

Second agent association in Turkey

A second agency association has been formed in Turkey, known as the Turkish Education Agents Group (TEAG). Ozdemir Icin, spokesperson for the group, which currently has 16 members, explained that the study abroad market in Turkey has been expanding steadily and a number of agents felt their needs would be better served in a separate association to UED (the first agency association in Turkey), dedicated to high quality operating standards.

"There are nearly 200 educational agents assisting students in Turkey," said Icin, "All the agents are encountering serious problems because of internal or external issues. TEAG aims to become a platform for sharing concerns and taking the initiative to sort out the problems in the sector."

The agency group has standards for joining and a number of agencies are in the process of becoming members, said Icin. As well as two references from school partners, new members

must demonstrate that they have a good reputation in Turkey as well as no debts with a school. The group has set up a website, www.teag.org, and Icin explained that as the largest companies in Turkey – such



Turkey's newest agency association displays its logo

as Global Vision, Alternatif and Network Educational Services – are promoting the logo and have links to the website, TEAG is already becoming well known in Turkey.

"Our website has a Turkish section to let the public know about our basic quality rules and list our members according to the cities in which they are located," said Icin. TEAG has also applied to represent Turkey at meetings of the Federation of Language and Consultant Associations (Felca).

Fedele workshop charms agents

THE SPANISH SCHOOL federation, Fedele, held its annual meeting and workshop in Valladolid last year, welcoming 126 agents from around the world to meet with its members. After a meeting between members and delegates of the Spanish tourism industry, a three-day programme of events was rolled out, aiming to ensure agents got to see some of the Castilla y León region and meet with schools from around the country.

Jean-Pierre Hermier from Language Power in Norway has attended the Fedele workshop before. "The workshop is a mix of friendly, professional and efficient meetings," he said. "It is always delightful to meet these schools that treat you as a member of a family." He added that the organisers always made an effort to



The event took place around an internal courtyard

organise sightseeing trips, visits to different schools and "marvellous Spanish food at its best". TurEspana and the Castilla y Leon local government supported the evening events.

The workshop itself took place in Museo Patio Herreriano and featured 60 participating schools that organised meetings from their booths. The agency turnout was the highest in the



This stylish building was the setting for the AGM and workshop

seven-year history of the Fedele workshop, commented Astrid Verlot, Executive Secretary of the association.

Balazs Pokoradi from Tensi agency in Hungary was also at the event and participated in the trip to Salamanca after the workshop. "It was very beautiful and here we visited several schools too," he said, adding that the whole event "was organised very well".

PHOTOGRAPHS: MAXIME BRAIRE

Agency of the month



This month, **Saint Mary's University** in Halifax, NS, Canada, nominates **J&C Cultural Exchange** in Korea.

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.



Maureen Sargent, Director of the TESL Centre, explains this decision:

"We have been working with Jun Yong since 2003 when he returned to Korea and established his agency after graduating from Saint Mary's, including studies in our Intensive English Programme.

During the last three years, J&C Cultural Exchange has established an excellent working relationship with the university. We have been extremely fortunate that Jun Yong has a very good understanding of the programmes we offer and that he has been able to very effectively match his clients with our services. Communication between our two organisations is quick and efficient and Jun Yong and his agents have in-depth knowledge of our policies and procedures and are able to convey them to clients.

We have been particularly gratified to see that the number of students from J&C has continued to increase and hope that this bodes well for the ongoing development of our long-term relationship."

Industry issues - agents speak out

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

Q Does travelling keep you out of the office too much?



**Kay Rafool,
Language Link, USA**

"No, it's always good for business, and the secret is having very competent help to cover things while I'm away. The average is probably six trips a year. I think that a combination of myself and other staff travelling overseas is best. Staff need to know the programmes first-hand, also, and I need to visit to reconnect long-standing relationships, particularly since I'm fluent in the language where our partner schools are located. Having partners visit us in our office is a very infrequent occurrence for us (five per cent or less), but always appreciated."



