

NEWS PEACE

A Father's Day Perspective From Far Away

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Setting up a pediatric intensive care center in Africa may sound challenging, as are many of the roles Physicians for Peace volunteers fill. Long hours, transcultural challenges and complicated political systems we try to assimilate with – even though we are outsiders - are just a few of the many challenges we face in our new jobs. We do not often report, however, about the impact these changes have on the family we drag into our adventures! The wellbeing of those we take along is essential to help us complete our missions successfully.

In our case, the “Children for Peace” involved are two girls of two and five years old. Although my wife and I were instantly enthusiastic about the opportunity to work in Africa, we had several discussions about the subject.

For our daughters, moving to Africa would mean a change of environment: leaving friends in Amsterdam, adjusting to a new school with a British curriculum (and uniform) and learning a new language. We anticipated a difficult first 3 months and so we decided to stay at least 12 months to make the “investment” to adjust to their new lives worthwhile. We also decided it would be best to keep the youngest one at home during these months and arranged extra language classes for the eldest.

Now in Malawi for four months and looking back on the discussions, I can only smile. Our eldest never complained a day about going to school, picked up a totally new language in 6 weeks and has a bunch of new friends from all over the globe. From the second week on, our youngest daughter started complaining she also wanted to go school, which we finally allowed. They both enjoy the liberties staying in a tropical country has brought them, and the new environment has added to their adventurous lives.

In retrospect, did we overestimate the impact such a change would have on our family life? Not entirely. As it turns out, my wife and I did need 3 months to get used to our new environments! It once more showed me that adapting is perceiving and accepting, something we can learn best from our own children.

From Malawi,
Job Calis



Job with daughters June (left) and Tyche (right)

*As a partner and volunteer medical educator, Dr. Job Calis has committed his time, professional expertise and family to assisting others and living out the Physicians for Peace mission to **teach one. heal many.** In conjunction with our partner, Raising Malawi, PFP is supporting Dr. Calis for a year as he supports and trains the staff at the Mercy James Centre for Pediatric Intensive Care in Blantyre, Malawi. Dr. Calis offers his Father's Day perspective with you in this month's newsletter.*



Our girls enjoying the view at Lake Malawi



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