

WORLD education NEWS & REVIEW education

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Regional News

Africa

LESOTHO

■ Unlike female children in most developing countries, girls in Lesotho are educated while their brothers have to work. As soon as they are old enough, male children have traditionally been sent off by their families to become herd boys in rural areas. The income they earn is used for household expenses and to help pay for their sisters' school fees.

But according to a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) spokesperson, the situation for boys in Lesotho is becoming increasingly difficult. The rise of livestock theft has meant that many of these boys have to go without pay — sometimes for up to two years.

They also face another problem. When young males get too old to work as herd boys, many find work in the mines of South Africa. Recently, however, the mines have been cutting back on migrant laborers, preferring to hire local workers instead.

All of this has impacted female education. A vital source of income has been cut off, and women and girls are now forced to find work to help support their families.

At the same time, UNICEF has attempted to set up weekend and night classes for male children who work as herd boys. But these efforts have not met with a great deal of success. It is difficult to set up classes in such remote areas

and even more of a challenge to convince parents of the educational benefits for boys.

— *Daily Mail & Guardian*
July 6, 1999

RWANDA

■ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is currently working with a number of non-government organizations (NGOs) to support local initiatives to rebuild the country's shattered educational system. As a result of UNDP collaboration with an Irish NGO called Refugee Trust, for instance, 24 new classrooms have been built while 41 more were refurbished.

Thanks to one Refugee Trust project, five schools were built and rehabilitated in the village of Giti and four in Mugambazi. The UNDP contributed \$997,000 to this project.

"Education is the key to national reconciliation and skills-building in the future," said Vincent O'Reilly, deputy director of Refugee Trust. "This must break down the barriers of ethnicity, gender and age bias."

Many Rwandans endowed with professional skills, including educators, either fled the country or were killed during the genocidal war that began in 1995. In the last five years, about 90 percent of the population has been forced out of the country, and resettlement of refugees remains a top priority.

— *CHOICES*
August 1999

SOMALIA

■ The European Community (EC) recently announced plans to set aside 700,000 Euro (\$732,000 U.S.) for its primary education program in the town of Merca, which is situated in southern Somalia.

The EC program is rebuilding five schools, in addition to facilitating the development of a school administration system for Merca. At present, less than 25 percent of the town's children are enrolled in primary school, but the EC project is expected to encourage more to attend.

The Merca program is part of a larger, ongoing project to rehabilitate more than 150 primary schools throughout the country by the year 2000. Somalia's education sector has been devastated by the civil war that followed the over-

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throw of Muhammad Siad Barre in 1991.

In addition to EC efforts, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are providing teaching materials and teacher training at the local level. UNICEF and the World Health Organization are also offering child health care services.

—*Yahoo! News Asia*
 Aug. 30, 1999

The Americas

CANADA

■ Tuition fees for college have escalated almost 90 percent since 1990, forcing many students in Canada to rely heavily on student loans with which to finance their education. The average debt load per student is now somewhere around \$25,000.

Student loans in Canada are backed by the government, and awards are based on demonstrated financial need. But even when students take out the maximum loan of \$9,000 a year, they find that they still do not have enough money to cover all their expenses while in school. Hence, more and more students are turning to banks and credit-card companies to help pay for tuition, miscellaneous fees and living expenses.

The Canadian Federation of Students has condemned this practice and urges students to be wary of credit cards in particular.

Financial institutions have invaded campuses around the country in recent years, offering students credit cards that carry steep interest rates. Many of these students, who have little or no form of income, end up getting into terrible debt with credit card companies. Default on a payment can seriously damage a person's credit rating for years, making it impossible to take out a mortgage or car loan.

—*The Toronto Star*
 Aug. 27, 1999

HONDURAS

■ The National Pedagogical Congress was held in Tegucigalpa in July 1999 to review the country's structure of education and to voice proposals for change.

Honduras' educational system has been in a state of decay for many years now due to abject poverty and a series of civil wars. Schools and universities have frequently been crippled by protracted strikes, organized by students and teachers, while many parents refuse to send their children to schools that are unsafe and unproductive.

Few students make it through high school, and of those who do manage to graduate, many are semi-illiterate and unprepared for the job market. Honduras has the fastest population growth rate in the Americas, with most peo-

Regional News

ple under age 25.

Even though the education budget is higher than ever before, the government has been hard-pressed to yield any positive results.

— *Honduras This Week Online*
July 26, 1999

UNITED STATES

■ Instead of building new universities, Florida legislators are encouraging community colleges to offer bachelor programs. In June 1999, a bill was passed that requires the state to reimburse universities, private four-year colleges and community colleges for offering joint bachelor programs at two-year colleges.

The purpose of the new law is to make bachelor programs more accessible to students who live in remote areas where there are no universities. There is a strong need to expand these programs because Florida does not have any four-year state colleges and its 10-campus university system is unable to satisfy the growing demand for higher education. At present, only 29 percent of Florida's 19-year-olds are attending college. Although the state's 28 community colleges will not be permitted to offer bachelor programs on their own, they can seek approval to offer such programs if no public university or private four-year college is willing to form partnerships.

