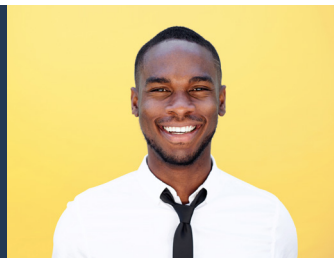




# NICS Alumni Stories

Real Stories From Real Teachers Following The Call



Network of International  
Christian Schools





Working at a NICS school is more than your ordinary teaching job. Do you ever wonder what it's like working at a NICS school? We've collected interviews from a few current and former teachers who share their experiences to give you a clear idea of what life is like as a NICS teacher.

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# Ava



## Brasilia International School

Ava is the Principal at the Brasilia International School.

### **Tell us a bit about yourself, how and where you grew up, and where you went to school.**

I grew up in Memphis with my parents and 4 other siblings. We were taught the Word of God and I became a Christian while in Elementary School.

After high school, I attended the University of Memphis and obtained both a Bachelor's and Master's degree. After marrying and starting a family, I changed my initial career focus from Health (Nursing) to Education. I had a love for both, however, I had become very interested in the education of my 3 children and the program for learning that was available to them in school, and I wanted very much to engage myself thoroughly in the educational process. I then decided to become certified in Elementary and Secondary Education and came to understand that Education was my calling.

I taught for 15 years, then felt a further calling to broaden my perspective in Education. After a discussion with my family and fervent prayer, I applied and became a Principal. What an awesome appointment. Being a Principal allowed a broader scope and range of the educational process and responsibilities while influencing and interacting with not only students, but teachers, parents, community, stakeholders, and district personnel. Going to work became a joy every day. However, there was one major component missing throughout my professional career as a teacher and as a Principal and that was the fact that prayer and the Bible were not allowed in the public schools as my entire career was in the public school arena. I knew of a surety that negative issues would have been far less prevalent if God's Word was allowed to go forth on a daily basis within and around the schools. Nevertheless, I continued my career with the public schools until retirement. It was only retirement from the public school system and not from the love of Education. I somehow knew that another door was about to open.

## **How did you first hear about opportunities at NICS?**

A year after I retired from the school system, I was visiting with a friend of mine and she asked me to visit her church with her and I agreed. I went the very next Sunday to Harvest Church and it was there that I heard an announcement from the President of NICS, Joe Hale. What a passionate, heartfelt, and genuine "short" announcement he made about NICS and its mission. He said that there would be a table in the back after the service for anyone who may be interested. I thought, "that sounds like the very opportunity that I have been waiting for." I went to the table after the service and met Lydia Zuideima. She was so warm, friendly, and knowledgeable. She actually had a sweet angelic disposition and countenance. Lydia was kind and professional while answering the questions that I asked. I could feel the love of Christ in her presence. I was so impressed that I decided to go to the website, sign up for the job fair, and apply. The rest is history, and here I am in Brazil as the Principal of Brasilia International School.

## **Did you speak any other languages beyond English?**

I did not speak any other language beyond English.

## **What did your family say when you told them that you were going to work in another country?**

My family was not so surprised because I had been to other countries leading a student exchange program, during each summer for 5 years. However, most of my visits to other countries did not extend beyond one month. The NICS opportunity was going to be the first time going to another country to live for an extended period of time.

My family was actually excited for me and said that this was a blessed opportunity. I was very fortunate to have my 92 year old mother to tell me that she was so proud of me and that she gave me her blessings to go. She said, and I knew, that my father would be proud as well if he was still living. My mother prayed for me and told me that God would be with me every step of the way through the tough times as well as the easy times, the same way He has been when working in Memphis, God is everywhere.

## **What was the biggest barrier keeping you from signing on with NICS?**

I think that I had more of a concern than a barrier. I was very concerned about the contract that I was to sign. I did not want to feel forced to stay in a place if things were not conducive to living in a satisfactory environment or working in a place where I could not do the job that I was hired to do and was led by God to do.

## **What convinced you to overcome that barrier?**

I went into the assignment feeling very positive which was the first thing to do. Secondly, I thought that in the event that things became bad enough to make me want to leave, I did not believe that a well respected organization like NICS would try to uphold or force me into unpleasant kinds of circumstances. So I believed that NICS would always have best interest, my safety, and my mental welfare at heart as well as the persons whom I was sent to serve.

## **What was the biggest fear once you signed up?**

I was not fearful at all, but I was a little nervous about approaching something so new for an extended period of time.

## **Did your family encourage you to go? If so, what was the most encouraging thing that they did?**

My family had a big dinner for me and my mother gave me her blessings. Also, we all attended church together and I was called to the altar where my biological family as well as my church family prayed for me and the job and opportunity that was before me.

## **What was your biggest fear when you landed in your new country?**

Communication was and still is my biggest concern. Not being able to communicate can be a major obstacle. I am working on that daily. This is a dual challenge; having to learn a new culture and a new language. However, after only 8 months, I can move about with much more comfort having learned basic and essential phrases.

## **What was your favorite experience living in a new country?**

My favorite experience was being able to order my very own favorite cup of coffee (in Portuguese) without help; (Espresso com leite, por favor); as well as a second cup, (mais um). I felt great after doing that. I said it with a Portuguese flair and accent!! I had been practicing it for days! (smile).

## **What is the funniest thing that happened to you as you acclimated to a new country?**

I would continue to mistake their money for paper and almost throw it away. I was cleaning up my counter and had some of the foreign currency crumpled in a pile of other gum or candy papers ready to toss into the trash! I shouted to myself, THAT'S MONEY!!!! I wondered how much money had I already thrown away!!

## **Tell us your favorite story from teaching/being a Principal at your NICS school.**

This is more of a comment rather than a story, but it is my favorite. One of the (Early Learning) 4 year old students told her mother not to speak to me in Portuguese because I could only speak English. Then she said to her mother, "Why can she only speak English?" How interesting, I thought. As young as she was, she could speak and understand English albeit in a limited fashion. She could not understand why I was not able to speak Portuguese especially being the Principal!! She wanted an answer!!

## **What makes being a Principal with NICS so special?**

NICS has created a wonderful opportunity for me and other professionals like me to see other parts of world while advancing your career and especially spreading the Good News; The Word of God to other people and other nations. We have the opportunity to do as God has commanded us to do from the Bible when it says to "go into all the nations." NICS is also an organization that is very supportive and attentive to the needs of its employees. I have not had any situation or question that has gone unaddressed or answered in the most loving and professional manner. It feels very good to be a part of any organization with such admirable characteristics.

## **How did your experience with NICS help you grow as a teacher/principal?**

This opportunity with NICS helped to broaden and enlarge my territory and sphere of interactions on a global scale. I came to understand the differences in countries and culture, while simultaneously understanding that we are all the same.

This opportunity also allowed me to not only to see how other school systems work but to actually examine best practices that are conducive to learning in any country within any venue. I grew to know it is the Fruit of the Spirit that undergirds any success that any teacher or Principal will ever have in any place anywhere.

## **What do you wish you knew before you signed up?**

I wish that I knew the cost of all of the documentation in preparation to go. The certification of the notaries, the background check and FBI report, the apostile cost, the visa cost, airfare etc. can add up to a rather hefty price tag. Also, the time that it takes to get all of the documentation and processes done can be daunting. Those were the two things that caused me to become somewhat stressed. If I had known the initial output of funds as well as the time needed to

complete all of the necessary paperwork, I may have decided to acquire the funds first, then apply very early so that I would not have become stressed about those two things.

