



Universities  
Canada.

# North-South mobility in Canada's universities

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This document is adapted from a series of research papers written by consultants Dr. Rebecca Tiessen and Dr. Kate Grantham from February to August 2016, which can be found online at *[univcan.ca/programs-and-scholarships/north-south-research](http://univcan.ca/programs-and-scholarships/north-south-research)*. Twenty administrators and faculty members at 14 Canadian universities were interviewed for this project. This work was commissioned by Universities Canada and carried out with the aid of a grant from the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada. The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors.

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# North-South student mobility in Canada's universities

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International student mobility builds a generation of future leaders who are globally engaged, inter-connected and culturally literate. Students who participate in international mobility programs develop the cross-cultural and problem-solving skills required to thrive in today's global economy and competitive job market.

In 2012-13, only 3.1% of full-time undergraduate students in Canada chose to study abroad (Universities Canada, 2014), with even fewer participating in programs in the Global South. However, 97% of Canadian universities offer international experiences, and an increasing number of these opportunities are in the Global South.

Building on existing research, key information on five topics of interest relating to North-South mobility were synthesized in a series of research papers by Dr. Rebecca Tiessen and Dr. Kate Grantham to guide decision-making and administration of North-South student mobility programs at Canadian universities. The findings have been compiled to provide guidance on ethical considerations, participation and funding, evaluation and measurement, faculty participation and partnership building for these programs.

This information provides valuable insights about the trends, challenges and strategies used by Canadian universities, and can be useful for North-South student mobility program administrators, international liaison officers and coordinators; faculty members involved in student mobility programs; and students at Canadian universities considering participating in a student mobility program.

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# Key definitions and terms

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**Global South:** The term “Global South” is used to describe countries – predominantly located in the Southern Hemisphere – with low overall Gross National Product (GNP). According to the Human Development Index (HDI), these countries are defined as low-income nations with high levels of inequality, poverty and insecurity. In contrast, the “Global North” is used to describe countries with higher levels of wealth and development, mostly located in the Northern Hemisphere.

Recognizing that inequalities exist within all countries around the globe, elements of the “North” – such as economic prosperity and higher levels of social equality – can be found in the Global South, just as elements of the “South” – including poverty, inequality and insecurity – can be found in the Global North.

**North-South mobility:** In this research, the term “North-South mobility” refers to the mobilization of Canadian students to countries classified by the HDI as “less developed.” This is an imperfect term as it does not capture the complexity of real-world diversity within and among different nations; however, it is a useful way of explaining the important phenomena of studying abroad in

countries where ethical, political and educational practices may differ from those in Canada.

**North-South student mobility program:** A “North-South student mobility program” is any opportunity for students to study or learn in the Global South as a component of their undergraduate or graduate degree program.

North-South student mobility programs may include: studying or volunteering in classrooms or field schools in foreign countries, participating in practicum placements or completing other work-related learning experiences such as co-op or internships.

**Host Country partners:** “Host country partners” generally refer to partner universities, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations or communities located outside Canada.

## Categories of student mobility programs

→ **Study abroad programs,** such as exchanges or field study courses, allow students to study at a host university in a foreign country while



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obtaining course credits from their home institution. These programs can occur under the supervision of a Canadian professor or a faculty member of a partner institution.

- **Internships, international service learning, practicum placements or volunteer/work placements** are programs that may or may not have an academic work component or offer university credits. International Service Learning is a subtype of field-study program in which the pedagogical focus is a placement in an activity that serves the needs of a community. The learning arises in large part from the acquisition of practical skills through immersion in a community or organization.

These often include university-organized internships abroad and international co-op placements, or volunteer-abroad programs organized by public and private organizations.

- **Hybrid study/work abroad programs** combine study abroad programs and classroom learning with practicum work such as field placements, research or volunteer work.

- **Research abroad** involves research programs carried out by students as part of their educational requirements of study. Periods of time for research abroad vary depending on the nature of the research. Students engaged in research abroad may or may not be affiliated with a partner or locally based university in the host country.

Examples of international internship programs include the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Social Science International Internship Program or the University of Waterloo's Master of Development Practice Field Placements.

For additional information of some of the diverse North-South practicum placements available to Canadian students, visit: [casid-acedi.ca/ccupids/members](https://casid-acedi.ca/ccupids/members).

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# Questions for consideration

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The following key questions should be used to guide your analysis of your own institution's practices. Consider how your university might adopt new practices, strategies, approaches and training to improve the North-South mobility experience for students and host partners.

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## **What are some of the effective practices or successful approaches used at your institution to facilitate North-South mobility programs?**

- 1) How do you prepare students to be ethically minded?
- 2) What innovative ways do you employ to evaluate and measure impacts of your programs?
- 3) What strategies for funding North-South mobility programs have been most effective?
- 4) What ways of involving faculty members and staff have yielded positive results?
- 5) What inventive strategies have you employed to improve student experiences, such as e-volunteering, research project support, internship program funding, better preparation and debriefing?

6) How does your institution build and maintain partnerships with host institutions and what role do those partnerships play in improving student mobility options?

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## **What have you learned from the effective practices at other institutions that could be applied to your own institution?**

- 1) What are the barriers to implementing these new practices and how might they be overcome?
  - 2) What resources and support do you think are needed to actualize some of these innovative practices at your institution?
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## **What are the advantages of improved data collection regarding North-South student mobility?**

- 1) What is the nature of the data collected at your institution?
- 2) What additional data collection would benefit you?
- 3) What tools or resources would be required to improve data collection and analysis?
- 4) How might better data collection improve program offerings?



