



One World - One Love
An inspiration for international families

Hosting Transformation Library

One World One Love

An inspiration for international families

Coordinating Editor Ursel Biester

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International Families

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Coordinating Editor Ursel Biester

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Contributors

Authors

Ursel Biester

Selva Sol

Karin Vanagand

Luiza Bengtsson

Design

Boris Goldammer

with thanks to

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You are truly awesome!

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Dear Reader:

Our world is growing more and more interconnected, and people’s lives are becoming more and more global. Families, too, reflect this global interconnectedness, uniting individuals from various corners of the world, cultures, and backgrounds. Our booklet, “One World - One Love: Inspiration for International Families,” is a heartfelt endeavor to provide insight, wisdom, and a sense of community to families navigating the beautifully complex journey of being international.

Part 1: Interesting Insights: 3 theoretical articles

In the first section of our booklet, we explore some theoretical underpinnings that offer perspectives on issues often encountered by international families. Through three articles, we shed light on topics that are often present in families’ lives yet might remain unexplored due to their implicit nature. We explore the concept of the “Third Culture,” the challenge of intercultural communication, and the evolving demographics of Europe in the context of internationalization. These articles aim to bridge the gap between lived experiences and academic insights, enriching your understanding and offering food for reflection.

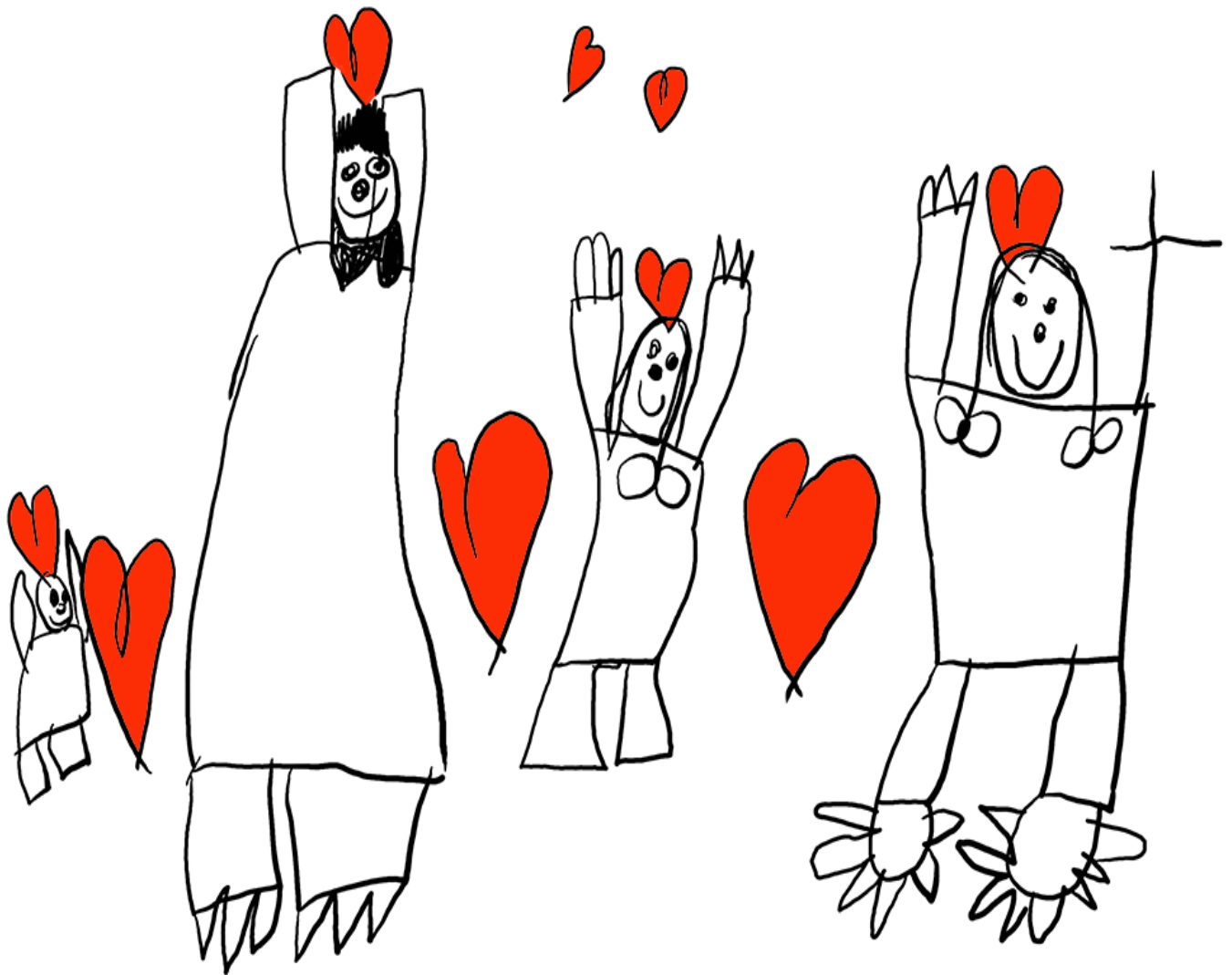
Part 2: Voices of Experience: 14 Interviews

The heart of our booklet lies in the second section, where you can read the real stories of 14 international families. Through interviews, these families generously share their personal journeys, revealing intricacies, joys, and challenges of life as an international family. Their diverse experiences and perspectives offer many insights. As you read their narratives, you might find echoes of your own experiences, a sense of camaraderie and mutual understanding.

Part 3: Navigating Your Path: 5 self-reflective questions

Our final section offers a brief toolkit for your own self-discovery and growth. Inspired by coaching principles, we present five thought-provoking questions that encourage introspection. Designed to help you consciously shape your family’s journey, these questions touch upon raising multicultural children, reflecting on gender roles, evolving worldviews, influencing your community, and sharing wisdom with fellow international families. This section invites you to engage in reflection and meaningful conversations.

We as a project team believe that every international family is one unique puzzle piece of our interconnected world. We hope that “One World - One Love: Inspiration for International Families” becomes a cherished companion on your journey, offering insights, solace, and inspiration as you navigate your life of family, culture, and connection.



Part 1

Interesting Insights: 3 theoretical articles

Welcome to the first section, where we delve into aspects that provide theoretical understanding of some aspects that are at play within international families. Through three articles, we dissect concepts that influence an international family's journey in a more or less direct way. The exploration of the "Third Culture" concept delves into the intricate dance of identity formation in multicultural settings. Moving forward, we examine intercultural communication and especially the interplay of high-context and low-context communication styles. Lastly, we examine Europe's evolving demographics and the trends regarding proliferation of international families.

These articles are designed to equip you with knowledge that transcends the surface. They are our selection of topics, there is so much more out there!

The Third Culture

A Bridge between Worlds in Modern International Families

by Ursel Biester

In our increasingly interconnected world, international families have become a significant and diverse part of society. These families often straddle multiple cultures, languages, and nationalities, creating a unique dynamic that has drawn attention to the concept of “Third Culture.” The Third Culture refers to a shared identity that emerges when individuals from different cultural backgrounds come together, forming a hybrid culture that transcends their original roots. However, as international families continue to evolve, the application of this concept may vary, and its relevance in contemporary society requires nuanced exploration.

The term “Third Culture” was first coined by sociologist Ruth Hill Useem in the 1950s when she studied the lives of expatriate children growing up in foreign countries. These children often developed a distinct sense of identity, blending elements from their parents’ cultures and the culture of the host country. Useem referred to this amalgamation as the “Third Culture,” emphasizing its intermediary position between the home culture (First Culture) and the host culture (Second Culture). This new identity was seen as a bridge, enabling smoother integration and fostering cross-cultural understanding.

The Third Culture in International Families

In the context of international families, the Third Culture represents the fusion of diverse backgrounds within the household. Children born or raised in these families grow up navigating multiple cultures simultaneously, leading to a unique upbringing that influences their worldview, values, and communication styles.

The factors contributing to the development of the Third Culture within international families include:

- **Multilingualism:** International families often speak multiple languages, creating a linguistic environment where children may become proficient in several tongues.
- **Cultural Traditions:** Families celebrate and preserve customs from different cultures, cultivating a rich tapestry of traditions.
- **Global Mobility:** Frequent relocations and exposure to various countries’ customs enable children to adapt and embrace change.
- **Open-mindedness:** Parents in international families often emphasize the importance of understanding and respecting diverse perspectives.
- **Tolerance for Ambiguity:** Living between cultures fosters adaptability and a greater appreciation for ambiguity.
- **Sense of Community:** International families form strong bonds with fellow expatriates, creating a supportive network away from home.

Challenges and Evolving Perspectives

While the concept of the Third Culture has been influential in understanding the experiences of expatriate children, its application to all international families may be less straightforward today. Globalization, advances in technology, and increased cross-cultural communication have blurred the lines between cultures, leading to less distinct concepts of First and Second culture.

In some cases, the traditional understanding of the Third Culture may not fully capture the complexities faced by modern international families. As globalization continues to shape our societies, there is a growing recognition that individuals and families can have fluid and ever-changing identities. Some families may choose to maintain strong ties to their home cultures, while others may fully embrace their host culture. This fluidity challenges the notion of a static “Third Culture” and instead highlights the dynamic nature of cultural identities in today’s world.

Additionally, as international families continue to grow in numbers and diversity, the experiences of each family will differ significantly. Factors such as the duration of their stay in a host country, the level of immersion in local communities, and the age at which children move abroad can all influence the extent to which a Third Culture emerges within the family.

Conclusion

The concept of the Third Culture remains relevant in understanding the experiences of international families, particularly those who have spent substantial time navigating multiple cultures. The blending of diverse backgrounds creates a unique identity that bridges the gap between different worlds. However, as our global society evolves, it is essential to acknowledge that not all international families fit neatly into this framework. The fluidity of cultural identities and the individualized nature of international experiences underscore the need for a more flexible and nuanced understanding of how cultural interactions shape the lives of families across the globe.

Intercultural Communication

or Our cultural biases when trying to understand each other

by Ursel Biester

Communication is not the only thing that makes or breaks a relationship, but it is one of the central pieces. When partners come from different cultures their communication styles often do not match. It takes an extra effort to look past one's own patterns in order to communicate effectively and appropriately.

One piece of knowledge that can help to understand what the other really means and not get stuck in (or possibly even annoyed of) the form of expression is the notion of high-context vs. low context cultures.

We would like to highlight that this framework (first introduced by the anthropologist Edward T. Hall in his 1959 book *The Silent Language*) is not the only one that tries to explain how people from different cultures communicate and sometimes miscommunicate, but it is - even though highly disputed - a prominent one.

