



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Bangkok Office  
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau  
for Education

# The International Mobility of Students in Asia and the Pacific



The International

# Mobility of Students

in Asia and the Pacific

Published in 2013 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,  
7, place de Fontenoy,  
75352 Paris 07 SP, France

and

UNESCO Bangkok

© UNESCO 2013

ISBN 978-92-9223-459-1 (Electronic version)



This publication is available in Open Access under the Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO (CC-BY-SA 3.0 IGO) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/igo/>). By using the content of this publication, the users accept to be bound by the terms of use of the UNESCO Open Access Repository (<http://www.unesco.org/open-access/terms-use-ccbysa-en>).

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors; they are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.

Project Coordinator: Jin Hyung Kim and Sofia Strandberg  
Design/Layout: Sirisak Chaiyasook

APE/13/033-E

# Foreword

The rapid expansion of higher education globally is clearly evident in these numbers: 97 million students enrolled in higher education institutions in 2000 compared to 263 million forecasted for 2015. This exponential growth is driven in part by the demand for a knowledge-based economy and highly skilled human resources.

At the same time, the number of students who chose to study abroad had increased from 1.3 million in 1990 to 4.3 million in 2011, demonstrating a new generation of mobile young people eager to learn and expand their horizons. Traditionally, the flow of students has been towards English-speaking countries, such as the United Kingdom, United States and Australia. However, this pattern is changing with a sharp increase in the flow and exchange of students in Asia and the Pacific, and the development of several education hubs in the region. According to OECD data, the largest numbers of foreign students in 2011 were from China, India and Korea. In fact, Asian students accounted for 53 percent of all students enrolled in higher education institutions overseas worldwide.

The mobility of students across borders has given rise to many concerns from policy makers and educators alike. The issues are complex and extend beyond the realm of education.

In response to these concerns, this publication presents the results of a study conducted by members of the Education Research Institute Network (ERI-net) in 2011. Following a common research framework, researchers from Australia, China, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand examined the drivers, consequences and implications of increased international student mobility in their country. The reports shed light on many issues including the domestic and external factors affecting student mobility, countries as popular study destinations or senders of students, the role of governments in shaping higher education and student mobility, rules and regulations governing private and public education providers, modes of delivery of education, student financial aid and visa requirements.

The ERI-net was established by UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in 2009 to facilitate regional collaboration among education research institutions and share knowledge and insight into educational issues of pertinence to Asia and the Pacific. International student mobility is indeed an important topic for discussion if the flow of students in an out of the region, and within the region, is any indication. Noted for its economic dynamism, countries in this region will need to work together to ensure the delivery of high quality education and the education of high quality human resources as the competition to attract and retain students intensifies.

I would like to express my gratitude to the researchers and ERI-Net members for highlighting the issues, challenges and recommendations. I hope policy makers, researchers and educators will find the information in this publication as useful and interesting as I have.



Gwang-Jo Kim  
*Director*  
UNESCO Bangkok

# Table of Contents

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Foreword</b> . . . . .  | <b>iii</b> |
| <b>Table of Contents</b> . . . . .   | <b>iv</b>  |
| <b>List of Abbreviations</b> . . . . .   | <b>vi</b>  |
| <b>Introduction</b> . . . . .  | <b>1</b>   |
| Domestic and External Factors Affecting International Student Flows . . . . .    | 2          |
| Countries as Receivers or Senders of Students . . . . .                          | 3          |
| Government Role vis-à-vis Institutional and Individual Decision-Making . . . . . | 3          |
| Modes of Provision . . . . .   | 4          |
| Consequences and Implications of International Student Mobility . . . . .        | 4          |
| Policy Implications . . . . .  | 5          |
| <b>International Student Mobility:<br/>the Australian Case</b> . . . . .         | <b>6</b>   |
| Internationalisation: the Policy Context of from Aid to Trade . . . . .          | 8          |
| The Australian International Education Industry Today . . . . .                  | 8          |
| Offshore or Transnational Education . . . . .                                    | 9          |
| Australian Higher Education Student Mobility . . . . .                           | 10         |
| The International Education Industry . . . . .                                   | 10         |
| Regulation of the International Education Industry . . . . .                     | 11         |
| The Perfect Storm . . . . .  | 12         |
| Impact of the Growth of International Education . . . . .                        | 14         |
| Positive aspects of internationalization: . . . . .                              | 15         |
| Negative aspects of internationalization: . . . . .                              | 16         |
| Where to from here? . . . . .  | 16         |
| Acknowledgement . . . . .  | 16         |
| References . . . . .   | 17         |
| <b>International Student Mobility: China</b> . . . . .                           | <b>18</b>  |
| Introduction . . . . .   | 18         |
| China's Higher Education as a Case Study . . . . .                               | 18         |
| The Mobility Service Modes . . . . .   | 20         |
| References . . . . .   | 28         |
| <b>International Student Mobility: Indonesia</b> . . . . .                       | <b>29</b>  |
| Introduction . . . . .   | 29         |
| Objectives of the Paper . . . . .  | 29         |
| Findings and Discussions . . . . .   | 30         |
| Problems . . . . .   | 33         |
| Conclusion and Recommendations . . . . .   | 34         |
| References . . . . .   | 35         |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>International Student Mobility: Republic of Korea . . . . .</b>  | <b>36</b> |
| Introduction . . . . .  | 36        |
| Change of Korean Government's University Policies . . . . .   | 37        |
| Student Mobility in Republic of Korea . . . . .   | 38        |
| Development Institute. . . . .  | 40        |
| Implemented Policies and Efforts of Korean Universities Concerning the Promotion of International Mobility. . . . . | 43        |
| Discussion and Summary. . . . .   | 45        |
| References . . . . .  | 45        |
| <b>International Student Mobility: Malaysia . . . . .</b>   | <b>47</b> |
| Introduction . . . . .  | 47        |
| Expansion of Higher Education and International Student Mobility in Malaysia . . . . .                              | 49        |
| Challenges and Prospects . . . . .  | 57        |
| Concluding Remarks. . . . .   | 58        |
| References . . . . .  | 59        |
| <b>International Student Mobility: Philippines . . . . .</b>  | <b>60</b> |
| Introduction . . . . .  | 60        |
| ISM As an Instrument of Colonial/Neo-colonial Policy . . . . .  | 61        |
| ISM for Human Resource and Institutional Development . . . . .  | 61        |
| Outbound ISM. . . . .   | 62        |
| Inbound ISM. . . . .  | 63        |
| Policy Pronouncements on ISM . . . . .  | 64        |
| Barriers or Inhibiting Factors to ISM . . . . .   | 65        |
| Other Modalities of Cross-Border Education . . . . .  | 66        |
| Current Inclinations Towards ISM and Cross-Border Education. . . . .  | 66        |
| References . . . . .  | 70        |
| <b>International Student Mobility: Thailand . . . . .</b>   | <b>71</b> |
| Introduction . . . . .  | 71        |
| The World's Tertiary Student Mobility Flows . . . . .   | 71        |
| Higher Education in Thailand . . . . .  | 72        |
| Economic Impact on Higher Education . . . . .   | 72        |
| Reform of Higher Education in Thailand . . . . .  | 73        |
| International Higher Education Student Mobility in Thailand . . . . .   | 74        |
| Inbound and Outbound Mobility . . . . .   | 76        |
| The Most Popular Fields of Study . . . . .  | 78        |
| Educational Expenses . . . . .  | 79        |
| Concluding Remarks. . . . .   | 79        |
| References . . . . .  | 80        |



# List of Abbreviations

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| AEI    | Australian Education International                             |
| AIT    | Asian Institute of Technology                                  |
| AOTULE | Asia Oceania Top University League in Engineering              |
| ASAHIL | Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning |
| ASEAN  | The Association of Southeast Asian Nations                     |
| AUN    | ASEAN University Network                                       |
| AUQA   | Australian Universities Quality Agency                         |
| BAN-PT | The National Board of Accreditation                            |
| BI     | Bureau of Immigration  |
| BLCU   | Beijing Language and Culture University                        |
| CAE    | College of Advanced Education                                  |
| CEA    | Certificate of Eligibility for Admission                       |
| CEIBS  | China Europe International Business School                     |
| CHED   | Commission on Higher Education                                 |
| CMO    | CHED Memorandum Order  |
| CSC    | Chinese Scholarships Council                                   |
| DEEWR  | Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations    |
| DGHE   | Directorate General of Higher Education                        |
| DIISR  | Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research       |
| ELICOS | English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students       |
| FAAP   | Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines          |
| GATS   | General Agreement on Trade and Services                        |
| GOI    | Government of Indonesia  |
| HECS   | Higher Education Contribution Scheme                           |
| HEI    | Higher Education Institution                                   |
| HESA   | Higher Education Support Act                                   |
| IPTP   | International Practicum Training Program                       |
| ISB    | International Student Barometer                                |
| ISM    | International Student Mobility                                 |
| ITAS   | Stay-Permit  |
| MONE   | Ministry of National Education                                 |
| NAM    | Non-Aligned Movement   |
| ODA    | Overseas Development Assistance                                |
| OECD   | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development         |
| OEI    | Overseas Expertise Introduction                                |
| OFW    | Overseas Filipino Worker                                       |
| OSC    | Overseas Student Charge  |
| PHBS   | Peking University HSBC Business School                         |
| PHEIA  | Private Higher Educational Institution Act                     |
| PIM    | Programme and Institution Mobility                             |
| R&D    | Research and Development                                       |
| RIHED  | Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development           |
| SAFEA  | China's State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs        |
| SEAMEO | The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization        |
| TESDA  | Technical Education and Skills Development Authority           |
| TESQA  | Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency                |

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| UGC    | University Grants Council  |
| UIS    | UNESCO Institute for Statistics                                  |
| UMAP   | University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific                      |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UPI    | Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia                                 |
| VET    | Vocational Education and Training                                |
| VKSB   | Social-Visit Visa  |
| VITAS  | Short-Visit Visa   |



# Introduction

Dr Jason Tan

*National Institute of Education, Singapore*

The topic of international student flows has assumed greater prominence in the last two decades. As a result of economic globalisation and heightening of governments' awareness of the perceived links between education and economic competitiveness, a large number of governments have pumped billions of dollars into increasing the number of higher education institutions and boosting student enrolments. This expansion of enrolments has meant that many countries, such as Republic of Korea, China and Singapore, have made rapid transitions from an extremely elite system of limited access to a university education, to a mass higher education system. The expansion has, however, failed to keep up with domestic demand as parents and students flock to higher education as a means to improve or maintain socio-economic mobility and enhance individual competitiveness in the job market.

The increasing demand, coupled with the financial power of the growing middle classes, has in turn fuelled the trend for students to choose to leave their home countries in search of an overseas university education. Until the mid-1990s, the overwhelming destinations of choice were the traditional English-speaking countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. This choice made sense in view of the predominance of English as the global language of business, science and technology. Beginning in the mid-1990s, countries such as Malaysia began capitalising on the international appetite for higher education by positioning themselves as education hubs. Not only would the domestic higher education institutions aggressively attempt to recruit foreign students, governments would also encourage foreign education institutions to provide degrees and diplomas through a variety of formats, for instance, fully-fledged branch campuses, or twinning arrangements with domestic for-profit schools or publicly-run universities. These foreign education providers would also cater to local students in order to relieve governments of the pressure of catering to all of the demand.

By the early 2010s, the phenomenon of international student flows had spread throughout East Asia, with students from China constituting the largest single overseas group of students in the United States higher education system. Several East Asian countries and territories, such as Hong Kong SAR, China<sup>1</sup>, Singapore, and Malaysia were actively competing to become the education destination of choice for foreign students. Numerous universities, especially those from Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States had set up branch campuses or signed collaborative agreements with Asian-based providers.

This paper summarises the content of seven papers that were presented at the Regional Seminar on the International Mobility of Students, in March 2011 at the Imperial Queen's Park Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand. The seven papers are:

- International Student Mobility: The Australian Case, by V. Lynn Meek;

<sup>1</sup> The case of Hong Kong SAR, China was presented at the ERI-net Regional Seminar on the International Mobility of Students, on 22–24 March 2011, however, due to copyright reasons UNESCO is unable to include the text in this publication. The text can be accessed at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/03075079.2011.630726#.UsvSm2RDtAs>

- International Student Mobility as Trade in Services: A Case Study of China, by Yue Changjun;
- Student Mobility: Policies, Implementation and Problems: A Case of Indonesia, by Hendarman;
- International Student Mobility Patterns and Trends: The Case of Malaysia, by Morshidi Sirat, Rosni Bakar and Koo Yew Lie;
- Philippine Participation in International Student Mobility, by Jean C. Tayag;
- Government Policies and the Internationalisation of Universities: International Student Mobility in Republic of Korea, by Kwon Ki Seok; and
- International Higher Education Student Mobility: A Case Study of Thailand, by Paitoon Sinlarat.

The summary will be divided into several main themes: the domestic and external factors affecting international student flows; countries as receivers or senders of students; the government role vis-à-vis university and individual decision-making in international student mobility; modes of provision in international education; and the consequences and implications of international student mobility.

## Domestic and External Factors Affecting International Student Flows

International student flows are affected by a variety of domestic factors. These include both push factors (i.e. factors encouraging outward student flows) and pull factors (i.e. factors encouraging inward student flows). Examples of push factors are the limited availability of places for domestic students in local institutions of higher learning, as in the case of Hong Kong SAR, China, where over 50 per cent of the students who passed the Hong Kong SAR, China Advanced Level examinations, thus qualifying them for university entrance, were unable to obtain admission to the local publicly funded universities. Domestic factors acting as pull factors could be those serving to attract foreign students to study in a particular country, or policies encouraging local students to choose studies in a local institution of higher learning. These could be governmental policies on the funding of higher education or student demographics.

The former factor, funding policies, is illustrated by the case of Australia, where successive budget cuts for universities by the Federal Government have made the recruitment of full-fee-paying foreign students that much more attractive as an alternative and growing source of revenue for universities. The latter factor, student demographics, is illustrated by the case of Republic of Korea, where a rapid decline in the birth rate has led to a situation where the population of eighteen-year-olds will be outstripped by total enrolment quotas in Korean universities. This situation has led to the encouragement of inbound foreign students to study in Korean universities as a solution to the problem of a shrinking freshman-age population. The external factors affecting international student mobility, as in the case of the domestic factors, comprise both push factors and pull factors. The push factors include the lure of studying in an English-language environment, given the overwhelming importance of the language in the global economy and global science and technology. Examples of pull factors include the impact of the 1997 global economic downturn on the devaluation of the Malaysian ringgit, which made studying overseas unaffordable for many Malaysian students.

## Countries as Receivers or Senders of Students

A few points emerged across the eight papers. First, there are obvious imbalances in the direction of student flows, with some territories such as Hong Kong SAR, China sending many more students overseas than they receive. Countries such as Australia, conversely, receive many more inward-bound students than they send overseas. Secondly, some countries such as Malaysia are both big receivers as well as big senders of students. Thirdly, there is a clear preference for education in predominantly English-speaking countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. This is exemplified by the cases of Malaysia and Hong Kong SAR, China. Fourthly, the countries/territories covered in the eight papers differ in terms of the relative importance of sources of inward student flows, as well as in the destinations of outward-bound students. For instance, the top overseas destinations for outward-bound Malaysian students were the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States, Egypt and Indonesia, while the top countries of origin for foreign students studying in Malaysian public universities were Islamic Republic of Iran, Indonesia, China, Yemen and Libya. In the case of China, the top overseas destinations are the United States, Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom and Korea, while the top countries of origin for foreign students studying in China are Korea, the United States, Japan, Viet Nam and Thailand.

This fourth point may be attributed to factors such as differing colonial legacies, the impact of language media of instruction, students' religious affiliations (as in the case of Iranian or Yemeni students opting for Malaysia or Malaysian students opting for Egypt or Indonesia).

As far as the countries/territories covered in the eight papers are concerned, countries in Latin America and Africa are relatively insignificant players either as receiving or as sending countries. Also interesting is the degree of regional mobility existing in East Asia, e.g. Malaysian students choosing Indonesia, Korean and Thai students choosing Japan or students from China studying in Hong Kong SAR, China. At the same time, there is still a relatively low level of intra-ASEAN student flows (except with regard to Malaysia and Indonesia).

## Government Role vis-à-vis Institutional and Individual Decision-Making

In all the eight papers, government roles are mentioned covering three main domains: control and regulation of domestic students leaving the country, financing and provision. In some cases, e.g. Australia, Hong Kong SAR, China and Indonesia, governments' decisions about the degree of liberalisation in granting foreign students student visas play a key role in determining inbound student flows. Likewise, government policies regarding the provision of scholarships or financial aid for either domestic or foreign students are a key factor in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and China. In a similar vein, government decisions about expanding the provision of higher education could serve as push or as pull factors that affect domestic students' decisions to study locally or foreign students' decisions to choose a particular study destination. For example, the Malaysian government's decision in the mid-1990s to ease regulations regarding the setting up of private higher education institutions in the country contributed significantly to the growing appeal of Malaysia as an education hub for foreign students.

At the institutional level, university managements' decisions about the desired domestic: foreign student ratios are crucial as well. These decisions are often influenced by changes in government policies. For instance, the Australian Federal Government's funding cutbacks for higher education has led to many Australian universities deciding to greatly expand their intake of foreign full-fee-paying students. An interesting point is the danger of university decisions being too demand-driven and catering to the rise and ebb of students' choices of courses at the possible expense of other educational or economic considerations.

At the individual decision-making level, personal finances play a significant part, as for instance in the case of the Malaysian ringgit's devaluation leading many students to reconsider study abroad as an option. Another instance is the Philippines, where only a small group of Filipinos have the financial capability to consider studying abroad. Next, the desire to enrol in certain courses that might not be available locally or that might be in scarce supply affects some students' decisions to study abroad. This is evident in the case of the Philippines. Republic of Korea, China and Hong Kong SAR, China are popular destinations for foreign students seeking to enrol in Korean or Chinese language courses. Yet another factor at play is the prospect of eventual emigration after studying and living abroad, e.g. in the case of Hong Kong students, Thai students and Filipino students. The Australian government has also had to respond to a growing tide of overseas students seeking to take advantage of liberal policies regarding permanent residence in Australia after the completion of higher education.

## Modes of Provision

There are a few predominant modes of provision: online provision, offshore provision, twinning arrangements and the setting up of full-fledged overseas campuses. In the case of Malaysia, the past twenty years have witnessed the establishment of branch campuses of British and Australian universities as well as the growth of offshore providers involved in collaborative arrangements with for-profit local education providers. China has witnessed growth in so-called split campus programmes in which the first part of the course takes place at a local Chinese university with subsequent study taking place at a foreign partner institution.

## Consequences and Implications of International Student Mobility

One major feature that has emerged is the rise of a market-oriented approach to the provision, regulation and financing of higher education. In this regard, the advent of the GATS framework on education services is instrumental in some cases of liberalising student flows. Educational provision is viewed by both governments and by universities as a potential money-making operation, sometimes at the expense of other considerations. There is talk of the "education market", of positioning one's country as an education hub and of the potential financial benefits that foreign students bring in terms of their housing and recreational expenditures, as for instance in the case of Australia. Part of this market-oriented approach involves growing inter-institution competition for a slice of the lucrative foreign student market. There is also the need of paying greater attention to the question of establishing a common system for measuring the equivalency of educational qualifications, a practice that has been slow in coming in the East Asian region. Alongside the mushrooming interest in international student flows is the growing discussion of the need to ensure "educational quality". Some institutions in Hong Kong SAR, China and Australia resort to highlighting their standing in various international league tables in order better to position themselves as attractive choices for foreign students. Other institutions, e.g. in Republic of Korea, resort to offering courses in English in order to take advantage of the global rise of the English language. The papers on Indonesia, Republic of Korea, China and Hong Kong SAR, China mention universities' attempts to recruit foreign faculty in a bid to boost their international credentials.

A second implication is the rise in bilateral agreements at the government or university level as a means of promoting international student flows, as for instance in the case of the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Indonesia and China.

Two papers touch on the issue of how the inflow of foreign students might impact on domestic students. The Hong Kong and Australian papers discuss the possible benefits, such as the broadening of individual horizons and the promotion of cross-cultural exchange, while highlighting the potential

drawbacks such as ghettoization of foreign students and foreign students being viewed by local students as a threat.

The papers on the Philippines and Indonesia discuss possible inhibitory factors that slow down government attempts to increase inbound student flows. These include government regulations on accreditation of qualifications and student visa processing procedures.

Two issues that did not receive much attention in the eight papers were that of equity at the national, institutional or individual levels, and the impact of international student mobility on university faculty.

## Policy Implications

The papers presented at the Bangkok seminar raised a number of key policy implications. These implications can be classified into two categories. The first concerns government policies. The papers highlighted the need for governments to seriously evaluate their policies with regard to access to higher education. For instance, what ought to be the public-private balance between provision, control and funding? Are there any limits to the provision of higher education to meet growing social demand for higher education? This last question in turn raises questions about the role of education as a social good or as a private good – to what extent ought governments to be providing and funding higher education at great public expense when the potential financial returns to students are so great? At the same time, East Asian countries have to deal with the vexed question of determining how many foreign students to admit in order not to arouse local resentment. This question has already arisen in more established hubs such as the United States and Australia, which have recognised the financial benefits of enrolling large numbers of international students but which have already tried to grapple with visa quotas and rules on staying on after graduation.

The last point about foreign students enrolling and staying on after graduation raises questions about the role of high schools in producing enough students to enrol in courses that currently have an over-representation of foreign students; and also about the labour market and longer-term issues of integrating these foreigners who stay on after graduation.

Other government policies that are implicated include the simplification of immigration procedures in order to make their countries more attractive as education destinations. On the flip side of the coin, governments need to appraise honestly the extent to which they are willing to allow large numbers of their own students to leave in search of study options overseas, with the potential risk of a brain drain. At the same time, governments must decide how much of the load of provision should be shouldered by public institutions vis-à-vis private providers. If large numbers of private providers and foreign campuses are allowed to offer courses, governments need urgently to address questions of quality assurance and protection of students' rights to a rigorous education, while at the same time not overwhelming providers with over-restrictive regulations.

Besides the implications for governments, there are also those for university administrators as they ponder how to deal with the influx of foreign students. These issues include the task of grappling with government policies regarding foreign student admissions and local students leaving for overseas studies, while strategising how to position their institutions as attractive institutions in an increasingly competitive and marketized environment. There are also issues of integrating foreign students and dealing with local/foreign tensions on campus. Another issue concerns the provision of quality assurance mechanisms and the attraction of quality academic staff who can teach in English. Lastly, universities have to make tough decisions on the balance between providing courses that are popular with foreign students and therefore potentially attractive money-spinners on the one hand, while on the other, maintaining the semblance of a balanced menu of courses that meet economic needs and provide the balanced education that a higher education promises students.

# International Student Mobility: the Australian Case

V. Lynn Meek

*Professorial Fellow, LH Martin Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Management  
University of Melbourne*

Tertiary education institutions, universities in particular, have always encouraged international co-operation and free flow between countries of staff, students and ideas. They have appreciated that science and scholarship do not recognise national boundaries and that progress in research will be facilitated by effective international sharing of ideas and discoveries.

The need to promote such co-operation is even greater today than in the past. National economies generally are becoming increasingly interdependent, while each year new technological advances in communication and transport mean that nations generally are in closer contact with one another. Added to this is the realisation that many areas of scientific, technological and medical research are becoming increasingly expensive, and that facilitating mobility of professional personnel is, on balance, likely to advantage rather than disadvantage most countries socially, culturally and economically. “Indeed”, as Wildavsky states (2010, p. 8) “academic free trade may be more important than any other kind”.

Curiosity still motivates a number of students to seek study abroad, but in the latter half of the twentieth century, international education has increasingly become tied to the development of global markets and worldwide economic restructuring. The internationalisation of tertiary education is expanding and as the production of wealth increasingly becomes based on knowledge rather than manual labour or mechanisation, it can be expected that the exploitation of international “knowledge-markets” will assume even greater importance. The number of students enrolled outside their country of citizenship has increased from 0.8 million in 1975 to 4.1 million in 2010 worldwide. This growth has greatly accelerated over the past decade or so with an average annual increase of 7.1 per cent, “mirroring the globalisation of economies and societies”. (OECD, 2010, p. 313; OECD, 2012) There is little or no evidence to suggest that growth in international student mobility is likely to abate in the near future.

Until recently, student mobility flows were overwhelmingly from south to north – from developing to developed nations. Even by 2008, nearly 80 per cent of the students enrolled outside their country of citizenship were studying in OECD countries, with only five OECD countries (Australia, France, Germany the United Kingdom and United States) enrolling more than 50 per cent of all foreign students. However, reflecting an “increasing preference to study in emerging countries” (OECD, 2010, p. 312) since 2005, the rate of growth has been higher in non-OECD jurisdictions.

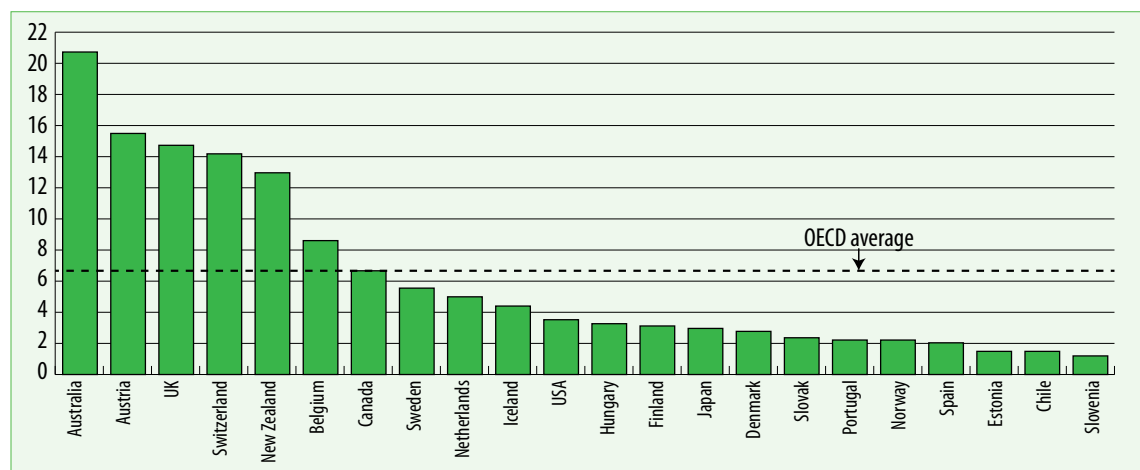
Globally, and within Australia, the largest number of international students in absolute terms is nationals from China and India. In 2009, students from China (25 per cent) and India (19 per cent) made up 44 per cent of all international students onshore in Australia. From 2009 for reasons to be discussed below, the number of international students from India declined drastically (particularly in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector), though over recent months they appear to be recovering. But whichever way you look at it, more than three-quarters of international students in Australia are of Asian origin.

In promoting student mobility, governments finance in one form or another various education co-operative efforts. Many governments expend a proportion of their international aid in the form of overseas fellowships and scholarships. (By so doing, of course, they recoup some of the international aid via overseas student financial expenditure at the host institutions.) Many cultural treaties between nations contain explicit provision for exchange of academic staff and students, and several government ministries of education have created formal programmes to further the international activities of their respective education systems.

Governments promote international co-operative schemes not merely for the cultural and academic enhancement of students and staff who participate in them. Governments are becoming increasingly concerned that they occupy for economic and political purposes an advantageous position in the international knowledge-market. These are clearly motivating factors behind Australia's prominent role in international education.

Australia is recognised as a world leader with respect to promoting the mobility of international tertiary education students. Although a small country in terms of population, Australia ranks third in terms of its worldwide share (6.9 per cent) of international students. While the United States has the largest share of international students at around 18 per cent, its overall market share until quite recently has significantly declined following the events of 9/11. In terms of the percentage of tertiary education students who are international, Australia is the world leader and far above the OECD average (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Percentage of international students in tertiary enrolments, 2008**



Source: OECD, 2010, p. 308.

Australian international education is based primarily on attracting foreign students to Australian tertiary education institutions and, to a lesser extent, through various mechanisms providing nationals of other countries the opportunity to gain an Australian qualification while studying in their home country (offshore or transnational education). Australia attracts students from around the world through various student-exchange arrangements and encourages its own tertiary students to gain international experience through studying abroad, usually for one or two semesters. However, the great bulk of Australia's engagement with international education involves fee-paying students enrolled for a formal educational qualification.

The reasons for Australia's success with international education are complex, involving, on the one hand, increasing market-like co-ordination of Australian tertiary education, funding diversification and the continuing privatisation of the tertiary education sector, and on the other hand, the desirability of Australia as a country to immigrate. Australian universities have dominated most of the history of international education in Australia. But over the past five years or so, the VET sector has become a significant player, both in terms of recruitment of international students and the present "crisis" faced by the Australian international education industry (see below).



## Internationalisation: the Policy Context of from Aid to Trade

Although there are a number of minor qualifications, the period between the end of the Second World War and the late 1980s was one dominated by the principal of aid to developing countries with respect to the recruitment of foreign students to Australia. This changed with the publication of the 1987 Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) Green Paper on higher education (*Higher Education: a Policy Discussion Paper*) which foreshadowed a more market oriented approach to foreign students by stating that “full-fee paying overseas students provide another important source of potential revenue growth” (p. 83) - quite an understatement as it turned out.

In 1988, the government recognised that “the subsidised overseas student programme was no longer satisfactorily meeting its aid, education or economic objectives” (DEET, 1991, p. 380). From the beginning of 1990, all foreign students would enter Australian universities on a full cost basis, and government deregulated the overseas student market by allowing individual institutions to directly recruit overseas students and to set and retain fees with no corresponding reduction in government operating grants. The change in policy was justified in the following terms:

In the light of significant external economic changes and changes in the policy and administrative environment, Australia could no longer see itself so much as a donor of education and training services to developing countries, a benefactor, but more as a partner where mutual benefits for individuals and countries is the desired outcome (DEET, 1991, p. 380).

The deregulation of the foreign student market created an environment of fierce competition amongst institutions for the overseas student dollar. Nearly all institutions regularly send representatives on student recruitment drives throughout South-East Asia, and some institutions have established overseas campuses in Asia and elsewhere.

Hundreds of thousands of international students are studying in Australia or for Australian qualifications offshore and contributing billions of dollars to the national economy, making the education of overseas students one of the country’s largest export earners (see below). Here is an example of how enhanced competition in a deregulated higher education environment appears to produce the desired outcome.

No one at the time of the late 1980s/early 1990s higher education reforms predicted how successful Australian universities would be in recruiting full fee-paying international students, but a number of stars seemed to be in perfect alignment. In accord with the old adage that “necessity is the mother of invention”, Australian universities needed to find extra sources of revenue to not only fund expansion, but initially replace subsidised overseas students with fee-paying ones. Externally, many of Australia’s Asian neighbours were developing economically, but did not have the capacity to meet the tertiary education needs and demands of all their citizens. Also, Australia was seen as providing quality higher education at a competitive price, as well as providing a safe and secure destination for students. Finally, the Australian government was prepared to play an important and major facilitating role. And as they say, the rest is history (although as discussed later, not quite).

