SCRIPT: “Global Nomads: Struggles Third Culture Kids Face Living in Egypt”
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This audio documentary explores the struggles that Egyptian third culture kids face when they move back to Egypt from a different culture they’ve lived in and how they cope with these struggles.

*MUSIC: FADE IN: Podington Bear– “Well and Good” (0:00-1:41)*

North. South. East. and West. Wherever you go you can find a third culture kid in every corner of the world. That’s why they call them global nomads.

*SFX: FADE IN: Airplane landing (0:00-0:05)*

*NAT SOUND: Luggage rolling (0:00-0:03)*

These global nomads face various struggles, but to know what they face, the important question to ask first is: who are they?

*SFX: Computer typing (0:00-0:03)*

Third culture kids is a term that was created by two American sociologists, Ruth and John Useem in the 1950s. They identified three cultures for people who lived in cultures different from their own originally. The first culture was that of their parents. The second culture was the culture where they moved to live. And finally, the third culture was the mixture of the first two cultures. Along with these different cultures, come different struggles. Imagine sitting with a group of friends and they’re joking around, but you’re not quite getting it. Well that’s what Karim Kadry, a mechanical engineering graduating senior felt when he moved to Egypt from the Czech Republic.

*MUSIC: FADE IN: Podington Bear– “Up, Up, Up” (0:48-1:32)*

*Karim Kadry (KK): “I feel the most bonding done between Egyptians, is done through shared pop culture references. Films like El Nazer.”*:10s)

An Egyptian comedy movie.
KK: Films like that, you tend to bond with people over making jokes and referencing them multiple times. A lot of the time when I just came back from Czech Republic, when I was in year 6, I had a lot of trouble communicating in Arabic. So, I couldn't really make jokes in Arabic because my language wasn't that strong to properly express the joke. So, most of my jokes where in English and that created a sort of language barrier between me and the people who joke around in Arabic.” (:40s)

With the struggle of language barriers comes the struggle of making friends. It’s not easy making friends as a third culture kid with all the different looks and perceptions people have of you. Someone who agrees with this is Yasmine Bassily, a multimedia journalism graduating senior.

*NAT SOUND: AUC campus sounds (0:00-0:05)*

I met Yasmine at the American University in Cairo campus to talk about this struggle.

*MUSIC: FADE IN: Dee Yan-Key - “Loss” (0:00-1:42)*

Yasmine Bassily (YB): “Every time I would click with someone I’d be like, oh so I can click with an Egyptian, like someone who grew up here. And while we talk, you know, I ask them, so did you guys live here your entire life? Like almost all of them would say no and almost most of them were brought up in the Gulf.” (:23s)

Doaa Abdelghany (DA): “And how did people who weren’t third culture kids react to that?” (:05s)

YB: “Don’t get me started. A lot of people, a lot of them and when I say a lot almost everyone, thinks I’m not trying hard enough to fit in society. Like, it’s my fault. Some people have, like directly, said that to me. They haven’t said that it was my fault, but they said that I need to try harder. (:31s)

Maybe they thought she should try harder by talking to more people, but that doesn’t come easily.
Moving on to a different type of relationships.

SFX: Ululation *FADE IN* (:03)

Shall we say congratulations? Hmm, well maybe not quite yet. A zaghroota is usually heard in weddings and happy occasions. Finding a romantic relationship is a struggle, let alone being a third culture kid looking for one. I decided to speak to someone who I know is really going through this struggle. My sister, Sara Abdelghany. Sara was born and raised in Bahrain, because my dad moved there at the end of the 70’s from Egypt for a job offer.

*MUSIC: FADE IN: Cecen Kizi- “Seyya” (0:28-1:01)*

In a migration profile, created by the European University Institute, Egypt is the largest migrant sending country in the region to date. Egyptian emigration took off after 1971. The 1973 War and the hike in oil prices created a strong need for workforce in oil-producing countries. Therefore, large numbers of emigrants left Egypt for Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states.

Alright, back to Sara. Sara moved to Egypt during her university years and lived for two years in Australia. Now, at the age of twenty eight, she definitely has a lot to say about finding Mr Right.

*MUSIC: FADE IN: Dee Yan-Key- “Fragile” (1:05-2:15)*

*Sara Abdelghany (SA): One of the most difficult issues is that when you grow up and try to find a relationship so you get all those aunties that get you the prospective husbands and all that stuff and you get to meet them and talk with them, if they know that you’ve lived all your life in Bahrain or a Gulf country or some other country like Europe or US and you have the nationality of that country they, they look at you as a stepping stone. Sadly, that’s the truth and I have faced many people like that. (:36s)*

To understand more about how third culture kids cope with all these struggles, I decided to speak to psychologist Fouad Bouzeineddine who teaches social psychology at the American University in Cairo.

*NAT SOUND: FADE IN: Footsteps to Dr Fouad’s office (0:06-0:17)*

*Fouad Bouzeineddine (FB): “Frame switching is basically, people adapting to their environments that they're in. When you're frame switching, when you're switching cultures or environments you switch the way you behave, the way you
express yourself, the way you express your values, the way you communicate, even the language changes that you use.” (:28s)

And now we’ve reached our final main struggle third culture kids face. The struggle of understanding where you belong and the usual question they face of “Where is home?”

NAT SOUND: FADE IN: Dorms sound and people chattering (0:12-0:25)

Nouran Allam, a multimedia journalism and political science senior who I met up with at the American University in Cairo, New Cairo campus dorms, seems to be facing this struggle.

MUSIC: FADE IN: Podington Bear- “Sanctuary” (0:38-1:55)

NA: “The main struggles I would say I face as a third culture kids is the fact that I feel like I really do not have a home, a stable home. I feel like I’ve learned to find home in people and sometimes even myself, because I feel like living in so many different places has taught me that home doesn’t have to be a physical thing it doesn’t have to be a territorial thing. Because, I’ve lived in Doha, I’ve lived in Egypt and in Egypt itself, I have family in Tanta, I have family in Banha.” (:50s)

With all these struggles third culture kids face, there are also some perks of being a third culture kid.

MUSIC: FADE IN: Podington Bear- “Well and Good” (1:20-2:15)

FB: “Well being exposed to multiple cultures gives you a broader range of options. It gives you a wider perspective and a more openness to new ideas, more creativity and this helps people develop their identity in a broader way perhaps than in a less conformist way than perhaps is the case with mono-cultural or mono-lingual people.” (:28s)

Overall, these third culture kids do face a lot of struggles when they go back to their home countries. But, it seems like they’ll try to make the best out of both worlds, or shall I say three?

This audio documentary was produced by Doaa Abdelghany for the audio production course at the American University in Cairo, taught by Professor Kim Fox in Fall 2017. Special thanks to Dr Fouad Bouzeineddine, Karim Kadry, Sara Abdelghany, Yasmine Bassily and Nouran Allam.
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