

CANADA'S ASIA CHALLENGE

CREATING COMPETENCE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF CANADIANS

A Report of the Asia Competence Task Force

NOVEMBER 2013

PROJECT OF THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON ASIA

MUNK
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UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

Asia Pacific
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ABOUT THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON ASIA

The National Conversation on Asia is a broad and inclusive initiative by the **Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada** to get Canadians thinking and talking about what Asia means to Canada. It is supported by Asia-engaged individuals, companies and organizations across Canada.

NCA Task Forces examine and formulate policy recommendations on strategic issues in the Canada-Asia relationship. Broad consultations with government, community and industry leaders, experts and stakeholders are an integral part of each Task Force's activity.

This report is the fourth in a series of NCA Task Force reports. The first taskforce report, *Securing Canada's Energy Future*, was released in June 2012. All reports are available at www.asiapacific.ca.

For more information, see www.nationalconversationonasia.ca.



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FOREWORD

Across the country, political and business leaders are talking about the importance of Asia for Canada, and the need for stronger diplomatic, commercial, and cultural ties across the Pacific. The Prime Minister has spoken about how Canada's future prosperity will "increasingly depend on our ties to the Pacific", and Foreign Minister John Baird has described deeper relations with Asian countries "not (as) an option, but an imperative". Increasingly, this view is shared by the public, with nearly two-thirds of Canadians agreeing that "Asian economies are vital to Canada's well-being", according to the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada's (APF Canada) *2012 National Opinion Poll*.

It is not clear, however, that Canadians have the skills, knowledge, and experience to successfully pursue business opportunities and build lasting relationships with Asian partners. Recognition of Asia's importance has not been matched by an investment in Asia-focused human capital. According to another APF Canada survey, 60 percent of respondents report that they have difficulty finding qualified Canadians to fill Asia-related jobs.

In March 2013, APF Canada, in collaboration with the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto, convened a group of experts to assess the state of Canada's 'Asia competence', and to recommend actions that will build long-term Asia capacity across Canada.

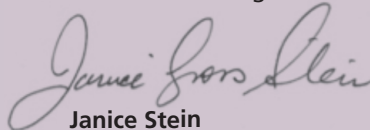
The Asia Competence Task Force is part of APF Canada's National Conversation on Asia (NCA), a cross-country effort to get Canadians to reflect on Asia's global impact and how Canada should respond. By addressing the fundamental issue of Asia knowledge, skills, and experience, the work of this task force goes to the heart of what the NCA is about. All the best intentions, promises, and ambitions for closer ties with Asia will come to nought if Canadians lack the essential tools that enable them to function effectively in the region and with Asian counterparts.

We are most grateful to the task force co-chairs, David Mulroney and Janet De Silva, for their sterling leadership, and to task force members Dave McMaster, Maureen Neglia, Victor Rabinovitch, Michael Stevenson, and Joseph Wong for their rich contributions. This was a dream team of experts from the public, private, and education sectors, and the quality of this report speaks for itself. The task force was diligently supported by APF Canada's Erin Williams, who provided excellent assistance on research, writing, and logistics. Not least, we extend our sincere thanks to the many individuals and organizations in Canada and abroad, who so generously shared their ideas and experience with our team.

This report makes clear that a lot of work is needed to build Asia competence in Canada, and that responsibility for this effort extends well beyond government to include the private sector, schools and universities, and community groups. As convenors of the task force, we do not take their findings lightly, nor are we content to let this work rest with the publication of a report. In the months ahead, we will work with others to advance the ideas presented by the task force, and begin the long-term effort of enhancing Asia competence in Canada.



Yuen Pau Woo
President & CEO
Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada



Janice Stein
Director
Munk School of Global Affairs

AVANT-PROPOS

Partout au pays, dirigeants politiques et chefs d'entreprise évoquent l'importance de l'Asie pour le Canada et le besoin de resserrer les relations diplomatiques, commerciales et culturelles entre celui-ci et les pays du Pacifique. Le Premier ministre a affirmé que la prospérité du Canada « dépendra de plus en plus de nos liens avec le Pacifique », et le ministre des Affaires étrangères John Baird a décrit l'approfondissement des relations avec les pays asiatiques comme « un impératif et pas une option ». De plus en plus, cette opinion est partagée par le public, près de deux tiers des Canadiens s'accordant pour dire que « les économies asiatiques sont vitales pour le bien-être du Canada », selon l'enquête d'opinion nationale réalisée par la Fondation Asie Pacifique du Canada en 2012.

En revanche, il n'est pas forcément évident que les Canadiens ont les connaissances, le savoir-faire et l'expérience qu'il leur faut pour exploiter les occasions d'affaires et tisser des liens durables avec leurs partenaires asiatiques. Le fait de reconnaître l'importance de l'Asie ne s'est pas traduit par un investissement correspondant dans le capital humain tourné vers cette région. Dans une autre enquête de la Fondation, 60 pour cent des répondants affirment qu'il est difficile de trouver des Canadiens qualifiés pour occuper des postes en rapport avec l'Asie.

En mars 2013, la Fondation Asie Pacifique du Canada a établi, en partenariat avec l'École Munk des affaires internationales de l'Université de Toronto, un groupe d'experts ayant pour objet d'évaluer l'état de la compétence au sujet de l'Asie au Canada et de recommander des mesures destinées à développer à l'échelle nationale des compétences utiles en Asie.

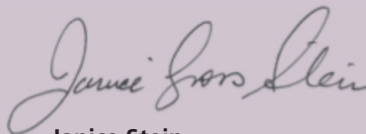
Le groupe de réflexion sur la compétence au sujet de l'Asie fait partie du Dialogue canadien sur l'Asie (DCA), une initiative pancanadienne de la Fondation qui vise à amener les Canadiens à réfléchir ensemble sur l'impact mondial de l'Asie et la façon d'y répondre. En étudiant la question fondamentale des connaissances, du savoir-faire et de l'expérience nécessaires pour exercer des activités en Asie, son travail s'inscrit précisément dans la finalité du DCA. Les meilleures intentions, toutes les promesses et les plus vifs souhaits de resserrer les liens avec l'Asie n'aboutiront à rien si les Canadiens n'ont pas les outils essentiels qui leur permettent de fonctionner efficacement dans la région et de dialoguer avec leurs homologues asiatiques.

Nous tenons à exprimer toute notre gratitude aux coprésidents du groupe, M. David Mulroney et Mme Janet De Silva, pour leur leadership remarquable, et à ses membres, Mme Maureen Neglia et MM. Dave McMaster, Victor Rabinovitch, Michael Stevenson et Joseph Wong, pour leur importante contribution. C'était une équipe de rêve, formée d'experts du monde des entreprises, de la fonction publique et de l'enseignement, et la qualité du rapport en est la preuve. Le groupe de réflexion a été secondé avec diligence par Mme Erin Williams de la Fondation Asie Pacifique du Canada, qui lui a apporté son excellent soutien dans la recherche, la rédaction et la logistique. Enfin, nous remercions sincèrement les nombreuses personnes et organisations au Canada et ailleurs qui ont si généreusement partagé leurs idées et expériences avec notre équipe.

Le rapport fait ressortir clairement qu'il reste beaucoup à faire pour développer la compétence au sujet de l'Asie au Canada et que la responsabilité de cet effort échoit non seulement aux pouvoirs publics, mais aussi au secteur privé, aux établissements d'enseignement et aux groupes communautaires. À titre de responsables du groupe, nous ne prenons pas ses constatations à la légère, et nous ne nous contenterons pas d'en rester à la publication d'un rapport. Au cours des prochains mois, nous chercherons avec d'autres à faire avancer les idées présentées par le groupe de réflexion et à commencer l'effort de longue haleine nécessaire pour améliorer la compétence au sujet de l'Asie au Canada.



Yuen Pau Woo
Président et chef de la direction
Fondation Asie Pacifique du Canada



Janice Stein
Directrice
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada's (APF Canada) 2012 *National Opinion Poll*, a majority of Canadians agree that Asia is important to Canadian prosperity. However, according to another recent poll, many of Canada's 'Asia practitioners'—Asia-engaged professionals from the public, private and academic sectors—say this has not prompted enough investment in the knowledge, skills, and experience Canadians need to be effective in Asia. When polled, 60% of these practitioners said it was difficult to find qualified Canadians to fill Asia-related jobs. Only 34% felt that the Canadians working in their professions have sufficient knowledge of Asian societies and economies.

In an effort to help bridge this gap, APF Canada and the Munk School of Global Affairs formed the Asia Competence Task Force in March 2013. This task force, comprising experts from business, the public sector, and K-12 and post-secondary education, defined Canada's Asia competence needs in terms of a hierarchy, ranging from exposure to Asia through general knowledge of Asian history, geography and culture; to experience in Asia through exchanges, internships and projects; to expertise through long-term in-market activities in Asia.

Programs that support Asia competence include, for example, training in strategically important Asian languages: (Mandarin) Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Korean and Bahasa; incorporating more Asia content into the K-12 curriculum; promoting on-the-ground experience in Asia through study abroad, internships, co-op placements and field school; and incorporating more Asian expertise on government advisory and corporate boards and trade associations.

Based on its investigations and consultations with school boards, industry and government stakeholders across Canada and in other countries, the task force came to the following conclusions:

First, there is a paucity of data on how Canada is doing in preparing its next generation for an increasingly Asia-centred world. While the task force did find 'pockets of excellence'—Edmonton, and Alberta in general, deserves special mention, as do other initiatives in the Greater Vancouver and Toronto Areas—these efforts are not happening on a large enough scale to produce the type of transformative effect that Canada needs.

Second, other countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the US and Germany have been far more proactive in promoting Asia competence. Many have taken a whole-of-country approach, including high-level commitment by governments and the private sector. One example is US President Barack Obama's announcement of a "100,000 Strong Initiative" to rapidly mobilize more young Americans to study in and about China. Australia's prioritization of "Asia capabilities" in its 2012 *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper* is another. While Canada should be concerned that it is not keeping up with these 'friendly competitor' countries, it should also view these cases as a valuable source of best practices and lessons learned.

Third, when we look at Asia Competence, we focus on the education of the next generation of Canadians who will be at the forefront in business, government, education and NGOs. That said, there are important sectors—like the tourism sector—which are now on the front-line in engaging Asia. In countries like Australia, New Zealand and Switzerland, efforts are underway

to build cultural sensitivity and new products and services for Asian visitors. Given China's emergence as the number one source of tourists globally, such an approach is warranted in Canada—among hospitality companies and tourism associations, and, even within the government to ensure something as basic as our ability to issue visas and manage arrivals at our border.

Fourth, a common ingredient in successful nationwide programs is the ability to bring together various stakeholders for the purpose of coordinating strategies and sharing resources. The task force therefore recommends a national 'accountability conference' to secure specific and appropriate support from each constituency, and to point the way to the structures and networks necessary to launch a sustainable national effort. The plan going forward should be to aspire to something larger than the sum of what governments, business and education sectors can contribute on their own. Canada needs a broad national consensus, and a collaborative, whole-of-country response to the challenge of creating competence for the next generation of Canadians.

The report's specific recommendations include:

- Establishing an annual national conference that will serve as a mechanism for sharing best practices. Alberta, as a province that has demonstrated an impressive commitment to Asian language training and internships in Asia, would be an ideal host of the first conference in 2014.
- Ensuring that Canada's international education strategy is a two-way effort. In recent years, both the federal and provincial governments have focused heavily on attracting students to Canada, with little high-level leadership and endorsement to encourage more Canadians to get experience overseas.
- Encouraging governments and the private sector, in key economic sectors, to strengthen their Asian know-how by involving Asia-experienced Canadians in strategic advisory boards, industry associations and corporate boards
- Examining ways to support and replicate successful community-led initiatives such as those in place in the Edmonton School Board and the Mayors Circle with the 100,000 Strong Foundation in the US.

RÉSUMÉ

D'après l'enquête d'opinion nationale réalisée par la Fondation Asie Pacifique du Canada en 2012, la majorité des Canadiens reconnaissent l'importance de l'Asie pour la prospérité du Canada. Cependant, dans une autre enquête récente, de nombreux spécialistes de l'Asie au Canada – des professionnels du secteur privé, de la fonction publique et du monde universitaire tournés vers l'Asie – affirment que cela n'a pas suscité suffisamment d'investissements dans les connaissances, le savoir-faire et l'expérience dont les Canadiens ont besoin pour bien fonctionner en Asie. Dans une proportion de 60 %, ces spécialistes estiment qu'il est difficile de trouver des Canadiens qualifiés pour occuper des postes en rapport avec l'Asie, et seulement 34 % d'entre eux pensent que leurs collègues canadiens possèdent des connaissances suffisantes sur les réalités sociales et économiques de ce continent.

Afin de combler cette lacune, la Fondation Asie Pacifique du Canada a établi en mars 2013, en partenariat avec l'École Munk des affaires internationales, un groupe de réflexion sur la compétence au sujet de l'Asie. Ce groupe, composé d'experts du monde des entreprises, de la fonction publique et de l'enseignement primaire, secondaire et postsecondaire, ont déterminé les besoins en la matière et les ont organisés selon une hiérarchie allant de l'exposition à l'Asie (connaissances générales de l'histoire, de la géographie et des cultures d'Asie) à l'expertise en Asie (exercice d'activités continues dans le marché asiatique) en passant par l'expérience de l'Asie (échanges, stages et projets).

Voici quelques-uns des programmes qui renforcent la compétence au sujet de l'Asie : des formations pour certaines langues asiatiques stratégiques (mandarin, hindi, japonais, coréen et indonésien); l'incorporation d'éléments sur l'Asie dans le programme d'études primaires et secondaires; la promotion de l'expérience sur le terrain par les possibilités d'études, de stages et de placements coopératifs en Asie; et l'intégration d'un plus grand nombre d'experts en Asie aux comités consultatifs des gouvernements, aux conseils d'administration des entreprises et aux associations commerciales.