## The Australian International Education Industry Today

Nearly two and a half million international students have studied in Australian universities and other educational institutions since records were first kept (Murray, 2011). The number of international student onshore in Australia across all education sectors grew from 21,118 in 1988 to 629,864 in 2009, the year in which the number of international student enrolments peaked. About another 100,000 international students study for Australian degrees and diplomas offshore.

Higher education has been the largest single actor in the Australian international student market. But from 2005 there was explosive growth of enrolments in the VET sector, which as described later, proved to be unsustainable and led inevitably to the rationalisation and restructuring.

With respect to higher education, about 56 per cent of the international students are enrolled at the undergraduate level and 44 per cent at the postgraduate level (mostly in coursework masters courses). International students are not evenly distributed across all courses or institutions. Rather, around 55 per cent of both undergraduates and postgraduate international students are enrolled in management and commerce courses, followed to a much lesser extent by information technology, engineering and related technologies, health and society and culture.

The distribution of international higher education students by field of study in Australia is much more skewed towards the social sciences compared to that of some of its key competitors, such as the United States, Germany, United Kingdom and Canada. This will be something that will need to be taken into account as the international competition for highly skilled personnel heats up over the coming years.

As might be expected, some universities have been much more successful than others in attracting international students. About 44 per cent of international higher education students are enrolled in only eight universities, while another eleven universities each enrol 3,000 or less international students. Of course, the greater an institution is dependent on international students as a major source of income, the more vulnerable they are to any sudden shifts in demand.

## Offshore or Transnational Education

Offshore educational provision – sometimes referred to as transnational education or mode3: commercial presence in GATS parlance – increased dramatically during the late 1990s and early 2000s, from about 300 programmes in 1996 to a peak of 1,569 programmes in 2003. In the latter half of the 2000s, the number offshore programmes were substantially reduced, either through consolidation or closure due in part to quality assurance concerns– although the actual number of students per programme increased and has more or less stabilised since the mid-2000s (Murray, 2011). In 2008 in the higher education sector, 93,596 international students were studying for Australian qualifications offshore (Murray, 2011; and see Meek, 2005).

There are a number of different types of offshore delivery modes as summarized below:

- **Twinning:** Students study for a period of time offshore and then at the onshore campus of an Australian university.
- **Mixed mode:** A local offshore institution delivers an Australian university programme with course delivery through intensive residential schools and distance education.
- **Offshore campuses:** An Australian university establishes a campus of the institution offshore.
- **Online programmes** are delivered through the internet by Australian onshore staff.

While Australian education programmes are delivered in more than 50 countries, in 2008, the top five nations in order of magnitude involved in Australian offshore education were: Singapore, Malaysia, China, Hong Kong SAR, China and Viet Nam, a different pattern in terms of the top five nations sending students to study in Australia (see above). Offshore students are also more likely to be younger and studying part-time, compared to international students studying in Australia. Most offshore programmes are taught in English, although there are programmes where the local language is used for instruction, either through interpreters or by other means.

It is important to note that the regulatory framework covering offshore programmes is different from that pertaining to onshore programmes (described below).

“In contrast to onshore programmes, Commonwealth and State governments do not require registration for Australian higher education programmes that are offered entirely offshore and, where international students will not enter Australia to study as any part of the programme. Institutions must endeavour to ensure, however, that income derived from offshore programmes covers the cost of provision, a requirement which applies to offshore courses which lead to an Australian higher education qualification and to arrangements where overseas institutions are licensed by an Australian institution to offer courses” (NTEU, 2004, p. 16).

The approach to transnational education by Australian universities has matured greatly over the last decade. It has moved from a “cottage industry” support by a few faculty enthusiasts to (where it’s offered) core university business, supported by sophisticated business plans and quality assurance mechanisms. The volume of transnational education activity appears to have stabilised, but how Australian offshore delivery will develop in the future is difficult to predict.

## Australian Higher Education Student Mobility

There are various non-revenue generating student exchange programmes between Australian universities and their sister institutions overseas. Such programmes usually involve a memorandum of understanding between an Australian and overseas university which allows students from the respective country to study for course-credits for one or more semesters tuition free. Both the federal government and individual universities have promoted the benefits of sending Australian students to overseas universities for part of their higher education programme through scholarships and other schemes. In 2009, the federal government provided AUD 34.3 million annually to support the mobility of Australian students (AEI, 2010).

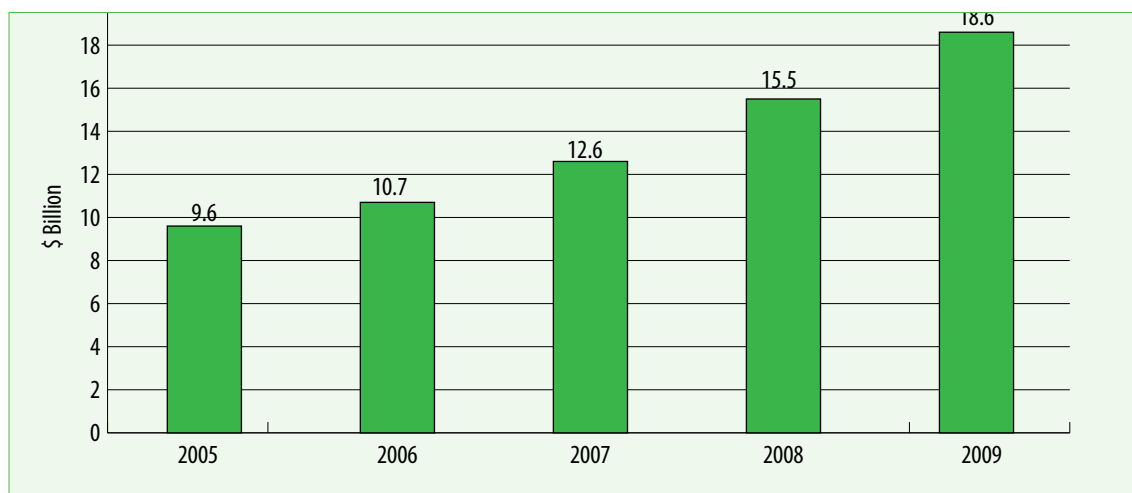
In terms of numbers, Australian student uptake of student mobility initiatives has been modest. In 2007, about 10,000 Australian students engaged in study abroad programmes, compared to around 50,000 United States students studying abroad and 25,000 United Kingdom students doing the same. However, in terms of percentage of all students (1 per cent), Australia compares favourably with the United Kingdom (1.2 per cent) and is substantially higher than the United States (0.3 per cent) (AEI, 2010). The majority of outbound Australian students study in OECD country destinations: United States, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and Japan.

## The International Education Industry

International students contribute financially not only through the payment of tuition fees, but also in a variety of other ways: travel, accommodation, leisure activities, food, clothing and so on. International education has evolved into an industry and is treated as such by government. Some academics recoil at describing international education as an “industry”, but whatever words are used to describe it cannot mask its economic importance.

In 2009, the export value of international education was AUD 18.6 billion from spending on fees and goods and services, AUD 18.0 billion spent by international onshore students and a further AUD 589 million earned through offshore activities (AEI, 2010) (*Figure 2*).

Figure 2: Export Income from Education Services AUD\$ Billion, 2005 – 2009



Source: AEI, 2010.

International education is now Australia's third largest export industry ahead of tourism and exceeded only by coal and iron ore in importance. It is worthwhile to note that higher education due to numbers and higher tuition fees, significantly accounts for the largest proportion of the income from international students.

## Regulation of the International Education Industry

All institutions receiving Australian Government financial support must meet quality and accountability requirements set out in the *Higher Education Support Act* (HESA, 2003). They are required by legislation to have in place appropriate quality assurance processes which are periodically audited by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA), an independent, national quality assurance body that audits the key activities of teaching, learning, research and management in Australian universities. Internationalisation has been a compulsory theme in AUQA's 2005 to 2012 round of quality audits.

The international education industry is highly regulated and co-ordinated from the government level down to the institutional level. Main federal government departments are:

- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR) have responsibility for the operation of the higher education sector.
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship is responsible for overseas student visas.
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has shared responsibility with AEI for marketing and scholarships.
- Australian Education International (AEI) within DEEWR plays the leading role in policy development, market intelligence, regulation and government-to-government engagement.

Universities and other educational institutions aggressively market overseas with the assistance of AEI, IDP Education, and overseas student recruitment agents of various types. Nearly all universities would have an international student office, headed by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor International (or equivalent).

The Education Services for Overseas Students Act – The ESOS Act, sets out the legal framework governing delivery of education to overseas students studying in Australia on a student visa. There is also CRICOS - the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students. Only CRICOS courses can be offered to international students studying in Australia on a student visa.

There is a National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students. The national code of practice provides legally enforceable standards under the ESOS act that govern the protection of overseas students and delivery of courses to those students by providers registered on CRICOS. In addition, VET international provision is regulated by a variety of different state legislation and authorities.

There are two new regulatory bodies commencing in mid-2011: Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TESQA) and the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator. TESQA will replace AUQA and have responsibility for the higher education sector. Between them, TESQA and the national VET regulator will replace a myriad of State and Territory tertiary education accreditation and regulatory authorities. The new regulatory structure will strengthen in particular the quality of the international provision in the VET sector – the sector generally regarded as having most of the problems in this respect. It is intended that TEQSA and the VET regulator will be amalgamated in 2013, but it remains to be seen if that actually occurs.

International education creates direct employment for literally thousands of individuals. Those involved in international education have their own professional associations, the main one being the International Education Association for Australia (IEAA).

## The Perfect Storm

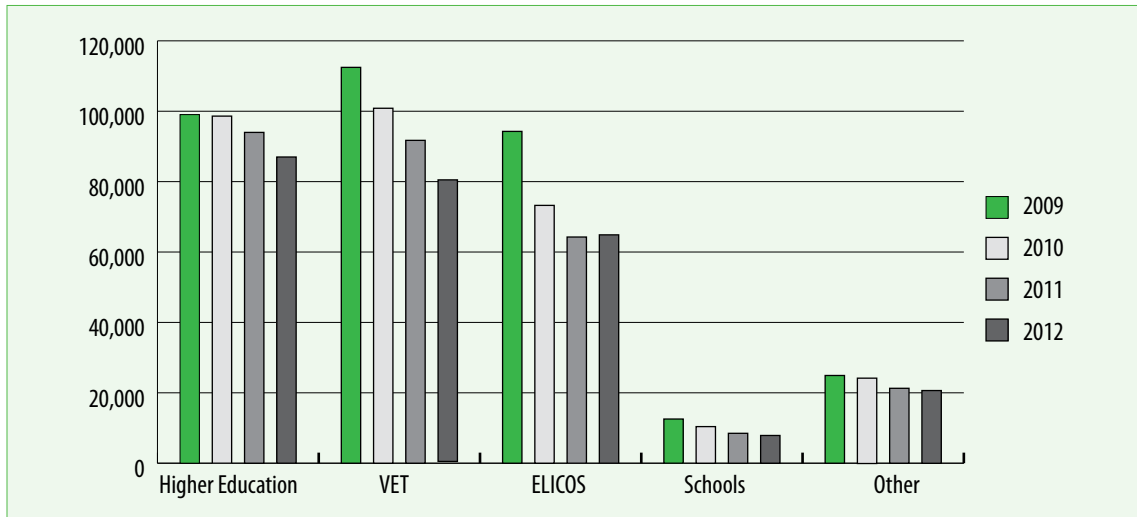
The growth of international education in Australia has not only been spectacular in terms of numbers, but highly resilient to external pressures. Over the years, Australian international education has defied predictions of its collapse despite the bird flu and Asian economic crises of the 1990s and the 9/11, SARS, oil and GFC crises of the 2000s.

The Australian experience reflects global trends. Despite numerous global crises, over a 30 year period there has been no single dip in aggregate numbers of global international students (up to now). But while global student mobility appears to be fairly resilient, host countries can intentionally or unintentionally compromise their popularity as a student destination. Apparently commencing in 2009, Australia did precisely that.

The downturn in Australia's popularity as an international student destination hit suddenly and hard in 2009, beginning a substantial reduction in international student numbers. In September 2010 the Department of Immigration advised the Minister for Immigration that student arrivals over the 2013 to 2014 period would be down by 50 per cent on 2010 figures. This forecast proved overly pessimistic but there have been substantial declines nonetheless.

Figure 3 displays international student commencements (i.e. international students in Australia on a student visa) by year 2009 to 2012 and sector. As can be seen, while the decline in higher education did not begin until 2011, there has been a steady and quite substantial decline in VET and English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) international commencing students. It is important to note that there is a delayed impact on higher education enrolments by ELICOS declining numbers because many international students complete ELICOS programmes as a prerequisite to higher education entry.

**Figure 3: International Student Commencements by Sector 2009–2012**



Source: AEI, 2012.

The total number of international students studying in Australia has steadily declined since 2009, from a total of 631,935 in 2009 to 425,555 in 2012, an overall decline of about 27 per cent. Again, the pace of decline has been slower for higher education and has started to stabilise overall (Table 1). But it will be some time before the number of international students studying at Australian tertiary education institutions reaches 2009 levels. One prognosis is that international student numbers will not be restored to 2009 levels until 2020.

**Table 1: International Student Enrolments, 2011 and 2012**

| Enrolments, Year-to-date  |                |                |                       |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Sector                    | YTD June 2011  | YTD June 2012  | Growth on YTD June 11 |
| Higher Education          | 205,791        | 195,970        | -4.8%                 |
| VET                       | 124,149        | 106,308        | -14.4%                |
| ELICOS                    | 59,778         | 55,884         | -6.5%                 |
| Schools                   | 17,339         | 15,270         | -11.9%                |
| Other                     | 18,498         | 15,924         | -13.9%                |
| <b>Total in Australia</b> | <b>425,555</b> | <b>389,356</b> | <b>-8.5%</b>          |

Source: AEI, 2012.

Some universities have reduced staff numbers to cope with the decline in international student enrolments. Higher education as a whole depends on international student fees for about 18 per cent of its revenue. Seven universities depend on international students for more than 20 per cent of their income, with a few deriving more than 30 per cent of their revenue from international students. The pain resulting from the international student downturn will not be equally shared, with some universities experiencing little or no impact, even though they have large numbers of international students (mostly the more prestigious institutions for which the demand for student places is very high).

No one factor brought about this “crisis”. Rather a number of events coincided to create what has been called a “perfect storm” in Australian international higher education (Murray, 2011). But high on the list of importance was the over rapid and unsustainable growth of international students particularly in the private VET sector brought about by changes in immigration policy. In 2005, the Howard liberal coalition government amended immigration laws to allow international students in non-university trade courses, including hospitality, hairdressing and childcare, to gain permanent

residency. This led to an explosion in both overseas residents seeking enrolment in private VET trade courses and in the number of private VET providers, some of which it soon became apparent had poor facilities, deficiencies in course quality, and allowed overcrowding. Apparently, lapses in application of state regulation allowed “rogue providers” to establish themselves. By 2009, problems with some providers were gaining much publicity, with some declaring bankruptcy. This led to considerable student dissatisfaction and some public demonstrations. The National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU, 2009, p. 16) stated that:

Although originally designed to assist skilled migration to Australia, there is now considerable evidence that the pathway to permanent residency has opened a doorway to what has been described as a “black market” trade in fraudulent letters of completion and migration services.

The next problem resulted from the government (now a Labour government) overreaction (or at least perceived to be) to the training and permanent residency issue. Changes to the permanent residency visa requirements reduced the number of eligible occupations in high demand by more than 50 per cent, and visa places were capped for some occupations. Overall, the student visa regime was tightened, with more rigorous assessment of availability of financial support, longer visa processing times and other major changes attempting to weed out bogus students. In combination with other factors, this led to a perception in the region that Australia no longer welcomed international students. Once the damage being done to the international student market became quite apparent, government softened some of its measures and announced in December 2010 a strategic review of the student visa programme. Also in 2010, government required all providers offering courses to international students to be re-registered. By the beginning of 2011, more than 50 education and training providers had shut for financial reasons and/or been stripped of their registration (Mather, 2011, p. 27). A number of other providers voluntarily cancelled their registration rather than subjecting themselves to audit. While the VET private sector has been “cleaned up”, the process sent negative messages to potential foreign students.

The third factor is the strengthening of the Australian dollar, coupled with increased competition for international students from, on the one hand, Canada, United Kingdom and United States, and on the other, maturing higher education systems in the region which are not only beginning to meet the higher education needs of their citizens but are themselves attracting international students. The Australian dollar has now achieved parity with the US dollar, making Australian education far more expensive than in past years where the average exchange rate was 70¢ USD to one Australian Dollar. Due to financial crises in both the United States and the United Kingdom, universities in these countries are aggressively marketing for international students to help support falling budgets. In the absence of its historical price advantage, it is difficult for Australia to compete.

Finally, other important factors damaging Australia’s image in the region were highly publicised (though relatively small occurrences) attacks on international students (Indian students in particular) and adverse publicity arising from political debates over immigration and population issues. During the 2010 federal elections, both major political parties were trying to outdo the other in sounding tough on migration issues and asylum seekers and refugees, a political debate that has continued unabated.

## Impact of the Growth of International Education

The downward spiral in international student enrolments appearing in 2010 will take some years to play out. But in the long run, probably the present Australian international student recruitment crisis will not prove to be all that significant. In fact, it has had a positive impact in terms of vastly improving educational provision in the private VET sector and in focusing attention on quality and student welfare issues in all sectors. Those involved with international education have taken the issues of alleged racism and the civil rights of international students quite seriously (Graycar, 2010; Jakubowicz and Monani, 2010; Davis and Mackintosh, 2011).



There have been regular surveys in Australia of international student satisfaction and graduate outcomes. While not diminishing the importance of housing, work and safety issues faced by international students (Marginson, 2010), it is interesting to note that international students' opinion of both the quality of their education and living conditions has actually improved over the years.

For example, the AEI's *International Student Survey 2010*, conducted between late 2009 and mid-2010, confirmed that a high percentage of international students in Australia are satisfied with their living experience (86 per cent), study experiences (84 per cent) and student support services (84 per cent). The results mirrored the international benchmark as measured through the International Student Barometer (ISB) and were "an improvement on the levels reported in the last international student survey conducted in Australia in 2006" (AEI, 2010, p. 1). Interestingly, according to the report, safety recorded high satisfaction levels in respect of the higher education cohort (86 per cent) and compared favourably with the ISB score of 89 per cent, and were a marked improvement on scores recorded for safety and security in the 2006 survey. Teaching elements within the *Study in Australia* category scored very highly, while ratings were lower for aspects relating to work such as *work experience* and *careers advice*. ISB respondents and Australian domestic students recorded similar satisfaction levels for these elements. As was the case in the 2006 ISB, the factors identified by survey respondents as being the most important in terms of influencing their decision on where to study were *quality of education*, followed by the *reputation of the qualification from the institution* and *reputation of the institution itself* (AEI, 2010).

There is the question of whether Australia's international student market should grow any larger than what it is today. Of course, cash-strapped universities and other higher education institutions will always wish to supplement their incomes.

But numbers and dollars are not sufficiently descriptive of the impact of internationalisation on Australian tertiary education institutions. Over the last couple of decades, internationalisation has come to mean in Australia much more than merely recruitment of fee-paying overseas students, as important as this aspect may be. A brief summary of the positive and negative aspects of the Australian experience with internationalisation of tertiary education are outlined below. Overall, the positives far outweigh the negatives.

## Positive aspects of internationalization:

- Obvious financial advantage for institutions and the economy generally;
- Well-developed sophisticated international support, with the study of the international student experience becoming an academic sub-discipline;
- Internationalization of the curricula;
- Cosmopolitan campus culture – although still a long way to go;
- Strengthening of political, economic, educational and cultural networks in the region;
- Encouragement and support for Australian domestic students to gain international experience;
- Promotion of academic staff mobility through building international teaching and research networks.

## Negative aspects of internationalization:

- Highly evolved, entrepreneurial culture with a focus on marketing and recruitment in conflict with traditional academic values;
- Profit motive eclipsing academic ethics – soft marking;
- Increased academic workload due to student language difficulties;
- Over emphasises of particular discipline areas – business and commerce;
- Over reliance on a single and potentially volatile source of income.

## Where to from here?

The evolution of Australia's engagement with international education can be understood in terms of four phases. The first period covers from just after the Second World War to the end of the 1980s, where the focus was on aid and international relations. By the end of this period, international education had firmly shifted from aid to trade.

The second phase covering the period roughly from 1990 to the early 2000s is characterised by the rapid expansion in the recruitment of international fee-paying students and the establishment of Australia as a world leader in the international student market. This has been followed by a third and still evolving phase where the focus has been on consolidation, improvement in the quality of domestic and international student experiences and the diversification and deepening of internationalization activities to include greater student and staff mobility, more effective research engagement and better use of alumni.

The fourth phase which concerns the future can only be speculative. But all signs point towards the continued evolution of the global knowledge economy and the enhanced importance of education in support of the knowledge economy. The research student is likely to become more prominent in international student mobility as research itself becomes even more internationalised. It is fairly certain that international student mobility will increase at all levels. However, in the future, competition within the international student market is likely to be more about brains than tuition fees.

## Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Dennis Murray, Executive Director of International Education Association of Australia (IEAA) for assistance with the background research on which this paper is based.

## References

- AEI. 2010. *International Student Survey Overview Report*. Canberra, AEI.
- AEI. 2012. *Monthly Summary of International Student Enrolment Data*. Canberra, AEI.
- Davis, D. and Mackintosh, B. 2011. *Making a Difference: Australian International Education*. Melbourne, Australia, IEAA.
- DEET. 1987. *Higher Education: a Policy Discussion Paper*. Canberra, AGPS.
- DEET. 1991. Programmes and Policies for Foreign Students in Australia. *Higher Education*, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp. 379–88.
- Graycar, A. 2010. *Racism and the Tertiary Student Experience in Australia*. Canberra: The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.
- Jakubowicz, A. and Monani, D. 2010. *International Student Futures in Australia: A Human Rights Perspective on Moving Forward to Real Action*. Canberra, Australian Human Rights Commission, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia.
- Marginson, S. 2010. *International Student Security: Globalization, State, University*. World Universities Forum, Davos, 9-11 January.
- Mather, J. 2011. *Foreign College Blitz Intensifies*. *The Australian Financial Review*, Vol. 14, p. 27.
- Meek, V.L. 2005. Country Paper on Australia: Cross-Border Higher Education in Australia. *Implications of WTO/GATS on Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific, part II*. Paris, UNESCO, pp. 45-85. (Forum Occasional Paper Series 9)
- Murray, D. 2011. The maturation of Australian TNE. Stella, A. and Bhushan, S. (ed.) *Quality Assurance of Transnational Higher Education*. Melbourne, Australia, Australian Universities Quality Agency, pp. 77-96.
- NTEU. 2004. *Excess Baggage, Australian Staff Involvement in the Delivery of Offshore Courses*. Melbourne, Australia, National Tertiary Education Union.
- NTEU. 2009. *Submission to the Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee Inquiry into Welfare of International Students*. Melbourne, Australia,
- OECD. 2010. *Education at a Glance*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD. 2012. *Education at a Glance*. Paris: OECD.
- Wildavsky, B. 2010. *The Great Brain Race: How Global Universities are Reshaping the World*. Princeton N.J., Princeton University Press.

# International Student Mobility: China

Changjun Yue  
*Peking University*

## Introduction

Since the implementation of the reform and opening up policy in 1978, China has enjoyed a long-term economic boom. In 2010, China surpassed Japan to become the second largest economy in the world, ranked only behind the United States. Meanwhile, China became the world's largest exporter and remains the world's second largest importer. Undoubtedly, this success in economic development benefits from the reform and opening up policy, which is regarded as bringing about foreign investment, high technology, and advanced management.

Moreover, the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping was aware of the importance of international student mobility and made the decision in 1978 to expand the number of students and scholars sent abroad. The policy serves as a window for China's reforms and opening up as well as for the cultural exchange between China and other countries. China's government promulgated the guideline for students and scholars studying abroad, which is "to support students and scholars studying abroad, to encourage them to return to China after their completion of studies and guarantee them the freedom of coming and going". On the other hand, the central government of China developed many policies to attract foreign students to study in China.

## China's Higher Education as a Case Study

China plays a key role in the trade in higher education services. It has been a leading consumer of education abroad, becoming the biggest consumer in the world. In 2008, there were 2,965,840 overseas students in the whole world, of which 441,186 were from China (*Table 1*), accounting for 14.9 per cent of the total. India ranked second with 170,256 outbound students, accounting for 5.7 per cent.

**Table 1: Top 12 Countries of Origin and Host Countries, 2008**

| Ranking | Country of Origin | Number  | Share (%) | Ranking | Host Country | Number  | Share (%) |
|---------|-------------------|---------|-----------|---------|--------------|---------|-----------|
| 1       | China             | 441,186 | 14.9      | 1       | USA          | 624,474 | 21.1      |
| 2       | India             | 170,256 | 5.7       | 2       | UK           | 341,791 | 11.5      |
| 3       | Rep. of Korea     | 112,588 | 3.8       | 3       | France       | 243,436 | 8.2       |
| 4       | Germany           | 83,524  | 2.8       | 4       | Australia    | 230,635 | 7.8       |
| 5       | USA               | 50,728  | 1.7       | 5       | Germany      | 189,347 | 6.4       |
| 6       | Japan             | 50,380  | 1.7       | 6       | Japan        | 126,568 | 4.3       |
| 7       | Malaysia          | 47,395  | 1.6       | 7       | Canada       | 68,520  | 2.3       |
| 8       | France            | 45,191  | 1.5       | 8       | South Africa | 63,964  | 2.2       |
| 9       | Canada            | 44,883  | 1.5       | 9       | Russia       | 60,288  | 2.0       |
| 10      | Russia            | 43,982  | 1.5       | 10      | Italy        | 57,271  | 1.9       |
| 11      | Morocco           | 41,254  | 1.4       | 11      | Austria      | 53,396  | 1.8       |
| 12      | Turkey            | 41,120  | 1.4       | 12      | China        | 51,038  | 1.7       |

Source: The UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Global Education Digest*, 2010.

Although the number of students from China studying abroad was the biggest, it is small compared with the huge scale of China's higher education. The outbound mobility ratio was a mere 1.7 per cent in 2008, and the gross outbound mobility ratio was only 0.4 per cent (Table 2).

**Table 2: Outbound Student Ratios in China, 2002-2009**

|                                     | 2005    | 2006    | 2007    | 2008    |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Students from China studying abroad | 343,126 | 417,351 | 421,148 | 441,186 |
| Outbound mobility ratio (%)         | 1.8     | 2.0     | 1.9     | 1.7     |
| Gross outbound mobility ratio (%)   | 0.3     | 0.4     | 0.4     | 0.4     |
| Inbound mobility ratio (%)          | -       | 0.2     | 0.2     | 0.2     |

Source: The UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Global Education Digest*, 2007-2010.

Since 1999 the scale of higher education in China has enjoyed a quick expansion. In 2002, the gross entrance rate to higher education reached 15 per cent, indicating that China had entered the era of mass higher education (Table 3). In 2009, the ratio rose to 24.2 per cent; the number of school students in general universities reaching more than 20 million. China has replaced the United States as the country that with the largest higher education sector.

**Table 3: Expenditure Trends in Secondary and Tertiary Education in China, 2001-2009**

|  | 2001  | 2002  | 2003  | 2004  | 2005  | 2006  | 2007  | 2008  | 2009  |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Number of Student Enrolment. Tertiary. (million)             | 7.19  | 9.03  | 11.09 | 13.34 | 15.62 | 17.39 | 18.85 | 20.21 | 21.45 |
| Gross entrance rate. Tertiary. (%)                           | 13.30 | 15.0  | 17.00 | 19.00 | 21.00 | 22.00 | 23.00 | 23.30 | 24.20 |
| Public expenditure on education as % of GDP                  | 2.79  | 2.90  | 2.84  | 2.79  | 2.82  | 3.00  | 3.22  | 3.48  | -     |
| Percentage of public expenditure distribution. Secondary (%) | 38.40 | 40.10 | 40.40 | 40.30 | 41.10 | 41.40 | 41.40 | 42.10 | -     |
| Percentage of public expenditure distribution. Tertiary (%)  | 24.30 | 24.20 | 24.30 | 24.30 | 23.80 | 23.20 | 22.40 | 22.30 | -     |

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, *China Statistical Yearbook*, 2003-2010.

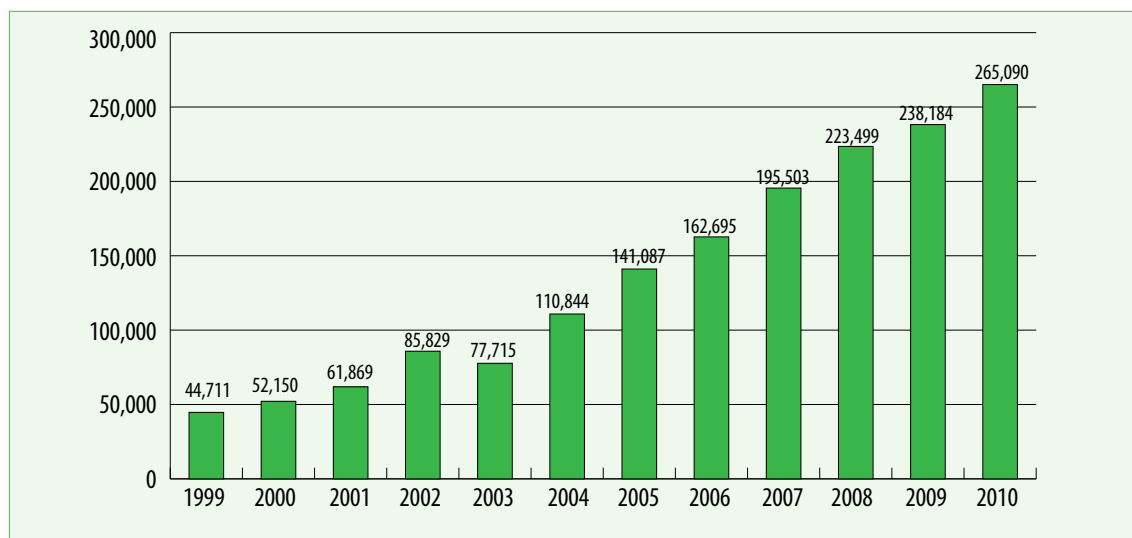
At the same time, China is trying to become a degree supplier for foreign consumers. Some key universities such as Peking University and Tsinghua University believe they are world-class. The ratio of international students and faculty members are key indicators in some world university rankings. In recent years, hundreds of Chinese universities attempt to absorb foreign students, with strong support from the Ministry of Education of China. The government published the *National Outline for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020)* in 2010, calling for an expansion of international co-operation and exchange among institutions of higher education. By 2020, according to the plan, the number of inbound students in China will reach 500,000.

