

Embracing International Life

Dr. Ute Limacher-Riebold
Ute's International Lounge

www.UtesInternationalLounge.com

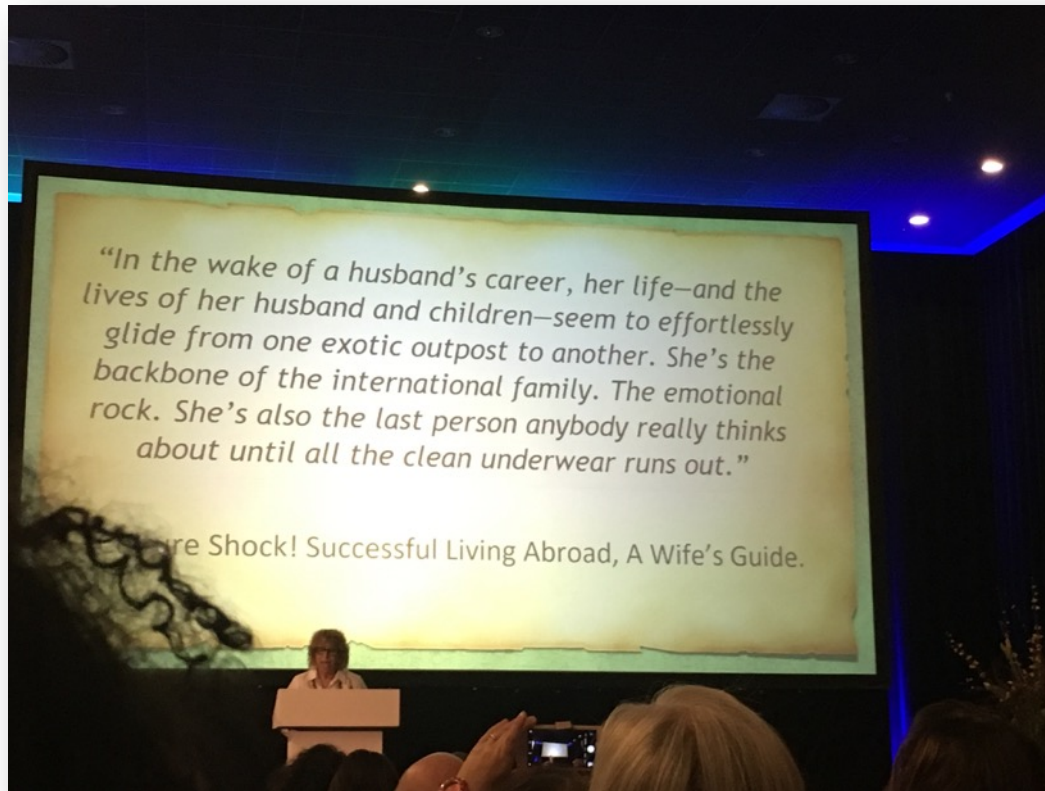
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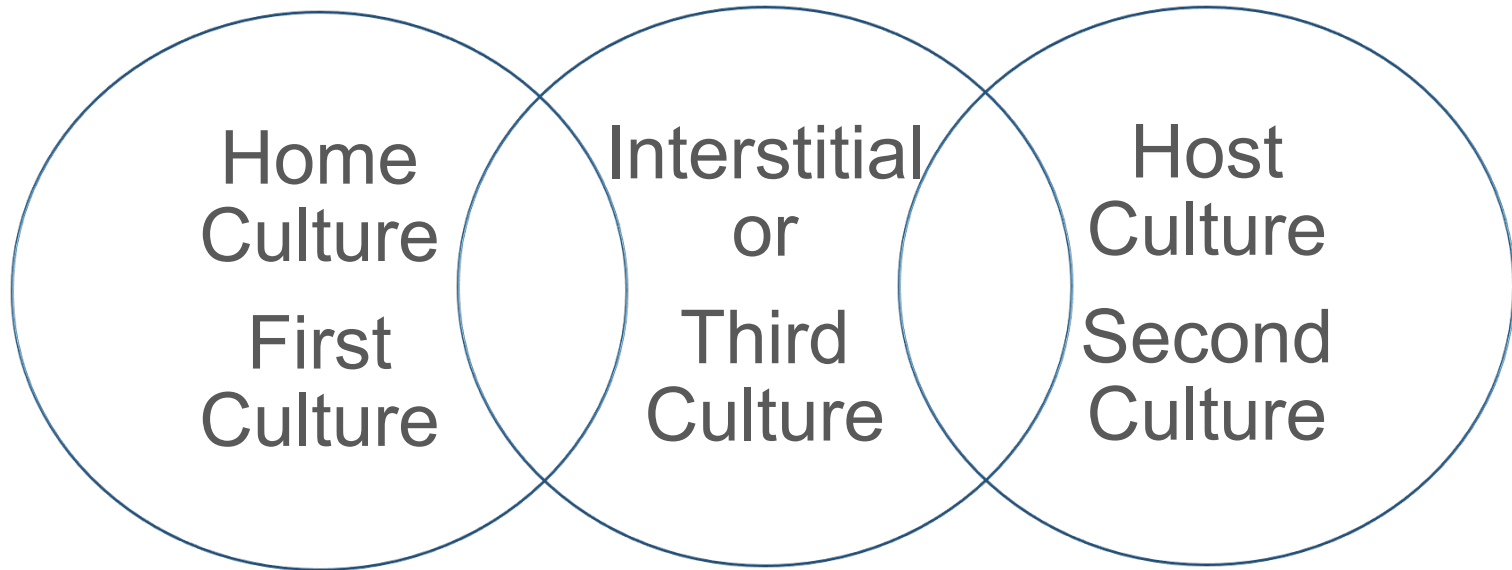
www.figt.org

The accompanying partners...



Robin Pascoe @ FIGT18NL

Third Culture Model



A traditional third culture kid (TCK) is a person who spends a significant part of his or her **first eighteen developmental years of life accompanying parent(s) into a country (or countries) different from at least one parent's passport country(ies) due to a parent's choice of work or advanced training**

(Michael V. Pollock; FIGT 2018 NL)



- **Identity and belonging**
- **Unresolved grief**
- **The transition cycle**
- **Relationship with home country peers**
(if considering repatriation)

The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any.

Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience, **the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background.**



- TCK's have a strong **identity with a system**
- The system in which TCK's grow up becomes the one constant mirror for defining their identity
- Often TCK's find their sense of identity and belonging in terms of ***relationships*** rather than geography



© OTE's International

Identity and Sense of Belonging for Internationals

Switching from *home* culture to host culture(s) is a balancing act

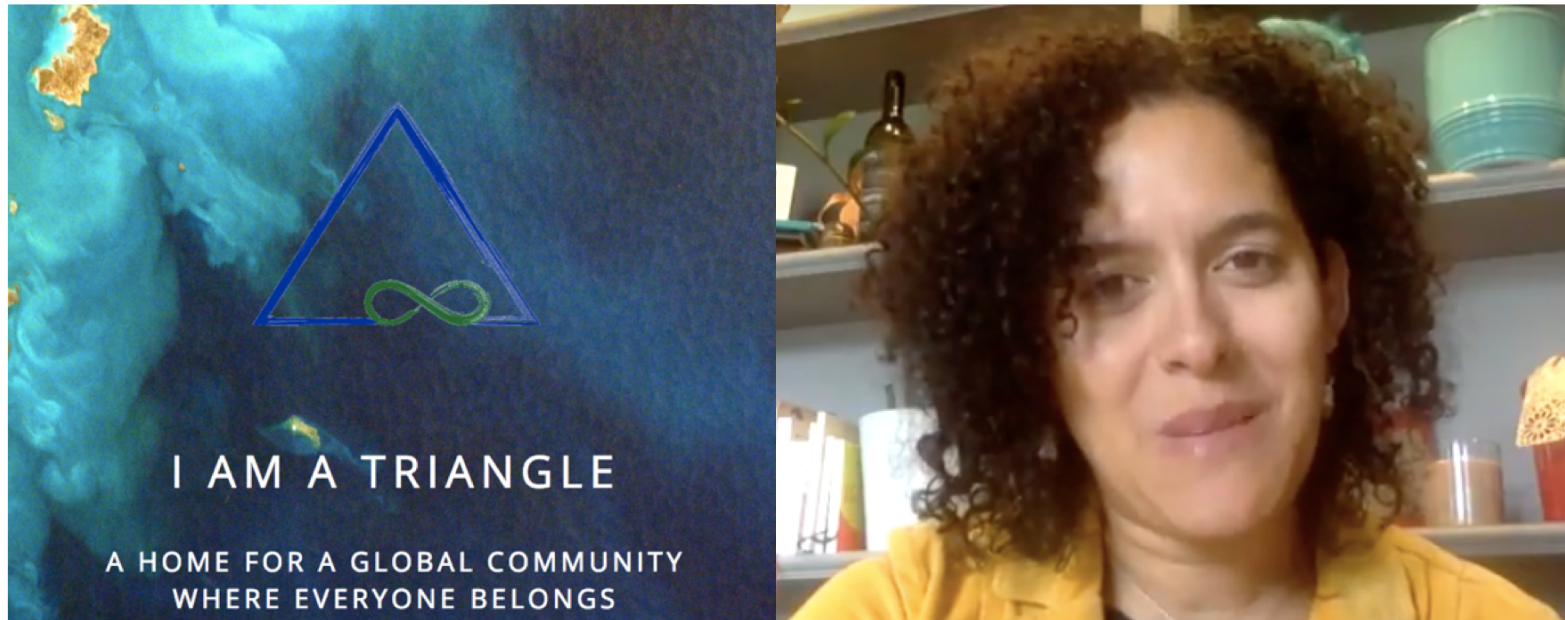
We create our own expat culture: embracing parts of each culture without ever completely feeling

like we belong to one or the other...

"I never really fit in"

"I'm neither X nor Y"





Naomi Hattaway

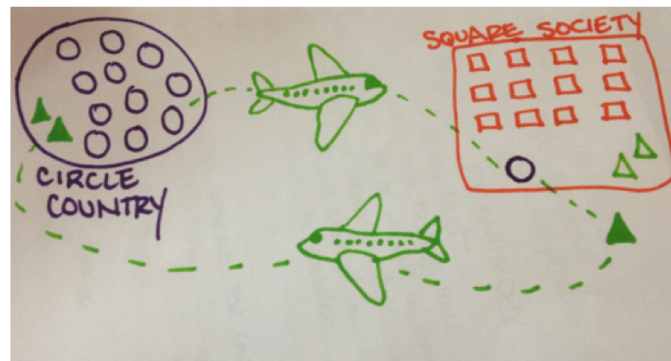
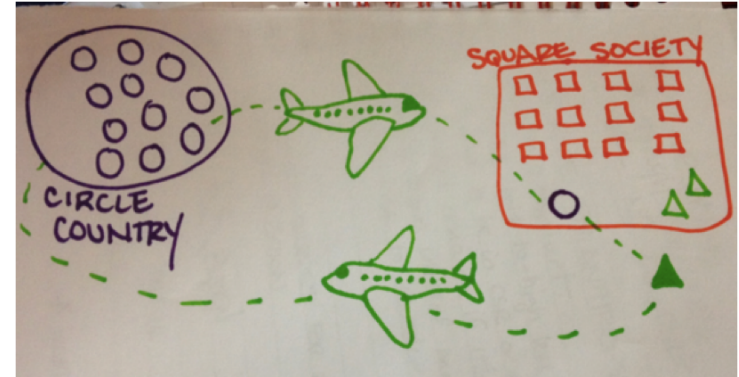
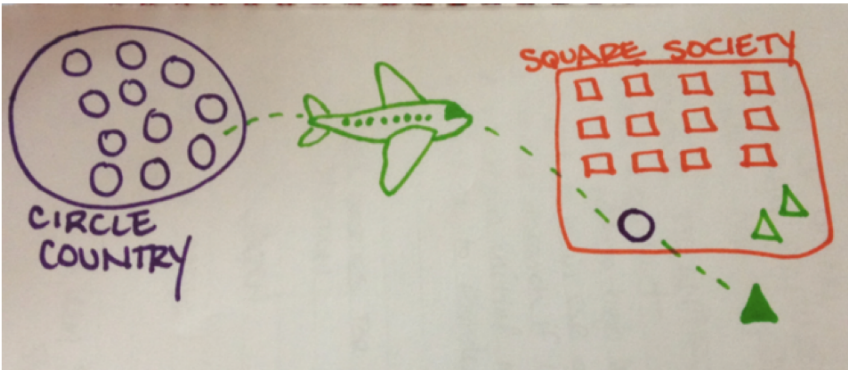
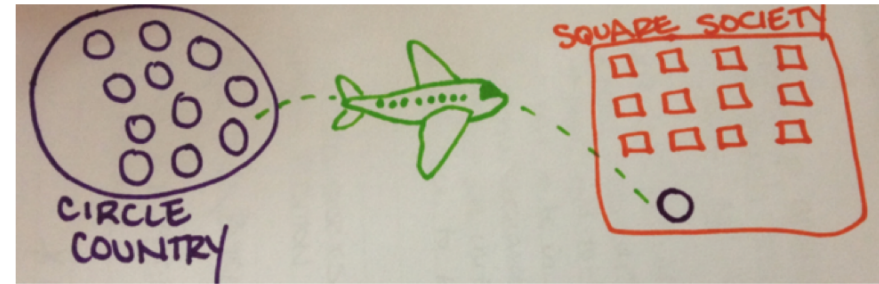
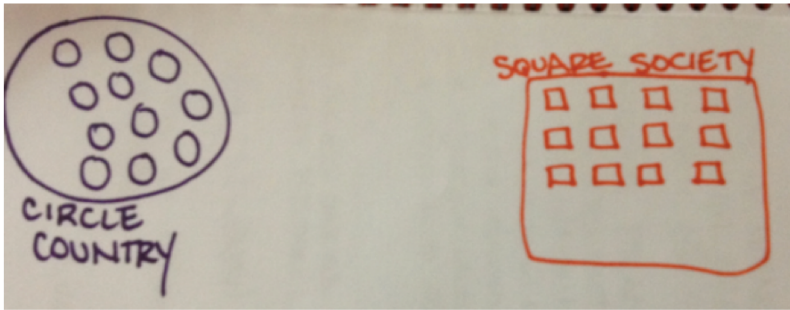
iamatriangle.com



