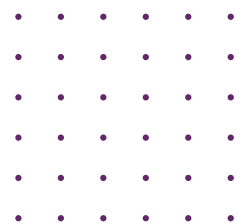


Unlocking Opportunities

South Asian Student Perspectives
Reshaping International Higher Education



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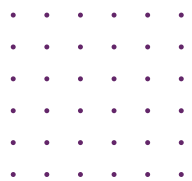
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About Worldwide Educonnect Inc: Enabling Global Education Opportunities

Key Insights Brief



Notable shifts and developments can be observed in key destination markets for education migration.

Destination Market Trends:

- USA: Surged beyond pre-pandemic levels with a remarkable 14% increase in international student enrollments, particularly notable in graduate programs.
- Canada: Continues to attract significant interest, with an expected approval of approximately 364,000 study permits out of 606,000 applications in 2024.
- UK: Experiencing a slowdown in growth, anticipated to decline further in 2024 due to increasing domestic pressures.

South Asian Student Mobility:

- India: Outbound student mobility surpassed 1 million in 2019 and is projected to reach 1.5 to 2 million by 2025, with a strong preference for the "big four" destinations (USA, Canada, UK, Australia).
- Bangladesh: Witnessing rapid growth in international student mobility, with a substantial increase in outbound students pursuing higher education abroad.
- Nepal: Notable surge in Nepalese students studying abroad, reflecting evolving preferences and opportunities in international education.

Student Mobility from Pakistan:

- Significant rise in Pakistani students pursuing higher education abroad, with key destinations including UAE, UK, Australia, US, Germany, and Canada.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- Visa Processing Disruptions (Canada-India): Indian students facing delays and processing issues due to strained diplomatic relations, impacting study-abroad plans.
- UK Study Visa Surge: UK emerging as a favored destination for Indian students, supported by streamlined visa procedures and new graduate visa routes.
- US Enrollment Growth: Significant surge in Indian student enrollment in the US, highlighting strategic recruitment efforts and growing attractiveness.
- Australia's Post-Pandemic Recovery: Resurgence in the international education sector driven by Indian student numbers and economic cooperation agreements.

Implications and Recommendations:

- Policy Clarity and Competitiveness: Emphasize the need for government policy clarity to sustain competitiveness and attractiveness of study destinations.
- Influence of Factors on Study Choices: Subject interest and earning potential post-graduation remain critical factors influencing study decisions, particularly in major markets like China and the Philippines.
- Student Aspirations and Global Education: International students seek welcoming environments and career opportunities, emphasizing the importance of educational quality and policy alignment.

Realizing global education aspirations requires addressing challenges and leveraging opportunities in response to global education migration trends.



Introduction

South Asian students are increasingly seeking education opportunities abroad, making them an important part of the global higher education community.

This research seeks to uncover the transformative role played by South Asian students in shaping educational systems and practices on a global scale.

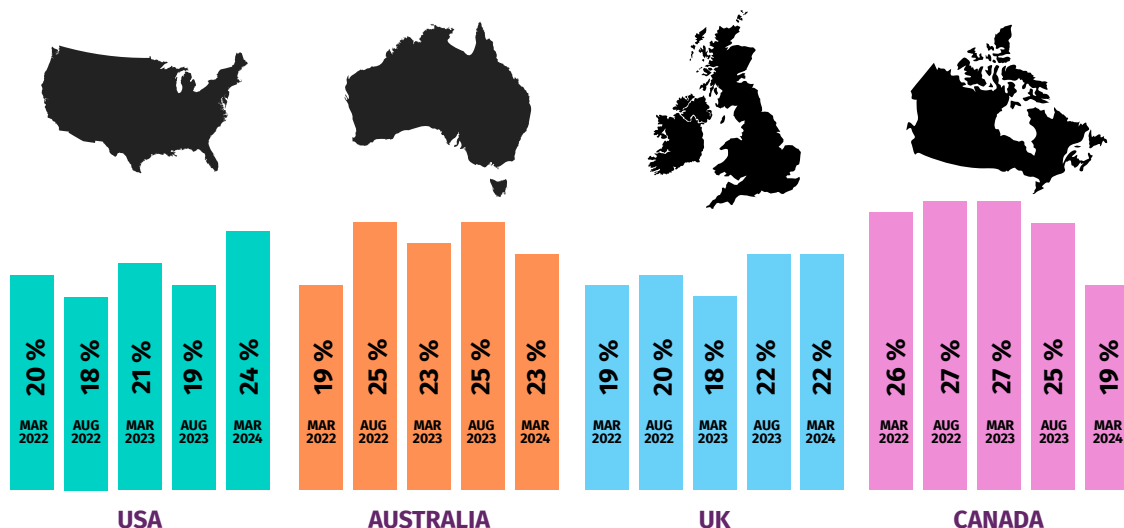
- The desire for access to high-quality academic programs is a strong driving force.
- Navigating through intricate visa procedures, Language barriers, Cultural adaptation is an additional challenge that South Asian students face.
- Academic institutions across the globe are progressively acknowledging the significance of the diversity and global perspectives that South Asian students bring, thereby enhancing both campus communities and academic discussions.
- By delving into the reasons behind their decisions, the hurdles they face, and the effects of their actions, we can uncover ways to understand mutual understanding between different cultures, boost the quality of education, and encourage productive collaborations that transcend geographical boundaries.