Après enquête et consultation avec les conseils scolaires et autres parties prenantes de la fonction publique et du secteur privé au Canada et ailleurs, le groupe de réflexion est arrivé aux conclusions exposées ci-dessous.

En premier lieu, il y a une pénurie de données sur les progrès faits au Canada pour préparer la nouvelle génération à un monde de plus en plus centré sur l'Asie. Tout en trouvant quelques exemples d'excellence (Edmonton en particulier et l'Alberta en général méritent une mention spéciale, tout comme certaines initiatives dans la région du Grand Vancouver et du Grand Toronto), le groupe de réflexion a constaté que ces efforts n'ont pas assez d'envergure pour avoir l'impact transformateur nécessaire à l'échelle du Canada.

En deuxième lieu, d'autres pays tels l'Australie, la Nouvelle-Zélande, les États-Unis et l'Allemagne ont été beaucoup plus proactifs dans la promotion de la compétence sur l'Asie. Plusieurs ont adopté une approche globale, reposant sur l'engagement de haut niveau des gouvernements et du secteur privé. C'est le cas, par exemple, du « plan des 100 000 » (« 100,000 Strong Initiative ») qui vise à augmenter rapidement le nombre d'étudiants américains en Chine, annoncé par

le président Barack Obama. C'est aussi le cas de l'accent mis sur le développement de « compétences utiles en Asie » dans un livre blanc du gouvernement australien produit en 2012 et intitulé *Australia in the Asian Century*. Tout en prenant acte de son retard par rapport à ces « concurrents amicaux », le Canada serait bien avisé de s'en inspirer en ce qui concerne les pratiques exemplaires et de tirer de précieux enseignements de leurs initiatives.

En troisième lieu, quand on parle de « compétences au sujet de l'Asie », on envisage surtout l'éducation de la prochaine génération de Canadiens qui prendront la relève dans les entreprises, la fonction publique, les établissements d'enseignement et les organisations non gouvernementales. Il y a toutefois des secteurs importants, dont le tourisme, qui se trouvent, à l'instant même, au front des échanges avec l'Asie. Certains pays, dont l'Australie, la Nouvelle-Zélande et la Suisse, mettent déjà en œuvre des initiatives de sensibilisation aux réalités culturelles d'Asie et s'appliquent à créer de nouveaux produits et services à l'intention des visiteurs en provenance de ce continent. Vu que la Chine s'impose comme le plus grand marché du tourisme émergent au monde, une telle approche se justifie au Canada chez les entreprises et associations touristiques, voire au sein du gouvernement pour assurer une fonction aussi fondamentale que celle de la délivrance de visas et de la prise en charge des arrivées à la frontière.

En quatrième lieu, les programmes nationaux qui ont réussi présentent comme point commun la convergence de différentes parties prenantes afin de coordonner les stratégies et de partager les ressources. Le groupe de réflexion recommande donc une « conférence de responsabilisation » pour obtenir le soutien concret et judicieux de chaque groupe intéressé et baliser la voie vers l'établissement des structures et réseaux nécessaires pour lancer un effort national durable, en visant plus que la somme des contributions individuelles maximales des gouvernements, des entreprises et des établissements d'enseignement. Pour relever le défi et développer la compétence sur l'Asie de la nouvelle génération de Canadiens, il faut un vaste consensus national et une initiative collaborative à l'échelle du pays entier.

Le rapport recommande les mesures concrètes suivantes :

- Instaurer une conférence nationale annuelle qui servira au partage des pratiques exemplaires. À titre de province qui a démontré un niveau d'engagement impressionnant dans les formations de langue et les stages en Asie, l'Alberta serait l'endroit idéal où tenir la première conférence en 2014.
- Faire en sorte que la stratégie d'éducation internationale du Canada ne soit pas une voie à sens unique. Ces dernières années, les gouvernements du Canada et des provinces ont fait de grands efforts pour attirer les étudiants étrangers au Canada, avec peu d'impulsion et d'appui en haut lieu pour inciter les Canadiens à acquérir de l'expérience à l'étranger.
- Encourager les gouvernements et les entreprises à l'œuvre dans les secteurs clés de l'économie à développer leur savoir-faire en faisant participer des Canadiens qui possèdent une expérience de l'Asie dans les comités consultatifs stratégiques, les associations commerciales et les conseils d'administration.



“In this century, the region in which we live will become home to most of the world’s middle class and will be the world’s largest producer of goods and services, and the largest consumer of them.

The scale and pace of Asia’s rise is staggering, and there are significant opportunities and challenges for all Australians.

It is not enough to rely on luck—our future will be determined by the choices we make and how we engage with the region we live in. We must build on our strengths and take active steps to shape our future.”

—From the press release introducing the 2012 White Paper on Australia in the Asian Century

“The need for Americans to gain greater exposure to and understanding of China is clear: there is perhaps no more important or complex relationship in the world than that between the United States and China in terms of securing global peace and security.

Virtually no major international issue—whether global economic recovery or climate change or nuclear non-proliferation can be solved without the active engagement of both the United States and China, working in concert.”

—From the State Department’s backgrounder to President Obama’s 100,000 Strong Initiative, launched in 2010 with the goal of having 100,000 young Americans travel to China to study by the end of 2014

“Asia’s economic and geopolitical rise is hardly news for anybody... But is Canada, as a whole, preparing itself for relevance and prosperity in a more Asia-centric world? The answer is not fast enough.”

—Opening remarks by Dean Connor, President and CEO of Sun Life Financial, at the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada’s June 2013 conference, Canada-Asia 2013: Navigating Asia’s Future, Charting Canada’s Strategy, in Vancouver



INTRODUCTION

WE HAVE BEEN ASKED to look at what we are doing in Canada to encourage a greater degree of “Asia competence.” It is not hard to understand why this is important. Globalization demands that we expand our horizons. It also provides new opportunities and a compelling rationale for doing so.

There is a particular urgency when it comes to Asia. This is partly due to its rise in terms of economic power, and its relevance to us in terms of people flows, including students, tourists and immigrants. It is also because of the increasingly important role that the countries of Asia are playing on vital issues like environmental protection, global health and food safety. It is clearly in our interest to prepare ourselves for an increasingly close and important engagement with the region. And that means equipping the next generation of Canadians with the Asia competence to do this.

We are not alone in facing up to something that is both an opportunity and a challenge. As illustrated by the quotations at the beginning of this report, countries like Australia and the United States also recognize the growing importance of Asia and the corresponding need to ensure that citizens are equipped to make the most of it. In the United States, President Barack Obama has challenged young Americans to travel to China to study and gain experience critical for continuing American competitiveness. Australia has embarked on an ambitious and far-reaching set of initiatives to prepare for the “Asian Century,” a program that has at its heart undertakings around the study of Asian languages, cultures and societies.

China is emerging as a particularly important Asian partner for Canada. Long our second most important source of imports, it is now also our second-largest export market. And it is playing a similarly important

role across our broad bilateral agenda. While China’s rise is likely to continue to have a very significant impact on the global agenda, it will not necessarily follow a smooth or predictable trajectory. This will bring opportunities for Canada, but it will also present us with entirely new challenges. That is all the more reason to ensure that we are preparing a generation of young Canadians with the skills and experience to address both eventualities.

As we found through our investigations, given China’s growing political and economic importance—and the significance of its diaspora population in

BOX 1: LIVING IN A MORE ASIA-CENTRED WORLD

- Asia is expected to account for half of global GDP by 2050
- China could surpass the US as the world’s largest economy as early as 2020
- China is Canada’s second-largest trading partner (after the US)
- Southeast Asia represents a market of 600 million people, larger than the population of the European Union
- The Philippines recently became the largest source of immigrants to Canada
- China is the new number one tourism source market in the world
- China, South Korea and India are Canada’s three largest sources of international students

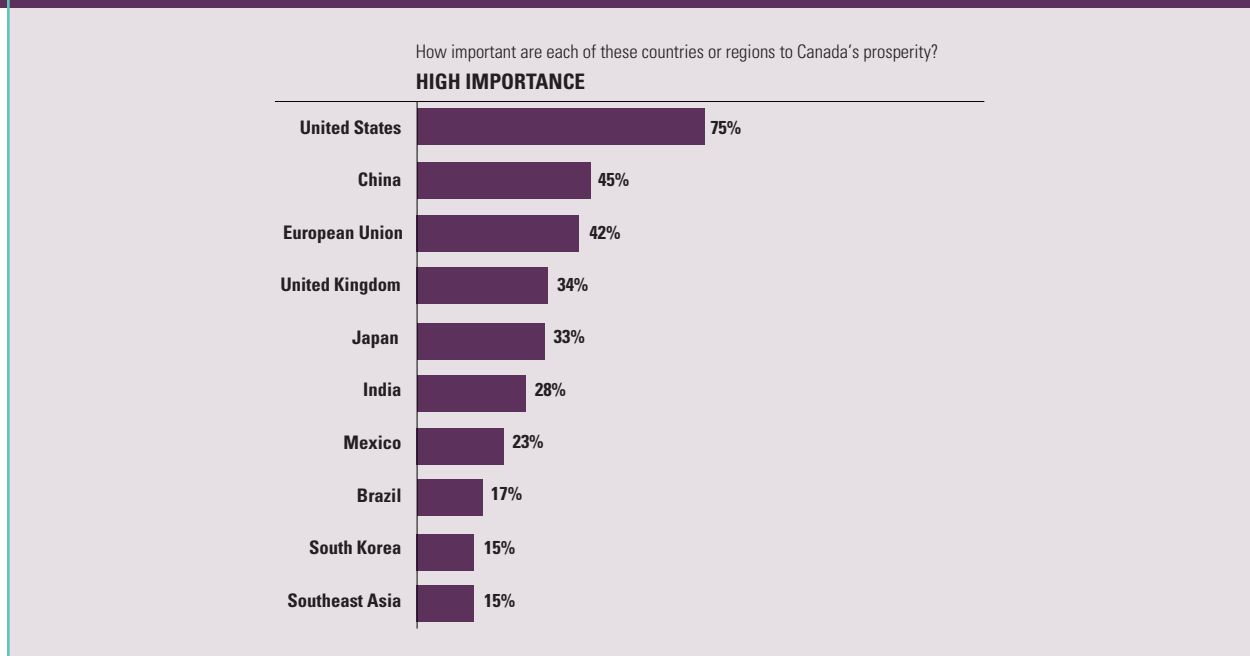
Canada—much of the activity in Canada that is dedicated to becoming more Asia competent is focused on China. That is only natural and is commensurate with the significant role that China plays in the Asia Pacific region. While there are signs that China’s economic growth is slowing, it would be a mistake to use this as an excuse for not undertaking the hard work that building a sustainable relationship requires. China’s leaders see slower and more balanced growth as a pre-requisite for continuing national development. However this is managed, it is safe to predict that China will remain a formidable economic partner and an important influence on our own future. We cannot afford to take our eye off the ball.

While we will certainly need an increasing number of Canadians who can help to build our relationship with China, we must also maintain a broader focus. We need Canadians who can expand our networks in Japan, connect with the best and brightest in India, negotiate contracts in Korea, and find new opportunities

in dynamic countries like Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines.

Knowing more about Asia, gaining on-the-ground experience there and indeed learning one or more of its languages are essential to the education of Canadians who will spend much of their careers in Asia. But these things are also important for the many more Canadians who will engage with Asia at home. Because just as we are reaching out to Asia, Asia is reaching out to us. Asian investors, students and tourists are making contributions right across the country. And changing demographics in Canada mean that being aware of Asian languages, cultures and traditions becomes an important asset in serving the public.

GRAPH 1: CANADIANS IDENTIFY CHINA AS SECOND-MOST IMPORTANT COUNTRY FOR CANADA’S PROSPERITY



Source: Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2013 National Opinion Poll: Canadian Views on Asia, May 2013, p. 14, http://www.asiapacific.ca/sites/default/files/filefield/national_opinion_poll_2013_-_may_29_-_final.pdf.

DEFINITION

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ASIA COMPETENCE?

AT THE MOST BASIC LEVEL, Asia competence means having a broad knowledge of the history, geography, culture and traditions of Asia. In other words, it means developing the same kind of awareness of Asia that we, through our education system, media and broader culture, have developed towards the United States and Europe. We need to think of this awareness of Asia as part of the life skills that enable Canadians to navigate in an increasingly connected world. It is something that should be part of everybody's educational experience.

Others, particularly those who will spend significant time in Asia, will want to master Asian languages. While this group will always represent a sub-set of the larger population, it is in our long-term interest to ensure that the growth of Asian language capabilities is commensurate with Asia's increasing relevance for us. As you will see from our initial survey work (see p.

x), while some communities and institutions are showing leadership in supporting instruction in Asian languages, as a country we have a long way to go.

Finally, looking at this through the prism of Canada's changing needs, we will require an increasing number of Canadians who are effective at engaging Asia. By this we mean people who have the experience and skill to negotiate in Asia (acknowledging that such skills are often country-specific), who can form successful partnerships, navigate cultural or bureaucratic systems that are unfamiliar to many Canadians, and help Asian visitors better understand Canada and Canadians.

While language skills are a part of this, so too are the cross-cultural skills that can be sharpened and enhanced through training and, ideally, experience on the ground in Asia, through internships, co-op placements and study abroad.

BOX 2: WHAT ASIA PRACTITIONERS SAY ABOUT CANADIANS' ASIA COMPETENCE

In 2012, the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada surveyed its panel of Asia practitioners—Canadians who are connected to and knowledgeable about Asia, primarily through their work as business leaders, government officials, academics, students and NGO workers—on the state of Canada's Asia competence.

60%

said it is difficult to find Canadians with the necessary level of knowledge and awareness of Asia to help their company or organization succeed in Asia.

82%

said that building Asia knowledge and expertise is the most critical component of any strategy to build closer relations with Asian countries. They point to the need for more mobility opportunities (study abroad, internships, co-op placements and field schools) and the need for a broader and more solid foundation of knowledge of Asian societies and economies.

91%

support Canada giving greater priority to teaching Asian languages in the country's primary and secondary schools.