Naomi Hattaway's

I am a Triangle

<http://iamatriangle.com/triangle-story/>



Cultural Identity Model

Ruth van Reken
& David Pollock



Ute

Adjustment

**Inclusion
-> assimilation**



Ballet & Hip Hop (Annika Verplancke)

*You don't have to choose, you are not “neither nor”,
you're “not only but also” and you're enough being a
unique combination of both! – Ute*

- **Identity and belonging**
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(if considering repatriation)

Unresolved grief or the art to saying healthy goodbyes



Reconciliation

Affirmation

Farewells

Think destination

Time! (Ute)

Lois Bushong at FIGT18NL

Maryam Afnan Ahmad

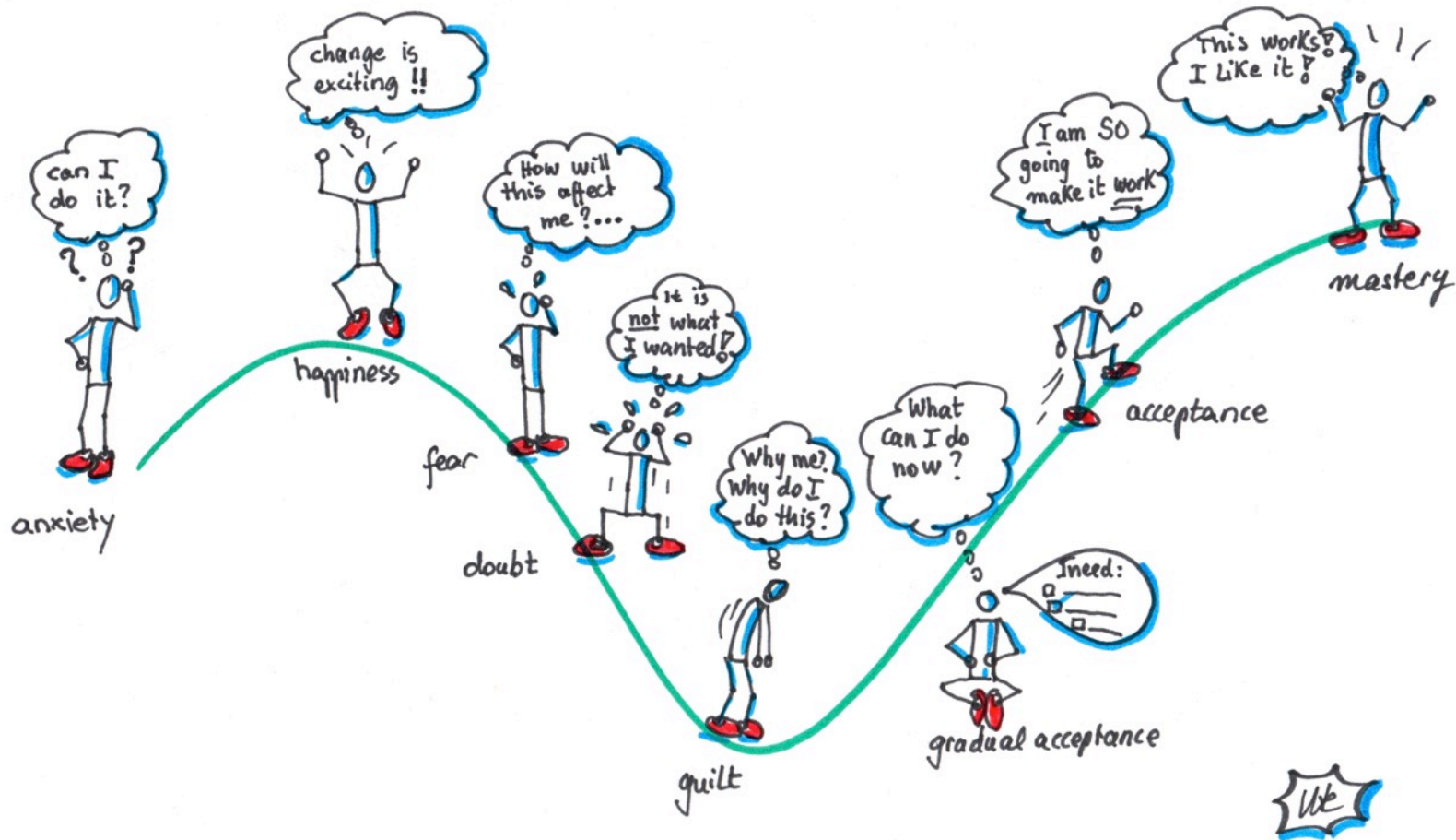


Doreen Cumberford

Lucille Abendanon



- **Identity and belonging**
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(if considering repatriation)



