19TH ASEF SUMMER UNIVERSITY
Sustainable Urbanisation in Heritage Cities
#ASEFSU

9-21 August 2015
Pune, India

Overview

Background

The ASEF Summer University (ASEFSU) is a 2-week annual project run by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF). The project fosters cross-cultural networks among youth from Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)[1] member countries and offers a platform for students and young professionals to analyse, exchange best practices, and to collaboratively develop proposals and solutions for contemporary challenges in Asia and Europe.

One such multifaceted and complex challenge is that of rapid urbanisation, which is increasingly visible across both continents. Cities are now home to more than 50% of the world's population and face a plethora of issues such as social inequity, poor governance, underemployment, congestion and pollution. Heritage cities face an additional particular predicament: that of building synergies between economic development and heritage conservation to ensure sustainable urbanisation.

On one hand, it is widely accepted that the conservation and use of heritage resources can provide much needed continuity and stability for urban development. Yet, on the other hand, a dichotomy still exists between the twin needs of preserving the past for its inherent value and facilitating development in response to changing trends and social environments.

The topic of the future of cities is high on the cultural agenda of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), as evidenced by the focus of recent ASEM Culture Ministers' Meetings. Therefore, the 19th edition of the ASEF Summer University (ASEFSU) will address these multifaceted issues stemming from urbanisation in heritage cities as mentioned above, with a special attention towards technological solutions. ASEFSU will also build on ASEF's previous work on urban heritage management including ASEF Experts' Meetings and Public Forums on:

- Investing in Heritage Cities: Stimulus for Sustainable Tourism and Livelihoods
  (June 2013, Myanmar)
- Managing Heritage Cities in Asia and Europe: the Role of Public-Private Partnerships
  (July 2012, Indonesia)
- The Cultural Heritages Of Asia And Europe: Global Challenges And Local Initiatives
  (September 2010, Netherlands)

Objectives

ASEFSU's core objective is to create a solution-centred platform for discussion and intercultural collaboration to develop concrete proposals and deliverables on the subject of urbanisation and protection of cultural heritage. In particular, the project aims to:

- Facilitate dialogue and on-site projects that connect the participants and the local community

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[1] ASEM brings together 53 members: Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Laos PDR, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom, Viet Nam, the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat.

- Train the participants to enhance their creative thinking and hands-on skills by offering a programme which integrates social, economic, environmental, technological and artistic elements

Participants

- 51 participants from all ASEM member countries selected through an Open Call
- ASEM experts from the civil society sector, ICT, academia and relevant ASEM Ministries

The Open Call and the selection process will ensure a geographical and gender balance as well as a diversity of participants from the various relevant fields.

Programme

ASEFSU consists of 3 phases:

1) Online preparatory phase
   Active participation through an online platform where participants get familiar with and discuss the relevant topics (ca. 1 month, July-August 2015)
2) On-site knowledge-building phase
   Lectures by scholars and thematic experts, skill development workshops, study visits to local communities (1 week, August 2015)
3) On-site hack-a-thon[2] phase
   In close collaboration with the local community, development of models and software prototypes which focus on local challenges and needs (1 week, August 2015)

Results

Tangible

- Physical and digital prototypes as concrete outcomes for the local community which enhance heritage preservation in the process of urbanisation (e.g. mobile applications, websites, business plans, social impact assessments models, open source codes, etc.)
- E-publication and multimedia online-databank which include best practises, recommendations and the deliverables from the project for target groups in Asia and Europe

Intangible

- "Classroom without walls"
  A learning environment that integrates social, economic, environmental, cultural and technological elements and goes beyond the conventional educational frames
- Increased knowledge and understanding
  Amplified understanding and strengthened practical skills among the participants regarding cultural heritage and sustainable urbanisation issues in ASEM countries

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[2] Hack-a-thon is an event format in which computer programmers, interface designers, economists, social scientists and other thematic experts jointly develop software projects (e.g. mobile applications, databases or websites) that address societal issues.