



**3<sup>rd</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference (ARC3)**  
*Universities, Businesses and You: For a Sustainable Future*

University of Groningen, the Netherlands  
25-26 September 2012

*Conference Recommendations*

**I. Introduction: ASEM Education Process - enhancing synergies and fostering university, business and stakeholder co-operation**

Jointly organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and the University of Groningen (UoG), ARC3 took place in Groningen, the Netherlands from 25 to 26 September 2012 gathering more than a hundred university leaders, representatives of ASEM higher education institutions, the business community including selected representatives from the 1<sup>st</sup> Asia-Europe Students' Forum convened on 24 September 2013.

Since 2008, the ASEM education dialogue has provided impetus for a discourse on university-business co-operation. According to the 1<sup>st</sup> Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (ASEMME1, Berlin, May 2008) "close co-operation between education and industry at international, national, regional and local level is a core element for ensuring the employability of the young generation entering the workforce as well as the employability of older generations".

This was further reinforced at their 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting (ASEMME3, Copenhagen, May 2011) when the ASEM Education Ministers invited ASEF, the ASEM Rectors' Conference permanent Secretariat, to contribute to the dialogue on higher education-business co-operation between and among education stakeholders. Furthermore, the ASEM governments "recognised the need to involve stakeholders, through the ASEM Rectors' Conference, and other initiatives from higher education institutions and student representatives in the ASEM Education Process to achieve a broad consensus..."

In response to the aforementioned call, ARC3 tackled *Universities, Businesses and You: For a Sustainable Future*. The Conference also followed up on the results of ARC1 and ARC2 held at the Freie Universität Berlin and Korea University in October 2008 and October 2010 respectively.

**II. Recommendations**

The recommendations reflect the topics discussed at the plenary and working group sessions of ARC3 where ASEM university leaders deliberated on the models of and best practices in university-business co-operation, community engagement and universities' social responsibility (USR). ARC3 participants also explored how collaboration across borders on employability and university-business and university-community co-operation can be strengthened including the state-of-the-art approaches to teaching creativity and entrepreneurship education.

The ASEM university leaders convey the following recommendations for the consideration of the ASEM Ministers for Education at their 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting in Malaysia in 2013. The participating universities also address these recommendations to their counterparts, business leaders and relevant institutions and stakeholders in ASEM countries. Annexed to the recommendations are case examples from participating universities.

### (1) Support universities in achieving both excellence and widening access

ASEM Governments and Ministries of Education are called upon to:

- Develop systems that link all education levels not only across disciplines, but also across national borders while acknowledging the variety of institutions and diversity of the student body
- Monitor the quality and efficacy of higher education institutions and support universities' efforts in providing quality education while guaranteeing access for students from marginalised backgrounds, both territorially and socio-economically
- Subsidise disciplines and research fields that are not supported by market forces
- Encourage universities' efforts in research talent development by identifying the most talented individuals at an early stage and allowing them to pursue research that may lead to scientific breakthroughs (i.e. strengthening the framework for research collaboration and mobility of young researchers in Asia and Europe)<sup>1</sup>.

University Leaders call upon their fellow university leaders in ASEM as well as on other stakeholders to:

- Recognise that academic excellence and widening participation do not conflict with each other i.e. e-learning, as a means to widen access
- Advocate a common understanding of excellence and equal access which encompasses the ideals of inclusive education, ethics and sustainability. Universities should be proactive and self-confident in identifying what their strengths and expertise are and communicate what they are good for
- Share examples and experiences in promoting equal opportunities and institutional talent development.

