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UK's new recruitment drive

The UK has announced that it is to follow up the original Prime Ministers Initiative (PMI) with a second five-year plan to recruit more international students into the UK. Prime Minister, Tony Blair, has set a target to attract 100,000 additional overseas students to the UK over the next five years and at the same time, he launched a second initiative to build education and research links between the UK and India.

While the PMI, part two, is focused on building enrolments in the further and higher education sectors, Tony Millns, Chief Executive of English UK, revealed that the English language teaching industry, for its part, intends to increase the number of English language students in the country by 20 per cent. English UK members are pledging to provide over 200 annual scholarships to assist with international promotion within the PMI.

"If UK education is to achieve [minister] Gordon Brown's forecast that it could be worth UK£20 billion (US\$35.7 million) a year by 2020 in foreign earnings, it will need concerted and effective promotion with significant resources," said Millns. "Phase Two of the PMI goes some way to providing this, and English UK is representing the accredited English language sector in formulating the PMI strategy."

Prime Minister, Tony Blair, hosted a reception for international students to announce the UK's new goals



The strategy to drive up enrolments and the UK-India

Education Research Initiative (UKIERI) will be backed by UK£27 million (US\$48.2 million) in investment from the government, the British Council, the education sector and businesses – Blair named businesses BP, BAE Systems, GlaxoSmithKline and Shell as "corporate champions" of the UKIERI.

"These [UK-India] links highlight the growing internationalisation of education at all levels," he said. "Increasingly, education is crossing national boundaries as it prepares our young people for careers in the global economy. I am passionate about raising standards in education in our country, but that means we must be willing to learn from the best in the world."

He continued, "[The initiative] is not just about getting students to choose UK universities and colleges. It's about building sustainable partnerships between our universities and colleges and those of other countries."

The British Council, which announced it will contribute "financially and organisationally" to the initiative, said that it will build on its Education UK brand, which it has spent 18 months developing, to increase enrolments. A spokesperson said, "This provides us with a solid and consistent communications platform to support the implementation of new marketing campaigns – that will for example focus on communicating positive changes to UK visa policy and reasserting the quality of UK qualifications to employers in target markets overseas." Greater attention will also be paid to supporting agents through the Council's dedicated agent training support.

Of the UK£27 million earmarked to fund the initiative, UK£4 million (US\$7.1 million) will be used for UK/China activities, scholarships and other partnerships, UK£3 million (US\$5.4 million) for UK/Africa partnerships and UK£2 million (US\$3.6 million) for UK/Russia partnerships.

English New Zealand in Saudi Arabia

NINETEEN SCHOOLS representing English New Zealand went to Saudi Arabia earlier this year to meet with educational agents and government officials in a mission that was chaperoned by New Zealand's Ambassador, Jim Howell.

"The English NZ representatives were pleased with the new contacts made," reported Angela Oliver, Chairperson of the association. The schools met 26 Saudi agencies at two events, one in Riyadh at the New Zealand Embassy and one in Jeddah at a hotel.

Cleve Brown of Worldwide School, the delegation leader, said, "This is the largest educational mission to ever visit Saudi

Arabia from New Zealand. We have a growing reputation with Arab students for the quality of our tuition and for our friendly hospitality." Howell added that the no-visa policy in Saudi Arabia for short-term students was also seen as favourable. Interest in another visit next year has already been expressed by association members.

Canadian report urges government action

CANADIAN GROUP, the Asia Pacific Foundation, has warned that Canada faces losing out on significant international student revenue in the face of coordinated national marketing campaigns from other competitor countries.

A report by foundation analyst, Carin Holroyd, called 'Canada missing out in the booming China education mar-

ket', observed that competition is coming from traditional competitors and also Singapore and Malaysia. Malaysia has recently opened four recruiting offices, one of which is in Beijing.

"The consensus among international educators is that one reason Canada is not as competitive... as it might be is because it lacks national leadership at the political level," noted Holroyd, who was looking specifically into the decline in Chinese student numbers since 2002. She noted that Australia has committed AUS\$114 million (US\$84 million) between 2004 and 2009 to market post-secondary institutions internationally and New Zealand has pledged NZ\$70 million (US\$44 million) over the same period, "and this is for a country with four million people and only eight universities".