**Tom Kane, UKEO,
Korea/Japan/China**

"Travelling is an essential part of my work, both domestic and international. As a company we have offices in Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai and travelling between offices is very much

a necessity. It is not a bad thing to be out of the office, as it does not impede business, as long as you have a strong team back at base. Indeed getting out of the office is very much a plus as it is important to keep a good grasp of market developments and issues which can often only be realised by making visits. The education industry is all about people so meeting with those in your industry to exchange ideas, develop relationships and to build a supportive network is de rigueur. Formal contracts are not always adhered to in this part of the world but strong personal relationships make all the difference."



**Veronika
Rastvortseva,
Coliseum, Ukraine**

"Travelling doesn't keep me out of the office too much. I travel overseas several times a year to attend interesting exhibitions and international workshops. After these events I take the opportunity to visit some schools but usually

I prefer to send my staff. Professional agents must have complete knowledge about school location, classes, school facilities, etc. And at the same time the director or general manager should conduct the most important face-to-face business overseas, as they are able to make a decision on the spot. We count the optimum number of business trips overseas as three to four times a year."



**Steve Kao, Nietzsche
Int'l Education
Consulting Institute,
Taiwan**

"Travelling for business is a necessity nowadays, but how to choose the important [events] is a crucial issue. Personally I have found myself travelling too much over the years, and in fact this has caused negative effects to my business. I am changing and adjusting my travel arrangements to save my energy and to cut down on the travelling cost. I noticed attending workshops overseas

did not bring our agency too many benefits, they provided opportunities to know more colleges and schools, though. However, practically we need to focus on marketing and recruiting students, rather than signing more agreements with education providers. If our agency needs more education providers to work with in the future, I believe we can do this by necessary visits to certain targeted institutions."



**Jimmy Kamajaya,
Global One
Interactive,
Indonesia**

"Not really, I always enjoy travelling and meet a lot of new people and see new environments. However, trips should be planned and there should not be too many trips each year. I travel overseas between three and four times a year. When business is busy, I prefer to be in the office. However, when it slows down, it's time for me to travel, either locally or overseas."

Q&A

Changes to the working holiday visa programme and an agent training programme are two areas that English Australia has been liaising with the government on. SUE BLUNDELL, Executive Director, answers our questions.



Fact box

Full name:

English Australia

Year established: early 1980s

Number of members: 101

Type of members:

Public and private colleges teaching English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (Elicos).

Association's main role:

To assist members to deliver high quality programmes, to promote high ethical standards, and to promote, strengthen and represent the interests of the members.

Membership criteria:

Full Neas accreditation, public liability insurance, site visits and reports from three referees, agreement to abide by EA's constitution and by-laws.

Government recognition: Yes

Code of practice: Yes

Complaints procedure: Yes

Agent workshops/fam trips: Yes

Contact details:

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How has EA developed in the last two years?

We have developed new comprehensive best practice guidelines in the area of pastoral care for students, particularly those under 18. We believe this will give parents and agents greater confidence when choosing an EA member college. EA also strongly supports improved teaching skills in our colleges and introduced new subsidies for teacher professional development activities. There were also achievements vis-a-vis government relations. Attempts by the Australian Tax Office to apply GST to fees for non-student visa holders (50 per cent of the sector) were prevented.

Are the recommended changes to the Esos Act likely to come into effect and what will this mean for the ELT industry?

These changes were quite complex – some have been accepted whilst with others the intent has been accepted, however there is agreement that there may be a need for a different approach to be considered. The main changes that will be focused on in the next six months will be re-writing the National Code into objective standards so that expectations of providers are clearly defined for both students and government auditors. There is a commitment to focusing on improved outcomes for students yet not adding a further cost burden on providers.

What does EA hope to achieve in 2006?

We propose to develop more best practice guidelines for EA colleges in priority areas. We also aim to continue our good relations with government bodies.

Are there any other government initiatives planned?

The government is currently consulting on proposals to make changes to the Working Holiday Visa (WHV) programme. One of these proposals is to allow WHV holders to study for up to four months instead of the current three. EA has also been working closely with the government on the development of an agent training programme (see page 49).

On the move

In Australia, Ruth Rosen, Former Director of Monash International's Melbourne Access Programmes, has been appointed International Education Policy & Marketing Officer with the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (Acpet). Ms Rosen is based in the Melbourne office but will be actively visiting members around the country, liaising with government and providing advice and information on the international education market.