### (2) Enhance co-operation between universities and businesses in ASEM

ASEM Governments and Ministries of Education are called upon to:

- Offer further platforms for exchange on creative and innovative skills (i.e. entrepreneurship education) and work-integrated learning schemes in ASEM such as the *ASEM University-Business Forum* established in the framework of ASEMME1 in Berlin 2008 and reaffirmed as an annual event during ASEMME3 in Copenhagen
- Commission data collection to compare and identify best practices on structures and mechanisms that encourage university-business co-operation in ASEM countries
- Promote and support the recognition of workplace learning by documenting industries' contributions to university programmes (and curricula) as well as universities' contributions to workplace learning
- Promote and support the wider use of tools for recognition and comparability in ASEM i.e. the European and the ASEAN credit transfer system (ECTS and ACTS), Diploma Supplement, etc.<sup>2</sup> and work towards making ECTS and ACTS compatible<sup>3</sup>
- Adopt the current proposal on *ASEM Work Placement Programme*, developed by the ASEM Education Secretariat and presented during the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEM University-Business Forum in 2012,<sup>4</sup> and provide support for its implementation.

University Leaders are called upon to:

- Facilitate and support the implementation of the *ASEM Work Placement Programme* in their respective institutions

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<sup>1</sup> See: The Aarhus Declaration of Excellence in Research: <http://www.excellence2012.dk/the-aarhus-declaration/-c10401>

<sup>2</sup> See: The recommendations of the ARC1 and ARC2: <http://www.asef.org/index.php/projects/programmes/529-asem-rectors-conference>

<sup>3</sup> Inspiration for making ECTS and ACTS compatible can be found in the Tuning Methodology, initially developed in 2000 to understand curricula and to make them comparable by increasing the awareness on students learning outcomes. See: <http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu>

<sup>4</sup> See: 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEM University Business Forum, Malaysia, 5 - 6 November 2012 <http://www.asem-education-secretariat.org/en/20363>

- Engage pro-actively in university-business co-operation and participate in existing platforms for exchange i.e. ASEM University Business Forum and *AsiaEngage*<sup>5</sup>
- Design curricula that enhance graduates' employability and entrepreneurship, i.e. by including work-placement programmes, international internships, etc.
- Further promote and disseminate university-industry research findings nationally and across borders.

### (3) Support universities' engagement with industry and the community

ASEM Governments and Ministries of Education are called upon to:

- Commission a report on policies, funding distribution and recognition systems that drive community and industry engagement across research, education and service in higher education
- Support universities in their efforts to equip students with skills that benefit society and reflect the demands of the labour market i.e. *ASEAN Youth Volunteer Programme*
- Recognise the contribution of experiential learning to soft skills development i.e. work-placement programmes and student volunteering
- Create platforms for exchange of good practices in university, industry and community engagement i.e. *AsiaEngage* and the *ASEAN USR Thematic Network*
- Establish a legal framework that allows universities to integrate industry and community stakeholder engagement in the curriculum<sup>6</sup>.

University Leaders encourage their counterparts in ASEM to:

- Advocate a common understanding of University Social Responsibility (USR) and its integration in universities' mission and implementation strategies across research, education and service (see the recommendations of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Asia-Europe Education Workshop: a new general (minimum) paradigm should be developed<sup>7</sup>)
- Promote lifelong learning and equip students with skills that benefit society based on UNESCO's Report on Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Learning to know, to do, to be and to live together<sup>8</sup>
- Recognise competences and skills obtained through work experience and non-formal education i.e. integration of student volunteering in the curriculum
- Co-operate with other stakeholders at community, local, regional or (inter-)national level in order to strengthen universities' role in providing education not only for the workplace but for social cohesion, intercultural dialogue as well as active and global citizenship.

### (4) Encourage and support student involvement in the ASEM Education Process

The ARC3 participants recognise ASEF's efforts to integrate the voice of the students in the ASEM Education Process through the launch of the Asia-Europe Students' Forum. The ASEM university leaders further call for increased and active involvement of students in strategic planning and consultation processes. They acknowledge the contributions from the 1<sup>st</sup> Asia-Europe Students' Forum (annexed to the ARC3 Recommendations) presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference and forward them to the ASEM governments and Ministries for Education, their ASEM counterparts and the wider higher education community.

