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# Alphe Workshops go well in Asia

A good agent turnout at the Alphe Japan and Alphe Korea workshops earlier this year cemented the reputation of the workshops organised by Hothouse Media in the region. Agency association, Kosa, supported the organisers at the event in Seoul. Agnes Kim, Kosa President, said, "It was a very busy this year with [higher] agent participation. This was due to the efforts made by the Kosa administration office. In addition, through the Kosa office, the invitation to non-Kosa agents had been followed up."

Eighty-seven agents attended Alphe Korea this year, representing a range of companies and countries. Eduardo Rosa from Education Abroad agency in Brazil commented, "Besides the great variety of educators and agents, the Alphe team made all of us feel so comfortable, I myself met new partners and also friends." Paul Keefe

from Centre Linguista in Canada, added, "There were good quality agents in a great atmosphere. It was not too big, well organised [and with] great facilities."

In Japan, agency association Jaos also supported the event, which welcomed 68 agents during the two days of business. Glenn Kitagawa from DenHouse in Japan said the atmosphere was very good. "Meeting new schools, such as vocational schools, has been very productive," he said. Finnish agent, Pia Flores from STS Kielmatkat, said she was pleased with her participation. "It turned out to be a very productive workshop for me. The 30-minute meetings and the size of it make the difference and allow you to have more efficient contacts." Mario Negretti from Eurocentres added, "I like to meet agents who have their references checked!" ●

## Ialc doing more for agents

THE INTERNATIONAL Association of Language Centres (Ialc) has come up with two new agent initiatives this year to ensure that agencies are fully supported in their role as Ialc customers, working with member schools.

Firstly, it is surveying as many education agencies as possible to canvass opinions about Ialc itself as well as market trends. "The results of the survey will help us to identify where to recruit new member schools and how we can improve our service to our

partner agencies," said David Diplock, Ialc President.

Diplock explained that while previous surveys have been undertaken to finetune Ialc policies or marketing activities, no prior survey had also attempted to chart business trends in the future. "The 2006 survey is the association's most ambitious attempt yet to find out what the language travel market wants in the 21st century," he said. The survey is online at [www.ialc.org](http://www.ialc.org).

A forum for agents to leave messages about schools has also been added to Ialc's website, enabling genuine agencies to leave comments about a school in a public domain, which can also be read by students. Walter Denz, Ialc Vice President of Promotions, said, "We want to know from agents how well we are doing, what we do well and what we could do better." ●

## English in the North hosts fam trip

THE ENGLISH in the North consortium, representing language schools, colleges and universities in the north of England, organised a seven-day fam trip around the region in April this year to show 11 agents from a range of countries the education opportunities there.

Companies were welcomed from Georgia, Azerbaijan, Latvia, Estonia, Japan, Russia and Korea. Richard Day from English in the North said that all agents were very impressed

with what the region had to offer, "particularly the geographic location and its accessibility" and they were also pleased with the high quality and variety of programmes on offer.

Agents visited institutions in Manchester, Chester, Liverpool, Halifax, Bradford, Sheffield, Leeds, York, Scarborough, Newcastle and Harrogate. Ursula Roosmaa from the British Council in Estonia commented, "We managed to see so much and the choice of institutions was really great." ●



Agents were impressed with the range of programmes available in the north of England

## Agency of the month



This month, **Languages Out There** in the UK nominates **GST** in the Czech Republic.

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.



**Jason West, Founder of the school, explains this decision:**

"I would like to nominate GTS International as an Agency of the month. They were the first agency to bring a group of sales staff from their 16 stores over to London, UK, to actually undertake a full three-hour Out There class.

We taught the group on a sunny Saturday morning, had them speaking English to Christmas shoppers and using the new language in and around Covent Garden and then finished the session in a local pub. They loved it and each member of the group went back to their respective sales office and told their colleagues, it was plain sailing from there...

They really understand our product and sell it incredibly well. At Languages Out There, we feel that the best way to learn a language is by talking to real people in the real world, which is the essence of what we do. GST International has been a loyal advocate of our teaching approach."

