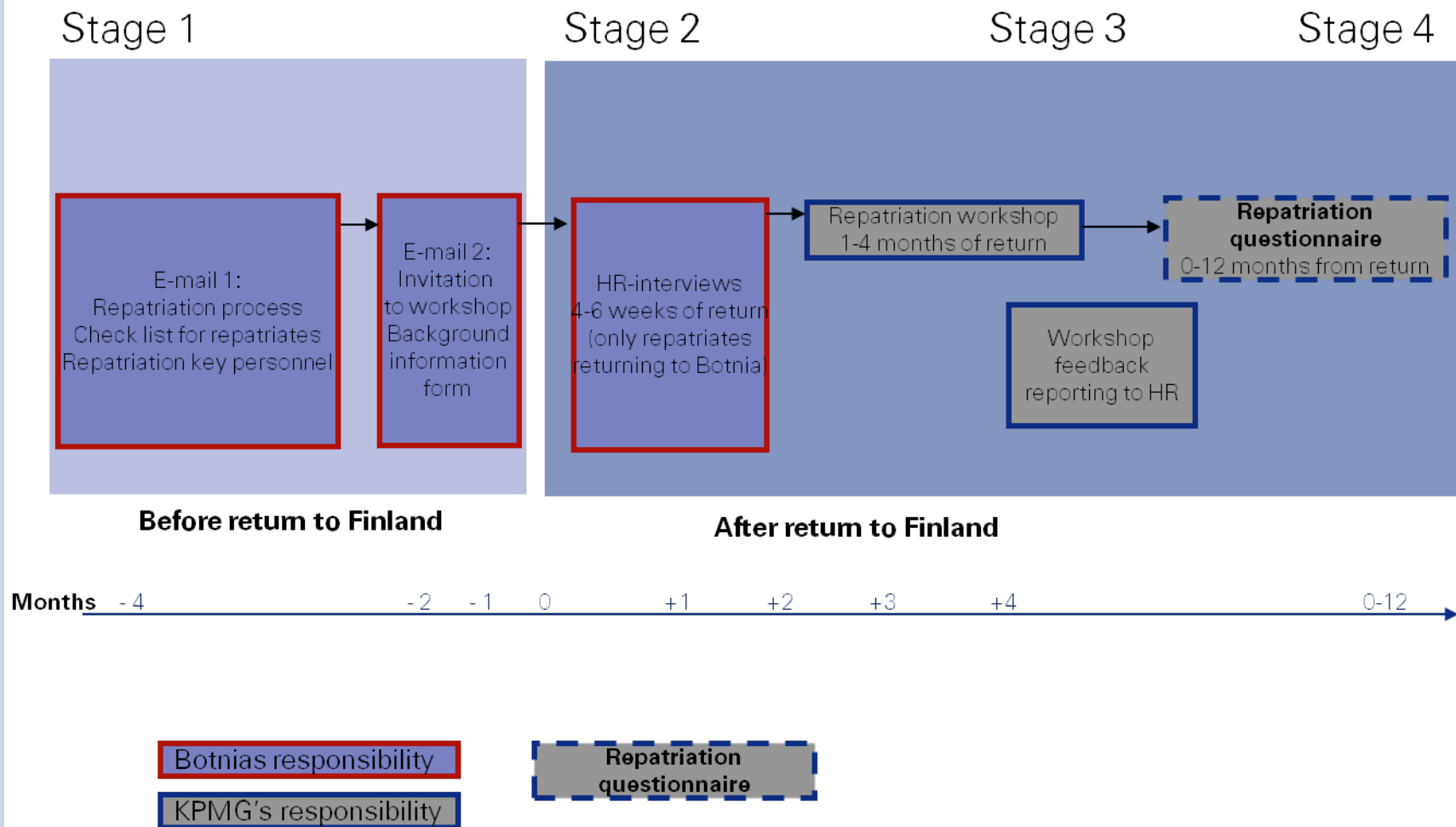
- The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions.
- The questionnaire consisted of background information, statements and five open-ended questions.
- Background information consisted of 21 questions.
- Statements were divided into four categories chronologically according the repatriation process; before the assignment in Uruguay, during the assignment in Uruguay, repatriation to Finland and future prospects.

- In addition, repatriation to Finland was divided into two subcategories:
  - work and organisation
  - life and adjustment.
- 37 of the statements were closed-ended questions and they were answered in the scale of
  - totally agree
  - agree
  - partly agree
  - partly disagree
  - disagree
  - totally disagree.

### Analysis

- In this report, the results of the closed-ended questions have been presented with bar charts with six different responses in numbers and in some questions also in percentages.
- All responses to open-ended questions can be found in the report. The responses have been presented nearly authentically. Only obvious spelling mistakes have been corrected and the answers slightly modified in case the respondent could have been identified from the answer.

## Repatriation process of Metsä-Botnia - assignments lasting more than 6 months from Uruguay to Finland



## Target group of the survey, respondents and background information

Target group of the survey was 23 people. They had been on the assignment for over 6 months in Uruguay.

The response rate of the survey was 83%.

### Target group

- Target group of the survey was employees of Metsä-Botnia and Botnia Mill Service (BMS) who had been on assignment in Uruguay for over 6 months. The number totalled up to 23 people.
- The assignment duration of the respondents vary between 7 and 27 months.
- First assignees belonging to the target group left to Uruguay in April 2006 and the last assignees returned to Finland in December 2008.

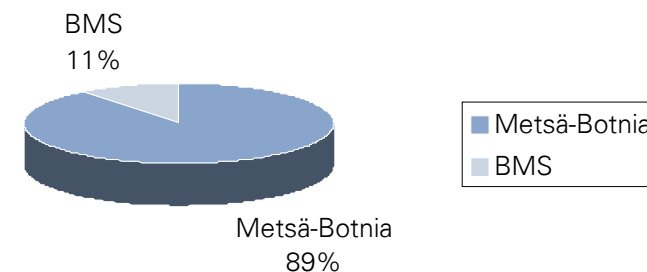
### Survey respondents

- 19 people, which equals to 83% of the target group, responded to the survey.
- 17 survey respondents (90%) had Metsä-Botnia as they home organisation and two respondents (11%) BMS.

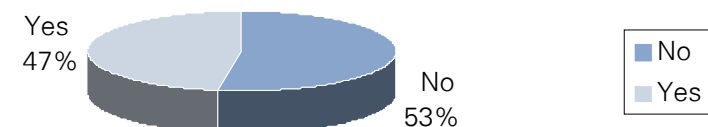
### Background information

- 9 of the respondents (47%) had a family accompanying them to Uruguay. 10 respondents (53%) were on the assignment alone. 5 assignees left their family in Finland.
- Only one respondent (5%) had previously lived abroad for over 6 months.

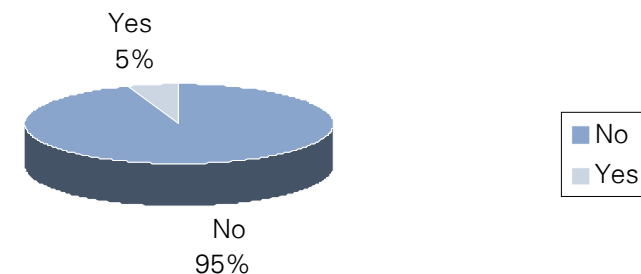
### Home organisation



### Family accompanying to Uruguay



### Lived abroad for over 6 months before this assignment

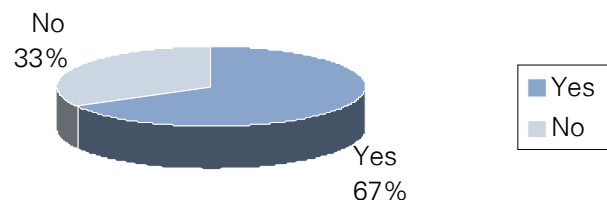


## Background information of the survey

### Background information

- 9 of the assignees (47%) returned to the same work (same working environment and same duties) than prior to the assignment.
- 17 of the assignees (89%) took part in the pre-departure training organised by Metsä-Botnia as 2 (11%) did not.
- Out of the assignees whose spouse was accompanying them to the assignment, 6 (67%) spouses took part in the pre-departure training as 3 (33%) spouses did not.
- Out of the assignees 18 (95%) took part in the repatriation workshop organised in Finland and only one assignee did not.
- Out of the accompanying spouses, 6 (67%) took part in the repatriation workshop as 3 (33%) did not. In addition, one spouse who was not on the assignment herself, took part in the repatriation workshop.

