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Successful SACE International webinars focus on the Future of Schools

Designed for the South Asia education sector, two online webinars were recently presented by SACE International, examining education transformation to meet the needs of an ever-changing world.

Principals, teachers and officials from top educational institutions across India and Bangladesh joined the webinars to find out how the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) is actively leading educational reform in Australia and how this innovative curriculum approach could be introduced into their schools. The recorded sessions continue to be available on the SACE International website.

Discussions addressed how education is on the pathway of change to transform and fit the needs of an ever-changing world and were framed within the context of the national education policy objectives for India and Bangladesh.

The webinars featured a keynote address by distinguished scholar Professor Martin Westwell and an opening address by Austrade Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner Dr Monica Kennedy.

Bringing his vast knowledge and understanding of working with education systems and using evidence to impact the direction of education at the SACE Board, Professor Martin Westwell shared his insights about the future of schools.

"It's important for us to consider what is our purpose and our role as educators in the system. It is not just about the delivery of schooling, and it's not just about getting students good grades. It is about what is the promise we are making to students and how we are going to meet that promise," Professor Westwell said.

"We need to strive to get the balance right for students and not rely on just examinations to test their understanding. We need to provide other ways for students to demonstrate their learning. As educators we need to be supporting students to develop their thinking, to use and expand their knowledge and to use their judgement, so that they can thrive in the future. When we are teaching to improve learning ability, we set students up to be successful both at university and life."

The SACE Future of Schools webinars were generously supported by the relevant Australian embassies and the Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade).

Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner Dr Monica Kennedy recognised the significant benefits of sharing insights about the future direction of education reform.

"The webinars are an opportunity to experience Australia's innovative teaching, practice and pedagogy, which plays a pivotal role in preparing our learners to thrive in the 21st century," Dr Kennedy said.

"The webinars are also a testament to Australia's strong relationship with South Asia, a relationship that is growing in strength and one that is flourishing between our countries."

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Currently the internationally recognised SACE qualification is taught in schools across China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Vanuatu and New Caledonia.

With the successful completion of SACE, graduates gain an international passport that opens doors to top universities in Australia, United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Malaysia and Singapore.

The SACE program has proven to be COVID resilient, an important benefit to school communities and students all over the world. Coursework, projects and collaborative activities make up 70 percent of the final grade, so results are not wholly determined by a final examination. Examinations for many major subjects are offered online, and the flexibility provided by a blended delivery model allows for smooth transitions without compromise to the academic integrity of the program.

With the SACE program, teachers and leaders are supported by professional learning opportunities so they can deliver the best outcomes for students.

More than 40,000 students have graduated from the SACE International program since its inception in 1982.

For more information about SACE International visit www.sacei.edu.au or email SACE.International@sa.gov.au. The webinar recordings remain online for viewing at <https://sacei.edu.au/discover/webinars>.

Feedback from attendees of SACE Future of Schools webinars

"The ideas resonated with my school's vision and mission, and it makes me proud to know that we are going in the right direction. The same now must be taken to the grass root level."
Era Dogra, Genesis Global School, India.

"It makes me more confident to understand the needs of the school and the future requirements, how well we can be prepared."
Smita Chandra, Genesis Global School, India.

"It was a thought-provoking session enlightening us on the challenges of the education system globally and how it can be resolved."
Sunita Goyle, Podar International School, India.

"I sincerely appreciate the expertise of the panel. They were amazing. It was thought-provoking."
Jegan Abraham Selvaraj, The Cathedral & John Connon School, India.

"The concepts of asking 'non-Googleable' questions, the power of instilling agency, human connection and belonging in a student were undoubtably my biggest takeaways."
Ruhbayna Chowdhury, Chittagong Grammar School, Bangladesh.

"The SACE International of South Australia Webinar was indeed an opportunity for academics of different continents to brainstorm through compassion and suggestions, on the best ways of educating students of the world, through joy and mindfulness."
Safia Ghazi Rahman, Principal, Sunshine Grammar School, Bangladesh.