STOCKTAKING REPORT

"From Bangkok to Valletta"

2022-2024

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Asia-Europe Meeting
ASEM Education

Preface

The ASEM Education Secretariat Italy is herewith presenting the Stocktaking Report 2024 **'From Bangkok to Valletta'** which collects the outcomes and progress of the ASEM Education Process (AEP) between the eighth ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME8), organised virtually by Thailand in December 2021, and the ninth ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME9) which is held in January 2024 in Malta.

After a transitory period from December 2021 through June 2022 were the Belgian ASEM Education Secretariat, in close cooperation with the Standing Working Group (SWG), continued its support to the ASEM Education Process, Italy has taken over the ASEM Education Secretariat (AES) in July 2022 and has since then coordinated the work of four Expert Groups, co-organised the (Intermediate) Senior Officials' Meetings and the 9th ASEM Ministerial Meeting (ASEMME9) and is since then ensuring coherence between the various projects and initiatives by being in regular communication with ASEM partners and stakeholders. In addition, the AES is representing the ASEM Education Process (AEP) during international events.

The ASEM Education Process has the ambition to offer an effective and sustainable platform for dialogue and cooperation in education between Europe and Asia. After many years of productive exchanges and meetings, the COVID-19 pandemic has had quite a big influence on the activities and meetings during the last period and further efforts are now necessary to reboost interregional cooperation on (Higher) Education between Asia and Europe. This edition of the Stocktaking Report is results-oriented and shall support the ASEM Education Process in identifying synergies and promoting coherence between initiatives to make better use of resources and further build on existing outcomes. It should raise awareness on ASEM Education activities, initiatives and projects also to other networks.

About the Structure of this Report

In this Stocktaking Report, after giving some background information, we will first report on the activities carried out by the ASEM Education Secretariat and the four ASEM Education Expert Groups and will then give space to initiatives and projects carried out by the ASEM partners and stakeholders. We will showcase some international projects working with Asia and Europe to give information and inspiration to our readers. We have asked the keynote speakers of the four big ASEM Education meetings of this period to provide us with articles on their speeches and we will finish with some conclusions and an outlook on the next two years.

This Stocktaking Report should be considered as a working instrument to further develop existing initiatives and plan future activities and projects. Hyperlinks are embedded throughout this report to allow the interested reader to get access to more comprehensive information and relevant documents or websites.

The Secretariat wishes you an interesting reading and hopes that it will inspire you to further develop and strengthen Asia-Europe collaboration in education in the upcoming years.
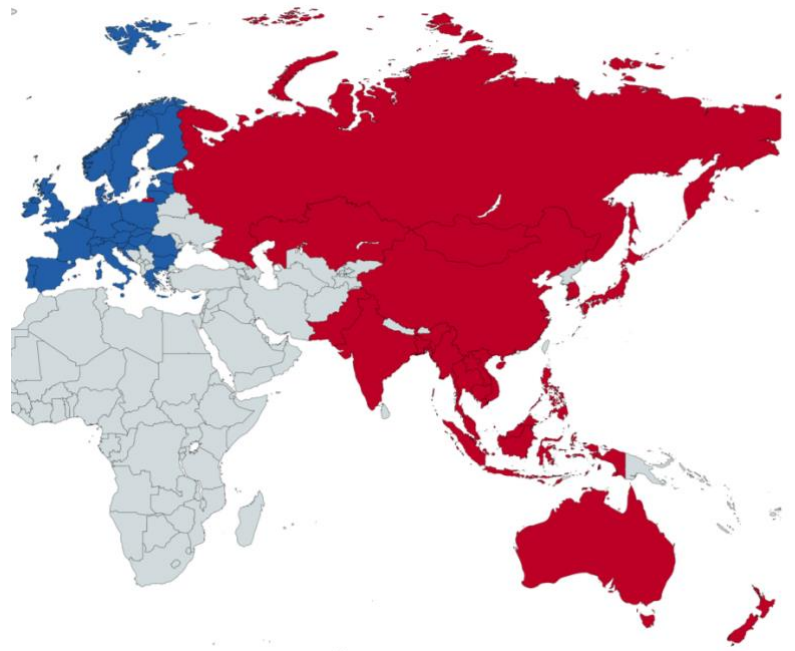
The ASEM Education Secretariat Italy

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AEI	Asia-Europe Institute
AEP	ASEM Education Process
AES	ASEM Education Secretariat
APT	ASEAN Plus Three
APGC	ASEM Pathfinder Group on Connectivity
APAIE	Asia-Pacific Association for International Education
ARC	ASEF Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEF	Asia-Europe Foundation
ASEFClassNet	ASEF Classroom Network Conference
ASEFInnoLabs	ASEF Innovation Laboratories
ASEFSU	ASEF Summer University
ASEFYLS	ASEF Young Leaders Summit
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
ASEM WPP	ASEM Work Placement Programme
ASEMME	ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting
AUN	ASEAN University Network
CC	Chair's Conclusions
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)
DG	Directorate-General
EG	Expert Group
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register
ESN	Erasmus Student Network
ESU	European Students' Union
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU SHARE	European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region
EUA	European University Association
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISOM	Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MOOCs	Massive Open Online Courses
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
QA	Quality Assurance
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEAMEO RIHED	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization - Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development
SOM	Senior Officials' Meeting
SWG	Standing Working Group
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UIL	UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WG	Working Group

1. Background

The [Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)](#) is a unique, informal platform for political dialogue and cooperation in various policy areas between [51 partner countries](#) (30 European countries, the European Union, 21 Asian countries, the ASEAN Secretariat). It was launched in 1996 with the first political Summit of Heads of State or Government held in Bangkok. ASEM meetings and activities involve European and Asian decision makers at different levels: ASEM Summits, Foreign Ministers meetings, Ministerial meetings, Senior Officials' meetings, regular dialogues, and initiatives by ASEM partners. ASEM's strength is the informality at the very highest level: informal exchange of views on many topics in different fields. In fact, the ASEM is based on three pillars, namely political, economic and financial pillar, and social and cultural. Education forms an integral policy part of ASEM's social, cultural and educational pillar and is seen as key to enhance mutual understanding and development of the two regions. In 2006 during the Helsinki Summit, ASEM leaders stressed the value of dialogue and exchange of best practices on questions related to education and training, leading to the establishment of regular ASEM Education Ministers' Meetings (ASEMME) as a logical consequence. The first ASEMME took place in Berlin, Germany in 2008 and it established the beginning of the [ASEM Education Process](#) (AEP), organised around a two-year cycle. More specifically, every two years, the ASEM Education Ministers gather during the Ministerial Meeting (ASEMME) to set the political and practical ASEM Education Process agenda. Before the Ministerial Meeting, Senior Officials and experts from ASEM stakeholders meet at the Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting (ISOM) and at the two Senior Officials' Meetings (SOMs) to discuss the policy orientation of the ASEM Education Process. To make the ASEM Education Process more structured, Ministers decided to formulate an [ASEM Education Strategy for 2030](#) and its [Action Plan](#) 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

Sustainable Development Goals. This Strategy and Action Plan has been acknowledged by Ministers at the last ASEMME, in Bangkok (online) 2021 and represents a milestone for the overall ASEM Education Process.

All ASEM meetings are organized by the ASEM Education Secretariat in collaboration with the host country. The Secretariat is at the heart of the ASEM Education community, it contributes to institutional memory and coherence between initiatives to avoid duplication. Asian and European countries take turns hosting the Secretariat every four years on a voluntary basis to guarantee the continuity of the ASEM Education Process. Italy has been hosting the Secretariat since July 2022, and this arrangement will continue until 2026.

The ASEM Education Secretariat usually prepares a Stocktaking Report for every Ministers' Meeting and describes systematically the initiatives and projects that have taken place since the last Ministers' Meeting. All ASEM partners and stakeholders are called to contribute to the stocktaking by reporting on their activities.

2. ASEM Education Secretariat and Expert Groups

In this period, since the 8th ASEM Ministerial Meeting and the hand-over of the ASEM Education Secretariat from Belgium to Italy, the ASEM community continued working on their projects to foster cooperation on specific topics. During the Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting held in November 2022, three Expert Groups (EGs) on **Sustainable Development Goals and Education** (Expert Group 1), on **Recognition and Balanced Mobility** (Expert Group 2), on **Lifelong Learning and TVET** (Expert Group 3) were established. The Expert Group 4 on **Digitalisation**, whose work started in 2019, continued its work with new members joining. The first three Expert Groups were established at the Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting held in November 2022, the fourth Expert Group had already started its work in 2019. If possible, the EGs have one Co-chair from an Asian country and one from a European country to guarantee geographical balance and to enhance weighted discussion and leadership. They have all had several online meetings to discuss how to better cooperate and how to take (higher) education policy on the specific topics forward. One Expert Group has organised an in-person meeting as well. At the 1st Senior Officials' Meeting in May 2023 in Malta all groups were asked to organise, with the technical support of the AES, public webinars to raise awareness for the ASEM Education Process and to disseminate their work.

2.1. The ASEM Education Secretariat – Italian mandate 2022-2026

To ensure effective coordination of ASEM Education Process initiatives and activities, ASEM Ministers of Education during ASEMME2 in 2009 agreed to establish a rotating ASEM Education Secretariat (AES) in which countries in Asia and Europe take turns to host the AES on a voluntary basis. Germany was the first host of the AES (2008-2013), followed by Indonesia (2013-2017) and Belgium (2017-2021). As it was difficult to find a host for the Secretariat after ASEMME8, there was a transitory period from December 2021 through June 2022 were the Belgian ASEM Education Secretariat, in

close cooperation with the Standing Working Group (SWG), continued its support to the ASEM Process.

In July 2022 Italy took over the ASEM Education Secretariat (AES), hosted by the Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence (CIMEA) based in Rome. Since taking office, the Secretariat has been fully dedicated to coordinating and organizing ASEM activities and to establishing swift connections with key stakeholders, like e.g. the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization, Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED) and the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub Secretariat (University College Cork). With great enthusiasm, the Secretariat represented the ASEM Education Process at international conferences from the very beginning, e.g. at the "ASEM Global Lifelong Learning Week", held in Cork, Ireland on 26-30 September 2022. Moreover, considering the valuable work of the Standing Working Group (SWG) in assisting the previous AES in the development of the ASEM Education Strategy 2030, the Italian Secretariat advocated for the SWG's ongoing presence as a supportive entity within the framework of the Education Process and had several online meetings.

During the first months, the Secretariat worked hard to succeed in organizing the [Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting (ISOM)](#) in-person, after a few years of online meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, an intense and very productive cooperation with the host of the ISOM, the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA), started immediately. The event took place on 24 and 25 November 2022 in St. Julian's, Malta, and was opened by the Hon. Clifton Grima, Minister of Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation, the MFHEA Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Rose Anne Cuschieri and the Head of the ASEM Education Secretariat, Mr. Luca Lantero. Senior

Hon. Clifton Grima, Minister of Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation with Dr. Rose Anne Cuschieri, Chief Executive Officer of MFHEA and Mr. Luca Lantero, Head of ASEM Education Secretariat. ISOM, November 2022.

Officials representing Ministers of Education and Stakeholders contributed to enhancing the ASEM Education Process by sharing their knowledge and expertise. ISOM participants engaged in three dynamic workshops centred around the topics of Lifelong learning, SDGs, Ethics, and Transparency. During this interregional meeting, the structure of the Work Plan 2022-2024 was approved, the Expert Group on Digitalisation was confirmed, and three new Expert Groups (EGs) were established: EG1 on Education and SDGs; EG2

on Recognition and Balanced Mobility; and EG3 on LLL and TVET. This ISOM served as an excellent opportunity for ASEM Members to meet face-to-face following the COVID-19 pandemic, fostering synergies, and strengthening their connections. To guarantee smooth coordination within the ASEM Education Process, the Secretariat committed to gather memberships for the three groups and arrange their kick-off meetings in early 2023 for the new Expert Groups, during which members appointed their (Co-)Chairs, established their Terms of Reference and started their activities.

Asia-Europe Meeting
ASEM Education

In March 2023, the ASEM Education Secretariat participated in the Conference of the Asia-Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE) in Bangkok, Thailand, and met key stakeholders of the ASEM Education Process, like the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the ASEAN University Network Secretariat (AUN), the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization, Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED) and the ASEAN Secretariat to discuss how to best cooperate and take the activities forward.

With the intention to establish regular communication with current and potential partners and stakeholders, and with the aim of identifying synergies and initiating collaborations, the Secretariat facilitated a meeting on 2-5 May 2023 in New Delhi between Dr. Pankaj Mittal and Ms. Marina Malgina, the Co-chairs of the Expert Group on Recognition and Balanced Mobility. It was a preparatory meeting that paved the way for the organization of the first in-person event of this Expert Group that took place on 12-15 December 2023. Apart from attending the Expert Group meeting, members had the occasion to take part in the event "Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence Summit 2023" in New Delhi, India.

The ASEM Education Secretariat has also worked – together with the Expert Group on Recognition and Balanced Mobility – on the improvement and promotion of the previously initiated ASEM Education Compendium of Country Profiles. Some more countries have uploaded their profiles and some countries have updated their information. Further efforts are necessary to enhance and disseminate this useful instrument.

On 22-23 May 2023 the Senior Officials' Meeting 1 (SOM1) was held in St. Julian's, Malta and as for the previous meeting, the relation with MFHEA's staff was very productive and smooth. At the SOM1 all Expert Groups reported on their activities, discussed in breakout sessions with the participants and the ASEM partners and stakeholders gave updates on their initiatives and projects. The Secretariat asked the Co-chairs of the Expert Groups and other stakeholders to organise webinars with the support of the Secretariat to promote the ASEM Education Process to a wider public.

ASEM SOM1 in May 2023 in St Julian's, Malta

To promote closer ties, cooperation and dialogue with other multilateral processes, the Secretariat played a key role in organizing and taking part in the Joint Meeting of the European Higher Education Area's Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue and policy makers invited by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in the framework of its ARC9 Policy Dialogue. This three-days seminar co-organised by the EU-funded project IN-GLOBAL took place in Rome on 27-29 September 2023 and brought together experts on Higher Education from Asia and Europe. The meeting was a significant opportunity to enhance synergies with the Bologna Process / European Higher Education Area.

Following the recommendations listed in the Conclusions by the Chair from ASEMME8 and the last Stocktaking Report, the Secretariat invested efforts in publishing ASEM events and activities on the ASEM Education website and on the social media profiles to best promote and to enhance the visibility of the ASEM Education Process.
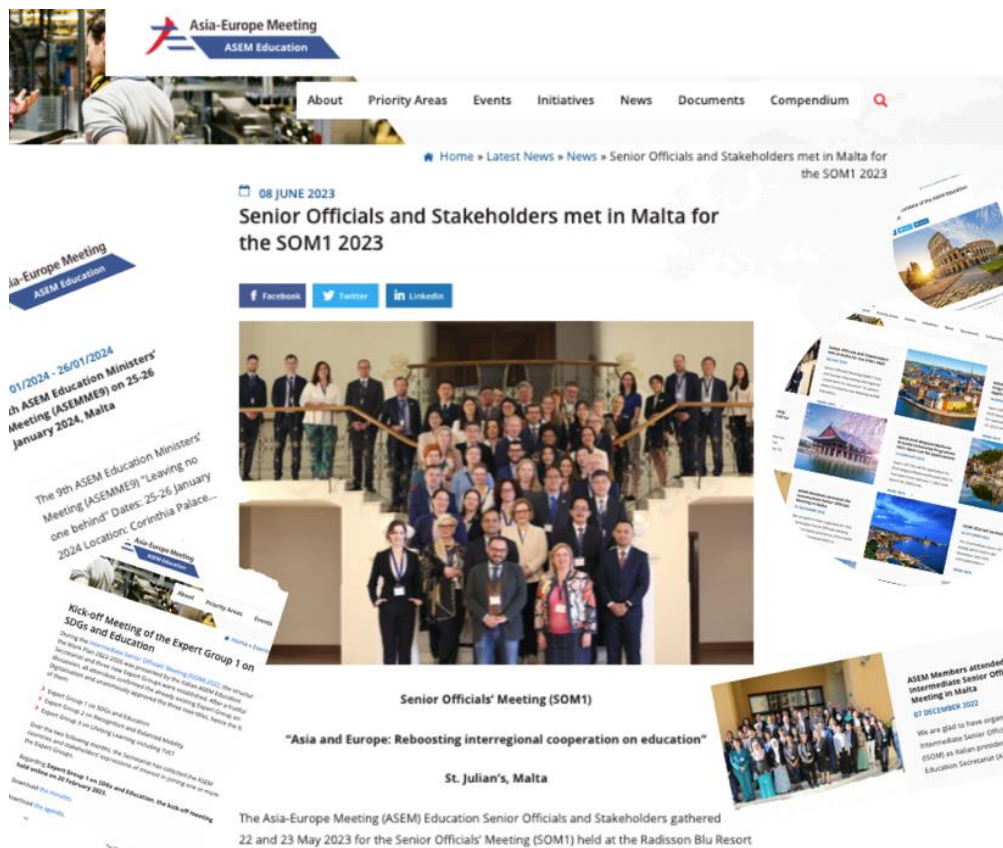
In the second half of 2023, the AES directed its efforts towards coordinating the organization of the 2nd Senior Officials' Meeting and the 9th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME9) in collaboration with the MFHEA, to be held on 24-26 January 2024 in Valletta, Malta. These events mark the end of this 2 years-cycle of the ASEM Process and start the new cycle until 2026.

2.2.Expert Group 1 on Sustainable Development Goals and Education

Co-chairs:	Gabriella Mallia (until 2023) and Adam Liwak (from 2023), **Malta**
	Duriya Amatavivat, **Thailand**
23 Members:	Austria, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, European Commission, Greece, India, Indonesia, Korea, Lao PDR, Latvia, Malta, Mongolia, Netherlands, Romania, Thailand, AEI, ASEF, ESN, ESU, EUA, IAU, SEAMEO RIHED

Background

Established at the Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting (ISOM) in November 2022, the mandate of the new Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and Education is to:

- foster dialogue on the SDGs in education with specific regard to the four priorities of ASEM Education Process,
- promote peer learning among the appointed experts of both regions,
- strengthen collaboration in SDGs and connectivity by identifying, sharing and promoting good practice concerning the implementation of SDGs in education at national, regional, interregional and local level,
- complement the work of other ASEM expert groups by providing expertise in the field of SDGs.

Summary of activities in 2023

In 2023 the Expert Group, comprising sixteen Senior Officials of ASEM partners (Austria, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, European Commission, Greece, India, Indonesia, Korea, Lao PDR, Latvia, Malta, Mongolia, Netherlands, Romania and Thailand) and seven representatives from ASEM Education stakeholders (Asia Europe Institute (AEI) Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF), Erasmus Student Network (ESN), European Students' Union (ESU), European University Association (EUA), International Association of Universities (IAU) ,Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization – Regional Centre for Higher Education (SEAMEO RIHED), held two meetings:

The first meeting of the Expert Group, which took place on 20 February 2023, identified the need to build a common understanding of concepts linked to the SDGs and explore ways to share information and best practices on topics such as country frameworks and policies, access to education, ensuring social inclusion, teacher education and education financing.

At the second meeting on 28 March 2023, representatives shared national practices, projects and significant achievements. To ensure that the groups' efforts are coordinated efficiently to accelerate and maximise achievement of the SDGs, it was recommended that a single template be designed as an efficient means for countries to report/document the relevant information.

In 2024, based on the inputs provided in the templates, the Expert Group will seek to identify common areas of potential collaboration or coordination to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs and address gaps or shortfalls.

