

A Lifelong  
Commitment to  
Transforming  
Education

# Hassan Sattar



>>> **An Interview with Hassan Sattar, the Managing Director and CEO of Silver Oaks International Education Services (SOIES) Group**

In this interview, we delve into the remarkable story of how Hassan Sattar, the Managing Director and CEO of Silver Oaks International Education Services (SOIES) Group, embarked on his path to success in the world of education. Join us as Hassan shares his experiences, notable accomplishments, leadership philosophy, and the values that have shaped his journey. Discover what sets SOIES Group apart in the education sector, how Hassan navigated the challenges of a transforming industry, and his aspirations for the future. Get ready to be inspired by Hassan Sattar's relentless pursuit of purpose-driven excellence and his vision for a more inclusive and sustainable educational future.



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**Introduction and Career Inspiration**

Hassan Sattar, 52, serves as the Managing Director and CEO of Silver Oaks International Education Services (SOIES) Group, an institution with a 'Heritage in Education since 1908' that spans five generations and operates across six markets. In his current role, he manages a network of 33 K-12 schools educating over 8,500 students, supported by a staff of 1,200. He also spearheads curriculum innovation and the development of fit-for-purpose teacher training programs. Hassan's journey into the field of edupreneurship was catalyzed by a family crisis that necessitated his return to Pakistan to temporarily manage school affairs. Drawing on his global corporate expertise, he identified a pressing need in the developing world: to deliver high-quality,

affordable education focused on structured life skills for the country's expansive middle class. This realization inspired his deep commitment to educational transformation.

**Key Achievements**

A Chevening Scholar with academic credentials from Punjab, Essex, and Oxford Universities, Hassan Sattar boasts 28 years of diverse professional experience in Oil & Gas, Banking, and Education across 14 markets. At just 34, he was appointed the youngest Global MNC Bank Head in Abu Dhabi in 2007. In 2011, he reinvented himself as an edupreneur and later became an internationally published academic author. Under his visionary leadership, a modest family-run school evolved into an internationally recognized educational enterprise, earning accolades such as 'Best International Impact School in the World, London, 2018' and 'Top 50 Educational Enterprise, Dubai, 2019'. His research-driven approach and its practical implementation have garnered 44 international education awards from the UK, USA, UAE, and Pakistan. In recognition of his contributions, he was honored among the 'Top 100 Global Education Leaders, GFEL' in 2019.

**Trends and Challenges Shaping 2025**

One of the most pivotal trends influencing education in 2025 is the rapid digital transformation brought about by advancements in EdTech. These technologies are reshaping educational delivery, allowing for more individualized learning, automation of routine tasks, and the utilization of data analytics to enhance student outcomes. Another emerging focus is sustainability and social responsibility, urging educational institutions to instill global citizenship and environmental consciousness in students. Hassan anticipates that the sectors that embrace digital innovation, sustainability, and adaptive policies will be best positioned to thrive in the evolving education landscape.

**Innovation and Its Impact**

Driven by the need to foster sustainability awareness among students, Hassan led the development of a multi-faceted 'sustainability education program' tailored for different age groups. The first component includes activity-based modules teaching environmental stewardship. Another element, 'Planted Forests', involves planting a tree for every staff member as a lasting symbol of ecological commitment. Complementing these is a community campaign titled 'Sharing is Caring', aimed at

promoting recycling and reuse while supporting the underprivileged. Additionally, a "save paper" initiative targeting a 20% reduction through digitization underscores the group's commitment to eco-conscious operations. This comprehensive initiative was internationally recognized as a finalist at the Bett Asia Awards 2024 in Kuala Lumpur.

**Fostering a Culture of Innovation and Adaptability**

Hassan's leadership style is centered on training, empowerment, and creating an environment where innovation is nurtured. His belief in structured skill-building, forward-thinking teams, and a collaborative work ethic has cultivated a vibrant culture of innovation at Silver Oaks. This environment has empowered educators to contribute actively to educational transformation. A testament to this culture is the successful implementation and global adoption of a redesigned approach to Nestlé's Global Healthy Kids program, which originated from Silver Oaks and became a global case study for Nestlé.

