

ASEM Education Expert Group 1 on Sustainable Development Goals and Education

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Name of Expert Group
Expert Group 1 on SDGs and Education
Working Period
February 2023 – ASEMME 10 in 2026
This new group was established at the Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting (ISOM) in November 2022.
Co-chairs
Mr. Adam Liwak, Malta Further & Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) Ms. Duriya Amatavivat, Special Advisor, Ministry of Education, Thailand (MOE) Ms. Réka Tózsza, Director of the Education Department, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)
Composition (Participating Countries and Stakeholders)
▼ (Senior) Officials of the following ASEM partners: Austria, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, European Commission, Greece, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Korea, Lao PDR, Latvia, Malaysia, Malta, Netherlands, Romania, Thailand. ▼ 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 and Development (SEAMEO RIHED)
Reference to Policy Background Papers
Chair's Conclusions ASEMME9 (Valletta, January 2024) ▼ The Ministers thanked the (Co-)Chairs of the four ASEM Education Experts Groups on (i) Sustainable Development Goals and Education, (ii) Recognition and Balanced Mobility, (iii) Lifelong Learning and TVET and (iv) Digitalisation for their continuous and precious work and for involving most of the ASEM partners and stakeholders in the discussions, the development of tools, webinars and peer learning activities. All Expert Groups were encouraged to find synergies with other ASEM Expert Groups and to build on the achievements from previous working structures. ▼ The Ministers underlined the relevance, for both Asia and Europe, of the UN Agenda 2030 and the importance of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a focus

on SDG4; and agreed that the ASEM Education Process can contribute to realising the SDGs. The Ministers reaffirmed their desire to contribute to the implementation of SDG4 to achieve inclusive and equitable quality education and called the Experts Group 1 on Sustainable Development Goals and Education, co-chaired by Malta and Thailand, to continue its work and to build on the respective regional implementation mechanisms in both regions and in synergy with UNESCO's coordinating role for SDG 4/Education 2030 and the pivotal role of the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat in the regional processes.

- ▼ The Ministers reiterated the role of the ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARC) as the Official Dialogue Partner of the ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting and appreciated the theme of the 9th edition of ARC on "Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping: Working Towards the SDGs" aligned with the ASEM Education Process horizontal priority and showcasing national ASEM higher education policies and institutional practices working towards the SDGs.

Chair's Conclusions ASEMME8 (Bangkok, December 2021)

- ▼ The 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 realizing the SDGs. The Ministers re-confirmed their commitment to contribute to the implementation of SDG4 in order to achieve inclusive and equitable quality education and Lifelong Learning opportunities for all. Therefore, they welcomed the newly formulated mission of the ASEM Education Process: "By 2030, the ASEM Education Process (AEP) will contribute to a more prosperous, resilient and sustainable Asia-Europe education region, better prepared for current and forthcoming global challenges. ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will reaffirm the AEP as an advanced transregional dialogue and cooperation platform. They aim to develop the AEP as a platform to promote inclusive and equitable quality education and training through equal and mutually beneficial Asia-Europe partnerships, leveraged by people-to-people connectivity. Through partnerships, exchanges and collaboration, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders will support the education sector to train individuals able to navigate through rapidly changing and increasingly complex societies and labor markets, while respecting national, regional, interregional and local education contexts and practices, as well as academic values. In order to realize this vision and mission statement, ASEM Education partners and stakeholders have identified strategic objectives, instruments and working methods, and developed an Action Plan in order to ensure effective implementation and tangible results." (cc.13)

Chair's Conclusions ASEMME7 (Bucharest, May 2019)

- ▼ The 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. Therefore, the Ministers confirmed their commitment to contribute to the implementation of the SDG4 in order to achieve inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. The Ministers welcomed the suggestion to link the ASEM Education Process more explicitly to the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 by introducing "Sustainable Development" as a transversal theme within the 4 priority areas of the ASEM Education Process. (cc.12)

Purpose and Intended Outcome

Purpose

- ▼ Strengthen collaboration in SDGs by identifying, sharing, and promoting good practice concerning the implementation of SDGs in education at national, regional, interregional and local level, particularly the SDG4 on Quality Education.

