

Indian Skills Show UK Participants Showcase their Talent at Nypunyam 2016, the International Skill Summit and Skill Fiesta, Kerala

Nypunyam 2016 – The International Skill Summit & Skill Fiesta was held recently at Taj Vivanta, (Trivandrum) Kerala from 5-7 February 2016. The event was jointly organized by the Directorate of Employment and Training (DET) and Kerala Academy for Skills Excellence (KASE) with the objective of raising the status of vocational education and training in order to build a globally competitive workforce.

The British Council actively participated in the summit with contributions being made at the technical sessions by means of sharing best practices from the UK; and at the Skill Fiesta where two young Indian contestants, who recently attended the Skills Show UK (2015), had participated and showcased their skills in beauty therapy.

The International Skill Summit witnessed participation from corporate leaders, heads of governments, mission directors from skill development missions in the country, foreign dignitaries, renowned academicians and eminent personalities from around the world.

Leighton Ernsberger, Assistant Director- Bengaluru and Skills for British Council India spoke about the work British Council does in English skills for employability and also highlighted the programmes being done with the Government of Kerala in Additional Skills Acquisition Programme. He also spoke about research and publications undertaken at the British Council with specific reference to the *Skills Assessment in India* report and the importance of third party assessment and UKs expertise in this sector.

Ben Blackledge, Head-Education and Development at Find a Future (UK) shared his experience of organising the Skills Show in UK and how the organisers managed to draw the interest of school students and parents alike in what can be called the UK's largest skills and career advice event with an annual footfall of 75,000. The Skills Show competitions he said is unique among the other 75 countries associated with the World Skills on account of its sheer scale, its focus on careers advice and in attracting parents and young learners. Its intensive engagement with training providers and industry partners has also helped make the competitions even more fruitful, he said.

Some of the eminent Indian dignitaries who attended the Skills Summit included:

- Shri Justice P Sathasivam, Hon'ble Governor of Kerala
- Shri Oommen Chandy, Chief Minister, Government of Kerala



Shri Oommen Chandy, Chief Minister, Government of Kerala during the inaugural ceremony



Leighton Ernsberger, Assistant Director- Bengaluru and Skills for British Council India at the podium



Ben Blackledge, Head-Education and Development, Find a Future (UK) at the podium

- Shri Shibu Baby John, Hon'ble Minister for Labour and Skills, Government of Kerala
- Shri Jiji Thomson IAS, Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala
- Shri Tom Jose, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Labour and Skills, Government of Kerala
- Shri Rahul R IRS, Managing Director, Kerala Academy for Skills Excellence
- Shri Harikrishnan Nair, Chairman, CII, Kerala State Council
- Dr MT Reju IAS, CEO, Additional Skill Acquisition Programme, Government of Kerala
- Shri J Harishkrishnan, Chief Operating Officer, Kerala Academy for Skills Excellence
- Shri Ranjan Chaudhury, Head – WorldSkills India, National Skill Development Corporation

Some of the key UK representatives at the Summit included:

- Dame Asha Khemka, DBE, Chief Executive, West Nottinghamshire College, UK
- John Mountford, International Director, Association of Colleges, UK
- Ben Blackledge, Head – Education and Development, Find a Future, UK
- Leighton Ernsberger, Assistant Director- Bengaluru and Skills, British Council India
- Other representatives from AoC, British Deputy High Commission and British Council.

On the side-lines of the event, the UK representatives including Leighton Ernsberger (British Council), Dame Asha Khemka (West Nottinghamshire College), John Mountford (AoC), Mathivathani (Deputy High Commission, Chennai) and Amit Sinha (AoC) met the Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Labour and Skills - Shri Tom Jose - to discuss the Centres of Excellence that KASE is establishing. Also discussed was the study visit to the UK to be held from 7-9 March 2016 which is being funded by the Deputy High Commission, Chennai. During the meeting it was also suggested that the tour can be tied up with that being planned by Vandita Tiwari (High Commission) in March.

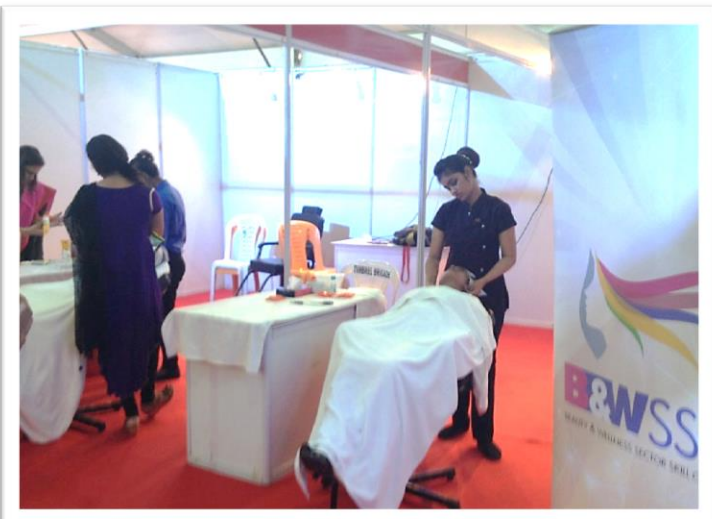


Inauguration of the Skill Fiesta & (below) Skill competitions at the venue

The Skill Fiesta (or competitions), which was a first of its kind in India, was held alongside the summit and showcased the talents and expertise of 72 young people representing 12 different trades, and who competed amongst each other in their chosen specialism.



Also seen competing at the Skills Fiesta were the two Indian contestants, Thabasum Sulthana from Chennai and Pooja Rani from Delhi, who had successfully participated at the Skills Show - UK last year in Birmingham. They demonstrated their talent in beauty therapy with even more panache and self-assurance, a quality which they attributed to the



Participants of Skills Show UK (2015) competing at the Skill Fiesta

learnings gained at the Skills Show UK and also to their trainer - Vaishali Karthik Shah.

The Skill Fiesta marked the culmination of a challenging selection and training process at three levels. The students who cleared testing at the institution levels participated at the zonal competitions at Trivandrum, Ernakulam and Kozhikode from 4th January 2016 to 11th January, 2016. For finals, two contestants in each trade from all three zones shall demonstrate and test their skills. The key objective of the competitions were to inspire young people, teachers, parents and others by raising awareness that enhancing vocational skills can lead to global opportunities.

As an outcome of the Summit and Fiesta, it is expected that the knowledge sharing and the UK best practices disseminated at the platform will give way to greater collaborations and understanding between the UK and the state of Kerala in raising the status of vocational education and training among the youth.