

Plugging the brain drain

October 11 2019, by David Bradley

In a world of growing educational and professional mobility, there is an urgent need, from an individual nation's perspective to reduce the potentially harmful effects of what is commonly referred to as the "brain drain". The brain drain refers to the loss of one's intellectuals and talented students and workers to another nation where they may benefit their adopted state, often never to return home to their place of birth.

Writing in the *International Journal of Education Economics and Development*, Akira Shimada of the Faculty of Economics at Nagasaki University, Japan, discusses the policy challenges facing education in attempting to plug the brain drain. His findings suggest that among the developed nations, subsidizing salary can often reduce the loss of talent to foreign shores. But, this is generally not an option for cash-strapped establishments in a developing nation where the disparity between available home salary and the remuneration potential of working in a developed nation is enormous.

One possible way to reduce the brain drain from developing nations and so retain the very talent that might allow the country to thrive is not to attempt to offer better working salaries but to improve education and the subsidizing thereof. Rewarding students for staying in their home nation to work could be implemented effectively whereas attempting to tax those who flow with the [brain](#) drain is largely untenable.

"I found that education subsidies are an effective way for a developed country to reduce [brain drain](#) for any degree of human capital transferability although they are not effective for a [developing country](#)

for a certain degree of human capital transferability," Shimada concludes.

More information: Akira Shimada. The education policy challenge to the brain drain problem, *International Journal of Education Economics and Development* (2019). [DOI: 10.1504/IJEED.2019.102740](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJEED.2019.102740)

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