

Trailing Spouse & Expat Family Challenges & Solutions

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“There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a great competition and rivalry between the two. There is a third power stronger than both, that of the women.”

— Muhammad Ali Jinnah

"When I was 5 years old, my mother always told me that happiness was the key to life. When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down 'happy'. They told me I didn't understand the assignment, and I told them they didn't understand life."

— John Lennon





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Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Anne B. Braseby, Phd. for her dissertation *Adaptation Of Trailing Spouses: Does Gender Matter?* Her analysis and insight into the challenges of the Trailing Spouse and expatriated family have been invaluable in compiling this presentation. Not only does she examine the psychological and emotional factors expat homemakers face, and how they deal with them, but why they occur.

In exploring the question from a cross-gender and historical perspective she has brought to light many of the socio-economic factors at play in present “modernizing” societies, communities, and within the family unit.

Most studies and literature surrounding expatriates and the expatriation experience only examine Americans, or at least western Anglo-phones. However, with globalization increasing at an exponential rate, expatriates are more and more often coming from a wide variety of nationalities and cultures, showing many of the same trends as their American counterparts in their expatriation and adaptation process.

These trends, as Dr. Braseby demonstrates, are in part linked to the changing role of women, particularly the homemaker, within a society and how women (and men) are responding to those changes.

By examining the past and present developmental stages of American expatriated families and homemakers, one can anticipate the necessities and challenges of this group, as well as how “emerging” expat markets will develop and respond to their own expatriations.

For example, in the past decades Spain has experienced dramatic economic growth in conjunction with the advancement of women’s rights. As a consequence to the former large corporations have begun to expand into foreign markets, and expatriate a number of their employees. The trends and challenges of these Spanish families show a striking resemblance to Americans expats of the ‘50’s and ‘60’s.

The French are another case in point, whose expatriation trends of today might be comparable to that of the Americans in the 1980’s. Or, in the case of Indians whose country is in the midst of dramatic social and economic changes; their expansion into foreign markets and expatriation trends might be compared to American expats of the 1940’s and ‘50’s.

How might examination of the socio-economic development of the American expat family over the past 100 years help to understand, and prepare for the challenges that “emerging market” expat families are experiencing, now and in the future?

Further research and examination of trends within expat communities and families, from a cross-cultural, cross-gender perspective and how this affects their wants, needs, behavior, actions, etc. is warranted. However, work done by researchers such as Dr. Anne Braseby’s, Dr. Yvonne McNulty, Dr. Anne Copeland, etc. provide significant insight into the motivations, incentives, aspirations, fears, reservations, and biases of expats in their decision making process, which in turn determines consumer-spending habits and investment decisions.



Introduction

Studies and reports repeatedly demonstrate that the expat spouse/homemakers is the key to the success of the expatriation experience. She (or he) provides the support, stability and guidance needed during highly stressful transitions and challenges, often at great personal and financial sacrifice to her or himself. These studies also show that the emotional stability, strong coping and problem-solving skills, and cultural agility of the homemaker translates into a well-adjusted and productive family; in the work-place, school, and community.

On the other hand, the various socio-economic reasons that have propelled women to seek gainful employment outside of the home for centuries, are still omni-present today; leaving the modern woman in a particularly difficult position.

Because of deeply inculcated social norms and traditions “working women” are expected to assume the same roles and duties in the home as past generations, while performing at par, or better, to their male counter-parts in the work-place; resulting in a situation that excessively surcharges their time, energy, and resources.

In part due to these pressures, many highly-educated, professional women are agreeing, and at times embracing the opportunity, to sacrifice their careers in deference to their husbands’ career and transnational opportunities, as well as in the general interest of their families. Such was the case in my own expatriation experience and marriage.

My awareness and appreciation of this situation, its complexities, and my desire to create a suit-case career for myself prompted me in 2006 to create www.global-expats.com. In the ensuing years the idea developed into a more complex and larger project that aims to offer the same work/family balance & financial independence to other expat homemakers that I have been attempting to provide for myself.

Additionally, during my research and development of Global Expats as well as my studies on women’s and children’s rights within family courts, I have come to appreciate to what extent the nurturing and socialization role that homemakers play in our societies, has not, and is not, being properly recognized or valued by institutions or social norms.

If solutions to the complex social and economical challenges that plague societies around the world are ever to be found and implemented, it will ultimately be achieved at a grass-roots level by the care-givers of society and those who serve as our “moral compass.”

In order to accomplish this in an effective and proficient manner homemakers must be provided with the opportunities, means and tools to effectively fulfill the roles they have traditionally played in the family, community and society, while at the same time afforded the opportunity to pursue and fulfill their own personal social and economic needs. This is the ultimate goal of Global Expats.

No problem can be solved using the same level of consciousness used in creating it. Albert Einstein



The Expatriated Family

Expatriate - (1818)"one who has been banished;" main modern sense of "one who chooses to live abroad."

Dictionary.com. Online Etymology Dictionary. Douglas Harper, Historian.

The term **Trailing Spouse** is used to describe a person who follows his or her life partner to another city because of a work assignment.

www.en.wikipedia.org

A **Third Culture Kid (TCK, 3CK)** or **Trans-Culture Kid** is "someone who, as a child, has spent a significant period of time in one or more culture(s) other than his or her own, thus integrating elements of those cultures and their own birth culture, into a third culture." TCKs tend to have more in common with one another, regardless of nationality, than they do with non-TCKs from their passport country. TCKs are often multilingual and highly accepting of other cultures.

www.en.wikipedia.org

History of the Expatriate

1920's

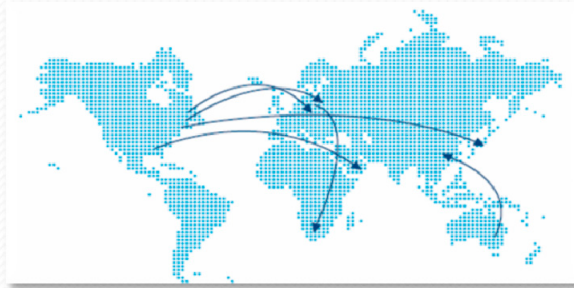
The 1920s are the years most associated with American expatriates in Paris, as the so-called "Lost Generation" fled the United States in search of "liberation and artistic freedom". Some prime examples are Gertrude Stein, Robert McAlmon, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Janet Flanner, Solita Solano, Djuna Barnes, Kay Boyle, Harry and Caresse Crosby, Walter Lowenfels, Anais Nin and Henry Miller.

1950's - 1970's

Another famous group of expatriates was the so-called Beat Generation of American artists living in other countries during the 1950s and 1960s. This group included Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs, Gregory Corso, Harold Norse and Ira Cohen. Gary Snyder has studied Zen in Japan. Later generation expatriates included 1950s jazz musicians such as Steve Lacy, 1960s rock musicians Jim Morrison and Nina Simone, as well as 1970s singer-songwriter Elliott Murphy.

www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expatriate

Global Expatriates 1970 - 1990



“International assignments are mostly driven by large multinationals base in the US and Europe. These organizations send talent from the HQ country out into the field to manage operations in other parts of the world. Many assignments are from the US into Europe, but oil and gas, mining, and other industries dependent on natural resources regularly send staff to more far flung destinations. Assignee are usually sent off for a two-to-five year period and are incentivized with attractive expatriate packages.”

