

# New agency association for Venezuela

## Next issue

In our new-look January 2005 issue, **Special Report** examines the evolution of various accreditation schemes, while **Market Report** finds out about market trends in South Africa. **Direction** looks at the latest developments in the junior sector and **Feedback** finds out what students studying in Australia think about their study abroad experience. **City Focus** visits New York, **Destination** reports from the north of England and **Status** provides market data relating to Malta.

LANGUAGE TRAVEL agencies in Venezuela have joined forces to form a new agency association, called Asociacion de Consultores Educativos Internacionales de Venezuela (ACEIV). The association aims to highlight the quality services offered by its members and to combat, as a group, the competitive threat posed by the British Council (see *Language Travel Magazine*, October 2004, page 11).

The five founding members are Arca Programas Educativos, Eduplace, Globorama Consultores Educativos, Proyectos Educativos and Travel & Language Agents. Nori Salazar, ACEIV Spokesperson, said that aside from local British Council's activities, the threat posed in the marketplace by unscrupulous agencies was another reason for forming a quality-based group.

"Recently, [members of ACEIV] have noticed the

proliferation of certain 'ghost companies' – individuals with no office, financial reliability or registered business," she explained. "Our group of long established agencies identified the need to protect our customers and our businesses."

The problem with the British Council is that it can offer to place students in institutions in the UK for a more competitive

exchange rate. Salazar said, "In our opinion, the British Council has turned from a friendly support institution into an aggressive competitor."

ACEIV also plans to organise education fairs for students, expand membership and build strategic alliances with institutions. Salazar said ACEIV would also work with similar associations in other countries. □

## Feltom's whirlwind fam trip

THE FEDERATION of English Language Teaching Organisations of Malta (Feltom) flew a group of 15 agents attending the International Languages & Education UK Fair in the UK to Malta and back again for a whistlestop famtrip of the island earlier this year.

The two-day event, which took place immediately after

the workshop in August, saw agents flying directly to Malta from Brighton for an overnight stay and then two days of school visits and functions. In just two days, agents managed to take in 11 Feltom member schools, visit sights such as St John's Co-Cathedral, the Inland Sea and Azure Window and view the silent medieval city of Mdina.

## Industry issues - agents speak out

January February March April May June July August September October November December

*Q Do you have a problem with receiving schools' photographs of adequate quality for your brochure?*



**Mehmet Catalagac, Yurt-disi Egitim Servisleri (YES), Turkey**

"We mainly do not experience any big problems to receive schools' photographs. When we need their photographs for our own brochures or promotional documents we always find positive response from them and they always do their best to give us good quality photos. However, according to my impression, some of them do not update the photos of school buildings and facilities in their schools. Some of the schools use the same photographs for years in their brochures and their promotional materials. Therefore, students might think that those schools do not make any improvements."

**Greg Shin, Educational Consultants, Korea**

"Although the photos are not perfect, most of them are quite good for [the purpose]. I rely on schools

about half the time for sending me photographs for use in the brochure. The rest I may take myself while on a fam trip. Otherwise, if the photos are not enough good, we use pictures from schools' brochure by scanning the image."



**Bruno Cabral, IE – Intercambio, Brazil**

"Photographs, videos, CD-Roms and DVDs are

an extremely important ally when advising about international programmes of any kind. Visual aids are the only way to make the words of an adviser into a concrete image. Quality [of images] and sufficient numbers of schools' photographs for any use have always been a problem. Once you have this, students are visually attracted to a certain school and I believe that psychologically, they instantly provide students with a real image of their dream. I try and visit the schools I mainly work with and take my own pictures. These can't

be used for printing purposes, but it adds personality to the photos when a prospective student sees his adviser next to the school's director – which is why fam trips are so important. We will always cope with selling international programmes that don't worry about the quality of their printed material. However, personal experience proves that good pictures help both advisers and students, and I believe more and more schools are becoming aware of this and working on producing better photographs."



**Chu Kap Ning, Yek Tak Travel Service, Hong Kong**

"Schools rarely provide photographs to agents until requested. We requested some photos when producing our brochure and generally got adequate support. However, we wish schools would put ads in our brochures with their own design [too]."



*The agent group during the trip*

An evening barbecue was also arranged on the roof terrace of a hotel in Sliema.

John Dimech of Feltom said, "On the whole the event was very successful. The agents all enjoyed the buffet barbecue on the rooftop terrace with some fireworks in the background, and I was pleased that all that preparatory work which had started six months earlier was finally put to fruition."

Natalia Chudnovska of Os-vita Education Consultancy in Ukraine said the schools' facilities were very different to facilities seen in the UK. "It was very useful to visit business partners, see classes, hotels and entertainment sites," she said. "We were very happy to meet so many very nice people promoting education in Malta."



Regent Language Training in the UK has appointed Louise Yahiaoui as Work Experience

Manager. Ms Yahiaoui will be responsible for overseeing the company's newly-launched Work and Learn division. Her role will involve coordinating both paid and unpaid work experience language courses throughout the UK. Previously, she managed unpaid work placements at LAF.



