

Both careers matter

1. A few words about me

I am a 55 year old pediatric anesthesiologist and my permanent post is in the anesthetic team of Necker Hospital, the oldest pediatric hospital for sick children in Paris.

I did my medical studies in France and my anesthetic training in Denmark. I was offered a fellowship in pediatric intensive care unit in Great Ormond street in London in 2003 (where many Irish colleagues worked) and a French diploma in pediatric anesthesia in 2005 in France.

I met my future husband, a diplomat, in 2005 in his office in Copenhagen: indeed , I had to get a certificate of good behavior in order to register with the French medical Council: At that time I had already worked in 3 EU countries and was trilingual (French English and Danish) .

2. Both careers do matter

We keep it as fair and balanced as possible.

How do WE choose our posting abroad ... well he makes 2 copies of the postings list and we isolate ourselves to make our choices .

I highlight the places where I believe I can work and I have few days to check within my international professional network.

In 2010, Dublin was on the list and I called the pediatric unit in Temple Street Dublin to enquire and after I told them I trained with Dr A . K. in GOSH PICU London the answer was: Can you start tomorrow?

My husband organized a meeting with the Officer in charge of MFA assignments to negotiate this kind of double posting and he got the post, too. We spent 4 happy years in Dublin where I got a permanent position as a consultant in the hospital. We came back to Paris in 2014 to allow me to get back to my permanent position in Necker hospital.

I keep in touch with my former Irish team and we have a training agreement with the Irish college of anesthetists : I am in charge of welcoming regular Irish young consultants in our team.

3. Adaptability

In 2020 , the listed countries were not suitable for my work. We implemented plan B : A 60% part time with rotation of 6 weeks at work followed by 4 weeks + annual leave in the foreign country.

To allow this plan B ,you need a comprehensive boss who will enjoy having you 60% instead of 0 % ... luckily he was!.

My cat also comes into the equation : she is a 7 kg Maine coon with a bladder capacity lasting up to 10 hours. A direct flight with AF and no old fashion quarantine excluding a well pampered indoor-cat fully vaccinated tested and treated for all parasites....

This plan B allows me to maintain the expertise I have acquired in my professional field, to keep up with my Irish fellows and enables me to fund my pension.

So, we are now posted in Mauritania and living for nearly two years in a diplomatic Campus villa with a garden which is now organic with permaculture helped by a happy bees colony in a hive at the back of the house .

I do represent AFCA-MAE on the French campus , I teach basic resuscitation as I did in the Dublin French embassy as well for the local French association ; I also joined Face au monde Organization and help local associations.

Creating surgical caps with Wax cloth for my colleagues, among others practical projects, has become a new hobby.

We also rescued and adopted a tiny 16 year old cat last year and our home became a war zone. As a consequence, each cat now has an en suite bedroom and everybody is happy.

4. Conclusion

In our diplomatic world there is always something positive to achieve or to experience and there is scientific evidence proving that a focus on anything positive boosts the brain's production of wellbeing endorphines.

A positive mind- set combined with adaptability are some facilitators to fulfill a rich personal and balanced family life.