

A WORD FROM RELOCATION SPECIALISTS



The feeling of summer has persisted much longer than usual given the unusually warm autumn weather Sydney has been experiencing recently. It was therefore delightful to visit Canberra recently and enjoy not only the clear blue skies but the crisp morning air and the leaves changing to magnificent orange or red tones. We have chosen to highlight Canberra this issue as it has much to offer both tourist or relocatee.

We bring you part 2 of our Moving with Kids. This time a look at some of the challenges families moving their children might face. Having moved my own teenage son to Asia and back in 2004, it was important to be forewarned about the challenges as well as the opportunities.

Finally. With Indonesia in our news so much recently we thought a look at a small part of the way they do business might be of interest.

As always we are looking for your feedback and welcome any ideas for articles for future issues.

Enjoy this Issue

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Quote of the month

People are pretty much alike. It's only that our differences are more susceptible to definition than our similarities.

Linda Ellerbee



PROFILE OF THE MONTH: Monita Mascitti- Meuter

Monita is one of three Relocation Specialists' cultural consultants based in Melbourne. Her main responsibilities include the preparation of all training sessions, development and delivery of corresponding manuals, presentations, newsletters and other research projects. Monita's background includes 15 years of lecturing and training experience at Canadian and Australian Universities as well as Australian relocation management companies. Her background neatly combines the practical and academic side of cross cultural training: fluent in Dutch, English and Spanish with working knowledge of Italian, French and Papiamento, she has also been through international and interstate relocation experiences, and has successfully completed both a Master degree in Spanish as well as International Business. Her professionally developed, well researched programmes offer a personalised approach which assures to address client's queries and needs prior to their cross cultural experience.



**Written by
Melbourne
based Cultural
Trainer**

**Monita Mascitti-
Meuter**

CITY SNAPSHOT: CANBERRA, ACT

Canberra, capital of Australia and home to Australia's Parliament, was designed by American architect Walter Burley Griffin. Situated between Sydney and Melbourne the city features a striking mixture of modern architecture, fantastic tourist attractions, memorials and an enormous number of museums.

Designed around three lakes, Canberra is laced with parks, gardens and is surrounded by mountain ranges. Its distinct seasons make it a picturesque and ever-changing city.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Area	187 square kilometers / 110 square miles
Population	310,000
Ethnic Groups	Caucasian is 92%, Asian is 7% and aboriginal and other are 1%
Religion	Anglican 26.1%, Roman Catholic 26%, other Christian 24.3%, non-Christian 11%

Climate:

The Capital Territory experiences warm summers and cold winters, often with light snowfalls. It rains throughout the year, especially on the mountains, and strong winds are frequent. Canberra averages more hours of sunshine per year than any other capital city in Australia.

Housing Market:

The last few years there has been an increase in the property market in Canberra, namely in the more affluent inner suburbs. More recently the upward trend is starting to slow as median house prices fell to \$355,000 during 2004 and in 2005. Projections to 2007 by The Real Estate Institute of Australia, however, forecasts a moderate growth in Canberra's property market over the coming two years.

Rental Market:

Canberra's residential market has gone through a series of changes due to the rising vacancy rate with the oversupply of rental accommodation in the last 5 years. Canberra currently has a vacancy rate of 5.2%. This is the highest since 1995

Median rental prices

Median rental prices
flats/units/townhouses -
\$270 /week
Median house prices
\$300/week

This does not reflect typical rents in sought after areas for relocatees. Typical realistic rentals would be \$270-450 for apartments and \$300-700 for houses.

The rental market is strictly regulated and advice may be needed before signing a lease. One month's rent & bond is required up front to rent a property.

Schooling:

In the ACT, children from age 6 to 15 must go to school. However, many children start earlier. School entry age is 5 yrs by 30th April. Government schools are of reasonably high standard and private or non-government schooling is also available in Canberra. Private schools offer single sex as well as co-education and fees can be up to \$15,000 per child per year. Some schools provide boarding for added fees of \$10-15,000 per year. International Baccalaureate is offered at some schools and Steiner and Montessori are offered.



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Kathy Hewitt

MOVING INTERNATIONALLY – WHAT ABOUT THE KIDS?- Part 2

In the months following an international move we, as parents, often wonder at the wisdom of uprooting our family yet again in order to pursue an international career. We looked at the benefits of moving in our last newsletter, but the other side of the story needs to be addressed as well. This article will look at the challenges facing a group of children also known as the “*global nomads*” (Barbara Schaetti, *Transition Dynamics*).

CHALLENGES TO CHILDREN:

1. Child and parent lack the same cultural experience:

Having a child with a different world view (to you) can be a challenge. Your children will be separated from the cultural context in which you grew up. They may not share the same values and norms that you take for granted, but may adopt the values of the host country.

