

RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION

Background to Understanding the Global Context of Student Ministry

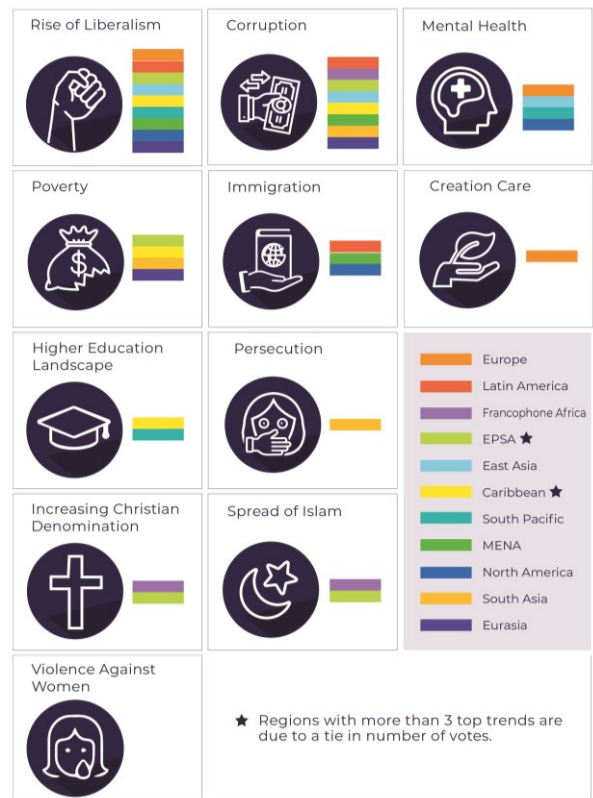
The following overview outlines the process followed over 2019-2020 to gain an understanding of the global context of student ministry. We combined internal grassroots consultations with external research findings and the experience and expertise of IFES senior staff to provide us with a deeper understanding of both the context of our ministry and the shared priorities of our movements of as we look ahead.

IDENTIFYING GLOBAL TRENDS

We initially reviewed a number of documents, reports and articles from external sources and, through this desk research, identified eleven global trends which seemed most likely to have the potential to affect student ministry.

The participants were asked to indicate the top three global trends that affect their students and national movements the most. Most national movements concur that the four trends which affect them the most are: **rise of liberalism, corruption, mental health and poverty.**

11 GLOBAL TRENDS	Increasing Christian Denomination
Spread of Islam	Persecution
Rise of Liberalism	Violence Against Women
Poverty	Mental Health
Higher Education Landscape	Immigration
Creation Care	Corruption



NATIONAL MOVEMENT SURVEY

Based on these findings, a survey was conducted among IFES national movements. Over 120 movements gave their input: 164 people at the World Assembly 2019 workshop and 83 people via an online version of the survey. *(Please contact Stephanie Chin at: stephanie.chin@ifesworld.org. If you are interested in seeing a copy of the survey or details of the participants' mode of participation, their roles by region and the number of movements that participated in this exercise.)*

UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS FOR IFES

Further desk research and analysis of external data was conducted to verify the results and to identify the regional relevance of each trend.



THE CONNECTED GENERATION



Understanding the Global Context of Student Ministry

We cannot make ministry plans without an understanding of the students we are serving. This page summarises some of the characteristics of this generation, drawing extensively on research from Barna and World Vision: theconnectedgeneration.com

TODAY'S STUDENTS AND GRADUATES BELONG TO TWO DEMOGRAPHIC COHORTS: MILLENNIALS (ALSO KNOWN AS **GENERATION Y** AND BORN BETWEEN 1984-1998) AND **GENERATION Z** (BORN BETWEEN 1999-2015).

Together, these groups are "The Connected Generation", a result of the ongoing digital revolution. They are more globally-linked than previous generations, but are often lonely and isolated from their surrounding community. Many young adults also feel uncertainty related to vocation and economics which leads to anxiety about their future.

SPIRITUAL AND GLOBAL AWARENESS

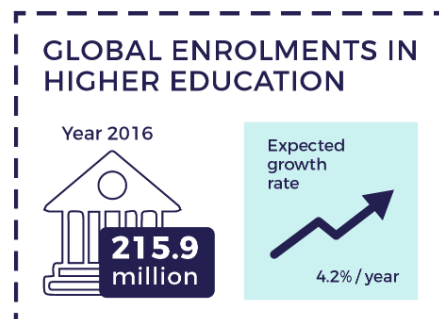
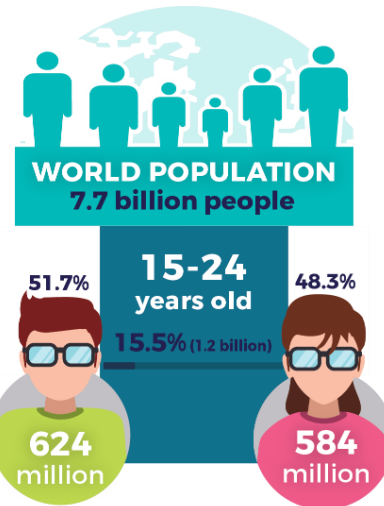
The spiritual awareness of this generation is quite high; they sense there is more going on than they can see with their eyes. They are not only interested in whether Christianity is true, they also want to see that it is good. Hypocrisy, suffering, wars and science are sources of doubt for many young people who might otherwise be drawn to faith. There is great concern about global issues such as corruption, climate change and extreme poverty, and a sense that there is a lack of effective leadership both to address such challenges and more broadly in society.

