



Emerging World

Helping Business Shape a Better Future



Understanding and exploring the long term impact of
corporate international service learning programmes

2017 CISL Impact Benchmark Study

Designed and implemented by Emerging World
Responsible Leadership contributions from Dr Karen Blakeley

Corporate International Service Learning – Inspirational experiences creating enduring business impact

Take a young sales executive from California who travels to Africa for two weeks to support a local start up with their business development. Or a cross functional team from four different continents that come together for ten days in Peru to help a health clinic become a centre of excellence in cancer prevention and treatment. Or perhaps a Singapore based banker who travels and lives in London to apply their finance skills to help an inner-city community finance organisation build a budget and business plan.

These are all examples of CISL Programmes – providing life changing experiences for the employees involved, organisation changing opportunities for their companies’ partners and returning real business benefits to the companies.

This is what makes CISL special and it’s why two years ago, Emerging World launched the first ever Study demonstrating that Corporate International Service Learning (CISL) programmes positively impact organisations looking to develop leaders, increase employee engagement and provide career mobility.



The Study reached out to participants 12 months or more after they had returned from their experience. It established the first cross company Benchmark measuring the long term impact of CISL programmes on participants. The findings were profound and provided opportunities for participating companies to make changes to their programmes that both built on success and improved areas of relative weakness. A second Study was conducted in 2016.

CISL programmes are defined by the fact that employees travel across international borders to apply their work-based skills to a project or other assignment that serves a third-party constituency.

The term CISL has four defining characteristics:



Programmes are established to meet a variety of business objectives, but the vast majority are driven from either a CSR or Sustainability function, or from Leadership Development/HR. Companies regularly report the results of their programmes having generated feedback from participants on their return from the CISL experience, but until the 2015 CISL Impact Study, it had been much harder to establish the longer term impact on participants and the associated return on investment for the companies.

Time to set a new Benchmark

Working with the participating companies, and building on the learning from the previous years, Emerging World launched the 2017 Study and Benchmark to provide:

1. Deeper analysis from a significantly larger sample
2. New areas of interest offering a greater depth to the data
3. Up to date statistics for the expanding field of CISL to build knowledge within the area

As in the original Study, participants completed an online survey at least twelve months after they had returned from their CISL experience. This time lapse enables people to reflect on what they have learnt as a result of their time away and how it had been applied on return. The survey, which took place in March 2017, included new demographic and programme design questions, more detail on post assignment activity and a new section on Responsible Leadership. The surveys which were confidential and anonymous included:

1. General questions on leadership development, business impact, employee engagement, career mobility and responsible leadership
2. More detailed questions to establish the impact on programme support processes
3. Tailored questions specific to participating companies that are not featured in this report

Five companies participated in the 2017 CISL Impact Benchmark Study. Each company's programme is uniquely designed and implemented to meet specific organisational objectives. As a result, the Study examined:

- **Employee profiles** (e.g. seniority, length of service, age, etc.)
- **Length of assignment**
- **Assignment design** (e.g. Group or Individual)
- **Location** (e.g. rural or urban)
- **Assignment host** (e.g. NGO, social enterprise, business, government agency)



The Benchmark has been created based on 688 responses from 6 companies with programmes dating from 2004-2015.

Within the Study:

- Gender participation in programmes is fairly equal: 51% female, 49% male
- The age profile is also relatively evenly split with 57% over 35. The largest groups of respondents are aged 25 to 44 (37%)
- The Study includes assignments dating back to 2004 with the majority of respondents completing their assignment between 2013 and 2015 (64%)
- 47% participated in group assignments (two or more people going to the same site at the same time), 53% participated as individuals
- 40% undertook assignments with longer field experiences (of more than one month) and 60% on assignments with shorter field experiences (less than one month)
- Most field experiences were complemented by virtual support. Only 6% of respondents provided no virtual support
- Participants were asked to rank themselves in terms of seniority on a range from 1-10. The majority ranked themselves at levels 5-7 (largest group ranging between 5 and 7 (60%))

For questions that were new or significantly changed from previous years, the Benchmark was created from the 2017 Study participant sample.

