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**HSBC holds first overseas education webinar – a virtual connect with education experts from Australia, UK and Malaysia**

The global pandemic is having a massive impact on international education, leaving parents concerned about the uncertainty impacting colleges and universities. Amidst this, parents are evaluating the educational path for their children with a slightly different lens and level of precaution.

In view of these changes, HSBC conducted its first Overseas Education webinar for customers on 17 July. The live session was attended by more than 170 customers, with close to 300 people registering for the event.

The topical and informative webinar on ***'COVID-19 impact on overseas education and how to cope with the current situation'*** brought together education experts from Australia, UK and Malaysia. The session addressed the pandemic induced challenges on global education and impact of admission for 2020-2021. It also highlighted the opportunities for Sri Lankan students with views from university experts on current learning platform for new students and how they are adapting to uncertain times to assure higher quality education; and advising parents to help their children prepare better.

The session was moderated by Tharanga Gunasekera, Head of Marketing & Communications, HSBC Sri Lanka. Panelists included Jack Johnston, Regional Manager, Monash University Australia, Shihui Pang, UK Consulting Program Manager at Crimson Education, UK, Andrianto Saputra, Customer Relations Management and International Recruitment, Sunway Education Group Malaysia. Covering another important aspect on navigating through the COVID -19 volatility and saving for future education was well explained by Simin Zhuo, Insights and Research Analyst, Wealth Products and Services, HSBC UK.

Speaking during the session, Country Head of Wealth & Personal Banking for HSBC Sri Lanka, Nadeesha Senaratne commented "Over 20,000 Sri Lankan students study overseas at any given time in key education corridors such as Australia, UK, Malaysia, India and the US, but possess little knowledge of these countries from an offshore study perspective.

As an international bank that is present in all these key education corridors, HSBC can help them navigate their overseas education journey, and facilitate their international banking needs with HSBC's integrated international student proposition."

The interactive discussion with university experts helped parents to be future ready while making a university selection for their children. It also highlighted on aspects of being financially ready, giving parents a base to start their future planning. Advice to explore opportunities for long-term, prepare for shock and unexpected; and manage the currency fluctuations were some of the top tips from a financial viewpoint which were stressed upon.

**Key messages from the experts during the session included:**

1. Students should be prepared for a blended version of online & face-to-face teaching for semester starting this year as this just for short term given the current situation. If students want an on campus experience they can opt for a study centre in Sri Lanka.
2. Sri Lankan A/L qualifications is an entry level for students looking to study in the UK and Malaysia, which gives students an advantage to stay ahead of the curve and meet university requirements. Also international school students will be eligible through the Cambridge or Edexcel results. Sri Lankan students are underrepresented at the top universities in the UK, and there is much opportunity for them to follow courses in medicine, veterinary, law, dentistry and engineering.
3. With a large diaspora of Sri Lankans in many Australian cities, Australia is one of the preferred destinations for local students and offers Sri Lankan students the opportunity to study at some of the top ranked universities in the world.
4. Importance of planning ahead for the long term investment of overseas education. The average cost of studying abroad is around \$36,000 per full academic year (According to research by the International Institute of Education, HSBC International Education report, 2019). This is why it's important to have a goal and make a plan to achieve that goal.
5. Sri Lankan students have post work visa in UK, Australia and Malaysia which allows them to look for employment post study.

The webinar received very good response from the participants, with many who joined the session finding it relevant and stating the event to have generated their interest in banking with HSBC.

HSBC plans to conduct more such webinars covering relevant topics in future so that prospective parents and students can be better equipped on their overseas education pursuits.

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**Media enquiries to:**

Tharanga Gunasekera +94 11 5451350

[tharangagunasekera@hsbc.com.lk](mailto:tharangagunasekera@hsbc.com.lk)

**Note to Editors:**

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