

ASEM Education 2030

Strategy Paper

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AEI	Asia-Europe Institute
AEP	ASEM Education Process
AES	ASEM Education Secretariat
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEF	Asia-Europe Foundation
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
ASEMME	Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education
AUN	ASEAN University Network
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
ESN	Erasmus Student Network
ESU	European Students' Union
ETF	European Training Foundation
EUA	European University Association
IAU	International Association of Universities
LLL	Lifelong Learning
RN	Research Network
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEAMEO RIHED	South East Asia Ministers of Education Organisation - Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development
SOM	Senior Officials' Meeting
SWG	Standing Working Group
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Preamble - ASEM Education Context

During the seventh Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (ASEMME7)[1] in the framework of the ASEM Education Process (AEP), the Ministers decided to formulate an **ASEM Education Strategy for 2030 in order to provide a framework for collaboration with common objectives** to encourage international exchanges, share good practices, help partners cope with similar issues and contribute to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (ASEMME7 2019; Bucharest Statement)[2].

In that meeting, it was decided that a Standing Working Group (SWG)[3] would be set up to assist the ASEM Education Secretariat (AES) in the development of a Strategy Document for the next decade. The SWG met for the first time in December 2019 in Berlin, Germany, to define aims, drafting modalities, as well as the general outline for the vision and mission statement. In their terms of reference, the SWG formulated the following aims for the Strategy 2030:

- *"To provide a common **long-term strategy** for the ASEM Education Process (AEP) for **enhanced connectivity** between Asia and Europe including relevant values, vision, mission and objectives in line with international and regional frameworks and strategies;*
- *To increase **visibility and recognition** for more commitment of ASEM Education partners and stakeholders;*
- *To provide a framework for developing and implementing **result-oriented initiatives and projects** (Chair's Conclusions and/or action plan) and for analysis, monitoring and evaluation [of the results of these initiatives and projects] (Stocktaking Report)" .*

[1] The ASEM Education Process (AEP) operates at two levels: the political and the stakeholder level. At the political level, the Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (ASEMME) is held once every two years. During the Ministerial Meetings, Ministers set the political and practical agenda of the AEP by agreeing on the policy orientation of the AEP and initiating the implementation of initiatives, programmes and projects.

[2] ASEMME7 Statement (Education Ministers, 2019, Bucharest, Romania).

[3] Composed of representatives of 8 ASEM partners countries (Austria, Belgium Flemish Community, Belgium French-speaking Community, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, The Netherlands, Thailand), a representative from ASEF as well as representatives from ASEM stakeholders (AEI, AUN, ESN, ETF, EUA, IAU, SEAMEO RIHED, UNESCO).

The ASEM Education Strategy 2030 builds on **four thematic priorities** (Quality Assurance and Recognition, Engaging Business and Industry in Education, Balanced Mobility, Lifelong Learning including TVET)[4] and **two transversal themes** (Digitalisation and Sustainable Development)[5] identified in the framework of the ASEM Education Process.

Staying true to the key characteristics of the overall ASEM process[6] , the Strategy Paper takes into account previously issued recommendations, in particular: the **Seoul Declaration** (ASEMME6), the **Bucharest Statement** (ASEMME7), the **Stocktaking Report "From Seoul to Bucharest"**, as well as the publication **"Looking Back and Looking Ahead: The ASEM Education Process – History and Vision"**. In addition, the ASEM Education Strategy builds on (other) international and regional processes and frameworks to create synergies and collaboration, pool expertise and resources.

The ASEM Education Strategy 2030 and its accompanying Action Plan aim to provide a framework for ASEM partners and stakeholders to develop, implement and monitor result-oriented initiatives and projects to be agreed upon by the ASEM Education Ministers in the Chair's Conclusions of each two-yearly ministerial meeting. These projects and initiatives will be implemented through the interaction between competent ministries and ASEM Education stakeholders, with the support of the ASEM Education Secretariat, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) as the only permanent established institution under ASEM, the ASEM-DUO Secretariat and the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub.