### **What would you tell someone considering becoming a NICS teacher?**

I would tell them that it is a grand opportunity to expand their horizon by immersing themselves into their profession, to see and experience other countries, and learn other cultures, while strengthening their Christian faith and walk with the Lord through service.

### **What is the one thing a new teacher should pack for their trip?**

The one thing they should pack is their own Bible. My favorite Bible is a rather large study Bible and I initially did not pack it. I took a smaller, newer one, (not as worn). But Oh, how it missed my favorite Bible with all of the markings and notations that I had made in it from my Bible Study classes, church services, and personal study.

When I went home for Christmas, that was the first thing that I got and put it in my luggage so that I would not forget it when I went back to Brazil.

So, my advice would be sure to bring what is special and has worked well for you in the past because if you do not, you will miss it so much more.

### **What is your best advice for getting use to a new culture/climate?**

For me, to get used to a new culture/climate, one must first research as much as possible about the country and culture. Secondly, if it is possible to reach out to someone already in the country where you are going, ask all of the questions that you may think of, including those that may seem trivial. If the question is important, it is not trivial. Thirdly, decide, in your mind, that you will do well in your new country. I believe that things almost always turn out the way a person continuously thinks that they will. Lastly, immerse yourself into the culture as completely as possible. For example, start trying to learn the language, eat the different foods, and allow yourself to experience a change to enjoy the difference in the variety of new tastes of the foods, and above all else, embrace the people of the country.

The people are typically very interested in foreigners and sometimes stare. But they are just curious to know more about this new American who has been interested enough to be a part of their country for a little while.

### **What final words of encouragement do you have for someone considering a job with NICS?**

If you desire to work with a solid, reputable, supportive, and Christian organization, NICS meets all of those qualities and characteristics and more. The people at the Home Office are phenomenal and they take the time to answer any and all questions that may come to mind. They never get tired of you and they are always so gracious.

Going to another country to work is a major decision and it is of paramount importance to be connected with the right people and the right organization that has God at its center governing every aspect of its operation. With a foundation such as this, the only thing that one must do is to pack up, say your sweet farewells for a while, and be on your way to a grand opportunity to serve and to be the best you can be for the Glory of the Lord!





# Carrie

 Turkey

Carrie is a teacher with NICS in Turkey.

## **Tell us a bit about yourself, how and where you grew up, and where you went to school.**

I grew up in the suburbs of Chicago, IL. I am the oldest of three children, raised by two godly, supportive, loving parents. I graduated from Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri.

## **What made you decide to become a teacher?**

I knew I had a burden to serve overseas and I loved working with youth, so I pursued my teaching degree to prepare me to serve in these areas.

## **How did you first hear about opportunities at NICS?**

A friend of a friend was serving at a NICS school. When she knew that I was looking into opportunities overseas, she told me about NICS.

## **Did you speak any languages beyond English?**

I speak Spanish.

## **What did your family say when you told them you were teaching in another country?**

They were, and still are, very supportive.

## **What was the biggest barrier keeping you from signing on as a NICS Teacher?**

Seeking certainty that this was the path God had for me.

## **What convinced you to overcome that barrier?**

Praying about the decision and seeking counsel from friends and family

## **What was your biggest fear once you signed up?**

Being far away from my friends and family.

## **Did your family encourage you to go? If so what was the most encouraging thing they did?**

My family was very encouraging to me. They have prayed for me and maintained regular communication with me while I have been overseas. My church family had a commissioning service and time of prayer for me before my departure.

## **What was your biggest fear when you first landed in your new country?**

At the time I arrived, my biggest fear/concern was finding my place/niche in my new community. Over the years as my community has changed, as any international community does, it has been challenging to say goodbye to dear friends and to find my new place in the community, but God has always provided relationships and support near and afar.

## **What was your favorite experience living in a new country?**

My favorite experience has been getting to befriend people from around the world and to learn about their lives and cultures.

## **What is the funniest thing that happened to you as you acclimated to a new culture?**

We all have funny language learning mistakes. My favorite language learning mistake was ordering a "sausage (sucuk) coffee" instead of a cold (soguk) coffee during my first few weeks in the country.

## **Tell us your favorite story from teaching at your NICS school.**

This is a really hard question. One of my favorite aspects of life in Turkey is getting to serve with the international youth group. For the past 5 years we have annually been able to take groups of teens to a mountain retreat center for a week-end retreat. These weekends have been definite "mountaintop" experiences of getting to see God work in the lives of all the youth and adults who have been able to attend has been a huge blessing over the years. I don't think I can narrow down a favorite teaching story either. One of my favorite things about teaching at my school is getting to work with students who need extra attention and seeing them grow in their ability and confidence, and getting to be a part of that.

## **What makes teaching at NICS so special?**

All children and people of any age are precious, but one of the most special things about teaching with NICS is the opportunity to know and befriend people from so many places around the world and to share truth with them.

## **How did your experience with NICS help you grow as a teacher?**

I have learned how to be flexible and to improvise. I have also had the opportunity to work with many students at various levels of English language acquisition, which I believe has developed my skills in working with students who are learning English. I have also learned how to use my resources: books, people, the Internet, to find solutions to challenges I have faced in the classroom.



### **What do you wish you knew before you signed up?**

That even though serving overseas and with other people from very different backgrounds will sometimes be challenging, God will use these opportunities to help me grow and will provide friends who will become family here for support. The place you serve will become a second home.

### **What would you tell someone considering becoming a NICS teacher?**

There will be challenges, as with any career/ministry, but it is worth it to be part of what God is doing around the world and in the lives of each individual you will work with.

### **What is the one thing a new teacher should pack for their trip?**

A good camera to record all the memories that you will make. I also recommend that you make a quote book. Students and co-workers will say a lot of funny things and I recommend recording them to look back on and share.

### **What is your best advice for getting used to a new culture/climate?**

Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Use the language that you know. It will help you to learn. Be intentional about reaching out and initiating friendships. Don't be nervous.

### **What final words of encouragement do you have for someone considering a job with NICS?**

No matter which opportunity you pursue, there will be highlights and there will be difficulties. Teaching overseas is an amazing platform for ministry and I love it.



# Cathy

 Japan

Cathy is a teacher at ICAN in Japan.

## **Tell us a bit about yourself, how and where you grew up, and where you went to school.**

As a native Texan, most of my life was spent in Houston. After moving north, I graduated from the University of Northern Colorado. A short time later while in my mid-twenties, I came to faith in Christ after someone shared the gospel with me.

## **How did you first hear about opportunities at NICS?**

I sensed a call to the mission field shortly after trusting Christ. Decades later as a middle-aged widow with two grown children, the timing seemed right to explore opportunities for serving as a missionary teacher. A friend mentioned the website for [acsi.org](http://acsi.org), where I found a link for overseas opportunities. As I scrolled down the alphabetical listing of countries, I prayed for guidance, asking, "How does a missionary know to which country they are called?" At that point, I reached the "J" listings, and there was JAPAN! I had been corresponding with a Japanese penpal since I was in middle school, and this teaching position was located very close to my penpal family's hometown. I knew with certainty that this was the answer to my prayer.

## **Did you speak any languages beyond English?**

No. Although I continue to glean bits and pieces of the Japanese language, I have discovered that some adults in the Japanese community are eager to practice their English with a native English speaker.

## **What did your family say when you told them you were teaching in another country?**

Most family members, as unbelievers, did not understand why I would leave family, job, and my house to move overseas

to be a missionary teacher. I was encouraged by the words of Jesus in Matthew 19:29, "...everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life."

### **What was the biggest barrier keeping you from signing on as a NICS Teacher?**

There were no barriers to signing on, as I was convinced that it was God's direction for my life.