LEADING FOR INFLUENCE

This generation wants to be part of the solution to the problems they see but they are not sure how. They believe strong leadership needs to combine timeless qualities, such as honesty, integrity, conviction and courage, with other ideas that are more contextual. There is a move towards collaborating and influencing, rather than the traditional ideas of control and direction. ¹

DEVELOPING A RESILIENT FAITH

Among Christians, those who were actively engaged in the faith of their upbringing have higher chances of being a resilient Christian in their adulthood. Many also point to someone in their life who encourages them to grow spiritually – highlighting the importance of a spiritual mentor. The overall religious climate of a particular culture also matters: disciples need extra support from their faith community in secular and post-Christian cultures, compared to Christian or even multi-faith cultures where regular religious practice and high-priority spirituality is the norm.



Sources:
• <https://www.worldometers.info/demographics/world-demographics/#pop>
• 'Massification of higher education revisited' by Angel J Calderon, Analytics & Insights, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia in June 2018]

CHURCH PRIORITIES

Among things that young adults find missing from their worship community are: friends, opportunities to fight injustice and oppression, vocational training, social gatherings outside of church services, relationship workshops and support groups. It appears that church life is distinct from their social circle or even from the issues and problems facing the world. Many Christians want to honour God in the work they do, so vocational discipleship is an enormous opportunity for churches.

¹ <https://generationz.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/GenZGenAlpha.pdf>



RISE OF LIBERALISM



Understanding the Global Context of Student Ministry

The rise of liberalism was one of the four global trends identified by national movements as most likely to affect student ministry in the coming years. This summary looks at the rise of liberalism and the experience of IFES movements.

DEFINING LIBERALISM

Liberalism is a philosophy based on liberty, consent of the governed and equality before the law.

Liberals typically support causes such as limited government, individual rights (civil and human rights), capitalism, democracy, secularism, gender equality, racial equality, internationalism, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of religion.¹

EXAMPLE FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF IFES MOVEMENTS

Regional consultations for the IFES Big Issues project highlighted the changing operating environment for movements in Europe and North America: there is an ongoing shift from a post-Christian culture to a predominantly non-Christian culture. This rapid away from a biblical worldview towards secularization threatens the national movements' access to campus and freedom of speech.

HOW SHOULD IFES RESPOND?

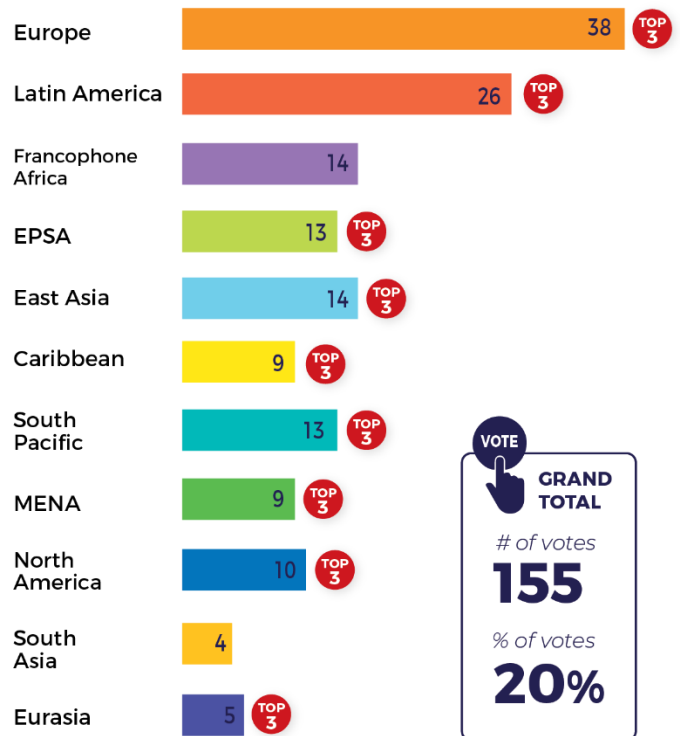
The survey comments from the Global Trends Exercise identified a need to inform students about these current issues through a biblical lens, to help them understand what it means to follow Christ in such contexts, and to equip them to engage in conversations concerning these issues. Specific topics within liberalism mentioned in the comments are sexuality, gender, feminism, freedom of religion, freedom of press, equality, postmodernism and secularization.