Student Mobility: Exploring International Education Migration Trends

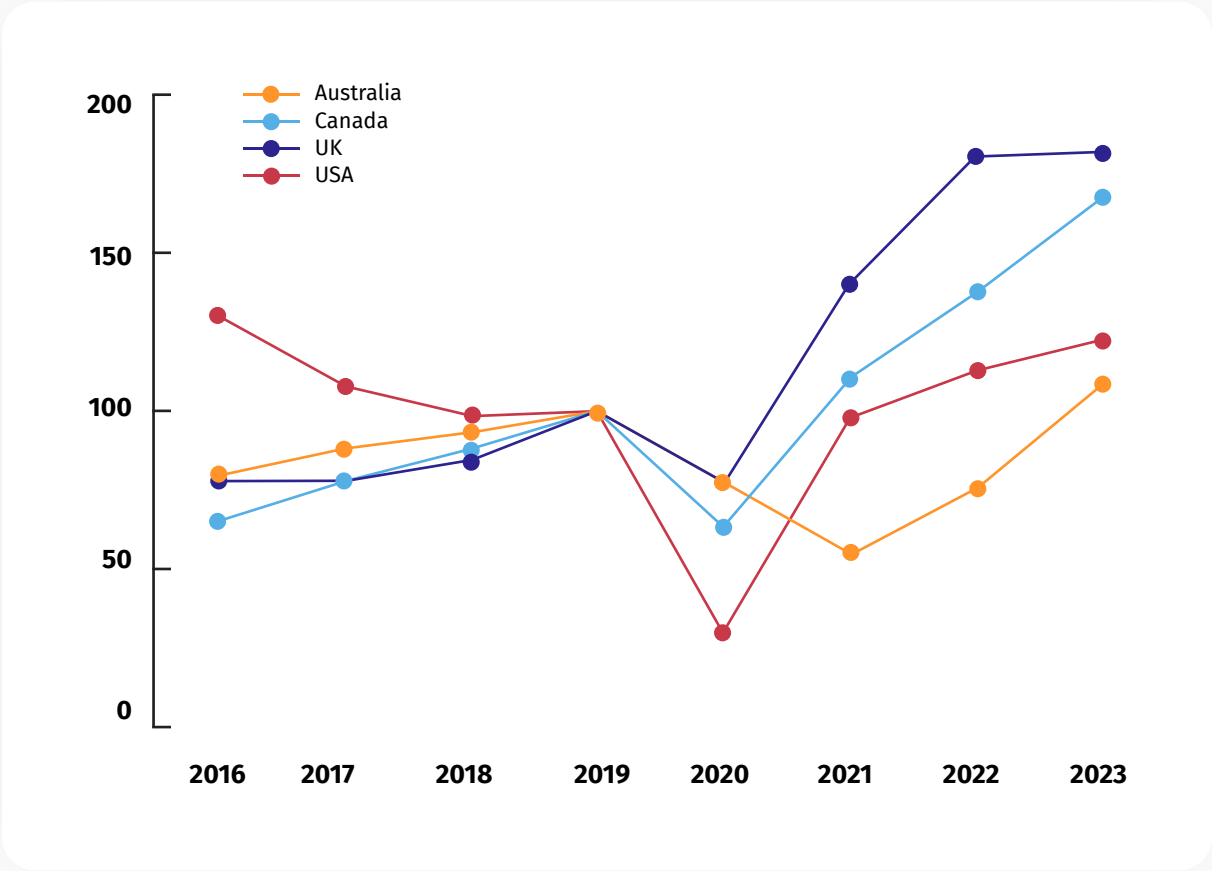
In 2024, Australia, Canada, the UK, and the USA are expected to see a slowdown in new international student enrollments despite a strong post-pandemic rebound. UK study visa growth has stagnated since recovering to pre-pandemic levels by Q3 2021. In contrast, the US saw a 14% increase in new enrollments for 2022/23, totaling 298,523 students. Canada remains attractive with an estimated 364,000 out of 606,000 applications projected to be approved. Despite some moderation in growth, South Asia, the USA, and Canada continue to be highly appealing to international students.



Emerging Futures first choice destinations from March 2022 to March 2024



Change in new international student enrolments' amongst major host destination markets (2019=100)



Transforming South Asian Education

Trends in Outbound Student Mobility from India

By 2023, around 850,000 Indian students had enrolled in top four choices, the USA, Canada, the UK, and Australia. This number exceeded 1 million in 2019 and is forecasted to reach between 1.5 and 2 million by 2025.

Rapid Growth in Bangladeshi Student Mobility

The data from 2020 and 2022 highlights the growing interest among Bangladeshi students in international higher education opportunities, the figures being from 49,150 to over 70,000 respectively.

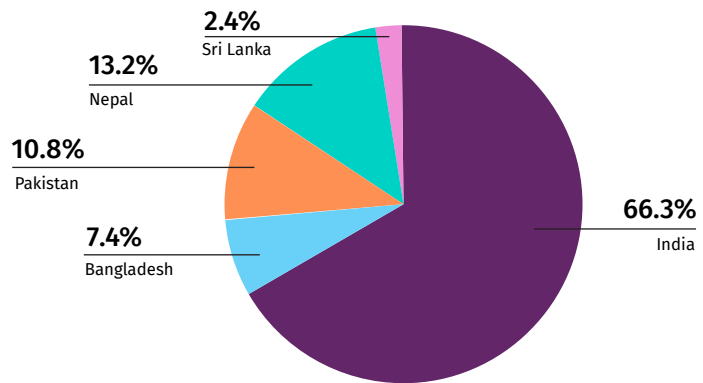
Exploring the Surge in Nepalese Student Mobility

The rise in the number of Nepalese students pursuing education abroad has been quite significant. Statistics revealing from 2020 around 95,270 to 125,500 in 2022.

Unveiling the Surge in Pakistani Student Mobility

The trend of Pakistani students enrolled in higher education abroad has been on the rise. With the data revealing an upward trajectory from 64,065 (2020) to 103,190 (2022).

South Asia Outbound Student Mobility



India's Education Diaspora: Trends and Updates in Student Mobility

Canada-India Visa Processing Disruptions Impact Indian Students

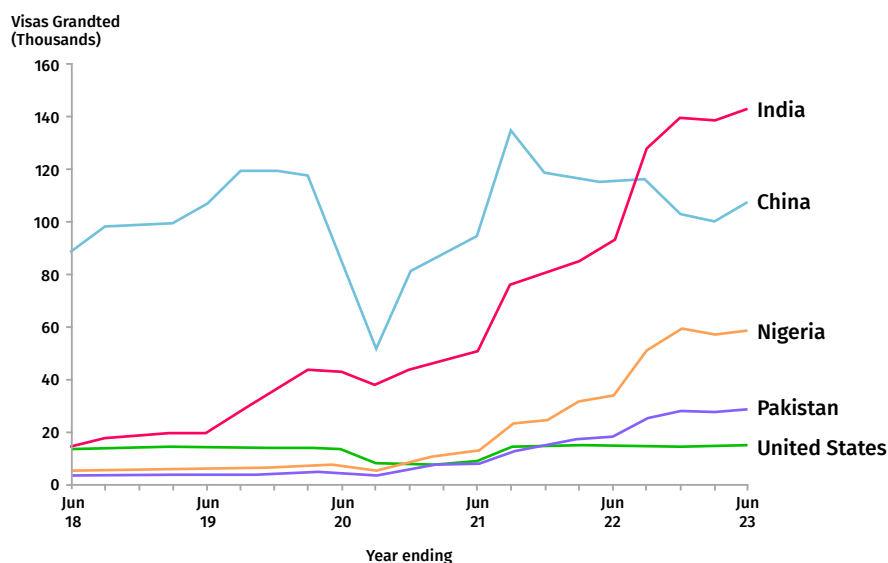
The visa processing system for Indian students has been significantly impacted by the ongoing diplomatic tensions between India and Canada with the immigration staff decreased from 27 to 5.

Minister Miller has acknowledged that Canada will not be able to achieve its goal of processing 38,000 visas for Indian applicants by December 2023 due to limited resources and staffing constraints. It is anticipated that only 20,000 visas will be processed, resulting in a backlog of around 17,500 visa applications by January 2024.

