

A group of approximately ten diverse young people, including men and women of various ethnicities, are smiling and posing for a photo. They are closely packed together, creating a sense of community and joy. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the individuals.

# **Children with International Experience**

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# *Who are we talking about?*

- Current labels
  - TCK
  - Global Nomads



# *Who are we talking about?*

## Caveats

1. Limited research-base
2. US-biased
- What these kids have in common:
  - Well-educated parents
  - High standard of living conditions
  - English-language
  - Live in a country which is not their parents' home country



## ***Who are we talking about?***

The labels gloss over vast differences

1. Time variations
2. Exposure to local conditions
3. Schooling
4. Parental experience
5. Children from all over the world



## *Who are we talking about?*

Research on TCK's/Global Nomads  
sees these children as:

- a) A small minority
- b) Within a national 'normal' context
- c) Sweeping generalisations



# We are not as unique as we may think

- Hundreds of thousands
  - International schools/ IB system...
  - Global movement
- Others face similar issues
  - Moving within your own nation
  - Parents from 2 cultures
  - Immigrants
  - Refugees

We are the future



# *How are children with international experience different?*

## **Three Challenges**



## Caveat 1: Keep things in perspective

- A child doesn't have to move internationally to experience massive change in his or her life
- Our children are in a sense privileged
- Advantages to moving



## Caveat 2: Every child's experience is different

- How they react, what they learn and the quality of the experience they get from moving to live in another country depends on three things:
  - Their personality (plus age)
  - Your support and example and your attitude
  - The conditions of their move



# Challenge # 1

- Face change/upheaval
  - Meeting new people
  - Dealing with fear
  - Developing a personal approach
  - Resilience, self-reliance
  - How to say goodbye/deal with grief



## Challenge # 2

- Face different people:
  - Develop empathy
  - Understand different cultures
  - Understand points-of-view
    - Differences are OK
    - World events/international politics



## Challenge # 3

- More conscious process of identity formation
  - What is identity?
    - 1- Collection of attributes, knowledge and beliefs
    - 2- The labels other people attach to you (who people think you are)

Identity is negotiated

Identity is not static



# Identity differences

- Children who move internationally have an expanded identity
  - Wider set of values, norms, behaviours, attitudes
  - Expanded sense of nationality
  - Flexible sense of the word 'home'



Orchids have solid roots but they can be transported from place to place.

This one carries it's tropical and northern influences with it in its coconut home.





# Impact of identity differences

- How children see themselves
- How you see your children
- How other people see your children



## *Preparing for a move with children*

- Kids cannot choose
- As parents...
- Give them control where you can



## The move as a project

- End goal – is for everyone to have a happy, productive, well-rounded life at the next destination
- You are project leaders, guiding the family through the stages of the project



# Step 1: Define what your life will look like

Children can see what they will  
“lose”

## Therefore

- Encourage/help them research the new place
- What are the advantages there
- Manage their expectations – make it realistic



## Step 2: Identify the hurdles

- What are the disadvantages
- Listen
- Take a pro-active approach to problem-solving

## Step 3: Prepare to leave

Three pre-departure phases:

- dismantling
- disengaging,
- dis-identification

Get your kids involved:

- When to move (date)
- What to pack
- How to say goodbye