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Abstract

International scholarship programs for higher education attract a substantial body of funding each year from national governments, supranational bodies, large charitable foundations, higher education institutions, and many smaller organizations. With aims variously shaped by international development and public diplomacy considerations, international scholarships fund students at higher education institutions worldwide. As the investment in, and scope of, scholarship programs has expanded, concurrent commitment to analysis and evaluation of their outcomes—both to improve policy making and justify further funding—has increased. This article explores several of the key methodological and conceptual challenges in the evaluation of international scholarship outcomes, focusing on the relationship between aims and outcomes, difficulties with “attribution” and “contribution,” and scholarship programs in comparison with their alternatives. The relationship between evidence gathering and policy making is considered in context of international scholarship

15.12.2025

programs, and several potentially useful future developments in evaluation approaches are suggested.
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