



GLOBAL TRENDS

Research Summary for IFES Strategy Planning 2021

We carried out this research 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.

RESEARCH METHOD

Through desk research we identified eleven global trends which seemed most likely to affect student ministry. 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. The participants were asked to indicate the top three global trends that affect their students and national movements the most. Further desk research and analysis of external data was conducted to verify the results and to identify the regional relevance of each trend.

FINDINGS

Most national movements concur that the four trends which affect them the most are:

- **rise of liberalism (secularism),**
- **corruption,**
- **mental health and**
- **poverty**

Although the **changing higher education landscape** was placed seventh in the prioritisation exercise, this trend was frequently brought out by theological advisors (refer to External-stakeholder report) and has been given higher priority in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONNECTED GENERATION

We cannot make ministry plans without an understanding of the students we are serving. We made extensive use of research from Barna and World Vision: [thecconnectedgeneration.com](https://www.thecconnectedgeneration.com).

Today's students and young graduates belong to two demographic cohorts. 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.

YOU CAN READ THE FULL SUMMARIES OF ALL THE TRENDS [HERE](#).