Source: Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, "Education in Canada-Asia Relations," *Points of View Asia Pacific*, December 2012, <http://www.asiapacific.ca/surveys/points-view/education-canada-asia-relations>.

TABLE 1: ASIA COMPETENCE SURVEY OF FIVE CANADIAN SCHOOL BOARDS

	VANCOUVER	EDMONTON	TORONTO	MONTREAL	HALIFAX
Do schools in your district offer Asian languages?	Yes, two Vancouver elementary schools offer Mandarin immersion. Mandarin and Japanese are also offered in grades 9-12.	Yes, Mandarin, Japanese, and Punjabi are offered. Mandarin is offered as a bilingual K-12 program. A six-year Chinese language and culture program beginning in Grade 7 is also offered, as is a three-year non-immersion Chinese language program beginning in Grade 10.	Yes, the Continuing Education department offers Mandarin and Cantonese, to approximately 10,000 elementary school students.	No information provided	No, although heritage maintenance language is offered in the Halifax Asian community outside the school day.
Does the broader curriculum in your district include content to help students better understand Asia?	Yes, humanities courses are designed to allow teachers to 'localize' content and teach within a global perspective, which can have an Asia focus given Vancouver's large Asian population.	Yes, Grade 8 social studies has a unit on Japan. Other Asian countries are included, but not as explicitly. The English Language Arts curriculum does not include specific regions or countries, but is open enough to enable teachers to include Asia content if they desire.	Yes, the Social Studies, Geography, History curriculum allows for an Asia focus, although the extent to which the teachers focus on Asia varies.	No information provided	Yes, in high-school-level global geography
Do you have exchanges with schools in Asia?	Yes	Yes, through the Confucius Institute (CI) (see Box 4, page 19) and through exchanges organized by school staff to Japan and China. Thirteen schools have twinning relationships with schools in Shandong, China. Five district schools have a twinning relationship with schools in Japan.	There are no programs for elementary school students, but the Continuing Education department offers summer programs in China.	No information provided	No
Do you have Confucius Institutes (CI) or Classrooms in schools in your district?	No	Yes, Edmonton Public Schools partner with <i>Hanban</i> in a very active CI. Thirteen public schools are designated Confucius Classrooms. In 2012, Edmonton's CI was recognized as a top CI globally.	Yes, the Toronto District School Board recently signed an Agreement on Implementation and is in the process of working out the details.	No information provided	No

Our task force felt the degrees of Asia competence to which Canadians can aspire can be defined as:

- **Exposure to Asia:** *Gained through education in Canada about Asian history, geography, culture, economic development and how business gets done.*
- **Experience in Asia:** *Gained through exchange programs, internships, projects and partnerships in Asia.*
- **Expertise in Asia:** *Gained through long-term, in-market activities, and acquired through living in Asia, doing business in Asia, developing Asian language capabilities, incorporating Asian expertise on corporate and advisory boards and participating in industry associations or other types of private and public sector organizations.*

We were not surprised to find that other countries approach the question of definition in much the same way. Asia competence is often described as a pyramid, with broad awareness, the things that everybody should have the chance to learn, forming the base, and more specialized language, cultural and operational skills at the apex. We need to think carefully about this hierarchy of needs, and to ensure that we are reinforcing skills and experience across a range of Asia competence at every level.

In addition to thinking about the needs of individual Canadians and the new life skills that globalization and the rise of Asia require of us, we have also considered the needs of organizations and sectors, like the public service, the people who sit on corporate boards and the many Canadians who are active in key economic sectors like tourism, energy and agriculture. People like this are on the front lines of our relationship with Asia. Their performance can be enhanced through specific competence-building measures. We list some sector-specific examples in Section IV.

STATE OF EDUCATION IN ASIA COMPETENCE IN CANADA

BUILDING ASIA INTO THE CURRICULUM

WE COLLECTED INFORMATION from a cross-section of schools and school boards across Canada. Getting even basic data proved very difficult. There is no widely accessible national repository of information, a comprehensive database to check or a nationwide network of practitioners to consult. While this was challenging for us, it is far more problematic for parents and students who are trying to plan for the future. We pieced information together through site visits and by means of electronic, phone and in-person interviews in Canada and with international specialists. We also sent a series of questions to school boards in Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto, Montreal (both the French and English school boards) and Halifax.

Most of these school boards reported that they are sensitive to the importance of including more references to and information about Asia in the curriculum. But actual activity is modest. We found little to equal the efforts of countries like New Zealand, where course modules are broadly available to schools to help students understand the connections between what has happened and is happening in Asia and

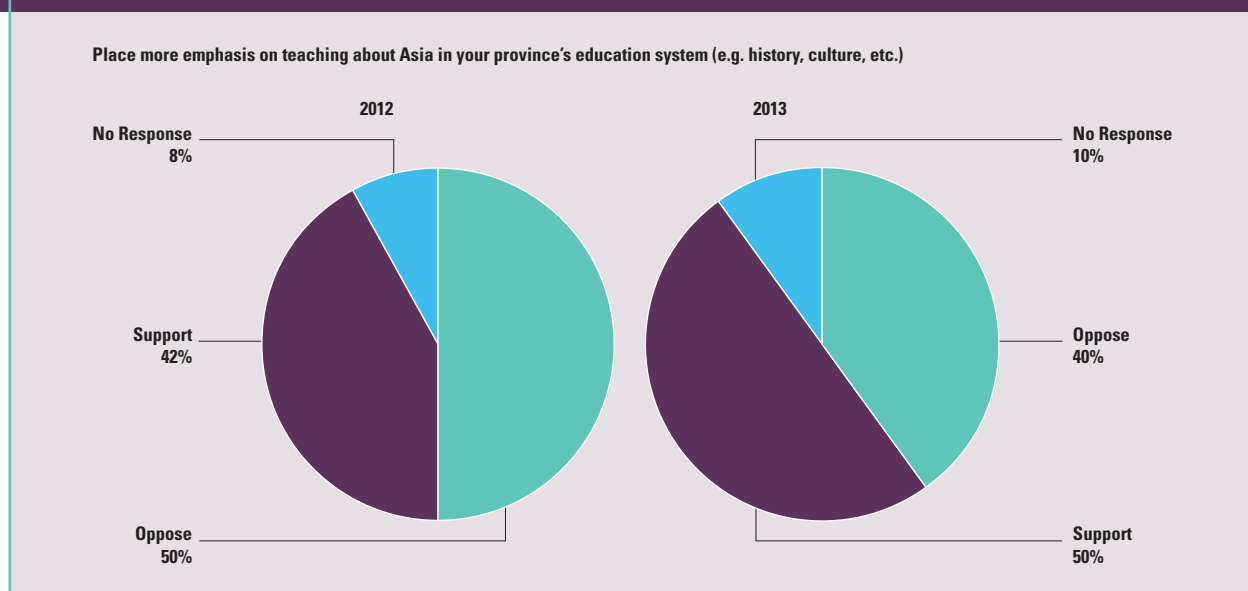
developments in their own country. Approaches differ widely across Canada, where education is a provincial responsibility; there are few chances to compare notes and identify best practices. We have listed some compelling examples in later sections of this report. In the recommendations section at the end of the report, we suggest an annual conference or conferences that would allow a more effective sharing of ideas and would encourage the creation of networks of Asia programs and specialists across Canada.

According to the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada's 2013 *National Opinion Poll: Canadian Views on Asia*, Canadians' support for teaching Asia content in schools is growing (see Graph 2). However, we are still a long way from reaching a national consensus, and were unable to find much progress toward teaching Asia content by provincial ministries of education or school boards.

Training in Asian Languages

The APF Canada 2013 *National Opinion Poll* also revealed that compared to previous years, more

GRAPH 2: CANADIAN SUPPORT FOR PLACING MORE EMPHASIS ON TEACHING ABOUT ASIA

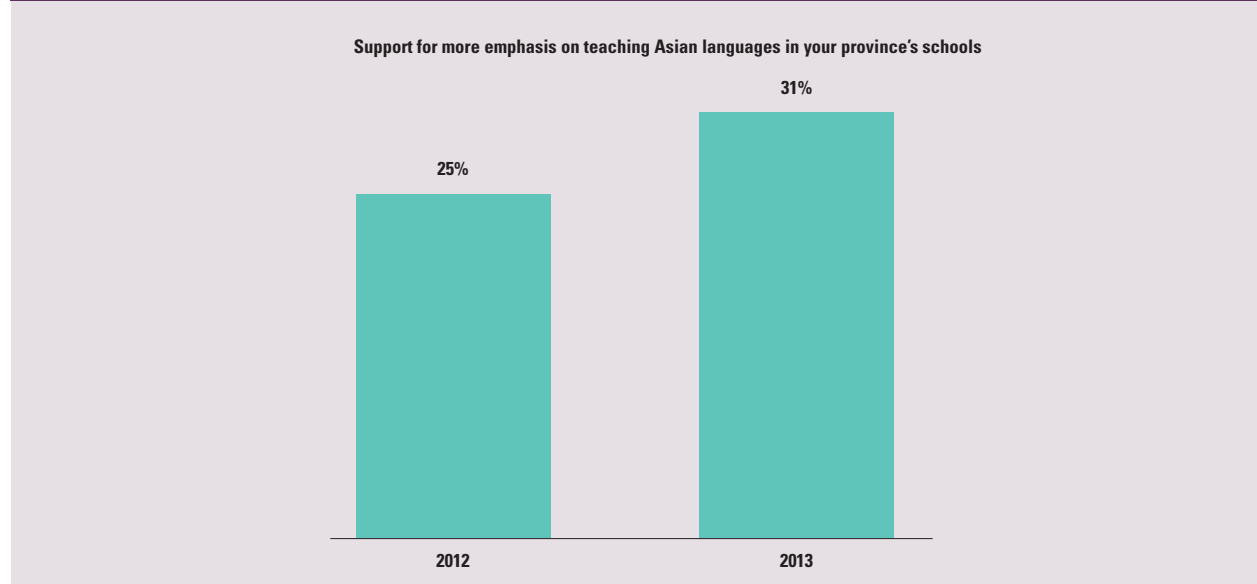


Source: Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2013 *National Opinion Poll: Canadian Views on Asia*, May 2013, p. 24, http://www.asiapacific.ca/sites/default/files/filefield/national_opinion_poll_2013_-_may_29_-_final.pdf; and 2012 *National Opinion Poll: Canadian Views on Asia*, April 2012, p. 22, http://www.asiapacific.ca/sites/default/files/filefield/nop_2012_april25.pdf.

Canadians support greater emphasis on teaching Asian languages in schools. The poll reported a 25% year-over-year increase, with 31% of Canadians surveyed showing support (see Graphs 3 and 4).

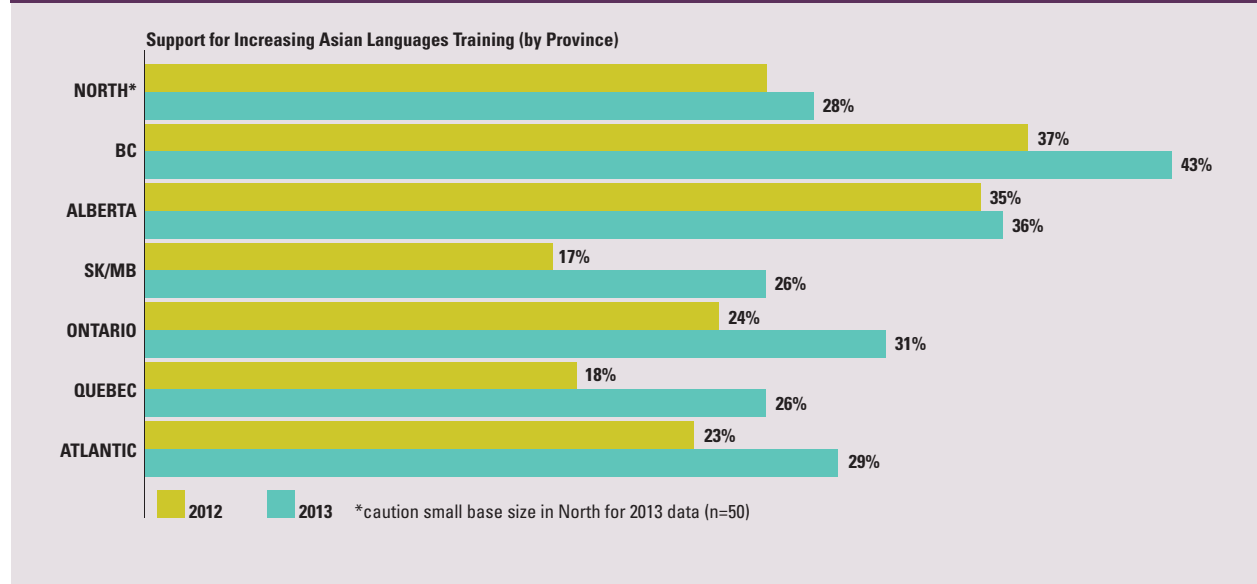
Despite growing awareness, Asian language training faces challenges in the university system and is scattered and disconnected at the K-12 level across the country.

GRAPH 3: CANADIAN SUPPORT FOR TEACHING ASIAN LANGUAGES GROWING BUT STILL VERY MODEST



Source: Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2013 National Opinion Poll: Canadian Views on Asia, May 2013, p. 24, http://www.asiapacific.ca/sites/default/files/filefield/national_opinion_poll_2013_-_may_29_-_final.pdf; and 2012 National Opinion Poll: Canadian Views on Asia, April 2012, p. 22, http://www.asiapacific.ca/sites/default/files/filefield/nop_2012_april25.pdf.

GRAPH 4: CANADIAN SUPPORT FOR TEACHING ASIAN LANGUAGES, BY PROVINCE/TERRITORY



Source: Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2013 National Opinion Poll: Canadian Views on Asia, May 2013, p. 25, http://www.asiapacific.ca/sites/default/files/filefield/national_opinion_poll_2013_-_may_29_-_final.pdf; and 2012 National Opinion Poll: Canadian Views on Asia, April 2012, p. 24, http://www.asiapacific.ca/sites/default/files/filefield/nop_2012_april25.pdf.