## The Mobility Service Modes

### Mode 1: Cross-border Supply

There are a number of reasons why China can become an important supplier of quality education for international consumers. First, China's economy has been undergoing rapid growth since 1978 when it initiated its reform and opening-up policy. It has now surpassed Japan, becoming the second largest economy in 2010. This economic success attracts more and more students from all over the world to undertake study and research in China. Second, the quality of higher education in China has improved and the country has signed protocols with more than 34 countries in mutual recognition of academic degrees and qualifications. As there are so many faculties in key universities who received their doctoral degrees from universities in the United States, the United Kingdom, and other countries, courses can be taught in English. Third, in order to strengthen mutual understanding and friendship between the Chinese people and people from all over the world, and to develop co-operation and exchange in politics, economy, culture, education and trade, the Chinese government has set up a series of scholarship programmes to sponsor international students, teachers and scholars to undertake study and research in Chinese higher education institutions (HEIs). Fourth, foreign students have bright employment prospects in China after graduation. Since China has become the world's largest exporter and second largest importer, the bilateral trade between China and many countries has become important. Foreign companies prefer to recruit Chinese speaking foreigners who understand China's economy and culture. Many international graduates chose to work in China in recent years because there are more job opportunities in China's labour market. Fifth, the cost of higher education in China, including tuition and the living costs, are much lower than those in developed countries.

Figure 1: Total International Students in China (1999–2010)



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, *China Statistical Yearbook*, 2011.

In 1950, China received the first group of 33 students from the East European countries. By the end of 2009, the total number of international students in China had increased to 238,184. They are from more than 190 countries and study in 619 higher education institutions and other organizations. International students from Asia still top the list, totalling 161,605 and accounting for 67.8 per cent (Table 4). Students from Europe number 35,876, accounting for 15.1 per cent; 25,557 from America account for 10.7 per cent; 12,436 from Africa account for 5.2 per cent; and 2,710 from Oceania account for 1.1 per cent.

**Table 4: Inbound Student Mobility in China, 2001–2009**

|                                       | 2001   | 2002   | 2003   | 2004    | 2005    | 2006    | 2007    | 2008    | 2009    |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Total International students in China | 61,869 | 85,829 | 77,715 | 110,844 | 141,087 | 162,695 | 195,503 | 223,499 | 238,184 |
| International students from Asia      | 46,142 | 66,040 | 63,672 | 85,112  | 106,840 | 120,930 | 141,689 | 152,931 | 161,605 |
| International students from Europe    | 6,717  | 8,127  | 6,462  | 11,524  | 16,463  | 20,676  | 26,339  | 32,461  | 35,876  |
| International students from America   | 6,411  | 8,892  | 4,703  | 10,695  | 13,221  | 15,619  | 19,673  | 26,559  | 25,557  |
| International students from Africa    | 1,526  | 1,646  | 1,793  | 2,186   | 2,757   | 3,737   | 5,915   | 8,799   | 12,436  |
| International students from Oceania   | 1,073  | 1,124  | 1,085  | 1,327   | 1,806   | 1,733   | 1,887   | 2,749   | 2,710   |

*Source:* Ministry of Education of China, *Students Studying in China Statistics, 1999–2009*.

Among the 190 source countries and areas, the top six with the largest numbers of international students are Korea, the United States, Japan, Viet Nam, Thailand and Russia (Table 5). Each has over 10,000 students in China, accounting for 55.6 per cent of the total overseas students. The top twenty countries that have the largest number of students in China are from either developed countries (namely United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, France and Italy) or neighbouring countries in Asia.

**Table 5: Top 20 Countries of Inbound Students in China, 2009**

| Ranking | Country/region | Number of Students | Degree Students | Non-Degree Students | Percentage (%) |
|---------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1       | Rep. of Korea  | 64,232             | 26,874          | 37,358              | 27.0           |
| 2       | USA            | 18,650             | 1,525           | 17,125              | 7.8            |
| 3       | Japan          | 15,409             | 2,865           | 12,544              | 6.5            |
| 4       | Viet Nam       | 12,247             | 8,447           | 3,800               | 5.1            |
| 5       | Thailand       | 11,379             | 3,217           | 8,162               | 4.8            |
| 6       | Russia         | 10,596             | 3,290           | 7,306               | 4.4            |
| 7       | India          | 8,468              | 8,064           | 404                 | 3.6            |
| 8       | Indonesia      | 7,926              | 2,922           | 5,004               | 3.3            |
| 9       | Kazakhstan     | 6,497              | 1,883           | 4,614               | 2.7            |
| 10      | Pakistan       | 5,738              | 5,396           | 342                 | 2.4            |
| 11      | Mongolia       | 5,684              | 2,864           | 2,820               | 2.4            |
| 12      | France         | 5,422              | 710             | 4,712               | 2.3            |
| 13      | Germany        | 4,239              | 490             | 3,749               | 1.8            |
| 14      | Singapore      | 3,198              | 1,109           | 2,089               | 1.3            |
| 15      | UK             | 3,002              | 290             | 2,712               | 1.3            |
| 16      | Malaysia       | 2,792              | 1,990           | 802                 | 1.2            |
| 17      | Italy          | 2,659              | 312             | 2,347               | 1.1            |



|    |             |         |        |         |       |
|----|-------------|---------|--------|---------|-------|
| 18 | Nepal       | 2,654   | 2,511  | 143     | 1.1   |
| 19 | Canada      | 2,520   | 902    | 1,618   | 1.1   |
| 20 | Philippines | 2,273   | 294    | 1,979   | 1.0   |
|    | Total       | 238,184 | 93,450 | 144,734 | 100.0 |

Source: Ministry of Education of China, *Students Studying in China Statistics, 2009*.

In 2009, there were 93,450 degree students accounting for 39.2 per cent of all international students in China (Table 6). The share of degree students increased significantly from 26.9 per cent in 2001 to 39.2 per cent in 2009. Among the degree students, 73,515 are bachelor degree students, accounting for 78.7 per cent; 14,227 are master degree students (15.2 per cent); 4,751 are doctoral degree students (5.1 per cent); and 957 are specialized course students, accounting for 1.0 per cent).

**Table 6: Inbound Degree Student Mobility in China, 2001–2009**

|                 | 2001   | 2002   | 2003   | 2004   | 2005   | 2006   | 2007   | 2008   | 2009   |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Specialized     | 1,282  | 499    | 263    | 450    | 593    | 1,009  | 1,119  | 860    | 957    |
| Bachelor Degree | 11,797 | 16,309 | 19,319 | 25,351 | 37,147 | 45,207 | 56,248 | 64,864 | 73,515 |
| Master Degree   | 2,377  | 2,858  | 3,397  | 3,883  | 4,807  | 5,966  | 7,628  | 10,373 | 14,227 |
| Doctor Degree   | 1,194  | 1,389  | 1,637  | 1,932  | 2,304  | 2,677  | 3,218  | 3,908  | 4,751  |
| Total           | 16,650 | 21,055 | 24,616 | 31,616 | 44,851 | 54,859 | 68,213 | 80,005 | 93,450 |

Source: Ministry of Education of China, *Students Studying in China Statistics, 2001–2009*.

Fifteen disciplines (Table 7) were offered in China in 2009, among which Chinese, Medicine, Humanities, Economics, Management, Engineering and Chinese Medicine have over 5,000 international students. The Chinese language is the most popular discipline, the choice of 57.3 per cent of all students.

**Table 7: The Discipline Structure of Inbound Students in China in 2009**

|    | code               | Number  | Degree student | Non-Degree student | Percentage |
|----|--------------------|---------|----------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1  | Chinese            | 136,576 | 18,209         | 118,367            | 57.3       |
| 2  | Medicine           | 21,123  | 19,757         | 1,366              | 8.9        |
| 3  | Humanity           | 16,635  | 9,771          | 6,864              | 7.0        |
| 4  | Economics          | 14,367  | 11,893         | 2,474              | 6.0        |
| 5  | Management         | 12,260  | 7,982          | 4,278              | 5.1        |
| 6  | Engineering        | 11,606  | 8,631          | 2,975              | 4.9        |
| 7  | Chinese Medicine   | 11,022  | 7,740          | 3,282              | 4.6        |
| 8  | Law                | 4,966   | 3,906          | 1,060              | 2.1        |
| 9  | Arts               | 2,732   | 1,729          | 1,003              | 1.1        |
| 10 | Education          | 1,470   | 756            | 714                | 0.6        |
| 11 | Sciences           | 1,417   | 1,062          | 355                | 0.6        |
| 12 | Physical Education | 1,318   | 738            | 580                | 0.6        |
| 13 | History            | 1,046   | 468            | 578                | 0.4        |
| 14 | Agriculture        | 1,018   | 600            | 418                | 0.4        |
| 15 | Philosophy         | 628     | 208            | 420                | 0.3        |

Source: Ministry of Education of China, *Students Studying in China Statistics, 2009*.

Since 1997, the Chinese Scholarships Council (CSC) has been entrusted by the Ministry of Education with the enrolment and administration of daily operations concerning international students in China sponsored by Chinese government scholarships. According to the agreements or programmes signed with other countries as well as international organizations, China's Ministry of Education

offered Chinese government scholarships to 174 countries in 2009. 18,245 foreign students were admitted, making up 8.0 per cent of the total number of international students in China, of which Asian students accounted for 8,409 (46.1 per cent of the total), Africa 4,824 (26.4 per cent), European students 3,022 (16.6 per cent), America 1,599 (8.8 per cent) and Oceania at 391 accounted for 2.1 per cent (Table 8). With the policy of raising the level of study of scholarship students, Ph.D. candidates and Master Degree students make up 8,103 of the total and undergraduate students, 6,172.

**Table 8: Chinese Government Scholarship Students, 2009**

|                                     | Number | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| International students from Asia    | 8,409  | 46.1       |
| International students from Africa  | 4,824  | 26.4       |
| International students from Europe  | 3,022  | 16.6       |
| International students from America | 1,599  | 8.8        |
| International students from Oceania | 391    | 2.1        |
| Total                               | 18,245 | 100.0      |

Source: Ministry of Education of China, *Students Studying in China Statistics, 2001–2009*.

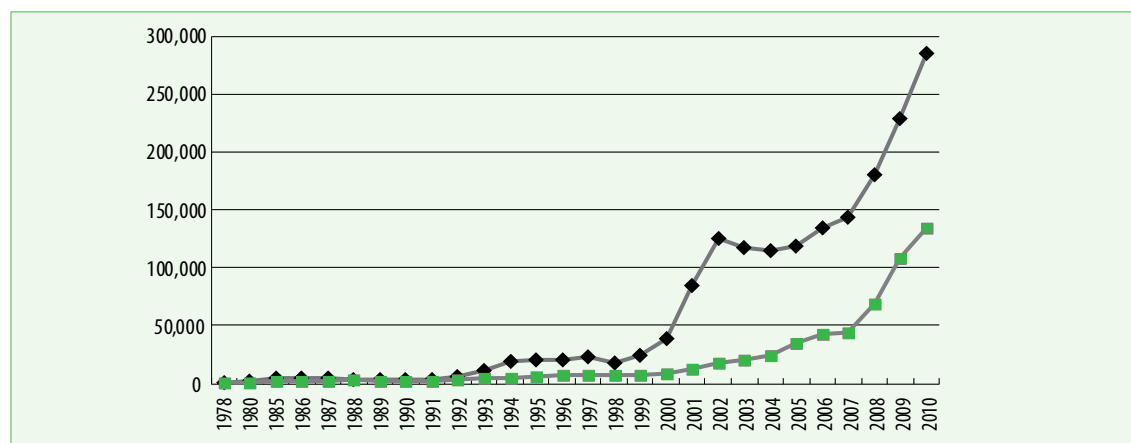
By 2010, the number of foreign students in China had risen dramatically, hitting a record high of more than 260,000. A total of 265,090 foreign students from 194 countries came that year to study in China's 620 universities, research institutes and educational institutions. Republic of Korea sent the largest group, followed by the United States, Japan, Thailand, Viet Nam, Russia, Indonesia, India, Kazakhstan and Pakistan.

## Mode 2: Consumption Abroad

It has been more than 100 years since China began to send its students and scholars to study abroad. Although the numbers and types of study have changed over time, the underlying principle remains the same. Before the foundation of China, there were already many Chinese going abroad for further studies in order to bring home knowledge that could help build a stronger country. After the establishment of new China, the central government decided to send students and scholars to the former Soviet Union and other socialist countries to study advanced science and technology and management. Beginning from the 1960s, with the change of the international political climate, the central government accordingly made adjustments in policies related to sending students and scholars abroad.

In 1978, with strategic insight, Deng Xiaoping made the important decision of expanding the scale of overseas study. From then on, the number of students studying abroad began to increase, but the quantity was still very small. It is from 2001 that numbers increased dramatically (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Students Studying Abroad and Returned Students (1978–2010)**



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, *China Statistical Yearbook, 2011*.

From 1978 to 2010, around 1,905,400 Chinese students have studied abroad, among whom 632,200 have returned. The number of Chinese choosing to study abroad increased hugely in 2010, reaching 284,700, while the number of Chinese returning from schools overseas was 134,800 for the same year.

In 2008, the total number of students and scholars studying abroad was 179,800, of whom 11,400 (6.3 per cent) were state-funded, 6,800 (3.8 per cent) employer-funded and 161,600 (89.9 per cent) self-funded (Table 9). The number of self-funded Chinese students increased significantly in 2001 and 2002. About 90 per cent of Chinese students studying overseas are self-funded.

**Table 9: Three Complementary Channels for Overseas Chinese Students, 2000–2008**

| Year | State-funded | Employer-funded | Self-funded |
|------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| 2000 | 3,000        | 4,000           | 32,000      |
| 2001 | 3,000        | 5,000           | 76,000      |
| 2002 | 3,500        | 4,500           | 117,000     |
| 2003 | 3,002        | 5,144           | 109,200     |
| 2004 | 3,500        | 6,900           | 104,300     |
| 2005 | 3,979        | 8,078           | 106,500     |
| 2006 | 5,580        | 7,542           | 120,700     |
| 2007 | 8,853        | 6,957           | 129,000     |
| 2008 | 11,400       | 6,800           | 161,600     |

*Source:* Wang, Huiyao. *Report on the Development of Chinese Overseas Educated Talents, 2009.*

2001 was a milestone year for China because it was the first time that GDP per capita attained USD\$1,000 (Table 10). It took China 52 years to reach this level from the founding of the People's Republic of China. After breaking the threshold of USD\$1,000, China's economy began to take off substantially. It took only five years for GDP per capita to increase a second USD\$1,000, reaching USD\$2,070 in 2006. Only two year later, the GDP per capita increased by another one thousand dollars to USD\$3,414 in 2008. In 2010, the GDP per capita increased to USD\$4,430. There is a significant relationship between the scale of outbound students and GDP growth (the correlation value is 0.933, significant at the 0.01 level). Often, Chinese students who fail to get into the top tier local institutions opt for a foreign education rather than a second tier education at home.

**Table 10: The Growth of Outbound Student Flows in China, 1999–2010**

| Year | Outbound Students | Total Population (million) | Local enrolment, secondary (million) | Local enrolment, tertiary (million) | GDP per capita, current \$US | Total GDP, current \$US, (billion) |
|------|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1999 | 23,749            | 1258                       | 73.05                                | 4.13                                | 865                          | 1083                               |
| 2000 | 38,989            | 1267                       | 78.72                                | 5.56                                | 949                          | 1198                               |
| 2001 | 83,973            | 1276                       | 83.02                                | 7.19                                | 1042                         | 1325                               |
| 2002 | 125,179           | 1285                       | 87.99                                | 9.03                                | 1135                         | 1454                               |
| 2003 | 117,307           | 1292                       | 91.11                                | 11.09                               | 1274                         | 1641                               |
| 2004 | 114,682           | 1300                       | 92.65                                | 13.34                               | 1490                         | 1932                               |
| 2005 | 118,515           | 1308                       | 92.06                                | 15.62                               | 1732                         | 2258                               |
| 2006 | 134,000           | 1314                       | 91.28                                | 17.39                               | 2070                         | 2713                               |
| 2007 | 144,000           | 1321                       | 89.84                                | 18.85                               | 2652                         | 3496                               |
| 2008 | 179,800           | 1328                       | 88.12                                | 20.21                               | 3414                         | 4522                               |
| 2009 | 229,300           | 1335                       | 86.54                                | 21.45                               | 3744                         | 4985                               |
| 2010 | 284,700           | 1341                       | 84.33                                | 22.32                               | 4430                         | 5927                               |

*Source:* National Bureau of Statistics of China, *China Statistical Yearbook, 2003–2011.*

The top five destinations for Chinese outbound students at the tertiary level are the United States (110,246), Japan (77,916), Australia (57,596), United Kingdom (45,356), and Korea (30,552) as shown in *Table 11*. These countries can be divided into two groups: one consists of English-speaking countries, while the other group consists of neighbouring countries. Since the English language is a compulsory course for most Chinese students at both the basic and higher education stage, they like to pursue degrees in English-speaking countries. It is because many world-class universities are in the United States and the United Kingdom that Chinese students wish to go to these two countries for a high quality education. Australia, New Zealand and Canada are not only English-speaking countries but also countries of immigrants, so these countries are also favourite destinations.

Japan and Korea are China's neighbours with a large amount of bilateral trade. Cultural traditions are also similar. In recent years, popular music, soap operas and movies made in Korea are very popular among Chinese youth. This has contributed to the number of Chinese students in Korea increasing 33 times, from 902 in 1999 to 30,552 in 2008. Meanwhile, the share of Chinese students in Korea increased from 31.4 per cent to 75.8 per cent of the total number of international students in Korea during the same period (*Table 11*).

Japanese animation and comics are popular among young Chinese. Electric and mechanical products made in Japan are well-liked too. Japan has been a key destination for Chinese people since China's reform and opening-up in 1978, and has remained the second largest host country. The number of Chinese students in Japan increased from 25,655 in 1999 to 77,916 in 2008. Meanwhile, the share of Chinese students of the total number of international students in Japan increased from 45.4 per cent to 61.6 per cent during the same period (*Table 11*).

Much research is focused on determinants of student choice. According to a 2001 Education World Survey of one thousand undergraduate students who travelled abroad from ten Asian countries, "mobile students' key choice factors" were "country (54 per cent), course (18 per cent), institution (17 per cent) and city (10 per cent)". The desire to access education of higher quality than available at home was as strong a motive as the desire for foreign education and experience for their own sake (OECD, 2004, pp. 172-173, 266).

**Table 11: China Students Abroad at Tertiary Level: by Major Country-Recipients**

|                        | 1999   | 2000   | 2001   | 2002   | 2003   | 2004   | 2005   | 2006   | 2007   | 2008    |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| USA (number)           | 46,949 | 50,281 | 51,986 | 63,211 | 92,774 | 87,943 | 92,370 | 93,672 | 98,958 | 110,246 |
| USA (%)                | 10.4   | 10.6   | 10.9   | 10.8   | 15.8   | 15.4   | 15.7   | 16.0   | 16.6   | 17.7    |
| Japan (number)         | 25,655 | 28,076 | 31,955 | 41,180 | 51,656 | 76,130 | 83,264 | 86,378 | 80,231 | 77,916  |
| Japan (%)              | 45.4   | 47.0   | 50.2   | 55.0   | 59.7   | 64.6   | 66.1   | 66.4   | 63.7   | 61.6    |
| Australia (number)     | 4,578  | 5,008  |        | 17,343 | 23,448 | 28,309 | 37,344 | 42,008 | 50,418 | 57,596  |
| Australia (%)          | 3.9    | 4.7    |        | 9.7    | 12.5   | 17.0   | 21.1   | 22.7   | 23.8   | 25.0    |
| UK (number)            | 4,250  | 6,158  | 10,388 | 17,483 | 30,690 | 47,738 | 52,677 | 50,753 | 49,594 | 45,356  |
| UK (%)                 | 1.8    | 2.8    | 4.6    | 7.7    | 12.0   | 15.9   | 16.5   | 15.4   | 14.1   | 13.3    |
| Rep. of Korea (number) | 902    | 1,182  | 1,645  | 2,407  | 4,025  | 6,462  | 10,093 | 15,288 | 23,097 | 30,552  |
| Rep. of Korea (%)      | 31.4   | 35.0   | 42.7   | 48.6   | 51.3   | 60.0   | 65.1   | 68.7   | 72.3   | 75.8    |
| Germany (number)       | 5,355  | 6,526  | 9,109  | 14,070 | 20,141 | 25,284 | 27,129 | 24,221 | 23,791 | 21,977  |
| Germany (%)            | 3.0    | 3.5    | 4.6    | 6.4    | 8.4    | 9.7    | 10.4   | 11.6   | 11.5   | 11.6    |
| France (number)        | 1,934  | 2,111  | 3,068  | 5,477  | 10,665 | 11,514 | 14,316 | 17,132 | 18,836 | 20,852  |
| France (%)             | 1.5    | 1.5    | 2.1    | 3.3    | 4.8    | 4.8    | 6.1    | 6.9    | 7.6    | 8.6     |

|                 |       |       |       |        |        |        |        |        |        |       |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| Canada (number) | 3,489 | 4,701 | 6,972 | 10,176 | 14,592 | 18,141 | 19,752 | 12,279 | 21,081 |       |
| Canada (%)      | 10.7  | 12.9  | 16.3  | 20.5   | 24.7   | 27.9   | 28.6   | 17.9   | 22.7   |       |
| Russia (number) |       |       |       |        |        |        |        |        |        | 9,187 |
| Russia (%)      |       |       |       |        |        |        |        |        |        | 6.7   |

Source: The UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2010.

## Mode 3: Commercial Presence

The commercial presence of China satellite campuses abroad is still in its early stages. By December 2010, only 56 overseas education programmes had been developed by 23 higher education institutions.

With the rapidly growing domestic demand for higher education, the scale of higher education in China has enjoyed quick expansion. Student enrolment has increased 4.2 times from 1998 to 2009, but public expenditure on tertiary education has not increased at the same speed. Additionally, the percentage of public expenditure on higher education shows a decreasing trend, dropping from 24.3 per cent to 22.3 per cent during 2001-2008. In order to compete in recruiting new students, many universities in China borrowed lots of money from banks to build new buildings resulting in heavy debts.

The Beijing Language and Culture University (BLCU) is the only international university in China. Its main task is teaching the Chinese language and culture to foreign students. BLCU always attaches great importance to international exchange and co-operation. As the country opens up, the university is also broadening its co-operation, building partnerships with 210 universities in 39 countries. BLCU has set up branch schools in Korea, Singapore and Thailand and launched joint undergraduate and postgraduate programmes with Hokuriku University in Japan, Keimyung University in Korea, Rangsit University in Thailand, University of Manchester, Harvard University and so on.

With the rapid growth of China's economy, there has also been a sharp increase in world demand for Chinese learning. China began its own exploration in 2004 by establishing non-profit public institutions which aim to promote Chinese language and culture in foreign countries. They are called the Confucius Institute. Over recent years, the Confucius Institutes' development has been sharp and they have provided scope for people all over the world to learn about Chinese language and culture. Through the joint efforts of China and the Confucius Institute host countries, by the end of 2010 there were 322 Confucius Institutes and 369 Confucius Classrooms in 96 countries. In 2009, Confucius Institutes/Classrooms around the world offered 9,000 Chinese courses with a total enrolment of 260,000.

At the same time, there is a growing commercial presence of foreign providers on China's campuses. Sino-foreign co-operation in running schools has developed so rapidly that more than 1,200 Sino-foreign joint institutions and programmes had been established by 2010. Sino-foreign joint programmes are also known as 'split-campus programmes' usually in the form of "2+2" or "1+3", where the first two years (or one year) of the course study takes place at the Chinese institution and the last two years (or three years) at the foreign partner institution. Joint programmes result in one qualification – that of the foreign partner. Degree-level Sino-foreign joint programmes must be approved and registered by the Ministry of Education, and diploma-level by the relevant local provincial education commissions.

Thirty Sino-foreign joint institutions have passed evaluation by the Ministry of Education by July 2010. One of these institutions is The University of Nottingham Ningbo, China, which is the first Sino-foreign university in China approved by the Chinese Ministry of Education. It is run by The

University of Nottingham UK with co-operation from Zhejiang Wanli Education Group-University. It has some 360 teaching and administrative staff from 30 countries and more than 160 international students.

## Mode 4: The Presence of Natural Persons

Rejuvenation of China through education and science is China's basic development strategy. China's State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs (SAFEA) has made great progress in serving China's quest for scientific development through "overseas expertise introduction" (OEI). The number of overseas experts recruited to work in China reached 2,300,000 during 2006-2010.

The central government has taken effective measures to attract outstanding students and scholars to return to China or to make contributions in various ways. The returned students and scholars play a leading role in areas like education, science and technology, high-tech industries, finance, insurance, trade and management and serve as a driving force for the country's economic and social development. At the same time, many students and scholars staying abroad contribute in various ways such as giving lectures during short-term visits to China, having academic exchanges, conducting joint research, bringing in projects and investments and providing information and technical consultancy. Accordingly, *Chinese governments at all levels*, enterprises and institutions have developed supportive policies in this regard. Institutions, special funds and talent-reserves have been established to facilitate the returnees in their careers. As for the MOE, it has been conducting some exemplary programmes to encourage students and scholars to return as well as to facilitate their careers. The main programmes are as follows:

- "The Fund for Returnees to Launch S&T Research".
- "Programme for Training Talents Toward the Twenty-first Century".
- "The Chunhui (literally, Spring Bud) Programme": The programme targets those returnees with doctoral degrees and with outstanding achievements in their respective fields.
- "Changjiang Scholar Incentive Programme": The programme provides financial support to leading young and middle-aged scholars of certain disciplines who have studied abroad and are invited by Chinese HEIs as Special Professors or Lecture Professors.
- "Programme of Academic Short-return for Scholars and Research Overseas".

To improve global educational competitive power, many universities in China began to recruit foreign faculty. Schools where more than half of the teachers are foreign include the China Europe International Business School (CEIBS), the School of Transnational Law at Peking University, and the Peking University HSBC Business School (PHBS).

CEIBS is the leading China-based international business school, with all three of its programmes ranked in the Global Top 30 by the *Financial Times*. The school's main objective is to contribute to the economic development of China by offering its students a thorough understanding of the latest international management knowledge and practices coupled with China expertise. CEIBS is a not-for-profit joint venture established under an agreement between MOFTEC and the European Commission. CEIBS' faculty members have attained impressive academic and professional reputations in China and abroad. The school has for five years running ranked among the top six worldwide in terms of the international diversity of its members according to the *Financial Times*.

To develop lawyers familiar with globalization processes, the School of Transnational Law at Peking University was set up in 2007. Peking University recruited Jeffrey Lehman, the former president of Cornell University and former president of the American Law Deans Association, to lead the new school which is located on the University's Shenzhen campus. Besides the dean, all other faculty members are foreigners or returned students from the United States.

## References

China. Ministry of Education. 2009. *Students Studying in China Statistics*.

China. National Bureau of Statistics. 2003–2010. *China Statistical Yearbook*.

China. *State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs*. <http://www.safea.gov.cn>

OECD. 2004. *Internationalization and Trade in Higher Education*. Paris, OECD.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2007-2010. *Global Education Digest*. Montreal, Canada, UIS.

Wang, Huiyao. 2009. *Report on the Development of Chinese Overseas Educated Talents*. China Machine Press.



# International Student Mobility: Indonesia

**Hendarman**

*Head, Centre for Research Policy Office of Research and Development,  
Ministry of National Education Indonesia*

## Introduction

Twenty years ago, the primary motivation for people to study abroad related to academic, political, geo-strategic, and cultural and development aid issues and considerations. This changed when many countries took initiatives to encourage mobility of students and academics as an opening up of the world under the assumption that it could create international networks of elites. Today, cross-border education that entails the international mobility of students and teachers, educational programmes or institutions of higher learning is being increasingly driven by economic considerations (Knight, 2004).

Governments see it as a means of improving the quality of higher education and their institutions of higher learning; whereas individuals see it as a further boost to their career both in their home country and in the international job market. Between 1998 and 2004 the number of foreign students enrolled worldwide rose by 52 per cent to 2.7 per cent of total higher education students, with the OECD countries hosting 85 per cent of the total (Vincent-Lancrin, 2004).

Asia is a hot house of student mobility, programme mobility, and innovative forms of managing and regulating international education. There are a growing number of middle class families willing to invest in post-secondary education, which given lack of local opportunities, plus the benefits of going abroad, often means a foreign education. The challenge for future governments and institutions is to ensure an optimal balance between academic, cultural, economic and strategic priorities. For students and academics, the region provides many opportunities to engage in rich cultural, linguistic, academic, geographical and social experiences (Marginson and McBurnie, 2004).

In the context of Indonesia, the importance of student mobility has been emphasized by the Vice-Minister of National Education Indonesia during the press conference of SEAMEO RIHED in Jakarta, March 2010. He stated that "Enhancing student mobility will allow a university student's credit points and grades obtained at other universities in the South-East Asian region to transfer to a home university. It is beneficial for Indonesian university students if they can study in many countries, with recognized credit transfer".

## Objectives of the Paper

This paper retraces the predominant trends in student mobility especially in the context of Indonesia, and highlights the major strategies for the opening of the flow of students in public and private universities and at the same time discusses the issues raised concerning its practices. This paper is based on the analysis of related documents on student mobility in Indonesia as well as interviews with a few respondents who are responsible for the international student offices within the higher

education institutions. The documents consist of policies of the Ministry of National Education, the initiatives taken by both public and private higher education institutions in Indonesia, and the information available in national and local newspapers.

In brief, this paper will respond to the following questions:

1. To what extent have policies been in place to support student mobility especially for international students to study and/or take part in various learning processes in Indonesia?
2. What is the implementation of the policy in terms of the number of foreign students studying in Indonesia's higher education institutions and the sources of funding for them to undertake their study? and,
3. What are the problems concerning student mobility in Indonesia and the solutions and policies to address them?

## Findings and Discussions

### Related Policies on Student Mobility

Indonesia encourages foreign academics and foreign programmes and institutions to come to Indonesia. Therefore, Indonesia has made legal provision for locally based co-operation with foreign universities to "improve and enhance the performance of higher education" and to "maintain, develop, empower and expand science, technology and/or arts" (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, 2004). The issuance of this policy assumes that foreign education within the nation can create broader benefits. It can foster academic jobs and expand infrastructure (classrooms, libraries, laboratories and IT equipment); create educational programmes and textbooks; and add testing services, administrative systems and policy blueprints.

The Government of Indonesia through the Ministry of National Education widely encourages both study abroad by domestic students and income-generating foreign programmes and institutions in its higher education institutions (HEIs) both public and private. In addition to providing opportunities for students to earn a foreign degree while remaining at home, and creating new forms of partnership and delivery, programme and institution mobility (PIM) is of major importance in student enrolments.

In the framework of Asian-African Conference for Capacity Building of Palestine, the government, through the Ministry of National Education in 2009, provided Palestinian students the opportunity to study in Indonesia through a scholarship programme (Beasiswa Unggulan). The programme aims to: (a) contribute for the development of Palestinian human resource quality, (b) strengthen the relationship and mutual co-operation between both countries; and (c) promote Indonesian higher education and cultural understanding. The scholarship is offered for bachelor (S1), master (S2), and doctoral (S3) degrees. Students will study at one of the Indonesian universities. Study includes a sixth month Indonesian language course running parallel to the main programmes of S1, S2, and S3.

