

ExpoBelta to visit more cities

Next issue

In our November issue, **Special Report** finds out about the latest activities of schools' associations around the world, while **Market Report** provides an update on business trends in Ireland. **Direction** asks agents about pricing arrangements with schools and **Feedback** finds out what students studying in Germany think about their study abroad experience. **City Focus** visits Vancouver and **Status** provides industry information from the Italian marketplace.

ExpoBelta, the study abroad fairs organised by the Brazilian Educational and Language Travel Association (Belta), is to expand its reach next year, visiting the city of Curitiba as well as São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Salvador. The decision reflects an upturn in the Brazilian marketplace, according to Mariglan Gabarra, Executive Manager at the association.

She said, "Our Board of Directors decided to expand the number of ExpoBelta locations because nowadays the education abroad market is increasing once again. Belta's agents from Curitiba have [noted] that the local market could be reached with the new format of ExpoBelta."

The ExpoBelta fairs introduced a cultural interest element to attract young Brazilians this year by organising performances and shows reflecting pastimes and interests in each country (see *Lan-*



Belta President, Tatiana Mendes

guage Travel Magazine, June 2004, page 10).

Gabarra said that Curitiba has 2,380,000 inhabitants and 27 per cent of them belong to "classes A and B1 – the potential targets for visiting the event and having [the right] conditions to study abroad". Classes are defined by salary level.

There have been other moves at Belta, as a new executive committee was elected earlier this year. The current President is now Tatiana Mendes of Global Exchange, while Wanda Silva of Study n Travel has been elected Finance Manager and Maura Leão of Yazigi Travel has been elected Operations Manager. An ethics committee and auditing committee were also voted in. Gabarra said, "The new Board's objective is to strengthen the association's image."

Aside from ExpoBelta, taking place in March, Belta's plans for the coming year include setting up an Intranet for members to send opinions and suggestions to other members; conducting marketing research; increasing their membership by inviting companies in different regions of Brazil to join; and developing relations with consulates and other relevant international organisations. □

Industry issues - agents speak out

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Q How much involvement do parents have in the study decisions of their children?



Le Thi Yen Binh, ICED, Vietnam

"In our country, parents always play an important role in their children's study decisions. When the student is still small, at primary and secondary school, children totally depend on their parents. Therefore, the parents' role is 100 per cent. When they come to high school, the students become more confident and tend to be more independent. Thus, parents give them more choice and freedom. When children go to university, their decisions are more autonomous. Parents play a 50 per cent role. When they complete university and do a Masters, they are mature enough to make their own decision. However, they still depend on their parents economically. So they play a 70 per cent role and parents, 30 per cent. In our country, students can support themselves only when they complete university studies and go to work."



Kimberly Haber, Adelante LLC, USA

"Since most of the time parents foot the bill, yes they seem to be fairly involved! Most of our candidates are over 18 years old, so they are technically "adults". However, both pre-departure and once in-country, parents do seem to want to stay involved to some degree. Usually a candidate will research the various programmes on their own. The decision on what country to go to and when seem to be theirs alone. Then, when the bill is due, the parents are likely to call. Often, it is rehashing the same information their children have so they are at ease prior to sending off a cheque. Other times there is a sense of "double checking" on research and data that has already been given to them by their child. We have just added a "Parents page" to our website and to our pre-departure orientation packet. This, with the help of the counsel from the United States Embassy's office of relocation,

covers things like initial homesickness the child might have, assurances that they are in safe areas and that our staff are available day or night, and more importantly: a policy on reporting a problem or concern. Although we welcome parental involvement at every turn, we have made it clear that no action will be taken, either prior to the programme or once abroad, unless we hear from the student directly."

Kian Hwa Ie, UCPA - University and College Placement Agency, Indonesia

"If clients are applying for a Bachelor degree, there is much involvement [from parents], unless the student is an outstanding student (and the parent usually leaves the decision to them). For Masters degrees, there is usually no involvement or very little. The younger the student, the more the involvement. The cost of education is very high. No student, even for a Masters, can afford it without parents' help."



Irina Mikhaylovskaya, Educational Centre Vera, Russia

"All parents in today's Russia understand the importance of foreign languages and many of them want their children to spend their holidays abroad or study at school or university abroad. They are very attentive in choosing a programme for their children. If a child is up to 15 years old, the parents decide all details of the education trip. Many of them ask for our advice, but some parents just tell us exactly what they want. Teenagers aged from 16 to 20 have more freedom in choosing a school and course for themselves, and they always accompany the parents to our meeting, though the parents have the final decision. For those over 20, as a rule, they know very well what they need, collect all the information and just take the money from the parents. Students in Russia become self-funded at the age of 25 or older."

