

UPF and IAPP Melbourne, Australia Launches Values Education Summit

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Melbourne, Australia -- UPF-Australia and the International Association of Academicians for Peace (IAAP)-Oceania launched the Values Education Summit series with a webinar on "Why Values Education is Important and What Should Values Education Look Like in 2021 and Beyond," on March 27, 2021.

The series, which will be held from 2021 to 2022, is being organized in response to the values challenges currently facing Australia, from the issue of improper sexual ethics to disrespect for women. An impressive line-up of 11 presenters offered a vision for a holistic approach to values education at the virtual event, which was attended by 50 participants. The outcome from it will be a published position paper that will be shared with state and national governments and stakeholders.

Mrs. Marilou Coombe served as the moderator and Dr. Robert S. Kittel, co-chair of UPF-Asia Pacific, gave the opening remarks. He underscored that "Character education helps students develop desirable traits, become productive in the workforce and contribute to society. However, this is not the ultimate goal. The ultimate goal is to become a good couple and good parents."

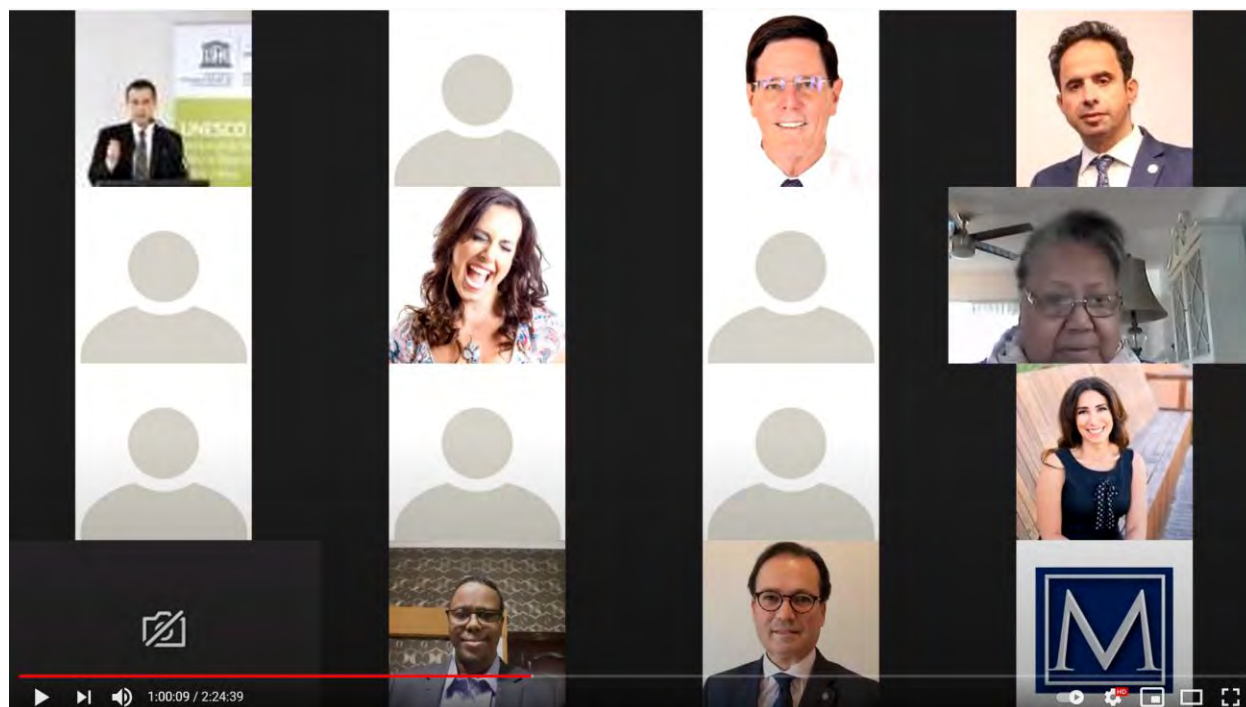
Dr. Anoop Swarup, founder chairman of the Global Knowledge Alliance and vice chancellor of Jagran Lakecity University in Bhopal, India, spoke about the importance of embedding values education into real life, namely experiential learning pedagogies. Dr. Swarup said, "Placing service before self is only possible when kids in their formative years go out into the community and serve."

