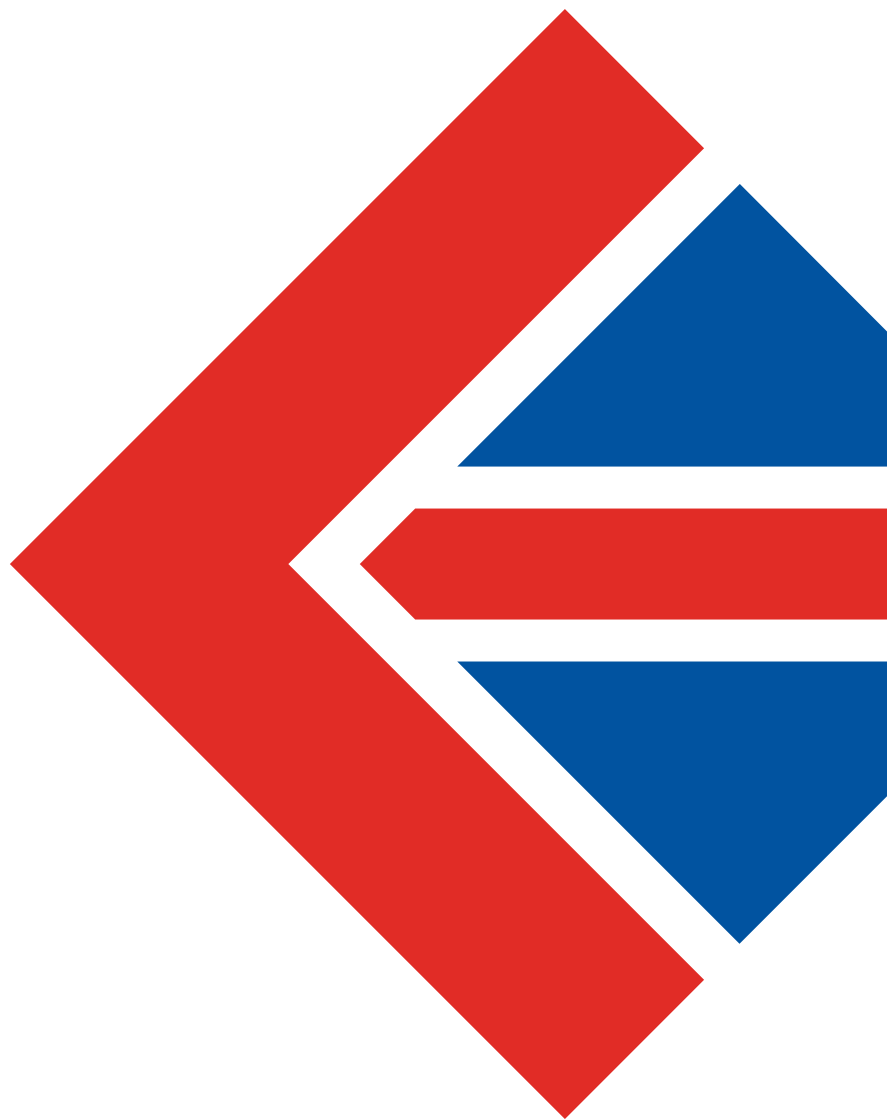


ENGLISH UK SCOPING VISIT TO SRI LANKA

01-04 November 2008

Supported by UK Trade & Investment



Executive summary

The education and training sector in Sri Lanka offers some opportunities for UK ELT providers. The Constitution designates Sinhala and Tamil as the official languages and English as the 'link' between these different linguistic and cultural communities. English is in demand as a learning tool, providing access to further education, ICT, employment, and economic development, and helping Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim groups understand each other (school students, authorities, uniformed personnel etc.).

Demand for higher education far outstrips supply – university places are available to only around 14% of qualified students, creating a huge demand for alternative higher education routes. Many turn to the largely unregulated private sector, choosing to study for professional qualifications in accountancy, marketing or computing. In recent years there has been a proliferation in the number of these private tertiary education institutions in Sri Lanka – the market is very competitive and newspapers and billboards are full with advertisements, offering guarantees of exam success.

