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BUILDING A STRONGER CANADA-ASIA RELATIONSHIP THROUGH TWO-WAY EDUCATIONAL LINKS

by Dominic Barton



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Although many of Canada's leaders and high-profile reports have emphasized the importance of international education to Canada's future, action to date has been modest and sporadic. On the 'inbound' side, which focuses on attracting students from other countries to study in Canada, we face intensifying competition. International students are highly coveted for their financial contributions to the host economies, their potential to become skilled workers after graduation and their ability to serve as ambassadors in building closer relationships with Asian nations. To merely stay competitive, Canada needs to significantly boost funding and promotion of its education offerings. On the 'outbound' side, which focuses on sending more Canadians to Asia, there is an even wider gap between what Canada is and should be doing, especially in comparison with Australia, New Zealand, the U.S. and U.K. Nor are we doing enough to prepare our young people with the knowledge, language training and cross-cultural skills that they will need to be confident and effective working in and with Asia. This paper recaps why strengthening two-way education links with Asia is of critical importance to Canada and what actions should take priority.

INTRODUCTION

"The time to act is now so that Canada's full potential in international education can be fully realized.... We are facing a narrow window of opportunity." — *Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy (August 2012)*

"We must act quickly to strengthen Canada's position as an ideal destination for the most talented students and researchers." — *Canadian Council of Chief Executives (September 2012)*

"Asia's economic and geopolitical rise is hardly news for anybody.... But is Canada, as a whole, preparing itself for relevance and prosperity in a more Asia-centric world? The answer is not fast enough." — *Dean Connor, President and CEO of Sun Life Financial, at the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada's "Canada-Asia 2013: Navigating Asia's Future, Charting Canada's Strategy" (June 2013)*

Such urgent exhortations about the importance of international education to Canada's economic and sociopolitical future have appeared in more than half a dozen reports over the past five years (see Appendix). In that time, the Stephen Harper government has strongly stated its commitment to boosting education links between Canada and Asia. However, action to date on developing these two-way educational links has been modest and sporadic — not enough to move the needle for Canada.

One very significant dimension of international education is the 'inbound' side: attracting students from other countries to study at Canadian universities, colleges and primary and secondary schools. As the global education market expands and Asian students' wealth and mobility grow rapidly, Canada faces intensifying competition in this arena. International students are highly coveted for their financial contributions to the host economies, their potential to become skilled workers after graduation and their ability to serve as ambassadors in building closer relationships with Asian nations. While Canada has made large gains

in recruiting students from Asia, so have others, notably the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. To merely stay competitive, Canada needs to significantly boost funding and promotion of its education offerings. But there is potential to achieve even more.

Another important dimension is the 'outbound' side: sending more Canadians to Asia through study abroad, internships, field schools and co-op placements - referred to generally as "mobility" programs. Here, there is an even wider gap between what Canada is currently doing and what it could and should be doing, especially in comparison with countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the U.S. and U.K. Nor are we doing enough to prepare our young people with the knowledge, language-training and cross-cultural skills that they will need to be confident and effective working in and with Asia.

This paper recaps why strengthening two-way education links with Asia is of critical importance to Canada and what actions should take priority. In its report last year, the Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy set out the target of doubling the number of full-time international students at all levels (K-12, university, language and vocational schools) to 450,000 within a decade. Considering that international enrolment growth in Canada has averaged 10% over recent years, we believe this to be an achievable, even conservative, goal. We also believe that Canada should focus on attracting Asian students — especially from India and China — with the aim of strengthening our links with those fast-rising economies.

The same report also recommended the creation of an international student mobility program that would serve 50,000 Canadian students by the year 2022. While individual universities and colleges are setting their own goals to boost the outbound side of international mobility, there needs to be complementary effort to promote Asian countries as destinations. Of the estimated 3% of Canadian students who participate in some type of study abroad

program, only a small fraction of them choose a program in Asia, despite the growing evidence of Asia’s importance to Canada’s future prosperity.

