



# East Asia Education Week

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**East Asia Agents Conference 2026**

**Empowering Local Insight  
for Global Impact**

**Key Takeaway Report**  
3 February 2026  
Indonesia

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# Event Overview

**The British Council's East Asia Agents Conference in Indonesia provided an opportunity for international education agents, universities, leaders, and policymakers to discuss the role of agents across the ever-evolving regional and global higher education landscape.**

**The event reviewed trends in international student mobility across East Asia, explored the impact of policy, regulation, and technology on the higher education sector, and examined strategies for education agents and universities to strengthen partnerships and collaboration amid dynamic market changes.**

A mix of plenary and breakout sessions assessed increasing global competition, changing student expectations, increasing use of technology, and regulatory pressures that affect traditional recruitment models. The role of agents as strategic partners who offer valuable market insight and help students navigate increasingly complex decision-making processes was reaffirmed. Delegates expressed a shared commitment to innovation, collaboration, and ethical practice to ensure the sustainable growth of UK–East Asia education cooperation.

The event was attended by **96** education agents and **55** university participants from **15** countries and territories.



# Key Takeaways

## **International education is diversifying**

There is no decline in global demand for international education, but market dynamics and changing student behaviours and expectations are driving change, requiring UK institutions and their partners to seek fresh and more adaptive strategies to maintain or develop their market positioning.

## **Regional context matters**

Markets in East Asia, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, and Vietnam, are at varying stages of maturity, with different types of domestic provision, alternative transnational education (TNE) pathways, and economic factors affecting the decision-making journey. Institutions need to think of “partner region”, not “source market”.

## **Education agents remain relevant, but the role is changing**

Agents are evolving from transactional recruiters into data curators, strategic interpreters, and gatekeepers of quality. Their value is now in filtering information, navigating risks and contextualising study options, supporting students well beyond the application stage, and evaluating strategic opportunities for UK institutions.

## **Trust is the cornerstone of sustainable partnerships**

Evidence-based practice delivered consistently and transparently, with a commitment to long-term relationship management, underpins trust in agile agent-university partnerships. The British Council is resolute in supporting agents through robust quality and partnership frameworks, with the Agent Quality Framework (AQF) being a valuable mechanism for building trust and promoting responsible and consistent standards of practice.

## **Technology is an enabler, not a substitute**

AI and data tools can improve recruitment cycle efficiency while providing deeper insight and greater transparency. However, over-automation carries the risk of producing generic outcomes, reduced authenticity, and weakened student support. The balanced integration of technology with human oversight is essential if quality outcomes for students are the aim.

## **Value needs greater articulation**

While return on investment and rankings are important for students, intangible outcomes such as employability, networks, confidence, a global mindset, and personal growth are also critical elements of the value proposition, but they remain undercommunicated in UK education narratives.

## **Alumni and industry voices amplify credibility**

Alumni engagement and industry perspectives add authenticity to counselling and recruitment. Lived experience and career stories resonate with prospective students more strongly than institutional messaging alone.

## **The time is ripe for UK–Southeast Asia collaboration**

Southeast Asia is a major engine of global growth. Universities, agents, industry, and policymakers have a golden opportunity to work together to create innovative strategies that ensure talent development continues to drive social and economic progress, increase access to quality higher education, and build trust with each other and with the students they support, educate, or employ.

# Quotes



“

**The reputation for academic excellence and strong employer relevance remains a cornerstone of any country’s educational offer. I think that is something the UK does exceptionally well.**

**Harry Anderson**

Deputy Director, Policy and Global Engagement,  
Universities UK International

“

**Authentic voices often build credibility and emotional connection. Happy students and successful alumni will definitely open the door to future recruitment opportunities. Their voices are genuine.**

**Vonny Augustine**

Director of Product and Business Development,  
SUN Education Group,  
Indonesia



“

**If a student can get all this... course comparisons, visa guidance, personalised advice instantly [by using... AI tools], what can agents do to earn commission in any future model? What value do humans add that AI can’t? What parts of our role should never be automated?**

**Stuart Easter**

Director of Student Recruitment and International, Edinburgh Napier University



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**What about trying to tailor marketing pitches to students based on the local market insights agents have? That’s where we can go beyond transaction, by building a sustainable strategy together.**

