



## Returning home with a new outlook on life

As HEINEKEN repat partner Gertraud Eregger recently discovered, expat life can change the way we want to live and work at home.

### Keeping it local

As an expat partner, Gertraud consciously developed a more portable career after relocating from Ethiopia to Jamaica. "In Addis Ababa, I'd joined the local workforce, which was an incredible experience," says Gertraud, whose European HR expertise was of real value in a developing market. "I built up a great reputation in the recruitment sector there but in Jamaica I had to start all over again!"

### Portability is the key

"So, I decided to start training to become an executive coach as I imagined we would continue our international life. In the end the next assignment was back to Austria! But by then our global mindset had evolved to a stage where we would have been thrilled with either another assignment or repatriation," says Gertraud, who moved back to Graz in June 2020.

### An ideal compromise

"As we were in the middle of a global pandemic, repatriating was a strange experience for us. So it was uplifting for me to have a sense of continuity with my clients. I also resumed my career in HR with a part time role that leverages some of my new coaching skills," says Gertraud, who felt there was one more piece of the jigsaw to put in place.

### Staying balanced

"On returning to Austria, I was eager to maintain the balanced lifestyle that I enjoyed as an expat. So I made sure I would have one idle day each week. On that day, I might go for a hike with my sister, go for a long swim or meet with a friend. I have also taken the flute up again after a long hiatus and I have a weekly yoga session. Along with retaining my portable professional identity and reconnecting with close family members, these rituals have been the anchors in helping me to feel at home once again."

### A sense of gratitude

"I'm very grateful for HEINEKEN's partner support and Global Connection's guidance over the years. If left to my own devices, I would not have set up a portable business. But I never felt alone. I felt like I had expert 'cheerleaders' urging me on. The whole experience was a game changer for how I want to live my life and work."

*Photo: Gertraud with her husband and daughter*