

News Release
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English UK opens doors in Kurdistan

English UK is planning a members' event in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq after a highly successful scoping visit this month.

Senior International Manager Jodie Gray and members of the Board of Directors Steve Phillips and Richard Day had three full days of meetings with officials around the country, and are now preparing a full report on the opportunities in the market for UK English language providers. The trio left Kurdistan very upbeat about the opportunities for English UK members.

"There was a very positive and progressive feeling in the country, which has been rapidly developing over the last few years," said Richard, adding: "Kurdistan is placing great emphasis on education in the development process. We were very warmly received by Presidents and senior staff at universities, past and potential students, educational agencies and government personnel."

Jodie added: "We're in the early stages of planning an event in the region for our members in May 2012, and we hope this will help English UK members to connect with potential students, study abroad agents and other stakeholders and influencers."

During the visit, which was funded by UK Trade & Investment and organised by the Kurdistan Regional Government UK Representation, the party met the region's main study abroad agents, the Presidents and senior staff of four leading universities, business leaders, and officials responsible for the country's Human Capacity Development Programme, which is spending \$100m each year on higher training for university graduates and government staff. Since 2010, more than 4,000 students have been awarded scholarships, of which two-thirds have come to the UK. The scholarship programme includes an allocation for students to improve their English in the UK for one year before post-graduate study at university.

"Kurdistan is a great opportunity for English UK and its members, still a pioneering EFL market and a region that has been overlooked by many educators. Now is the time to act," said Steve Phillips, adding: "UKTI missions are ideal gateways as doors are opened at high levels – the decision makers are met with and action can be taken there and then. This was our experience in the Kurdistan region and I look forward to seeing the gains for EFL UK from this short trip."

Notes to Editors

1. English UK is the world's leading language teaching association, with more than 450 accredited centres in membership. It covers university and further education college language departments, international study centres in independent schools, educational trusts and charities, and private sector colleges. English UK is a UK registered charity (www.englishuk.com).
2. For more information, please contact Jodie Gray (Senior International Manager, English UK) on jodie@englishuk.com.