The Tenth Conference of Heads of States of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) countries, Bandung, 1 to 6 September 1992, concluded, among others, that scholarships be provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which is now the Ministry of National Education (MONE). In 1993 the Government of the Republic of Indonesia started offering postgraduate (master degree) scholarships to students from the NAM member countries. Due to the changes in geopolitics, the use of the term "NAM" was dropped and the programme renamed as Beasiswa Kemitraan Negara Berkembang (KNB) or "Scholarship on Developing Countries Partnership (DCP)". The objectives of the scholarship are: (1) promoting deeper cultural understanding among developing countries; (2) strengthening the relationship and mutual co-operation among the participating countries; and (3) contributing

to the development of human resource quality. The scholarship is provided for master degree study at one of 13 universities in Indonesia for 3 years, consisting of one year for the Indonesian language and preparatory programmes and two years for the master programme on various subjects.

## Implementation

As mentioned earlier, the Government of Indonesia encourages international students to study in Indonesia and at the same time sends Indonesian scholars to study abroad under different scholarship schemes. The Ministry of National Education offers the so-called "Beasiswa Darmasiswa Republik Indonesia" (Darmasiswa Scholarships) for international students to learn Bahasa Indonesia, music, traditional dance and other studies in Indonesia's higher education institutions. This scheme is the response of the government to scholarship programmes offered by other countries. This scheme is for the period 2007 to 2015. The target number of students is increased from year to year: 500, 750, 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 7,500 and 10,000 students from 2007 to 2015. The categories of this scheme include among others: (1) regular, (2) short-course, (3) plus courses (including Bahasa Indonesia) and (4) double-degree. There were 44 participating countries by 2008; and by 2008 there were 2,037 alumni from 85 countries.

With the purpose of providing an international dimension to universities in ASEAN, on 23 November 2009, three countries within SEAMEO RIHED - Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand - launched the M-I-T Pilot Project on Promoting Student Mobility in South-East Asia. SEAMEO RIHED (SEAMEO Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development) is one of the SEAMEO Centres in ASEAN. The role of SEAMEO RIHED located in Thailand is to build the networking and capacity building of universities in ASEAN. This programme will be started in 2010 by conducting student exchange among the three countries in agriculture, tourism, language and culture, food technology, and international business. At present, Indonesia will involve 11 universities (both state and private). The tuition fee will be borne by the receiving university, while transport and a stipend will be provided by their own government.

**Table 1: Institutions and Number of Awardees of "Scholarship on Developing Countries Partnership (KNB)"**

| No. | Name of institutions | KNB      |      |          |           |          |          |          |           |           |           |           | AUN-SEED/Net |          |           | JICA |          |           |
|-----|----------------------|----------|------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|----------|-----------|------|----------|-----------|
|     |                      | S1       |      |          |           |          |          | S2       |           |           |           |           | 2007         | 2008     | 2009      | 2007 | 2008     | 2009      |
|     |                      | 2005     | 2006 | 2007     | 2008      | 2009     | 2010     | 2006     | 2007      | 2008      | 2009      | 2010      |              |          |           |      |          |           |
| 1   | UGM                  |          |      |          | 2         | 1        |          |          | 10        | 10        | 6         | 8         |              | 7        | 5         |      | 5        | 5         |
| 2   | UAJ Yogya            |          |      | 2        |           |          |          |          |           | 4         | 3         | 4         |              |          |           |      |          |           |
| 3   | UNY                  |          |      |          |           |          | 3        |          | 7         | 5         | 3         | 7         |              |          |           |      |          |           |
| 4   | UNS                  |          |      |          | 1         |          |          |          | 5         | 7         | 5         | 6         |              |          |           |      |          |           |
| 5   | UM                   |          |      |          |           | 1        |          |          |           | 3         | 5         | 5         |              |          |           |      |          |           |
| 6   | UM AIR               |          |      |          |           |          |          |          | 7         | 6         | 5         | 7         |              |          |           |      |          |           |
| 7   | ITS                  | 1        |      |          |           |          |          | 1        | 4         | 3         | 3         | 3         |              |          |           |      |          |           |
| 8   | UN PAD               |          |      | 3        | 1         | 1        |          |          | 7         | 5         | 5         | 6         |              |          |           |      |          |           |
| 9   | ITB                  |          |      |          |           |          |          |          | 5         | 8         |           | 2         |              |          | 7         |      | 4        | 5         |
| 10  | UNPAR                |          |      |          | 1         | 1        |          |          |           | 3         | 3         | 4         |              |          |           |      |          |           |
| 11  | UPI                  |          |      |          | 2         | 2        | 2        |          |           | 3         | 3         | 4         |              |          |           |      |          |           |
| 12  | USAKTI               |          |      |          | 2         | 1        | 1        |          |           | 3         | 4         | 4         |              |          |           |      |          |           |
| 13  | IP B                 |          |      |          | 1         |          |          |          | 6         | 5         | 6         | 5         |              |          |           |      |          |           |
|     | <b>Total</b>         | <b>1</b> |      | <b>5</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>51</b> | <b>65</b> | <b>51</b> | <b>65</b> |              | <b>7</b> | <b>12</b> |      | <b>9</b> | <b>10</b> |

Source: Directorate of Institutional and Corporation (2010).

In the context of Beasiswa Kemitraan Negara Berkembang (KNB) or “Scholarship on Developing Countries Partnership (DCP)”, the sources of funding come from the national budget and JICA. *Table 1* shows the number of awardees and the institutions in which they study. As revealed by international student respondents, they gained exposure to the values, culture and society of Indonesia while undertaking their study. There are cases of scholarship students finding their husband or wife through the programme and settling down in Indonesia.

*Table 2* shows the total number of international students registered in public and private HEIs in Indonesia as of 2010. This table indicates that students come from about 89 countries in Asia and Africa. The total number of students recorded in this table includes the KNB or DCP scholars shown in *Table 1*.

**Table 2: Total of International Students in Indonesia as of January to December 2010**

| No. | Country           | Number | No.   | Country     | Number | No.   | Country                 | Number |
|-----|-------------------|--------|-------|-------------|--------|-------|-------------------------|--------|
| 1   | Malaysia          | 1,980  | 31    | Brazil      | 14     | 61    | South Africa            | 1      |
| 2   | Timor Leste       | 2,618  | 32    | Swiss       | 12     | 62    | Maxico                  | 1      |
| 3   | Republic of Korea | 447    | 33    | Cheko       | 10     | 63    | Papua Nugini            | 1      |
| 4   | China             | 363    | 34    | Pakistan    | 9      | 64    | Russia                  | 1      |
| 5   | USA               | 176    | 35    | Italy       | 9      | 65    | Isalamic Rep. of Iran   | 1      |
| 6   | Japan             | 148    | 36    | Belgium     | 8      | 66    | Sudan                   | 1      |
| 7   | Australia         | 127    | 37    | Myanmar     | 6      | 67    | Suriname                | 1      |
| 8   | India             | 123    | 38    | New Zealand | 6      | 68    | Mali                    | 1      |
| 9   | Turkmenistan      | 94     | 39    | Norway      | 6      | 69    | Tunisia                 | 1      |
| 10  | Lybia             | 89     | 40    | Denmark     | 5      | 70    | Ceylon                  | 1      |
| 11  | Germany           | 77     | 41    | Poland      | 5      | 71    | Argentina               | 1      |
| 12  | Thailand          | 75     | 42    | Finland     | 3      | 72    | Bergia                  | 1      |
| 13  | Turkey            | 74     | 43    | Sweden      | 3      | 73    | Ukraina                 | 1      |
| 14  | Viet Nam          | 74     | 44    | Egypt       | 3      | 74    | Palestine               | 1      |
| 15  | Philippines       | 73     | 45    | Slovakia    | 3      | 75    | Hongkong                | 1      |
| 16  | Netherland        | 65     | 46    | Gambia      | 3      | 76    | Republik of Seira Leone | 1      |
| 17  | France            | 40     | 47    | Cameroon    | 2      | 77    | Yordania                | 0      |
| 18  | United Kingdom    | 36     | 48    | Aliazair    | 2      | 78    | Austria                 | 0      |
| 19  | Canada            | 35     | 49    | Lao PDR     | 2      | 79    | Equador                 | 0      |
| 20  | Somalia           | 31     | 50    | Bosnia      | 2      | 80    | Kazakhstan              | 0      |
| 21  | Tajikistan        | 26     | 51    | Ethiopia    | 2      | 81    | Costa Rica              | 0      |
| 22  | Iraq              | 24     | 52    | Colombia    | 2      | 82    | Syria                   | 0      |
| 23  | Taiwan, China     | 20     | 53    | Romania     | 2      | 83    | Maldives                | 0      |
| 24  | Nigeria           | 20     | 54    | Uzbekistan  | 2      | 84    | Fiji                    | 0      |
| 25  | Spain             | 20     | 55    | Islandya    | 2      | 85    | Kenya                   | 0      |
| 26  | Singapore         | 16     | 56    | Romania     | 2      | 86    | Marocco                 | 0      |
| 27  | Yaman             | 16     | 57    | Lithuania   | 2      | 87    | Mongolia                | 0      |
| 28  | Azerbaijan        | 15     | 58    | Namibia     | 2      | 88    | Pantai Gading           | 0      |
| 29  | Cambodia          | 15     | 59    | Hungary     | 1      | 89    | Uganda                  | 0      |
| 30  | Madagaskan        | 15     | 60    | Afghanistan | 1      |       |                         |        |
|     | Total             | 6,932  | Total | 7,079       |        | Total |                         | 16     |

Source: Directorate of Institutional and Corporation (2010).

Related documents indicate that various scholarships are available for international students to study in Indonesian higher education institutions either for short or long periods. For example, at the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) in Bandung, the scholarships are given by the Government of Indonesia (GOI), donors, and sending countries.

The tendency is for the number of international students to increase year by year. The data of international students in 2010 as shown in *Table 2* and data for 2007 and 2008 in *Table 3* confirms this. The fact that several countries have for years chosen Indonesia as a place of learning shows that Indonesian study programmes are recognized by other countries.

**Table 3: Total Number of Foreign Students in Indonesia HEIs (2007–2008)**

| No        | Countries       | 2007   |         | 2008   |         |
|-----------|-----------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
|           |                 | Public | Private | Public | Private |
| 1         | Malaysia        | 2,502  | 320     | 2,026  | 201     |
| 2         | Timor Leste     | 51     | 1,629   | 160    | 2,097   |
| 3         | China           | 23     | 154     | 13     | 107     |
| 4         | Rep. of Korea   | 29     | 10      | 97     | 72      |
| 5         | Japan           | 63     | 15      | 91     | 21      |
| 6         | Germany         | 71     | 86      | 63     | 8       |
| 7         | Australia       | 37     | 12      | 48     | 2       |
| 8         | Thailand        | 2      | 27      | 4      | 19      |
| 9         | Turkey          | 43     | 29      | 1      | 24      |
| 10        | Viet Nam        | 14     | 8       | 11     | 16      |
| 11        | Other countries | 87     | 98      | 168    | 139     |
| Sub-total |                 | 2,922  | 2,388   | 2,682  | 2,706   |
| Total     |                 | 5,310  |         | 5,388  |         |

*Source:* Directorate of Institutional Development, Directorate General of Higher Education, MONE (2009).

Another example of student mobility is the various schemes used by Institut Teknologi Bandung (Bandung Technology Institute) for incoming and outgoing students. For incoming students, the schemes include among others student exchange, research exchange, full time students, summer programmes, and international network membership. Student exchange includes attending courses/classes in the regular semester where the medium of instruction is English. Research exchange comprises of thesis/dissertation research which can be undertaken in university partners overseas. International networks membership covers AOTULE (Asia Oceania Top University League in Engineering), ASEA UNINET, AUN, AUN/ SEED-Net, Global E3 and others. For outgoing programmes, the schemes are almost the same such as the summer programme which is usually a three week course in July and is equivalent to three credits.

## Problems

To be eligible to study in Indonesia, students are required to apply for a visa. There are two relevant visas, the short-visit visa (VITAS) and the social-visit visa (VKSB). The short-visit visa can be obtained from the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in the candidate's home country. Upon arrival in Indonesia this visa should be converted to the stay-permit (ITAS) for one year through the local immigration office where the candidate will study. The student must report to the local immigration office within seven days upon arrival to get the stay-permit and must have a passport which is valid for a minimum of two years.

The second visa, the VKSB, is normally considered an alternative visa for joining a course of study. This visa can be obtained through the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia where the student lives. Upon the student's arrival in Indonesia, this visa should be converted to the stay-permit (ITAS) for one year through a facility of the State Secretariat and a local immigration office.

To get the stay-permit, students must produce the necessary documents such as a copy of their passport (including the visa used) and a letter of acceptance from the host Indonesian university which will be sent to the Bureau of Planning and International Co-operation and the Ministry of National Education. Then it will be passed to the State Secretariat, the Directorate General of Immigration and a local immigration office for processing. The successful candidates are prohibited from using a tourist visa to study in Indonesia since it will cause a problem in processing the stay-permit.

In many cases, as revealed through interviews with a few students, they have had to spend extra time on this process. This is especially so for students who entered Indonesia using the VKSB. This will not happen to students with the VITAS visa who need just three days for their stay-permit to be issued. If the students fail to meet the deadline for this process there will be administrative sanctions.

The new Government Regulation No. 17/2010 states that recognition of the student/lecture exchange programme or double-degree will be endorsed by the Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE) Indonesia as long as the study programme(s) at Indonesian HEIs has been accredited "A" by the National Board of Accreditation (BAN-PT) Indonesia. In fact, out of 18,424 study programmes available in more than 3,000 public and private universities, only 64.03 per cent are accredited and only 1,411 study programmes have an A status in the accreditation process. Because of this it seems that very few higher education institutions in Indonesia have the opportunity to initiate student mobility (BAN-PT, 2011).

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Academic mobility and education exchange across borders has been a central feature of Indonesian higher education. It has flourished due to cultural and academic exchange. Educators and policy makers are aware of the new opportunities as well as potential risks to higher education in Indonesia if basic pre-requisites for a fair and equitable cross-border provision of education are not met.

Policies on student mobility have been in place, with amendments made from time to time due to dynamic and growing issues in its implementation. With this in mind, the Government of Indonesia has offered various scholarship schemes not only to attract international students but also to send Indonesian students to study overseas in recognized foreign higher education institutions.

Although the number of international students is growing slowly, they still face problems. The critical problem relates to visas. There are two types of visa used by international students and it is felt that the process is bureaucratic when compared to student visa systems in other countries.

It is recommended that the Ministry of National Education should table issues related to international students to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Immigration Office and local education authorities. This will result in a more effective, efficient and accountable visa granting process.

## References

BAN-PT. 2011. Data PTS Terakreditasi. Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional.

Directorate of Institutional and Corporation. 2010. Report of number of international students registered in public and private HEIs in Indonesia (unpublished). Jakarta: Directorate General of Higher Education, Indonesia.

Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi. 2004. Strategi Jangka Panjang Pendidikan Tinggi 2003–2010 (HEELTS). Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia.

Internationalization remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 5–31.

Knight, J. 2004. Internationalization remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales, *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 5–31.

Marginson, S. and McBurnie, G. 2004. *Asia: The Region and International Education*. This article draws upon a presentation at the OECD/Norway Forum on Trade in Education Services, 3 November 2003, Trondheim, Norway. The full report is available at: [http://www.flyspesialisten.no/vfs\\_trd/ufd/4-OECD-AsiaPacificregion.pdf](http://www.flyspesialisten.no/vfs_trd/ufd/4-OECD-AsiaPacificregion.pdf)

Vincent-Lancrin. 2004. Building Futures Scenarios for Universities and Higher Education: an international approach. *Policy Futures in Education, Volume 2, Number 2, 2004*



# International Student Mobility: Republic of Korea

Ki-Seok Kwon

*Assistant Professor, Department of Global Convergence Studies, Hanbat National University,  
Republic of Korea*

## Introduction

Along with the powerful socio-economic forces of globalization, the internationalization of higher education has been gaining momentum during the last few decades. According to Knight (2005), this internationalization involves the integration of research, the use of English as the lingua franca for academic communication and the growing international labour market for scholars. In other words, it is the process of weaving academic programmes, institutions and their quality into the global context.

The internationalization of higher education involves two goals: one is joining the first-rate education level, and the other is bilateral openness (Park, 2009). In order to accomplish both, two strategies are crucial for Korean higher education system. Firstly, it is pivotal to benchmark the top-ranking overseas universities and to internalise the best practices considering idiosyncratic properties of Korean universities' system. Secondly, a strategic alliance with first-class overseas universities is also necessary. Consequently, Korean universities can provide a high quality of education, maintain recognition, and promote the inbound movement of international students.

Recently, while scholars have noted the prominent growth of cross-border higher education in Europe, they have also noted an increased interest in the internalization of higher education in Asia as well as in political and economic co-operation. In particular, student mobility has tended to increase in Korea.

During the last half century, Korean universities have experienced tremendous change, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The number of universities, academic faculties and students has increased at a rapid rate compared to both developing countries and developed countries. For example, according to the enrolment rates of each stage, Trow (1974) suggested three stages of development of higher education: elite (less than 15 per cent), mass (between 15 per cent and 50 per cent) and universal (more than 55 per cent). Based on his definition, Korean higher education has moved from the "elite phase" to the "universal phase" within only three decades.

From the early stage of catch-up, the Korean government has been a dominant actor influencing the growth of the university system as well as of industry. In particular, through the provision of technically skilled labour and qualified scientists and engineers, Korean universities have been continually encouraged to play a role as a human resource supplier for economic growth. In the 1990s, the government adopted a series of policies for strengthening universities' research activities, and recently Korean universities began to gain recognition as direct contributors to the nation's economic development.

The trend of internationalization in higher education, combined with related government policies, brought to light international mobility as an important issue. This study aims to examine the

international mobility of higher education institutions in Republic of Korea within the historical context of government policies implemented during the last few decades. The paper also addresses the efforts of individual universities and current policies related to the student mobility issue.

## Change of Korean Government's University Policies

This section suggests a categorization based on the development of the Korean government's university policies. The various responses of universities according to their different policy environments are discussed.

### Strong regulation of the education system for economic take-off (1960s – mid 1970s)

In the aftermath of Park Chung-Hee's military coup in 1961, strong regulation of the national system as well as the education sector characterizes the 1960s and 1970s (Lee et al., 1998). In this period, acting as a supplier of technical labour, especially through vocational education and training, was considered the main role of the secondary and tertiary education systems; access to universities was limited (Kim and Lee, 2006; Lee et al., 1998). In particular, in addition to encouraging an increase in the supply of human resources to the fields of science and engineering, overall government control over public and private universities was based on strong policy measures such as fixed numbers of students.

Based on the fixed number policy, large national universities in the regions were strongly supported. As mentioned earlier, the government regarded the imbalanced development between the capital area and other regions as a serious problem stemming from 1950s policies related to the economy and education. By increasing the quota for enrolled students at regional universities, the government aimed both to reduce the concentration of students in the capital area and to attract them to regional universities.

In terms of highly qualified scientists and engineers, the strong dependence on overseas institutions started during this period. In the 1950s, the government began to encourage overseas training supported by foreign scholarships, and initiated an official support programme for students to study abroad in 1954. These initiatives were possible due to United States aid just after the Korean War. In the 1960s and 1970s, the training of highly qualified scientists and engineers was motivated both by these government initiatives and individual demand for higher education at overseas institutions (Kim, 1997). Half of these students studied science and engineering and most of them attended institutions in the United States.

### Massive expansion of the higher education system (late 1970s to 1980s)

In the aftermath of the coup in 1980, General Chun Doo-Hwan succeeded Park Chung-Hee. In light of the vulnerable political legitimacy of the government, a series of distinctive reforms of the education system were implemented (Lee et al., 1998). The most significant characteristics of this period are the massive expansion of the university system and the relaxation of the previously strong regulation of universities, in order to meet the explosive demand for higher education (Kim and Lee, 2006). However, the expansion occurred mainly in terms of the number of students in non-technological disciplines such as the humanities and social sciences, whereas in the previous period, vocational training in the fields of science and engineering was stressed (Cho et al., 2002).

Around the end of the 1970s, the strong regulation policy based on fixed numbers of students faced a few challenges due to the explosion in demand for higher education. For a long time, personal education had been considered as a significant factor for the success of members of

Korean society, an attitude that can be traced back to Confucianism (Lee, 2006). Furthermore, as the national economy grew, households accumulated enough wealth to pay tuition fees, and industry came to need more qualified personnel. More directly, the sudden increase of potential entrants (i.e. graduates from secondary education) in the previous period also contributed to the explosive demand for tertiary education. As a result, the demand for higher education increased throughout the society (Lee et al., 1998).

## Liberalization and globalization (1990s – present)

In 1988, the direct vote system for the presidential election resumed in response to popular pressure; and in 1993 a leader of the democratic movement, Kim Young-Sam, was elected as president. Following this, a series of educational reforms as well as political ones were implemented. Democratization in the 1990s sped up the deregulation of education policy and as a result it became easier to establish higher education institutions. In other words, the previous “permission” policy was replaced by the minimal “condition” policy for the establishment of new higher education institutions.

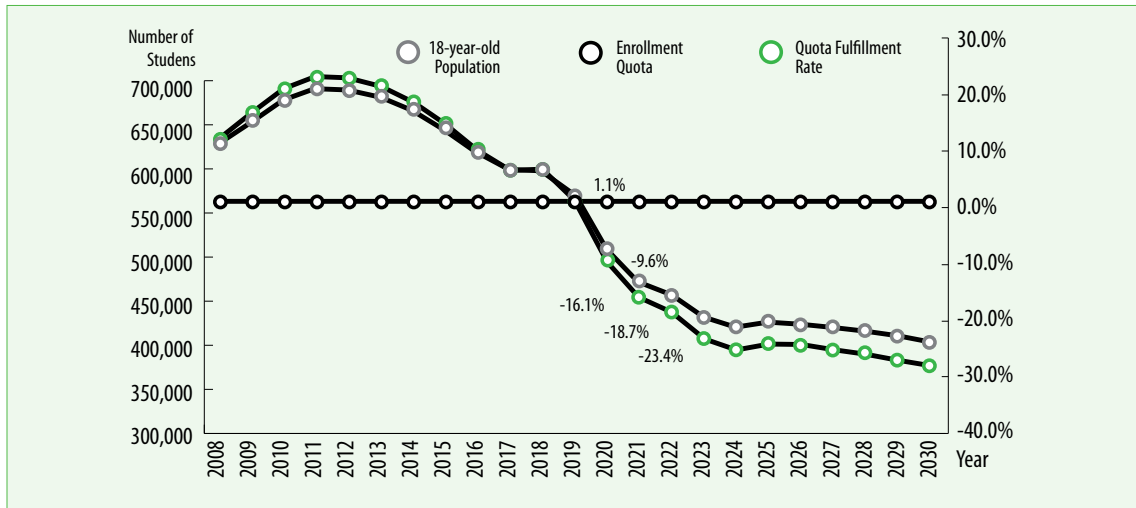
For example, one of the most distinctive education reforms was the abolition of the quota system for higher education institutions (except for those in the capital area) in 1995 (Kim and Lee, 2006). This led to the creation of numerous higher education institutions, not only typical small- and medium-sized private universities in local areas but also new forms of institutions, such as graduate schools without undergraduate students, and online universities. This reform also encouraged large private universities in Seoul to create a dozen local autonomous campuses. This increase can be regarded as the second explosion in the number of universities as well as in the number of students enrolled. Between 1990 and 1993, twenty new four-year universities were created.

Moreover, the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995 had significant influence on Korean higher education, especially on the internationalization policies. In 1996, the “Initial Plan for Opening the Higher Education Market to Foreign Countries” was announced by the Korean government in anticipation of the upcoming WTO negotiations. In this vein, the neo-liberal higher education reform based on market-friendly approach was internally set up. During the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s, Korea’s internationalization reached a new phase. Shifting away from policies focusing on deregulation, the Korean government put an emphasis on the financial aspect of higher education by exerting an effort to attract foreign students to study in Korea and to hinder domestic students from studying abroad. Now that Korea was situated in a transitional period in which the freshman enrolment quota exceeded the eighteen-year-old population (a phenomenon induced by the falling birth rate over the previous two decades), Korean higher education institutions saw the internationalization of higher education as a survival strategy and endeavoured to target the international market to recruit students from abroad (Byun, 2010).

## Student Mobility in Republic of Korea

As the country’s birth rate dropped over the previous two decades, it caused a decrease in the freshman-age population (Choi, 2008). The eighteen-year-old population is estimated to shrink dramatically after 2010 and the enrolment quota is predicted to be equal to the freshman-age population in 2020 (*Figure 1*). After 2020, the eighteen-year-old population will lag far behind the total enrolment quota. Thus, the gap between the enrolment quota and the freshman-age population will be so aggravated that it is estimated to be -23.4 per cent in 2023. The encouragement of international student mobility, especially of inbound foreign students, could be a reasonable solution to this shrinking freshman-age population. Consequently, it is important for the government to enforce effective policies in order to make up for this lack of enrolment.

**Figure 1: The Estimated Trend of University Enrolment Quota and 18-Year-Old Population**



*Source:* Park, Jaeyoon et al. 2010. *Research on the Educational Vision toward Future Education*. Korean Educational Development Institute.

The population and enrolment rate of inbound foreign students involved in Korean higher education are both experiencing continuous growth. During the period from 1980 to 2000, the foreign student population was no more than a few thousand, and the ratio of foreign students remained low (0.1 per cent or 0.2 per cent) throughout this period. However, there has been a dramatic increase of inbound foreign students since 2005. Their number is growing by 0.3 per cent on average every year since 2005. Moreover, the sharp rise in the number of foreign students can be easily noted because the figures since 2005 were measured every year, not every five years. Comparing only the figures from 2000, 2005 and 2010 (respectively 0.1, 0.6 and 2.3 per cent) indicates a great inflow of foreign students to Korea in recent years.

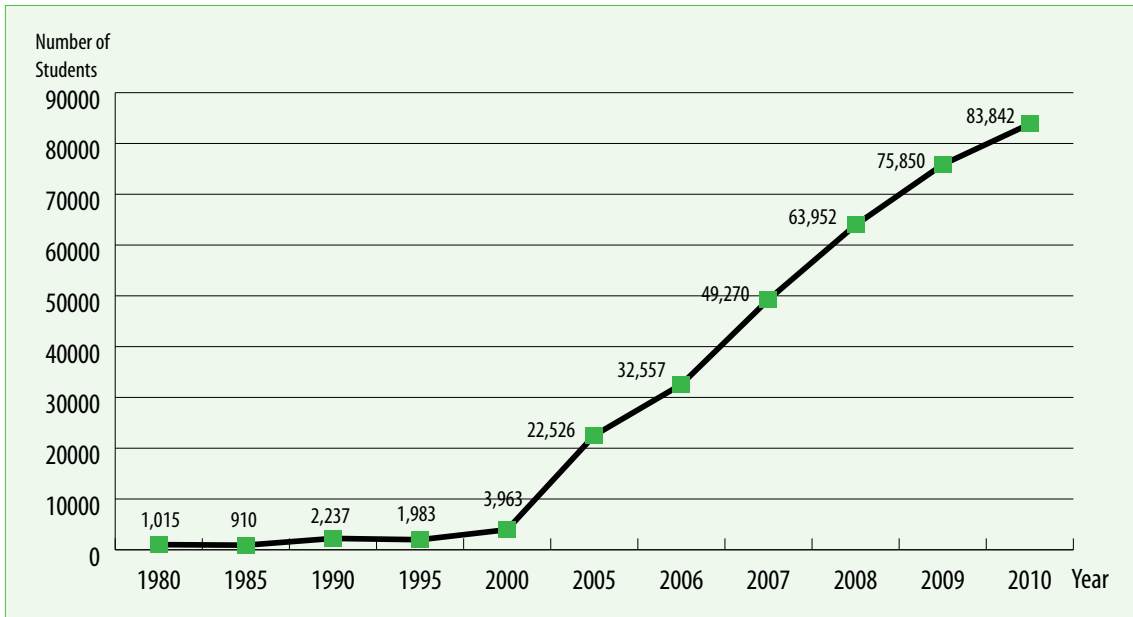
In addition, the types of foreign students who have come to Korea are diverse. In the past, overseas students were mostly enrolled in degree programmes. While this is still the case, students registered in language studies cannot be ignored. There is an upward trend of foreign students coming to Korea for language studies, setting aside the increasing population of foreign students in degree programmes. Compared to the students enrolled in degree programmes in 2005, by 2010 the actual number of foreign students in Korea had increased by four times. In particular, there has been a steep rise in inbound foreign students registered in language studies since 2007.

**Table 1: Number of Inbound Foreign Students Per Year**

| Year | Total Sum | Ratio of Foreign Students | Degree Programmes | Language Studies, etc |
|------|-----------|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1980 | 1,015     | 0.2                       | 1,015             | -                     |
| 1985 | 910       | 0.1                       | 910               | -                     |
| 1990 | 2,237     | 0.2                       | 2,237             | -                     |
| 1995 | 1,983     | 0.1                       | 1,983             | -                     |
| 2000 | 3,963     | 0.1                       | 3,963             | -                     |
| 2005 | 22,526    | 0.6                       | 15,577            | 6,949                 |
| 2006 | 32,557    | 0.9                       | 22,624            | 9,933                 |
| 2007 | 49,270    | 1.4                       | 32,056            | 17,214                |
| 2008 | 63,952    | 1.8                       | 40,585            | 23,367                |
| 2009 | 75,850    | 2.1                       | 50,591            | 25,259                |
| 2010 | 83,842    | 2.3                       | 60,000            | 23,842                |

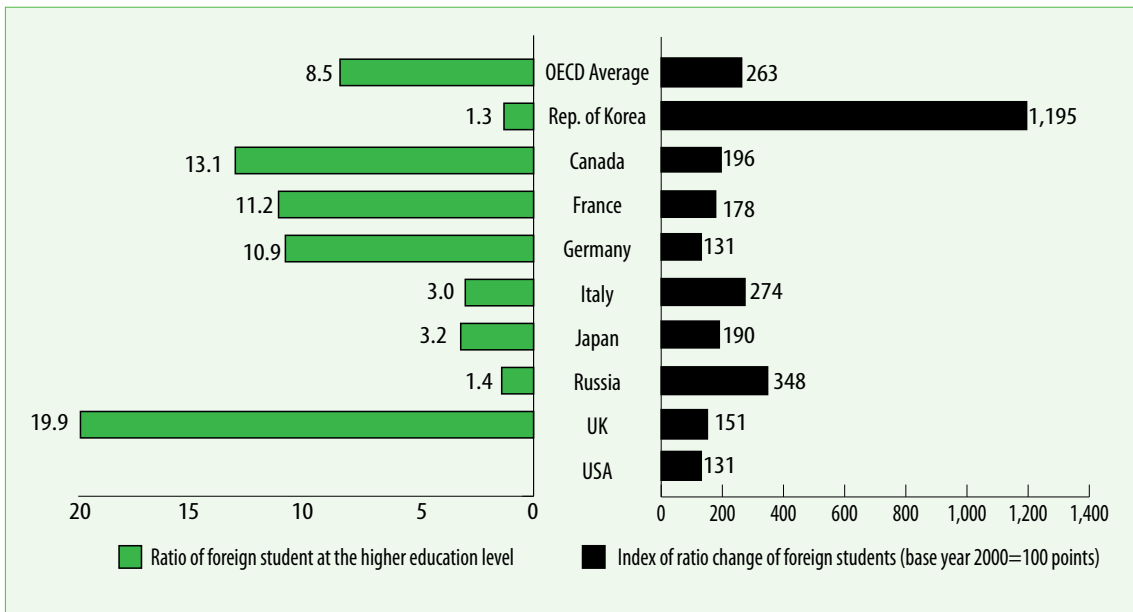
*Source:* KEDI. 2010. *Sourcebook of Statistics Analysis in Education in 2010*. Korean Educational Development Institute.