Settled Involvement/
Leaving

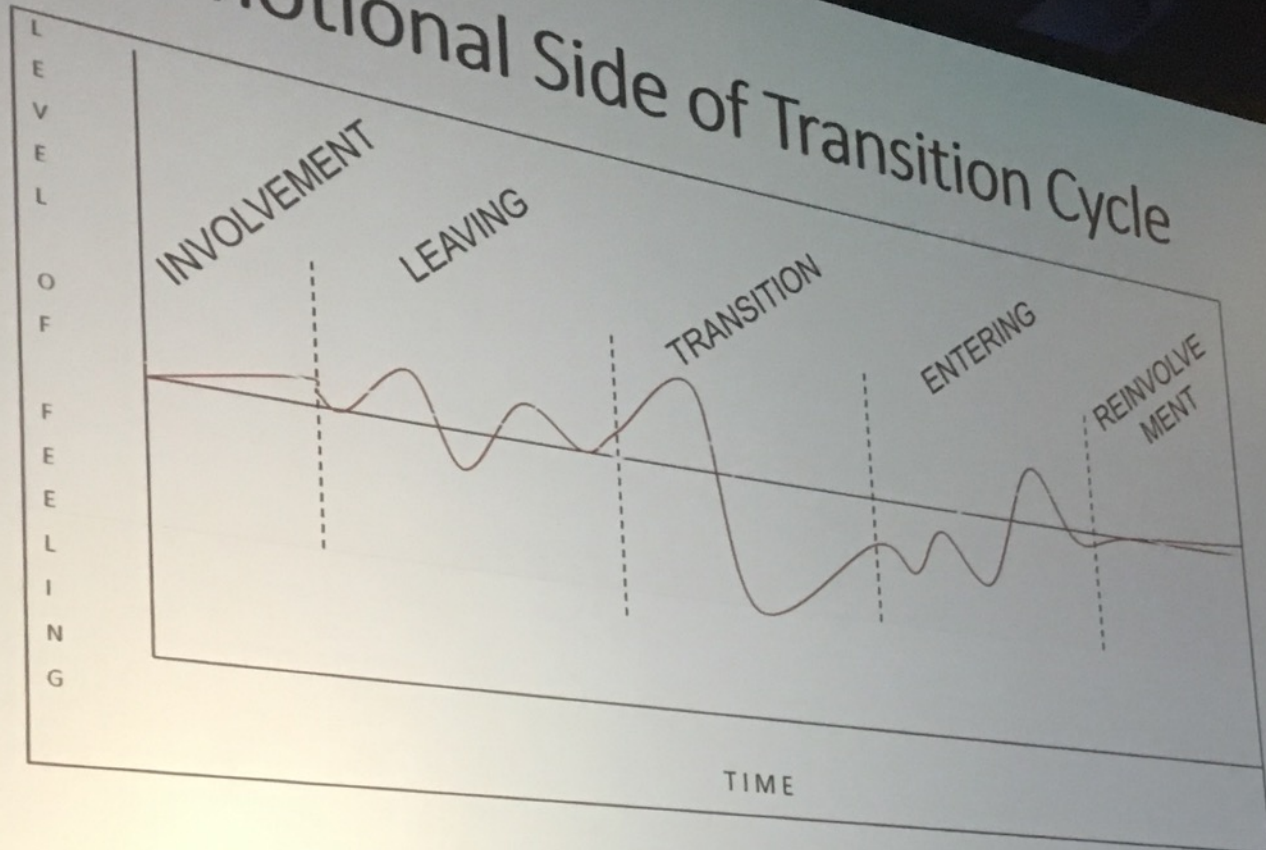
Transition

CRISIS

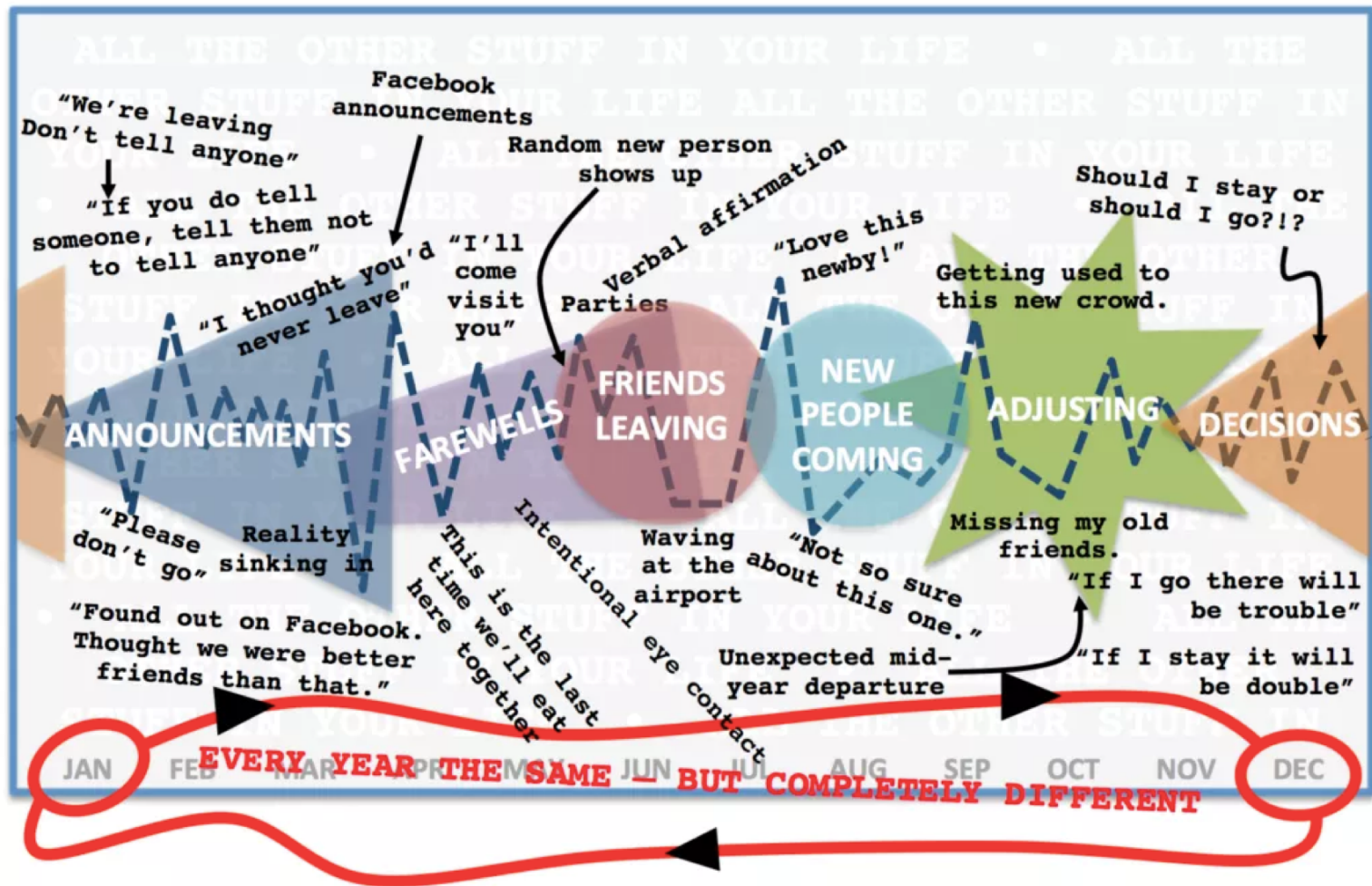
Entering Re-Involvement

Settled

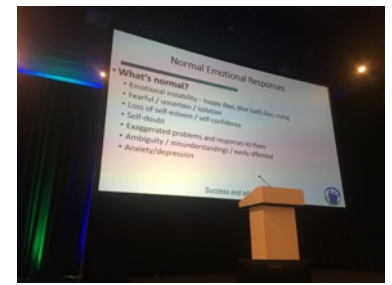
Emotional Side of Transition Cycle



© Tina L. Quick 2012



<http://www.thecultureblend.com/the-transition-that-never-ends-the-ongoing-cycle-of-expat-stayers-goers-and-newbies/>



Normal emotional response

- Emotional instability – happy days, blue (sad) days, crying
- Fearful / uncertain / isolation
- Loss of self-esteem / self-confidence
- Self-doubt
- Exaggerated problems and responses to them
- Ambiguity / misunderstandings / easily offended
- Anxiety / depression

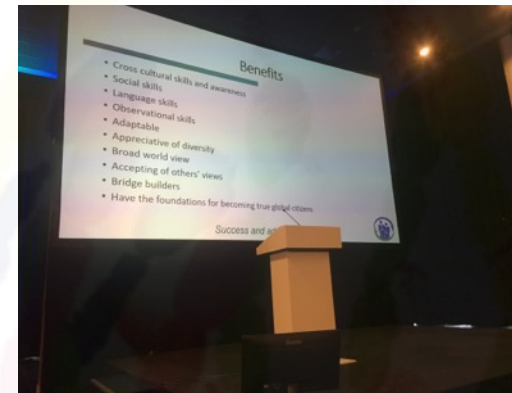
if these persist longer than 2 weeks or get worse: get some help

The benefits of growing up internationally and leading an international life



Benefits

- **Cross cultural skills and awareness**
- **Social skills**
- **Language skills**
- **Observational skills**
- **Adaptable**
- **Appreciate diversity**
- **Broad world view**
- **Accepting of others' view**
