
Terra Nova e-news

Terra Nova Consultancy Ltd, 14 Glanworth Place, Dannemora 2016, Manukau, Auckland, NZ - PO Box 58385 Botant 2163, Manukau, Auckland, NZ
Phone/Fax +64 9 265 1578 , Mobile +64 0275 706 540 - Email jpeter@terranoconsultancy.co.nz - Web www.terranoconsultancy.co.nz

INSIDE:

The 10 things to consider when moving to a new country



Deciding to move to a new country, either for retirement or for the lifestyle, is often the result of having had several wonderful vacations in the area being considering, or is based on something read about in books or travel magazines, or something seen in a movie or on TV. I happened to see the Commonwealth Games being broadcasted from New Zealand showing the wonderful lifestyle, the gorgeous scenery, the friendly people.... but I had never actually been to New Zealand before I moved there. Not the best type of research to base a major move on!

Even when a considerable amount of time is spent in the country you plan on moving to, the image created of actually living there can often based on an idealized vision of what life will be like on a day to day basis. It is far too easy to accentuate the positive aspects of what life will be like in this new country and all too easy to overlook the negatives. It's one thing to have a great time there on vacation for a couple of weeks a year, but to really live there, day after day, month after month, year after year, is a whole new level of reality. Sometimes its the little things, like not being able to get your favorite brand of peanut butter, or toothpaste, or coffee, that become a major irritation. Other times its the big things, like not being able to understand what your doctor is telling you, or the chemists instructions for taking a medication, that can leave you stressed. I quickly discovered that even when language is not an issue, cultural, lifestyle and other differences can be still be challenging, specially if you are unprepared for them.



So, before you sell off all of your worldly belongings, here's a list of 10 things that you should carefully consider before deciding to move to a different country:

1) Family and Friends: How close are you to members of your family and to your friends? Do you visit often? Do you share activities, golfing, shopping, visiting museums, sharing dinner, etc, on a regular



basis? Or do you rarely see them? Promises to visit regularly may be made with the best of intentions. Unfortunately, life always happens, intentions, maybe not so much. How do you feel about missing out on the major events in your family's life such as the birth of a grandchild, your niece's graduation, your nephew's wedding, etc.?

2) Language: If the native language of the country you are thinking about moving to is not English, how well do you understand the language? Could you cope with an emergency, such as a medical emergency that sends you to hospital or to an emergency clinic? or a burst water pipe or other household emergency that requires immediate attention? Could you understand a movie? or make small talk at a party?

3) Medical Issues: An unfamiliar language is not the only concern regarding medical issues. Do you have a medical condition that will require continuing care? Even something like high blood pressure or diabetes could be expensive if your medical insurance does not cover you while you live outside of your native country.

4) Culture: Every country has their own unique culture, their way of doing things that is often different from the way these same things are done in every other country. The way people interact while shopping, at work, doing business, renovation and repairing homes, in social settings, etc, can be very different from country to country. How easy is or would it be for you to adapt to these new customs?

5) Financial: Have you calculated the cost of living in the country you are considering moving to? I believed that the cost of living in New Zealand was low, but what I did not realise that the cost of anything that was imported into the country, like books, large appliances, beds, cars, generally anything that wasn't made in New Zealand, was quite high. For some countries, its the 'extra' costs of doing business, or buying a home, or whatever. When you take these 'extra' costs into consideration, the cost of living can become prohibitively high.

6) Employment: Although related to Financial Issues, issues surrounding whether you are allowed to work or not can become unexpectedly significant and should be considered on their own. No matter how good a financial plan is things. like wobbly stock markets, can happen. Do you have the skills, the talents or the legal abilities to work if you need to? Some jobs or entrepreneurial opportunities, can be done completely online from anywhere in the world where the Internet can be accessed. Other jobs will require work visas or permanent residence status for the country.

7) Lifestyle: Are you used to a certain lifestyle? Frequent visits to museums, art galleries or live theater; eating out in good restaurants, or eating in fast food restaurants; enjoying a wide selection of food; vol

unteering; having a friendly game of tennis or round of golf in the weekend; etc. Will these lifestyle choices still be available to you after you have moved? Do you enjoy watching television or listening to the radio? Some countries only have three television channels to choose from. Will this be enough? Is the area you are thinking of moving to one that attracts a lot of tourists? How will you feel about being inundated with tourists in five or ten years?

8) Shopping: What is the shopping like in the area you are thinking of moving to? Will you have access to the type and style of clothing you like; the foods you like; the books, magazines and newspapers you like? Is the shopping close to where you are thinking of living or will shopping become a major day-long excursion? If you have only visited the area you are considering moving to during the holiday season, what is the shopping like during the off season? Is the selection of goods and services that you have become familiar with only available while the tourists are in town?

9) Amenities: Are you used to a certain standard of living? Well maintained roads where the snow is cleared after every snowfall: a consistent supply of electricity; services completed in a reasonable amount of time; the ability to grab a quart of milk or loaf of bread at midnight or on the weekend? While these differences may be easy to live with in the short term, could you make them a part of your everyday life?

10) Returning to Your Native Country: There are two situations when returning to your native country can be stressful:

- The first is if you need to get back quickly because of a family emergency, a family member is sick, or has passed away, or was in an accident. Could you cope with not being able to get back to your family in a hurry? Natural disasters, strikes, etc., could prevent you from traveling right at the moment when you need to travel the most.
- The other "Returning to Your Native Country" situation that can be very stressful is if you discovered that the country you moved to is no longer the country you want to live in and you want to return to your native country. The financial costs of moving back can be enormous, but there are also emotional costs. Culture shock can be just as hard to take moving back to your native country after you have been away for a few years, as it can be when you move to a new country.

The bottom line is that the more flexible you are, the more you are willing to adapt to whatever comes your way and to change as the situations demand, the easier and more enjoyable it is to live in a new country.

Article taken from Anne Bolender - Ageless Nomads - <http://www.agelessnomads.com>

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