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### **How is pre-departure and debriefing training carried out at your institution?**

- 1) Is the pre-departure training sufficient?
- 2) What are the challenges you face with pre-departure training?
- 3) How does pre-departure training differ across the institution? Do different programs employ different methods of pre-departure training?
- 4) What important aspects of pre-departure training are students not receiving? Why?
- 5) Do students receive debriefing sessions after returning to Canada from their placement? What would be helpful to include in these sessions?
- 6) What are the perceived advantages of improving pre-departure training and debriefing sessions?

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### **What are the financial challenges you encounter in supporting quality student mobility programs?**

- 1) How do financial barriers affect students? Which students are most affected?
- 2) How do financial barriers impact the nature of your partnerships with host country partners?

- 3) What innovative strategies has your institution used to overcome financial challenges experienced by students or staff?
- 4) What funding models could you use to improve options for low-income students?
- 5) How can these funding models be utilized to help students in the Global South overcome the financial challenges they face when pursuing their studies in Canada?





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## Chapter 1

# Ethics in North-South student mobility

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North-South student mobility programs can often reinforce the inequalities that exist between partner institutions and between nations – especially when primarily Global North students experience the benefits of these partnerships.

But there are strategies to avoid this. Establishing sustainable and equitable relations through well-defined partnerships can ensure that both parties benefit from North-South student mobility, and that mobility programs facilitate mutual learning among students, faculty and staff at both institutions.

Other important ethical practices to consider in such partnerships include research collaborations, knowledge sharing and exchanges, including opportunities for students at partner universities to study in Canada.

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# Ten important ethical considerations for North-South mobility programs

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The 2016 research report, *Building Ethical Global Engagement with Host Communities: N-S Collaborations for Mutual Learning and Benefit* by Ms. Farzana Karim-Haji, Dr. Pamela Roy and Dr. Robert Gough, identified ten important ethical considerations for North-South student mobility programs.

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## 1. Mutually beneficial North-South mobility

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Mobility program administrators must consider the ethical implications of programs that primarily focus on encouraging Global North students to work, conduct research or study in Global South communities.

Students in the Global South often face far more challenges when pursuing their studies in Canada, compared to Global North students studying in the South. This can lead to unequal opportunities and unidirectional knowledge transfers.

To improve the mutual benefits of North-South mobility programs, a comprehensive international education strategy can be an important starting point. For an example, please refer to Global Affairs Canada's International Education Strategy at [international.gc.ca](https://international.gc.ca).



## 2. Centralize education and training services

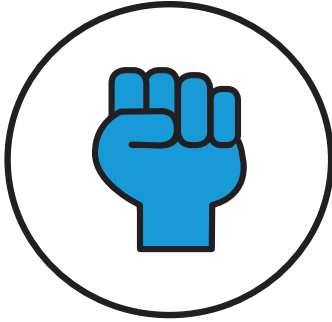
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International experiential learning is increasingly profit-oriented. As a result, universities have begun using third-party organizations to facilitate student mobility, which has transferred pre-departure training responsibilities from university administration to external third-parties.

The issue with this arrangement is that, at times, students arrive at the host institution uninformed and unprepared, leaving it up to the host communities and institutions to complete preparatory student training.

To address this, universities must continue to facilitate pre-departure training as a core aspect of their mandate, even if this training is offered by third parties or host organizations.

For additional questions and considerations, visit the BetterAbroad check-in guide at [betterabroad.org](https://betterabroad.org).

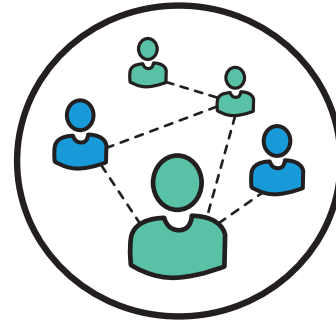


### 3. Acknowledge and address power relationships

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Asymmetrical power relations unfortunately characterize many North-South student mobility programs. For example, practices such as gift-giving can perpetuate stereotypes of the “giving North” and the “needy South.” To avoid this type of ethical dilemma, it is essential that pre-departure training programs inform students, faculty, staff and foreign institutions about appropriate gift-giving practices and expectations.

For a useful guide about gift-giving practices and other ethical considerations, visit Verge Magazine’s “Gift-Giving Guide for Overseas Volunteers” at [vergemagazine.com](http://vergemagazine.com).

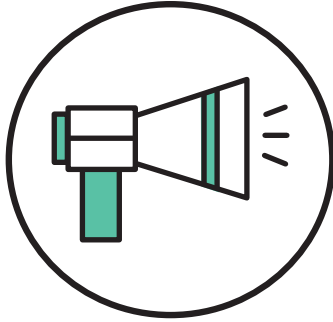


### 4. Ensure host communities benefit from the program

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Research-based student mobility programs frequently use members of host communities as research participants to collect data for course work, research papers or theses. When this information is disclosed with community members, or when it is carried out without the intent to influence position changes in the community, the relationship becomes very one-sided. It is important to have adequate training to avoid this imbalance, especially when the research conducted is invasive or contains a medical aspect.