In high-context cultures people rely comparatively more on non-verbal cues, gestures, and shared background knowledge to convey messages than in low-context cultures. They will for example rather not say "I would like you to clean more often", but imply it, for example by saying "Don't you think it does not look too clean?" or perhaps show a raised eyebrow and a certain look. High-context cultures include - but are not limited to - most Latin-American, Southern European, Asian and African countries and tribal communities around the world.

High context

Typically, Latin or Asian cultures are more high context, women are usually more high context

- Implicit information
- Importance of rank
- Common history and background
- Nuanced communication
- Emotions are being transmitted
- Difficult to enter

Low context

Typically, Germanic or Scandinavian cultures are more low context, men are usually more low context

- Explicit information
- Direct communication
- All of the necessary information is integrated in the exchange
- Exchanges are more direct
- Easy to enter

Low-context cultures tend to focus on the literal meaning of words and prioritize directness and clarity. They include - but are not limited to - Scandinavian countries and most English- and German speaking countries.

“In anthropology, high-context culture and low-context culture are ends of a continuum of how explicit the messages exchanged [...] are and how important the context is in communication. [...] High-context cultures often exhibit less-direct verbal and nonverbal communication, utilizing small communication gestures and reading more meaning into these less-direct messages.[3] Low-context cultures do the opposite; direct verbal communication is needed to properly understand a message being communicated and relies heavily on explicit verbal skills.[4] [...] (Wikipedia 16.08.2023 on High-context and low-context cultures)

Understanding the differences between high-context and low-context communication can help bridge gaps in intercultural interactions. By being aware of these differences, partners can adapt their communication style

to meet the expectations of others and reduce misunderstandings. The honest wish to know what the other thinks, feels, means and intends will be the best companion on this journey.

Source of the pictures: Wikipedia

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Changing demographics

How the population of the EU is becoming internationalized

by Selva Sol

After the second world war, Europe experienced a massive migration, first from within Europe and then later, especially from the 1960s and onwards, increasingly from non-European immigrants.

The horrors of war, and the destruction it had created, created an awareness that if war was to be prevented from happening again, growth and mutual interests between the major powers of Europe, mainly France and Germany, had to be ensured. This led to the coal and steel union, which over time became the European Union. There, a collection of European countries engaged in collaboration over protectionism, facilitating peace and growth unlike anything the continent had experienced before.

This growth created a demand for labor that especially the more industrialized European countries were unable to provide themselves. At the same time, the stability and wealth of the continent made it an attractive destination for foreign workers, students and immigrants. This led to Europe changing from being the major source of emigrants world wide to Europe being a receiver of immigration, which had profound

consequences for every country on the continent.

The next big step in migration happened with the EU's expansion towards the East in 2004 and again in 2007. The former Soviet bloc countries were eager to join the successful European community, and the open borders created by the Schengen agreement enabled millions to move freely. This move was mostly from East to West, and the people migrating, hungry for the same life possibilities as were enjoyed particularly in the north west Europe, created additional wealth in the receiving countries, while the remittances towards the countries of departures stimulated the purchasing power and growth there.

On a regional level, and from the point of view of the societies involved, migration in the EU has thus been an undisputed success. Then as well as now, where people from former colonies continue to arrive, South Europeans seek North Europe, and Asian knowledge workers increase in numbers in every country.

However, when looking solemnly at the numbers, one has the tendency to forget that behind every number, there

are human beings, human relations and human consequences.

One consequence the founders of the Coal and Steel Union may not have considered, is that when people cross borders, they often fall in love with someone from another country. Our project intended to explore this phenomenon. Both because we found the mix of intimacy and culture to be highly interesting, but also because mixed families are increasingly becoming the norm in many EU countries as a direct result of migration or European travelers finding love while on vacation, studying, working and likewise.

Close to one-fifth of all EU households include first-generation migrants, or people whose parents were foreign-born migrants (Martin, Koops and de Vilhena 2019). This is by all means a significant portion of the European population and something we as a Union and as individual countries have to take into account, not only in the policymaking, but also in the narrative we use about what it is to be European and a member of a country.

Do they integrate?

A frequently voiced concern regarding foreigners is whether they adapt to their new nation's customs, or stick to the lifestyle of their country of origin.

This has been investigated thoroughly by the EU's Generations and Gender Programme (2019), and the findings from there are, among others:

Families where one of the parents is from the host country on average follow the overall norms of the society, in terms of age of moving out, family size, gender relations and family setup. We experienced this in the families we interviewed as well, even with those where both of the parents were born in another country, and we interpret it as a trend of mixed families being more likely than non-mixed families to "shop" for norms, having at least two cultural backgrounds to choose from. In this, the norms of the host country frequently become the best option, as societies tend to be organized around the preferences of the majority, while it must be expected that children growing up in a given society will learn values and preferences from their native-born friends.

Foreign-born families where both parents are from the same country are less likely to follow the norms of their new country in the same areas as above. However, they do differ significantly from the norms in their country of origin. Overall: it appears as if the migrants of

the same cultures tend to "meet in the middle" with their new country. If their country of origin for instance has a median of four for number of children, and their host country has a median of 1,5, the immigrants will end up, on average, on having 2-3 children. This indicates a partial adaptation, and the ability to "shop" norms, as seen with the mixed families, albeit on a smaller scale.

There is a differentiation between "adaptation" and "socialization" when foreigners meet their new country's norms. "Adaptation" is when the foreigner's interaction with their new society is shaped by them adapting to what they meet, to their best ability. "Socialization", on the other hand, refers to the input a human receives from the primary and secondary caregivers, which has a profound impact on the values and norms of an individual. This socialization can sometimes get in the way of adaptation, leading to disputes in mixed families as well as in societies. For instance, to bring a frequently discussed example, if someone comes from a cultural background where women are seen as the center of a household, and not the one supposed to face the world, work, study, etc, then the Western ideal of gender equality may cause a cultural collision. Here, the foreigner will have to make the often subconscious choice between adapting to the the new country's norms on how daughters are treated, or stick to the values they themselves grew up with.

Close to one-fifth of all households in the EU has at least one member who is foreign to their country of residence, and the number is growing.

A new demographic definition?

In their report "The future of families to 2030", OECD describes a new phenomenon: People are identifying not as "black/white/Xnation" etc, but as "Mixed", "Mixed-Race-Identity" or "Mixed Origins". Based on a British census from 2001, where 1% percent of all identified as "mixed", OECD projects that by 2050, 8% of the British population and 26% of all infants will identify as such.

In our project group, we see this as the most probable future for the whole EU, particularly the countries who have had and have high rates of immigration.

Part 2

Voices of Experience: 14 Interviews

In this section, we present the stories of 14 international families. Through interviews, these families offer a glimpse into their lives, sharing the joys, challenges, and transformative moments that define their international journeys. As you read about their experiences, we wish that you find inspiration and a deeper sense of community in your own path as an international family.

We would like to express a huge thank you to all contributing families that offered their time, energy and trust and that made this booklet possible. You are amazing and deserve a full round of applause!



Life in Bornholm, our Chilean-Danish oasis

An interview with Emilie and Ivan by Selva

Facts

Her: Emilie, Danish

Him: Ivan, Chilean

Children: 2 boys (6 years old, 18 months)

Live: Bornholm, Denmark.

How did you meet?

Emilie: We met in Copenhagen at a party, I could say it was not the most romantic party: It was the celebration of a new toilet.

Ivan: One of my friends had an apartment in Nørreport, in Copenhagen, and we had been partying a lot in his apartment without a toilet as it had been out of service for a long time. So, once the toilet was fixed, he decided to celebrate and honor the fact that we no longer needed to go downstairs to do our business. Coincidentally, one of my friends, who was also Emilie's friend, invited her to that party.

Since that time, what happened?

Emilie: When we met, I was studying at the "School of Pedagogics". At that time, Ivan needed to go back to Chile to renew his visa, when he said to me: "Why don't you come with me?" My answer was "yes!" And I still think it was a good decision. It was six months after we met and we had already decided to go to Chile together. After our trip, we felt like we didn't want to say goodbye to each other.

Ivan: That is how we then got married and initiated the migration papers process, as that's the only way one has in Europe in order to stay.

Emilie: When we came back, I decided I wanted to go to Bornholm and learn to become a glassblower and I asked Ivan to come with me.

Ivan: I didn't want to go, but Emilie pulled the card: "it is my DREAM! I didn't have any strong job connections or anything that made me feel I had to stay in Copenhagen, so I followed her. Now it's me who wants to stay here in Bornholm.

What are the challenges your family has been facing with the Danish migration "service"?

Ivan: The migration rules have put some extra pressure on the relationship. We have been fighting with the Danish immigration services all the time we have been together, and it has been a struggle. They make it so annoying. It was particularly burdening because our relationship was still young and that struggle demanded extra determination to stay together. I think many people at that stage would have given up and said "F&%€#*" this! I go back to Chile" or she could have said "I go back to a Danish guy where I don't need to think about all these things all the time!"

Emilie: The visa has to be renewed frequently and we never know how long Ivan's residence will be. While the extension is in process, Ivan is not allowed to leave Denmark, which makes traveling difficult, as the way of getting from Bornholm to the rest of Denmark is through Sweden.

Ivan: Once I was stopped by the Swe-

dish border patrol, trying to get from Copenhagen to Bornholm. They used two officers to escort me all the way back to Copenhagen, although I was traveling with a pregnant Emilie and our infant son. It has been a stress factor in our relationship. We have survived, but I don't think it is good.

Emilie: We have also thought about moving but we cannot be so flexible because Ivan is always preoccupied with keeping his full-time job, as a waiter at a local hotel, to have the hours needed for his permanent visa. Hopefully this will end now, as Ivan has just applied for permanent residence, something that is not easy to get in Denmark.

What is for you to live and navigate this two-culture relationship?

Emilie: There are a lot of good things and also a lot of challenges. We come from different cultures. We don't share the same childhood memories. With my friends I can relate to memories from music from the kindergarten or the school. Sometimes I cannot even imagine what it was like for Ivan in Chile, at that time, during those years of dictatorship, for example. We also talked about that in Chile, the way he grew up was maybe more similar to my dad's upbringing than mine. At the same time I think it is exciting to be with someone from another culture – there are many things to learn, if

you just have the energy to look for it. I can feel that I get a lot of things from Chile, the history and such, and get more every time I dig a bit. Ivan keeps teaching me things.

And for the extended family, how is the relation to this multicultural experience?

Ivan: The distance between Denmark and Chile makes visiting family a rare luxury. When my parents came from Chile, it was a nice experience, even though maybe it was not the best time as Emilie was recently coming from the hospital with our newborn son. Nevertheless, I enjoyed having my parents here.