Meanwhile, India continues to dominate Canada's international student market, accounting for nearly 40% of all foreign enrolments with close to 320,000 Indian students holding study permits by the end of 2022—a growth of 46% since 2019.

United Kingdom: Indian Students Propel Study Visa Surge

Approximately 500,000 study visas were issued during this period, and 30% of them were given to Indian students. The streamlined visa process has made it easier for Indian students to pursue their education in the UK.



Study visas granted from students from top five sending markets, year ending June 2018 to year ending June 2023. Source: UK Home Office

United States:

Major Growth in Indian Student Enrollment

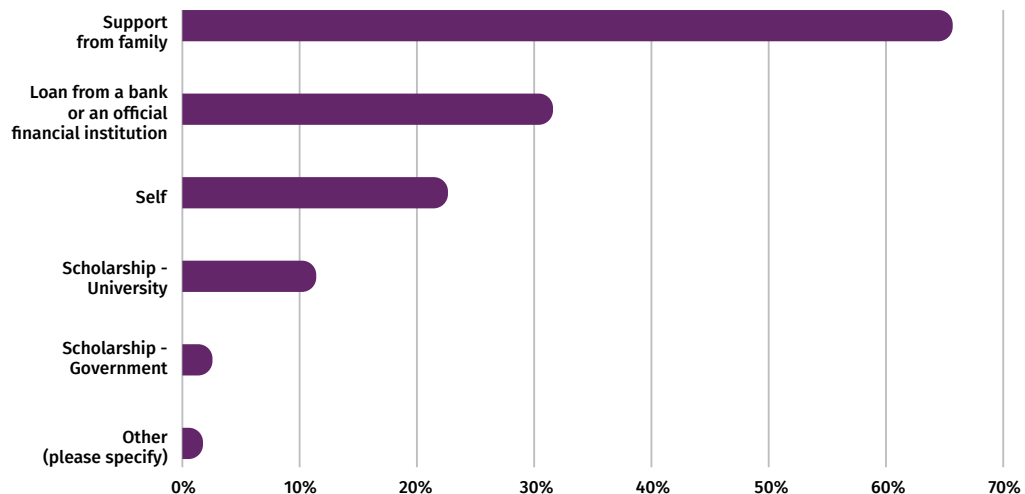
Indian student visas in the US have seen a growth of more than 30% since 2020, indicating a rising trend in Indian student interest in American institutions, almost on par with the number of Chinese students.

Australia:

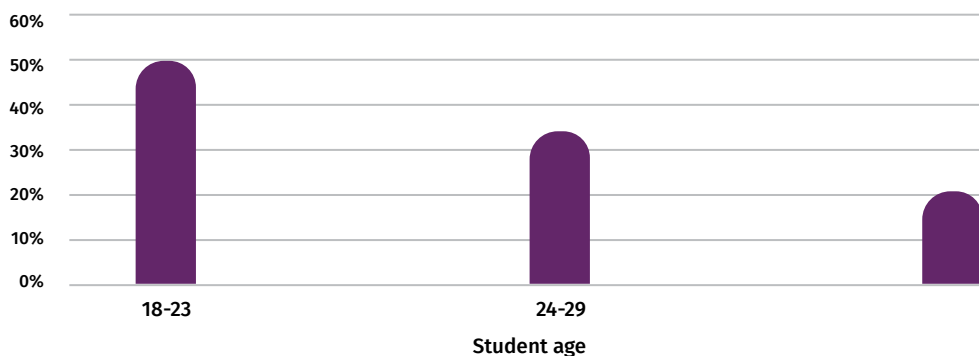
Indian Students Drive Post-Pandemic Education Recovery

Similarly, Australia is experiencing a resurgence in its international education sector, driven by a 34% increase in Indian student numbers in January-August 2023. The recently signed Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) aims to further facilitate student mobility between the two countries, allowing Indian graduates to work in Australia for up to four years. Despite the challenges faced, India is projected to maintain its role as a prominent source market for international students, with student enrollment expected to reach 2 million by 2025.

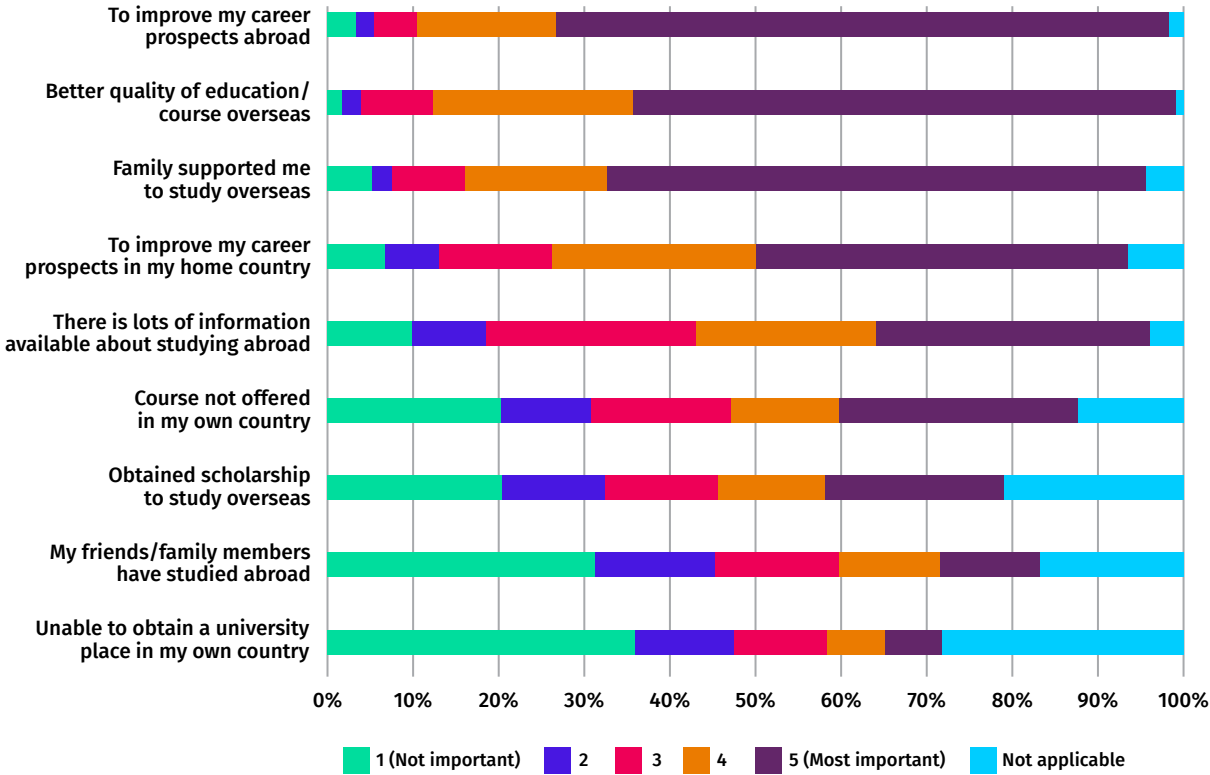
Main sources of funding used by student survey respondents



Age distribution of student survey respondents



Importance of key factors in student survey respondents' decision to study overseas.