The slow growth rate of the economy has caused a high rate of unemployment and under-employment and a long job search among educated young people – the demand for educated labour has not risen to match the increasing supply of educated job seekers. Employers complain that despite the competition for jobs, it is still difficult to recruit employees with sufficient English language proficiency, IT skills and basic work competencies (good team work, creativity, flexibility, effective communication, problem solving approach etc.).

The significant need for English language training for work is now being addressed by the Sri Lankan government's 'English as a Life Skill' national initiative. Many private tuition colleges offer English language training, either exclusively or alongside other professional programmes. Preparation courses for IELTS are very popular and the British Council administers a large and growing number of exams every year.

Around 8% of Sri Lanka's qualified school leavers currently choose to travel abroad for higher education and the UK is the number one destination. The British Council's name is recognised and respected, and its teaching centres are seen as the gold standard of ELT provision. In general, a high premium is attached to a British education. In 2007, over 2000 student visas were issued and this number has been steadily increasing year-on-year.

Many private tertiary education colleges in Sri Lanka are keen to partner with overseas providers in order to differentiate themselves in the market by offering accredited/affiliated courses, international qualifications and study abroad options. The British Council reports that an increasing number of UK institutions now see Sri Lanka as a significant market, as they seek to diversify.

ELT student recruitment

There is a high demand for English language training in Sri Lanka, but the unaffordable cost of studying in the UK for many will be a major obstacle for providers looking to recruit students in the market. However, there may still be an opportunity for centres offering 'added value' English courses such as English for Academic Purposes, high-level English for Specific Purposes, Business English, exam preparation courses (for IELTS or proficiency-level exams) and English Plus business/management/marketing/tourism etc. (especially where this leads to a recognised qualification). This will be a niche area, as many of those students who are able to afford to study in the UK will already be proficient in English, but some want to gain specialised language qualifications or prepare for further academic study or professional careers.

There are a large number of agents and educational consultants operating in Sri Lanka. While many of these work with UK universities, few represent ELT providers. It is recommended that English UK carries out an audit of the agents' network and considers holding a briefing seminar specifically for educational consultants on a future visit to Sri Lanka.

Opportunities for independent further education colleges

As Sri Lankan students are very open to alternative (and affordable) higher and further education routes, the British Council report that they see significant opportunities in the market for BAC

accredited private further education colleges offering courses at less than GBP4000 per year. Those that are also accredited by the British Council for the teaching of English will be at an advantage, as programmes offering language training alongside other qualifications are in high demand. A quick glance through the advertisement section of the education supplement of a weekend newspaper shows that several UK independent FE colleges are already recruiting students in Sri Lanka. It is recommended that English UK and Study UK (the association for BAC accredited institutions) consider organising a small joint mission of providers to Sri Lanka to meet with agents and educational consultants.

Opportunities to partner with private tuition providers

The large number of private tuition colleges in Sri Lanka offers the greatest opportunity for UK providers to take advantage of the market. These colleges are keen to work with overseas partners in order to differentiate themselves in the highly competitive private education sector. The British Council is actively encouraging more UK institutions to build links with local colleges and provide affiliated courses in Sri Lanka, as it sees this as a key growth area. Opportunities exist for:

- Partnering with local providers to offer 2+1 programmes and/or intensive language courses for students studying on 2+1 programmes to help them improve their level of English before embarking on their final year of study in the UK.
- Cooperating with private tuition providers to offer affiliated or accredited courses with a study abroad option.

It is recommended that English UK looks into the possibility of bringing a small mission of providers to Sri Lanka to meet with local private tuition colleges.

Opportunities for corporate training providers

There is a need for providers able to deliver bespoke training courses for the corporate sector, particularly at the middle and senior management level. This has led to the largest corporations developing their own in-house training departments. Corporate training is a niche area at present, but as the economy grows, driven by the private sector, demand seems likely to increase. It is recommended that English UK keeps a watching brief on developments.