At the level of higher education, Asian languages, primarily Mandarin, Japanese and Korean, are offered to some extent at many universities across Canada. While there are constraints on growth, there are at least opportunities available to students in all regions of the country. Results are uneven at the primary and secondary levels, where the reality is of scattered pockets of excellence in places like Edmonton, Vancouver and Toronto.

The Edmonton experience with Mandarin instruction is particularly interesting, and offers some best prac-

tices for Asian language programs. These include having a strong core of motivated parents, a network of capable and committed teachers and school administrators, and a supportive school board.

Like other educational institutions across the country, the Edmonton School Board has established a partnership with *Hanban*, an international section of China's Ministry of Education that supports the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language. *Hanban* promotes Chinese instruction in a growing number of countries through the establishment of what are called Confucius Institutes (CIs). These are vehicles for providing teachers, teaching materials and connections to counterpart schools in China (see Box 4). The fact that Edmonton's Confucius Institute is embedded in the School Board itself, rather than in a specific school, means that Mandarin programs are widely available throughout the city.

The Edmonton School Board has also worked closely and creatively with the University of Alberta, with the result that an increasing number of students continue learning Mandarin at the university level. This is a smart connection. It benefits the School Board, since students are more likely to enrol if they can see future benefits from their studies. It benefits the University, which taps into a stream of interested and qualified local students. And, most important, it benefits the students themselves, who can begin to see a seamless and connected educational path ahead of them.

But even Edmonton faces challenges. Most of the students are studying Chinese as a "heritage" language, which means they come from a Chinese heritage family.¹ It is still difficult to encourage students who do not have family links to China to study Mandarin.

BOX 3: EDMONTON MANDARIN LANGUAGE PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

- Over 3,000 students study Chinese in Edmonton Public Schools, one of the oldest and most recognized Mandarin immersion programs in North America.
- The Chinese (Mandarin)-English Bilingual Program includes partial immersion for Kindergarten through Grade 12. In elementary school, 50% of the curriculum is taught in Chinese and 50% is taught in English. The goal is to train students to be functionally fluent in Chinese and to appreciate the culture of Chinese-speaking countries.
- The Chinese Language & Culture six-year program is for students starting in Grade 7, and three-year program is for students starting in high school.

¹ According to the University of British Columbia's Asian Studies Department, "heritage" and "non-heritage" language learners can be determined as follows: "heritage" students include those a) who were born in a non-Chinese speaking country, but who were raised in a home where Mandarin or another Chinese dialect was spoken, who speak or merely understand the dialect, and who are to some degree bilingual in English and Chinese; b) who were born in a Chinese-speaking country, whose first language was Chinese, and who have received some, but incomplete, formal education in that country up to Grade 6; and c) who are of non-Chinese origin but who have acquired a certain level of Chinese language proficiency (especially speaking and listening) by living, studying or working in a Chinese-speaking country or region for an extended period of time. "Non-heritage" learners are those a) who are of non-Chinese origin; or b) who are of Chinese origin but do not speak any Chinese dialect, and whose parents do not speak any Chinese dialect. See <http://www.chinese.arts.ubc.ca/coursedescriptions.htm#distinction>.

This is a familiar challenge. Indeed, the recent growth in the numbers of students studying Mandarin in Australia has tracked that country’s growth in Chinese immigration. Mandarin enrolment has declined among Australian students whose families are not of Chinese origin.² One Canadian educator commented to us that students at his school study Spanish because they can “see” themselves visiting, studying or working in a Spanish-speaking environment. It is clearly still difficult for students outside of ‘heritage’ communities to see themselves in a Chinese or other Asian environment. An outlier to all of this is the city

of Chicago, home to the top Confucius Institute in the world. There, more than 12,000 students of all heritages study Chinese in 48 K-12 schools. Corporate scholarships are available for high school students to attend six-week summer programs in China as part of Obama’s 100,000 Strong Initiative (see Box 10).

It is also clear that much of the growth and energy behind Chinese language training in Edmonton and elsewhere is linked to the assistance provided by China’s *Hanban*. This is equally true of programs elsewhere. None of *Hanban*’s Canadian partners with whom we spoke had anything but positive things to

BOX 4: QUICK FACTS ABOUT CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES (CIS)

Confucius Institutes in Canada		
British Columbia	Confucius Institute at British Columbia Institute of Technology (<i>the first in Canada</i>)	<p>Confucius Institutes are agencies to promote the learning of Chinese language and culture.</p> <p>They are created through a partnership between two academic institutions, one foreign (usually a university) and the other Chinese.</p> <p>The first CI was established in South Korea in 2004, and as of October 2013, there were approximately 400 CIs around the world, with 12 in Canada.</p> <p>They are guided by China’s Office of Chinese Language Council International (<i>Hanban</i>). Their primary role is to provide funding, teachers and instruction materials. They administer the Chinese proficiency examination, or HSK (<i>hanyu shuiping kaoshi</i>), and certification tests for Chinese language teachers; offer consultative services concerning China’s education and culture; and conduct language and cultural exchange activities.</p> <p><i>Hanban</i> provides the start-up money for the institutes. This is especially valuable for universities not able to independently fund their own Chinese language programs.</p>
Alberta	Confucius Institute in Edmonton School Board	
Saskatchewan	University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina	
Ontario	Brock University, Carleton University, University of Waterloo, Confucius Institute at Canterbury College in University of Windsor, Seneca College	
Quebec	Confucius Institute in Quebec (<i>partnership between Dawson College and the University of Sherbrooke</i>)	
New Brunswick	Confucius Institute in New Brunswick	
Nova Scotia	St. Mary’s University	

² *Australia in the Asian Century*, Australian Government White Paper, October 2012, p 173, <http://asiancentury.dpmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/white-paper/chapter-6.pdf>.

say about the relationship. That said, we are aware of one notable case in which a Canadian university withdrew from a partnership with *Hanban* because of concerns about hiring policies that it believed were incompatible with the University's values.³ There is also the larger question of whether we should depend almost exclusively on assistance from another country to develop a competence that is so clearly in our long-term interest. At the very least, we should not allow our recognition of *Hanban's* enthusiastic support for Mandarin training in Canada to convince

us that there is no need to develop indigenous capability in teaching and creating made-in-Canada training materials.

The Edmonton example shows that support for Asian languages is rooted in strong support from the local community, the engagement of committed teachers and principals, and encouragement from the local school board. But, all-important funding flows from the province.

BOX 5: STUDY ABROAD IN ASIA AND CANADIAN STUDENTS

Only 3% of Canadian post-secondary students take advantage of opportunities to study abroad. According to a 2012 Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) report, titled *World of Learning: Canada's Performance and Potential in International Education*, participation rates are twice as high for Australian students, and in Germany the rate is 30%, with a goal of reaching 50%.

According to the universities consulted for this task force report, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan are destinations chosen by only 8-14% of Canadians studying abroad, while the US, the UK, Australia, France and Ireland are the top destinations of choice.

According to CBIE, the concept of studying abroad is widely supported by Canadians in all regions and among all demographic subgroups, and is associated with very positive benefits both for students and for Canada. And most Canadian colleges and universities have added an international or global emphasis to mission statements and accept the importance of being international in scope and content.

However, many felt that higher education institutions could be doing a lot more, and expressed doubts that their institution was prepared to make learning in an international or intercultural context a reality for the majority of students. Several faculty members expressed concern that even if there were more opportunities, student participation rates would not grow, citing barriers such as a lack of interest, fear of going beyond one's comfort zone and cost.

The top internal motivators for students include the excitement of travel, a desire to live in a different culture, and the chance to develop global awareness. External motivators include encouragement from friends, parents, and faculty; availability of funding; and having had a positive previous study abroad. The main obstacles include cost (78%), time away from friends (43%), and concerns about not receiving academic credit (38%).

Source: Canadian Bureau of International Education, "World of Learning: Canadian Post-Secondary Students and the Study Abroad Experience," 2009, http://www.cbie-bcei.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/20100520_WorldOfLearningReport_e.pdf

³ McMaster University, "Update – Confucius Institute," *Daily News*, May 2, 2013, <http://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/worth-mentioning/update-confucius-institute/>

Support for Asian language training at the provincial level is uneven. In many provinces, instruction in languages other than English or French is shaped by a combination of demand, demographic trends and local capabilities. That means that Asian language programs struggle for funds and support alongside languages like German, Spanish, Italian, Polish and Ukrainian. While it is important to be responsive to what parents and students want, provincial ministries of education also need to lead. That means preparing young Canadians for an Asian future that has already arrived. This is particularly true for those parts of the country that are not yet home to large communities of people of Asian origin, and where parental demand may not yet be a significant factor. Regions that have large diaspora communities more readily fund and support Asian language learning. This in turn attracts students and teachers in a self-reinforcing cycle.

Meanwhile, regions that are less diverse fall further behind. This is unfair to many young Canadians and deprives the country of talent that could help us to move forward. If we are to engage Asia successfully, we cannot afford to leave parts of the country behind, and we need to call on the energy and talent of all Canadians. To be clear, we are not suggesting supplanting existing heritage language programs. Rather, we are arguing that Asia's global importance and its importance to Canada is such that provinces need to help build awareness of the growing need for education in Asia-related subjects, and help to create opportunities to attract students.

While universities offer many courses in Asian languages, there are significant impediments to program growth. Teachers speak frankly about funding constraints and caps on class sizes. They point to the relatively high cost of providing language courses, and suggest that what is happening is part of a larger trend affecting the study of humanities and social sciences: current funding favours engineering, the applied sciences and business.

It can also be difficult to differentiate between heritage and non-heritage students. Students who are new to Asian languages can find themselves falling behind classmates for whom Chinese or Korean is the language at home. Some schools, like the University of British Columbia, have developed effective two-track solutions so that students who are new to a language like Chinese are not left behind by classmates who are already fluent.

Restrictions on the transferability of credits between institutions further compound the problems students face.

Finally, because Asian language programs are scattered and diverse, there is little scope to share best practices, pool resources and establish mutually supporting creative networks.

Helping Canadian Students Gain Experience on the Ground in Asia

Although there are many programs available that can help young people to gain experience on the ground in Asia, participation rates are low, especially compared to the number of young people travelling to the US, Europe and Australia (see Box 5). While the supply of programs and placements may be an issue, demand from young people also plays a significant role.

Options for gaining on-the-ground experience include visits to sister schools for students at the primary and secondary levels. Indeed, ready access to Chinese sister schools is one of the attractions of a partnership with China's *Hanban*. Universities offer a wide array of study abroad and co-op programs delivered through partner schools, mainly in China, Korea and Japan, although the absolute number of openings is still relatively modest.

There are also a number of programs catering to more specialized needs. The British Columbia Institute of

Technology, for example, offers Canadian entrepreneurs the experience of work terms in China, letting them see how a Chinese company works from the inside.

A variety of scholarships are available at the federal and provincial level offering opportunities for study in Asia.⁴

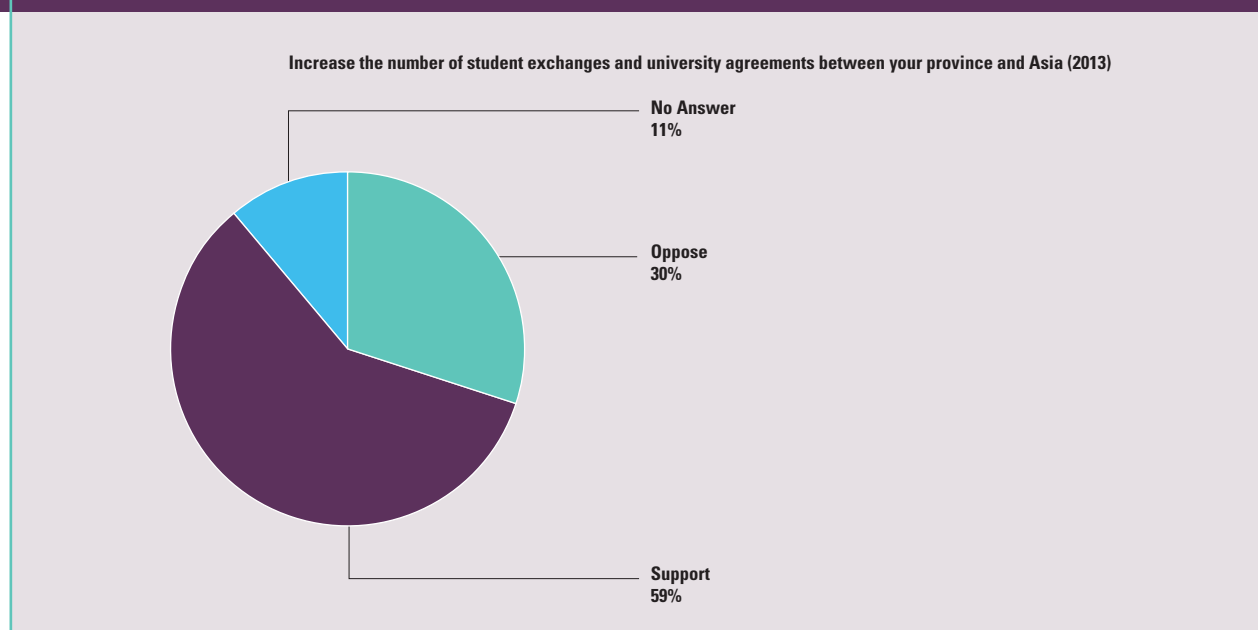
Even more extensive are the opportunities offered for working holidays⁵ or co-op work terms in Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan through the International Experience Canada program offered by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD). These are offered on a bilateral basis. Currently, the program is heavily used by Asian students interested in Canada, with little take up by Canadian students travelling to Asia (see Graph 6).

There is no clear explanation for this, but several factors may be at work.

First, the programs are not well publicized, and hence it can be hard for students to find out about them. The International Experience Canada program could and should be much more actively promoted. We need to see it as a truly win-win endeavour. Canada wins by attracting bright young Asian students to Canada, and by encouraging our own young people to go to Asia.

