



**SCHOOL OF
ASIAN STUDIES**

Scoil na Staidéar Áiseach
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

The Irish Asia Strategy and Beyond The Role of Education

Education: An International Trade Commodity

- **Reflecting :**
 - **Increasing wealth in developing countries**
 - **Limited availability of higher education places in developing countries**
 - **Desire to access knowledge and technology; to learn the English language; and to make foreign contacts**
 - **Fashion and the societal pressure to have foreign educated offspring**
- **Ireland is an English speaking country with a credible education brand and well positioned to benefit from this trend**
- **Education has been a constant topic in the main political speeches on Irish-Asian relations and in the key strategy documents on the matter**

A Decade of the Asia Strategy

The report “A Decade of the Asian Strategy: 1999-2009” saw

1. **Dramatic increases in key measures including:**
 - Exports from Ireland
 - The number of Irish companies trading in Asia
 - Effort and resources into raising awareness and forging long term institutional connections
 2. **Development of targets and priorities for the second 5 years of the strategy**
 - The report identified China as one of 8 countries for prioritised attention
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The Role of Education

- **Further development of bilateral trade would require *“advancement not only of economic and trade relationships but (also) across ... social and cultural dimensions”* .**
- **The primary objective for the next 5 years was *“to intensify the levels of political, business and other forms of interaction ... so that Ireland benefits to a significantly greater extent from the trade and other benefits”* .**

The Role of Education

- **Successful establishment of businesses in Asian markets requires “*proper planning and resource commitment*”; and that “*this can present significant challenges for smaller companies*” .**
 - **The reference to resource commitment would include human resources. Education and academic research would have significant roles in providing the human resources.**

The Role of Education

- ***Establishment of Institutes of Chinese Studies to enhance the understanding of Chinese language and culture in Ireland“***
 - ***Two Institutes were established in 2006***
 - ***UCD and UCC***

The Role of Education

- The Asia Strategy recognised
- *immediate benefits in additional expenditures* by foreign students
 - *a wide range of longer term benefits.* The longer term benefits include human resources equipped to drive business between Ireland and its Asian markets.
- The Asia Strategy created a number of measures to encourage development of sustainable educational links including:
 - *Scholarship* schemes to attract top Asian graduates and students to Ireland

Political Support

High level political exchanges including
Taoiseach visits

- Bertie Ahern in January 2005
 - Brian Cowen in October 2008
 - Enda Kenny 2012
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October 2008

- An intergovernmental agreement Mutual Recognition of Qualifications
 - The opening of two Confucius Institutes in Ireland
 - at University College Dublin (UCD) with Renmin University
 - at University College Cork (UCC) with Shanghai University
 - The Establishment of Irish Studies in China:
 - NUI Maynooth / Beijing Foreign Studies University: Irish Studies Centre
 - MUI Maynooth / Beijing University: Sino-Irish Educational Centre
 - Creation of Annual governmental scholarships
 - An agreement on PhD cooperation between Ireland and China
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The Irish in Asia

Discovery and creation

- Creation of New embassies and support agencies in Asia IDA EI
- Irish Asian Pacific Business forum
- Irish Chambers of Commerce
- Asia as the newest GAA Province
- Mobilisation of the Irish Asian diaspora

The Irish Asian Diasphora

- Farnleigh 1 Changing the agenda
- The Farnleigh fellowships
- Irish Industry supported 25 scholars
- MBS Asian Management with Nanyang Business School Singapore
- Year two recruitment completed 240 applicants

Executive Development

- Development of :on line training modules
- Co authored with Chinese experts
- ecommerce accessed
- Customised and generic workshops
- Creation of Asian focused HR strategy at an individual organisational level in process

Ireland as a Hub

- History of working between Giants
- Facilitating and interpretation skills
- Historically USA Portal to Europe
- Future gazing
- Asian portal to Europe
- And education as the critical means

The UCC Experience

- The need for quality education on Chinese matters will be readily appreciated in the context of the growing importance of China
- Demonstrated that Ireland has a culture of openness to international possibilities and an Irish Institute of Chinese Studies (IICS) would stimulate and facilitate Irish energies in this direction
- This can be achieved at modest cost relative to Ireland/China trade volumes

The UCC Experience

- The Irish Institute of Chinese Studies at UCC (IICS UCC) was established in June 2006.
- UCC believed itself to be well placed to compete for position in the Chinese Studies market:
- The Vision
- A broad range of courses
- Teaching and research expertise
- Large and attractive campus; Long-established scholastic tradition
- Credibility and a record of delivery at international level

The UCC Experience

Objective: To *Implement the 'Asia Strategy'* and beyond and to directly and indirectly contribute to the economic, educational and cultural development of Ireland.

Aim:

- ***Produce an Irish generation*** who can effectively deal with China in the 21st Century
- ***Educate the general public*** and enhance mutual understanding between Ireland and China.
- ***Promote multi-disciplinary research*** on contemporary issues in China and Greater China.
- ***Assist the International Education Office*** to provide educational opportunity for Chinese students and create a Chinese constituency with knowledge of, affection for, and links with Ireland.

