

16.2.2026**Author**

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TitleApproaches to Analyzing the Outcomes of International Scholarship Programs for Higher Education /
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2017

Source/Footnote

In: Journal of studies in international education : a publication of the Association for Studies in International Education (ASIE). - 21 (2017) 3, S. 230 - 245

Inventory number

46264

Keywords

Austausch von Wissenschaftlern und Studenten ; Mobilität

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

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programs, and several potentially useful future developments in evaluation approaches are suggested.
(HRK / Abstract übernommen)