### **Did your family encourage you to go? If so what was the most encouraging thing they did?**

My church family encouraged me through their prayers and support.

### **What was your favorite experience living in a new country?**

Upon my arrival, my penpal family took me on many outings and introduced me to the culture and unique etiquette of Japan.

### **Tell us your favorite story from teaching at your NICS school.**

In my 17 years of teaching at ICAN, my greatest blessing is when a young student approaches me with a desire to trust in Jesus. There is no greater joy!

### **What makes teaching at NICS so special?**

Through NICS, God has provided me with the privilege of sharing the gospel in a country in which many have not yet heard of Jesus.

### **What do you wish you knew before you signed up?**

Actually, I'm thankful that I did not know anything that might have discouraged me from going. I was so convinced of the Lord's will in this, that I wasn't concerned about too many of the details.

### **What would you tell someone considering becoming a NICS teacher?**

Check your motives: Are you simply looking for the adventure of an overseas teaching job, or are you a mission-minded teacher seeking to be a part of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)?

### **What is the one thing a new teacher should pack for their trip?**

It will vary depending on your destination, so be sure to check with your teammates. But you should probably pack a lot less than you think you will need!

### **What is your best advice for getting used to a new culture/climate?**

Although it may differ in many ways from what you're accustomed to, it's important to show proper respect for the differences in culture.

### **What final words of encouragement do you have for someone considering a job with NICS?**

As you consider a teaching position with NICS, I pray that you will find joy in knowing that...we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us..." (2 Corinthians 5:20)



# Clarissa

 Indonesia

Clarissa is a teacher at the Bandung Alliance Intercultural School.

## **Tell us a bit about yourself, how and where you grew up, and where you went to school.**

I grew up in Alaska, mostly in small towns. I went to college at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks for BAs in History and Education.

## **What made you decide to become a teacher?**

I don't remember deciding to be a teacher! I only remember signing up for education classes at college. I always enjoyed working with kids though.

## **How did you first hear about opportunities at NICS?**

A good college friend (Adam Kelley) heard about NICS from his dad, who is friends with Pete, and Adam told me. It all goes back to Pete!

## **Did you speak any languages beyond English?**

Mediocre Spanish

## **What did your family say when you told them you were teaching in another country?**

My mom didn't want me to go so far away but my Dad said, "People say the sign of good parenting is that your child is happy and able to leave home and start their own life. I must be a really good parent because my kid is moving across the planet!" Haha! I don't think they were surprised I was going overseas since I'd always wanted to live internationally.

## **What was the biggest barrier keeping you from signing on as a NICS Teacher?**

Nothing :)

## **What was your biggest fear once you signed up?**

Not being a good enough teacher.

## **Did your family encourage you to go? If so, what was the most encouraging thing they did?**

Yes. I think the most encouraging thing was simply that they trusted my judgment about this choice. My parents and brothers never tried to persuade me to stay. Some of my extended relatives are still pretty confused about why I live here, but they've gotten used to it, even if they don't understand.

## **What was your biggest fear when you first landed in your new country?**

Again, I think I was the most afraid of being a bad teacher. This was my first teaching job and I was pretty nervous!

## **What was your favorite experience living in a new country?**

Impossible question!!! I think one of my favorite experiences is simply that there is always something new to learn – whether about people or food or culture or myself or God or .... the list goes on forever.

## **What is the funniest thing that happened to you as you acclimated to a new culture?**

Oh there were lots! In the first few months, as I worked on learning Indonesian, one time I mixed up 'buku' (book) with 'buka' (open) and accidentally called out to the security guard, "Please book! Please book!"

## **Tell us your favorite story from teaching at your NICS school.**

Again, impossible. One of my favorites is when I overheard a G1 student talking about Pocahontas on the bus during a fieldtrip and I told her that Pocahontas was a real person, the Disney movie is about 95% wrong, and that Pocahontas is recorded to have converted to Christianity. The little girl got the biggest eyes ever and exclaimed, "Will I get to meet her in heaven!?" I also love watching students grow up. I've been here eight years (well, 7 + 1 furlough) so my first first graders are in grade 8 now. Of course, the best ever is having a child (and sometimes whole families!) come to know Christ!

## **What makes teaching at NICS so special?**

Being able to teach from a Christian worldview, among a staff of people passionate for what they do.

## **How did your experience with NICS help you grow as a teacher?**

Being the only grade-level teacher in a small school has its challenges, but it's also helped me see the way schools work in a deep way since we are involved in so much of how this place works.

## **What do you wish you knew before you signed up?**

That I'd be here so long — I would have bought better furniture from the get-go! Nothing I have matches! On a more serious note, I wish I'd known more about balancing life and work. It's still something I struggle with.

## **What would you tell someone considering becoming a NICS teacher?**

You can't come in and expect to live the same kind of life you had in your home country. You need to change. Come in as a learner and be willing to give up elements of self so that you can serve better.

**What is the one thing a new teacher should pack for their trip?**

Something which makes you happy. A poster, a special cup, cheese (seriously, I bring cheese every year), whatever.

**What is your best advice for getting used to a new culture/climate?**

Choose to love it, choose to look for the good. It's a choice at first, but eventually, it will be true. Don't complain about your host country in front of national staff.

**What final words of encouragement do you have for someone considering a job with NICS?**

Matthew 28:19a — Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations.





# Jean

 Southeast Asia

Jean teaches in Southeast Asia.

## What made you decide to become a teacher?

I am the oldest of four children. My parents told us to either be a nurse, a doctor, a lawyer, or a teacher!!!! I chose teaching!

## How did you first hear about opportunities at NICS?

My first trip to Southeast Asia was the summer of 2001 to an orphanage. I was on an exploration trip in a different city in May of 2002 and visited my school and interviewed with the headmaster.

## Did you speak any languages beyond English?

No other languages at that time.

## What did your family say when you told them you were teaching in another country?

They totally understood.... my kids never said "don't go." At that time I was caring for my elderly father, and I did say I would not move until he died. He died April 1, 2002, and I landed in Southeast Asia on April 1, 2003!!!

## What was the biggest barrier keeping you from signing on as a NICS Teacher?

Really NO barrier... once my dad died, the doors opened!!!! I came with another company, One Challenge International and taught at my school. In 2007 I dropped the OCI connection and joined NICS.

**Did your family encourage you to go? If so what was the most encouraging thing they did?**

My family has been a huge support. My two kids and their families have been here... twice!!!

**What was your biggest fear when you first landed in your new country?**

Concerns about the language... everyone said it was so HARD.

**What was your favorite experience living in a new country?**

Everyday has been fun... talking to people... bike riding... wonderful food... sharing the FATHER with people...

**What is the funniest thing that happened to you as you acclimated to a new culture?**

I took sailing lessons the first summer here... walking my bike back to the road, I had an accident... bike and me fell in the lake!!!! Rode home wet and showered!!!

**Tell us your favorite story from teaching at your NICS school.**

One of my students told her mother "Mrs. Bannen has eyes in the back of her head... but I cannot find them!"

**What makes teaching at NICS so special?**

The children and their families... the excellence that happens... sharing HIS love...

**How did your experience with NICS help you grow as a teacher?**

I have learned so many different cultural things... become much more patient... become more open to new ideas and ways of doing things...

**What would you tell someone considering becoming a NICS teacher?**

Go for it!!!! It will change your life.

**What is the one thing a new teacher should pack for their trip?**

Any special meds that are needed.

**What is your best advice for getting used to a new culture/climate?**

Try everything... be flexible... be willing to make mistakes.

**What final words of encouragement do you have for someone considering a job with NICS?**

Explore the options... ask questions... take the risk... it is a joy to be a part of NICS.