The Standing Working Group therefore calls upon all ASEM Education partners and stakeholders to consider this strategy paper not only as a framework for the further development of the ASEM Education Process, but also as an important milestone encouraging renewed commitment towards a stronger dialogue and collaboration platform between Asia and Europe.

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[4] The four ASEM Education priority areas were identified and adopted during ASEMME3 in 2011 (Copenhagen, Denmark).

[5] The two transversal themes were identified and adopted during ASEMME7 in 2019 (Bucharest, Romania).

[6] Informality, multi-dimensionality, equal partnership, high-level and people-to-people (Source: https://www.aseminfoboard.org/about/overview).

1. Global Context

1.1. Global Challenges and Opportunities

At the dawn of the 21st century's third decade, the education sector is facing a **paradigm-shift**. Technological, demographic, social, environmental, economic and political changes are forcing education actors to rethink their methodologies and structures. **Global challenges**[7], such as climate change, persisting gender and social inequalities, demographic evolutions[8], technological shifts[9] and more recently the COVID-19 crisis have put **education and training systems under increased pressure to adapt** while identifying untapped opportunities.

Education and training systems have a **pivotal role to prepare all learners** for fast-paced, demanding environments and to help them becoming active, responsible and engaged citizens. ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will seek to help **embrace new opportunities** arising in times of change and crises, while **mitigating associated risks.**

Through the ASEM Education Strategy 2030, ASEM partners and stakeholders stress the importance of Asia-Europe collaboration to share good practices, to tackle similar issues, as well as to foster international cooperation and exchanges in education.

1.2. Sustainable Development Goals

Since 2018, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders have repeatedly stressed the importance of **contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda** 2030. During ASEMME7, Ministers officially welcomed the suggestion to link the ASEM Education Process more explicitly to the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 by **introducing "Sustainable Development" as a transversal theme** within the four priority areas of the ASEM Education Process.[10]

Ministers underlined the importance of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on SDG4 ('Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong

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[7] Other global and regional challenges that impact education have arisen since 2021 when this document was adopted, but these issues will not be added subsequently.
[8] E.g. migration and aging societies.
[9] In particular: digitalisation (taking into account the digital divide), robotisation, automatisation, artificial intelligence and machine learning.
[10] ASEMME7 Chair's Conclusions, (2019, Bucharest, Romania).

learning opportunities for all')[11] and agreed that the ASEM Education Process could contribute to realising the SDGs[12].

1.3. COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic served as a powerful reminder of the disruptive potential of global crises. In just a few weeks' time, entire societies, education and training systems have been forced to rethink their working modalities. Education and training institutions in Europe and Asia were heavily **impacted by the pandemic** and had **to cope with similar challenges** in both regions. Internationalisation and mobility were the first affected, quickly followed by educational institutions who had to make a sudden transition towards **digital education** which revealed both its **advantages and pitfalls**. Many educational actors seized the opportunity to learn and explore new tools and systems, which contributed towards more acceptance for digital, distance and blended learning. This has also contributed to raise awareness towards, and at times mainstream, approaches that were already employed at some institutions, or in parts of them. Apart from this changing mindset, the fast acceleration towards digital education also brought several limitations and issues to the surface. Where students and staff lack access to proper infrastructure and technology at home, many schools and universities have noticed that **inequalities of chances and** opportunities related to teaching and learning **have been exacerbated**.[13]

ASEM Ministers for Foreign Affairs reiterated the **need for interconnectedness between Asia and Europe** in their Ministerial Statement in September 2020.[14] An international crisis

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[11] More specifically on the following **SDG4 targets**: **4.3**. *"Equal Access to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education[…]"*, **4.4**. *"Increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills […]"*, **4.5.** *"Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all level of education and vocational training […]"*, **4.7.** *"All learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, through education for sustainable development"*.

