

Simon Appleton

Founder & Director | International Relations Specialist

New Zealand

Professional Summary

International relations specialist with over a decade of experience supporting New Zealand local government, iwi, education providers, and community organisations in structured international engagement across Asia. Founder of Eastern Bridge Limited (est. 2014) and Eastern Bridge Education (est. 2022). Extensive lived and professional experience in China and South Korea, with strong capability in cross-cultural negotiation, relationship management, education pathways, and governance advisory.

Professional Experience

- Founder & Director, Eastern Bridge Limited (2014–Present) – Providing structured international relations management for New Zealand councils, iwi, and schools.
- Founder, Eastern Bridge Education (2022–Present) – Established a NZQA-registered Private Training Establishment delivering community-based education and training programmes.
- International Relations Advisory – Supported 36 local governments (2017–2019) in sister-city relationship management, strategic planning, delegation coordination, and Asia engagement.
- Central Government Advisory – Contributed to migrant engagement and multicultural strategy development during COVID-19; delivered nationwide Migrant Perception Survey.
- Honorary Consul for the Republic of Korea (Hawke's Bay) – Supporting diplomatic and community engagement functions.

Education

- Master's Degree in Chinese Law (Foreign Policy Focus)
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) – Asian Studies & International Relations
- Trinity TESOL Certificate

Languages

English (Native), Mandarin Chinese (Fluent), Korean (Conversational)

Core Competencies

- International Relations & Sister-City Management
- Local Government Advisory
- Cross-Cultural Negotiation
- Education & Youth Exchange Programme Design
- Governance & Risk Framework Development
- Asia Engagement Strategy