# Yoshi

 Asia

Yoshi is a teacher in South East Asia.

## **Tell us a bit about yourself, how and where you grew up, and where you went to school.**

I was born in Hokkaido, Japan. At the of age 15, I moved to America by myself. I was searching for the meaning of life and I didn't want to get trapped in the Japanese education system. I met God as a teenager at a boarding school in Oklahoma. After a missions trip to Ukraine, I attended Word of Life Bible Institute and Cedarville Univ. where I met my husband. In 1999, after completing my masters at Columbia International Univ. and working for a couple years, we signed up with NICS to become international school teachers. Currently, I am a member care coordinator and counselor in South East Asia. My husband is a philosophy teacher. Our 2 teenagers have grown up in Asia and attended NICS schools all of their lives. We taught in Korea (7 years), Turkey (1 year), and now in South East Asia (10 years).

## **What made you decide to become a teacher?**

To impact students for His Kingdom. As a TCK myself, I can relate/connect with students. Teachers inspired me so much, so I want to do the same!

## **How did you first hear about opportunities at NICS?**

Cedarville University College Fair

## **Did you speak any languages beyond English?**

Japanese (had to learn Korean, Turkish, and Chinese)

## **What did your family say when you told them you were teaching in another country?**

"Teaching is the best way to change the world!"

## **What was the biggest barrier keeping you from signing on as a NICS Teacher?**

Will I be accepted in Asia as a Japanese citizen, educated in America?

## **What convinced you to overcome that barrier?**

Having a partner who believed I could make the difference in people's lives. Going and serving as a team.

## **What was your biggest fear once you signed up?**

Am I going to be accepted by the host cultures? Koreans and other Asians hate Japanese due to our terrible history. Once they find out my true identity, will they hate me and despise me?

## **Did your family encourage you to go? If so what was the most encouraging thing they did?**

Gave us their blessings to follow His Will but hesitated for us to be on the opposite side of the globe. Just before we left America nineteen years ago, our lives were spared in car accidents, and we felt, "He is not done with our lives yet." Our parents supported us to go where we felt led. Once our children came along, it got harder for them to be away from their grandchildren. Once our parents came to visit us on the field, they understood why we love what we do, and they stopped worrying about us being so far away.

## **What was your biggest fear when you first landed in your new country?**

Why am I going to a country where I knew they hate my nationality and my native language? My first job was to teach the un-welcome Japanese language to Korean high school students. However, once I arrived, the teenagers had very different attitudes towards Japanese culture and the language. After studying together for a couple years, my students decided to take a missions trip to Japan to share the Good News because, "The Japanese did not know what they were doing." Only 0.1% of Japanese are Christians. He blessed me with many Korean brothers and sisters who accepted me and forgave me. I am also on the reconciliation journey in my current field as well. Hatred is real, but real forgiveness and repentance can bring so much healing. Love can cover a multitude of sins!

## **What was your favorite experience living in a new country?**

Learning new languages, meeting locals, eating the authentic food, learning to cook new dishes, exploring historical sites.

## **What is the funniest thing that happened to you as you acclimated to a new culture?**

Trying to practice my Chinese, I went to the market and meant to say, "Excuse me..." instead I was using the wrong tone and said "Please kiss me!" So embarrassing!

## **Tell us your favorite story from teaching at your NICS school.**

Having many high school class parties over for pizza parties at home; out of that, discipleship started. Even today, some graduates come back seeking spiritual advice since they consider us their spiritual parents.

## **What makes teaching at NICS so special?**

All about Him! He can change the hearts of students, teachers, schools, and the community! Teaching at different

schools brings different challenges, but we serve the same King! He taught me so much from trials and suffering. Since you are so far away from your own family/relatives, your international community becomes your family.

### **How did your experience with NICS help you grow as a teacher?**

Having a network with other schools. Feeling like you are a part of a big international team making a difference in young people's lives. The school paid for my further education to be a counselor, so that I can be more effective in what I do.

### **What do you wish you knew before you signed up?**

This experience will change your life! We are committed to NICS long term. We've already put in 19 years. The retirement package also helps!

### **What would you tell someone considering becoming a NICS teacher?**

Great experiences and adventure. You will be stretched in many areas of your life and make friends from all of the world!

### **What is the one thing a new teacher should pack for their trip?**

Flexibility!

### **What is your best advice for getting used to a new culture/climate?**

Have a learning attitude. Don't assume American ways are the best. Make local friends when you want to stay longer!

Take a leap of faith! Your eyes will be opened up through your global experiences—both in your classrooms and traveling in your new country! Build your own support system back home and also on the field—have friends and a church that will pray for and support you! Let them partner with you on this exciting journey!



# Melissa

 Indonesia

Melissa is a teacher at the Bandung Alliance Intercultural School.

## **Tell us a bit about yourself, how and where you grew up, and where you went to school.**

I was born and raised in Fairbanks, Alaska. All my family pretty much still lives there. We have an adventurous spirit that has been modeled for us by my Grandfather. He was born and raised in one of the Carolinas; I don't remember which one right now. He tried everything to move to Alaska as a young man, even joined the army hoping to get stationed there. After his two year service in the army, he bought a 1940-something army ambulance and drove it from Carolina to Alaska. He lived in Alaska for the rest of his life. I remember growing up, sitting around the table listening to his stories of adventure in the wilderness, hunting along the Yukon River, sacrificing the comforts of the modern life for the joy of living in Alaska, and how the Lord used those years to grab his heart and grow his faith. I would often think to myself, "If Alaska is normal, where is my wilderness? If Alaska is my home and my comfort, where is my adventure? What will God use to teach me faith?"

## **What made you decide to become a teacher?**

Well, that is a hard question to answer. When Pete Simano lived in Alaska, we worked together with the youth group. He knew my heart was working with teens. He encouraged me to apply, telling me that I wouldn't really be a teacher, I would be doing what I love. Working with teens, building relationships, and showing them how to take better pictures. I didn't go to school to be a teacher. I was hired to research and create a dorm house for BAIS and to co-teach a photography/graphic design class. After just a few weeks of being here, it became apparent that we could not have a dorm. The area that school is in would not allow us to do that. Yet I had signed a contract for two years. My focus and job changed. I was already co-teaching the one class, but that wasn't enough to keep me busy all day. I became the school's building sub. I loved it! I had the opportunity to work with all the students in the building. I had the best job, spending time with the kids, and I didn't even have to lesson plan. WIN!



## **How did you first hear about opportunities at NICS?**

From Pete. He encouraged me to apply. I don't think that he thought I actually would.

## **Did you speak any languages beyond English?**

Nope. I took Spanish in high school, but by the time I moved to Indonesia the language was gone. Or at least I thought it was. While learning my numbers in Bahasa, the Spanish came back so quickly.

## **What did your family say when you told them you were teaching in another country?**

My folks were and still are very, very supportive! Although, there was a day that I thought my Ma was going to put her foot down. You see, I was scheduled to fly out of Alaska at the end of July. On the 17th of July, 2009, there was a bombing in Jakarta. My Ma freaked out. No. No. No. It's not going to be okay. We spent a lot of time in prayer that day. I knew that this is what God wanted me to do, there were so many different ways that He had confirmed that, a small bomb in a hotel in a city that I would only be driving through was not going to stop me. But I wanted my Ma to have peace about it. God answered that prayer.

## **What was the biggest barrier keeping you from signing on as a NICS Teacher?**

The 2 year commitment. I thought that since I was good friends with Pete, the school director at the time, that he would allow me to sign a one year commitment.

## **What convinced you to overcome that barrier?**

Have you met Pete?! He can pretty much talk people into doing anything.