Joanne Szostek has taken over from Tanya Gafon as International Programmes Coordinator at

Language Link in Moscow, Russia, after working as assistant in the same department last year. The role includes long-term development of the Russian department, marketing Language Link abroad and coordinating partnerships with agents.



Jóna E Hammer is now Acting Director and Chief Administrator of the ESL Program at Duquesne

University in Pittsburgh, PA, USA. Dr Hammer, originally from Iceland, earned a BA from Smith College and completed her PhD at Duquesne University.



Salman Saffari has assumed the role of Marketing Administrator at the Abbey College in Malvern,

Worcestershire in the UK. Mr Saffari's role will see him liaising with agents, facilitating student enrolment and arranging attendance at exhibitions, as well as producing promotional literature for the school.



Simon Ammann joined Eurocentres, based in Switzerland, earlier this year as Manager of

Special Projects. Mr Ammann is responsible for developing new leisure products, looking after new accommodation products and deputising for the Head of Sales and Marketing. Before joining Eurocentres, he worked for TUI International and Kuoni Switzerland.



Katrina Papas has taken on the role of Administrative Assistant at Griffith University's

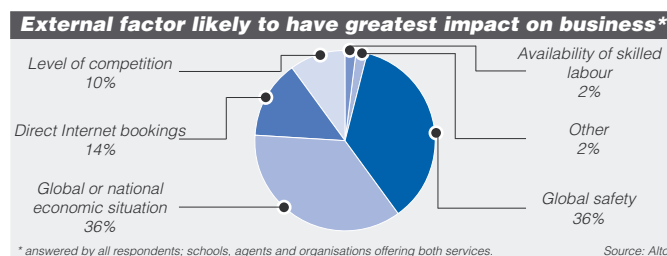
Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages in Nathan, QLD, Australia. She will be maintaining relationships with agents and providing marketing support.

## Alto charts trends among members

VERTICAL INTEGRATION of school and agency services will become increasingly common, according to the results of a recent industry survey, *Global Directions in Language Travel*.

The Association of Language Travel Organisations (Alto) conducted a survey of its members and asked them pertinent questions about business trends. Respondents also indicated that the hot product of the moment is work experience, while agents are also looking at career development services to add to their portfolio.

Of 171 Alto members, 58 responded, 23 of whom were agents, 23 were schools and 12 offered both types of services. Diversification of services offered is now more commonplace in the industry, according to the



One area of the study examined factors most likely to impede business

respondents. This will slow in the next few years, but to date, has often been seen as a key to success in a competitive climate.

Other trends uncovered in the report suggest that agents will remain the most important source of bookings at Alto member schools, although their share will decline very slightly year on year, with 57 per cent of bookings via agents expected in 2006,

down from 63 per cent in 2003. In turn, agencies are expecting to receive more bookings online by 2006 – 28 per cent, up from 19 per cent in 2003. Local bookings will contract in the same timeframe as a result.

In terms of marketing spend, schools and agents expect to spend more money in the next three years on industry shows and Internet-related services. □

## Agency of the month

### LanguageCourse S.L.

Languagecourse S.L.

In a series appearing each month in *Language Travel Magazine*, we ask a different language teaching institution to nominate one of their preferred agencies or agent partners, and to explain why this person/company is worthy of their nomination.

This month, **Interlink School of Languages in South Africa** nominates **Languagecourse S.L.**, an online agency based in Spain.



Luanne McCallum, Manager of the school, explains this decision:

"Languagecourse S.L. [known as Languagecourse.net] is not a traditional agency that is solely dedicated to a national audience, but an innovative consultancy service which is primarily Internet-based. They have created a comprehensive online profile of our school in four languages.

This has meant that we have received a variety of clients from them, which has made for a great nationality mix in our school. They also offer a comprehensive database of schools therefore making it easier for clients to best find the particular school that suits their needs. Furthermore, by following an open policy of publishing the name of our school, high quality counselling is encouraged, and they have consistently met our clients' needs and represented Interlink in a prompt and accurate way.

We have found the agency to be professional and reliable and have enjoyed good and successful cooperation with the staff."

### Alphe winners announced

VARIOUS language schools around the world have won a free table at an Alphe Workshop, thanks to a generous offer from Hothouse Media.

In collaboration with a selection of language schools' associations, Hothouse Media, organisers of the Alphe workshops, donated a free participation at a selection of the Alphe events this year as a prize for associations to pass on to their schools to boost the benefits of membership.

In Australia, Donal Ducie from Sydney West International College was the lucky English Australia winner who elected to attend the Alphe Asia workshop in Phuket, while Quality English member, Clive Barrow from Beet Language Centre in Bournemouth, won and chose to attend Alphe Japan.

The winning English UK member was Nicole Kennedy from Studio School in Cambridge. The Alphe Workshops, which take place worldwide, will be moving to Russia for the first time in November 2005. □