

Welcome speech – David

Good afternoon and welcome to the Royal Institution and BIEA 2019 International STEM Youth Innovation Competition.

I wish to thank you all for your attendance, interest, support and encouragement. And I give my particular thanks to:

- Dr Alex Holmes for hosting this conference;
- Gareth Bullock, BIEA President;
- Howard Jones from our partner the Bornfree Foundation;
- Mr Holmes OBE from Taylor Wimpey.
- all of our presenters;
- and our supporters; Microsoft, the New Scientist, the British Science Association, STEM Sussex and the Royal Institution.

Today would not be possible without your support (applause).

I wish to say a few words about BIEA, the organisation that has brought us all here today and put on this wonderful event. The British International Education Association, BIEA, is a young non-profit organisation with a simple mission to promote the best of British educational practice overseas and encourage, develop, share and learn from best practice we find around the world.

I have had the privilege of being the STEM Chairman of the BIEA board for the last year and what I have seen has filled my heart with admiration. It all came from an idea developed by a group of committed educators who came together shortly before the 2016 Brexit referendum – perhaps a simpler time - in order to create an organisation that would safeguard and promote the best of British education. It would be fair to say that the organisation has flourished beyond their wildest dreams and I would suggest that its ambition has never been more important, as the UK seeks to find a new path in the world.

BIEA is now a leading champion of British early years education in the China market and we are looking forward to opening an office in Dubai later this year, which is an important development.

Perhaps more closely linked to what we are talking about today is that BIEA is also championing science, technology, engineering and maths education (STEM), across the globe through our S-league and competition programs.

It is our mission to inspire young people from around the world to engage in STEM education and careers, so that they may create a future world where we all would wish to live, work and thrive.

Through a packed programme of presentations on technology, conservation and a panel discussion on STEM education, we hope we will encourage you to join us in making this happen.

Thank you.

As we have heard today, we are living in a world of advanced technological development. Our environment and our planet as a whole, is being impacted by technology and an ever larger portion of its population is dependent upon integrating technological concepts. Therefore, STEM education has never been more important.

High quality STEM education has many benefits. It will benefit our young people as they meet the global demand for STEM in employment and it will help business, industry and other organisations outperform.

However, I believe that there is also a bigger mission - which is to make STEM a force for good in the world. In the right hands, directed by the right purpose and shaped by the right attitudes, values and behaviours, technology can help us create a future world where we we would wish to visit, to live and work – a world where we, our fellow creatures and the wider environment could thrive.

It is with these thoughts in mind, I wish, on your behalf, to thank our speakers and presenters, and all of you for your wonderful support and encouragement. We hope to see you soon and in the meantime, as we close this conference, the BIEA team and I will be here afterwards, if you wish to ask us any questions. Thank you.