

News story: UK/ Egyptian workshop on Higher Education

On 11 February leaders of universities across Egypt were invited to a workshop at the British Embassy in Cairo to share best practice on improving higher education, by giving university teachers the recognition they deserve for their work, and ensuring that students leave university with the skills they need for the modern job market.

The workshop, delivered by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the British Government's Department for International Trade, was attended by Prof Dr Mohamed Salheen, Adviser to the Minister of Higher Education & Scientific Research, as well the British Ambassador to Egypt, John Casson, and Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP, UK Trade Envoy to Egypt.

HEA is a UK-based organisation which works with ministries, universities and individual academics across the world to help them improve education standards. For teachers, this includes ensuring that systems are in place to recognise and reward good teaching. For students, it means ensuring that students stay in university, get thorough assessment and constructive feedback on their efforts during their studies, and leave university with the skills they need for the modern workplace.

British Ambassador John Casson said:

Giving young Egyptians the chance for world class education is at the heart of the UK's partnership with Egypt. When you put together world class UK university expertise and Egypt's best young talent and institutions there is no limit to what we can achieve together. Everywhere I go I am inspired by the talent and ambition of young Egyptians and this workshop is a fantastic opportunity to share ideas that will help teachers and students succeed in giving Egypt excellent universities and young people with the skills to succeed in the modern world.

Ian Hall, HEA Partnership Development Manager, said:

We are delighted to have this opportunity to speak to senior university leaders in Egypt. While every country is different, we've seen that higher education providers across the globe face many of the same issues. We'll be sharing lessons learned from the HEA's work across the world, including from our projects in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Oman, and how these could be applied within an Egyptian context. Our aim is to promote teaching excellence and to enable student success. An important route to achieving student success is by motivating great teaching in higher education through the reward and recognition of those who deliver

it. We've also decided to focus on student employability which is increasingly under scrutiny from governments and employers, quite apart from being critically important to students themselves. We want to highlight some of the work we have done to help institutions develop holistic strategies to supporting employability, particularly through curriculum design.

News story: Latest Carillion update from the Official Receiver

A spokesperson for the Official Receiver said:

"Arrangements have now been finalised to transfer prison facilities management and defence bases catering and cleaning contracts to new providers and as a result we have been able to safeguard employment for a further 4,418 employees.

"Ongoing employment has been confirmed for more than a third of Carillion's workforce so far as part of the liquidation. There is a lot of interest from potential purchasers in the contracts the company delivered which will see the number of jobs safeguarded continue to increase.

"Employment could not be secured for a further 59 employees working on paused construction projects and regrettably they will leave the business later this week. Those who have lost their jobs will be able to find support through Jobcentre Plus' Rapid Response Service and are also entitled to make a claim for statutory redundancy payments.

"Most employees who have transferred so far have done so on existing or similar terms and I will continue to facilitate this wherever possible as we work to find new providers for Carillion's other contracts.

"The process to find new suppliers to deliver Carillion's contracts continues. I am continuing to engage with staff, elected employee representatives and unions to keep them informed as these arrangements are confirmed."

- in total, to date 6,668 jobs have been saved and 989 jobs have been made redundant through the liquidation
- further information about rights in redundancy is available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)
- continued support by Carillion's public and private sector customers is enabling as many employees as possible to be retained in the interim until all contracts have been worked through

Press release: Foreign Secretary holds talks with Aung San Suu Kyi

Lasting an hour, the talks focused on the Rohingya crisis and took place a day after the Foreign Secretary visited Cox's Bazar where he saw first hand the scale of the humanitarian disaster.

During the meeting Mr Johnson expressed his deep concern over the current situation and urged Burma to work with the international community to create conditions in Rakhine which will allow Rohingya refugees to return safely, voluntarily and in dignity to their homes under international oversight.

The Foreign Secretary also urged for the involvement of the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) in the repatriation of the Rohingyas and raised the plight of two Reuters journalists currently detained in Burma.

Speaking after the meeting Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

I have held talks with Aung San Suu Kyi and discussed the range of challenges facing her country.

I spoke to her about my own experience witnessing the terrible conditions of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, and my deep concern about their future.

I underlined the importance of the Burmese authorities carrying out a full and independent investigation into the violence in Rakhine, and to hold to account those responsible for human rights violations.

I underlined the urgency of creating the conditions in Rakhine that could make it a safe place for the Rohingya refugees to return to, free from fear, and in the knowledge that their basic rights will be respected and upheld.

The UK is already a major donor to the humanitarian crisis. We will continue to use all our diplomatic tools and influence on the global stage to find a way to provide a better future for the Rohingya community.

I encouraged her efforts to broker a nationwide peace settlement to put to an end seventy years of conflict in her homeland.

News story: £30 million investment in revolutionary V2G technologies

New technology which will unlock the potential for electric vehicles to help power people's homes is being boosted by almost £30 million in government funding.

Through the Industrial Strategy the government is committed to becoming a world leader in shaping the future of mobility and in the design and development of the clean technologies of the future. This investment will help deliver on that ambition, supporting vehicle-to-grid (V2G) technologies that could enable electric cars and other vehicles to deliver electricity back to the smart grid, to light homes and power businesses.

The funding has been awarded to 21 V2G projects, to pay for research and design and development, with the aim of exploring and trialling both the technology itself and commercial opportunities.

