

PRAISE & PRAYER



**FELLOWSHIP
TOGETHER**

PRAYING TOGETHER AROUND THE WORLD

In a fraught and tense world, with multiple challenges for life and ministry, finding sanctuary in God is more important than ever for Christian students and those who serve them. IFES movements around the world are dealing with political and economic instability, campus access difficulties and mental health crises (to name but a few), yet continue sharing the hope of Christ, and are able to testify that God is with them no matter how calm or stormy the sea.

On 18 October, IFES World Student Day 2024, more than 34,600 people in 140 countries and territories were praying for students and exalting God's name in all the earth. Praise God for the way in which groups used the event to connect – with God, with others on

their own campus (like at UNPRG in Peru, above), with other groups locally or elsewhere in their movement and region, and with friends and peers around the world online. Feedback after the event showed how appreciated the five-day devotional guide and the prayer cards were, giving prayers a specific focus, and giving readers insight into Christian student and graduate ministry in very different contexts. These great resources are still available online at ifesworld.org/wsd. The map is always a huge encouragement, illustrating how students, staff and supporters all over the world were gathering to pray. The photos provide a little insight into how the day was marked on campuses across the globe.

Thank you to all of you who were part of the day and to those who pray faithfully throughout the year. Please continue to lift up IFES ministry to the Lord.

LEARNING TOGETHER IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

After disappointments with South Pacific regional events having to be postponed earlier this year, Regional Secretary David Walter and movement staff were delighted to see the IFES South Pacific Young Leaders join TSCF New Zealand staff training in November. Participants from Australia, Fiji, Guam, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Tonga took advantage of their summer holiday to join the New Zealanders at their conference. It was a chance for staff training, network building and encouragement both for the South Pacific leaders, and for the TSCF staff team. There was Bible study, training on culture and Christian ministry, partnerships, and some precious worship time – including learning to praise God in Fijian, led by Jonacani Vakaruru of PSFC Fiji. Much fun was had during a session of lawn bowls, a first time activity for most of the group!

"We've LOVED having IFES friends join us at our TSCF Staff Training Conference – mostly from the South Pacific! It was such a treat and we are so thankful. So glad to be part of IFES and to see God



◀ *WSD prayer followed some good teaching for SONOKO Cambodia*

◀ *In Serbia, social media shared about the EUS prayer meeting*

◀ *InterVarsity/USA in California scheduled time for prayer*

◀ *The BSFB Bangladesh group in Jashore with their amazing artwork, used to encourage prayer*





WORLD STUDENT DAY ▲ *Logos and Cosmos Initiative participants across Latin America met to pray online.*
 ▲ *A quiet prayer time for GBU in Cote d'Ivoire.*

SERVING TOGETHER IN NATIONAL MOVEMENTS

“We can feel overwhelmed when processing various issues at our board meetings. The final say, however, should belong not to us, but to the Bible. We constantly need to examine our governance culture and practice in the light of Scripture. It should always be the ultimate reference in any policy we create and any decision we make as a board.”

So wrote long term IFES staff Mirek Pieszka, most recently the Director of the IFES Governance Development program in ‘Good and Faithful’, a devotional book he compiled for those serving on national movement boards. Mirek has recently retired from this role (meet his successor below), but the team he built up and the training materials they have developed are a huge resource for IFES national movements and their board members.

Why focus on boards? Because student generations last only a few years and staff cohorts need to be supported and equipped to serve them. Without good training and smooth leadership transitions, previously strong student groups can disappear and staff burn out and move on quickly if not invested in and provided with the skills and care they need. Boards serving according to biblical principles and empowered with key governance skills provide the solid foundations needed for thriving ministry.

Praise God for Mirek and the 34 IFES Governance Development trainers across our fellowship, running online and in person training for new and experienced board members, mentoring and coaching individuals and being a listening ear and source of wise counsel for those in times of crisis.

LEARNING TOGETHER IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC CONTINUED

working in NZ, the South Pacific and around the world.” – Ben Carswell, National Director, TSCF New Zealand.

IFES Associate General Secretary Annette Arulrajah from Malaysia was a speaker, sharing stories from 77 years of IFES ministry and teaching on the importance of self-care for ministry. After the conference, she enjoyed visiting TSCF New Zealand student groups in several cities.

Pray for staff as they build on what they learned as they apply it in ministry, and for the student groups across the South Pacific preparing for the start of their new academic year in February.

▼ *TSCF New Zealand staff and colleagues from across the South Pacific*

Mirek and the board of CCX Ukraine marking the 100th IFES governance training in 2015 ▶



IFES PERSON: JOHAN SODERKVIST

GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Born in Sweden, Johan moved to Italy with his missionary parents aged 11, and it soon became his home. With a background as a member of the GBU Italy Board while in secular work, and then as their General Secretary, he has served the Europe region as Governance Training Coordinator since 2022. This new role will be full time, and so he will be leaving GBU Italy.

IFES Head of Global Resource Ministries Olena Welch writes: “Johan’s ability to think clearly, communicate with precision, and advocate for strong governance in student ministry has been evident time and again. His deep commitment to governance development, both regionally and within IFES, has fostered mission-focused, thriving boards. I am confident that Johan’s insight, dedication, and visionary leadership will greatly benefit our staff and national movements in this new season.”

Johan would appreciate your prayers: “Please pray for GBU Italy and the Board as they are searching for a new General Secretary . Pray for me during the handover process; pray for wisdom while I am getting to know my new team better and as we together seek direction for the years ahead; pray for my family, wife and two children aged 13 and 15, as I will be travelling more, and as my daily schedule, when I am not traveling, will be more full during the coming months.”

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