

# Asian fairs pull in crowds

## Next issue

In our March issue, **Special Report** looks at new trends in the summer programmes market, while **Market Report** finds out about business performance in Australia last year.

**Direction** looks at the home tuition sector and computer-aided language learning, while **Feedback** finds out what students studying in New Zealand think about their study abroad experience. **City Focus** visits Berlin and **Destination** reports from the west coast of the USA.

The Thai and Vietnamese agency associations both held successful student fairs at the end of last year which saw many overseas education centres meeting Asian students face to face and talking about study opportunities. In Thailand, the Thai International Education Consultants' Association (Tieca) arranged its biggest fair yet with more than 80 institutions participating from around the world.

Almost 4,000 students visited the ninth International Education Fair, which was held in the Amari Watergate Hotel in Bangkok. Peter Millington, from Geos International in Thailand, said he was pleased with the fair's location at the hotel, which attracted interested students only, rather than passers-by. He added, "I'm very happy with the student numbers and the quality of enquiries. Tieca has done a good job in overall organisation."



PHOTOGRAPH: HOTHOUSE MEDIA

Students mingle at the Tieca fair in Bangkok last year

Thai students at the event were also able to attend a panel discussion on the benefits of studying abroad, which was attended by Thai actor Paul Sinlapajarn among others. All institutions reported that they had been busy during the two days. Ian Pratt, Asia Marketing Direc-

tor of Shane Global Village (SGV), commented that many of the enquiries he had received from students had been for the South African SGV school.

On the Saturday evening, all exhibitors were invited to join the "highest party in town", dinner and dancing in the Baiyoke Tower 2, with the Bangkok skyline as a backdrop. Geoffrey Blyth at Tieca said, "The Saturday evening event proved to be a very enjoyable for everybody, especially after Tor Nicol from Aspect sang a version of Hound Dog! I think that all of the visitors thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment provided."

In Vietnam, the Vietnam International Education Consultants Association (Vieca) held its bi-annual student fairs in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, which received TV coverage on a number of national TV channels.

"This successful event welcomed 26 institutions from Asia, North America, Europe, foreign embassies in Vietnam and Vieca's 13 members," commented Vu Thank Huong, Secretary of Vieca.

Over 3,000 students attended from across the country, and according to Huong, the most frequently requested information was relating to MBA programmes and courses in environment, business and project management.

A seminar session was held during the fairs about visa requirements for overseas study and Huong reported that institutions were able to meet registered agents in Vietnam. □

## Industry issues – agents speak out

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

*Q Are there too many workshops available worldwide, and how do you choose which ones to attend?*



"I don't think there are too many workshops. It's better to have more options because

sometimes the workshops are too far away from the Netherlands or sometimes it's not convenient to attend a workshop at a particular time of the year. I choose workshops by the recommendation of other agents, but I'm also willing to attend a workshop that I don't know very well. It depends on my interest. If a lot of different schools attend a workshop then I have more choice about which school to see. Also, the time for each appointment is important. My experience is that 20 minutes is too short. I went to Alphe in London and Icef in Berlin last year. Before printing new brochures, I like to know all the new information and changes concerning schools I work with and receive the new prices for the coming year. I also like to meet

new schools and locations. Alphe and Icef are both located in the centre of Europe, which means that they are easy to visit."

**Helena van Staveren, Adelante Taalreizen, the Netherlands**



"I think workshops are needed, but I don't know how many workshops there are a year in the world. I have only participated at Icef workshops because they provide accommodation for us. At the workshops, we can meet the schools and agents we already know and talk about many things concerning the world education market. We can also get new school information from new participants. Good times for workshops for Korean agents are April, May, August, September and October because they are low seasons in Korea."

**Hee Won Kim, Cici Ednet Corp., Korea**



"From my perspective, there are not too many workshops to attend. Because of business and other

commitments, it is never feasible to attend them all. In recent years, I have attended the Alphe workshops in London and Phuket, the Ial workshop in Cork and Malaga plus International House events in Cairns and Nice. International workshops are more attractive to Avanti Consultants as opposed to country-specific ones. A good workshop is one that is well structured with a variety of opportunities to network. Certainly it helps if a tentative list of participating countries/institutions is circulated as early as possible. I would be quite happy to attend an event I know little about provided the participants' focus accorded with the requirements and interests of potential clients from Australia."

**Hee Carol, Avanti Consultants, Australia**

## Agencies run illegal clubs in Canada

A NEW trend for illegal “conversation clubs” is sweeping Vancouver in Canada, which is home to a large number of English language schools. These conversation clubs offer “language tuition” by employing university students to chat to international students for a much lower fee than that charged by licensed language schools.