Asia-Europe Meeting
ASEM Education

2.3. Expert Group 2 on Recognition and Balanced Mobility

Co-chairs:	Dr. Pankaj Mittal, **India**
	Marina Malgina, **Italy**
30 Members:	Austria, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Lao PDR, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Romania, Thailand, ASEM-DUO Secretariat, EQAR, ESN, ESU, EUA, IAU, SEAMEO RIHED, UNESCO Bangkok

The Expert Group on Recognition and Balanced Mobility was established at the Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting (ISOM) in November 2022 with the first meeting of the group convened in February 2023. The group met five times online and once in-person/hybrid in New Delhi, India.

Objectives

In response to the priorities of the ASEM Education Process, the overall goal of the activities undertaken by the Expert Group on Recognition and Balanced Mobility is to foster dialogue and promote mutual understanding, transparency and cooperation between Asian and European counterparts through systematic exchange of information and closer cooperation. The Expert Group agreed that this goal can be achieved through promoting peer learning among the Asian and European counterparts, including the Asia-Pacific Network of National Information Centres (APNNIC) and the European Network of Information Centres – National Academic Recognition Information Centres (ENIC-NARIC), while sharing the experience on the existing conventions on recognition, such as the Global Convention on Recognition, the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the Tokyo Convention, further improving information resources like the ASEM Compendium, and sharing and promoting good practices through joint activities, presentations and webinars.

Activities

In the year 2023, the expert group held five digital meetings and one in-person meeting hosted by the Association of Indian Universities in New Delhi, India in December 2023. With the intention to gather new ideas and initiatives in the field of Recognition and Balanced Mobility and to achieve stronger cooperation within the ASEM framework, the expert group members were invited to share the information about relevant activities and processes in their respective countries. As a result, the members of the group had an opportunity to involve in the discussions and identify opportunities for peer learning, as well as possible synergies with the activities of the other three Expert Groups of the ASEM Education Process. The in-person meeting in New Delhi, India provided a unique opportunity to meet both, peer expert group members and Indian stakeholders in person, which allowed making stronger connections with the world outside the ASEM. As a part of the activities, the Expert Group was invited to participate in the DAY of AI India held in New Delhi on 12-14 December 2023, as the topic of the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the field of Recognition and Balanced Mobility is identified as highly relevant also by the participants of the Expert Group.

In 2023, considerable attention was paid to the importance of the ASEM Compendium, as a comprehensive collection of the information on all higher education systems represented within the ASEM Education Process. As a result, following the recommendations from the Expert Group, specific guidelines for contributors to the ASEM Compendium were developed and a template for the country profile was amended. In September 2023, the ASEM Compendium webpages were updated, and several new country profiles were uploaded.

2.4. Expert Group 3 on Lifelong Learning and TVET

Chair:	Dr. Séamus Ó Tuama, **ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub Secretariat (Ireland)**
18 Members:	Austria, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Mongolia, Romania, Thailand, ASEM LLL Hub Secretariat, ESU, ETF, EUA, IAU, SEAMEO RIHED, UNESCO Bangkok

The group had its first meeting on 13 February 2023 and elected its Chair: Dr Séamus Ó Tuama, Chair of the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub. The Terms of Reference (ToR) were decided at the second meeting on 15 September 2023. Particular attention was given to the purpose and intended outcomes for the group. The group committed to promoting peer learning among Asian and European partners and stakeholders on Lifelong Learning including TVET. The group is currently considering best examples of lifelong learning and TVET in their regions. The intention is to collate this information and to create a forum where this information can be shared. On 27 September, Dr Séamus Ó Tuama held a webinar on 'Five Capitals of Learning: Refocusing the LLL Agenda including TVET'. The respondent was Dr Adaline Goh Yuen Sze from Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Education, University Brunei Darussalam. The webinar focused on the framework of the "Five Capitals of Learning"; the role of TVET in building human, social, natural, economic, and cultural capitals; with particular focus on case studies from around the world. The next webinar, which will be held in the first part of 2024, will concentrate on the Asian perspective.

2.5. Expert Group 4 on Digitalisation

Chair:	German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)
41 Members:	All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE); Artevelde University of Applied Sciences (Belgium); ASEAN Secretariat; ASEM Education Secretariat (AES); Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF); Beijing Normal University (China); Dania Academy (Denmark); Department of Education (Ireland); National Europass Centrum (Netherlands); Erasmus Student Network (ESN); European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA); European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport; European Students' Union (ESU); European Training Foundation (ETF); European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR); European University Association (EUA); Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (Austria); Further & Higher Education Authority (Malta); Ghent University (Belgium); Groningen Declaration Network (Netherlands); Hangzhou Normal University (China); Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence (CIMEA, Italy); Polytechnic Institute of Bragança (Portugal); International Association of Universities (IAU); King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (Thailand); Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat (India); Ministry of Education (Brunei Darussalam, India, Romania, Thailand); Ministry of Education and Science (Bulgaria, Mongolia); Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Indonesia); Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (Cyprus); Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (France); Ministry of National Resources and Education (Hungary); Polytechnic Institute of Bragança (Portugal); SEAMEO RIHED; UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education; UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training; UNEVOC Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) project; University Politehnica of Bucharest (Romania)

Digitalisation was introduced as one of the two transversal themes within the ASEM Education Process in 2019 to complement the four priority areas. The Expert Group Digitalisation was established in the same year.

Objectives

The objective of the Expert Group is to foster dialogue on the potential of digitalisation in (higher) education with specific regard to the four priorities of the ASEM Education Process as well as the Sustainable Development Goals through peer learning activities among the appointed experts of both regions for example. Collaboration and connectivity are to be strengthened by identifying, sharing and promoting good practices of digitally enhanced education cooperation between Asia and Europe. The Expert Group complements the work of other ASEM expert groups by providing expertise in the field of digital transformation.

Activities

In the working period 2019-2021, the group held several virtual meetings to draft a working paper on digitalisation. This working paper was presented at the SOM2 and the ministerial conference ASEMME8 (Bangkok, December 2021). It analyses the challenges and opportunities of the digital transformation in the ASEM Education Process and provides recommendations to policymakers.

Since 2022, the expert group has been following a peer-learning approach to enable exchange and dialogue between Asia and Europe. A portfolio of good practice examples on cooperation in digitally

enhanced education has been collected and serves as a knowledge base for further collaborations between the two regions.

Since the last ministerial conference in December 2021, three peer-learning meetings of the expert group took place. The March 2022 meeting concentrated on micro-credentials, including speakers from Germany, Singapore, Thailand and Belgium with a presentation of the European "Microbol" project and the European approach to micro-credentials. In December 2022, the meeting dealt with "Digitally enhanced Learning and Teaching" and included presentations on open education (Romania), virtual reality (Indonesia, Germany) and collaborative online international learning (Japan). In May 2023, the group discussed "The impact of Artificial Intelligence on learning and teaching". Speakers from Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Hungary and India provided insights into this topic and the challenges and opportunities which go along. One focus was on generative AI tools like ChatGPT and how they impact higher education.
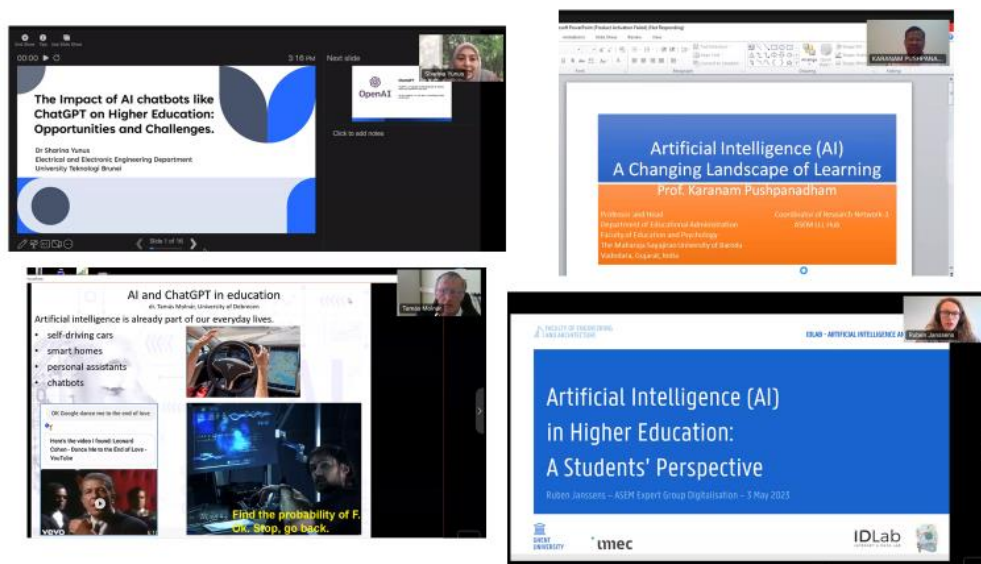
© DAAD/ EG Digitalisation Peer Learning Activity on the Impact of AI on Learning and Teaching.

Following a decision by the SOM1, held in May 2023 in Malta, the expert group recently added an outreach component, organising a public online seminar on the impact of Artificial Intelligence on higher education in November 2023. This online seminar, featuring expert views from HEIs, students as well as business, attracted widespread interest, with more than 170 participants from 32 countries.

© DAAD/ EG Digitalisation Public Online Seminar on the impact of AI on Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

3. Ongoing and Future ASEM Education Initiatives and Projects

This chapter lists on-going and future initiatives, projects and activities organised by ASEM partners and/or stakeholders that are fostering cooperation on (higher) education between Asia and Europe. It shall mainly inform the reader, give examples and inspiration for further collaboration and dialogue.

3.1. ASEM Partners

The Asia-Europe Meeting has 51 member countries, 30 European and 21 Asian countries who all contribute to the ASEM Education Process. The national ASEM representatives were asked to provide information on recent, ongoing and future initiatives and projects fostering cooperation of Asia and Europe in the field of (higher) education. The following is a non-exhaustive list of activities and shall give an idea of what is happening in the ASEM countries.

3.1.1. Belgium Flemish Community

The Flemish Department of Education and Training continued to host the ASEM Education Secretariat at it premises in the period between Bangkok's ASEMME9 and the start of the Italian ASEM Education Secretariat in July 2022, in cooperation with the French Community of Belgium and in coordination with the ASEM Education Standing Working Group.

Flemish higher education institutions are intensively involved in exchange with partner institutions in Asian countries, mostly via bilateral or EU programmes. Due to the pandemic the exchanges have been interrupted, but since the academic year 2022-2023, there has been a substantial recovery, although with some countries the exchange is not yet at cruise speed.

The ASEM Work Placement Programme remains a powerful complementary action to other bilateral mobility programmes between Asian countries and Flanders. It is a good vehicle to strengthen ties with institutions in Asian countries involved in (higher) VET and to boost incoming mobility as well. Moreover, it reinforces the link between the ASEM Education actions and the world of work in both regions.

In 2022-2023, 64 Flemish students were sent out via the ASEM WPP: 20 to Vietnam, 8 to Cambodia, 7 to India, 6 to South-Korea, 6 to the Philippines, 5 to Japan, 5 to Thailand, 3 to Indonesia, 2 to Malaysia, 1 to the People's Republic of China, 1 to Singapore. ASEM WPP – Students on the Move.

The programme is administrated by the Flemish Council of Universities and University Colleges (VLUHR) und supervision and funding by the Flemish Department of Education and Training.

3.1.2. Belgium French Community

The ASEM-DUO exchange program in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (BE-FR) continues to play a vital role in fostering **balanced mobility and academic collaborations between higher education institutions in Wallonia-Brussels and Asia** (more universities are participating than university colleges of applied sciences or schools of art). Applications must be submitted by two members of academic or scientific staff, one from the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and the other from Asia.

In the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, ASEM-DUO scholarships mainly support transport costs and per diem for participants for average exchange program of 29 days. This financial support has enabled a **real evolution in relations** between Wallonia-Brussels Federation and the Asian partners; it has enabled progress **in interpersonal relations** (which are difficult to achieve virtually) and has contributed to the flowering and development of **concrete research projects.** In addition, it has supported the **establishment of new collaboration & mobility programmes as well as the learning of new working, analysis and teaching procedures and techniques.**

The majority of projects enhance collaboration with institutions in Japan, Vietnam, and India (even though the project is open to all ASEM partner countries). Additionally, the projects predominantly focus on scientific disciplines and STEAM areas such as engineering, chemistry, physics, and biology. While the majority of project candidates are men, there is a positive trend observed in the selection process towards a more balanced gender representation.

Finally, despite the program's significance, there has been a noticeable reduction in project submissions since 2014. Nevertheless, various elements of the programme could be reviewed in order to improve the selection procedure: better highlighting the degree of internationalisation of the projects in the applications (i.e. the opportunities for developing collaborations that go beyond the project itself); work on a better promotion of the program and its opportunities (better use of social media, promotion campaign, accessibility of information, …) and continue to envisage measures in order to support a better diversity and inclusion.

For more information: https://www.ares-ac.be/fr/relations-internationales/bourse-asem-duo

3.1.3. Estonia

The Eur-Asian Border Lab joins European and Asian scholars to study bordering practices across regions and address policy gaps

By Karin Dean, coordinator of the Horizon Europe project "Advancing Trans-Regional Border Studies".

Borders emerge when different jurisdictions, but also languages, identities and cultures come into contact. The questions about which borders are enforced, guarded, crossed, overlooked or neglected point to complex issues related to the politics of power, social injustice, the hidden tensions in societies, or the societal needs for order and frame. Crucially, critical issues such as trans-national migration, global pandemics, aggression, trade and smuggling, have the processes of bordering at their core – but the public and policy-level reactions remain somewhat basic as state borders are routinely, but selectively, closed off in the face of threats.

The scholars behind the Eur-Asian Border Lab believe that while the dynamic geopolitical transformations in Asia have produced insightful challenges to dominant theories, their impact on the broader field of border studies remains marginal given that the state-of-the-art research draws largely on socio-political developments in the European Union and North America. Through coordination by scholars from Tallinn University and in partnership with colleagues from two top universities well known for border studies, the University of Eastern Finland and the University of

Amsterdam, these gaps in border studies and policy are addressed in a project titled "Advancing Trans-Regional Border Studies," where the Eur-Asian Border Lab is the principal tool. The project received funding from the EU's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation funding programme (Grant Agreement No. 101077207).

Anchored at Tallinn University, the Eur-Asian Border Lab is a platform for catalyzing trans-regional conversations and synergies between Euro-American and Asian border scholars through various online and offline activities. The Lab's website (https://borderlab.eu/) provides virtual space to cultivate new ideas between scholars studying borders in Europe and Asia and engage in conversations across disciplines. For example, it has featured blog posts on different practices of bordering and the related geopolitics from Northeast India to London and Tallinn. A photo contest was held online, open to academics, artists, activists, journalists and students globally to explore issues of societal concern through the lens of borders or bordering. The top photo essays are featured on the Lab's website together with brief conceptualizations. The key offline event of the Eur-Asian Border Lab is the Symposium *Bridging the Regions and Disciplines in Border Studies* that will take place in January 18-19, 2024, at Tallinn University, Estonia. Bringing together almost one hundred scholars from Asia, Europe and beyond, it is expected to establish trans-regional conversations and cross-fertilize perspectives in multiple ways. For example, the individual panels have been designed so that scholars from both regions focus on one common theme such as cross-border migration, informal cross-border solidarities or bordering technologies, to name a few. This enables to share empirical insights and region specific theoretical challenges to theory. After days of rigorous discussions, the participants will visit Narva at the Estonia-Russia border, which has transformed from the historical Iron Curtain into the EU, NATO and Schengen external border.

The Eur-Asian Border Lab encourages academic collaboration, joint publications and mobilities between both, the established scholars and early career researchers between Europe and Asia.
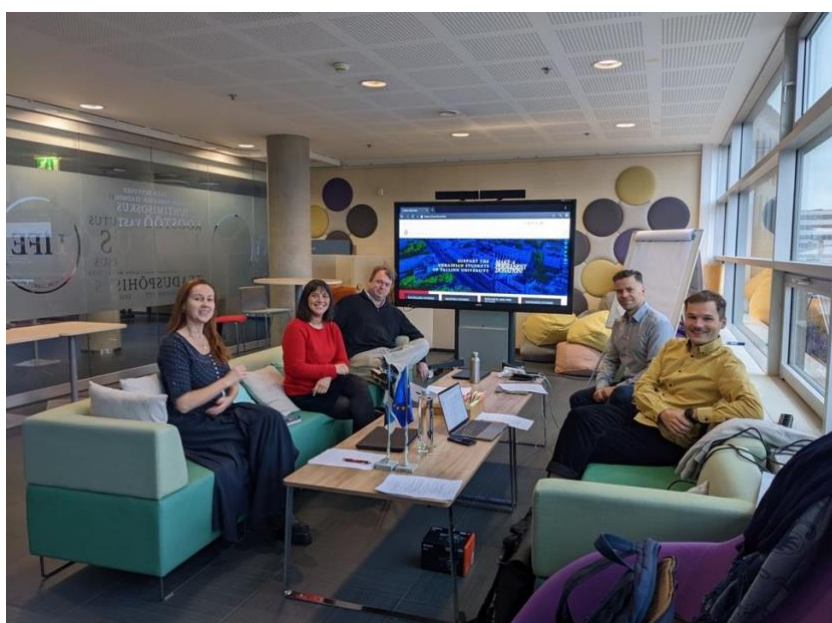
Artificial Intelligence in (Teacher) Education

The main and general objective of this project is to create a new Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's degree programme that connects education professionals with the rapidly growing role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education, research and teaching (AITE: Artificial Intelligence in (Teacher) Education). The goal is to develop educators' professional knowledge and understanding of AI and AI

applications in education and educational research, and give them the teaching and research skills to use AI to both innovate education systems and help them better and more effectively meet sustainability goals in education. By doing this, we also aim to increase the employability of the graduates.

This focus on educational innovation via effective, competent and critical reflective use of AI solutions includes a focus on sustainable value creation that is practical, ethical, inclusive, and equitable, and alert to issues that arise in the conjoining of human and machine effort in educating both people artificially intelligent (learning) systems and knowledge development in the teaching and learning environment. In this way, it is capitalising on the added value that AI can contribute to pursuing greater individual and collective well-being, while also alerting students to human (individual, social, and cultural) issues and challenges that arise with the expanding role of AI solutions in education, we expect to make a strong contribution to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 4: Quality Education.

Seven higher education institutions from South Korea, Sweden, Estonia, Cyprus and the Netherlands join forces, with a view of setting up the 'AITE' programme. The joint higher education institutions bring together cutting-edge expertise needed to deliver the programme, combining knowledge of AI solutions in the field of teaching and educational research.

The ambition of the strong partnership is to recruit excellent students from all different regions in the world including developing countries.

Project teams and staff:

Prof. Priit Reiska, Tallinn University, Coordinator, PhD in Science Education. Relevant expertise: teacher education, educational policy, science education, methodologies (concept mapping).

Dr. Heeok Heo, Full Professor Sunchon National University, Co-coordinator, Collaborator, PhD in Educational Technology. Relevant expertise: AI in education, teacher education, instructional design, technology enhanced learning.

Dr. On Soon Lee, Associate Professor, Sunchon National University, Collaborator, PhD in Linguistics. Relevant expertise: general education, intercultural competence, academic reading and writing, experimental research method.

Dr. Ee-Gyeong Kim, Full Professor, Dean of Graduate Schools Chung-Ang University Collaborator, PhD in educational administration. Relevant expertise: teacher education policy, smart education and AIinEd, educational policy.

Dr. Shinchun Kang Kongju National University Collaborator, PhD in educational technology. Relevant expertise: AI, AI based platform development, Data Science, AI convergence Education.

