

# **India – East Midlands: Business and Employment Opportunities**

## **East Midlands International Working Group**

### **Project Report**

#### **Background to the Project**

India - East Midlands – ‘*Business and Employment Possibilities*’ – was an event conceived and delivered by a collaboration of careers advisers from eight regional institutions, responsible for developing services and support for the growing numbers of international students. This was achieved with generous support and funding from the East Midlands India Business Bureau [a regional development team responsible for encouraging trade and inward investment into the region] and PMI 2 funding granted by the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS).

The purpose of the event was to help raise the profile of our international Indian talent and to educate local employers on how to work with this student group to maximise their business potential. It aimed to enable businesses to learn from organisations who have successfully engaged with the Indian market by utilising UK educated Indian students and graduates. It demonstrated how universities can provide support to businesses to achieve their globalisation objectives as well as information on the legal framework around recruiting international talent and an economic analysis of India.

#### **Key Achievements**

- Event was attended by 172 students from eight institutions
- Twenty one employers attended from sectors including manufacturing, consultancy, education, export and food wholesale.
- Event positively endorsed by the Consul General of India who stressed the importance of business-university engagement.
- Employers learned about the economic imperative for engaging with India for business opportunities and how Indian students and graduates could be a facilitator of this.
- The regional skills agenda and the contribution of Indian graduates and SMEs to the achievement of this was presented
- Case studies of employers who have taken on Indian students illustrated some of the benefits of employing an international student and showed also what students have to gain from the experience as well as what they can contribute.
- Presented to the SME audience the benefits of engaging with regional universities with case study examples
- Developed students networking capabilities with a training session, which they were then able to practise with employers

## **Follow up activities from business delegate session**

In the business delegate session we did an exercise to determine any immediate need that businesses had for engaging with careers centres and also what tips they would give to other SMEs. The immediate needs will be followed up by members of the EM group and developed into employment opportunities.

Examples of immediate needs include:

- Need for IT graduates
- Potential marketing student to support development of routes to market within next 6-9 months
- Possible 6 month internship (construction)
- Development of a local Asian TV channel with potential need in R&D and media production team plus marketing and promotion of British qualifications
- Help with assessing attractive job descriptions and assessing appropriate graduates
- Providing skills sessions and internships in social enterprise

Tips for SMEs included:

Know exactly what you want and expect

Universities could send out email example case studies of actual projects

More collaborative networking events with companies and graduates

SMEs should use this service (careers services)

Get in touch with careers services as soon as they have some requirements

## **Comments from delegates**

“Bringing together businesses and students from academia is essential for economic growth”-Consul General of India

“Gained a better understanding of India and the opportunities.”-Business delegate

“A useful overview of the current economic situation concerning business opportunities within India”-Business delegate

“It was a great opportunity to have discussions with company representatives. The event was fantastic”.-student delegate

“This was a very good initiative within the East Midlands”-student delegate

“It was good-I look forward to attending them in the future”-student delegate

“Awesome event!”-student delegate

## **Dissemination to Wider AGCAS community**

- Created a video of the day with footage promoting the benefits of recruiting Indian students which will be linked to the AGCAS internationalisation pages.
- Vacancies arising from event to be submitted to International Jobs Online for advertising as well as being advertised across 8 regional institutions.
- Phoenix article to be submitted
- Session to be delivered at next Biennial University of Nottingham from 13-15 September 2011 to share learning and practice.
- Providing information and advice to other careers professionals on working as a regional group for international students

## **Conclusions**

This event in addition to our experiences with the China-East Midlands event demonstrates that small businesses have a lack awareness of what careers services can provide and that there is an ongoing need for activities which promote the benefits that university careers services can provide to small and medium enterprises.

Developing and maintaining the link between SMEs and graduate talent is vital for regional and national economic development. PMI 2 funding and financial support from the East Midlands India Business Bureau was essential to delivering this initiative. Continuing funding for initiatives such as these should be made available to universities directly or via regional and national initiatives to sustain economic growth.

The recruitment requirements of SMEs are sporadic in nature and thus sustained information about careers service activities including examples of success stories is essential to raise awareness. SMEs also often lack expertise (personnel/size of organisation) in the recruitment and selection process and would benefit from careers service support to enable them to identify, access and work with graduate talent in the region.

Working with regional agencies who have a specific remit in small business development is a good way of gaining access to small developing businesses and enables universities to demonstrate that they have a credible offer by engaging with a trusted organisation.

Providing specialist events that focus on a particular area of interest is more effective than a general event. In order to attract SMEs, the objectives for the day need to include business development e.g. opportunities within the emerging markets, rather than just recruitment.

Collaborative working amongst universities was a good way of lowering the barriers to access student talent.

## **Appendices**

Event Flyer

<http://www-staff.lboro.ac.uk/~adym/India-UK%20event.pdf>

Event Programme

<http://www-staff.lboro.ac.uk/~adym/India%20event%2017-6-10%20programme.doc>

## **Photographs**

<http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/yasmina.mh/IndiaEastMidlandsBusinessAndEmploymentPossibilities?feat=directlink>

## **PowerPoint presentations**

Dr Kelly Manders Skills Development Manager, EMDA

<http://www-staff.lboro.ac.uk/~adym/Kelly%20Manders%20EMDA.pdf>

Student case study-Kripa Anand University of Leicester

<http://www-staff.lboro.ac.uk/~adym/Kripa%20Anand%20Case%20Study%20Presentation.pdf>

Anjalika Bardalai, Senior Analyst, Economist Intelligence Unit

<http://www-staff.lboro.ac.uk/~adym/Anjalika%20Bardalai%20EIU.pdf>

Student Session- Networking your way to employment

<http://www-staff.lboro.ac.uk/~adym/Networking%20session.pdf>

Employer Session- Working with Universities: Helping regional businesses

<http://www-staff.lboro.ac.uk/~adym/Employer%20session%2017th%20June%202010.pdf>