It is clear that the issue of boosting two-way education exchanges with Asia needs a national champion. In Canada’s complex jurisdictional landscape, responsibility for interrelated aspects of education, research, innovation and international trade is dispersed among numerous government bodies — and thus is owned by no one. In order to get past the terrific studies and to move to action plans, someone needs to mobilize the numerous stakeholders, coordinate their efforts and set out priorities.

WHY FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Creating educational bridges between Canada and Asian powers has the potential to deliver wide-ranging, long-term returns on investment that few alternative investments can match.

- **Economy:** International students bring enormous value to the Canadian economy, spending more than \$7.7 billion per year on tuition, accommodation and discretionary purchases. Their contributions translate into 86,000 jobs and generate more than \$445 million in annual tax revenue. Education is already Canada’s 11th-largest export, bringing in more revenue than coal or softwood lumber.¹

Over the longer term, Canada will also need to make strategic investments in the Asia skills and knowledge base of its own population so that Canadian companies and governments will be equipped to identify economic opportunities and to be as effective as possible in pursuing them. And if these investments in Canada’s ‘Asia competence’ are to yield pay-offs soon, we must begin the process of introducing and strengthening relevant programs now.

- **Labour Force:** Canada’s future workforce will rely heavily on immigrant skills. Today, 75% of labour growth comes from immigration, a share expected to reach 100% before the end of the decade. Indeed, by 2020, our economy is projected to face a shortage of skilled labour in sectors as diverse as health, finance and applied sciences. If current patterns persist,

¹ Roslyn Kunin & Associates, Inc., *Economic Impact of International Education in Canada* (presented to Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada), July 2009.



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within 20 years there will be almost two million unfilled knowledge-industry jobs in Ontario alone. International students who choose to remain in Canada represent a highly desirable source of immigrants capable of integrating well. What’s more, they will be a key source of entrepreneurial talent. One U.S. study found that a quarter of high-tech startups in that country had at least one immigrant founder, and more than half of these entrepreneurs entered the U.S. as students.

But we should not rely on immigration alone to fill critical gaps in our labour force. Canadian companies are in dire need of workers with knowledge of and experience in Asia in order for them to compete in those growing markets. In 2012, an Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APF Canada) poll found that six in 10 companies struggle to find Canadians qualified to work in Asia. According to the same poll, only one-third of respondents felt that the Canadians working in their professions had adequate knowledge of Asian societies and economies. Sending Canadian students to Asia is an effective way to fill this skills gap.

- **Education System:** Amidst capped domestic tuition, international students provide important revenues that schools need to expand their academic programs. Moreover, research and faculty links between Canadian and foreign institutions boost our universities’ reputations, help them attract prestigious projects and talent, and position them at the forefront of innovation. These links should extend down to the undergraduate level, specifically having more Canadian students spending terms or years abroad at Asian partner institutions (something these institutions have pointed

out has been sorely lacking) and making valuable personal and professional connections.

- **Global Standing:** Perhaps most important, two-way educational links have the potential to significantly strengthen Canada's future trade and foreign policy relationships with Asia by making Canada more globally connected and demonstrating our commitment to that region. Canadian youth gain knowledge and opportunities that will make them stronger players in the Asian Century, while Asian graduates who return home are poised to become future leaders with strong links to Canada.



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WHY WE MUST ACT NOW

On increasing the number of international students: Canada has made impressive strides in attracting international students. Over the past decade, our schools have increased foreign enrollment by 75%, to almost 240,000 full-time students, making Canada the sixth-largest player in the global education sector, and fourth-largest in English-language education. We have made particular progress in Asia. Today, more than half the international student population in Canada comes from that region. Education is already our single largest export to China, and Chinese students represent close to a quarter of all international tertiary students here. Indian student numbers have been growing as well, with approved study permit applications rising over three-fold between 2007 and 2011.