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3.1.4. Indonesia

Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA) and Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards Vocational Edition (IISMAeVO)

IISMA is a government-funded flagship scholarship program managed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. It aims to fund Indonesian undergraduate students for mobility programs at top partner universities in 30 countries. Selected students can spend one semester studying courses outside their major and will be guaranteed 20 credits transferred to their Indonesian universities. These 20 credits are earned through academic and extracurricular activities based on students' interests.

There are three key drivers of IISMA. The first is Industry 4.0, in which automation propels the world of work towards greater efficiency and adaptability. IISMA prepares Indonesian students to become qualified graduates with the experience, knowledge, and skills necessary for their future careers. Learning experiences abroad can provide additional value as an important part of students' preparation for the future workplace.

The next aspect is internationalization, which makes the mobility of students from one country to another more seamless, offering them the opportunity to learn new cultures, languages, and lifestyles. By participating in the IISMA program, Indonesian students can develop their cross-cultural understanding, intercultural communication skills, and leadership abilities while living in another country and studying alongside local students. Indonesian students will also have the chance to expand their international network by connecting with lecturers and fellow students in their class.

The third key driver is emancipated learning, the country's education transformation policy. Among other things, emancipated learning opens up Indonesia's tertiary education. The IISMA program gives students the opportunity to learn multidisciplinary knowledge based on their interests through a variety of courses. Students are free to choose courses that may not be related to their school or department in home universities.

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In 2021, 2022, and 2023, the IISMA Program was implemented in 73, 72, and 75 partner universities all over the world, respectively. In each of those academic years, 1,000, 1,155, and 1,416 students participated in the program.

IISMAVO is a program similar to IISMA, designed specifically for students in Vocational Higher Education. It has three primary objectives. First, IISMAVO aims to enable students in Vocational Higher Education to enhance their analytical thinking, leadership capabilities, and networking skills through international education. Second, it provides opportunities for these students to learn in collaboration with industry, allowing them to gain work experience and insights into the business world. Last but not least, IISMAVO aims to implement the Emancipated Learning policy, granting students in Vocational Higher Education the freedom to undertake various subjects outside their fields of study.

In order to prepare our students in Vocational Higher Education with 21st-century skills for the workforce, we have identified four areas of study that can be applied at IISMAVO. The first area is Engineering, which includes Information Technology, Computer Science, Water Management, Marine and Maritime, and Agriculture. The second area is Business, which encompasses the Hospitality and Tourism Industry, Creative Industries, Business and Management. The next area is Health and Science, covering Nursing and Aged Care. The fourth area is Social Sciences, including Accounting, Public Relations, Community Engagement, and Creative Arts.

In 2022, the IISMAVO Program was implemented in 46 partner universities all over the world, and in 2023, it was implemented in 51 partner universities. In those two academic years, 407 and 568 students participated in the program. Students of IISMA and IISMAVO thrive in their programs, and the alumni are sought after globally. While the national average waiting time from graduation to employment is four months, the average for the IISMA and IISMAVO alumni is only 0.3 months.

3.1.5. India

Inputs from the Ministry of Education, Government of India.

The recently released National Education Policy 2020 "is built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability" (NEP 2020). The NEP 2020 recommends "path-breaking reforms that aim at paradigm shift by equipping our students, teachers and educational institutions with the right competencies and capabilities and creating an enabling and reinvigorated education eco-system for a vibrant new India" (NEP 2020). The NEP extensively focuses on attaining the highest global standards in the quality of higher education. Further, it reinforces the need to attract a greater number of international students and achieve the goal of "internationalisation at home".

The policy also aims to make our young generation of learners aware and understand global issues and make them truly global citizens committed to human rights, sustainable development and global well-being. The approaches to promoting the internationalisation of higher education in NEP 2020 involve "facilitating student and faculty mobility, establishing international partnerships for research and cross-border delivery of higher education programmes, easing the processes through which institutions can enroll students from around the world, as well as the feasibility of carrying credits across institutions in multiple countries, and other such measures".

A. SCHEMES TO PROMOTE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION

1. **Study in India (SII)**
   a. Launched in 2018 to attract foreign students to top Indian HEIs
   b. Extended for a further period of five years (i.e. 2021-22 to 2025-26) with total financial outlay of Rs. 80.50 crores
   c. 45 + Focus countries across South-East Asia, Middle East and Africa
   d. More than 1500 courses are on offer.
   e. The programme also offers tuition fee waiver ranging from 25 percent to 100 percent to the meritorious students.

2. **Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaborations (SPARC)**
   a. Launched in October 2018
   b. Aim is supporting 600 joint research proposals and facilitating academic and research collaborations
   c. HEIs from 28 selected countries are participating
   d. Participating countries -USA, UK, Germany, Australia, Austria, Denmark, France, Canada, Italy, China & Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, Russia, Israel, Switzerland, Sweden, Netherlands, South Africa, South Korea, Norway, Portugal, New Zealand, Taiwan, Belgium, Spain, Brazil, and Finland
   e. 5 Thrust Areas and Sub-Themes: Fundamental Research, Emergent Areas of Impact, Convergence, Action-Oriented Research and Innovation-Driven

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f. In the first phase of **SPARC total 394 Projects** have been approved

g. In the second phase of SPARC, 266 proposals have been approved.

3. Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN)

a. Launched in December, 2015 to garner the best international experience into our systems of education, enable interaction of students and faculty with the best academic and industry experts from all over the world and also share their experiences and expertise to motivate people to work on Indian problems.

b. Internationally reputed academicians from all over the world were invited primarily to teach in the Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs) of India and to initiate teaching and research collaborations.

c. This GIAN scheme is used to bring in foreign academicians to teach courses in Indian Institutions of higher learning. Each course having either one week (12 to 14 hours) or two-week (24 to 28 hours) duration is taught by a Foreign Faculty in an Indian academic Institution, sometimes jointly with the Indian host faculty. Students and Faculty members of Indian institutions as well as members of industry, research institutions can participate in attending these courses.

d. Till date, 204 higher education Institutes are participating in this scheme and submitted 3600 course proposals.

e. After rigorous review process, 2163 proposals are approved, and 1763 courses have been conducted so far. More than 90000 students directly got exposed to the teaching methodologies of international faculty and also have the opportunity to interact with the foreign experts for research internships.

4. Study in India Portal

Study in India Portal: Study in India Portal has been launched on 3rd August, 2023. It is a dedicated website that showcases the best of Indian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and is a one-stop solution for admission and visa applications for foreign students who wish to pursue their higher education in Indian Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs). With the launch of the portal, it is now mandatory for every international student seeking admission in Indian HEIs to register on the SII portal for the academic session 2023-24 onwards, for every full time or short time course. The portal provides a structured mechanism to facilitate foreign students to meet their Visa obligations. A unique ID will be generated when a student registers on the portal, and this ID will have to be quoted with Visa applications.

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B. LEGISLATIVE/REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FACILITATING ENTRY OF FOREIGN UNIVERSITY TO OPERATE IN INDIA

a. Setting up of campuses of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions in India

University Grants Commission (UGC) has released enabling Regulations to facilitate the establishment of campuses of Foreign Higher Institutions in India. The UGC (Setting up and Operation of Campuse of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions in India) Regulations 2023 has been released for the same.

b. Setting up of campuses of Foreign Educational Institutions in the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT-City)

As announced by the Hon'ble Finance Minister in the Union Budget 2022-23, World-Class Foreign Universities and Institutions will be allowed in the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) to offer courses in Financial Management, FinTech, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics free from domestic regulations, except those by International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA). Foreign Universities and Institutions can set up their Branch Campuses in GIFT City as per the criteria and standards laid down in the IFSCA (Setting up and Operation of International Branch Campuses and Offshore Education Centres) Regulations, 2022. Two Universities from Australia have submitted proposals for setting up their campus in India.

5. Regulatory provisions for Foreign Collaboration under Joint Degree/Dual Degree & Twinning Programme

The National Education Policy-2020 recommended that "research collaboration and student exchanges between Indian institutions and global institutions will be promoted through special efforts. Credits acquired in foreign universities will be permitted, where appropriate as per the requirements of each HEI, to be counted for the award of a degree".

In line with NEP, 2020, the University Grants Commission has approved University Grants Commission (Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Educational Institutions to offer Twinning, Joint Degree and Dual Degree Programmes) Regulations, 2021.

3.1.6. Italy

Second ASEAN-Italy Youth Conference

29-30-31 May, 2023 - Jakarta, Indonesia

The Italian Association Global Action, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MoFAIC) and the ASEAN Secretariat, joined forces to organize an international program entirely dedicated to ASEAN and Italian students.

The 2nd ASEAN-Italy Youth Conference took place at the ASEAN Secretariat, in Jakarta, Indonesia, from the 29th to the 31st of May 2023.

Thanks to the contribution of the Italian MoFAIC and the support of the ASEAN Secretariat, Global Action was able to provide all the participants with the opportunity to join the program free of charge and to participate in discussions and training sessions focused on Climate Change, Food Security, Youth Empowerment and Digitalization.

The training phase involved the participation of representatives from the Italian MoFAIC, the ASEAN Secretariat, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the ASEAN Youth Organization (AYO). During the Second ASEAN-Italy Youth Conference, the participants were invited to discuss and find possible global common solutions to two main challenges:

- Climate Change and Food Security;
- Youth Empowerment and Digitalization.

The ultimate aim was for students to formulate youth-driven recommendations fostering cooperation between Italy and ASEAN.

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The Closing Ceremony of the Conference featured the presentation of the final proposals to key representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat, the Italian MoFAIC, the Italian Ministry of Sport and Youth, the Delegation of the European Union to ASEAN, Permanent Representations to ASEAN and ASEAN Embassies to Italy.

The 2nd ASEAN-Italy Youth Conference sought to enhance multiculturalism, curiosity, and proactivity among students who are usually geographically distant, and to strengthen their inclination to intercultural dialogue. By bringing together 33 participants from 11 countries, Global Action successfully bridged the geographical divide, enabling these students to share a collective commitment: to show their willingness to concretely take action in the fields of Climate Change and Food Security, Youth Empowerment and Digitalization.

Promotion of Italian Language, Internationalization of Universities and Scholarships sponsored by MoFAIC

In 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation provided contributions for the support and maintenance of **Italian professorships in favour of 40 universities in the Asia-Pacific** region of the ASEM area, distributed geographically as follows: **Australia** (3), **China** (15), **South Korea** (1), **India** (6), **Kazakhstan** (9), **New Zealand** (1), **Thailand** (2).

In the framework of the last call for scholarships for the academic year 2023/2024, published last May 5, **the Asian-Oceanic countries of the ASEM area have been awarded 810 monthly grants** (corresponding to 99 scholarship holders). 3701 applications were received, distributed geographically as follows: Bangladesh (18 monthly payments, 2 grant holders), People's Republic of

China (162 monthly payments, 20 grant holders), South Korea (27 monthly payments, 3 grant holders), Philippines (27 monthly payments, 3 grant holders), Japan (45 monthly payments, 5 grant holders), India (153 monthly payments, 22 grant holders), Indonesia (81 monthly payments, 9 grant holders), Kazakhstan (72 monthly payments, 8 grant holders), Malaysia (36 monthly payments, 6 grant holders), Mongolia (18 monthly payments, 2 grant holders), Myanmar (36 monthly payments, 4 grant holders), Pakistan (27 monthly payments, 3 grant holders), Singapore (9 months, 1 scholarship holder), Thailand (45 months, 5 scholarships) and Vietnam (54 months, 6 scholarships).

According to data from CINECA-MUR, **there are currently 2,839 university cooperation agreements between Italian universities and their counterparts in the Asian-Pacific countries of the ASEM area, 128 of which were established in 2023.**

According to the Italian Ministry for Universities and Research **29.886 students from the Asian-Oceanic countries** of the ASEM area were enrolled in the Italian higher education system, 8.351 of them at Higher Education in Art, Music and Dance institutions.

Italian courses are active in 192 universities in the Asia-Pacific ASEM area, and there are **429,969 Italian language students** in the Asia-Oceanic countries of the ASEM area.

ARDI – Automatic Recognition Database Italy

In order to align Italy with the European policies of "automatic recognition" of academic qualifications, in line with the ["Council Recommendation, 26/11/2018, on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education diplomas and the outcomes of learning period abroad"](#) and with what is required by the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), taking also into account the ["Rome Ministerial Communiqué"](#) approved during the Ministerial Conference organised by Italy in 2020, and in the view of the next meeting of EHEA Ministries to be held in May 2024 hosted in Tirana, **CIMEA developed ARDI - Automatic Recognition Database-Italia.**

[ARDI - Automatic Recognition Database - Italy](#) is an open access tool that **describes the main types of academic qualifications and final secondary school qualifications of the** [Countries that are signatories to the Lisbon Recognition Convention](#). It provides a **comparative opinion on their correspondence** with Italian qualifications, as well as specific evaluative notes for each type of qualification in line with the typical elements of the foreign reference system. In addition to this, a **Statement of Correspondence** is automatically generated by the system for each qualification, immediately **available for download**. ARDI contains 426 academic and upper secondary school qualifications from 55 countries. ARDI is a tool for institutions and individuals dealing with the recognition of foreign qualifications in Italy, offering a systemic approach to evaluate and compare qualifications from a wide range of countries.

Regional Human Rights & Peace Summer School at The National University of Timor-Leste

August-September 2024

The Global Campus of Human Rights (GC), funded by the European Union, is an association constituted under the Italian law and has its headquarters in Venice. It is currently the only Italian non-confessional entity working on cooperation for development in Timor-Leste. Since 2019, the GC has been leading the capacity-building project "Development of Human Rights Education and Research at the National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL)", which aims at engaging in training, education, international networking, and research activities.

The Human Rights Centre of the National University of Timor-Leste, together with GC, and with the financial support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International cooperation, created an integrated regional summer school focused on the promotion of peace, human security, and human rights.

Scheduled from August 26 to September 8, 2024, the upcoming summer school holds a crucial role in **engaging Timorese and ASEAN scholars**, **experts, and students** in the best regional exchange schemes, training programs, events, and networks, fostering the mobility of professors and students to and from the Global Campus Asia-Pacific Master Program Universities. This will significantly contribute to the advancement of higher education quality and internationalization in Timor-Leste, especially in the regional context.

Participants are expected to acquire a sound knowledge of human rights, peace theories and advocacy practices, leading to the issuance of a diploma and transcript of records. Upon positive results of the project, the initiative envisions a second edition for the subsequent year.

3.1.7. Malaysia

ADEK-USM Tropical Biodiversity Summer Program

12 – 21 August 2023, Penang, Malaysia

The Department of Education and Knowledge, Abu Dhabi and Universiti Sains Malaysia (ADEK-USM) Tropical Biodiversity Summer Program had collaborated to organize the Tropical Biodiversity Summer Program, held at the Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang, Malaysia, from 12 August to 21 August 2023. 18 students from Year 11 and Year 12 from Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) under the purview of ADEK, participated for the first time on a face-to-face program post Covid-19 pandemic in Penang, Malaysia.

The summer program hosted by International Mobility & Collaboration Center (IMCC), USM, Penang, Malaysia is a short-term program for students to explore the tropical biodiversity, experience the complexity and beauty of some of the most biologically diverse and threatened ecosystems in the world. The students attended lecture modules mixed with a variety of activities, field trips and team-building exercises. The lectures and field trips include:

- Bio Living Lab: CEMACS Marine Biodiversity by boat, Releasing Baby turtle at the Turtle Conservation Project at Kerachut Beach, Meromictic Lake Biodiversity, Visit to UNESCO Biosphere The Habitat, Orang Utan Conservation Project, Mangrove Biodiversity, Visit Coal Factory and Firefly Tour.
- Introduction to SDG Project: Entrepreneurial from Waste to Wealth, SDG 11,12,13,14,15.
- Cultural Activities: Traditional Dance, Georgetown Heritage Tour, Batik Canting.
- Biology Lecture: Technology & AI Conservation Ecology.
- Food Tech Lecture: Processed Food.
- Leadership and Team Building Activities.
- Final Presentation: Entrepreneurial Product Pitching.

At the end of the Summer Programme, participants had covered both Genetic Diversity and Species Diversity in Penang Island and its capital George Town, the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Participants understand the importance of Tropical Biodiversity and Sustainability, with the inclusion of topics such as Marine Ecology and Leadership Traits through Problem-Based Learning. The final presentation is

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about a proposal for Entrepreneurial Product Pitching from the participants. For more information about the program and other events by IMCC, please visit https://www.imcc.usm.my/

Prepared by: Education Malaysia Dubai

EDUTOURISM PROGRAMME

Inputs from the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia

In line with the Government's goal to make Malaysia a world-class higher education hub as outlined in the Malaysian Education Development Plan 2015-2025 (Higher Education); the Ministry of Higher Education (KPT) wants to make Malaysia a top-choice destination for further studies with a target of 250,000 international students by 2025 through the implementation of the Mobility programme that was introduced in 2015.

Edutourism Programme

An educational tourism programme, or Edutourism, is a programme under the Mobility programme defined as a tourism activity by a person visiting Malaysia where the educational and learning process in the Malaysian HEI is the largest contribution to their visit. This programme involves the admission of students or international tourists who spend at least overnight in the country to participate in the Edutourism programme at the Malaysian HEI for a period of not less than one (1) day or eight (8) hours to six (6) months and involves immigration pass facilities. The main objectives of this program are to enhance the enrolment of international students as well as to promote HEIs as parts of Malaysia tourism centers. There are 168 programs registered under the Edutourism Package from 20 public universities and 17 private higher institutions.

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3.2.ASEM Stakeholders

The Asia-Europe Meeting has many stakeholders, which are institutions, organizations, interest groups, etc. who are involved in the ASEM Education Process or have an interest in its success but are not official partners of ASEM. The most active stakeholder in the AEP is the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the only permanent institution of ASEM. Other stakeholders currently involved in the ASEM Education Process are: ASEAN University Network (AUN), ASEM LLL Hub Secretariat (University College Cork), ASEM-DUO Secretariat, Erasmus Student Network (ESN), European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), European External Action Service (EEAS), European Students' Union (ESU), European Training Foundation (ETF), European University Association (EUA), International Association of Universities (IAU), Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre specialising in higher education and development (SEAMEO RIHED), UNESCO, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and others.

The ASEM contact persons were asked to provide information on recent, ongoing and future initiatives and projects fostering cooperation of Asia and Europe in the field of (higher) education. The following is a non-exhaustive list of activities and shall give an idea of what is happening in the ASEM Education context.

3.2.1. ASEM DUO Secretariat

ASEM-DUO Structure based exchange through pairing

ASEM-DUO contributes to the overarching ASEM objective of people-to-people connectivity which was confirmed at the highest political level by all ASEM members. The objective of balanced mobility is achieved through reciprocity ("pairing"). Since 2001, the ASEM-DUO Secretariat has supported more than 4,456 students, teachers and professors to be exchanged with the financial supports by Belgium (Flemish and French Community), Denmark, France, Germany, India, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sweden, and Thailand.

As of December 2023, there are five ASEM-DUO Programmes in operation, supported by five ASEM member countries which are Belgium (French Community), Singapore, Sweden, Thailand, and Republic of Korea. During 2022-2023, 193 students and professors were selected, while in 2023-2024, 156 are to be supported.

The ASEM-DUO Secretariat hosted the 5th ASEM-DUO Fellows Alumni Meeting in October 2022 and 1st ASEM-DUO Essay Contest in 2023. In contest, 9 essays were selected as the excellent & outstanding essays and published online (www.asemduo.org). Also, the ASEM-DUO Secretariat will host the 12th ASEM-DUO Expert meeting during ASEMME9, and the 6th ASEM-DUO Fellows Alumni Meeting in October 2024.