“Students are cancelling classes at bona fide schools to pay the cheaper rates at these businesses,” explained Virginia Christopher, President of the Private English Language Schools Association (Pelsa). Many of the businesses operating these clubs are local inbound agencies. They are unlicensed as they contravene city by-laws that require a special assembly licence for any enterprise where more than a specified

number of people are congregating. “The agents call the [operations] conversation clubs or counselling centres,” said Christopher. “[Their] businesses are not licensed as schools or assembly spaces of any kind.”

Pelsa members are alarmed about the problem and met last year to decide upon a course of action. A letter has since been sent to the Vancouver City Hall licensing department listing 12 of the businesses believed to be operating in this matter, and copied to

the Private Post-secondary Education Commission (PPSEC), a provincial government organisation that has jurisdiction over private post-secondary programmes in British Columbia.

Pelsa is also asking fellow Canadian association, Capls, to produce a similar letter. “We hope to see some results in this endeavour,” said Christopher.

*Language Travel Magazine* would be interested to hear from language schools in other areas where this is a problem. □

## Felca’s website plans

AT ITS Asia Pacific regional meeting in Phuket, Thailand, last year, the Federation of Education and Language Consultant Associations (Felca) raised issues

including the development of its website and a standard client booking form. One of the federation’s main objectives is to promote awareness of Felca through the content provision and promotion of its website. An extensive associate programme will further increase the site’s reach by linking to a wide variety of industry-related websites and discussion groups. This includes cooperation with *Language Travel Magazine*.

Peter Kopitz, General Secretary of Felca, said, “Further functionality [of the website [www.felca.org](http://www.felca.org)] includes a discussion forum and bulletin board, to provide a communication platform for education associations and agencies where both parties should develop a complaints procedure and a code of practice.” He added that he hoped the Felca site would be used by agencies to find good schools under the new schools’ section in a “recommended partners” page. □

### Talk to us

Agents – do you have increasing numbers of clients asking for language plus work experience? If so, what are the difficulties you have in providing them with a course that fits their needs? *Language Travel Magazine* would like to hear from you! Please email us at [mail@hthousemedia.com](mailto:mail@hthousemedia.com) with your response by 03/03/03.

## On the move



Regent has appointed Tamasyn Baker as Administration Manager for its Margate-based

school, Regent Fitzroy. Ms Baker, who previously worked as International Relations Officer for a further education college, will be responsible for all aspects of administration within the school, as well as building contacts with agents. “I was extremely impressed by Regent’s range of locations, products and friendly atmosphere”, said Ms Baker. “That, and Regent’s good reputation, contributed to my decision to apply.”



Stefania Frappi is the new Course Coordinator at Studiotalia in Rome, Italy. Ms Frappi took up

her position after seven years working as a sales executive for an Italian representative office of an English tour operator. In her new role, she is looking forward to working with agents and students the world over. “I am also very happy to be working in such an attractive and friendly school,” she said.



William Dimech is the new Principal at CIE Oxford, the College of International Education, which

enables students from all over the world to continue their education to GCSE, A-level and beyond in Britain. Mr Dimech was previously the Head of St Edward’s College, Malta, and Academic Administrator and Course Director at St Clare’s in Oxford. He hopes to build on the traditions of the college to provide young people with a sound foundation before they join schools or colleges in Britain, and to further develop provision of one-to-one tuition at all levels of English in a wide range of subjects.



John Paxton, former Director of ILA in Perth, Australia – which has since

become Aspect Perth – is now Managing Director of Perth International College of English (PICE). The school is a partnership between Mr Paxton and Warren Milner, owner of Milner Colleges in Australia and England, and is situated at the former premises of World English. While operating as a totally separate entity, PICE will follow Milner College’s lead in providing superior quality tuition and services. “That personal touch from an owner-operator will continue to be of the highest priority,” said Mr Paxton.



## Face to face

Each month, we profile the people from language schools who deal directly with agents, in order to give you the chance to get to know some of the people you work with.

### Who are you?

Viviane Litannie, Administrator.

### Where do you work?

Bruxelles Destination Langue Française, Brussels, Belgium.

### Why and how did you start in the industry?

After my studies at university, I travelled for a few months and then worked in a real estate agency. In 1996, I decided to take on the challenge of a new project promoting Brussels [as a study destination].

### Why should agents choose to represent your school?

Because we have a high quality product and are situated in the very heart of the European Union.

### What advantages does Brussels offer for international students?

Brussels is a real international city but it maintains a human dimension, which is often a reassuring factor for students. Moreover, Brussels is characterised by considerable diversity and provides numerous professional and cultural opportunities.

### What do you believe are the challenges facing your school in the future?

To convince people that French is still a good language to learn.

### How does your school promote itself to agents?

By taking part in fairs and through personalised contacts.

### What percentage of your annual student intake comes through agents?

Around 85 per cent. The other 15 per cent come via the Internet, advertisements in specialised magazines and also Belgian tourist offices.