

Recruiting for the International Christian School

Tim Shuman, Regional Director for International Schools, ACSI Global

tim_shuman@acsi.org

The Challenge

- Your goal: get the best, keep the best
- But it's not easy...
- A few stats from ISC Research
 - <https://www.iscresearch.com/>
 - <https://www.iscresearch.com/data>
- A reminder – your school is God's school. He raised it up and he will resource it
- Prayer is something we have that others do not, but we must accompany prayer with our part.
- Story of the Pastor and the Farmer.
 - One day the local pastor visited the farmer. As they stood outside, the pastor couldn't help but admire the abundant crops coming up in the garden and the fields and remarked, "My goodness, look what God has done here!" The farmer replied, "Yes, Pastor, that's true, but you should'a seen it last year when he had it all to himself." The moral of the story is that yes, God is at work, but he uses his people to accomplish his work on this earth. We need to do our part too.

Approaches

- Set your needs list. When do you poll your current staff for their intent? The lead time for international appointments is much longer than national schools (this includes US and Canada) that can recruit locally. ACSI's job board allows international schools to leave 8 posts up for 9 months. The US member schools only get 60 days.
- On a northern hemisphere schedule recruiting must start in the fall for the coming school year.
- Marketing – your website is your public face – be sure it is attractive, tells your story with some emotion, and draws people in.
- Social media – Facebook and Instagram. Tell you story through classroom, sports, the arts, outreach, milestones, etc.
- The links on your website are your doorway for potential staff to engage with you. Have an outsider give you input on the effectiveness.
- Your rapid response time to inquiries is critical – "You were the first to respond..." has been heard many times over and often led to a hire.
- What does your initial application look like? Do your webpages introduce the job process (steps to appointment) to potential applicants?
- Someone needs to be prepared for late night, early morning interviews and Q&A with potential staff across time zones.
- Who does the bulk of the recruiting work? Head of School or another dedicated person?
- Following up – use a recruiter tracker and communicate often – from initial inquiry to start (does anyone use a tracker that they can recommend?)
- How do you conduct interviews?

- You **must** check ALL references and do background checks. A member school briefly employed a criminal (US citizen). Later his many criminal acts committed while living abroad came to light. Thankfully, he had done no harm while at that school, but it was frightening. The lesson is to do the background check and contact references.
- How do you finally approve candidates? What is your process? How quickly can you move on these things?
- How do you support new staff from the off-site “You are accepted” to the on-site “Welcome to our school”?
- Be ready for disappointment and pitfalls along the way.
- WHAT IS YOUR BUDGET FOR RECRUITMENT AND MARKETING? Do you have a budget for this? If not, fix this.
- PRAYER is free. 😊

You need every fishing pole you can find

- Be sure to make use of your ACSI membership to post jobs on ACSI Job Board (see link below).
 - ACSI offers you up to 8 free job postings for your school annually on its online job board. Additional posting will require a fee.
 - Use and maintain your page. Do not neglect your postings - keep them fresh and up to date.
 - Purchase upgrades to get noticed. Upgrades may include highlighting, so your post stands out and/or the ability to stay on top of the job board for a longer period of time above the others.
 - Be sure to track the job seekers pages. Individuals can and do post their CVs to the job board. Do your own research on people you see there.
- You cannot rely on just one source to find the staff you need
- Word of mouth is invaluable!! Get your staff and their network of friends involved
- Consider partner agencies like RCEI (Resourcing Christian Education Int’l), and TeachBeyond, and other mission agencies
- Make use of multiple Job Boards to post your openings – see table below
- Consider Christian job boards from other nations that are English speaking or strong English component – UK, Australia, Canada, Holland?
- College Career Centers welcome your job posts – not just Christian colleges!
 - Almost all US colleges (Christian and secular) have an online career center. They are happy for you to post your job openings on their job board - usually at no cost to you. Those job boards not only serve their current student body but their alumni as well. If you post to a secular college job board be sure that you are clear on the Christian nature of your school and your ideal candidate.
 - If you post to a college job board be sure that you maintain, and not neglect, your postings. It can be easy to forget your postings over time. Take notes with dates of postings and keep them fresh and up to date.
 - Handshake is the new go-to location for college career center. Here is an example of how you can leverage this platform through Calvin College. <https://calvin.edu/offices-services/career-center/employers/post.html>
 - Other examples...
 - <https://www.cedarville.edu/Offices/Career.aspx>
 - <https://www.moody.edu/student-services/career-services/>

