

HANDBOOK ON **CANADIAN OPPORTUNITIES** IN BANGLADESH

HIGHER EDUCATION

The population of Bangladesh is estimated to be 130 million with 11 million in the higher education (18-22 years) age group bracket. By 2020, there will be an increase of about three million in this age bracket.

According to a World Bank report, three out of four students who pass Higher Secondary go on to some form of higher education. About 10% of the entrants are admitted to universities and the remainder go to 1200 degree colleges, or pursue other options such as going abroad, reapplying the following year or entering the job market.

Overcrowding at Bangladeshi colleges and universities is creating a significant marketing opportunity for international institutions. An American degree is held in high esteem. Canada can take advantage of this stimulus by offering the same or higher quality education at less cost.

VISION 2020 ACTION:

According to a World Bank report, private universities will enrol up to a third of students in 2020 and the government will concentrate on areas not covered by private institutions. At all levels, Vision 2020 will focus on upgrading the quality of education to the necessary life skills for students entering the labour market.

Canadian academic institutions can play a significant role in helping Bangladeshi students receive quality higher education, and also help Bangladeshi institutions raise their standards in the 21st century.

Why market your educational offerings and related products in Bangladesh?

- The number of qualified students simply overwhelms the education infrastructure. In 2000, almost 190,000 students graduated from high school. There are only 91,651 seats in Bangladesh universities (public and private).
- Studying abroad is a popular topic in Bangladesh. There are no official statistics, but it is estimated that approximately 200,000 students are studying overseas with approximately 15,000 of these students in US institutions. In the year 2000, 24,000 students went abroad for higher education.
- In 1999, the majority of Bangladeshi students studying abroad were in India, the US, the UK, Japan, Australia and Canada in that order. The majority of these students went to these countries to complete undergraduate, graduate and PhD degrees.
- Best prospects are students from high-income families, undergraduate students who have just finished high school (particularly English medium), or transfer students who are looking for opportunities to go abroad for higher education.

In summary, a US degree is held in high esteem. Canada can take advantage of this impression by offering the same or higher quality at less cost. The main reasons Bangladeshis want overseas education are:

- Excellent experience in global economy for future careers.
- Knowledge diversification in a new country, environment and lifestyle.
- Unique programs in foreign countries.
- Quality and value for money - important criteria in selecting a country for overseas studies.