- ✓ Address the issue of Diversity, Equality, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) in (higher) education by exchanging good practice, strategies, targets, and measuring approaches among members.
- ✓ Support values, skills, and learning as well as collaboration related to Global Citizenship Education in Asia and Europe.
- ✓ Foster dialogue on SDGs in education with specific regard to the four priorities of the ASEM Education Process: Quality Assurance and Recognition, Engaging Business and Industry in Education, Balanced Mobility, and Lifelong Learning including TVET.
- ✓ Promote peer learning among the appointed experts of both regions.
- ✓ Complement the work of other ASEM Expert Groups by providing expertise in the field of SDGs.

Intended Outcomes

- ✓ Establishment of a pool of experts on SDGs in education specifically working within the ASEM context.
- ✓ Creating a portfolio of good practice examples on the implementation of SDGs in education in Asia and Europe, including Diversity, Equality, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) and Global Citizenship Education (GCE) which will serve as a knowledge basis for further collaboration between the two regions.
- ✓ Contributing to outcome documents of ASEM meetings (ASEMME and SOM) in order to advance the implementation of the SDGs in our regions and to stimulate the further integration of the SDGs in our education systems.

Workplan 2025-2026

EG Meeting 1 (Virtual)

Topic: Setting the Scene

Date: 26 March 2025

- Discussing the workplan with members
- Setting the Agenda for 2025/26

EG Meeting 2 (Virtual)

Topic: Rethinking Educational Equity: From Access to Real Inclusion (SDG 4.1, SDG 4.5, & SDG 4.a)

Date: 22 May 2025

- Contextual inequalities that exist between HEIs (e.g., in funding, language, infrastructure)
- Ensuring equitable access and providing support to facilitate education at all levels, especially for marginalised groups
- Measuring success through learning outcomes, well-being, and lifelong learning participation
- Channelling/creating fund sources for equitable education for all
- Best practices for inclusive policies in higher education and lifelong learning

EG Meeting 3 (Virtual)

in partnership with ASEM Expert Group on LLL and TVET

Topic: Lifelong Learning & Upskilling for a Sustainable World (SDG 4.4 & SDG 8.6)

Date: 10 September 2025

- The role of different levels of education in green and digital transitions
- Policies for reskilling and upskilling in response to evolving labour markets

- How to foster a culture of lifelong learning through national education policies
- What new skills and competencies should the post-2030 agenda prioritise
- Exploring foundational learning as part of the next global agenda
- Designing more flexible learning opportunities for all and exploring micro-credentials

EG Meeting 4 (Hybrid)

in conjunction with the ASEM Education SOM1 in Bucharest, Romania

Topic: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): Where are we and What's Beyond 2030? (SDG 4.7 & SDG 16.7)

Date: 20 November 2025

- How well have the SDG 4 targets been integrated globally?
- Lessons learned from the ESD for 2030 framework—what should continue or change?
- How should the next global education agenda evolve to address emerging sustainability challenges?
- Good practices on regional approaches to STEM Education
- Social responsibility and education's contributions to personal development and community building

EG Meeting 5 (Virtual)

Topic: Global Citizenship Education (GCED) & Civic Engagement in a Changing World (SDG 4.7.1)

Date: February 2026

- Integrating global competencies into national curricula.
- Strengthening intercultural dialogue and peacebuilding through education.
- The balance between local cultural identities and global interconnectedness in the curriculum.
- The role of youth participation in decision-making processes.
- *Potential Speaker:* Massimiliano Tarozzi, UNESCO Chair in Global Citizenship Education in Higher Education (Italy) <https://unescochairgcd.it/en/>

EG Meeting 6 (Virtual)

in partnership with ASEM Expert Group on Digitalisation and AI

Topic: Digital Transformation and the Future of Learning (SDG 4.3 & SDG 9.c)

Date: May 2026

- Role of technology and AI in reducing educational disparities and ensuring affordable access to quality, safe, and secure digital learning
- Ensuring online safety for children
- The ethics of AI in education and how to leverage AI for inclusive and effective learning
- The role of big data in education: are we using it ethically and effectively?
- What policies should guide AI-powered education tools in the post-2030 agenda?
- Exploring expression of culture (i.e. languages) in digital spaces
- Dual education and increased collaboration with labour market

Reporting

The Chairs report progress to the ASEM at Intermediate Senior Officials' Meetings (ISOMs) and Senior Officials' Meetings (SOMs).

The minutes of this EG's meetings are in the responsibility of the Chairs.