Exchange rate in Venezuela rocks BC relations

A VENEZUELAN agency has highlighted a problem that is being created by a dual exchange rate that is operating in the country. Cornelia Sierich, Director of IVI agency in Venezuela, says local agencies have been unable to access the official government exchange rate for foreign currency that the British Council, because of its status, is able to use.

As a result, students enrolling on a language course in the UK via the British Council can pay directly in Bolívares and essentially pay less than they would have to pay to agencies using the unofficial exchange rates available at a less favourable rate.

Sierich told *Language Travel Magazine*, "Since January 2003, a currency control rate was implemented in Venezuela. An official exchange rate was established but

has been unavailable for the majority of the population. Only certain government institutions and other eligible companies can get currency at the official rate."

While local agencies were angry that they had to operate at a competitive disadvantage to the British Council, the Council tried to help agents by offering them the option to send their students to book via the local office. For this, the British Council would take a 40 per cent commission payment to cover costs, while the agency kept 60 per cent of the fee.

Richard Law, Manager of ELT Promotion Services at the Council, said, "It is a very difficult situation in Venezuela but it is not the fault of the British Council." He stressed that the Council was keen to work with local agents to promote study in

the UK and that booking via the Council was an idea that had been adopted after liaising with some agents. "We are having regular meeting with agents and it is possible that we could make some changes to the scheme," said Law.

He pointed out that in its efforts to foster good links with agents, the local Venezuela office had also sent two agents to attend the International Languages & Education UK Fair in Brighton. "We urge agents with concerns to attend one of the meetings that are regularly held with agents in the country," said Law.

Sierich said operating conditions had eased in the last few months, with some students able to access the official currency exchange rate, but she remained concerned about direct selling to students by the British Council. □

On the move



Barcelona-based consultant Richard Young is now working as the Overseas Business

Development Manager for the British Educational Travel Association (Beta) in the UK.



Juergen Gemmeke has joined insurance company Site (Services for International

Travel & Education) in Bonn, Germany, where he assumes the position of Director of Business Development. Since joining the international education industry more than 20 years ago, Dr Gemmeke has worked for Eurocentres, LAL and Did.



Rob Brown has been appointed as Marketing Director at the Australian College of

English (ACE), which has various teaching centres in Australia. Mr Brown has been with ACE for over nine years. He brings to his new role an extensive knowledge of the ACE product, plus many new ideas and initiatives.



Manchester Academy of English in the UK has recently appointed Amy Wells (top) as



Senior Marketing Coordinator responsible for global business development. Ms

Wells brings solid international marketing and communications experience to her new post. Ruth McGowan (below) has joined as Marketing Assistant.



Fiona Pape (top), formerly at the British Council in Naples, is now



Manager of English Language Teaching Quality Services in the UK, managing the English in Britain

Accreditation Scheme. John Shackleton, former Manager of Accreditation Services, moves to Japan as Director of the British Council in Osaka. Richard Law, former Manager of ELT Promotion Services, is now in Taiwan as Director of Education at the British Council in Taipei. Angela Sexton (below), former Communications Manager, takes over from Law. She has worked for the British Council since 2002. Cherry Gough, former Deputy Director of the ELT Group, has moved to Poland to be Deputy Director, British Council Poland.

Agency of the month



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.

This month, the University of Waikato Language Institute in New Zealand nominates Latino NZ Education in Santiago, Chile.



Myra Davis, Senior Marketing Executive at the institute, explains this decision:

"Chile is a relatively new market for the University of Waikato Language Institute. Despite this, we have seen immediate results since we partnered with Latino NZ Education in March 2004. Latino NZ Education is a branch of Latino Australia Education (LAE). In 2003, Rob Woodward – an expatriate New Zealander living in Santiago – approached LAE to set up the branch focused on New Zealand only. In today's competitive marketplace we find companies that are more focused and knowledgeable about NZ [to be] consequently productive agencies for us, and they provide accurate information and sensible expectations for our students.

We like Rob's attitude toward the overseas study market in Chile. He is not only passionate about encouraging students to study in New Zealand, but he is also a zealous advocate of increasing overall awareness of New Zealand as a destination for Chileans."

CEC Network Agent Fair in Montreal

THIS YEAR'S CEC Network Agent Fair, which takes place in a different venue each year, is taking place in Montreal, Canada, this November. A sightseeing trip around the city is being organised after the event, and between 130 and 150 education agents are expected to attend.

The CEC Network organises the only exclusively Canadian workshop for agents to attend. Ella Dreyshner, Assistant Director of Domestic Events at CEC Network, said that this year, a seminar on the new agent regulations in Canada (see *Language Travel Magazine*, July 2004, page 11) was likely to be held.

"This will be our second year holding information sessions for agents on various topics [during the workshop]," she explained.

Dreyshner explained that public and private secondary schools, English and French language schools, post-secondary institutions and summer camps from all regions of Canada would be attending this year. □