

Canadian Diplomatic Family Network Survey Results

This presentation highlights the results of the survey conducted in the spring 2024 with 253 respondents from the family/dependents community

September 2024

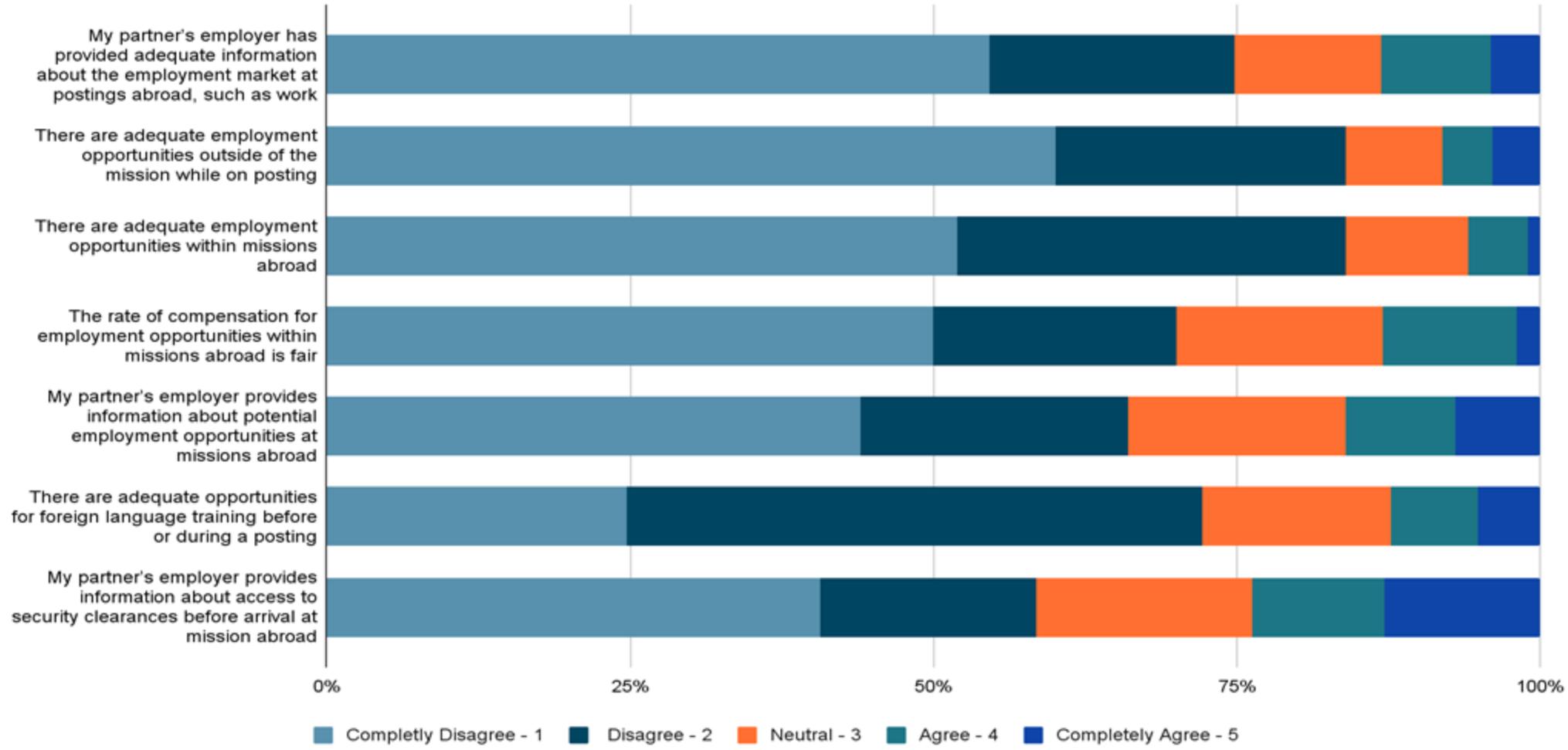


Key Survey Findings - Highest and lowest ranked statements

1. "Postings abroad have overall been a positive experience for me" - 53% agreement
2. "The prospect or reality of going on posting has adversely affected my mental health" - 48% disagreement
3. "The overall financial position of my partner and me has been negatively affected by going on postings" - 47% disagreement
4. "The prospect or reality of going on posting puts strain on my relationship with my partner" - 47% disagreement
5. "My partner's employer adequately takes into account the considerations of 2SLGBTQI+ partners" - 46% agreement
6. "The process for being officially added to a posting as a common-law partner or aging parent is clear" - 33% agreement

