



Rajika Bhandari, Ph.D.

Consulting Services

Subject Matter & Regional Expertise

International student and scholar mobility trends; international higher education landscape; education and people-to-people exchange programs, including bilateral and multilateral scholarship schemes and fellowship programs; global talent and youth preparedness; women and education in developing countries; higher education and social justice; access and equity issues in higher education; STEM education and global engagement; and diaspora engagement and skilled immigration issues.

Regional: Experience in conducting programs and research in 22 countries, with regional expertise in the U.S. and India.

Research: Data, Trends & Insights

- Designing small- and large-scale mixed methods research studies on a range of topics in international education and academic mobility.
- Support for lifecycle of primary research: research design and methodology; survey/tool development; data collection; data management and analysis; shaping and dissemination of key findings; and quality assurance.
- Guidance on the use and applications of secondary data sources such as UN datasets; country-level data; World Bank and OECD data; and large-scale datasets in education.
- Proposal development and writing.
- Storytelling, narrative, and developing written products for a wide range of audiences.

Sample projects:

- *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*: a 100-year-old research project that is the most comprehensive source of quantitative data on international students and scholars in the U.S. and U.S. students going abroad, with data collected annually from 8,000 respondents at U.S. colleges and universities.
- Three separate research projects to assess the status of mobility and internationalization between the U.S. and: China, Mexico and Brazil. Findings helped inform the progress of the bilateral 100,000 Strong for China and the 100,00 Strong for the Americas initiatives.
- *Gaining an employment edge: The impact of study abroad on 21st Century skills and career prospects*, a report based on surveys and interviews with 4,500 U.S. college and university alumni at various stages of their careers; Graduate Learning Overseas, the first-ever survey to measure the global engagement of U.S. graduate students.

Monitoring & Evaluation: Enhance impact & learning

- Consultation on best-fit monitoring and evaluation approach for international education projects.
- Design and implementation of theory-driven, process, implementation, and outcomes evaluations.
- Design and implementation of large-scale impact studies to assess the longitudinal and global impact of international fellowship and scholarship programs and alumni.
- Leveraging data and findings to drive learning and program improvement.

Sample projects:

- Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program Alumni Tracking Study: design and launch of a ten-year study of a program which served over 4,300 scholars from marginalized communities in 22 countries. Largest global evaluation of the longitudinal impact of social justice and higher education.
- Fund for Leadership Development (FLD) evaluation: Implemented from the 1990s – 2013, the FLD was an initiative of MacArthur Foundation's Population and Reproductive Health (PRH) program with the goal of fostering new leadership in India, Brazil, Mexico, and Nigeria.
- NSF Workshop on Best Practices in International Research Experiences for Graduate Students

Thought leadership: Amplify your voice & visibility

- Developing a comprehensive thought leadership strategy, bringing together organizational content and other assets such as events and publications.
- Guidance on dissemination and positioning of knowledge products with a wide range of audiences, including global press and media.
- Shaping and launching a signature research product to amplify organizational thought leadership, including partnering with key stakeholders in the process.

Curation & Moderation: Convening influencers & ideas

Curation, including chairing and moderation, of high-level dialogues and panels of global experts on a wide range of educational issues, ensuring cohesion of topics and content during multi-day events.

Sample projects:

- Led content development for the *IIE Centennial Summit 2019*, a three-day convening of over 600 leaders, influencers and practitioners from education, government, business, and philanthropy, centered around five key themes: equity and access; higher education in emergencies; student mobility; international partnerships; and scholars and innovation.
- Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) *Transformational Training Week*: Curated a week of virtual sessions for school leaders and teachers of 21,500 CBSE schools in India and other countries in August 2020, with each session reaching 10,000 viewers and participants.
- Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Residency Program: Facilitated the high-level selection panels for the prestigious Bellagio Academic and Arts and Literary Residencies, with panelists representing world-renowned academics and artists.

Workshops & Trainings: Advancing knowledge

- Developing and preparing research products for a wide audience; leveraging storytelling and translating data and evidence into user-friendly insights.
- Assisting government agencies or organization with developing student-level data collection systems with a focus on student mobility data.
- Individual coaching for thought leadership development: translating expertise into influence.
- “Why didn’t someone tell me that before?” Understanding the social, cultural, and academic norms of succeeding in the U.S. as an international student.

Sample projects:

- Two-day workshop held in Australia for 21 APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) economies on measuring internationalization; developing international student data collection systems; and leveraging data for policymaking and advocacy.
- Partnered with Mexico’s National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions (ANUIES) on developing *Patlani*, Mexico’s system for gathering student mobility data; advised the development of the international student mobility section of India’s All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE).

About:



Dr. Rajika Bhandari is an expert in international higher education and senior leader with over twenty years of executive and management experience in research; monitoring and evaluation; and thought leadership strategy in the nonprofit, private and higher education sectors. Part scholar-practitioner, part storyteller, Dr. Bhandari is skilled at leading large-scale global mixed-methods research; shaping thought leadership; leveraging data for organizational insights and learning; forging networks and external engagement across multilateral, governmental and philanthropic sectors; and serving as a spokesperson with media and at key

dialogues and events. Over the course of her career, she has partnered with U.S. government agencies such as the Departments of State and Education, and the National Science Foundation; multilateral organizations such as UNESCO and the World Bank; foundations such as the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, and Macarthur Foundation; and higher education institutions and associations in the U.S. and other countries.

Dr. Bhandari recently served as the President & CEO of the IC3 Institute, which connects high schools, colleges and universities, and industry to help students forge a successful pathway to future education and careers. Previously, Dr. Bhandari led the Institute of International Education's (IIE) research, impact and thought leadership activities for over a decade, including the flagship Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange. She is the author of over 50 publications, including six books, and has written for the Guardian, Times Higher Ed, the Huff Post, the Chronicle of Higher Education, and University World News, with her work covered by NPR, PRI International, the BBC, the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, Quartz, and Time.

Dr. Bhandari has a background in international development with a focus on gender and education in Asia and is also an expert on Indo-U.S. educational and people-to-people exchanges. She has served as an Adjunct Associate Professor at Teachers College, Columbia University and also on the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO. In recognition of her contributions to the field of international higher education, Dr. Bhandari was one of 100 recipients worldwide to be awarded an IIE Centennial Medal in 2019, marking the Institute's 100th anniversary. In addition to her academic and scholarly writing, Dr. Bhandari is a published nonfiction writer. Her forthcoming book (due out in 2021) is both a manifesto that argues the importance of international students and their value to the U.S., while also being a deeply personal story of her own journey as a foreign student from India. She holds an undergraduate degree in Psychology (Honors) from the University of Delhi and graduate degrees in Psychology from North Carolina State University in the U.S.

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