These accomplishments, while laudable, pale in comparison to the potential as the international education market continues to surge. According to the OECD, the

number of international students worldwide was 4.3 million in 2011; by 2025, that figure will grow by two-thirds, to 7.2 million — with more than half of the students coming from Asia. That's because the continent's education infrastructure can't keep up with the demand. China and India alone have a combined school-age population a billion strong. India, for example, is projected to need 1,500 universities by 2015; it currently has about 350, leaving an estimated 100,000 highly qualified Indians unable to secure spots in top institutes at home. Yet, amid rapid economic growth, these countries urgently need an educated workforce. India and China face a combined shortage of 36 million skilled workers by 2020. All this amounts to a vast population of young talent seeking an education outside their home countries.

Canada has a chance to become the favoured destination for this diaspora. The fact that fewer than 2% of the Indian students abroad are attending Canadian institutions suggests the size of the opportunity. Indeed, Canada has a number of advantages over our top rivals — assets on which, to date, we have failed to capitalize. “If the country's universities were graded on how well we've done at helping Canadians understand the importance international students can play in the country's future, we would receive a failing grade,” wrote Amit Chakma, president of the University of Western Ontario, who chaired the federal international education panel, in an op-ed in 2012.

As the panel's report noted, these advantages include “a strong economic foundation, safe environment [and] an ever-growing multicultural population with ties to the world.” Thanks in part to its relatively strong performance during the Great Recession, Canada has gained a higher profile on the world stage, and has been repeatedly singled out in global surveys as the favoured place to live, work and study. Our schools are highly rated on criteria that matter to Asian students. For example, Montreal recently topped a ranking by The Economist and the Bank of Communications in China as the city offering the best ROI for overseas students based on education quality, employment prospects and a welcoming multicultural environment. And this high education quality comes at an affordable cost: tuition fees and the cost of living are lower in Canada than in the U.K. and the U.S.

Additionally, our large Asian immigrant population could serve as a powerful magnet to attract students from overseas. As APF Canada President Yuen Pau Woo has written, “the strength of people movements between Canada and China is already unmatched by China's ties with any other OECD country.” International students have the option to work during their studies and apply for jobs here upon graduation, opportunities some countries have been

restricting in recent years. What’s more, our education system is amply capable of accommodating more foreign students with no impact on quality. According to a recent study, only 7% of our tertiary students come from abroad, and fewer than 1% at the elementary and high school levels — ratios substantially lower than in leading markets (by comparison, 17% of tertiary students are international in the UK and 20% in Australia).

An important reason to tap all these assets now is that the three biggest players in English-language education face challenges that could help Canada gain market share. The U.K.’s recent immigration policies, such as restrictions on work placements, and new regulations aimed at quality assurance, constrain that country’s push for more international recruitment. Australia, long seen as a “marketing champ” in the education sector, has had to retrench after quality issues and a series of ethnically motivated attacks led to a drastic drop in international enrollment. The U.S., meanwhile, continues to suffer the image as an unsafe place in many Asian students’ and parents’ minds.

However, these international education leaders have no intention of ceding competitive ground, and all are working to recapture any lost advantage. Meanwhile, new competition is growing. Asian schools are rapidly expanding and improving in hopes of keeping more of their young talent at home. Malaysia, in particular, is positioning itself as a regional education hub, with the government targeting to take over Canada’s spot as the sixth-largest education exporter by 2020.

All this creates an urgent moment for Canada to leverage its strengths. There is political will: The 2011 federal budget allocated \$10 million over two years to develop and implement an international education strategy that will align with Ottawa’s goals in science and technology, immigration and the labour market. Additionally, the governments of Canada and China have agreed to make education the fifth pillar of their bilateral relationship. To make significant progress, however, any new strategy must avoid the pitfalls that tripped up previous efforts. Earlier government initiatives have been episodic and limited in scope, and have tended to face cuts at the first sign of an economic downturn. Worse still, Canada has failed to adopt a coordinated approach to promoting its education offerings.