- <http://www.liberty.edu/academics/general/career/index.cfm?PID=26577>
- Print options:
 - [The International Educator](#) is the leading print resource for international schools. Not only do I recommend that you subscribe to this valuable newspaper for its content, but also because it is the go-to resource for job opening print ads around the world. You may consider submitting your own ad to TIE for a fee. Please keep in mind that your ad will likely attract some inquiries from non-Christian job seekers. You can avoid this somewhat by being crystal clear in your ad that you are looking for committed Christian workers/teachers.
 - Christianity Today, World Mag, etc. can work too.
- Do you have a budget for ads and job boards? Should be part of your recruiting budget.
- “Headhunter Services”. Some schools employ a company to do executive searches usually to find head of school or administrative candidates. This can be very effective, but it can be costly as well. When researching such a firm be sure they are good at what they do and can be a trusted partner with you. Examples of Christian firms include...
 - <https://www.paideia-inc.com/executive-and-administrative-search>
 - https://globalscg.org/search_services/
 - <https://www.graybeal.org/services.php>

Job Fairs

- ACSI and [our new job fair plan for 2019](#) – three large colleges are on the 2019 tour
 - Liberty University, Grand Canyon University, and Baylor University
 - Return trips are planned to these “anchor” locations every year to build momentum
- How to approach our job fair and others out there....
 - It is a good idea to make a job fair a priority every year. Your name recognition will grow over time.
 - Think about your table and materials. Does it draw in potential recruits? What does it say about you? Is there any sort of emotion in the images? Your approach? It’s all about sowing seed.
 - A large pop-up banner is a good idea but freshen your graphics so that they are attractive and easy to absorb from a distance across a crowded hall. (Small photos and text are not effective - recruits will not stop to read the small text of your posters. Remember, impression is probably the most powerful thing you can do. Your school name and the “coffee-cup version” (one liner) of your mission statement is usually enough to draw people to your table. Your logo and one or two attractive photos to highlight your school is usually enough.
 - Bring SWAG items (school logo pens, other interesting items from your country with your logo) and give them out liberally. You never know where that pen or trinket will end up! Pray over those items as if they were seed you sow into the world.
 - Other materials on your table can include a recent yearbook, a signup sheet for more information, business cards, a small country flag, a soccer ball, or something that’s interesting and tells something about your school.
 - Avoid the heavy stuff – big items (full size banners). These can work for some people to stand out, but your smiling face and confidence at your table will speak volumes. A few images on a pop-up banner of people that highlight what does on at your school can be very effective.
 - Prepare for the conversations you will have at the fair with the following individuals: people who walk by your table but have never heard of your school, people who know about the world

- of international Christian schools and have some interest but don't know about your school, and those who know about your school and want to learn more.
 - Consider taking written notes of conversations you have with every individual - good or bad.
 - Keep your eye on both the short-term and the long-term. Share your findings and daily activity with your prayer team back home or around the world.
 - Have a clipboard and pen at your table for people to indicate their interest by leaving their name, phone number, and email address.
- Make your own personalized recruiting stops between fair dates made up of contacts from your school community. Return visits, year after year, to a Christian college or large church, can be very powerful. Start with who you know and foster that relationship over time.
- Consider Mission events:
 - Moody Bible college's annual mission fest
 - Mission Fests – Canada, Urbana, CRU Winter Conference
- There are lots of other secular job fairs out there, but they are not cheap.
 - One of the biggest and oldest fairs for international school recruiting is held in Iowa every year. [Learn more here.](#)
 - Scroll down [on this page](#) to see a list of recruiting fairs with International School Services.
 - [Search Associates Job Fairs.](#)
 - [Council of International Schools.](#)
 - Note: Secular job fairs can be challenging when faith and lifestyle issues come up. Be prepared for those conversations.
- Attending any job fair tour (including ACSI's) is not inexpensive. Do you have a budget line for this?

Retention of staff

- First, international schools need a both-and strategy – recruiting and retention. Your recruitment efforts must start your current staff. What does your recruitment plan for your current staff look like? Have you thought through this issue, do you have a plan for keeping the good staff that you already have? Think about recruiting them every year. In other words, do not assume they will stay on. Have you thought about enticements to stay?
- But let's start at the very beginning. Consider how you begin with your newest hires. What you do in the very first days and weeks can make a huge difference in retention.
- Be sure to think through your pre-job orientation. What are you doing with your new staff before they ever reach the school or teach their first class?
- Question to consider: What is the downside of just hiring someone, getting them to your school, having a brief orientation and then showing them their classroom and giving them a key? Think through all that they are going through as they join your community, locality and culture.
- The initial field experiences for your new hire (how on-boarding and orientation is conducted) can indicate future success and longevity. Is your orientation caring and thorough? Does it establish proper expectations? Are new hires given information about transition and culture? Do you appoint a mentor or a caregiver to walk with them through the first year?
- When you set the table of expectations well for your new hires you reduce surprises and frustrations. Then, those same surprises or frustrations become easier to handle – “Oh yeah, they told me this would happen. They told me I might feel this way.”