## **What was your biggest fear once you signed up?**

That I would get my hopes up... That I wouldn't get approved for a visa... That BAIS would realize that they didn't want me or need me. That I wouldn't have the opportunity to live overseas.

## **Did your family encourage you to go? If so what was the most encouraging thing they did?**

My family was great! They still are. They are always asking how they can be praying for me and offer financial support.

## **What was your biggest fear when you first landed in your new country?**

I don't think that I can focus on just one. There were so many different things. I'm a larger girl. I'm tall. I'm from Alaska. So living on the equator with a bead of sweat running down my back at all times – not my favorite. Being taller than most people. Let's be honest, I get stared at A LOT. And then there was the food.... I look back at my 2009 self and think, what a lame person, scared of so much. Just try the food, tell yourself you are going to like it because there will be a time very soon that you will crave it. To be honest, my biggest barrier was myself. You see, I didn't finish college. I went, but decided I wanted something different. My education is in Cosmetology – it's a fancy title for doing people's hair, nails, waxing, and facials. Remember I was hired to be a dorm parent and teach a photography class. Once I got here and realized that I was working in a school. IN A SCHOOL. A college prep, academically advanced school. I was surrounded by people with master's degrees and people who valued education. I was a college drop-out. I was afraid that people would find out. That people would know I wasn't smart. It has taken years. It has taken me sharing my fear. It has taken the Creator speaking into me and my life for me to feel comfortable here.

## **What was your favorite experience living in a new country?**

Everything was new. I knew nothing. I had to trust that the Lord was going to take care of me. That He would help me find my way home the first time I got lost driving my motorbike in the city. That He would be my strength when it looked like Indonesia was not going to renew my work visa because I was not educated to be a teacher. Praise God for my education in photography, because of that certificate I am still here, doing what I love.

## **What is the funniest thing that happened to you as you acclimated to a new culture?**

Indonesia is all about saving face. So the one time that I walked into the men's bathroom while at the mall, and the bathroom attendant told me it was okay. Well, now that I think back on it, she may have been telling me that I was in the men's bathroom and to use the women's, but since I didn't know the language....

## **Tell us your favorite story from teaching at your NICS school.**

So many. Mentoring students. Class trips. Reunions with students. Making lifelong friends that you travel the globe to see. Making friends that you get to travel the globe with. Knowing that America, that Alaska will never be 'home' again, but that Indonesia will never always be 'home.' Knowing that the world is so HUGE, but that it's really not.

## **What makes teaching at NICS so special?**

The support. IMPACT – I refer to it as camp for the adults that are getting ready to do something amazing with their lives.

## **How did your experience with NICS help you grow as a teacher?**

YES! Teaching photography, something that I was already knowledgeable in and good at, made me realize that I didn't know why I was doing what I did. Once I started explaining things, I realized that there was still so much that I wanted to learn. Because of that I have gone on in my education, especially in photography. Working for BAIS, I have seen my skills grow. I've mastered new programs, learned people skills, and improved my spelling and grammar (but still not great at proofreading my own words).

## **What do you wish you knew before you signed up?**

That I'd still be here nine school years later and committed to another year. I should have just sold all my house stuff instead of storing it my folk's house.

## **What would you tell someone considering becoming a NICS teacher?**

Do it!

## **What is your best advice for getting used to a new culture/climate?**

The power of positive thinking. And the joy of finding a working air conditioner and standing in front of it until you are no longer a dripping mess. Only to step outside and begin the search for the next air conditioner all over again, till you make it home. My first year here, my housemate's alarm clock had a temperature setting on it. – Let's step back for a moment and remember I'm from Alaska. Wealthy Alaskans heat their houses to about 72F. I was raised to just get a blanket as our house was heated to 68F. In the summer, our hottest days can be up near 95F, but our houses never seem to get that hot. Back to the alarm clock, I remember my first night being so tired from the 58 hours of planes, airports, and the drive from Jakarta to Bandung, that nothing was going to keep me awake. But that next night.... Our house was 82F and that was after the sun went down and it had started to cool off. I was always sweaty. Walking to school in the morning. Sweaty. I didn't like it.

## **What final words of encouragement do you have for someone considering a job with NICS?**

Do it with your whole heart. Dive in. Be open. Realize that you are going to make mistakes. Laugh at yourself. Learn to apologize and mean it when you mess up. Learn to apologize and mean it even when you don't think you've messed up – with different cultures, we see things differently. I have hurt feelings and offended people by just joking with them the way that I would with an Alaskan. FYI: Indonesians are not Alaskans, nor do they even begin to understand my Alaskan ways.



# Murrell

 Kenya

Murrell is a teacher at the West Nairobi School in Kenya.

## **Tell us a bit about yourself, how and where you grew up, and where you went to school.**

My parents were originally from Jamaica. They lived in Nottingham, England for a number of years after they were married and that's where I was born. When I was about four years old, our family relocated to Montreal, Quebec, Canada. After graduating high school, I took a few college courses while working part time and still trying to figure out God's will and direction for my life. Through the encouragement of my pastor, he suggested a school called Heritage Baptist College in Cambridge, Ontario.

## **What made you decide to become a teacher?**

I had graduated with a Bachelor of Theology major with a Youth Ministry minor. I had always thought I would work on a church staff as a youth minister. After I graduated I did an internship at the church that I had been attending while at Heritage. The church was called Temple Baptist Church and I did serve as the youth pastor during the internship. The church also had a Christian school as well. I taught Bible for a semester and would occasionally sub as a PE teacher. It was my first exposure to teaching and it was a good experience and looking back it was something God would use to open up a door a little later on.

## **How did you first hear about opportunities at NICS?**

At the end of the internship, I sensed God was moving me on to something else. To make a long story short, I had the opportunity to go to Korea for a job teaching English in a private school. I went with a couple of friends who I had graduated college with. I thought it would be a interesting experience, and to give me time to pay off some school debt as well as figure out what I may do next when I return to Canada. Upon arriving in Korea (in January 2001), I ended up

moving into a neighbourhood in Uijongbu, which was just across the road from ICS Uijongbu. I remember seeing a sign for their school. Since it was one of the few signs in English, it seemed to stand out. I was quite curious as to who they were and what they were all about. Eventually, I had the chance to meet some of the NICS missionaries through the church I was attending. Through that relationship, was how I learned more about NICS and then I eventually applied for a position at the school.

### **Did you speak any languages beyond English?**

While I was in elementary and high school in Montreal I had French classes everyday since they were a required part of the curriculum of going to school in Quebec. I had picked up French pretty well and it would prove useful to me during my time with NICS.

### **What did your family say when you told them you were teaching in another country?**

My family was very supportive when I first went to Korea, and they continued to be supportive and encouraging during my time overseas.

### **What was the biggest barrier keeping you from signing on as a NICS Teacher?**

Perhaps the biggest barrier was that I never studied education while I was in college. I was a Bible major and I thought I would end up ministering in a church setting. So when it came to things like classroom management, writing lesson and unit plans and many of the other skills that education majors learn, it was all new to me and I wasn't sure how I would be able to manage.

### **What convinced you to overcome that barrier?**

Well it's been said that God doesn't call the equipped but He equips the called and that's what He did and continues to do in my life. I have been with NICS since 2002 and have served in three different countries. Through it all, he has given me clarity, creativity and confidence to be able to teach in whatever situation I have been in.

### **What was your biggest fear once you signed up?**

There really wasn't much fear, it was much more of an excitement. During that first year in Korea, I had met, started dating, and eventually married a young lady who was serving with NICS, named Jeanelle Culver. Jeanelle was a great encouragement for me in that transition to NICS. She is an excellent teacher and I have learned a lot from her example of preparation for classes as well as showing love to students.