1. "I can receive adequate support from the Spousal Employment Support Office (SESO)" - 92% disagreement
2. "On return from posting abroad to Canada, my partner's employer provides information on employment opportunities in Canada" - 89% disagreement
3. "On return to Canada from posting abroad, my partner's employer supports security clearance updates and/or language testing" - 87% disagreement
4. "There are adequate employment opportunities outside of the mission while on posting" - 84% disagreement
5. "There are adequate employment opportunities within missions abroad" - 84% disagreement
6. "There are adequate opportunities for foreign language training before or during a posting" - 81% disagreement

Key Survey Findings - Employment and training (1 of 2)



Key Survey Findings - Top Proposals for Better Support

1. Creation of a formal qualified employment pool for partners and other family members of Canadians posted abroad, like the US “Foreign Service Family Reserve Corps”
2. Embassy employment contracts for partners and family members paid at the same rate of pay as if the work was being completed in Ottawa, rather than local employment rates of pay.
3. Access to foreign language training before and/or during a posting abroad
4. Priority access to embassy employment contracts for partners and family members who meet the minimum requirements of the job description
5. Creation of an officially recognized network / group for partners of Canadian diplomats abroad with representation in official discussions with the employer related to partners and families abroad
6. Funding for CPP/QPP contributions for partners who were previously employed but who became unemployed due to joining their partner on a posting
7. Improved support for telework arrangements with government departments in Canada
8. Creation of a communication portal for partners to access relevant information (e.g. Mission Reports) outside of the GAC intranet
9. Financial support for education / training (e.g. for career shifts)
10. Access to training before and during a posting through the Canada School of Public Service and other courses, including Passport Training
11. Access to French or English language training

Selected Comments from respondents

“Embassies could save so much money compared to TDs and employees at a posting when there are already qualified spouses living in the country who want to work. Spouses are a valuable untapped resource! We are here and we want to work!”

“We need help for integration for dependents when moving to a foreign country where they do not know anyone and have no support. The Community Liaison Officer role back the day was very helpful as they provided useful relevant information before and during a posting. They also brought families together with other expats.”

“Spouses abroad suffer from lack of employment opportunities as well as in my case zero retirement benefits on returning to Canada. This is after 20 years of continuous travel abroad. We were **forced to always choose hardship posting** to try to put money aside for spousal retirement. It’s exciting being abroad, but it does have a significant amount of financial stress attached to it.”

“One of the core issues is limiting and removing control (and respect) from educated and intelligent spouses who are trying to make the best decisions for their families. Those with the best intentions for postings are often finally disillusioned and beaten down by the lack of respect and acknowledgement by GAC.”

“Access to training for jobs at mission (such as immigration or passport officer jobs) should be provided and encouraged, and would cut down on departmental TD costs. This could be done before or during a posting. Same with language training.”

“We have had equal rights to marriage for long enough that Canada should be supporting us fully when countries will have a policy that will put us in harms way when our careers bring us to places where Canada has work to do. Being Canadian and proudly a member of the LGBT+ community. We are strong as a country when we truly support those who work hard for Canadian interests abroad.”

“We need a job database for spouses inside and outside of the mission, including teleworking opportunities. Many officials receive job posts from international organizations that would be good to share with spouses looking for jobs at post.”

“I sacrificed career and income potential, but the rub is at the end of his career, if my spouse dies I only get half the pension but have pretty much nothing of my own because of following him around.”

« **La création d'un point d'accès unique pour toute les questions que pourrait avoir le/la partenaire d'un.e Canadien.ne en affectation à l'étranger,** spécialement lors de la première affectation, lorsque tout est nouveau. Que ce soit pour répondre à des questions en lien avec les possibilités d'emploi, les assurances, la santé (incluant santé mentale), à l'éducation des enfants, etc. Nous avons trouvé beaucoup de réponses à nos questions (mais pas toutes) en parlant avec d'autres. »

“We need interdepartmental agreements for teleworking. We had spouses who worked for all sorts of other government departments, and none were able to secure a teleworking agreement for the duration of the posting.”

« J'ai dû démissionner de mon poste permanent au Canada dû aux affectations de mon mari. Cela a eu un énorme impact financier et psychologique. Le traitement des conjoints à l'étranger est médiocre. J'ai eu souvent l'impression d'être qu'un numéro et que mon bien-être n'est pas une priorité. **Le manque de formation linguistique et d'une communauté canadienne à l'étranger développe l'isolation et à des impacts importants sur le conjoint et le reste de la famille.** »