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Report of the Study Group on Global Education

Global Education for Canadians

Equipping Young
Canadians to Succeed
at Home & Abroad

Executive Summary
and Recommendations



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Canadians pride themselves on their open, diverse and innovative society. But is Canada really prepared for the challenges that lie ahead?

Young Canadians need knowledge, skills and experience to succeed in a more complex and competitive world. Technological innovation is changing the nature of work and the skills required for the 21st century economy. Relationships with emerging countries are becoming increasingly important to Canada's prosperity. The current generation of young Canadians will need to be comfortable working with people from different backgrounds. They will need self-awareness and self-confidence, a willingness to take smart risks, and knowledge of the world and other societies.

These are not luxuries in the 21st century; they are vital skills.

Global education fosters these skills. Enabling more Canadians to gain international experience as part of their university or college education would be an investment in their — and Canada's — future. It would equip young Canadians, including those from less-advantaged backgrounds, to succeed in the new economy. It would expand Canada's links to important trade partners and investment centres, including emerging economies, and strengthen our educational institutions' connections to global research networks, which are vital to innovation in Canada. It would also reinforce the values of openness and inclusion that are essential to Canada's success as a diverse society, particularly at a time of rising intolerance.

An individual who travels abroad may be changed in highly personal and sometimes



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intangible ways. But when we look at the population as a whole, we know that global learning matters, because the evidence shows that it does.

Studies indicate that international education is associated with higher academic scores and degree-completion rates as well as higher employment rates and salaries after graduation. Moreover, these benefits appear to be strongest among students from less-advantaged backgrounds; the opportunity to study or work in another country can be a great social and economic equalizer.

Many other countries, including some of Canada's closest partners and competitors, have already recognized the importance of sending their students abroad. The United States, Australia, and members of the European Union, for example, have pursued

PERCENTAGE OF UNDERGRADS WHO STUDY ABROAD DURING THE COURSE OF THEIR DEGREE



Data sources (and year): France: Campus France (2015); Germany: German Academic Exchange Service (2013); Australia: Government of Australia (2015); US: National Survey of Student Engagement (2016); Canada: National Survey of Student Engagement (2016) and Universities Canada (2014). All figures are for university students.

ambitious strategies to increase the number of post-secondary students gaining international experience, because they believe it gives their own citizens and societies an advantage. All of these strategies have resulted in striking increases in outbound student mobility.

Canada has no such strategy — and it shows. Not only do we send a smaller proportion of our students abroad than do most of our peer countries, but this gap has been growing. Moreover, the relatively few Canadian students who engage in international learning overwhelmingly travel to only a few places — the United States, Western Europe, and Australia — and study in their native language. We are not preparing young Canadians to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Although Canadians tend to pride themselves on their open, diverse and internationally connected society, even the United States, which many Canadians view as more insular, is doing a better job at expanding the horizons of its young people through international education. The diversity of Canada's population does not automatically translate into worldliness,

or into the skills that Canadians — and Canada — will require to succeed. These competencies and values are not given by nature; they have to be cultivated.

In recent years, the Government of Canada has worked with educational institutions and other levels of government to increase the number of international students coming to Canada. What's needed now is a coordinated effort to ensure that more young Canadians gain their own international experience. The record elsewhere shows that national strategies — led by national governments, but based on a partnership between government, educational institutions, and the private sector — have worked. Without a carefully crafted and adequately funded national strategy that sets clear targets and responsibilities, Canada will continue to fall behind.

International education may once have been viewed as an optional luxury. Those days are gone. Now it must be seen as a vital tool to equip young Canadians from all walks of life for success. Their future, and Canada's future, depends on it.

Recommendations

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The core objectives of the proposed global education strategy are to:

Foster long-term economic growth and innovation in Canada, including by:

- Equipping young Canadians to succeed in the new economy.
- Reducing barriers and creating economic opportunity for students from less-advantaged backgrounds.
- Strengthening research and innovation networks.

Strengthen Canada's open and inclusive society, including by:

- Reinforcing the values of openness and inclusion that are essential to Canada's success as a diverse society.
- Fostering intercultural and international cooperation.

Strengthen Canada's global links, including by:

- Expanding connections with partner countries, including emerging powers.
- Preparing the next generation of globally competent Canadian public- and private-sector leaders.

PRIORITIES

- 1 Significantly increase the number of Canadian post-secondary students learning abroad:
 - Set a national target of one-quarter of all Canadian post-secondary students going abroad on credit- and non-credit

learning experiences within 10 years.

- Establish a new national initiative — Go Global Canada — to support 15,000 Canadian post-secondary students per year going abroad within five years, rising to 30,000 per year within 10 years.