- **Bridge builders**
- **Have the foundations for becoming true global citizens**

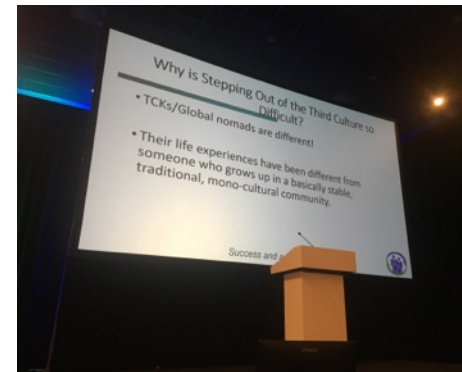


Tina Quick @ FIGT18NL

- **Identity and belonging**
- **Unresolved grief**
- **The transition cycle**
- **Relationship with home country peers**
(if considering repatriation)

Why is stepping out of the Third Culture so difficult?

- TCKs/Global nomads/internationals **are different**
- Their life experiences have been different from someone who grows up in a
basically stable
traditional
mono-cultural community



Identity and belonging: How others perceive you

What you expect
is what you get



What you expect
is not what you get



What you expect
is not what you get

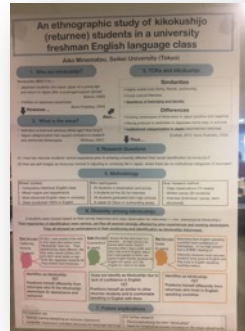


What you expect
is what you get



Ute

Research about internationals, global nomads, TCKs/ATCKs/CCKs... at FIGT



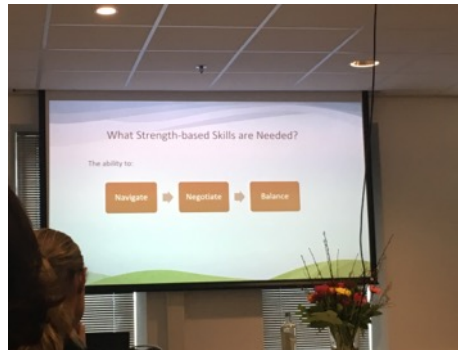
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What strengths should we all have?

Navigate

Negotiate

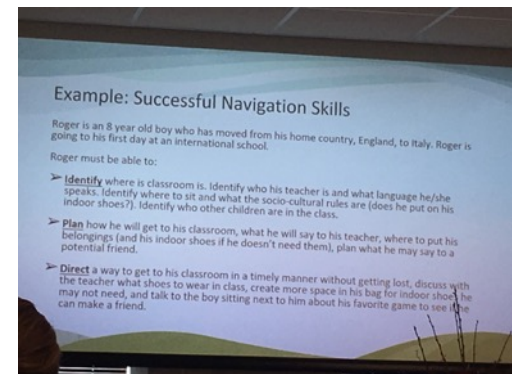
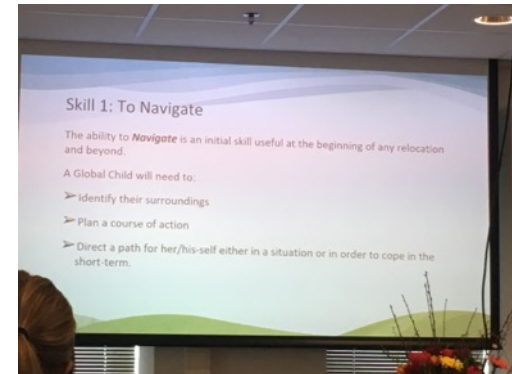
Balance