Participating
companies:



Impact on Depth of Learning

To establish the depth of learning, the Study identified survey questions mapped against the four levels of Kirkpatrick's evaluation model:

Level 1 Reaction:

How the delegates felt about the assignment

Level 2 Learning:

Understanding the increase in knowledge and learning

Level 3 Behaviour:

Involves how the learning is applied and can only be assessed over time and often is judged by others as well as the participant

Level 4 Results:

Relates to positive tangible business results with a causal link to the assignment.

Level 1 Reaction

100%

Of participants surveyed have recommended a CISL experience

Level 2 Learning

92%

Recognised their experience led to positive developments in leadership skills & competencies

Level 3 Behaviour

78%

Made positive changes to the way they work

75%

Applied the learning from their experience to their role

52%

Of participants' positive changes were observed by others

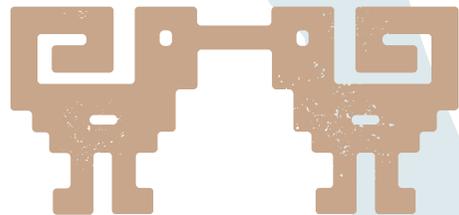
Level 4 Results

56%

Made a positive business impact on their organization as a result of their insight and learning

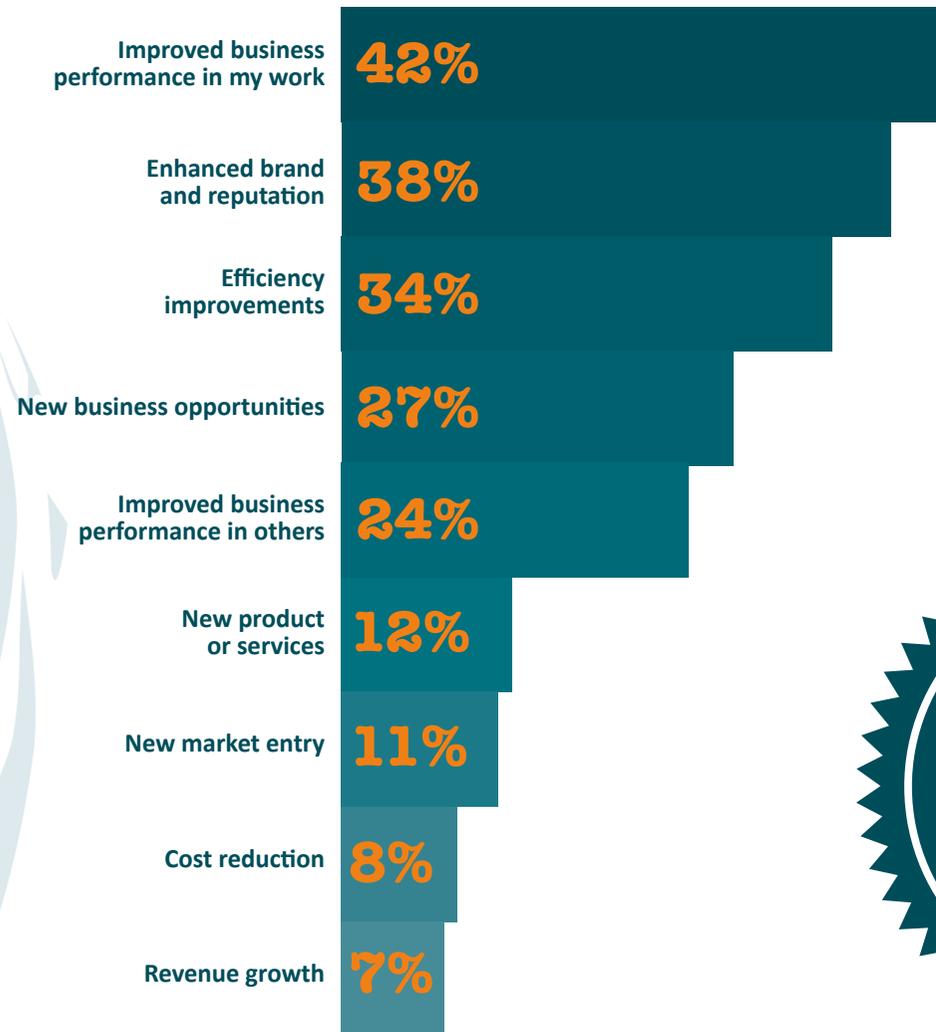
56%

positive business impact



Impact of CISL on Business Performance

To understand more about how CISL impacts business results, the Survey asked participants to select all the areas of business impact that they felt their experience had contributed towards.