Second, there are still all-too-few voices encouraging Canadian students to seek experience in Asia. We have heard nothing as high-level or compelling as President Obama's 100,000 Strong Initiative or the Australian White Paper, which was released in 2012

GRAPH 5: CANADIANS SUPPORT INCREASING STUDENT EXCHANGES, UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS WITH ASIA



Source: : Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2013 National Opinion Poll: Canadian Views on Asia, May 2013, p. 24, http://www.asiapacific.ca/sites/default/files/filefield/national_opinion_poll_2013_-_may_29_-_final.pdf.

⁴ Examples include: http://www.canlearn.ca/eng/loans_grants/grants/index.shtml and <http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studyabroad/financial.htm>.

⁵ The Working Holiday Program is organized through International Experience Canada, a travel and work abroad initiative under the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD). International Experience Canada has secured bilateral reciprocal youth mobility arrangements and agreements with 32 countries and territories (as of September 2013) to make it easier for Canadians between the ages of 18 and 35 to obtain a temporary work permit for up to one year. See http://www.international.gc.ca/experience/working_holiday-travail_vacance.aspx.

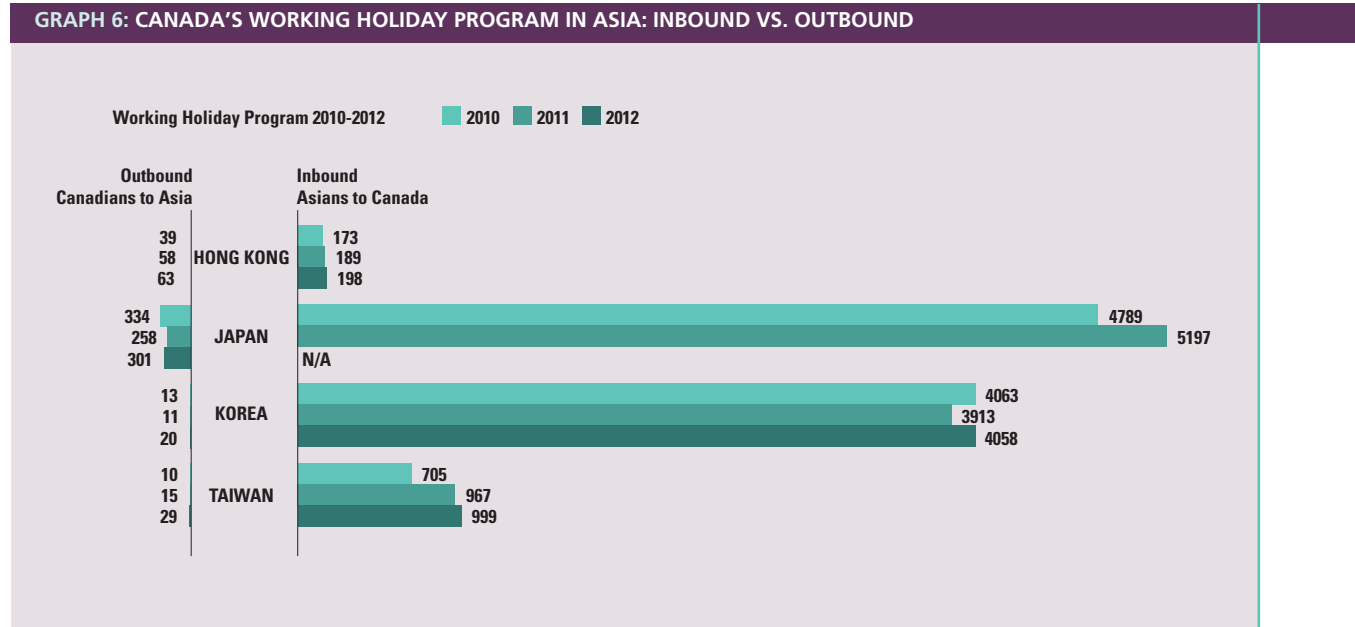
by their Prime Minister, encouraging their students to seek experience in Asia.

Two very significant Canadian reports on the importance of international education—“International Education: A Key Driver of Canada’s Future Prosperity,” and “Bringing Education in Canada to the World, Bringing the World to Canada,”—were issued recently, one at the federal level and the other by the provinces. However, both documents focus largely on increasing the inbound flow of students to Canada.⁶ Both acknowledge the necessity for collaboration between the provinces and the federal government, which has the lead when it comes to international relations. This only makes sense when engaging Asian partners. China’s government, for example, sees the Canadian federal government as its natural

interlocutor on cooperation on education. Indeed, China recently agreed to elevate education to the status of a bilateral Canada-China priority.

Unfortunately, we have yet to see specific examples of federal-provincial collaboration, much less a shared federal-provincial strategy to encourage two way student flows.

Although educational institutions and governments play the key role in helping students to gain on-the-ground experience in Asia, there is also a role here for potential employers in the private sector. Anecdotal evidence suggests that young Canadians are wary about taking time away from highly competitive programs in Canada for what they see as an experience that will do little to burnish their resumes. Students who return from such opportunities and find



Source: International Experience Canada/DFATD

⁶ Advisory Panel on Canada’s International Education Strategy Final Report, “International Education: A Key Driver of Canada’s Future Prosperity,” August 2012, http://www.international.gc.ca/education/assets/pdfs/ies_report_rapport_sei-eng.pdf; Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, “Bringing Education in Canada to the World, Bringing the World to Canada: an International Education Marketing Action Plan for Provinces and Territories, a Response to the Council of the Federation from Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Education and Immigration,” June 2011, http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/264/COF_Bringing_Ed_to_Canada_Eng_final.pdf.

themselves at a competitive disadvantage in the job market provide cautionary examples for others. Young people need to hear that experience gained on the ground in Asia and the acquisition of Asian language skills are valued by potential employers. And the best way to deliver that message is for employers to invest more heavily in the enterprising young people who represent the future managers of our relationship with Asia.

Students, too, need to understand that the first and best reason for undertaking such international experiences is personal development and the chance to expand one's horizons. They also need to be confident that Asia-related skills will indeed open doors, but that these doors may not be the ones they expect, nor can this be achieved without effort. Above all, students need to understand that skills like mastering an Asian language do not simply remain dormant and unfulfilled until a future employer decides to bring them to life. Students today, like students in previous eras, need to be optimistic and entrepreneurial, energetic and open to new and unexpected opportunities.

Our review of programs in places across Canada left us with the strong sense that building Asia competence is still largely dependent on interest and activity at the community level. This grassroots level of commitment is, not surprisingly, strongest in those regions that benefit most from being home to significant Asian diaspora communities. Whether or not this is enough to meet the opportunities and challenges in engaging a rising Asia is perhaps best answered through a comparison with what is happening in similar countries.

HOW ARE OTHERS DOING?

CANADA IS NOT ALONE IN RECOGNIZING the importance of a rising Asia. Other countries, long-standing partners and, our direct competitors in Asia, are working to ensure that their citizens are increasingly Asia competent.

Australia

It would be fair to say that the Australia has been experimenting with building Asia competence longer than any other comparable country, and that it has developed the most comprehensive program for addressing the challenges of doing so. Australians will frankly admit that they have made their share of mistakes along the way, and to their credit, are dedicated to learning from what has gone wrong in past initiatives as well as from what has gone right.

Their current effort is embedded in the aforementioned White Paper. Its drafters, drawn from government, the private sector and academia, make the important point that the key to a successful Australian engagement with Asia involves improving Australian competitiveness in all major sectors—economic, educational, entrepreneurial and governance. They also see the effort to engage Asia, including the development of Asia competence, as a “whole-of-country” commitment, something of relevance across Australian society and requiring broad levels of input and support.

An entire chapter of the White Paper is dedicated to “Building Capabilities.” It includes as a key objective the idea that “Australians need to build Asia-relevant

BOX 6: AUSTRALIA’S NATIONAL CENTRE FOR ASIA CAPABILITY

In July 2013, the Australian federal government announced funding support for a new National Centre for Asia Capability. The private and philanthropic sectors will also contribute funding to this collaborative effort, which will involve the business community, government, the higher education sector, and philanthropic groups. This Centre’s core purpose will be to improve the “Asia skills” of the Australian workforce.

The Centre defines “Asia capabilities” as more than just “Asia literacy,” and specifies the individual and organizational skills required for Australia’s successful engagement of Asian countries.

Individual skills include

- Sophisticated understanding of Asian markets and environments
- Significant experience operating in Asia
- Long-term Asian relationships
- Ability to adapt behaviour to Asian cultural contexts
- Capacity to deal with government
- Some proficiency in Asian languages

Organizational skills include

- Ensuring that leaders are committed to pursuing an Asia-focused strategy
- Managing talent in a way that is customized for Asia
- Customized offering / value proposition based on insights from customers
- Organizational design that allows for local autonomy
- Processes that encourage the sharing of “Asian learnings”

BOX 7: INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY: AUSTRALIA'S ASIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION (AEF)

The Asia Education Foundation (AEF), based in Melbourne, Australia, supports K-12 teachers, principals, education leaders and school communities to implement the Australian Curriculum's cross-curriculum priority of *Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia*.

Examples of its work include building school-to-school partnerships with counterparts in Asia; supporting teachers from Asia traveling to Australia to spend time in an Australian school community; reciprocating the exchange by sending Australian teachers to Asia (all of which is coordinated with the Australia curriculum); and supporting a range of online interactions both within Australia and with schools in Asia.

The AEF also plays a pivotal role in sourcing, creating, assessing and disseminating curriculum materials that cater to all years and subject areas. Its 2013 National Conference, *Equipping Australian Schools for the 21st (Asian) Century*, showcased leading school and classroom practice in intercultural understanding, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia cross-curriculum priority and innovative languages education.

Source: Asian Education Foundation, <http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/default.asp>.

capabilities—both broad-based and specialised.” The chapter begins with a call for an across-the-board improvement in the quality of Australian schools, which need to be comparable to those in the top-

The paper then outlines a series of objectives designed to reinforce Asia competence. These include specific objectives to increase Asia content in the national curriculum, a call for every school to engage with a partner school in Asia to support language training,

performing countries elsewhere, many of which are in Asia. In other words, the ultimate Asia competence is keeping up with the high education standards for which the region has come to be known.

and for every student to have access to instruction in a “priority” Asian language, meaning Mandarin, Hindi, Indonesian and Japanese. Currently, 12% of Year 12 students in Australia are studying a foreign language, both Asian and non-Asian.

BOX 8: PARENTS' ADVOCACY GROUPS IN AUSTRALIA: PARENTS UNDERSTANDING ASIA LITERACY (PUAL)

The Australia-based Parents Understanding Asia Literacy (PUAL) group is a network of 225 parents from 75 schools who work collaboratively with school leaders to build student demand for knowledge, skills and understanding of Asia and increase opportunities for them to be exposed to high-quality and sustainable teaching programs. The group engages in conversations and projects in their school communities focused on building demand for Asian Languages and studies.

Parent Advocates attend a one-day training program in clusters of approximately five schools. Each cluster has a mentor to provide ongoing support to the Parent Advocates in their own school communities.

Source: Asian Education Foundation, <http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au/default.asp>.

While much of the paper is focused on the education sector, it also reaches out to business and government. Recommendations include ensuring that one-third of the directors of Australia's 200 largest publicly traded companies and one-third of the senior public service will have "deep experience in and knowledge of Asia."

Australia's September 2013 federal election brought the opposition Liberal Party to power. Prime Minister Tony Abbott has said in the past that he supports the White Paper in principle, but has faulted it for lacking specific initiatives and for not looking squarely enough at impediments to trade and investment.⁷ Last year he pledged that, if given the chance, he would launch efforts to increase the number of Australian secondary school students enrolled in foreign language programs to 40% within a decade.⁸

New Zealand

The effort in New Zealand is led by the Asia New Zealand Foundation (see Box 9). This is a non-profit organization funded by government but delivering its activities through close participation with the country's private sector. Their "Educating for Asia" program includes outreach to individual school districts across New Zealand to support Asia-relevant teacher training; opportunities for principals, teachers and students to travel to Asia; and initiatives to develop and to share Asia-themed course modules across a range of subjects. The program also matches high school students with New Zealand companies active in Asia.

New Zealand is looking at building Asia competence across the tourism sector. In the wake of a visit to China earlier this year, New Zealand's Prime Minister John Key made the point that growth in tourism from China will require New Zealanders to build their Asia competence. He has called for efforts to upgrade a broad range of services that will be important for

Chinese tourists. This has led to the development by Accor, a major hotel chain, of "Optimum Service Standards," which include recruiting more Chinese-speaking staff, providing Chinese-language television and newspapers, and introducing popular Chinese items into the menu, starting with breakfast, since that is one meal where people are mostly likely to want the comforts of home. Accor has launched a similar program for Chinese and Indian visitors in its hotels in Australia.

BOX 9: ASIA NEW ZEALAND FOUNDATION

The Asia New Zealand Foundation was established in 1994 to build New Zealanders' knowledge and understanding of Asia, and its work has focused on five main areas: business, arts and culture, education, media and research.

Its education-related activities focus on putting Asia in the curriculum and supporting professional development, especially working with principals to help build Asia-aware schools through the Principals' Asia Aware Network (PAAN). It also organizes study programs in Asia, including for teachers, senior managers, heads of department, curriculum leaders, and syndicate leaders.

Source: Asia New Zealand Foundation, <http://asianz.org.nz/>

The United States

In 2009, US President Barack Obama announced the 100,000 Strong Initiative, which was later launched in 2010 by then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, with the goal of seeing 100,000 US students travel to China for studies over a four-year period. In 2012, the initiative became the 100,000 Strong Foundation, an

⁷ "As it happened: Australia in the Asian Century," ABC News (Australia), October 29, 2012, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-10-28/live-coverage-australia-in-the-asian-century/4337812>.

