

Being seconded to Hogan Lovells

Africa Legal Network and Hogan Lovells secondment programme

In September 2012, through our secondment programme with Africa Legal Network (ALN), we welcomed two African lawyers to our London office for several months. Co-ordinator of Hogan Lovells' Africa Practice, Camille Astier asks them a few questions about their experiences...

Lydia Nanyange Luyima, MMAKS Advocates

Lydia of Ugandan firm MMAKS Advocates joined the London Real Estate and Energy practices of Hogan Lovells.

1. Why did you apply for a secondment?

I applied for a secondment to gain exposure and broaden my horizons for the general benefit of my country. Africa has attracted a lot of investment in the recent years including from the UK and China, to name a few. Through understanding and awareness of best practices in the UK and the skills I acquired during my secondment, it will enable me to provide commercially sound advice to domestic, regional and international clients doing business in Uganda. This will attract investment in Uganda, and lead to further development.

I also wanted to build and strengthen a network with the lawyers in the UK which will develop and strengthen links with the legal profession in Uganda.

2. What did you get the most out of your secondment?

While in the Energy department of the firm, I reviewed proposed legislation in respect to the supply of gas and current legislation in respect of the oil and gas industry. This gave me an insight into the regulation of the Oil and Gas sector in England.

Uganda has recently discovered oil wells and the Oil and Gas Act came into force on 5th April 2013. The review of the UK legislation gave me an insight into what should be contained in laws regarding oil and gas and what is required of the different players in the sector for the benefit of the country. This will be used as a contrast with our current legislation and amendments can be effected where needed.

3. Did you enjoy living in London?

Yes I did. I got to see lots of new and exciting things and places that I only read about or see on television. The London Eye was the best experience. I also went ice skating for the first time - I couldn't let go of the side of the rink though, I needed all the support I could get!

4. Has the secondment changed the way your work?

Yes it has. I attended in-house training at Hogan Lovells and external training organised by different law firms and organisations.

Practical participation in different transactions has also developed my skills in negotiation and legal drafting. I also use technology more than before.

5. What were your three favourite things of working in London?

Life is really fast in the UK. I admired the speed at which things are done, the mode of transport and the technology at the work place.

Key Contacts



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Zainab Mohamed Bachoo, Anjarwalla & Khanna

Zainab of Kenyan firm Anjarwalla & Khanna joined the London Banking and Corporate practices of Hogan Lovells.

1. Why did you apply for a secondment?

My reason for applying for the secondment was to further my knowledge in the banking and commercial area of the law as these sectors are more developed and advanced in the UK. The secondment would give me an opportunity to be exposed to the style of work of a lawyer at a UK city law firm. I also wanted to build on and further my legal knowledge and my analytical, marketing and client management skills by exposing myself to international banking and commercial transactions. Additionally, I wanted to make contacts which would be beneficial in the future for exchange of information and knowledge-sharing.

2. What did you enjoy the most during your secondment?

It was great working at Hogan Lovells as I got to work on a few banking and corporate finance matters and experience first-hand the working style of lawyers in a City law firm. The senior associates in-charge of the matters I worked on ensured that I was present during calls with clients and that gave me an opportunity to observe how vital points of a document are negotiated. I also had the opportunity to liaise with the client and partner in charge on a couple of matters.

I also attended many training sessions, which mainly focussed on Africa and emerging markets. This gave me an insight into the potential Africa has as an investment hub. At these events, I also had an opportunity to meet professionals from different industries and make contacts with them.

The secondees were given an opportunity to meet the pro-bono team of Hogan Lovells and also to meet members of certain charitable organisations which the firm supports enabling us to learn and get ideas for future CSR projects.

3. What would your advice be for future secondees?

I would say to future secondees that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity so they should do their research/homework and be very clear about their aims/goals of what they wish to get out of the secondment. It is important to visit the website of the firm to see the kind of work they specialise in, speak to the person you are liaising with at Hogan Lovells on the kind of work you are/may be interested in. This will give them time to plan better. In London law firms, the departments are divided, for example in banking you have general banking, trade finance, project finance and so on hence it is important know which area you need most experience in.

I would also advise that before your arrival, when you are communicating with the law firm on the secondment, insist that you sit with a senior associate to make the most out of your experience. While there, get involved as much as possible in transactions. Everyone is really busy there so it is necessary for you to make your presence felt.

Finally, enjoy London. Take time out to attend at least one play at the theatre, visit the museums and take a walk absorbing the city.



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