**Figure 2: The Number of Inbound Foreign Students per Year**



Source: KEDI. 2010. Sourcebook of Statistics Analysis in Education in 2010. Korean Educational Development Institute.

**Figure 3: The Ratio of Foreign Students at the Higher Education Level and the Index of Ratio Change of Foreign Students in 2008**



Source: KEDI. 2010. Sourcebook of Statistics Analysis in Education in 2010. Korean Educational.

## Development Institute

Figure 3 represents the ratio of foreign students at the higher education level and the index of ratio change of foreign students in 2008. Compared to the OECD average regarding the ratio of foreign students at the higher education level, the proportion of foreign students who received higher education in Korea was only 1.3 per cent. The United Kingdom, on the other hand, had the highest ratio (19.9 per cent) of foreign students at the higher education level. The average ratio of foreign

students among OECD countries was 8.5 per cent. This figure suggests that Korea needs to exert greater efforts to internationalize its higher education system.

The index of ratio change of foreign students shows that Korea has struggled to attract more foreign students. The index sets 2000 as the base year with 100 points, and each numerical value indicates the ratio change in the number of foreign students. Surprisingly, while OECD countries' average was 263, Korea's was recorded at 1,195 and it held an unrivalled status among other OECD countries. It can be said that Korea made strong efforts to internationalize its higher education institutions from 2000 to 2008. Therefore, although the ratio of foreign students in Korean higher education is still low, Korea possesses infinite potential to improve its higher education toward internationalization.

We have seen the overall increase in foreign students who come to Korea for higher education. In order to closely approximate international student mobility, it is critical to conduct a comparative study with other countries by studying the figures of inflow and outflow of students in higher education. This paper compares the number of inbound foreign students in higher education per thousand and that of outbound students in higher education per thousand in Korea with the same figures for other Asian countries and European countries.

**Table 2: Comparison with other Asian Countries**

|  | Rep. of Korea | Hong Kong SAR, China | Singapore | Japan | China | Taiwan, China |
|--|---------------|----------------------|-----------|-------|-------|---------------|
| Number of inbound foreign students in HE   | 0.66          | 0.91                 | -         | 0.99  | 0.03  | 0.67          |
| Number of outbound domestic students in HE | 2.17          | 1.73                 | 3.97      | 0.43  | 0.32  | 1.52          |

*Note:* The numbers are calculated per thousand people, HE: Higher Education.

*Source:* KEDI. 2010. *Sourcebook of Statistics Analysis in Education in 2010*. Korean Educational Development Institute.

In comparison with other Asian countries, the number of outbound students in higher education per thousand people in Korea was, at 2.17, second to Singapore. However, the number of inbound foreign students in higher education per thousand in Korea was very low, with a value of 0.66. This is partially related to the fact that talented Korean students are more likely to study abroad instead of pursuing higher education domestically. Furthermore, considering that Hong Kong's number of inbound foreign students in higher education per thousand was 0.91, Korea lags behind Hong Kong in the internationalization of domestic education. In fact, the more foreign students coming to a country means that they tend to seek more opportunities and convenience in terms of language, selection of English courses and so on. Thus, the high proportion of foreign students in Hong Kong compared with other Asian countries, including Korea, results from the fact that Hong Kong has internationalized domestic higher education for a long time.

In *Table 2*, another noticeable point is that Japan shows a result opposite to Korea's. While Japan's inbound student population per thousand is merely 0.99 persons, its outbound student population per thousand is recorded as 0.43, which is the highest among Asian countries and even higher than Hong Kong. That is, Japanese students have a strong tendency to get higher education in their country rather than abroad. Also, since it has a low number of outbound domestic students, it is surprising that Japan shows a high ratio of inbound foreign students at the same time.

**Table 3: Comparison with European Countries**

|  | Rep. of Korea | Denmark | Finland | Sweden | Switzerland | Iceland |
|--|---------------|---------|---------|--------|-------------|---------|
| Number of inbound foreign students in HE | 0.66          | 2.33    | 1.9     | 2.41   | 5.07        | -       |
| Number of outbound students in HE        | 2.17          | 0.92    | 1.13    | 1.49   | 1.39        | 8.05    |

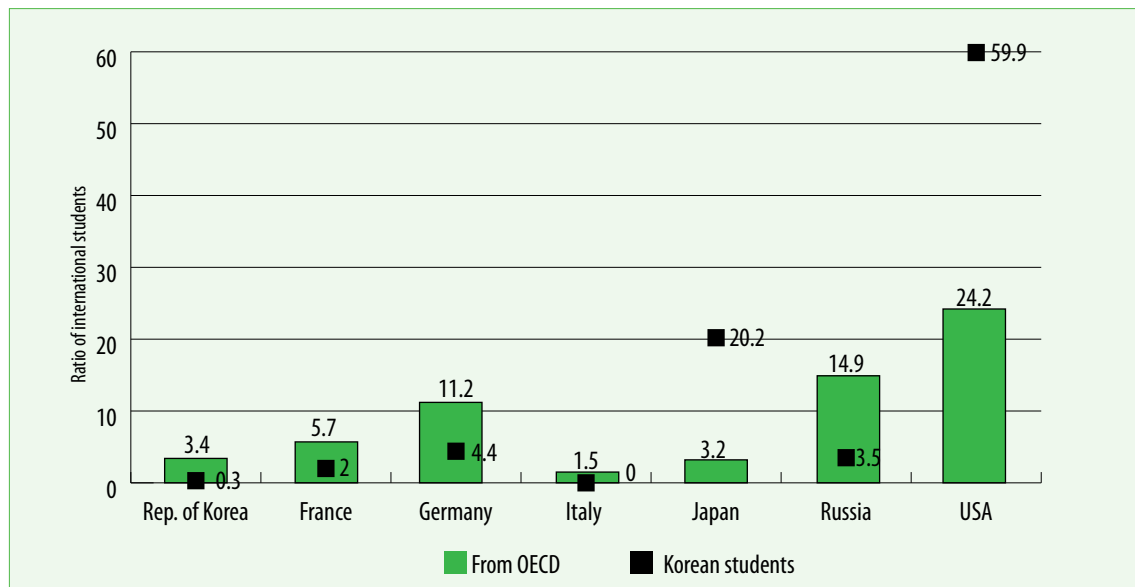
*Note:* The numbers are calculated per thousand people, HE: Higher Education.

*Source:* KEDI. 2010. *Sourcebook of Statistics Analysis in Education in 2010*. Korean Educational Development Institute.

Table 3 shows the Korea's and European countries' number of inbound foreign students in higher education per thousand and that of outbound students in higher education per thousand. Except for Iceland, Korea recorded the highest number of outbound students per thousand, with 2.17, whereas other European countries such as Denmark and Finland maintained approximately 1.00. Korea's relatively low number of inbound overseas students indicates that most of the European countries attract more foreign students. For instance, the inbound foreign student population is as many as 5.07 people per thousand in Switzerland. This value is much higher than 1.39, which is Switzerland's outbound figure. In other words, it signifies that Switzerland's higher education is highly internationalized and is more attractive for international students than Korean higher education.

Generally, in Asian countries the number of inbound foreign students in higher education is low, whereas the number of outbound domestic students is relatively high, except in Japan. In European countries, the trend is quite different. Those countries had more inbound foreign students than outbound domestic students. Setting aside Switzerland, where international students' mobility is particularly active, the inflow and outflow of students in European countries tends to be counterbalanced. That is to say, the gap between the number of inbound and outbound students is narrower than that of Asian countries.

**Figure 4: Ratio of International Students in Higher Education per Country**



Source: KEDI. 2010. *Sourcebook of Statistics Analysis in Education in 2010*. Korean Educational Development Institute.

It is also necessary to understand the trend of outbound domestic students since Korea recorded a high number of them going abroad for higher education. Figure 4 shows the ratio of international students per country in higher education. This is helpful to discern which countries Korean students mostly go to in order to study abroad. Korean students are asymmetrically apt to go to the United States and Japan for higher education. While the ratio of OECD international students going to the United States is 24.2 per cent, 59.9 per cent of Korean students studying abroad go to the United States, which is twice the OECD average. In the case of Japan, the difference between the OECD average and Korea's average is greater. The ratio of Korean students going to Japan is 20.2 per cent, which is second after the United States. The ratio of OECD students is only 3.2 per cent. Moreover, although the ratio of Korean students who get a higher education in Japan and in the United States is conspicuously high, the level of Korean students going to other countries remains low compared to the OECD average. For instance, the ratio of international students in higher education in Russia is 14.9 per cent, which is third following the United States and Germany. However, in Korea, that ratio is barely 3.5 per cent. This indicates that Korean students rarely go overseas to countries other



than Japan or the United States for a higher education. In other words, their range of international mobility is limited to those two countries within OECD countries. Outside of OECD, China has emerged as a popular destination for Korean students recently.

## Implemented Policies and Efforts of Korean Universities Concerning the Promotion of International Mobility

This section mainly focuses on two topics: government policies and universities' response to the policy measures. Before doing this, a framework assessing the two topics is introduced. Finally, some discussions are presented in the next section.

### Evaluation of internationalization of higher education

In assessing the degree of internationalization of higher education, it is critical to determine what kind of index of analysis should be used. Lee et al. (2001) comprehensively outlines three general analysis criteria: infrastructure of international education, internationalization programmes and human resources. First, under the infrastructure of international education category, whether institutions in charge of the internationalization education, international education or international co-operation are established or not can be one standard. In addition, the number of foreign books and journals that the university has in its library is an important determinant of the quality of the infrastructure of international education.

Internationalization programmes are related to the university's exchange agreement with other universities abroad. Even though individual researchers at a university can privately contact other researchers overseas, these agreements between universities facilitate international co-operation, which means creating a more collaborative environment for the internationalization of higher education. With those agreements, co-research can be activated among foreign universities or foreign research institutes. As for domestic students, instituting the cross registration system with foreign universities offers a good cause to go abroad to get a higher education. At the same time, it creates more opportunities for foreign students to come to Korea. Internationalization programmes also include university courses conducted in English. For the non-English native countries, a large number of subjects need to be offered in order to attract more foreign students to those countries.

The human resources criterion assesses the degree of internationalization. This standard is divided into professors and students. The former comprises the number of papers published in foreign journals, participation in academic societies overseas, participation in foreign research projects, and exchange of professors. The latter is related to the number of exchange students sent overseas. Attracting foreign students is also included in this category.

### Assessment of Korea's internationalization of higher education

With these criteria, understanding Korea's state of internationalization of higher education is possible. As mentioned earlier, it is clear that the number of inbound foreigners in higher education has been dramatically increasing since 2000. Since the mid-1990s, interest in internationalization of education gained strength among universities in Korea. The number of Korean universities which had installed departments in charge of international education and international exchange was 44 (80 per cent) out of 55, and most of them planned to install permanent offices in 2000 (Lee et al., 2000).

Internationalization programmes showed great progress in that a cross registration system with foreign universities has been done among Korean universities. According to Lee et al., (2000) among the responding universities, 92.5 per cent had already implemented that system or would have

introduced the cross registration system in 2000. This activation of internationalization programmes not only affects the number of inbound foreign students, but also that of outbound domestic students. In addition, based on the report of the Korean Council for University Education (KCUE), the proportion of doctorates in the university academic profession was measured as 82.9 per cent in Korea in 2000. Among these working at universities, approximately 40 per cent acquired Ph.D.'s from abroad (KCUE, 2003). This numerical value implies that a large proportion of domestic students study abroad to get a higher education.

On foreign expertise, the number of foreign academics working in Korean universities is still insignificant despite its rising slowly for the last decade. In 2001, the ratio of foreign academics only took account of 2.9 per cent out of all university academics in Korea although 89.3 per cent of universities had employed foreign faculty by 2000 (Lee et al, 2000; Kim, 2005). In other words, there are only few foreign scholars teaching in Korean universities. What is noticeable is that 49.6 per cent of those foreign academics were Americans, followed by Canadians and Japanese (Kim, 2005). Intense concentration of Americans and Japanese academics is partly due to the inclination of Korean students to study in the United States or in Japan. According to Kim, E. (2006) one of the major international factors in Korean universities is student exchange programmes established by partnerships with foreign institutions. In the survey data shown by Kim, 89.9 per cent of Korean universities see internationalization as increasing the opportunities for their students to meet and work comfortably with foreigners.

## Korea's policy for internationalization of higher education

One of the most famous higher education policies for internationalization in Korea is the Brain Korea 21 Project (BK 21 Project), which was active between 1999 and 2005. The goal was to apply new rules of competition among universities in setting the amount of national research funds and to introduce a new evaluation system for the academic performance of universities. Over seven years, 1.2 billion USD dollars was invested (Kim, 2005). The BK 21 Project emphasized the achievement of getting more global recognition for Korean research especially through publication in academic journals and citations in Science Citation Index (SCI) (Byun, 2010). According to the Ministry of Education, BK21 contributed to an increase in SCI-level publications by Korean academics

With the increase in the number of Korean scholars' papers from the BK 21 Project, the Lee Myung Bak administration launched the World Class University Project (WCU Project) in 2008. Its goal was to hinder Korea's brain drain and to attract more well-known scholars to Korea. Also, this project encouraged new academic programmes in growth-generating fields such as nanotechnology as well as collaboration with foreign academics (Byun, 2010).

## Efforts of Korean universities

While establishing partnerships with international higher education institutions, one of the other approaches to internationalization is offering courses in English. According to data provided by the KEDI, 120 schools have internationally related programmes. The development of an internationalized curriculum can be a good way to achieve reforms in diversification and specialization. In addition, the establishment of "international" graduate schools will bring stronger competitiveness to Korean universities' academic programmes. The idea of establishing international graduate schools was presented around the mid-1990s, when Korea was negotiating an agreement for the terms of trade in services and agricultural products with the United States (Kim, E., 2006)

As an example of these efforts to improve the competitiveness of universities in attracting foreign students, Korea University employs a variety of strategies to promote its internationalization. First, in order to establish a firm information infrastructure, it has carried out the creation of e-library and wireless networks on campus. This has also created a good environment for scholars and students. Second, Korea University has taken measures to expand English courses. In fact, 31 per cent of all

lectures were done in English in 2006, and the school plans to increase this number (Ahn, 2006). This development attracts a greater number of prominent visiting scholars and exchange students from overseas.

Moreover, the establishment of a Global Korea University Campus is being discussed. In order to send a large number of students overseas with minimal complications, the university is making an agreement with foreign universities. It will provide an opportunity for Korean students to experience high quality higher education overseas, while providing infrastructure such as building dormitories for the exchange students.

## Discussion and Summary

Globalization has triggered the internationalization of higher education. International student mobility has been facilitated and many students have studied abroad to get a quality higher education. Korea is not an exception to this global trend. Korean students have studied abroad for a long time. The number of outbound students shows no sign of declining. This can result in a brain drain and loss of human resources for the country. However, recently, “brain circulation” perspective is gaining currency which means that outbound students return to Korea to contribute to nation building. Also, in response to the expected deficit in the registration quota in the future due to the falling birth rate in Korea, higher education institutions have focused on attracting foreign students to Korea. As a result of such efforts, the population of inbound foreign students has increased since 2000, and it continues to progress steadily.

The internationalization of higher education diversifies academic programmes and institutional types. These encourage efficiency, productivity and quality within the higher education system. In addition, Korea’s competitiveness with other universities in the world will be enhanced to a great extent if internationalization is strengthened. Thus, in the long run, internationalization will attract more foreign students to Korea while encouraging domestic students to study in Korea rather than abroad. That is, domestic students will be able to receive an almost equal level of higher education without going to other countries, because internationalisation causes not only international student mobility but faculty member mobility too.

## References

- Ahn, M. 2006. *The Current Issues and Tasks of Internationalisation of Higher Education*. Keynote Presentation at Conference of Higher Education Institute, Korea University, Seoul.
- Altbach, P.G and Knight, J. 2007. The Internationalisation of Higher Education: Motivations and Realities. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Vol. 11, No. 3/4, pp. 290–305
- Byun, K. and Kim, M. 2010. Shifting Patterns of the Government’s Policies for the Internationalisation of Korean Higher Education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Vol. 15, No. 5, pp. 467–486.
- Cho, H., Lee, E., Lee C. and Kim, S. 2002. *Review of S&T Human Resource Policies in Korea*. STEPI (Science and Technology Institute), Seoul.
- Choi, J. 2008. Comparative Study on the Concept and the Motivation of Internationalisation of Higher Education. *Education of Religion Research*, Vol. 28, No.1, pp. 213–232.
- KCUE. 2003. *A Survey on International Cooperation of Korean Universities*, Korea Council for University Education. Seoul, Korea.

Kim, E. 2006. Internationalisation and isomorphic forces in Korean higher education, *Perspectives in Education*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 69–80.

Kim, L. 1997. *Imitation to Innovation: The Dynamics of Korea's Technological Learning*. Harvard Business School Press.

Kim, S. and Lee, J. 2006. Changing Facets of Korean Higher Education: Market Competition and the Role of the State. *Higher Education*, Vol. 52, pp. 557–587.

Kim, T. 2005. Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Korea: Reality, Rhetoric, and Disparity in Academic Culture and Identities. *Australian Journal of Education*, Vol. 49. No. 1, pp.89–103

Lee, H., Choi, K., Yoon, J. and Kim G. 1998. A study on the History of Modern Education after Liberation from Japanese Rule. Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI), Seoul.

Lee, J. K. 2006. Educational Fever and South Korean Higher Education, *Revista Electrónica de Investigación y Educativa*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp.1–14.

Lee, Y. et al. 2001. Study on the Systematic Approach to the Effective Internationalization Policy of Universities. *Korean Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp.155–205.

OECD. 2009. *Globalisation and Higher Education: What Might the Future Bring?* Paris, OECD.

Park, S. 2009. *The Advancement of Higher Education in Globalised World*. Keynote presentation, conference for the promotion of private education. 31st, June, 2009. Korean Foundation for Private Education, Seoul, Korea.

# International Student Mobility: Malaysia

Morshidi Sirat, Rosni Bakar and Koo Yew Lie  
*National Higher Education Research Institute, Malaysia (IPPTN)  
Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang*

## Introduction

A report by British Council in 2003 noted that the global demand for international student places will increase to approximately 5.8 million in 2020 (British Council, 2003), making international student mobility an increasingly important part of the global higher education landscape (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007b). It is also recorded that more than 90 per cent of international students have enrolled in institutions in countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) with the main destinations (the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Australia) recruiting over 70 per cent of them (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007a).

As revealed in Table 1, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia are the “major players” (Lasanowski, 2009) in international student mobility (ISM) service provision. These three countries have become the leaders in the international student market recording the highest number of foreign students, with approximately 45 per cent of 2.7 million foreign students studying abroad (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007a). The “brand name” provision and perceptions of comparative values explain this dominance of the United States and the United Kingdom over their counterpart providers. Australia, on the other hand, is a major player in international student recruitment. Lasanowski (2009) reports that the country’s traditional markets are slowing (Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong SAR, China and Taiwan, China), but it is taking measures to facilitate growth in new potential markets (Nepal, Viet Nam).

The “middle powers” (Lasanowski, 2009) in the international student market are Germany, France and China, attracting approximately 25 per cent of students who are mainly from their proximate countries. These ISM providers represent the “global regionalism” which is now influencing mobility trends. Lasanowski points out that they are reassessing their recruitment policy to implement new tactics to tap into new markets, for e.g. by introducing English-taught provision to cater to students from countries where English is widely used.

Lasanowski (2009) terms Canada, New Zealand and Japan as the “shape shifters” of the ISM services. As the providers for approximately 10 per cent of the world’s overseas students, they implement transformative policy in an effort to grow their visibility in the recruitment landscape. Brand provision is arguably their main challenge. On the other hand, Singapore, Malaysia and Republic of Korea are positioned as the “emerging contenders” (Lasanowski, 2009) in the ISM attracting more than 5 per cent of the world’s international students primarily from Asian countries. These countries which include China, have historically been key players in sending students abroad and are now seeking to attract more students to their own universities. Lasanowski (2009, p. 3) comments that Singapore and Malaysia “stand to benefit by marketing the value of their education to an increasingly wide

audience” due to their multilingual and multiethnic environments. They are in fact, aiming to expand their ISM services by “actively implementing strategic policy designed to transform themselves into regional educational leaders” (Lasanowski, 2009, p. 3) beyond the region.

The Open Door Policy of China has given opportunities to institutions of higher learning from the United States, Europe and Australia to establish a presence on the mainland through partnerships with Chinese universities. Universities from the developed countries are aggressively recruiting China students to study in their universities. At the same time, developed countries are expanding their educational programmes through cross-border trade, consumption abroad, commercial presence or presence of natural persons. Australia, Hong Kong and other Asian countries are already making strides into the China market. At the same time, China is planning to play host to 300,000 international students by 2020. Its current enrolment of international students is 195,000 (Redden, 2010).

Table 1 identifies countries that are marked as top players in educating foreign students. These include the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, France, Japan, Canada and New Zealand. Table 1 also shows the top five countries that provide foreign students to these top players. Table 2 depicts the top ten countries that provided international students in the years 1975 to 2005. From *Table 1* and *Table 2*, it is noted how China has emerged as a major exporting country of its students to overseas markets. In 1975 China was not in the top ten. However, after embarking on its open door policy in 1978, the country has been experiencing tremendous economic growth. In realizing the importance of education to economic growth, China is determined to expand her higher education system and also call for international players to participate in its education sector. At the same time, China also increased the number of students it is sending overseas as the country cannot accommodate them all. Also, China aims to keep pace with the rising need for higher education of her people through domestic provision.

**Table 1: Top Five Source Countries for Top Players in Educating Foreign Students (2005 and 2006)**

| No. | USA                  | Britain        | Australia                   | Germany         | France         | Japan                | Canada               | New Zealand         |
|-----|----------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1   | India 76,503         | China 50,755   | China 65,543                | China 27,390    | Morocco 25,782 | China 74,292         | Rep. of Korea 12,505 | China 26,546        |
| 2   | China 62,582         | India 19,205   | India 36,078                | Turkey 22,419   | Algeria 21,552 | Rep. of Korea 15,974 | China 6,880          | USA 2,480           |
| 3   | Rep. of Korea 58,847 | Greece 17,675  | Malaysia 18,074             | Poland 15,183   | China 15,963   | Taiwan, China 4,211  | Japan 4,786          | Rep. of Korea 2,094 |
| 4   | Japan 38,712         | Ireland 16,790 | Hong Kong SAR, China 16,558 | Bulgaria 12,794 | Tunisia 9,593  | Malaysia 2,156       | USA 3,782            | Japan 2,040         |
| 5   | Canada 28,202        | USA 14,755     | Indonesia 13,025            | Russia 11,953   | Senegal 9,019  | Viet Nam 2,119       | France 3,560         | India 1,886         |

Source: [www.britishcouncil.org/eumd\\_-\\_vision2020.pdf](http://www.britishcouncil.org/eumd_-_vision2020.pdf)

**Table 2: Top Ten Countries of Origin of Foreign Students, 1975 – 2005**

| 1975                 |        | 1985                 |        | 1995          |         | 2005          |         |
|----------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|---------------|---------|---------------|---------|
| Country              | No.    | Country              | No.    | Country       | No.     | Country       | No.     |
| Islamic Rep. of Iran | 33,021 | China                | 42,481 | China         | 115,871 | China         | 343,126 |
| USA                  | 29,414 | Islamic Rep. of Iran | 41,083 | Rep. of Korea | 69,736  | India         | 123,559 |
| Greece               | 23,363 | Malaysia             | 40,493 | Japan         | 62,324  | Rep. of Korea | 95,885  |
| Hong Kong SAR, China | 21,059 | Greece               | 34,086 | Germany       | 45,432  | Japan         | 60,424  |
| China                | 17,201 | Morocco              | 33,094 | Greece        | 43,941  | Germany       | 56,410  |
| UK                   | 16,866 | Jordan               | 24,285 | Malaysia      | 41,159  | France        | 53,350  |

|          |        |                      |        |                      |        |         |        |
|----------|--------|----------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|---------|--------|
| Nigeria  | 16,348 | Hong Kong SAR, China | 23,657 | India                | 39,626 | Turkey  | 52,048 |
| Malaysia | 16,162 | Rep. of Korea        | 22,468 | Turkey               | 37,629 | Morocco | 51,503 |
| India    | 14,805 | Germany              | 22,424 | Italy                | 36,515 | Greece  | 49,631 |
| Canada   | 12,664 | USA                  | 19,707 | Hong Kong SAR, China | 35,141 | USA     | 41,181 |

Source: [www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/2010/rd20\\_10](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/2010/rd20_10)

Compared to China, Malaysia has been supporting the expansion and the development of higher education since her independence in 1957 and marks her appearance as one of the main exporters of students. By 1985, Malaysia had become the world's third largest exporter of students. However, the number of Malaysian students sent overseas has been dwindling especially after the economic crises of 1986 and 1997. To decrease the outflow of foreign exchange the government reduced the number of government-sponsored students sent overseas. At the same time, the government has also encouraged privately-funded students to study locally. Malaysia had since overhauled its policy of sending students abroad and emphasized the need for students to enrol in local institutions. This explained the significant increase in the number of students enrolled in local higher institutions after the 1986 and 1997 economic crises. From a positive perspective, the 1997 crisis propelled Malaysia into becoming a regional and international centre of education excellence.

This paper examines the trends and patterns of ISM in Malaysia. Even though ISM can be defined as any form of international mobility, we would like to focus our study on international student mobility (inward and outward) i.e. in the context of those students who travel from one country to the country of the education provider in order to enrol in a full duration course of study in a higher education institution. The following section explains the expansion of higher education in Malaysia leading to its emergence as one of the players in the higher education industry in the region.

## Expansion of Higher Education and International Student Mobility in Malaysia

Over the last four to five decades, the world had been experiencing an education boom where enrolment at all levels of education increased tremendously. Malaysia was no exception especially after the launching of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1970 which called for greater accessibility at all levels of education. A tremendous increase in enrolment was noted especially at the higher level where the number of students who qualified to enrol in local public universities grew considerably. The enrolment in local higher institutions was 8,633 in 1970, 26,410 in 1980 and 58,286 in 1990, an enrolment rate at 0.61 per cent, 1.63 per cent and 2.87 per cent, respectively.

The period from 1970 to 1995 saw an expansion of higher education through the implementation of the NEP. A greater portion of government expenditure was allocated for the growth of higher education but even then, public universities still could not meet the growing number of high school graduates wanting to enter public HEIs. Owing to the limited availability of places within the country, some students were sent overseas for higher education. Many opted to go overseas on their own and some were on scholarships. *Table 2* reveals that in 1975 only 16,162 Malaysians studied overseas but by 1985 there were about 40,493. In 1985, Malaysia also ranked as the third largest provider of outbound international students.

However, the 1986 and 1997 economic crises had their impact on the Malaysian economy. The weaker Malaysia currency during this period made studying overseas unaffordable and expensive to many. Some students who were on public scholarships were recalled and instructed to continue their studies locally. This situation together with the upsurge in demand for tertiary education and the inability of the public local institutions to meet the demand led to a new government policy and strategy. The government had to call upon the private sector to participate in providing higher education through the passing of the Private Higher Educational Institution Act (PHEIA) in 1996.



This in effect, opened the country to private colleges and universities as well as to elite foreign universities which catered to the demand from local and foreign students in their campus or branch campuses. Some of these private universities and colleges offered twinning programmes, franchising programmes and distance education.

Table 2 also reveals that Malaysia was no longer in the top ten exporters of outbound students by 2010. Malaysia is now extending its higher education facilities to the international market and is ready to capture the ISM from the region and beyond. To summarize, the positive impact of the 1997 crisis was the liberalization of education that set the stage for Malaysia to become a domestic and regional centre for higher education and an exporter of educational services through the consumption of higher education in Malaysia by foreign students. Malaysia has since set ambitious targets to attract thousands more foreign students in the coming years.

## Malaysia: Patterns and Trends of Outward Student Mobility

Malaysia has a long history of providing scholarships to its students to study abroad. Indeed, until 2007, it sent more students abroad than it received. As of 2009, of those Malaysian students studying overseas, 47.6 per cent enrolled in Australian universities, followed by 23.8 per cent in the United Kingdom and 16.2 per cent in the United States. In total, 96.9 per cent of these students enrolled in universities of OECD countries. Of the students who studied abroad, slightly less than half (47.6 per cent) were in advanced research institutions and most likely in doctoral programmes. The remaining 52.4 per cent were in professional programmes geared to prepare graduates for direct entry into the labour market.

**Table 3: Number of Malaysian Students Studying Overseas (2002–2009)**

| Country            | 2002   | 2003   | 2004   | 2005   | 2006   | 2007   | 2008   | 2009   |
|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Australia          | 15,700 | 15,448 | 15,434 | 15,909 | 14,918 | 13,010 | 15,124 | 17,311 |
| UK and Ireland     | 11,970 | 11,860 | 11,041 | 15,189 | 12,569 | 11,490 | 11,810 | 5,265  |
| USA                | 7,395  | 7,611  | 5,519  | 6,411  | 6,142  | 5,281  | 5,281  | 5,942  |
| Egypt              | 4,664  | 4,330  | 5,768  | 6,256  | 5,780  | 6,896  | 6,912  | 8,611  |
| Indonesia          | 1,337  | 1,225  | 1,607  | 2,444  | 3,630  | 4,565  | 5,735  | 5,844  |
| New Zealand        | 995    | 918    | 1,011  | 1,338  | 1,297  | 1,574  | 1,706  | 1,672  |
| Jordan             | 361    | 361    | 310    | 444    | 490    | 655    | 655    | 1,149  |
| Canada             | 231    | 231    | 196    | 230    | 238    | 312    | 543    | 582    |
| Saudi Arabia       | 127    | 125    | 125    | 132    | 138    | 125    | 84     | 84     |
| China              | NA     | NA     | NA     | NA     | NA     | NA     | 1,743  | 2,114  |
| Russian Federation | NA     | NA     | NA     | NA     | NA     | NA     | 2,621  | 2,261  |
| India              | NA     | NA     | NA     | NA     | NA     | NA     | 1,197  | 2,175  |
| Other countries    | NA     | NA     | 2,268  | 8,256  | 8,722  | 11,007 | 5,696  | 5,927  |
| Total              | 42,780 | 42,109 | 43,279 | 56,609 | 53,924 | 54,915 | 59,107 | 58,937 |

Note: NA – Not Available

Source: Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia.

