

Press Release

**East Asia Education Agents Shine in First Industry Awards**

March 26 2013:

The first ever British Council East Asia Education Agent Awards took place in Guangzhou, China on Monday, staged to coincide with the Education Agent Conference, organised by the British Council and bringing together 160 delegates from 12 East Asia countries and the UK.

With at least 40 per cent of East Asia students who choose to study abroad employing the services of Education Agents, and over 110,000 UK Tier 4 and Student Visas issued to East Asia students in 2012, the industry is playing an increasingly critical role in the international operations of UK universities. The awards served as a timely opportunity to celebrate success and entrepreneurship, and lend credence and exposure to an often-misunderstood industry.

Eight International Directors from UK institutions from all sectors, British Council's Higher Education Partnership Advisor and the Chief Executive of English UK formed the panel of judges.

Nominees were put forward in three award categories: Most Innovative, Most Entrepreneurial, and Best Partner.

Vincenzo Raimo, Director of the International Office at University of Nottingham and a member of the awards judging panel, was impressed with both the quality and quantity of the entries. "This region does have some of the best education advisors from around the world, and hopefully these awards show how important and how appreciative we are of the agents' support to our work.

China's Shinyway Education picked up the 'Most Innovative' award. Since its founding in 1996, the organisation has established partnerships with over 2000 institutions in 30 countries. Ms Ma Yawei, Shinyway's CEO, was delighted to receive the award: "We are proud that we keep our promises to our students and parents by supporting them throughout their study abroad experience."

GEN Education Malaysia scooped the Entrepreneurial Award, received by Mr Mr Joseph Hii, the Executive Director, "I'm proud to come here all the way from Malaysia, a regional hub for tertiary education. This award is an acknowledgement of all our hard work."

The final accolade of the evening was awarded to Taiwan's UKEAS Group (United Kingdom Education Advisory Service), with 29 offices in 6 countries. Accepting the award was an especially proud moment for Richard Smith, Director, and the founder of the company, with 2013 marking the company's 20th year of operations.

Alistair Morgan, British Consul General in Guangzhou and 30-year veteran of East Asia, closed the awards by expressing his continuing admiration for the value placed on education in the region, and acknowledged the role of all present in shaping global citizens. "I find it inspiring to meet young people after they've come back from studying in the UK, and to see they feel they can really do something positive with their lives."

**ENDS**



Vincenzo Raimo, Director of the International Office at the University of Nottingham makes an opening speech on behalf of the judges.



Mr Raimo presents certificates for finalists in the Most Innovative award category.



Mr John Quirk, Director of International Office, University of Central Lancashire presents certificates to the finalists for the Most Entrepreneurial award.



Winner of the Most Innovative award, Ms Ma Yawei, Shinyway CEO, makes an acceptance speech.



Mr Andrew Disbury, Director of International Office, Leeds Metropolitan University presents Mr Richard Smith, director and founder of UKEAS with the award for Best Partner.



160 delegates from 12 East Asia countries and the UK attended the East Asia education agent awards ceremony.

Notes to Editor:

- **The British Council East Asia Agents Awards**

The British Council Agent Awards is an awards programme organised by the British Council in East Asia to recognise and promote excellence in education agent enterprise and endeavour across East Asia. This was the inaugural British Council Agent Awards and will be organised biennially.

Through three categories – the best partner award, the most innovative award, and the most entrepreneurial award, the Awards showcased education agents who have been achieving outstanding results and who have demonstrated the highest level of commitment to UK-EA relations in education.

The Agent Awards were open to all education agents operating in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand, and over 200 applications were received.

- **The British Council East Asia Agent Conference**

As international education providers in the UK recognise the importance of agents, and agents across East Asia realise the challenge and need for change, the British Council organised the inaugural East Asia Agent Conference to address issues and create new opportunities.

The East Asia Agent Conference was held in Guangzhou, China on 26<sup>th</sup> March, aiming to increase student mobility between East Asia and UK, to monitor, develop and improve agent industry standards and services, to enhance public confidence in agent industry, to help UK institutions to understand the current market trends in East Asia, increase student recruitment with new partnerships, and develop internationally relevant local strategies as well as to promote interactions among the government's supervisory body, education agents and UK institutions.

- **About British Council and our work with Agents**

The British Council creates international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and builds trust between them worldwide. We are a Royal Charter charity, established as the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. Our 7,000 staff in over 100 countries work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year through English, arts, education and society programmes.

UK education is internationally recognised for its rigorous academic standards, innovation and career-enhancing qualities. The British Council's Education Marketing team promotes UK's learning opportunities to local people, aiming to attract more international students to the UK and in the long term nurturing long lasting relationships between the two countries. The 'Education UK Marketing Programme', have become the most renowned and comprehensive resource for local students, agents, institutions and relevant organisations at different stages on their way to study in the UK.

We work with hundreds of agents in East Asia. We support, develop and improve their professionalism, skills and knowledge about UK education and enhance public confidence in agent industry, through dedicated online and offline training, workshops, publication, familiarisation trips to the UK and conferences.

For more information, please visit [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)