Source: Talent Mobility 2020 – Price Waterhouse Coopers

Global Expatriates 1990 - 2010



“Demand for global mobility of talent increases as new markets emerge for companies to sell their products and services, and also manufacture their goods at lower cost. Offshoring gathers pace. A new breed of mobile worker emerges alongside the expatriate and meets the globalisation demand through commuter, rotational, and technology-enabled virtual assignments. The flow of talent is still predominantly from West to East or intracontinental, but companies begin to tap into a rich talent pools in emerging markets, particularly India.”

Source: Talent Mobility 2020 – Price Waterhouse Coopers

Global Expatriates 2020



“Global mobility continues to grow in volume. Within the context of closely aligned international regulatory frameworks, the growth of cross-border acquisition by sovereign wealth funds, lingering public investments in private business concerns, greater security cooperation between nations, and information technology that can identify and connect talent in an instant, global mobility becomes part of the new normal. Mobility of talent is fluid. For example, a Chinese company may engage a European team to manage an investment in Africa.”

Source: Talent Mobility 2020 – Price Waterhouse Coopers


Socio-Economic Changes of the Family During the 20th Century

The patriarchal family was constructed to give sexual control of men over women to ensure progeny once male inheritance became established (Kimmel 2004).

In the 19th century biological arguments were used to justify women’s exclusion from the labor force; they were too weak, lacked strength, their brains were too small. So those who could, stayed home and looked after the children accepting the role of homemaker and mother.

This was reinforced during the Great Depression when it was considered men should have the few available jobs. Although World War I had not lured many housewives into the labor market, World War II did...They proved they could work, keep house, and raise a family. (Kessler-Harris 1982; McDowell 1999; Hesse-Biber and Carter 2004). When the men returned, the women were expected to return to their previous role of housewife and mother.

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Women resisted, enjoying their new-found economic freedom, so a campaign was launched to redomesticate women in the 1950s... (These) ideals...were to be indelibly fixed in many people's minds to the point of believing that domesticity was a natural, innate feature of women, with men conveniently inept at keeping house."

...This model of the traditional nuclear family with the male breadwinner and female stay at home nurturer became insinuated into the popular cultural imaginary where...it continues to hold strong today (Coltrane 1998)...

Adaptation of the Trailing Spouse: Does Gender Matter? by Anne Braseby

The Trailing Spouse of the Late 20th Century

...Despite the "Feminist Revolution" of the 1970s, the business research on trailing spouses still held quite fast to what are now widely recognized as gender stereotypes. Thus, many of the initial approaches to spousal adaptation among expatriates were based on middle-class, middle-aged women who came of age in the 1950s when functionalist ideals of the breadwinner husband and stay-at-home housewife were normalized.

Many of these early trailing spouse women, although educated, rarely had careers or professional identities of their own. They had been groomed to marry, take on the identity of the wife and mother and assume a supportive role to their husbands...researchers assumed that the wife would follow her husband; after all that was the "natural" and "normal" thing to do at the time... it was considered that wives had relatively little exertion of power in decision making in the marital relationship.

(Zvonkovic, Greaves et al. 1996; Brescoll and Uhlmann 2005)


Huge social, political, and economic changes have occurred since those first studies, drawing married women into the paid labor force. Women's opportunities for paid employment expanded greatly during the 1960s and 1970s... Legislation began to break down legal barriers for women to pursue careers in professions that had largely excluded them before, such as law, medicine, and management.

(Reskin and Roos 1990)...

As more women enter the workforce the dynamics within the household have altered. With relatively more economic independence, women have a greater influence in family decision making which has led to a marked decrease in the migration of professional couples where two careers need to be negotiated before a move is made.

(Gerson 1993; Goode 1994; Zentgraf 2002 /Boyle and Halfacree 1995; Green 1997; Nivalainen 2004)

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This is borne out in the fact that despite more companies going international and needing additional overseas personnel, they have reported difficulty in recent years in recruiting employees to relocate overseas .

(Global Relocation Trends Survey 2009).

The Trailing Spouse of the 21st Century

“Family considerations” is one of the major reasons given for not pursuing an overseas assignment including spouses not willing to sacrifice their careers by going overseas where finding appropriate employment is unlikely. The middle class trailing spouses of the first decade of the twenty-first century have been raised with very different socio-cultural norms than the trailing spouses of the generation before. Many of them are highly educated women with professional statuses that challenge the sex role stereotypes which dominated the first trailing spouse studies.

(Harvey 1997; Pellico and Stroh 1997; Harvey and Kiessling 2004; Adler 2007)


The struggle by women to acquire all the advantages of the feminist movement are not given up lightly: many are not willing to forfeit them to follow their husbands overseas. Although the feminist revolution is far from complete, women today have greater economic independence and dual career couples often have a much more egalitarian marriage, allowing women greater decision making powers within the marital relationship.

(Potuchek 1997)

...Successful career women want to perform like men in their professional lives, but men don't have the pull of family responsibilities that career mothers do. Often women try to “do it all;” the supermom syndrome which inevitably leads to role overload...They rarely feel they are doing either to their own satisfactory level and can lead to a negative self image. Pamela Stone and Mary Blair Loy have written about these professional middle class women who have opted out of the workplace to become stay-at-home moms because they felt they could not “do it all.”

...These many competing pressures to be a successful career woman, a good homemaker, a good mother and a good wife, all driven by the ideals of the traditional sex roles, impact women's lives tremendously. It is these competing identities that determine whether women will become trailing spouses, and will affect their adaptation once they have relocated overseas. Men do not have such competing identities, so their reasons for becoming trailing spouses are much more elusive...

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...(The model of the traditional nuclear family) is inherent in women's decisions to become trailing spouses. It is reified by the companies that transfer the families overseas and expect the male worker to have a female support at home so he can give 100 percent to the company. It is constructed within the expatriate community with American Women's clubs and schools defining activities and information needed to be a "good mother." And it is shattered when men decide to become the trailing spouse.

...Although stay-at-home fathering is becoming more frequent, it still remains a difficult decision for most men. To many people stay at home fathers have crossed the boundaries that are considered gender appropriate and tend to be distrusted by others, men and women alike...Men are taught to be powerful, that is economically successful, and staying at home...to look after children is perceived as submissive or dependent. Relying on a woman's income makes them appear particularly unsuccessful. Women's work is devalued in many societies and as such stay-at-home fathers are devalued too.

(Wood 2003)


The Trailing Spouse's Motivation to Move Overseas

An overseas experience as a trailing spouse can be an interesting, exciting experience, and it can also be a frustrating, disempowering experience...With dual earners being the norm in American families, why would a spouse give up their career to move overseas where they probably cannot work?

...People who have decided, for various reasons, to follow their partners overseas, often putting their careers on hold, isolating themselves from family and friends, and agreeing to live a domesticated life in a strange culture where many find difficulty communicating with the host society...

..Is the female trailing spouse the victim of gendered social expectations where she trails her husband because she is bowing to the traditional breadwinner role as the name suggests, or is she using the opportunity to become a willing trailing spouse to liberate herself from some of the gendered societal expectations that have persisted even in the post-feminist era? Likewise, when a husband decides to follow his executive wife overseas, is it purely an economic decision if she earns more than he does?

