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NUMBER OF ARAB STUDENTS IN CANADA SPIKES

New data reveals that the number of Arab students in Canada reached an all-time high in 2010 with 9,800 Arab citizens enrolled in Canadian academic institutions as foreign students, April 2013

Data from Citizenship and Immigration Canada acquired by CAI reveals that the number of Arab[1] students in Canada reached an all-time high in 2010 with 9,800 Arab citizens enrolled in Canadian academic institutions as foreign students. This number constituted 10.3% of all foreign students in Canada that year and was surpassed only by China (with 18.6% of Canada's foreign students), India (12.3%), and South Korea (11%).

A report released in 2012 by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) showed that international students contributed more than \$8 billion to the Canadian economy in 2010, up from \$6.5 billion in 2008.

The rise in the number of Arab students is part of a larger trend of an increase in the overall number of foreign students in Canada. The DFAIT report found there were 218,000 full-time international students in Canada in 2010, up from 178,000 in 2008 and more than double the number of students in 1999.

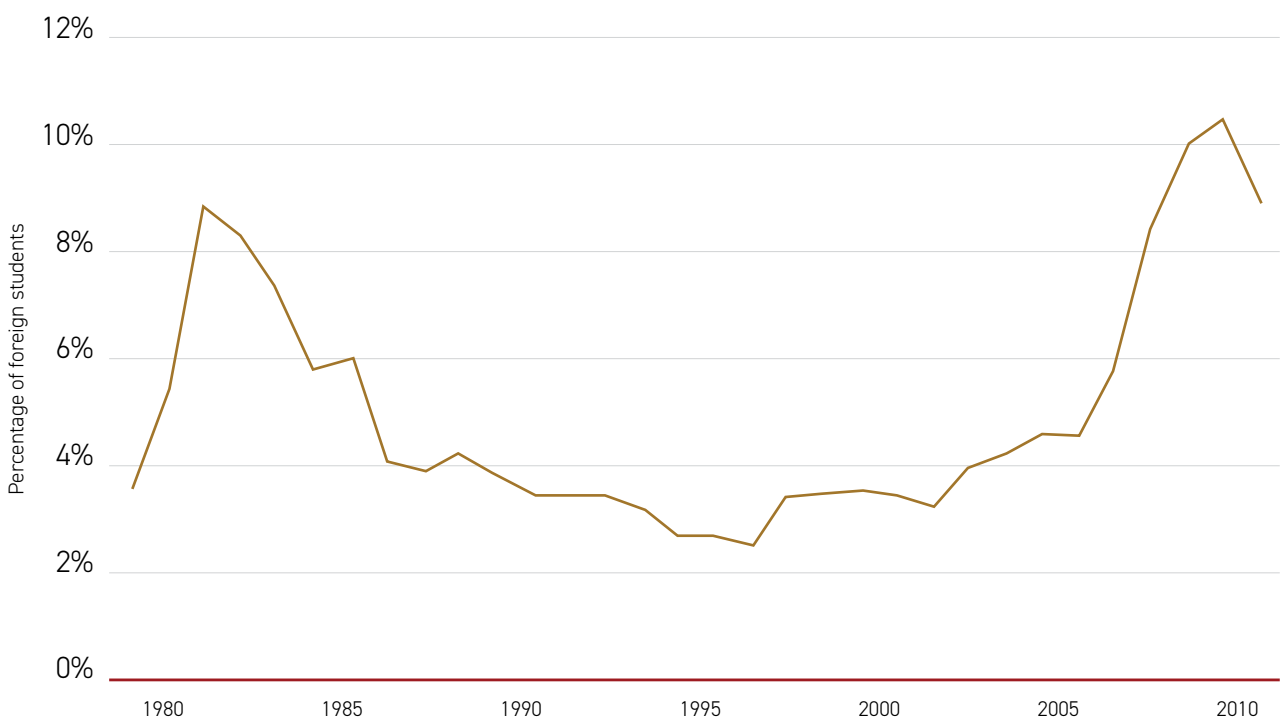
It estimated that international students supported 86,000 jobs and contributed \$445 million in tax revenue to the country.

In addition to the economic benefits of foreign students there's also improved cross-cultural understanding. Students play the role of ambassadors of their cultures while in Canada, and ambassadors of Canadian culture when they return home, which also allows for the creation of informal networks and broadening the experience of Canadian students.

In 2011, the percentage of Arab League students in Canada fell slightly to 8.85%. While this represents a decrease in Arab students attending post-secondary schools in Canada as compared to students of other nationalities, the region remained in fourth place behind the countries previously mentioned.

The following graph depicts Arab students as a percentage of total foreign students in Canada between the years of 1980 and 2011.