“Through MySkills4Afrika, Microsoft employees from around the world share their experience with a wide range of schools, government agencies, start-ups, SMEs and other organisations and individuals in order to build world class skills and increase innovation and affordable technology access across Africa. By closely aligning projects with our business goals, we have seen our volunteers deliver improved performance and many new opportunities for business growth.”

Lutz Ziob

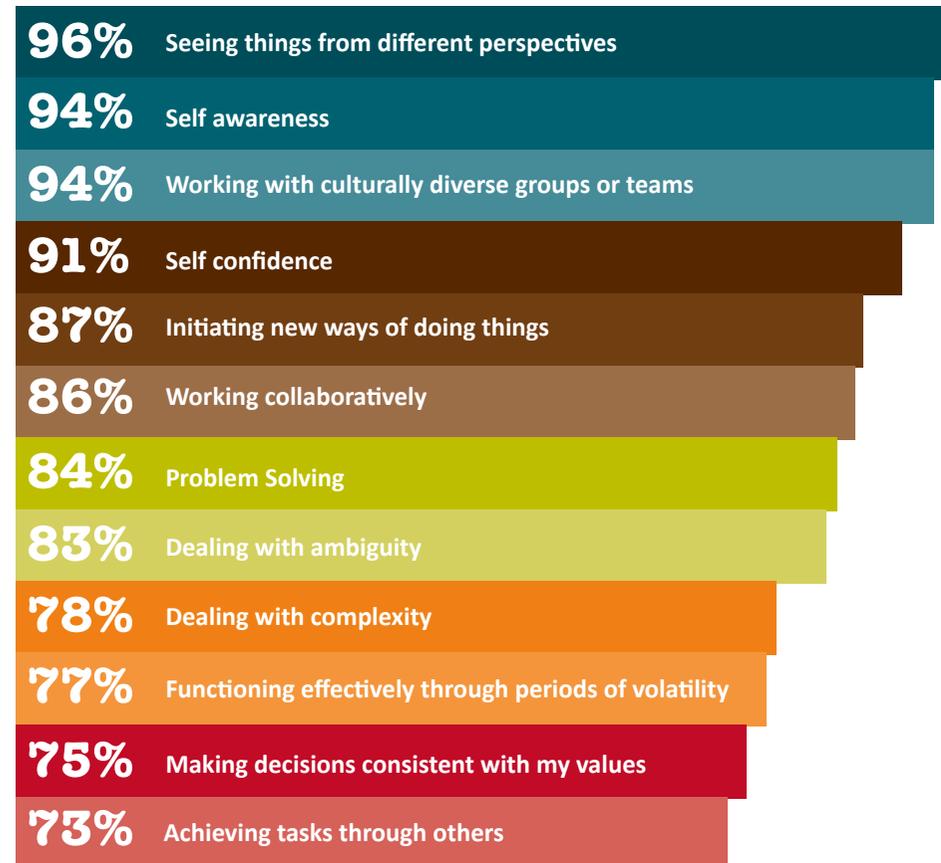
Dean of Microsoft4Afrika Academy



Impact on Global Leadership Skills

CISL builds the skills and competencies required for the challenges of modern leadership