## Industry issues - agents speak out

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

### Q. Is there a type/age range of client that is the most difficult to place?



**Burcin Turkkán,**  
**USEH-International**  
**Training &**  
**Education Services,**  
**Inc, International**

"The clients who are recently graduated with little or no job experience; who are not realistic about their current qualifications and abilities; who do not have extensive industrial/on-the-job training experiences; who have higher expectations than they could achieve. The reasons for these types of people building these unrealistic expectations are that sometimes the educational institute they graduate from gives students unrealistically high targets for just after their graduation. Sometimes, parents also have too high expectations, causing social pressure on the applicant and naturally they demand more."



**Kamil Rechowicz-Szawica,**  
**TEE,**  
**Poland**

"The nature of

services TEE offers is so complex that it is inevitable to face problems when it comes to matching client demands with reality. Each problem, however, we treat as a challenge and we are happy to move forward on this sometimes very bumpy road. In the internship area, there are two typical groups of problematic customers. The first type requests a sector in which it is very hard to be placed (eg very narrow specialisations such as in medicine, engineering, law). The second is a 'never-working child with rich parents and boosted self-esteem' – we have learnt the lesson that they can never be satisfied with the placement as what they want is beyond their abilities and beyond what the hosting organisation offers. For the language school business, we have recognised two distinctive groups: Mature students are looking to choose the best and the cheapest option possible, which is probably caused by limited financial resources and their ability to

analyse options. One thing [that is an] advantage here for us is that we can improve our offers and services. The second group is formed by those where there are many decision-makers, for example parent and child. The mother is looking to book a course which suits her and the teenager wants something completely different. In that case it's really hard to find a school that would satisfy two extreme poles. In my last words however I would like to say that we welcome all customers."



**Renán E. Herrera,**  
**Corporate Sales**  
**Director, EEM,**  
**Mexico**

"For the academic year programme which is our main programme, the hardest and most difficult placements are males over 18. It seems the families do not want to deal with an older kid. In some countries they are considered adults. So their actions and behaviour sometimes scare

the host families. Most of our clients are well off financially, they'll ask for the best service and will demand an excellent experience just because they are paying for it. We try to explain to them the real expectations for every programme, but sometimes it's not easy. The Mexican client will ask and search for the 3B's: Bueno (good), Bonito (pretty) and Barato (cheap). Young kids aged from 14-to-19 are the ones that will come alone to the office and without a clear picture of what they want. They ask about any programme without knowing their parents' opinion, consent and sometimes without a budget constraint. Normally they will ask for so many things that you can identify if they will book a programme or not. We try to ask as many possible questions in order to identify the best programme. We try to get him/her to come back another time along with a parent who will make the decision."



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# Q&A

The federation of Spanish school associations, Fedele, has been working on behalf of its members to improve visa processes. **ASTRID VERLOT**, Executive Secretary of the association, answers our questions.



## Fact box

### Full name:

Federación Española de Asociaciones de Escuelas de Español para Extranjeros (Fedele)

**Year established:** 1999

**Number of members:**

Seven associations with a total of 69 schools

**Type of members:**

private schools specialised in teaching Spanish for foreigners

**Association's main role:**

To represent the Spanish teaching sector to the Spanish government; defend the commercial and professional interests of member schools

**Membership criteria:**

Quality standard (Ceele or Instituto Cervantes)

**Government recognition:** yes

**Code of practice:** yes

**Complaints procedure:**

Fedele Quality Charter and Code of Guarantees for Fedele students

**Agent workshops/fam trips:** yes

**Contact details:**

Fedele, C.N 340, Km 189, 6 - 29600 Marbella (Málaga), Spain  
Tel: +[34] 952831153  
Fax: +[34] 952831153  
Email: info@fedelespain.com  
Web: www.fedele.org

### One of your goals last year was to help improve the immigration process for Spanish language schools. Has Fedele made much headway with this?

Last year, the Fedele executive board had a meeting with two members of the Spanish parliament to talk about the main visa problems experienced by our schools. As a result of this meeting, the two parliament members developed a "proyecto no de ley" (which means a plan or proposal that includes recommendations or norms not yet to be turned into a law) which was presented recently officially to the Spanish parliament. Besides this, during our last General Assembly, we had the honour to receive the Director of the Visa Department of the Spanish Office of Consular Affairs as one of our guests so he could give direct information about visa procedures and receive a direct impression of the main problems experienced by our schools.