Arab Students in Canada as a Percentage of Total Immigration 1980-2011

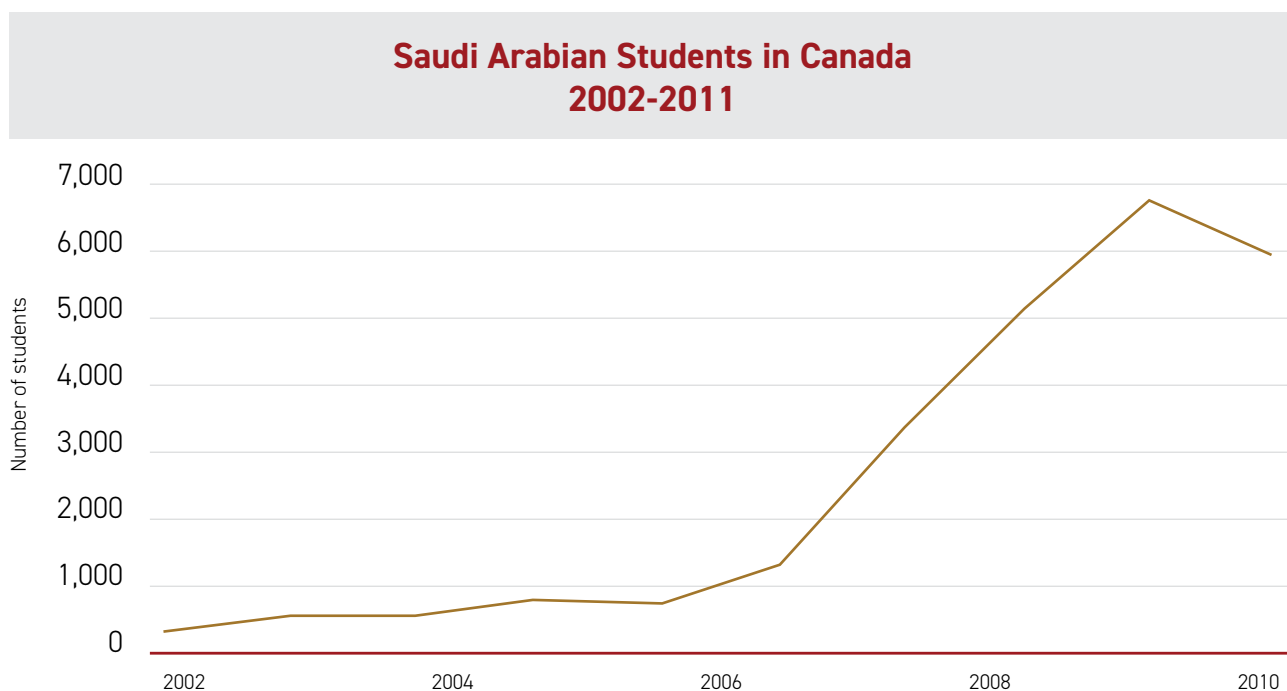


The sharp increase of Arab League students arriving in Canada between 1980 and 1982 is directly related to an increase of students from Mauritania and Lebanon.

Following a drop in numbers in the ensuing years, the percentage of Arab students began to steadily increase once again until it spiked significantly between 2007 (5.8%) and 2010 (10.3%). In 2007 there were 4,310 Arab students enrolled in Canadian universities, with that number more than doubling to 9,800 in 2010.

The vast change over this four year period can be directly linked to an increase in students from Saudi Arabia, which, between 2007 and 2011, constituted 59.1% of all Arab students.

Saudi Arabia has not only become the top Arab source country, but, it has also emerged as a top source country overall. In 2010, with 6,765 students enrolled in Canadian academic institutions, Saudi Arabia was the fourth top source country for international students to Canada, led only by China (with 17,780 students), India (12,165) and South Korea (10,510).



The drastic increase of Saudi Arabian students attending schools within Canada is attributed to a massive education scholarship that the Saudi Arabian government has begun to educate its young people in an attempt to move away not only from the country's reliance on oil, but from its dependence on foreign brain power.