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...Two different types of trailing spouses emerge:

- 1) Those who agreed to relocate not because they wanted to but in order to improve the family's economic position and enhance the partner's career*
- 2) Those spouses who, in their words, were "ready for a change." Gendered societal expectations weave throughout the decision making process.*

These two patterns are not monolithic nor are they mutually exclusive. Many participants expressed more than one reason as to why they decided to relocate...

A study on dual career couples and found even when wives have equal or better salaries, they tend to be unwilling to consider a move to improve their own career prospects if it means their husbands have to find a new job. Conversely, husbands tend to be more willing to uproot their families if it means their own career prospects will improve. The Bielby's conclude that the husband is fulfilling his functionalist role as the "provider" by perceiving economics to be the most important aspect of the move whereas the wife is fulfilling her role as nurturer and taking responsibility for the welfare of the family above her own desires.

Factors of Adjustment for the Trailing Spouse

How Do I Prepare? Anticipatory Adjustment

There are numerous ways that spouses can build more realistic expectations, including having overseas experience, collecting information from books, the Internet, or people with experience living overseas, and/or participating in an inter-cultural training program...spousal counseling, language training, career counseling, networking information, and intercultural training help reduce early assignment withdrawals

(Trager 1987; Selmer 2001; Copeland 2003; Pascoe 2004; McNulty 2005; Miser and Miser 2009; Cole 2010).

...Despite these consistent findings, employers have been slow to implement programs for spouses and families (and) trainers have generally presumed that the training for the spouse is similar to the training for the transferee.

(Takeuchi, Yun et al. 2002; Selmer and Leung 2003; McCaughey and Bruning 2005)

...previous overseas experience for spouses was positively correlated with adjustment.

Black and Gregerson (1991)

Adaptation of the Trailing Spouse: Does Gender Matter? by Anne Braseby



I've Arrived – What Do I Do Now? In-Country Adjustments

The biggest change is experienced by the spouse, whether male or female... There is a plethora of new services to organize, bureaucracies to deal with as well as navigate the geography of the area to find facilities to fulfill their role as executive of the household.

The spouse is left to find stores to buy food they are not familiar with, use a currency they do not yet understand, buy food in weights that are alien, in a language many do not understand. It takes months to get oriented to their new surroundings and familiarize themselves with the day to day running of a home in a foreign country. The constant unknowns can be exhausting...

The expatriate bubble are (expats) who chose to live with like members of the community to enhance social and cultural connections. However, expatriate clusters form around language and not just nationality; so Americans, Europeans, Canadians, Australians and British tended to be in one area while Japanese or Indian would be in another.

Different Responses to Managing the Physical Environment

- 1) *They isolate themselves as much as they can from the host environment, living in a “mini America”*
- 2) *They adapt to certain aspects of the environment but also change their environment to make it more similar to their home environment*
- 3) *They themselves adjust until the foreign environment becomes their home environment*

Oberg (1960)

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Factors in Trailing Spouses' Adaptation to Host Society

- 1) *Their motivation to integrate with the host society*
- 2) *The quantity and quality of contact with the host society*
- 3) *Participation in activities with the host society*

Although most of the preparation for an overseas move is geared toward the host environment and adaptation to the host society, it is often difficult for even highly motivated spouses to integrate into the host community because of reluctance from the host society themselves, language fluency, and differences in cultural values.

Successful Acculturation

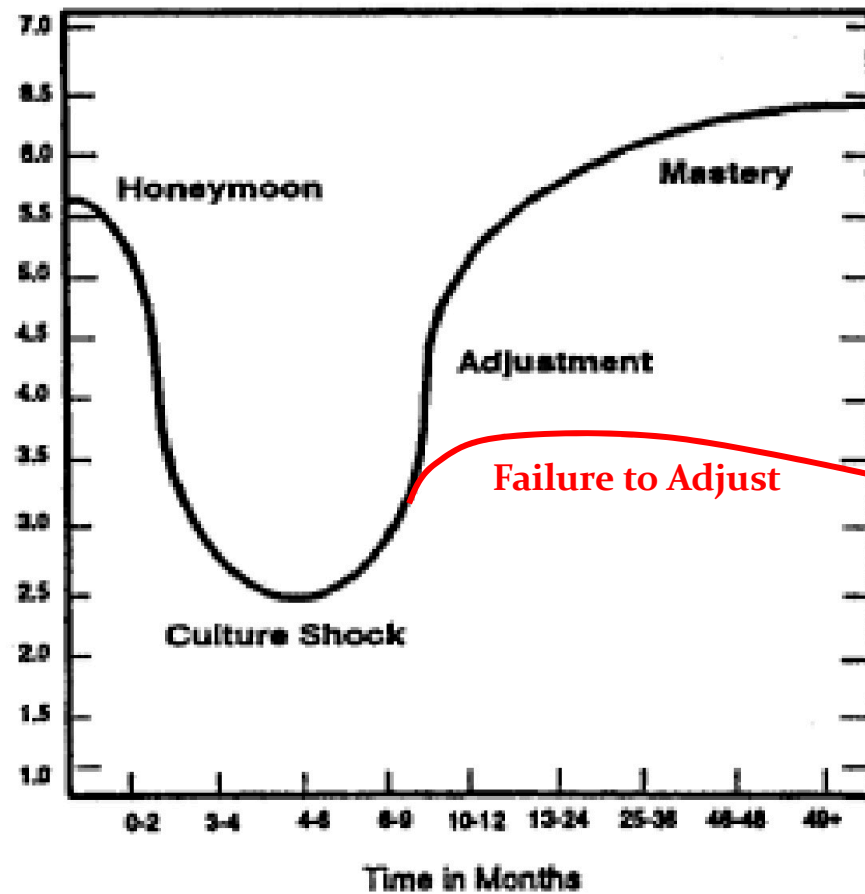
- 1) *The honeymoon stage - the immigrant is fascinated by everything new*
- 2) *After a few months immigrant has to cope with real conditions of life, usually characterized by hostility towards the host nation and longing for the familiarity of home country food, media and conational friends.*
- 3) *Immigrant shows some acculturation where functioning in the host nation becomes easier*
- 4) *Immigrant exists comfortably in the host culture*

Berry's Bi-dimensional Model of Acculturation

Maintenance of Culture of Origin	Maintenance of Culture of Host	
	Yes	No
Yes	Integration	Separation
No	Assimilation	Marginalization

*Note. Adapted from "Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation" by J. W. Berry, 1997, *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46, p. 5-34.*

Degree of Adjustment



Integration

Assimilation

Separation

Marginalization

Figure 1. The U-curve of cross-cultural adjustment

Derived from Black
and Mendenhall (1991)



What is Cultural Adjustment?

- **Manageability of life** - the adaptation to the physical environment and its social structures which includes environmental and situational conditions such as schools, transportation, availability of goods, weather, the ability to communicate, entertainment, communication facilities etc.
- **Acceptance of diversity and change** - “cultural openness,” “commitment to live overseas,” “acceptance of culture,” “cultural empathy,” and “open-mindedness.”

Trying to communicate interculturally is not just about having a common language, but about understanding each other's cultural concepts. Milton Gordon (1964) posited that there are two different levels of culture, extrinsic culture, which is that which is visible by outsiders and intrinsic culture which cannot be so easily detected nor understood by outsiders.