⁸ "Education leaders urge Abbott to make knowledge-creation a priority," Financial Review, September 9, 2013, http://www.afr.com/p/australia2-0/education_leaders_urge_abbott_to_MUwY5hLU9wRfWxbeMhNDII.

independent non-profit organization devoted to strengthening US-China relations by deepening Americans' understanding of China.

The Foundation partners with American University in Washington, DC and is governed by an 11-person

Board of Directors comprising leaders from the private, public and academic sectors. Its Advisory Council includes members from the private sector, mayors, members of philanthropic organizations, academics and high-level officials from both countries.

BOX 10: THE 100,000 STRONG FOUNDATION

Mission: *to expand and diversify the number of Americans studying Mandarin and studying abroad in China.*

Goals: *to bridge the culture gap, strengthen the US-China economic and strategic relationships and enhance global stability.*

What does the Foundation do?

1. Leads national campaign to generate demand, promote diversity and support for study abroad programs in China
2. Works with Washington & Beijing to engage high-level government support for study abroad in China. (*China offers 20,000 scholarships for Americans to study in China.*)
3. Hosts annual US-China conference on the US-China strategic relationship linking policymakers and students in both countries.
4. Established a Washington, DC-based hub for US educational institutions to share best practices, leverage resources and expand Chinese programs.
5. Conducts independent studies on the impact of study abroad in China on US competitiveness and US-China relations.
6. Works with Project Pengyou (*Project Friend*) to develop a robust alumni network of Americans who have studied or lived in China.

Key 2013 Initiatives:

1. New strategic advisory council of foreign policy experts & business
2. Blackstone CEO, Stephen Schwarzman invests \$100M to provide 200 Master's degree scholarships at Tsinghua University in Beijing for US students
3. New Mayors Circle to expand K-12 Mandarin language learning in US cities and create additional summer study abroad opportunities

Beijing has been an active supporter and partner, and under the auspices of the US-China Consultation on People-to-People Exchange, the Chinese government has offered 20,000 scholarships for Americans to study in China.

While the Foundation has no formal relationship with the Chinese government, it works closely with Chinese officials to encourage Americans to apply for these scholarships.

And while the Foundation does not fund individual students, it works with other programs such as the China Scholarship Council, the Fulbright Student Program and the Critical Language Scholarship Program. It was launched with seed funding from the Ford Foundation, which was matched by the Florence Fang Family Foundation, alongside resources from other corporate, foundation and philanthropic sources.

One of its most notable features is the Mayors Circle, in which the Foundation will work with US mayors to expand Mandarin language learning at the K-12 level and create additional summer study-abroad opportunities for high school students. To date, the Mayors Circle includes the mayors of Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, DC.

The New York-based Asia Society is an organization dedicated to promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among peoples, leaders and institutions of Asia and the United States. It works across the fields of arts, business, culture, education, and policy. Over the past decade, it has become active in promoting and supporting Mandarin language education at the K-12 level. It has identified “islands of progress” throughout the United States, and has provided momentum to those programs by offering technical and other types of support. In 2008, it introduced an annual National Chinese Language

Conference, which now brings together approximately 1,200 teachers and school administrators, and

BOX 11: TEACHER TRAINING: THE NATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR TEACHING ABOUT ASIA (NCTA)

Since 1998, the US-based National Consortium for Teaching About Asia (NCTA) has encouraged and facilitated teaching and learning about East Asia in elementary and secondary schools nationwide. It is a collaboration of East Asian Studies programs of seven national institutions: Columbia University, Five College Center for East Asian Studies at Smith College (MA), Indiana University, University of Colorado, University of Pittsburgh, University of Southern California, and the University of Washington. It also partners with 15 other universities throughout the US.

NCTA seminars serve more than 1,000 teachers yearly, and participants interact with East Asia specialists, receive teaching materials and discuss effective strategies for bringing East Asia into their classrooms. It also offers seminars in different delivery methods, including face-to-face settings, online forums, or in a blended format of face-to-face and digital interaction. The consortium’s target audience is K-12 teachers of world history, world geography, other social studies courses, and language arts/world literature. In addition, its resources are used by teachers of Asian languages, media specialists, librarians, and art teachers who play a key role in teaching Asian studies. It offers more intensive programs such as residential, one-week seminars on a specific topic, as well as weeks-long study tours to various parts of Asia.

Source: National Consortium for Teaching About Asia, <http://www.nctasia.org/>

provides a forum for the sharing of best practices and strategies. This conference features high-level speakers from the government, media, private sector and arts and culture who reinforce the broader arguments explaining why these language programs are important. In addition, the Asia Society's website provides an extensive list of teacher and school resources and offers practical advice on establishing partner relationships with schools in China, free webinars for teachers, and handbooks for best practices in Mandarin immersion.

The Asia Society has worked with the *Hanban* in promoting Chinese language courses in elementary and secondary schools, but has done so with several caveats and conditions. The first is that it would use *Hanban* resources to strengthen and sustain existing programs rather than introducing new programs. The second is that participating schools will not use *Hanban* curriculum, materials or teachers, but rather locally-sourced and approved materials.

European Union

A recent report from France makes the point that China is now the most important career destination for European expatriates. Currently, close to 600 secondary schools in France offer courses in Chinese, up from just over 200 in 2005. More than 30,000 students were enrolled in 2012, which represents growth of 11% from the previous year. Some 150 university-level institutions in France also offer Chinese, with 12,000 currently enrolled at that level. Among the challenges that France faces in addressing this growth in demand is qualifying a sufficient number of new teachers.

BOX 12: MANDARIN LANGUAGE TRAINING IN FRANCE AND GERMANY

30,000	secondary school students in France are studying Chinese
45%	four-year increase in the number of German schools offering Chinese
15,000	the estimated number of German students studying Chinese in 2012

A major contributor to the growing recognition in France of the importance of Chinese-language education is the surge in Chinese tourism. Arrivals from China were up 23% in 2012, representing 1.4 million visitors to France, making it among the most important tourism source from outside the EU.⁹

The support of foreign languages in the German education system is the responsibility of the German Länder, a system similar to our provincial system. The Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK), or the conference of ministers of education and cultural affairs, deals with these questions on a national level. According to KMK's most recent survey, completed in 2011, 232 schools in Germany were offering Chinese courses to about 5,800 students, an estimate considered to be conservative by a Ministry of Foreign Affairs official. Other sources point to around 15,000 Chinese language students across the entire primarily through university education system in Germany. While

⁹ Henry Samuels, "How France is Benefiting from Chinese Tourists over Britain," *The Telegraph*, July 11, 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/10173805/How-France-is-benefiting-from-Chinese-tourists-over-Britain.html>.

Chinese is very much an exotic, niche language with fairly low enrolment in Germany, interest has been growing: the number of schools offering the language grew by 45% from four years earlier. In addition, the number of school-to-school partnerships has grown from 144 to 210 between 2007 and 2011.

Following the 2012 government consultations between Chancellor Angela Merkel and her then-counterparts Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao in Berlin and Beijing, a two-part initiative to promote each other's language was launched this year by the current Chinese Premier, Li Keqiang. The year 2013 marks the "Year of Languages" between China and Germany. The German government is focusing on promoting the Germany language in China with several projects. For example, in September 2013, a Sino-German Writers Forum was organized in Beijing with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and featured Nobel Laureate Mo Yan. There was also an initiative to improve the training of designated German teachers at Chinese universities. Meanwhile, the Chinese government is organizing projects to promote Chinese as a foreign language in the German school system. There are currently 16 Confucius Institutes scattered across different German universities.

BUILDING SECTORAL COMPETENCE

WHEN WE LOOK AT ASIA COMPETENCE, we focus on the education of the next generation of Canadians, who will be at the forefront—in business, government, education, the arts, communities and NGOs—of shaping Canada’s future with Asia. That said, there are important sectors that are now on the front line in engaging Asia. The discussion below has been influenced by the approaches taken by countries like Australia, New Zealand and Switzerland.

While businesses across the country will benefit from the recruitment of young people whose education has made them more informed about Asia, or, indeed, who have some language capability or on-the-ground experience in Asia, the highest levels of management also need an infusion of Asia competence. Australia’s White Paper, which drew on private sector input, sets a target of having one-third of the board members of the country’s largest corporations having “deep experience in and knowledge of Asia.” That this is aspirational and voluntary makes it no less important. We would welcome consideration by Canadian businesses of measures that could enhance awareness of Asia by board members, perhaps as part of their general preparation and formation. Aiming to have a third of the board members of Canadian companies qualify as Asia competent would be an inspiring step forward.

The White Paper sets a similar target for Australia’s senior public service, suggesting that one-third of its membership should attain similar competence by 2020. What will make this somewhat easier to achieve is the existence of a number of collaborative programs involving the public services of Australia and New Zealand and counterparts in Asia. Fortunately, we can already point to a variety of professional exchanges and educational visits involving senior public servants at the federal and provincial levels. But these are diverse, somewhat random, and in no way connected or strategic in national terms. The federal government’s Canada School of Public Service should fill this gap,

establishing a baseline inventory and, working with provincial counterparts, should establish early targets for education and exchanges with Asia.

Not surprisingly, the tourism sector also comes in for special focus. In both New Zealand and Switzerland efforts are underway to build cultural sensitivity and awareness, and to introduce new products and services for Asian visitors. Both New Zealand and Switzerland have taken what might best be called a ‘big picture perspective’ on tourism from China. Given China’s emergence as the number one source of tourists globally, such an approach makes sense. Indeed, the ability to think in connected and comprehensive ways about the emergence of China and Asia is itself a competence that governments in Canada need to focus on. This is as basic as ensuring that our efforts to promote greater numbers of tourists and students keep up with our ability to issue visas and manage arrivals at our borders.

Recognizing Canada’s significant potential to attract an increasing portion of the Chinese overseas tourism market, here is a look at Asia competence requirements:

DEGREES OF COMPETENCE FOR PRIORITY ECONOMIC SECTOR: CHINA TOURISM

China is the new number one tourism source market in the world.

Chinese travellers spent US\$102 billion on international tourism in 2012, 40% more than 2011, making them the top source of tourism spending in the world.

In 2012, 83 million Chinese travelled abroad, and by 2015, this is forecast to grow to 100 million.¹⁰

Countries with Approved Destination Status (ADS)—a bilateral tourism arrangement with China—have seen tremendous growth of Chinese tourism. Canada received ADS in 2010 and by 2012 China was its fifth-largest source of visitors. China is also Canada’s

¹⁰ United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer), Accessed September 30, 2013.

largest source of spending, with the average Chinese visitor spending C\$1,777, almost three times the average spent by American tourists, our largest source of tourists by numbers.

Canada ranks as the twelfth-most popular overseas travel destination for Chinese travellers, attracting slightly more than one quarter of a percent of Chinese tourists last year. Overseas study, immigration and overseas property purchases, areas in which Canada is highly competitive, also drive travel.

All this suggests there is significant potential for Canada to attract an increasing portion of the Chinese overseas tourism market, particularly if we enhance our Asia competence.

A look at other top overseas destinations reveals that many are taking a number of steps to build their

competence and understanding of the Chinese tourist and adapting their offerings accordingly, including:

- Adding a Chinese concierge in hotels and Mandarin Chinese-speaking staff in retail outlets
- Adjusting menus to serve more Chinese meals, including Chinese breakfast
- Educating service staff on Chinese culture and basic greetings
- Providing in-room tea kettles, slippers, Chinese menus, brochures, newspapers and television channels.
- Offering on-site translation services

Best practices include the Swiss Hotel Association and Switzerland Tourism’s educational initiative, “Swiss Hospitality for Chinese Guests.”¹¹ And, in New Zealand, Accor hotels has introduced Optimum Service Standards for Chinese guests. A key component is educating front-line staff on the culture of China and needs of Chinese guests.

Engaging Canadian business in Asia and aligning policy plays to the strengths of Canada’s innovation and export economy and can improve the living standards of Canadians. Beyond tourism, Appendices 1 and 2 of this report take a similar look at building Asia competence in the energy and agriculture and agri-food sectors. There are other competitive Canadian sectors such as forest products, applied genomics, alternative energy and new media, all of which we should emphasize. But we have concentrated on current major export areas to illustrate the case.

Just as Australia’s implementation of their *Australia in the Asian Century* White Paper seeks to align policy and business capabilities to support key economic sectors, there is a similar compelling value proposition for Canada. In key trade sectors the development of competence is more complex, as the range of stake-

TABLE 2: PREFERRED INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS

RANKING	REGION	POPULARITY
1	France	34.0%
2	US	33.8%
3	Singapore	26.5%
4	Switzerland	23.1%
5	UK	22.2%
6	Italy	20.9%
7	Australia	19.4%
8	Dubai	17.1%
9	Germany	16.2%
10	Maldives	13.9%
11	Japan	13.5%
12	Canada	12.6%

Source: Hurun Report: The Chinese Luxury Traveler 2013

¹¹ Swiss Hotel Association, “Swiss Hospitality for Chinese Guests,” Bern, August 2012, www.hotelleriesuisse.ch/files/pdf3/Chinesen_zu_Gast_en_Final.pdf.

TABLE 3: ENHANCING OUR ASIA COMPETENCE IN CANADA: TOURISM SECTOR

DEGREES OF COMPETENCE	EXPOSURE	EXPERIENCE	EXPERTISE
	<i>Gained through education in Canada: about Asian history, geography, culture, economic development & how business gets done</i>	<i>Gained through exchange programs, internships; projects and partnerships in Asia</i>	<i>Gained through long-term, in-market activities. Living in Asia. Doing Business In Asia. Asian Language capabilities.</i>
<p>Priority Economic Sector:</p> <p>China Tourism</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop educational tools like the “Swiss Hospitality for Chinese Guests” guide and incorporate them into hospitality schools and retail training academies <i>(In May, Destination BC held a Worldhost Service workshop in Whistler to teach Tourism Whistler members about the nuances of Chinese visitors. It attracted only 20 participants, but is a good model that could be expanded.¹)</i> 2. Use client and professional feedback to adapt tourism offerings to the differing needs and expectations of specific Chinese tourism groups like business travellers, people combining tourism with education, senior citizen travellers and high net worth travellers. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formalize exchange programs and internships in China through major hotel chains. They are seeking to transfer “international competence” to their locally employed staff and Canadian hospitality and retail staff will gain first-hand experience in China 2. Build “term abroad” educational exchanges with hospitality and retail training academies in China or Hong Kong 3. Leverage the International Experience Canada program 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider Asian experienced Canadians for key leadership roles in Canadian tourism and retail associations, education institutions, and businesses. 2. Consider Asian experienced Canadians for roles on Canadian retail and hospitality corporate boards.