Due to the wide range of liberalism topics/causes, deeper consultation with each region is required to determine the specific topics that are relevant to their movements, since they may differ from region to region.

REGIONAL RESPONSE ON THE ISSUE



RISE OF LIBERALISM



The rise of liberalism received the highest number of votes from participants in the global trends exercise. Nine regions selected this as one of their top three global trends affecting students and movements.

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberalism>



CORRUPTION



Understanding the Global Context of Student Ministry

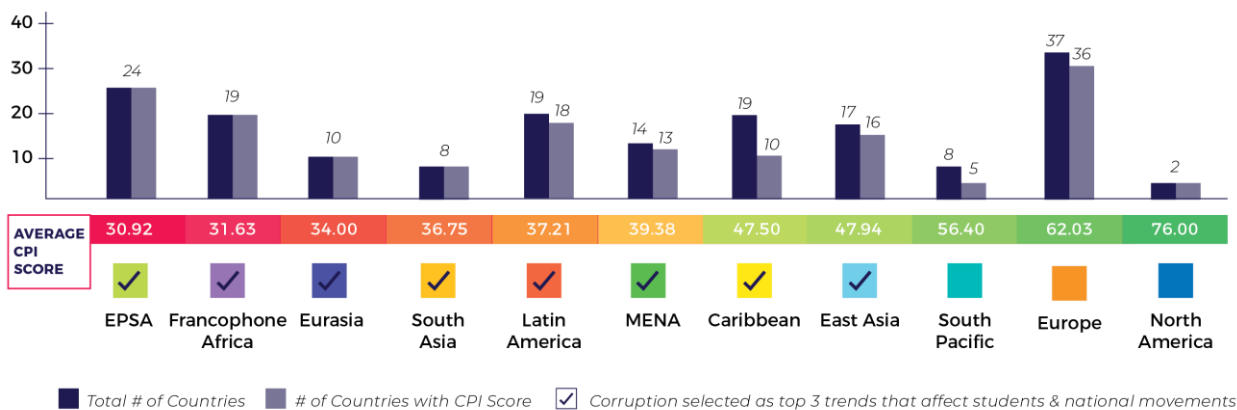
Corruption was one of the four global trends identified by national movements as most likely to affect student ministry in the coming years. This summary looks at the regional relevance of corruption and the experience of IFES movements.

DEFINING CORRUPTION

Transparency International defines corruption as *'the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.'* It can occur: at a high level of government, where the central functioning of the state is distorted, enabling leaders to benefit at the expense of the public good; among low- and mid-level public officials in their interactions with ordinary citizens, who are trying to access basic goods or services in places like hospitals or schools; and among political decision makers, who sustain their power, status and wealth by manipulating policies, institutions and the allocation of resources and financing.

REGIONAL CORRUPTION LEVELS

In 2018, Transparency International ranked 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople, using a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). This was published in their Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) and formed the basis of the regional analysis below.



The graphic above shows that IFES regions with the highest levels of corruption (lowest CPI scores) were the ones which identified corruption as a top trend affecting global student ministry. Corruption in those regions affects the local students and the national movements.

EXPERIENCE OF IFES MOVEMENTS

Survey comments from the global trends exercise point towards corruption at all levels of society – personal, national and in the university. This confirms earlier research from the IFES Big Issues project, where participants from Francophone Africa and EPSA mentioned corruption on campus, and those from Latin America cited corrupt examining in the faculty and unjust governmental practices affecting tuition fees and admission. Corruption may still be an issue for individual movements in regions with lower levels of corruption. For example, in the Big Issues consultation, corruption was raised as an issue for the Pacific Islands.

HOW SHOULD IFES RESPOND?

Survey comments from the global trends exercise emphasized the centrality of the gospel in addressing this issue – through the corporate body of student ministry as a prophetic voice and the personal role of students and graduates in modeling a life of integrity on campus and in their respective vocations upon graduation. There were also repeated calls to raise up leaders who can be justice keepers, including in the political arena.



Understanding the Global Context of Student Ministry

Mental health was one of the four global trends identified by national movements as most likely to affect student ministry in the coming years. This summary looks at the regional relevance of mental health issues and the experience of IFES movements.

DEFINING MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to his or her community.

REGIONAL RELEVANCE OF THE ISSUE

Mental health issues affect the student generation around the world. As one example, suicide is the second leading cause of death in 15-29-year-olds¹ and about 98% of those who died by suicide had a diagnosable mental disorder.² Nearly 80% of suicides occur in low- and middle-income countries which bear the larger part of the global suicide burden.³

Around 13% of the global population – about 970 million people – are thought to have some sort of mental or substance use disorder.⁴ The actual numbers are likely to be higher as many mental health cases go unreported, especially in less developed countries due to low awareness or stigma.