A useful resource on ethics in global health programs, produced by the American Medical Student Association, can be found at [amsa.org](http://amsa.org).



## 5. Use ethical marketing and advertising materials

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Specific types of imagery and language used to promote North-South mobility programs can often create and reinforce stereotypes of the Global South. For example, portraying Africa through images of wildlife or impoverished children fosters inaccurate ideas about what students experience abroad, and reduces the Global South to tropes of poverty and helplessness.

For advice and additional insights on ethical marketing, visit [ngostorytelling.com](http://ngostorytelling.com), where Elisa Morale is interviewed about her research on images in volunteering marketing.



## 6. Provide longer placements guided by community preferences

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Some research has shown that host communities abroad prefer programs offering longer-term placements of six months or more (Heron, 2011). Recently, semester-long programs have become less common with increased offerings of two- or three-week study-abroad options, particularly in field schools or short-term volunteering programs offered by universities.

However, to avoid exploitation and asymmetrical power relations between partner institutions, host community preferences must also be considered.

For an explanation of the advantages and disadvantages of long- and short-term placements, see Virtual Wayfarer's article, "Five Major Differences Between Long-Term and Short-Term Study Abroad Programs." at [virtualwayfarer.com](http://virtualwayfarer.com).





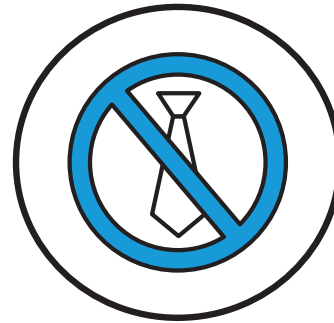
## 7. Introduce appropriate behaviour and cultural sensitivity

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Cultural sensitivity requires an understanding of how two cultures differ – from dress and attire, to behavior, to actions and nonverbal cues – and is crucial for students and faculty who are travelling abroad to work or study.

It is important to encourage students to conduct their own research and speak with others who have experience in the place they are going to. Ask students to reflect on the adjustments they may need to make to their behaviours and habits to ensure they are prepared and will be respectful toward the communities in which they will work.

A useful resource outlining best practices can be found in the Forum on Education Abroad's Standards of Good Practice toolbox at [forumea.org](http://forumea.org).



## 8. Focus on community-building and social justice

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At times, universities tend to promote the career advancement and skill development aspects of mobility programs over other important learning outcomes – such as cross-cultural understanding and social justice. This puts the focus of student mobility exclusively on the benefits for the students, with little regard for host communities' needs and aspirations.

As an example of how to avoid this, students at St. Francis Xavier University learn about social justice and opportunities to effect change in host communities as part of the university's pre-departure preparation for the Ghana student mobility program. Learn more at [stfx.ca/academics/service-learning](http://stfx.ca/academics/service-learning).



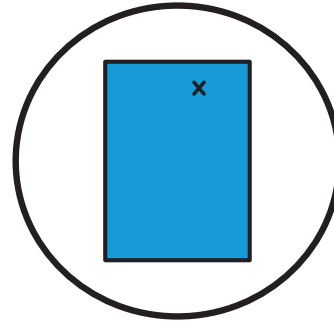
## 9. Engage in critical reflection

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Canadian students should be encouraged to reflect on their fortunate access to resources, bursaries and higher education to truly appreciate their opportunities and privileges. When students feel guilt for their status relative to others, they risk focusing on their experiences of inequality over the experience of those who are truly disadvantaged.

Students may process these experiences in different ways. Posting blogs or voicing concerns about inconveniences (such as water or electricity shortages) is an important ethical issue, particularly since the challenges they experience are not temporary for their host communities.

The [theline.org.au](http://theline.org.au) website provides a helpful resource for critical reflection on privilege, “Talking to Students about Privilege and Power.”



## 10. Make sense of unethical scenarios

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While studying, working or volunteering in the Global South, students may experience unethical practices including corruption; physical violence against women, children, people with disabilities or animals; or disrespect toward people who behave outside of prescribed societal norms.

These scenarios may compel students to react in ways that can put themselves and the people around them in danger. Students require adequate ethics preparation to consider their position and privilege in these situations, and recognize that their actions may have larger impacts in the communities.

The [vimeo.com](https://vimeo.com) video “First, Do no Harm: A Qualitative Research Documentary” is intended for pre-departure preparation and training, particularly for global health clinical electives and volunteer projects in the Global South.

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## Innovative strategies

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### Incorporating ethical dimensions into pre-departure training and return orientation sessions

The Global Development Studies program at Queen's University offers a placement handbook and an intensive classroom-based course, which notes that students should “begin to plan [the] placement at least 12 months ahead of [the] expected departure date” (Queen's University 2016: 3).

As part of this preparation, students participate in meetings over the course of a semester, during which they discuss “logistical and pedagogical aspects related to work-study placements as well as important ethical issues which underlie the idea of development.” The work-study placement is followed by a mandatory post-placement seminar course.

The Queen's model and other programs that dedicate multiple sessions to ethical issues – before and after North-South mobility program placements – recognize that ethics training takes time.

## Additional resources

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A starting point for students who would like to consider ethical issues in greater depth is a free, online course at [globalcitizenshipedu.weebly.com](http://globalcitizenshipedu.weebly.com) called Global Citizenship and International Experiential Learning. The course is comprised of six modules that cover topics such as global citizenship identity, motivations, critical reflections on outputs and impacts, ethical considerations and getting the most out of the international experience.