### What else has Fedele been up to since we last spoke to you?

We have kept on working more closely with Turespaña, the Spanish Tourist Board, and with the Cervantes Institute to promote and support our sector after having signed our common collaboration agreement in 2004. Every year a new action plan is being set up which includes, among other measures, a specific international advertising campaign; a catalogue edited in different languages that will represent all the courses offered by schools and different destinations; research work about the progress of the market overall, new business areas, which activities and products are being demanded by the students and their degree of satisfaction; assistance for international language fairs and several fam trips.

### Is Fedele attending any international events this year?

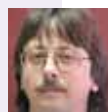
Fedele is working on a marketing plan in collaboration with Turespaña and the Cervantes Institute, which includes among other actions, joint participation in international events.

## On the move

Francisco Scarpinelli (top) is now back in Buenos Aires, Argentina, running the re-opened office there of Smart Mendy agency, a business started by his grandmother. Previously he was working for Smart Mendy in Spain and the UK, while the Argentinean office dealt only with closed group bookings. He is joined in the Buenos Aires office by Maximiliano Acuña (below), who is specialising in placements to the university sector. Mr Acuña has worked in Argentinean universities for the last 10 years.



Yves Cloutier, who was previously director of language programmes for Canadian agency, Voyages Tour Étudiant, and then worked for QuébecTrekking.com and as coordinator of a solidarity tourism organisation, is back in the study abroad world, working as an independent educational consultant. "My goal is to help schools to get an agent-friendly approach and agents to find what they're looking for," he said.



Geos UK sees Paul Clarke (top) transferring from the Geos English Academy Brighton & Hove, to Geos LTC in Eastbourne. Anthony Drury (below) is moving from Guildford College of Further and Higher Education to become the new Principal of the Brighton school. The changes also see Wendy Teraoka relinquishing her direct responsibilities for Geos LTC to focus on the development of Geos Europe.



Tony Evans has joined Jason West on the board of Languages Out There in London, UK. Director of LanguagesForLife.com and Langues Sans Frontières, with more than 15 years of sales and marketing experience and previous positions at Sprachcaffe and IP, Mr Evans' input into the continuing growth of Languages Out There will be invaluable.



Lisa Fitzgerald is the new English Programme Director at Kaplan English Programs in London, UK. She is responsible for the overall management of the programme and all English product offerings. "We are preparing for our first British Council inspection in June and the building is undergoing a full refurbishment," she related.



## Grapevine

A kindly Spanish agent with Irish experience, Jaime Rodriguez of Grupo Mundo en Red, took our Jessica of the Alphe Workshops under his wing and showed her the delights of fish and chips in Kinsale, Ireland, just after the MEI-Relsa Workshop in Cork. What better way to repay his generosity than to feature him in *Language Travel Magazine*?



### Snapped at GWEA's Travel Mart (left)



is Rutger Bruin and Maarten De Jong from Wereldstage in the Netherlands with Nicola Lutz from *Language Travel Magazine*. Above: Kathryn Powell, Cherish Childcare, UK (left); Clare Sudwarts, Crest Schools of English, UK.

The Alphe Workshops in Korea and Japan in March provided the usual blend of friendly networking and hard work. Pictured here during the socialising opportunities, on the left, Jessica Booker of The Language Repair Shop in Vancouver, Canada (right) with a Korean agent, making business look easy.

And right, Kurt Swain from Learning and Achievement Foundation/Oxford School in the USA, with Agent,

Kaneisha Watanabe (right) from Ryugaku Times Tokyo, Japan.



### Correction: French in Normandy, Rouen

In the April issue of *Language Travel Magazine*, our Special Report 'Business Edge' erroneously quoted Eleri Maitland from Inlingua Rouen. In fact, the correct name of the school is French in Normandy. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

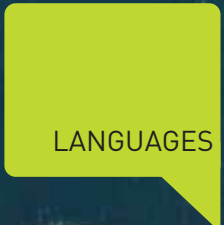
**Next issue - July 2006: Special Report** looks at academic preparation programmes • **Market Report** charts trends in NZ • **Direction** looks at the inbound market in Brazil • **Agency Survey** canvasses China • **City Focus** visits Moscow • **Spotlight** profiles language and activity programmes in Malta • **Destination** tours the UK



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