They met Emilie's parents and siblings and that was like a magic time. We had recently moved into the house. It was totally empty and we prepared a long table in the middle of the living room for the whole family where my sister and her



boyfriend made a Paella. It was super nice! And then, people could not communicate so much but it was nice music and it was so hyggeligt!

Emilie: I love Chile! It's so exciting and beautiful! I also love the people there and Ivan's family. I feel connected to his family, especially to his grandmother. I had so many nice conversations with her. Even though I didn't speak Spanish it felt like we could communicate.

Ivan: Yes! For my grandmother, she didn't care about the language barrier, she just talked to her!

What language do you speak at home?

Ivan: To the kids, I speak Spanish and Emilie speaks Danish. In the beginning, we were speaking English together and with time it became more Danish. I think that when we got Alvar, our oldest son, I started to speak more Spanish at home. English is still there and it has turned into the secret language for adults. Alvar started to speak back to me in Spanish when he was around four. Before that he could understand everything. Every time we visited my sister in Malmö he was speaking Spanish to her. He was aware that my sister couldn't speak Danish. When we went to Chile with him, he spoke Spanish to my parents and my friends. The first two weeks he was a bit shy but after that he started to speak a lot. So yes, he speaks both.

What do you “culturally “give to your family?

Ivan: I love it when my sister, who lives in Malmø, comes with the whole family, and everybody makes food together while listening to nice music. We make it together, that is part of the Latin vibe: just being happy and everybody helping with the whole thing, nobody is just sitting and waiting.

Emilie: There's also another thing that is very nice about the different cultures. Ivan always tries to teach Alvar about different ways of living, what it is to be poor, his political views... he sees things from a different perspective. He doesn't come from a welfare country like Denmark. Here we just take things for granted, to what he says: “you have to be happy for this and this because in other countries...” I think it is a good thing.

Ivan: At the end, the kids get the whole package of Europe and Latin America and that's so good. There's a lot of diversity in it.

*Hyggeligt is the Danish word that is used to express a deeper feeling of satisfaction. It could be translated as “cozy”

A Single Mom from Brazil in Berlin

An interview with Regina by Ursel

Facts:

Her: Regina, Brazilian

Him: Brazilian

Children: 1 boy (9 years), 1 girl (7 years)

Living in: Berlin, Germany

Regina is divorced, she and her ex-husband are living separately. The children spend 2 days per week with their father with alternating weekends.

Why Germany?

I was always curious about going outside of my country. Then the father of my children, back then my husband, got a job in Berlin, so we went there. That was 7 years ago. Our oldest child was already born. The second one was born here in Germany.

How is life as a single mom abroad?

It's hard. I don't speak the language. I don't have time to learn the language because I have to work full time and take care of the kids. We're always in

a rush. If I were in my home country, I would have support from my larger family, and we would have more time as a family. Here we don't have that. The German bureaucracy is challenging, especially when you don't speak German. Finding babysitters and support is mostly through social media groups for parents, but sometimes I don't even find somebody I can pay to take care of my children! Then I simply cannot keep my other appointments, like going to the doctor.

Why did you separate?

In Brazil, I had a job and my own money. When we came to Germany, my husband didn't want me to learn German or find a job. He wanted me to stay home with the kids, but I wanted to study. So I decided to divorce. Now I am studying programming and I have a job in that already. I still don't speak the language though.

Why is it still good to be here?

The most important thing is that it's a safe place. In Brazil, it's not safe. Plus the kids have more opportunities here. They grow up with multiple langua-

ges and meet people from around the world. I think contact with nature is important, and here we have playgrounds. When the children grow up, they can decide to go back to Brazil, but for now, it's better for us to stay. I would wish for my children to grow up understanding that we are all different, but we all need to be respected. I hope they will learn this, from growing up abroad.

When I see them play in the sand and speak two languages, when we walk home late at night and nobody puts a gun in our face and tries to take our stuff, I think we are in the right place.

What are challenges in your interaction with society?

I feel like I don't have a voice, especially when dealing with my children's school. The father has a voice, to me they don't listen. But when there's a problem, it's my fault, not his. I don't feel discriminated against as an immigrant, but as a woman.

We had one meeting where the teacher said our son should apologize for something he had done, and said that I should educate my son. They only addressed me, not the father, even though he was there as well. Why? When the

father doesn't do his part, it's ok, but the mother should do hers? As if I was the only one responsible. In Brasil this would not be much different though.

Do you miss home?

Of course! A lot. Christmas is the time I miss Brazil the most. We celebrate similarly, but the togetherness with my family is what I miss. The children should have more family around, but that's not possible here. That's really a downside. They miss their family so much.

What are your insights about life?

I am learning that life is hard. When I was still with the father, I was only home and I was dependent on someone. But then I decided to go out and look for something by myself. It was really hard, because I don't know the language, but I need it to resolve things, all while I have 2 children who depend on me. I had to learn programming, so I would be able to work. While my friends and colleagues have time after work to do the exercises, I don't. I have to make dinner for the kids, take care

of them and put them to bed. And then it's evening and I am tired. But I never want to give up. What gives me strength are my kids. All that I am doing, I am doing for them. I presume that without them I would have gone back to Brazil after the divorce. But for them, I want a better life.

Any advice?

Learn English, seize opportunities, and never give up!



Differences stretch the mind

An interview with Filipe by Ursel

Facts:

Him: Filipe, Portuguese

Her: Viktoriya, Russian

Children: 1 daughter, Violeta. (2 years and 5 months)

Live in: Tomar, Portugal, a small town in the center of Portugal, his mother's side original hometown

How did you meet?

We met in Lisbon, while Viktoriya was studying here. Then corona hit and she decided not to go back to Russia. We first lived in Lisbon, then in Biovilla and then moved to Tomar. After a short period Vika got pregnant. We have been here for 3 years now.

What is great about this international family constellation?

I spent quite some years outside of Portugal. I have had mostly international relationships since I was 19. It is part of my reality, it reflects my personality. I have a very global worldview. I find it fascinating to be with someone who

has a different mindset and culture and language which informs a different way of feeling. That contrast enables me to see things in a different way.

For example, once I was with a Swedish woman, we were at a music festival in Portugal and we were listening to a Portuguese song with Portuguese lyrics. She asked me to translate. While translating I noticed how colonial the music was. I stopped, she looked at me and said: 'Do you notice this is a mega colonial almost racist song and you are unconsciously singing it here with 100.000 people? How do you do that?' I had never thought about it. I had really never noticed it. It took somebody from a different culture to shift my point of view and make me reflect about my own cultural biases

How do you deal with your differences?

Portugal is this tiny speck at the rim of Europe, and Russia is this huge, vast country. Viktoriya grew up as far from the sea as possible on this planet, and now she is next to it. So our realities are very different and we are conscious about it.

We come across differences nearly every

day. Consider the question: What food do we give our daughter? The Russian diet is very different from the Mediterranean. We have to negotiate in order to satisfy all of us. For that we considered what we believed to be the best food for our daughter in terms of a healthy diet, but also we went back to our memories from when we were children. We negotiated all these little details. I think this is more difficult than if both partners come from the same culture, where you always eat, for example, porridge in the morning. Negotiation demands energy, time, presence and focus. A lot of experimenting and testing goes with it. For example, we have a special baby food in Portugal, it is not eaten anywhere else in the world, but here people are addicted to it. I grew up eating it, devouring it. We gave it to Violeta, we tried it for a few days, then we observed how she reacted to it and how we all felt with it. In Russia they eat a lot of buckwheat, we have talked about it and slowly introduced it to our diet. All this demands time and energy. But if we don't do it, a conflict starts growing very fast

What's important to you when raising your child, regarding her background?

We had a lot of conversations about that during the pregnancy. Conversations about what kind of father I wanted to be, what kind of mother she wanted to be, what from our own upbringing we wanted to bring along and what we wanted to dismiss. We talked a lot about our own childhood experiences. We also made some decisions about what kind of parenting we wanted to do, e.g. she will only enter kindergarten when 2 years old, she will sleep in our bed until she says it's enough or we do, Viktoriya wanted to breastfeed until 2 years old. I wanted Violeta to grow up completely vegetarian, Viktoriya did not support that, so we had many conversations about it, wondering what is still ok, what not, what do I still feel ok with, what not. We put on the table a lot of our belief system and intentions of parenting, some were aligned and some were not.

I don't want to blame everything on the cultural differences though, some might be just gender roles or simply challenges of raising a child that any other couple would have. While I don't want to dismiss the task of parenting even when you are from the same country, I do think that the cultural differences add a layer of complexity

Advice for cross-cultural couples:

I think it is very easy to overlook the complexity that you bring into your life. It will demand negotiation, you will have to put energy into it. Don't take too many steps at a time. With each step, you add more complexity: children, marriage, any kind of contracts. Be aware and bring to the table what comes up, raise your level of consciousness about those things together.

The statistics don't play in favor of international families, the divorce rates among international couples are much higher. Be very mindful and cautious

with each other, even more than you would be around any partner. There are topics that need to be discussed; have good, honest and meaningful conversations about them.



Different perspectives enrich our lives

An interview with Karolina by Ursel

Facts:

Her: German

Him: Bangladeshi

Children: 2 boys (4 and 8 years old)

Live in: Berlin, Germany

How did you and your husband meet?

We met in Bangladesh while working for the same organization. In the beginning we had to keep our relationship secret. In Bangladesh there are no public spaces where you can meet, no cinemas or clubs. My husband lived with his family, I was in the context of the expats, so it was difficult to nourish our relationship. His family is very well-educated and sends their children abroad to study; my husband's father worked for an international institution. Still, there is limited openness towards a western way of life.

When we moved to Germany he went under the pretext of doing his Masters. My husband was afraid his family would not accept his decision and he had given up so many things for moving to Germany: friends, a well-paying job,

the cultural context. He even immersed himself into a completely different language context. The right moment to tell his parents about this new relationship and our little family came when our son was 1 year old. His family took it calmly and welcomed us warmly.

What led to your decision to get married?

We married because of Muslim family values. We married after our first child was born, first according to Muslim rules, then also by German law. Marrying a non-European citizen comes with a high number of bureaucratic hurdles in Germany, so we got married in Denmark where the procedure is simple and the marriage certificate can be transferred to Germany.

What are the benefits of living in an international constellation?

I've always been interested in cross-cultural human interactions. Our different backgrounds allow our children to experience two very different worlds, taking a German and a Bangladeshi perspective. For example, my husband

grew up in a country where there is not an overflow of food as there is here, and I appreciate my husband's awareness of not wasting food. Our children get the chance to learn how to value the permanent availability of a high variety of food. My partner has adopted many "western ways" in his daily life - and we live in Germany, so the children don't get „a continuous South-Asian experience“, but still many insights.

