



Yintong talks with ...

Philip Hao, chief executive of UVIC Group



This is the first chance to catch with Philip Hao since we collaborated on the UK Guide for Chinese Students in 2010. The UVIC Group, which he heads, is a key player in university placement and visa services and is something of a phenomenon in UK inbound education. Not only is the company a member of organisations such as UCAS and the British Council, its bespoke event, UniFair, is the largest university fair for students from over 100 countries to meet key UK universities.

As a result Hao has become the 'go-to' expert on UK education, and is regularly featured in the media – UK and China.

Chinese inbound students occupied the highest rate among international students in UK universities

in 2014, amounting to 62,000. I asked him what advantages the British education had over the Chinese system that makes them flock to the UK. Moreover, I asked, would the trend continue, and what changes had he seen since he himself was a student here in the late 1990s?

Relevant

"As China's economic development picked up speed, one could see very clearly the changes in the Chinese overseas student population. Most of them no longer need to take on a part time job to supplement their cost of living. Instead, they choose relevant opportunities carefully either to strengthen their CV profile, to test landscape for their potential future career or just to enrich their social lives."

On the differences in the two education systems, Hao told me that the Chinese system was still known for its long school days, tough discipline and parental pressure. This rigid education system provides a solid foundation and encourages good studying habits setting students on the right track to achieve good grades. Chinese exam results often top global league tables. However, Hao believes that this approach may be better applied at the more basic, primary level. He says, "As pupils are growing up, they are on autopilot, they study for exams, not for interest. By the time they are studying

for their university degree, they often lack motivation and vision for their future career, so Chinese students are sometimes perceived as weaker contenders in the employment market. By comparison, British education promotes individualism, self-initiative and application abilities, providing a more fully rounded personality that Chinese students have lacked in the past. To gain a place in the global job market, acquiring a British style of education makes them better equipped, not just in an international organisation but also in a Chinese firm. Therefore, I believe the inbound education market into the UK will continue to grow steadily over the next ten years."

Resources

Analysing the Chinese education system and its future trends, Hao says: "China has opened up its restrictions on private schools. This change will provide more resources for Chinese students and parents to choose from, as they are multi-functional and provide a more dynamic range of education possibilities."

"China also recognises that many students choose a university degree such as business studies or economics due to peer pressure. Many important jobs in craftsmanship and more practical fields are lacking graduates. Colleges similar to polytechnics are being encouraged to set up. Although the Chinese govern-

ment has limited funds, Chinese educational entrepreneurs are investing in foreign educators to entice them to China, increasing resources, leading to fewer people going abroad."

After 13 years, UVIC has reached a stage where its business is mature, with an enviable reputation within the industry. What are his next steps and what ambitions does he have for the future? "Education is extremely close to my heart," he said. "My first overseas study experience was with the University of Cyprus, followed by a Masters in Management at Westminster University. Those formative years were challenging but I benefited tremendously from this wealth of experience. I have therefore made it my mission to help other young people find the right track acquiring a good education." This ambition is currently being pursued through the creation of a giant bi-lingual digital application portal called myOffer.com, linking major universities across the world to allow easy access for students from China and other Far East countries.

www.uvic.co.uk

Yintong Betser is the author of a series of books on doing business in China and the UK and managing director of ACTIVE Anglo Chinese Communications.
www.activeukchina.com

Londoners know the phrase 'All change' as TfL's regular loudspeaker announcement. It is also now also an apt description of the capital's journey through 2016. With the referendum results deciding Britain's EU exit, the appointment of Sadiq Khan as London's Mayor and Theresa May as the UK's new PM, there have been plenty of changes to observe.

Whilst the UK takes stock of the recent changes, the key requirements of London's built environment remain the same; the housing crisis and the skills shortage are core concerns of the construction industry. These issues will be tackled at the annual London

Building London

Build event, the leading construction show for London and the South East. The event will also showcase cutting-edge developments within London's current, planned, future projects and opportunities in construction, regeneration and housing.

Taking place at Olympia London on October 26th & 27th, London Build 2016 provides an opportunity for building on confidence within the sector. The show will host the city's key players and figureheads: contractors, developers, architects, government representatives, councils and housing associations, who utilise the myriad opportunities

the show provides, for networking, building partnerships, and for finding out about the latest major project tenders.

In addition to the conference, CPD workshops and exhibition a number of activities will take place over the two days; The London Build Breakfast, officially supported by LCCI, will open the event. The show will also feature four hubs, dedicated to: architects, sustainability, skills and market intelligence. A Meet the Buyer VIP Luncheon will take place on each day, including a business card exchange session, announcements on

the latest tenders and investment opportunities in London, one-on-one meetings and huge networking potential with hundreds of key decision makers including First Base, Heathrow Airport, TfL, Lendlease, Crossrail, Foster +Partners, Mace Group and Atkins Global.

Register for free tickets at www.londonbuildexpo.com



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