[12] The following goals have been identified as relevant for the ASEM Education Process: **SDG5** *"Gender Equality and empowering of women and girls"* (5.1 and 5.B), **SDG8** *"Decent work and economic growth"* (8.2., 8.3. and 8.5.), **SDG9** *"Industries, innovation and infrastructure"* (9.2.), **SDG10** *"Reduce inequalities"* 10.2.), **SDG12** *"responsible consumption and production"* (12.8.), **SDG13** *"climate action"* (13.3.) and **SDG17** *"Partnerships"* (17.9, 17.16 and 17.17).

[13] IAU Global Survey Report 2020 "The impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education around the world", G. Marioni, H. van 't Land, T. Jensen, p. 24-26.

[14] Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Statement on Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) (Ministers of Foreign Affairs, ASEM SOM in preparation of the ASEM13 Summit, 2020, hosted online by Cambodia).

such as COVID-19 requires interregional cooperation and multilateralism in **putting forces together** to overcome its consequences and challenges.

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders hereby also acknowledge that such **challenges cannot be tackled in isolation** and recognise the role the ASEM Education Process can play as a transregional platform for dialogue and cooperation.

2. Vision and Mission Statement

By 2030, the ASEM Education Process (AEP) will contribute to a more prosperous, resilient and sustainable Asia-Europe education region, better prepared for current and forthcoming global challenges.

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will reaffirm the AEP as an **advanced transregional dialogue and cooperation platform.** They aim to develop the AEP as a platform to promote **inclusive and equitable quality education and training** through equal and mutually beneficial Asia-Europe partnerships, leveraged by **people-to-people connectivity**.

Through partnerships, exchanges and collaboration, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will support the education sector to train individuals able to navigate through rapidly changing and increasingly complex societies and labour markets, while respecting national, regional and local education contexts and practices, as well as academic values.

In order to realise this vision and mission statement, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders have identified **strategic objectives, instruments and working methods**, and developed an Action Plan in order to ensure effective implementation and tangible results.

3. Strategic Objectives for the Next Decade

The strategic objectives, identified by ASEM Education partners and stakeholders, will shape the **thematic focus** of the ASEM Education Process for the next decade by outlining **what** ASEM Education partners and stakeholders aim to achieve through their collaborative projects and initiatives.

3.1. Enhancing Connectivity between Asia and Europe by Boosting Inclusive and Balanced Mobility and Exchanges

Enhancing connectivity between Asia and Europe has always been at the heart of the ASEM Education Process. In the next decade, ASEM partners and stakeholders will continue to foster not only **physical, but also blended and virtual mobility and exchanges** between both regions.

Through the ASEM Education 2030 Strategy, ASEM partners and stakeholders will **further promote and encourage meaningful exchanges in all forms**, as well as **in various contexts**: (higher) education, TVET and LLL, including workplaces, non-formal settings, short exchange programmes and projects, etc. Furthermore, taking into account the specificities of the ASEM Education context and recent developments, they will dedicate special attention to several aspects listed below.

To Strive for Inclusive Exchanges

In line with their contribution to SDG4 and ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will further strive to create exchange opportunities for all[15].

Bearing this objective in mind, ASEM partners and stakeholders will seek to harness the full potential of digital and new communication tools to foster a **more equitable access** to mobility and exchange opportunities, as well as to policy and funding support.

While online and digital technologies bear a **great potential to create better conditions for more inclusive international exchanges,** ASEM partners and stakeholders acknowledge the need to address the existing digital divide[16] with targeted measures to make sure no one is left behind due to inadequate access (or lack thereof) to new technologies.

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[15] regardless of their age, gender, disabilities, country of origin or social, economic, cultural, religious or ethnic background.

[16] *"The term '**digital divide**' refers to the difference between those who have access to the Internet and are able to make use of new services offered on the World Wide Web, and those excluded. The term explicitly includes access to information and communication technologies, as well as the skills needed to take part in the information society. The digital divide can be classified according to criteria that describe differences in participation according to gender, age, education, income, social groups or geographic location"*. (Eurostat, Regional Yearbook 2010, p. 120).