Kelli Sanness and Tami Nelson
(*PhD Psychotherapist; Mental Health Therapist*)

Navigate

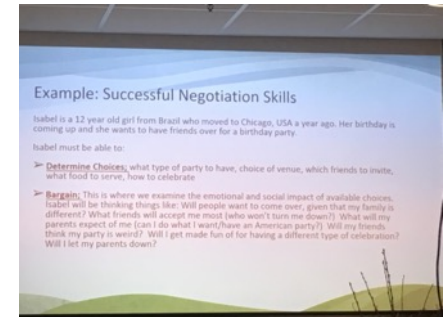
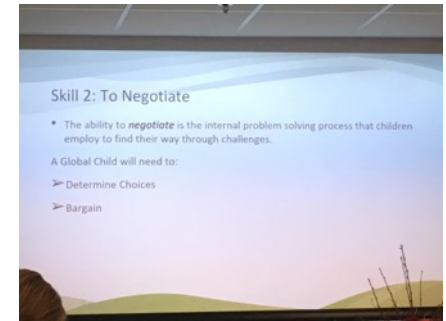
- Identify the surroundings
- Plan a course of action
- Direct a path for ourselves either in a situation or in order to cope in the short-term



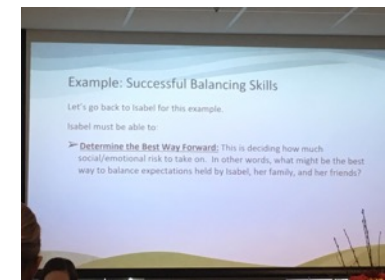
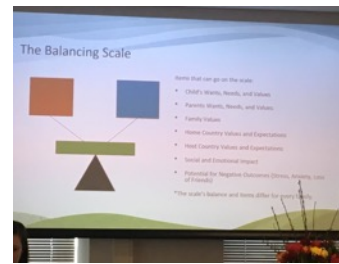
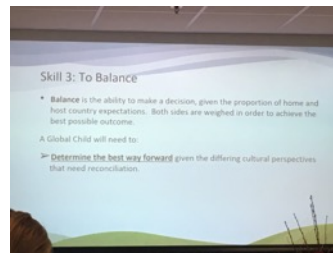
Negotiate

(internal problem solving process to find our way through challenges)

- Determine choices
- Bargain



Balance



Ability to make a decision, given the proportion of home and host country expectations

Determine the best way forward

- everyone's wants, needs and values
- family values
- home and host country values, beliefs and expectations
- social and emotional impact
- potential for negative outcomes stress, anxiety, loss of friends
- scale's balance and items differ for every member

Resilience

**Resilience:
Learn to Influence Your Ability
to Gain Inner Stability**



Dr. Ute Limacher-Riebold
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**How to build resilience
in children and teens**



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info@UtesInternationalLounge.com

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Resilience workshops and trainings with Ute

No Pathology

"It is my conviction that being a TCK is not a disease, something from which to recover. It is a life healthily enriched by this very TCK experience and blessed with significant opportunities for further enrichment."

Pollock and Van Reken, "Third Culture Kids: Growing up Among Worlds," 2009

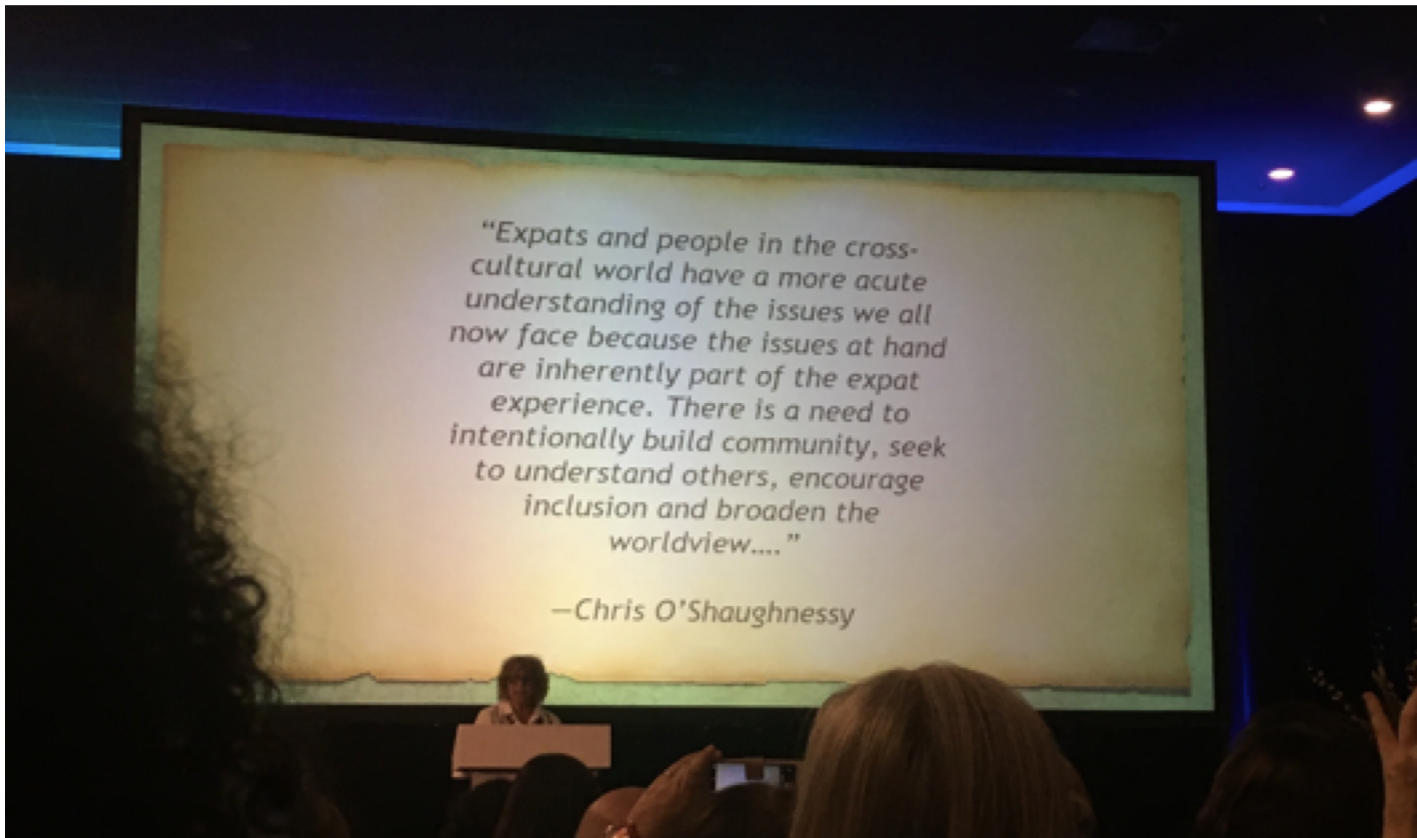
Success and adventure in transition



@worldtreecoaching



Never leave your sense of humour!