Stages of Cultural Adaptation

The Honeymoon Stage

Common thoughts during the Honeymoon Stage include:

*Isn't this exciting? I can't wait to tell ____ about this!
Aren't they interesting? Everything here is so __!*

Characteristics of the Honeymoon Stage:

- You are busy taking care of business (registration, housing, bank account, etc.)
- You are observing the new culture and familiarizing yourself with the new environment
- You are meeting useful and friendly (people)
- You are making your first social contacts with members of the host culture
- You are seeing and doing new things and enjoying a new world

Adaptation of Trailing Spouses: Does Gender Matter? by Anne M. Braseby



The Conflict Stage

Common thoughts during the Conflict stage include:

*We would never do that in my country! Why can't they just ____?
I only have __ months before I go home. These people are so ____!*

Characteristics of the Conflict Stage:

- *You begin to desire more personal relationships with members of the host culture*
- *You find you have little time or opportunity to make friends*
- *You are feeling isolated, out of place*
- *You may feel tired, sick, depressed, angry, or frustrated*
- *You have a growing awareness that your home culture's behaviors may not be accepted in the host culture, and you may have to give up, suspend, or modify your own behavior*
- *Your high expectations remain unmet*
- *You blame the host culture for your problems*
- *You spend lots of time with members of your home culture complaining about the host culture*
- *You experience problems with the subtleties of the target language*

The Critical Stage

Common thoughts during the Critical Stage include:

Why shouldn't they say/do that? We say/do that too, but differently

Characteristics of the Critical Stage:

- *You choose to become an "explorer" in the new culture*
- *You accept the challenge of self-reflection*
- *You assume responsibility for your own cultural adjustment*

The Recovery Stage

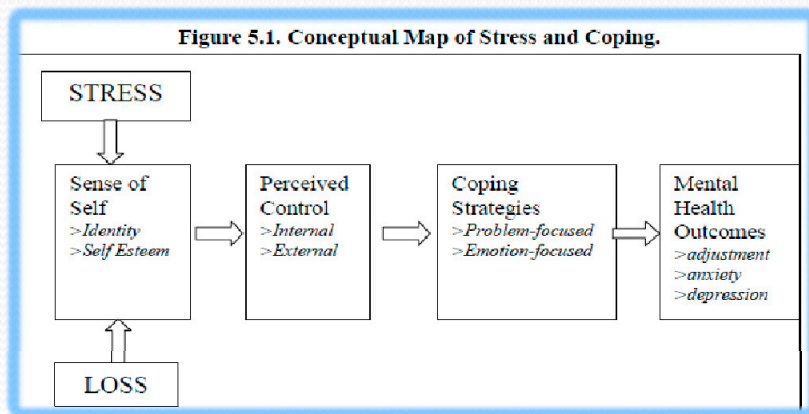
Common thoughts during the Recovery Stage include:

You don't understand them like I do. I'm beginning to like this.

Characteristics of the Recovery Stage:

- *Your language skills improve noticeably*
- *You begin to understand the actions of members of the host culture*
- *You have finally made friends and feel part of the community*
- *You develop a greater tolerance for what is strange and new*
- *You become a mediator between the two cultures*
- *You feel proud that you can make yourself understood in the target language and that you can understand native speakers*

The Ability to Cope with Life Stressors



Individuals who possess high self esteem and/or sense of control over their lives have significantly lower symptoms of anxiety and depression when negative events occur.

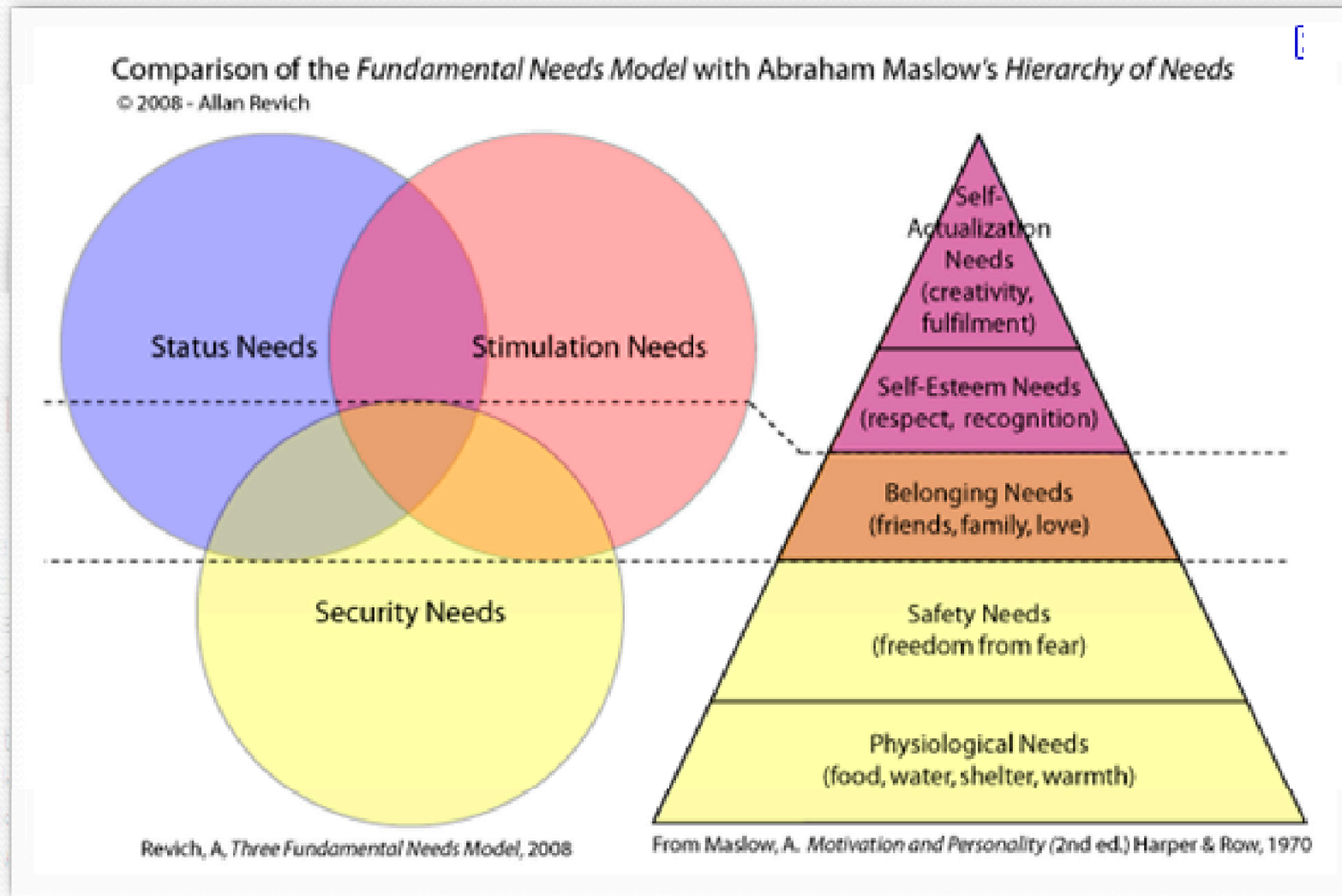
(Pearlin 1991; Ross, Mirowsky et al. 1991)

