

***The Haves and Have-nots
in Tertiary Education***

and

***Tertiary Students Abroad:
Learning Without Borders***

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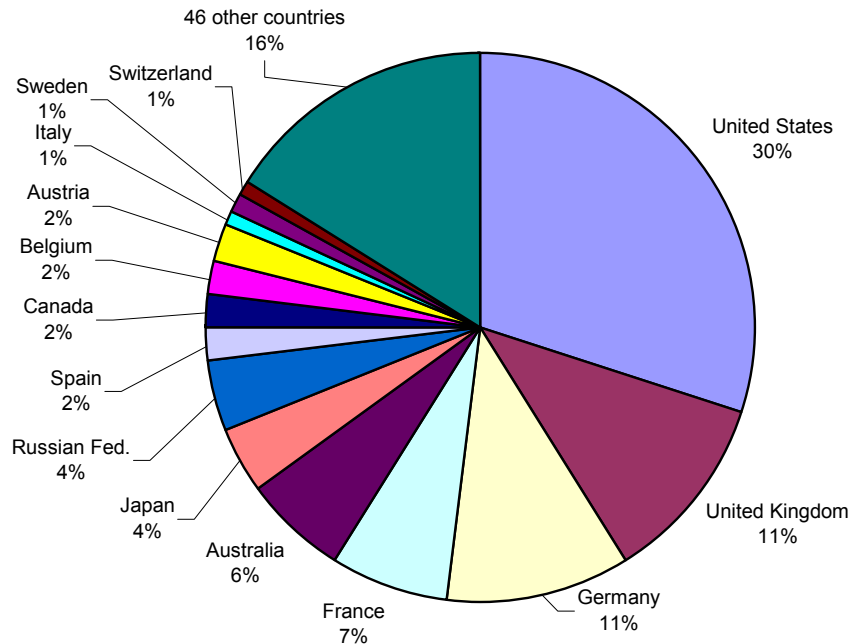


Tertiary Students Abroad: Learning Without Borders

The provision of tertiary education reaches beyond the boundary of any given country. In many parts of the world, tertiary-level students are enrolled in programmes in countries where they are not permanent residents. The latest figures on the percentage of foreign students in any given host country reveal that:

- Out of every ten tertiary students studying abroad, four are Asians, three are Europeans and one is African.
- Half of all foreign students study in Europe and almost one-third in the United States.
- Three countries host half of the world's foreign students (United States, United Kingdom, Germany). Add the next two highest hosting countries (France and Australia), these five countries serve two-thirds of the world's foreign students.
- While 30% of all foreign students are in the United States, they represent only 4% of the domestic tertiary sector. Foreign students make up one in ten enrolments in the United Kingdom and Germany and almost one in seven tertiary students in Australia.
- South America is the least common destination for foreign students (hosting only 0.4% of the global foreign student population), followed by Africa (1.2%).