It has been over a year since the federal panel presented its strategy. Three years have passed since a high-level education delegation travelled to India, only to find its proposed investment embarrassingly eclipsed by those from Australia, the U.K. and Germany. The higher-

education working group formed around the G20 Summit in Toronto has met just once in three years. The recent foreign service strike produced significant delays in processing international student visas, causing reputational damage that must quickly be addressed. The recent recommendations by various stakeholder groups demonstrate a consensus around key goals.

On raising the level of ‘Asia competence’ among Canadian students:

The need to act is just as compelling when it comes to building and strengthening the Asia-related skills and knowledge of young Canadians. As was noted by the recent Asia Competence Task Force (a joint initiative by APF Canada and the Munk School of Global Affairs), while Canada certainly has some impressive and inspiring “pockets of excellence” in building Asia competence, these efforts are too small-scale and isolated to have the kind of pervasive and national-level effect that Canada needs. Moreover, many of the international mobility offices and organizations devoted to international education have focused heavily on the inbound side, with far less attention and resources devoted to the outbound side.



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GOALS AND ACTIONS

The following recommendations are based on research done by organizations and individuals within and outside the government, most notably: the federal advisory panel; the Canadian Council of Chief Executives; the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada; and the Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE).

1. Integrate efforts under one national umbrella;
2. Clarify and boost the education brand;
3. Streamline and improve infrastructure;
4. Boost funding and improve branding of scholarships for inbound students;
5. Raise Canadian students' knowledge and experience of Asia; and
6. Learn from other countries' successes and setbacks.

1. Integrate efforts under one national umbrella or champion

It's a well-established fact that international students and their parents pick the country of study first and only afterward think about the school. That alone is a compelling reason why the promotion of Canada's educational offerings should be a national effort. But herein lies a challenge: Unlike our top rivals, Canada lacks a federal ministry of education or a central marketing agency. The provinces and territories hold jurisdiction over education, but the recruitment of foreign students is steered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), while post-secondary institutions largely interact with Ottawa via the Ministry of Industry. As a result, our efforts on inbound international education have been diffuse, spread among institutional, provincial and federal initiatives that have failed to optimally advance our strategic interests. Similarly, in terms of Asia skills and knowledge for Canadian students, the lack of a pan-Canada body responsible for tracking progress, mobilizing resources and sharing best practices has resulted in scattered and one-off successes.

Canada needs a national body solely focused on international education, one that will coordinate the efforts of the various jurisdictions and departments, as well as the numerous educational associations and individual institutions. This need not, and should not, be a large group. The 2009 DFAIT report recommended the formation of an agency that's "small, agile, performance-oriented [and] expertise-driven." It's important, however, that this group have a dedicated budget and a strong physical presence in key target countries.

To show that its mission carries weight, this agency will need high-profile government support. Senior federal leaders need to demonstrate to Asian partners — in both

the public and private sectors — Canada's commitment to international education by making it a pillar of official federal missions to priority countries and integrating it into the trade, innovation, immigration and foreign policies.

2. Clarify and boost the education brand

In 2007, Ottawa established an education promotion initiative funded with \$1 million a year over five years. Dubbed Edu-Canada, the effort relied on embassies and foreign offices to promote Canadian education and recruit international students. Edu-Canada exceeded the targets set for it, and was lauded a success.

But times have changed, and the bar has risen — Australia's 2010 allocation of AU\$27 million over three years to the promotion of its education offerings signals just how high. To merely stay in the game, Canada has to significantly boost its promotion budget, and its goals. The first step should be a rethinking of the education brand. Many stakeholders now view "Edu-Canada" as a generic and bland term that fails to communicate a distinct value proposition. In surveys, foreign citizens report that they think highly of Canada but have trouble explaining why. We need to define for them what makes this country and its educational institutions uniquely attractive by injecting freshness and boldness into Canada's brand.

