



MELBOURNE

Victoria
Australia

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION – MARKET DEVELOPMENT PLAN SOUTH ASIA

The Victorian Government's one- to two-year strategic priorities for International Education

MARKET INSIGHTS

- South Asia, with its young population and rising middle class, is one of the largest education markets in the world; however, key education output indicators lag behind global averages. South Asia's adult literacy rate is around 67 per cent, with its youth literacy rate at 83 per cent.¹ Rising demand for higher education in South Asia is currently not being met.
- South Asia is the least integrated region in the world in terms of trade and economic connectivity, with the second highest intra-regional trade costs. It is one of the regions most vulnerable to climate change and natural disaster. It also faces long-term water, food and energy security challenges.²
- Moderate but steady trade flows between Australia and South Asian countries are expected to continue, with the exception of India, which is projected to grow more rapidly. Deeper and broader engagement is predicted through closer educational, cultural and people-to-people links.³

¹ 'Education: Overview', *UNICEF Data*, accessed 9/11/2016, <http://data.unicef.org/topic/education/overview/>

² & ³ South Asia Regional Development Program Strategy 2013–2017, 2013, AusAID, Canberra

COUNTRY EDUCATION PROFILES

India

India is experiencing a renewed optimism following the election of the Modi Government in 2014. The government's *Make in India* strategy and the overhaul of monetary policy aims to consolidate India's stabilising economic position and reinvigorate stalled reforms, including in education. With India expected to have the largest tertiary-age population in the world by 2020, education and job creation remain key priorities.

Under its *Skill India* initiatives, the Indian Government has set itself a target of training 400 million citizens by 2022. This flagship program includes incentives such as skills training and providing financial rewards to the participants on completion of their training. Over the coming years, 2.4 million Indians are expected to benefit from this scheme.

The Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN) in Higher Education is aimed at encouraging the talent pool of scientists and entrepreneurs internationally to engage with the institutes of higher education in India.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka continues to stand out as one of the fastest-growing countries in the region. The Sirisena Government, elected in 2015, is looking to improve education and training to boost productivity and create a knowledge- and innovation-led economy. While the government is progressing its plans to become a regional education hub, the local higher education market remains heavily oversubscribed and presents an opportunity for expansion in distance learning, transnational education programs and study abroad.

The *National Policy Framework on Higher Education and Technical and Vocational Education* outlines a vision for post-school education and aims to produce globally employable graduates and world market-oriented entrepreneurs by 2020.

Pakistan

Reforms are underway to stabilise Pakistan's economy and create conditions for meaningful growth and job creation. The government has committed to improving higher education provision and raising literacy levels. The education sector faces significant political, security and funding-related challenges. The poor quality of provision and current lack of places mean that Pakistanis are seeking opportunities to study abroad.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh continues to see strong economic growth, largely on the back of increased remittances and exports. Demand for education is increasing, outstripping supply. A small but rapidly expanding share of the population is progressing to higher education. Weak infrastructure, a poor regulatory and business environment, and ongoing political unrest remain obstacles to investment.

Nepal

The *Education Sector Reform Plan 2009–2015 (SSRP)* aims to equip students with employability skills that will accelerate their transition from school to work, and help them access career opportunities that are available inside Nepal as well as in neighbouring countries and global markets. However, economic growth has stalled due to a major earthquake in April 2015. While the education sector continues its reform path, young Nepalese are heading abroad in increasingly large numbers in search of study and employment. Access to affordable tertiary education is another major challenge facing the country.

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Support Victorian vocational education and training (VET) providers to respond to opportunities in targeted industries and states across India

Rationale

As India looks to meet the challenge of developing an industry-ready workforce of 400 million by the beginning of the next decade, it is increasingly turning to international partners for collaboration. Recent reforms aim to create favourable conditions for international vocational education and training providers, whose capital, experience and reputation will assist in development of the sector.

Reform to India's VET sector since 2013 has seen India establish a competency-based National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF), coupled with a suite of National Occupation Standards (NOS) set out by industry-led Sector Skills Councils (SSCs).

Key actions

- Build and strengthen relationships with industry peak bodies and agencies involved in workforce development to understand training needs and position Victorian VET providers to respond to them.
- Develop collateral profiling Victorian VET capabilities to support emerging opportunities.
- Support providers to work collaboratively to secure high-value offshore projects.
- Facilitate and engage with inbound delegations to showcase Victoria's approach to skills development and industry engagement.

Stakeholders

Targeted institutions in India, industry peak bodies and government authorities in India, Victorian VET providers, the TAFE Development Centre

2. Promote and position Victoria's research and development (R&D) capabilities across India's education and corporate sectors

Rationale

India's gross domestic spend on R&D as a percentage of its GDP is close to 0.95 per cent, just below 1.1 per cent for Brazil and 1.5 per cent for China. Indian industry and university research collaboration is at a relatively nascent stage and is limited to the Indian Tier-1 universities and institutes. The latter includes the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT), Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIIT).

Key actions

- Showcase Victoria's research strengths, discipline-based expertise and research infrastructure to build exports and investment.
- Leverage relationships with research academies to promote research partnerships in priority areas.
- Work collaboratively with stakeholders in India to identify suitable partners for Victorian universities and research institutes.
- Leverage scholarship funding in India and Victoria to attract talent and advance knowledge and skills.

Stakeholders

Tier-1 universities and institutes, scholarship and research bodies in India, Victorian universities and research institutes, Austrade, Australian Education International (AEI)

3. Promote Victoria as the leading destination in Australia for student experience in the southern states of India – Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh

Rationale

Victoria is well-placed to be a leader in international education in southern India. The region is home to a significant proportion of international students currently studying in Victoria, and consists of a range of favourable factors including demographics, as well as economic, social and political stability.

Key actions

- Build and maintain relationships with government to facilitate access to market opportunities.
- Profile Victoria's education, training and research expertise to education agents.
- Build and strengthen relationships with key scholarship bodies such as JN Tata Endowment, Paul Foundation and Aga Khan to promote Victoria's education offering to potential students.
- Identify and support key education symposiums, student recruitment events and selected education- and research-focused conferences.

Stakeholders

Government education agencies, peak bodies, scholarship bodies and education agents across southern India, Victorian education and training providers

4. Develop relationships with government and relevant agencies to facilitate access to market opportunities for Victorian VET and higher education providers in Sri Lanka

Rationale

Australia remains the number one destination for Sri Lankan students, with around 4500 enrolled in Victoria. There has been an estimated 18 per cent growth in enrolments, mostly brought about by greater economic prosperity following the end of the three-decade long conflict. While there has been engagement by Victorian providers in Sri Lanka for almost two decades, further opportunities could be unlocked by Victorian Government-led activities in this market.

Key actions

- Develop and support relationships with relevant government decision-makers and providers in relation to VET and higher education.
- Support education, training and research capacity building opportunities and education linkages.
- Support Victorian education, training and research providers to work cooperatively to secure high-value offshore projects.

Stakeholders

Relevant government agencies, aid and development partners, Victorian VET and higher education providers

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