— *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
July 2, 1999

■ In an effort to meet the overwhelming demand for e-commerce courses, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) introduced a new e-commerce and marketing track this fall. Graduating students will receive certification in e-commerce along with their MBA degrees.

Other universities are offering similar programs. Students at Vanderbilt University, for instance, can now specialize in e-commerce;

Carnegie Mellon University offers a one-year program leading to a masters of science in e-commerce; Loyola University in Chicago is in the process of putting together a number of e-commerce related programs; and the Darden Graduate School of Business at the University of Virginia plans to offer e-commerce courses to businesses as well as students.

The growth of e-commerce specialization programs and courses can be attributed to several factors. Many of the lesser-known business schools have been quick to adopt these programs as a way of differentiating themselves from the bigger schools in the battle to attract students. Polytechnic University now offers an electronic business concentration option in its master of sciences management program. The chair of the department stated that his school wants to focus on e-business over general management to differentiate itself from other business schools that do not offer this track. And the strategy seems to be paying off; enrollments have increased 40 percent over last year.

He also said that traditional business schools and financial companies were caught off guard by the sudden proliferation of e-commerce and have been hesitant to embrace the new trend. Some of the more elite business schools like Harvard and Stanford, for instance, have not introduced e-commerce to their MBA programs. At Harvard, only one of about 50 elective courses is geared towards the Internet.

But while just a few years ago e-commerce was viewed with a great deal of suspicion, it is slowly but surely making its way into

the mainstream. MIT recently stated that Fortune 500 companies have started to take it more seriously and want to hire their students who have specialized in e-commerce.

— *Financial Times*
Sept. 6, 1999

Asia-Pacific

AUSTRALIA

■ Between July 1998 and April 1999, the Australian government granted visas to 95,000 international students.

The largest contingent of foreign students receiving visas to attend Australian institutions of higher education came from Indonesia, according to Australian immigration statistics. Most of these

Instead of building new universities, Florida legislators are encouraging community colleges to offer bachelor programs.

students are believed to be ethnic Chinese. A total of 15,000 visas were issued to Indonesian students, which is double the number granted to Japanese and Korean students, and more than half the number granted to students from Hong Kong.

The next largest contingent came from India (6,150 visas) followed by Malaysia (5,938), China (4,926), Britain (4,500), Thailand (4,400), Singapore (4,274) and Taiwan (3,916).

Visa applications from many countries are still down due to the aftershocks of the economic crisis that wreaked havoc on parts of Asia two years ago. The number of students coming from Korea, for example, fell by 35 percent this

year, while student numbers from Malaysia and Singapore were both down by 10 percent.

But the sharp drop in visas issued to students from those three countries — Korea especially — has been offset by big gains in the number of offshore visas granted to students from China (up 75 percent in the past year) and from India and Indonesia (both up 10 percent).

Visa applications from American students are also increasing. Between July 1998 and April 1999, close to 3,700 offshore and onshore visas were granted to students from the United States, compared with less than 2,500 two years ago. At present, the United States is among the top 12 countries from which students apply for visas to study in Australia.

Higher education in Australia attracts students from more than 100 different countries around the world. South America and the Pacific Islands provide the smallest number of students, while the top 20 nations provide 86 percent of all international students who study in Australia.

— *Campus Review*
June 23-29, 1999

CHINA

Colleges and universities in southern China's Guangdong province are aiming to enroll close to 82,000 new students this year, up 64 percent from 1997-98.

The vice-secretary of the Guangdong provincial government stated recently that the recent recruitment drive is designed to help foster domestic consumption and encourage more students to pursue their studies at home rather than abroad.

Rapid economic development in the province has spurred an exodus of students who go overseas to study. According to the Guangdong Bureau of Higher Education, there are currently 6,000 students studying in other countries, a number that triples each year.

Many of these students are not even in college yet. About half of the 6,000 are teenagers enrolled in primary and secondary schools located primarily in Guangdong's prosperous cities. Younger students used to account for less than 30 percent of the total number going abroad to study. In 1997-98, for example, only 50 students from Shenzhen High School applied to overseas programs; there were 90 applicants last fall.

On average, each of these teenagers spends about 150,000 yuan (US\$18,000) per year studying in the United States, Britain and other countries. The local bureau of education estimates that with 2,500 teenagers going abroad each year, Guangdong is losing close to 1 billion yuan (US\$120.5 million) in educational revenues annually.

— *China Daily*
July 28, 1999

INDIA

The Bachelor of Information Technology (BIT), currently offered at Indira Gandhi National Open University, is a three-year intensive program comprised of nine trimesters. After successfully completing the first five trimesters, students are granted a Higher National Diploma (HND) in computing. The HND is awarded by Computing & Multimedia of Edexcel Foundation in Britain and is equivalent to a bachelor's degree in the United Kingdom.