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<sup>5</sup> AsiaEngage is a platform that shares good practices for both industry and community engagement across the region – at present it has 68 members of universities across ASEAN and Asia. See: <http://www.asiaengage.org>

<sup>6</sup> See: 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEM University-Business Forum, Malaysia, 5 - 6 November 2012 <http://www.asem-education-secretariat.org/en/20363>

<sup>7</sup> See: 2<sup>nd</sup> Asia-Europe Education Workshop, Austria, 5 - 7 June 2011 <http://www.asef.org/index.php/projects/themes/education/1149-2nd-asia-europe-education-workshop-knowledge-societies>

<sup>8</sup> See: UNESCO's Report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty first Century <http://www.unesco.org/delors/highlights.htm>

#### **IV. Outlook: Next ASEM Ministerial Meeting**

The Conference reaffirms its willingness to contribute to the ASEM Education Process and forwards its recommendations to the 4<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Meeting of Ministers for Education (ASEMME4) to be held in 2013 in Malaysia.

## CASE EXAMPLES

### (1) Support universities in achieving both excellence and widening access

- The *PARTNERS Programme* (Newcastle University, UK). Started more than a decade ago, the programme engages with over 100 schools where students from disadvantaged backgrounds can - under certain conditions - be admitted to the university with lower grades than normal.<sup>9</sup>
- The *Realising Opportunities Programme*. A collaboration of 12 leading UK universities working together to promote fair access and social mobility of students from under-represented groups.<sup>10</sup>
- The *Integrated Outdoor Campus, IOC* (University of Surabaya (Ubaya), Indonesia) is a leafy green and environmentally friendly campus that integrates outdoor learning activities, development, and productive collaboration with community, nature conservation, recreation, and business.<sup>11</sup>
- The *Learning Beyond the Classroom* at the University of Surabaya (Ubaya), Indonesia which includes student activities like in-company internships, company visits, entrepreneurship outside the campus, community services, etc. Students and lecturers benefit from in-company internships for a period of time to minimise the gap between theories and the real working condition.<sup>12</sup>
- The *Mini Indonesia* recruitment process at the University of Surabaya (Ubaya), Indonesia. The university is aware that higher education is based on a system of equality and merit, in which all students have equal opportunity to enter Ubaya, regardless of their ethnicity, race, social class, and religion. Ubaya therefore actively strives to accept students from all provinces in Indonesia, including Papua, Kalimantan, Maluku, Batak, Aceh, Java, etc.
- The *NOHA Erasmus Mundus Masters' Programme in Humanitarian Action*: The programme aims to: (1) respond to the challenges raised by the new environment in which international humanitarian action works and further the development of humanitarian assistance education through an agreed programme of joint research and training and (2) advance cooperation at a global level by a common understanding of the importance of international humanitarian action and its developments through courses jointly designed and elaborated<sup>13</sup>. The programme allows students who want to pursue a career in research to participate in brief exchange programmes with universities outside Europe. Three of these universities are based in Asia.

### (2) Enhance co-operation between universities and businesses in ASEM

- The *Rise Up Entrepreneurship Programme* (RUEP, Newcastle University, UK). A specific university training initiatives in entrepreneurship for students.<sup>14</sup>
- The *Graduate Employment Training Unit* (UGet) (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, UKM). UKM is in the advanced stage of setting up the UGet, which focuses on soft-skills training and other work place required competencies which can be discipline based. The curriculum and delivery will be worked on by industry, NGOs and government agency partners.
- The *endowment chairs, the research thrusts and publications* by UKM. UKM is becoming the regional hub for research in the sustainable development of the oil-palm industry, for zero waste technology and for social and economic aspects. This is with collaboration of the Sime Darby Foundation and the Malaysian Palm Oil Board.
- The *Ubaya Tan Chong Center of Asian Management Studies* (Ubaya and Tan Chong Holding Company Malaysia) provides the opportunity for Ubaya students to do internships and work at Tan Chong Holding, which has a wide reach in the Asian region<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> See: PARTNERS Programme: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/partners/>