The most adaptive forms of coping demonstrate the selective use of both functions of coping (problem and emotion-focused,) and that when people match or tailor their coping effort to the specific stressors they face, adaptation is greatest and psychological distress minimized

(Frazier, Hooker et al. 1993; Frazier, Tix et al. 2000).

www.odu.edu

Hierarchy of Needs and the Trailing Spouse





Psychological Needs of the Trailing Spouse

“What relocation support did you receive that helped your family the most? “

“Knowing where the decent suburbs were. What bank to use...how to lease a car... help on all aspects of the move...minimizing time in hotels...finding accommodations...taking (us) places to orient ourselves...help moving in, with people to set the utilities (gas, electricity, internet, telephone) ; help with translator at first; how to buy a car, where, how much; meeting families who can share their experiences of school and living...intensive language courses...show me the shops and business I would need ...a handbook that was useful. It was the only consolidated source of information...books about cultural shock and brochures about moving...information about living conditions in the new location; advice for career development for the accompanying spouse...assistance in moving pets... get our house settled in and start living...”

Source: “ExpatriExpert.com/AMJ Campbell International Relocation “Family Matters!” Survey”

What kind of assistance do you get (from HR) at new location?

77.9% - Real estate assistance
64.2% - Work Permit (for employee)
49.7% - Set up bank account
34.6% - medical support (names of doctors...)
29.8% - School search assistance

23.9% - shopping familiarization
18.2% - Handyman services
10.5% - IT assistance for computers
9.1% - Career counseling
3.0% - Babysitting service

Companies have reported...that they make cross-cultural training workshops and other pre-departure training available to almost all families. Respondents...reported a different story...such support may be written down in policy, but neither is being communicated or implemented.

The stronger the accompanying family feels, the...happier the employee will be both physically and emotionally, capable of carrying out his or her overseas assignment in a way that is profitable for the company or organization, and enriching for the family.



The information received about schools, shopping, and social activities is usually from expatriate (community/spouse) sources...

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Safety Needs of the Trailing Spouse

A change in cultural environment can be extremely stressful as it involves a reorganization of cognitive maps, learning new rules for interaction, changing previously learned behaviors and acquiring skills needed to perform in the new situation.

(Gullahorn and Gullahorn 1962; Torbiorn 1982; Bochner 1986)

The level of cultural difference often indicates the amount of stress or acculturation difficulty a person may experience .
(Sheehan & Pearson 1995).

If the new culture involves differences in language, humor, human rights, laws, or taboos, the process of acculturation is often more difficult.

THE IMPACT OF ACCULTURATION by Jonathan Leggett

...Spouses who had been used to being economically independent before relocation saw the lack of income after relocation as a threat to their financial freedom...(others found) more control of their lives abroad because they viewed their marriage and its resources as a partnership...

Source: "ExpatExpert.com/AMJ Campbell International Relocation "Family Matters!" Survey"



Belonging Needs of the Trailing Spouse

Emotional support, particularly in the first few months is especially important to get spouses through the hostility stage of culture shock (Oberg 1960). One way that social support can help with a stressful situation is by providing the necessary resources to help cope with the stressor...exchanging information within a social network, gaining comfort by sharing, and shaping new interpretations to a stressful situation .

Cohen and Wills 1985; Thoits 1986; Aspinwall and Taylor 1997; Hopkins 1997; Haslam, Jetten et al. 2004

Spouses who had been stay-at-home parents found the expatriate community much more of a social and emotional support than the support they had at home... The support can be from individuals, but also from community groups. It is a sense of belonging that is important.

(Felton and Shinn 1992)

...employed transferees who do not have to interface with many of the daily hassles that spouses do, do not understand the stresses that spouses go through...did not understand or appreciate what she had given up...Other spouses felt the international experience enhanced their family ties and they became an emotional support for each other.

Belonging Needs and Expat Wives Clubs

For many spouses, particularly wives, the expatriate community is a social space where resources, help, and support abound. Resources were found through clubs and societies that were run by expatriate spouses...not only gave information that helped relieve some of the stressors (and) provided a space for newcomers to meet people and make friends...

...In some ways the...expat community is a throwback to the 50s when all women stayed at home raising their children and not working. What I have appreciated is the company of so many bright, intelligent women with professional degrees...accomplish great things on a volunteer level. I didn't find that back home...

Not everyone felt the clubs and societies were what they needed for social support... There can sometimes be very negative feelings there. They all want to create a "Little America" and that is not why I am here... Some spouses, particularly non-parents, did not want to join the Club for the same reasons ... but could not find another outlet to find their social support.

Adaptation of the Trailing Spouse: Does Gender Matter? by Anne Braseby



Self Esteem Needs of the Trailing Spouse

Although some spouses felt a loss for some aspects of their identity, people have multiple identities that are formed along axes of identification such as gender, nationality, ethnicity, relationships, profession, or hobbies.

One person can identify herself simultaneously as a mother, a daughter, a wife, a runner, a dentist, an American, and a Republican, but as her social contexts change, so might her identities. That is, identity is not fixed but plastic and contextual.

Relocation provokes huge context changes that, in turn, generate pressures to alter or change their identifications. Some identities are lost, others are shifted and some are strengthened. Brett and Stoh (Brett and Stroh 1995) refer to the redefining of personal and social roles as identities in a state of transition.

Cognitive dissonance in our beliefs about ourselves can negatively impact our self-esteem and result in a variety of negative emotional states most notably stress, anxiety, and feelings of depression.