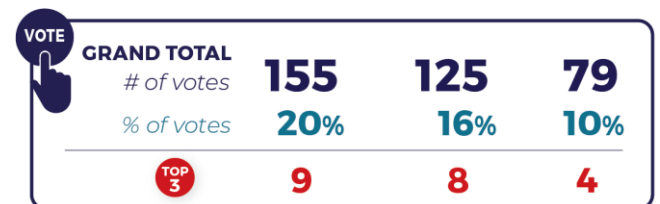
War and disasters have a large impact on mental health and psychosocial well-being.⁵ These have huge implications on student ministry, including international student ministry involving refugees and asylum seekers from countries affected by conflict or disaster.



	Rise of Liberalism	Corruption	Mental Health
Europe	38	11	21
Latin America	26	29	18
Francophone Africa	14	21	2
EPSA	13	28	4
East Asia	14	8	12
Caribbean	9	7	5
South Pacific	13	4	6
MENA	9	6	1
North America	10	1	7
South Asia	4	6	2
Eurasia	5	4	1

HOW COULD IFES RESPOND?

Survey comments mention that student ministry can be strategically positioned to serve university communities by providing information to raise awareness on mental health and offering pastoral care. Student groups can act as restorative communities where students build genuine and healthy relationships, as well as safe spaces for struggling students. Staff workers/student leaders could be equipped to detect cases which require professional medical help.



¹ https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/mental_health_facts/en/index2.html

² Mental health section in <https://ourworldindata.org/suicide>

³ 'National suicide prevention strategies: progress, examples and indicators' publication on <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/national-suicide-prevention-strategies-progress-examples-and-indicators>

⁴ <https://ourworldindata.org/mental-health#prevalence-of-mental-health-and-substance-use-disorders>

⁵ https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/mental_health_facts/en/index3.html



POVERTY



Understanding the Global Context of Student Ministry

Poverty was one of the global trends identified by national movements as most likely to affect student ministry in the coming years. This summary looks at the regional relevance of poverty and the experience of IFES movements.

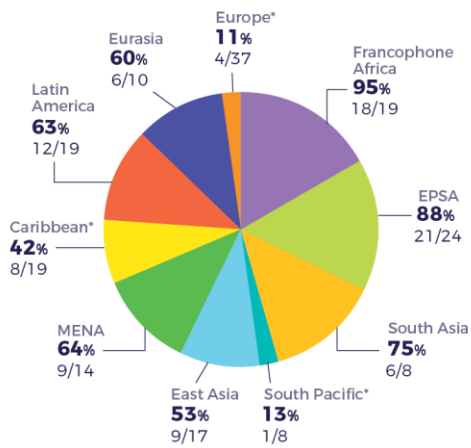
DEFINING POVERTY

Those who live below the poverty line find it difficult, if not impossible, to meet basic needs, such as health, education, food and shelter. Multidimensional poverty includes hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, social discrimination and exclusion, as well as the lack of participation in decision-making.¹

REGIONAL RELEVANCE OF THE ISSUE

Poverty is measured independently by each country's government and hence differs between countries². So, for the purpose of cross-country comparison, we considered two global poverty markers: the internationally agreed poverty line of US\$1.90 a day and multidimensional poverty levels based on data available from the United Nations (UN)³.

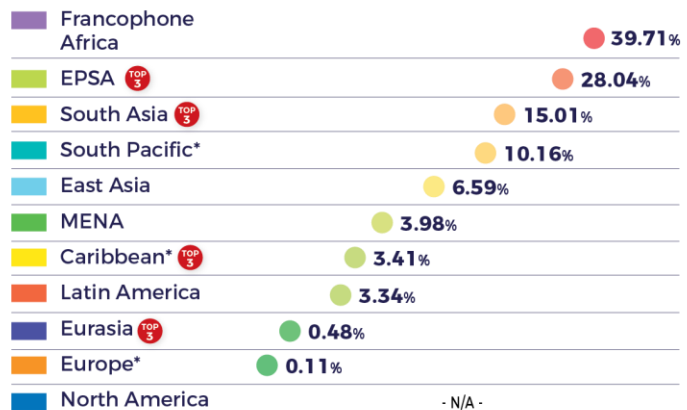
Poverty rates (multidimensional poverty)



of countries with available data from UN / Total # of countries

*Note: Data available might not accurately represent regional situation due to limited number of countries with data available.

% Population in severe multidimensional poverty



Most people living below the poverty line are in **South Asia** and **sub-Saharan Africa**¹ (the countries from which are in the IFES regions of EPSA and Francophone Africa.), so it is not surprising that the IFES regions of South Asia and EPSA selected poverty as a top trend affecting student ministry. In Francophone Africa, poverty was selected as the region's fourth top trend, with a gap of just two votes below its third top trend.