Saturday 01 November 2008

Meeting with Mr Sunimal Fernando, Presidential advisor and co-ordinator of the special Presidential Task Force on 'English as a Life Skill'

'English as a Life Skill' is a national initiative to disseminate spoken or communicative English skills across Sri Lanka. The short term objective of this project is to provide 50,000 people over 3 years with job-orientated spoken English skills for employment in services such as the IT related business process outsourcing (BPO) industry. Such sectors do not currently source investment opportunities in Sri Lanka largely because of the absence of adequate and appropriate spoken English language skills in the country.

The current situation

There are 21,850 English teachers in government schools and more than 2,100 private tutoring institutes teaching English and other subjects. However, despite the fact that ELT is being delivered so extensively across Sri Lanka, private sector companies are unable to recruit staff with adequate spoken English skills for employment. The belief behind the Presidential Initiative is that the root of the problem lies in the widespread use of traditional methodologies borrowed from English speaking countries (such as the UK, Canada, USA and Australia) to teach the language through a structure, grammar and translation approach, rather than through listening, speaking, reading and writing (the LSRW method). This has generated a fear in the learner to speak in English.

India as a role model

The overriding strategy of the Presidential Initiative is to bring about a transformation in Sri Lanka's ELT methodology, replacing the teaching of English through structure, grammar and translation with the LSRW method. Mr. Fernando's proposal points out that this teaching methodology has been developed in India over the course of the past 10 years, driven by the new employment opportunities created in the BPO sector. The Sri Lankan government are very keen to emulate India's success in attracting overseas investment and have partnered with the Indian Government to implement the 'English as a Life Skill' Initiative. Two major projects have already been launched to facilitate the transfer of English language teaching methodology – 'soft technology' from India to Sri Lanka.

1. New teaching methods for the private tutoring sector

- The Presidential Secretariat together with the Board of Investment (BOI) organised a 3-day business fair where 11 Indian English teaching institutes demonstrated their teaching methods and course content to around 325 Sri Lankan tutoring institutes (April 2008). Around 10 Sri Lankan institutes have since started the process of developing joint English teaching business enterprises with Indian partners and another 125 have expressed interest in becoming franchisees or agents of bigger joint teaching ventures.
- These joint ELT business enterprises plan to retail their courses at a price of between Rs. 100 - 140 per hour per student (£0.60 – 0.80/hour). A 60 hour 'Survival English' course will cost around Rs 6000 - 8400 (£35 – 50) and another 50 hours of 'Basic English' (good enough for basic office tasks) will cost around Rs 5000 – 7000 (£30 – 40). These can then be supplemented with further courses of between 20 and 70 hours for 'Executive Level English', 'Call Centre English' and 'Industry specific language training' costing between Rs. 2000 and 9800 (£12 – 58).
- The Presidential Initiative acknowledge that as these costs will be relatively high for a learner from a rural family, the Cabinet of Ministers has approved a grant scheme for assisting those aged between the ages of 18 and 25 to acquire job-orientated spoken English skills by following any accredited courses of his/her choice. The Government will match a contribution of Rs. 200 million (£1.18 million) from the private sector towards this fund with another Rs. 200 million.

2. Re-training the Government English teachers

- A Sri Lanka – India centre for English Language Training (SLICELT) was established in 2008. The Indian Government provides 2 permanent professors and short-term specialists when required from the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU) of Hyderabad.
- The Indian Government provided scholarships for 41 experienced English teachers from Sri Lanka to train as master trainers at EFLU Hyderabad from September – December 2008.
- SLICELT will also be tasked with the responsibility of working in cooperation with the English Language Unit of the Education Ministry and the Department of Examinations, to design a multi-tiered certification process for both English teachers and English learners (no norms and standards exist in Sri Lanka for English teachers or learners).