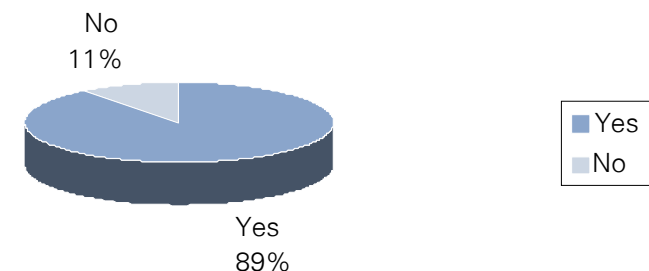
#### Took part in repatriation workshop (spouses)



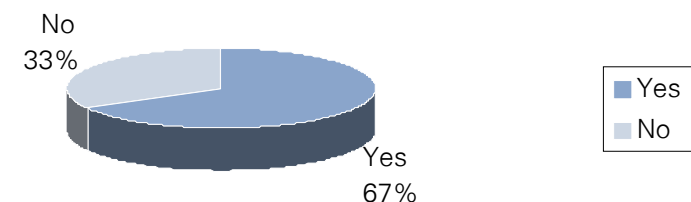
#### Returned to same work as prior to the assignment



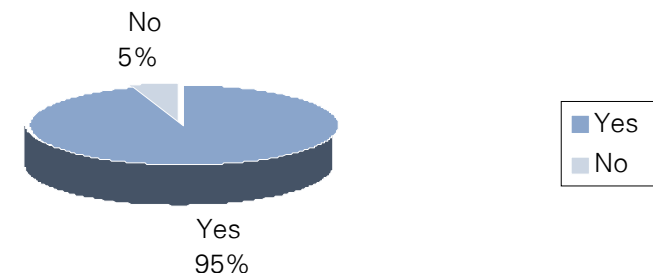
#### Took part in pre-departure training (assignees)



#### Took part in pre-departure training (spouses)



#### Took part in repatriation workshop (assignees)

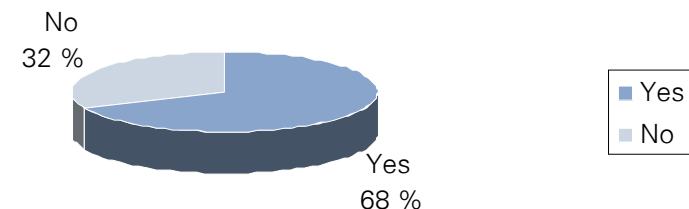


## Background information of the survey

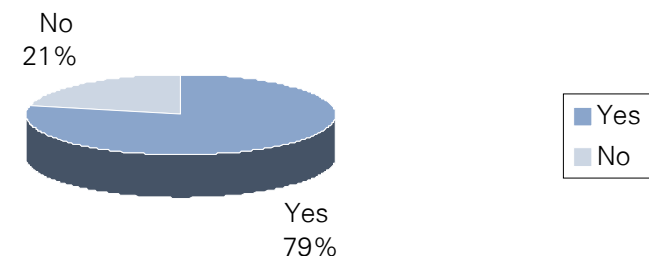
### Background information

- Negotiations for the work task after repatriation started on average approximately 6 months before the end of the assignment.
- Work task after repatriation was confirmed approximately 5 months before the end of the assignment so on average work task after repatriation was solved relatively quickly.
- New work tasks were decided on average 4 months prior to the repatriation. On the other hand 3 respondents did not disclose their answer and one respondent told in the open questions that work task was not decided by the time of repatriation.
- 13 (69%) assignees visited Finland during the assignment as 6 (32%) did not. These assignees were on the assignment between 7 and 10 months.
- At the end of the assignment, representative from human resource department interviewed 15 (79%) assignees, of which 13 were interviewed in Finland, 1 in Uruguay and 1 in both countries. 4 (21%) assignees remained without being interviewed.

### During the assignment I visited Finland



### At the end of the assignment, representative from human resource department interviewed me



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# Questions and analysis of the responses

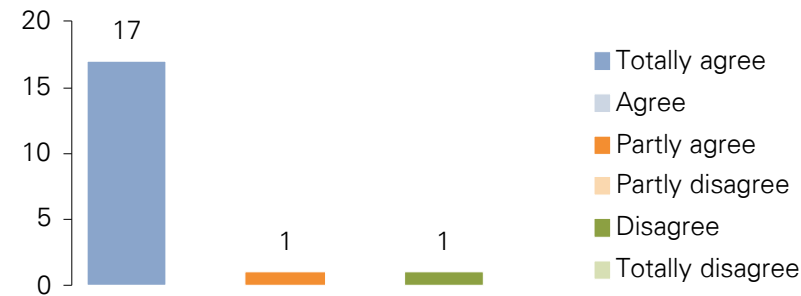
# Attitude towards departure

Most of the respondents and their family members were pleased to go for the assignment.

## I was pleased to go for the assignment in Uruguay

- 17 respondents (89%) fully agreed that they were pleased to go for the assignment in Uruguay. In addition one person partly agreed.
- Only one person disagreed.

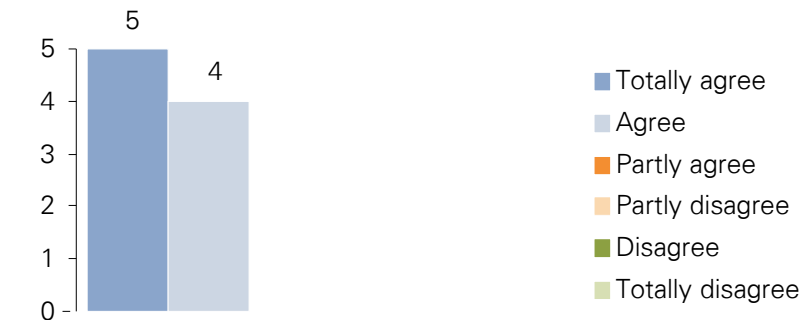
## 22. I was pleased to go for the assignment in Uruguay



## My family was pleased to come along to Uruguay

- 9 (100%), which is all the respondents who had a family on the assignment, totally agreed or agreed that family was pleased to come along to Uruguay.

## 23. My family was pleased to come along to Uruguay



# Satisfaction and expectations

Assignees were satisfied with the assignment in Uruguay.

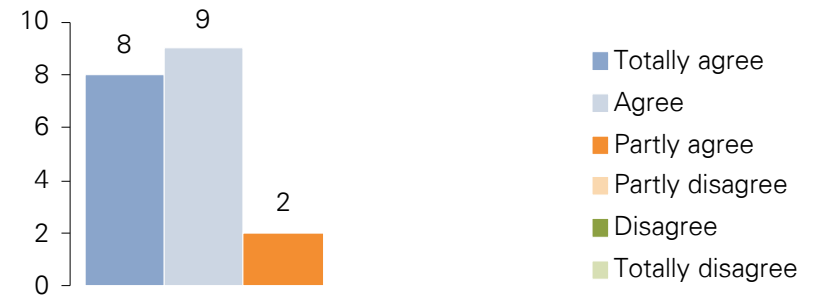
## Satisfaction with the assignment

- 17 (98%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with their assignment in Uruguay.
- In addition, 2 respondents partly agreed.

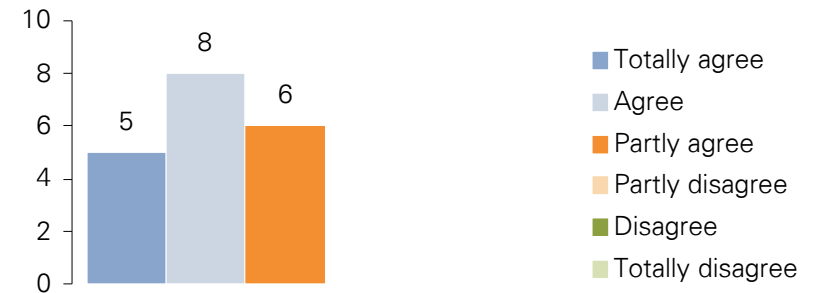
## Expectations

- 13 (68%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that their expectations on the assignment proved to be true.
- In addition 6 respondents partly agreed.