Data source: Survey of Indian students currently studying in the UK (n=273)



Exploring Student Mobility Trends and Updates: Nepal's Role in International Education

Taxation Strain on Nepali Families:

Nepali families sending their children abroad for education now face additional financial burdens due to a new 3% tax on payments to foreign colleges, translating to nearly USD 1,000 on a USD 30,000 tuition fee. This tax hike is seen by some as part of a strategy to discourage students from pursuing education outside Nepal.

Financial Outflow and Educational Expenditure:

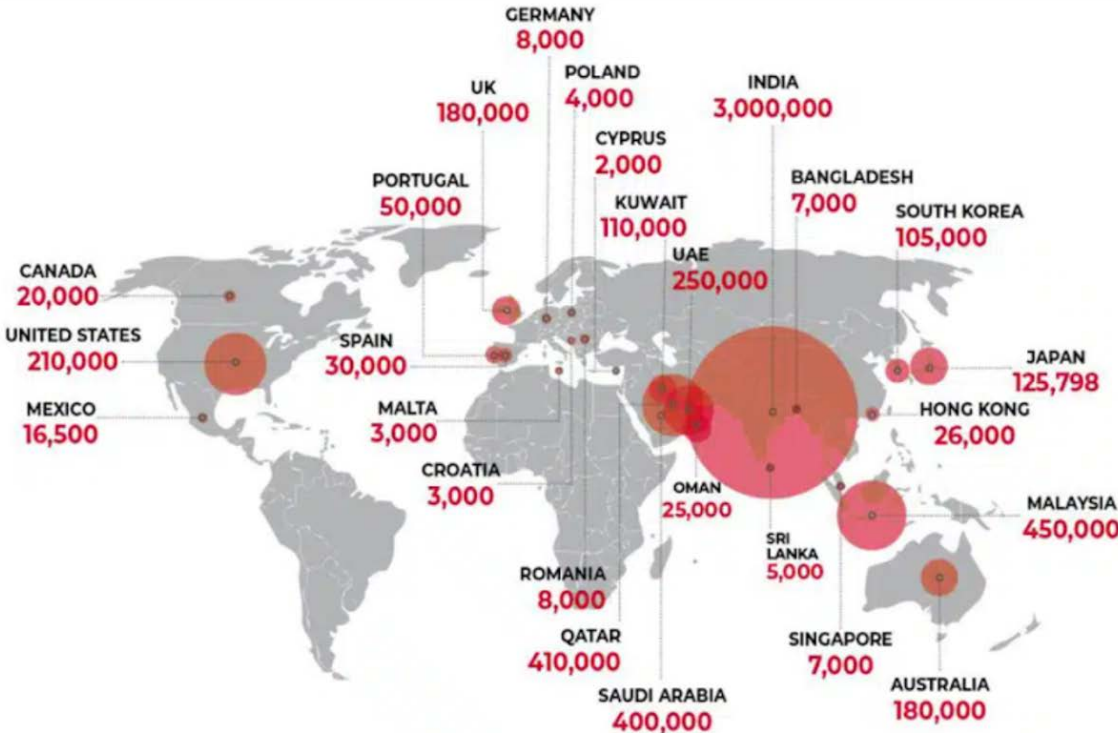
Nepal Rastra Bank data shows students remitted approximately USD 571 million for tuition in the fiscal year 2022-23, raising concerns for the government. With over 125,000 Nepali students studying abroad in 2022, destinations like Australia, Japan, India, and the USA remain popular. Rajendra Baral of the Educational Consultancy Association of Nepal emphasizes creating a supportive environment to encourage students to return home.

Challenges in Nepal's Education System:

The domestic education system's issues, such as underfunding and lack of qualified teachers, drive families to consider study abroad essential. The 3% tax is also causing concern among foreign educators, especially amidst inflation.

Navigating Bureaucratic Hurdles and Career Challenges:

Enticing students to return to Nepal post-study is challenging due to youth unemployment and bureaucratic hurdles. Aastha Dahal, a PhD holder from the University of Cambridge, highlights the difficulties in obtaining necessary certificates and finding suitable opportunities in Nepal, reflecting broader issues with educational policies and economic dynamics.



Estimated number of Nepalese studying, working, and living abroad in selected countries. Source: Nepali Times article published in December 2022

Exploring Student Mobility Trends: Insights and Updates from Bangladesh

Bangladeshi students face a range of opportunities and challenges in their pursuit of higher education abroad within a dynamic educational environment.

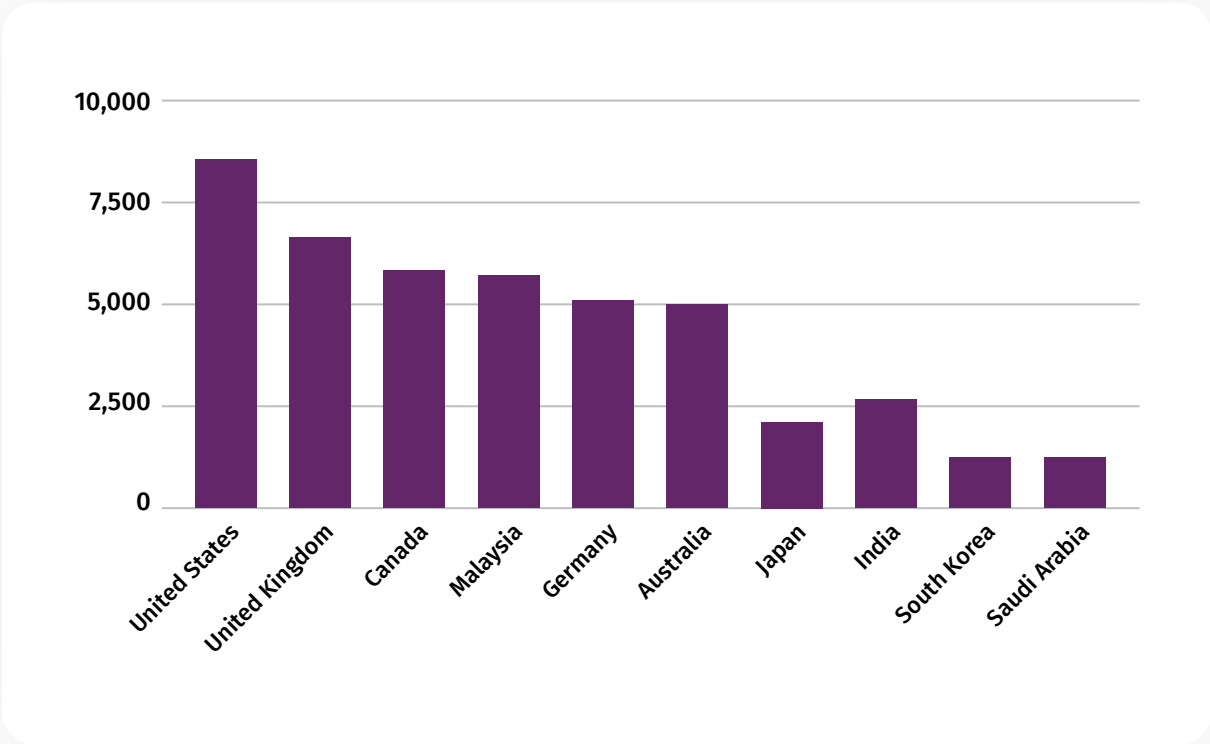
Despite the appealing scholarships and facilities available in countries like the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, and Japan, numerous Bangladeshi students are unable to benefit from these opportunities due to eligibility limitations.