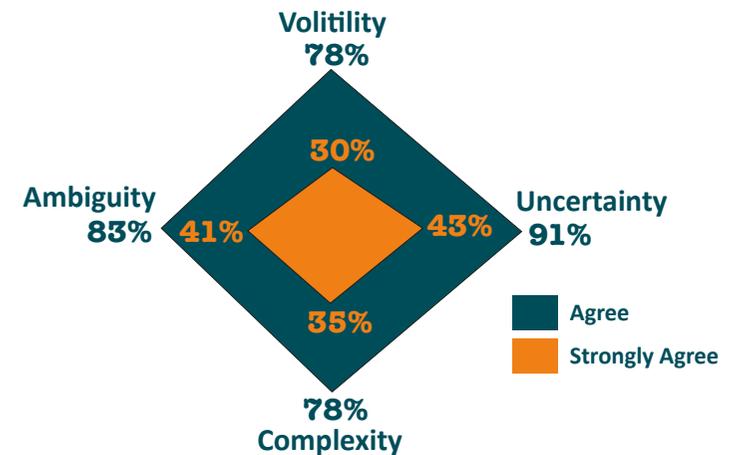
Respondents were asked to answer questions on leadership development using a five-point scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. A positive response includes scores for Agree and Strongly Agree. The questions relate to 12 leadership competencies and behaviours identified, from a range of recent research, as critical for executive global leadership in the future. The results show that CISL programmes are proving very effective for development across all competencies but the main differences emerge when looking at Strongly Agree responses which show the strongest impact on Seeing things from different perspectives and Working with culturally diverse groups or teams.



VUCA

VUCA is an acronym used to describe or reflect on the **volatility, uncertainty, complexity** and **ambiguity** of general conditions and situations. The notion of VUCA was introduced by the U.S. Army War College to describe the more volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous multilateral world which resulted from the end of the Cold War. For many organisations – VUCA is a practical code for awareness and readiness.

Mapping the leadership competencies against the VUCA model shows that CISL programmes prepare employees to succeed in a VUCA world.



“The EY Vantage Program connects future EY leaders with market leaders of tomorrow to accelerate growth and create jobs through six-week projects, at no fee, addressing the entrepreneurs’ growth obstacles. The Study shows that Vantage delivers leadership development opportunities for our people. This development leads to more value for our business, our clients, and our purpose.”

Elise Saur

Vantage Program Lead, EY

Responsible Leadership by Dr Karen Blakeley*

Business leaders are some of the most powerful people on the planet. Their actions and decisions generate profound changes in the lives of people all over the world. In 2017, the World Economic Forum at Davos issued a call for more responsible leadership (RL). Klaus Schwab, the founder of Davos, admitted that unless businesses take responsibility for tackling issues around inequality, environmental sustainability and social justice, these problems will worsen, leading to a global increase in political, economic and environmental instability and jeopardising the abilities of business to prosper.

So what is responsible leadership? We have defined RL as:

influencing all stakeholders to commit to building long term viable organisations that actively contribute towards a more equitable, just and sustainable world.

This idea can be summarised by viewing responsible business leaders as ‘agents of world benefit’ (Maak & Pless, 2009) who as part of effective leadership, take a global perspective, understand and engage with all stakeholders, take personal responsibility for their actions, and seek to build viable organisations that bring about social justice, human flourishing and environmental sustainability for future generations. Of course, it is easier to define RL than to enact it! There is currently a crisis of leadership, with low levels of trust in leaders, making it very difficult for those in senior positions to do their jobs. We need more responsible leaders who inspire followership and can get things done throughout the global system but we don’t yet know how to cultivate them.

Some questions raised by these challenges include:

- how do we develop the next generation of leaders with the abilities to balance complex, competing stakeholder interests within a global context?
- how do we spread RL throughout the system so that it is deeply embedded across global, organisational cultures?
- how do we cultivate the moral, even spiritual development needed to establish leaders of character who can operate as respected and trusted role models and thought leaders?

In the very few studies conducted on responsible leadership development, we know that service learning can contribute towards these goals. So this year, the CISL Study included questions on the extent to which participation in a corporate international service learning programme helped develop participants’ responsible leadership.

