

Important findings from “The future of the world’s mobile students to 2024”

This recently-released report from the British Council’s Education Intelligence division offers updated predictions about the next decade of international student mobility based on new data published their report from last year.

This report primarily examines data from the 56 countries they deemed most significant for international student mobility, although is impacted by the lack of OECD data for countries such as China, India, Singapore, etc.

These are some of the findings that we found most interesting:

- There will be 32 million additional higher education enrolments by 2024, up to 196 million overall
- 3.9 million students will be studying abroad in 2024, up from 3 million in 2011
- The population of 18-22-year-olds in China will fall from 120 million to 80 million by 2024, the primary contributing factor to an overall global decline in the age group in the same time period.
- The top 10 fastest growing 18-22 populations between 2011 and 2024 in absolute terms will be: Nigeria, India, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Philippines, Iraq, Pakistan, Angola, and Nepal
- The top sending countries for international students in 2024 will be China, India, Germany, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Turkey, Pakistan, France, and Khazakistan, although students from China and India are predicted to make up roughly one-third of the total number
- The largest increases in countries sending students abroad are likely to take place in India, China, Saudia Arabia, Nigeria, Nepal, Pakistan, Indonesia, Iraq, Brazil, and Turkey
- The countries that receive the largest number of international students will remain similar to today with the US, UK, Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, and South Korea as the biggest recipients of international students (albeit this is the area most likely to be impacted by missing data from China, India, Singapore, and Malaysia)

The report itself covers the data in more detail, as well as for significant bilateral changes. It also outlines at least one scenario of the impact of a potential slowdown in the BRIC economies that shows how fragile these predictions may be.

The 2012 report mostly underestimated the incredible growth in international mobility that has taken place from 2009 and 2011 in spite of a major economic slowdown impacting much of the globe. The authors have taken the new data into account and their current predictions are more aggressive. We will have to wait a few years to see if the trend lines shift again, but this is already a useful tool for universities or governments looking ahead to see where and how they might want to shift their efforts.

Note: The report reviewed was published by British Council in October 2013 and is available for purchase at <http://ihe.britishcouncil.org/educationintelligence/future-world-mobile-students-2024>.