

## **New mature cross cultural workers leaving behind young adult children**

Global Connections TCK Forum  
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### **Introduction**

It has been observed anecdotally that young adults left behind when their parents go abroad for cross cultural service, (aka YANGs – Young Adults Not Going) may experience some problems specific to that situation. These can be more acute if, for example, the young person is single, still in full time education or in an unstable job situation. Possible problems could be:

- Loss of a “family home” to go to on occasions such as Christmas
- Lack of access to parents in times of difficulty e.g. relationship break up, illness, job problems, all exacerbated by time zone differences and internet issues
- Dilemma of feeling that they should support their parents in this new venture, though they will also miss them very much. This is possibly harder for children who are Christian.

It is important for mature applicants for cross cultural work to recognise at the candidate stage, the cost and sacrifice involved in what God is calling them to, and, in particular, how that affects their young adult children.

### **Suggestions for parents of young adults aiming to move to cross cultural work abroad:**

1. Explore as much as you can with your adult children about the impact on them of your moving abroad for an extended period.
2. Plan how you will stay in touch – how often, best times and days, by what method (eg Skype, email etc). Manage expectations, and be prepared to be flexible and make changes. Keep up to date, but avoid managing things for them from long distance unless specifically asked to do so. Watch for non-verbal cues.
3. Give reassurance about how you will aim to deal with personal and more general crises, both at home and where you will be serving.
4. Work with your children on identifying trusted older adults, family or friends, who can support them in your absence.
5. Indicate when you expect to return home, whether for holiday or home assignment and discuss where you will stay – i.e. with them or in your own space or a mixture. Consider arranging joint holidays, either back home or elsewhere.
6. Discuss what would be appropriate arrangements for them to visit you – timing, cost, location, your likely availability.
7. Ask whether they would like to assist you in practical ways e.g. providing a home address for you, dealing with post, sending out correspondence on your behalf, recording TV programmes, sermons etc.
8. Discuss expectations with them about keeping in touch with other family members e.g. their grandparents.
9. Arrange some fun times with them, creating happy memories and showing that they are important to you when you are busy with the many things you have to do.
10. Tell them you pray for them daily and find out what to pray for them specifically, both now and while you are away.

Based on H's paper *New mature cross cultural workers leaving behind young adult children*. (H went to E Asia in 2005 aged 54 with her husband leaving behind 2 adult children and returned to UK in 2013.)