Self-Actualization Needs of the Trailing Spouse

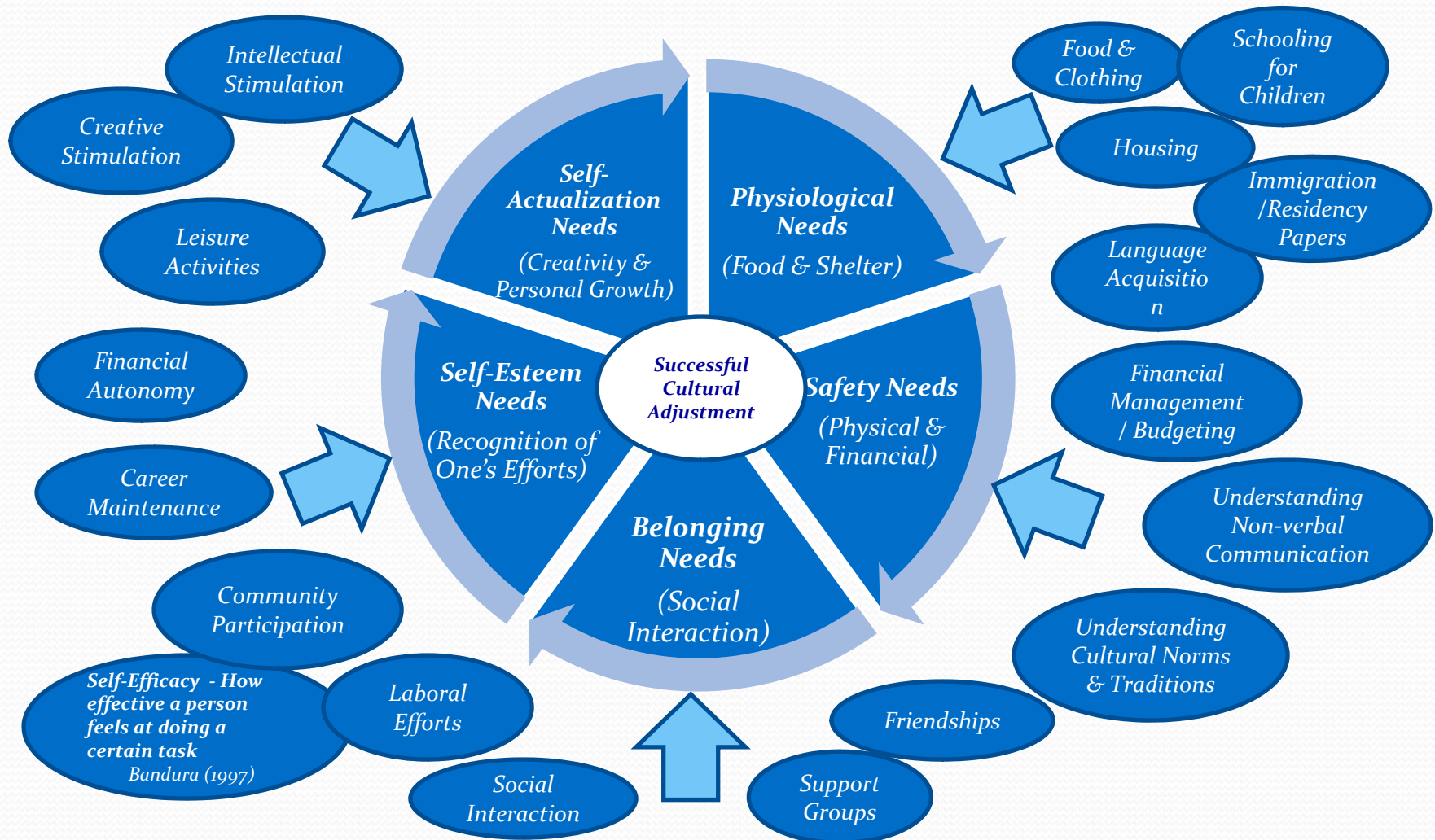
Two major assets to spousal adaptation overseas are parental status and a readiness for change. Parental status is important to both psychological adjustment and socio-cultural adjustment. Children are an avenue to making social networks to build social support, but they are also a source of an identity that is accepted and respected.

By transferring and building identities and concentrating on activities that provided them with an internal locus of control their self esteem grew, and they achieved higher levels of adjustment...

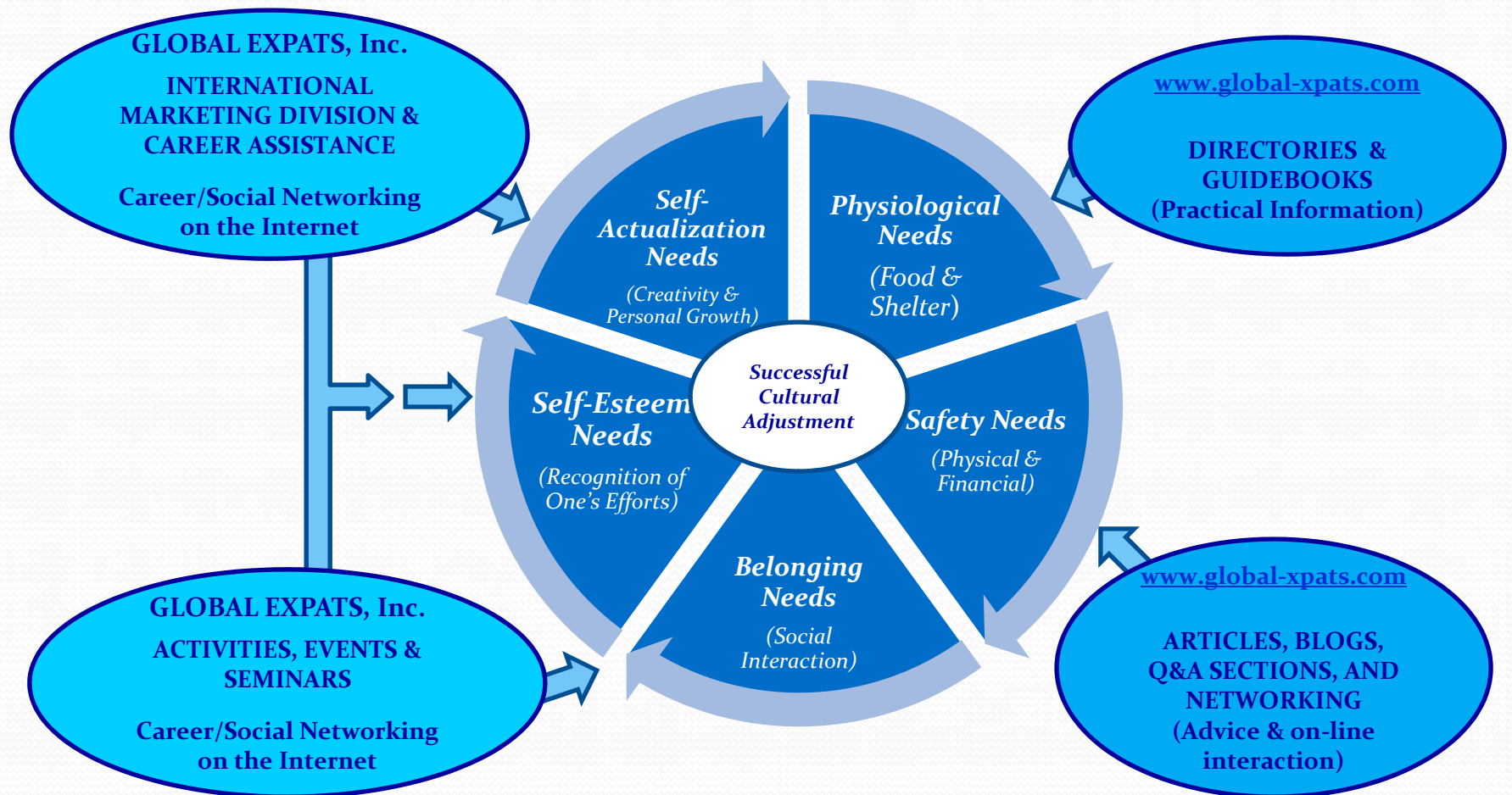
Those spouses who were and continue to be stay-at-home parents had less identity dissonance than spouses with professional, high status careers... Spouses who have strong professional identities and firm projections for their career will suffer a great deal of loss if they cannot continue with their careers, especially when they see the transferees enhancing and forwarding theirs...

Adaptation of the Trailing Spouse: Does Gender Matter by Anne Braseby

Acculturation of the Expatriated Family and Maslow Hierarchy of Needs



How Does Global Expats Meet the Needs of the Trailing Spouse and Expat Family?





Global Expats, LLC

One of the most important developments of the Internet in the coming years, will be how online communities will interact with offline communities, as well as how they will interact with interest groups, advocacy groups, and local consumer markets. Another significant development in coming years will be the role social responsibility, and activism in an organization's Internet presence plays.