As indicated earlier, Malaysia in 1985 was one of the top ten source countries providing international students. Countries like the United States, United Kingdom and Australia were the popular destinations for higher education as revealed in Table 3 and Table 4. Apparently, the number of Malaysian students going to United States reduced significantly from the end of the 1990s and by 2004 the number had plummeted to only 5,515 (Table 4). Many would attribute this downward trend to the post 9/11 factor but this may not be the complete picture. In fact, as shown Figure 1, the downward trend had already begun in 1998 and the triggering factor could have been the Asian financial crisis whereby Malaysians found overseas education too costly. Furthermore, during that

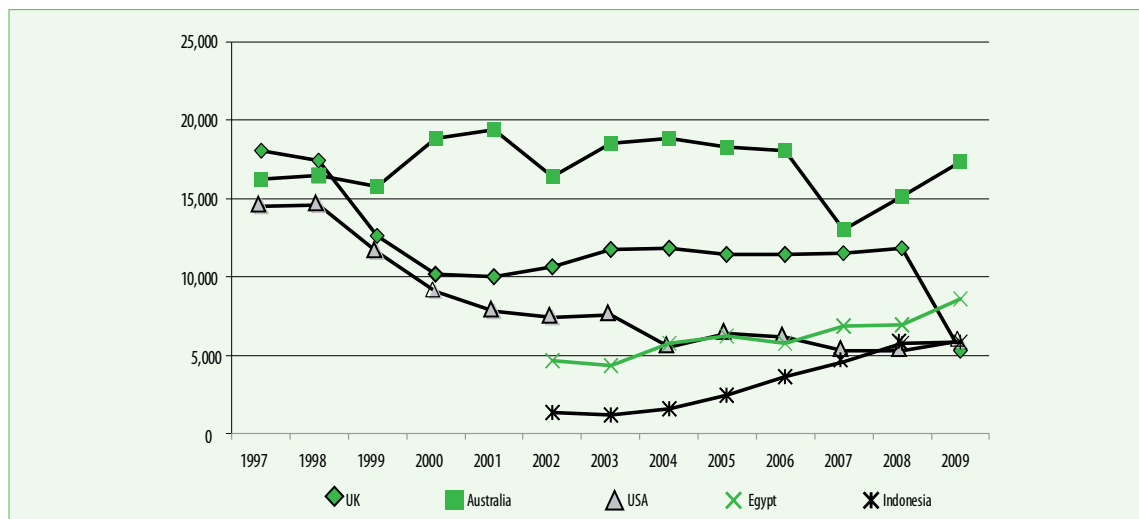
period, transnational higher education providers and branch campuses of reputable foreign higher education institutions established themselves in Malaysia thus increasing local capacity (Morshidi, 2006; Morshidi, 2008). Doubtless, the easing of regulations pertaining to private higher education in Malaysia has made studying locally and regionally possible and attractive.

Table 4 also reveals that there was a substantial decline in the inflow of Malaysian students to the United Kingdom. This decline was less dramatic compared to the outbound numbers to the United States. But, while still in the “top ten” source countries for the United Kingdom, the number of Malaysian students there decreased yearly. The decline in student numbers which began in 1998 was partly attributed to the high cost of higher education in the United Kingdom. At the time when the cost of overseas education was rising steeply (because of the strength of the British Pound vis-à-vis the Malaysian Ringgit), Malaysia was experiencing the debilitating aftermath of the Asian financial crisis. In order to reduce the outflow of funds, the government intervened by expanding the capacity of the local (private) higher education sector. The rise in student flows to the United Kingdom after 2002 could be attributed to sending sponsored students there to pursue higher degrees and other professional courses when places were still very limited locally. However, a sharp decrease in 2009 can be attributed to the global financial crisis.

Malaysian students’ presence in Australia is very strong, with 14,918 in 2006 (however, we note the discrepancy of data in Table 4 and Table 1 because of different sources of information). In 2006, Malaysia was third in importance after China and India in terms of foreign student enrolment in Australia. Again, the decline in student flows to Australia in 1999 and 2002 could be linked to the effects of the Asian financial crisis and September 11, respectively. But more importantly, the decline could be due to the fact that Malaysian students could now pursue their Australian-style education in Australian campuses at home: Monash University Sunway Campus, Swinburne University Sarawak and Curtin University branch campus in Miri, Sarawak. However, it is interesting to note that during the economic crisis in 2008-2009, the number of Malaysian students studying in Australia increased quite significantly from 15,124 in 2008 to 17,311 in 2009. Could this be due to the trade-off between the United Kingdom and Australia as the cost of studying in United Kingdom is relatively higher than in Australia?

As indicated in Figure 1, Egypt and Indonesia have become important destinations for Malaysian students. Unlike the United Kingdom and the United States, the number of Malaysian students studying in Egypt and Indonesia has gradually increased every year. Egypt in particular has traditionally been an important destination for Malaysian students since the 1970’s and 1980’s. However, we are not able to get data for that period.

**Figure 1: Malaysian Student Enrolment in the United States, Australia and United Kingdom Higher Institutions (1997–2009)**



Source: Verbik and Lasanowski (2007b) and Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia.

**Table 4: Top Five Countries Higher Education Destination for Malaysian Students (1997–2009)**

| Year | UK     | Australia | USA    | Egypt | Indonesia |
|------|--------|-----------|--------|-------|-----------|
| 1997 | 18,015 | 16,257    | 14,527 | NA    | NA        |
| 1998 | 17,380 | 16,485    | 14,597 | NA    | NA        |
| 1999 | 12,632 | 15,767    | 11,557 | NA    | NA        |
| 2000 | 10,140 | 18,868    | 9,074  | NA    | NA        |
| 2001 | 10,005 | 19,385    | 7,795  | NA    | NA        |
| 2002 | 10,680 | 16,431    | 7,395  | 4,664 | 1,337     |
| 2003 | 11,780 | 18,554    | 7,611  | 4,330 | 1,225     |
| 2004 | 11,805 | 18,819    | 5,519  | 5,768 | 1,607     |
| 2005 | 11,475 | 18,262    | 6,411  | 6,256 | 2,444     |
| 2006 | 11,457 | 18,074    | 6,142  | 5,780 | 3,630     |
| 2007 | 11,490 | 13,010    | 5,281  | 6,896 | 4,565     |
| 2008 | 11,810 | 15,124    | 5,281  | 6,912 | 5,735     |
| 2009 | 5,265  | 17,311    | 5,942  | 8,611 | 5,844     |

Source: Verbik and Lasanowski (2007b) and Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia.

## Inward Student Mobility: Patterns and Trends in Malaysia

Malaysia has set an ambitious target to attract more foreign students in the coming years. In its *National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2020*, Malaysia has confirmed a target of 100,000 international students by 2010 and is currently implementing strategies to become a major exporter of higher education in the Asian region. Admittedly, Malaysia has allocated substantial financial and human resources towards the development of “world-class” universities (as opposed to a world class higher education system). Thus far, Malaysia has been successful in attracting international students from countries in South-East Asia, the Far East, and the Middle East (Morshidi, 2008). Based on Verbik and Lasanowski’s (2007) analysis, Malaysia has an approximate two per cent share of the international student market, with around 55,000 foreign students enrolled in the country’s higher education institutions in 2006. (The actual figure from the Ministry of Higher Education was only 44,390 as revealed in *Table 5*). Traditionally, the large majority of them have come from the neighbouring Asian countries, such as Indonesia, Thailand, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Singapore and overwhelmingly, China. However, the pattern has changed recently with more students arriving from Middle East countries.

*Table 5* shows the number of international students enrolled in public and private higher education institutions in Malaysia. It is obvious that the private higher institutions are more successful than the public institutions in attracting international students. However, the percentage distribution of foreign student enrolment in private higher education institutions has dropped significantly from 82.1 per cent in 2006 to 70.1 per cent in 2007.

On the other hand, an increase of international student enrolment is noted in public higher education institutions from 17.9 per cent in 2006 to 29.9 per cent in 2007. This could be the result of the implementation of National Higher Education Strategic Plan in 2007 that called for more international students in local public higher education institutions. Overall, in less than a decade i.e., from year 2002 to 2009, the number of international students studying in Malaysia has increased tremendously at a whopping 189.7 per cent.

**Table 5: International Students' Enrolment in Public and Private Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia 2002–2009**

| Year | Public |        | Private |        | Total  |
|------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|
|      | N      | (%)    | N       | (%)    |        |
| 2002 | 5,045  | (18.1) | 22,827  | (81.9) | 27,872 |
| 2003 | 5,239  | (17.2) | 25,158  | (82.8) | 30,397 |
| 2004 | 5,735  | (18.1) | 25,939  | (81.0) | 31,674 |
| 2005 | 6,622  | (16.3) | 33,903  | (83.7) | 40,525 |
| 2006 | 7,941  | (17.9) | 36,449  | (82.1) | 44,390 |
| 2007 | 14,324 | (29.9) | 33,604  | (70.1) | 47,928 |
| 2008 | 18,485 | (26.7) | 50,679  | (73.3) | 69,164 |
| 2009 | 22,456 | (27.8) | 58,294  | (72.2) | 80,750 |

Source: Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia.

Table 6 and Table 7 identify the top twenty countries that provide international students to Malaysian public and private higher education institutions. It is interesting to note that public higher education institutions have attracted more students from the Middle East. Of the total number of foreign students studying in public higher education institutions 37.6 per cent were from Middle East in 2008, increasing to 38.8 per cent in 2009.

The private higher education institutions on the other hand, captured 21.5 per cent and 24.3 per cent of the Middle East students for 2008 and 2009, respectively. Islamic Republic of Iran emerged as the biggest provider of students among the Middle East countries. It is also interesting to note that in 2002, Iran was among the lowest contributors to Malaysian higher education institutions but had since increased its numbers significantly, both in public and private higher institutions.

Equally interesting is that although China has become the main provider of students to private higher education institutions, the number has gradually declined from 10,731 (47 per cent) in 2002 to 7,078 (12 per cent) in 2009.

**Table 6: Top Twenty Countries of Origin (based on 2009) of Foreign Students in Public Higher Institutions in Malaysia (2002–2009)**

| Country of origin      | 2002 | 2003  | 2004  | 2005  | 2006  | 2007  | 2008  | 2009  |
|------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Islamic Rep. of Iran   | 72   | 120   | 225   | 440   | 736   | 2,049 | 2,945 | 4,002 |
| Indonesia              | 633  | 1,496 | 1,721 | 1,504 | 1,850 | 3,000 | 3,402 | 3,713 |
| China                  | 118  | 119   | 175   | 282   | 373   | 1,160 | 1,525 | 2,099 |
| Yemen                  | 117  | 219   | 308   | 371   | 457   | 837   | 1,353 | 1,549 |
| Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | 202  | 264   | 191   | 260   | 294   | 456   | 635   | 1,190 |
| Iraq                   | 105  | 152   | 151   | 166   | 225   | 678   | 972   | 1,164 |
| Thailand               | 394  | 475   | 360   | 493   | 464   | 719   | 803   | 809   |
| Somalia                | 58   | 78    | 77    | 155   | 176   | 249   | 496   | 701   |
| Saudi Arabia           | 15   | 8     | 35    | 42    | 65    | 299   | 516   | 656   |
| Sudan                  | 160  | 284   | 237   | 278   | 257   | 432   | 529   | 576   |
| Nigeria                | 47   | 51    | 76    | 85    | 117   | 258   | 381   | 571   |
| Jordan                 | 108  | 156   | 190   | 240   | 284   | 478   | 544   | 554   |
| Singapore              | 195  | 172   | 198   | 256   | 321   | 401   | 402   | 477   |
| Bangladesh             | 103  | 152   | 175   | 187   | 230   | 309   | 341   | 436   |
| India                  | 267  | 139   | 171   | 211   | 209   | 257   | 274   | 325   |
| Palestinian Territory  | 26   | 34    | 66    | 106   | 114   | 140   | 208   | 294   |

|                   |       |       |       |       |       |        |        |        |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| Pakistan          | 64    | 74    | 129   | 130   | 137   | 164    | 189    | 207    |
| Brunei Darussalam | 73    | 81    | 80    | 85    | 94    | 142    | 148    | 70     |
| Maldives          | 25    | 37    | 55    | 108   | 124   | 181    | 209    | 70     |
| Oman              | 52    | 27    | 59    | 71    | 89    | 133    | 137    | 158    |
| Other countries   | 2,211 | 1,101 | 1,056 | 1,152 | 1,325 | 1,982  | 2,476  | 2,635  |
| Total             | 5,045 | 5,239 | 5,735 | 6,622 | 7,941 | 14,324 | 18,485 | 22,456 |

*Note:* Of this figure, 37.6 per cent were from the Middle East Countries in 2008 and 38.8 per cent in 2009.

*Source:* Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia.

**Table 7: Top Twenty Countries of Origin of Foreign Students in Private Higher Institutions in Malaysia (2007–2009)**

| Country of origin      | 2002   | 2003   | 2004   | 2005   | 2006   | 2007   | 2008   | 2009   |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| China                  | 10,731 | 10,230 | 9,075  | 9,035  | 6,937  | 5,308  | 6,452  | 7,078  |
| Islamic Rep. of Iran   | 174    | 254    | 478    | 741    | 1,048  | 1,629  | 3,659  | 6,930  |
| Indonesia              | 4,098  | 4,138  | 4,799  | 5,362  | 5,691  | 5,454  | 5,896  | 6,099  |
| Nigeria                | 141    | 128    | 305    | 537    | 1,696  | 2,626  | 5,043  | 5,398  |
| Yemen                  | 363    | 469    | 687    | 1,073  | 1,095  | 1,179  | 2,929  | 3,382  |
| Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | 144    | 163    | 139    | 202    | 109    | 149    | 1,153  | 2,831  |
| Botswana               | 152    | 160    | 160    | 206    | 517    | 1,489  | 2,348  | 1,938  |
| Sudan                  | 163    | 223    | 271    | 428    | 654    | 710    | 1,778  | 1,867  |
| Saudi Arabia           | 109    | 128    | 206    | 287    | 460    | 749    | 2,236  | 1,675  |
| Bangladesh             | 723    | 1,984  | 1,460  | 5,525  | 6,287  | 2,197  | 1,680  | 1,521  |
| Pakistan               | 549    | 1,084  | 1,297  | 1,819  | 1,819  | 1,164  | 1,325  | 1,473  |
| Maldives               | 542    | 525    | 565    | 645    | 759    | 886    | 1,156  | 1,153  |
| India                  | 689    | 791    | 762    | 997    | 1,163  | 1,093  | 1,039  | 1,010  |
| Sri Lanka              | 202    | 348    | 409    | 524    | 716    | 807    | 1,014  | 897    |
| Thailand               | 366    | 406    | 475    | 501    | 480    | 429    | 661    | 870    |
| Republic of Korea      | 321    | 369    | 548    | 644    | 555    | 639    | 1,479  | 828    |
| Tanzania               | -      | -      | -      | -      | -      | 353    | 592    | 821    |
| Kenya                  | 156    | 204    | 276    | 400    | 568    | 677    | 729    | 679    |
| Somalia                | 65     | 98     | 203    | 382    | 395    | 447    | 894    | 619    |
| Iraq                   | 28     | 31     | 33     | 41     | 92     | 233    | 649    | 548    |
| Other countries        | 3,111  | 3,425  | 3,791  | 4,554  | 5,500  | 6,676  | 7,967  | 10,677 |
| Total                  | 22,827 | 25,158 | 25,939 | 33,903 | 36,449 | 33,604 | 50,679 | 58,294 |

*Note:* Of this figure, 21.5 per cent were from the Middle East Countries in 2008 and 24.3 per cent in 2009.

*Source:* Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia.

Table 8 shows international student enrolment by types of private higher education institutions for 2008 and 2009. Private colleges have become a popular destination among foreign students especially those from China and more recently from Middle East countries. This is probably due to the fact that private colleges offer foundation or preparatory programmes for international students before they embark on their degree programmes in another country. Thus, some of the private colleges in Malaysia may have been used as a launch pad for students who treat it as a transit point to other countries.

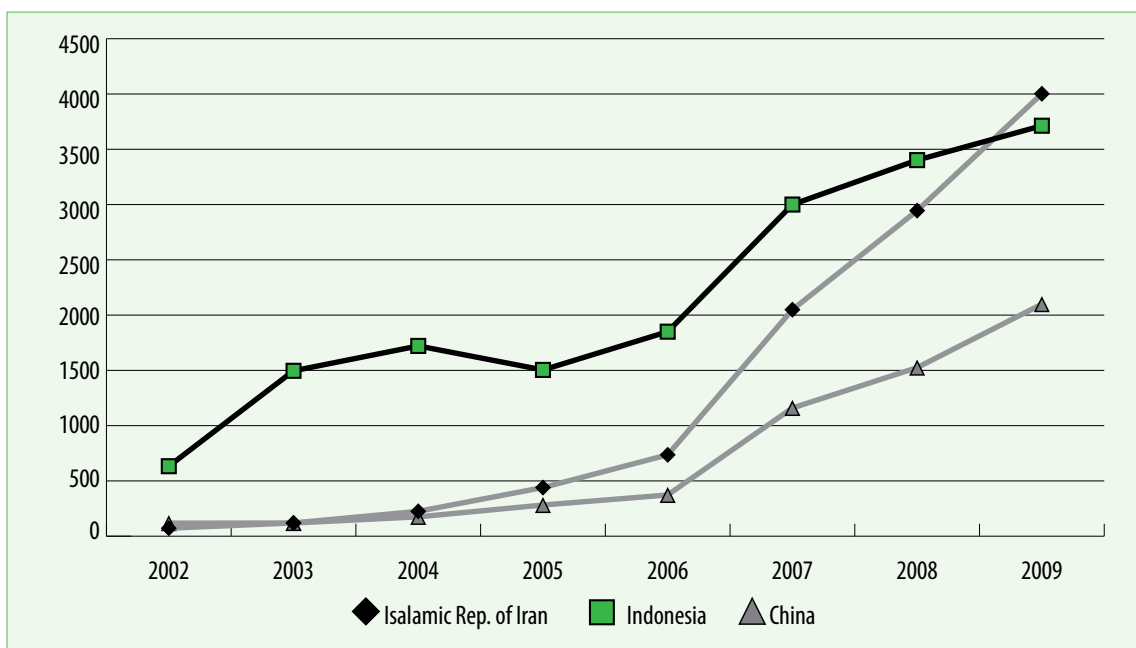
**Table 8: International Student Enrolment by Types of Private Higher Education Institutions (2008–2009)**

| Types of Private HE institutions       | 2008          | 2009          |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| University                             | 9,564         | 13,816        |
| PHEIs branch campus (university level) | 2,480         | 2,195         |
| Foreign universities branch campus     | 2,937         | 3,721         |
| College universities                   | 13,195        | 14,699        |
| Colleges                               | 22,503        | 23,863        |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>50,679</b> | <b>58,294</b> |

Source: Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia.

Figure 2 and Figure 3 show student enrolment trends from three main source countries (Islamic Republic of Iran, Indonesia and China) in public and private higher education institutions, respectively. From Figure 2, we note that there is a sharp increase of student numbers from these three countries in 2007. Iran which appeared as the lowest contributor in 2002 had become a major contributor to Malaysian public higher education institutions by 2009. In general, we can see that there is an upward trend of student enrolment in public higher education institutions from these three countries and it is more obvious for Iran.

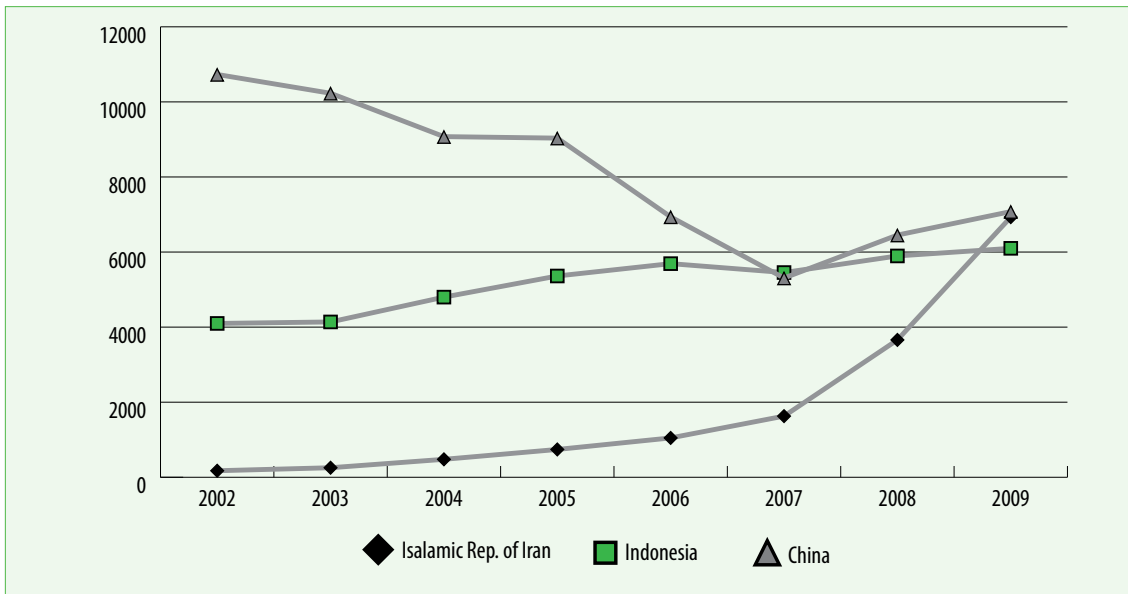
**Figure 2: Top Three Contributors of Foreign Students to Public Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia (2002–2009)**



Source: Verbik and Lasanowski (2007b) and Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia.

Figure 3 shows student enrolment trends in private higher education institutions from 2002 to 2009. We note that the student enrolment trend for each country varies significantly. Student enrolment from China was at its peak in 2002 but thereafter was on a declining trend. The number plummeted to its lowest in 2007, but slowly recovered in 2008 and 2009. Islamic Republic of Iran on the other hand was at its lowest in 2002 with 174 students, but thereafter increased quite significantly every year reaching 6,930 students in 2009. The number of students from Indonesia grew consistently from 2002 becoming the third largest contributor in private higher education institutions in Malaysia.

**Figure 3: Top Three Contributors of Foreign Students to Private Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia (2002–2009)**

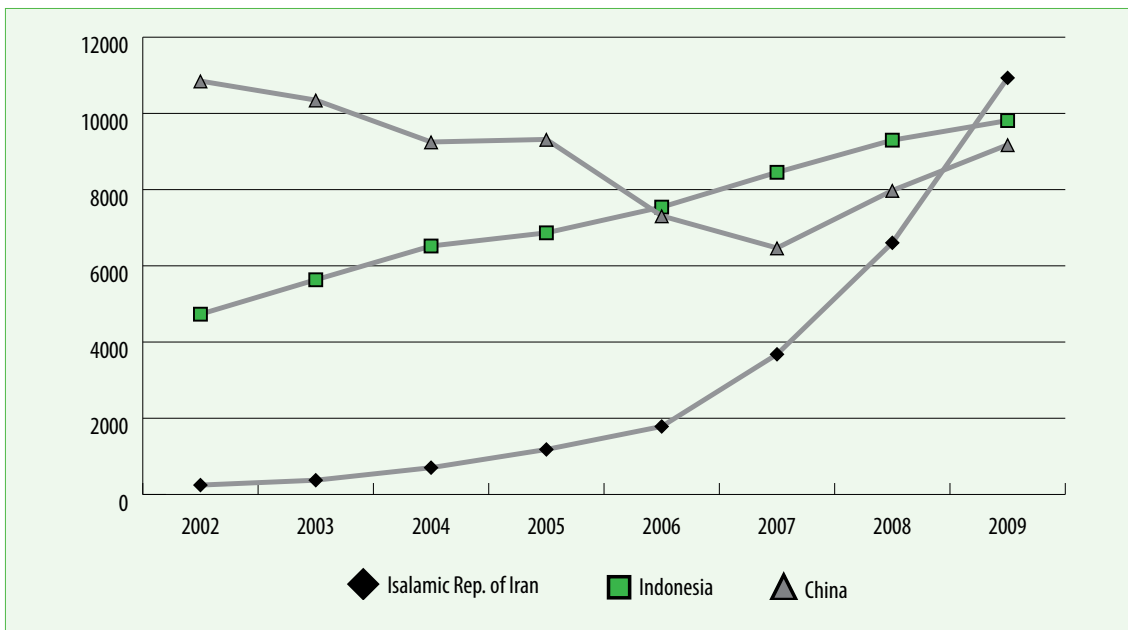


Source: Verbik and Lasanowski (2007b) and Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia.

When the total number of international students in public and private higher education institutions is combined, as shown in Figure 4, Islamic Republic of Iran appears as the top provider of international students for Malaysia in 2009 with 13.5 per cent of the total. This is followed by students from Indonesia (12.2 per cent) and China (11.4 per cent). It is interesting to note that the number of Iranian students has increased at an astounding rate, from only 246 in 2002 to 10,932 in 2009.

The number of Indonesian students has also increased gradually every year, from 4,731 in 2002 to 9,812 in 2009. China on the other hand, shows a significant reduction in student enrolment in Malaysia’s higher education institutions, from 10,849 in 2002 to 9,177 in 2009.

**Figure 4: Top Three Contributors of Foreign Students to Malaysia’s Public and Private Higher Education Institutions (2002–2009)**



Source: Verbik and Lasanowski (2007b) and Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia.



## Challenges and Prospects

Malaysia is looking strategically at the Middle East and the Arabian Gulf region to meet the 100,000 foreign students target by 2010. Presently, they form the majority of the international students in Malaysia. However, Malaysia must not forget that the Arabian Gulf countries are also spending hefty sums to upgrade infrastructure and increase capacity and capability. They are also inviting reputable universities from the United States to provide an American-style education in the Arabian Gulf region. A United States higher education is seen as a worthy investment due to its “world-class” image, quality provision and high “brand” visibility in the international market (Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007b). The governments of the Arabian Gulf countries realize this fact. Currently, the United Arab Emirates is already hosting 40 international branch campuses, a quarter of all such ventures in the world. Two-thirds of these foreign campuses are located in Dubai International Academic City. This prime position is largely driven by high student demand, coupled with the country’s need to build a knowledge economy and reduce its dependence on the export of oil (Becker, 2010).

By the time the huge investment in infrastructure and capacity in the Arabian Gulf region is in place, the number of students from that region coming to Malaysia will decrease drastically. Parents will be more comfortable having their children study closer to home believing that they will not be exposed to customs and traditions that may be viewed as contrary to theirs. If in the near future the United States government decides to ease permanent residency requirements for highly-skilled international graduates so as to entice them to choose to study at American institutions in the United States, we can anticipate that the flow of Middle Eastern students to American universities will increase and the flow to Malaysia will be significantly reduced. Thus, the over-dependence on the Middle East market is not a sound strategy in the longer term.

Like Malaysia, Singapore is also aggressively working towards becoming an education service provider in the region. The Singapore government has also formulated policies to require colleges and universities to aim for a foreign student population of 20 per cent to promote the internationalization of education in Singapore (“Foreign Students in Singapore”, 2009). It also aims to increase the number of foreign students studying in Singapore to 150,000 by 2015. By 2006, Singapore already hosted over 80,000 international students and in 2009 the international student numbers were recorded at 97,000. The majority of these students come from mainland China, India, Malaysia and Indonesia. Singapore is not only a popular destination for Asian students but also to students from Europe, the United States and Australia. Many Western students consider Singapore to be a comfortable introduction to Asia that provides them with a Western styled curriculum in English at globally ranked institutions (Eu-Asia Higher Education Platform (EAHEP)2010).

The Economic Development Board of Singapore has also continued to pursue brand-name foreign universities to set up specialized campuses to serve an international market for Singapore (British Council, 2009). Already, 16 international branch-campus have been set up comprising global brand names such as INSEAD, Chicago School of Business and Duke Medical School, New York University.

The emphasis on turning Singapore into an education hub in the region and to increase a substantial number of international students by 2015 has become a threat not only to her neighbouring countries such as Malaysia (which has a similar mission), but also to Anglophone countries which have been the leaders in international student markets. To attract more foreign students, Singapore also provides subsidies, scholarships, school fees and loans to reduce the study costs to local and foreign students. Furthermore, with fairly liberal immigration requirements, it is easier to attract foreign talent to work in Singapore after graduating (EAHEP, 2010).

## Concluding Remarks

The government of Malaysia seeks to promote Malaysia as a regional education hub and to attract more international students. The goal is to increase the number of international students in the Malaysian system to 100,000 by the year 2010. It is noted that the majority of Malaysia's international student body as of 2009 is from Asia, primarily from Islamic Republic of Iran, China and Indonesia at 13.5 per cent, 12.2 per cent and 11.36 per cent respectively. Measures were also taken to attract and recruit students from Pakistan and the Middle East.

Efforts were taken to develop education as an export industry as a source of foreign exchange earnings. These included fact-finding missions, government-to-government initiatives on accreditation of qualifications and education promotion activities. As a result, a total of 80,779 foreign students from various countries enrolled in local institutions of higher learning in 2009 compared with 69,164 in 2008, i.e. an increase of 16.8 per cent in just a year. The preferred fields of study of foreign students are business administration, ICT and engineering.

The rapid expansion of private higher institutions together with the growth in student numbers led to increased emphasis on the promotion of Malaysia as a centre of educational excellence for foreign students. The number of foreign students enrolled in private higher institutions of education grew from 13,472 in 2001 to 40,525 in 2005 and to 58,294 in 2009. The education sector has since contributed towards export revenue and the reduction of the perennial services deficit in the country.

The number of international students studying in Malaysia in 2009 has increased threefold since 2002, with 27,872 students in 2002 soaring to 80,750 in 2009. The increasing number of foreign student enrolments is turning Malaysia into the education 'hub' for South-East Asia it aspires to be. The majority of the country's international student population are from Islamic Republic of Iran, Indonesia and China. The enrolment from these three countries numbered 29,921 in 2009 and represents approximately 37.05 per cent of the country's total international student population of 80,750.

More recently, Malaysian recruiters have widened their search for international students by targeting many countries in the Middle East including the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon (Sedgwick, 2004 as cited in Morshidi, 2008, p. 87). As a result of these efforts the number of students from the Arab world at Malaysian higher education institutions, in particular at Malaysia's International Islamic University (which uses both Arabic and English as the medium of instruction), has been growing steadily (Morshidi, 2008, p.87). Furthermore, the pull factors for Middle East students to Malaysia are lower costs, bureaucratic convenience and security and the attractiveness of a Western style Education.