Monday 03 November 2008

Meeting with Mr Nishantha Fernando, Director, and Mrs Seema Nicholas, Director, George Steuarts Educational Services

The George Steuarts Educational Institute (GSEI), owned and managed by George Steuarts Educational Services, was established in 2005 to provide foreign language training to those seeking employment abroad. George Steuarts Recruitment recruits professionals, skilled workers and sales & marketing personnel for companies in 19 countries worldwide. During the course of sifting applications, the lack of candidates with communication skills in English became apparent. The GSEI was established to rectify this problem.

The GSEI is a Colombo-based teaching institute offering English and Korean language courses. It is also an approved testing centre for TOEFL exams.

Mr Fernando and Mrs Nicholas expressed an interest in partnering with a UK provider to deliver English language training programmes in Colombo. See the appendix for a business proposal/introductory letter from George Steuarts Educational Services.

www.georgesteuarts.com/education/index.htm

Meeting with Tim Davis, Entry Clearance Officer, British High Commission, Colombo

There is a Visa Application Centre in Colombo, but student visa applications are processed in Chennai (India). The demand for and issuance of student visas is increasing and Tim saw no reason why applications for visas for English language study in the UK should be refused, especially with the introduction of Tier 4 of the Points-Based System. The high refusal rates for all visa types are due largely to applicants presenting false documents.

	Received	Issued	Refused	Refusal rate
July – October 08	2,604	-	842	32%
2006-2007	4,755	2,535	2,440	51%
2005-2006	3,851	1,925	1,801	47%
2004-2005	2,727	1,641	1,035	38%

Meeting with Mr Vibhu, Phantomz Global

Phantomz Global, founded in 2005, has three departments: Corporate Consultancy and Training, Centre for English Language Study and Study Abroad Programmes.

The Centre for English Language Study offers IELTS, TOEFL, A-level and General English programmes, while the Study Abroad arm of the company acts as an agent for a small number of UK and US universities.

Mr Vibhu indicated that he would be interested in partnering with a private UK-based provider to deliver ELT 'to the masses' and to expand his Study Abroad Programmes. The majority of his students are looking for language training as an entry requirement to undergraduate or postgraduate

courses abroad, or because they wish to improve their job prospects in Sri Lanka or migrate to an English-speaking country.

www.phantomzglobal.org

Meeting with Mr Ishan Sidique, Country Manager, EDEXCEL International

Last year around 2000 Sri Lankan students sat for BTEC EDEXCEL Higher National Diploma exams and 6000 for EDEXCEL A-levels. Mr Sidique estimated that there are around 30-40 private tuition centres and colleges offering BTEC HND 2+1 programmes, offering students the chance to complete the final year of their undergraduate degree in a university abroad. UK universities are very popular, and the 2+1 course structure makes this an affordable option in the price sensitive Sri Lankan market. Mr Sidique emphasised the large percentage of appropriately qualified Sri Lankan school-leavers who are not selected for university (over 80%), and are left disappointed, searching for alternative tertiary education options.

Many students following the BTEC HND 2+1 programmes struggle with their level of English, especially when entering directly into the final year of a degree course in the UK. He sees an opportunity for UK ELT providers to partner with Sri Lankan institutions and offer intensive language training in the UK to these students during the holiday break before they embark on their final year.

Meeting with Mrs Vijitha Mallika Senanayake, Educational Consultant/Managing Director, Institute of Vocational Studies – BMICH

The Institute of Vocational Studies (IVS) is a consultancy offering advisory services to Sri Lankan students hoping to receive an overseas education.

IVS directs students to follow graduate courses of study in a variety of disciplines in Bangladesh, India, China, Australia, Malaysia and Singapore among other countries.

IVS has placed over 7,000 students in overseas educational institutions over a period of more than 13 years and has branch offices located around the country. Mrs Senanayake indicated that she would be interested in hearing from any UK institutions looking for representation in the Sri Lankan market.

