
Implications for Canada

While many Canadian educational institutions have received students at various levels from Asia Pacific, and others have established mutually beneficial educational links, this study suggests that Canada has not yet begun to tap its large potential for exporting educational services to Asia Pacific. We seriously risk losing what market share we have attained if a more co-ordinated and targeted marketing approach is not adopted.

International education is big business. In addition to paying tuition fees, international students pay rent, buy groceries and purchase many Canadian products and services while they reside here. In 1991, international students' expenditures in Canada were estimated by Statistics Canada (based on a Vancouver Board of Trade study) as contributing about \$1.5 billion to the Canadian economy—an amount corresponding to approximately 19 000 jobs for Canadians. While our competitors have already recognized the significant economic impact of international students to their economies, Canada is just realizing this fact (Table B).

We have had some wake-up calls. The October 1992 Prosperity Initiative Report commissioned by the Government of Canada, *Inventing Our Future: An Action Plan for Canada's Prosperity*, highlights the importance of international education in helping "prepare Canadians to meet the challenge of globalization." The report urges Canada to market education more intensively to other countries and sets forth the challenge of doubling the number of international students in Canada over the next two years from 83 000 to 166 000.

Industry, Science and Technology Canada's 1990-91 *Industry Profile on Commercial Education and Training* suggests that the potential benefit "to other sectors of Canadian industry is considerable, as the provision of Canadian education and training services can lead to the development of broader and longer-term trading relationships."

It is the long term however, that deserves more attention. International education represents an essential opportunity for Canada to become better known to the next generation of Asian decision-makers while Asian languages and culture become known to the new wave of Canadian leaders. Enhanced cultural, political and economic understanding achieved through international education will help to ensure Canada's future success in the international marketplace and will promote the acceptance of Canadian foreign policy interests abroad. As noted by the Vancouver Board of Trade, "students' experiences here will create familiarity with and acceptance of Canadian products, which in turn will create opportunities for technology transfer, joint ventures and other future business arrangements."