



*An International Division Member Connection, July 2024*

**Fellow International Educator,**

It was late summer of 1986. I had just arrived at Black Forest Academy (BFA) in Germany. I was in my twenties, single, and excited for the future. I had earned my teacher license and was ready to move into my calling as an educator to MKs/TCKs. I was prepared to tackle the world, or so I thought...

Back then, there was little in the way of orientation to the world I was joining. Yes, we were given a crash course in German and oriented to life at BFA, but deeper topics like working with TCKs, transitioning, experiencing culture, dealing with change and stress, etc., were not covered as well. This gap meant I made some unforced errors that could have been avoided. For example, I didn't understand why the American passport holders in our boys' dorm passionately cheered for another country's soccer team instead of "America's team". Like the mono-cultural person that I was, I didn't understand what made TCKs tick, and I would needle them about it. I also didn't understand how to process the changes that confronted me almost daily in my new country of residence and often asked, "Why do they do things that way?" Looking back now, it's all a bit embarrassing. Thankfully, through listening, observing, and appreciating, I did come to understand these things, but it took time.

In 1987, ACSI developed Pre-Field Orientation (PFO), a training to address the very gaps that new hires like me experienced. Had PFO been available just one year sooner it would have helped me...

Continue reading [Tim Shuman's opening here](#).

### Membership Renewal

With you, we are stronger together. Renew your ACSI membership for the 2024–2025 school year! For details on how to renew, visit our [website](#) or [contact the ACSI Care Team](#).

### A Global Action Plan Forms for Vision 2030

Earlier this year, ACSI introduced our Vision 2030 and asked for prayer as we sought God's guidance on developing a plan that builds upon our three foundational pillars. The ACSI team has been working to develop key performance indicators and detailed strategic financial plans to advance four growth initiatives, including strengthening a teacher and



leader pipeline, creating quality educational resources and programs, connecting with others through missional partnerships, and assisting in new fields of ministry. Cindy Dodds, ACSI Chief of Flourishing Initiatives, shares how her team is working to advance Vision 2030.



Continue to pray for us as we implement the global action plan in the months and years ahead. For prayer requests or future updates, please visit [acsi.org/vision2030](https://acsi.org/vision2030).



## Upcoming International Events

- ACSI is running a price drop for PFO2Go until 31 July. Register your incoming hires to [PreField Orientation 2 Go](#) now. [Check out our course FAQs](#).
  - A recent PFO2Go participant wrote, *I would recommend this course to anyone going to an overseas school assignment because it touches on many important issues that affect everyone moving overseas: culture, transition, culture shock, how to handle the stress that will arise, and how to care for yourself.*
- Need help finding staff for the 2025–2026 school year? Register now for the [2024 Job Fair Tour](#) and our [Virtual Job Fair Day](#).
- **International School Leaders, join us in Mallorca, Spain, for ISLC Europe coming up on 27-30 April 2025.** [LEARN MORE HERE](#).
- **Latin American leaders** we are announcing a new conference just for you on 02-05 April 2025 in Santa Domingo, Dominican Republic. Information is in the works.
- **ICEC Asia 2025** is coming 26–29 November 2025, to be held in Malaysia! Details will be forthcoming.
- Check out the ACSI Europe [Student Leadership Conference 2024](#) in Budapest. All are welcome.

## News, Articles, & Other Ideas

- ACSI's most recent posts and resources:
  - [Creating a Total Rewards Philosophy](#) with Chris Loncar
  - [School's Over, But We Didn't Finish Everything—And That's a Good Thing](#) with Dr. Lynn Swaner
  - ACSI ranked among the best Christian workplaces – [learn more here](#).
- This article, [Addressing Board Dysfunction](#), from our friends at Resolve could be a good board topic at an upcoming meeting.
- [The Shepherding Leader: Lead in the Power of our Good Shepherd](#) from the blog of Dr. Barrett Mosbacher.