Recent UNESCO data reveals that in 2023, a total of 52,799 Bangladeshi students pursued studies abroad. The breakdown of destinations is as follows:

- United States: **8,524** students
- United Kingdom: **6,586** students
- Canada: **5,835** students
- Malaysia: **5,714** students
- Germany: **5,046** students
- Australia: **4,987** students
- Japan: **2,082** students
- India: **2,606** students
- South Korea: **1,202** students
- Saudi Arabia: **1,190** students

Comparatively, Bangladeshi student numbers abroad show a gradual increase, but they remain lower than students from neighbouring countries like India, Nepal, and Pakistan.

Bangladeshi Student Mobility Surges - UNESCO 2023 Report

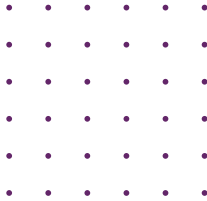


Insights from Experts and Officials:

- Professor Abdul Mannan: Stressed the need to enhance educational quality in Bangladesh to meet international standards.
- Retired Professor Siddiqur Rahman: Emphasized the critical role of language skills and quality education for global competition and highlighted the need for research to address lagging performance.
- Kazi Faridul Hoque (FACD-CAB President): Underscored language competence as a major barrier to student mobility and highlighted the demand for quality English-medium schools and private universities.
- Deputy Minister for Education, Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury: Highlighted government efforts to establish universities providing quality education and support for students pursuing higher education abroad.

Barriers and Opportunities:

- Challenges: Inadequate language skills, financial constraints, lack of information, taxation documentation requirements, accommodation issues, employment restrictions, and immigration policies.
- Opportunities: Improvements in language education and increasing access to quality institutions in Bangladesh are gradually enhancing prospects for Bangladeshi students to compete globally and pursue higher education abroad.
- This overview highlights the importance of addressing key challenges while leveraging opportunities to empower Bangladeshi students in their pursuit of global education.



Exploring Student Mobility: 2024 Insights into Sri Lanka's Education Landscape

Top Destinations for Sri Lankan Students

Leading Countries:

United Kingdom: In 2024, approximately 8,500 Sri Lankan students chose the UK as their study destination, marking a 10% increase from 2023. The UK remains the top choice due to its prestigious universities and post-study work opportunities.

Australia: Australia attracted 7,200 Sri Lankan students in 2024, a slight decrease from the previous year due to stricter visa regulations but still a leading destination due to its favourable climate and high living standards. **Canada:** Canada saw a significant rise, with 6,000 Sri Lankan students enrolling in 2024, a 15% increase, driven by its welcoming immigration policies and strong emphasis on multiculturalism.

India: India remains a popular destination, especially for medical and engineering students, with around 5,000 Sri Lankan students enrolled in 2024, a 5% increase from 2023.

New and Emerging Destinations:

Germany: Germany emerged as a new favourite, with 1,200 students in 2024, up 20% from the previous year, thanks to low tuition fees and strong engineering programs.

Malaysia: Malaysia attracted 900 students in 2024, highlighting its appeal as a culturally familiar and cost-effective destination.

Field-Specific Preferences:

Medicine: Eastern European countries like Russia and Ukraine remained popular for medical studies, with about 1,800 students, primarily due to lower tuition fees and simpler admission processes.

Information Technology: Australia and Canada continued to lead in IT, attracting over 3,500 students collectively.

Regional Insights

Regional Distribution of Outbound Students:

Western Province: The Western Province, including Colombo, accounted for 45% of all outbound students, with approximately 12,500 students studying abroad in 2024.

Central Province: Central Province saw a rise in outbound students, with around 4,000 students, driven by increasing awareness and access to international education opportunities.

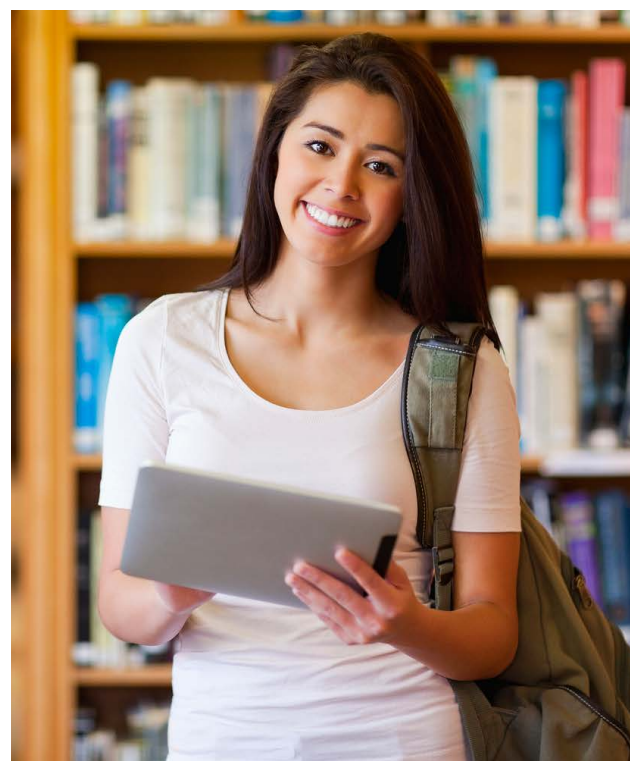
Southern Province: The Southern Province contributed 3,500 students, reflecting a growing interest in foreign education.

Urban vs. Rural Trends:

Urban centers like Colombo had a higher concentration of outbound students, with a student mobility rate of 55% compared to 30% in rural areas. This disparity is attributed to better access to information and preparatory resources in urban areas.

Influence of Local Educational Institutions:

Prestigious schools in Colombo, such as Royal College and Visakha Vidyalaya, were key contributors, with graduates making up nearly 20% of the total student migration numbers.



City Dynamics and Student Demand

Popular Cities for Higher Education:

Colombo: Colombo alone accounted for 10,000 students studying abroad, with a significant concentration in the fields of business and engineering.