## 24. I am satisfied with my assignment in Uruguay



## 25. My expectations on the assignment in Uruguay proved to be true





# Information on conditions in Finland and life in Uruguay

Majority of the respondent would have wished to receive information on general conditions in Finland before repatriation to Finland

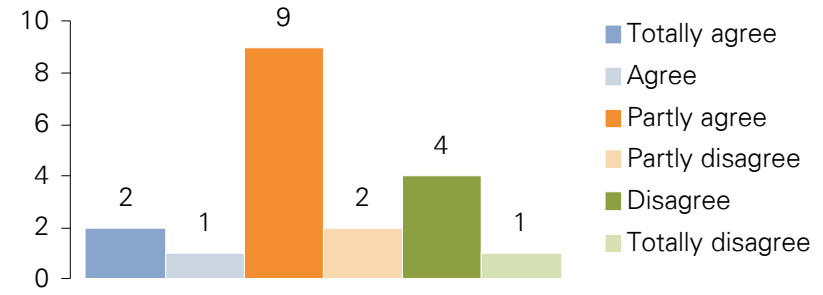
## Information on conditions in Finland before repatriation

- 12 respondents (63%) totally agreed, agreed or partly agreed that it was or would have been important to receive information on conditions in Finland before repatriation to Finland (e.g. economical situation).
- 5 respondents did not consider it important to receive information on conditions in Finland before repatriation. In addition 2 respondents partly disagreed.

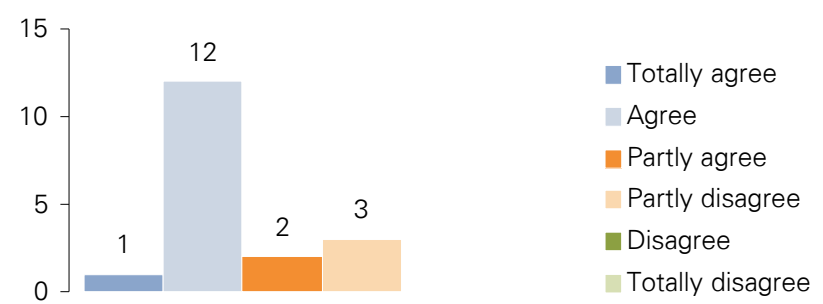
## Life in Uruguay

- 13 (72%) of the respondents totally agreed or agreed that life in Uruguay differed greatly from life in Finland.
- 2 respondents partly agreed.
- 3 respondents partly disagreed.

## 26. It was or (would have been) important to me to receive information on general conditions in Finland before my actual repatriation to Finland



## 27. Life in Uruguay differed greatly from life in Finland



# Adjustment

**Adjustment to Uruguay went well for assignees, spouses and children.**

## Adjustment to Uruguay

- 18 (95%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that in their own opinion they adjusted well to Uruguay.
- Only one of the respondents partly disagreed.

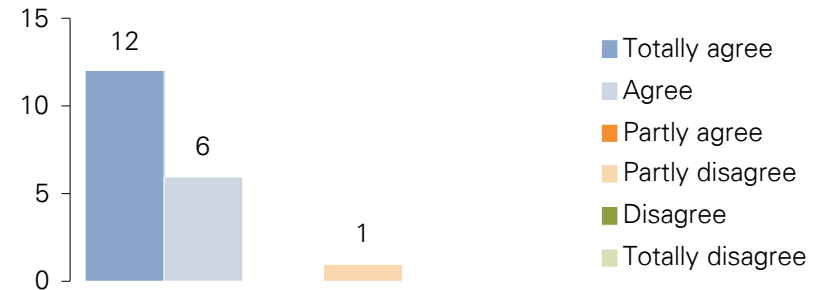
## Spouses' adjustment

- 9 (100%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that their spouses adjusted well to Uruguay.

## Childrens' adjustment

- 5 (71%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that their children adjusted well to Uruguay.
- In addition, 2 respondents partly agreed.
- None of the respondents even partly disagreed with the statement.

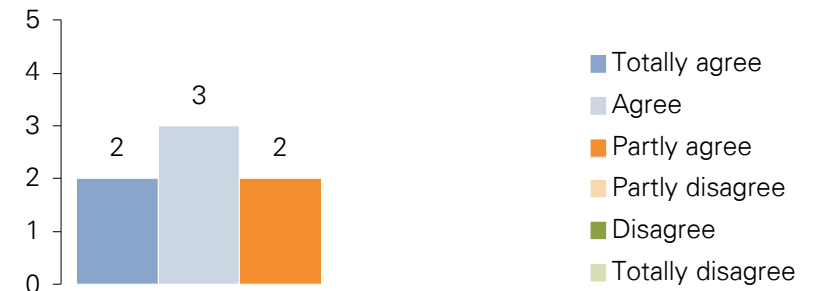
### 28. In my own opinion I adjusted well to Uruguay



### 29. In my opinion my spouse adjusted well to Uruguay



### 30. In my opinion my children adjusted well to Uruguay



# Communication and changes in home organisation

**Communication between the assignee and the home organisation could be improved.**

**Information on changes that took place in the home organisation in Finland should be clearly provided more than currently.**

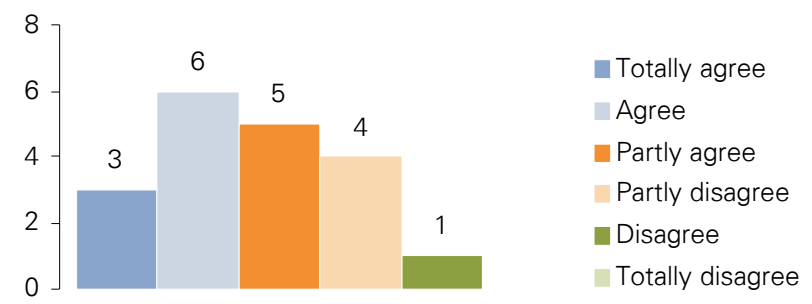
## Communication with home organisation

- 9 (47%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that communication with home organisation was smooth. In addition 5 respondents partly agreed.
- Out of the respondents, only one disagreed and 4 partly disagreed with the smoothness of communication.

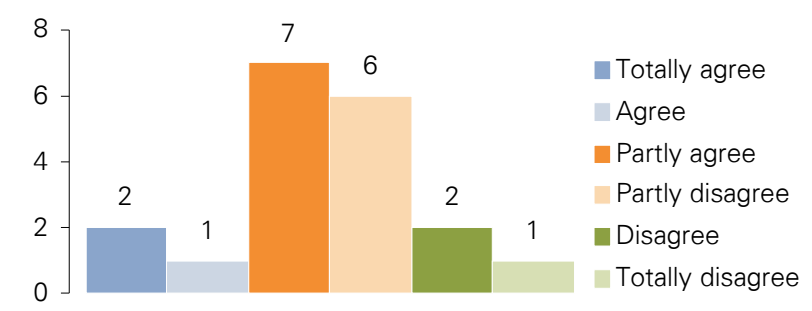
## Changes in home organisation

- Out of the respondents only 3 (16%) totally agreed or agreed that they received sufficient information on changes that took place in the home organisation in Finland during their assignment. 7 respondents partly agreed.
- 3 respondents totally disagreed or disagreed with the statement . 6 respondents partly disagreed (in total 47%).

**31. In my opinion communication between myself and the home organisation in Finland was smooth**



**32. During my assignment I received sufficient information on changes that took place in the home organisation in Finland**



# Support from organisation

The respondents experienced that the organisation in Uruguay supported them more than home organisation in Finland in matters concerning repatriation.

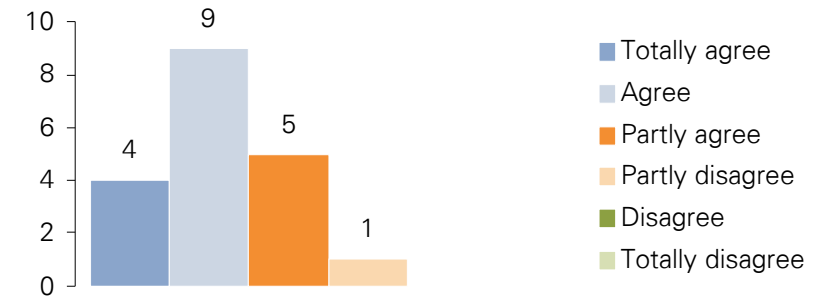
## Support from organisation in Uruguay

- 13 (68%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that the organisation in Uruguay gave enough support to him and his family in matters concerning repatriation.
- In addition, 5 respondents partly agreed.
- Only one respondent partly disagreed.