- Consider [ACSI's PreField Orientation](#) (PFO) program for your new hires. ACSI's PFO has been shown to aid in retention of staff.
 - Even though a good orientation program costs considerable money and time, your investment in your new staff on the front end will pay off in the long term.
 - Also, consider sending a key leader to PFO to invest personally in your incoming staff. Knowing a key leader prior to leaving home can make a big difference in your new hires' anxiety levels.
 - ACSI's PFO promise: Participants who attend PFO will start their new assignment overseas with more confidence, transition more successfully, work with TCKs more effectively, and potentially stay longer at their international school.
- Do you assign veteran teammates to serve as hosts for the first year?
- Have you considered adding in a mid-year retreat day for first year staff?
- One more word on retention. Sometimes you can do everything right - invest in PFO training, have a retention strategy, and even have written and verbal agreement from your new staff to the long term, yet life can get in the way. Unanticipated life events can interrupt your staff members best-laid plans to stay long term. God is aware of this and will meet your need - in the short and long term.

IDEAS that come from participants at the 2019 ICEC Prague Workshop

- *We don't assume our staff will stay and we respect them enough to say, "We hope you will re-sign with us"*
- *Incentives: On word-of-mouth...if you help us recruit a friend there will be a bonus, family tuition discount*
- *Posting on church job boards and other business sites*
- *The place of student teachers as a recruiting tool – consider working with CTECC to secure student teachers. Many times these young people will come back to the place that is now so familiar to them.*
- *Don't forget "[Handshake](#)" the career online platform that colleges use across the US. (More study is needed to know how our schools can access this platform.)*
- *Others: Driestar in Holland? Canada options? South Africa recruiting?*

Online Resources

ACSI does not endorse each site or company below. These resources are offered as a collection of ideas. It is important that you check out each option carefully to be sure it is a good solution for your school.

Institution	For Job Seekers	For employers
Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)	www.ChristianEducatorJobs.com	Included with ACSI membership – 8 free posts https://www.acsi.org/school-services/career-center#Post
ChristianJobs	www.christianjobs.com	Fee Based. https://www.christianjobs.com/employers/job-posting-process/
ACSI Canada	https://www.acsiwc.org/overview-1	Part of ACSI. They would be pleased to post your job free of charge!
Christian Schools Australia	https://csa.edu.au/jobs/	ACSI Partner, fee based. Will offer 50% discount to ACSI international schools. https://christianschooljobs.com.au/employer-panel/instructions-to-post-and-access-discount.

TeachNext	https://teachnext.missionnext.org	Fee to post, must be ACSI school and overseas. Posting page .
Christian Teaching Jobs	www.christianteachingjobs.com	Fee to post. http://www.christianteachingjobs.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=register_employer
Christian Schools International	https://www.csionline.org/job-board	Must be a member of CSI. https://www.csionline.org/job-board/post-job
Christian Career Center	www.christiancareercenter.com	Fee based. https://www.christiancareercenter.com/employer-products/
Association of Christian Teachers UK	https://www.christian-teachers.org.uk/vacancies	This is a free posting in the UK
Christian School Employment	www.christianschoolemployment.com	Fee based. https://christianschoolemployment.com/employer/pricing/
Teachers-in-service	https://www.teachers-in-service.org/	Strictly for MK schools financed by M-support
TeachBeyond	www.teachbeyond.org	Must be a partner or owned schools
Network of International Christian Schools	www.nics.org	Must be a NICS owned school
International School Consortium	https://iscglobal.org/	Must be an ISC owned school
Resourcing Christian Education International	www.rce-international.org	Must be a partner school. https://www.rce-international.org/partner-schools-ministries/
International Schools Services	https://www.iss.edu/international-teaching	Fee based. https://www.iss.edu/services/teacher-recruitment/hire
TeachAway	www.teachaway.com	Fee based. https://www.teachaway.com/recruitment/post-teaching-jobs
Search Associates	www.searchassociates.com	Must be member. https://www.searchassociates.com/School-Services/Recruiting.aspx
Joy Jobs	www.joyjobs.com	Fee based, but inexpensive. http://www.joyjobs.com/schools/index.html
TIE (The International Educator)	https://www.tieonline.com/tie_services.cfm	Fee based, includes print. https://www.tieonline.com/postjobad_ga.cfm

From Our Job Fair Guide Brochure

I am including the text below from a past Job Fair Brochure to 1) let you know how we message to potential recruits about you at our Job Fairs, and 2) to give you an example of how you might communicate in person or online to job seekers of your own. Providing job seekers with free tips communicates care and concern to any who crosses your path. Credit goes to Darren Gentry and the International Community School of Bangkok for some of the ideas below. [This secular site lists similar tips for finding a job.](#)

Message to Job Fair attendees....

Welcome to the International Job Fair!