To Stimulate Balanced Exchanges and Mobility

ASEM partners and stakeholders recognise that the reciprocity of exchanges between Asia and Europe could still be improved. At this point in time, the incoming and outgoing flows of students, academic staff and researchers between both continents are still imbalanced; the incoming flow still being heavily biased in favour of Europe. To reduce this imbalance and reach a more **balanced two-way mobility between both continents, scholarships, as well as short- and long-term mobility programmes will be promoted.**

To Promote and Support Virtual Mobility and Exchanges[17]

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders acknowledge that **physical mobility remains the main focus** because it gives students a broad international learning experience. At the same time **virtual mobility and exchanges** (e.g. Collaborative Online International Learning) are **complementary** to physical mobility as they open up interesting and additional **avenues for international collaboration**.

As shown by numerous internationalisation at home[18] practices, internationalisation of the education sector does not necessarily imply that the participants have to be physically mobile to benefit from international or intercultural experiences.

Virtual mobility and exchanges for students, academic staff and researchers will be promoted as part of wider efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of higher education international programmes, as they represent an **ecological alternative** to physical mobility, **especially for short-term exchanges.**

During the COVID-19 outbreak, many higher education institutions have tried out new forms of online collaboration and virtual mobility to offer their students an international

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[17] *"The following **distinction between the concepts Virtual Mobility (VM) and Virtual Exchanges (VE)** is made: **Virtual Mobility** implies that a student takes an online course/module/study programme from a university in another country. The international experience takes place by taking part in a programme from a foreign university.*
***Virtual exchange programmes** involve online exchange, communication and collaboration between students and lecturers from universities in different countries (for example 'COIL' (Collaborative Online International Learning))"* (Source: Evolve Project, https://evolve-erasmus.eu/about-evolve/what-is-virtual-exchange/).

[18] Defined as *"the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments"* (Beelen & Jones, 2015, Redefining Internationalisation at Home).

experience while staying in their own country[19], thereby demonstrating that online learning formats and virtual exchanges can provide an **alternative when physical mobility is restricted**.

Furthermore, when physical mobility is not limited by travel restrictions, collaborative online international learning can help more students to benefit from an international experience and can additionally form a **step up towards a physical or blended mobility experience**. ASEM Education partners and stakeholders wish to build on this experience and new practices, using the momentum to refine internationalisation in education.

In the next decade, they will use the platform provided by the ASEM Education Process to share **good practices on methodologies, formats and platforms** for virtual exchanges and mobility, as well as to **promote and stimulate partnerships and networking** between European and Asian institutions in order to develop more structural and efficient virtual exchanges and mobility programmes.

3.2. Promoting Lifelong Learning (LLL), Including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

To Raise the Profile of LLL including TVET

Lifelong learning, in particular technical and vocational education and training, has been identified by ASEM Education Ministers as a crucial mechanism for enhancing the employability of current and future generations in changing labour markets throughout their lives.

In light of emerging and existing challenges, such as industry 4.0, ageing societies, technological evolution and the massive growth of the service economy, **the profile of LLL and** in particular **TVET should be raised** in order to offer **all learners** education, training, upskilling and reskilling opportunities to equip them for transformations and disruptive events both on the **labour market and in society in general**.

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[19] *"COVID-19 has had an impact on international student mobility at 89% of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The type of the impact is diverse and varies from institution to institution but everywhere it has been negative. The 60% of the higher education institutions reported that they have increased virtual mobility and/or collaborative online learning as alternatives to physical student mobility"* (IAU Global Survey Report 2020 "The impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education around the world", G. Marioni, H. van 't Land, T. Jensen, p. 27-29).

TVET is part of a lifelong learning **continuum providing citizens initial training, as well as upskilling and reskilling opportunities.** In addition to being inclusive as advocated by SDG 4, LLL systems should also allow for **flexible learning pathways** as described in section 3.4.