The initiative carried out by ASEM-DUO is vital to enhance balanced mobility between both regions. Our program encourages interaction that facilitates mutual understanding, enhances student employability, and expands cross-border collaboration. So, it affects them to have the opportunity to build new or strengthen existing international collaborations. There is unanimous support for the

continuation of the Programme as ASEM-DUO is considered as one of the uncontested success stories of ASEM. (ASEM Looking back and looking ahead, 2019).

However, the amount of contribution is tilted towards Asian members with 76% of contribution being made by Asian members since 2008: imbalance exists. More contributing members into ASEM-DUO would be critical for its continuation. Thus, we highly encourage ASEM European partner to contribute to our program in order to tackle imbalance currently existing.

3.2.2. Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)
Education Department
Impact on ASEM Connectivity since ASEMME8
Projects implemented between 2022-2023

About ASEF
Established in 1997 as an intergovernmental, not for profit organisation, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) remains ASEM's only permanent institution with the mission to connect institutions and individuals of Asia and Europe to address and collaborate on common global challenges. Learn more at www.asef.org

ASEF's Work in Education
Education is one of ASEF's key thematic areas. In this field, ASEF connects the youth, students, teachers & educators, higher education leaders & EdTech experts with policy makers across both regions. Through policy dialogues, capacity building and the creation of bi-regional networks, ASEF contributes to innovation in the formal and non-formal education sector and towards the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN Agenda2030.

Connection to the ASEM Education Process
Aligned with the strategic priorities of the ASEM Education Process (AEP), ASEF's education projects engage civil society and government stakeholders in interdisciplinary, technology-driven and lifelong learning opportunities to enhance quality education. The outcomes of ASEF's education projects feed into the AEP expert groups, the ASEM Education Senior Officials Meetings and the ASEM Education Ministers' Meetings (ASEMMEs).

ASEF contributes to the **Strategic Objectives #1** Enhancing Connectivity between Asia and Europe by Boosting Inclusive and Balanced Mobility and Exchanges and **#3** Fostering the Development of Skills and Competences as defined by the ASEM Education 2023 Strategy.

Projects Implemented since ASEMME8
Since the 8th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME8) hosted by Thailand in 2021, ASEF carried out over hybrid and interdisciplinary 20 activities that boosted ASEM Education connectivity, including online and onsite events, dialogues, studies in secondary education, higher education & the youth sector. These have directly/indirectly engaged over 19,000 participants from all 51 ASEM countries and provided diverse opportunities for learning and networking.

Impact on Connectivity
ASEF's Education Department conducts Alumni Impact Surveys on a biennial basis to find out what influence ASEF had on participants through its projects and to evaluate its project formats and outcomes for future enhancements. Key Findings from the 2023 Alumni Survey Based on the feedback by alumni who joined ASEF's Education Projects during the years 2014-2022:

- 97% confirmed that ASEF's projects helped them build personal connections and networks
- 95% commented that ASEF's projects improved their career/professional opportunities
- 77% of participants reported still being in contact with their project peers
- 68% stated that participating in an ASEF project inspired them to study/live/work in another ASEM country
- 37% of ASEFEdu alumni of education projects established new collaborations

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9th ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education
Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping: Working Towards the SDGs

9th ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education
Asia-Europe HE Mapping: Working Towards the SDGs
Hybrid, 2022-2023

- Official Dialogue Partner of the ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME)
- The only bi-regional multi-stakeholder dialogue platform for university and student leaders, experts, policy makers and ministers
- Contributing to all of the ASEM Education Strategic Objectives and the horizontal priority on sustainable development

The ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARC) is the **"Official Dialogue Partner of the ASEM Education Ministers Meeting (ASEMME)"** and the only bi-regional multi-stakeholder dialogue platform for university and student leaders, policy makers and ministers to discuss higher education issues and shape the education landscape in Asia and Europe.

For the past 15 years, ARC has continuously evolved and contributed with various outputs (policy recommendations, research, and events) to the ASEM Education Process, and created opportunities for key Asian and European stakeholders to connect.

Key Objectives

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE
Facilitate the exchange of good practices and networking among policymakers, universities and student organisations in Asia and Europe

INFORM POLICY
Inform policies by collecting evidence and conducting policy dialogues with stakeholders of the ASEM Partner Countries, the EU and ASEAN

The Topic
In December 2021 the ASEM Education Ministers "underlined the importance of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on SDG4 and agreed that the ASEM Education Process can contribute to realising the SDGs"[1] and adopted "sustainable development" as a horizontal priority of the ASEM Education Process. Hence, ASEF decided to focus the ARC9 topic on this issue between 2022-2023.

1| Research phase: The project started with collecting and mapping evidence on the topic across the ASEM countries, in order to lay the foundation for policy discussions. The following study was published:

REPORT ON HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY & PRACTICE
"Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping: Working Towards the SDGs"

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[1] 8th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME8). Conclusions by the Chair. https://asem-education.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Conclusions-by-the-Chair_ASEMME8_Final_Version.pdf

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- **Part 1: Mapping Policymakers Perspectives**
  Covering **31 national contexts in Asia and Europe**, the study maps how governments are encouraging HEIs to contribute to the SDGs, provides concrete examples of enabling measures, and identify opportunities that may be leveraged to strengthen the HE policy-practice interface towards the SDGs.

- **Part 2: Mapping Higher Education Institutional Perspectives**
  This study maps 240 institutional perspectives from **42 countries in Asia and Europe**, showcasing how universities engage with the SDGs. The study was conducted in partnership with the International Association of Universities (IAU).

Download the Report here, or watch the recording of the Launch of the ARC9 Study here.

2| Dissemination and Dialogue Phase: Based on the findings and recommendations of the report, ASEF organised a series of dissemination and policy dialogue events with prestigious partners to showcase and discuss the findings of the report:

Policy Dialogue events and Policy Recommendations

Policy Dialogue Workshop with ASEAN+3 students and university leaders titled "Working Towards the SDGs: Mapping University and Student Perspectives in ASEAN", 18 July 2023, Online
- Organised in partnership with the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and Universitas Airlangga (UNAIR)
- Policy recommendations emerging from the workshop are available here.

Policy Dialogue Workshop with ASEM Policymakers titled "Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping: Working Towards the SDGs", 27-29 September 2023, Rome, Italy
- Co-organised by ASEF and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue (CG GPD), in partnership with the ASEM Education Secretariat and Associazione CIMEA through the IN-GLOBAL Project
- Policy recommendations emerging from the workshop are available here.

Policy Dialogue with Student and Youth Leaders titled "Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping: Working Towards the SDGs", 2-5 November 2023
- Organised in Partnership with the ASEAN Youth Organisation (AYO)
- Policy recommendations emerging from the workshop are available here.

Dissemination Events

- **In partnership with International Association of Universities (IAU):** IAU 16th General Conference 2022 titled "Relevance and Value of Universities to Future Society", 25-28 October 2022, Dublin, Ireland
- **In partnership with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Regional Institute for Higher Education Development (RIHED):** 2022 Inter-Regional Research Symposium

titled "Sustainable Learning in Higher Education: Towards Sustainable Development", 23-25 November 2022, Asia Hotel Bangkok, Thailand

- **In Partnership with British Council**: Going Global Asia-Pacific 2022 Conference titled "International Education in the UK and Asia Pacific region: How to pursue equity in an inequitable world", 28 November – 1 December 2022, Singapore
- **Asia Pacific Association of International Education (APAIE) 2023 Conference,** 13-17 March 2023, Bangkok, Thailand
- **In partnership with ASEAN University Network (AUN):** 6th ASEAN+3 Rectors' Conference on "Future and Potentials of University-Industry Collaboration", 20-21 September 2023, Surabaya, Indonesia

Key highlights of the project:

31 National Contexts
Studied in the policy research

240 Universities
Surveyed and provided insights

100 Dialogue Participants
Consulted online and offline and participated in drafting recommendations

500+ Academics and Experts
Learned about the research results through the dissemination

82,000+ Reached
On Social media with different messages

Visit the ARC9 website to learn more.

5th ASEF Young Leaders Summit (ASEFYLS5)
"Leadership in Society 5.0"
Hybrid, August – December 2023

- Leadership development programme for students & young professionals
- Enhancing People-to-People Connectivity through building sustainable intellectual networks and organising dialogues between Youth and ASEM Leaders
- Contributing to ASEM Education Process Strategic Objective #1 Enhancing Connectivity and #3 Fostering the Development of Skills and Competencies

The 5th ASEF Young Leaders Summit (ASEFYLS5) took place from August to December 2023. It focused on the theme of **'Leadership & Society 5.0'** and incorporated 3 spheres for youth leadership: 1) self-leadership (you), 2) team leadership (we) and 3) societal leadership (all).

The Programme brought together 99 Young Leaders from the 51 ASEM countries, who lead in a variety of areas, as young academics, young entrepreneurs, leaders of youth associations. The ASEFYLS5 programme consisted of 4 phases:

- **Navigators Training:** 21-26 June 2023, Singapore
- **Knowledge Building:** August 2023, Online
- **Youth Summit:** 12-16 September 2023, University of Salamanca, Spain
- **Leadership in Action:** Sept-Dec 2023, Online

ASEF YOUTH REPORT 2023
"Stepping into Society 5.0: Youth Perspectives on Technology-Informed Societal Leadership"

This report is one of the intellectual outcomes of this project, summarising over 8,500 young leaders' perspectives from 51 Asian and European countries on the key challenges of our times and the future Society 5.0, and how technology could be deployed to address them.

Watch the launch presentation of the report findings here.

Key highlights of the project:

152 Participants
& Resource Persons involved from 51 ASEM countries

8,500+ Applications
Received from 51 countries

1,195,310
Social media reach

10 Leadership in Action solutions
proposed by participants to solve real-world Society 5.0. challenges

99%
would recommend ASEFYLS or other ASEF projects to a friend

50,347
Website visitors

Visit the ASEFYLS5 project website to learn more.

3rd and 4th ASEF Higher Education Innovation Lab
Universities' Role in AI Innovation Ecosystems
Hybrid, May-November 2023

	• Design thinking laboratory for leaders, managers and administrators of tertiary higher education institutions in charge of innovation and research • Enhancing peer networks across Asia and Europe that leads to concrete actions and outputs • Contributing to ASEM Education Process Strategic Objective #1 Enhancing Connectivity and #2 Promoting Lifelong Learning and #3 Fostering the Development of Skills and Competencies

The 3rd and 4th edition of the ASEF Higher Education Innovation Laboratory (ASEFInnoLab) on the theme *"Universities' Role in Artificial Intelligence (AI) Innovation Ecosystems" and Universities' Role in Advancing Teaching AI Skills and Entrepreneurship"* took place in 2023.

In partnership with Fudan University, ASEF designed two hybrid learning and networking programmes that involved 80 participants - university managers, administrators and academics - to exchange good practices, co-create new ideas and explore areas for collaboration among their institutions. Participants designed 8 collaborative research and teaching innovation projects.

One of the key outcome was the launch of the Asia-Europe for Artificial Intelligence (AE4AI) Network at the Shanghai Forum, highlighting three areas where universities can significantly contribute to the ongoing developments:

-AI Governance
-AI in Education
-AI for Sustainable Development

Key Highlights of the ASEFInnoLab3&4 editions

92 Participants
Including Resource persons from 24 ASEM countries

8 Innovation Projects Developed
Drafted by participants working in teams

98%
would recommend the programme to a colleague

Launched the AE4AI Network
A Community of Practice

Side-event of the Shanghai Forum
Directly contributed to subforum discussions at the prestigious event

Visit the project website of the ASEFInnolab3 to learn more.
Visit the project website of the ASEFInnolab4 to learn more.

16th ASEF Classroom Network Project

Leading Change: Digital Transformation of Education in the Era of AI

Hybrid, June-December 2023

|	
	▪ The only platform in Asia and Europe that facilitates connectivity, knowledge and intercultural exchange in secondary, high, and vocational schools ▪ Contribution to teacher professionalisation and the development of 21st century skills ▪ Contributing to ASEM Education Process Strategic Objective #1 Enhancing Connectivity and #2 Promoting Lifelong Learning and #3 Fostering the Development of Skills and Competencies

The ASEF Classroom Network Project (ASEFClassNet) connects teachers, teacher trainers, and academics working at the secondary & vocational education sector from Asian & European countries through two programme tracks:

- **School Collaboration:** For teachers and school leaders
- **Faculty Collaboration:** For teacher trainers, academic experts, and researchers.

The 16th edition of the ASEFClassNet project, focused on "Leading Change: Digital Transformation of Education in the Era of Artificial Intelligence" and took place in a hybrid format from June to December 2023. The programme consisted of 3 phases, including self-learning, peer-to-peer learning and action learning opportunities with collaborative elements and an on-site conference hosted in partnership with the International Research Centre for AI (IRCAI) under the auspices of UNESCO between 12-16 November 2023 in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

REPORT ON ASEM TEACHERS' VIEWS

"Asian and European Teachers' Perspectives on AI and Education"
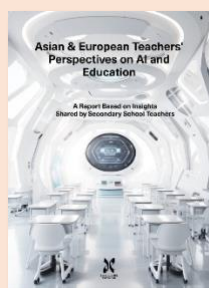
This report is one of the intellectual outcomes of this project, summarising over 330 teachers' responses from 43 ASEM countries on AI & Education, how teachers view the role of AI in education and what they think about AI literacy, and their fears and hopes.

The report consists of five chapters explaining Artificial Intelligence (AI) and AI and Education (AI&ED) and the insights from the ASEFClassNet16 Survey Results. You can read the full report here

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Key highlights of the project:

190 Participants
& Resource Persons throughout the 4 phases from 30 ASEM countries

1 Report
Featuring teachers' views from 43 Asian & European Countries

7 months long programme
of participant engagement

56 Collaboration Activities
48 Innovative Teaching Practices (ITP) & 8 Research Collaborations

2,595,361 viewers
Social media reach

5,229 users
Unique website visitors

100% would recommend ASEFClassNet to their peers to participate in this project

Visit ASEFClassNet16 webpages to learn more: Faculty Collaboration, School Collaboration & Onsite Conference.

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ASEF ClassNet Collaborations 2022

**ASEF Classroom Network Collaborations**
"Innovative Teaching & Learning, STEM Education and Education for Sustainable Development"
Online, September-December 2022

In 2022, the ASEFClassNet took place entirely online and focused on the theme "Innovative Teaching & Learning, STEM Education and Education for Sustainable Development". It was a 3-month long (Sep-Dec 2022) capacity-building project for teachers at the secondary education level. It contributed to enhancing teaching & learning environments in secondary, high, and vocational schools across ASEM on two themes:

- **School Collaboration 1:** *Holistic Learning Environments for Innovative Teaching and Learning.* The Collaboration trained 77 Teachers from 27 ASEM Countries which resulted in the development of 16 Innovative Teaching Practices on various aspects of Holistic Education.

- **School Collaboration 2:** *STEM Education through Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).* It trained 65 Teachers from 32 ASEM Countries and enabled them to critically reflect on both local and global Climate Change issues. It contributed to introducing Climate Change Education across ASEM through 11 Innovative Teaching Practices.

TEACHERS' HANDBOOK
"Holistic Teaching and Learning Environments for Well-being"
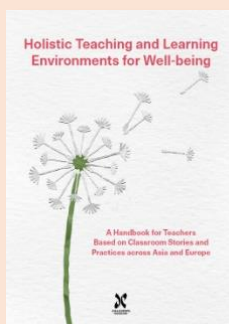
This ASEFClassNet Teacher Handbook (an outcome from the 2022 School Collaboration) on Holistic Learning Environment aims to empower K-12 teachers in the ASEM region and beyond to promote teaching in a Holistic way. It is providing pedagogical capacity building opportunities to the participant teachers on the 5 thematic areas:
1) Relationship Building
2) Inclusion
3) Active Learning & Engagement
4) Teaching Resilience and Grit and
5) Teaching Social Emotional Skills (SES)
Download the handbook [here](#).

Key highlights of the project:

107 Participants
Teachers from secondary and vocational schools from 37 ASEM countries

2 Reports
Featuring teachers' views and providing them with useful guidance

26 Webinars
Organised on two tracks in 3-months

27 Innovative Teaching Practices
Developed by participating teachers on improving wellbeing and climate change education

100% wants to stay in touch
And continue to collaborate in future projects

Visit the [ASEFClassNet Collaborations 2022 website](#) to learn more.

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3.2.3. Asia-Europe Institute (AEI)

AEI-ASEM Summer School 2023
31 July – 13 August 2023,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The Asia-Europe Institute (AEI), Universiti Malaya (UM), has successfully hosted the AEI-ASEM Summer School '23, themed "Civilizational Dialogue for a Sustainable Future." It was held at Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, from July 31st to August 13th, 2023. Thirty students from seven ASEM partners—

Japan, Russia, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Pakistan—participated in this year's summer school. This year's summer school was the first face-to-face session held in three (3) years, as the program was moved online during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The program was officiated by the Executive Director of AEI, UM, Distinguished Professor Dato' Dr. Rajah Rasiah. In his speech, he highlighted the commitment of AEI, UM, and the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia in organizing the summer school as a post-pandemic strategy to revitalize the agenda of balanced mobility between Asia and Europe.

Datin Noorazah Omar, Undersecretary of the International Relations Division, Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) Malaysia, also graced the opening ceremony with her presence and delivered the Keynote Speech. In her speech, she noted that this year's summer school was a unique platform for participants to comprehend Malaysia's outlook on sustainable development goals based on the Malaysia MADANI

concept. MADANI is a Malay abbreviation for sustainability, prosperity, innovation, respect, trust, care, and compassion. It was coined by Malaysia's current prime minister, Anwar Ibrahim, as a policy framework that was launched on January 19, 2023.

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Therefore, the theme for this year's AEI-ASEM Summer School, "Civilizational Dialogue for a Sustainable Future," focuses on various topics of interest in line with the concept to generate conversation and ideas among participants of diverse backgrounds in understanding the global challenges we face. It also focuses on encouraging participants to think about impactful solutions and the role they can play in achieving these solutions.

Participants were able to attend lecture modules alongside a strategic mix of activities, field trips, and skills-building exercises. This provided practical and valuable learning experiences for all participants. The lectures and field trips comprised a diverse range of modules, including:

- An Overview: "Malaysia Truly Asia";
- Introduction to Malaysian Food; and Folk Music and Dance;
- Sustainable Development – Perspective of Asia and Europe;
- Harnessing Innovation and Green Technology for a Sustainable Future;
- Addressing Contemporary Human (in) Security;
- Youth and Transformational Leadership; and
- Sustainable Human Development: Perspective from ASEAN and Malaysia;

At the end of the Summer School, participants were able to compare and differentiate the issues that serve as barriers to social and sustainable development, assess the use of innovation and Green Technology for sustainable practices, and demonstrate awareness of different civilizational experiences in dealing with contemporary social and developmental issues. Participants also had a chance to visit various sites of interest in Kuala Lumpur and Melacca. The program culminated with a student-led forum where the students conducted panel sessions concerning different topics related to the themes for a panel of jurors from various industries.

The two-week program ended with an experience-sharing session by the participants and a certificate-awarding ceremony. The participants' certificates were signed by the Minister of Education Malaysia and the Executive Director of AEI, UM. The AEI-ASEM Summer School will be held again next year. Consequently, AEI, UM believes that there will be more participants from Europe for the next summer school. For more information about the programs and events of AEI, UM, please visit us at https://aei.um.edu.my/.

Prepared by Arief Izuadin Ahmad Jefferi and Dr. Nurliana Kamaruddin

3.2.4. European Students' Union

The European Students' Union has been active through ASEF on initiatives connecting Asia and Europe. We are members of different ASEF working groups touching on recognition & mobility, VET, digitalization, and SDGs. At the end of October, we participated in the ASEF policy dialogue with youth on SDGs. This dialogue will propose recommendations on how to implement SDGs.