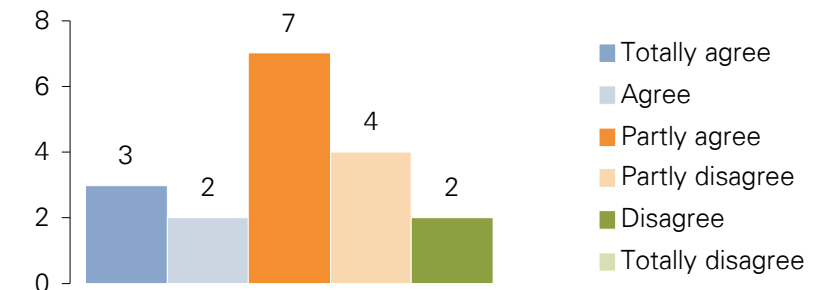
## Support from home organisation in Finland

- 5 (27%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that home organisation in Finland gave enough support to him and his family in matters concerning repatriation.
- 7 (39%) respondents partly agreed.
- Out of the respondents, 2 disagreed and 4 partly disagreed totalling up to 33%.

33. The organisation in Uruguay gave enough support to me and my family in matters concerning repatriation



34. The home organisation in Finland gave enough support to me and my family in matters concerning repatriation



# Work task after repatriation

Some of the assignees wanted more information in advance on their work task after repatriation. Especially those people, whose work tasks changed into new ones, were unsatisfied with the amount of information received in advance.

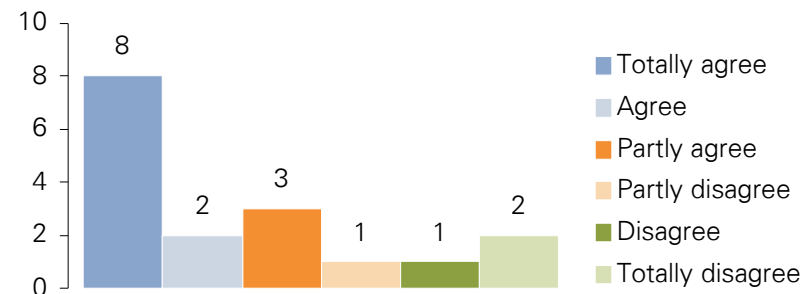
## Negotiations on work task after assignment

- 10 (59%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that negotiations on work task after assignment started early enough before the assignment ended in Uruguay.
- In addition 3 respondents partly agreed.
- 2 respondents totally disagreed and 2 respondents disagreed.

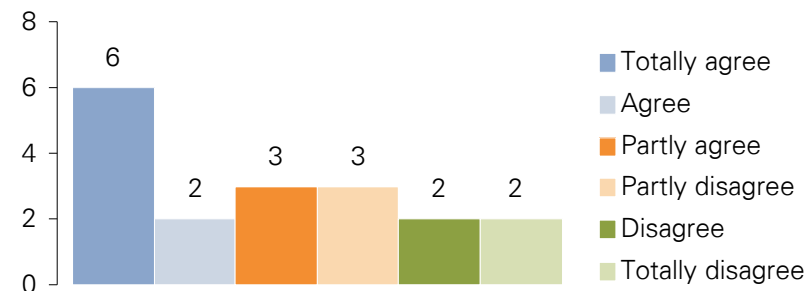
## Information in advance on work task in Finland

- 8 (44%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that they received enough information on their work task in Finland already in advance.
- 3 respondents partly agreed.
- On the other hand 4 (22%) respondents totally disagreed or disagreed. In addition 3 respondents partly disagreed.
- Out of the assignees who returned to new work tasks, 60% experienced that they did not have enough information on their new work tasks in advance.
- Assignees who returned to the same work task experienced that they had enough information in advance. Only one respondent partly disagreed.

35. Negotiations on my work task in Finland were started early enough before the assignment ended in Uruguay



36. I received enough information in advance on my work task in Finland



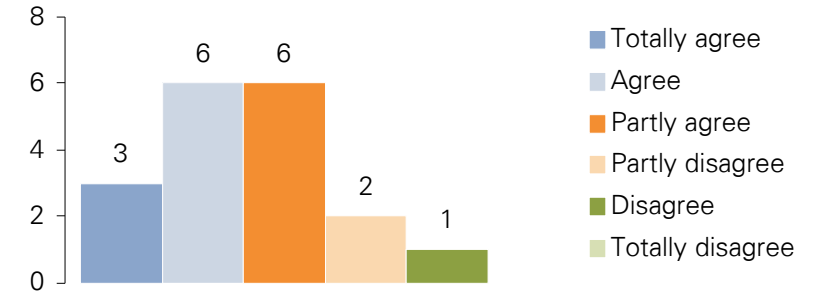
## Repatriation process

Respondents were relatively satisfied with the received information in repatriation process and its different stages.

### Information on repatriation process

- 9 (50%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that they received enough information on repatriation process and its different stages from Metsä-Botnia before the end of the assignment.
- In addition 6 respondents partly agreed.
- Only 3 respondents either disagreed or partly disagreed.

### 37. I received enough information on repatriation process and its different stages from Metsä-Botnia before my assignment in Uruguay ended.



## Open answers on time before the repatriation to Finland

### Further open comments on time before the repatriation to Finland

- Best information on repatriation process could be received from previous repatriates.
- In terms of work task after the assignment, the company operated really well and the discussions on the future work task was carried out in good time.
- Apartment, school issues etc. during the assignment the company dealt really well and that really helped the family to be happy. It helped the assignee to push forward when you knew that everybody were happy at home.
- Project assignees were forgotten when informing about the changes in home organisation. Information flow was not good.
- I have done project related work 100% of my time during the year after repatriation.
- In the assignment contract, it was agreed that I would return to same work task and shift. The contract was also drawn in the way that I should have paid for the costs of my family to accompany me.

# Support from home organisation and adjustment

**Support given by the home organisation in Finland has been inadequate for some of the repatriates.**

**Majority adjusted well back to the home organisation in Finland.**

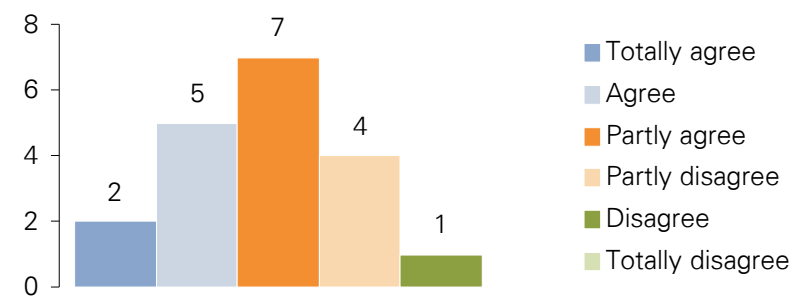
## Support from home organisation

- 7 (37%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with the support given by the home organisation in Finland during repatriation. In addition 7 respondents partly agreed.
- 1 respondent disagreed and 4 partly disagreed with the statement.

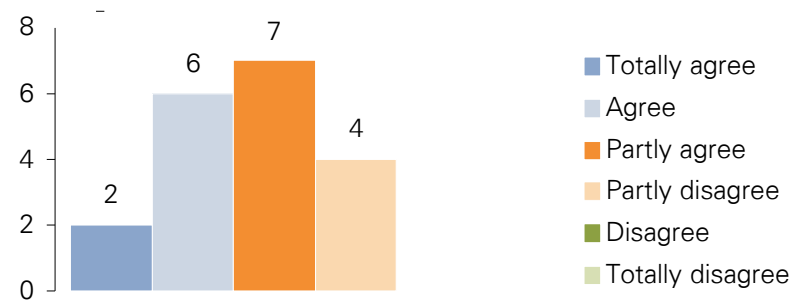
## Adjustment back to home organisation

- Out of the respondents, 8 (42%) totally agreed or agreed that adjustment back to home organisation in Finland went without problems. In addition 7 respondents partly agreed.
- 4 respondents partly disagreed.

**39. I am/have been satisfied with the support given to me by the home organisation in Finland during repatriation**



**40. Adjustment back to the home organisation in Finland went without problems**





# Work task after repatriation

Majority of the respondents experienced that they had had an opportunity to influence to their work task after repatriation.

