

News Release
13 May 2014

English UK builds business with Colombian agents and students

English UK members and staff have returned to the UK after a fortnight building closer relationships with agents and students in Colombia.

The organisation took advantage of a long-planned English UK fair in Cartagena and a report highlighting opportunities in the market to combine several complementary events in the country.

Annie Wright, English UK's deputy chief executive leading the international team, explained: "Colombia is a really important market for us, and we were keen to get to know agents in Colombia better. So it all came together that we were able to organise a couple of meetings with them to supplement our long-planned English UK Fair in Cartagena just afterwards."

The English UK/British Council Colombian market report highlighted the need for Colombian university students to achieve an English level of CEFR B1 before they are allowed to graduate, but that this training is rarely part of their course. So many young Colombians take a break from their degrees to study English abroad. The report also showed a growing demand for specific types of English language training.

Author Alex Jones said the country provides great opportunities for particular markets - not juniors or short business courses - "but younger students -- perhaps those who are aged 20 to 30, university level or just finishing university and want to improve their language skills to either graduate or get into the job market -- that's a very specific market that's there."

One other factor uncovered in the research was that Colombian agents often do not feel well informed about UK visas, and in particular when to use the extended student visitor visa and when to use Tier 4.

So the trip began with two special presentations about UK visa rules and other useful information for agents in Medellin and Bogota, led by English UK's international manager Siobhan Baccas, accompanied by five of our member centres.

Days later, the international team led one of English UK's popular Fairs in Cartagena, attracting 42 agencies from the region – 17 from Colombia itself -- to meet and form working relationships with 34 member centres.

Finally, members of the English UK team and 11 member centres joined incoming chief executive Eddie Byers at the Expo-Estudiante student fair in Bogota for three intensive days working direct with students. Roz Rozidor,

English UK's international manager, said: "There were so many of us that we had a whole area to ourselves, which was brilliant for our profile, and it was a very well-organised event. They'd done some excellent pre-publicity, which involved us writing three pieces for students, and that helped to ensure it was very popular. There were students queuing for 90 minutes to get in each day, and a lot of them were very interested in studying English in the UK."

Notes to Editors

1. English UK is the world's leading language teaching association, with more than 470 accredited centres in membership. It covers university and further education college language departments, international study centres in independent schools, educational trusts and charities, and private sector colleges. English UK is a UK registered charity (www.englishuk.com).
2. For more information, please contact Roz Rozidor (International Manager, English UK) on roz@englishuk.com