We also took part in the Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue that took place at the end of September in Rome and at the EHEA Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue and the Asia-Europe Foundation, where we discussed SDGs and ways of further cooperation with Asian policymakers.

We were panelists at the ASEM public online seminar on "The impact of artificial intelligence on Learning and Teaching in Higher Education." Finally, through the Global Student Forum, ESU has connections with the student movement in Asia. We also connected with NUS Australia, New Zealand, and the Union of Pacific Islands to the EHEA's Global Policy Forum.

3.2.5. European University Association

The Global Universities Associations Forum (GUAF)

The Global University Associations Forum was established in 2021, as a platform to foster systematic exchange between regional university association, and in order to mobilise the collective capacity of universities to tackle global challenges, and address the role of universities in shaping our future society. It complements the ongoing exchanges and collaboration initiatives developed by universities, and their national networks and associations.

Members of the GUAF are regional university associations, among them European and Asian ones:

- The Association of African Universities (AAU)
- The Association of Arab Universities (AArU)
- The American Council on Education (ACE)
- The Association of Indian Universities (AIU)
- The ASEAN University Network (AUN)
- The China Association of Higher Education (CAHE)
- The Latin American and The Caribbean Space for Higher Education (ENLACES)-
- The European University Association (EUA)
- Universities Canada (UC)

As a space for open dialogue, GUAF seeks to strengthen existing links between its members, building upon longstanding cooperation in areas where the collective resources and influence of members can add value. It aims at identifying pathways for joint action to further enhance links between university associations and their relationships with member institutions. In addition, GUAF advocates for the vital role of partnerships as a vehicle for pursuing joint actions within and across regions.

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GUAF works with a rotating chairmanship: it was chaired by AUN in 2023, and will be chaired by CAHE (China) in 2024 and by AIU (India) in 2025.

GUAF holds one physical meeting per year. The next annual meeting will take place in autumn 2024 in Beijing, China. In addition, GUAF members hold regular thematic meetings virtually, for peer-learning and exchanging on policy developments in their respective regions.

GUAF's working priorities for 2022-2023 are:

- International mobility and recognition;
- Sustainability as a theme of and mode for international partnerships;
- Limitations on international collaboration, particularly in relation to institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

3.2.6. European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)

Higher education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is subject to regular external review by a quality assurance agency. The agreed common framework for quality assurance systems is the 'Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA' (ESG). The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education is the EHEA's official register of quality assurance agencies, listing those that substantially comply with the ESG.

What does EQAR provide ?

- The **Register** of trustworthy quality assurance agencies in the EHEA.
- The **Database** of higher education institutions and degree programmes that have been subject to external quality assurance, as well as easy access to the corresponding quality assurance reports (DEQAR).
- The **Knowledge base** with country information, describing the national QA frameworks of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) countries, and other info on QA in Europe.
- Expertise and experience sharing on quality assurance in higher education with national authorities and stakeholders.

EQAR in the ASEM context

EQAR gives easy access to information on QA agencies working in line with the ESG, country requirements, QA reports and decisions by EQAR-registered agencies. Furthermore, through DEQAR it responds to information needs of various stakeholders, particularly ENIC-NARICs. Asian recognition and admission officers can use the database as trustworthy basis for the recognition of degrees, thus facilitating cooperation and mobility among Europe and Asia.

EQAR shared its knowledge and expertise through an active participation at the APQN Annual Academic Conference and Annual General Meeting, 2-4 November 2023, Dhaka, Bangladesh 2023, together with 200 participants from 40 institutes, agencies and higher education institutes around the globe.

EQAR also had an active role in the Annual VII Central Asian International Forum on Quality Assurance in Education that took place on 6-7 October 2023, Astana, Kazakhstan. EQAR handled several applications of Kazakh QA agencies to its register in the past years, leading to the inclusion of 3 Kazakh QA agencies taken up in the EQAR register up till now.

Through its international activities and liaisons with networks and organisations like APQN and others, EQAR entertains a continued dialogue with all who reflect on regional QA in HE in Europe and Asia.

New features in 2024?

DEQAR will also provide information on quality assurance among alternative providers and on micro-credentials.

More information on EQAR: https://www.eqar.eu/
Search our database: https://www.deqar.eu

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3.2.7. SEAMEO RIHED

As the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED), the Centre recognises the importance of Leadership in contributing towards higher education development and the progress of the Common Space in Southeast Asian Higher Education. To support university leaders in acquiring new skills and updated knowledge to tackle global challenges and achieve a more sustainable future for the region, SEAMEO RIHED collaborates with the British Council and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) on two ongoing projects.

The Project on Strengthening Leadership with Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (GEDI) in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Southeast Asia (2022 – 2025)

Together with the British Council, SEAMEO RIHED collaborated with 35 universities from 11 countries of the Southeast Asian Region and 5 universities from the United Kingdom since 2022 to enhance GEDI in institutional management of universities, to provide more inclusive learning experiences, as well as to create a sustainable university network on GEDI. The Project also created a collective learning space for university leaders to reflect and lead changes toward GEDI suited for their individual contexts. The Project has 2 phases. The first phase started in February 2022 with the Virtual Project Launch and a series of Leadership Fora, followed by the Leadership Workshops and virtual and physical SEA-UK Leadership Exchange Programme between the regions. The first phase was concluded with the Stakeholder Forum and Policy Dialogue on Envisioning GEDI for Southeast Asian Higher Education which was held online on 9-10 October 2023. A White Paper on Envisioning GEDI for Southeast Asia was also developed in partnership with the Institute of Development Studies which includes the key outcomes of the Project as well as the recommendations to further efforts at the institutional, national, and regional levels and the continuation of the Project.

The second phase of the Project, 2024-2025, aims to advance discussions and dialogues on policy and planning of GEDI at institutions through research, workshop, fora, and grants for collaborative research projects, and share knowledge through RIHED-SHARE and SEAMEO RIHED's biennial Inter-Research Symposium. The engagement from policymakers, university leaders and faculty members are crucial to drive transformation and capacity building to embed GEDI in their institutions for Southeast Asian Higher Education.

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SEA-UK Leadership Exchange Programme, March 2022 – June 2023

Stakeholder Forum and Policy Dialogue on Envisioning GEDI for Southeast Asian Higher Education, 9 – 10 October 2023

Horizon Southeast Asia: Pushing the Frontiers of Research and Sustainability (2022-2025)

The Project on Horizon Southeast Asia: Pushing the Frontiers of Research and Sustainability has been implemented since 2022 between SEAMEO RIHED and the Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences, Germany, in consultation with a planning committee comprised of six Southeast Asian universities. The Project aims to support sustainable research ecosystems in higher education institutions in the Greater Mekong Subregion and Timor-Leste to generate relevant impacts by strengthening the research governance structures of the higher education institution and curating research programme and projects towards contributions for sustainable development in SEAMEO region.

Two groups of participants were targeted in this project which includes:

1. University leaders who are responsible for research from 25 beneficiary universities from 6 countries of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. The objective for this group of participants is to support the improvement of research governance and management at institutional levels. Each university leader is encouraged to develop a Research Development Action Plan (R-DAP) or Initiative for the improvement of research ecosystem at their university.

2. Nominated researchers from 25 beneficiary universities with expertise among the identified common challenges including 1) Climate Change; 2) Collaborative River

Governance and Management; and 3) Sustainable Agricultural Production join and collectively exchange their expertise to develop possible joint research collaboration or publications including research proposals, brief policy overviews and webinars for tackling regional challenges.

Each year, a Regional Leadership Forum in Research Governance on Supporting Sustainable Research Ecosystems is held in conjunction with a Researcher Networking Forum where nominated researchers work together on one of the commonly identified regional challenges. After the forum, nominated researchers will then participate in the Researcher Exchange Programme. So far, four Fora including the Regional Leadership Fora and Researcher Networking Fora on Climate Change and Collaborative River Governance and Management were conducted in September 2022 and September 2023 in Thailand and Vietnam, respectively. The Researcher Networking Forum was followed by the Researcher Exchange Programme on Climate Change and Collaborative River Governance and Management held in November 2022 and November 2023 at participating universities in Southeast Asia.

1st and 2nd Regional Leadership Forum

Researcher Exchange Programme on Climate Change, and River Governance and Management

3.2.8. UNESCO-UNEVOC

BRIDGING INNOVATION AND LEARNING IN TVET (BILT)

The Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) project supports TVET stakeholders to address challenges in TVET systems, which arise due to technological, environmental, social, and workplace changes. BILT is implemented by UNESCO-UNEVOC, is supported by the German Federal Institute of Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) and is sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). BILT leverages the existing mechanism of the UNEVOC Network – which currently comprises 231 UNEVOC Centres across the globe - to offer opportunities for collaboration and knowledge exchange between Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe. The project complements national developments by offering interregional peer learning and policy learning opportunities to explore and support innovative, market-oriented and attractive modes of learning and cooperation in TVET.

BILT themes

The overarching theme of BILT is new qualifications and competencies to ensure that TVET remains relevant for individuals, economies and societies. The first Expert Group of the project focused on the 'three I's' approach in TVET: identification, integration and implementation of new qualifications and competencies. The four complementary themes of BILT are digitalisation and TVET; greening TVET; entrepreneurship in TVET; and migration and TVET.

BILT Bridging events

Between 2022 and 2023, BILT organized four bridging events: three regional conferences and the global BILT Learning Forum. The regional events were hosted by Omnia in Finland, in July 2022, TVETA in Kenya, in November 2022, and Temasek Polytechnic in Singapore, in June 2023. The BILT Learning Forum was hosted by UNESCO-UNEVOC at the UN Campus in Bonn, Germany, in October 2023. These events brought together policy makers, associations of employers, TVET providers and other stakeholders from the three regions of the project. The BILT bridging events have been instrumental in connecting TVET institutions across regions and in forming new partnerships for collaboration.

BILT Expert Groups

Following the first Expert Group which focused on new qualifications and competencies, the second expert group delved into new qualifications and competencies in the hospitality and tourism sector. In particular, the Expert Group discussed trends and challenges to address the dual transition of greening and digitalisation. Besides recommending promising practices at macro (TVET governance),

meso (TVET advocacy) and micro (TVET delivery) level from the three regions, the Expert Group has prepared a synthesis report with recommendations for TVET policy and practice. The report will be published in 2024. The next Expert Group of the project will focus on new qualifications and competencies in the building and construction sector.

BILT Learning Labs

Several Learning Labs – webinars that facilitate the transfer and implementation of specific promising practices through a deeper focus on the practices – were organized in 2023. BILT collaborated with private and public institutions, as well as NGOs, to discuss TVET practices related to digitalisation, greening, and inclusion. For the first-time ever, BILT organized a live Learning Lab during the BILT Learning Forum providing an opportunity to explore a concrete example and sharing different regional perspectives on the use of digital micro-credentials in TVET. Besides organizing additional Learning Labs in 2024, BILT is also organizing a series of webinars on TVET and clean energy.

To learn more about BILT and opportunities for engagement, contact unevoc.bilt@unesco.org.

3.3.International Projects

The ASEM Education Process is based on inter-regional cooperation and there is a huge number of international relevant projects carried out in and in-between the two regions. This chapter is listing projects that were brought to the attention of the ASEM Education Secretariat. The following is a non-exhaustive list of international projects fostering cooperation of Asia and Europe in the field of (higher) education and shall show some examples of good practice in the ASEM Education context.

3.3.1. EU in the Indo-Pacific (EUIP)

The project 'What role for Europe in the Indo-Pacific? Identifying regional policy responses towards the EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy 2022-25' is led by the University of Canterbury (New Zealand) and involves 27 EU and Indo-Pacific partners in a Network. The main idea of the project, which is funded by the European Commission, is to enhance the EU's potential to play a more significant role in the specified region, while also maintaining its relevance and effectiveness to make a positive difference in cooperation with it. Through this project, a unique network of partners has been established, creating a group of prominent academic institutions/think tanks from the EU as well as Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand to conduct interviews, engage in policy debates and policy 'sandpits' development in the aforementioned eight Indo-Pacific locations. The process of accumulation of contemporary knowledge on the issue of the EU-Indo-Pacific collaboration will, with necessity, lead to creating new academic modules, writing influential materials, and arranging conferences and workshops at all locations of the network.

More information can be found here: https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/research/about-uc-research/research-groups-and-centres/national-centre-for-research-on-europe/ncre-research/eu-in-the-indo-pacific

This project description is drafted in by Estonia.

3.3.2. Knowledge for Change (K4C)

The Knowledge for Change (K4C) initiative, launched by the UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, is a transformative global consortium that focuses on training in Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR). This initiative was conceived to address the observed gap in community-university engagement and to prepare the next generation of practitioners and academics in CBPR. The core objective of the K4C initiative is to build research capacity and empower individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary for meaningful community-based research.

Operating on the principles of inclusivity, collaboration, and knowledge democratization, the K4C initiative operates through a cascading training model, offering a 21-week Mentor Training Program (MTP). The MTP is strategically designed to train mentors who play a crucial role in the local hubs affiliated with the K4C initiative. These mentors contribute actively to the growth of their respective local hubs by enhancing curriculum development, improving pedagogical approaches, and

strengthening research capacities. Addressing the pressing challenges confronting humanity necessitates fresh perspectives and solutions. The attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) demands novel insights and interconnected efforts on both local and global scales. It has been established that fostering innovative solutions and gaining new insights is achievable through the collaborative construction of knowledge, particularly when conducted in respectful partnerships with local communities. The UNESCO Chair has played a pivotal role in establishing global benchmarks for curriculum and pedagogy, shaping the training of the next generation of researchers in Community-Based Research (CBR). Recent research indicates a growing demand for CBR methodology education, notably among practitioners and students in contexts that were previously marginalized, particularly in the global south.

The K4C initiative has achieved significant success, completing nine cohorts of the MTP and training 170 mentors across 31 hubs in 18 countries. The consortium is currently composed of higher education institutions across the globe. The institutions in Europe consists of Ireland (University of Limerick), Italy (University of Sassari, University of Brescia), and in Asia: India (PRIA, Dayalbagh Educational Institution, Christ University, Manipal University), Malaysia (Islamic Science University of Malaysia, University of Science, Malaysia, UNIMAS, Sarawak) and Indonesia (Sunan Ampel Islamic University).

The hubs based out of Italy, at University of Sassari and the University of Brescia, have contributed greatly to CBPR training. The University of Sassari hub, based at Foist Lab, provides training to master's degree students, through a special curriculum and a one-year community-based field work project, and to different types of practitioners through classroom sessions (on theories and techniques of the CBPR), fieldwork and knowledge exchange. The University of Brescia also undertakes capacity building trainings in CBPR and address topical issues relevant to SDGs, such as poverty, good health and well-being, sustainable cities and community, through relevant courses and research. The two hubs actively collaborate through a spectrum of different activities among which is a summer school in CBPR which is run once a year alternatively in Sassari and Brescia. They also take part in joint research projects based on CBPR approach and they actively collaborate to promote engaged research and practice across Italy.

Additionally, the global nature of K4C promotes knowledge exchange, collaboration, and dialogues among global hubs. Dr. Rajesh Tandon, PRIA hub India, presented at the University of Sassari on the role of higher education in achieving SDGs in 2017. The University of Sassari hub had also participated in dialogues on Gandhian principles in developing new futures for higher education in India. In addition, the Italian hubs and the Asian hubs had collaborated on the UNESCO Chair's project: Bridging Knowledge Cultures (2017-2022), aimed at examining and addressing the dynamics of knowledge production in higher education, particularly concerning the establishment and sustenance of community-university research partnerships. The project focuses on the critical exploration of diverse knowledge cultures, aiming to bridge the gap between community-based knowledge and academic knowledge. The project resulted in publishing of a book: Hall, B., Tandon, R., & Lepore, W.

(Eds.). (2023). Bridging Knowledge Cultures: Rebalancing Power in the Co-Construction of Knowledge. Brill. ISBN: 978-90-04-68776-9.

Overall, the K4C initiative represents a pioneering effort to bridge the gap between academia and communities, fostering collaborative, inclusive, and impactful research practices globally, especially through fostering global north-south partnerships, contributing to overarching aims of achieving SDGs.

This project description is drafted by India.

3.3.3. MicroCASA

MicroCASA – [MICRO-credentials for lifelong learning and employability: Building Capacities for developing Agile educational interventions in Southeast Asian Universities](#) is a co-funded EU project, developed in the framework of the Erasmus+ Programme, KA2 action, Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE).

The MicroCASA project, carried out over three years (2023-2026), aims to co-create, promote and deliver short competence-oriented educational units leading to micro-credentials with the goal of solving various economic and social problems by sharing the European Union experiences and building a comprehensive set of competences, technical and institutional capacities in Southeast Asia. MICROCASA, mainly involving Indonesia, Malaysia and The Philippines, has the ambition to have a systemic impact on the ASEAN region as a whole.

Partners from Southeast Asia are 6 Higher Education Institutions, including the main national institutions, as well as universities with regional development missions. On the European Union side, the project consortium includes 3 universities with complementary competences, the Italian ENIC-NARIC Centre and a private company for quality assurance topics. In details, the consortium is composed as follows: Universiti Sains Malaysia and University Malaysia Sarawak (Malaysia), Universitas Brawidjaja and Universitas Sam Ratulangi (Indonesia), University of the Philippines System and Ateneo de Manila University (The Philippines), Universität des Saarlandes (Germany) in their capacity of project coordinators, Associazione CIMEA (Italy), Università Europea di Roma (Italy), Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (Spain), Giraf PM e.K. (Germany).

The project plan builds around the following activities:

- Regional Micro-credentials Study and Roundtables, gathering factual data and experts opinions about the barriers and enablers for introducing micro-credentials into the regional HEIs, as well as to benchmark the regional approaches to the ones in the EU;
- Micro-credentials capacity building development covering all aspects mentioned above;
- Pilot development, delivery and evaluation of the set of Digital Competences courses granting micro-credentials;
- Targeted awareness raising and dissemination activities spreading excellence beyond the project consortium.

Specifically, since the beginning of the project implementation (March 2023) until nowadays, some activities were already completed: an online Survey on the level of HEIs awareness regarding micro-credentials was launched in May 2023 and spread around the SEA Universities, inside and outside the partnership; together with the online Survey, a Desk

Research was conducted among the SEA partners from Malaysia, Indonesia and The Philippines, regarding policies and regulations on micro-credentials within their national contexts; finally, in October 2023, the first results of the online Survey and Desk Research were presented during the roundtable meeting in Malang (Indonesia) in which participants had the opportunity to brainstorm about policies, regulations and the future development of micro-credentials in the SEA region. In the meantime, micro-credentials capacity building programmes started for academic and technical staff in the partner SEA HEIs.

In 2024, a Comparative Study based on the online Survey and Desk Research findings will be published, as well as a White Paper, which represent a policy-level document summarizing the major conclusions of the roundtables concerning regulatory frameworks and measures enabling comparability and recognition of micro-credentials. At the same time, the piloting of micro-credentials will start, on the basis of a shared co-designed quality assured structure. Regarding the events, at the end of February the second roundtable will be conducted online, and in April 2024, EU and SEA partners will first meet in Madrid and then in Rome, for a Study Visit and Workshop with the aim to share skills knowledge in micro-credentials instructional design and technology.

This project description is drafted by Italy.

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3.3.4. Q-ENTRY Database

The Q-ENTRY database is an online database containing information and samples of school leaving qualifications giving access to Higher Education in the national system of education. The database aims to enhance automatic recognition of these qualifications thanks to a common platform of collaboration among national authorities from different countries, as they directly upload information to enrich the database. This way, the database guarantees trust and quality as it is filled only with first-hand information.

