

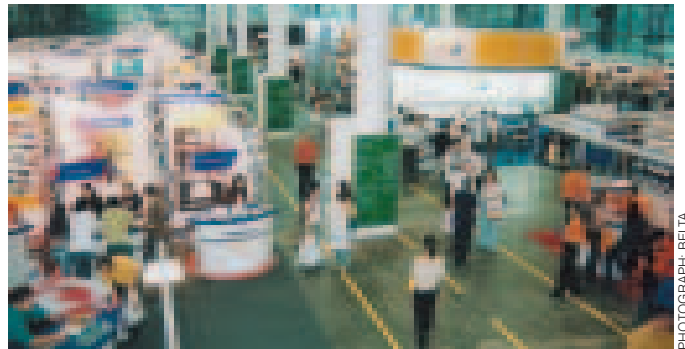
ExpoBelta branches out

Next issue

In our July issue, **Special Report** examines agency associations and their role in the marketplace, while **Market Report** finds out about market trends in the USA last year. **Direction** looks at the issues surrounding accommodation for language students and **Feedback** finds out what students studying in the UK think about their study abroad experience. **City Focus** visits Salamanca in Spain while **Destination** finds out what attractions Germany has to offer.

A Maori dance group from New Zealand, tango dancers from Argentina and a DJ, fashion workshop and theatre make-up demonstrations from the UK were all on the agenda during the recent ExpoBelta student fairs organised by the Brazilian agency association, Belta. The expos, which took place in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Salvador, were aimed at promoting interest in study abroad among those who attended, and according to Bianca Antunes at Belta, this goal was certainly achieved.

"With a total of 12,300 visitors, the target audience was reached," she said. "Those who visited the fair were really interested in travelling." This year, Belta decided to offer more than just the usual stands representing different educational opportunities for students around the world. "Thanks to our partnership with international organisations, the



PHOTOGRAPH: BELTA

ExpoBelta attracted high quality visitors, according to reports

fair introduced cultural performances," explained Antunes.

Eighty-four exhibitors attended ExpoBelta this year and schools were present from countries as wide-ranging as Peru, Cuba, Canada, Ireland, Australia, South Africa, Malta, Germany, the UK, the USA and Costa Rica. Paul Keefe, President of Centre Linguista in Canada, was present

at the events. "They were well organised, with good traffic," he commented. "We were busy all the time." Keefe observed that the student fairs were "similar to most educational fairs", although he said the quality of visitors seemed better than average.

Partner organisations of the event included New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, the British

Industry issues - agents speak out

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

Q What happens when a student has to cut short their language travel trip and return home before their course has finished?



"Each school has its own refund policy in case a student has to shorten their programme. We work with the school in adjusting our commission amount related to the actual amount of time the student studied. The number of students who cut short their programmes and return home is less than one per cent. Before a student signs a contract with our agency, we fully explain our refund policy and encourage him to register only for six months. If the student is satisfied with the school and programme, he can renew directly at the site. Through this approach, we eliminate many problems. Furthermore, the schools we work with are very reputable and we have strong relationships with them so we are able to amicably resolve any problems that the student might have."
Mansuk Bae, KAMC, Korea

"As far as we are concerned, the percentage of students returning halfway [through their course] is minimal. We will normally try to talk to students before they make their final decision to go back to their home country. As for the commission payment, we will normally be paid when the student has paid the tuition fees, and so far we have not experienced any problems in [schools] asking us to return the commission. In some agreements signed with the institutions, this point is included in the contract. After spending hours counselling and doing all the enrolment [work], I strongly feel that we should be paid the commission even if the students come back half-way through."
Jackie Tan, Dyna-Ed Services, Malaysia

"Usually we try to learn the reason the student wants to return home and then we contact the school to find out



if, in spite of their regulations of no refund, they are willing to return part of the fees. Depending on the length of the programme and the reason the student needs to return, schools might refund part or, in some cases, all of the fees. Sometimes schools do want part of the [commission] payment back – especially if payment was made on a net basis and they refund the student directly. This is not very common as most schools would ask the agency to give the money back to the student. Thankfully we do not have [many] students giving up their programme, this is very rare – less than one per year and usually for very extraordinary reasons. I believe that best practice is to have a standard [agreement] for all students but also to be open to assess different cases."
Dinah Carvahlo, Kangaroo Tours, Brazil



"According to schools' refund policies, basically, the students won't get their tuition [fee] back. They can talk to schools about what their options are, such as returning to the school or giving up studying their course. They may contact the insurance company if this situation is covered by insurance policies. If we have already received commission, we will return the money to the schools. In New Zealand, schools don't have to refund tuition to students after one week from the starting day of the course. We follow the schools' requirements. A student returning home happens rarely – between one and three per cent of students. We always respect schools' decisions. The best practice is to be continually aware of any problems that arise."
Ken-ichi Inaba, K-Max Japan, Japan

Council, Turespaña, the Argentina Tourism Department, CEC Canada and the US Department of Commerce. Isobel Oliveira at the British Council said, "The [cultural] attractions were the fairs' great differential, increasing incredibly the number and quality of visitors."