Mrs. Heather Yelland, founder of The Elevation Company and Green Super Camp Australia, has worked in education and change management for more than 30 years. She spoke on the topic, "Educating the Uniqueness in Each Child," highlighting the need to look at whole child exploration in education. She said, "The ultimate outcome of a high quality education system would be to honor and elevate the uniqueness in every young person so that they ultimately get to live the difference they were born to make." However, the current education system was designed to meet the needs of a society in the industrial era. And in Australia, 72 percent of children's primary learning channel is kinesthetic, but classrooms do not cater to this enough.

Mr. Roland Jabbour, recipient of the Order of Australia Medal (OAM), honorary consul general of the Kingdom of Morocco in the state of Victoria and chairman of the Australian Arabic Council, spoke on "Values Education and Building Bridges in the International Community." He affirmed that values education can form the most powerful bridge for international cooperation. Involved in the promotion of Australian international education for decades, Mr. Jabbour said that he observed firsthand the capacity of innovative education to inspire, develop and unite people from different cultures and to build important links. He argued for an innovative education model that can build bridges between international communities and said, "The centrality of values-based learning offers a way for education to stay responsive and relevant."

Dr. Joy de Leo OAM, founding president of UNESCO-APNIEVE (Asia Pacific Network for International

Education and Values Education) Australia, has worked in education for more than 40 years, involved in policy, curriculum, research, management and teaching. Her experience with Indigenous and migrant communities, Australian and international students, and teachers and teacher educators across the Asia Pacific region led her to explore quality values education. She spoke on the topic of "Quality Values in Education for a Peaceful, Just and Sustainable World." She argued that an integrated values education for the development of the whole person involves experiential learning and whole child learning. Dr. de Leo averred that values in education needs to implicitly inform the hidden curriculum and the whole school ethos as well as be explicitly taught and integrated within the curriculum. She spoke briefly about UNESCO's model of education for the 21st century involving learning to know, do, be and live together. She concluded by saying, "But ultimately for me, the ultimate value is that of love, and as a starting point, the love of others and the natural world."



Dr. Chris Sotiropoulos, CEO and co-founder of Global Opportunities Commercialisation (GOC), spoke on "Entrenching Values Education by Bringing the Community to the Classroom." He contended that engagement by the school and students with the community will help tackle and solve social issues in the community. This approach will embed values education into the consciousness of children, teachers, school leadership, associated families and the community. He said, "When I walk past our well-manicured schools, I look over the fence and wonder, why do we have a fence? It fosters a feeling of psychological distance, which is not good." Dr. Sotiropoulos said an educational model that incorporates the school, the community, faith and family is needed. He also said that we need both emotional and virtuous intelligence.

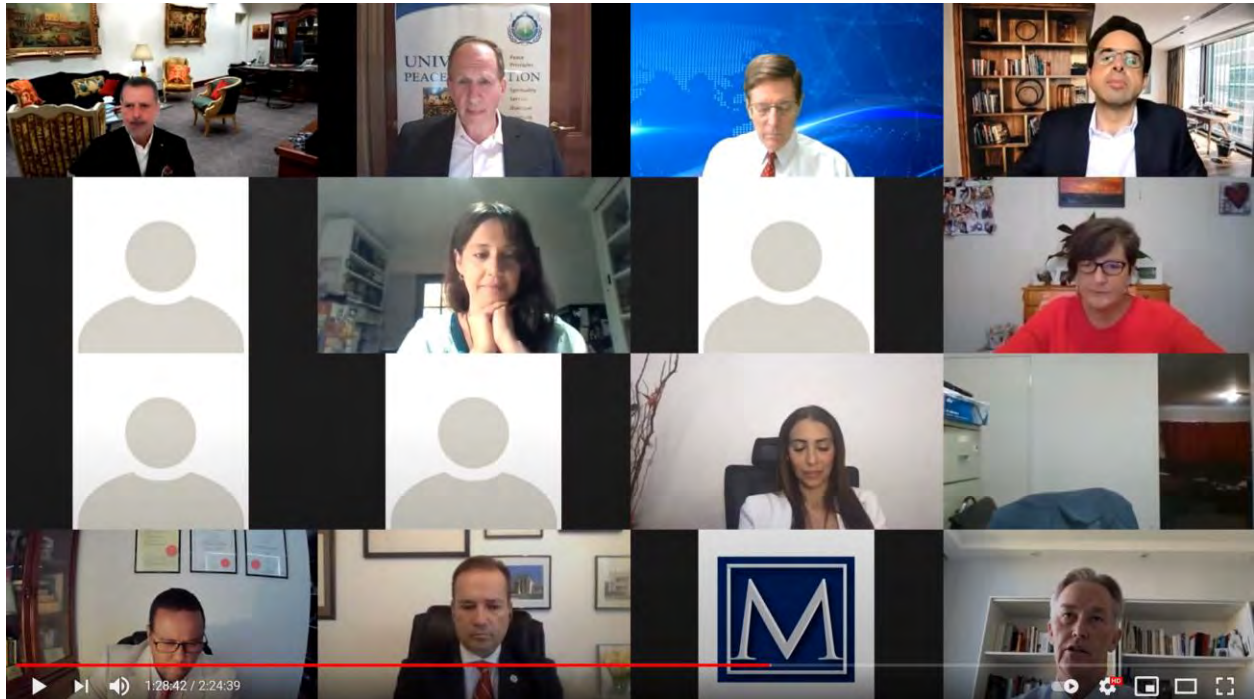
Mrs. Heidi Soliman is the founder of EMPOWER and EVOLVE. . She spoke about "How Values are Our Navigation System – According to What is Installed, the Simple Arrival to the Desired Destination is Achieved or Not." Mrs. Soliman underlined the importance of harmonizing the relationship between mind, body and soul as well as conscious self-reflection, as we mostly operate on autopilot in our daily lives. She discussed the values transitions from victim to understanding, hurt and rejection, to self-acceptance, and from guilt and unworthiness, to forgiveness. She also said that values education needs to come to the home. Parents need to understand that it all starts from the home.