What challenges do you face as an international family?

The expectations of colleagues, family and friends are different in the two contexts. My husband's family, for example, has expectations towards me as his wife and mother of his children, related to their Muslim background. They would be satisfied to see me adopt Muslim religion, which is out of question for me. It was also difficult for them to understand why our sons are not circumcised. My family is not very familiar with the South-Asian context and lacks cultural knowledge.

Our communication patterns are different, as I am direct and my husband comes from a high-context-culture which influences his communication. Our

styles and values regarding education are also different and sometimes I find my husband to be too strict in emphasizing “the principle” more than I do. We both encourage our sons to cultivate their artistic side as well, enrolling them in painting or letting them play an instrument.

How do you navigate raising your children in a multicultural context?

I want to protect my children from hostility and ensure they are aware of their roots. I encourage them to understand that they look different from me and their German family. We also want them to develop a sense of humbleness and an awareness that not everyone lives in the same reality, for example regarding economy or security. The ability to change perspectives and respect differences are important values we want to impart on our children.

In practice this means being in conversation with them. For example, at our sons’ kindergarten, new children joined. One girl had roots in India, phenotypically she looked similar to our son. I asked if he had already played with her, he said no and I asked why. He said, she is an Indian girl, I don’t want to play with her. I took this as an occasion for a conversation with him so he can understand that he is not only from Germany either.

How do you incorporate your husband’s culture into your children’s lives?

It’s challenging to bring the Bangladeshi reality to our children’s lives. Although I encourage my husband to take an even more active role, he could emphasize it more and take the children for example to one of the mosques in Berlin and explain the religious backgrounds. He speaks Bangla with them constantly, though, and they also enjoy Bangla food daily and read books in Bangla every now and then.

Which tips would you give other multicultural couples?

Cultivate consciousness about the origins of your own communication style and that of your partner.

Actively seek reasons why it is appealing to immerse yourself in your partner’s context and adopt their perspective.

Encourage your children to constantly question and learn from the cultural context of both parents.

Take a close look at any challenges your children may face in reconciling two distinct ways of life and in potential reactions from the outer world to them being different.



Easy peasy

Coming from 2 different countries is a small, nice detail in our family constellation

An interview with Elodie and Michael by Ursel

Facts

Her: Elodie, French

Him: Michael, German

Live in: Berlin, Germany

Children: 2 girls (3 and 6 years old)

How did you get to know each other?

Elodie: I was already living and working in Berlin. I had studied there with the Erasmus exchange program and afterwards I came back for work. Michael and I met by coincidence when we both were shopping with a friend.

Michael: We went to play badminton another day and that's how we got to know each other better. We dated for a while, then decided to have children and married when our first daughter was 1 year old.

How have your cultural backgrounds influenced your relationship?

Michael: We cannot think of anything where the differences in our culture would have played a role in our life. We don't experience conflict because of different ideas around e.g. education or something else. If those ideas were so different, we would not have married! We speak German with each other and Elodie speaks French with the kids. I refreshed my French after the kids were born, mostly to be able to communicate with Elodie's parents. I had learned it at school, but it had never been my favorite.

If you could ask for a change to improve your situation, what would you request?

Michael: That Elodie's family lives closer to us. Right now her family is living a 1 day journey away. There are obviously no spontaneous meetings happening. That's a pity.

Elodie: Even as a European you are not

allowed to vote for another national parliament than your own. I acquired German nationality, because I wanted to be able to vote here. I would appreciate a regulation where you can vote for the national parliament of the country where you live for more than 10 years already.

Michael: Really, we would not ask for much. Except for the right to vote we never had any trouble with permissions of any kind, being European. And for us as partners it was easy. Nobody had to move to another country and thereby sacrifice something for the other. We were both well established in Berlin, only that Elodie happened to be from France.

What differences do you find when comparing family life in Germany and in France?

Elodie: One thing which is very different in Germany compared to France is the amount of time mothers spend with their children after birth and in general during a normal work day. In France, most moms go back to work 3 months after birth. The child goes to a

crib institution. I learned quite quickly that mothers in Germany usually take 1 year off work after their child is born. I thought they were lazy and could not imagine that having one child at home would occupy me much. That idea has changed now... (laughs). Besides, there is the practical aspect that it is impossible to find a daycare place for your child before they turn one year old.

Another factor which is very different is the in-schooling process. In France it takes 1 week to get the child used to going to daycare, in Germany it takes 3 weeks or more.

When I compare those things now, I am really happy I could do all this in Germany, because I believe it

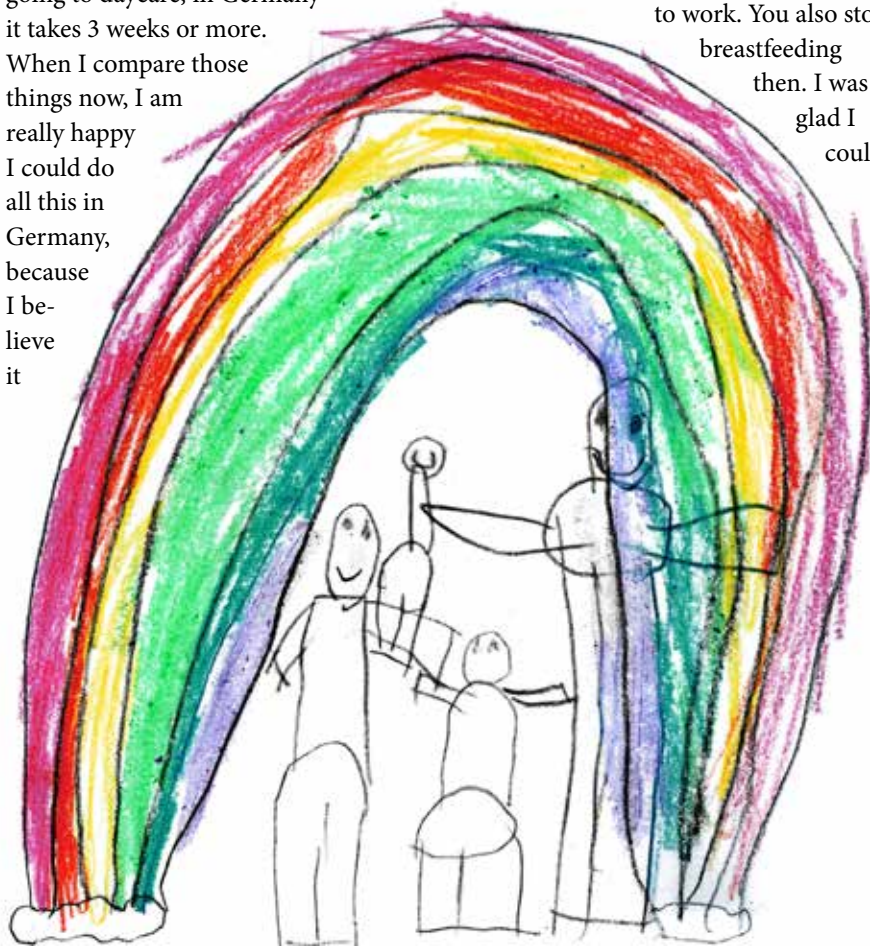
brings a better bonding between mother and child if you take so much time together. I usually pick up my child from kindergarten at 4pm, which is considered late in Germany. In France 4:30pm is early. I am glad to have this freedom. I am happy with the way it is lived here. However, I don't think the French approach is bad for children either. If I had lived there, I would have done it that way, because everybody does it that way. You take the 2 months you get from government, then vacations, and after 3 months you go back

to work. You also stop breastfeeding then. I was glad I could

keep breastfeeding and did not have to stop because of my work. I breastfed our 2nd child for 20 months. When I told people in France they thought I am crazy (laughs). In France some people say it's not good if you are so close to your child, you have to separate from your baby. They would also let the children cry at night. When I told them that our daughter still wakes up 3 times a night with 20 months, they just looked at me in amazement.

Which tips would you give other international families?

- learn about your partners culture, visit the country
- make sure the children visit the country and get to know the language
- let your children read typical children's books from each partner's country
- eat typical food from each country
- keep speaking your own language to the children. Even if they don't speak it, simply understanding it is a very good first step. That first step is important so that later the 2nd step, speaking, can follow. Even if you are sad that your child does not speak your language (yet), don't give up!



Tough love

An interview with Marina and Mahmoud by Ursel

Facts:

Her: Marina, German

Him: Mahmoud, Egyptian

Children: 1 boy (14 years), 1 girl (11 years)

Live in: Berlin, Germany

Can you tell me about how you met?

Marina: We first met in Egypt when I was on a holiday. Mahmoud was working at a souvenir factory, we took a photo together and exchanged email addresses so I could send it to him. Then we lost touch until I went to Egypt for a semester abroad. Mahmoud helped me navigate the university and find a place to live. So we spent a lot of time together waiting in university corridors, and finally we got married. We first had a non-registered marriage in Egypt and later we married in Germany officially.

How did your families look at your rather spontaneous marriage?

Marina: Mahmoud's parents did not know about our relationship at first.

We married in Germany in summer and half a year later Mahmoud came to Germany again, originally only for a visit. His parents wondered: why is he going again? They hid his passport, but he found it. His father told him if he went now, he would not be allowed back, not even for attending the funeral when his father was to die. Mahmoud went anyway. A few days before he was supposed to go back I asked him: where will you go back to, if you cannot go to your parents home? He said: I cannot go back. Since then he has been in Germany. Fortunately with time his family accepted our relationship and now we are on good terms with them.

My mother only found out about our marriage one month after it happened. She visited me in Egypt, and that's when I told her. Unfortunately, she couldn't meet Mahmoud at the time because he had to fulfill his military service. My mother had many fears, influenced by books like "Not Without My Daughter," and worried that my children might be kidnapped someday. We know people for whom that has happened – the children are now in Syria, while the mother is in Germany. But over time she built a fine relationship with her son-in-law.

What's challenging?

Mahmoud: The pace of life here is so fast, you are always running. And it's so cold! I miss my family. We cannot invite them, first because there would be Visa issues and second because we would not have the facilities nor the time to host them properly. Family is lived very differently there. In Egypt, the whole family would gather and support you if you were in the hospital, whereas in Germany, only a few people may reach out. Our flat in Germany is smaller compared to the larger houses in Egypt. Taxes are high, especially for my pizzeria. If I had the same restaurant in Egypt, I could afford a Porsche!

Marina: We had a lot of fights in the beginning. One time Mahmoud was holding our youngest in his arms, crying, because he thought the next day he would return to Egypt, because it was so bad. But we found ways to organize our life together.