Meeting with Mr Madu Ratnayaka, General Manager, Virtusa (Pvt) Ltd

Virtusa Corporation is a global information technology (IT) services company providing IT consulting, technology and outsourcing services with a large office in Colombo. Mr Ratnayaka spoke at length about the need for English language training, especially in the corporate sector. It is very difficult for global companies like Virtusa to find employees with adequate levels of English, and this problem reaches through all levels from the most junior workers to senior managers. Virtusa has sought to improve the situation in-house by setting up a comprehensive training and development programme for employees covering professional skills and English language.

Until now the lack of adequate English language skills has led to Sri Lanka missing out to India on opportunities in the BPO sector. Mr Ratnayaka suggested that the growing number of global companies now investing in Sri Lanka, attracted by the lower labour costs, will drive a demand for corporate English language training.

www.virtusa.com

Meeting with Mr Bradley Emerson, Divisional Chief Executive Officer, The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)

At present, CIMA Sri Lanka has over 1700 members and 10,000 students, making it the largest concentration of members and students outside the UK. Mr Emerson emphasised the large numbers of students seeking higher education, but unable to win a place at university. Many of them choose to study for their CIMA qualifications at the large number of private tuition providers offering these courses. Demand for university places in Sri Lanka far outstrips supply and this has led to the

flourishing of private tuition colleges offering professional courses such as CIMA, ACCA, CIM, ABE etc.

Mr Emerson commented on the demand for English language training, especially as many CIMA students aspire to work abroad after graduation. He suggested that there may be opportunities for UK providers to partner with private tuition colleges in Sri Lanka to offer complementary language training alongside the professional courses. However, he agreed that as the competition in the private education sector in Sri Lanka was fierce, price sensitivity would always be an issue to overcome.

Meeting with Mrs Mala Salgado, Director, Department of Vocational Studies, Ladies College

The Department for Vocational Studies was established over 25 years ago as an institution within the Ladies College, a private school founded by the Church Mission Society of the Anglican Church. The DVS aims to serve the community by catering to students unable to attend university. Courses on offer include General and Spoken English and the London Chamber of Commerce & Industry Executive Secretary's Diploma. Mrs Salgado was keen to emphasise the price sensitivity of the Sri Lankan market – while her students aspire to receive an overseas education or international qualifications, the cost is prohibitive in many cases. Studying English at the British Council Teaching Centre is very popular and seen as highly prestigious, but the tuition fees for this are out of the reach of many DVS students. A General English course at the British Council costs Rs. 26,800 for 50 hours over 10 weeks (~£165.00), whereas a 4 hour/week General English course at DVS is Rs. 1,250 per month (~£8.00) and the 6 month LCCI Diploma is Rs. 26,450 (~£160.00).

www.dvs.edu.lk

Meeting with Mr S Sivabaskaran, Director, Imperial College of Business Studies (ICBS)

ICBS is a private tuition college and business school offering a range of professional qualifications including CIMA, CIM, CMA and ICSA. Enrollments at the College have risen from 320 in 2003 to over 3000 in 2008. Mr Sivabaskaran spoke of the huge and growing popularity of professional qualifications due to the large numbers of students who fail to secure a place at university and the competition for jobs. He indicated that he would be interested in offering ELT alongside the professional qualifications and partnering with overseas institutions in order to add value to his courses, but emphasised the importance of an affordable pricing structure in order to compete effectively in the private education market.

www.icbgroup.com

Meeting with Mr Anthony Jayaranjan, Head of Learning & Development, John Keells Holdings PLC

John Keells Holdings PLC is the largest listed conglomerate on the Colombo Stock Exchange. Companies of the group manage the largest number of hotel rooms in Sri Lanka, own the country's largest privately-owned transportation business and hold leading positions in Sri Lanka's key industries - tea, food and beverage manufacture and distribution, logistics, real estate, banking and information technology.

Mr Jayaranjan spoke in a similar vein to Mr Ratnayaka of Virtusa about the difficulty of recruiting employees with good levels of English across all sectors of industry. As John Keells Holdings own a large number of hotels and resorts, he focussed particularly on the English language training needs of the hospitality and tourism sectors. Mr Jayaranjan also referred to the lack of corporate training providers in Sri Lanka who are able to offer bespoke training solutions of a high standard. Hence, like Virtusa, John Keells Holdings has chosen the route of developing their own in-house programmes.

