



FLEXIBLE LEARNING PATHWAYS
Asia-Europe Conference on Lifelong Learning and
the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

13-14 December 2018, Hanoi, Viet Nam

CONCEPT NOTE

Dates	13-14 December 2018
Venue	Hanoi, Viet Nam
Partners	Ministry of Education and Training (Viet Nam) http://pbc.moet.gov.vn Hanoi Open University (HOU) http://en.hou.edu.vn/ Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) http://asef.org
Expected Participants	60-70
Thematic Areas	Education, Lifelong Learning, Sustainability

BACKGROUND

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets ambitious goals to transform our world, balancing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The Agenda encompasses all aspects of our lives, which implies that learning must be both life-long and life-wide. Sustainable Development Goal 4 is of particular importance to adult educators and other advocates of lifelong learning since it enjoins UN member states to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.

Promoting lifelong learning within the framework of the 2030 Agenda implies a cross-sectoral effort which recognises the interdependence of learning and key concerns around environmental protection, economic growth and social and cultural development. The inter-sectoral relevance of lifelong learning makes it the key factor in delivering the sustainable development agenda. Furthermore, cross-national approach is necessary in creating responsive lifelong learning systems, which support mobility of people and flow of knowledge.

An Asia-Europe collaboration was also encouraged by the ASEM Heads of States in Ulaanbaatar in July 2016 ([ASEM11](#)). Leaders “acknowledged the important role of education, in particular higher education, lifelong learning and vocational education and training for human resource development”, and also “commended the role of Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in bringing together the peoples of Asia and Europe, forging closer links between the ASEM governments and civil societies and providing capacity-building trainings for the youth from both regions”.¹

SYNERGY

Acknowledging the importance of exchanging practices at an Asia-Europe level, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the Ministry of Education of Viet Nam (MoET) and Hanoi Open University (HOU) organize this conference to contribute to the [Incheon Declaration](#) “Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all” and the [Asia-Europe Meeting \(ASEM\) Education Process](#).

¹ See the Chairs’ Statement of ASEM11 at https://d333mq0i40sk06.cloudfront.net/documents/Chairs-Statement-ASEM11-adopted_7JaJqc3.pdf

The conference is building on the outcomes of the following events:

- [ASEM Conference on Innovative Education and Human Resource Building for Sustainable Development](#) held in Hue, Viet Nam, 29-31 March 2017.
- The [6th ASEF Rectors' Conference and Student's Forum \(ARC6\)](#) titled "Future-ready Universities and Graduates: Quality Education Beyond the Horizon", 12-13 October 2017, Singapore². The rectors and the students created Policy Recommendations to the ASEM Ministers of Education and highlighted the importance of the Asia-Europe cooperation on lifelong learning policies at an institutional, national and international level. (Read the ARC6 Rectors' Policy Recommendations [here](#), and the ARC6 Students' Policy Recommendations [here](#)).
- The [4th Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 \(APMED4\)](#) titled "Transforming Learning: Meeting the skills demand to achieve the SDGs in the Asia-Pacific", 12-14 July 2018, Bangkok, Thailand. The Regional Recommendations for Action on SDG targets 4.3 and 4.4 highlight the role of higher education institutions in using technology to ensure equal access to lifelong learning, and the need for systems and measures to recognize prior and experiential learning in higher education.

TOPIC

This conference aims at engaging people from Asia and Europe and promote exchange of information, practices, institutional policies, relevant research at national, regional and international level. The topic "**flexible learning pathways**" is examining how could traditional education systems adapt to the needs of economy from 3 angles:

- Flexibilisation of degrees: Recognition of non-formal and informal education/ learning and prior learning as credits within degree programs, enabling learners to accumulate learning, experiences and qualifications through flexible participation at different stages.
- Flexibilisation of curricula and of learning content: Meeting the needs of non-traditional learners in their various life contexts (adult retraining, skills upgrading, dropouts, women and mothers, etc.), and design responsive learning programmes to their demands.
- Flexibilisation of methodology and learning design: Offering self-organised learning programmes in various forms, adopting learner-centred pedagogy, supported by information and communication technology (ICT) and open educational resources.

OBJECTIVES

- To raise awareness in Asia and Europe on the mission of higher education institutions in lifelong learning, thereby advancing the SDG Agenda, and their societies;
- To promote regional and inter-regional cooperation on sharing best practices and experiences among ASEM members and relevant institutions in lifelong learning at all levels: policymakers, government officials, businesses, entrepreneurs, NGOs, international institutions and other stakeholders;
- To propose policy recommendations at cross-regional level for higher education institutions and policy makers on how to foster ASEM cooperation in achieving the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially Goal 4 through promoting lifelong learning.

EXPECTED PARTICIPANTS (60-70)

Approximately 60-70 participants from the International and Vietnamese expert community, including academic leaders, researchers, government officials, policy-makers, and representatives from private sector, regional and international institutions in Asia and Europe.

² The conference themes was inspired by the Commissioned paper by Dr. Ulf-Daniel Ehlers on "Lifelong Learning - Holistic and Global Education" prepared for ARC6 to feed the discussion on Policy Recommendations http://www.asef.org/images/docs/ARC6_Commissioned%20Paper_EHLERS.pdf

STRUCTURE

- Plenary sessions with international organisations discussing and comparing trends and dilemmas in Asian and European policy making and practice
- Workshop sessions with university leaders and experts, who introduce good examples and make a policy recommendation based on their experience

EXPECTED RESULTS

Tangible

- Conference proceeding, including the panel discussion, working group presentations
- Development of policy recommendations and distribution to various target groups
- Acknowledgement of the Conference in official ASEM documents, including the 7th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting (tbc)

Intangible

- New cross-border and/or inter-regional collaborations established among participants
- Increased awareness of ASEF and ASEM among participants/ attendees/ interested public
- Acknowledgement of the programme by other stakeholders in the field
- Promotion Goal 4 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda among participants and target groups

FOLLOW-UP/ SUSTAINABILITY

- The programme will be part of the wider and longer-term project within ASEF Education Policy Programme;
- The issues discussed at this event will be incorporated into ASEF Outlook Report 2018;
- The Policy Recommendations will be presented to ASEM stakeholders at various forums, including the ASEM Stocktaking Report from Seoul to Bucharest, the 7th ASEF Rectors' Conference and Students' Forum, and at the 7th ASEM Ministers of Education Meeting (ASEMME7) on 15-16 May 2019.

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