Robin Pascoe quoting Chris O'Shaughnessy



Vivian Chiona, Ruth van Reken, Ute Limacher-Riebold, Rita Rosenback



We all need an anchor...

What is yours?

Some more take-aways from FIGT18NL



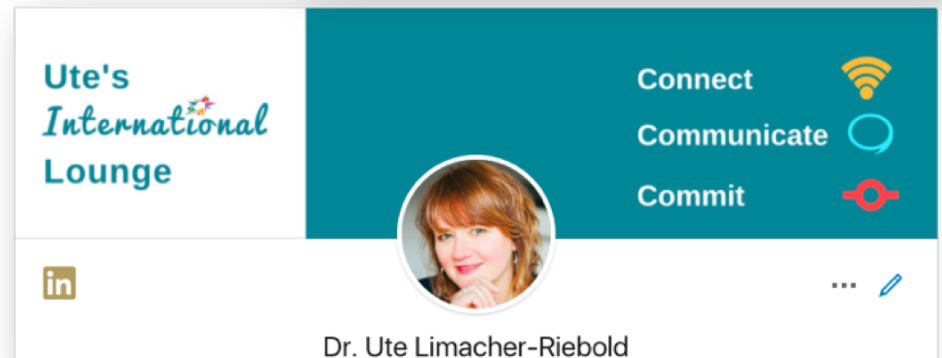
Thr-vival:

Thrive and Survive
but first you need to **survive** in order to **thrive**
(Michael Pollock)

What if the next move breaks us?

Don't hang your dreams onto your kids.

Teach them to stand out. Not to blend in at all costs.



As my gift for you...

take my

International Life Assessment

[here](#)

