



Learning Abroad: Insights from the Canadian K-12 sector

A U G U S T 2 0 1 7

In the spring of 2016, 35 Canadian post-secondary institutions surveyed their students as part of the national 2016 Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) Education Abroad Student Survey. The resulting survey analysis, with a focus on post-secondary learning abroad participant demographics, motivations and barriers appeared in the 2016 flagship report, [A World of Learning](#).

The dataset also offers key insights from the 412 post-secondary student respondents who had learning abroad exposure during their primary and secondary levels of study. This brief delves into this sample with the goal of helping CBIE membership and the wider international education sector to better understand the K-12 learning abroad experience.

INFLUENCERS AND ORGANIZERS

Students who pursued learning abroad during primary and secondary school were likely to have

had considerable influence from adults in their lives, and to lean on adults in the organizing of learning abroad experiences.

Post-secondary students were more likely to have had an early learning abroad experience if their parents participated in learning abroad (24%) than students whose parents did not have a learning abroad experience (15%).

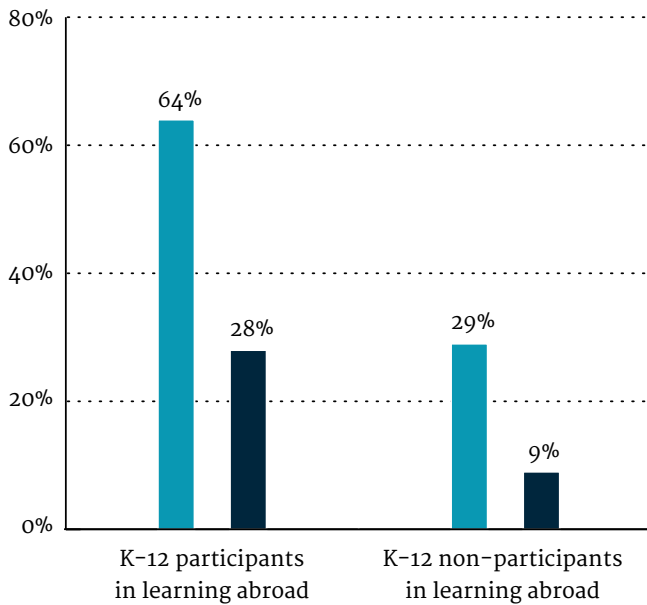
Over half of learning abroad experiences at the primary and secondary levels were organized by the school.

Among those students whose experiences were not organized by their school, our results show a wide diversity of organizers across public, private and non-government actors. Notably, 27% of learning abroad experiences at the primary and secondary levels were organized by parents and other family members.

CATCHING THE BUG

Participating in an early learning abroad experience correlated positively with the pursuit of more learning abroad at the post-secondary level. Among students who did learning abroad in primary or secondary school, 64% went on to have a second experience during post-secondary and 29% went on to have three or more. Among students who did not undertake learning abroad until post-secondary

Figure 1: Likelihood of participating in learning abroad during post-secondary



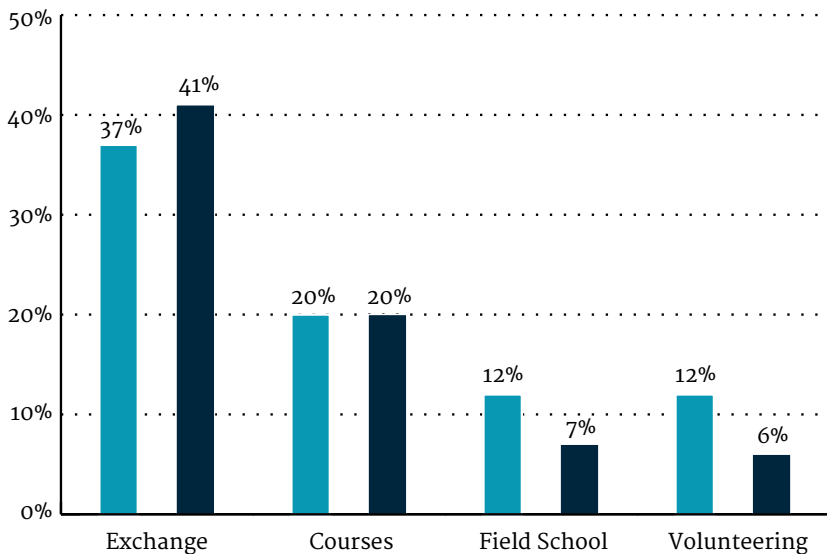
- Pursued one learning abroad experience during post-secondary
- Pursued two or more learning abroad experiences during post-secondary

only 28% went on to have a second experience and 9% went on to have three or more (see Figure 1).

