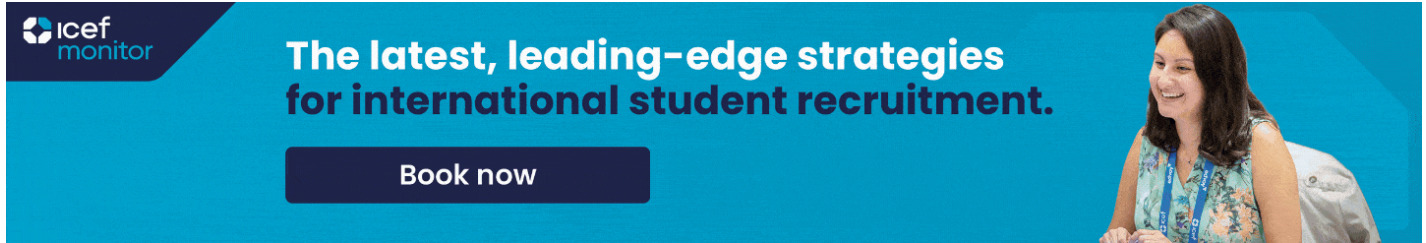


Market intelligence for international student recruitment from ICEF



Home > Colombia > Recruiting in Colombia demands a long-term presence and communication with parents

11th Jun 2026

Recruiting in Colombia demands a long-term presence and communication with parents

Short on time? Here are the highlights:

- A new report on Colombia provides a great reminder that successful student recruitment depends on human connection
- Family is paramount for Colombians, and reflecting this cultural characteristic in marketing campaigns and on-the-ground outreach is crucial
- Agents are responsible for 6 in 10 study abroad placements for Colombians, making them even more central to recruitment than in Brazil and Mexico

Market intelligence for international student recruitment from ICEF

["Colombia Connections: Tools and Tactics for Smarter Student Recruitment,"](#) is that successful student recruitment depends on investing in a long-term presence that is grounded in human connection. Family is at the heart of everything in Colombian culture, and education is no exception.

Understanding this context is important for institutions establishing a presence in Colombia, where competition for students is intensifying. There are now about 75,000 Colombians studying overseas, and it is now common for up to 80 foreign universities and schools to be at Colombian education fairs promoting their programmes.

Rafael Minauro, senior partner manager at EdCo LATAM, notes:

"Institutions cannot rely on their websites to attract Colombian students. The focus should be on developing interpersonal relationships, speaking the same language, understanding unique needs, sharing experiences, highlighting graduate success stories, and developing confidence. This all takes time, but it really pays

withdrawals surpass refusals in Q1 2026

[Read More](#)

Ascending in world university rankings and highly affordable, Azerbaijan is strengthening its offer to international students

[Read More](#)

Netherlands reports first-ever decrease in foreign enrolment for 2025/26

[Read More](#)

Most Popular

Which countries will contribute the most to global student mobility in 2030?



Market intelligence for international student recruitment from ICEF

A greater proportion of Colombian students can now afford study abroad than in the past. The economy has grown by an average of +3.5% a year for the past 15 years, helping to alleviate poverty and bring more of the population into the middle class.

Still, income equalities remain and are often pronounced along regional lines, making geographical segmentation essential. The report breaks down the industrial characteristics of each region to highlight which programmes may be especially interesting for students living there. For example:

“Students from Bogotá and Medellín may be more interested in technology, business and politics-related programmes, while students from Colombia's Caribbean region may be drawn towards international trade, logistics, and commerce programmes.”

Demand for study abroad is strong in part because domestic higher education capacity is low and tuition at the highest quality Colombian universities

[Read More](#)

Beyond the Big Four: How demand for study abroad is shifting to destinations in Asia and Europe

[Read More](#)



Market intelligence for international student recruitment from ICEF abroad.

The report notes that prospective undergraduate and graduate students tend to be quite different:

- Undergraduate-level Colombians tend to be younger than their peers in other countries due to the structure of their high-school system. They are often under the age of 18, and so need more care and support. Their parents are heavily involved in decision-making.
- By contrast, postgraduate-level students often have years of work experience and make more independent choices.

Overall, there is a significant base of potential students from which to recruit: 26% of the 53.5 million-person-strong population is between the ages of 14 and 28.

La Familia

Simon Terrigton, director and co-founder of EdCo LATAM Consulting, uses a personal anecdote to

Market intelligence for international student recruitment from ICEF

This weekend, my daughter and I made a Colombian Coffee mug at pottery and wrote 'La Familia' on the mug as it perfectly sums up how Colombia and other LATAM countries prioritise family over everything else. I was surprised when in Colombia I had fixed plans (or so I thought) which were then changed due to a distant aunt's birthday or similar event!"

The report emphasises that including parents in campaigns, webinars, discussions, etc. is as important as marketing directed at students themselves. "You have to sell your UG programmes to parents, not students," says account manager Maria Elisa Rodriguez Cardazo. Maria continues:

"Parents always want to take care of us and when we're oceans away, it can be tough for them. Universities should therefore involve parents and family friends from the beginning of the decision-making process."

Beyond parents, there is another important advantage to keeping "La Familia" in mind when recruiting in Colombia: "Providing a high-quality



Market intelligence for international student recruitment from ICEF

institutional website through testimonials and a student ambassador option is also key. The report notes:

“Colombian students naturally gravitate towards existing Latin American cohorts on international campuses. By building a critical mass of LATAM students, you create a cultural gravity that makes your campus the default choice for others in the region. The bottom line is that success breeds scale.”

An agent-driven market

Approximately 60% of Colombian overseas enrolments came through agents, making Colombia the most agent-dependent market in Latin America. Comparatively, 47% and 46% of Brazilian and Mexican students, respectively, are enrolled through agents.

Which destinations are popular?

While the **US** higher education system boasts the most Colombian students (just over 10,200 in 2024/25), growth has stalled, with the number of

Market intelligence for international student recruitment from ICEF
the first six months of Trump's second
administration were Latinos. While Colombians are not among the most targeted of Latinos, the overall trend is naturally worrisome.

Despite **Canada's** enduring popularity among Colombian students, visa policies are making it difficult for Colombians to make it to Canada for studies. Only about 5,800 study permits were issued to Colombians in 2025, down from just over 10,400 in 2023.

Australia is a top destination for Colombia's English-language students, but it is also attractive for higher education, especially for master's studies. In 2025, more than 2,300 Colombian students were enrolled in Australian universities. However, Australia's higher education system is quite dependent on its ELICOS (English-language training) sector for international enrolments, and that system is [under immense pressure](#) due to government policies. Fully 38% of Colombians begin in an ELICOS course before progressing to an Australian university programme.

Market intelligence for international student recruitment from ICEF
faster growth than from Mexico and Brazil.

Spain remains a favoured study destination, hosting more than 23,600 Colombian students in 2022/23. A primary driver of demand is the common language (Spanish). Mobility is also being spurred by [a 2023 agreement](#) between the Colombian and Spanish governments for the mutual recognition of degrees, diplomas, certificates, and tests allowing Colombians access to Spanish universities and vice versa.

The report notes that **France** and **Germany** are steadily gaining traction, enrolling about 4,000 Colombian students each.

For additional background, please see:

- [“Market Snapshot: International student recruitment in Colombia”](#)
- [“Are you paying enough attention to parents in your recruitment marketing?”](#)