Produce an Irish generation who can effectively deal with China in the 21st Century

- Five taught degree programmes in which the students spend from three months to one year at one of the Chinese partner universities; Shanghai or Guangzhou. The courses are:
 - BA in Chinese Studies (4 years programme)
 - BCom (International) with Chinese Studies (4 years programme)
 - HDip in Contemporary Chinese Culture and Business (1 year)
 - MA in Contemporary Chinese Culture and Business (1 year)
 - MBS Asian Business
 - MPhil and PhD in Chinese Studies
 - Post experience and executive workshops
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Produce an Irish generation who can effectively deal with China in the 21st Century

- *Quality Teaching*: the 2008 European Language Award for developing innovative methods of teaching Chinese in Irish Higher Education.
- The Chinese Proficiency Test Centre (HSK) in Ireland is established at UCC.
- Presently in excess of 165 students are taking Chinese Studies degree programmes which include a wide range of subjects e.g. history, culture, sociology, politics, economy and commerce.
- *Integration* of the University's ethnic Chinese and other nationalities: Learning "buddy" system. Chinese and Irish students pair and help each other
Chinese Studies Society - student body - at UCC

Educate the general public and enhance mutual understanding between Ireland and China

- UCC/ Shanghai University's Confucius Institute partnership strongly involved:
 - visiting language teachers and executive support from Shanghai University
 - A library of 4,000 Chinese books
 - Funds which we direct to language and cultural activities reaches out to the wider University and Public
 - Promote Chinese language and culture in schools in Cork:
 - Teaching Chinese at 24 schools with 850 students
 - Evening classes in Mandarin for the general public
 - *Certificate in Chinese* for adults education
 - Special language classes for special groups, such as Cork City Council
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Promote multi-disciplinary research on contemporary issues in China and Greater China.

- Host and co-host four international conferences between 2006-9
- Host *Asian Ambassadors Round Table Discussion* twice in 2008 and 2009
- Launched a book series on Irish Asia Strategy and Irish China Relations
Staff members are actively undertaking research in their specialised areas
- PhD supervision (20 PhDs)
- A centre of Chinese Studies in Ireland and an important platform for the intersection of policy and research

Assist UCC'S International Office

- IICS and the International Office have supported each other to create an environment
- in which the traditional role of accepting students has been changed; and
 - where interconnected global culture is celebrated at UCC - a 21st century international university

Conclusion

- Our students have a strong sense of mission that they are preparing to pathfind for Ireland in the changing economic and political landscapes of the 21st Century.
- Our students, colleague departments, and external partners have all shared their energies with us and helped us to our goals.
- We look forward with a spirit of optimism to consolidating and deepening our achievements both in Chinese and in wider Asian studies.

The Asian Studies Association Ireland

The School of Asian Studies

- Noted that *“a better understanding of Asia and its peoples is important to the development of sound economic and trading relationships.”*
 - The Asia Studies Ireland Association (2008)
 - The UCC School of Asian Studies (2009)
 - They should play their educational role in Ireland's Asia Strategy and should do their parts to ensure that Ireland is globally competitive in terms of its ability to deal with China and Asia in the 21st century.
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Next ...

- The present Asia Strategy is clear on the basic educational tools for developing Ireland's capacities and on the opportunities to do business with China. It has focused on developing business volumes, relationships and institutions.
 - Educationally, the world is moving towards the challenge and opportunity of the East. In England in 2007 more than 10% of secondary schools were teaching Mandarin at some level. Ireland Inc must compete for future market share in China.
 - For Ireland to continue to proactively respond to Chinese opportunities then Irish efforts in Chinese education must be redoubled by formally promoting Chinese language and culture in the curriculum of secondary schools in Ireland.
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The Status Quo

- In 2008, nearly 40,000 students (39,431) took modern languages at Leaving Cert level. The split in languages was:
 - *French* 70.2%
 - *German* 18.9%
 - *Spanish* 7.5%
 - *Italian* 0.7%.
 - Other languages 2.7%. Of these languages there are only approved syllabuses for Russian, Japanese and Arabic. Additional languages are provided on request, notably Polish and Lithuanian.
- In summary, foreign languages at Leaving Cert are dominated by French, with German and Spanish showing respectably. Chinese does not feature at all.

The Future: Education in A Strategy for Asia

- The 2004 Asia Strategy review concluded that the most important indicator of success at the end of 2009 will be the extent to which Ireland has further developed its export trade with the priority Asian countries.
- However, the business levels and relationships envisaged by the strategy will increasingly be sustained and developed by new generations.
- **Therefore, I recommend that in the years to come, Ireland should aim also to judge the success of the Strategy by resourcing and measuring:**
 - The quantity and quality of its young people and adults that it has empowered for China and Asia
 - Those that are in the pipeline in the Higher and Lower education sectors.

The Future: Education in A Strategy for Asia

- The current economic climate can be a major driver for the acceleration of an initiative that can reposition Ireland to be able to assert a new international competitive advantage.