

Feature

MK education

What is an MK?

Missionary Kids (MKs) are the children of missionary parents. Many are born and/or raised in a country different to that of their parents. MKs are part of a broader group referred to as Third Culture Kids (TCKs). A TCK is a person who has spent a significant period of time in one or more culture(s) other than his or her own, thus integrating elements of those cultures and their own birth culture, into a third culture. The term TCK encompasses children of business, professional, and government people who work overseas while MK refers specifically to missionary kids. MKs make up nearly 20 percent of TCKs worldwide.

What are MKs like?

MKs are an incredibly diverse group of people. However, research shows they tend to:

- experience difficulties relating with people of their parents' culture (90% feel "out of sync" with their peers)
- identify with where they were raised which could be multiple cities, countries, or continents
- be open-minded and tolerant of diverse cultures and often feel more at home in culturally rich environments (ninety percent report feeling as if they understand other cultures/peoples better than average Westerners)
- speak more than one language
- be more likely than non-TCKs to earn a bachelor's degree (81% vs 21%), with 40 percent earning an advanced degree
- get along with other MKs very well because they possess a unique shared experience
- struggle to have in-depth communication with non-MKs
- be unaware of the pop culture influences within their passport country
- be more mature as teenagers than non-TCKs, but ironically take longer to "grow up" in their 20s
- be very aware of global politics and issues
- come from intact families and have a close family experience
- enter careers that allow them to travel frequently or live overseas
- develop a sense of belonging everywhere and nowhere
- be independent and cosmopolitan (eighty percent believe they can get along with anybody)
- often struggle with their identity and with the losses they have suffered in each move
- choose careers in education, medicine, professional positions, or self employment
- have lower divorce rates than the general population, but they marry older (25+)



The care and education of missionary children is a key support need. This feature defines what an MK is and describes their tendencies before looking at what WEC is doing to support them. It then lists opportunities for readers to get involved.

WEC Australia has consultants available to discuss MK support with individuals, churches and church planters.

Call **1300 788 566**
or email
info@wec.com.au

MK support

The support of missionary children and their families is a focus within WEC. Susan Giles is WEC Australia's MK advisor.

"Simply put, without good education our families will come home and the church planting won't get done," Susan said.

"My role is to speak with new church planters about parenting MKs, help them look through education options, and to help families through transition periods."

"Lots of couples go out without kids, have their children and then begin to look at education issues without experience of the Australian education system."

"So they are starting at square one - what system should they use, what options are there - home school, international school, local school, or distance education."

Susan, together with her husband Peter, will attend an MK advisor summit in March in London that will bring together 20 MK advisors from around the world to share ideas and hone practices so that WEC can provide the best support possible to families.

Your opportunities for 2008-9

The following is a list of opportunities WEC has for you to serve unreached peoples through MK education. Please note that these are not all WEC-run schools. In some cases the listed schools are international schools which WEC-related parents send their children and thus WEC is keen to help provide staff to the schools to ensure the schools continue.

Bourofaye Christian School, Senegal
<http://bcs.wec-int.org.uk>
Primary x2
Secondary/Middle & High - Mathematics, English, Science, Art & Music
Admin & maintenance staff

Hebron School, India
www.hebronooty.org
ESL/ASL
Secondary - Maths, History, Modern Languages, Technology, Physics
Resident expatriate Nurse

GDQ, Albania
www.gdqschool.org
Special Needs Educator x2
Classroom Aides/Learning Support Assistants x3
Kindergarten/Year 1 x1

Wesley International School, Indonesia
www.wesleyinterschool.org
No current listings but possibilities will come up through the year

Hope Academy, Kyrgyzstan
www.hopeacademykg.com
School Director - for 2008/2009 academic year
Primary x3
ESL
Secondary/Middle school - English (language and literature), History/Geography, Mathematics

Hope International, Cambodia
www.hopeschool-cambodia.org
Elementary/ Primary teachers
Special needs
Secondary - English, Visual Arts, PE, ESL, Mathematics & Science
Assistant principal

Black Forest Academy, Germany
www.bfacademy.com
Biology, Chemistry, German, Spanish, Guidance Counsellor, American Literature
Dorm Parents & Residence Assistants

Grace International School, Thailand
www.gisthailand.org
Webmaster & IT support staff
NILD trained (National Institute for Learning Development) or equivalent
School counsellor, Occupational therapist
Primary/elementary - Music, Special Educational Needs
Secondary/Middle & Senior - Mathematics, Science (middle school), PE, Social studies, Music, Special Needs

Tien Shan Educational Centre, Kazakhstan
www.tienschanschool.org
Elementary/Primary x2
ESL
Middle/Secondary - Mathematics, English, Science

Call 1300 788 566 or email info@wec.com.au for more information on MK education and opportunities.