The Caribbean and Eurasia regions also selected poverty as one of their top trends, even though available statistics seem to indicate that these regions are generally not poor. Further research and consultation with the movements is needed to understand this better.

EXPERIENCE OF IFES MOVEMENTS

In previous regional consultations for the IFES Big Issues in the University project, participants from both Francophone Africa and EPSA raised the issue of poverty, highlighting students who cannot afford tuition fees or resources. Survey comments from the Caribbean and Eurasia in the Global Trends Exercise suggests they experience poverty both in the university (poor students/peers in need) and nationally.

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/poverty/>

² <https://www.worldvision.org/sponsorship-news-stories/global-poverty-facts#measured>

³ <http://data.un.org/DocumentData.aspx?id=397>

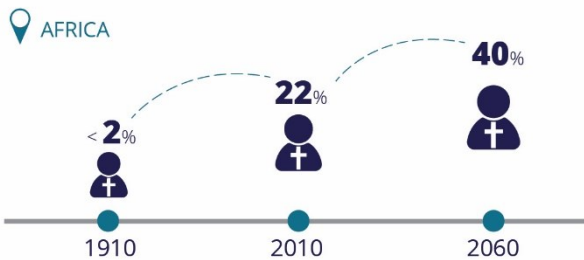


Understanding the Global Context of Student Ministry

Increasing Christian denominations was one of the global trends identified as being likely to affect student ministry in the coming years. This summary looks at the regional relevance of this issue and the experience of IFES movements.

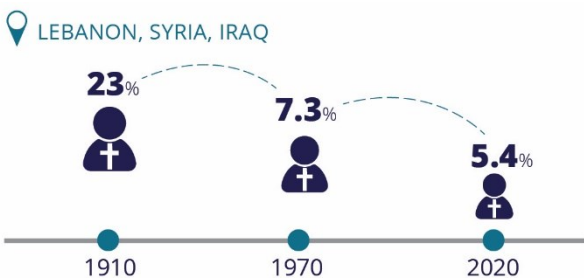
A CHANGING FACE OF CHRISTIANITY

There has been a dramatic change in the geographical location of Christians globally. The Global North (defined as Europe and Northern America) contained over 80% of all Christians in 1910 but this was less than 40% by 2010.



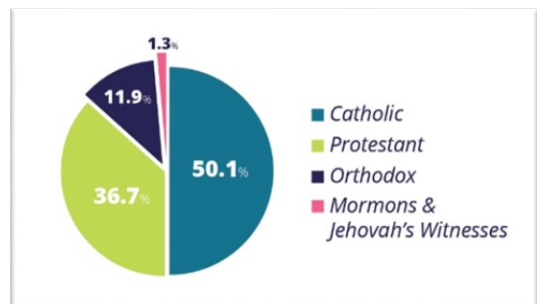
In 1910, less than 2% of all Christians lived in Africa, but this was almost 22% by 2010 and is expected to continue to increase to 40% by 2060.¹

Many historically Christian communities – notably those in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq – have been emigrating because of ongoing conflict and violence in the region. In 1910, the region was 23% Christian, in 1970 it was 7.3%, and by 2020 it will likely be only 5.4% Christian.

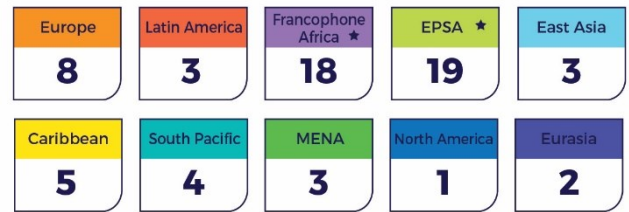


Although the global Christian population has not increased significantly over the past 100 years, remaining at about one third of the world's population, it is becoming increasingly fragmented. There are currently more than 45,000 denominations listed in the World Christian database, ranging in size from millions of members to fewer than 100 members.

The global Christian population is divided into three main categories: Catholic (50.1%), Protestant (36.7%), Orthodox (11.9%), with other smaller groups such as Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses (1.3%).²



INCREASING CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS



★ Region selected 'Increasing Christian Denominations' as Top 3 trends affecting movements and students

Grand Total	# of votes	% of votes
66	9	

The Francophone Africa and EPSA regions selected increasing Christian denominations as one of their top three trends. Survey comments from the Global Trends Exercise indicate that national movements affirm the importance of IFES student ministry being interdenominational and view churches as partners instead of competitors.

However, there appears to be some confusion among students arising from the myriad of denominations and presence of various church ministries on campus. Some national movements face challenges in relationship building and communication with church pastors. Other national movements experience church ministries on campus that do not want to work together.

¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/19/sub-saharan-africa-will-be-home-to-growing-shares-of-the-worlds-christians-and-muslims/>

² <https://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/>



IMMIGRATION



Understanding the Global Context of Student Ministry

Immigration was one of the global trends identified in desk research as being likely to affect student ministry in the coming years. This summary looks at the regional relevance of immigration and the experience of IFES movements.