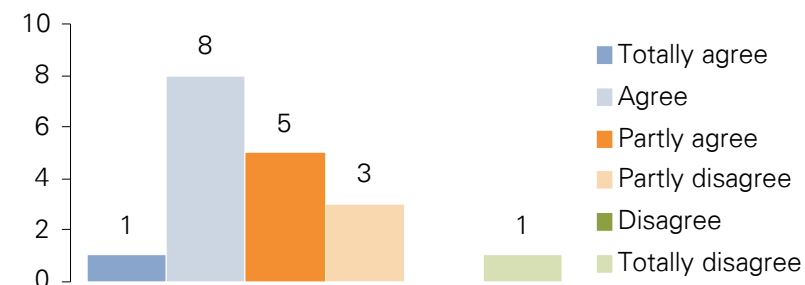
## Work task after repatriation

- Out of the respondents, 9 (50%) totally agreed or agreed that they had enough opportunities to influence their work task after repatriation. In addition, 5 respondents partly agreed.
- 1 respondent totally disagreed and 3 partly disagreed.
- Out of these 4, 3 assignees returned to a new work task after assignment.

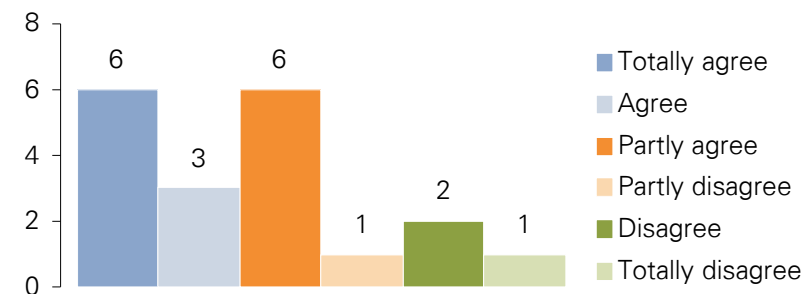
## Expectations on work task

- 9 (47%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that their expectations on their work task in Finland proved to be true.
- In addition, 6 respondents partly agreed.
- 3 respondents disagreed or totally disagreed as well as 1 respondent partly disagreed.

## 41. I felt that I had enough opportunities to influence my work task after repatriation in Finland



## 42. My expectations on my work task in Finland proved to be true



# Work task and adjustment to working environment

**Majority of the respondents were satisfied with their work task in Finland after the assignment.**

**Two respondents were clearly unsatisfied. These two returned to the same work task as prior to the assignment.**

**Majority of the respondents were of the opinion that adjustment to working environment in Finland is/has been challenging.**

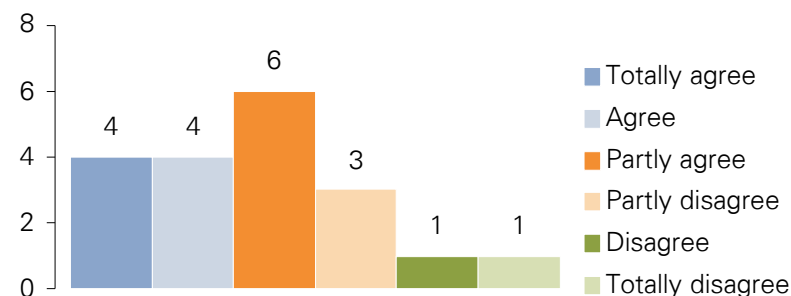
## Satisfaction with work task

- 8 (42%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that he/she was satisfied with work task in Finland after the assignment.
- In addition, 6 respondents partly agreed.
- 2 respondents disagreed or totally disagreed. In addition, 3 respondents partly disagreed
- Both two respondent who disagreed or totally disagreed, returned to the same work task as prior to the assignment.

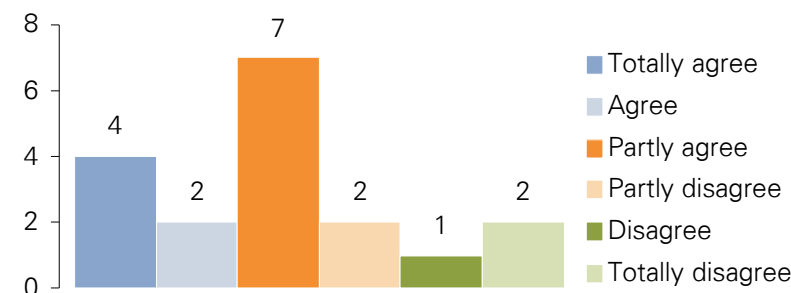
## Adjustment to working environment in Finland

- 13 (72%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that adjustment to working environment in Finland is/has been challenging.
- 2 respondents totally disagreed. In addition 1 respondent disagreed and 2 partly disagreed.

43. I am satisfied with my work task in Finland after the assignment



44. Adjustment to working environment in Finland is/has been challenging



## Valuation of know-how and utilisation of new skills

Majority of the repatriates agreed that the organisation in Finland values their know-how

4 respondents thought that they cannot utilise the skills learned in Uruguay in their current work.

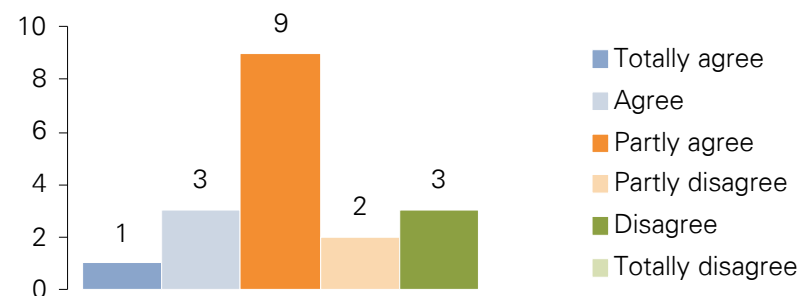
### Valuation of know-how

- 4 (22%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that the organisation in Finland values his/her know-how. Anyhow, 9 respondents partly agreed. In total 72% of the respondent agreed to certain level.
- 3 respondents disagreed and 2 partly disagreed.

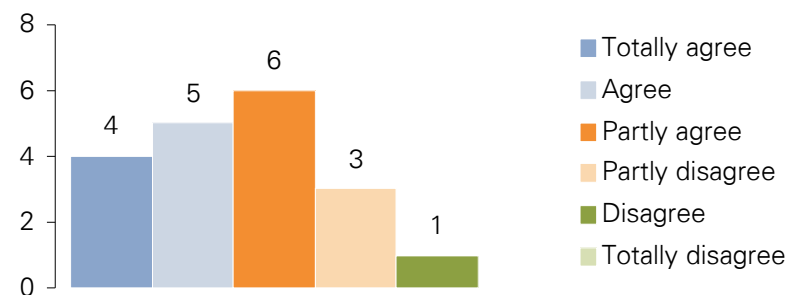
### Utilisation of new skills

- 9 respondents totally agreed or agreed that he/she can utilise the skills learned in Uruguay in their current work.
- In addition, 6 respondents partly agreed.
- Only one respondent disagreed and 3 partly disagreed.

### 45. I feel that the organisation in Finland values my know-how



### 46. I can utilise the skills I have learned in Uruguay in my current work



## Open answers related to work or organisation during or after repatriation

### Further open comments related to work or organisation during or after repatriation

- Work task especially in the beginning was not clear. During the assignment, I got used to having more responsibility and making independent decisions, so that needed adjusting.
- Botnia has forgotten about the know-how and new views of the project employees. This information could be utilised and it could be rather significant in certain areas.
- Work task was not decided by the time of repatriation.

# Practical arrangements

**Practical arrangements of repatriation to Finland went extremely well.**

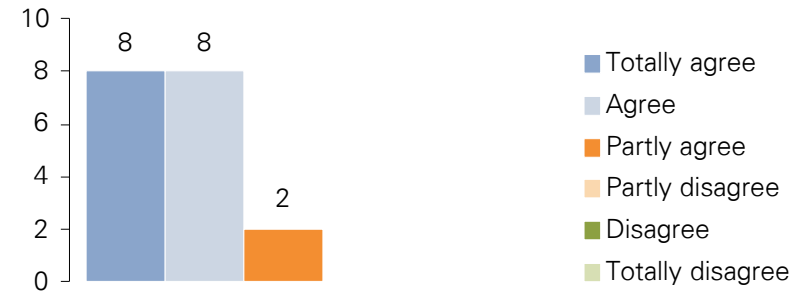
## Practical arrangements

- Out of the respondents, 16 (89%) totally agreed or agreed that practical arrangements of repatriation to Finland went well.
- In addition, 2 respondents partly agreed.