- [Michael and Kim Essenburg](#) care for international Christian schools and love to give you flourishing tips, ideas, and things to think about.
  - [How clear are you on what it means for you to holistically flourish in Jesus?](#)
  - [International Christian school staff and leaders, what can you do to help yourself and your colleagues get holistically flourishing in Jesus?](#)
  - [Your accreditation visit is done—so your next step is to update your improvement plan, right? Nope!](#)
- Guidance Counselors here is a new tool to help your students connect with top universities. “[Meto](#) is an innovative nonprofit, now expanding to Christian international schools, which runs a free platform where universities “make the first move” and invite good-fit students to apply after reviewing student profiles. Meto’s platform includes top global universities, from Vanderbilt and UBC in North America to HKUST in Asia to Imperial College London and Leiden University in Europe. [Click here](#) to connect with the Meto team and learn more.”
- Have you ever wondered why some places have more than one name? Take Holland for example, is it Holland, the Netherlands, or Nederland? This short video is a fun explanation of how exonyms and endonyms come to exist. [Why Do People Talk Like That? Exonyms](#)
- Maybe you need to pause and [take a virtual walk](#) – pick your favorite world city and enjoy. (Fitbit is optional).

## Headship Openings Only

- Cairo Covenant School (starting June 2025), Egypt. [Learn more here.](#)
- Christian Academy of Guatemala. [Learn more here.](#)
- Christian English School, Italy. [Learn more here.](#)
- Doulos Discovery School, Dominican Republic. [Learn more here.](#)
- Faith International Academy, Philippines. [Learn more here.](#)
- Hillcrest School, Nigeria. [Learn more here.](#)
- Mountainview Christian School, Indonesia. [Learn more here.](#)
- Sahel Academy, Niger. [Learn more here.](#)

Due to the unusual need, we are also listing this non-headship opportunity at Dakar Academy, Senegal. [Experienced Boarding Administrator](#) needed.

If you have a head of school opening coming up, please let me know. Be sure to check our [member school vacancy page](#), as well as the [ACSI Career Center](#). If you are interested in a position at an international school, check out the latest non-USA opportunities [here](#). Check out the latest ACSI [Job Flash](#) that goes out to thousands. Learn how you can get your needs included in the job flash [here](#), just scroll down for Job Flash.

## Educating Students in Caribbean and Central American Countries: What Makes a Difference?

By Dr. Ashley Brusma

The goal of education is to prepare children for every aspect of life. A “good” Christian education, or, to use a buzzword, an “effective” Christian education, is holistic. Christian schools should prepare students for life (e.g., working a job, contributing to a community, making moral decisions, forming relationships, and growing spiritually).

## Tune into ACSI Podcasts



Watch the short video above to learn more about the ACSI podcasts. Be sure to tune in to one of our four new ACSI Podcasts: Sharpening Kingdom Leaders, The Flourishing Journey, Student Leadership & Learning, and

## A Demonstration of Faith

By Emily Pigott

Hebrews 11:32-34 paints an incredible picture of servant leaders whose lives demonstrated such faith that they conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, and put foreign armies to flight.

A detailed study of the lives of those mentioned in Hebrews 11

A holistic approach is foundational in Christian education, but we know that what makes an education effective can vary from one context to another, and it should. In a recent mixed-methods study, I invited teachers and administrators in Christian schools in Caribbean and Central American countries to rate research-based factors and respond to open-ended questions describing what makes their schools effective.

An exciting trend surfaced during the study: the biblically focused factors of an effective education (e.g., Christlike instructors, discipleship groups) rose above the rest (e.g., basic resources, parental involvement).

[Continue reading here.](#)

Grafted Together. Every week you can you can hear interviews, stories, research, and more.

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## Student Leadership & Learning: Journey with Us This Fall



Watch this short video to learn more about the [ACSI Student Leadership & Learning](#) events and resources.

shows faith's outstanding place in each experience and service. Personal shortcomings were victoriously overcome as they looked away from themselves to the greatness of God. As a result of this process, they were able to stand victoriously because they knew their full focus and trust had to be on God, not themselves.

This is a beautiful depiction of a servant leadership journey. Leadership doesn't happen overnight but rather is an intentional journey of development modeled after Mark 10:45. None of those mentioned in the great hall of faith in Hebrews 11 started as impactful leaders. Rather, they went through an intentional growth and learning process...and each had at least one, if not more, people dedicated to their leadership growth.

