Our
future.
It's in
our hands.

UK FE: Building On Our International Reputation

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Structure of presentation

- International Education
- International Reputation – the good, the bad
- International Students – a good thing?
- Making a difference – how colleges have benefited
- FE Reputation Strategy Group
- FE Reputation Research and next steps

International Education

- Second Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI2) for International Education
- Emphasis on establishing UK education brand; quality of student experience; strategic partnerships and alliances
- 2006-2011: increase non-EU students in FE by 30,000
- Double number of countries which attract 10,000+ students per year to the UK

Source: Warwick Institute for Employment Research/AoC; Going Global? UK FE/TVET – opportunities in the international market; April 2008

International Reputation

Strengths

- High reputation internationally
- Framework for lifelong learning
- Positive learning environment – e.g. student support; advice; independent learning
- Strong track record of international activities
- Flexibility of delivery
- Demand led provision
- Skills-based practical training

Source: Warwick Institute for Employment Research/AoC; Going Global? UK FE/TVET – opportunities in the international market; April 2008; UKCOSA Report on International Students; New Horizons; 2006

International Reputation

Weaknesses

- Poor performance in OECD league tables
  - Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development helps governments tackle the economic, social and governance challenges of a globalised economy
  - First reference point for potential students and partners
  - Need to strengthen quality assurance for qualifications delivered abroad or through franchising
- Lack of clarification of FE colleges' status
- Complexity of the quality assurance system
  - 3 large awarding bodies; 100+ smaller or specialised qualifications recognised nationally; 300+ smaller ones not recognised

Source: Warwick Institute for Employment Research/AoC; Going Global? UK FE/TVET – opportunities in the international market; April 2008; UKCOSA Report on International Students; New Horizons; 2006

International Reputation

Weaknesses (contd)

- International work not recognised with FE sector
  - Due to mainstream funding mechanism
  - Absence of reporting requirements
  - No requirement for data on international students
- Quality assurance of qualifications delivered in-country and through franchise training
  - No inspection of awarding bodies
  - No inspection mechanism for courses delivered overseas by FE colleges

International Students – the positives

Opportunities

- Assistance with developing employability by securing part-time work
- Assistance with budgeting and financial planning
- Offering improved social opportunities with UK students & local communities
- Development of ‘life skills’ and employment prospects in home country

Source: UKCOSA Report on International Students; New Horizons; 2006

International Students – a good thing for Colleges?

- Generates a growth in activity
- Alternative income streams to compensate for reduced funding
- Widen staff and student horizons in light of increasingly global economy
- Build strategic partnerships with international organisations
- Improved access to international benchmarking to support continuous quality improvement
- Provide access to more diverse and innovative teaching and learning opportunities
- Benefit from new and creative ideas through collaboration and sharing experience and best practice

International Students – or a bad thing?

- Distracting from core commitment to UK students
- Negative impact on results
- May affect local communities
- Could lead to resource and residential issues

Making a Difference – lots of good practice

- West Nottinghamshire College
  - Investigating links and exchanges with Delhi & Rajasthani colleges
  - Established relationships with China; first Chinese exchange students Summer 08
  - Initial staff exchanges & training across institutions through to establishing Centres of Vocational Excellence in Rajasthan
  - Strategy to bring more international perspective to local population where <5% ethnic minority
  - Raising aspirations and opening up opportunities by exposing students to the global environment

Making a Difference

- York College
  - Partnership with the Nihon Automobile Technical School, Japan
  - English Study Abroad Programme for high calibre, Level 4 Japanese Motor Vehicle students
  - Students have the opportunity to study abroad; improve their English; gain invaluable experience of the European motor trade (by placing them in locally approved dealerships); gain real work experience in a commercial environment
  - 7 month programme
    - » 6 week induction & intensive English summer school
    - » 6 week placement with LOTUS Group
    - » Mixture dealership experience, EFL Programme, Motor Vehicle studies