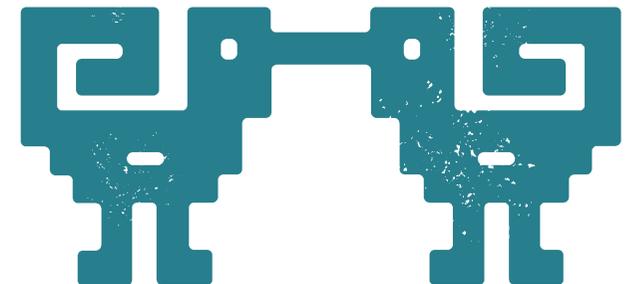
Responsible Leadership is based on four complementary theories:

- 1. Global Leadership Theory:** The ability to influence others to bring about desired change in a complex, globalised context
- 2. Stakeholder Theory:** Taking account of the all stakeholders’ interests (inclusiveness)
- 3. Business Ethics:** The ability to identify the ‘right’ course of action and act accordingly (Conscience)
- 4. Corporate Responsibility:** Business commitment to delivering economic, social and environmental benefits to all of society

“The MSD Fellowship for Global Health is designed to leverage the skills and talents of employees who are paired with non-profit partners around the world to provide meaningful and systematic improvements in health service delivery for people in the greatest need. Results from the Study show that the program provides profound personal learning and development opportunities and helps participants to reflect on how their work has a broader impact on society.”

Christine Funk

Associate Director Corporate Responsibility, Merck



* Dr Karen Blakeley is Head of the Centre for Responsible Management at Winchester University.

Responsible Leadership

This year's findings show that, in addition to developing effective leaders, CISL also develops responsible leaders who can translate their new insights and thinking into powerful action.

In order to measure responsible leadership we drew on the four main theories that have contributed to its development: global leadership theory, stakeholder theory, business ethics and corporate responsibility. We then designed questions to test how leaders might think and act if they genuinely championed stakeholder interests, business ethics and corporate responsibility. We also wanted to understand if there was a difference between thought and action in this area- do CISL experiences just encourage responsible thinking? Or do they also develop people who have the courage to take action based on their new thinking – the essence of responsible leadership.



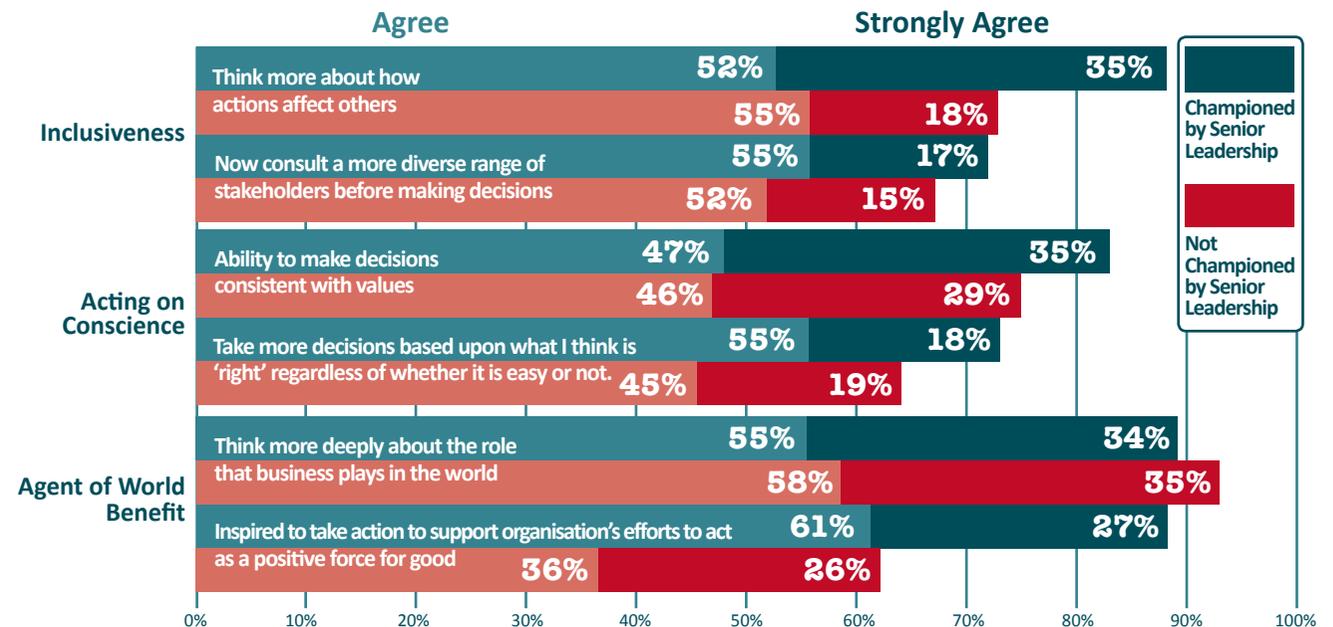
The results were clear. CISL not only develops more responsible leaders, it develops people with courage to take action based on their new thinking, even if this involves some risk.