It has been developed in the framework of two EU co-funded projects, in the framework of the Erasmus+ programme:

- Q-ENTRY – International Database on Higher Education Entry Qualifications (2018-2020)
- qENTRY+ – International Database on Higher Education Entry Qualifications (2020-2022)

The database is available for the general public and provides, in a simple and standardised format, all the relevant information that can be used by students, admission officers, guidance practitioners, ENIC-NARIC centres, ministries, funding agencies. CIMEA coordinated the project, which was carried out with partner ENIC-NARIC centres from: Belgium Flemish Community, Bulgaria, France, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Poland, The Netherlands.

Thanks to the cooperation in other initiatives such as other international Erasmus+ projects or bilateral agreements among CIMEA and other institutions, the Q-ENTRY database has been enriched also with qualifications from Asian countries: Japan, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea and Mongolia.

This project description is drafted by Italy.

3.3.5. RecoASIA

RecoASIA – Regional Cooperation in the field of Recognition among Asian countries

https://www.recoasia.eu/

The RecoASIA project – developed from November 2019 to November 2023 and coordinated by University of L'Aquila – aimed at favouring and increasing the quality of vertical and horizontal mobility of international students and professionals within

the Asian and European higher education systems by reinforcing the role of the National Information Centres (NIC) at governmental level and as well as competencies on the internationalization of higher education worldwide and recognition issues with Asian countries.

The project consortium was composed by competent authorities and higher education institutions from Cambodia, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, including the ENIC-NARIC centres from Italy and Estonia, and associated partner institutions: National Information Center for Academic Recognition Japan, Korean Academic Recognition Centre – South Korea, Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange – People's Republic of China, UNESCO Bangkok – Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education.

In the framework of the project, all partners worked together to improve their competences and skills as credential evaluators defining common practices and creating common tools among the participating European and Asian countries, National Bodies and Higher Education Institutions. The sharing of relevant information on the educational systems, recognition practices and mobility flows of both regions are important contributions to facilitate mutual trust and understanding.

This project description is drafted by Italy.

Among the project activities, several study visits were organised on the topics tackled within the project, more specifically on refugees' qualifications and transnational, non-traditional and cross-border education.

4. Articles from the Keynote Speakers of the ISOM, SOM1 and ASEMME9

To give a good basis for discussion to the participants, there were inspiring keynote speeches on topics of relevance at all formal ASEM Education meetings of this period.

At the Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting, taking place on 24-25 November 2022 in Malta, with the overall theme "Implementation of the ASEM Education Strategy and Vision 2030", Ms. Thérèse Zhang, Deputy Director for Higher Education Policy, European University Association (EUA), gave a keynote speech on "The role of FHEIs in building Research and Innovation Areas: The future skills for a sustainable world" followed by a keynote on by Mr. Andreas Snildal, Senior Programme Officer and Secretary to the Global Recognition Convention, UNESCO on the "Global Convention on Recognition and Regional Conventions in the ASEM area: Lisbon and Tokyo Conventions".

The 1st Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM1) that took place on 22-23 May 2023 in Malta with the overall topic "Asia and Europe: Reboosting interregional cooperation on education" had the keynote speech "Asia and Europe: Leveraging the digital transformation for inclusive quality higher education" by Mr. Libing Wang, Chief of Section for Educational Innovation and Skills Development at UNESCO Bangkok.

And finally, we are having the 9th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME9) on 25-26 January 2024 in Malta with the theme "Leaving no one behind" and two keynote speeches on "Inclusive Horizons: Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Education's Collective Future" by Prof. Enzo Maria Le Fevre Cervini, Senior Researcher of the Laboratory on Innovation and Artificial Intelligence (IALAB) of the University of Buenos Aires and on "Embracing Technology and Innovative Learning Methods in Healthcare Education: A Pathway to Inclusive Growth and Development" by Prof. Andreas Charalambous, University of Nicosia, Cyprus.

All keynote speakers drafted articles on their speeches, which can be found in this chapter. The articles express the author's viewpoints and not necessarily those of the ASEM Education Secretariat.

4.1. The role of higher education institutions in (reforming) a regional research area: EUA and the European Research Area

By Thérèse Zhang, Deputy Director for Higher Education Policy, European University Association (EUA), with Stéphane Berghmans, Director for Research and Innovation, EUA.

Keynote at the ASEM Education Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting (ISOM, Malta, 24-25 November 2022).

The European Research Area (ERA)'s ambition is to create a single, borderless market for research, innovation and technology across the European Union (EU). It aims to support countries to be more effective together, by strongly aligning their research policies and programmes. ERA was originally launched in 2000 but a process to revitalise it started in 2018, and the Council of the European Union adopted its conclusions on a new ERA in November 2021. At that time, the European University Association (EUA), together with other research and innovation stakeholders in Europe, was advocating to be included at the discussion table with member states, associated countries and the European Commission to co-create the new ERA. This was successful, and now stakeholder organisations speak eye-to-eye with policy makers on the ERA Forum.

Since 2021, the new ERA has moved into implementation mode. Twenty ERA Actions were originally discussed, and Member states and stakeholders expressed their commitments for some of those ERA actions that they wished to see included in the ERA policy agenda 2022-2024.

The European University Association (EUA) is representing the European university sector and coordinating the efforts of the university sector group in Europe (including the organisations AURORA, CESAER, Coimbra Group, ECIU, UNICA, EuroTech Universities Alliance, The Guild, UAS4EUROPE, YERUN). The work of EUA and the university sector mostly takes place in dedicated ERA actions activities including sub-groups, workshops, mutual learning exercises, etc. As we pursue the implementation of the current ERA Policy Agenda (2022-2024) and start co-designing the next one (2025-2027), the engagement and acceptance of universities within this European-level dialogue is an essential asset. Among the member states, there is no longer any question about the university sector's presence in the ERA Forum, as their contribution is listened to − and, more importantly, valued. To achieve this position, the university sector had to step up to the challenge. At the outset, eleven European associations and networks representing the sector in Brussels gathered and agreed to work together towards the new ERA. This was not a given, as all members of such a diverse group would not always hold the exact same position. Further trust building was key. When EUA sits on the ERA Forum, it does not only speak for itself, but as the representative of all these organisations and their combined membership. Speaking with one voice, while highlighting the diversity within the sector, is an achievement that the sector can be proud of. But more importantly, this unity will be a prime asset for upcoming battles, such as the development of the next EU Research and Innovation framework programme.

The next step, from EUA's perspective at least, will be to ensure that national stakeholders are just as engaged with ERA. We need to raise the visibility of ERA beyond the Brussels EU policy making

bubble and make it a reality for stakeholders across the EU. Most of the now-17 ERA actions are of foremost relevance for universities and their leaders, such as Action 13 (empowering higher education institutions), Action 4 (promoting attractive research careers, talent circulation and mobility), and Action 3 (providing support from member states to the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment and the reform of research assessment) – to just name a few.

4.2. Global Convention on Recognition and Regional Conventions in the ASEM area: Lisbon and Tokyo Conventions

By Andreas Snildal, Senior Programme Officer and Secretary to the Global Recognition Convention, UNESCO (from September 2023, Policy Director in the Division for Admissions and Recognition, Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills).

Keynote at the ASEM Education Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting (ISOM, Malta, 24-25 November 2022).

By having ratified UNESCO's recognition conventions, a significant number of ASEM countries acknowledge the importance of fair, transparent and non-discriminatory recognition of foreign qualifications for improving higher education access, mobility and internationalization. These countries also realize that recognition enables holders of foreign qualifications to make use of their qualifications and contribute positively to work life and society.

Of the 51 ASEM countries, 37 have ratified one or more UNESCO recognition conventions. With nearly 75 % of the countries, adherence to the conventions in the ASEM area is among the highest in the world. The fact that 16 ASEM countries have ratified two conventions – and some even three – further underlines the importance of cross-border and cross-regional recognition of foreign qualifications for ASEM policy makers. However, ASEM countries' commitment to the recognition conventions is still uneven between Europe and Asia – while almost all the 30 European ASEM partners have ratified one or more conventions, only 6 of the 21 Asian countries have done the same.

The adoption of UNESCO's Global Convention in 2019 and its entry into force in March 2023 marks a new paradigm for recognition across the ASEM area. Whereas the two existing regional conventions in the area cover recognition within the regions, the Global Convention paves the way for improved inter-regional mobility between Asia and Europe. The Global Convention builds and complements UNESCO's five regional recognition conventions and aims to provide a platform for inter-regional cooperation on qualifications recognition, as well as an international legal framework for inter-regional mobility, thus improving the rights of qualifications holders moving across countries, continents and regional borders.

Although ratifying a regional convention is not a prerequisite to ratify the global, the functioning of this "global ecosystem" for recognition largely depends on the successful implementation of the recognition conventions and requires countries to increase cooperation on recognition both within the regions, and at global level. In the following, we will look closer into the three recognition conventions covering the ASEM area, and how they can work together in concert to improve foreign qualifications holders' opportunities for fair recognition of their qualifications, for access to further studies and employment opportunities.

The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, more commonly referred to as the Lisbon Convention, was adopted in 1997 as a joint Council of Europe (CoE) and UNESCO convention, open for ratification by Member States in the Europe Region as defined by UNESCO, including North America, as well as the Holy See, and States Parties to

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the 1979 UNESCO Convention and the European Cultural Convention of the CoE. It has 56 States Parties (December 2023), including nearly all European States, the Holy See, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

The Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, also known as the Tokyo Convention, was adopted in 2011, entered into force in 2018 and covers the entire Asia-Pacific region, while being open for ratification by all UNESCO Member States as well as the Holy See. It currently has 12 States Parties: Afghanistan, Armenia, Australia, China, Fiji, Holy See, Japan, Mongolia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and Türkiye.

The respective committees of the regional conventions, made up of all States Parties, promote the application of the conventions and oversee their implementation by adopting recommendations, declarations, protocols and models of good practice to guide national recognition authorities about the implementation of emerging issues. For instance, the Lisbon Convention Committee adopted in 2017 a recommendation on the recognition of refugees' qualifications, responding to challenges occurring in the wake of the 2015 refugee crisis in Europe. To monitor implementation of the convention at national level, the committee of the Lisbon Convention recently published its second monitoring report, while the results of a monitoring survey of the Tokyo Convention were published in 2021.

For both regions, networks of national information centers (NICs) play a crucial role in the practical implementation of the conventions. NICs are responsible for sharing information about their country's higher education system, institutions, and qualifications, while also providing information on foreign qualifications to higher education stakeholders in their own country. In many countries, NICs also serve as competent recognition authorities and/or perform the evaluation of foreign qualifications, while others have a coordinating and advisory role without being recognition bodies. An example of the latter type includes NIC-Japan, and an example of a NIC that also is a recognition body can be found in the Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-dir).

The ENIC-NARIC networks in the Europe region and the APNNIC network covering the Asia-Pacific region bring the NICs together for consorted efforts to share information on national education systems, and to ensure capacity building and technical assistance, particularly through annual meetings and the ENIC-NARIC and APNNIC websites where country information and other resources are listed.

The regional conventions also share most of the same features when it comes to principles and provisions for fair, transparent and non-discriminatory recognition. This includes the main rule that a State Party should recognize the qualifications of other States Parties giving access to higher education, as well as their higher education qualifications, unless there are substantial differences between a foreign qualification and the corresponding national qualification.

Furthermore, recognition procedures should be transparent, have clear criteria and be timely, while applicants should have the right to appeal recognition decisions. Competent authorities should also recognize partially completed studies for the purpose of completing a degree. The conventions

special attention to the situation of refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation, who often experience difficulties in providing documentation of their qualifications. For such situations, States Parties need to develop special procedures to assess whether the applicants fulfil requirements for access to higher education or for recognition of qualifications for employment activities, even in cases where documentary evidence is incomplete or missing (Article VII of the Lisbon and Tokyo Conventions).

The principles and provisions of the regional conventions were largely maintained in the Global Convention, although some new features also appeared. However, as a recent study shows, the Global Convention is fully aligned with the Lisbon Convention and has absorbed the main policy developments since the adoption of the Lisbon Convention in 1997. Such developments include recognition of prior learning and qualifications obtained through non-traditional learning, which have also been included in the text of the Tokyo Convention.

In other words, the three conventions are fully compatible with each other, and ratifying the Global Convention does not require any changes to be made for countries that have ratified one of the regional conventions, or vice-verse. Should doubts arise about interpretation, the Global Convention clearly states that States Parties that have ratified both the regional and the Global Convention should always apply the convention most favorable to recognition for individual applicants. To maintain consistency in implementation between the regional and global level, the heads of the committees of the regional conventions participate in the Intergovernmental Conference of the States Parties to the Global Convention, which has a similar function for the Global Convention as the committees of the regional conventions. The Global Convention also stipulates that the regional convention committees should be consulted on important issues, and the networks of NICs (ENIC-NARIC, APNNIC, etc.) are identified as key implementation structures of the Global Convention.

Currently, 26 countries have ratified the Global Convention (December 2023), and more than 20 other countries are expected to ratify soon. Among the current 26 States Parties, 12 are ASEM partners, but only two (Australia and Japan) are in Asia, which reaffirms the impression that Asian countries are lagging behind in global cooperation on qualifications recognition. In this regard, ASEM cooperation can be an important support to promoting ratifications of the Tokyo Convention and the Global Convention and providing platforms for peer learning between European and Asian partners.

4.3. Putting digital transformation at the heart of HE systems

By Mr. Libing Wang, Chief of Section for Educational Innovation and Skills Development (EISD) at UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok.

This is a lightly adapted version of a keynote speech delivered at the Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM1) of the ASEM Education Process on 'Asia and Europe: Reboosting Interregional Cooperation on Education', held from 22-23 May 2023 in Saint Julian's, Malta: https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/putting-digital-transformation-heart-he-systems

The advancement and widespread adoption of digital technologies have shaped the higher education landscape worldwide. We have gone through the stage of digital awareness to digital responsiveness and now find ourselves in an era of digital transformation for education, as confirmed by the Transforming Education Summit held at the United Nations headquarters last year in New York, United States. It is indeed encouraging to see that digitalisation has been included as the second transversal theme, alongside sustainable development, which cuts across the following four priority areas of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Education Process: quality assurance and recognition; engaging business and industry in education; balanced mobility; and lifelong learning, including technical and vocational education and training (TVET). My interest is to highlight the potential interregional collaboration between Asia and Europe on these four priority areas in the context of digital transformation with the aim being to enhance access, quality and equity of higher education provision.

Quality assurance and recognition

Quality assurance and recognition are two interrelated issues in higher education. Recognition should be rooted in the quality of learning rather than solely relying on the goodwill of the parties concerned. At the same time, comparable quality standards can facilitate the recognition of learning and qualifications across different countries. The Sydney Statement issued in August 2016 at the 14th Session of the Regional Committee on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific acknowledged for the first time the connections between quality assurance, qualifications frameworks and recognition for mobility and employability. This was a milestone in getting policy-makers and practitioners in these two critical areas to work together and align with each other. A similar trend can also be observed in Europe at the same time, if not earlier, as Europe has been a world leader on both fronts. As for the content of learning, digital transformation means we must include digital skills, competencies, values and attitudes in various qualification frameworks to inform the development, delivery and regular updating of learning programmes and courses offered by different learning providers. National and regional bodies and authorities responsible for developing and implementing digital competency frameworks in both regions should strengthen their collaboration in order to share experiences and build capacity, especially when it comes to categorising digital skills and competencies and integrating them in programme development and course planning processes at institutional and faculty levels. The digital transformation process enables us to incorporate digital technologies into the management and delivery of higher education

programmes. As a result, ensuring quality assurance and recognition of online and blended learning has emerged as a pressing challenge for countries in Asia and Europe. To promote greater mobility of students and professionals across regions, countries in Asia and Europe should leverage various multilateral and bilateral platforms, such as the ASEM Education Process, in accordance with the Tokyo Convention, Lisbon Convention and the Global Convention on academic recognition which has recently entered into force. These frameworks highlight the need for transparency, comparability, compatibility and harmonisation of quality standards and should guide efforts to enhance interregional collaboration. Together with UNESCO, Asia and Europe must place a special focus on the inclusion of all learners, the recognition of qualifications and quality assurance, particularly in developing countries.

Engaging business and industry

Throughout much of the history of higher education, the academic community and professors have wielded substantial authority over university affairs under institutional autonomy and academic freedom. Unfortunately, this has resulted in a system that has been primarily driven by the supply side, leaving little room for input or feedback from external actors and stakeholders. As higher education systems continue to expand globally, it is critical to establish shared ownership of these systems between the supply and demand sides. To achieve this, engaging business and industry can be a viable solution that amplifies the voices of the demand side in the planning and implementation of higher education programmes. The involvement of business and industry can be crucial in developing and implementing national quality standards and frameworks at the system level. Therefore, institutionalised and effective engagement mechanisms must be established to ensure that their input and concerns are duly considered throughout the process. Digital technologies offer a range of apps and tools that enable us to incorporate business and industry engagement into online workflows for programme development and course planning. This is instrumental in enhancing the relevance and quality of higher education programmes and increasing accountability of the sector to various stakeholders, including taxpayers, students, employers and the wider society. Asia and Europe can benefit from sharing their experiences in developing and implementing guidelines, regulations and workflows related to business and industry engagement in higher education, utilising technology at the systemic, institutional and faculty levels. To facilitate this, thematic working groups can be established to develop joint priorities and work plans, thus advancing collaboration between the two regions.

Balanced mobility

Asia and Europe are among the most significant destinations for international students worldwide. According to data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), there has been a gradual increase in the number of students moving between these two regions, with an average annual growth rate of 6.97% for students going from Asia to Europe and 3.17% for students going from Europe to Asia between 2008 and 2020. According to the same UIS data, in 2020, the number of students moving from Asia to Europe totalled over one million, significantly surpassing the 12,925 students who moved from Europe to Asia. Achieving a balance in international student mobility involves more than

just the sheer number of students moving between regions; it also requires consideration of the balance of academic disciplines, modalities of delivery and levels of study programmes. Some countries and sub-regions face significant imbalances, which must be explored in depth. Digital transformations in higher education can be vital in shaping shared priorities for mobility programmes between Asia and Europe. Cross-border higher education, as defined by UNESCO, encompasses the mobility of students, professionals, institutions and programmes across national or regional boundaries. With the help of digital technologies, new forms of mobility have emerged, including virtual campuses, online classrooms and virtual mobility for students and professionals within and between regions. These innovative approaches are expanding opportunities for cross-border education and enhancing the internationalisation of higher education. Similar mobility frameworks have also been developed by the World Trade Organization (WTO) through its General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), including the four modalities of delivery: cross-border supply (virtual mobility), consumption abroad (in-person mobility), commercial presence (movement of programmes and institutions) and the movement of natural persons (movement of students and professionals). As numerous countries in both regions are members of UNESCO and the WTO, reconciling divergent views on higher education is crucial. On the one hand, higher education is a public good that necessitates public investment. On the other hand, it is a service sector subject to the WTO's market access and national treatment rules. Achieving such reconciliation is essential to ensure equitable and high-quality cross-border higher education for all students. To promote international and interregional mobility among students and professionals, public and private scholarship providers in both regions should collaborate and work towards a shared agenda. However, compared to the EU-funded Erasmus+ programme, Asia has yet to develop a coordinated scholarship initiative with sufficient scale to support students and professionals from the region.

