

Helping international families settle into Denmark via Spousecare

By Beatrice Benavides, 2018



Here's the story of why Sys Vecht, an HR Director at a software company based in Denmark, decided to leave her job and work with a little, unknown company called Spousecare.

Sys Vecht was employed as the HR Director at a software company back in 2009. The company hired many of their employees from outside of Denmark. However, the international employees left the company early on to go back home because his/her spouse was unhappy. Sys says, *"The employee would have a good time at work, but his/her spouse would be without network, friends and family. The spouse felt isolated and wanted to go home. We experienced this twice in a short time, and this was not good."*

And then, they heard about Spousecare.

Spousecare was founded by Anette Pilmark in 2007. Spousecare is a private company that specializes in caring for spouses of foreign employees hired by large Danish organizations.

Sys gushes, *"I think the concept is quite genius. I have never understood why other relocation companies haven't thought about this. It's a brilliant concept."*

After hiring Spousecare, Sys felt that the company received less questions and frustrations. The employee/the-working-spouse was much happier at work because he knew that someone was helping his or her spouse at home. Sys says, *"It was a big success. It made a huge difference."*

After a while, Sys left the company to be an independent consultant. She then decided to contact Anette, as she was drawn to Spousecare from her experience of working with them. —And she hasn't looked back since. *"After 8 years, I am still happy with Anette and Spousecare"*

The 24/7 go-to person

Sys says, *"It's really a gift, working with people from other countries, because you also learn so much about yourself and you're able to contribute a lot by just being a Dane."* At Spousecare, Sys is a full-time mentor and is also the main career counselor for spouses with an IT background. However, she considers herself as more of a 24/7 go-to person. *"I have had calls late at night where people were sick and didn't know what to do,"* she says. *"We try to tell them as much as possible in the first few meetings, but there are things that you discover later. And it's nice that there's someone to call who won't get angry and who can help you."*

Different expectations

Counselors at Spousecare help Spouses with what they need in Copenhagen. *"Everyone has different expectations on what they're looking for. And so, I help them find a job, gain a social network, find activities for their children—basically whatever their needs are when they arrive and settle in."*

“Spouses looking to pursue their career tend to get frustrated quite early on. One of my best pieces of advice is: be more patient than expected. Finding a job is not easy. You’re competing with a lot of people to get the same job—competing with a lot of Danes.” She further explains, *“The process can take between three and nine months, due to not being able to speak Danish and due to the slow recruitment process in Denmark. Of course, also depending of the candidates’ background and experience.”*

“Spouses appreciate hearing this because they can enjoy life more. It’s the system, not them. They can focus on other things while job hunting, such as taking Danish classes and networking.”

A message for Danish companies

Sys has a message for Danish companies: *“If I was an HR Director, I would not hesitate for a second in hiring Spousecare. It’s so costly to hire people abroad. You have to relocate and train them here. And, before they even start working, training and settling in can take around 6 months. It’s really costly. And so, Spousecare is a small investment with big value.”*

She concludes, *“I’m really happy and proud to work with Spousecare. I have many international friends here and abroad. I have a very good and tight international network. And I’m still in contact with a lot of the people I met in Spousecare.”*

For more information about Spousecare, visit www.spousecare.dk or contact Sys Vecht or Anette Pilmark.

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