

Global Connections - TCK Forum
Raising children in restricted societies
12 June 2018

Family 'Anchors'



These are the beliefs that will hold you and your family stable through the storms of living overseas. You will probably need to return to them, re-examine them and reaffirm them frequently!

(Note: Satan will try to get us to doubt most of these, most of the time.)

- i) God is faithful: if we trust and obey Him, He will never let us down.
- ii) God brought us specifically to this place: it is not a mistake (however much it feels like it!)
- iii) God's plans are good - even when they feel the opposite e.g. Joseph.
- iv) God's plans will not harm us and our children: even if we walk through danger and suffering
- v) Bad things happen back in our home countries too: parenting and childhood have their own stresses there, too. Comfort brings its own problems!
- vi) By obeying God's command and living in a hard place, we are laying an eternal foundation in our children's' lives, giving them living examples of
 - hearing and obeying
 - living in complete dependence on God
 - submission to His good and perfect will
 - stepping out in faith
 - seeing answered prayer that will keep them stable in the storms of life.



Family Lifelines



- i) People who love them and show it by
 - intentionally listening
 - sending presents!
 - accepting and not judging them when they do something that looks strange or extravagant by home country standards (like flying somewhere 'posh' for a break , or coming home early or....)
 - show kindness in many big or small ways
- ii) 'Happy places/events/times'

- give temporary relief from the pressure and enable them to face life again
- create happy memories that bond the family together and last all their lives.



What Can Families Do to Survive and Thrive in Difficult Places?

- Learn about the culture and how other families in similar situations cope, beforehand
- Determine to look past the negatives (usually easy to see) for the positives, which usually take time and knowledge of the place, to appear
- Look out for safe spaces/ happy activities/ places where you can relax from the pressures as a family
- Talk and listen to each other/ their children- set up times and ways of doing this
- Prioritise your marriage: the health of the marriage is the foundation for the stability of the children
- Agree to take regular breaks from the pressured situation - and take them! Don't let worries about how everyone at home will see it, influence your decisions about rest and replenishment.
- Make sure your children know that they come first in your love and attention: children can adapt and thrive even in very difficult surroundings if they know they are loved.



What can supporting agencies and churches do?

- Discuss the issues involved in living in a closed/restrictive place before the family leaves and on every home leave - see Family/Agency Discussion Questions sheet
- Agree and communicate plainly to the family that their family's emotional/psychological health comes FIRST: this takes the pressure away from families to 'perform' and endure.
- Do everything you can to encourage and enable the family to take regular breaks from the pressured situation.
- Attach no blame to anyone if the family can't stay in that situation. Let them know they are free to stop.