Keeping a journal or a blog to document the student's time abroad is another way to think through any challenges and unexpected emotions the students experience, keep in touch with loved ones back home and reflect on their time abroad once they return to Canada. Ryerson University offers a useful guide, “[Keeping Track: Start a Journal/Blog](#),” for this.



Another useful resource is the video documentary “Volunteers Unleashed,” which can be accessed at [cbc.ca/doczone](http://cbc.ca/doczone).









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## Chapter 2

# Increasing participation and overcoming funding barriers in North-South student mobility

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Research shows that Canadian students are generally interested in studying abroad, but they face a number of obstacles in doing so. Obstacles students face in participating in student mobility programs can be summarized as the “four C’s”: cost, curriculum, (institutional) culture, and circumstance (International Institute for Education, 2014; Martin, 2015).

Canadian faculty and administrators interviewed for this research pointed to a number of factors limiting student participation, including: limited amounts of information on diversity-related barriers, physical and linguistic accessibility barriers, fears about travelling to foreign countries and financial constraints.

Funding these programs was also challenging both for students, who may rely on a local, part-time job to pay tuition, and for program administrators, who require seed funding to explore new and strengthen existing partnerships.

Those interviewed also shared strategies that their institutions are using to fund their programs and increase the number of students going abroad.

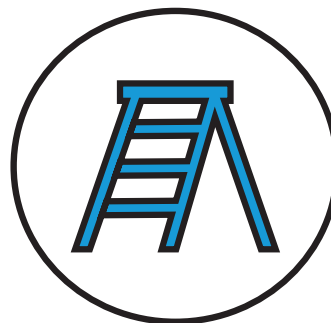
# Strategies to overcome Canadian student mobility program participation and funding challenges

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## Participation

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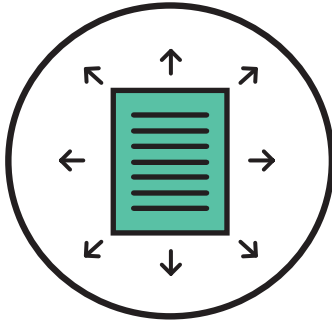
### 1. Adopting a “stepladder approach”

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Some universities have adopted a “stepladder approach,” whereby students participate in shorter-term, faculty-led trips as a way of reducing their discomfort with longer-term placements abroad.

Students are then encouraged to build upon their initial experience by visiting the same place a second time, but for a longer period in the form of a co-op placement, internship or semester abroad. Some administrators reported great success generating repeat participation using this approach.

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## 2. Marketing to underrepresented groups and recruiting from non-traditional disciplines

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Many Canadian universities have also started marketing to underrepresented student groups and actively recruiting students from non-traditional mobility disciplines, such as natural sciences and other institutions, such as trade schools. One administrator suggested that a catalogue of financial awards currently available for Canadian students by government and non-governmental funding agencies would also be valuable to support the participation of underrepresented groups.

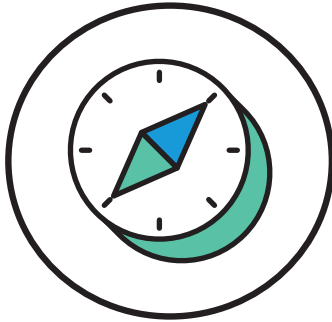


## 3. Implementing peer-to-peer mentoring programs

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Implementing peer-to-peer mentoring programs, which offer students an opportunity to speak with their peers about certain topics relating to student mobility programs and travelling abroad, is another strategy used by universities across the country. Universities commonly recruit students who are returning to Canada from overseas to act as ambassadors, represent their program and assist with promotion on campus.

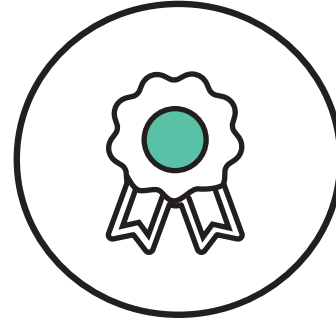




## 4. Providing orientation sessions for parents

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One university offered a parents' orientation on student mobility. The administrator responsible explained: "What I realized is that if we are able to impact the parents we can reach the students. So what we did was created an information session and we invited the students who are potentially thinking about wanting to study abroad, and we invited their parents to a night at the university to talk about our programs... With that we were able to get more and more buy-in."



## 5. Integrating international experiences into traditional education

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Research has clearly shown that student mobility must constitute an integrated, formalized part of a student's overall educational experience. "Integration" can include increasing the number of course credit opportunities, the number of courses devoted to preparing for and reflecting on students' experiences abroad, and formal designations for mobility program participation that can be indicated on students' transcripts. These forms of integration allow students to incorporate international experiences into their regular course work and have these experiences recognized in a more formal way.

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# Funding

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## 1. Using international conferences to network with current and potential partners

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When financial means are limited, conferences are great opportunities for networking. Conferences organized by NAFSA, the European Association for International Education (EAIE) and the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) were highlighted as being particularly useful.



## 2. Integrating student fee levy model

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Some universities have opted to finance student mobility by supporting fee levy organizations on campus. One successful example is the Community Empowerment Education Development (CEED) program at Concordia University, which is dedicated to social justice and community empowerment in Uganda. CEED's programming is supported by a 35-cent per credit tuition fee for undergraduate students, resulting in students in CEED's experiential learning program having to pay only \$450 for the three-month experience, including accommodation, food, pre-departure training and in-field staff support in Uganda. Students can also choose to opt out of the levy if they wish and have the 35-cent fee lifted.



