

EDUCATION MARKETING INITIATIVE IN ASIA-PACIFIC

In April 1995, a Network of Canadian Education Centres (CECs) was created with CECs opening in Taipei, Kuala Lumpur and Seoul. New Centres are scheduled to open soon in Hong Kong, Bangkok, Jakarta and Singapore. With locally engaged managers trained in the Canadian education system, the Centres have become a focus for all Canadian education promotional efforts. The CECs bring to the attention of qualified, fee-paying international students, the excellence of Canadian education institutions and education products.

The Education Centre Network is unique in that for the first time, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, the Canadian International Development Agency and the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada have come together in formal partnership to establish offices dedicated specifically to education and education-related matters. The establishment of the Network gives expression to the Government's priority of making culture and education the Third Pillar of Canadian foreign policy.

The CEC Network is an initiative which operates on a cost-recovery basis. Over 85 institutions in Canada, including major universities, community and career colleges and public and private schools, are subscribers to the Network. In addition to subscription fees, which run from \$1000-\$2000 per Education Centre, service fees are charged for special events and activities. Special authority was sought and received from Treasury Board to reinvest

revenues produced by individual CECs back into those CECs and the Network.

While it is too early to declare the CEC Network a success, preliminary results are most encouraging. In Taipei in 1990, before the establishment of the Education Centre, fewer than 400 student visas were issued to Taiwanese students. In 1994, nearly 2000 student visas were issued to Taiwanese students. In pre-Education Centre Seoul, about 600 student visas were issued to Koreans; last year, over 900 were issued. Marketing produces results.

It is noteworthy that in Singapore, where we have not aggressively marketed since 1990, student authorizations (mostly undergraduate university study) have plummeted from 813 in 1990 to 404 in 1994. We can learn from our Commonwealth friends and competitors, the Australians. With the establishment of the Australian Education Centre in Singapore, their student visas have jumped from 2317 in 1990 to 3720 in 1994.

The message is clear. In the global economy, it is not enough for exporters to have just good services and products. In order to be competitive and to prosper, effective marketing systems are also needed. With our Education Centres in the Asia-Pacific region, we have taken a big step in that direction.

Watch for the next issue in which we share with you our education marketing plans for other parts of the world.