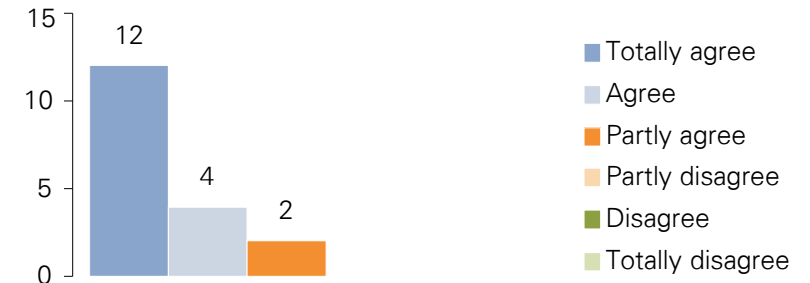
## Apartment

- 16 (89%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that housing arrangements in Finland worked out quite well.
- In addition, 2 respondents partly agreed.

## 48. Practical arrangements of repatriation to Finland went well



## 49. Housing arrangements in Finland worked out quite well



# Adjustment to Finland

**Most of the respondents experienced adjustment back to Finland a bit challenging at first.**

**At the time of taking part in the survey, they felt that they had adjusted well back to Finland.**

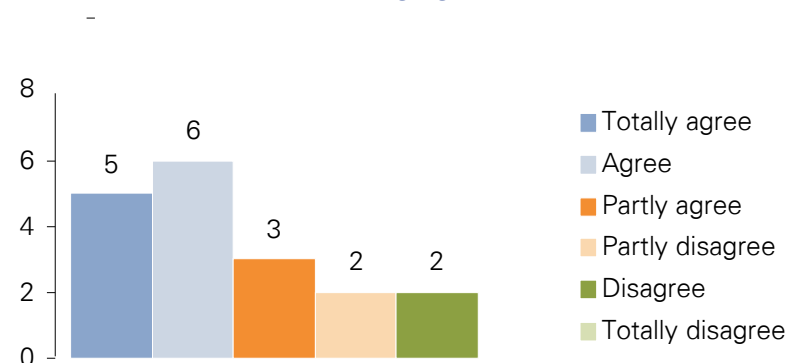
## Adjustment at first

- Out of the respondents, 11 (61%) totally agreed or agreed that adjustment back to Finland and the way of life were a bit challenging at first.
- 3 respondents partly agreed.
- Out of the respondents, 2 disagreed and 2 partly disagreed.

## Adjustment back to Finland

- 14 (77%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that in their opinion they had adjusted well back to Finland.
- In addition, 4 respondents partly agreed.
- None of the respondents experienced that they had not adjusted well back to Finland.

### 50. At first I felt that adjustment back to Finland and the way of life in Finland was a bit challenging



### 51. In my own opinion I have adjusted well back to Finland



## Spouses' and childrens' adjustment back to Finland

Spouses and children of all the respondents had adjusted well back to Finland.

### Spouses' adjustment

- 7 (77%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that their spouse had adjusted well back to Finland.
- In addition, 2 respondents partly agreed.

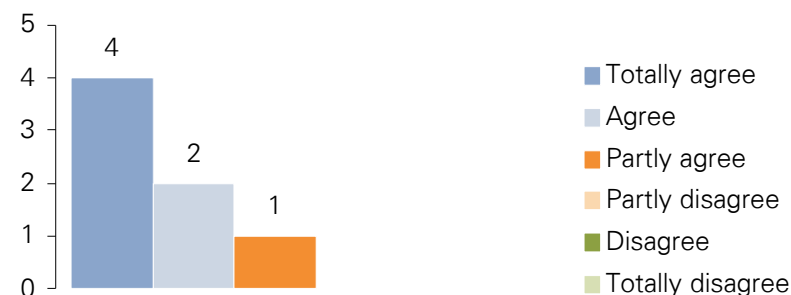
### Childrens' adjustment

- 6 respondents totally agreed or agreed that their children have adjusted well back to Finland
- In addition, 1 respondent partly agreed.
- None of the respondents thought that their children had not adjusted well back to Finland.

### 52. In my opinion my spouse has adjusted well back to Finland



### 53. In my opinion my children have/child has adjusted well back to Finland



# Satisfaction and repatriation challenges

A clear majority of the repatriates thought that they had been told in advance about challenges related to repatriation.

## Satisfaction

- 12 (71%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with they current life in Finland.
- In addition, 5 respondents partly agreed.
- None of the respondents disagreed.

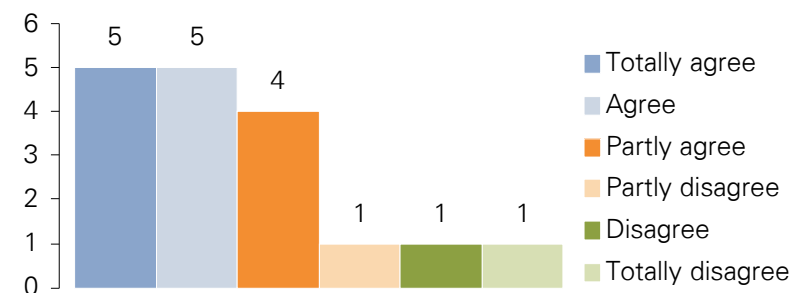
## Repatriation challenges

- 10 (59%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that they were told in advance about challenges related to repatriation.
- In addition, 4 respondents partly agreed
- 2 respondents disagreed or totally disagreed. In addition, 1 respondent partly disagreed.

### 54. I am satisfied with my current life in Finland



### 55. I was told in advance about challenges related to repatriation





# Life and expectations

**Social life in Finland had returned to normal with most repatriates.**

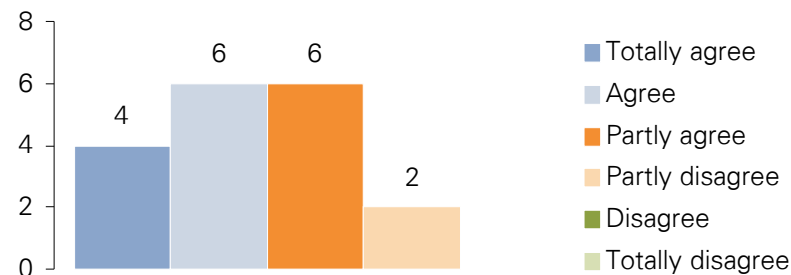
## Social life

- 10 (55%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that their social life in Finland has returned to the way it was before the assignment.
- In addition, 6 respondents partly agreed.
- Out of the respondents, 2 partly disagreed.

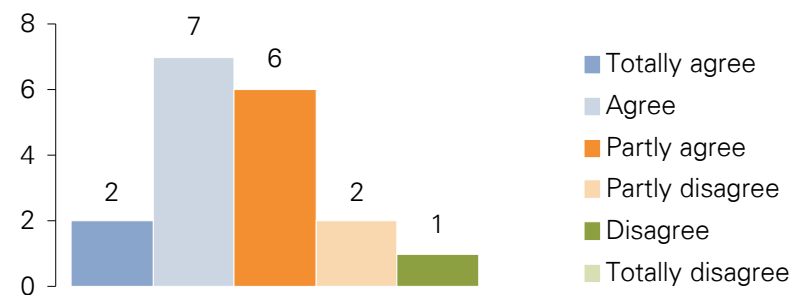
## Expectations

- 9 (50%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that their expectations on repatriation and related matters proved to be true.
- 6 respondents partly agreed.
- Out of the respondents, 1 disagreed and 2 partly disagreed.

**56. My social life in Finland has returned to the way it was before my assignment in Uruguay**



**57. My expectations on repatriation and related matters proved to be true**



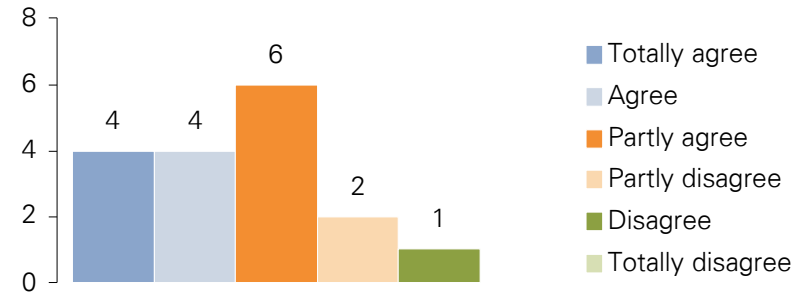
# Repatriation workshop

**Repatriation workshop had been worthwhile according to most. On the other hand, 3 people thought differently.**

## Repatriation workshop

- 8 (47%) respondents totally agreed or agreed that the repatriation workshop had been worthwhile.
- In addition, 6 respondents partly agreed.
- Out of the respondents, 1 disagreed and 2 partly disagreed.