Global Expats and its various divisions will utilize these developments and lead the way in demonstrating how an organization can maintain a socially-progressive Internet presence and contribute to community development, while remaining profitable.

Global Expats, LLC will tap into the highly-educated, global, labor-market of 13 million expat women, and demonstrate how a profit-making entity can assist in the creation of women led businesses, further the rights of women and children, while promoting global peace and socio-economic development. My blogs on the [HuffPost](#) [Womenalia.com](#) and [Reuters Foundation](#), as well as my on-going work in defending the rights of victims of domestic violence (see [Family Courts in Crisis](#) newsletter and my [Linkedin profile](#)).

These various revenue-generating and low-cost activities will contribute to our brand-imaging and brand recognition, substantially reducing the marketing costs involved in turning Global Expats into 'house-hold brand-name' in markets around the world.

Global Expats, LLC structure is modeled after existing expat associations (ie. FAWCO – www.fawco.org), but turns the model into a revenue-generating organization. Expat, 'trailing spouse' women are in the unique position of collectively understanding the ins-and-out and realities faced by the globally mobile family. Their unique knowledge and understanding of the needs of higher-income family markets provides a competitive edge in producing a top quality product, and thereby assuring sustainable revenue growth and long-term profitability.

The project will provide a comprehensive, long-term solution for global employers in their efforts to assist the families of their expatriated employees, as well as a long-term, comprehensive solution to the dual-career challenge of expat employees (through employment opportunities with www.global-xpats.com and Global Expats, LLC, as well as through programs and activities of its Career & Entrepreneur Division.)

Global Expats Modeled After *Expat Wives Clubs*

(Non-profit model developed in 1930)

Global Expats will not replace present expat organizations, but will work with them towards our common interests. We will serve as a liaison; provide support; promote the interests of their memberships; and work with them to achieve our common goals.



"FAWCO (Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas, Inc.) was founded in 1931 by Caroline Curtis Brown, then President of the American Women's Club in London, who believed that enlightened women, working cooperatively throughout the world, could do much to help achieve international peace. Its objectives, defined at a meeting of seven clubs in London, were to "work towards international goodwill and the preservation of world peace, to help one another solve problems common to them all and to aid women whose citizenship rights were being restricted." FAWCO is a non-partisan and not-for-profit U.S. corporation, with over 75 Member Clubs representing more than 15,000 individuals throughout the world. It is the largest network of independent American and international volunteer organizations representing private-sector American citizens overseas."

www.fawco.org



"The FIAFE (Fédération Internationale des Accueils Français et francophones à l'Etranger) was created in 1984 in order to facilitate the adaptation of expatriated franco-phone families around the world. It is comprised of 194 chapters in 5 continents."

www.fiafe.org



"The Canadian Expat Association is a Non-Profit, Non-Government community linking all Canadians living abroad under one bilingual Platform. At nearly 9% of the total population of Canada, the estimated 2.8 million Canadians living abroad can connect regardless of where they are living in the world. Opening its doors in the summer of 2007, the assoc. now offers the opportunity for members to search in both French & English for global events, search for Canadian member companies operating around the world, read articles and obtain information that will help improve their lives while abroad. As an advocate for Canadian Expats, the assoc. plays a key role representing Canadians that until now have had no collective voice."

www.thecanadianexpat.com



"The Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW) is a non-profit organization that has been representing Foreign Service spouses, employees and retirees since 1960."

www.aafsw.org



"The Schlumberger Spouses Association (SSA) is a global, voluntary, social organization for all local and international spouses and partners of Schlumberger employees. We aim to create and maintain a welcoming and supportive environment for all members and their families. The SSA fosters fellowship through ongoing social events and community involvement. It has 146 chapters worldwide."

www.ssafara.net



"With over 60 offices in over 35 countries around the world, Outpost is uniquely placed to provide assistance to Shell expatriates and their families on the move. The network can provide inside information and professional services on most aspects of life abroad, and in particular, on anything related to living in specific locations where Shell is present. It was established to support Shell expatriates and their families on the move by providing a more accessible way of obtaining non-contractual advice, information and services regarding postings."

www.outpostexpat.nl



Global Expats, LLC - Products and Services

Multi-media Division

Global Expats Survival Guides – They will be similar in concept to present tourist travel guides, (Frommer's, etc.) but for the globally mobile family rather than those on vacation.

The books will provide general information about the myriad of challenges faced during the entire expatriation process, as well as city-by-city information on housing, schools/education, utilities, home decorating, food, shopping, transportation, places of worship, sports, leisure activities, financial services, investment advice, and family issues. Updating and maintenance of information in the guide books will be facilitated by www.global-xpats.com.

The basic outline and structure of the guidebooks has already been completed based on my own challenges in living abroad. However, my experience, even if extensive, is not all encompassing. Trailing spouses from a wide variety of professions will be contracted to participate in the creation of the final product.

Expat Reality Show – Presenting the daily lives and challenges expatriates face during their travels abroad, as well as the various aspects of the different cultures in which they find themselves.

Expatriates Cookbooks – One “surefire” money-maker is cookbooks. Expats are faced with unique challenges when cooking abroad, and these would provide recipes as well as cooking instructions. My article *An Expat Thanksgiving Dinner* explains the basic concept of these cookbooks. The distribution of these books would be the same as the guidebooks. The viability and profitability of producing an on-line video cookbook would be examined as well.

Social Networking Events

Social networking events will include the following:

Cultural Visits and Art Expositions – A really good guide or artist who is passionate about his/her work or subject can make all the difference with cultural visits.

Coffee Mornings, Cooking Clubs and Toddler Play Groups – Even if these groups do give an antiquated reputation to trailing spouse associations as “nothing more than social clubs,” they are very popular and successful. They provide an important source of social interaction and support amongst spouses, and integration of new arrivals.

Annual Receptions, Happy Hours, and Dinners – These events provide husbands, wives, partners, and single expats the opportunity to meet and interact.

Children's Manual Arts Classes and Festivals – These give expat children and parents the opportunity to meet and interact.

Global Expats Bazaars - In developing countries imported “expat” products have traditionally been exorbitantly expensive due to protectionist trade policies. In response expat associations have organized annual holiday bazaars. Embassies, who enjoy tax-free import status, import goods, food & textiles from their countries, which are then sold at lower than local prices in bazaars.



Over the years as protectionist trade policies have declined, so have the local prices of imported, luxury goods in many of these countries, eliminating the financial attraction of the bazaars. As a consequence attendance has declined substantially, leaving a myriad of bazaars each year with few participants.

The brain-child of this idea said, “Let’s bring all of these bazaars under one roof and do a *Christmas Around the World Bazaar* with everyone splitting the profits.” The idea finds solutions for the challenges of present Expat Holiday Bazaars, and creates a wonderful cross-cultural exchange opportunity for expat communities.

Social Services Division

Domestic Abuse Prevention/VAW Division – Awareness of domestic violence and it’s prevalence at all socio-economic levels is growing worldwide. The unemployed, *trailing spouses* of expatriated employees are particularly vulnerable to its’ consequences.

They are isolated from support networks, financially dependent upon spouses, & under foreign jurisdiction, customs, & laws, at time in a foreign language.

The unemployed, expat woman is in a situation little different than undocumented, immigrants; open to discrimination, expulsion/deportation from the host country, and violations of her human, civil and constitutional rights with no legal recourses.