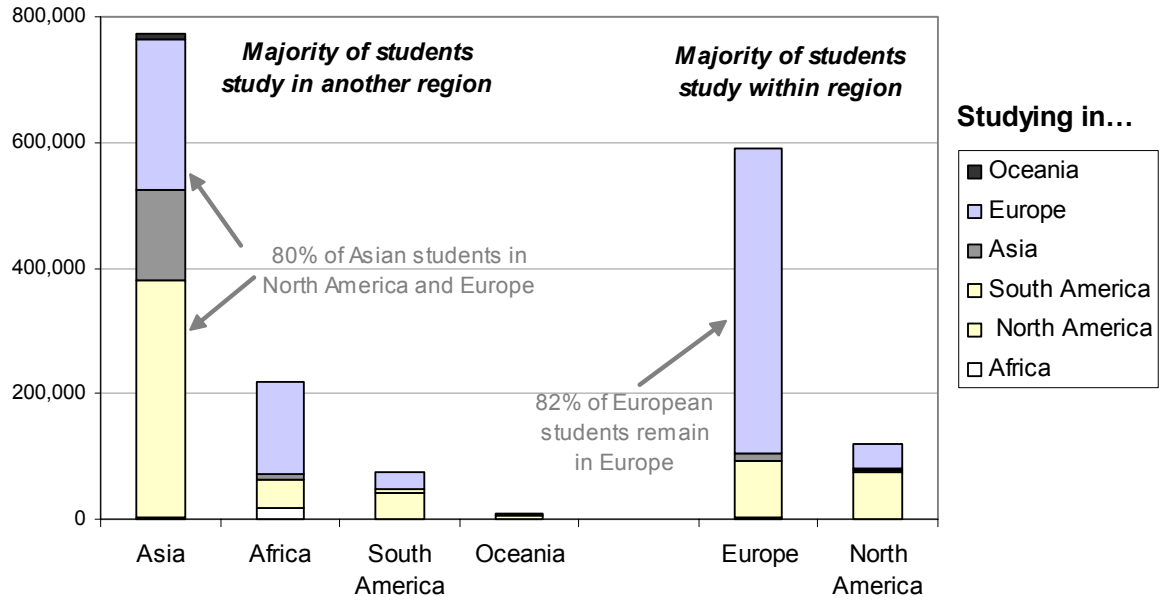
Figure 1. Distribution of foreign students by host country/territory, 2001/2002



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Global Education Digest 2004.

- Eight out of ten foreign European students study in another European country.
- North American students rarely study abroad (less than 2% of the population of foreign students).
- Three out of five foreign students in Europe are studying in either in the United Kingdom, Germany or France.
- 46% of all foreign students are women and only eight countries host more foreign female students than male.
- The United States is the largest single host country for foreign students, welcoming 583 thousand students in 2001/02. Sixty-three percent of these students come from the Asia region.
- The percentage of foreign students varies considerably throughout the world. Some of the highest percentages are found in Macao (China), where foreign students make up 64% of tertiary enrolments, in Qatar and Cyprus with 21% respectively, in Switzerland (17%), Australia (14%), and Austria (13%).

Figure 2. Foreign students by continent of origin, 2001/2002



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Global Education Digest, 2004.
 Note: Data are for countries hosting more than 1000 students.

One of the most significant divides between the world's richest and poorest countries relates to the amount of schooling a child can expect to receive. A big part of this difference is found in the average duration spent in tertiary education.

- Globally, a child, on average can expect to spend an average of 1.5 years in tertiary education. However, there is wide variation around this average.
- In Europe, a child can expect to spend 15.4 years in schooling, of which three years is at the tertiary level. In North America, tertiary education also adds three years to a total school life expectancy of 14.3 years. In each region, participation in tertiary education comprises about one-fifth of the total time spent in schooling.
- In Asia and South America, tertiary education adds over one year to school life expectancy, where children can expect to spend a total of 13.7 and 9.9 years respectively in schooling. In these regions the duration of tertiary schooling contributes only one-tenth to the total duration of schooling.
- Tertiary education has almost no impact on the overall school life expectancy in Africa, where a child will spend on average 7.8 years in school, of which only a couple of months in tertiary education. Only 3% of total years of schooling is the result of tertiary studies.

Figure 1. Average school life expectancy in years, by region, 2001/2002

	Average school life expectancy in years		Number of years of tertiary education	Tertiary duration as a share of total (%)
	Primary to secondary	Primary to tertiary		
Africa	7.6	7.8	0.2	3
North America	11.2	14.3	3.1	22
South America	12.1	13.7	1.6	12
Asia	8.9	9.9	1.0	10
Europe	12.4	15.4	3.0	19
Oceania	12.4	m	m	m
World	9.3	10.8	1.5	14