To Collaborate with Business and Industry

Engaging business and industry in education is essential to understand current trends, as well as technical and transversal skills in demand. Business and industry partners should play a proactive role in this regard: working closely together is of paramount importance to design innovative, fit-for-purpose and qualitative education and training curricula. Technological advancements related to robotisation, automatisation, AI and machine learning in particular will need to be closely monitored in order to keep education and training relevant.

The AEP will, therefore, provide a platform to **support exchanges between industries, businesses and ASEM Education partners and stakeholders and identify relevant partners** to promote more inclusive, flexible and relevant lifelong learning systems in the ASEM regions.

3.3. Fostering the Development of Skills and Competences

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders recognise the ever-growing importance of having a **diverse set of knowledge and skills** to navigate through an **increasingly globalised, interconnected, fast-changing world and uncertain times**.

Emphasising the development of skills and competences in education and training implies a shift towards a (more) **learner-centred approach** in teaching and learning. This specific focus goes beyond the acquisition of basic, academic, (cross-)disciplinary, technical and vocational skills to include a wide range of knowledge and skills, such as transversal skills, attitudes and values that enable individuals to become active and responsible citizens, as well as engaged lifelong learners.

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will promote and support the development of a broad set of skills, competences and knowledge, with special attention dedicated to the ones listed below, in order to **contribute to the well-being, lifelong development and employability** of Asian and European individuals, as well as **to sustainable societies**.

ASEM partners and stakeholders will bring together expertise on approaches to address skills and competences, and to **anticipate future skills** demands in both regions.

Transversal Skills

Transversal skills[20] aim to foster **opportunities** for learners to develop critical and innovative thinking skills, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, media and information literacy, as well as skills, attitudes and values related to **global citizenship**[21], including tolerance, openness, respect and understanding for diversity, different cultures and sustainable development[22].

Exchanges in all forms between Asia and Europe can create avenues for learners to develop their transversal skills, with a focus on intercultural skills and values related to active and global citizenship.

Skills to Promote Sustainable Development

As a platform for Asia-Europe collaboration, the ASEM Education Process will promote and support Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as it is "the foundation for the required transformation, providing everyone with the **knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to become change agents for sustainable development**".[23] This knowledge, skills, values and attitudes will enable learners to take "**informed decisions and responsible actions** for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and

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[20] *"skills that are not specifically related to a particular job, task, academic discipline or area of knowledge but [...] can be used in a wide variety of situations and work settings"* (UNESCO International Bureau of Education, IBE Glossary of Curriculum Terminology, 2013).

[21] *„[...]social, political, environmental, and economic actions of globally minded individuals and communities on a worldwide scale. [...] belief that individuals are members of multiple, diverse, local and non-local networks rather than single actors affecting isolated societies. Promoting global citizenship in sustainable development will allow individuals to embrace their social responsibility to act for the benefit of all societies, not just their own"* (https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/global-citizenship).

[22] *"1) critical and innovative thinking, 2) interpersonal skills (e.g. presentation and communication skills, organizational skills, teamwork, etc.), 3) intrapersonal skills (e.g. self-discipline, enthusiasm, perseverance, self-motivation, etc.), 4) global citizenship (e.g. tolerance, openness, respect for diversity, intercultural understanding, etc.), 5) media and information literacy (e.g. ability to locate and access information, as well as to analyse and evaluate media content), 6) others (competencies, such as physical health or religious values, that may not fall into one of the other)"* (UNESCO International Bureau of Education, IBE Glossary of Curriculum Terminology, 2013).
Most of these transversal skills are also included in the EU's Recommendation of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (adopted by the Council of the European Union in May 2018).

[23] Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development (Preamble 4), 2021.

future generations, while respecting cultural diversity", thereby contributing to SDG4 target 4.7[24].

Digital Skills

The digital transformation is impacting society, the education sector and workplaces, forcing everyone into continuous development and improvement of digital skills, not only to embrace the opportunities these new technologies bring, but also to better cope with their inherent challenges and potential risks[25]. The ASEM Education Process will provide a platform for partners and stakeholders to **exchange views and ideas on policies and practices related to the digital transition**. This includes digital skills development with a focus on creating equal access to digital learning environments and bridging the digital divide.