## References

- Becker, R. 2010. International Branch Campuses: Trends and Directions. *International Higher Education*, Vol. 58, Winter, pp. 3–5.
- British Council. 2003. *Vision 2020: Forecasting International Student Mobility – A UK Perspective*. UK.
- British Council. 2009. *Singapore Market Introduction*. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-information-background-Singapore> (Accessed 1 March 2011.)
- Eu-Asia Higher Education Platform (EAHEP). 2010. *Developing Asian Education Hubs*. <http://www.eahep.org/asiahigher-education/asian-policy-drivers/127-developing-asian-education-hubs.html> (Accessed 1 March 2011.)
- Foreign Students in Singapore. 2009, March 24. Ministry of Education, Singapore. <http://www.moe.gov.sg/media/parliamentary-replies/2009/03/foreign-students-in-singapore.php> (Accessed 1 March 2011.)
- Lasanowaski, V. 2009. *International Student Mobility: Status Report 2009*. The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education.
- Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia. 2009. *Higher Education Statistics 2005-2009 and Compilation of Statistics*. Kuala Lumpur, Ministry of Higher Education.
- Morshidi, S. 2006. Transnational Higher Education in Malaysia: Balancing Benefits and Concerns Through Regulations. Huang, F. (ed.). *Transnational Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific Region*. Hiroshima, Japan, Research Institute for Higher Education, Hiroshima University, pp. 109-150. (RIHE International Publication Series No. 10.)
- Morshidi, S. 2008. The Impact of September 11 on International Student Flow into Malaysia: Lesson Learned. *International Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies*, Vol.4, No.1, pp. 79–94.
- Redden, E. 2010. *The international Student Scene*. *Overseas Association for College Admission Counseling*. <http://new.oacac/2010/06/02/the-international-student-scene> (Accessed 1 March 2011.)
- Verbik, L., and Lasanowski, V. 2007a. *International Student Mobility: Patterns and Trends*. *World Education News and Reviews*. <http://www.wes.org/educators/pdf/StudentMobility.pdf> (Accessed 1 March 2011.)
- Verbik, L., and Lasanowski, V. 2007b. *International student mobility: Patterns and Trends*, The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, UK, International Strategic Information Service, Woburn House, London.

# International Student Mobility: Philippines

Jean C. Tayag

*Commission on Higher Education, Philippines*

## Introduction

The Philippines is an archipelagic country of 94 million people with a long history of colonial rule, first under Spain, then under the United States of America.

Hence, the nation's early experiences with international student mobility (ISM) were as a recipient of colonial education and later, a more subtle form of indoctrination called "benevolent assimilation". After independence, the nation continued to benefit from ISM components of international education exchanges under the aegis of various donors and countries other than its two former colonial sponsors.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, the government started actively initiating and engaging in cross-border collaboration and exchange through bilateral agreements with other countries and provision of scholarships for study abroad in priority disciplines needed for the country's development. These initiatives were in recognition of the important role of such collaboration in fostering mutual understanding and co-operation among nations and in developing the country's human resources.

On their own initiative, the leading higher education institutions joined regional university networks and entered into bilateral agreements with foreign counterparts for the conduct of academic exchange programmes in order to enhance their institutional capacity and international standing and at the same time participate in the collective pursuit and advancement of knowledge.

Amidst globalization and the heightened commercialization of cross-border education, the country's involvement in ISM and internationalization of education has yet to be appreciated within and outside the country. At present, the Philippines is a very minor player as a consumer and provider in the international student market, accounting for less than half a per cent of the total international student movements in 2008.

Is the nation inclined to or should it expand its level of participation? Should it try to boost student mobility out of and/or into the country? What for? Does it have clear policy goals to enhance international student mobility? What would it entail to improve its competitive position as a destination for students and a provider of international education programmes?

This paper retraces the development and current state of ISM from and into the country, examines pertinent policy pronouncements, and based on the current state of the Philippine higher education system, reflects on whether or not and how the system should move from its peripheral position towards a better vantage point in the international student market.

## ISM As an Instrument of Colonial/Neo-colonial Policy

The country was under colonial rule for centuries – as a colony of Spain for almost four centuries, then as a colony/neo-colony of the United States of America for another five decades.

Study abroad programmes under the colonial regime served as a tool for “indoctrinating the subject people into their colonial statuses and roles and equipping them with knowledge, attitudes and skills required of subservient and loyal subjects” (Cortes, 1993). As Varghese (2008) aptly observed, overseas education under colonialism served to develop reliable and competent administrative support for the colonial government and as a means of social control.

During the Spanish regime, the lone university – the University of Sto. Tomas and the few schools that were established at that time were limited to the elite of the colonial society – the European born and local Spaniards, the mestizos (i.e. the children of Spanish-Filipino marriages) and a few native Filipinos. These also had limited offerings, intended for those aspiring to become priests and clerks in the colonial administration. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and the ensuing increase in commercial activities between the Philippines and the rest of the world, enabled the wealthy Filipino students to go to Europe for advanced studies in medicine, the sciences, engineering, arts and law. Ironically, among those who went to study abroad were the group of ilustrados who founded the Propaganda Movement that eventually led to the Philippine revolution against Spain in the 1896 (Caoili and Valenzuela, 2000).

During the American regime (1898-1946), the American system of secularized public education was introduced with the declared objective of preparing and teaching Filipinos in self-government. The Philippine Normal School was established in 1902 and the University of the Philippines (UP), in 1908. Like the bureaucracy, these institutions were initially run and staffed mostly by Americans. Overseas education was needed to produce the first generation academics to teach in the state university and professionals to serve in the colonial bureaucracy. The colonial government thus sent Filipinos to the United States to study to become teachers, engineers, physicians and lawyers. The Rockefeller Foundation, a private American institution, also provided support that enabled Filipinos to pursue graduate education in United States and Europe. By 1938, the number of higher education institutions had increased to seven universities and 64 colleges, most of which were privately owned. Much of the progress made was, however, destroyed during World War II and the Japanese occupation (Caoili and Valenzuela, 2000).

Again, post war Philippines received foreign assistance for the education and training of the workforce needed for reconstruction and development, this time from more sources: From the United States government through the Fulbright Program and the East-West Center scholarships and travel grants for study abroad; from private donors such as the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations; and other international donors including countries that had hitherto no strong historical and political links with the Philippines. The latter sponsors provided scholarships for Filipinos to study, train and undertake research in universities in North America and Europe, as well as for foreign academics and scholars to study, teach and do research in Philippine universities.

## ISM for Human Resource and Institutional Development

Post-colonial Philippine participation in international educational exchanges had been largely donor-funded, often linked with technical assistance or Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) programmes offered by countries like Australia, Belgium, Germany, India, Israel, Japan, Rep. of Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand and Spain.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, the country assumed a more active role and started initiating and engaging in cross-border collaboration and exchanges. The Philippine Government entered into bilateral agreements with several countries for cultural co-operation and education exchanges, particularly in the fields of agriculture, fisheries, medical science, health and related courses, engineering, natural sciences and social sciences.

The government also provided scholarships for study abroad in priority disciplines needed for the country's development. In order to strengthen engineering and science education in the country, the government even took out a loan from the World Bank to co-fund (with the Japanese Government) the Engineering and Science Education Project or ESEP, 1992-1998, which provided scholarships for 5,935 students/faculty including more than 300 who studied abroad.

With the objective of exposing Filipino students to work environments in other countries, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) supported the International Practicum Training Programme (IPTP). Under this programme, participating HEIs could send qualified students for a six month on-the-job training outside the country. This ongoing programme has been incorporated into the hotel and restaurant management and tourism courses in most schools and hundreds of undergraduate students have availed of it to do OJT in hotels and restaurants in Asian and Western countries.

On their own initiative, or with CHED assistance, the leading higher education institutions, particularly the University of the Philippines, De La Salle University, University of Sto. Tomas, Ateneo de Manila University and University of Asia and the Pacific, participated in academic exchange programmes through bilateral agreements with foreign counterparts. HEIs also joined regional university networks such as the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAHL), the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) which offer venues for mutual co-operation towards enhancing institutional capacities and international standing while addressing common concerns of universal scholarship. These international linkage activities involve not only ISM but also other forms of cross-border collaboration such as faculty mobility, programme mobility and joint research projects.

## Outbound ISM

The number of outbound Filipino students increased from 6,974 in 2004 to 8,443 in 2008 (*Table 1*). Still, the number is small, representing only 0.3 per cent of the total enrolment in the local tertiary education sector and 0.1 per cent of the total college age population.

Students studying abroad sponsored under various ODA and government programmes make up only about two per cent of the total number of outbound students (*Table 2*). Add the few hundred faculty and students involved in HEI-to-HEI exchange arrangements and those who manage to get into the highly competitive scholarships and mixed study-work assistance programmes of individual universities abroad, and the total number of sponsored/assisted outbound students would still be small. The remainder could be assumed to comprise self-financing outbound students.

The growing number of non-scholarship or unsponsored overseas Filipino students could mean that the country now has more affluent families who can afford to finance studies abroad. There may be other explanations for this development, though, such as overseas studies serving as entry, transit or a concurrent channel for overseas employment.

The destination countries of outbound students are, understandably the United States, the country's former colonizer, United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea, and New Zealand (*Table 3*). These are countries that have been providing ODA to the country. There are also universities in these countries that offer attractive scholarship packages and/or provide other ways of helping

students finance their studies as teaching fellows, research assistants, or interns, in lieu of outright grants.

How many of these overseas Filipino students will return after completing their studies abroad remains to be seen. One strategy used by some countries to attract foreign students is to offer opportunities for gaining permanent residency and employment rights after graduation (Australia's Monash University 2006 survey, cited in Verbik and Lasanowski, 2007). Add to this recruitment strategy the prestige that goes with credentials earned in reputable foreign universities and the pull of better paid employment opportunities abroad, the temptation to emigrate would be hard to resist especially if one had or could find the wherewithal to do so.

The association between overseas studies and overseas employment/migration should be worth looking into. It is noted that the top destinations of outbound Filipino students are also among the top destinations of the country's Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) or top remittance sources of OFW earnings.

## Inbound ISM

The data from UNESCO show an increase in the number of foreign students in Philippine tertiary institutions from 2,323 in 2001 to 5,136 in 2006, then a 48 per cent decline to 2,665 in 2008 (*Table 4*). Another set of data shows a slightly different and more dramatic picture, indicating that the number of inbound tertiary (post-secondary and higher) education students more than doubled in the last five years (*Table 5*). Foreign students enrolled in higher education institutions alone (excluding those enrolled in post-secondary and TESDA-listed schools) totalled 8,125 (*Table 6*), accounting for 0.29 per cent of total higher education enrolment of 2,770,965 in the country in Academic Year 2010-2011.

The top consumers of Philippine tertiary education are Koreans, Chinese, Taiwanese, Indonesians, Americans and Iranians (*Table 5*). Increasing numbers from developing countries in Asia and Africa are also observable.

Foreign students are distributed in 134 HEIs, 118 private and 16 public, throughout the country. Hence, 7.5 per cent of the country's total number HEIs is actively involved in hosting foreign students.

The biggest concentrations of foreign students are found in the National Capital Region or Metro Manila with 2,891 and Region VII or Metro Cebu with 2,049. Next most favoured destinations are Region III (particularly Angeles City), and Cordillera Administration Region (particularly Baguio City).

Metro Manila serves as a melting pot, hosting 2,891 students from more than 60 countries. The biggest groups of foreign students in the city are Chinese (1,064), Koreans (696), Indians (162) and Americans (156). In Metro Cebu, the biggest groups are Iranians, Kuwaitis, Africans and Koreans.

Institution-wise, the HEIs with the biggest numbers of foreign students are: Far Eastern University and De La Salle University in Metro Manila, and University of the Visayas in Region VII.

In terms of academic programmes the courses that appear to be most popular among foreign students are health and allied disciplines including nursing and medicine, English, education, IT-related, engineering and business administration including hotel and restaurant management.

Often cited advantages of studying in the Philippines are: the use of English as the medium of instruction and communication; the presence of good institutions offering a wide variety of academic programmes; the relatively low cost of living and affordable tuition and other school fees; and the hospitality and friendliness of the people.



## Policy Pronouncements on ISM

In total, the international student flows from and into the country accounted for less than half a per cent of total international student movements in 2008. This insignificant level of participation is not for lack of an articulated national desire to participate actively.

Two years after its establishment in 1994, the CHED (1996) articulated a national vision of the country as a “Center of Education and Training in the Asia-Pacific Region”, and the higher education sectoral goal of “ensuring the attainment of empowered and globally competitive Filipinos through provision of undergraduate and graduate education which meets international standards of quality and excellence”. Programme thrusts towards this vision and goal include:

- Development and promotion of academic exchanges between and among local and international HEIs, scholarship grants, international conventions and similar activities, and
- Optimization of foreign assistance in current critical areas such as agricultural technology education, environmental education and maritime education.

The earlier mentioned government initiatives to promote inter-country cultural co-operation, educational exchanges, and studies abroad were in line with the above pronouncements. Concomitantly, the government declared its policy:

...to continuously promote the Philippines as a centre for education in the Asia Pacific Region by (i) encouraging foreign students to study in the country, (ii) developing awareness of the Philippine educational system among neighbouring countries, and (iii) allowing duly accepted foreign students to avail of the facilities of the Philippine educational system. (Presidential Executive Order No 188 s. 1994, Executive Order No. 423 s. 1997, and Executive Order No. 285 s. 2000).

The 2000 Presidential issuance stipulates that only schools with programmes accredited by the Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP) or with equivalent accreditation by CHED and Bureau of Immigration (BI) are authorized to accept foreign students. At present there are 381 HEIs (21 per cent of the total number of HEIs in the country) authorized by the Bureau of Immigration to accept foreign students: 57 public and 326 private.

The Order also:

- regulates foreign enrolment in courses of study where there is shortage of facilities such as medicine and dentistry, by requiring issuance of Certificate of Eligibility for Admission (CEA) addressed to the accepting school;
- provides mechanisms and procedures for accreditation of advanced credits earned in college or in the eleventh and twelfth years of secondary education in foreign countries;
- sets the length of stay of a foreign student in the country, which should be consistent with the length of the course of study to which he has been accepted by a Philippine school;
- requires foreign students to seek permission to change course of study or school;
- requires monthly and by term monitoring of foreign students by the concerned schools and the BI;
- allows conversion from tourist visa category to student visa or issuance of Special Study Permit; and
- allows foreigners already in the country under any valid visa arrangement to apply/petition for conversion to student visa or for the issuance of a Special Study Permit provided all requirements are met.

In addition, CHED issued CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No 40, s 2008 which sets a limit to the number of foreign students that a HEI can accept. The CMO provides that:

...No higher education institution shall be established exclusively for aliens, and no group of aliens shall comprise more than one-third of the enrolment of any school except for institutions established for foreign diplomatic personnel and their dependents and unless otherwise provided for by law, for other foreign temporary residents.

The above issuances are supposedly meant to liberalize the procedures and requirements in the entry of foreign students without compromising national security. However, except for the provisions on accreditation of previously earned units and visa conversion, these are essentially regulatory and could, in effect, inhibit the entry of foreign students.

Other than the regulatory policies, there are barriers or factors that could inhibit international student mobility into the country.

## Barriers or Inhibiting Factors to ISM

### Outbound student mobility

The lack of two years basic education preparation is a major setback for graduates wanting to pursue advanced studies abroad. Many baccalaureate degrees earned in local HEIs are considered to be equivalent to only two years of college work in other countries. Hence, baccalaureate graduates wanting to enrol for graduate studies in the said countries have to take back-subjects before qualifying for admission to post-baccalaureate programmes.

Financial constraint is another inhibiting consideration. The Philippines is already classified as a low middle income country, but the income group that could afford to finance study abroad is still small. The government has also limited funds for supporting studies abroad even for acquiring expertise needed for the country's development. In view of the high cost involved, government scholarships for overseas study are highly selective, targeted usually for advanced or specialized studies in priority fields which the local higher education system cannot adequately provide due to lack of facilities and qualified faculty.

There is also an underlying anxiety that study abroad would just be a stepping stone for eventual emigration. In the government foreign scholarship programmes that have been implemented to date, some scholars have chosen not to return after earning their degree. Some returned to render the obligatory return service in the country only to leave again for overseas employment or permanent residence abroad. Self-financed students have no such return service obligation

### Inbound student mobility

As mentioned earlier, the essentially regulatory policy on foreign students could inhibit student mobility into the country.

In a National Convention of Foreign Students convened by CHED in 2010, several issues were raised by the foreign students themselves.

- The guidelines for equivalency and recognition of eleventh and twelfth years of secondary education taken abroad are not clear to students and sometimes to prospective host HEIs. Many foreign students claim that the last two years of secondary education should be counted as equivalent to the first two years of college in the Philippines and hence insist that they should be allowed to proceed to the third year. Some applicants even demand automatic admission to the Medicine Proper without going through the 3–4 year pre-medicine programme. Most of these students go through the process of accreditation eventually, but some return home.

- There is a clamour to adapt curricula to respond to the needs and preferences of foreign students. Among the subjects recommended to be made optional are Philippine History, Life of Rizal, Religious Studies (favouring the Christian religion), and Physical Education
- Foreign graduates of local HEIs, except those with dual citizenship, are not allowed to take the professional licensure examinations in the country. This is consistent with the constitutional provision limiting the practice of professions in the Philippines to Filipino citizens except in cases covered by treaty or on grounds of reciprocity, or cases as prescribed by law.
- Student visa processing needs further streamlining.

## Other Modalities of Cross-Border Education

As discussed earlier, the country has already been drawn into the international education market via Mode 2 - consumption abroad in the form of study abroad programmes and student exchanges, and Mode 4 - presence of natural persons through faculty exchanges and visiting professorships.

The two other modes of commercialization under the framework of the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) are also now observable in the country's education sector: Cross-border supply (Mode 1) via e-learning or distance learning programmes, and commercial presence (Mode 3) - through the offshore campus delivery of courses/programmes. There are now eight transnational providers of higher education that have been granted CHED authority to deliver twinning/offshore programmes in the country.

However, the regulatory framework for transnational education provision through Mode 3 is less encouraging compared to that for ISM. The rationale is to ensure that the education being provided is of acceptable quality and to protect Filipino consumers from "diploma mills" and unscrupulous operators. The establishment of a foreign school is governed by applicable laws of the Philippines and its operation is governed by policies, standards and guidelines prescribed by CHED (CMO No.2, s.2008) pursuant to law. Regulatory measures include: establishment, registration and ownership requirements, including foreign equity ceiling of 40 per cent; mandatory government authority to operate; accreditation; professional regulation; civil service requirements; and tax and foreign exchange regulations.

The regulatory regime has certain loopholes though, including: unclear delineation of regulation responsibilities (between education agencies) over ladderized/articulated programmes and lack of regulation of gray area programmes; and lack of clear equivalency criteria for recognition and accreditation issued by accrediting bodies in different countries (Tayag, 2007). There is thus a growing concern that the present regulations are not enough to prevent fraudulent and fake foreign providers from settling in, offering mediocre/poor quality programmes that duplicate what are already available locally, or "buying into the system's worst pathology" (Diokno, 2010).

## Current Inclinations Towards ISM and Cross-Border Education

Is the country inclined to upgrade its level of participation?

The country is bound to be drawn deeper into the international education market.

The government has acceded to subject selected industries in the services sector under the rules of the GATS, but it has not yet made any specific commitment on the educational services subsector. Still, the reality of the impact of globalization and the need for as well as the advantages of internationalization of higher education, are well recognized.

The vision and goals relative to ISM and internationalization of higher education that were articulated in the Long-term Higher Education Plan for 1996–2005 still hold. These have been restated in the successor plans formulated by the CHED. The crucial question, however, is – how should the country’s participation in the global education market be enhanced in order to maximize the benefits to be derived and minimize the attendant risks?

Reluctance to fully participate in the global market stems from reservations regarding the readiness of the local higher education institutions as well as their graduates, the Filipino professionals, to engage in the various modalities of global education. The opening of the educational sector to liberalization may serve as a potential threat to the survival of some schools (Tullao, Jr., 2003). As Bernardo (2003) pointed out, internationalization cum globalization of higher education might, in effect, exacerbate the existing inequities, weaknesses and inefficiencies in Philippine higher education.

Still, the rational stance is to face up to the challenges by addressing the internal and external inefficiencies that render the system unprepared or inadequately prepared to participate in the global education market.

Hence, the government should continue to support studies abroad in the disciplines needed for the country’s development, in order to meet skills requirements as well as to build up the higher education system’s capacity to provide these in the future. As pointed out earlier, however, government support for outward ISM will be limited, highly selective and targeted.

There is a general sentiment in higher education circles that the system could benefit more from ISM into the country. The higher education system is huge with more than 2,000 HEIs including satellite campuses. With the increasing migration of students from the private to the public institutions, many private HEIs now have plenty of room to accommodate foreign students. The additional income that international students bring would enable the host HEIs to upgrade their capacities and the quality of their programmes. Besides, inward ISM would be a countermeasure to offset the effects of the brain drain caused by self-financed outbound ISM and labour export or deployment of overseas Filipino workers.

The inbound ISM figures look promising. The government and the HEIs themselves could project their strengths in specific disciplines/fields to attract more scholars and students. Reforms should also be effected in current policies and procedures for processing student visas and special study permits as these have been identified as major disincentives for foreign students and scholars to come to the Philippines.

The local market for foreign distance/online as well as for twinning and articulation programmes remain small and are not likely to grow fast in the next few years, despite the attractiveness of having international credentials. These programmes are rather expensive compared to similar programmes being offered by local HEIs. Hence, they tend to cater to the same high income clients that are being served by the country’s elite institutions.

At the moment, there are no strong signals for considering a full open door policy for cross-border higher education provision through a commercial presence. There are, in fact, negative sentiments about the few foreign providers that have gotten in. They are offering programmes that duplicate local offerings. There is also a felt need to revalidate the quality of their programme offerings, and the standards used by their accreditors. The regulatory framework for commercial cross-border provision obviously has to be strengthened to ensure the quality of and direct such provision towards the disciplines and parts of the country where it is needed.

In the meantime, the government and the local higher education system could prepare for more active participation in the international education market by addressing the barriers to ISM (as well as its possible negative consequences) including full implementation of the 12-year basic education cycle (K-12 programme), upgrading of local tertiary education programmes to meet international standards, and strengthening of the country’s quality assurance systems.

Participation in the globalizing education market should, however, not lose sight of the primary missions of the local higher education system, particularly the public institutions – to broaden access to quality higher education, help promote equity in the country, and provide the skilled workforce needed for national development.

**Table 1: Outbound Student Mobility Ratios in the Philippines 2004–2008**

|   | 2004  | 2005  | 2006  | 2007  | 2008  |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Students from the Philippines studying abroad | 6,974 | 7,693 | 7,916 | 7,843 | 8,443 |
| Outbound Mobility Ratio (%)                   | 0.3   | 0.3   | 0.3   | 0.3   | 0.3   |
| Gross Outbound Mobility Ratio                 | 0.1   | 0.1   | 0.1   | 0.1   | 0.1   |

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics. <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer> (Accessed 6 March 2011).

**Table 2: Study Abroad Participants, 2006–2009**

| Sponsored by the Government          |      |      |      |      |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Sponsoring Agency                    | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
| Department of Science and Technology | 4    | 8    | 25   | 34   |
| Commission on Higher Education       | 6    | 6    | 7    | 16   |
| Total                                | 10   | 14   | 32   | 50   |

Source: Department of Science and Technology, 2011 and CHED 2011.

| Under various co-operation and Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) Programmes |      |      |      |      |      |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| Country/Programme   | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
| Australia: Philippine-Australian Human Resource Development Facility (PAHRDF)   |      |      |      |      |      |
| Long Term Training  | 83   | 83   | 75   | 67   | 2    |
| Short Term Human Resource (HR) Solutions  |      | 48   |      |      | 2    |
| Japan: Japan Grant Aid for Human Resource Development Scholarship Project (JDS) | 25   | 25   | 25   | 53   | 28   |
| Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)                                   |      |      |      | 1    | 2    |
| Belgium: Flemish Inter University Council                                       |      | 2    | 2    |      |      |
| India: Indian Technical and Economic Co-operation                               | 1    | 1    | 1    |      |      |
| Technical Co-operation Scheme-Colombo Plan- India                               |      |      | 2    | 2    | 2    |
| Netherlands Fellowship Programme  |      | 8    | 19   | 23   |      |
| New Zealand Development Scholarships  |      |      |      | 9    | 9    |
| Korea Development Institute-Technical Cooperation Scheme-Colombo Plan           |      |      |      |      | 2    |
| Total   | 109  | 169  | 124  | 155  | 45   |

Sources: National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Annual Report, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009.  
Commission on Higher Education-International Affairs Service, 2010.

**Table 3: Top Country Destinations for Outbound Students**

| Country       | 2004  | 2005  | 2006  | 2007  | 2008  |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| USA           | 3,467 | 3,668 | 3,891 | 3,812 | 4,174 |
| UK            | 777   | 955   | 935   | 824   | 663   |
| Australia     | 674   | 1,017 | 1,017 | 882   | 1,019 |
| Japan         | 526   | 552   | 574   | 575   | 594   |
| Germany       | 229   | 216   | 141   | 145   | 165   |
| Malaysia      | 118   | -     | 202   | 145   | -     |
| New Zealand   | 97    | 81    | -     | 205   | 246   |
| Rep. of Korea | 88    | 97    | 134   | 193   | 266   |

|              |       |       |       |       |       |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Canada       | 150   | 156   | 132   | 239   | -     |
| Italy        | 54    | 91    | 101   | 139   | 182   |
| Saudi Arabia | 127   | 147   | 145   | 103   | 109   |
| Others       | 667   | 923   | 644   | 581   | 1,025 |
| Total        | 6,974 | 7,923 | 7,916 | 7,843 | 8,443 |

Source: Global Education Digest (GED).

**Table 4: Inbound Student Mobility in the Philippines 2001–2008**

|   | 2001  | 2002  | 2003  | 2004  | 2005  | 2006  | 2007 | 2008  |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|
| International Students in the Philippines | 2,323 | 2,609 | 4,744 | 3,495 | 4,836 | 5,136 | -    | 2,665 |
| Inbound Mobility Ratio (%)                | -     | -     | -     | 0.2   | 0.2   | 0.2   | -    | 0.1   |

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics. <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer> (Accessed 6 March, 2011).

**Table 5: Top Sending Countries of Inbound Students in Tertiary Education**

| Country              | 2004  | 2005  | 2006  | 2007  | 2008  | 2009   |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Rep. of Korea        | 1,914 | 2,070 | 2,113 | 2,279 | 2,779 | 3,096  |
| China                | 669   | 742   | 860   | 1,155 | 1,807 | 2,191  |
| Taiwan, China        | 582   | 651   | 442   | 351   | 316   | 267    |
| Indonesia            | 408   | 461   | 571   | 569   | 590   | 592    |
| USA                  | 348   | 444   | 440   | 418   | 454   | 534    |
| Islamic Rep. of Iran | 321   | 448   | 553   | 816   | 1,379 | 2,018  |
| Thailand             | 173   | 175   | 153   | 144   | 160   | 182    |
| Nepal                | 125   | 120   | 89    | 85    | 166   | 228    |
| Sudan                | 122   | 137   | 153   | 181   | 212   | 275    |
| Myanmar              | 70    | 136   | 161   | 178   | 203   | 234    |
| India                | 68    | 87    | 102   | 171   | 519   | 671    |
| Viet Nam             | 105   | 105   | 111   | 111   | 122   | 150    |
| Kuwait               | 18    | 20    | 23    | 20    | 61    | 237    |
| Others               | 660   | 673   | 784   | 838   | 1,033 | 1,509  |
| Total                | 5,583 | 6,269 | 6,555 | 7,316 | 9,801 | 12,174 |

Source: Philippine Bureau of Immigration 2011.

**Table 6: Foreign Students in the Philippines by Region and Host Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) AY 2010–2011**

| Region |       | Host HEIs |        | Total Philippines |      |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------------------|------|
|        |       | Private   | Public | Total             | HEIs |
| I      | 395   | 6         | 1      | 7                 | 86   |
| II     | 232   | 3         | 2      | 5                 | 53   |
| III    | 896   | 10        | 4      | 14                | 193  |
| IV-A   | 30    | 3         | -      | 3                 | 221  |
| IV-B   | 40    | 2         | 1      | 3                 | 48   |
| V      | 29    | 3         | -      | 3                 | 123  |
| VI     | 273   | 11        | 1      | 12                | 101  |
| VII    | 2,049 | 20        | 2      | 22                | 139  |
| VIII   | 2     | -         | 1      | 1                 | 72   |
| IX     | 29    | 2         | 1      | 3                 | 58   |

|        |        |     |    |     |       |
|--------|--------|-----|----|-----|-------|
| X      | 163    | 8   | 1  | 9   | 76    |
| XI     | 289    | 12  | -  | 12  | 87    |
| XII    | 32     | 1   | -  | 1   | 80    |
| CAR    | 765    | 9   | -  | 9   | 40    |
| NCR    | 2,891  | 26  | 2  | 28  | 305   |
| CARAGA | 10     | 2   | -  | 2   | 48    |
| Total  | 8,125* | 118 | 16 | 134 | 1,791 |

**Note:** \* Does not include foreign students enrolled in language centres and schools registered with Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

**Source:** Philippine Bureau of Immigration 2011.

## References

Bernardo, A.B.I. 2003. International Higher Education: Models, Conditions & Issues. Tullao, T. (ed.) *Education & Globalization*. Makati City, Philippines, Philippine APEC Study Center Network (PASCN) and the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS).

Caoili, O. and Valenzuela, E.A. 2000. Internationalization of Higher Education: Patterns, Trends, Status and Directions. Valisno, M.D. (ed.) *The Reform and Development of Higher Education in the Philippines*. Manila, UNESCO, pp.153–186.

Commission on Higher Education (CHED). 1996. *Long-Term Higher Education Development Plan, 1996–2005*. Pasig City, Philippines.

Cortes, J.R. 2003. Philippine Education 2000 A.D.: Perspectives for an Alternative Future. *The Congressional Commission on Education, Report of Consultants and Experts in Education, Vol. 2*. Quezon City, Philippines, Congressional Oversight Committee in Education.

Diokno, M.S. 2010. A Framework for Reform Amid the Landscape of Higher Education. *The Forum*, Vol. 12, No. 2. <http://up.edu.ph/upforum2.php?i=312&pg3>. (Accessed 7 March 2011.)

Tayag, J.C. 2007. Transnational Commercial Provision of Higher Education: The Case of the Philippines. Martin, M. (ed.) *Cross-border Higher Education, Quality Assurance and Impact*. Paris, UNESCO International Institute of Educational Planning.

Tullao, T.S. 2003. Higher education and globalization: An integrative report. Tullao, T.S. (ed.) *Education & Globalization*. Makati City, Philippines, Philippine APEC Study Center Network (PASCN) and the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS).

Varghese, N.V. 2008. *Globalization of Higher Education and Cross-border Student Mobility*. Paris, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning.

Verbik, L and Lasanowski, V. 2007. International Student Mobility: Patterns and trends. *The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education*, September issue.



# International Student Mobility: Thailand

Prof. Paitoon Sinlarat  
*Dhurakij Pundit University*

## Introduction

The dynamics of student mobility and the internationalization of higher education have changed profoundly since the 1990s. Twenty years ago, the primary motivations to study abroad were related to academic, political, geo-strategic, cultural and development aid issues and considerations. At the time, countries took a favourable view of the mobility of students and academics as an opening to the world, in the hope of creating international networks of elites. Today, even though the original motivations remain valid, cross-border education is being increasingly driven by economic considerations (Knight, 2004).