### **Did your family encourage you to go? If so what was the most encouraging thing they did?**

As I stated above, my family was encouraging and supportive during my time overseas.

### **What was your biggest fear when you first landed in your new country?**

When I first landed in Korea, I think my biggest fear was just getting used to eating food that was very different than what I grew up eating. But I really didn't have much choice, it was either get used to it or starve! But there were also several Western food options available as well, so that adjustment didn't turn out to be as difficult as I first thought.

### **What was your favorite experience living in a new country?**

Jeanelle and I have served in Korea, Japan and Kenya. Our favourite experiences include getting to meet the people who we will be working with. We always appreciate the people who have reached out to us and our family, particularly when we moved to Japan and to Kenya.

## **What is the funniest thing that happened to you as you acclimated to a new culture?**

One of the weirdest thing that happened within my first few months in Korea was when I was riding on a city bus one day. I remember Jeanelle was with me and that the bus was getting crowded. At one stop a lady who was carrying her baby came on. And in Korea, I guess it's common for people who are carrying bags to just give them to people who are sitting down to hold them for the people who are standing. Well this lady with the baby gets on the bus, and there's no seats available, so without even thinking twice, she just plops her baby down on my lap and so for about 10 minutes, I am holding this baby until they get to their next stop. The baby didn't seem to mind too much :)

## **Tell us your favorite story from teaching at your NICS school.**

One of my favourite things was last year when it was my birthday. Throughout the day, I had several students write "Happy Birthday" greetings on my whiteboard. By the end of the day, there were greetings in English, Swahili, French, Spanish, Korean, Japanese, Norwegian and Amharic.

## **What makes teaching at NICS so special?**

I believe what makes teaching with NICS so special is that we have the privilege of giving the Gospel to so many students from across the globe and then these students can potentially go back to their home countries and share the Gospel as well.

## **How did your experience with NICS help you grow as a teacher?**

I think just being able to be exposed to a variety of students whose first language may not be English, combined with different learning styles, has shown me that not everyone learns and processes the same way. I am continually looking for ways to add variety so that my students can remain engaged as I teach.

## **What do you wish you knew before you signed up?**

That no matter what you learned in your college classes, there are just going to be some situations that you are not going to be prepared for, so you need to be flexible, have patience and exercise grace.

## **What would you tell someone considering becoming a NICS teacher?**

There are a number of ways that you can be involved in a school ministry without having a teaching degree. If you have a background in office work, or business or nursing or working in a library, there are a number of needs to be filled in the schools across the network. So if you believe that the Lord has called you, then respond!

## **What is the one thing a new teacher should pack for their trip?**

Well there are always going to be essentials and staples that you need to pack, but I think it's important to pack an item or two that reminds you of home as well. That may look different for everyone, but I think having something that connects back to the comfort of home is important.

## **What is your best advice for getting used to a new culture/climate?**

Allow yourself the opportunity to find a way to be involved in something outside of your classroom. Whether it's an extra-curricular activity that involves students, or building relationships with people at church, but find a way so that you don't end up just falling through the cracks.

## **What final words of encouragement do you have for someone considering a job with NICS?**

Pray about it and if you believe the Lord is leading you in this endeavor, then just do it!





# Rebecca

 Japan

Rebecca started as a teacher at the International Christian Academy in Nagoya, Japan.

## **Tell us a bit about yourself, how and where you grew up, and where you went to school.**

I'm a MK born and raised in Mexico. My parents chose to home school my siblings and me as there were no educational options that fit their vision for both a Christian and English education for us. At 18 years of age I moved to Idaho to go to college at Lewis Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho.

## **What made you decide to become a teacher?**

My Grandmother was a teacher, first in Canada, and later as the school teacher for all the missionary kids on the field with her and my grandfather in Mexico. I grew up hearing stories about her school house in Canada and later her one room missionary kid school house in Mexico. From a young age I felt the call to missions and knew that teaching would be a good fit for me. I imagined that I would follow a similar path as my grandmother and my mother before me, marry a missionary and teach my kids along with any other MKs where I was serving. Little did I imagine that God had other, much better plans for me.

## **How did you first hear about opportunities at NICS?**

As I finished college, I began to pursue teaching opportunities overseas, by searching for Christian international schools. I submitted several applications but did not hear back from anyone. Discouraged, I began to think that maybe God's plan was for me to stay in the US and gain a few years of experience before going overseas. Then one day I stumbled across a link for NICS. As soon as I read of their vision and opportunities I felt instinctively that God had led me there. Shortly thereafter I accepted a position to serve at International Christian Academy of Nagoya.

## **Did you speak any languages beyond English?**

I was raised in a bilingual home and speak both English and Spanish.

## **What did your family say when you told them you were teaching in another country?**

My parents were not surprised by my decision to teach in another country as I had been telling them my whole life that is what I was going to do. They encouraged me to follow where the Lord was leading.

## **What was the biggest barrier keeping you from signing on as a NICS Teacher?**

I had few hesitations before signing on with NICS. NICS was an answer to prayer and I knew before I was offered a job that if the opportunity presented itself, I would say yes.

## **What convinced you to overcome that barrier?**

I felt God's calling strongly to teach in another country. Throughout the process of finding and then applying to NICS, I saw God's hand moving and opening doors. When I was offered a position, I felt confident that it was God's sovereign plan for my life to answer the call.

## **What was your biggest fear once you signed up?**

Besides the normal fears of a first year teacher, I remember that I was hired two or three weeks after the March 11th earthquake in Japan. I was a little nervous of the reports of radiation but felt confident that if the school was still hiring teachers, the situation must be safe enough to remain in country. I was also broke as I finished college and feared the start up costs of moving to a new country.

## **Did your family encourage you to go? If so what was the most encouraging thing they did?**

My parents reminded me that the safest place to be is in the middle of God's will. If He had called me there, He would provide for my safety and financial needs.

## **What was your biggest fear when you first landed in your new country?**

My finances were a big stressor the first month in country, but that was mostly because I did not understand the currency or how to budget. I quickly realized that my salary was generous enough to live comfortably and to cover the start up costs I had during the first few months.

## **What was your favorite experience living in a new country?**

In 2013 I moved from Nagoya, Japan to Caracas, Venezuela. Living overseas is not always easy, but my deepest friendships are those I have made since moving to a new country. More than any experience, the people relationships I've made are what I treasure most. That being said, getting to eat fugu (blowfish), standing at the top of Machu Piccu, and finding a sloth in my back yard have all been pretty exciting.

## **What is the funniest thing that happened to you as you acclimated to a new culture?**

Once in Japan I got stuck talking to a door to door salesman for 20 minutes repeatedly saying "No, thank you." without realizing that by thanking him, I was signaling that I was interested in his product. Once my roommate came out and simply told him "No," he quickly left!

## **Tell us your favorite story from teaching at your NICS school.**

One year, as we were approaching Winter break, I had a student who became more and more unmanageable and disruptive. He repeatedly told me he couldn't wait for his vacation to start. The last day of school before the break he sat in the dismissal line, sobbing because of how much he was going to miss his friends and teachers. The friendships between students and teachers is unmatched. My students consistently say they prefer to be at school than on vacation.

## **What makes teaching at NICS so special?**

Having parents tell you they're sad to move away because this is the first school where they knew the teachers loved their kids, that's what makes NICS special.

## **How did your experience with NICS help you grow as a teacher?**

I have grown so much as a teacher since joining NICS. My experiences with students of diverse backgrounds have pushed me to create culturally relevant lessons that are accessible for all the learners in my classroom.