Edexcel is one of the largest degree-awarding bodies in the United Kingdom and is affiliated with BTEC (formerly Business & Technology Education Council) and the University of London Examination and Assessment Council.

On successful completion of the ninth trimester, students are awarded a BIT degree and are eligible to enter the second year of the university's Master's in Computer Applications program.

The only requirement for admission into the BIT program is a valid high school diploma.

— *University News*
June 7, 1999

JAPAN

Japan is currently experiencing a shortage of lawyers. In the wake of a string of personal and corporate bankruptcies resulting from the ongoing recession, many of the country's law schools are under pressure to bolster enroll-

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The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title "eWORLD ENR education news & reviews". The page content includes the date "January/February 1999 Volume 12, Issue 1" and a "CONTENTS" section. Under "REGIONAL NEWS", there is a sub-section for "Africa" with a focus on "SOUTH AFRICA". The text under "SOUTH AFRICA" discusses "Anticipating cutbacks in state subsidies, the University of Cape Town recently reported that it plans to downsize its faculty and staff by 10 percent over the next two years. Many of the country's universities have been eliminating faculty positions and laying off administrators in response to the government's restructuring of South Africa's system of higher education." It also mentions that Cape Town currently has 18 faculties, but by next year that number will be reduced to six, according to university officials. The biggest change in this respect is that the now separate faculties of the arts, education, and the social sciences and humanities will be collapsed into a new faculty of humanities. Compounding matters is the fact that Cape Town is undergoing a painful transition from being largely an all-white university to becoming a first class 'black' apartheid institution. In compliance with the country's new employment-equity laws, Cape Town University is hiring more blacks and women — sometimes at the expense of white.

ments to meet the demand.

There are currently 16,800 lawyers in Japan, or one lawyer for every 6,600 people, according to a recent survey. Compare this with one lawyer for every 300 people in the United States, and one for every 650 British citizens in the United Kingdom.

Many blame tough entrance and bar exams as the main obstacles to increasing the number of lawyers in the country. According to one source, most of the 1,100 students who passed the Japanese bar last year had taken the exam at least five times before achieving an acceptable score.

Many students applying to law school hire tutors to help them pass the entrance exams. Needless to say, a disproportionate number of students who make it into law school are from high-income families that can afford after-school tutors and the high cost of tuition.

In an effort to turn out more lawyers for the country, the Japanese Federation of Bar Associa-

parents in upgrading facilities and curricula; their strong commitment to and positive attitude towards education; and their superior teaching methods in subjects like math and science. He further suggested that Malaysia's national schools could stand much to gain by emulating their Chinese counterparts.

Of the 600,000 or so children enrolled in Chinese schools, 60,000 — or 10 percent of the total — are Malay children.

Many Malay parents have lost confidence in their national schools and are looking for alternatives.

They have embraced the Chinese schools for a number of reasons: their children can learn a third language (students are taught Mandarin, Bahasa Melaya and English) while in school; science and math are taught better at Chinese schools; children come out of Chinese schools better prepared for college; parents are also given greater flexibility in deciding

about the controversial student-loan scheme, in addition to the impending brain drain of young talent.

Last year 7,683 students left the country, up from 4,713 in 1997-98. These so-called "nonresident borrowers" currently owe more than \$6 million in overdue student loan repayments, a figure that accounts for almost half the \$13.7 million in student loan arrears.

Canterbury University Student Association President Darel Hall was not at all surprised by the IRD statistics. The exodus of graduates and post graduates for greener pastures overseas, he says, has become commonplace on campuses all over the country.

But while students have always taken time off to travel abroad after graduation, Hall claims there has been a "qualitative shift in what's pushing them to go, and what's making them think twice about coming back."

The lack of job opportunities at home and the burden of paying back student loans are the two factors most responsible for the exodus of college graduates, he says.

— *The Press Online*
Sept. 4, 1999

The number of college graduates who leave New Zealand for overseas opportunities and default on student loans has close to doubled during the last 12 months.

tions has agreed to slightly increase the bar exam pass rate, although not enough to satisfy the national demand for lawyers.

— *Times Higher Educational Supplement*
July 16, 1999

MALAYSIA

■ Chinese schools are becoming increasingly popular among Malaysia's non-Chinese students. Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib recently praised Chinese schools for their cooperation with

which particular school is best for their children.

— *The Star Online*
Sept. 2, 1999

NEW ZEALAND

■ According to figures obtained from the Inland Revenue Department (IRD), the number of college graduates who leave New Zealand for overseas opportunities and default on student loans has close to doubled during the last 12 months. The exodus has raised concerns

THE PHILIPPINES

■ De La Salle University in Manila recently graduated 23 social workers from the Certificate Program for Street Educators. The program, which is supported by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), aims to improve services for street children.

An estimated 60,000 to 75,000 street children are sexually exploited or prostituted in the Philippines, according to the DSWD. Many others fall victim to drug abuse, street violence and health hazards.

The certificate program, which was launched about a year ago, offers courses in guidance, counseling, non-formal education, values education, recreational education,