Mrs Cal Senewiratne – an English teacher based at the Cinnamon Grand Colombo (a 5* hotel owned by John Keells Holdings) – also attended the meeting. She identified a need for training in Sri Lanka's tourism sector in both basic and more advanced language and hospitality skills, made worse by the constant 'brain drain' of experienced staff to hotels around the world where salaries are higher (the Middle East). Mrs Senewiratne indicated that there may be an opportunity for UK providers of language and hospitality & tourism qualifications to work with the larger companies operating in Sri

Lanka's growing tourism industry, either by training staff directly or offering a 'train the trainer' solution.

www.keells.com

Meeting with Mrs Saroja Gamage, Managing Director, Open Arc College of International Studies

Open Arc College is a private institution offering academic and professional qualifications in project management and IT. The College is an overseas education partner of the University of Southern Queensland Australia and offers students the opportunity to study several of the University's 'off-shore' programmes. Mrs Gamage indicated that she would be interested in partnering with other overseas providers to expand the College's course portfolio and offer English language training.

www.openarc.lk/ocis

Tuesday 04 November 2008

Meeting with Ms Gill Westaway, Country Director and Mr Duncan Wilson, Deputy Country Director, British Council

The British Council has offices and teaching centres in Colombo and Kandy, and also delivers Professional Training programmes in Galle, Jaffna and the Maldives. English language courses are very popular and always over-subscribed – the teaching operation in Sri Lanka is in the top 5 in terms of enrolments worldwide. In 2006-7, the teaching centres provided courses for 11,778 people – this was 17% up on 2005/6 and 2007/8 is expected to show a similar increase again.

The British Council engages with the Sri Lankan government through a number of educational initiatives including the Skills through English for Public Servants (STEPS) project and the Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) teacher training programme.

In 2006-7, the Exams team administered 50,429 candidates for IELTS; 7,509 for GCE and 4,702 for EFL.

The annual Education UK Exhibition is the single largest international education exhibition in Colombo and Kandy. According to the education information service team's research, the already popular top-up degree would be the growth area in the future in terms of students going to the UK from Sri Lanka. The British Council is encouraging UK based institutions to build more links with local colleges and provide affiliated courses in Sri Lanka.

The libraries in Colombo and Kandy have a total membership of around 15,500 and 5,500 respectively.

There is little doubt that the British Council is a highly recognised and respected brand in Sri Lanka. Courses through the Council are seen as the gold-standard of ELT provision, and Duncan suggested that many families and students will save over a long period of time in order to be able to afford the tuition fees. Much kudos is attached to studying at a British Council Teaching Centre, and the huge popularity of their courses was in evidence during our visit by the sheer number of students attending classes at the time.

A General English course at the British Council costs Rs. 26,800 for 50 hours over 10 weeks (~£165.00).

Duncan also spoke of the importance placed on education by Sri Lankan families, the belief among students that attaining qualifications (especially overseas qualifications) was the path to a better career and life, and the hard-work ethic shared by many. He indicated that British Council accredited UK providers would command much trust and respect in the Sri Lankan market, but raised the issue that those who most need English language training are inevitably those that can least afford it.

www.britishcouncil.org/srilanka

For a list of local agents and representatives of UK institutions in Sri Lanka - <http://www.britishcouncil.org/srilanka-educationuk-local-agents-and-representatives.htm>

Meeting with Mr Failan Saleem, The Knowledge Factory (Pvt) Ltd

The Knowledge Factory is a small private tuition college specialising in the CIM qualification. Mr Saleem also writes a regular column – ‘Career Guru’ – in the education supplement of ‘The Sunday Times’, in which he gives career and education guidance. He spoke generally about the disillusionment with the university sector - demand far outstrips supply, there is a lack of funding, and regular strikes force frequent closures and long delays in course delivery. Professional qualifications such as the CIM are not just seen as ‘CV points’ for particular career paths, but are instead recognised as a legitimate alternative to traditional, academic higher education. Mr Saleem also raised the issue of a lack of regulation in the private education sector – students are faced with a bewildering and confusing choice of private tuition providers, many offering similar courses. International affiliations or accreditations offer valuable reassurance.