What is great?

Marina: I'm grateful for this intercultural relationship. It has taught me values that were previously unfamiliar to me, such as the significance of family. I witness this whenever we

visit Egypt—when a friend is in need, there are always 10-20 people ready to help. This sense of communal support is something I wouldn't have learned without this relationship. For instance, once Mahmoud gave an umbrella to a lady. She asked how she could return it, but he laughed and said: it's a gift! It's raining, you need it! This contrasts with the German approach of self-reliance, where one focuses on having an umbrella oneself without much consideration for others. I truly appreciate how this relationship has broadened my perspective.

What do you see as important for your children?

Mahmoud: I'm concerned because my children are so German. They attend a German school, have German friends, and mostly speak German. I believe it's Marina's responsibility to add Arabic schooling to their routine. I regret not prioritizing this earlier and acknowledge my fault for focusing too much on work. It frustrates me that our children only learn about German celebrations, and Marina doesn't incorporate Egyptian festivities like Ramadan at home, does not pray with the children nor speaks Arabic with them.

Marina: I would love it if my children spoke more Arabic, but my knowledge of the language is limited. I think if Mahmoud wants Arabic schooling, he should take charge. Unfortunately,

I don't know the prayers, I grew up and am still a Christian. I would not know which decorations to put up for Ramadan. I believe all this would be Mahmoud's responsibility and I regret he is not taking it.

Mahmoud: I speak Arabic with my children, but not always because they don't understand me. I haven't spent much time with them when they were younger, but now I have engaged in activities like reading books or singing songs with them. I didn't have a father who was very present in my own childhood. I believe this model to be the right one, as it aligns with the biological role of the mother being the primary caregiver.

But we feel our children are navigating this space quite well. They show a lot of respect for their Arabic origin. And being in Berlin is a privilege, here we

don't stand out because there are so many international families like us.

What tips would you give other international families?

Mahmoud: Don't do it! (laughs) But I would still do it for Marina. Living abroad has its challenges. Open communication and expressing gratitude to each other are essential.

Marina: I would do it all over again, but it requires a lot of effort, both emotionally and practically. Communication is key, and it's important to express our frustrations and gratitude to each other. Therapy has helped improve our relationship from my perspective.

Mahmoud: I still believe we would have overcome our challenges without therapy, but I attended for Marina.



Rice and Beans versus Pasta

An interview with Dayana and Leonardo by Selva

Facts

Her: Dayana, Cuban

Him: Leonardo, Italian

Children: One son (1 year old)

Live in: Madrid, Spain.

How did you guys meet?

Leonardo: We met in Aarhus, Denmark, in a bar, through some friends. We actually met by chance. I went out with an Italian friend on a Saturday night. There was this Cuban guy I knew from before, and he then said to me: “you got to meet this hot chick from Cuba”, and he introduced us. It was Dayana...

Dayana: We had a drink together that day and we didn't see each other again. A week later, he invited me to a bar that did a cultural exchange of languages, and that was the first outing we did to get to know each other better. We started dating and after two weeks Leonardo invited me to come to Italy with him to meet his family. Those ten days we were together in Italy turned out to be the actual beginning of our relationship.

Leaving everything behind and starting a new life in Spain.

Dayana: When we got back from Naples we talked about my intentions of moving to Spain to start a new life there, and that scared Leonardo. “How am I going to keep this relationship at a distance?”: he said to me. We agreed that he could come to visit me and later he would join me, once I was more established there. For Leonardo, that time became all about working and saving money, as this was a way for us to start a new life together in Spain.

Leonardo: Leaving everything behind and starting a new life together happened partly because we started our relationship and that helped us to take all these decisions at once. If you think twice you get scared and you don't do it, so I took the chance, got my ticket and came to Spain.

“Come on, let's go on an adventure”, Dayana said to me. I moved here, mainly, because of her. I see life as an adventure, and in the end, I am happy with what I have and with what I did. I now feel more open minded than

before. Here in Madrid, everything is more open, with different cultures, with people from Colombia, Venezuela, England... anywhere. I believe this experience has helped me broaden my mind.

Being Cuban and being Italian in our relationship

Dayana: We had our cultural differences but nothing major. Our thing started around the food. Leo, as a good Italian, wanted to eat pasta every day while I always preferred my rice and beans. I could eat pasta every once in a while, but Leo refused that.

In the end I think that Leo has adapted to the Cuban traditions. We now eat Cuban food most of the time and pasta has become a boring kind of food for him. He is no longer craving for it. If he now wants to go on a diet, for example, then pasta is excluded and he leaves the rice.

Another thing is the language. We now exclusively speak Spanish and we have discussed at home how important it is for me to be able to speak Italian. The little Italian I know is because of the few

encounters I have had with his family back in Italy and because at home our Netflix and YouTube is played in Italian. In that sense, I don't feel supported by him. Sometimes I have these conversations with him: now that we have a son, why don't you speak Italian to him to make him bilingual? It is such a gift to grow up knowing two languages without having to study it. It also concerns me that our son will not be able to communicate with his Italian family.

Leonardo: For me, I have had to adapt to the way Cubans talk to each other in their relationships with friends. I thought Dayana was too nice in the communication with male friends, writing "kisses" and "love" in messages to them, which is something normal for a Cuban, but it made me feel uncomfortable. Even when dancing, to my Italian eyes, Cubans like to dance salsa and reggaeton in a very sexual way with their friends, way too close. With time, we both learned and understood about what is normal for Cubans and where the limits are".

What is your experience with your family in law?

Dayana: I have so many beautiful things to say! When I arrived at Leonardo's family in Naples I felt very welcome, very loved, very accepted. I had a lot of concerns, maybe they would have prejudices, If not because of my skin color then because of my culture. But

when I arrived, it was as if they had known me my entire life. And somehow, I understood everything they said to me in Italian, even the Nonna, who only spoke Napoletano to me. They really made me feel like I was at home.

Leonardo: I still haven't met Dayana's entire family. We are soon traveling to Cuba and I am looking forward to meeting her mom and the rest of the family. I have met her family by her father's side though, both here in Spain and in Denmark. I think they are all really nice. I also have a closer relation with Dayana's father, from the times when I was still living in Denmark.

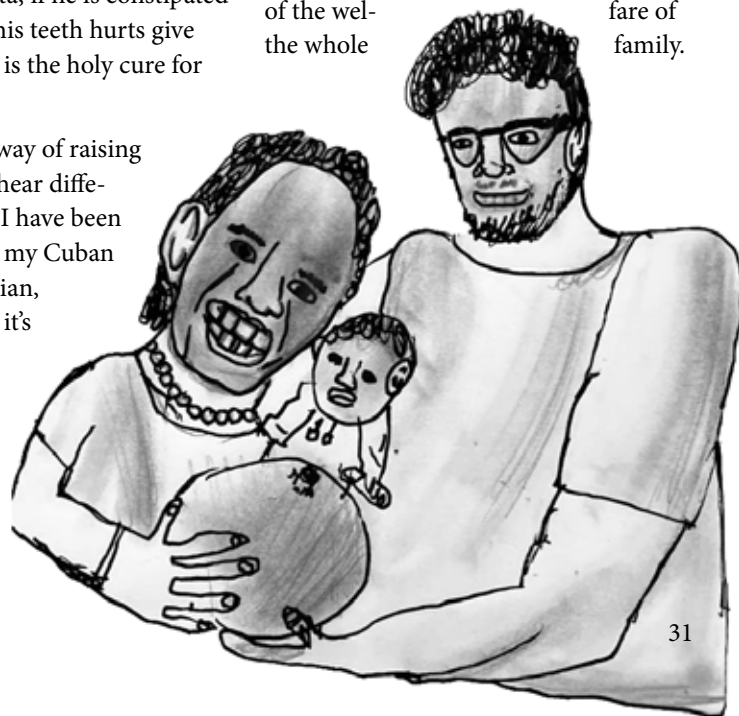
Dayana: There is a problem with Leo's mom. She wants my son to eat pasta every day and for any good reason, according to her: If my son is sick and has fever give him pasta, if he is constipated give him pasta, if his teeth hurts give him pasta... pasta is the holy cure for everything!

In the end, in my way of raising my child I always hear different opinions and I have been criticized by both, my Cuban family and the Italian, especially because it's my first child. But I always get a bit from both cultures and do what I think is best for my son.

Appreciating the other's culture

Leonardo: It's a very beautiful culture! There's nothing like the happiness of Cubans. For example, what I like about the Cubans is that even if they don't have money, they are always willing to help each other, and I appreciate that from them. It's different for us Italians. Where I come from, one has to make an appointment first to have a coffee, a beer, whatever. Cubans are not like that! I love their spontaneity: "I am coming tomorrow or I'll come over to your house later". Dayana has given me that. That is the difference between a European and a Cuban"

I want our son to inherit both cultures' mindset of community in the family. It is important for us to think of the welfare of the whole family.



Our little Family Island

An interview of Anja and Rajko by Karin

Facts:

Her: Anja, German

Him: Rajko, German

Children: 2 sons; Max (10) and Teo (almost 2)

Live in: Kungsängen, Sweden

Live in: Sweden in the nature surrounded by forest and water, 20 minutes car drive to the closest town with (Swedish) schools, public transport and shops.

How did you end up living in Sweden?

Anja: Me and my husband moved to Sweden because of his work. He was working for a German construction firm and after a specialised education he was promised work and settlement in Sweden.

I found work as a nurse – even though I was not able to work as a specialised children nurse which I had been educated for in Germany, because the Swedish system demands a different qualification for that.

What is special about your international family constellation?

Anja: As we live quite secluded from the rest of town, we are much on our own and are much more dependent on each other as a small family. Luckily, we have a very nice and unusually helpful and spontaneous Swedish family living close-by. They have been helping out picking up kids when needed, for example during wintertime when we were both stuck in snowstorms.

As we both are foreigners, we have come here to Sweden together and built up our family. We as a couple rely on each other in managing our daily life decisions and practicalities without having much help from others. We recognise each other in our foreign differences while living in Sweden. Therefore we might also form a greater team.

What can you tell us about the schooling of your sons?

Anja: Max (11 years old) is going to a Swedish school. This is more convenient because of transportation – when kids are going to a regular Swedish school, they get school bus pick-up/drop-off included. Otherwise this will not be included and parents have to arrange transportation themselves.