Promotional efforts will require a significant investment to stand out amidst appeals from numerous other countries, with consistent messaging that emphasizes distinctive aspects of the Canadian education experience. Canada needs to commit to high-profile participation at all key international education fairs and to stage independent education events like those our top competitor countries regularly hold in Asia. Advertising in newspapers and



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magazines in major Asian markets could be augmented by sponsorship (possibly with scholarship rewards) of education-related initiatives, such as English-language competitions in China. Critically, any marketing strategy must rely heavily on digital communication, through the mobile and social media that now dominate young people's interactions.

Additionally, we need to tap the invaluable promotional resource that is Canadian schools' Asian alumni population. Nine out of 10 foreign students report being satisfied or very satisfied with their experience in Canada — constituting an army of potential ambassadors for Canadian education. Alumni associations can tap graduates' enthusiasm by organizing outreach efforts, such as alumni events in major Asian cities. Expat organizations, meanwhile, can help form groups like the India-Canada Alumni Network, which offers Indian graduates of Canadian universities a networking forum while fostering cultural and academic links between the two countries.

3. Streamline and improve infrastructure

A key pain point for international students is the lengthy red tape they encounter when trying to access our schools. Canada's turnaround for student visas averages 65 days — three to five times longer than visas processed by the U.S., U.K. and Australia. The foreign service strike exacerbated the problem, and the bottlenecks will get worse if we succeed in increasing the Asian applicant numbers. At least two recent reports note that processing improvements could be funded by raising study-permit fees, which are currently the lowest among comparable countries. The initial focus should be on streamlining approvals for qualified students from the highest-priority countries.

To help students navigate the application process, the government needs to fund a sophisticated online system that will serve as a national portal for those interested in studying here. The portal should provide all the resources and information an international student might need — including links to the websites of schools, associations and government agencies — and be fully translated into the languages of target students. Incorporating a student permit and visa processing hub could be a highly valuable addition.

The government should also invest in training the staff at embassies and trade offices on Canada's diverse education offerings. Teams that include trade commissioners, visa officers and representatives from academic associations or institutions could develop strategies uniquely suited to each market. B.C., for one, already plans to install dedicated

education officers in its overseas trade and investment offices. Meanwhile, at home, we should improve how we host international students by providing better language preparation, cultural acclimatization and academic support. Ensuring that all provinces extend health benefits to students from abroad would further extend Canadian schools' appeal.

Elementary and high schools often get left out of discussions about international education strategy, yet they form important pipelines for two-way student flows. Canadian provinces currently have 84 offshore and international schools — three-quarters of these in Asia — that are accredited to teach, for a fee, the provincial K-12 curricula. A significant portion of students in these institutes end up in Canada's post-secondary system; in fact, all the schools host presentations by several Canadian universities each year. The model has been successful but needs a consistent, national brand and a stronger system for monitoring quality.

4. Boost funding and improve branding of scholarships

There is a consensus in Canada's international education community that the current scholarship offerings, at both undergraduate and graduate levels, are simply not globally competitive. The fact that the available funding is parceled out under a variety of programs, with no overarching brand or coordination and little promotion to foreign applicants, further reduces the impact. Only a quarter of the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships and fewer than a third of the Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships were awarded to international students in 2011-2012, amounting to a couple of dozen foreign winners. Many of the awards funded under the Canada Graduate Scholarships Program are not open to international students. In comparison, the Australia Awards program alone, funded with AU\$334 million from the federal government, drew almost 5,000 international scholars last year.

Canada needs a high-profile, integrated scholarship strategy that gives international students powerful financial and career incentives to choose this country. The federal panel has recommended the creation of 8,000 new scholarships for top international undergraduates — a program that should strive to match the offerings of the China Scholarship Council or Brazil's Science Without Borders initiative. At the graduate level, we need to combine the available funds under one prestigious scholarship brand — on the model of the Fulbright or the Chevening — both to attract the best students and researchers, and to raise Canada's image as a top destination for education.