Other Partnerships

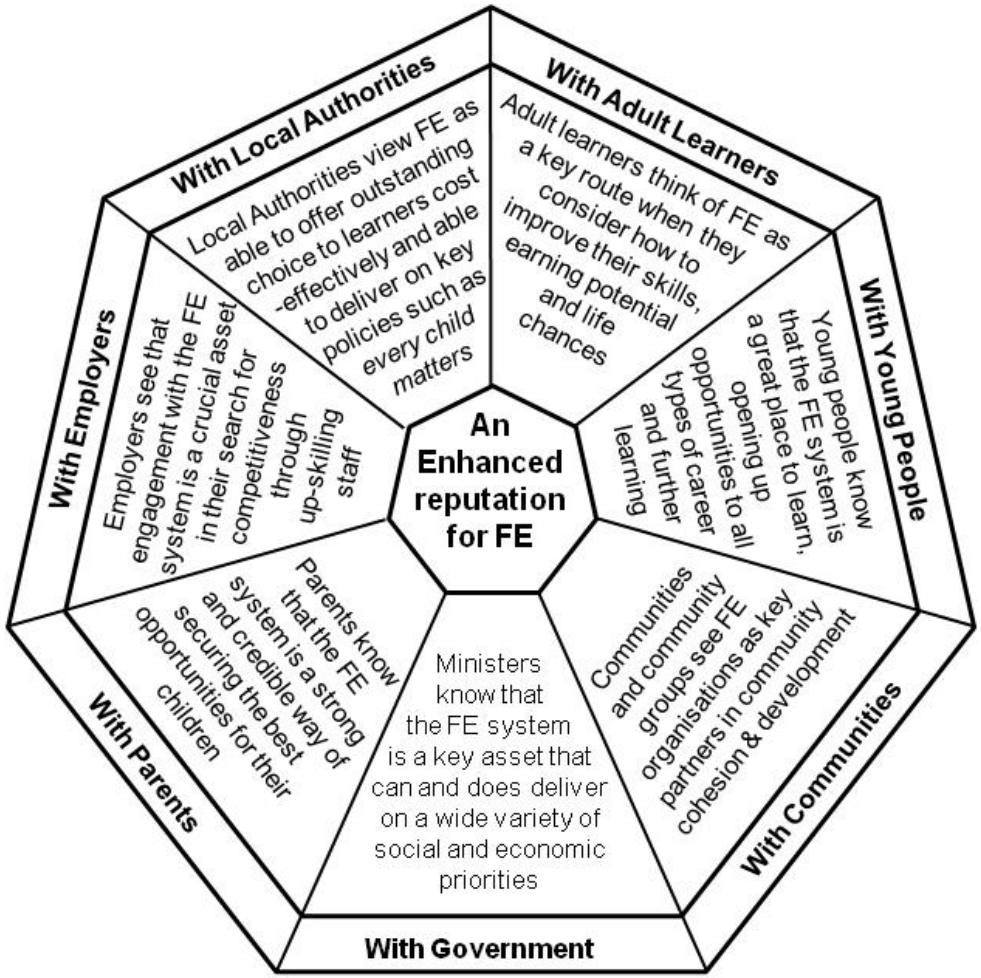
- Tower Hamlets & City College Norwich; UEA and insurance companies – Delhi's Indian Institute of Foreign Trade
- Ravensbourne, Newham & Blackburn colleges – Indian colleges of fashion
- Greenwich Community College – Ghana; Iraq; Saudi Arabia; Vietnam
- Bournemouth & Poole College – working with Thai & Russian consortiums; China; South Africa; Kuwait

What are we doing to improve FE Reputation – how does this link with international work?

- Nationally
  - FE Investment : Building Colleges for the Future
    - £3.2bn investment 2008/9-2010/1
    - Helping to deliver world class buildings
    - Opening colleges to employers and the wider community
  - FERSG
    - Cross-sector cross working to enhance FE Reputation

- Internationally
  - International strategy to be developed once national reputation has been enhanced
  - By association, improved national reputation will result in better international reputation

FERSG working to build reputation



With thanks to Frank Villeneuve Smith/LSN

UK FE Reputation Research

- To define reputation in ways that are specific to the FE sector and its primary stakeholder groups
- To use this intelligence to create a framework to enable colleges to manage their reputations more effectively
- To surface specific ideas as to how reputation can be advanced in individual colleges
- To identify how principals can act collectively to enhance the reputation of the group of colleges as a whole

Source:

What counts for students (national and international)?

Critical

- High quality staff – teaching excellence
- Learning facilities – library, computers, equipment
- Good student experience and social atmosphere
- Higher than average pass rates
- Friendly and accessible teachers and tutors
- Higher than average proportion of students get a good job or go on to university
- Good student support services

Source: UKCOSA Report on International Students; New Horizons; 2006

What counts for students?

Important

- Small class sizes
- Accepts students from all types of backgrounds and abilities
- High quality staff – professional or trade experience
- Opportunity for work experience
- Excellent extra curricular activities – music, sports, community activities
- Located in a safe, positive neighbourhood

Overarching truths*

- College reputation is not always universal across departments and **excellence in one department does not always transfer**
- Poor performance in one department can jeopardise corporate reputation and lead to the loss of other unconnected business
- Seems unfair but in this context **reputation is a one-way street!**

* Based on UK research, but the assumption is that this would also apply internationally

Source:

Colleges have...

- Massive expertise
- Real knowledge of our community
- Good employer relationships
- Valuable experience in partnership working
- Real progression opportunities through to HE

BUT does this matter for international students?

What is the FE sector’s USP?

What next for FERSG?

Need to ask…

- Is the international reputation of FE Colleges worthy of research?
- What is the position re training providers? (FERSG's role is to work on behalf of the sector)
- Is it one of the vital few?
- Bearing in mind the current climate, has the International Reputation of Colleges changed in any way?
- What are your views?

For further information

Please see www.lsc.gov.uk/fersg

Contact us

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