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## Chapter 3

# Evaluation and measurement of North-South Mobility programs

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Increasing student participation in mobility programs requires an understanding of how and why students are – or are not – taking part in these opportunities. There are two key knowledge-gaps that make it difficult to assess the true nature and extent of mobility programs offered at Canadian universities:

1. Inadequate demographic information about the number of students traveling abroad, as well as their destinations, length of stay and the possible obstacles they face
2. Limited studies that offer comprehensive analyses of the impacts and measure the outcomes of these programs within and across universities in Canada

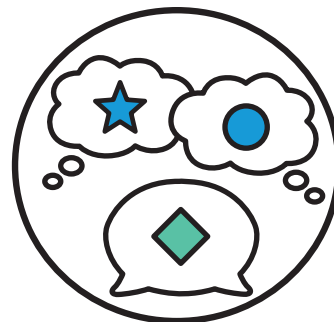
There are a number of barriers to collecting this type information, but Canadian universities have adopted several strategies in an effort to address these concerns.

This chapter highlights administrators' and faculty members' experiences in evaluating and measuring the impact of their North-South mobility programs.



# Challenges that Canadian universities face in measuring and evaluating student-mobility programs

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## 1. Lack of clarity and differing perspectives on evaluation focus areas

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It is difficult to evaluate, let alone define, ideas such as intercultural learning, self-awareness, civic engagement and intercultural competency (Bennett, 2009). Measuring the impact of student mobility programs based on these factors is especially difficult due to their intangible and equivocal nature – in other words, the impact cannot always be measured using numbers and metrics.

Partners may also have conflicting ideas about evaluation outcomes, definitions and measurement tools (Nelson and Child, 2016). Existing research tends to focus on critical theory and post-colonial critiques (academic scholarship) or on positive results (self-studies), with a strong bias towards the experiences of students from the Global North (Sherraden et al., 2008).

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## 2. Inconsistent and insufficient collection of information

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Most, if not all, Canadian universities track mobility program participation; however, calculating the precise number of students is complicated by the diversity of international learning opportunities available. Universities may not officially record all of these opportunities or clearly differentiate between each of the many programs offered. Most importantly, the data collected does not always recognize the educational value of student placements unrelated to courses at their home institution.

Additionally, very few universities collect demographic data on students travelling abroad. As one administrator explained, “I can see how it (demographic data) might be interesting... but at our level it doesn’t make a huge difference in how we market or recruit for our program.”

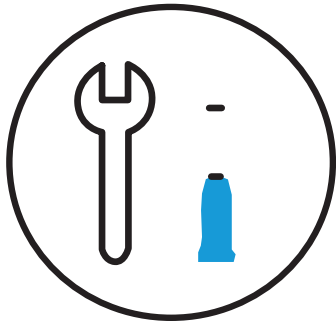


## 3. Software inefficiencies

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Universities increasingly look externally to track and collect data about their student mobility programs. Many have subscribed to external web-based student travel information systems – such as Horizons, Terra Dotta, or MoveON – but program administrators indicated that software tailored specifically to Canadian universities is not currently available.

Universities that do not use a third-party system typically maintain data manually. Institutions often cite high costs and additional administrative effort and training as reasons why they choose not to use an online software program. One administrator quoted a \$25,000 initial investment, with an additional \$10,000 annual subscription fee for her institution.



#### 4. Lack of tools to evaluate programs institutionally and nationally

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One of the greatest technical challenges universities face is the lack of available and effective tools for evaluating mobility programs at the institutional-level. Program administrators indicated that it would be extremely valuable for a national member-based organization like Universities Canada to develop and share evaluation tools online. This would also facilitate cross-institutional comparisons of evaluation results.

On an international scale, more research is needed to capture, understand and validate the perspectives of host-country communities, particularly from the Global South. Long-term research focusing on understanding the impacts of student mobility programs on career outcomes and labour-force integration of Canadian students is also needed.



#### 5. Insufficient knowledge of graduate students' activities

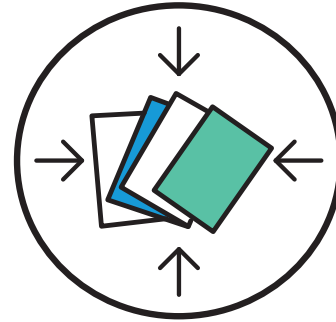
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Currently, methods for monitoring and evaluating graduate student activities are particularly lacking. Graduate students' international activities do not usually fall under the purview of international offices; instead, they are the prerogative of individual students and their faculty supervisors.

As one mobility program administrator highlighted, international offices want to reach the broadest possible audience, meaning cohort trips, such as field schools, are usually their priority market. Graduate students conducting research trips are less often targeted for interaction. As a result of this, relatively little information exists in Canada regarding the number of graduate students travelling abroad and the impacts of their international experiences.

# Strategies for improving evaluation and measurement practice

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## 1. Management through centralized models

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Canadian universities are increasingly moving away from decentralized and hybrid approaches to student mobility by designating international learning offices and consolidating electronic reporting systems to centralize student recruitment and training efforts.

