



Dear IAESTE alumni

I am afraid we have been silent too long — I apologise for the lapse and that the due date for our spring edition came and went. And yet so much has been happening since you last heard from IAESTE UK.

In January, three of the IAESTE UK team travelled to Cartagena de Indias, the splendid UNESCO world heritage city on Colombia's north coast. Unfortunately we had little time to visit as we were hard at work in the 57th Annual IAESTE Conference. Imagine holding a series of 50 bilateral meetings over the course of five days in 38° heat — that's just what we did, and exchanged 198 placement offers from UK employers with IAESTE organisations from 50 countries. Those meetings laid the foundation for all our work in the ensuing months, filling those placements with motivated and qualified student trainees.

The Cartagena conference was a landmark in the programme's history since, finally, after nearly 60 years, the IAESTE Association voted to register the organisation. In April, the UK team headed to Ljubljana for a 4-day conference, the Seminar on IAESTE Development. The exciting news is that the UK will host the next SID in Glasgow in 2006; you can read more about that and the registration of IAESTE in this edition.

This summer we have received over 200 IAESTE students into the UK. And rather than let our 185 UK trainees abroad disappear over the horizon this year we have developed a way to keep in touch, a weekly one-page newsletter where they can send in photos and reports from all over the world. I'm not sure if we did this only for their benefit or for ours as well, because the newsletters are fun and make rewarding reading, a bit of a pat on the back as we think: 'We did that!' Space permitting I hope to fit in some of their stories and photos in this edition of **directions**.

Christina Vakomies
 IAESTE UK National Secretary



Above IAESTE trainees at United Utilities' Anderton Centre on Rivington Reservoir

United in the North West

'Delighted to hear from you! I went with IAESTE to Japan in summer 1989 and also the year before to Finland. Fantastic times and a major part of where I am today.'

So wrote Eóin Cooke, now a Director at United Utilities plc where he is Chief Operating Officer for Electricity. He has also become an IAESTE employer — this year his division offered five placements which have been filled by electrical engineering students from Canada, Greece, Serbia and Slovenia. As an engineering undergraduate at Queen's University Belfast, Eóin's first application to the IAESTE programme took him to Neste Oy, a petrochemical company based in Porvoo, Finland. There he gained valuable experience in fuel cell technology, learnt about Finnish culture — and suffered the onslaught of the Finnish mosquitoes in summertime! The following summer saw him as an IAESTE trainee working for the Omron Corporation in Japan. Eóin describes his time there as 'a tremendous experience which opened a lot of doors for me and helped me to move into consultancy and further my career.' In fact, following his graduation and until he moved to United Utilities in 1997, Eóin worked as a consultant with Accenture based in Dublin, working with manufacturing operations for aerospace and defence contracts, and latterly, utilities operations for power, electric distribution, water and waste water.

Not content to participate as an employer alone, Eóin wanted as many IAESTE trainees as possible to experience the hospitality of the northwest of England. United Utilities is the largest landowner in the region with

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Ad hoc no more

On 27 January 2005, delegates from 69 IAESTE member countries raised their glasses and toasted the foundation of IAESTE Asbl. After several years of proposals and amendments, revised statutes, and general soul-searching, the association had reached the point where it was ready to move on from the informal network of member organisations first established back in 1948 to a legally registered, non-profit organisation. By the end of May, IAESTE Asbl (*Association sans but lucratif*) was successfully registered in Luxembourg. All the association members — such as IAESTE UK — are already either legally registered in their own countries or form part of organisations that are.

Registration will make a huge difference to the management of the international organisation and create an opportunity to diversify some of our activities. The core activity will always remain the exchange of students, but if IAESTE is to become truly global and bring opportunity to students and industry in the developing world, then it must be an organisation which can generate income and sponsorship to raise the funds necessary to support this development. Our key assets are our networks, be it the IAESTE intraweb which offers potential access to students from over 1,000 universities worldwide, or the alumni network, Friends of IAESTE, which now has over 8,000 registered members, all scientists and engineers with a clear record of global experience. IAESTE now needs to develop imaginative business opportunities for these networks which have already proved to be of great interest to multinational companies seeking sponsorship opportunities.

Below Delegates toast the new IAESTE Asbl organisation with champagne



Did you know that there is an international Friends of IAESTE network, which is being developed to allow alumni to communicate with friends from all over the world? You can register on www.iaeste.org/friends/

For many, an IAESTE placement means much more than getting work experience during the summer months: it can influence various aspects of a person's life.

You may still be in touch with friends made from other countries or gone on to work for the company where you were placed. Please write and share your experiences either by e-mail iaeste@britishcouncil.org — or by post — IAESTE UK Alumni Group, Education and Training Group, British Council, 10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN.