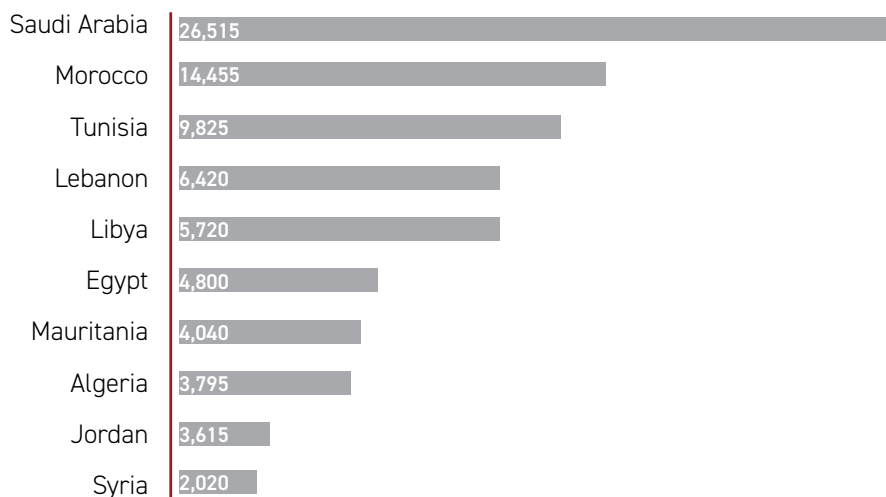
Recently, Canada has become the third most popular university destination for these students (behind the United States and Great Britain), possibly due to increased anti-Arab sentiment in Europe and the US, as compared to Canada's reputation for tolerance.

These ever increasing numbers of Arab students will have significant connotations for policy makers at academic institutions, and also for the service providers that operate on these campuses. And, given Canada's new "Canadian Experience" immigration class, students from some Arab countries will find it easier to become permanent residents in this country.

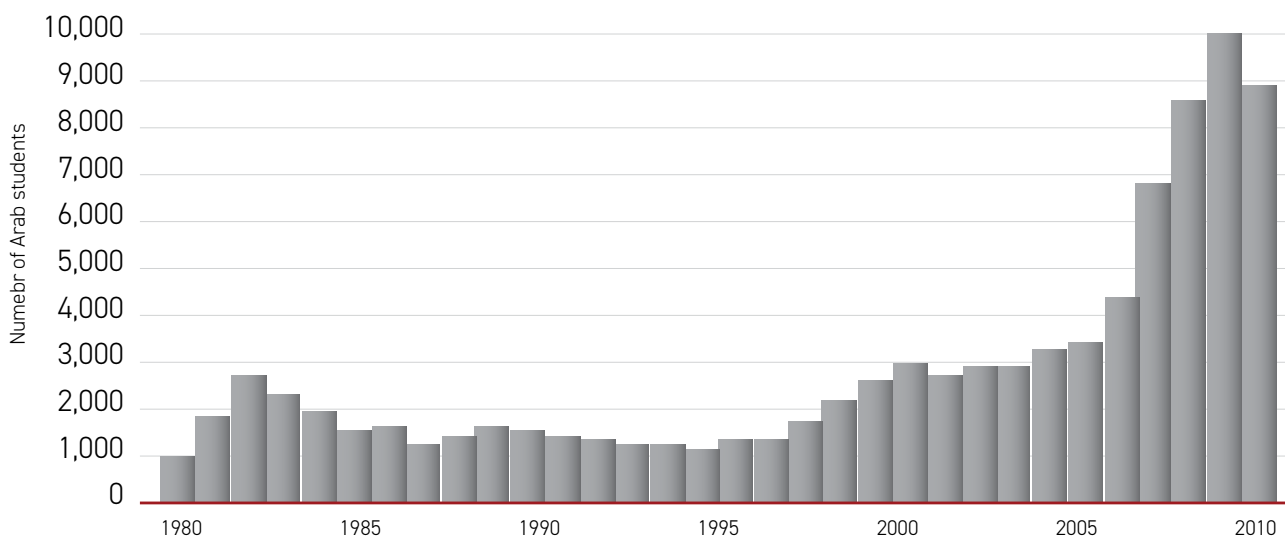
Top Source Arab Countries

Although Saudi Arabia did not emerge as a top source country until 2003, the drastic increase of Saudi students in Canada between 2007 and 2011 has elevated it to the number one position, by far, with 29.4% of all Arab students between 1980 and 2011 being citizens of that country. Saudi Arabia is followed, distantly, by Morocco at 16.0%, Tunisia at 10.9%, Lebanon at 7.1%, Libya at 6.3%, and Egypt at 5.3%. These six countries have produced 75% of all Arab students in Canada over the past 31 years. When the students from Mauritania (4.5%), Algeria (4.2%), Jordan (4.0%) and Syria (2.2%) are included, these ten countries constitute 90% of all Arab citizens who have attended school in Canada between 1980 and 2011.

Top Source Arab Countries 1980-2011



Arab Immigration to Canada 1960-2011



Still to come

The Canadian Arab Institute will continue to analyze and explore Arab immigration to Canada. Upcoming issues of this bulletin will examine the settlement patterns of Arab immigrants and refugee claimants within Canada.

[1] Students from the 22 countries of the Arab League were included.