This approach allows for streamlined communications, more consistent monitoring and evaluation and support for students across disciplines – ultimately resulting in a more effective mobility program. The precise statistics that come from this approach also ensure that activities within the programs are accurately reported in order to leverage funding.

With this said, there are challenges associated with transitioning to a centralized management model, including costs and technical issues, resistance to change and the perception among staff and faculty that resources may become limited.





## 2. Institutional collaboration and information sharing

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Improved coordination, communication and institutional-level evaluation can contribute to a national student mobility database, where participation data and the nature of programs and outcomes can be recorded, uploaded and shared.

A centralized database is an important first step for data entry and evaluation, and could lead to benefits such as: identifying trends to improve program planning; sharing knowledge about innovative partnership models; and accessing national data to market programs and leverage institutional funding.

“  
Collaboration is what we are all about as Canadians, or I like to think that is what we are about. I also think that is the way forward... we need to create global communities and we’ve got to practice what we preach.”

– Student mobility program administrator, research participant

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Two examples of institutional collaboration and software information sharing were highlighted in this research:

#### *Horizons User Group*

Members from Canadian universities used to connect semi-annually via web conference to conduct software demonstrations, share information and experiences and provide collective feedback to Horizons manufacturers. This united front led to Horizons adapting and adding features specifically to satisfy Canadian customers.

#### *The Study Abroad Software List*

Student mobility practitioners at Canadian institutions who wish to ask questions and share experiences of purchasing and using study abroad software can use this list. Software vendors are not list members.

To join the group, contact Lynne Mitchell at [lmitchel@uoguelph.ca](mailto:lmitchel@uoguelph.ca).

## Additional resources

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Institute of International Education.  
“How Are We Doing? The Role of  
Evaluation in IIE’s Programs.”  
New York, 2013. [iie.com](http://iie.com)









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## Chapter 4

# Faculty participation in North-South student mobility

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### *Encouraging faculty participation*

Faculty members are actively involved in the design and execution of many student mobility options available at Canadian universities. Whether faculty act as instructors, program administrators, field school leads, research supervisors or principal investigators, they ensure students are prepared before travelling abroad, supported throughout their time overseas and have opportunities to critically reflect on their travels after returning to Canada.

Increasing faculty involvement can lead to stronger North-South institutional partnerships, opportunities for future research collaboration, improved access to resources and a higher quality student mobility program.

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## Why do faculty participate in North-South student mobility programming?

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Faculty members who devote their time to student mobility programs may do so for a variety of reasons, but the most significant reason identified by program administrators was a deep personal commitment to and passion for education and cross-cultural learning. Other motivations that ranked highly include the opportunity to mentor students, the chance to reconnect with international partners or communities and the ability to conduct research abroad.

Little is known about current strategies employed by universities for encouraging faculty participation in these programs. This is an important information gap given that the lack of incentives for the participation of diverse actors, including university faculty and staff, was recently identified as one of the main institutional barriers limiting the growth of mobility programs in Canada.

Study participants highlighted five strategies to encourage faculty members to participate in the development and implementation of North-South student mobility programs.

The most significant reasons for participating in student mobility programs, as identified by faculty interviewed for this research, is a deep personal commitment to and passion for education and cross-cultural learning.



# Strategies Canadian universities use to encourage faculty participation

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## 1. Offer internationalization trainings

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A national survey conducted by Universities Canada found that between 2009 and 2014, “42% of universities offered workshops on internationalizing the curriculum, 27% offered opportunities for faculty to improve their foreign language skills, [and] 26% offered workshops on using technology to enhance international dimensions in teaching” (Universities Canada, 2014: 30).

Other types of training can include workshops on identifying funding opportunities to undertake international projects, guidance on how to develop successful field courses and risk-management training for first-time supervisors of graduate students conducting international fieldwork.



## 2. Reward participation

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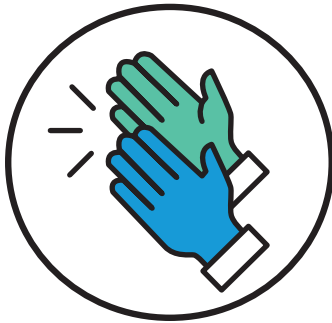
Rewarding participation in mobility program development and execution is an important tactic to ensure faculty continue their involvement in future years; however, Universities Canada found that 87% of institutions lack formal guidelines regarding this matter (Universities Canada, 2014: 30). Additionally, only 7% of universities consider international work and experience in promotional decision-making, and only 6% of universities have institution-wide policies about rewarding participation in these programs.

In the United States, 25% of doctoral institutions, 12% of masters and 11% of baccalaureate institutions have relevant guidelines. These numbers are much higher than in Canada, where only 21% of universities offered specific recognition awards.

“  
If you want faculty to go abroad, they need this task to be recognized by the university... Incentives are not always about money – money is not really the incentive that we have available – but about recognizing the importance of that work.

– Student mobility program administrator,  
research participant

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### 3. Provide formal recognition

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Participating in mobility programs is not about remuneration, but recognition. Mobility work – which is often considered to be a type of “outreach service” – must instead be placed under the umbrella of “research” or “teaching,” which hold far greater weight with administration making faculty promotion and tenure decisions.

When asked what types of benefits might result from formal recognition of international work by the university, program administrators identified course allowances or release from other administrative obligations, increased weight for international work and experience in promotion or tenure decisions, and the flexibility to build in opportunities for independent research while abroad.