## **What do you wish you knew before you signed up?**

I've worked at two NICS schools and this summer I'm moving to a third. Each school is unique but each one is a vital part of the mission of NICS. Large or small, every school is doing important work for the kingdom.

## **What would you tell someone considering becoming a NICS teacher?**

If God is calling you to another country, He will provide everything you need. He doesn't always call us to safe, He doesn't always call us to easy, but when we are in His will He is faithful "to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine." This experience will deepen your relationship with Him and leave a lasting impact on your life.

## **What is the one thing a new teacher should pack for their trip?**

Bring pictures or a favorite blanket, something that will make your new house feel like home.

## **What is your best advice for getting used to a new culture/climate?**

Initiate! For a little while you will be completely dependent on others to help you navigate the basics of survival, but as soon as you can cook a meal or get to a local restaurant on your own, invite someone out who is a local or has been there a while. You'll feel proud that you can finally 'give back' and your efforts to reach out will go a long way to helping you find your place and establish meaningful relationships.

## **What final words of encouragement do you have for someone considering a job with NICS?**

Don't be afraid to go! The impact you can have on the life of a child will last for eternity. That's what makes everything worth it!



# Melissa

 Japan

Melissa is a NICS teacher in Japan.

## **Tell us a bit about yourself, how and where you grew up, and where you went to school.**

I was born and raised in central Kansas. I have always been surrounded by people with good values and Christian morals. I love my Mid-Western roots, and all the “farm girl” qualities instilled into me from birth. I just wish I had grabbed hold and appreciated it as much then as I do now. God is good and has strengthened many relationships I took for granted as a kid. I graduated from Kansas Wesleyan University in small town Kansas and received my Master’s in an even smaller Kansas town at Baker University.

## **What made you decide to become a teacher?**

I actually never dreamt of being a teacher! I wanted to be an adventurer, traveling the world, painting, writing, and creating happiness everywhere I went. Through life’s twists and turns, I settled for being a travel agent and enjoyed life through other people’s adventures and stories. Then 9-11 happened and the travel industry took a hit, so I chose to go back to school and finish my degree I’d been working on for several years, one class at a time to be an accountant. While sitting in the registrar’s office, it hit me, I did not want to sit behind a desk the rest of my life, I wanted to have the adventure I’d so been craving. So again I chose a career where I could live vicariously through others, and became a teacher. God is good and always knows best!

## **How did you first hear about opportunities at NICS?**

After several years of teaching in Kansas public schools, I felt the calling to become a missionary. I went to my church and discussed options for me. They connected me with NICS, an organization I had never heard of before. The thought that I could be a missionary and be paid on the field was huge! I also loved the idea of seeing in real life all those places I’d only dreamed about as a kid, a travel agent, and a teacher. God is good and sees it all.

## **Did you speak any languages beyond English?**

I had attempted to learn German and Spanish, and now Japanese. None of these can I do much more than simple vocabulary and count to 10. God is good and has humor.

## **What did your family say when you told them you were teaching in another country?**

My mother said she always knew I would do something like this. She is my biggest supporter in all areas, spiritual, financial, mental, emotional. She is awesome and a great Christian role model to me. My daughter, who at the time was a freshman in college, loved the idea and also was pursuing a degree in missions. She hoped to move to Africa and help in the medical field. She now is graduated and works in the inner city for a medical missions organization and loves it.

## **What was the biggest barrier keeping you from signing on as a NICS Teacher?**

I honestly don't recall any barriers. I turned in my resignation, sold my house, prepared my family and friends, all before I even had a position with NICS. From the time I applied, God assured me over and over it was the right decision with so many validations. There was no room for doubt.

## **What convinced you to overcome that barrier?**

Prayer and faith that God is who He is always and forever.

## **What was your biggest fear once you signed up?**

I worried about losing my freedoms like driving anywhere I wanted, whenever I wanted and being able to talk to people in different languages.

## **Did your family encourage you to go? If so what was the most encouraging thing they did?**

Yes, they encouraged me. They prayed with me, assisted with the transitions, and most importantly never questioned me and what God was doing through me. They also saw the validations over and over again. Every time there was a "what if..." spoken, He answered it with an "I AM..." and the worry was gone.

## **What was your biggest fear when you first landed in your new country?**

I did not have a visa at the time of my arrival, so I was very worried about what would happen at the airport. But it was very smooth and very easily handled.

## **What was your favorite experience living in a new country?**

The first time I went out on my own was an amazing feeling. I was able to order food, shop in the stores, find my directions, and get home all in one piece! I remember standing at the stop light outside my apartment and just staring at it in amazement that I was standing on a street corner in Japan... alone... at night... and God's got me.

## **What is the funniest thing that happened to you as you acclimated to a new culture?**

Food troubles... oh so many... Once, I purchased what looked like shredded cheddar cheese. I was extra excited, because this is a very rare find! I came home and tried to make nachos with chips and shredded cheese, but my cheese didn't melt. I thought, "hmm, maybe it doesn't react with the microwave?" So I made pizza and put the cheese on top and it still didn't melt in the oven. Weird. So then I tried to melt it on the stove top into my scrambled eggs, but no luck. It also had no real flavor. I then had a friend over who looked at the bag and fell on the floor with laughter.... it was shredded egg. She said the funniest part was that I put egg in my egg!

## **Tell us your favorite story from teaching at your NICS school.**

I LOVE teaching Social Studies to international children!!! So many cultural perspectives I've never even thought about! I'm teaching World War 2 in Japan! I'm teaching about the European explorers who made slaves out of the barbarians from other countries. I'm teaching the Bible and God's role in all of it! God is so good and reminds us of His divine presence in all areas of history!

## **What makes teaching at NICS so special?**

I get to teach the Bible and God in everything I do! And I get to tell every child and parent I see about God, too!

## **How did your experience with NICS help you grow as a teacher?**

I definitely have become more confident in my own abilities. Teaching at a small school, you get to be "everybody" at some point or other. I am a computer tech, a librarian, a chaplain, a counselor, an advisor, maintenance man, lunch lady, nurse, weed puller, janitor, a PE teacher, an art teacher, a leader, a follower, a curriculum writer, an accreditation team member, a grade book master, among many others I can't even recall right now! God is good and equips us with skills before we need them!

## **What do you wish you knew before you signed up?**

I wish I had known about NICS before. I really wish my own children had an opportunity like this when they were growing up.

## **What would you tell someone considering becoming a NICS teacher?**

Do it! It will change you forever. Pray.

## **What is the one thing a new teacher should pack for their trip?**

Medicine or food not found in the host country that you need.

## **What is your best advice for getting used to a new culture/climate?**

Find a friend, find a smart phone, find the time, and just get out into the community and enjoy it without preconceived ideas. Give yourself time then to reflect and recoup from the experiences. It's exhausting to constantly be "thinking" about things we've always just done. Simple things like taking out trash, cooking, using hot water, traveling on the left side of the road, etc. are exhausting at the beginning. God is Good. If He brought you to it, He will bring you through it.

## **What final words of encouragement do you have for someone considering a job with NICS?**

God is good. Always.





# Kay

 China

Kay has been a teacher in both Ghana and China.

## Tell us a bit about yourself, how and where you grew up, and where you went to school.

I was born in the Philippines as a PK, and later went to Indonesia with my parents who were missionaries there for almost 15 years. In the Philippines I went to public schools. In Indonesia we were first homeschooled with other missionary children (in a garage that was converted into a classroom), and later, my siblings and I were one of the first students at a new school for expats, which is now a well-known International school in Bandung, Indonesia. When I started senior high school, I went back to the Philippines to study, as the tuition at the Bandung school became too much for a missionary family income. I stayed with relatives while I finished high school, Bible College, and up to when I finished a teaching degree in secondary education. (My parents were in Indonesia, except for when they were on furlough.) I finished my Master's in Linguistics and subsequent grad courses at Ohio University. After grad school, I taught ESL/ELL for many years at a public school in Ohio.