These schemes, including EDF Energy's V2GO scheme, will demonstrate how energy stored in electric vehicle batteries could be borrowed by the electricity system during peak hours, before being recharged during the off-peak in time for their drivers to set off on their next journey.

Using electric vehicles in dense urban areas like Oxford will significantly reduce local emissions and improve air quality, boosting the quality of life for residents and benefitting businesses. Led by EDF Energy R&D UK, the 'V2GO' is a large scale demonstration of V2G charging in Oxford using 100 electric fleet vehicles (cars and vans) from a number of organisations including several delivery and taxi companies.

The project will develop, trial and evaluate potential business models for fleet operators' use of electric vehicles and their suitability for vehicle to grid (V2G) charging.

The consortium is made up of 8 organisations with expertise in energy and power markets and systems, fleet operation value chains and electric mobility: EDF Energy R&D UK, University of Oxford, Oxfordshire County Council, Arrival, E0 Charging, Upside Energy, and Fleet Innovation.

At the same time these electric vehicles will provide a cleaner alternative to many of the fleet vehicles operated in UK cities, including Royal Mail vans, and Addison Lee taxis.

Transport Minister, Jesse Norman said:

As the number of electric vehicles grows and their battery

capabilities increase, there is a huge opportunity for them to make a significant contribution to a smart grid.

These projects are at the cutting edge of their field. Just like the visionary designs of Brunel and Stephenson in transport, they could revolutionise the ways in which we store and manage electricity, both now and in the future.

Business Minister Richard Harrington said:

The UK's automotive industry is a great British success story, and as set out in our ambitious Industrial Strategy we are determined to lead the way in innovative, low-emission vehicle production.

We have shown that growing the economy while cutting emissions, can, and should, go hand in hand. Vehicle-to-grid technology provides another opportunity for the UK to showcase to the world our leading expertise in game-changing automotive and low carbon technologies.

Dan Bentham, Head of R&D, Smart Customers, EDF Energy said:

Electric vehicles will play an important role in the future of UK energy and its economy. They will have a beneficial impact on the environment by reducing emissions and improving air quality.

Through our research, EDF Energy will use new technologies, business models and smart systems to make low carbon transport, and the infrastructure and market conditions needed for its success, a reality.

The investment will help deliver on the government's ambition, set out in the recently published [Automotive Sector Deal](#) , to be at the forefront of low-emission and electric vehicle production, powering the next generation of innovative, environmentally-friendly vehicles.

The competition for government funding, run by Innovate UK, saw a host of winners including SSE Services, Nissan, OVO Energy, Octopus Energy, Cisco, Flexisolar and AT Kearney.

Innovate UK recently concluded the assessment process, with OLEV and BEIS providing almost £30 million to grant fund industry led collaborative R&D in electric 'vehicle to grid' technology for up to 70% of project costs.

Press release: Welsh Secretary announces trade and investment visit to New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia

A three-day trade mission to New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, led by Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns, will begin today.

With the aim of attracting American businesses to invest in Wales and build on a trading relationship already worth more than £33.5 billion, Mr Cairns will meet with companies operating in sectors from cyber security to pharmaceuticals.

He will be joined by two Board of Trade Advisers: former Chairman of Cardiff Airport and Welsh Development Agency, Lord Rowe-Beddoe and Chief of Staff for Manchester Airport Group Collette Roche.

Secretary of State for Wales and Board of Trade Adviser, Alun Cairns, said:

Wales and the United States are close trading partners – and I want to ensure that we continue to build on this important relationship by creating more investment and exporting opportunities for companies from both countries.

US firms invest more than £30 billion in the UK and our commercial relationship is stronger than ever. We want to see that partnership continue to grow and flourish, making Wales the place of choice for investors.

In the year 2016-17, the Department for International Trade (DIT) supported 85 investment projects in Wales, generating 2,581 jobs. In the same year, Welsh companies exported more than £16 billion to the world's largest economy, up 18.8% on the previous year.

International Trade Secretary and President of the Board of Trade, Dr Liam Fox, said:

I'm delighted to see this Board of Trade delegation head across the Atlantic, seeking to attract investment into Wales – bringing prosperity, jobs and growth.

As our largest trading partner, the US remains an enormously important market for Wales as well as the rest of the UK, with

exports of Welsh goods to the US increasing by almost 19% last year.

The Department for International Trade's expert advisers stand ready in 108 countries across the world, to support British companies to export and help overseas investors find the right partners in the UK.

Just one of the Welsh companies taking advantage of the huge opportunities offered by the United States is Halen Môn – Anglesey Sea Salt.

The ambitious North Wales company first sent their product abroad in 2001, finding an American distributor shortly after. Their sea salt is now enjoyed in 22 countries around the world.

Used by chefs and food lovers, it has been served at the London 2012 Olympics, political summits and royal weddings and the US market continues to be one of the most important to the company.

Co-Founder of Halen Môn, Alison Lea-Wilson, said:

We have found exporting to the US an extremely positive process, and would urge other Welsh businesses to look to the market for the range of opportunities it offers.

Minister for Investment Graham Stuart will also be heading to Boston and Miami later this month to conduct a series of bilateral meetings with business leaders to discuss investment opportunities.