### 4. Offer funding for curriculum development

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Increasingly, universities are establishing internal curriculum-development funds to support faculty in expanding and advancing course offerings. Some of these funds are specifically devoted to support international or intercultural learning opportunities for students.

For an example of this approach, see Western University’s International Curriculum Fund at [uwo.ca](https://www.uwo.ca).



## 5. Recruit faculty from non-traditional disciplines

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It is unlikely that faculty members from all faculties and departments would express equal interest in mobility program participation. Recognizing this, Thompson Rivers University launched a program in 2013 designed to recruit faculty members from non-traditional disciplines to develop international field school courses. The outcomes of this pilot program had particular success with generating participation from faculty working with trade schools.

“

We had faculty teaching future electricians, and they basically put on a field course in a small village in Mexico. They installed solar power grids to bring electricity to the community. They did that three years in a row, but my role was to pilot the first year because they had never had any experience taking their students out of the city.

– Director of Global Engagement at Thompson Rivers University, research participant

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## Additional resources

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Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA). 2015. “Managing from the Middle: Eight Tips for New International Education Administrators for Working with Faculty.” Durham: AIEA. [aieaworld.org](http://aieaworld.org)







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## Chapter 5

# Partnership building through North-South mobility programs

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### *Important considerations and innovative opportunities*

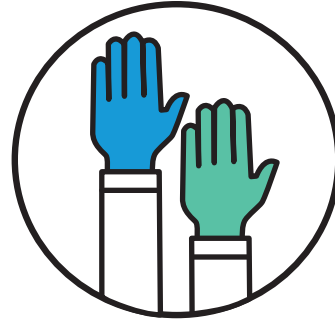
International partnerships offer universities prestige and a competitive edge in national and global rankings. According to a Universities Canada survey, high-quality partnerships were considered a priority at 79% of the institutions surveyed (Universities Canada, 2014: 7). Student mobility programs play an important role in international partnership building and internationalization strategies.

The majority of Canadian students travel to the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Europe (Universities Canada, 2014 and Duncan, 2014); yet university administrators see incredible value in facilitating student mobility to other regions of the world.

Growing and expanding North-South student mobility, however, requires careful consideration of the opportunities and challenges of partnership building.

# Important considerations for North-South mobility partnership building

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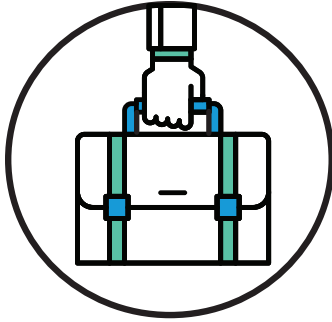
## 1. Identifying potential partners

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One of the challenges of expanding North-South student mobility options is limited access to formal guidelines or policies for identifying potential partners. International program staff and administrators often develop their own protocols, many of which rely heavily on word-of-mouth and existing relationships as methods of establishing new international partnerships. Partnerships may emerge following site visits by university administrators or as a result of a faculty members' long-standing work in a particular country.

To expand partnership arrangements, mobility program administrators identified the need for a database of Global South institutions interested in partnering with Canadian institutions, and the nature of the partnership preferred.

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## 2. Establishing and maintaining strong partnerships

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Visiting international partner institutions is necessary to establish and sustain relationships, as they build trust and generate a mutual understanding of shared goals. However, resources and funding for travel and partnership maintenance is not always available to international offices. As a solution to this challenge, program administrators identified international conferences as a way to network and advance relations with international partners.

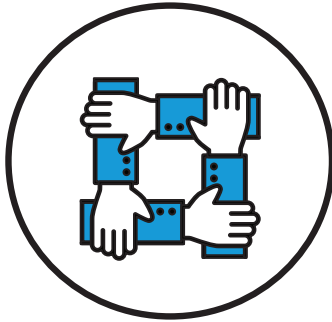
A particular challenge smaller universities face is finding enough students to make sustainable partnerships feasible. This insecurity can put otherwise very strong partnerships in jeopardy. Some universities seek out students from other institutions or establish partnerships with third-party providers to reach students from multiple Canadian universities.

“  
[Cancelling a mobility program with a long-time partner due to limited student interest] is an ethical problem because you build a partnership based on the principle of reciprocity and then you still just walk away, and there is zero you can do about that. So I’m deeply concerned about that moving forward.

– Student mobility program coordinator,  
research participant

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### 3. Reciprocity and genuine collaboration

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Reciprocity of opportunities is an important ethical consideration in North-South partnerships. One strategy to achieve institutional reciprocity and collaboration is to ensure equal numbers of incoming and outgoing students in mobility programs.

Interestingly, universities faced challenges in these areas. Some administrators reported difficulties recruiting Canadian students to go abroad, while others indicated that inbound recruitment is disproportionately challenging, often due to financial inequities.

Beyond the numbers, other important aspects to be put in place include: institutional symmetry in terms of perceived value of student mobility programs and students' roles and responsibilities; clearly defined expectations in jointly written partnership agreements; and equal and shared decision-making power among institutions.



### 4. Evaluating partnerships

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Mobility program administrators spoke about the difficulty of collecting regular, consistent feedback from international partners, mainly due to limited resources and insufficient evaluation tools.

When evaluating mobility programs, international partners must also participate in the data collection process to ensure programs are improved, changes are made and negative impacts are eliminated.