**Essential Qualities for Future-Ready Leaders**

According to Hassan, effective leadership is rooted in emotional intelligence and the ability to mobilize people towards shared



goals by removing barriers and inspiring action. He believes that leadership is co-created by followers and that success stems from the ability to influence and drive change. Particularly in education, leadership is a moral and ethical undertaking where the leader's values and behaviors—strategic, analytical, imaginative, and interpersonal—shape the path forward. Hassan emphasizes that excellence is defined not only by academic outcomes but also by the virtues upheld in achieving them.

**Technology and Industry Transformation**

Technology has become the most powerful force transforming the education industry. Its ability to make education accessible across geographical and socio-economic barriers is a game-changer, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Silver Oaks capitalized on technology by developing a proprietary digital learning model that ensured no child was left behind. This strategy contributed to the institution recording one of the lowest pupil de-registration ratios in the industry, demonstrating the tangible impact of tech-enabled resilience.

**Overcoming Significant Challenges**

One of the most formidable challenges Hassan faced was transitioning a small, family-operated

school into a sustainable and globally competitive educational enterprise. This transformation required a deep understanding of family business dynamics, including governance, succession, ownership, and boundary management. The ultimate goal is to achieve institutional imperishability by evolving Silver Oaks' legal and operational structures while preserving the family's core values. Convincing both himself and the family board to embark on this transformative journey marked a defining moment in his leadership journey.

**Strategies for Resilience and Sustainability**

For Hassan, ethical leadership forms the cornerstone of sustainable governance that balances immediate operational needs with long-term goals. He acknowledges the disproportionate effects of ecological degradation on marginalized communities and emphasizes the role of education in breaking the cycle of poverty. Silver Oaks has aligned its objectives with six Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), implementing specific initiatives to promote environmental and social resilience. Hassan believes that value-driven leadership can motivate individuals to make meaningful contributions toward a more sustainable future.

**Guiding Values and Legacy**

Hassan's decision-making is anchored in three foundational principles: providing whole-child education for upward social mobility regardless of background, delivering academic excellence without excessive parental dependency, and nurturing global citizenship through holistic programming. His vision for Silver Oaks is to leave a legacy of nurturing an enlightened generation grounded in values such as integrity, courage, respect, creativity, and optimism. He understands that this pursuit will be complex and demanding, but he views perseverance as the key to transforming Silver Oaks from good to great, shaping a future generation prepared for the challenges of tomorrow.

**Advice for Aspiring Leaders**

Hassan advises future leaders to focus on setting visionary strategies and making values-based decisions. He champions the idea of 'Level 5' leadership—humble, resolute, people-first, and purpose-driven. He encourages leaders to embrace innovation, remain adaptable, and prioritize empathy in organizational culture. By being equitable and value-oriented even in tough decisions, leaders can foster trust and navigate volatility with resilience. Ultimately, he believes that impactful leadership lies in transcending personal ambition to inspire collective progress toward meaningful change.

**Exciting Upcoming Initiatives**

Hassan is particularly excited about three upcoming initiatives. First, he aims to globalize Silver Oaks' life skills development program, addressing the needs of students who are underserved by traditional education systems. Second, he is committed to leading a model of inclusive schooling in Pakistan, where millions of children remain outside the formal education framework. Third, he is expanding into

tertiary, technical, and vocational education, offering students viable pathways to respectable livelihoods beyond academic degrees.

**Vision for the Next 5-10 Years**

Having overseen a second-generation transformation of SOIES, Hassan recognizes the imperative of long-term institutional continuity. He believes that education, as a societal cornerstone, should not be subjected to uncertain leadership transitions. His strategic vision includes building institutional capacity that mirrors family social capital, ensuring the legacy endures beyond individual stewardship. To realize this, Silver Oaks is moving towards restructuring management and legal frameworks, enabling the organization to remain mission-focused and impactful for generations to come.

In conclusion, Hassan Sattar's journey is one of purpose, resilience, and transformation. From a pivotal family moment that redirected his path to the strategic reinvention of a legacy institution, his story reflects a deep commitment to educational equity and excellence. As a leader, his vision is not limited to academic success but extends to social change, sustainability, and global citizenship. Through Silver Oaks International Education Services Group, he continues to challenge conventional norms, promote value-driven leadership, and shape future generations with wisdom, empathy, and unwavering resolve.