## What made you decide to become a teacher?

My parents in heaven and our neighbors would testify that I decided to be a teacher even before I went to school. I would gather neighbor kids (around my age) and 'teach' them how to write ABCs with chalk, using my little 12 in. x 8 in. green slate that had the ABCs around its edge. Seriously, I wanted to be a teacher at a very young age. Always did. God opened opportunities for me to pursue an undergrad degree in Secondary Ed. with majors in English and Natural Science. After teaching at a Filipino school for 2 years, God opened another teaching opportunity at an Indo-Chinese refugee camp, also in the Philippines. Teaching ESL to refugees who were bound for the US, Canada, Australia, Germany, and other countries, opened my eyes and interest in pursuing a graduate degree in ESL, which led me to finish a Master's in Applied Linguistics in the US. I could say that God was the One who decided for me to become a teacher, by putting all the opportunities, experiences, and resources on my path.

## **How did you first hear about opportunities at NICS?**

I had always wanted to teach overseas (outside the U.S. and the Philippines), and asked God to close doors in the U.S. if HE wanted me to go. And HE did! (Be careful for what you pray for!!!) I looked at the website of my old school in Bandung, Indonesia (Question #1, the start-up school), thinking I could apply there. The name of the school was Bandung International School (BIS). As I was scrolling through the pages and learning about my old school, I saw on the margin of the school's website another school name. It was BAIS or Bandung Alliance International (now Intercultural) School. Curious, I decided to investigate about BAIS. I read and read, and it directed me to the NICS website. As they say, the rest is history!!!! Praise the LORD! I have taught at our NICS school in Ghana, and now at one of our Oasis schools in Southeast Asia.

## **Did you speak any languages beyond English?**

Yes, I did and still do.

## **What did your family say when you told them you were teaching in another country?**

Coming from a missionary family, they said, "If God opens the way, go for it!"

## **What was the biggest barrier keeping you from signing on as a NICS Teacher?**

I had some medical needs. Going to a missionary salary from a fairly good monthly paycheck and health insurance was the first barrier. How about my daily maintenance of meds? Are there good hospitals if something happens?

## **What convinced you to overcome that barrier?**

His Word convinced me and I claimed it. My life verse, Isaiah 41:10, reminded me again that HE is all I need, and HE will care for me. This verse has 7 promises, one for each day. That was enough. He did, He has, and I know He will come through for me. He reminded me how HE had come through for me, through the years leading to joining NICS.

## **Did your family encourage you to go? If so what was the most encouraging thing they did?**

Yes, they did. They bought me a Magic Jack plan that is internet based, so I could call them anytime! The church and elder relatives gathered together, gave me a despedida (goodbye/send-off party) and prayed over me.

## **What was your biggest fear when you first landed in your new country?**

Would I find the food I am used to? The answer: Yes, I did for some and adjusted when others were not available. I also learned to appreciate (and love!) the food of the new country.

## **What was your favorite experience living in a new country?**

Learning, experiencing, and adjusting to the new culture. My senses went wild in both directions! I loved what my senses loved, and the ones my senses did not like, I learned from them.

## **What is the funniest thing that happened to you as you acclimated to a new culture?**

During the first 2 weeks at my apartment, I could not understand why a modern high rise apartment building would not have appropriate lighting from the main door to the elevators. Each time I would go into the building after dark, I would use my cellphone light to see my way to the elevators. One day, a gentleman stomped hard on the floor and whistled, and the lights magically turned on. He looked at me, puzzled that I was using my tiny cellphone light. Embarrassing and funny! From someone who has lived in the 'boonies' (even in the US), this was pretty funny to me. Can you imagine me whistling or stomping on the floors? And it has to be a certain pitch and loudness of whistling.

## **Tell us your favorite story from teaching at your NICS school.**

At the first NICS school, I taught and tutored a Japanese 6th grader. On the first day of after-school tutoring, I helped this student understand his Bible homework: The Lord's Prayer! I truly believe that those one-on-one times I helped him with homework, and answering honest questions about God, salvation, and living the Christian life, led him to accept Christ, and eventually he gave his testimony in front of his peers at school. Still gives me chills!

## **What makes teaching at NICS so special?**

Teaching at NICS truly gives you the opportunity to teach to the whole child. It comes with the opportunity (and mission) to point a child to Christ and heavenward. AND, you get to see the world doing that!!! How awesome is that!

## **How did your experience with NICS help you grow as a teacher?**

Teachers in NICS schools come from different walks of life, different countries and cultures, different educational backgrounds, expertise, experiences, different teaching styles, and different personalities. When all these come together in a school, the result is phenomenal: new teaching ideas, new perspectives in learning and teaching, new bank of teaching tools and resources, and ultimately, learning how to adjust to new information and how to incorporate them into one's repertoire.

## **What do you wish you knew before you signed up?**

I tend to ask a lot of questions before I sign up, so the things I wish I knew before signing up would be minor things.

## **What would you tell someone considering becoming a NICS teacher?**

If the Lord opens the way, GO for it! I believe that ALL experiences/events/opportunities that HE opens up or puts on your path, all lead and prepare you to and for the next exciting adventure HE has in store for you. So, GO!

## **What is the one thing a new teacher should pack for their trip?**

Your favorite SPICES! If you like to cook/bake, that is! Seriously! Cooking and baking gives me comfort – especially when I'm away from home. SO, pack what gives you comfort. IF reading gives you comfort, fill your Kindle with books. IF a book for teaching in your area, pack it! I always bring one or two books that I know could help me in my area of teaching.

## **What is your best advice for getting used to a new culture/climate?**

Be open to the new culture and be willing to make a commitment to learn. Experience and enjoy the new culture by being out there where people are at. Invite them into your home. Look at the 'new things, way of doing things, or ideas' from THEIR perspective. Have them teach you their ways and share yours, too, but be sensitive to their culture. You are in THEIR territory. Ask a lot of questions.

## **What final words of encouragement do you have for someone considering a job with NICS?**

Pray specifically AND, when HE opens all the doors, walk through them with the confidence of Isaiah 41:10 in your suitcase.

# So what's the next step?

Are you ready to learn more about becoming a NICS teacher? NICS faculty and staff are more than ordinary professionals. They are professional, passionate, and prepared.

## The ideal candidate. . .

- . . . has a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.
- . . . has a Christ-centered, Biblical worldview and lifestyle.
- . . . regularly attends an evangelical church.
- . . . agrees with the NICS statement of faith.
- . . . holds, at least, a bachelor's degree in education or a related field.
- . . . has state or ACSI teaching certification (if applying to teach).
- . . . is a native-English speaker or scored higher than 100 on the TOEFL iBT exam.
- . . . is committed to providing a Christ-centered, academically excellent education for students from over 100 nations.
- . . . is ready to live overseas for at least two years.
- . . . is flexible and willing to learn.
- . . . is ready to walk by faith.
- . . . wants to share Christ with the nations.

Are you ready to learn more about becoming a NICS teacher? Check out the resources below to get started.

## Find more answers.

Still have questions? Check out our FAQ page and see if your question is one that has already been answered.

[www.nics.org/teach-nics/careers-faq](http://www.nics.org/teach-nics/careers-faq)

## Search for a job.

Are you ready to dive in? Check out our job listings page and find the perfect job for you!

[www.nics.org/career-opportunities](http://www.nics.org/career-opportunities)