“Hilton to open more Waldorf, Conrad hotels in China, add 40,000 jobs.”

—12 June 2013 South China Morning Post

holders extends beyond individuals and corporations to industry associations, communities and provincial and federal governments. In these areas, government and business need to work together.

Worthy of note are the steps being taken by the Province of Alberta. In 2012, the province formed a 12-member Asia Advisory Council to provide expert advice to government and industry from people who have experience in Asia.¹² It is mandated to provide strategic advice on pursuing new market opportunities and supporting market entry for Alberta exporters and sectors as well as promoting Alberta as an attractive destination for international investment. In early 2013, the Council met with industry representatives and with the managing directors of Alberta’s offices in Asia. It identified three priorities:

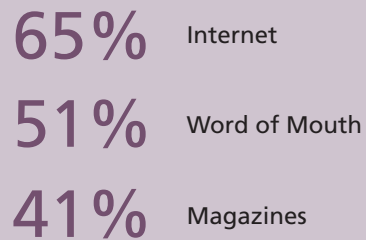
1. To enhance public awareness of the importance of expanding market access to Asia;
2. To work with government and industry to set hard targets for trade and investment, to work on strategies to create more opportunities for Alberta’s small- and medium-sized enterprises doing business in Asia and for Alberta students to study abroad; and
3. To complement government advocacy efforts to create new access to Asian markets.

BOX 13: CHINA TOURISM TO CANADA IN 2012

- China became Canada’s fastest **growing source of tourists**
- **273,000 Chinese tourists visited**, up 15.5% over 2011
- Chinese tourists stayed an average of 29.8 nights and **spent C\$485.5 million**, up 19.2% over 2011
- China is the **fifth-largest source of visitors to Canada**. #1 is US (10,084,000), #2 is Britain (597,000), #3 is France (422,800) and #4 is Germany (276,600)
- **C\$1,777 v. \$518**: the average spending of a Chinese vs American tourist to Canada

Source: www.tourism-review.com/canada-welcomed-155-more-visitors-from-china

BOX 14: PREFERRED SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT TRAVEL FOR CHINESE



Source: Hurun Report: The Chinese Luxury Traveler 2013

¹² Members of the Alberta Asia Advisory Council include Teresa Woo-Paw (Chair), Associate Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations; Thomas Walter, lawyer and small business owner; Margaret Cornish, Beijing based business advisor; Robert Francis, International Development Consultant; Peter Harder, former Deputy Minister in the Government of Canada; Gordon Houlden, China Institute Director, University of Alberta; Ray Price, Alberta businessman; Peter Sutherland, former Canadian High Commissioner to India and Ambassador to the Philippines; John Zahary, President & CEO, Sunshine Oilsands; Bob Barss (Ex-Officio Representative), President of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties; and Linda Sloan (Ex-Officio Representative), President of the Alberta Union of Urban Municipalities Association. For more information, see <http://www.international.alberta.ca/AACmembers.cfm>

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ALTHOUGH WE DID FIND ISLANDS of innovation and creativity across the country, we are a long way from a serious cross-Canada commitment to becoming better informed, more experienced and more capable when it comes to engaging Asia.

Simply put, Canada has a serious Asia competence challenge, which, if not addressed, will be to the detriment of our next generation.

We can point to a lack of focus on what government can and should be doing. Unlike their counterparts in the US, Australia or New Zealand, young Canadians are not hearing clear and authoritative statements from the highest levels of government about the importance of becoming more Asia competent. We are also not seeing the programs and policy initiatives required to support this. Governments still seem to view their responsibility towards international education as a one-way process, that of encouraging increasing numbers of foreign students to come to Canada. As important as this is, it is also of vital

importance that we encourage and enable young Canadians to gain experience in Asia, to better understand Asian cultures, to study how business is done, and to learn Asian languages.

There cannot be a more fundamental responsibility of government than taking the steps necessary to safeguard our future prosperity and well-being. Even though education is a provincial responsibility in Canada, the federal government can help by encouraging national objectives, in this case, Asia competence, and by supporting national access and participation. This needs to be done collegially and with careful consultation with the provinces. But Canadian students and parents, as well as our Asian partners, need to know that this is a national priority.

In a recent article in the *Financial Times*, The University of Toronto's Irvin Studin makes the point that it is easier for countries that manage education at the national level to promote the acquisition of new languages than it is for countries, like Canada and the

“The opportunity is historic, massive and moving very quickly. If we do not get on the game in terms of pivoting towards (Asia), we are going to miss out on something that will be absolutely critical to our success as a country.”

—Opening Keynote Remarks by Dominic Barton, Global Managing Director of McKinsey & Company, at the September 2012 Canada In the Pacific Century Conference

United States, where education is the responsibility of sub-national units like provinces or states.¹³ This is undeniable. That said, our system is not without advantages. We can point to the ability of smaller jurisdictions, like Edmonton, to innovate and experiment. And non-governmental actors, like the Asia Society in the US, are able to build networks across jurisdictions and to help political actors see the bigger picture. But there is no reason why the federal government and the provinces cannot begin to share ideas on Asia competence and to discuss a suitable division of labour for its promotion. Indeed, the sooner this happens, the better.

It is also clear that while individual companies and business organizations are doing some creative and encouraging things, the private sector is falling short when it comes to encouraging young people to make the investment of time and money required to build their Asia credentials. We regularly hear projections from chambers of commerce of how many engineers, welders and lab technicians we will need in the coming decades, but we never hear how many Chinese speakers or Southeast Asia experts we will need to deploy. This may be because Canada is lucky enough to accept thousands of new Canadians of Asian origin each year. While we should make full use of this Canadian advantage, it is irresponsible not to do more to invest in domestic capabilities, ensuring that we are making use of the talent and energy of young Canadians in building our future.

The education sector can do more, too. Currently, efforts are far too fragmented, both vertically and horizontally. For the most part, it is still hard for interested students to trace an educational path that leads from the primary or secondary level to college or university. And there is little sharing of course modules, program opportunities or best practices. Funding constraints are a real problem, but they should not be allowed to blunt progress. We have yet to explore the gains that are possible through smarter

and more effective network building and collaboration.

There is a danger in being overly eager to ascribe the problems to some other part of society: to government, to the private sector or to academia. We need to face up to the fact that Canadians across the board have yet to be fully convinced that it is worth carving out time and money from our education system to build Asia competence. While studies are showing encouraging trends, we are a long way from having a consensus.

We outline below recommendations designed to address some of the challenges that face government, business and the education sector.

Recommendations:

This report is appropriately part of a National Conversation on Asia, a broad and inclusive initiative of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada to get Canadians thinking and talking about what Asia means to Canada. At some point in that conversation we have to talk about whether we are doing everything that we need to do to make the most of a relationship that will shape our future. We hope that this study represents the beginning of that portion of the conversation. We cannot imagine a more timely or compelling topic for Canadians across the country to discuss.

It is all too common in studies like this to draw up a laundry list of recommendations aimed at government, academia, or the private sector, and then to consider the job done. We remain focused on the observation by one of the drafters of the Australian White Paper to the effect that a project like this is ultimately a *whole-of-country* task. We all have a responsibility on the issue of Asia competence.

The highest levels of government have a role in providing a compelling message about the importance

¹³ Irvin Studin, "To pull off a pivot to Asia, first learn the lingo," *Financial Times*, 27 August 2013.

of upgrading our Asia competence, and shaping policy to this end. The private sector needs to make it clear to young people that employers value these skills. And the education sector needs to develop a more coherent, consistent, connected and truly national approach to this challenge. But, as the example of Edmonton shows us, things begin with individual Canadians, with parents and teachers, and most importantly, with students themselves.

We have divided our recommendations into actions that can be done to change attitudes and things that can be done to change institutions. We close with a specific initiative that we think could help make this a more of a whole-of-country undertaking.

1) CHANGING ATTITUDES

Schools and school boards should collaborate in efforts to build interest in and support for the study of Asia across the country

- by developing course modules for free distribution to interested parties across Canada;
- by collaborating and sharing best practices on teacher training and professional development; and
- by sharing experiences in broadening community support and encouraging student interest.

Universities should inspire and energize their broader communities

- by serving as centres of excellence in their communities for the teaching of Asia-related content;
- by building links to Asian language programs at the secondary-school level;
- by focusing and consolidating twinning programs to increase activity levels;

- by making it easier for students to transfer between and among programs; and
- by expanding outreach to the private sector to build awareness and encourage the growth of Asia-related co-op programs and work terms.

Private sector employers should make it clear that they need and value Asia competence

- by speaking out at the level of business associations and chambers of commerce about the importance of building Asia competence;
- by supporting scholarships for young Canadians to study in Asia;
- by supporting more work terms and co-op placements in Asia; and
- by creating co-op placements and mentoring activities in firms in Canada that are active in Asia.

Provinces should support education in Asia Competence as an investment in the future

- by working with the federal government to establish an effective division of labour in what should be a national effort;
- by setting ambitious targets for growth in training in Asian languages in their school systems;
- by increasing funding for scholarships to study in Asia;
- by increasing support for Asia-related co-op placements and internships; and
- by having the provincial ministers of education hold one of their meetings in Asia.

The federal government should work closely with the provinces

- by speaking out at the highest levels to encourage young Canadians to develop their Asia competence;

- by making the promotion of Asia competence among young Canadians central to efforts to promote international education;
- by working with the provinces and governments in Asia to increase opportunities for young Canadians to study and work abroad;
- by more actively promoting DFATD’s working holiday programs in Asia;
- by offering more internships at Canadian embassies;
- by creating opportunities for young people to participate in trade missions and high-level visits to Asia; and
- by using the fact that education is now a bilateral priority with China to encourage a greater flow of Canadian students to study there.

2) CHANGING INSTITUTIONS

The private sector can enhance its Asia competence

- by making significant Asia competence (language skills and/or on-the-ground experience) a criterion for (at least) some members of corporate boards;
- by expanding Asia-related training and education as part of the preparation of new board members;
- by adopting Asia-relevant service standards in the tourism industry;
- by promoting more exchange and engagement opportunities in Canada by developing high-profile annual conferences that attract Asian participants. The mining sector’s Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) annual conference is a good example;
- by increased participation in trade missions and Asian-based conferences; and

- by encouraging rotational assignments that permit industry practitioners and associations to rotate through Asian-based trade office of Canadian and provincial governments.

Governments can enhance their Asia competence

- by developing Asia-specific training modules for public servants; and
- by setting targets for Asia competence (language skills and/or on-the-ground experience) among senior public servants.

A Continuing Conversation

We conclude with a recommendation for Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada. Our report identifies three key constituencies—government, business and the education sector—who have a stake in helping to build the Asia competence of all Canadians. We believe that it would be useful to bring them together in what we see as an “Accountability Conference.” The goal of the event would be to secure specific and appropriate support from each constituency, and to point the way to the structures and networks necessary to launch a sustainable national effort.

Representatives of the federal and provincial governments would be asked to point to new partnerships, innovations that are less about competing jurisdictions and more about building competencies right across the country, enlisting support from partners in Asia, and speaking authoritatively to all Canadians about the importance of the challenge.

The private sector would be asked how best to make clear the importance employers attach to Asia competence, and to share best practices for supporting scholarships or work terms in Asia.

And educators could discuss how best to collaborate horizontally—sharing best practices with other institutions and building nation-wide networks—and vertically—building links from studies at the primary and secondary levels right through to advanced work at the university and college level.

The ultimate objective of the meeting would be to identify specific champions in each of these three sectors. And while we need ideas and answers from each, we want to encourage cooperation and greater ambition. We should aspire to something beyond the sum of what government, business and the education sectors can contribute on their own. We need a broad national consensus, and a collaborative, whole-of-Canada response to a national challenge—Canada’s Asia challenge of creating competence for the next generation of Canadians.

APPENDIX 1: PRIORITY ECONOMIC SECTORS: ENERGY SECTOR

GAINING ACCESS TO global energy markets would generate an additional \$28 billion per year in Canadian GDP.¹⁴

In mining and mineral processing, Canada is already a world leader and is highly integrated into the global economy. But, in the case of petroleum, becoming a supplier to Asia is a more recent national priority as US demand declines.

The energy sector is one of the largest components of the Canadian economy, representing more than 20% of our GDP and in excess of 663,000 jobs in 2012.

In 2012, the International Energy Agency forecast that the US will overtake Saudi Arabia and Russia to become the world's largest global oil producer by 2015, and could be energy self-sufficient by 2035.¹⁵

BOX 15: WORLD ENERGY OUTLOOK:

- 12 of Canada's 13 provinces and territories are involved in oil and gas production and exploration
- Canada's world rankings: #3 in crude oil reserves, #3 in natural gas production, #2 in uranium reserves, #2 in hydro-electricity production
- Today, Canada is the top supplier of oil to the US, with 98% of our exports going to the US
- By 2020, the US is projected to be the largest global oil producer
- China and India will account for 94% of net oil demand growth and 30% of gas over the next 20 years

Source: Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, www.capp.ca

TABLE 4: NET ENERGY EXPORTS BY COUNTRY (millions tonnes)

RANK	COUNTRY	TOTAL EXPORTS	
		2009	YoY %
1	Russia	474.4	107
2	Saudi Arabia	371.8	176
3	Norway	184.5	107
4	Iran	132.9	103
5	Canada	132.6	126
6	Venezuela	123.1	120
7	Nigeria	122.1	53
8	Qatar	115.8	83
9	Algeria	111.9	74
10	Iraq	95.7	90

Source: International Energy Agency, 2012

“Asia needs Canada’s energy resources, and Canada is uniquely positioned to deliver these resources.”