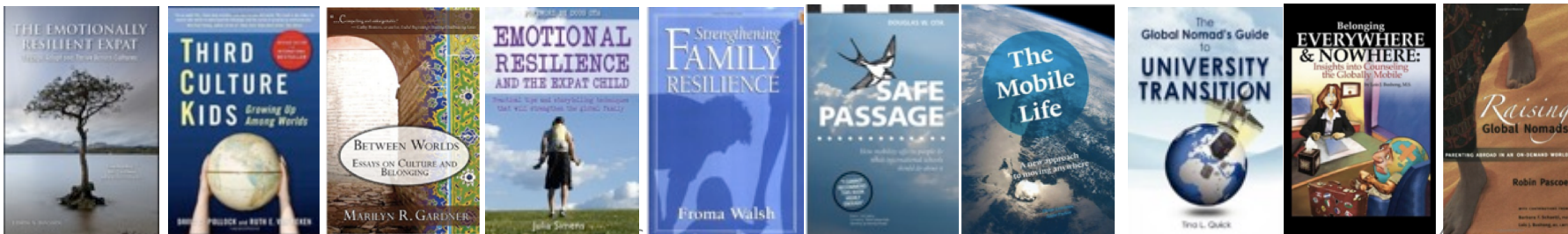
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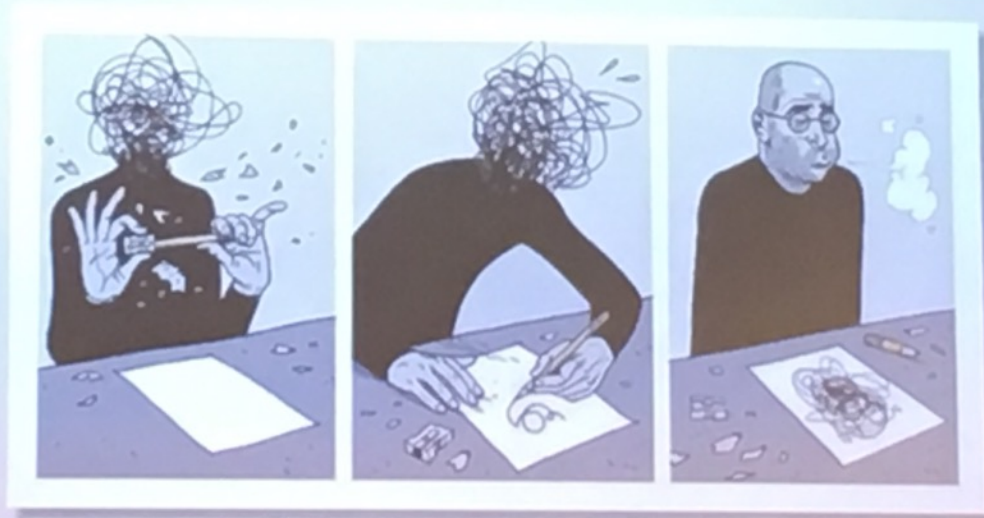
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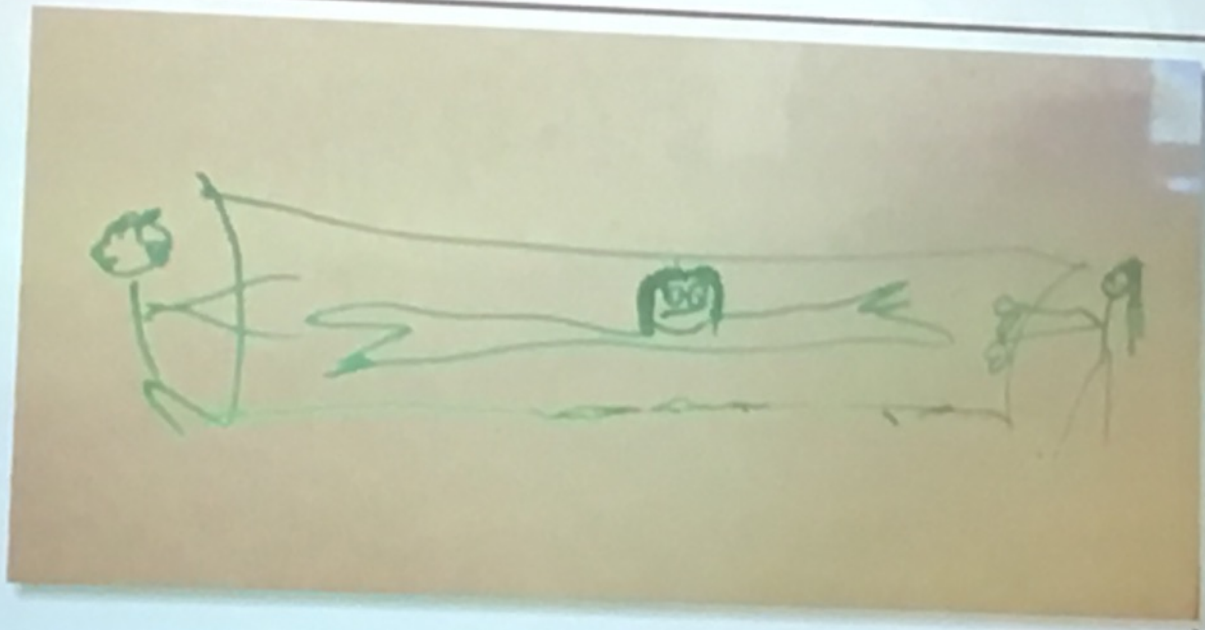
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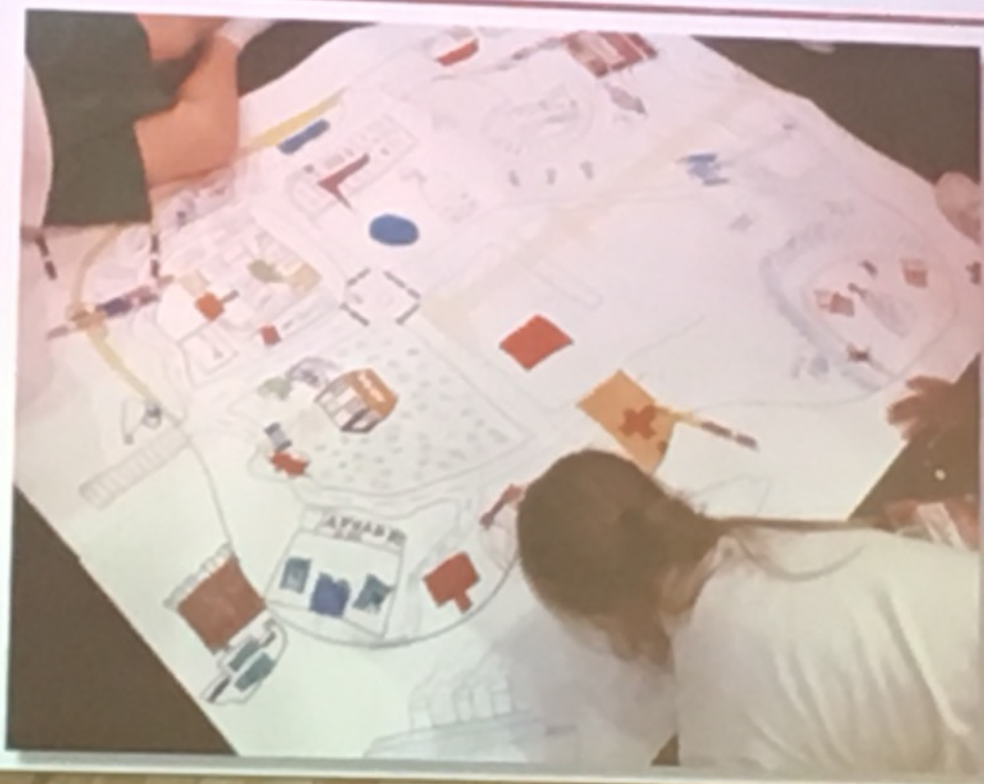
ART THERAPY: WHEN WORDS ARE NOT ENOUGH



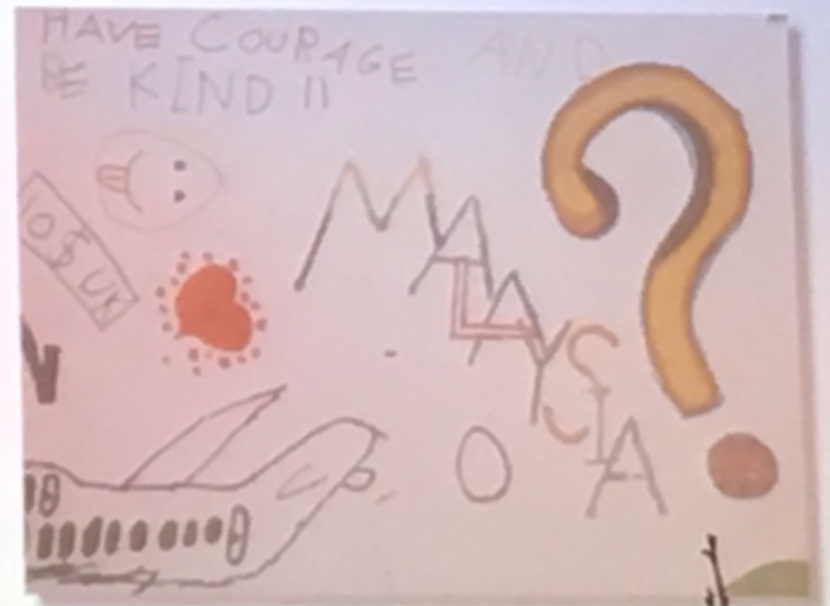
THIRD CULTURE: EXPLORING IDENTITY



CREATIVE SOCIAL GROUP ACTIVITY: OUR ISLAND



MOVING ON (AGAIN)



TO SUM UP

- Art Therapy based individual and group activities within a highly transient international community thus:
 - Helps to develop and maintain a 'tool kit' of coping mechanisms for all age groups by providing a creative space in which each individual can practice and experience feeling in control.
 - Develops a strong sense of identity and ownership.

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