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|----------|-----------|----------------------|
| Calendar | JUNE - | M T W T F S S |
| | AUGUST | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| | SEPTEMBER | 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 |
| | OCTOBER | 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 |
| | NOVEMBER | 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 |
| | | 29 30 31 |

Italian in Italy Workshop
Date: June 8-11
Venue: Rome, Italy
Email: p.foti@italianinitaly.it
Web: www.italianinitaly.it

The Alphe UK Workshop
Date: August 26-28
Venue: London, UK
Email: jane@hothousemedia.com
Web: www.hothousemedia.com

The LTM Star Awards
Date: August 27
Venue: London, UK
Email: mail@hothousemedia.com
Web: www.hothousemedia.com

International Languages & Education UK Fair
Date: August 29-31
Venue: Brighton, UK
Email: fair@englishuk.com
Web: www.englishuk.com

Annual Conference of the EAIE
Date: September 13-16
Venue: Basel, Switzerland
Email: eaie@eaie.nl
Web: www.eaie.nl

Fedele Annual Meeting
Date: September 28 - Oct 1
Venue: Granada, Spain
Email: info@fedelespain.com
Web: www.fedelespain.com

International Education Fairs of Turkey
Date: October 8-15
Venue: Ankara, Izmir, Bursa, Istanbul - Turkey
Email: info@ieft.net
Web: www.ieft.net

WYSTC 2006
Date: October 9-14
Venue: Melbourne, Australia
Email: ks@wystc.org
Web: www.wystc.org

Qisan in talks with UK Home Office

THE QUALITY INTERNATIONAL Study Abroad Network (Qisan), which was set up in 2003, has revealed that it is aiming to become recognised by the UK Home Office as an accrediting body for private, non-language, teaching institutions in the UK. It is also collaborating with QS, a private company that offers graduate and careers events for students. QS plans to use the agent membership of Qisan to expand its agent workshops – Qisan was first launched as a network primarily for agencies that were unable to join national agent associations because they were not formed already in their countries, such as in India.

Details of the network's quality inspection process for education institutions have not been made available to *Language Travel Magazine*. Whilst it is unclear whether any teaching standards are checked, Qisan issues a Certificate of Accreditation stating that member centres have been "fully evaluated and recognised as a high quality professional and ethical institution".

"Our [educator] accreditation is mainly concerned with the marketing activities of these institutions," said Maurice Dimmock, Founder of Qisan. "We also check that they meet the minimum requirements of the Home Office. They get a lighter touch if they are accredited [by an existing UK accreditation body]."

Dimmock said that if Qisan failed to become recognised by the UK Home Office, it would simply offer a membership scheme for schools and assist with marketing activities. "This will start to come under the QS banner," he said.

There has been some concern in the industry about a possible new accreditation system for UK institutions. At English UK, Chief Executive, Tony Millns, said, "It is not clear what criteria and standards are used by Qisan, whether there is any form of independent inspection, who is in effective control, what its legal status is, and who stands to make a profit from it."

At the British Accreditation Council (BAC), Chief Executive Stephen Vickers said, "It is not our policy to comment on nascent or would-be accrediting institutions, save to state that we consider a non-profit structure to be an appropriate model and that inspection is robust and carried out by skilled and qualified inspectors."



No current information was supplied by Qisan about the inspection process for agencies, or the inspection team. Dimmock – an ex-employee of University of Northumbria – said this was due to the impending acquisition of Qisan by QS.

Dimmock told *Language Travel Magazine* that Qisan "now has over 750 agencies accredited". With an initial membership of around 150 member agencies – this means a growth rate of around 200 agencies per year. However, in a recent newsletter from QS, it was claimed that Qisan had 1,300 member agencies.

Masaru Yamada, President of global agency federation, Felca, commented, "Qisan has no mandate to accredit any institutions, whether agents or schools, in our industry. We have no reason to believe that any of its current agent members have undergone sufficient independent checks and inspections for Qisan to be using the word accreditation." He added that if Qisan agency members happen to be a member of one of Felca's national association members, for example, their quality is verified by Felca member associations, not by Qisan.