A growing number of persons either go abroad to study, enrol in foreign programmes or establishments present in their country, or simply turn to the internet to follow courses run by universities or other institutions of higher learning at a distance from other countries (OECD, 2008). International student mobility is the main form of cross-border higher education. In 2004, there were 2.7 million students worldwide studying outside their own countries; in other words, almost three times as many as 20 years ago. The decision to study abroad and where depends on a broad spectrum of cultural, educational, economic and social factors (Vincent-Lancrin, 2008).

This study aims to investigate the global situation and flow of tertiary student mobility; and also to explore international tertiary student mobility in Thailand as a case study. The trends of student mobility, the most popular field of study, source of funds, inbound and outbound ratios of international tertiary students in Thailand will be described.

## The World's Tertiary Student Mobility Flows

In 2007, over 2.8 million students were enrolled in educational institutions outside of their country of origin. This represents 123,400 more students than in 2006, an increase of 4.6 per cent. The global number of mobile students has grown by 53 per cent since 1999 and by 2.5 times since 1945 with an average annual increase of 11.70 per cent throughout this period. China sends the greatest number of students abroad, amounting to 421,148. The other major countries of origin are India (153,300), the Republic of Korea (105,327), Germany (77,500), Japan (54,506), France (54,000), the United States (50,300), Malaysia (46,478), Canada (43,900) and the Russian Federation (42,900). These ten countries account for 37.50 per cent of the world's mobile students, reported by 153 host countries. In 2007, the global outbound mobility ratio was 1.80 per cent. This means that about 2 out of 100 tertiary students left their home countries to study. Globally, student mobility has kept pace with student enrolment. (UNESCO-UIS, 2009).

The United States hosts the largest number and share of mobile students at 595,900 and 21.30 per cent respectively. It is followed by the United Kingdom (351,500), France (246,600), Australia (211,500), Germany (206,900), Japan (125,900), Canada (68,500), South Africa (60,600), the Russian Federation (60,300) and Italy (57,300). These ten countries host 71 per cent of the world's mobile students, with 62 per cent of them studying in the top six countries. Almost one out of every four mobile student was enrolled in business and administration programmes in countries with available data. (UNESCO-UIS, 2009, p.37)

In 2007, about 29 per cent of global mobile students were from East Asia and the Pacific. Students from China accounted for one-seventh of the total. The overall outbound ratio is 1.90 per cent. Less than two per cent of tertiary students from the following countries study abroad: Australia, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. In contrast, outbound mobility ratios increased, reaching 47 per cent in Brunei Darussalam, Hong Kong SAR, China (20 per cent), and Singapore (11 per cent). In general, mobile students from East Asia and the Pacific tend to study among a relatively large group of host countries (UNESCO, 2009, p. 15). This is clearly illustrated in the case of Thailand. In 2007, about 37 per cent of its mobile students went to the United States compared to 58 per cent in 1999. At the same time, the share of mobile students rose in the other key destinations: the United Kingdom (14 per cent to 18 per cent), Australia (13 per cent to 20 per cent) and Japan (5 per cent to 7 per cent).

## Higher Education in Thailand

There are eight categories of post secondary education institutions in Thailand. These are public universities with limited admission, autonomous public universities, open universities, the Rajabhat University, the Rajamangala University of Technology, public vocational colleges, private universities and private colleges. All, except private universities and private colleges, operate on a budget allocated by the government.

There are currently 143 higher education institutions in Thailand (77 public and 66 private universities and colleges) under the supervision of the Office of the Higher Education Commission. Tertiary level institutions include those that offer four year programmes of study leading to a bachelor's degree. This does not include public and private vocational colleges, which offer two year study programmes leading to a vocational diploma.

## Economic Impact on Higher Education

As shown in student numbers in higher education, including those in open universities, enrolment declined from 2,054,426 in academic year 2006 to 1,970,644 in 2009 (*Table 1*). Both public and private universities are faced with declining numbers of students. This might be due to economic problems in the country. The crisis in Thailand led to a decreased rate of economic growth. The growth rate declined from 4.90 per cent in 2007 to 2.50 per cent in 2008 and contracted to 2.20 per cent in 2009 (Sinlarat, 2010).

In 2006 there were 320,815 graduates with bachelor's degrees and above. In 2007 this figure increased to 371,982. In 2006, about 75.02 per cent of graduates (excluding those from open universities) found employment. About 18 per cent of graduates did not find employment. The proportion of employed graduates dropped to 68.65 per cent in 2008 and unemployment rose to 28.98 per cent. Unemployment is believed to be because of a mismatch between employers' demands and graduates' qualifications and to a reduction in job openings in the labour market between 2006 and 2008, which came about as a result of the economic crisis.

**Table 1: Number of Students by Type of University, Academic Year 2006–2009**

| Type of University                 | 2006      | 2007      | 2008      | 2009                 |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------------|
| Public University                  | 1,777,923 | 1,708,409 | 1,713,094 | 1,695,519            |
| Limited Admission University       | 448,363   | 478,884   | 329,603   | 365,709              |
| Autonomous University <sup>1</sup> | 35,369    | 39,242    | 225,813   | 237,559              |
| Open University                    | 665,319   | 556,595   | 514,703   | 523,889              |
| Rajabhat University                | 540,703   | 527,274   | 525,702   | 447,798 <sup>2</sup> |
| Rajamangala University             | 88,169    | 106,414   | 117,273   | 120,564 <sup>3</sup> |
| Private University                 | 276,503   | 283,521   | 295,757   | 275,125 <sup>4</sup> |
| Total All Universities             | 2,054,426 | 1,991,930 | 2,008,851 | 1,970,644            |

**Note:**

<sup>1</sup> There are 11 universities under this type.

<sup>2</sup> Data of four universities were not available.

<sup>3</sup> Bangkok Rajamangala University data was not available.

<sup>4</sup> Data of two private universities were not available.

**Source:** Office of the Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education, Thailand.

As a result of the economic crisis, graduates are likely to have more difficulties in finding jobs. It is likely that some graduates have to take jobs not related to their qualifications or be underemployed because they cannot find jobs for their qualification levels.

Universities and colleges are stable institutions, in part due to their mission and role in society and in part due to how they operate and are managed. Nonetheless, the economic downturn in Thailand had an impact on higher education institutions in a variety of ways. There was a reduction in endowments and some promised donations were delayed. It is likely that there will be no budget for certain forms of education development. The financial crisis also affected the market value of university endowment funds.

Only a small fraction of government revenue is spent on education. Between 2006 and 2009, about 21.70 and 22.70 per cent of national expenditure was allocated for education. This increased to 23.70 per cent in 2010. Investment in education was mainly for basic education. In 2006, only 17.60 per cent of public expenditure on education went to tertiary education (bachelor's degrees and above). Expenditure on tertiary increased slightly to 18.70 per cent in 2009 but dropped to 16.60 per cent in 2010.

In general, government spending on public universities is usually inadequate. The larger part is spent on maintaining the operations of the institutions and increasing the number of student recruits. About 15 to 20 per cent of the higher education budget is spent each year on construction and acquisition of new equipment. The capital budget was reduced to 9.50 per cent in 2010.

## Reform of Higher Education in Thailand

Higher education is essential to human resource development especially in this era of globalization, in which a country's international competitiveness depends a great deal on the capability of its citizens to succeed in a knowledge – based economy and society. The Thai higher education system is facing a crisis. A large proportion of university graduates are not sufficiently competent in their fields; and while there is a surplus of graduates in the field of social sciences there is a lack of qualified graduates in the technological and professional fields (Weesakul and Associates, 2004; Rachapaetayakom, 2005).

Several endeavours have been made to increase access to higher education and improve its quality. These include the provision of education loan funds, establishment of new universities, transformation of existing public institutions into private universities, reform of the central university admission system and promotion of research and innovation in Thai higher education institutions (Office of the Education Council, 2006, p. 17).

To enable universities to produce high calibre graduates consistent with the requirements for social and economic development and national competitiveness, and to serve as centres for the creation of knowledge required for transformation to a knowledge-based economy and society, the reform of higher education has focused on improving the structure and administrative system and on strengthening the mechanisms and administrative procedures for enhancing the quality of education (Thailand. Office of the Education Council, 2006, p. 22). A policy and roadmap was issued for the functioning of the Ministry, based on government policy, ongoing strategies of the Ministry of Education and relevant studies.

## International Higher Education Student Mobility in Thailand

During the last decades, international education has become a growing business as a result of the globalization and liberalization process that has caused freer flow of cross-border education. Consequently, agencies involved in the provision of education must improve quality to compete in the international arena. At the same time, international co-operation in education is essential to educational development in all countries. Several public and private agencies are involved in promoting international education services available in Thailand. For international tertiary programmes, a total of 844 international programmes were offered in 2007 by 53 higher education institutions. Among these, 844 international programmes were offered by 30 public universities while the rest were offered by 23 private universities (Thailand. Office of the Education Council, 2007).

In 2009, there were 19,052 foreign students studying in public (11,177) and private (7,875) higher education institutions under the supervision of the Office of Higher Education Commission. The majority of foreign students came from Asia (*Table 2*). If we include foreign students at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) the total number will be 19,872. The AIT which is based in Thailand with a branch in Viet Nam is an autonomous graduate institution offering programmes in science and engineering, development and management, with the goal of addressing the needs of the region and contributing to its sustainable economic growth (Thailand. Office of the Education Council, 2006). The total number of foreign students in 2005 was 911 decreasing to 822 and 775 in 2009 and 2010, respectively (*Tables 3 and Table 4*). In 2005, Indian students had the highest number, with 112, followed by students from Bangladesh and Nepal. Pakistan provided the highest number of foreign students at AIT in 2009 and 2010.

**Overseas Study and Training:** The number of government scholarship recipients and other Thai students going overseas under the supervision of the Office of Civil Service Commission decreased from 6,215 in 2005 to 5,373 in 2009. The number of government officials going overseas to study declined from 2,309 in 2005 to 942 in 2009. Among those awarded government scholarships to study overseas, the highest number went to the United States. The United Kingdom is the second popular destination country. In 2009, more Thai officers went to study in China than in 2005. It is observed that the Thai officers selected more developed countries (*Table 4*) in which to study.

It was found that the institutions having the highest number of foreign students were Assumption University and Mahidol University. Most of the foreign students came from China. The most popular field of study is business administration.

**Table 2: Number of International Students Studying in Thailand classified by Region of Origin, 2010**

| Region                      | Number | Highest Country of Origin <sup>1</sup> |
|-----------------------------|--------|--|
| Asia (40 countries)         | 16,667 | China (8,993)                          |
| Europe (31 Countries)       | 1,084  | Germany (215)                          |
| North America (8 Countries) | 959    | USA (818)                              |
| Africa (31 Countries)       | 243    | Nigeria (49)                           |
| Australia (6 Countries)     | 71     | Australia (55)                         |
| South America (8 Countries) | 27     | Brazil (9)                             |

*Note:* <sup>1</sup>Highest number of students from country of origin.

*Source:* Thailand. Office of the Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education.

**Table 3: Top Ten Countries of Origin for International Students Studying at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Thailand, 2005, 2009 and 2010**

|   | 2005       |        | 2009       |        | 2010       |        |
|---|------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|
|   | Country    | Number | Country    | Number | Country    | Number |
| 1   | India      | 112    | Pakistan   | 109    | Pakistan   | 106    |
| 2   | Bangladesh | 94     | Nepal      | 95     | India      | 95     |
| 3   | Nepal      | 87     | India      | 83     | Nepal      | 94     |
| 4   | Myanmar    | 84     | Indonesia  | 78     | Sri Lanka  | 59     |
| 5   | Cambodia   | 63     | Sri Lanka  | 61     | Myanmar    | 56     |
| 6   | China      | 62     | Myanmar    | 60     | Indonesia  | 52     |
| 7   | Lao PDR    | 61     | Bangladesh | 42     | Viet Nam   | 39     |
| 8   | Indonesia  | 45     | Viet Nam   | 39     | Bangladesh | 38     |
| 9   | Sri Lanka  | 39     | Cambodia   | 34     | France     | 28     |
| 10  | Viet Nam   | 39     | Lao PDR    | 34     | Cambodia   | 26     |
| Total 1-10                                |            | 686    |            | 635    |            | 593    |
| Total Thai students                       |            | 674    |            | 937    |            | 874    |
| Total international students <sup>6</sup> |            | 911    |            | 822    |            | 775    |

*Notes:* 1Excludes Thai students studying in Thailand and also these students studying at the AIT Branch in Viet Nam.

*Source:* The Registry Office, Asian Institute of Technology: Thailand.

**Table 4: Thai Students Studying Abroad under the Supervision of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) of Thailand, Classified by Top Ten Destination Countries in 2005 and 2009**

| No. | 2005 <sup>1</sup> |                        |                   |       |        |       | No. | 2009 <sup>1</sup> |                        |                   |       |        |       |
|-----|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------|--------|-------|-----|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------|--------|-------|
|     | Country           | Government Scholarship | Official on Leave | Other | Total  |       |     | Country           | Government Scholarship | Official on Leave | Other | Total  |       |
|     |                   |                        |                   |       | Number | %     |     |                   |                        |                   |       | Number | %     |
| 1   | USA               | 1,163                  | 622               | 114   | 1,899  | 30.56 | 1   | USA               | 1,225                  | 179               | 153   | 1,557  | 28.98 |
| 2   | UK                | 676                    | 191               | 308   | 1,175  | 18.91 | 2   | UK                | 911                    | 113               | 265   | 1,289  | 23.98 |
| 3   | Japan             | 282                    | 407               | -     | 683    | 11.09 | 3   | Japan             | 427                    | 156               | -     | 583    | 10.85 |
| 4   | Australia         | 208                    | 277               | 13    | 498    | 8.01  | 4   | Australia         | 226                    | 99                | -     | 325    | 6.05  |
| 5   | France            | 316                    | 104               | 1     | 421    | 6.77  | 5   | France            | 287                    | 31                | 2     | 320    | 5.96  |
| 6   | Germany           | 260                    | 97                | 1     | 358    | 5.76  | 6   | Germany           | 257                    | 31                | 3     | 291    | 5.42  |
| 7   | China             | 132                    | 105               | -     | 237    | 3.81  | 7   | China             | 140                    | 86                | 19    | 245    | 4.56  |
| 8   | Netherland        | 102                    | 35                | -     | 137    | 2.20  | 8   | Netherland        | 127                    | 16                | -     | 143    | 2.66  |
| 9   | India             | 23                     | 75                | -     | 98     | 1.58  | 9   | India             | 65                     | 20                | 1     | 86     | 1.60  |

|       |                     |       |       |     |       |        |       |                     |       |     |     |       |        |
|-------|---------------------|-------|-------|-----|-------|--------|-------|---------------------|-------|-----|-----|-------|--------|
| 10    | Canada              | 44    | 53    | -   | 97    | 1.56   | 10    | Canada              | 64    | 21  | -   | 85    | 1.58   |
| 11    | Others <sup>2</sup> | 263   | 343   | -   | 606   | 9.75   | 11    | Others <sup>2</sup> | 244   | 190 | 15  | 449   | 8.36   |
| Total |                     | 3,469 | 2,309 | 437 | 6,215 | 100.00 | Total |                     | 3,973 | 942 | 458 | 5,373 | 100.00 |

**Notes:**<sup>1</sup>As of December 31<sup>2</sup>With other 34 countries*Source:* Office of Civil Service Commission, Government of Thailand.

Between 2005 and 2009, five countries with the highest number of students studying in higher education institutions in Thailand were studied. For five consecutive years, most of the foreign students studying in Thailand came from China. During 2004 and 2005, Myanmar came second, replaced by Lao PDR in 2008 and 2009. Myanmar fell to third position in the same period. It seems that during 2008 and 2009, the foreign student flow to Thailand was from East Asia, the Pacific Region and ASEAN countries (Table 5).

**Table 5: Top Five Countries of Origin of Foreign Students Studying in Education Institutions in Thailand (Academic Years 2005–2009)**

| No.                  | 2005           | 2006           | 2007           | 2008            | 2009             |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1                    | China (1,615)  | China (2,698)  | China (4,028)  | China (7,301)   | China (8,993)    |
| 2                    | Myanmar (489)  | Myanmar (631)  | Viet Nam (751) | Lao PDR (1,301) | Lao PDR (1,254)  |
| 3                    | Lao PDR (436)  | Viet Nam (599) | Myanmar (741)  | Myanmar (999)   | Myanmar (1,205)  |
| 4                    | Viet Nam (409) | USA (521)      | Lao PDR (664)  | Cambodia (984)  | Viet Nam (1,141) |
| 5                    | Japan (307)    | Lao PDR (493)  | USA (527)      | Viet Nam (895)  | Cambodia (1,009) |
| Total five countries | 3,256          | 4,942          | 6,756          | 11,480          | 13,602           |
| Total all countries  | 5,321          | 7,947          | 10,518         | 15,917          | 19,052           |

*Source:* Office of the Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education, Thailand.

## Inbound and Outbound Mobility

The inbound mobile students in seven host countries are from East Asia and the Pacific (Table 6). In 2007, Australia has 211,526 tertiary foreign students from around the world. Thailand had the smallest number of international mobile students. The highest inbound mobile ratio is 19.50 for Australia, followed by New Zealand with 13.60. China has the lowest inbound mobile ratio, only 0.20. About 21.25 per cent of foreign students in Malaysia arrived from South and West Asia and 14.65 per cent from the Arab states.

**Table 6: Tertiary International Mobile Students by Host Country and Region of Origin, 2007**

| Region of Origin                 | Inbound Mobile Students in Host Country |       |         |          |               |          |             |
|----------------------------------|---|-------|---------|----------|---------------|----------|-------------|
|                                  | Australia                               | China | Japan   | Malaysia | Rep. of Korea | Thailand | New Zealand |
| Arab States                      | 4,406                                   | -     | 564     | 3,574    | 112           | 23       | 328         |
| Central + Eastern Europe         | 1,524                                   | -     | 1,217   | 207      | 374           | 103      | 350         |
| Central Asia                     | 194                                     | -     | 1,246   | 227      | 1293          | 44       | 39          |
| East Asia and the Pacific        | 126,633                                 | -     | 112,257 | 13,149   | 26,903        | 8,064    | 23,383      |
| Latin America and the Caribbean  | 2,394                                   | -     | 1,288   | 40       | 171           | 35       | 319         |
| North America and Western Europe | 15,912                                  | -     | 4,301   | 301      | 930           | 1,416    | 5,472       |
| South and West Asia              | 36,764                                  | -     | 4,463   | 5,186    | 1,123         | 1,151    | 2,859       |
| Sub-Saharan Africa               | 6,487                                   | -     | 531     | 1,680    | 187           | 131      | 256         |

|                          |         |        |         |        |        |        |        |
|--------------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Unspecified              | 17,212  | 42,138 | 10      | 40     | 850    | -      | 41     |
| All Regions              | 211,526 | 42,138 | 125,877 | 24,404 | 31,943 | 10,967 | 33,047 |
| Inbound Mobile Ratio (%) | 19.5    | 0.2    | 3.0     | 3.3    | 1.0    | 0.5    | 13.6   |

Source: Compiled from UNESCO 2009 – [www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/ged/2009/GED\\_2009\\_EN.pdf](http://www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/ged/2009/GED_2009_EN.pdf)

The top five destinations for outbound mobile students by country of origin, Australia, China, Malaysia and Thailand is illustrated in *Table 7* and *Figure 1*. The most popular country among Australia, China and Thailand is the United States, but not for Malaysia. The second most popular destination of Thai students is Australia, while Australia, China and Malaysia prefer New Zealand, Japan and the United Kingdom.

**Table 7: Top Five Destinations (Host Countries)<sup>1</sup> for Outbound Mobile Students by Country of Origins in 2007**

|   | Australia<br>Number 9,968   | China<br>421,148       | Malaysia<br>46,473     | Thailand<br>24,485     |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | USA (28.68)                 | USA (23.49)            | Australia (38.07)      | USA (37.09)            |
| 2 | New Zealand (27.59)         | Japan (19.05)          | United Kingdom (25.41) | Australia (19.95)      |
| 3 | United Kingdom (17.77)      | Australia (11.97)      | USA (11.62)            | United Kingdom (18.55) |
| 4 | Germany (3.93)              | United Kingdom (11.78) | Japan (4.42)           | Japan (7.04)           |
| 5 | Japan (3.62)                | Germany (5.65)         | New Zealand (3.72)     | Malaysia (3.47)        |
| 6 | Others <sup>2</sup> (18.41) | (28.06)                | (16.76)                | (13.90)                |

Notes: <sup>1</sup>Percent of students from given country studying in the host countries is shown in the brackets.

<sup>2</sup> The rest of top five destinations.

Source: Compiled from UNESCO Statistics International Flow of Mobile Students, 2007.

**Figure 1: Top Five Destinations for Outbound Mobile Students from Australia, China, Malaysia, and Thailand, 2007**



Source: Compiled from UNESCO Statistics, 2007.



Table 8 shows the international flow of mobile tertiary students of selected countries in 2007. China has the largest number of students studying abroad (421,148) with the outbound mobility ratio of 1.90 while the inbound ratio is only 0.20 and the net flow ratio is -1.70. Malaysia has an outbound ratio 6.10 and an inbound ratio of 3.30 with -2.80 net flows ratio. Thailand has a 0.90 outbound ratio with a 0.50 inbound ratio. Australia seems to be the most popular destination for foreign students to study, with the highest inbound ratio at 19.50, followed by New Zealand at 13.60.

**Table 8: International Flows of Mobile Tertiary Students, 2007**

| Country       | Students Studying Abroad |                             | Students from Abroad |                            | Net Flow Ratio (%) |
|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
|               | Number                   | Outbound Mobility Ratio (%) | Number               | Inbound Mobility Ratio (%) |                    |
| Australia     | 9,968                    | 1.0                         | 211,526              | 19.5                       | 18.5               |
| China         | 421,148                  | 1.9                         | 42,138               | 0.20                       | -1.70              |
| Japan         | 54,506                   | 1.2                         | 125,877              | 3.00                       | 1.80               |
| Malaysia      | 464,738                  | 6.1                         | 24,404               | 3.30                       | -2.80              |
| Rep. of Korea | 105,327                  | 3.1                         | 31,943               | 1.00                       | -2.10              |
| Thailand      | 24,485                   | 0.9                         | 10,967               | 0.50                       | -0.40              |
| New Zealand   | 4,104                    | 1.9                         | 33,047               | 13.60                      | 11.70              |

Source: Compiled from UNESCO, *Global Education Digest 2009*.

## The Most Popular Fields of Study

The top five fields of study among foreign students studying in higher education institutes in Thailand between Academic Year 2005 and 2009 were surveyed. It was found that business administration was the most popular field of study for three consecutive years, 2004 to 2006 (Table 9). From 2008 and 2009, the most popular field changed to the Thai language (Thailand, Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2009). In 2009, business administration came second followed by international business, English language and marketing. It was found that foreign students studying at the bachelor degree level exceeded those studied at other levels in higher education institutions in Thailand.

**Table 9: Top Five Fields of Study Among Foreign Students Studying in Thailand, Academic Years 2005–2009**

| No | 2005                    |       | 2006                    |       | 2007                    |       | 2008                    |       | 2009                    |       |
|----|-------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
|    | Field of study          | Total | Field of study          | Total | Field of study          | Total | Field of study          | Total | Field of study          | Total |
| 1  | Business Administration | 279   | Business Administration | 1,148 | Business Administration | 1,575 | Thai Language           | 1,927 | Thai Language           | 3,075 |
| 2  | Marketing               | 267   | Thai Language           | 832   | Thai Language           | 1,101 | Business Administration | 1,739 | Business Administration | 2,376 |
| 3  | Thai Language           | 214   | Marketing               | 414   | Marketing               | 517   | English Language        | 717   | International Business  | 960   |
| 4  | Business English        | 159   | International Business  | 241   | International Business  | 412   | International Business  | 656   | English Language        | 801   |
| 5  | Business                | 134   | Thai Studies            | 230   | Business English        | 308   | Marketing               | 521   | Marketing               | 589   |

Source: Office of the Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education: Thailand.

## Educational Expenses

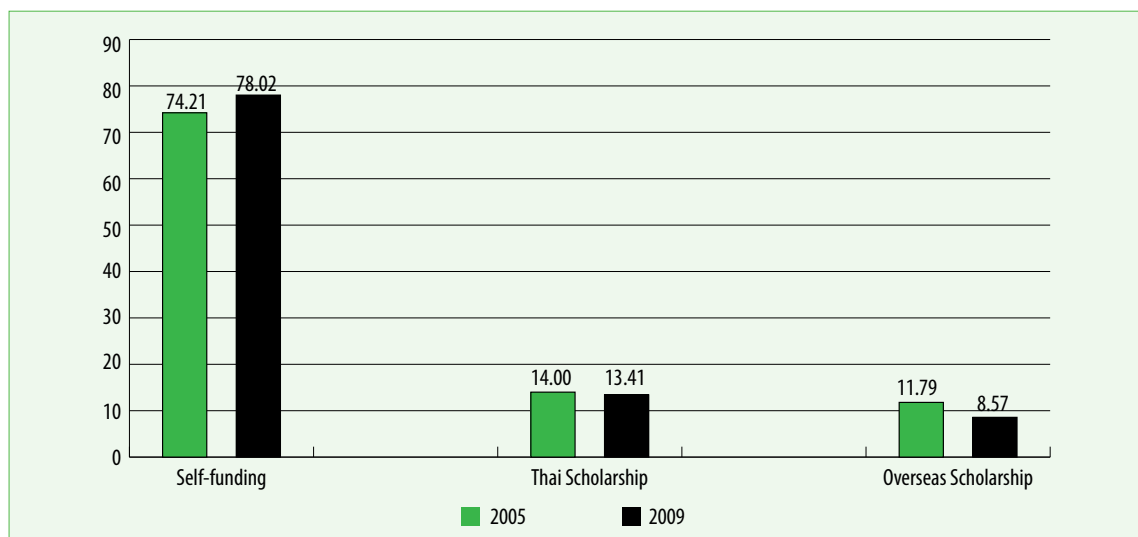
Educational expenses of foreign students studying in higher education institutions came from three sources. Self-funding played the most important role during 2005 to 2009 (Table 10 and Figure 2). In 2005, about 74.21 per cent of 5,351 foreign students spent their own money for studying in Thailand. This proportion increased to 84.51 per cent in 2008 and declined to 78.02 per cent in 2009. Educational expenses from Thai scholarships and overseas scholarships declined from 14 per cent in 2005 to 13.41 per cent in 2009 and from 11.79 per cent to 8.57 per cent, respectively.

**Table 10: Source of Educational Expenses of Foreign Students Studying in Higher Education**

| Source of Expenses   | 2005          | 2006          | 2007           | 2008           | 2009           |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Self-funding         | 3,971(74.21)  | 6,286(79.10)  | 8,658(82.32)   | 13,451(84.51)  | 14,866(78.02)  |
| Thai Scholarship     | 749(14.00)    | 896(11.27)    | 1,022(9.72)    | 1,232(7.74)    | 2,552(13.41)   |
| Overseas Scholarship | 631(11.79)    | 765(9.63)     | 838(7.96)      | 1,234(7.75)    | 1,634(8.57)    |
| Total                | 5,351(100.00) | 7,947(100.00) | 10,518(100.00) | 15,917(100.00) | 19,052(100.00) |

Source: Office of the Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education: Thailand.

**Figure 2: Source of Educational Expenses of Foreign Students 2005 and 2009**



Source: Thailand. Office of the Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education.

## Concluding Remarks

Student flows grew rapidly over the past decade and show no signs of diminishing in the decades ahead. Globalization, increased migration flows of all types, the strategies followed by institutions of higher learning and the policies of developing countries are combining to create a more competitive, homogeneous and globalized arena of higher education, which, in turn, makes for continuing student mobility. (Vincent-Lancrin, 2008, p. 105).

There are many reasons why students pursue their education abroad. For some, it is a chance to broaden cultural and intellectual horizons. Others go abroad to avoid the frustrations of under-resourced universities at home. Many have no choice but to go abroad in order to pursue a particular field of education or type of academic programme. These are just some of the factors that can push students to pursue educational opportunities outside of their home countries.

The flow of cross border students indicates that the dominant flow continues to be from the developing to the developed countries (Varghese, 2008, p. 26). The United States used to be the favourite destination for many students but the trend is changing, making countries such as Australia and New Zealand attractive destinations. Many institutions in the host countries rely heavily on the income generated by foreign students. Foreign students not only mobilize funds but also subsidize domestic students.

The promotion of international higher education should be on the “National Agenda” at the National Committee level by looking at international education development issues as: human resources development; quality assurance and assessment development for world class programmes; international higher education curriculums; and networking promotion and market development. However, the integration of the ASEAN community programming will begin in 2015. It includes higher education development issues within the ASEAN Social and Cultural Community. ASEAN countries should be prepared and alert to participate in this programme. It is expected that international higher education will be developed, co-ordinated and managed among ASEAN countries.

## References

- Asian Institute of Technology (AIT). 2010. Enrolment Statistics. Bangkok, AIT Registry Office.
- Knight, J. 2004. International Remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 5–31.
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2006. *Education at a Glance 2006*. Paris, OECD.
- Rachapaetayakom, J. 2004. *Labour Mobility in Rural and Urban Societies: Opportunities or Risks?*, Presented at the National Seminar on “Rural to Urban Transformation”, Thailand.
- Sinlarat, P. 2010. *Impact of the Global Financial Crisis on Higher Education in Thailand*. Presented at the Regional Seminar on the “Impact of the Economic Crisis on Higher Education”, organized by UNESCO, 30 June to 2 July.
- Sugimura, M. 2009. *Higher Education Strategies and International Student Flows in Asian Countries*. Tokyo, Sophia University.
- Office of Civil Service Commission. 2009. *Statistics of Students Studying Abroad, 2009*. Thailand.
- Office of the Education Council. 2007. *Education in Thailand 2007*. Bangkok, Ministry of Education, Thailand.
- Office of the Higher Education Commission. 2010. *Higher Education Statistics*. Bangkok, Ministry of Education, Thailand.
- UNESCO. 2007. *Global Education Digest 2007: comparing education statistics across the world*. Montreal, Canada, UIS.
- Varghese, N.V. 2008. Globalization of Higher Education and Cross-Border Student Mobility. (Research paper of International Institutes for Education Planning, UNESCO).
- Vincent-Lancrin, S. 2005. *Building capacity through cross-border higher education*. London, Observatory on Borderless Higher Education.
- Vincent-Lancrin, S. 2008. Student Mobility, Internationalization of Higher Education and Skilled Migration. *World Migration*. Paris, OECD.
- Weesakul, B. and Associates. 2004. *A Summary of Financing of Thai Higher Education: Leverage for Quality Improvement Reform*. (Research grant supported by the Office of the Education Council). Bangkok, Dhurakij Pundit University.



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

**Bangkok Office**  
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau  
for Education

Mom Luang Pin Malakul Centenary Building  
920 Sukhumvit Road, Prakanong, Klongtoey  
Bangkok 10110, Thailand  
Email: [apeid.bgk@unesco.org](mailto:apeid.bgk@unesco.org)  
Website: [www.unescobbkk.org/education/apeid](http://www.unescobbkk.org/education/apeid)  
Tel: +66-2-3910577 Fax: +66-2-3910866