Attracting research talent from Asia is critical to creating lasting links with the continent’s innovators. But it’s not enough to be a recruiter. Canada needs to provide funding for research collaborations that at the very least matches the money Asian countries are putting up, and ideally support this investment with bilateral agreements. As Brazil’s experience with its science program shows, a significant financial commitment from the government can bring big corporate participation — in that case, funding for more than a quarter of the scholarships.

5. Raise Canadian students’ experience of Asia

As indicated above, for one of the world’s most multicultural nations, Canada has a poor record of student mobility. A mere 3% of Canadian post-secondary students study abroad, with only a small fraction of them studying in Asia. By comparison, 5% of European students and 6% of Australians pursue study abroad. Several big players in international education, including the U.K. and New Zealand, are planning to expand their student-mobility programs, while Germany has committed to boosting the ratio of its student population studying abroad from an already impressive one-third to one-half.

And Canada? The 2011 cancellation of the federal International Academic Mobility initiative, which helped fund undergraduate study abroad, has left the impression that raising our students’ global experience is a low priority. That’s detrimental both to our young people’s prospects and Canada’s international relationships. Understanding the cultures, histories and languages of the rising Asian powers will give the future Canadian workforce important qualifications for careers both abroad and at home. As the APF Canada survey of businesses found, more than eight in 10 of the respondents consider education (especially Asian



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languages) to be the most critical component of a strategy to build closer relations with Asia.

For education to help us build lasting links with the continent, it must be in the form of truly bilateral relationships. Last year, Prime Minister Harper committed to an exchange of 100,000 students with China within five years. “In Foreign Affairs,” complains one international education advocate, “they think that means 98,000 Chinese here, 2,000 Canadians there.” Treating education as a one-way conduit risks giving Canada an image not as a partner but a poacher. In his paper for the CCCE, University of British Columbia President Stephen Toope noted that Canada’s foreign counterparts are concerned about the paucity of Canadians studying in other countries. “The imbalance is seen as representing a lack of commitment by Canada to true partnership and evidence of provincialism.”

To combat this perception, Canada needs to invest in establishing more exchanges between our universities and Asian institutions, including co-ops, internships and other study-abroad programs. As well, the federal panel has recommended that Ottawa co-fund, with schools and provincial governments, a new student mobility program to enable 50,000 students a year go abroad by 2022 — an initiative that should take high priority. Additionally, Canadian curricula from K-12 up through postgraduate levels need to give young people more exposure to Asia, offering Asian language courses, inviting visits from international scholars and making greater use case studies from emerging markets.

6. Learn from other countries’ successes and setbacks

Australia has long been viewed as a mid-size power punching far above its weight in Asian relations. This has been especially true in the education arena. The nation has served as a model for how government and private sector can effectively work together on a goal key to both their interests: making the Australian workforce ready for the Asian Century. Given our two countries’ similar demographics, size, and geographic and immigration links to overseas Asian neighbours, Canada’s international education strategy can find many lessons Down Under.

Australia ranks as the third-largest English-language market for international students and, at 20%, the share of international students in its educational institutions is the highest among OECD countries. Education contributes AU\$16.8 billion in export income to the Australian economy — twice as much as in Canada — and represents the country’s third-largest source of overseas earnings.

These impressive gains experienced a sudden reversal in 2009, when reports of abusive incidents targeting Indian students, combined with complaints of “huckster” practices at some institutes and a high Australian dollar, significantly reduced Australia’s appeal to young Asians. Indian enrollment in particular plunged, dropping 70% over the past three years. The setback highlighted, among other things, the danger of focusing on student recruitment without applying equal vigilance to maintaining education standards. The hole the enrolment declines made in school coffers and governments’ finances also demonstrated the risk of overdependence on too few source countries.