—Ed Fast, Minister of International Trade, 5 April 2013, Pacific Energy Summit

¹⁴ “Canada in the Pacific Century,” Annual Report 2013 presented by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, December 10, 2012, <http://www.ceocouncil.ca/pacific/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Agenda-Calgary-Dec.-10.pdf>.

¹⁵ Peg McKay, “U.S. to overtake Saudi as top oil producer: IEA,” Reuters, November 12, 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/12/us-ia-oil-report-idUSBRE8AB0IQ20121112>.

With 98% of our oil and gas exports shipped to the US, our transportation infrastructure is focused on north-south.

While infrastructure developments are key to gaining access to Asian markets, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) feels that developing a relationship with Asia is equally essential to achieve market diversification.¹⁶

In 2012, the Province of Alberta formed a 12-member Asia Advisory Council to provide expert advice, to government and industry, from people who have experience in Asia. The Council is mandated to provide strategic advice on pursuing new market opportunities and supporting market entry for a variety of Alberta exporters, including energy exporters, as well as promoting Alberta as an attractive destination for international investment.

In early 2013 the Council met with industry representatives and with the Managing Director's of Alberta's offices in Asia.

The Council identified three priorities:

1. Enhance public awareness of the importance of expanding market access to Asia;
2. Work with government and industry to set hard targets for trade and investment, work on strategies to create more opportunities for Alberta's small- and medium-sized enterprises doing business in Asia and for Alberta students to study abroad;
3. Complement government advocacy efforts to create new access to Asian markets.

The Asia Advisory Council is one of the ways the Canadian energy sector is seeking to build Asian competence.

“The Asia Advisory Council will be integral to success in finding pathways for our energy and expertise in one of the fastest growing economies in the world.”

—Cal Dallas, Alberta's Minister of International & Intergovernmental Relations

¹⁶ Paul Wells, “Efforts to Gain Market Access About More Than Just Infrastructure,” *Daily Oil Bulletin*, May 29, 2013.

TABLE 5: ENHANCING OUR ASIA COMPETENCE IN CANADA: ENERGY SECTOR

DEGREES OF COMPETENCE	EXPOSURE	EXPERIENCE	EXPERTISE
	<i>Gained through education in Canada: about Asian history, geography, culture, economic development & how business gets done</i>	<i>Gained through exchange programs, internships; projects and partnerships in Asia</i>	<i>Gained through long-term, in-market activities. Living in Asia. Doing Business in Asia. Asian Language capabilities.</i>
Priority Economic Sector: Energy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hosting Asian delegations in Canada. 2. Developing high profile annual conferences that attract global participants like the mining sector's Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) annual conference which in 2012 attracted 30,000 delegates to Toronto. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in trade missions to Asia and energy conferences such as the China International Petroleum Convention 2. Develop & fund secondment programs that position Canadian industry representatives to rotate through projects and market development assignments with the province of Alberta's Asian offices. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leverage the insights of the Asia Advisory Council to develop market engagement strategies 2. Add Asia experienced board directors to Canadian energy companies and to Canadian industry associations.

APPENDIX 2: PRIORITY ECONOMIC SECTORS: AGRICULTURE & AGRI-FOOD

CHINA IS POISED TO BECOME THE WORLD'S LARGEST AGRICULTURAL IMPORT MARKET BY 2020.

THE RISE OF CHINA and other emerging markets has dramatically changed the outlook for Canadian farmers and agricultural processors. Canada's agri-food sector has the potential to become a growth engine for the entire economy if we maximize export opportunities.¹⁷

Today, agriculture and food processing are key components of the Canadian economy and of

Canada's trade portfolio. They account for 11% of Canada's goods GDP and almost 10% of Canada's total merchandise trade.

Food processing is the largest manufacturing employer in Canada supporting over 250,000 jobs across the country. There are over 220,000 farms across Canada, 90% of which are dependent on or supported by export markets.¹⁸

BOX 16: CHINA FOOD IMPORTS BOOST WORLD TRADE:

- China has been a net agricultural importer since 2003
- China has 21% of the world's population but only 8.5% of arable land and 6.5% of water reserves
- 2001-2012: China's import dependence doubled from 6.2 to 12.9%
- China's 300 million strong middle class is expected to double by 2020
- 2013-2022 China Projections: 40% rise in oilseed imports accounting for 59% of global trade; 20% rise in dairy imports

TABLE 6: CANADIAN AGRI-FOOD & SEAFOOD TRADE

RANK	COUNTRY	2012 C\$ billions	2012 % of 2011
1	US	23.6	107
2	China	5.4	176
3	Japan	4.2	107
4	Mexico	1.8	103
5	Hong Kong	0.8	126
6	Russia	0.7	120
7	South Korea	0.6	53
8	India	0.5	83
9	UAE	0.5	74
10	Netherlands	0.5	90

Source: Statistics Canada

"There's a perception in China that Western foods offer higher quality and standards than domestic food. Canada has a huge reputation for producing quality, safe products"

—Everett de Jong, Export Director, Pelee Island Winery, Financial Post 13/06/2013: China's growing hunger for Canada's food

¹⁷ Michael Gifford, "Golden Opportunities and Surmountable Challenges: Prospects for Canadian Agriculture in Asia," Canadian Council of Chief Executives, April 2012, <http://www.ceocouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Golden-Opportunities-and-Surmountable-Challenges-Prospects-for-Canadian-Agriculture-in-Asia-Michael-Gifford-FINAL2.pdf>.

¹⁸ Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance, <http://cafta.org/pages/agri-food-exports/>.

China's large population, changing diets resulting from rising middle class incomes, and declining food production capacity create tremendous opportunities for Canada's food sector. By 2050, over 60% of the world's demand for food will come from Asia.¹⁹

In 2012, China became Canada's second largest export market for agri-food and seafood with export volumes exceeding \$5 billion. China has been our highest growth export country for the past several years. Canada's growing export performance in this sector is the result of our strength in oilseeds and oilseed products. Our main exports were canola seed, canola oil, peas and canola meal.

In China, there is growing demand for beef and a broad range of dairy products. China is projected to surpass the European Union as the world's top consumer of pork by 2022 on a per capita basis.

Canada has arable land, energy, access to capital and an educated workforce. Canada is considered by many as one of the few countries in the world where agricultural production can be expanded significantly, and ranks second in the world behind Australia in arable land per capita.²⁰ And, there is the potential for significant export growth in value-added crops, processed products and food services.

Canada has a track record of innovation as the world's largest exporter of canola and canola oil. The

canola industry is a Canadian success story, the result of Canadian research that transformed oilseed into a widely used premium food oil. Canola has displaced wheat as the most valuable crop in the Prairie provinces.

Over the decade ending in 2010, Canadian exports to China increased by \$9.2 billion or 248%. Australia's equivalent increase was \$61.5 billion or 1,152%.²¹ Australia introduced legislative changes and incentives to promote production²² and has been negotiating free trade agreements (FTAs) with key Asian markets which provide preferential access.

The Canadian government has been active through agricultural trade partnerships, with China and Hong Kong and with Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz leading regular trade missions to Hong Kong and China. This has been accompanied by strong growth, with exports to Hong Kong and China totalling \$6.2 billion for the year 2012, or 67% of the decade ending 2010. Further growth is likely should changes ever occur to Canadian supply management systems for products like dairy, poultry and eggs.

Further significant gains are likely if Canadian producers and distributors enhance their Asian competence.

¹⁹ *Food & Drink Business*, "An Exporter's Guide to China," June 12, 2013, <http://www.foodanddrinkbusiness.com.au/news/an-exporter-s-guide-to-china>.

²⁰ Greg Burkinshaw, "Profile and Outlook for the BC Agri -Food Industry," Business Council of BC, April 2010, available at http://www.bcbc.com/content/580/2020_201004_AgriFood.pdf.

²¹ Don Campbell, Paul Evans and Pierre Lortie, "Securing Canada's Place in Asia: Means, Institutions and Mechanisms," Report of the Regional Architecture Task Force, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, September 6, 2012, p. 46 (Table 8), available at http://www.asiapacific.ca/sites/default/files/filefield/securing_canadas_place_in_asia_taskforce_report.pdf.

²² (22) PWC Global Agribusiness Monthly, May 2013.

BOX 17: OPPORTUNITIES FOR CANADIAN EXPORTERS: CHINA**Opportunities**

China's packaged food and beverage market is growing at an annual rate of over 10%.

The popularity of organic foods is expected to increase resulting from growing concerns with food safety.

There is a major market for seafood consumption, as it is a staple food of Cantonese cuisine.

There has been a boom in China's health products sector, causing increased demand.

There is a significant market for dairy products because Chinese consumers are choosing not to consume Chinese products for health reasons.

Canadian Advantage

Canada enjoys a good reputation and is viewed as a source of safe, high-quality food.

Canada is seen as reliable source for imported goods, with an increasingly innovative and diverse organic sector. Canada's Organic Products Regulations ensure all organic products are internationally compliant.

Canada is already a major player in this market, as China's fifth-largest source for lobster and first for crab.

Canada's functional foods products rank among the world's best in terms of quality, nutrition, taste and scientific research.

Canada has established a positive reputation as an upholder of safety practices and regulations when it comes to dairy products, so it can fill in that demand.

Source: "Agri-Food Consumer Profile: China," Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, May 2011, <http://www.ats-sea.agr.gc.ca/asi/5807-eng.htm>

TABLE 7: ENHANCING OUR ASIA COMPETENCE IN CANADA: AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD TRADE SECTOR

DEGREES OF COMPETENCE	EXPOSURE	EXPERIENCE	EXPERTISE
	<i>Gained through education in Canada: about Asian history, geography, culture, economic development & how business gets done</i>	<i>Gained through exchange programs, internships; projects and partnerships in Asia</i>	<i>Gained through long-term, in-market activities. Living in Asia. Doing Business in Asia. Asian Language capabilities.</i>
<p>Priority Economic Sector:</p> <p>Agriculture & Agri-Food Trade</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop an annual Canada-China agri sector symposium that supports networking and knowledge sharing between Asian and Canadian companies. 2. Encourage active industry association research and engagement to develop awareness of differences in Asian consumer preferences around packaging, cuts, uses and marketing of our products. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider utilizing local market importers and distributors to assist with localizing products and marketing and expanding market access. 2. Build our next agri-generation through increased youth participation in international exchanges such as International Rural Exchange of Canada (www.irecanada.ca) and Communicating for Agricultural Education Programs (www.caep.org). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure adequate human and financial resources within industry associations to develop, implement and sustain a long-term Canadian strategy focused on Asia. 2. Seek more Asian experienced agri-professionals for industry associations, trade missions and boards. 3. Leverage the insights of the Alberta Asia Advisory Council to develop market engagement strategies.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

David Mulroney (Co-Chair) is a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto, and a Distinguished Fellow of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada. He was Canada's Ambassador to China from 2009 to 2012. Prior to this, he was assigned to the Privy Council Office as the deputy minister responsible for the Afghanistan Task Force, overseeing inter-departmental coordination of all aspects of Canada's engagement in Afghanistan. He also served as secretary to the Independent Panel on Canada's Future Role in Afghanistan ("the Manley Panel"). His other assignments include serving as Associate Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and, concurrently, as the Prime Minister's personal representative to the G8 Summit. He has worked as the Foreign and Defence Policy Advisor to the Prime Minister, and has held diplomatic appointments in Taipei, Kuala Lumpur, Shanghai and Seoul. From 1995 to 1998, he was executive director of the Canada-China Business Council. He participated in full-time Mandarin instruction at the Canadian Forces Language School.

Janet De Silva (Co-Chair) leads the Hong Kong campus and Mainland China operations of Ivey Business School at Western University. She has more than 10 years of CEO experience in China leading Sun Life Financial Hong Kong and its Mainland China joint venture, and then Retail China Limited, a company that operated retail stores and managed franchises for international retail brands. She has served terms as Chair of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong and Chair of the Canada China Business Council, Beijing. She has been named one of Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women and Asian Business Executive in the Stevie Awards for Women in Business. In 2012, the Canadian Board Diversity Council named her to their inaugural Diversity 50 List of board ready candidates. Ms. De Silva is presently a non-executive director on the boards of Intact Financial (TSE:IFC) and BlueUmbrella Limited. She also serves on the boards of the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong and Canadian International School of Hong Kong.

Dave McMaster has been Head of School at Canadian International School of Hong Kong (CDNIS) since August 2004, and has introduced numerous initiatives that have positioned CDNIS as a leading international school in the region, including the introduction of all three International Baccalaureate Programmes, a school-wide one-to-one laptop programme and technology initiative and an overhaul of the school's Mandarin Language program. He has been Principal and Head of School at schools in British Columbia and Hong Kong that offer comprehensive Mandarin programs. The school has been recognized as the *Leading International School in Hong Kong* by Hong Kong Business magazine's High-Flyers campaign for seven years in a row and is an Apple Distinguished School. Prior to his work in Hong Kong in 2002, Mr. McMaster was a teacher, Vice Principal and Principal at elementary, middle and high schools in three different school districts in British Columbia.

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Michael Stevenson was the President of Simon Fraser University from 2000 to 2010. He received his undergraduate education in history and politics from the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa, and his PhD in political science from Northwestern University, where he was awarded the top graduate student fellowship, a national Bobbs-Merrill Prize for graduate studies in political science, and a post-doctoral Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship for teaching and research in Nigeria. He served as Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and as Vice-President Academic and Provost at York University, as Chair of the University Presidents' Council of British Columbia, Chair of the Council of Western Canadian University Presidents, Chair of the Standing Committee on Educational Issues and Funding of the Association of Colleges and Universities of Canada, Chair of the British Columbia Council for International Education, and as Director of MITACS (the National Center for Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems), GenomeBC, the Vancouver Board of Trade, the BC Business Council, Vancouver Opera, the PuSH Festival, and the British Columbia Advancement Foundation. He is the recipient of the Queen's Jubilee Medal and two honorary Doctor of Laws degrees.

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