PURPOSE, DURATION AND STRUCTURE

As depicted in Figure 2, primary and secondary level learning abroad participants in this sample were more likely to participate in field school and volunteer placements than their post-secondary counterparts. While exchange remains the top type of experience, primary and secondary level students were less likely than post-secondary students to have a learning abroad exchange experience.

Figure 2: Type of learning abroad experience



- K-12
- Post-secondary

Learning abroad experiences at the primary and secondary levels were considerably more likely to be of a brief duration (0-2 months) compared with post-secondary experiences, which were more likely to be of medium-range (3-6 months) duration. It is noteworthy that the likelihood of an experience being longer than 7 months did not vary between K-12 and post-secondary levels (see Figure 3).

DESTINATION

The top destinations for learning abroad at the primary and secondary levels were similar to those

of post-secondary level experiences (see Figure 4).

This brief provides a unique exploration of how learning abroad experiences take shape for students at the K-12 level. It also offers cues on the collaborative role that educators, parents and other influencers have in instilling enthusiasm for learning abroad at a young age to spark

a lifelong curiosity and fascination with the world. CBIE will continue to develop and share knowledge on this theme to support and inspire young Canadians as they embark on their journeys of learning here in Canada and abroad.

Figure 3: Duration of learning abroad experience

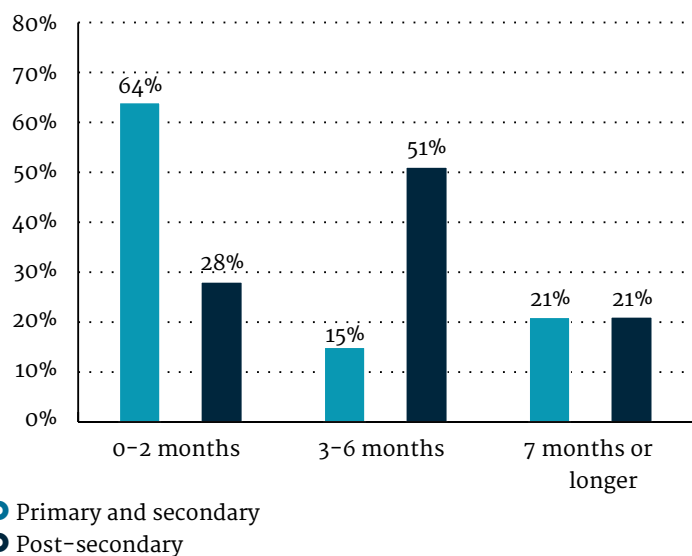
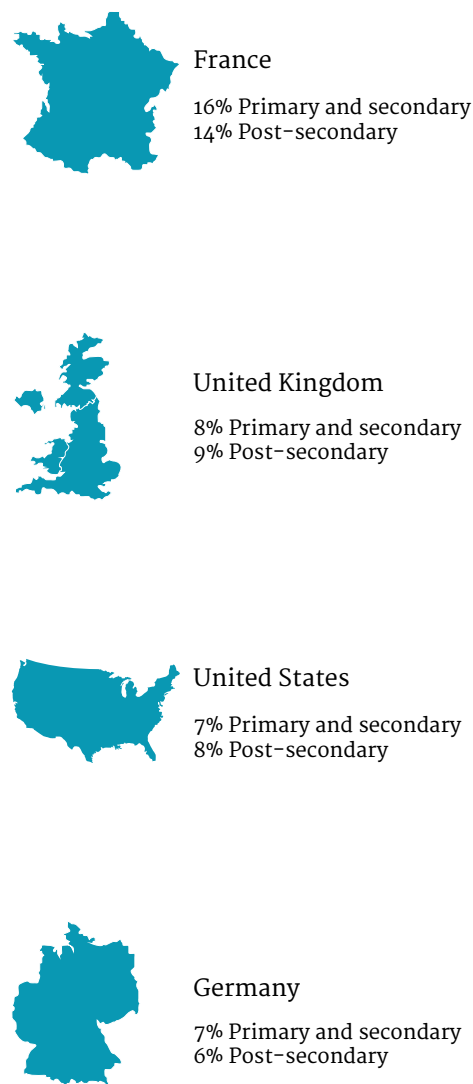


Figure 4: Learning abroad destination



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