**Treenat Jaiyasarn**

CEO, WIN Education,  
Thailand



“

**It’s a relationship business. The relationship holds so much strength and so much camaraderie. The knowledge transfer between agents and universities is immense.**

**Nick Lim**

Country Manager,  
AUG Study Abroad,  
Singapore



# Programme and Speakers

## Programme

Time	Session	Speaker
09.00	Welcome & opening remarks	<b>Summer Xia</b> Country Director Indonesia & Director South East Asia, British Council
09.10	<b>Opening Keynote:</b> The shifting world of international education – understanding the drivers for change and how universities are responding	<b>Harry Anderson</b> Deputy Director (Policy and Global Engagement), Universities UK International (UUKi)
09.40	Shifting Tides in Student Mobility: Challenges and Opportunities for the UK	<b>Sonia Wong</b> Regional Research Analyst Education Insights Hub East Asia, British Council
10.10	<b>Panel Discussion:</b> Future-proofing the education agent sector - policy, practice and partnerships for what's next  <b>Panellists:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Satyadhi Hendra</b> Director, Indonesia-Britain Education Centre (IBEC), Indonesia</li> <li>• <b>Devina Sivagurunathan</b> Executive Director, MABECS, Malaysia</li> <li>• <b>Van Nguyen</b> Country Head for Vietnam, AECC Global</li> </ul>	<b>Jazreel Goh</b> (Chair) Country Director Malaysia and Director Education Insights Hub East Asia, British Council
11.30	<b>Panel Discussion:</b> Innovating the recruitment cycle - designing student-centric journeys  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Susan Fang</b> CEO and Co-Founder, OxBridge Holdings, Taiwan</li> <li>• <b>Stuart Easter</b> Director of Student Recruitment &amp; International, Edinburgh Napier University</li> <li>• <b>Vonny Augustine</b> Director of Product &amp; Business Development, SUN Education Group (part of StudyIn), Indonesia</li> </ul>	<b>Clare Mackay</b> (Chair) Deputy Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions, The University of Edinburgh

13.50	<p><b>Breakout Session 1:</b> Innovation and Agility: How agents are pivoting?</p> <p><b>Panellists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nick Lim</b> Country Manager, AUG Study Abroad, Singapore</li> <li>• <b>Sai Boon Chuan</b> Country Director, United Kingdom Education Centre (UKEC), Malaysia</li> <li>• <b>Amarjeet Mutneja</b> Director, Partnerships and Business Development, Hands On Education Consultancy, Thailand</li> </ul>	<p><b>Louise Tracey</b> (Chair) Deputy Head of International and Postgraduate Recruitment, The University of Edinburgh</p>
	<p><b>Breakout Session 2:</b> Beyond Transactions: Building trust and strategy in UK agent–university partnerships</p> <p><b>Panellists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Michael Ge</b> Director of Asia Partnership Team for East Asia, University of Lancashire</li> <li>• <b>Xenia Xu</b> Head of International Recruitment and Market Development, Newcastle University</li> <li>• <b>Treenat Jaiyasarn</b> CEO, WIN Education, Thailand</li> <li>• <b>Jazi Jannati</b> UK Regional Marketing Manager, YES Education Group, Indonesia</li> </ul>	<p><b>Eduardo Ramos</b> (Chair) Head of Higher Education Systems and Internationalisation, British Council</p>
15.10	<p><b>Closing Keynote:</b> Asia at the Centre: How International Education Accelerates the Region’s Future</p>	<p><b>Ainsley Mann MBE</b> Vice Chairman, British Chamber of Commerce Indonesia</p> <p>President Director, Swire Investment Indonesia</p>
15.30	<p>Closing remarks</p> <p>Photo session and networking</p>	<p><b>Stuart Easter</b> Director of Student Recruitment &amp; International, Edinburgh Napier University</p> <p>BUILA Executive Vice Chair and Scotland Representative</p> <p><b>Leighton Ernsberger</b> Regional Education Director, East Asia, British Council</p>
16.30	End of conference	
18.30	Evening reception	

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