We're glad you're here. Our international schools are excited to meet you and to see how you might fit into our team overseas. International Christian schools need qualified and passionate individuals with a variety of skill sets to minister to the expatriate children and local families. Whether you're serious about working abroad or just curious about the possibilities, you can use this guide to make the most of your time here at the fair. Thanks for coming!

Finding Your International Calling

Christian teacher, administrator, IT specialist, potential dorm parent, RA, etc. are you looking for an international adventure with lasting impact? Teaching and serving in an international Christian school may be the right calling for you. Here is a suggested pathway to finding your international calling.

Be sure to spend time with God, tell Him what you are thinking and feeling about working overseas. Ask for clear direction, answers to your questions, and openness to whatever He might have in store for you.

Take time to jot down the key issues or concerns you might have about the logistics of teaching overseas. Remember, this process is much more than just job related. Be sure to also think through living overseas, travel arrangements, and personal adjustments, etc.

Learn as much as you can about the process, opportunities, and distinguishing factors of schools or regions in which you are interested. Gather as much information as possible and talk personally with those who work at international Christian schools. And then....

- Throw out your net early and wide. Get information on as many opportunities as possible. Often, just going through the process of researching provides options you may not have thought of before and helps you refine exactly what you want to do.
- Start to learn about the children and teens who are enrolled in international schools. These students often carry characteristics known as Third Culture Kids.
- Communicate directly with the schools or sending organizations with whom you would most like to work.
- Visit a lot of school websites. Follow the social media feeds of a few schools that are of interest to you.
- Be sure to update your resume and have it ready to send to schools.
- Go ahead and apply to some schools and see what happens. There may be a few setbacks initially, but the application process is another way to learn about how things work when pursuing a job overseas.
- Some schools may have recruiters in your time zone or nearby, reach out to arrange a personal conversation.

Keep in mind that it often takes many months from initial job application, to interview, to job offer, to actually arriving at your new posting, so start the process early.

And don't forget to visit www.ChristianEducatorJobs.com where you can post your resume and do research on Christian school job openings for free. See other online job boards in the addendum at the back of this booklet.

A Brief Word about... worldwide locations, missionary teachers, stipends, salaries, and worldwide locations.

Many international Christian schools are located in the great cities of the world. Serving in a city like Seoul, Bangkok, Tianjin, Taipei, Hong Kong, Vienna, Madrid, Moscow, Nairobi, Kigali, Bogota, Rio de Janeiro, Jakarta, or

Sao Paulo might appeal to you. Lesser known cities and smaller towns like Chiang Rai Thailand, Kandern Germany, Niamey Niger, or even Almaty Kazakhstan may be the perfect place for you.

It is important to note that some international Christian schools are looking to hire teachers as missionaries on financial support. Some schools were established to serve the children of Christian missionaries. To help subsidize the cost of missionary kid (MK) education, these schools require their teachers come with a sending agency and raise their own financial support. You may be an excellent candidate for one of these opportunities. If debt is an issue this article indicates a possible solution along with a missionary appointment:

https://world.wng.org/2018/02/repayment_ministry

There is another segment of international Christian schools that offer a partial salary or stipend package to help supplement the amount of support a missionary teacher needs to raise.

And finally, there are international Christian schools that offer a salary and benefit package, including airfare, etc. Be sure to ask financial questions of the schools you are considering and don't let the answer scare you off. Be open to God's call no matter the package.

Whatever the location or the finances, students in schools around the world are waiting for caring teachers and staff members like you to come and teach them.

Things to keep in mind

- Some Christian organizations require that you will raise some or all your financial support like a missionary does.
- Many schools in other countries are private and a few are for-profit ventures.
- Not all international schools provide support for your well-being while you are overseas, so find out how they take care of housing, transportation; travel to and from the country, health care, mental health care, dental care, sick leaves, disability insurances, life insurance, retirement, family benefits, education for children of staff, pre-job orientation, etc.
- No matter where you apply, do your homework and check references on the school. However, one bad internet reference on the school doesn't mean the school is bad!!

Some Questions to Ask Potential Employers:

- What is the school's mission and vision for the future?
- How long has the school been operating?
- What are the demographics of the staff and of the student body?
- How long have the head of school and the principals been at the school? (Longevity in leadership is often a good marker for the school, generally, but not always)
- Do teachers get planning periods?
- Do teachers have an allowance for supplies, and if so, how do they go about getting the funds?
- What resources are available for me the classroom? What technology is available to staff and to students?
- What is done for teacher professional development and continuing education?
- What is done to orient new teachers to the school and to the host country's culture?
- What are the expectations for...
 - Teacher dress?

- Teacher behavior at school and out of school?
- Number of teaching hours each day?
- Extra-curricular activities?
- Supervision?
- Weekend obligations?
- Church attendance?
- Orientation and arrival times in country to start my new job?

Blessings on the journey

Tim Shuman and your Friends at the ACSI International School Office

international@acsi.org