Lifelong learning

The concept of lifelong learning has evolved beyond simply referring to adult learning and continuing professional development and has instead become a fundamental principle that spans across various levels and types of education, including TVET and higher education. This is reflected in the title of Sustainable Development Goal 4: to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Furthermore, adopting a lifelong learning perspective has also led to a significant expansion of learning spaces. As a result, it is crucial to establish flexible learning pathways encompassing diverse learning tracks and orientations, various learning venues, a range of learning delivery modalities and multiple learning providers. There are several ways in which digital technology can help establish a lifelong learning society. Firstly, it can facilitate access to lifelong learning through online and blended learning opportunities, particularly for individuals from under-served communities. Secondly, it can enhance the quality of learning by providing learners with access to a wealth of online learning resources, particularly through open educational resources (OERs). Lastly, it can promote equality by enabling outreach to previously unreachable populations. The demand for digital skills and competencies is evolving rapidly. Therefore, it is crucial to incorporate these changes into national digital competency frameworks to inform the development and implementation of lifelong learning programmes. In addition, cross-regional collaboration

between Asia and Europe is essential in addressing gaps in each other's areas of expertise and complementing one another in a mutually supportive way, especially for countries facing significant skills gaps. As the primary academic infrastructure for supporting the establishment and functioning of a lifelong learning system, including TVET and higher education, countries from both regions can benefit from referencing each other's national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) to identify areas for improvement. This is particularly important in ensuring that national quality standards and frameworks remain relevant in the digital transformation era. UNESCO actively promotes the use of NQFs, MOOCs (massive open online courses), OERs and micro-credentials as indispensable tools for fostering a lifelong learning society. Thematic inter-regional workshops, webinars and other experience-sharing activities should be arranged through various multilateral and bilateral platforms engaging policy-makers, researchers and practitioners from both regions.

Shared goals

UNESCO's collaboration with member states on the Transforming Education Summit follow-ups underscores the shared priority of digitalisation in education across Asia, Europe and globally. It is imperative to examine higher education systems through the lens of digital transformation, ensuring that digital technologies are integrated into the various domains rather than treated as mere additions. Digital transformation is about transforming content, pedagogy, governance and management within higher education systems. It offers various entry points to initiate the process, such as focusing on learning outcomes associated with essential digital competencies, acknowledging flexible learning pathways, fostering collaboration with external partners and advocating for virtual mobility and blended mobility opportunities for students and professionals. We strongly believe that digital transformation in higher education holds immense potential to create pivotal opportunities for all systems to enhance accessibility, inclusivity and overall quality and standards. As we collectively strive towards our shared goals for 2030 and beyond, UNESCO stands ready to provide unwavering support throughout this journey.

4.4. Inclusive Horizons: Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Education's Collective Future

By Prof. Enzo Maria Le Fevre Cervini, Senior Researcher of the Laboratory on Innovation and Artificial Intelligence (IALAB) of the University of Buenos Aires. The opinions expressed by the author are strictly personal and do not necessarily reflect those of the Institutions he works for or with.

Keynote at the 9th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME9) on 25 January 2024, Malta.

Introduction

In the realm of education, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents a promise of transformative change. From personalized learning experiences to adaptive assessments, the potential of AI, including Generative AI (GenAI) models, is vast. However, with this potential come challenges and controversies that necessitate a comprehensive policy framework. This article explores the multifaceted landscape of AI in education, emphasizing the need for inclusivity, ethical considerations, and a human-centered approach.

The Promise of AI in Education

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, Artificial Intelligence (AI) emerges as a beacon of promise, poised to redefine the learning experience for students worldwide. As we delve into the realms of AI technologies, including the groundbreaking domain of generative AI, a world of possibilities unfolds, reshaping how knowledge is acquired, assessed, and personalized.

The transformative power of AI in education lies in its ability to revolutionize learning experiences. GenAI models promise to reshape educational landscapes by offering personalized learning paths, adaptive assessments, and real-time feedback. This technological advancement holds the potential to enhance the educational journey, fostering creativity and catering to diverse learning needs.

One of the most compelling promises of AI lies in its ability to fashion bespoke learning paths for each student. No two learners are alike, and AI acknowledges this fundamental truth. Through sophisticated algorithms and machine learning, AI can analyze individual learning styles, preferences, and strengths, tailoring educational content to suit the unique needs of every student.

Imagine a classroom where the curriculum adapts in real-time to match the pace at which a student comprehends concepts. Generative AI, in particular, amplifies this potential, generating content that aligns seamlessly with the student's current understanding while gently nudging them towards higher levels of mastery. This personalized approach not only fosters a deeper understanding but also instills a love for learning by catering to individual interests. It is per se a revolution of the education models as we know them.

Traditional assessments often fall short in capturing the holistic growth and capabilities of students. Enter AI-powered adaptive assessments, a game-changer in the evaluation landscape. By continuously monitoring a student's progress and dynamically adjusting the difficulty of questions, AI

ensures that assessments are challenging enough to stimulate growth yet tailored to the student's proficiency level.

Generative AI adds another layer of innovation by creating diverse and contextually relevant questions. This not only prevents rote memorization but also assesses a student's ability to apply knowledge in real-world scenarios. The result is a more accurate representation of a student's aptitude, fostering a shift from standardized testing to a nuanced understanding of individual competencies.

In the traditional classroom setting, feedback often comes with a time lag, inhibiting immediate course correction. AI steps in to bridge this gap, providing real-time feedback that is timely, specific, and actionable. Generative AI models, equipped with natural language processing capabilities, can offer nuanced feedback on written assignments, aiding students in understanding not just what went wrong but why and how to improve.

This continuous feedback loop transforms the learning process into an iterative journey, where mistakes are not roadblocks but stepping stones to improvement. Students can engage in self-directed learning with the assurance that their AI-powered companion is there to guide and support them at every turn.

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) brings transformative opportunities also for teachers and educators. AI, particularly Generative AI (GenAI) models, offers valuable benefits, including time efficiency through automated grading tasks, personalized teaching assistance with insights into student performance, and data-driven curriculum design. Teachers can leverage AI-powered tools for professional development, receiving personalized training programs to stay updated on the latest teaching methodologies. Real-time analytics enable adaptive teaching, allowing educators to dynamically adjust strategies based on student progress. AI also supports content creation, facilitating the development of engaging educational materials. Collaborative platforms powered by AI promote communication among educators, fostering the exchange of best practices. AI assists in identifying individual learning needs, allowing for differentiated instruction within classrooms. Moreover, teachers play a crucial role in ensuring the ethical use of AI applications, providing contextual understanding that AI may not fully grasp. They balance technology and human interaction, maintaining the essential personal connection, mentorship, and emotional support for students. Ultimately, AI enhances the effectiveness of teachers, transforming them into orchestrators of personalized, efficient, and engaging learning experiences.

As we explore the promise of AI in education, it becomes evident that the fusion of technology and learning holds the key to unlocking a new era of educational possibilities. From personalized learning journeys to adaptive assessments and real-time feedback, AI stands as a catalyst for transforming education into a dynamic, inclusive, and student-centric endeavor.

Challenges and Controversies

As already anticipated, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) brings forth promises and challenges that demand careful consideration. While the potential benefits are immense, ethical

concerns cast a discerning light on the path ahead, prompting a thoughtful and deliberate approach to the use of AI in educational settings.

At the forefront of navigating these challenges is UNESCO's 2021 Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, serving as a guiding beacon. Emphasizing a human-centered approach, it asserts that AI should be a catalyst for human development, promoting inclusivity, justice, and sustainability. This ethical lens necessitates a commitment to human rights principles, safeguarding dignity, and preserving cultural diversity within the knowledge commons.

A significant challenge in the realm of AI in education is the presence of biases embedded in algorithms. UNESCO's review underscores the critical imperative to identify and rectify biases, particularly those perpetuating gender biases or discriminating against marginalized groups. As AI systems shape learning experiences, intensified efforts are required to ensure fairness, impartiality, and equal opportunities for all learners.

Another vital concern is the expansive data landscape required for efficient AI operations, which raises issues related to learner privacy. UNESCO advocates for a step-by-step approach aligned with international data protection regulations, stressing the urgency of adopting or adapting national frameworks to safeguard personal data. The call is not only for formulation but, crucially, for the rigorous implementation of data protection laws to uphold the privacy rights of students and educators involved in AI-infused educational systems.

Transparency and accountability emerge as non-negotiable pillars in the quest for ethical AI in education, according to UNESCO's roadmap. Governments are urged to endorse or develop robust data protection regulations, ensuring accountability in the deployment and operation of AI systems. This transparent governance is deemed essential to preserve human agency, maintain public trust, and navigate the intricate ethical terrain of AI in education.

Confronting the challenges and controversies surrounding the ethical use of AI in education, UNESCO's insights echo a clarion call for a meticulous, rights-based, and culturally sensitive approach. By addressing biases, championing privacy, and upholding transparency, the education community can strive for an AI-driven future that is not only innovative but, more importantly, ethically sound. Let us embark on this transformative journey with a collective commitment to shaping an educational landscape that honors the principles of equity, respect, and human dignity.

A Human-Centered Approach

As we navigate the complexities of AI in education, prioritizing a human-centered approach becomes paramount. This approach, strongly advocated by UNESCO's 2021 Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, serves as the foundation for an educational paradigm that is not only innovative but inherently ethical and sensitive to the needs and rights of every learner.

At the heart of a human-centered approach lies the conviction that AI should be a servant, not a master, in the journey of human development. UNESCO's recommendation underscores the role of AI in enhancing human capabilities, fostering inclusivity, justice, and sustainability in education. By embracing this ethos, education institutions embark on a path that places human rights principles at

its core, safeguarding the dignity of individuals and celebrating the rich tapestry of cultural diversity that defines the shared knowledge commons.

Crucial to the success of a human-centered approach is the need for robust governance mechanisms. UNESCO's insights stress the importance of proper regulation to ensure human agency, transparency, and public accountability. By endorsing international or regional data protection regulations and developing national frameworks, governments can not only facilitate the responsible use of AI but also create an environment that nurtures trust and safeguards the fundamental rights of learners and educators.

The 2019 Beijing Consensus on Artificial Intelligence and Education further elucidates what a human-centered approach implies for the educational landscape. It envisions AI technologies not as disruptors but as enablers, enhancing human capacities for sustainable development and fostering effective human-machine collaboration. The Consensus calls for policies that ensure equitable access to AI, especially for marginalized communities, while championing linguistic and cultural diversities.

Building on UNESCO's insights, the guidance document "AI and Education: Guidance for Policymakers" and the latter UNESCO's "Guidance for generative AI in education and research" refine the practical dimensions of a human-centered approach. These documents delineate concrete steps to harness the benefits of AI while mitigating risks, such as enabling inclusive access to learning programs, supporting personalized and open learning options, improving data-based provisions and management for enhanced learning quality and accessibility, monitoring learning processes to identify risks and empower educators, and developing understanding and skills for the ethical and meaningful use of AI.

In embracing a human-centered approach to AI in education, we not only unlock the full potential of technological innovations but also ensure that educational systems remain beacons of inclusivity, equity, and respect for the diverse tapestry of humanity.

Steps for Regulation and Governance

Regulating AI in general requires a unified approach involving the collaboration of government, the private sector, academia, non-governmental organizations, and civil society—the quintuple helix. This concept emphasizes the interconnectedness of these five key stakeholders in driving innovation and addressing complex societal challenges. Each component plays a unique role, and their collaboration ensures a holistic and inclusive approach to AI development, deployment, and regulation.

In the specific context of education, effective regulation demands a strategic and adaptive approach, necessitating collaboration among governments, regulatory bodies, educators, researchers, and AI providers. The quintuple helix framework remains applicable here, signifying the joint efforts of these stakeholders in shaping policies and practices that enhance the responsible use of AI in educational settings.

The development of comprehensive frameworks addressing the intricacies of Generative AI (GenAI) integration is crucial. This requires the establishment of ethical validation mechanisms, regular audits,

and continuous monitoring to ensure that AI in education aligns with ethical standards, respects privacy, and serves the best interests of learners. The quintuple helix concept underscores the importance of diverse perspectives and collaborative decision-making in navigating the complex landscape of AI regulation.

The advent of Generative AI (GenAI) has presented a spectrum of possibilities and challenges in education, prompting the recognition of the need for regulatory measures. Governments worldwide are responding to this by grappling with various approaches. UNESCO has proposed a comprehensive seven-step strategy to guide governmental agencies in navigating the complexities of GenAI and reasserting public control.

The foundation of responsible GenAI use lies in robust data protection regulations, which endorse international or regional norms to establish a legal framework governing the collection and processing of personal data by GenAI suppliers. The enforcement of such regulations, modeled after the EU's GDPR, becomes imperative to safeguard privacy and ensure ethical practices.

GenAI regulation necessitates a holistic, whole-of-government approach, requiring national AI strategies to adapt and include provisions for the ethical use of GenAI, especially in education, as envisioned in the forthcoming EU's AI Act. Governments can ensure coordinated, intersectoral actions by revising or formulating national AI strategies, providing a framework for integrated responses to emerging challenges.

To navigate the ethical dimensions of GenAI, specific regulations are indispensable. UNESCO emphasizes the articulation and implementation of clear regulations on the ethics of AI, ensuring that ethical principles are translated into actionable laws or regulations. This move goes beyond mere acknowledgment, promoting the enforcement of ethical guidelines.

The pervasive use of GenAI introduces challenges to copyright laws, prompting the need for adjustments in response to GenAI implications. Some countries, including China, the EU, and the United States, have adapted, their laws. This step urges nations to follow suit, addressing issues such as content labeling and defining the copyright status of GenAI outputs.

The rapid pace of GenAI development necessitates swift regulatory renewal. China has released specific regulations on GenAI, prompting UNESCO to advocate for the formulation of national GenAI-specific frameworks based on a careful assessment of existing gaps in local regulations. These frameworks should address issues like content labeling and lawful use, ensuring responsible GenAI deployment.

Educational institutions must build capacities to understand GenAI's benefits and risks, emphasizing the need for countries to develop training programs and platforms dedicated to AI capacity development in educational institutions. Teachers and researchers require support to understand and use GenAI ethically, striking a balance between innovation and responsible application.

As GenAI's impact unfolds, it prompts reflection on its long-term implications for education and research. Calls for open public debates and policy dialogues to ensure a human-centered use of AI become a mandatory element of this exercise. Inclusive discussions involving the actors of the

quintuple helix should inform iterative updates of regulations and policies, fostering an environment where GenAI aligns with societal values and expectations.

In emphasizing these seven steps, UNESCO provides a roadmap for governments to navigate the regulatory landscape of GenAI in education. Through transparent governance and inclusive discussions, nations can usher in a future where GenAI becomes a force for positive transformation in education.

Policy Framework for GenAI

The landscape of education is currently undergoing a profound transformation with the integration of Generative AI (GenAI). As the transformative power of GenAI unfolds, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive policy framework to harness its potential while mitigating associated risks. UNESCO's 2022 document, "AI and Education: Guidance for Policymakers," stands as a robust foundation offering crucial insights to develop sector-wide policies that align with principles of inclusivity, ethics, and human-centered AI. Let's delve into the critical components of crafting a policy framework to navigate the complexities of GenAI in education.

Guided by UNESCO's comprehensive recommendations for AI in education, a policy framework for GenAI emerges. Aligning policies with inclusivity, ethics, and human agency ensures that GenAI serves as a catalyst for positive educational transformation. The framework involves measures such as promoting universal connectivity, establishing sustainable funding mechanisms, and validating GenAI systems to prevent biases and discrimination.

At the core of this transformative shift is the introduction of Generative AI and its potential impact on reshaping the educational landscape. GenAI, including models like ChatGPT, possesses the capability to revolutionize learning experiences. From personalized learning paths to adaptive assessments and real-time feedback, GenAI promises to enhance the educational journey for students, fostering creativity and catering to diverse learning needs.

In navigating this transformative landscape, the work of the Ministries for Education at national level become pivotal to offer a guiding light to education institutions.

Promoting Inclusion and Equity

Inclusive horizons must extend to promoting inclusion and equity. Accessibility to GenAI tools should be universal, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or geographical location. Sustainable funding mechanisms and validation processes must be in place to prevent biases and discrimination, fostering an inclusive educational environment.

Aligning the policy framework with the overarching vision of inclusivity becomes paramount. It is essential to ensure that GenAI tools are accessible to all learners, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or geographical location. In the age of sophisticated GenAI, protecting human agency takes center stage. Learners and educators should be informed about the data collected by GenAI, ensuring transparency in its usage. Striking a balance between human-driven learning and AI-supported tools is crucial, preventing GenAI from depriving learners of real-world experiences.

Addressing the ethical considerations associated with GenAI in education is imperative. Implementing actions such as building validation mechanisms to ensure GenAI systems are free of biases and conducting audits to mitigate inappropriate content generation becomes crucial. Strict ethical validation before institutional adoption is a foundational aspect of responsible GenAI applications.

Protecting Human Agency

In the realm of education, safeguarding human agency stands as a cornerstone of the policy framework. To achieve this, it is imperative that learners and educators possess a clear understanding of the data collected by Generative AI (GenAI), fostering transparency in its usage. Striking a delicate balance between AI tools and real-world experiences is paramount, underscoring the significance of ethical considerations.

The cultivation of AI competencies, especially those related to GenAI, emerges as a top priority. This multifaceted journey involves advocating for government support, promoting gender equality, and preparing learners for the evolving job landscape shaped by AI automation.

Effectively navigating the GenAI landscape requires the development and implementation of government-sanctioned AI curricula. These curricula should play a pivotal role in covering the impact of AI on daily lives and ethical considerations. Learners must be equipped with the skills necessary for the creative and responsible use of AI applications.

It's crucial to illuminate the probabilistic nature of AI algorithms, emphasizing the potential emergence of biases that may reinforce established opinions. Recognizing the challenge of AI systems reproducing dominant worldviews present in training data is vital, with user awareness being equally important.

Incorporating critical thinking initiatives within educational programs is vital for fostering a culture where learners can critically assess AI-generated content. Educators, as central figures, play a crucial role in emphasizing the importance of questioning and inquiry. User training programs should explicitly instruct learners and educators on the limitations of AI in providing diverse perspectives, equipping them with the skills to identify and challenge biases.

Advocating for inclusive learning is foundational, championing the need for government-supported AI curricula at all levels of education, from primary schools to higher education institutions. This fosters a foundational understanding across diverse student populations.

A comprehensive approach to AI education, extending beyond technical aspects, is crucial. This involves emphasizing the inclusion of ethical considerations, societal impacts, and interdisciplinary perspectives within AI curricula.

Promoting lifelong learning initiatives in AI ensures that individuals of any age can acquire and update their competencies. The proposal for accessible online platforms and resources for continuous AI education accommodates the diverse needs of learners.

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Ensuring inclusivity in AI education, with a focus on dismantling gender stereotypes, is essential. Initiatives supporting women in AI, including targeted programs, scholarships, mentorship, and networking opportunities, empower women and foster a supportive community for their growth.

Collaborating across sectors to conduct forecasts on job shifts caused by AI automation is a strategic move. Anticipating changes in job demands and identifying the skills required for emerging roles in the AI-driven economy is essential.

Emphasizing the need for educational systems to adapt and future-proof skills at all levels ensures preparedness. Developing curricula that align with prospective shifts in demand equips learners with skills relevant to the evolving job market.

Establishing targeted programs for older workers and citizens who may need to learn new skills and adapt to the changing employment landscape is a proactive measure. Providing resources and training initiatives facilitates a smooth transition for individuals affected by job shifts caused by AI.

Integrating elements of creative problem-solving and innovation within AI curricula is essential for encouraging innovative thinking. This emphasizes the role of AI competencies in fostering adaptability, preparing learners for dynamic career landscapes.

Encouraging the development of interdisciplinary skills alongside AI competencies is forward-thinking. Showcasing the potential of combining AI knowledge with expertise from diverse fields highlights the capacity to drive innovation in research and industry.

