

OVERSEAS, OVERWHELMED

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Abroad Perspective

Have you considered recruiting students more extensively in Indonesia? Indonesian students would bring with them a range of cultural diversity that would benefit any Canadian campus. Indonesia's some 17,000 islands straddle cultures whose influences include Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and a myriad of tribal world views. Cultural antecedents in different parts of Indonesia draw from as far as the Indian Ocean to the South Pacific.

Indonesian high school programs offer a mixed bag in terms of their suitability to Canada's higher education system. On the one hand, high school academic programs offer mathematics as well as other sciences at a generally high standard. This is particularly true of the various private systems in major cities which cater to those students of Chinese ancestry or to those of "Indonesian" or "Pribumi" ancestry.

On the other hand, programs offered in English medium are rare. This means fluency of the kind commonly achieved in Commonwealth countries is much less encountered. However, English is widely taught in Indonesian high schools and many ESL agencies exist in major cities catering to a keen interest in improving English proficiency. Keep in mind that the vast preponderance of Indonesian students studying abroad do so in Australia. The Australians offer extensive ESL programs to assist Indonesians intending to study there.

Are you fearful of what you perceive to be political instability in Indonesia? Indeed, during a recent trip to Indonesia, our Dani Zaretsky discovered that t-shirts bearing the likeness of Osama bin Laden were being sold on city streets. On previous trips, he has also encountered street demonstrations in Indonesia. It would be a mistake, however, to take these isolated experiences as indicative of the level of risk that a Canadian

encounters there. The main security worry in Indonesia remains that of crime and this is largely only a serious issue in Jakarta. By a prudent selection of reliable hotels, taxi services and a local source of information, the risks can be reduced tremendously.

Let's Go Canada!

A strong rivalry has developed between the British Council and the IDP (Australia) for recruitment of Indian students. With the use of heavy advertising in local newspapers and numerous education fairs, the UK and Australian consortia have made strong cases about their superior access and service for Indian students. This healthy competition has helped both countries increase their market share in India.

There is a strong feeling that in the wake of the September 11th attacks, Indian parents and students will not be as enthusiastic about the U.S. as a destination for higher education. Canada has fallen behind in terms of creating awareness and interest through advertising. Recent articles in leading Indian newspapers (Times of India) and magazines (India Today), which assessed study abroad options for Indians, did not even mention Canada. In fact, Canadian education has slipped behind New Zealand, Germany and France in general awareness in India. At present, New Zealand's eight universities attract more Indian students than Canada does.

Nevertheless, Canada is in a very good position to attract students seeking an alternative to the US given our strong ties with India and the fact that Canada is considered by many Indians as a premier destination for migration.

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Globe Tipping

Notwithstanding the current political climate in the US and the Middle East, it is always wise to brush up on local information before one travels. Travel advisories issued by governing bodies such as DFAIT or the U.S. State Department are easily accessible and organized by country.

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/destinations/menu_e.htm
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspssp/tmp-pmv/pub_e.html
http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html
<http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel/>
<http://www.airsafe.com/>

Canada
Canada health travel advice
US
UK
Website which includes information concerning flight safety