Skills for the Future

In the context of rapid labour market changes, technological evolutions and economic developments, anticipation of skills needs has become an increasingly important area of focus in education and training. ASEM partners and stakeholders will bring together expertise to anticipate the future demand for skills in both regions.

3.4. Creating More Transparency and Mutual Understanding on Recognition, Validation and Quality Assurance

To Support and Promote Interregional Cooperation

Reliable and transparent information is a prerequisite to establishing trust and robust relationships between ASEM partners that will encourage cooperation and exchange agreements. In order to promote, support and **advance interregional cooperation and build up trust** across Asian and European education systems and institutions, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will further contribute to **foster transparency** on

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[24] SDG4, Target 4.7: *"By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development".*

[25] such as discriminatory algorithms in artificial intelligence, overload of information, misinformation and fake news, potential misuse of digital tools or data privacy awareness (Expert Group on Digitalisation's Working Paper, December 2021).

quality assurance systems, learning outcomes, credit systems, recognition and validation mechanisms, as well as qualifications frameworks of the two regions and adhere to common principles and international good practice, **while respecting their diverse fit-for-purpose implementation at the level of education systems and institutions.**

To Support and Promote Flexible Learning Pathways

Exchange of information on recognition and validation mechanisms is essential to stimulate cooperation and exchanges between regions, as well as to **create flexible and diversified learning pathways**. As a matter of fact, learning is increasingly taking place in diverse contexts (formal, non-formal and informal settings) through various channels and methodologies (online, blended, physical) and is offered by different types of institutions (schools, higher education institutions, private providers and companies, civil society actors, non-profit organisations, etc.) throughout a person's life.

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will continue to fully support the lifelong learning paradigm **by developing transparency on quality assurance, validation and recognition mechanisms -** including the recognition and validation of prior learning - in order to promote and encourage the creation of personalised and relevant flexible learning pathways. In addition, to keep up with the latest (digital) developments, they will dedicate more attention to quality assurance, validation and recognition of virtual and blended learning formats. In addition, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will follow closely on-going discussions related to micro-credentials[26] and digital credentialing[27] at global, regional[28]and national level. They will take into account differentiated perspectives in their exchanges around both topics and take advantage of existing instruments, such as the Global Convention on Recognition, the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the Tokyo Convention.

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[26] Exchanges of knowledge, experiences and good practices related to this concept will be encouraged within ASEM Education Expert and Working Groups.
There are several definitions of micro-credentials in use in Asia or Europe, as for example: European approach to micro-credentials. Essentially, micro-credentials are documented statements that acknowledge outcomes achieved and assessed, for small volumes of learning, made visible in the form of a badge, certificate, or endorsement, whether issued in a digital or paper format (Working Paper – ASEM Expert Group Digitalisation, p. 10).
[27] Exchanges of knowledge, experiences and good practices related to this concept will be encouraged within ASEM Education Expert and Working Groups.
[28] e.g. of a potential European approach to micro-credentials.

4. Instruments and Working Methods

To implement the 2030 Strategy and realise their ambitions, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders can count on the support of the ASEM Education Secretariat, the Asia-Europe Foundation, the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub, as well as the ASEM-DUO Secretariat.

The **ASEM Education Secretariat (AES)** ensures effective coordination of ASEM Education Process initiatives and projects, facilitates ASEM Education activities, represents the ASEM Education Process during regional and international events and liaises on a regular basis with existing and potential partners and stakeholders to identify synergies and initiate collaborations. In the framework of the implementation of the ASEM Education 2030 Strategy, the AES will be tasked with reporting on initiatives and projects listed in the Action Plan. Thanks to input provided by projects' coordinators, it will assess progress made in the Stocktaking Report and inform all partners and stakeholders about new initiatives.