Facilitating collaboration between educational institutions and industry partners to align AI curricula with industry needs is pragmatic. Establishing internships, apprenticeships, and collaborative projects provides learners with real-world applications of their AI competencies.

Championing the development of AI competencies, advocating for government support, promoting gender equality, and preparing for future job shifts pave the way for a society that not only embraces the transformative power of AI but also equips individuals with the skills needed to thrive in an AI-driven future. This collective effort ensures that the promises of AI are realized as a force for positive change and innovation in the journey toward progress.

In the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI), fostering a comprehensive understanding and critical engagement with the capabilities and limitations of these technologies is paramount. Public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives emerge as powerful tools to enhance AI literacy among learners, educators, and the broader community. By encouraging critical engagement with AI outputs, these initiatives lay the groundwork for an informed user base.

Creating platforms for user feedback further amplifies the collaborative aspect of improving AI systems. Establishing channels for active participation in refining algorithms ensures a diverse range of perspectives are considered, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. This collaborative approach not only empowers users but also contributes to the refinement of AI technologies.

Educators play a pivotal role in the responsible integration of Generative AI (GenAI). Formulating localized, context-specific guidance becomes crucial in helping educators navigate the AI landscape

effectively. It involves addressing unique challenges and opportunities presented by AI in diverse educational settings. Protecting teachers' rights and defining the knowledge and skills required for ethical GenAI use are essential components. Continuous training and capacity building are necessary to keep educators abreast of emerging values and skills related to AI.

Continuous learning and adaptation should be embedded in policies, enabling educational systems to stay agile in the face of technological changes. Mechanisms for regular reviews and updates, informed by the latest research and technological advancements, ensure that policies remain aligned with the evolving educational landscape.

The journey begins with a commitment to fostering AI literacy among users through comprehensive public awareness campaigns. By understanding the capabilities and limitations of AI, learners, educators, and the broader community are empowered to engage with these technologies critically. Initiatives such as AI literacy programs pave the way for a society that not only embraces technological advancements but also comprehends their impact on education.

Empowering teachers to drive AI integration in pedagogical practices is pivotal. Educators should be encouraged to explore innovative ways in which AI tools can enhance the learning experience for students. Striking a balance between technology-driven instruction and human interaction is essential. Teachers play a crucial role in fostering meaningful connections with students alongside AI-enhanced learning.

A consultative decision-making process that involves teachers in the selection and implementation of AI tools is foundational. Establishing feedback loops ensures that the perspectives of educators are integral to the AI integration journey. Teachers should be empowered to critique and question the methodologies behind AI systems, fostering transparency and accountability.

In the pursuit of responsible AI integration in education, the emphasis on training teachers, protecting their rights, and continuously updating their competencies becomes a cornerstone. By equipping educators with the knowledge and skills to navigate the AI landscape, we empower them to harness the full potential of AI while upholding the values and responsibilities inherent in the noble profession of teaching. This collaborative and informed approach ensures a seamless integration of AI in education, contributing to a technologically enriched and ethically grounded learning environment.

Encouraging Plural Opinions

Transitioning from individual awareness to a broader societal transformation, the quest for inclusive AI necessitates systemic changes within development processes. The establishment of platforms for user feedback represents a cornerstone, fostering a collaborative ecosystem where insights from a diverse user base contribute to the continuous improvement of AI systems. By institutionalizing these feedback mechanisms, the evolution of AI algorithms becomes a collective effort, ensuring responsiveness to the ever-evolving needs and expectations of users.

Advocating for diversity within AI development teams is crucial to address biases and prevent the perpetuation of narrow worldviews. Recognizing the value of interdisciplinary perspectives in the

design and implementation of AI systems becomes foundational for building inclusive technologies. The intersection of diverse backgrounds and expertise enriches the developmental process, resulting in AI applications that resonate with global audiences.

As we look forward, this collaborative and inclusive approach aligns with a vision for an educational landscape that embraces plural opinions. Recognizing diverse perspectives not only enhances the learning experience but also contributes to the development of AI systems that are more equitable and reflective of global viewpoints.

However, amidst this optimistic outlook, it is imperative to acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead. The probabilistic nature of AI algorithms, influenced by training data, has the potential to inadvertently reinforce existing biases, thereby limiting the diversity of opinions presented. To address these challenges and transform them into opportunities for growth and improvement, creating learning environments that nurture diversity is essential. This involves advocating for the diversification of AI training data sources and integrating inclusivity into curriculum design, thereby taking a proactive stance towards building a more inclusive and unbiased AI future.

Testing Locally Relevant Models

Shaping the design and adoption of Generative AI (GenAI) to align strategically with local educational needs requires embracing key principles. Designers are encouraged to move beyond standardized approaches, actively recognizing and incentivizing the incorporation of diverse learning options. This shift ensures that GenAI remains adaptable to the unique requirements of various educational contexts. The promotion of evidence-based use cases becomes integral, highlighting the importance of practical testing to validate GenAI's effectiveness in diverse settings. Furthermore, establishing criteria grounded in evidenced pedagogical research serves as a guiding factor, emphasizing the need to prioritize not only technological capabilities but also the educational impact of GenAI. This approach aims to cultivate a nuanced and context-sensitive implementation of GenAI in education, fostering inclusivity and enhancing its overall effectiveness.

Testing locally relevant models within the context of Generative AI (GenAI) involves adopting a nuanced and adaptive approach to ensure optimal alignment with the specific needs and characteristics of a given region or community. This process transcends a one-size-fits-all mentality, recognizing the diversity inherent in cultural, linguistic, and educational contexts.

Tailoring AI models to local requirements during the testing phase enables developers to consider unique considerations that might be overlooked in a more standardized approach. This includes understanding regional educational practices, cultural sensitivities, and linguistic nuances influencing how GenAI interacts with users. For example, the testing phase may encompass evaluating how well the AI understands and responds to language variations or incorporates culturally relevant content into educational materials.

Moreover, local testing serves as a crucial step in identifying and addressing biases that may emerge in the application of GenAI. If trained on biased data, AI systems can perpetuate or exacerbate

existing inequalities. Local testing allows developers to uncover and rectify these biases, ensuring that the technology is fair, inclusive, and respectful of diverse perspectives.

Ultimately, the goal of testing locally relevant models is to enhance the adaptability and effectiveness of GenAI in diverse educational settings. It provides a comprehensive understanding of how AI can positively contribute to local learning environments, offering insights that contribute to the responsible and ethical deployment of AI in education.

Reviewing Long-Term Implications

In our collective journey toward the future, a collaborative approach is paramount, particularly when delving into the intricate realm of AI's long-term implications. This collaboration extends beyond educational boundaries, involving interdisciplinary engagement with technology, policy, and industry sectors. Such broad collaboration becomes indispensable in comprehending the multifaceted impacts of AI, ensuring that our foresight is attuned to the evolving educational landscape.

As we endeavor to shape policies, a continuous learning mindset is imperative, recognizing the swift evolution of AI technologies. The ability of policies to anticipate future advancements not only demonstrates foresight but also strategically positions educational systems to fully leverage the potential benefits offered by emerging technologies. Therefore, policies designed to support continuous learning and adaptation empower educational systems to maintain agility in the face of rapid technological changes.

A comprehensive exploration of the long-term implications of Generative AI (GenAI) demands an intersectoral and interdisciplinary perspective. This entails fostering collaboration among AI providers, educators, researchers, and stakeholders, creating a vital feedback loop to inform system-wide adjustments in curriculum frameworks and assessment methodologies. The integration of timely advice is crucial, ensuring that regulations and policies undergo iterative updates in response to the dynamic nature of GenAI and its impacts on education. This iterative and collaborative approach is pivotal in navigating the intricate landscape of GenAI's long-term consequences, fostering adaptability, and promoting responsible deployment in educational settings.

Conclusion

In synthesizing these elements, a comprehensive framework for Generative AI (GenAI) in education emerges. Aligning national policies with UNESCO's guidance ensures that GenAI becomes a catalyst for positive educational transformation, fostering inclusivity, ethics, and human agency. As we navigate an era where AI reshapes the educational landscape, adopting a proactive and collaborative approach becomes the cornerstone for building a collective future that upholds the principles of equity, inclusivity, and responsible innovation.

Within this inclusive horizon, education emerges as the catalyst for positive change, with AI serving as a force for innovation and empowerment, preparing learners, educators, and Higher Education Institutions for dynamic career landscapes. Educators, equipped with the necessary skills and guidance, navigate the AI landscape responsibly, balancing technology-driven instruction with meaningful human interaction. Students, in turn, become active participants in this transformative

journey, engaging with AI technologies critically and contributing to shaping a future where technology enriches the learning experience.

Acknowledging the challenges posed by biases and the probabilistic nature of AI, these should be perceived not as obstacles but as opportunities for growth and improvement. This perspective drives a commitment to transparency, ethical considerations, and continuous refinement. Through this forward-looking lens, AI in education becomes a collaborative venture that enriches, empowers, and propels students, educators, and HEIs toward a future where the collective potential of AI is harnessed for the betterment of education worldwide. Embracing this vision, there is the potential into collectively steer towards an era where AI becomes a transformative and inclusive tool, shaping the future of education for generations to come.

4.5. Embracing Technology and Innovative Learning Methods in Healthcare Education: A Pathway to Inclusive Growth and Development

By Prof. Andreas Charalambous, University of Nicosia, Cyprus.

Keynote at the 9th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (ASEMME9) on 26 January 2024, Malta.

In aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4[2] (1), the theme of the 9th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (2024), "Leaving No One Behind", underscores our dedication to promoting inclusive and equitable quality education for all, a mission that resonates more powerfully in the context of the combined economic and social influence of the ASEM.

This talk is focused on innovations in healthcare education and educational technologies. It also touches on the problem of healthcare workforce shortages and its direct relationship to economic growth and development, and finishes with a suggestion on how collectively we can share and deploy educational technologies and innovations in healthcare education for addressing this problem.

Healthcare education as an academic discipline is firmly established with dedicated journals and conferences that bring together those who are committed in its advancement and to meet the needs of society. In the last century, we have had enough evidence on how to construct and implement effective curricula with methods firmly grounded in cognitive science and brain research. We know what outcomes and characteristics we need to have in our graduates and how to assess their skills, competences and behaviours.[3]

Going forward, we need to incorporate medical education innovations, digitalization, and artificial intelligence (AI) streams within curricula and prepare our students for leadership roles in medicine, academia, research, and industry.

AI is a transformative force of healthcare education. AI enables personalized learning experiences, adapting to individual student's needs. This personalization is crucial in healthcare education, where the depth and complexity of the material necessitate a tailored approach for optimal understanding and retention.[4]

AI will also necessitate that we change the way we assess students, focusing on a more personalized approach, rather than group written exams. We should continue and strengthen our reliance on Clinical Competence Assessment and learning portfolios that track student development across the years. The influence of AI extends beyond the classroom into the realm of patient education and care. AI has the potential to significantly enhance the way patients understand and manage their health.

AI tools are able today to analyse vast amounts of medical data, including past treatments, genetic information, and external exposures throughout the lifetime, including lifestyle, to provide a

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comprehensive view of a patient's health. This will not only aid healthcare professionals in making more informed decisions but will also allow patients to be more actively involved in their healthcare journey.[5]

Incorporating AI and distance learning technologies into both healthcare education and patient care will greatly contribute toward a healthcare system that meets the current and future needs of society. It also allows for an increase in the number of healthcare graduates. Distance Learning education can also support the professional development needs of healthcare workers.[6]

The way we teach medical and healthcare personnel and the use of technology can elevate the overall quality of education, improve the student experience, enhance retention rates, and ultimately contribute to the increased production of healthcare professionals. There is a critical need for various professionals, including doctors, nurses, midwives, and public health workers.

In fact, there seems to be an important mismatch between healthcare education and the needs of health systems in terms of workforce in addressing the needs of populations. The World Health Organisation (WHO) predicts that there will be a shortage of 10 million healthcare professionals by 2030, mostly affecting countries with lower and middle incomes.[7]

The problem is becoming more pronounced following the pandemic and in 2023 the WHO report on "Health workforce support and safeguards" clearly showed that during the COVID-19 pandemic rich countries imported more doctors, nurses and midwives. Fifty-five countries now rank below the global mean in terms of per capita density of their healthcare workers, in comparison to 47 countries in 2020. The global median is defined as 49 healthcare workers per 10,000 population.[8]

Healthcare workers are critical components of a health system and there is a clear link between population health, gross domestic product (GDP), poverty and migration. It is estimated that 8 million amenable deaths – these are preventable deaths from conditions treatable with medical interventions – were reported in 2015, almost exclusively (96%) in low- and middle-income countries. The result is a projected cumulative loss of 11.2 trillion USD in these countries for the period 2015 – 2030 and an associated potential economic output loss of as high as 2.6 percent of GDP in low-income countries by 2030.[9]

David Bloom and his colleagues have clearly demonstrated the significant impact of advancements in health on productivity, household incomes and economic growth: Specifically, they found that a one-year increase in life expectancy leads to a 4% boost in the GDP.[10]

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We are currently in position to deploy learning technologies and innovations in healthcare education to increase the numbers and level of knowledge, skills and behaviours of the healthcare workforce around the world, and particularly in the countries that need them the most.

By doing so, we demonstrate our commitment to deploy healthcare education innovations and technological advancements in order to bridge the divide through resource allocation, and ensuring equitable access. Our goal should not be just advancement; but advancement for all. To truly Leave No One Behind, as the theme of this meeting states.

5. Conclusions and Outlook

5.1. Main Conclusions of the Stocktaking Report

Considering the findings of this report and the development of the ASEM Education Process since the 8th ASEM Education Minsters' Meeting (ASEMME8, Bangkok, Thailand online, December 2021), the following main conclusions can be drawn:

1. The Chair's Conclusions of ASEMME8 (December 2021) have set the political and practical agenda for the ASEM Education Process until ASEMME9 (January 2024). At the 8th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting in 2021 the ASEM Education 2030 Strategy and Action Plan were endorsed and the ASEM partners and stakeholders continued to further work on the four thematic priorities: 1. Quality Assurance and Recognition; 2. Engaging Business and Industry in Education, 3. Balanced Mobility and 4. Lifelong Learning including TVET and two transversal themes *Sustainable Development* and *Digitalisation*.
   During ISOM (Malta, November 2022) and SOM1 (Malta, May 2023) as well as during other AEP events, Senior Officials, stakeholders, education experts and the ASEM Education Secretariat discussed issues related to the further development of the AEP and current emerging topics for education. The exchange of experience of ASEM partners and stakeholders was based on the belief that the AEP is an important dialogue and cooperation forum that can address and successfully meet (inter-)regional and global challenges and deserves continued support. This positive attitude is encouraging for all who wish to widen and deepen cooperation between Asia and Europe in the coming years under the ASEM umbrella.

2. The period between ASEMME8 and ASEMME9 has still been influenced by the global COVID-19 pandemic and it took a bit of time to get back to in-person meetings. Hybrid meetings have had some difficulties, not only because the online and in-person participants had very different possibilities in the meetings, but also because travel permission might not have been granted to experts when there was the possibility to participate online. Online meetings of e.g. the Expert Groups have limited the possibilities for networking and getting to know the colleagues. The AES has put additional efforts in motivating countries and stakeholders to participate in-person in meetings and it seems necessary to re-establish and redefine cooperation and partnerships among countries and stakeholders in the next period, while building on lessons learned and positive past experiences. This Stocktaking Report demonstrates that, despite the global sanitary crisis and all related challenges, a significant number of ASEM Education activities carried out by ASEM partners and stakeholders have made progress and at least partly achieved the set objectives in order to contribute to the AEP priorities and further develop the Process.

3. Although the period since the take-over of the Secretariat in July 2022 and the ASEMME9 (Janaury 2024) was rather short and three of the four ASEM Education Expert Groups have only been established at the ISOM in November 2022 and started their work in early 2023, the Expert Groups and many of the AEP activities and initiatives have made substantial

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progress. Nevertheless, some more ASEM partners and stakeholders could coordinate activities, establish new projects and reboost cooperation between Asia and Europe.

4. Despite the efforts made and the progress achieved, there is room for improvement and in the upcoming period we will continue to focus on the following areas of the ASEM Education Process: policy dialogue, communication and visibility, and synergies with multilateral organisations and processes.

Policy Dialogue: The informal ASEM Education Process has made good progress and the ASEM Education partners and stakeholders have further implemented the ASEM Education Strategy 2030 with its long-term common political vision and the accompanying Action Plan, which defines clear objectives and measurable targets. Together, they provide the basis for the implementation of a coherent ASEM Education vision for 2030, which contributes to make the forum even more relevant and influential on a global scale.

The ASEM Education Process is an advanced transregional dialogue and cooperation platform which promotes 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 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. 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 Expert Groups and other working structures will allow partners to develop and discuss innovative ideas and exchange good practices for future policies. 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 ASEM Education Ministerial Meetings and on the other, the ASEM Summit and the ASEM Foreign Ministers Meetings, as well as other ASEM 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 dialogue and more systematic exchanges with the overall ASEM Process in order to guarantee better follow-up and coherence of activities, projects and initiatives.

Synergies with multilateral organisations and processes: The ASEM Education Process deals with highly topical issues in education, many of which are also discussed in other international fora (e.g. ASEAN Plus Three, UNESCO, EHEA's Global Policy Forum).

The ASEM Education Process is part of a wider ecosystem involving a large network of international actors and organisations. Closer cooperation and dialogue will be fostered and reinforced among ASEM Education partners and stakeholders, and all involved actors will also be encouraged to have more dialogue with other relevant multilateral processes and organisations, such as the Bologna Process / Bologna Follow-Up Group / European Higher Education Area, especially in the framework of the Global Policy Forum, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as quality assurance and recognition bodies (e.g. ENIC-NARIC Networks, APNNIC Network, European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)). This list is not exhaustive nor set in stone, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will continually seek to connect and exchange with other multilateral actors and fora where relevant.

ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will seek to foster synergies with multilateral organisations and 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.

In addition, 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.

Communication and visibility: Although ASEM member countries cover 60% of the world's population and represent 65% of the world's GDP, the lack of visibility of ASEM and the AEP remains a continuing challenge. Some new awareness-raising activities should be envisaged to make both fora more visible to the education sector and to the public.

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 hand 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 AEP and the ASEM Political 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, social media channels and newsletters to better disseminate flagship initiatives, results and information. Nevertheless, the ASEM Education Secretariat 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.

5.2.Call for Involvement and Commitment

The many activities and projects described in this Stocktaking Report show the strong commitment of many of the ASEM partners and stakeholders to further develop dialogue and collaboration in the field of education under the political umbrella of the ASEM Process. This Stocktaking Report, however, also shows that there is room for improvement and that it would be beneficial to the process if more ASEM partners or stakeholders took up the coordination of initiatives. The success of informal political processes such as the ASEM Education Process relies heavily on the active commitment of its partners and stakeholders, as well as people-to-people connectivity.

For this reason, the ASEM Education Secretariat would like to conclude this Stocktaking Report by **inviting ASEM partners and stakeholders to express their interest to coordinate or participate in specific existing initiatives and welcomes any suggestions for new initiatives, projects or activities**. All ASEM partners and stakeholders are in addition encouraged to report regularly to the ASEM Education Secretariat on their initiatives and activities.

We hope that this Stocktaking Report provides ASEM Education partners and stakeholders with an overview of the activities that are going on and gives inspiration to further engage in the ASEM Education Process.

We wish to thank you for your contributions, for your constructive feedback and for the pleasant collaboration over the last 1,5 years since we have taken over the Secretariat.

The ASEM Education Secretariat Italy, January 2024.