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The Malaysian contingent was noticeable, but the impact was just minimal. Although there were 12 institutions that had registered as participants there was no concerted effort at all to promote Malaysia as an education innovator and regional hub for education excellence.

Matrade (Malaysian External Trade Development Corporation) or the MoE (Ministry of Education) should have taken the lead to portray a dynamic image of a knowledge country which has internationally accepted quality standards and accreditation.

Nigel Banister, Sales and Marketing Director, UK eUniversities

"I had been in my new role as Sales & Marketing Director of UK eUniversities all of two weeks. This initiative is UK higher education industry's response to the next phase of online learning, being an established part of the overall process of making education really accessible. The UK Government has teamed up with Sun Microsystems and injected serious funding to set new world standards that UK Universities can be proud of. We will not have actual products for a few months but with a change in focus for me to fronting a public private partnership I needed to start networking at a top level.

"That is when my attention was drawn to WEM which promised "to help you cut through the crowds to reach senior educational executives and decision makers, from both public and private sectors around the world".

Sure enough when I eagerly surveyed the list of participants it was an international who's who of education. The appointments that I was able to make even at short notice a week before attending enabled me to speak with people that if I visited would have ensured my family holidays for the next few years with the air miles! If I had had longer to prepare, I could have ensured every waking hour was packed but would have missed some pleasant encounters.

"In brief interludes, I resorted to approaching groups from my future target countries and did that with a trio from Beijing. After testing the water with a mini explanation of eUniversities I was gradually surrounded by around 30 friendly Chinese. After an impromptu speech they politely applauded and I had my photo taken with every conceivable combination of these delegates - I have my hospitality taped for next time in China!

"Apart from such opportunities a visit to the entrepreneurial Jingkun Bi of China Campus provided free knowledgeable and realistic advice for those seeking to venture into that market. Isn't new world enthusiasm great - thank you everybody on the Canadian stand. One of the small gripes is that at the price of the ticket couldn't coffee have been free and refreshments more easily obtained? As it was many resorted to the drinks and nibbles offered by the Canadians rather than face the long queues at intervals in the conference.



Dr Koo: Matrade or the Education Ministry should take the lead to portray a dynamic image of a knowledge country which has internationally accepted quality standards and accreditation

had taken the opportunity to launch new products like NCC Education with their Virtual Campus and so it was an ideal time to catch up on the latest developments. What is it about these shows that make all competitors talk so openly with each other? I guess that few exhibitors will have been unhappy with the interest level, as most stands seemed constantly busy.

I wish that I had had more time to attend the conference as well but it was not so much my personal focus this trip. However, I would pick out the excellent session on "Reporting on the marketplace". Three education specialists from the finance industry spoke with authority and objectivity on how global education is doing as a business and what the trends are for the future - not to be missed!

"So did WEM deliver for me? Yes, and I will be back, hopefully as an exhibitor and speaker next time."

Rohaya Amal Wan Abdul Razak, Business Development Manager, Telekom Smart School Sdn Bhd

"It is a good seminar which should be attended by educationists and those who are involved directly or indirectly with the education industry.

"As the business development manager of my company, I felt that it was very useful for me to explore education solutions and products available in Europe. Through WEM, we established business partnership with foreign partners such as English Courseware.

"Some products like their assessment system and other applications are really good for the market here. Through WEM, we were able to explore further business contacts in Europe, and penetrate further into the international market.

"I encourage Malaysians involved in education to attend this gathering to get themselves exposed to the state-of-the-art technology available in the education industry. It is a great place to network."

■ WEM 2003 will be held from May 20 to 23 in Lisbon, Portugal. To book a place, contact Allan Cheah or Maria Khor of MDC at: 03-8315 3000. For more details,