DEFINING IMMIGRATION

Immigration is the international movement of people into a destination country of which they are not natives or where they do not possess citizenship in order to settle or reside, especially as permanent residents or naturalized citizens, or to take up employment as a migrant/foreign worker.¹

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

According to the UN, the number of international migrants worldwide has grown rapidly in recent years – from 173 million migrants in 2000, to 220 million in 2010 and 258 million in 2017. Over 60% of all international migrants live in Asia (80 million) or Europe (78 million), followed by Northern America (58 million), Africa (25 million), Latin America and the Caribbean (10 million) and Oceania (8 million).

The infographics below shows the number of migrants in the top four immigrant hosting countries, and the top eight countries where the migrants originate from, consolidated based on IFES region.²

The IFES regions of North America, Latin America and MENA all selected immigration as one of their top three trends affecting student ministry (and Europe placed it fourth). This suggests that immigration is an issue both for immigrant-hosting countries and countries that have a lot of people immigrating. It is surprising that South and East Asia did not identify this as a top trend as both regions have a significant number of migrants being hosted or leaving. This might be due to the lack of education opportunities for migrant/refugee children or because migrant students are not attending student groups. Consultation with regions is needed for further clarity.



HOW CAN IFES RESPOND?

In survey comments gathered from the Global Trends Exercise, national movements frequently mentioned International Student Ministry. Comments touched on the need to increase awareness among students on staying in their origin country rather than migrating, providing migration support between national movements and overcoming a closed mindset that fears foreign influence.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immigration#cite_note-1

² https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017_Highlights.pdf



SPREAD OF ISLAM

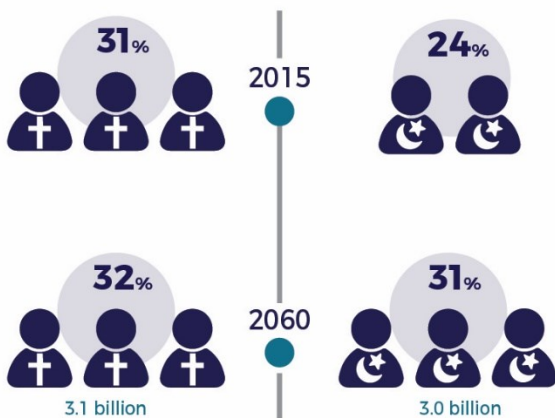


Understanding the Global Context of Student Ministry

Spread of Islam was one of the global trends identified in desk research as being likely to affect student ministry in the coming years. This summary looks at the regional relevance of the spread of Islam and the experience of IFES movements.

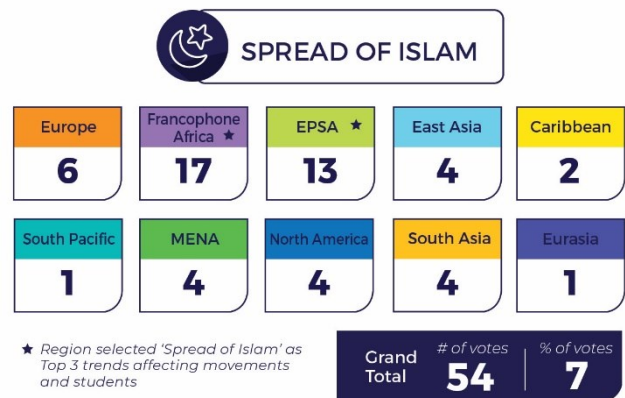
DEFINING THE SPREAD OF ISLAM

In 2015, Christians were the largest religious group in the world (about 31% of the global population) and Muslims were second (24% of the global population). Between 2015 and 2060, the world's population is expected to increase by 32% and the number of Muslims – the religious group with the youngest population and the highest fertility – is projected to increase by 70%. The number of Christians is projected to rise by 34%. As a result, according to Pew Research Center projections, by 2060, the number of Muslims (3.0 billion, or 31% of the population) will near the Christian count (3.1 billion, or 32%).¹ Indeed, if current demographic trends continue, the number of Muslims is expected to exceed the number of Christians by the end of this century.



The growth and regional migration of Muslims, combined with the ongoing impact of the Islamic State (also known as ISIS or ISIL) and other extremist groups that commit acts of violence in the name of Islam, have brought Muslims and the Islamic faith to the forefront of the political debate in many countries. Migration is increasing the Muslim population in some regions, including North America and Europe². It is projected that 10% of all Europeans will be Muslims by 2050.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES



Francophone Africa and EPSA both selected the spread of Islam as one of their top three trends. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to a growing share of the world's Muslims. Between 2015 and 2060, the number of all Muslims living in the region is projected to increase from 16% to 27%. It is noteworthy in terms of student ministry that in this context Muslim adults are more than twice as likely as Christians to have no formal schooling.³

HOW CAN IFES RESPOND?