QS declined to comment on its activities regarding Qisan. ●

Currency

| | | 1xUS\$ =currency* |
|---------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Argentinean | Pesos | 3.067 |
| Australian | Dollar | 1.344 |
| Brazilian | Real | 2.110 |
| British | Pound | 0.560 |
| Bulgarian | Leva | 1.584 |
| Canadian | Dollar | 1.139 |
| Chilean | Pesos | 518.25 |
| Chinese (PR) | Yuan RMB | 8.011 |
| Czech | Koruny | 23.06 |
| Danish | Kroner | 6.042 |
| Egyptian | Pound | 5.748 |
| EU | Euro | 0.810 |
| Hong Kong | Dollar | 7.755 |
| Hungarian | Forint | 214.15 |
| Icelandic | Kronur | 77.68 |
| Indonesian | Rupiah | 8,936.2 |
| Israeli | New Shekels | 4.541 |
| Japanese | Yen | 117.09 |
| Maltese | Lira | 0.347 |
| Mexican | Peso | 10.924 |
| New Zealand | Dollar | 1.577 |
| Norwegian | Kroner | 6.321 |
| Polish | Zloty | 3.154 |
| Russian | Rubles | 27.463 |
| Singaporean | Dollar | 1.597 |
| Slovakian | Koruny | 32.262 |
| South African | Rand | 5.955 |
| South Korean | Won | 945.76 |
| Swedish | Kronor | 7.546 |
| Swiss | Franc | 1.270 |
| Taiwanese | NT Dollar | 32.402 |
| Thai | Baht | 37.768 |
| Turkish | YTL | 1.331 |
| Venezuelan | Bolivar | 2,144.0 |

*Rates are subject to change and should be used as indications only. 19/04/06.

Chinese death in New Zealand

THE DEATH OF a language student in Auckland, New Zealand, earlier this year should be treated as an "isolated case", said Robert Stevens, Chief Executive of New Zealand.

Nineteen-year-old Wan Biao was found in a suitcase floating in the harbour in Auckland. Three other Chinese nationals have been subsequently charged with his murder and kidnap, or with being an accessory to the murder. One of the men, who had been

his classmate at the Oxford Academy, is reported to have phoned his parents demanding a RMB4 million (US\$0.5 million) ransom. By the time this information reached police in New Zealand, the student was already dead.

The kidnapping of well-off Chinese nationals when abroad has occurred previously but this is the first case to come to light in some time. Jenny Wang, Executive Director of the Chinese New Settlers Trust, said that

only-children from China were particularly at risk when dealing with new-found freedom for the first time, if they got mixed up with the wrong crowd or were unclear as to who they could turn to for help.

Stevens noted, "This tragic case does need to be seen in context. New Zealand is one of the safest destinations globally for international students and we have been the global pace-setter in terms of regulatory protections for students." ●

Scope on the Globe

Date: October 11-14
Venue: Utrecht, Netherlands
Email: s.vdaakster@aromedia.nl
Web: www.scopeontheglobe.com

The Icef Asia Workshop

Date: October 11-16
Venue: Shanghai, China
Email: info@icef.com
Web: www.icef.com

Higher Education Exchange and Agent Workshop

Date: October 16-18
Venue: Istanbul, Turkey
Contact: IEFT as above

The Alphe Russia Workshop

Date: October 27-29
Venue: St Petersburg, Russia
Email: jane@hothousemedia.com
Web: www.hothousemedia.com

The Language Show

Date: November 3-5
Venue: London, UK
Email: jrs@thelanguageshow.co.uk
Web: www.thelanguageshow.co.uk

The Icef Berlin Workshop

Date: November 5-7
Venue: Berlin, Germany
Contact: Icef as above

CIEE Annual Conference

Date: November 8-11
Venue: Seville, Spain
Email: conference@ciee.org
Web: www.ciee.org

Expolingua Praha

Date: November 10-11
Venue: Prague, Czech Republic
Email: prague@expolingua.com
Web: www.expolingua.cz

Expolingua Berlin

Date: November 17-19
Venue: Berlin, Germany
Email: info@expolingua.com
Web: www.icwe.net
www.expolingua.com

The Alphe Asia Workshop

Date: November 19-21
Venue: Bangkok, Thailand
Email: jane@hothousemedia.com
Web: www.hothousemedia.com