Australia is bouncing back, however, with an ambitious push to reverse recent trends. In a strategy released in February, a government-appointed panel set the target of hosting 520,000 international students by 2020. The report’s main recommendations mirror many of the proposals put forth by the Canadian panel, including greater coordination among industry stakeholders, a reduction in bureaucracy and visa-processing red tape, more partnerships between domestic and Asian institutions, and intense promotion (which will come from the Australian Trade Commission’s nearly \$200-million annual allocation). The private sector has urged quick action on the report’s recommendations.

It’s worth noting that Education Minister Christopher Pyne stressed the country is seeking long-term strategic advances, not short-term financial boosts. “It’s time for international education in Australia to become more than a commodity for exchange, more than an export market,” he said in a recent speech. “It’s about Australia’s soft diplomatic capacity and our place in a region where relationships are so important.” This commitment to preparing youth for learning, living and working in Asia is evident in Australian schools’ curricula. Asia features significantly from kindergarten through grade 10, and every Australian child has an opportunity to study an Asian language. Moreover, government-sponsored interest-free loans and internships enable tens of thousands of students to travel to Asian countries. Business leaders visit secondary schools to build awareness of Asia’s importance. An extensive school-partnership program organizes extensive teacher exchanges between the two countries. Such comprehensive, bilateral education connections with Asian powers are exactly what Canada needs to forge. As one Canadian education expert has put it, “It’s a template we could just adopt.”

Canada could also consider adopting models that have been successful in other countries. For example, the U.S.-based National Consortium on Teaching about Asia (NCTA) provides Asia-focused content training and instructional materials to K-12 teachers in a range of disciplines. This consortium takes the form of a partnership between universities that have

considerable Asia expertise, and primary and secondary schools within their geographic regions. Canada could also benefit from an organization that plays a role similar to that played by the Asia Society in the U.S.: facilitating cooperation between school districts and the Hanban, China’s national office for teaching Chinese as a foreign language, in implementing and sustaining Mandarin-language programs. And in the future, Canada could consider creating an organization modeled on Australia’s Asia Education Foundation, which is devoted to working with school districts and education professionals and to advocating for a wide spectrum of programs and initiatives aimed at boosting their students’ Asia skills.



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CONCLUSION

The measures mentioned above by no means constitute an exhaustive list. Various experts have recommended other steps to strengthen Canada’s international education position, from establishing a national framework for ensuring consistent high quality in education, to diversifying Canada’s education exports, to expanding foreign students’ opportunities to work off-campus and remain here after graduation. Many of these same experts have also urged Canadian education institutions to ensure that educational exchange with Asia is in fact two-way. Moving forward, Canada needs to prioritize its efforts, and the steps noted above are of highest urgency.

The support of the private sector will be essential in promoting and funding an international education strategy, but Corporate Canada is looking for the government to show that it is ready to take this opportunity seriously. Many Canadian schools already view internationalization as a top priority, and identify China and India as the two most important countries. We now need the federal and provincial governments, along with institutional representatives, to set an agenda and provide leadership. With the Governor General’s recent visits to China and India, this is an opportune time to show our top Asian partners that our education efforts are gaining momentum. It’s also essential to push for significant measures and financial allocations in the next federal budget to implement the federal panel’s strategy.

APPENDIX

Selected reports and studies consulted in the creation of this paper:

- “Best Practices on Managing the Delivery of Canadian Education Marketing”: report by Illuminate Consulting Group for DFAIT, September 2009.
- “Bringing Education in Canada to the World, Bringing the World to Canada: An International Education Marketing Action Plan for Provinces and Territories”: by the Council of the Federation and Council of Ministers of Education, Canada; June 2011.
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- “International Education: A Key Driver of Canada’s Future Prosperity”: by Amit Chakma et al, final report of the Advisory Panel on Canada’s International Education Strategy, August 2012.
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