The survey comments from the Global Trends Exercise point towards the need to love our Muslim neighbours and to further understand Islam as well as the Arabic language and culture, while being equipped theologically to share the gospel through effective evangelism strategies. For many movements, the Muslim students are international students hence IFES may consider addressing this trend via International Student Ministry.

¹ Global Population Projections, 2015 to 2060 section in

<https://www.pewforum.org/2017/04/05/the-changing-global-religious-landscape/#global-population-projections-2015-to-2060>

² <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/09/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/>

³ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/12/14/muslims-in-sub-saharan-africa-are-twice-as-likely-as-christians-to-have-no-formal-education/>



Understanding the Global Context of Student Ministry

The higher education landscape was one of the global trends identified in desk research as being likely to affect student ministry in the coming years. This summary looks at the regional relevance of the higher education landscape and the experience of IFES movements.

DEFINING THE HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

The higher education landscape is shifting in three main ways:

1	2	3
<p>Educational institutions are adapting to changing labour market demands due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. A new education model emphasizing practical skills to support the high-tech knowledge economy is emerging.</p>	<p>Education is becoming more accessible globally through increasing investments by governments and because of digital technology. Enrollment in massive open online courses (MOOCs) more than doubled between 2015 and 2017—reaching 78 million globally.</p>	<p>International students are being hosted by an increasingly diverse range of countries.¹ Why? Increasingly restrictive immigration policies in several developed markets are pushing students to a greater number of countries, and emerging market governments are improving the quality of higher education in a bid to attract more international students.</p>

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES



* Region selected 'Higher Education' as Top 3 trends affecting movements and students

Only the regions of the Caribbean and the South Pacific selected Higher Education Landscape among their top three trends. It is worth noting that the higher education landscape varies within regions and countries, depending on a variety of factors including course disciplines and internet availability.

HOW CAN IFES RESPOND?

Survey comments from the Global Trends Exercise highlighted some implications for national movements. There is the difficulty of reaching students doing online distance learning and the need to use digital technology in ministry to engage students more effectively moving forward.

The expansion of tertiary education institutions in the emerging markets/developing countries may mean national movements have to be prepared to increase pioneering efforts in new local campuses and expand their reach to more tertiary education institutions. Shifts and fluctuations in the magnitude of international students, which very much depends on the global and national political situation, calls for national movements and student ministries to be agile in adapting their International Students Ministry model according to demand and needs.

¹ <https://www.atkearney.com/web/global-business-policy-council/global-trends/2018-2023>



Understanding the Global Context of Student Ministry

Creation care was one of the global trends identified by national movements as most likely to affect student ministry in the coming years. This summary looks at the regional relevance of creation care and the experience of IFES movements.

DEFINING CREATION CARE



Climate change is perhaps the greatest threat to sustainable development of the 21st century. The changing climate itself; the adaptation to these changes by the people, countries and economic sectors most affected; and the mitigation measures required to move towards low-carbon economies, have far-reaching implications for economic and social development.¹



Global consumers, increasingly composed of Millennials and Generation Z, are making more value based purchases across the entire commercial landscape. This trend includes a growing number of individuals incorporating sustainability, health, and wellness factors into their purchasing decisions. According to a 2015 survey, 66% of global consumers were willing to pay more for sustainable brands—a significant increase from the 50% in 2013.



Criticism of industrial farming practices is leading to more demand for cage-free, humanely raised, and grass-fed animal products. Some of the most innovative and potentially game-changing investments are those related to cultured meat and non-meat alternatives to satisfy global protein demand.² According to Google Trends, global interest in veganism has soared more than 2,000% since 2004 while Meatless Mondays and other campaigns to reduce consumption, waste and single use plastics are also rising.



Only the Europe region selected Creation Care as one of its top three trends affecting movements and students. Strong environmental activism exists in this region which has seen youth-led climate protests across its countries addressing their concerns to UN and the World Economic Forum.³

Participants from the South Pacific also commented on climate change, as the low-laying islands of the South Pacific remain among the most vulnerable in the world to a rise in sea levels.⁴ Respondents to the global trends exercise raised other related issues that concern students, including concerns around single-use plastics and climate issues, as well as the possible benefits of the green economy, sustainable living, and fair trade.

While North America did not select Creation Care as a top three trend, they did bring up the subject of climate change and responsibility in responding to it, during the regional consultations for the "Big Issues in the University Project".

¹ <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/dw4sd/themes/green-jobs/lang-en/index.htm>

² <https://www.atkearney.com/web/global-business-policy-council/global-trends/2018-2023>

³ <https://grist.org/article/youth-led-climate-protests-sweep-across-europe/>

⁴ http://www.wfpacific.org/what_we_do/climatechange/



PERSECUTION



Understanding the Global Context of Student Ministry

Persecution was one of the global trends identified in desk research as being likely to affect student ministry in the coming years. This summary looks at the regional relevance of persecution and the experience of IFES movements.