Kandy: Kandy contributed to 3,200 students, primarily in medicine and allied health sciences, due to the strong presence of preparatory institutions in the city.

Galle: Galle saw 2,800 students, with a growing interest in environmental and marine sciences.

Local Demand for Foreign Education:

The demand for foreign education in Colombo grew by 12% in 2024, driven by the increasing availability of educational consultancy services and international school networks.

Infrastructure and Resources:

Colombo hosted over 50 educational consultancy firms and international schools, making it the most well-equipped city to support outbound student mobility.

Scholarships and Push Factors

Government and Private Scholarships:

Mahapola Scholarship Scheme: In 2024, the Mahapola Scholarship supported 1,500 students, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds, enabling them to study abroad.

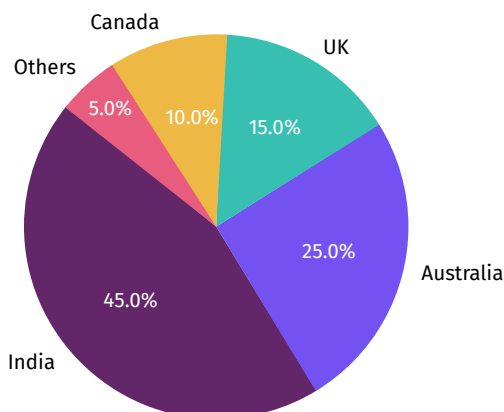
Private Sector Scholarships: Private sector scholarships, such as the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce Scholarship, funded 800 students in 2024, focusing on fields like business management and engineering.

Economic and Social Push Factors:

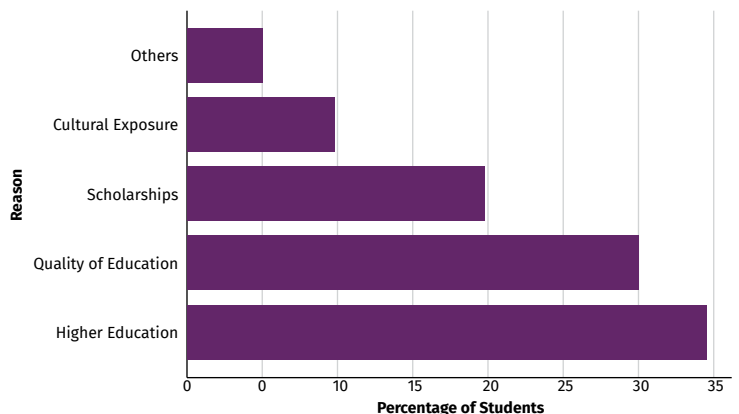
Economic Conditions: With an unemployment rate of 12% among graduates in Sri Lanka, many students pursued education abroad to enhance employability, leading to a 15% increase in outbound student numbers in 2024.

Quality of Local Education: Concerns over the quality of higher education in Sri Lanka, especially in fields like medicine and engineering, pushed more students to seek international alternatives.

International Student Mobility (2024)



Reason for Student Mobility



Bhutan's Educational Shift: Unpacking Student Mobility in 2024

Top Destinations for Bhutanese Students

Leading Countries:

India: India remains the most popular destination, with around 6,000 Bhutanese students enrolled in 2024, largely due to the geographical proximity and cultural similarities. Popular fields include Engineering, Medicine, and Business.

Australia: Australia attracted approximately 2,500 Bhutanese students in 2024, a 12% increase from 2023, driven by strong post-study work opportunities and high-quality education.

Thailand: Thailand saw a growing number of Bhutanese students, with about 1,200 students in 2024, up 8% from the previous year, particularly in hospitality and management studies.

New and Emerging Destinations:

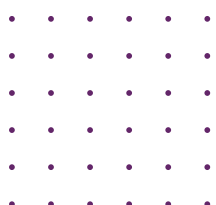
United Kingdom: The UK attracted 900 students in 2024, a slight increase, fueled by scholarships and competitive academic programs in the humanities and social sciences.

Malaysia: Malaysia emerged as a viable option for Bhutanese students, with 700 enrollments in 2024, particularly for affordable programs in IT and Business.

Field-Specific Preferences:

Medicine: India and Thailand are the top choices for Bhutanese medical students, accounting for nearly 3,000 students in 2024.

Hospitality and Tourism: Thailand and Switzerland remain attractive for hospitality and tourism studies, with around 1,500 students opting for these fields.



Regional Insights

Regional Distribution of Outbound Students:

Thimphu: Thimphu, Bhutan's capital, leads in outbound student numbers with approximately 5,000 students studying abroad in 2024, reflecting its status as the educational hub of the country.

Paro: Paro contributed about 2,000 students, driven by a strong interest in international studies in business and management.

Eastern Bhutan: The eastern regions, such as Trashigang, saw a smaller but growing number of outbound students, with 1,200 students in 2024, reflecting increased access to information and educational opportunities.

Urban vs. Rural Trends:

Urban areas like Thimphu and Paro showed higher student mobility rates (about 70%) than rural regions, where only 30% of students pursued education abroad. This discrepancy is attributed to better access to preparatory resources in urban centres.

Influence of Local Educational Institutions:

Prominent institutions like Royal Thimphu College played a significant role in preparing students for international education, with their graduates representing 25% of Bhutanese students studying abroad in 2024.



City Dynamics and Student Demand

Popular Cities for Higher Education:

Thimphu: Thimphu accounted for the highest number of outbound students, with around 4,000 students in 2024, primarily in business, engineering, and IT.

Paro: Paro, with its growing educational infrastructure, saw about 1,500 students pursuing higher education abroad, particularly in the management and hospitality fields.

Local Demand for Foreign Education:

The demand for foreign education in Thimphu increased by 10% in 2024, driven by economic growth and the aspiration for global exposure among students.

Infrastructure and Resources:

Thimphu and Paro have seen investments in educational consultancy services and international school networks, making it easier for students to navigate the complexities of studying abroad.

Scholarships and Push Factors

Government and Private Scholarships:

Royal Government Scholarships: In 2024, the Royal Government of Bhutan offered scholarships to 1,500 students, focusing on critical areas like medicine, engineering, and environmental sciences.

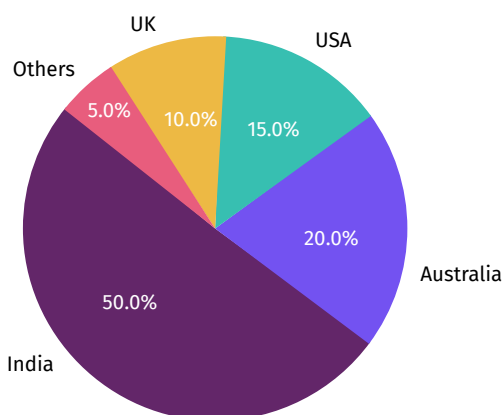
Private Sector Scholarships: Private organisations, such as the Bhutan Development Fund, supported around 600 students, with a focus on technology and business studies.