Mr. Ahmed Tohow is deputy chair of the board of directors of the Global Somali Diaspora. Mr. Tohow spoke on the topic of an "Inclusive Education."

He stated that values education involves any implicit or explicit school-oriented activity that promotes students' knowledge and understanding of values, as well as developing the dispositions and skills of learners so that they can endorse specific ethics (values) as an individual and a community member. He averred that access to education, especially for Aboriginals and migrants, is the main hindrance in inculcating values education across Australia. Aboriginals and migrants are under-represented in universities, resulting in lower educational achievement for Aboriginals compared to non-Indigenous students. He said, "Values education must involve fostering the values of equal opportunity, empathy, admiration for the environment and critical assessment."

Mr. David de Carvalho, chief executive officer of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), has extensive experience in leading major reforms at both the national and state levels. The title of his presentation was "The Development of Successful Learners and Active and Engaged Members of Our Community." Mr. de Carvalho started by acknowledging the traditional owners

of the land, pointing out that for them, values education is not separate from formal education. They also understand the importance of connecting with the natural world, as this holds spiritual and moral significance. Mr. de Carvalho said, "I think we all have a lot to learn about values education from our first nation's peoples." He also spoke about the moral challenges facing Australia with respect to sexual ethics. ACARA is currently reviewing ways in which respectful relationships and issues of consent are covered in school curriculums. However, he argued that strengthening the curriculum should not be seen as the solution to this issue. It is not just having the conversation that is important; it is where those conversations are taking place. Having conversations in the classroom is not enough; they must occur around the boardroom and dining room table, at the local bar, as well as in the halls of parliament.



Dr. John Bellavance, coordinator of IAAP-Oceania, spoke about the importance of a holistic education, an education that includes how well individuals manage themselves and their relationships, contribute positively to society and manage their natural environment. These rely on the domains of moral reasoning, moral emotion and moral behavior. Along with fostering intellectual and creative abilities, schools need to foster emotional and social abilities that support wellbeing and connection with others and service learning. Additionally, fostering global citizenship is vital in our global village. Universally shared values, our sense of interdependence and mutual prosperity underpin global citizenship.

Other academics from the IAAP-Oceania and community leaders shared their insights on this topic. Dr. Yamin said that an understanding of values is often missing, while selfish individualism is accelerating, and that this is a timely discussion for global societies. Dr. Nsubuga-Kyobe maintained that a winner-takes-all value creates inequities, and this is why we need transformation learning in the settlement of African Australians and building value systems from the family. He said, "This is a great opportunity and resource to build an improved future, a cohesive human multi-cultural and positive values society." Dr. Rametse said that values education in Africa has been around from time immemorial and is embedded in the African communitarian philosophy of Ubuntu. The health of the community is essential to the health of the individual and the other way around; the person is a person through other people. Dr. Mphande said in a post-modern world where everything goes, it is hard for a young person to even make sense of what is a "value."