David Pottinger joins Bell International as Chief Executive, taking over from Richard Rossner on 1 January. Mr Pottinger moves from NCC Education Ltd., where he is Managing Director of a global higher education awarding body operating through 350 tertiary education colleges in 45 countries. Richard Rossner retires from Bell after 22 years of service, including more than seven as Chief Executive. He will be taking up a part-time position as Chief Executive of Eequals, the European Association for Quality Language Services.



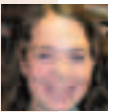
The Cowichan Valley International Programme, School District 79, on Vancouver Island, Canada, is pleased to announce that Clemens Rettich has assumed the position of Director. Mr Rettich is looking forward to serving international students and he will continue the 20 years of excellent school and homestay programmes in the area.



LAL Group, based in Germany, has made two additions to its international marketing team. Barbara Walder (above), formerly Koenig, is based in Hong Kong as Marketing and Sales Manager for Asia. She will travel extensively throughout the Far East developing marketing opportunities for the LAL group as well as visiting existing and recruiting new business partners. Jenny Schwarz (below) has taken over the position of Marketing Manager in the Munich head office, taking care of website content management, promotional material and agent relations.



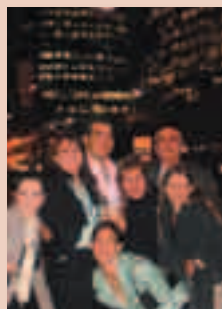
Clare Montgomery has been appointed Marketing Manager of the International Centre at the University of Arts in London, UK. Ms Montgomery will be responsible for promoting and developing language programmes at the university, and will be involved in integrating the existing language centre's marketing operations with the newly created international centre.



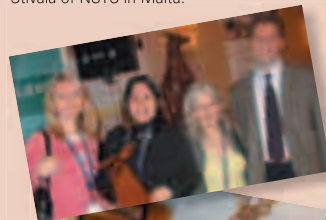
Grapevine

At WYSTC in Toronto, some exhibitors were determined to make sure that they stood out from the crowd. As well as the Hans Brinker Hotel in Amsterdam giving away life-size posters of their cleaning woman, Canadian International Student Services used leather chairs and stag's head decoration and

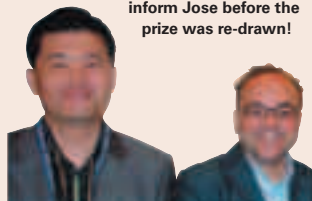
Tourism Australia had inflatable kangaroos (below). And (right), pictured in front of a typical backdrop of Toronto skyscrapers, a Latin American contingent of the Eurocentres-hosted party, with a Maltese twist! From left to right: Santuza Bicalho, STB Brazil; Lucia Torres, Cosmo Educacion, Mexico; Bruno Mellone and directly below, his sister, Lucia Mellone, also Cosmo; Christina Vareschi and Cornelia Sierich of IVI in Venezuela; and above, Francis Stivala of NSTS in Malta.



This year's Fedele Workshop in Valladolid, Spain, impressed agents with the fine local cuisine on offer, but one agent got a bit over-excited. Here, Kanehisa Watanabe of Ryugaku Times in Japan has a strong reaction to a plate of cheese, watched over by Martine Sartoretti of ESL Sejours Linguistiques in Switzerland.



Jose Flores from Kaplan in the USA was the lucky winner of a free table at the Alpha USA workshop in Miami. He is pictured here (right) with Charles Yu from World Overseas Education Center in Korea, who witnessed the winning moment and rushed to inform Jose before the prize was re-drawn!



If you have any lighthearted news, photos, or stories of industry interest, please contact amy@hothousemedia.com and ask to appear in the Grapevine section!

Next issue - February 2006: **Special Report** examines interest-led learning • **Market Report** charts business trends in Germany • **Direction** looks at the worldwide visa situation • **Agency Survey** canvasses UK agencies • **City Focus** visits Madrid in Spain • **Spotlight** profiles high school year programmes in Canada