[Continue reading here.](#)



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## Tim Shuman Opening Continued

start better, transition with understanding, and work more effectively with the TCKs in my dorm and classroom. Thankfully, I hung in there, and over time I learned and changed.

Today, PFO exists online as [PFO2Go](#), a course that can be taken anytime, anywhere. It's a great way to help your new staff begin better prepared and less inclined to make mistakes like mine. It's not too late to enroll them for the coming school year.

I will close with one of the many reflection points from the PFO2Go Learner's Guide: "Read [Philippians 2:5-11](#) and notice the great cultural chasm that Jesus crossed (from very far to near) to reach and save the lost. If He did that for you, is there anything preventing you from making every effort to know and love the people you will meet in the culture you are entering?"



Blessings upon you wherever you are,

Tim for the [international school team](#)

[Tim Shuman, Senior Director, International Division](#)

[Chelsea Allen, International Schools Activity & Events Coordinator](#)

[Michael McNabb, Director of Accreditation, International Division](#)

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## **Educating Students in Caribbean and Central American Countries Continued**

Biblically focused factors used in the survey came from ACSI's research-based Flourishing School Culture Model. Survey responses from administrators and teachers validated the strong influence of these countercultural, Christian factors on student outcomes.

### **Discipleship**

Both when participants ranked the top five research-based influencers on student outcomes and when they responded to open-ended questions asking what they felt most impacted student outcomes, discipleship was one of the top responses. Discipleship can take many forms, but this study described it as intentional mentorship to lead others to Christ. We see some examples of how Jesus did this by growing active Christ followers (Matthew 28:16-20), sharing a lived example of how to honor God (Matthew 17:19-20), and helping his disciples wrestle through questions and interpersonal conflicts (Matthew 20:22-28).

**Questions for reflection:** What does discipleship look like in your school? How might discipleship vary from context to context?

### **Teachers Make a Difference**

In this study, administrators and teachers indicated that "Christlike instructors" are one of the most important influencers on how students do in school. Caring for and loving students as image bearers of Christ is what characterizes a Christlike instructor.

**For reflection:** Brainstorm some recent examples of how teachers in your school extended Christlike love to students.

### **Christian Community**

A Christian community cultivated within the school was the third-top contributor to student outcomes. Participants described a school culture of interdependence, kindness, and care. This countercultural atmosphere is illustrated in Acts 2, where Christ followers looked out for one another and shared their resources.

**Questions for reflection:** How would students and families at your school describe your school's culture?

### **Supportive Administrators**

Administrators and teachers in the study identified administrative leadership as another significant factor impacting their schools' effectiveness in Caribbean and Central American countries. Administrative leadership is an essential factor in the broader research, so it is unsurprising that it showed up here. As expressed by participants in the study, the relationship between administrators and teachers is valuable, and teachers need to feel that their administrators trust them to make wise decisions in their classrooms.

**Questions for reflection:** How is your school caring for its teachers (e.g., asking for feedback, offering support, encouraging rest, etc.)?

### **Challenges**

When asked what the most significant threats were to the effectiveness of their schools in Caribbean and Central American countries, teachers and administrators identified some reoccurring themes: prolonged effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, political insecurity (particularly in Haiti), and brain drain. Brain drain refers to a country's loss of highly trained individuals, due to immigration (here it applies to teaching staff).

This is a first glance into effective Christian education in the Caribbean and Central America. Factors specific to a Christian education may impact student outcomes most. A next step is for schools in these regions and others worldwide to evaluate how effective their programs are for the students they serve.

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### **A Demonstration of Faith Continued**

This is what our students need today—educators who are committed to developing servant leaders. Is it a messy process? Indeed! Are our students far more capable of impactful leadership and cultural change than they comprehend? Absolutely! ACSI's Student Leadership Institute is step one of an intentional servant leadership development process and provides schools with an intentional servant leadership development program. When this leadership development journey is implemented, it will equip and develop student leaders who will change the entire landscape of your school. Let's go on this journey together!