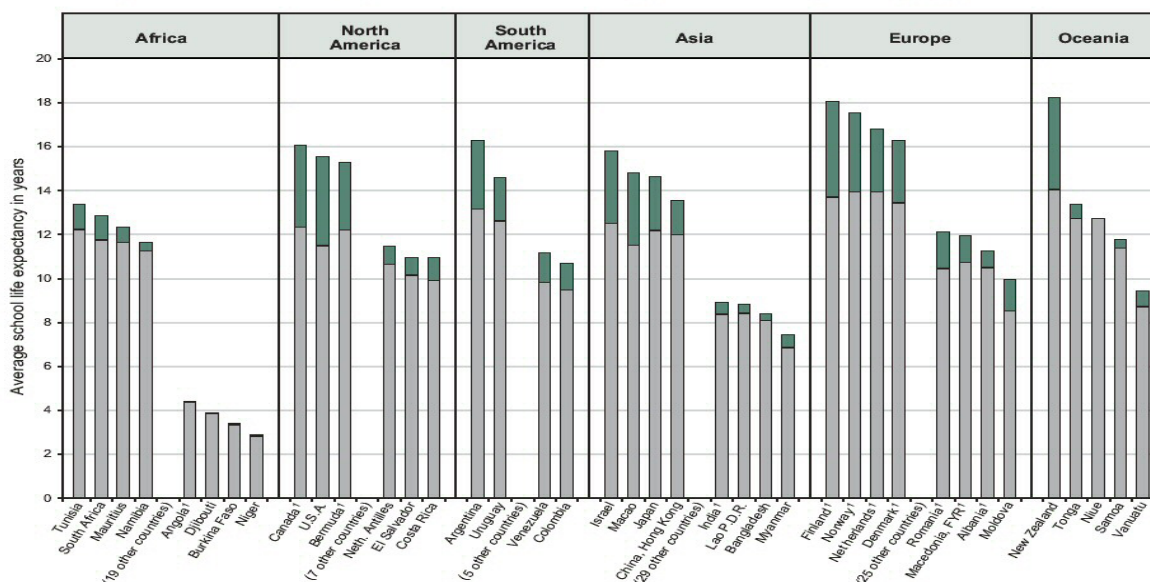
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Global Education Digest 2004

Notes: Data for 38 countries refer to 2000/2001 and 7 countries to 1999/2000. Regional averages are weighted by the population of children at the age of 5 years.

- The average duration expected in tertiary education is more than 30 times greater in the ten countries with the highest participation rates compared to the ten with the lowest rates.
- In high performing countries, more than two and a half years of an average school career is due to participation in tertiary studies. This is the case for Argentina, Bermuda, Canada and the United States in the Americas; Israel, Macao (China) and the Republic of Korea in Asia; Finland, the Netherlands and Norway in Europe; and Australia and New Zealand in Oceania.
- In Africa, levels of tertiary education remain low even in countries with high rates of participation. The average duration of tertiary education exceeds one year only in Tunisia and South Africa. In eight African countries, a child will spend less than five years in basic education; of these, Djibouti, Burkina Faso and Niger register less than four years, of which only a small fraction is at the tertiary level.
- In Asia, children in countries such as India, Laos, Bangladesh and Myanmar can expect, on average, less than half a year's tertiary education.

Figure 2. How long can children expect to stay in education, from primary to tertiary education?

Average school life expectancy in years for countries with the longest and shortest expectancy by region, 2001



Source: *Global Education Digest 2004, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2004*

Notes: Countries are sorted in descending order within a region. Some OECD/EU countries are excluded due to inclusion of adult education. For each region the number of countries with data, though not shown, is indicated on the horizontal axis.

1) Data refer to 2000.

What is school life expectancy?

School life expectancy (SLE) reflects the average number of years that a child at age 5 can expect to be enrolled in school. It indicates the average expected duration of schooling, not the number of grades reached, based on current rates of enrolment. Here, the SLE includes years spent repeating grades, so the measure overstates duration *per child* in countries with high repetition rates.