Economic and Social Push Factors:

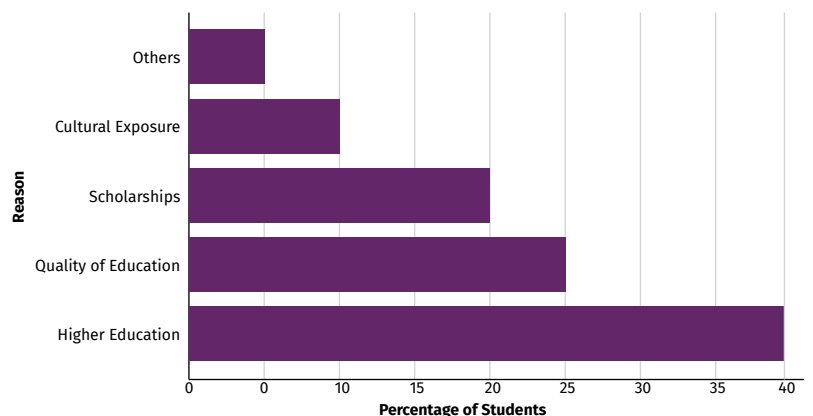
Economic Conditions: With limited job opportunities in Bhutan's small economy, many students sought education abroad to enhance employability, leading to a 12% increase in outbound student numbers in 2024.

Quality of Local Education: The perceived limitations in Bhutan's higher education system, particularly in specialised fields, motivated more students to seek international education.

International Student Mobility (2024)



Reason for Student Mobility



Unveiling Student Mobility: Trends and Updates from Pakistan's Education Landscape

In recent years, Pakistani students have increasingly pursued international higher education, significantly boosting outbound mobility. UNESCO data shows that the number of Pakistani students studying abroad rose from 64,065 in 2020 to over 103,190 by 2022, according to government sources.

Top Destinations for Pakistani Students:

- **United Arab Emirates (UAE):** In 2020, UNESCO reported 24,865 Pakistani students in the UAE.
- **United Kingdom (UK):** A substantial increase was noted in the UK, with 23,075 Pakistani students in 2021/22, marking a remarkable 62% year-on-year growth.
- **Australia:** Australian universities welcomed 15,875 Pakistani students in 2022, reflecting a 15% increase.
- **United States (US):** The US recorded 8,770 Pakistani students in 2021/22, marking a 17% growth.
- **Germany:** German universities attracted 7,115 Pakistani students in 2021/22, showing a 22% increase.
- **Canada:** The number of Pakistani students in Canada reached 6,405 in 2022, showing a significant 38% rise.

Regional Insights:

- **Punjab Region:** Punjab, Pakistan's most populous region, significantly contributes to international student mobility, particularly to the UK. Major cities like Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujrat, and Sargodha drive this demand due to strong family connections and business ties in the UK.
- **North Region (Islamabad and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa):** Students from this region often prefer North America and Australia over the UK for higher education.
- **South Region (Karachi and Surrounding Areas):** Karachi focuses on the US as a study destination, benefiting from the presence of US universities and strong local engagement.

City Dynamics and Student Demand:

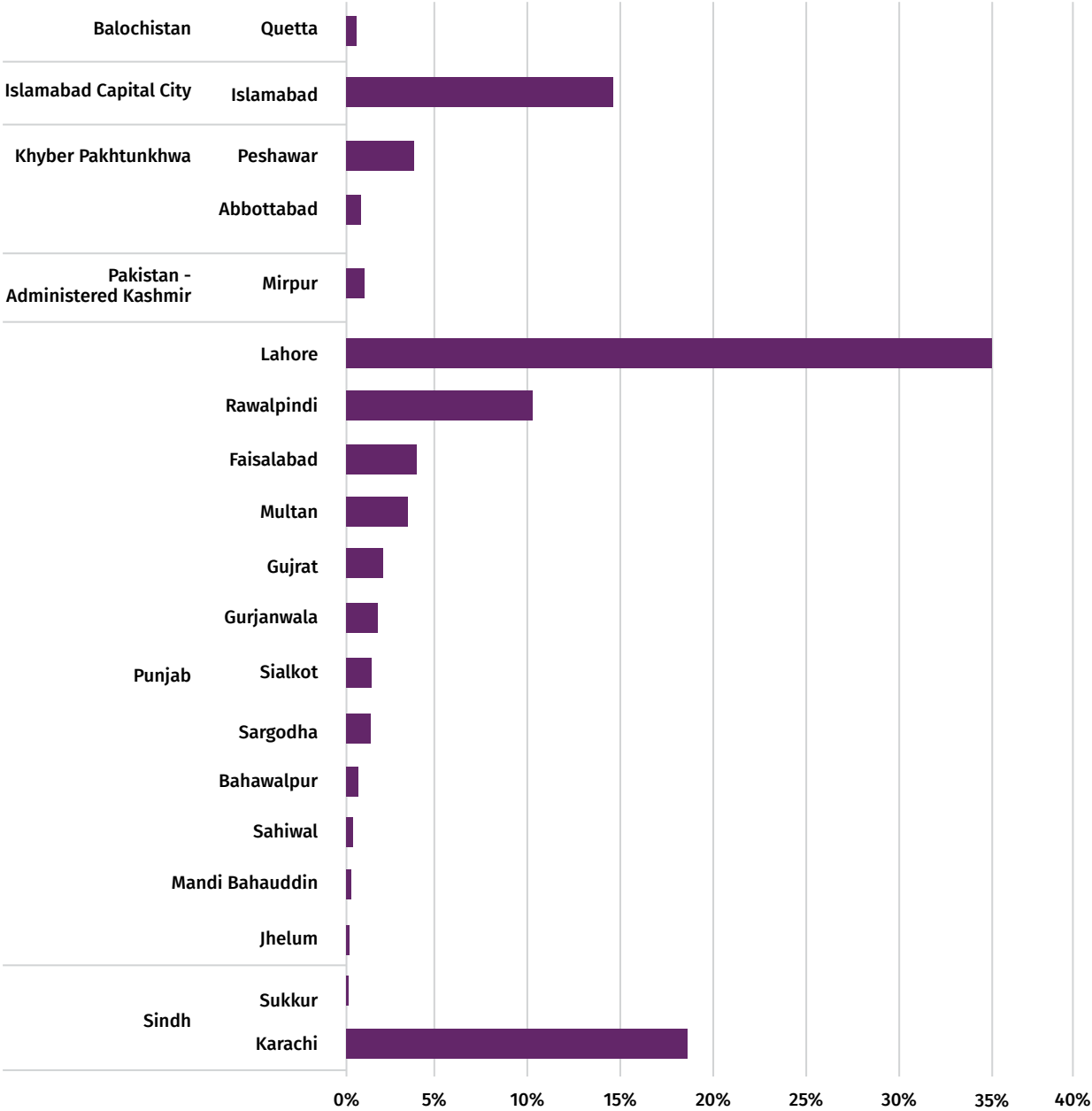
- Metropolitan cities like Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad are key contributors to outbound student numbers due to their large populations and awareness of international opportunities.
- Cities like Faisalabad and Peshawar are emerging as significant hubs for study abroad, reflecting rapid growth in demand.