# Innovative models for mobility partnerships

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## Collaborative online systems and courses

The Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing at Western University and the University of Rwanda have launched an online course in order to mitigate some of the ethical concerns that exist around reciprocity in North-South student mobility programs. As a full-semester course, using Blackboard Collaborate (a web-based system for collaborative education and training), the course connects nursing students in Rwanda with their counterparts at UWO to learn about clinical decision-making within the context of culture, nursing practice and health systems, using real-life scenarios. Online courses like this one also alleviate financial barriers for international students.

## Creating mobility opportunities for students and faculty members

Dalhousie University has offered students the opportunity to study in Cuba for 20 years. In addition to offering a two-week intensive program and a semester-long program, Dalhousie has also recruited Cuban academics and scholars to visit the university, giving students the chance to learn more about Cuban culture, history, politics and development.

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## Creating reciprocal exchange opportunities

Since 2006, Western University (UWO) students have travelled to Madagascar to attend classes at l'Université d'Antsiranana and worked with community organizations on projects concerning environmental conservation. In the summer of 2016, six Malagasy students travelled to Canada and worked with a local organization on projects in London, Ontario, near UWO.

For more information about this program, visit the Madagascar Field Course's Facebook page at [facebook.com/MadagascarFieldCourse](https://facebook.com/MadagascarFieldCourse).

“

One thing I really like about this [partnership] is that...rather than having [Malagasy] students come to Canada and think we are giving to them, they are coming here and giving to our community... Malagasy students are participating in a form of service learning here in London (Ontario) in the same way that our Canadian students participated in a form of service learning in Madagascar.

—Co-creator and co-facilitator of the Madagascar Field Course, research participant

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## Additional resources



### For more information about international associations and conferences, visit:

- The Association of International Educators (NAFSA). [nafsa.org](https://nafsa.org)
- The European Association for International Education (EAIE). [eaie.org](https://eaie.org)
- The Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA). [aieaworld.org](https://aieaworld.org)

### For more information about building international partnerships, see:

- American Council on Education - International Partnerships: Guidelines for Colleges and Universities. [acenet.edu](https://acenet.edu)

### For more information about strategic international partnerships, see:

- Global Perspectives on Strategic International Partnerships by C. Banks, B. Siebe-Herbig and K. Norton, Institute of International Education and German Academic Exchange Service, 2016. [iie.org](https://iie.org)







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# The future of North-South student mobility for Canadian universities

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Increasing student mobility continues to be a top priority for Canadian universities. The next generation of Canada's innovators, entrepreneurs and leaders require a broad set of skills and cross-cultural knowledge to thrive in today's global economy.

The Centre for International Policy Studies (CIPS) at the University of Ottawa recently identified Canada as falling behind its OECD country peers and competitors, and challenged educators to set more ambitious targets for outbound international education.

Creating opportunities for Canadian students to study, work and volunteer in developing and emerging economies in the Global South – and recruiting more top students from these countries to study in Canada – is an important step to improve the current student mobility rates (CIPS, 2015:35).

Using the recommendations and resources provided, mobility program administrators and faculty members at Canadian universities will be better equipped to provide students with high-quality North-South mobility programs based on ethical, sustainable and equitable partnerships with institutions in the Global South.



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## Methodology

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This research included a comprehensive review of materials, including practical guides, reports and scholarly material. A 2015 workshop and 2016 symposium on North-South student mobility, organized by Universities Canada, provided opportunities to consult with Canadian universities about relevant priority research topics. A literature review, prepared by Universities Canada in February 2016, offered an important guide for researching key material and themes in greater depth.

The methods used to conduct the research included a review of current literature and resources on mobility program evaluation. Many of the resources examined have been included as endnotes or additional resources. Other documents, such as eight pre-departure training guides from eight different universities, were examined.

Interviews with 20 faculty members and international program administrators from 14 universities across Canada were also conducted. Student mobility coordinators and faculty members at Canadian universities were invited to participate in an interview for the study at Universities Canada's North-South Student Mobility Symposium held in Montreal in February 2016. After viewing a short presentation outlining the study's purpose and methodology, interested individuals were asked to provide their email address in order to be contacted for a phone or Skype interview during the summer of 2016.

This study received ethics approval from the Social Sciences and Humanities REB at the University of Ottawa.

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## Study limitations

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This was an exploratory study with a limited budget, time frame and number of researchers and participants. While the study results do not provide a basis for generalization, the papers provide an overview of broad trends with reference to specific practices as effective examples of North-South student mobility programs being offered in Canada. They also identify important research gaps that warrant further study, including the need for an in-depth qualitative study identifying under-represented groups in student mobility in Canada and the barriers they face in studying abroad, and a study that documents the range of student mobility training programs available at Canadian universities.

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Starting with the current baseline of 3% of undergraduate students annually working or studying abroad, that figure needs to be tripled by 2020, and then again by 2025. These targets will no doubt be viewed by some people as unrealistic. It is our view, however, that outbound educational mobility should no longer be viewed as a frill for a few but rather as an imperative for all. Special efforts will be needed to create opportunities for Canadian students to study and work in developing and emerging economies and to recruit more top students from those countries to study in Canada. In launching an ambitious outbound international education program, Canada would be well placed to learn from other countries where international exchange is increasingly the norm.

(Centre for International Policy Studies, 2015: 35)

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