The **Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)** is the only permanent institution of the ASEM political dialogue process. As part of its education portfolio and diverse projects, ASEF provides a wide range of opportunities for education collaboration and connects youth, students, teachers and educators, higher education leaders and experts with policy makers across both ASEM regions. The **ASEM Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning** is a platform for dialogue between researchers, practitioners and policy-makers composed of Regional Centres, National Contacts and seven thematic research networks[29]. Finally, the **ASEM-DUO Secretariat** coordinates the ASEM-DUO Fellowship Programme, one of the flagship initiatives in the ASEM Education Process that contributes to balanced mobility between Asia and Europe.

This section details **how** ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will strive to realise the ASEM Education Strategy 2030 vision and mission statement with the support of the abovementioned institutions and describes the various instruments and working methods to implement.

[29] RN1: eASEM (Digital Learning Management Systems, Techno-Pedagogic Skills and Knowledge Network Communities in Lifelong Learning); RN2: Workplace Learning; RN3: Professionalisation of Adult Teachers and Educators in ASEM countries; RN4: National Strategies for Lifelong Learning; RN5: Lifelong Learning Transitions; RN6: Learning Cities and Learning Regions; RN7: Non-formal, Informal Learning, and Civil Society.

4.1. People-to-people Connectivity

People-to-people connectivity has been established as a central component of the AEP vision and mission and has become a "critical form of cooperation to **promote connectivity** between Asia and Europe".[30]

In ASEM Education meetings, projects and initiatives, direct contacts between people foster institutional cooperation and **strengthen both personal, institutional and structural relations** between Asian and European partners and stakeholders. These people-to-people contacts facilitate mutual understanding and contribute to building **lasting relationships** between the various actors.

Through the ASEM Education Action Plan 2030, ASEM partners and stakeholders will identify common interests and joint endeavours to further develop collaborative projects and initiatives.

4.2. Policy Dialogue

The ASEM Education Process will continue to provide an **informal dialogue platform for policy makers** active at different levels in the education sector. The ASEM Education political meetings (Senior Officials' and Ministers' meetings) and the various working groups allow partners to develop and discuss innovative ideas and exchange good practices for future policies. It is customary for concrete outcomes of working and expert groups to be presented and discussed at policy level during Senior Officials' Meetings.

Through meetings, joint initiatives and projects **policy makers** will interact with **a wide variety of actors**, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, such as youth and students, education institutions' representatives, researchers, academics, representatives from quality assurance and recognition agencies, civil society organisations, as well as business and industry partners, etc.

More synergies are needed between, on the one hand, the ASEM Education Process and the Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education and on the other Ministerial Processes and Meetings which tackle priorities of the ASEM Education Process. Through the Action Plan, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will seek to identify more opportunities for

[30] "*Enhancing Collaboration between Asia and Europe in Education and Training*" (Seoul Declaration , 2017, p 2.). The importance of people-to-people connectivity was also stressed during the ASEM Summit in 2018, in Brussels and is part of the EU's Strategy for EU-Asia collaboration.

dialogue and more **systematic exchanges with the overall ASEM process** in order to guarantee better follow-up and coherence of activities, projects and initiatives carried out.

4.3. Exchanges of Knowledge, Expertise and Good Practices

Within the AEP, differences have long been perceived as enriching the dialogue rather than hampering it. ASEM partners and stakeholders are very diverse in terms of cultural, historical and political traditions, demography, level of industrialisation, etc. providing a very compelling environment for peer-learning and exchanges of knowledge.

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders should capitalise on partners' strengths and **share good and innovative practices -** both from the educational field as from policy level **-** that could be used by others as sources of inspiration, thereby contributing to fostering mutual understanding. Knowledge, expertise and research capacity should be pooled in order to allow for **capacity building and peer-learning.**

Experiences and lessons learned should serve **to develop inspirational models and pilot projects** adapted to each country's context. Good practices cannot be merely copy-pasted: adapting them to very diverse national contexts is part of a lengthier process of deep and meaningful peer-learning. Experimentation is often a necessary step in order to contextualise practices.