- 2 Significantly expand the proportion of students going to emerging countries:

- Set a target of one-half of all students within the Go Global Canada initiative going to emerging countries within 10 years.
- Define a list of priority emerging regions and/or countries for the Go Global Canada initiative.
- Offer significant support for language and cultural training to enable students to study and work in these regions.

- 3 Make international learning accessible to students from all backgrounds:

- Establish, within the Go Global Canada initiative, tailored programs to boost participation from lower income and underrepresented groups in international education.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4 Support different kinds of learning experiences, and of varying durations:
 - Focus on the quality rather than the type of experience, which may include:
 - Traditional semester- and year-long study for credit;
 - Language training;
 - Internships, traineeships and work-study experiences with private-sector firms, public-sector institutions and non-governmental

- organizations;
 - Research placements;
 - Exchanges; and
 - Organized field-study visits, ranging from a few weeks to a year or longer.
 - Establish quality-based criteria for international experiences to be eligible for support under the strategy.
- 5** Start with quality assurance:
- Create a common platform for Canadian educational institutions to exchange information on best practices for quality assurance in their respective international learning programs.
 - Establish common standards and procedures to ensure that students receive the appropriate preparation prior to their departure, support while they are abroad, and follow-up after their return.
- 6** Reduce barriers within Canadian universities, colleges and institutes:
- Post-secondary institutions and their academic units should update their curricula and integrate international learning opportunities into their programs.
 - Embrace a more flexible approach to recognizing international learning experiences and granting credits for study are related to students' programs of study.
 - Support faculty-led development of new international learning opportunities.
- 7** Build up student knowledge of, and interest in, international learning opportunities.
- Develop a sustained and coordinated effort to highlight the value of international learning to students, including for future employment.
 - Provide special recognition and credentials to students who participate in Go Global Canada.
 - Build an alumni network of returning Go Global Canada participants to serve as "ambassadors" for global education to other students, including at the primary and secondary levels.
- 8** Establish a national system for collecting consistent and comparable data on student outbound mobility.
- 9** Establish a monitoring and evaluation system for Go Global Canada in order to assess and improve the program's impact and to begin building a stronger evidence base across the country.
- 10** Create an overarching brand to create unity of purpose and build recognition across the country and abroad.
- 11** Recruit high-level advisors and champions from multiple sectors to tap expertise and networks, build awareness and serve as ambassadors in Canada and abroad.
- 12** Develop a shared platform or portal to provide "one-stop shopping" for program participants and sponsors and serve as an online resource centre.
- TAKING ACTION:
A PAN-CANADIAN APPROACH**
- 13** The federal government should take the lead in articulating and catalyzing a 10-year, pan-Canadian, global learning strategy.

- 14** Establish a Global Education Leadership Council — comprised of representatives of the federal, provincial and territorial governments; Canadian universities and colleges; experts on international education; representatives of the business sector; student groups; and other stakeholders — as a coordinating body for Canada’s global education strategy.
- 15** The federal government should make a 10-year catalytic investment in a Go Global Canada initiative as the lynchpin of a national strategy on global education.
- 16** To complement this investment and expand the reach of Go Global Canada, a “Go Global Canada Investment Fund” should be created for strategic investments from private foundations, corporations and other contributors.
- 17** The federal government should also:
- Incorporate global education goals into Canadian trade and diplomatic initiatives.
 - Identify research, cop-op and internship opportunities for students in Canadian missions and overseas activities.
 - Assist students in navigating and thriving in offshore placements (e.g. tapping the capabilities of Canadian overseas missions to connect students to peers and local communities).
 - Include global education opportunities in the federal government’s work-integrated learning initiatives.
- 18** Provincial and territorial governments should:
- Build global education into their policy and funding approaches to post-secondary education, research and innovation, and experiential and workplace-based learning.
 - Incorporate into their internationalization strategies ambitious targets for outbound academic mobility that meet or exceed the proposed national targets.
 - Contribute to the Go Global Canada Investment Fund.
- 19** Canada’s post-secondary institutions should:
- Make outbound international education an integral and leading component of their own internationalization strategies.
 - Set ambitious targets for outbound academic mobility that meet or exceed the proposed national target (one-quarter of all students going abroad on credit and non-credit learning experiences within 10 years).
 - Create academic pathways and credit and credential recognition mechanisms that enable students to engage in international learning opportunities.
 - Introduce innovative funding models such as earmarking a portion of revenues from international student fees and soliciting alumni donations.
 - Secure the support of provincial governments for international learning.
- 20** Canadian companies should:
- Support international learning for young Canadians, and champion global education as a national public good.
 - Contribute to the Go Global Canada Investment Fund and/or sponsor specific scholarships or mobility funds.
 - Identify internships, co-ops and work placements in their international operations.