Unless you had an internationally mobile childhood, you and your children will not share the same cultural background.

Action: Accept the responsibility for this, and the resultant positives and negatives.

2. Mistrust goal setting and planning: If your child moves a lot, she'll know that things often change at short notice.

Action: Provide opportunities for your child to experience the benefits of planning. Focus on short-term planning.

3. Lack sense of roots: Lack a sense of history, of belonging to any one place, one country. Experiences usually not valued by the wider community “The kids back home just don't understand me.”

Action: Adults - plan how to say what you have gained from living abroad in 2 minutes (about how long people will listen to you talk about your experience)

Children - think of ways to express or share your experience with friends eg photos, painting, show and tell.

4. Lack skills in maintaining friendships:

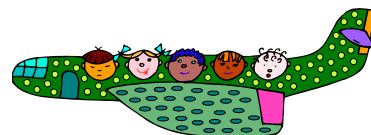
Children who have had the repeated experience of beginning and ending friendships several times tend to develop some unique characteristics in relation to friendships (Barbara Schaetti, *Transition Dynamics*) They

firstly tend to form friendships very quickly but stop themselves from becoming too dependent or too deeply involved with the other person in an effort to protect themselves against a future loss. They also tend to “drop” a friend quickly when they hear one is moving on, tend to avoid proper closure in friendships as it is too painful to say goodbye, and consequently have difficulty maintaining these friendships.

Action: As parents we need to talk to our children about these issues and let them know that we too find it painful to say goodbye. Help arrange farewell parties. Encourage children to deal with unresolved friendship issues before leaving for the next assignment.

Summary

Moving internationally with children is fraught with highs and lows. Once a decision to move has been reached by the parents, you need to believe this is the best move for the whole family and provide a united front. Children are extremely perceptive and will know if one of their parents is a reluctant mover. Be positive, be optimistic and enjoy all that the world can offer you.



CULTURAL SNAPSHOT: INDONESIA



Written by
Melbourne based
Cultural trainer

Monita Mascitti-
Meuter

Australia's relationship with Indonesia (our 10th largest trading partner) is one which is highly valued and nurtured by both parties concerned. The cooperation of both nations in their fight against terrorism, and Australia's contribution this January to the reconstruction of Aceh and elsewhere in Indonesia (A\$1 billion over 5 years) shows the commitment the Australian government is willing to take to keep its alliance strong. This year, however, events involving Australian nationals on Indonesian soil (the nine Australians arrested in April on drug smuggling charges, following the trial of the Queensland beautician on similar charges, not to mention the heart wrenching story of the toddler who was abused in a child care facility of a 5 star hotel in Bali) are testing these relations, and yet interestingly enough, bring to the fore cross cultural differences, and how these are embedded within the way the respective bureaucracies work. Most notably, the way different hierarchies of a business or organisation interact are coming to the fore: that is, issues surrounding power distance, as discussed below.

FACTS AND FIGURES:

Capital	Jakarta
Surface Area	741,096 sq. mi. (1,919,440 sq. km)
Language(s)	Bahasa Indonesia (official), Dutch, English, and more than 583 languages and dialects
Population	223.8 million (2004)
Religion (s)	Islam, 87%; Christian, 9%; Hindu, 2%; other, 2%
Head of state and government	H.E. Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
GDP per Capita (\$US)	1,276 (2005)
Inflation (% change YOY)	7.2
Unemployment rate (%)	9.4
Major Australian Exports 2004 (A\$m)	Cotton 311; crude petroleum 291; live animals 209, aluminium 171, copper 127.
Major Australian Imports 2004 (A\$m)	Crude petroleum 1,202; non-monetary gold 543; paper & paper board 171; refined petroleum 146; sound or video recording 121.

Indonesia: High Power Distance

In the Indonesian work culture, there is a high power distance with many hierarchical levels between employees. It is not surprising then, that due to the autocratic, authoritarian management style in Indonesia, employees are reluctant to make decisions. Furthermore, decision making in Indonesia is very centralised and regulated. Senior managers make the decisions and employees follow the rules.

An Australian company being usually characterised as a having a culture where power distance is low, may encounter problems in Indonesia with regards to the different work patterns and operational procedures. For example, due to the high power distances, managers in Indonesia are unlikely to express their opinions freely. There may be a fear of offending the senior management employees under whom these subordinates work. As a result, there is the potential of inaccurate or ambiguous business decisions. Another consequence of high power distance in Indonesia's work environment is that managers are not accustomed to may appear to not want to take responsibility for their decisions.

Source: www.dfat.gov.au