While my research into programs and services offered is on-going, this division will not only be involved in protecting expatriated victims of domestic abuse, but will further my present work in community violence prevention & discrimination against women in the courts.

Country-by-country services will be marketed to local HR departments from the public and private sector, as well as offered to members of expat communities in general.

Trailing Spouse Social Services Division – Health, social & financial benefits packages would be created with under-writing insurance companies. They would then be marketed to expat employers & offered to Global Expats employees. These would include legal ins., which would provide for legal fees in case of divorce.

Intercultural Training Programs – Intercultural training is an enormous, multi-million dollar industry, but mainly concentrates on serving expatriated employees and managers. This division would develop and market seminars designed for expat spouses and children.

International Equitable Pay Artisan Division

Trailing spouses in developing countries would assist local artisan women in procuring quality raw material, means of production, and design development. These products would then be exported to distribution divisions of Global Expats in OECD countries.

(Original market research conducted in 1999 found the idea needed a large, global managerial labor force which could assure quality control & product design. Also, found was that the multi-layered distribution systems, made price of product for end-consumer non-competitive in market-place. The development of ecommerce on Internet has significantly lowered distribution costs, making the idea viable and profitable at present.)



Jewelry and Accessories Line

These products would be distributed under the same systems as the aforementioned.

Eco-Friendly, Luxury Jewelry Line – More and more publicity is given to the damage that mining of precious and semi-precious stones is doing to our eco-systems, as well as the exploitation of local workers and the political ramifications.

Laboratory gems, rather than those mined from the earth would be used. These gems (not to be confused with imitations) are often considered of inferior quality, but this is not always the case. Laboratories such as Chatham and Gilson produce very good quality gems, and the French company Burma is the only business that has successfully developed this type of retail product.

(Original market research and examination of the idea, conducted in 1996, found little “eco awareness” amongst consumers, a need for enormous start-up capital to produce a large stock inventory, develop a large advertising campaign & contend with the multi-layered product distribution system. Entry barriers were considered too significant at the time to develop the idea. Renewed market research in 2005 showed consumer “eco-awareness” has skyrocketed globally in the previous decade, and development of ecommerce on Internet had significantly lowered distribution costs, making idea viable and profitable at present.)

Eco-Friendly, Accessory Lines - Designs of purses, belts, scarves, and shoes is restricted to the imagination of the designers

Eco-Friendly, Natural Jewelry - Markets for designer jewelry using beads, seeds, tagua, bone, shells, etc. is growing globally, but lack effective distribution systems. These are businesses that creative women from all socio-economic levels can produce from their homes, with little investment and a minimum of training.

Career & Entrepreneurial Development Division

One of the most difficult challenges of the expat in his or her job search is the lack of professional contacts within the host country, as well as lack of knowledge of local business and social customs. Seminars, conferences and social events would be developed to fill these needs as well as provide practical assist for the entrepreneurial and job-search efforts of the expat.

Seminars and Training Programs - Possible seminars, training programs, certification and higher education courses are wide and diverse. Courses that work well in my experience are computer-related, cultural/art, local history/politics, and cooking, but the opportunity for distance learning and on-line courses is growing.

Career Networking Events – A variety of events and activities designed to connect expat professional communities with corresponding local communities.

Entrepreneurial Programs and Activities – Seminars, conferences and training programs on entrepreneurial development, working with foreign and local commerce departments.

Founder of Global Expats

Quenby Wilcox was born in New Orleans, grew up in Tucson, Arizona and moved abroad for the first time to England in 1976. She attended Cobham Hall in Kent, returning to the USA in 1978 to attend Foxcroft School in Middleburg, VA. In 1981, she moved to Washington, DC where she attended George Washington University and worked on Capitol Hill. She graduated with a BBA in International Marketing.

After university she worked for several years in the financial markets, and in 1988 packed her bags and was off to Paris to learn French. In 1989 she returned to the USA with the intention of entering law school, but soon returned to Paris to live with her future husband.

Six months later they were off to Madrid, where they were married. In 1991, they were expatriated by her husband's multinational employer to Brussels, where their two children were born. They were then transferred to Paris in 1995.

In 1997, they were transferred to Bogotá, Colombia. While in Bogotá she was active in the Anglo-phone, Franco-phone and Hispanio-phone expat communities, serving on the board of a variety of expat associations, with a tenure as president of Bogotá Accueil (Fédération Internationale des Accueils Français et francophones a l'Etranger-FIAFE). In addition to her involvement in her children's school, she worked with various local non-profit children's organizations.

At the end of 2003, her family was transferred back to Madrid, where once again she struggled with the perpetual problem of *trailing spouses*; maintenance of a career. Due to very limited career prospects for a 40+ year old woman in Spain, along with the many entrepreneurial opportunities on the Internet, she decided to start a website for expat families. The idea eventually developed into Global Expats.

In 2007, www.global-expats.com was launched on the Internet, and the project received enormous interest from the global mobility industry and expats around the world. However, her husband had never wanted her working outside of the home, and when she refused to renounce her work on Global Expats, a very high-conflict, international divorce ensued.

As she continues her legal battles which are now headed towards the international courts on human rights, she has become involved in promoting the rights of women and children within courts around the world. In 2012 she submitted her research and findings on the legal and political issues involved to the *United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women – Commission on the Status of Women*.

Blogs: [HuffPost](#), [Womenalia](#), [Reuters Foundation](#)

[LinkedIn Profile](#)





Conclusion

“Man is the only animal that possessed enough cultural agility and enough aggressiveness to have been able to successfully migrate to every continent (except Antarctica) of the earth. Therefore, it may be assumed that humans possess an inherent sense of aggression and competition, and that while this trait appears to have been necessary in the development of civilizations it also appears to be the one trait that may produce our extinction.”

(A Brief History of the Human Race” by Michael Cook)

The present migratory trends of man, commonly known as globalization, is nothing new to the human species. For tens of thousands of years homo sapiens have been moving from one corner of the earth to another, culminating in our present domination of the planet.

What is exceptional in the case of human migration in the past 100 years, however, has been the ease and rapidity with which man can travel from place to place as well as communicate with each other.

Even more amazing is how in the past few decades, with the advent of the Internet and global networking, people all over the world can communicate and interrelate instantaneously, and how it is transforming the socio-political dynamics of our world.

As with all mediums of mass communication, whether it be the first written word, first printed book, or first telecommunication broadcast, the Internet has had, and will continue to have, an enormous impact on social interaction and socio-economic development; positive and negative.

What is perhaps unique in the case of the Internet, as opposed to other forms of mass communication, is the limited ability of governments or any one organization to censor the quantity and content of information diffused. Never before has the capacity of any one person to reach a truly global audience been so great. Once again with potentially negative and positive consequences.

Social networking is nothing new to the human species, has been used throughout history, and is the foundation upon which all of our institutions are based. For thousands of years people everywhere have used it to maintain the *status quo* as well as initiate change.

The true challenge for the Internet, its' future and those who shape it, will be the capacity to tap into man's (& woman's) innate desire for social interaction, and direct the vast resources at their disposal towards positive social, political and economic change and development. As is it a *“perfection of means, and confusion of aims, which seems to be our main problem [at present].”* (Einstein)