We also want Max to join a Swedish school because of the language even though we feel more at home in the German schooling system. The German schooling system is more rigid, concrete and clear with the child's progression. The Swedish schooling system however is much more openly structured with little progress updates or requests for assistance from the parents. There is a typical silent "trusting" attitude from Swedish teachers that we find typically Swedish. According to our experience, Swedish teachers are not standing up for their opinions and are not supporting the kids into pushing their progression. In our opinion Max needs a much more structured and rigid schooling system with clear assignments, expectations and goals. We think this is typical Swedish behaviour; conflict scared. Tea-

chers don't dare to take a stand when assignments are not or not properly done. Teachers are approaching the students' miss-steps in a whole different way, just saying "ok, then it will be better next time..."

In order to support Max we give encouragement and a push of discipline to him regardless of how teachers are doing it. Perhaps we are even more aware of the importance of our role of teaching him discipline because we feel that he is lacking this at school and in Swedish society. The challenge is that we feel our way of teaching discipline is not supported by the teachers/ schoolings system.

What is important to you when raising your child in an international family constellation?

Rajko: It's a benefit to grown up with different languages and cultures. It will surely help the children in future work and life circumstances. It gives them different perspectives on how one can approach daily life challenges. Our kids know that we have a different culture at home and know that other families have their own cultures and habits.

The difference in approaching daily life challenges – bigger and smaller ones – gives the kids benefits and sometimes the confusion on how to behave at school versus at home.

Benefits

Anja: We have more free time here in Sweden then we would have had in Germany. More time to enjoy nature and the country itself. This is a big positive aspect of living in this country. Swedes are generally accepting and encouraging each other for the enjoyment of free time and time in nature.

Advice for cross-culture couples:

Rajko: Have connections and work already arranged before moving, at least if you plan to move to Sweden. In order to find work as a foreigner living in Sweden, one has to have contacts and connections, in order to find employment.



Unique micro-culture in our home

An interview with Jennifer and Pejang by Karin

Facts:

Him: Pejang, Iranian

Her: Jennifer, English

Children: Arthur (11), Henry (7) and Charles (2)

Live in: Kungsängen, Sweden

Pejang (from Iran) moved to Sweden with one of his siblings (without parents) at an age of 6 and lived in a children home with 12 other kids during his whole childhood. Jennifer is from England and moved here (?) years ago. They met at their work place in Dubai and got married there in 2010. Currently they live in Sweden with their three boys in the ages of 11, 7 and 2 years old.

How would you describe the identity of your kids?

We find that the kids see themselves as Swedish – 100%! They don't see themselves as English or Iranian. Their secondary nationality is Iranian and English but the primary nationality of the kids is Swedish. Therefore we do our best to support them to grow up in a Swedish way as much as possible. The

kids are Swedish, they feel Swedish. We feel it would be wrong to implement the Iranian or English traditions on top of that. We do show them of course how things are done in an Iranian or English tradition. But we do not force anything onto them.

Pejang himself feels that he is in a grey zone. When I am in Iran I am seen as a foreigner and when I am in Sweden I am seen as a foreigner... Despite me speaking the native language of both countries, I cannot 100% identify myself with the nations. Jennifer however identifies herself as English. Sometimes the kids get a reminder that they are having an international background. For example when we celebrate festivities or simply when we talk about the various languages which we use in our family and joke about which one is "better" than the others. For them it is a factor that is so obvious that they don't even notice it.

What are the advantages of being an international family?

We automatically have three different cultures in the house and that gives different perspectives to the kids. We

travel quite a lot and have relatives in various countries. It broadens the kids' perspectives while yet having a home to come back to.

Racism – mirroring the society

Pejang: there is a form of racism that is noticeable in Swedish society. I describe it as a funnel that is hard to get through as a foreigner.

One sees it in sports and business. In sports for example when choosing the best players from a team, they don't choose the best, but the Swedish best. In other countries we have experienced that background matters much less and they seem to be able to choose objectively which player is the best to play at the next level.

In business it is hard to get a job as a foreigner and to climb the ladder of business promotion. I would describe it as jealousy and a certain pride that I see in Swedish culture.

Cultural celebrations and traditions

We surely do celebrate certain Swedish cultural festivities, just because we are

living in Sweden. For example, the important celebration of midsummer is something we celebrate for the sake of the kids. It's not that we personally have the urge to celebrate midsummer but we want them to feel included and celebrate like others do.

In this family we try to keep up with three sets of traditions: the English, Iranian and Swedish. It depends a bit on where we are when we celebrate the tradition. If we celebrate Christmas in England, we will automatically celebrate it in an English way. If we celebrate it in Sweden we will celebrate it as much in a Swedish way as we are aware of. We also try to keep up with the Iranian traditions as best as we can. Even though we haven't been so good at it the last couple of years, we do try to keep it alive among the family traditions.

Family support

Pejang has a mother and brother living in Sweden – both being good with children. They are always there if we need them but unfortunately we have not such good contact with his mother at the moment.

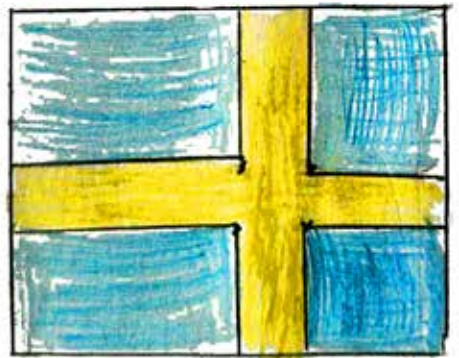
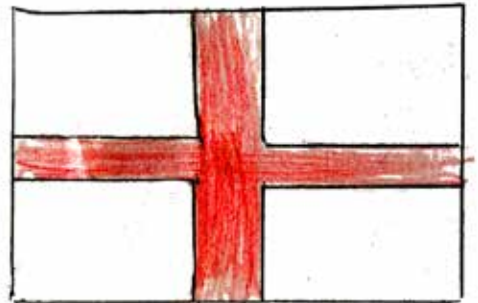
She has been there to support us during several years – pre-covid – it was helpful because Jennifer could build up her career. But after some time, it didn't work well anymore. Grandma applied different rules than we had and we stopped this way of collaborating.

Now we manage everything ourselves

and sometimes ask Jennifer's mom to fly over from England to take care of the kids.

Which culture are you giving to the kids?

We are giving them an international culture. Pejang: I would like to give them the desire to always do better. This is a typical Iranian mindset. Being successful in career life is of great importance in Iran. Jennifer: As I have been living in several countries, Dubai, England and Sweden, I can better reflect on each country's shortcomings and benefits. Different countries present different things and by me having lived in several of those I can now better choose to take benefits from other countries and cultures and incorporate them in my own life. This makes for a unique micro-culture in our home.



Yes! We can say No!

An interview with Rubi and Magnus by Karin

Facts:

Him: Magnus, Swedish

Her: Rubi, Mexican

Children: 1 son; Nils (4)

Live in: Bro, Sweden

How did you meet?

Rubi: We met through a dating site when we both were studying at the technical university in Stockholm. Right from the start we had a very enjoyable contact and next summer we got married.

Choosing for daycare or homecare today?

Rubi: Three years after our marriage we became parents to our son Nils and suddenly had become an international family. We speak our mother language to our child and speak English with each other. A big difference we noticed is that in Mexico parents are usually super protective towards the kids. They would not leave them at daycare at an age of 1 year old. In Mexico it is usual that the moms stay home with the kids during the first 4-5 years, until the age

that they go to preschool. Kids stay either with mother or grandma. Here in Sweden it is much more common that children enter daycare at the age of 1.

We notice sometimes the differences between how Magnus and I approach Nils' wish to occasionally stay with grandma that day instead of going to daycare. I totally support Nils' wish and enjoy the fact that he can spend more time with his (Mexican) grandma. Magnus prefers to stick to a routine. His feeling is that we should bring him to daycare as was scheduled upfront. But after having discussed the topic with each other we feel more relaxed with it and Magnus can let go a little easier.

Overprotective vs more relaxed approach

Rubi: In Mexico city parents are very protective, I would describe it as over protective. They do everything to avoid their kids getting hurt. Even small educational bumps and brushes are avoided with the greatest care. In Sweden we experience that it is much more ok to let the kids try out their own boundaries within a safety range.

It is similar regarding family care, when

someone is sick and for example ends up in hospital. The Swedish people would go on with their daily routines and continue going to work while their family member is in hospital, visiting them only during visiting hours unless there is an emergency. A Mexican family member would drop all of its own daily routines and work and stay with their sick family member throughout day and night until they are recovered. In Mexico we are very close with family, meet each other often and spontaneously and have the greatest care for each other. In Mexico we prioritise the family over everything else.

Sometimes we notice a difference in our approaches when it comes to Nils. Where I can be overprotective and avoid by all means that Nils is going to hurt himself, Magnus can be more relaxed with Nils wanting to try out his boundaries and occasionally hurt himself a little. By having these background differences we form a great team and can balance each other out.

Expression of love

Rubi: In Mexico we are very expressive with our love for each other and our

kids. We hug and cuddle very much – also when surrounded by others. The Swedish people are more reserved and keep to themselves, also when it comes to expressing their love towards the children.

We see these differences at home as well. Sometimes, I notice that Magnus' family finds it somewhat awkward when we display excessive affection, such as hugging, kissing, and playing.

Balanced upbringing because of our extreme differences

Rubi: We think that Nils has the chance to grow up balanced because of the precise mixture of our cultures: A more reserved culture matching a more outgoing and spontaneous culture.

It also has an effect on us as parents. We adapt to and adopt from each other's cultures and habits. Magnus has become a bit more spontaneous. And Rubi has become more relaxed in her parenting approach and is allowing Nils to explore by himself and making occasional missteps.

In Mexico it is usually the mom who is organising everything around the family practicalities and preparing for outings. This is what I took with me as an example from my mother when I grew up in Mexico city. When becoming an own family here in Sweden I started doing the same as my mom did;

taking all the preparations on myself. Until Magnus (and now even Nils) explained that I don't have to stress and prepare everything alone because he (they) can help out too. This support helps me to relax.

Yes! We can say No!

Rubi: In Mexico it is not very well accepted if someone rejects a favour or request for help. In Sweden one can respectfully reject. This is a great relief! It was an issue for me in Mexico because I didn't want to say yes to everything, which wasn't really accepted and I became a shy woman in Mexican culture. Here in Sweden I notice that I can be more myself and I am not shy when compared to Swedish culture. This fits me better.

Our unique mesh

An interview with Selva and Anders by Ursel

Facts:

Her: Selva, Cuban

Him: Anders, Danish

Children: 1 girl (4 years old)

Live in: Aarhus, Denmark

What is great about being an international family?

Selva: We find it exciting that our food culture is vastly different from any other family in Denmark or Cuba. We prepare a lovely blend of both. We have many places to go on vacation: we have friends and family all over the world, because many Cubans leave their home country and go live abroad.