DEFINING PERSECUTION

Christian persecution is defined as any hostility experienced as a result of identification with Jesus Christ.¹ Open Doors' annual World Watch List examines the 50 countries worldwide where it's most difficult to be a Christian. Across these countries, 245 million Christians (one in nine Christians worldwide) experience high levels of persecution for their choice to follow Christ. The primary cause of persecution in seven out of the top ten countries on the World Watch List is Islamic oppression.²

Open Doors' annual survey reveals several trends in how Christians are being targeted around the world:

TREND 1	TREND 2	TREND 3
Christian women experience "double persecution"—one for being a Christian and one for being a woman.	A radical Islamic ideology is being spread across sub-Saharan Africa by ISIS and Islamic militant fighters.	More laws are being passed to control religion by state authorities aided by monitoring via digital technology.

REGIONAL VARIATIONS



★ Region selected 'Persecution' as Top 3 trends affecting movements and students

The IFES region of South Asia was the only one to select persecution as one of its top three trends. This corresponds with the results from the South Asia regional consultation for the "Big Issues in the University Project". The Big Issues consultation also found that persecution was a main concern for Francophone Africa and EPSA. This mirrors the fact that 14 of the top 50 countries on the World Watch List lie in Sub-Saharan Africa.³

EXPERIENCE OF IFES MOVEMENTS

Survey comments from participants in the global trends exercise showed that movements feel they should respond to the issue of persecution by providing more training on the theology of suffering and encouraging a greater global awareness about persecution.

Due to secularization, Christians in some western countries are also beginning to feel some opposition and tension for professing Christianity.

¹ <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/>

² <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/world-watch-list/>

³ <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/stories/in-africa-christians-are-in-the-flames-of-persecution-and-on-fire-for-jesus/>



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



Understanding the Global Context of Student Ministry

Violence against women was one of the global trends identified in desk research as being likely to affect student ministry in the coming years. This summary looks at the regional relevance of violence against women and the experience of IFES movements.

DEFINING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

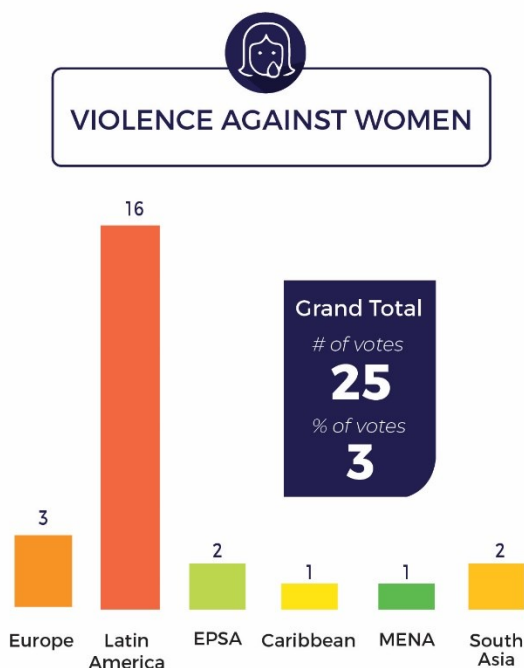
Violence against women is often considered a form of hate crime, committed against women or girls specifically because they are female. The term 'gender-based violence' refers to "any acts or threats of acts intended to hurt or make women suffer physically, sexually or psychologically, and which affect women because they are women or affect women disproportionately".

Violence against women is a significant public health problem, as well as a fundamental violation of women's human rights. Based on statistics by World Health Organization (WHO) in 2013, 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual violence by a partner, or sexual violence by a non-partner. Evidence shows that women who have experienced this form of violence are 2.3 times more likely to have alcohol use disorders and 2.6 times more likely to experience depression or anxiety.¹

Although none of the regions selected violence against women as one of their top three trends, it did feature in Latin America's top five, where studies have found that a huge proportion of women have been physically or sexually abused by their partner. Between 28% and 64% did not seek help or speak to anyone about their experience of violence.

The other regions with high prevalence (above 30%) of violence against women are the African regions (Francophone Africa and EPSA), Eastern Mediterranean region (MENA) and South-East Asia region (South Asia and East Asia).

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES



None of the regions selected 'violence against women' as Top 3 trends affecting movements & students

HOW COULD IFES RESPOND?

Some movements in Latin America are already addressing the issue of violence against women through theatre productions and discussion events.

Further consultation with other regions is needed to understand their local context and culture in connection with this issue.

Survey comments from the Global Trends Exercise indicate the need to provide clarity from a Biblical viewpoint concerning the issue of gender – be it gender equality, gender equity or gender roles – an issue that divides even the global church across various denominations. Since it is related to feminism, it may be addressed by IFES under the umbrella of the Rise of Liberalism.

¹ Executive summary on <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/9789241564625/en/>