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Centre for International Communication in Vancouver, "We cater specifically to in-career business and professional people. They come during work hours, after working hours, and we also go to them. For the kamikaze course — the suicidally intensive courses that we do in Japanese, Mandarin, Cantonese and Korean languages and cross-cultural communication — those involve four and half hours a day.

Dr. Walls has a wide-ranging outlook on the philosophy behind Asian language training. "Part of our role is convincing Canadian companies they need to hire people who have spent time in Asia and who have studied their cultures and languages. Companies say, "Well, you know, I've got an office in Japan. Why do I need someone with Japanese skills in my company?" And I say, "Because they're not useful to you just in Japan or when you bring your clients over here to Canada. They're useful to you anywhere the Japanese are your business associates or competitors and that's everywhere in the world."

Thinking through what Asian language and culture skills business people need to compete also occupies Michael Hartmann, coordinator of the York University Asian Business Studies Program.

Under the Asian Business Studies Program (ABSP), EAITC funded

York and the University of Toronto, which together comprise the Joint Centre for Asia Pacific Studies, to promote language and cross-cultural studies directed specifically to the business community.

The Centre is involved in a range of activities including a resource research network introductory course for small companies that want to get some background on how to do business in Asia; continuing studies at University of Toronto on the same subject; and language courses in Japanese, Chinese, and Korean.

That is an ambitious agenda, but according to Mr. Hartmann, the demand is there among business people. "In the past we found that the need wasn't perceived by business. But slowly we are finding business is taking more of an interest in language training for their employees and also an understanding that it's not just a senior level manager issue. We also get requests for training for support staff, the people who have to sit here and figure out what they are doing abroad and actually get an idea of why it's not working out or why it is working out the way it is."

Driving demand is the high cost of failure. Studies have shown in the U.S. that expatriate failure rate is about 30 to 40 per cent. That means that of all the employees U.S. companies send overseas, 30 or 40 per cent return prematurely. Many just can not adjust to the new surroundings — and the cost of one failure can run to \$150,000. Clearly, exposure to Asian culture and languages will help cut that kind of cost, even while bolstering the impact of marketing expenditures. And with Pacific 2000 funding to learning institutions bringing down costs as low as \$700 per course, it is difficult to find a better investment for companies serious about improving their competitiveness in the Asia-Pacific market.

## Asian Language and Awareness Fund

The Asian Language and Awareness Fund is a five-year \$15 million fund designed to enhance Asian linguistic capabilities in Canada and to increase Canadians' knowledge about the Asia-Pacific region. The Fund is managed jointly by EAITC and the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APF).

### Program Components

The Fund encourages activities which are part of longer-term Asia-Pacific strategies of Canadian educational and corporate institutions. The key support programs are:

### Major Centres

Core support is provided to two university-based Centres which focus on applied Asia Studies courses and offer seminars, workshops and short-term customized in-house programs and language courses for the private sector:

- David Lam Centre for International Communication, Simon Fraser University;
- Asian Business Studies Program Joint Centre for Asia-Pacific Studies, York University & University of Toronto.

### The Asia-Pacific Foundation

Through its Head Office in Vancouver and seven regional offices across Canada and in Asia, APF administers funding for the following main program components:

- Regional Language and Awareness Centres
- Outreach Training Program
- Corporate Language Course Participation
- Secondary School Activities
- Japanese Language Teacher Development
- Employment Opportunities for Canadian Experts
- Future Leaders Program

### Asian Studies Conferences

Support is provided directly by EAITC for conferences in Canada dealing with key Asian and bilateral issues.

## ALAF Contacts

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