The impact of senior management in the development of responsible leadership is irrefutable.

Some 88% claimed that senior leadership championing of a CISL programme inspired them to further a company's corporate responsibility efforts. In addition, 87% indicated that senior leadership championing encouraged them to think more deeply about how their actions affected others.

On the other hand, when programmes aren't seen to be championed by senior leadership, larger numbers of participants thought more deeply about the role that companies play in the world (89%). But when senior management did champion the programme, many more people ACTED on their learning (88%) than those where the programme was not championed by senior management (62%)

We also noted that there is a strong relationship between the degree to which the experience takes participants out of their comfort zone and the ability to demonstrate responsible leadership.

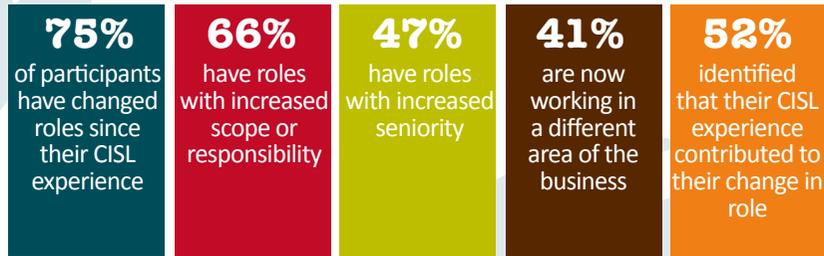


Impact on Career Mobility, Retention and Engagement

As the shape of business changes and ways of working evolve to meet these needs, career mobility has shown itself to be good for business. Reduced recruitment costs, less time for on-boarding and higher retention rates are just some of the benefits. In a world where restructuring is the norm and job security may no longer be a realistic goal, mobility gives employees access to a range of professional opportunities and career paths.

Retaining employees allows companies to build on an individual's existing knowledge and networks and maximise their transferrable skills. A stable workforce drives a positive culture with motivated and loyal employees that are aligned with the company objectives and values:

CISL programmes build the skills and competencies needed for career mobility



“BD has two programs included in this year’s Study: the Labs for Life Program - focused on bringing employees’ skills to strengthen laboratory systems in the developing world and the Volunteer Service Trips Program that sends teams of skilled employee volunteers to work on projects in hospitals and clinics. Both programs have shown outstanding results across the employee engagement measures this year. This reflects the efforts we take to ensure our senior management champion the programs, aligning them with our business objectives, priorities and values.”

