

CAN Schools and You, a Unique Adventure

The ACSI International School team serves a broad spectrum of schools. Some are in remote, rural areas of the globe while others are in some of the world's largest cities. In addition, some Christian schools operate freely as Christian schools, while others must take restrictive precautions about communicating their Christian purpose. It is this last group that we want to bring to your attention from time to time.

The schools that we want to highlight are located in what has been coined, "Creative Access Nations" (CAN). A Creative Access Nation is a country where it is difficult if not impossible to obtain a religious related visa. Expat individuals who feel called to such a location usually enter under a different purpose like business, technical aid, non-governmental work, agriculture, and of course, education. Given these limitations, CAN schools experience challenges getting the word out to educators and leaders that might feel called to join in their important work. ***Maybe one of you reading this highlight will hear that call.***

Note: Given the risks mentioned above, the identity of this school, its location, and even the name of the interviewee will not be given. At the end of this interview, you can learn how you can get more information about the school below.

Tim Shuman, Regional Director for International Schools, ACSI Global

Q. Can you give us a general idea of what part of the world your school is located?

A. It might be best to say that we are located former "Soviet Central Asia".

Q. What was the founding purpose of the school?

A. The founding purpose of our school was to provide education for the children of cross-cultural workers, thus allowing parents to engage in community projects and local relationships. The purpose of the school remains the same today.

Q. Tell us a little bit about your school?

A. We were founded in 1998 with 6 or so students as a homeschooling cooperative and have grown to over 150 students across grades K-12. We have facilities to enable administration, classroom learning and PE.

Q. What is the primary demographic of your student body?

A. Our student body is almost 100% MK (although we don't use the M-word in daily work), with one family who might be described as 'business'.

Q. What is the local economy and location like?

A. Our location is in a capital city of around 1 million people in a developing country. Poverty is common throughout the country but less so in the capital where we are located.

Q. What are some of the best parts about life in your community?

A. Less than an hour's drive from the school are spectacular mountains, which make for great hiking and camping in summer and skiing in winter. Local people are extremely hospitable and make excellent hosts. The people of Central Asia are unique and wonderful and it's a pleasure to get to know them.

Q. What is at risk if local officials were to learn more about your work?

A. If local officials hear some religious words associated with our school, they could misunderstand those words to indicate a political agenda. Such a misunderstanding could undermine our place in the community and risk everything up to and including school closure.

Q. What challenges do you have in recruiting teachers and staff to your school?

A. Our country's name ends with '-stan' which can be a barrier for some who may have negative associations with those countries. In our case, our city and region are really quite safe. Also, we do pay a partial salary, but we especially focus on finding teachers who will raise some support for themselves, the same as the parents of our students do.

Q. What characteristics are you looking for in an excellent expat candidate to join your CAN work?

A. We are looking for competent teachers who are willing to prioritize God's calling to serve in unreached contexts, those who joyfully seek to embrace life as a follower of Jesus in a cross-cultural setting.

Q. What is the best part about joining your team?

A. Our team is full of inspiring, sacrificial, servant hearted spiritual giants. We mutually encourage and support one another. Some of us do church together and walk alongside each other, literally and figuratively as we hike, work, and pray together. We also have more formal mentoring and staff development relationships between junior and senior staff.

Q. What is your greatest need? How can we pray for you?

A. Our greatest need is experienced and skillful educators and administrators. Our school started as a home schooling cooperative and is now at the right stage to grow into a more professional institution. Please pray for experienced educators and administrators to join in this work while contributing to the great commission and evangelization of unreached peoples.

Q. What is your greatest joy? What can we give thanks for?

A. Our greatest joy is being with the children and families of our school community. It is a unique privilege to serve and provide for our student's social and educational needs.

Thank you for sharing with us. We are praying for you.

If you would like more information about this CAN school, please write to Tim Shuman and mention "Information requested on CANSchool-01". tim_shuman@acsi.org