4.4. Collaborative Research on Education

In order to face challenges that cannot be tackled in isolation, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders should not only share experiences, lessons learned and good practices, but also rely on collaborative interdisciplinary research to come up with **common innovative answers and solutions** to educational challenges.

Collecting evidence is of utmost importance to allow decision-makers to make informed decisions and formulate **evidence-based policy recommendations** concerning education and training.

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will stimulate mutually beneficial research and innovation, as well as seek to increase the collaborative engagement of researchers from both continents. They welcome initiatives and projects at the national and international level

that **connect researchers and innovators** from Asia and Europe and endeavour to further collaborative innovation and research in the field of education.

4.5. Synergies with Multilateral Organisations and Processes

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will foster synergies with multilateral organisations and other multilateral processes to serve common goals and pool resources and capacities, where possible, to avoid duplication of efforts, as well as to **establish new and more systematic collaborations**. ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will do so, by identifying areas of common interest and shared objectives, and subsequently intensifying relations among partners and stakeholders, as well as with multilateral processes.

Through policy dialogue, partnerships, networking and concrete collaboration between institutions, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will strive, on the one hand, to build on existing projects and programmes and, on the other, to **launch joint projects and initiatives** in the field of mobility and international exchanges, transversal skills development and lifelong learning in all education sectors and areas, including TVET.

Closer cooperation or dialogue should not only be fostered with existing partners and stakeholders, but should also be encouraged with other relevant multilateral processes and organisations listed in the dedicated section of the Action Plan.

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will continue to closely monitor relevant initiatives in its field of expertise and strive to be as proactive as possible to contribute where appropriate.

4.6. Visibility and Communication

Improving the AEP's visibility and raising awareness about ASEM Education initiatives and projects by **sharing success stories** is crucial for several reasons.

First of all, highlighting good practices within the AEP demonstrates that it continues to be relevant and legitimates its existence. Secondly, broadcasting the benefits of actively taking part in ASEM Education activities can, on the one hand, further deepen Asia-Europe collaboration within ASEM and on the other, **encourage more partners and stakeholders to contribute**. Finally, stronger commitment and deeper collaboration as a result of

increased visibility, could have a positive effect on the four identified strategic objectives, thereby allowing them to yield better results.

Communication is the core issue and needs to be enhanced both within the ASEM Education Process and with external partners and stakeholders. ASEM Education partners and stakeholders should use all the tools at their disposal, such as documentation, the dedicated website of the ASEM Education Process and the official ASEM Infoboard website, and social media channels to better disseminate flagship initiatives, results and information. Nevertheless, the AEP cannot act in isolation and should remind its partners and members to advertise the process within their own structures in order to create a **multiplier effect**.

If communication material is deemed insufficient, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders should contemplate the possibility of **developing new formats and tools** where needed.

Finally, multiplying and combining communication tools and channels could be beneficial not only to **reach a larger audience, but also to target specific underrepresented groups of beneficiaries.**

5. Implementation and monitoring

The accompanying **Action Plan** in annex details the **practical implementation of the ASEM Education Strategy 2030** and lists actions that ASEM Education partners and stakeholders are carrying out and are planning to carry out to realise the ambitions of the ASEM Education 2030 Strategy and to reach the four strategic objectives identified for the next decade.

This Action Plan also features a table which both existing ASEM Education projects, activities and initiatives for each action and suggestions and ideas for new projects or initiatives. Furthermore, Section 5 of the Action Plan specifies how ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will monitor concrete implementation through existing documents such as the Stocktaking Report and Chair's Conclusions.

The ASEM Education 2030 Action Plan is a live document: relevant projects can be added and new stakeholders can be involved at a later stage should ASEM Education partners and stakeholders find it appropriate.

This Strategy was endorsed at ASEMME8 (December 2021)
and slightly updated after ASEMME9 (January 2024)*
*previous version as of 2021 is available here