Anders: We are raising our child in diversity: the Cuban background enriches her life. We have a very latin lifestyle at home, people come and go, there is always something going on. We have a wider circle of diverse friends than other Danish people, this is a huge gift for her.

Selva: It's great that our child grows up with a father who lives the post-modern

role model of fatherhood. He is very present in daily life and takes on tasks that used to be the domain of women, e.g. changing diapers, cooking, taking care of the child, all kinds of small things. In Cuba there is still a macho culture and few men venture into the traditionally female domain of roles at home. Luckily our daughter can grow up without thinking that she has to take on certain tasks just because she is a woman. I as a woman am glad to have a Danish man who is not a macho and not jealous if I live my personal life as well! I can go out, meet friends and he stays home to watch our child. I love being a woman in Denmark. My own mother holds the expectation that I stay home with my daughter all the time, I have to be careful what I tell her. The idea that a mother goes out and leaves her child with the father is something unbelievable for her. I like that in Denmark children's individual opinions matter. In Cuba it is the rule that mother and father are figures with some kind of superpower and the child has to do what they say. I also like that in Denmark children are not obliged to kiss or hug somebody if they don't want to. But saying good morning and good night, that's something I teach her, as a simple rule of politeness. I emphasize

the value of family which is higher in Cuba than in Denmark. There, family is not only your brother or sister, but also the neighbor who grew up with you, or the far far away cousin.

How do you celebrate Christmas?

Selva: In Cuba I grew up as a communist, we did not celebrate Christmas. I experienced it with Anders's family for the first time. At first I found that Christmas was a very materialistic time, where you only care about the presents. I missed the joy of being together as a family! I didn't like the Danish tradition of dancing around the tree, or singing Christian songs. But then we decided to spend Christmas every other year according to our partner's tradition or wishes. In "my" year we went to my Brazilian friend who was married to a Danish man. Their style I loved! That Christmas I danced around the tree! It was a celebration full of joy, dancing and singing. There was food, there was life, there I felt: this is family, this is about being together and having a good time. I am changing my attitude towards Christmas, also because now I have a daughter who is learning

about Papa Noel and other Christmas traditions. This year it is my choice, and I want to create my own style. I will gather input from Denmark, Cuba, Brazil and other places of the world, and create our own tradition.

How do you navigate Danish culture?

Selva: I am up for integration, not for assimilation aka adopting Danish culture completely. I want to expose my daughter to many influences. She meets my Spanish and Portuguese speaking friends, eats different food and goes to a Spanish speaking children's group. I emphasize this, because otherwise I feel colonized by Danish culture.

Anders: We Danes supposedly have this value of equality, but there are very clear ideas how the outsider should behave. The outsider should be grateful for being here. They should adapt. Danish people believe that Denmark is the best country in the world. Of course me and Selva reject that. According to Danish rights Selva can not have citizenship right now. That unfortunately leaves us unbalanced in our relationship. Thankfully, due to EU regulations, the situation is improving in Denmark. But for now the system is still preventing Selva from reaching equal status, even though it always claims that equality is so important.

What are you learning about life, because of your multicultural perspective?

Anders: I work with students and I am particularly good with those whose life is not 'perfect'. I learned this through my own life, which did not go the usual way according to mainstream opinion. I see now that Danish life is great as long as you stay inside the box, but when you go outside, it's not so great anymore. Being in touch with Selva's perspective allows me to see that Danish mainstream opinion is heavily influenced by our cultural perspective. I got really good at seeing further than this.

Selva: For me, being in an intercultural relationship has given me the possibility to be a mom and also be a woman. My personal development as a mom and career woman has been very balanced. I have my freedom. This I so much appreciate from this relationship.



I will not go back to Germany, so let's be creative!

An interview with Nelson and Maria by Selva

Facts

Her: Maria, Greek-German

Him: Nelson, Cuban

Children: One boy and two girls
(18, 14, and 10 years old)

Live in: Accra, Ghana.

Tell us your story.

Nelson: We met in Havana in 2003. Maria came to Cuba with a German group from the University of Weimar to work on a project at the University of Havana, where I had recently graduated. The Germans went to Santiago de Cuba with a group of Cuban students I was part of, but somehow the trip felt segregated. Politically speaking, Cubans consider locals to be inferior to foreigners, and this view creates an unequal relationship. That same inequality was felt even for us students during our trip. To make things worse, we Cubans have a particular sense of humor. We make fun of everyone and everything, even ourselves, perhaps for self-protection, so using our humor on them was not

unusual. We gave a “nickname” to each one in the German group. I think they did not understand it culturally and felt uncomfortable with the situation. Therefore, they kept their distance. Such were the circumstances under which we met each other.

Maria: That is why we didn't talk in Santiago de Cuba those days, because we felt that we were “not of interest”. On the way back, on the train to Havana, Nelson was chosen to sit by my side. All Germans were seated together, and so were the Cubans, but for some reason, I was sitting alone, and he sat together with me. I was so angry at the Cubans for ignoring us that I didn't talk to him in those almost 14 hours to Havana.

Nelson: Still, Maria got my attention while on the train. She was so curious about the trip, she was like the light of the group, and also, I thought: This girl moves in a way that is not German at all! The second time we met was in Varadero. That was the moment when we started flirting. We met again in Havana on Maria's last day in Cuba. We

ended up in “El Malecon” with a group of friends, and that day we kissed.

Maria: Back in Germany, I decided I wanted to go back and got the idea of doing a semester in Cuba. I went to the embassy in Berlin and got my student visa. We were lucky that a good friend of Nelson offered to let us stay with his mother at her apartment illegally. We lived there together, in Havana, before we moved to Berlin.

Now you live in Ghana. Tell me about this geographical movement you have done.

Maria: I am the one to blame for this. I am responsible for this family migration! It says a lot about my identity and how I grew up. In the 80s and 90s, and even now, I feel the same every time I go back to Germany. Even though my skin color is not different from the stereotypical German, my name is. People always perceive me as not German, so my identity has been shaped by the idea that I am not only German,

I am also Greek. That is why I decided to go to Greece when I was 19 years old, looking for my roots, identity, and culture. In the end, not all of it could fulfill the needs of my identity formation. That is why I tried to live in Cuba with our family, even though that was never an option for Nelson. We then lived in Spain with our first child and I remember when we decided to move back to Berlin due to financial needs, I told him: I will not stay in Germany, so be prepared! It took us 16 years to leave Germany! It was always my need. Nelson loved Germany. He always said: "I don't have any problem here. The only problem I had was to leave Cuba, and now that I live in Berlin, I am happy" But I also needed to fulfill my needs, so I started looking for a job to live abroad. This process took me six years, and now we have been living in Ghana for two years and I conclude that having a neutral space is good: Ghana reminds me of Greece and Cuba and, at the same time, I am reflecting on our identities and cultures that we know. Our settlement here has been very smooth for us. However, Nelson is now struggling because of Ghana's similarities to Cuba. I see here that he is triggered by many situations that remind him of Cuba. But yes! This is an experience! And it won't be the last adventure. A few weeks ago, I told him: I will not go back to Germany, so let's be creative!

The similarities Nelson finds in Ghana might remind him of the reasons he left Cuba. Has it been challenging to get out of your comfort zone in Germany?

Nelson: That is precisely the point! Personally, I would choose a holiday destination, and then I would return to Germany, and that would be enough chaos. I do not need experimentation. I have accomplished having my job, family, and a great place to live. I just wanted to have the life quality I always dreamt of, which has been forbidden or impossible, and that is what I have in Germany. Here in Ghana, some things upset me. Maria is here working and is not dealing with everyday life as I do. It is a challenge for me every time I confront the same inefficiency and lack of professionalism I left behind in Cuba. Yet, despite the similarities with Cuba, the mentality here is different. I always have to be cautious that what I say is not misinterpreted or doesn't offend anyone to be seen as "the white colonizer" when I am not even white. These experiences and the fact that I don't have a job here that keeps me occupied makes it difficult for me. I am still finding my place. I am trying to create a balance where we could keep this nomadic life and where I also have a purpose. I want to have my autonomy.

Maria: I agree. We still need to find a

balance. The balance was not in Germany because I was not balanced, and now we are experiencing another place that we didn't know. We must find a balance for ourselves and this family structure and dynamic. It needs improvement, but we all have learned a lot during these two years. I also learned that Nelson's experiences here remind him of what he lived in his own country, which he is reacting to. There are wounds that Nelson can't heal, wounds from Cuba. I saw them here in Ghana, and they are still bleeding. We need to find a balance for all of us. We have said: "Let's go for one year, and let's see how it is." We have asked our children's opinion, and the decision has been to prolong our stay here. Let's see what Africa does with us in the end.

How has this internationality impacted your children?

Maria: They already had an international life. We have educated our children to live within these multiple identities. Living in Ghana will expand their geographical experiences. Now, for example, they are going to international schools. They are living this internationalization through education. This is a new door that got opened to each one of them. They are aware of it and are now ready to support the idea of not going back but going further.

Nelson: We like to travel and live in different places. We like this lifestyle,

but each one of us perceives it differently. Maybe our idea of opening their horizons might be disturbing to them. Maybe they are pleased with it, or maybe they would like to return to Berlin when they become adults. Right now, it seems like they are open to changes, and they adapt well to new life situations. Initially, the language barrier was our concern, especially for Vida, our youngest daughter. In the end, she was the one that most quickly adapted. Alma, for instance, is at that age where having her friends matters. Her social structure in Berlin gave her the freedom to move, socialize and have her teenage life. For her, the arrival to Ghana was something else. At her age, the conversations have more complex topics than when you were a child, and communicating on that level was difficult. Now she has overcome these challenges. All in all, Alma was the one to whom this adaptation process was most complex. On the other hand, Nathan, our oldest son, had a different experience. I believe that gender fact plays a role here. He found his place at his new school. He got his group of friends, and he has an independent life here, similar to what he left in Berlin, maybe a more luxurious expat life.

Maria: We always involve our children in discussions about our plans and consider their opinions. Are they missing Berlin? What is missing? Their input matters, and they are actively participating in our decision-making. In

contrast, I find it interesting how flexibility has increased, like Vida choosing to change schools, not due to issues but to explore diverse learning methods. Mobility encourages adaptability, aiding in stepping out of your comfort zone easier. These insights stem from Vida's choices. I think she was so cool! Despite her initial fears, she confidently owns her decisions.

What about the conscious choice of putting your kids in bilingual schools in Berlin?