Plans for next year are already underway, with more cultural offerings promised, and the USA keen to participate, according to Belta. Ruben Eduardo Ali of the Argentina Tourism Department said he was also planning to return to ExpoBelta next year. "The organisation was excellent and it was a unique opportunity for us to meet Brazilian operators and students," he said.

A closing party ended the ExpoBelta series of shows, with an outdoor stage at Pelourinho hosting Brazilian group Didá along with Maori group Waihirere and DJ Pogo. □

Baselt hosts final fam trip

THE SERIES of inbound fam trips hosted by the British Association of State English Language Teaching (Baselt) has come to an end – in part because Baselt has merged with Arels to form English UK. The final trip was organised for a group of Korean agents earlier this year.

Julie Hutchinson, Marketing and Communications Manager at Baselt, said, "The inward missions have been very popular over the past two years with members and agents and we hope to continue them in the new association, offering agents the opportunity to view a wider spectrum of diversity [in the UK market], integrating both private language schools and state sector English language teaching institutes."

The latest trip took a group of six Korean agents on a tour of educational institutions in central



Korean agents enjoy the snow

England and Wales. "For this particular fam trip, it was the agents themselves who requested to visit member institutes [in this region]," said Hutchinson. The week-long tour consisted of three showcases at City College Coventry, the University of Birmingham and the University of Aberystwyth in Wales. Two workshops for the agents were also held at Warwickshire College and Gloscat in Cheltenham, allowing them to meet a total of 17 individual education institutions. □

On the move



Anglo-Continental Educational Group in Bournemouth, UK, has

appointed Lu Chang Nguyen-Duc as Marketing Assistant. Lu Chang, who speaks Mandarin and Cantonese, looks forward to working closely with Anglo-Continental's Far Eastern representatives.



Regent Language Training in the UK has appointed John Harrison to the position of

Regional Sales Manager. A business communication graduate, Mr Harrison will be responsible for the Middle East, Eastern Europe and former Soviet Republic markets. Previously, he was Corporate Relations Manager for the Commonwealth Business Council. He brings with him extensive experience of international affairs, government relations and knowledge of doing business in emerging markets.



Carol Johnson is the new Sales and Marketing Coordinator for English Language and

International Programs at the University of California Extension, Santa Cruz, in the USA. She said, "Coming from the high-tech world of Silicon Valley, I am delighted to be working in an academic environment, meeting and working with agents from all corners of the world."



Gregory Bondar is the new International Sales and Marketing Manager for

Wollongong University College (WUC), which is the private college of the University of Wollongong, NSW, Australia. Mr Bondar has a solid background in vocational & educational training and higher education. With a commitment to quality, he aims to see WUC as a leader in the provision of English language programmes and pathway programmes for international and domestic students.



Rachael Dunham is the new Marketing Manager at Avalon School of English based in

central London, UK. Ms Dunham has many years of marketing experience and will use this to promote Avalon's unique teaching method and courses in the professional and international student marketplace.

Agency of the month



Silc, France

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

This month, British Study Centres in the UK nominates Silc in France.



Andrew Roper, Marketing Director of English Language Teaching for the group, explains his decision:

"I would like to nominate Silc France as my favourite agency. I have been working with Silc for around six years now, first with Shane English Schools and now with British Study Centres.

Aside from liking the Silc staff on a personal level and admiring their professionalism, what has been most rewarding has been working on a number of joint projects together. For example, Silc recently took the initiative to publish a special brochure focusing on the degree and diploma courses offered at our three business schools in the UK. We have also worked together on a number of special group packages such as teacher groups and works committees, in each case tailor-making the programmes for the groups' needs.

In this way my relationship with Silc has always felt like a 'partnership' in which we work together towards a common goal." □

New agency association for Pakistan

Pakistan is the latest country to have its own national agency association, in the form of the Pakistan Education Abroad Consultants Organisation (Peaco). Founded last year in March, the association now has 29 members, according to Mumtaz Malik, President of the association.

He explained that the association is a platform for ethical agencies. "Some of the consultants are very good and have fair dealings with students," he said. But he warned, "There are many unethical and non-professionals working in our market."

Peaco helps its members in disputes with schools or students and it has its own legal advisory panel, said Malik. □

Clarification – Idiom in France

In our Course Guide to French programmes offering cultural activities, printed in our April 2004 issue (page 27), one school erroneously supplied incorrect information about minimum age requirements. Idiom International Language Centre in Nice would like to point out that the minimum age of students accepted is in fact 18 years old.