Meeting with Mr M. M. Maznavi, London Business School

The London Business School is an example of a private institution that has achieved success through developing partnerships and affiliations with international providers, including a UK based university and state FE college. The School offers students the chance to complete internationally accredited degree, diploma and certificate programmes in business, finance, marketing, travel & tourism and English language.

Mr Maznavi indicated that he would be interested in hearing from any UK providers (including English language teaching centres) interested in forming partnerships. He was also keen to point out the kudos attached to studying courses affiliated with overseas, and particularly UK based, colleges and institutions.

www.lbslanka.com

Meeting with Mr Chinthaka Wijyaratne, Operations Director, Wisdom Business Academy (Pvt) Ltd
Wisdom Business Academy is a private tuition college specialising in CIMA qualifications. With around 6,000 students per year, it is the 2nd largest CIMA institution in the world. The Academy also assists and advises students looking to study abroad, and represents several UK universities.

In line with reports from the directors of other private tuition providers, Mr Wijyaratne confirmed that CIMA is so popular in Sri Lanka as it is seen as a recognised alternative to over-subscribed traditional academic programmes. He expressed an interest in partnering with UK ELT providers and indicated that there is a high demand for English language training among the Academy’s student body. He also emphasised that in such a saturated private education market, international accreditations and affiliations are highly valued, but tuition fees must remain competitive.

www.wisdombusiness.com

Meeting with Mr Nizam Razak, Managing Director and Mr Sri Kandasamy, CEO, Business Management School

The Business Management School (BMS) is a private tuition college specialising in delivering courses in association with UK institutions. These include courses at foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate level offering accessible progressions routes onto programmes in the UK. BMS also acts as a local agent and representative for a number of UK colleges and is actively seeking new partners.

Mr Razak and Mr Kandasamy were both very experienced (Sri used to work in the education services team at the British Council), and indicated that they saw opportunities in the Sri Lankan market for UK ELT providers. They believe that while those who most need English language training are unable to afford to study abroad, there is still a niche market among wealthy Sri Lankans for recruiting students

to study 'added value' English courses in the UK such as English for Academic Purposes, high-level English for Specific Purposes, Business English, exam preparation courses (for IELTS or proficiency-level exams) and English Plus business/management/marketing/tourism etc. (especially where this leads to a recognised qualification).

They were both keen to emphasise the fact that UK education is held in high regard in Sri Lanka. As the number of people able to afford an overseas education grows and disillusionment felt by parents and students with Sri Lankan higher education continues, UK institutions are well placed to take advantage of the situation.

Mr Razak and Mr Kandasamy also spoke of the opportunity for UK ELT providers to partner with BMS and other private colleges to offer affiliated courses (perhaps with the option of final intensive training in the UK), focussed short EAP training in the UK before students embark on the final year of their top-up programmes and cooperation in the delivery of foundation year courses, possibly including the option of part study in the UK. They highlighted the price sensitivity of the Sri Lankan education market, but agreed that there are opportunities for UK ELT centres seeking to diversify.

www.bms.lk/index2.php

Meeting with Mr Harsha Alles, Gateway College

Gateway was established in 1986 and has over 33 teaching centres spread across Sri Lanka, including Gateway College (a primary and secondary school following the English National Curriculum) and Gateway Language Centre, which offers courses leading to Cambridge ESOL Young learners, Business English, KET, PET, FCE, CAE and CPE, IELTS and TOEFL, and EDEXCEL London Tests of English qualifications. Around 2000 students attend language courses with Gateway at any given time.

Gateway is managed under the direction of a former Sri Lankan Secretary of State for Education, and prides itself on offering programmes affiliated or accredited by UK training providers.