58. Repatriation workshop that I participated has been worthwhile



## Open answers related to life and adjustment

### Further open comments on life and adjustment during repatriation or after that

- Abroad communication to Finland decreased and was not naturally at the same level. It has not returned to the same level, but I did return to different city than where I lived before. That does matter a lot.
- When I returned, I thought that repatriation isn't that big a deal, but in practice it is much more challenging. Social network has decreased due to some kind of jealousy. On the other hand, that kind of friendships, which were not ok anymore, may go, if they cannot handle this.
- I left in the middle of a construction project of my own home. After repatriation I was "homeless" for a long time, but that was mainly my own choice. Life after repatriation has evolved mainly around the construction project. Maybe that has also greatly affected to the repatriation challenges. There has not been a lot of social life.
- Health check has not been carried out after repatriation and nobody has really asked after it either.
- Customs problems with our container.

# Changing employer and new assignment

**8 respondents, which is 42% of the repatriates, had seriously considered changing employer before or after the repatriation.**

**Half of the repatriates who returned to a new work task, had considered changing employer.**

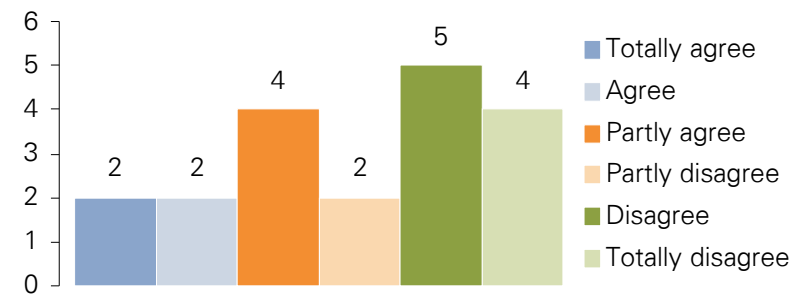
## Changing employer

- Out of the respondents 8 (42%) totally agreed, agreed or partly agreed that they considered or had seriously considered changing employer before or after repatriation.
- 11 (58%) respondents did however disagree.
- Out of those respondents, who returned to different work task after assignment, 50% had considered changing employer.
- Out of the respondents who returned to same work task after assignment, 33% had considered changing employer.

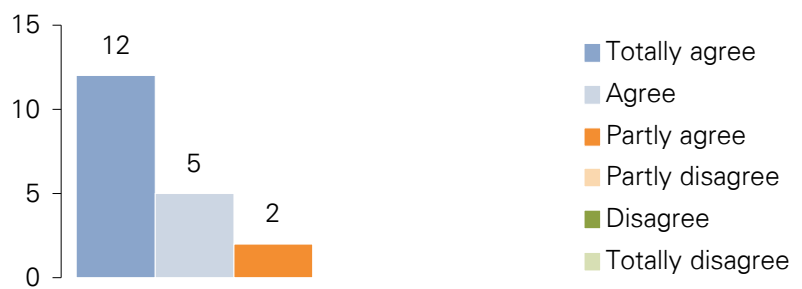
## New assignment

- Out of the respondents, 17 totally agreed or agreed that they would most likely go to a new international assignment if it was offered.
- In addition, 2 respondents partly agreed.

**60. I consider/have seriously considered changing my Employer before or after repatriation.**



**61. I would most likely go to a new international assignment if it was offered to me**



### Further open comments on repatriation in general

- I would put more effort into learning the local language prior the assignment. It could even be mandatory.
- I have not a clear picture whether this assignment was useful or not to my career. I have been allowed to continue at work, so i guess it did not go too bad. Personally i consider the assignment as a good experience professionally and otherwise as well. I did consider changing employer a lot at the end of the assignment and after returning to Finland, because I had a strong feeling that the my assignment failed in respect to my work.
- I have missed a lot those wonderful times in Uruguay. Even so much, that we have seriously considered with my wife if we would like to move there during the winter season when we have retired.
- Repatriation workshop was extremely good.
- Physically it was hard to return directly back to work, because we did such long shifts during the assignment..

## Further open comments and suggestions how repatriation process of Botnia should be developed

- One workshop is not enough. Repatriation is not easy, motivation is less than normally and that does not disappear in a month.
- There should be a development discussion at the end of the assignment to discuss how it went, what could have been developed etc. Sure it is good to get feedback throughout the assignment, so that everything is not left to last minute if there was some things which could have been done differently.
- In my case, everything was fine. Therefore I do not see any development needs. Botnia took good care of us as well as all the other co-operation partners.
- Not only repatriation process, but remembering the project personnel during the assignment should be taken into consideration.
- Receiving managers should be coached to be able to receive the repatriates and to understand their new thoughts. Managers should think together with the repatriate how things and skills learnt during the assignment, could be taken forward and what new tasks the repatriate could start to do. On the assignment the pace is very hectic and in factories in Finland very easy-going. That change managers might not understand.

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# Summary

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# Development suggestions



## Development suggestions for repatriation process

Generally, Metsä-Botnia has put a lot of effort into the repatriation process and turned it rather smooth. To this section, we have gathered some development suggestions, which Metsä-Botnia can utilise to further develop their repatriation process of their international assignments.

In creation of these development suggestions, we have taken into account the results of this survey, special features of Metsä-Botnia, notes made by professionals during the repatriation workshops and KPMG's benchmarking information on repatriation processes of similar companies. The aim is to create Metsä-Botnia's repatriation process even more comprehensive, so that it will benefit both the repatriates and the organisation in the best possible way.

### **Forging comprehensive and detailed repatriation process (as well as international assignment process)**

- More detailed and transparent repatriation process and description (what and when)
  - Adding negotiations on for example work task after repatriation, development discussion during repatriation, communication during the assignment
- Clearly defined responsible parties in repatriation process (who)
  - To clarify responsibilities between HR in home and host organisations
  - To increase responsibilities of the managers in home country
  - To increase responsibilities of repatriate and family
  - Responsibilities of the management
  - Responsibilities of co-operation partners or external advisors
- Suggestions for additions to repatriation process
  - Maintaining the repatriation process unified to all repatriates
  - Regular communication of changes in home organisation
  - More information to managers about repatriation challenges by for example training
  - In development discussion after repatriation going through the assignment and updating know-how and considering and planning utilisation of that know-how

## Development suggestions from respondents

### Development suggestions from respondents

- More than one repatriation workshop.
- Development discussion at the end of the assignment.
- Project personnel should be taken into account and remembered during the assignment.
- More information to managers how to receive repatriates.
- For repatriates a chance to discuss with manager how further develop skills learnt during the assignment..
- Improve flow of information between the assignee and home organisation.
- Work duties more clear for the repatriate.
- Utilising the skills and know-how of the project personnel after repatriation.
- Health check after repatriation.
- More encouragement to learn the local language.