Scholarships and Push Factors:

- Scholarships significantly impact Pakistani students' choices of destinations and courses.
- Population dynamics and evolving preferences are continuously shaping the global higher education landscape, fostering greater academic and cultural exchanges.



Distribution of Pakistani IELTS candidates by province / territory and city, 2022



Facilitating Global Education: Agent Insights on Student Mobility from South Asia

Emerging Futures Research Program Insights:

In March 2024, IDP Education surveyed international students from 117 countries, revealing a significant shift in preferences.

1. US Surpasses Australia and UK:

The US is now the top choice for international students, gaining five percentage points since last year. Australia has fallen from its top spot, losing two percentage points since August 2023, and Canada dropped to fourth place due to new policies.

2. Impact of Government Policies:

54% of prospective and applied students are aware of recent policy changes, and 41% are reconsidering their plans due to these policies.

3. Policy Clarity and Competitiveness:

Simon Emmett, CEO of IDP Connect, emphasizes the need for government clarity on international student policies to maintain competitiveness. The UK, Australia, and Canada are urged to provide clear policies.

4. Shifts in Preferences and Branding:

Despite policy changes, the UK remains the second most preferred destination. Australia's reputation is at risk due to stricter immigration settings and visa rejections.

5. Factors Influencing Choices:

"Subject of interest" and "earning potential after graduation" are major influences on program choices, especially in China and the Philippines.

6. Work and Immigration Opportunities:

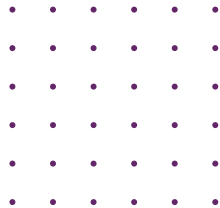
Students from Bangladesh and the Philippines prioritize destinations with job demand and favorable immigration policies.

7. Welcoming Environments and Career Opportunities:

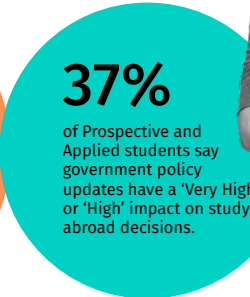
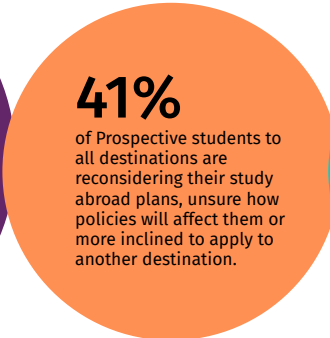
Visa regulations and work opportunities are critical for international students when choosing destinations.

Conclusion:

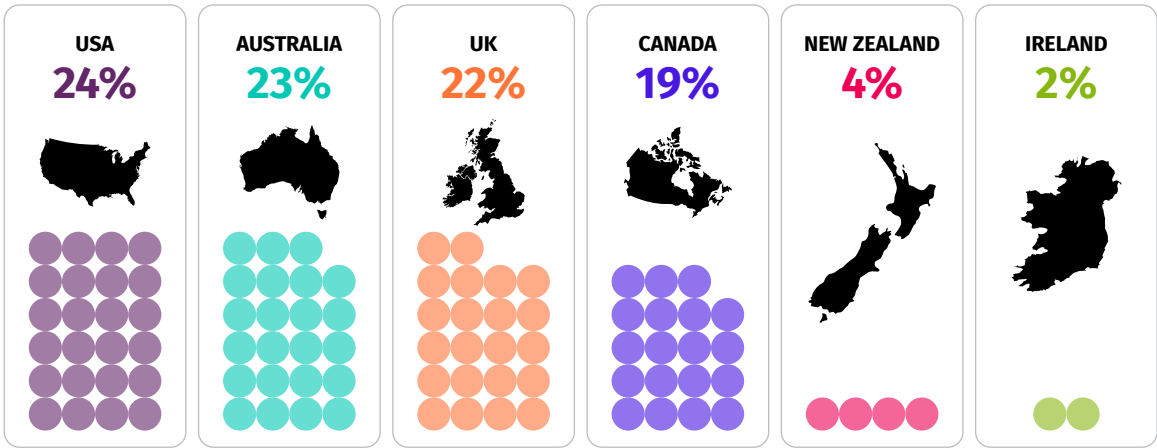
IDP Education's research highlights the dynamic global education landscape, with students driven by life-changing aspirations and adapting their choices based on policy clarity and educational quality.



Key headlines from students with preferred study destinations of Australia, Canada and the UK



USA is the most desired destination for the first time in the Emerging Futures research series



Source markets of interest

	INDIA	CHINA	PHILIPPINES	BANGLADESH
Subject area of interest	66%	22%	49%	58%
Learning potential after graduation	41%	55%	57%	36%
Demand for jobs in destination country	41%	25%	56%	52%
Offers internships/work placements	35%	50%	45%	28%
Demand for jobs in my home country	32%	20%	36%	36%

Indian students' top priority is "subject area of interest," while Chinese students are notably motivated by earning potential after graduation and the availability of internships. Filipino and Bangladeshi students are clearly interested in work and immigration opportunities as shown in their keen interest in "demand for jobs in destination country."

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7. ICEF - Higher education supply-demand gap a major driver of Sri Lankan outbound student mobility 2023.
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About Worldwide Educonnect Inc: Enabling Global Education Opportunities



At Worldwide EduConnect, we offer a comprehensive solution designed to empower international educational institutes and elevate their global presence through strategic student mobility initiatives.

How We Help

In-Depth Research and Market Discovery:

We conduct rigorous research to identify key opportunities and market dynamics, enabling institutions to make informed decisions on international expansion and student recruitment strategies.

Enhanced Branding and Visibility:

Our expert team enhances the visibility and reputation of educational institutions in target markets, attracting prospective students and building trust among stakeholders.

Streamlined Application Process:

We simplify the enrollment journey for international students through our Application Hub, ensuring a seamless and efficient process that enhances student recruitment efforts.

Strategic Partnerships Development:

We facilitate the development of strategic partnerships with local institutions and organizations, optimizing collaboration opportunities and student exchange programs.

Comprehensive Agent Management & Training:

Our comprehensive agent management services include training and ongoing support to ensure effective representation and recruitment of international students.

By partnering with Worldwide EduConnect, educational institutions can achieve sustainable growth, expand their global footprint, and deliver exceptional educational experiences to students worldwide. We empower universities to maximize the return on student mobility and transform the future of global education.



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