During the scoping mission, many people mentioned Gateway as an example of an organisation that has successfully used its partnerships with UK providers and awarding bodies to become a 'household name' in the private education sector in Sri Lanka.

Mr Alles indicated that there may be an opportunity for UK ELT providers to partner with Sri Lankan private English language centres to deliver study programmes, especially in specialised fields such as English for Specific Purposes (legal English, financial English, tourism and hospitality etc.) and Business English. However, he believed that price sensitivity would always be a big issue - a 50 hour course with Gateway costs around Rs. 5000 (~£30.00).

www.gatewayworldwide.com

Jodie Gray
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Appendix

Proposal from George Steuarts Educational Services

It is our intention to commence English communication and personal development classes for those who are seeking employment overseas and locally, as a service project. In this regard, we request your assistance to commence such classes to equip candidates with the adequate skills to secure employment. In this regard, we forward background details of our organization and look forward to associate with an educational Institute who would consider investing and giving accreditation to our institute to conduct courses locally for the job seekers to enter the global job market.

- **Background of our Company**
- **Our Vision**
- **Our Mission**
- **Our Strengths & Competitive Edge**
- **Future Business Focus**
- **Our Aim**
- **Course of Action**

Background of our Company

George Stuart & Company (Pvt) Limited is the oldest business house in Sri Lanka and one of the oldest firms in Asia and the World. Having commenced business as Merchant Bankers in 1835, it transformed into an Agency House from coffee to the tea industry. Currently the Company is engaged in many fields such as: handling inbound and outbound tours; GSA for Delta & Philippine airlines; import and distribution of pharmaceutical items; providing health care services; export of tea in bulk, in packets, and bags; property development; import, assembly and distribution of telephones & PABXs, etc; recruitment of employees for prestigious clients overseas, money broking and advertising. In the process of interviewing candidates in particular for foreign employment from those who are registered with the Job Bank of George Steuarts Recruitment (Pvt) Ltd, it was apparent that there is a lack of English communication skills.

To rectify this situation, during July 2005, George Stuart Educational Institute (GSEI) was established at No.7F, Postmasters Place, Templers Road, Mount Lavinia. The main activities of the company are conducting and facilitating education programmes, conducting of seminars and workshops. We are also acting as a ETS certified test administration site to conduct TOEFL internet based tests and conducting of basic computer courses.

Our Vision

To become a leading and renowned educational development organization in Sri Lanka.

Our Mission

The mission of George Stuart Educational Institute is to open the gateway to the global employment opportunities for those who are aspiring to be professionals in their chosen fields. This will be achieved through quality professional programmes offered by the institute to those who are employed as well as to those who are looking for productive work, locally or overseas.

Our Strengths & Competitive Edge

- Reputation as a subsidiary of the Group of the oldest mercantile establishment, with 173 years of service
- Reputation of ethical business practices
- The Institute is fully equipped and capable of catering to the needs of the customers

- Facility for easy parking
- Attractive state of the art building

Future Business Focus

To become the most preferred educational institute in the minds of participants, by providing timely and futuristic training programmes, at affordable prices.

Our Aim

We have a dearth of candidates with inadequate communication skills in the foreign and local market. However, unfortunately the candidates are not able to meet the requirements of prospective employers due to the lack of English communication skills. We find that most candidates are professionally qualified and have the technical knowledge but are not equipped with the skills needed to secure employment both in the overseas and in our local market. In this regard, many institutions have commenced classes to enhance the skill levels in English. However, most institutions have not been able to systematically conduct their programmes to finally equip the candidates to face an interview. Therefore, it is our intention to provide crash courses for this segment of job seekers. It is our intention to have a programme which also includes attire and facing an interview process. We also hope to direct interested candidates who successfully complete this programme, through our job bank for overseas employment. In our experience we have over the years scheduled interviews for prospective employers for overseas employment but they have on many occasions, not recruited the number they wish to, due to poor communication skills. Our recruitment agency does not charge a fee from a candidate unlike other agencies. Therefore, candidates directed through our employment agency would also benefit.



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