Maria: This was due to traumas from my life experience, which I see as a generational lesson. Like my father, every parent with a different cultural background had to integrate into German culture. I lacked a bilingual upbringing. Not learning Greek felt like an amputation, a challenge I still face and work to overcome. Being bilingual has always been my identity struggle. Nelson says: "You and your identity issues." This is my story. That's why it was clear to me that with my children, I needed to ensure a bilingual education: Spanish-German or Greek-German. Nowadays, the public schools in Berlin offer a bilingual curriculum, and this was the opportunity. We chose the Spanish-German school since it matches the languages spoken at home. Finding an environment of a bilingual school for my children has been vital for me. I believe a school is a micro-society

where identity and oneself are reflected in a certain way. This was the Spanish-German school for me. Children need acceptance and a feeling of belonging to shape their identities, influenced not only by themselves but also by their environment. You are constantly exposed if you don't belong.

So, Ghana is the neutral base to be now?

Nelson: I would see myself in Greece or Spain. We have experienced living in Spain, and even though we haven't lived in Greece yet, I know that life makes sense when you have people you know around you. With time, if we keep moving, our children will become more international, and once they become adults, they will decide if they want to continue their journey with us or if they want to continue their path.

Maria: For the kids, it always depends on the situation. After holidays in Berlin, they love it there, and when they return, they love it here in Ghana. It is always changing. However, I have learned that this neutral base can be found anywhere. The most important thing is that you can build something independently from the country. You always need an inner circle and an environment that gives you social and professional stability. This is what we have experienced in Ghana. No matter where you are, the most important thing is that you can create a stable environment around you.

Children's comments

Vida: I love it! I am lucky because I am having my childhood here. I have Ghana, Berlin, Cuba, and Greece!

Nathan: I love it here. It is like Cuba but even better, I have my friends here, the school! I love it here. But now I will start my studies at the university, and I am looking for options in Europe, maybe The Netherlands.



Love and Respect

An interview with Blondy and Dorthe by Selva

Facts

Her: Dorthe. Danish

Him: Blondy. Angolan-Portuguese

Children: 1 son together (11 years old). More children and grandchildren from previous marriages.

Live in: Århus, Denmark.

Tell us your story

Dorthe: We met at a party in Brabrand, Aarhus. We met for the first time in 2009, where Blondi was working as a doorman and I was a guest. We lost contact for about 2 years until we met again and became a couple, in 2011.

Blondi: Everything went so fast. We started dating and after a month we moved in together, and 3 months later she got pregnant with Elias. I think it compensates for these 2 years we missed each other. It was lovely!

Dorthe, you have been married previously with a man from Iran and now with a man

from Angola. What is it like for you to be in these “non-Danish” relationships?

Dorthe: In my first marriage, the language barrier was a significant challenge. Initially, he did not speak any other language than Farsi until he went to the language school to learn Danish. Nevertheless, this experience in my life was also very exciting. I got to learn about other cultures and languages. At that time, my sister was also married to someone from Iran, so since I was 15 years old, I learned to speak Farsi and to make Iranian food. My marriage with Blondi has been easier, because he thinks more like a European.

Blondi: I’ve spent most of my life in Europe, having arrived when I was 19 years old. My perspective aligns more with European values than African ones. I’ve embraced a different approach to relationships; for instance, I firmly believe that household responsibilities shouldn’t be solely determined by gender, so we share the responsibilities equally at home.

How do you manage the

cultural differences within your families?

Dorthe: I like when Blondi’s big family is here. I like this kind of culture, where being together with the family is a value in itself, it was the same with my ex-husband. I liked the fact that we always had a big family that would come and go.

Blondi: This is not a common way of thinking in Denmark. I am so happy because I have found the right woman for me that also accepts my culture. She embraces it and she has never said to me: “they can only be here for two days and then they have to leave”. I explained to her that when my family from Angola comes for a visit, it is the whole package: the children, the spouses, the grandchildren... it will be a full house with lots of noise! The children are playing and maybe breaking her things and she says: “it’s ok, I like it!” The only thing I can say to this is Thank You!!! I know her family and they are not like that.

For example, every time we celebrate with Dorthe’s family, the tradition is to be seated to eat and drink. That’s the Danish way. In my culture, on the

other hand, there is a lot of food, joy, loud music and you just get crazy, dance and be happy! Her family gets scared of our happy madness. Instead, they would like my family to keep quiet when we are together and follow their norms. They want us to adapt and to be integrated. Dorthé also thinks that and here we disagree. I say to her: “Now you got to stop! We have to dance right?” Now, instead, we do something else: we have decided to celebrate with each family separately. We celebrate with my family and friends independently from Dorthé’s family and everyone is pleased. In that way we have no complications between the two families. We did it this way when our son had his birthday and it worked really well. We’ve found a balance that works for us, and it’s made our bond even stronger.

What is the biggest strength in your marriage?

Blondi: Dorthé is the most respectful and caring person I know. And she is very patient with my family. I don’t think I could be as patient as she has been, if she had that many family members living with us over long periods of time. This is not Danish, this generosity: it is just how Dorthé is.

There is happiness in Dorthé’s eyes when she looks at me. My sister always says: this woman loves you! How can you guys be like this? That is because love and respect come together in our

relationship. That’s the way we do it and we are happy together!

Dorthé: To me, Blondi is the perfect man! He is a constant: Always calm, always supporting, firm in his values, but at the same time someone who never judges and he lives from this approach of live and let live, that is just so relaxing to be around. I can always just be myself around him.

What would you say to others that are starting a multicultural relationship?

Dorthé: First and foremost: there has to be love. But respect for the other one’s habits and quirksiness

tial to keep it. This is not just culture, but in everything. And when there is a conflict, which there will be, then insist on handling them in a respectful and loving fashion.

Blondi: Absolutely, communication and openness are essential. We’ve learned that embracing each other’s whole beings has brought us closer together, and it’s something we continue to aim for in our relationship. There’s beauty in our differences, and it’s a journey worth taking. Our recipe for a successful multicultural relationship is simply this: love and respect.



Parental benefits while surrounded by rural nature

An Interview with Anja and Roman by Karin

Facts:

Him: Roman, Polish

Her: Anja, German

Children: 2 sons, Anton (10) and Joachim (7)

Live in: Kungsängen, Sweden in the countryside surrounded by rural nature.

How did you meet and why did you move to Sweden?

Anja: We moved to Sweden in 2011 because of Roman's work. He was working for a Polish subcontractor specialised in tunnel constructions. We met when we were trainees at a Polish company in 2007.

I went back to Germany and had never had plans to move abroad. Roman had the opposite wishes and always wanted to live abroad. When we decided to start a family and when I got pregnant, we doubted between Germany and Sweden and decided to move to Sweden because of the benefits of parental leave and giving birth in Sweden.

Is Sweden the perfect country to live?

Anja: I don't think there is such a thing as a perfect country. But for families this is a very good country to live in. If both parents have the wish to work while managing the family life all by themselves without support of the family from their home country, this seems to be a very good country to live in, because of the support from the state you get for kids' daycare and parental benefits.

How is it to live abroad without family close by?

Roman: We are used to organising our family by ourselves and don't see a real need for assistance from family members. We don't experience it as an issue to live further away from family. It does help that we both have a position at work where we have no fixed working hours and can be flexible with our times or even occasionally work from home. This makes it possible to adapt to the daily needs of the family. This is really working well!

Languages

Roman: We want our kids to grow up with the family languages which are Polish, German, English and Swedish. I speak only Polish to the boys, Anja speaks only German to the kids. Me and Anja speak English with each other.

We notice that the kids have an easier time speaking the native languages when they are in the native country themselves. That is why we organise that the kids can spend several weeks per year in both Germany and Poland as well as their current home country Sweden.

However, the kids speak Swedish to each other. Also, when they are at home. The play-language is Swedish for them.

How do you think that the kids are experiencing it to be an international family?

Roman: It is obvious to them. They are used to the mixture of languages and cultural differences.

Anja: Yes, it is obvious to them but I re-

member that it was part of my decision to choose for a second child because the kids would have a sibling in the same odd family situation. Someone they can relate to.

There was a period that Anton thought it was unfair that he had to do so much extra work in going to extra mother language classes compared to his classmates. It took a while for him to understand that he is not alone in it and that those few extra hours a month are an investment for staying in good contact with the family.

What is the important factor of being an international family?

Roman: We have an awareness of various cultures and different ways of living. The kids naturally get to experience the differences of cultures, sometimes misunderstanding or not understanding the culture codes and challenges.

What we experience as the biggest challenge is the ‘Swedish Humbleness...’ It’s sometimes so hard to read or interpret the Swedish people. Swedish people in general have this very diplomatic way of being. German and Polish people are more alike in their cultural behaviour. We are more straightforward and say what we mean to say.

School

Anja: Last year the kids switched schools – they went from a regular Swedish school to a German school. For us it was too big of a challenge when the kids were still going to a Swedish school. It was hard to get clear and concrete information from the teachers about how our kids are doing at school and what they need to have assistance with. Now that we have decided to have the kids going to a German school it is much easier for us. The school follows a German schooling system and the approach is much more straightforward.

Roman: Our kid Anton interpreted my comments often as negative and criticising. Now that the kids are going to the German school, I do not hear these comments anymore. I think that our way of being with the kids at home is more in line now with the schooling culture.

An outsider in both our home country and current home

Anja: We adapt partly to Swedish culture by living here. I notice when coming “home” to Germany that I look at many things from an outsider’s perspective and notice that I have an opinion about them. I feel like an outsider and experience that I find certain ways in which Swedish culture approaches life more relaxing.

Thank you very much for your drawings!

Amelie

Elias

Vida

Táina

Helga

Nora

Violeta

Lara

Most of the drawings were done by the children of the families we interviewed.

One riddle for you:
notice where not!

Part 3

Navigating Your Path: 5 self-reflective questions

In this section we present five coaching questions designed to help you shape your family's life and leverage your multicultural background as a source for strength and enrichment. The questions encourage thoughtful introspection and discussion. We invite you to answer them in a written format, journal about them in a diary, or use them as conversation starters with people you trust. Have fun with the questions and enjoy the thoughts, conversations and resulting actions they bring you!

Question 1:

What is important to you when raising your children, regarding their multicultural background? Name 3 things (or more).

Question 2:

Reflecting on your role within your international family, how might your beliefs about gender roles, whether inherited or culturally influenced, impact the dynamics and relationships within your family?

Question 3:

Which aspects of your worldview have evolved as a result of getting in touch with your partner's perspective?

Question 4:

How does it influence your community that you are an international family? Your community can be your larger family, your neighborhood, your circle of friends, your professional contacts, the daycare, or school your children go to.

Question 5:

Which tips would you give to other international families?



If you enjoyed this booklet and would like to hear more stories of international families, check out our podcast series.



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Find all information about this project on

<https://hostingtransformation.eu/project/international-families/>

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