Jennifer Farrington
Vice President BD Foundation

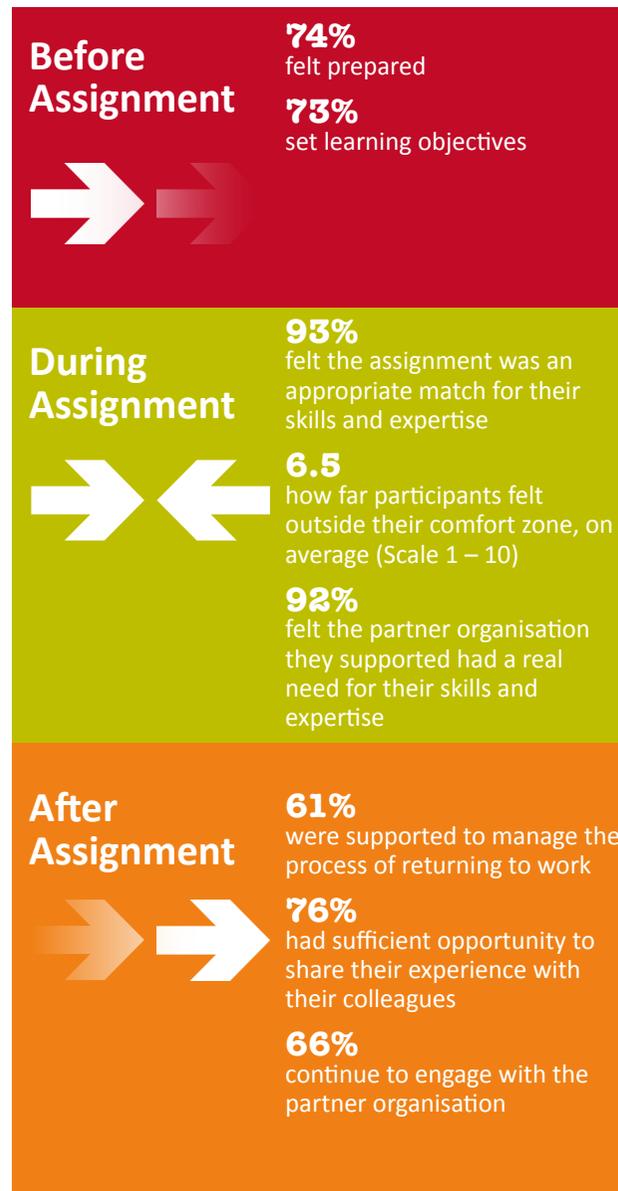
CISL programmes increase loyalty, retention and employees’ pride in their employer



Programme Essentials for Success

The Study provides insight into the value of the different programme components and how they contribute to overall programme effectiveness. We describe these components as Programme Variables and split them into the different phases of programme management, i.e. What companies do before the assignment, during the assignment and after the assignment. The 2017 Benchmark scores show that company performance has stayed the same or improved against all the Variables with the exception of participants having the opportunity to share their experience (down 2%). It shows that the participating companies are generally doing a good job in preparing employees for their assignments. However, there is still more to be done once participants return from their experiences to achieve a greater impact.

This year's Study looked more closely at what happens after the assignment in terms of the alumni experience. A strong alumni programme with opportunities for participants to engage with each other; to remain involved by supporting and acting as ambassador for the CISL programme can have a strong effect on the breadth of learning, employee engagement, retention, business impact as well as responsible leadership.



“Credit Suisse’s Global Citizens Program promotes skills transfer and knowledge sharing between the bank’s employees and partner organisations working in education and financial inclusion. By using the results of the Study, we’ve been able to adapt some of our processes and introduce others to help improve the effectiveness of the program, for participants and for our partners. For example, we have a more structured way of supporting employees returning from their assignment that has resulted in very positive responses from participants.”

Eva Halper

Director, Corporate Citizenship, Credit Suisse



Programme management and design makes a difference to results

Management involvement is essential. We looked at the effect of both line management engagement with the programmes as well as the influence of Senior Leaders championing their companies' CISL programmes and these two variables have a strong bearing on six of the seven Areas of Impact that we examine in the Study. Companies' programmes are diverse in design but there are common elements in terms of how they are managed. Our deeper analysis reveals valuable information on the relationship between different processes and Programme Variables. Working with the University of Winchester and using a wide range of statistical analysis we identified where these 'Impact Levers' had the greatest effect on the Programme Variables. By understanding these relationships, CISL Programme Managers are able to design programmes that deliver against their particular objectives and maximise the company's return on investment.