United in the North West

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several sites and centres of interest, and they made discounted rate places available at the Anderton Centre which the company runs in partnership with the Lancashire Outdoor Activities Initiative. So on the weekend of 6-7 August, 25 IAESTE students headed to the shores of the Rivington Reservoir to undertake a range of outdoor pursuits. Luckily, the sun shone and the students had a great time on the abseil tower, searching for orienteering markers in the West Pennine countryside and putting their engineering backgrounds to good use to build rafts capable of surviving the 100m or so trip across the reservoir. Unfortunately, only two of the three rafts made it all the way back! The staff at the centre were very accommodating, providing additional sleeping bags, transport to the supermarket and even putting on an impromptu fire breathing display!!

We look forward to receiving the feedback forms on United Utilities' five trainees and hope they have been working hard, validating Eóin Cooke's ongoing commitment to the programme.

Are there any more alumni out there like Eóin, ready to assume the role of an IAESTE employer? If so, just contact us at iaeste@britishcouncil.org for more information.

Do tell SID ...

In April 2006 the IAESTE world will be coming to Scotland for the 21st meeting of the Seminar on IAESTE Development (SID). SID first started in 1990 as a means to bring together member IAESTE organisations from countries around the world to discuss issues of best practice, administration, organisational advancement and development. Unlike the annual conference, which focuses on the exchange of placements and voting on key policy issues, SID is more a think-tank where delegates participate in dedicated workshops to develop proposals to bring before the Board and the general voting assembly of the association. SID features the hard work of IAESTE conferences minus as much as possible of the formality. Participants in workshops vary not only in cultural background but also in age and occupation, representing in microcosm the various elements that make up the success of IAESTE worldwide – students, academics, employers and professional exchange organisers.



Above Neil, Diane and Bruce from the IAESTE UK team, in Ljubljana promoting SID in Scotland. Although they backed out from dancing, they did offer fine Scotch salmon and whisky to the delegates!

The Kelvin Conference Centre in the West of Scotland Science Park in Glasgow will be the venue for the 21st SID, from 6 to 9 April 2006. As hosts, IAESTE UK will be responsible for ensuring all facilities meet the conference requirements and, of course, introducing delegates to local history and culture. We anticipate receiving up to 70 delegates from approximately 30 countries, a ripe group for a *ceilidh* at the very least! We will be looking for volunteers from amongst our returning Scottish students this year to come and assist with the conference and help entertain our international guests. And if there are any alumni in Scotland with ideas or time to contribute please do get in touch. This is our chance to put Scotland firmly on the IAESTE map.

Summer in the City

The annual IAESTE Summer Reception took place on 22 July at Imperial College, London. The event drew over 100 guests, including 60 IAESTE student trainees from 36 nations. They were joined by several of their employers, including AMEC Upstream Oil and Gas, United Utilities, BT Exact Technologies and Capita Symonds. Some had travelled from as far as Scotland for the event, part of a weekend of London activities including a picnic in Hyde Park which saw the trainees preparing food and drink from their own countries and sampling each other's wares. The clear favourite was the Toblerone mousse prepared by the Swiss students! On 3 August an even larger reception was held for employers and trainees in Northern Ireland. Sponsored by the Department for Employment and Learning, guests gathered at Stormont, the seat of the Northern Irish Assembly.



Above Sixty IAESTE trainees at the 136-year-old *Cutty Sark* in Greenwich

Top 3s in 2005

Destinations for UK students

- 1 Poland
- 2 Switzerland
- 3= Brazil, Czech Republic, Germany

UK participating employers

- 1 BT Exact Technologies
- 2 Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- 3 United Utilities plc

UK HE institutions

- 1 Queen's University Belfast
- 2 Imperial College
- 3 University of Ulster

From our correspondents abroad 2005

The funniest thing about work is that at 5.45 pm every day (I work 8 am to 6 pm, with a two hour lunch break) everyone stops work and we have to do a communal stretching session. No kidding, we all stand around for 15 minutes whilst being led by one of the office workers in a series of stretches and lunges. I thought I'd probably come back with improved Portuguese. I never thought I'd come back more flexible ...
Ingrid, Brazil

I'm in Tokyo on a placement with a civil engineering firm, Mishimatsu Construction. It's been nuts so far, I haven't had time to stop. They have taken me to a different site each day to show me different styles of construction so I'm learning lots and meeting loads of people.
Dave, Japan

Below Proof of the midnight sun in Norway! **Kevin**



How you can help IAESTE

As an alumni member, there are many ways in which you can help IAESTE UK. These include:

- **becoming an IAESTE employer**
Join the increasing list of companies and academic institutions that benefit from having a foreign trainee during the summer months. At the same time, be safe in the knowledge that you have provided an opportunity for a British student to go abroad.
- **providing accommodation for a foreign student**
Foreign trainees who visit the UK are usually housed in university halls of residence, flatshares or with host families. However, finding such accommodation often provides a major headache. If you can help, please get in touch.
- **promoting IAESTE to others**
If you work in an academic institution you can promote the IAESTE programme to undergraduate students by displaying posters, distributing leaflets and arranging a presentation.

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