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# Appendix

- Appendix 1: 8.12.2008 Repatriation survey for the test respondents
- Appendix 2: 10.12.2008 Repatriation survey for employees returning from Uruguay
- Appendix 3: 12.12.2008 Reminder - Repatriation survey for employees returning from Uruguay
- Appendix 4: Instructions for repatriation survey and survey questions

**Hello,**

**Metsä-Botnia together with KPMG People Services is carrying out a survey for its employees who come back from their international assignment in Uruguay. Below you find more information about the survey and link to the survey.**

**Now the survey is ready and before sending the survey to all the repatriates, we wish that you two could answer the survey. Maarit Herranen suggested you as the test respondents. Your responses will be included in the survey results. In addition, if you have any technical problems or you have any comments on the content of the survey, I would kindly ask you to contact me.**

**Would you have time to answer the survey as soon by Wed 10 December?**

**Thank you already in advance for your valuable input in terms of success of the survey.**

**Below you find the email, which will be sent to all repatriates.**

**Regards, Annika Varjonen.**

**Dear repatriate from Uruguay,**

**Metsä-Botnia wants to find out experiences and opinions regarding repatriation from its employees who are returning from their international assignment in Uruguay. The aim of the survey is to find out what the repatriates (over 6 months) were satisfied with and what not. In addition, the aim is to identify possible targets for development in terms of return and repatriation process.**

**The survey is carried out by an independent party KPMG People Services, which will handle all the responses with absolute confidentiality. KPMG will report the responses to Metsä-Botnia in anonym format where individual answers cannot be identified.**

**By responding you give valuable feedback, which will be utilised to further develop Metsä-Botnia's repatriation process.**

**The responses will be reported to all participants in early 2009. In terms of planning the development suggestions, it is vital that you will also answer to the open-ended questions and tell your development suggestions in terms of repatriation process. It takes approximately 15 minutes to answer the questions. Please note that the survey needs to be answered and sent at once, because it cannot unfortunately be saved.**

**Please answer as soon as possible, however by Mon 15 December 2008 at the latest. Thank you already in advance for your active participation and valuable comments!**

**Here is the link to the survey**

**<https://www.surveys.kpmg.com/mmi/2wU33BC/Link.html>**

**If you have any questions in terms of the content of the survey, please contact KPMG/Annika Varjonen [annika.varjonen@kpmg.fi](mailto:annika.varjonen@kpmg.fi) or by phone 020 760 3261.**

**If you any technical problems in terms of filling in or sending your answers, please contact KPMG/Jukka Kantola [jukka.kantola@kpmg.fi](mailto:jukka.kantola@kpmg.fi) or by phone 020 760 3921.**

**Regards,**

**Annika Varjonen**

**Hello!**

**I would like to remind you to respond to the repatriation survey. You have time to respond until Mon 15 December. If you have already responded, please ignore this message. Thank you already in advance on taking part in the survey.**

**Regards, Annika Varjonen**

Metsä-Botnia wants to find out experiences and opinions regarding repatriation from its employees who are returning from their international assignment in Uruguay. By responding you give valuable feedback, which will be utilised to further develop Metsä-Botnia's repatriation process.

The survey is carried out by an independent party KPMG People Services, which will handle all the responses with absolute confidentiality. KPMG will report the responses to Metsä-Botnia in anonym format where individual answers cannot be identified.

### INSTRUCTIONS

It takes approximately 15 minutes to answer the questions. Please note that the survey needs to be answered and sent at once, because answers cannot unfortunately be saved temporarily.

Start the survey by clicking the KPMG logo below. Please type your name on the first window and press send to be able to go to the actual question form. In the survey, you can move forward by pressing next-button at the bottom of the window. If you cannot see the next-button on your screen, please decrease the size of the window by dragging it smaller with your mouse. At the end of the survey send your responses by pressing send-button. Thank you already in advance for your active participation and valuable comments!

If you have any questions in terms of the content of the survey, please contact KPMG/Annika Varjonen [annika.varjonen@kpmg.fi](mailto:annika.varjonen@kpmg.fi) or by phone 020 760 3261.

If you any technical problems in terms of filling in or sending your answers, please contact KPMG/Jukka Kantola [jukka.kantola@kpmg.fi](mailto:jukka.kantola@kpmg.fi) or by phone 020 760 3921.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. My assignment in Uruguay started
2. My assignment in Uruguay ended
3. My Employer before the assignment in Uruguay

Metsä Botnia  
BMS

4. Place of work before the assignment
5. Place of residence before the assignment
6. My Employer after the assignment in Uruguay

Metsä-Botnia  
BMS

7. I repatriated to the same work (same working environment and same duty) as before the assignment

Yes/No

7. a If no, what is the place of work after the assignment

8. Place of residence after the assignment

9. I have a family Yes/No Please choose no if your spouse or your children have not accompanied you on the assignment or have accompanied you for less than 6 months. (Please note! If you choose no, please skip all the questions concerning family issues. Thank you.

10. Before the assignment in Uruguay, I have lived abroad for a period over 6 months

Yes/No

- 10 a. Where were you

- 10 b. For how long

11. Negotiations on my work task after repatriation started xx months before the actual return to Finland

12. My work task after repatriation was confirmed xx months before the return to Finland

13. I participated in the pre-departure training before the assignment

14. My spouse participated in the pre-departure training before moving to Uruguay

15. In pre-departure training, also repatriation issues were discussed.

**16. I visited Finland during my assignment**

**16 a. How many times**

**16 b. My visits to Finland lasted (on average)**

**16 c. During my visits to Finland I also visited my home organisation**

**17. I participated in repatriation workshop in Finland**

**17 a. Repatriation workshop that I participated was held on**

**January 8st 2008 (8.1.2008)**

**April 14th 2008 (15.4.2008)**

**May 13th 2008 (13.5.2008)**

**May 20th 2008 (20.5.2008)**

**August 26th 2008 (26.8.2008)**

**17 b. Why did you not participate**

**18. My spouse participated in repatriation workshop organised in Finland**

**19. A representative from Human Resources department interviewed me before my repatriation**

**20. A representative from Human Resources department interviewed me after my repatriation**

**21. Further comments on background information**

**PRIOR TO THE ASSIGNMENT IN URUGUAY**

Please read the statements carefully. For each statement choose the alternative on the scale that best describes your opinion and experience on your current situation. Please try to use the whole scale and state your opinion strongly.

**22. I was pleased to go for the assignment in Uruguay**

**1. Totally agree**

**2. Agree**

**3. Partly agree**

**4. Partly disagree**

**5. Disagree**

**6. Totally disagree**

**23. My family was pleased to come along to Uruguay.**

**DURING THE ASSIGNMENT IN URUGUAY**

**24. I am satisfied with my assignment in Uruguay**

**25. My expectations on the assignment in Uruguay proved to be true**

**26. It was (or would have been) important to me to receive information on general conditions in Finland before my actual repatriation to Finland (e.g. economical situation)**

**27. Life in Uruguay differed greatly from life in Finland**

**28. In my own opinion I adjusted well to Uruguay**

**29. In my opinion my spouse adjusted well to Uruguay**

**30. In my opinion my children adjusted well to Uruguay**

**31. In my opinion communication between myself and the home organisation in Finland was smooth**

**32. During my assignment I received sufficient information on changes that took place in the home organisation in Finland**

**33. The organisation in Uruguay gave enough support to me and my family in matters concerning repatriation.**

**34. The home organisation in Finland gave enough support to me and my family in matters concerning repatriation.**

**35. Negotiations on my work task in Finland were started early enough before the assignment ended in Uruguay.**

**36. I received enough information in advance on my work task in Finland**

**37. I received enough information on repatriation process and its different stages from Metsä-Botnia before my assignment in Uruguay ended.**

**38. Further comments on time before the repatriation to Finland**



## **REPATRIATION TO FINLAND**

### **Work and organisation**

- 39. I am/have been satisfied with the support given to me by the home organisation in Finland during repatriation**
- 40. Adjustment back to the home organisation in Finland went without problems**
- 41. I felt that I had enough opportunities to influence my work task after repatriation in Finland**
- 42. My expectations on my work task in Finland proved to be true**
- 43. I am satisfied with my work task in Finland after the assignment**
- 44. Adjustment to working environment in Finland is/has been challenging**
- 45. I feel that the organisation in Finland values my know-how**
- 46. I can utilise the skills I have learned in Uruguay in my current work**
- 47. Further comments on work or organisation during or after repatriation**

### **Life and adjustment**

- 48. Practical arrangements of repatriation to Finland went well**
- 49. Housing arrangements in Finland worked out quite well**
- 50. At first I felt that adjustment back to Finland and the way of life in Finland was a bit challenging**
- 51. In my own opinion I have adjusted well back to Finland**
- 52. In my opinion my spouse has adjusted well back to Finland**
- 53. In my opinion my children have/child has adjusted well back to Finland**

- 54. I am satisfied with my current life in Finland**

- 55. I was told in advance about challenges related to repatriation**

- 56. My social life in Finland has returned to the way it was before my assignment in Uruguay**

- 57. My expectations on repatriation and related matters proved to be true**

- 58. Repatriation workshop that I participated has been worthwhile. (Please leave unanswered if you did not participate in the workshop)**

- 59. Further comments on life and adjustment during or after repatriation**

## **FUTURE PROSPECTS**

- 60. I consider/have seriously considered changing my Employer before or after repatriation.**

- 61. I would most likely go to a new international assignment if it was offered to me**

- 62. Further comments on repatriation in general**

- 64. In my opinion repatriation process of Botnia should be developed as follows**