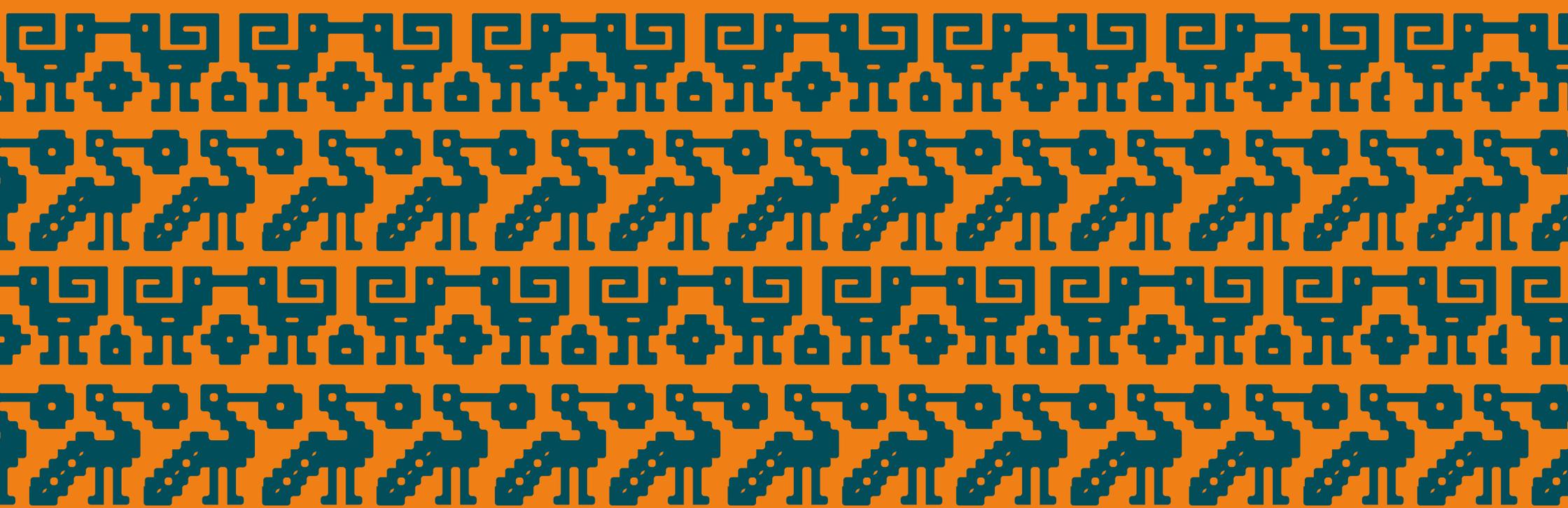
Variables		Areas of Impact						
		Breadth of Learning ¹	Depth of Learning	Career Mobility	Engagement	Retention (self-report)	Business Impact ²	Responsible Leadership
Assignment Architecture	Seniority			✓				
	Type of host org			✓				
	Location			✓		✓	✓	
	Group/Ind			✓	✓	✓		
	Duration	✓				✓✓		
Management Involvement	Line Mgt Engagement	✓	✓✓		✓✓	✓	✓✓	
	Senior Leaders Champion	✓	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Before Assignment	Felt prepared	✓	✓✓		✓✓			✓
	Set Learning objectives	✓	✓✓		✓✓		✓✓	✓✓
During Assignment	Appropriate match	✓	✓✓		✓✓			
	Comfort zone	✓				✓✓		✓✓
	Partner need for skills	✓✓	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
After Assignment	Support upon return	✓✓	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
	Sufficient opportunity to share	✓✓	✓✓		✓✓		✓	
	Cont. engagement w. partner	✓✓	✓✓		✓✓			
	Alumnus activity	✓✓	✓✓	X	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓

¹ Breadth of Learning refers to the Global Leadership Skills reported on page 6

² Business Impact refers to the Business Performance areas reported on page 5

Many of the 2017 Study results reinforce the findings from the original 2015 Benchmark. For example that a good match of employee with assignment will result in a strong impact on development in the 'levels of learning' and result in strong employee engagement.

We can also see that stronger results are seen when there is a good match of participant with a partner organisation and project that has real need for their skills.



About Emerging World

Emerging World is a specialist consultancy that helps your business shape a better future. In the globalised world of business, with increased emphasis on emerging markets, companies are being presented with challenges in developing the way leaders think and act in order to succeed. In these markets, companies need specialist support to develop leaders to have very different ways of thinking. Emerging World works to:

- Design and deliver international Leadership Development learning experiences that help leaders make the personal changes in perception and behaviours required to succeed in globally-integrated business.
- Develop and implement corporate volunteering programmes that incorporate tailored experiential learning to challenge and stretch employees.
- Help companies develop programmes and inclusive business strategies to connect business objectives with social responsibility.
- Enable people and organisations tackling social issues in the emerging world to access skills and perspectives to address the challenges they are facing.

For more information on the 2017 CISL Impact Benchmark Study contact Emerging World on
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