<sup>10</sup> See: <http://www.realisingopportunities.ac.uk/>

<sup>11</sup> See: Ubaya, IOC: [https://www.ubaya.ac.id/ubaya/news\\_detail/530/Universitas-Surabaya-Launches-a-Green-Campus.html](https://www.ubaya.ac.id/ubaya/news_detail/530/Universitas-Surabaya-Launches-a-Green-Campus.html)

<sup>12</sup> See: Ubaya: [www.ubaya.ac.id/](http://www.ubaya.ac.id/)

<sup>13</sup> See: NOHA: <http://www.nohanet.org/erasmus-mundus-programme.html>

<sup>14</sup> See: RUEP: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/riseup/startup/ruep.php>

<sup>15</sup> See: Ubaya Tan Chong Center of Asian Management Studies: <http://cams.ubaya.ac.id/>

- Ubaya is exploring similar large-scale cooperation with the *Korean Ginseng Company in Indonesia* (Ubaya and Korean Ginseng Center for Most Valuable Products (KGCMVP), Kyung Hee University Korea - Ubaya will place a big investment to establish a Korean Ginseng company in Indonesia)
- The *Cátedra de Emprendedores* ("Entrepreneurship department") of the Universidad de La Rioja is a collaboration between the university and the regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry.<sup>16</sup>
- The *Cátedra de Emprendedores* of the Universidad de Salamanca is focused on researching entrepreneurship trends and practices, as well as offering training for students.<sup>17</sup>
- The *University of Navarra-Business Foundation* works to promote strong connections between business world-wide and universities.<sup>18</sup>

### (3) Support universities in their engagement with industry and the community

- The *ASEAN Youth Volunteer Programme* at the AsiaEngage.
- The *Student Community Action Network* (SCAN) by the National Union of Students, UK.<sup>19</sup>
- The *Industry Partnership* at the University of Surabaya (Ubaya) Indonesia: The terms of this partnership comprise financial support of the industry to Ubaya (i.e. scholarships) as well as Ubaya's support of the industry in terms of research and development.
- The *Solidarity & Action Office* (Oficina de Acción Solidaria) was created and is funded by the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. This office, effectively an NGO inside the University, manages different community involvement programmes, promotes research on aid and development practices, and is itself part of the NGO network which supports the European Volunteer Service programme.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See: *Cátedra de Emprendedores, Rioja*: [http://fundacion.unirioja.es/Catedras\\_subsecciones/view/6/catedra-de-emprendedores](http://fundacion.unirioja.es/Catedras_subsecciones/view/6/catedra-de-emprendedores) (in Spanish)

<sup>17</sup> See: *Cátedra de Emprendedores, Salamanca*: <http://www.catedraemprendedores.net/> (in Spanish)

<sup>18</sup> See: FEUN: <http://www.feun.es/feun/general-information>

<sup>19</sup> See: SCAN: <http://www.nusu.co.uk/scan/>

<sup>20</sup> See: Universidad Autónoma de

Madrid: [http://www.uam.es/ss/Satellite/es/1242664234487/subHomeServicio/Oficina\\_de\\_Accion\\_Solidaria\\_y\\_Cooperacion.htm](http://www.uam.es/ss/Satellite/es/1242664234487/subHomeServicio/Oficina_de_Accion_Solidaria_y_Cooperacion.htm) (in Spanish)



**1<sup>st</sup> Asia-Europe Students' Forum**  
***Are You Fit For The Future?***

University of Groningen, the Netherlands  
24 September 2012

*Contributions from the 1<sup>st</sup> Asia-Europe Students' Forum*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Jointly organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and University of Groningen (UoG), the 1<sup>st</sup> Asia-Europe Students' Forum took place at the University of Groningen on 24 September 2012, directly preceding the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference (ARC3) on 25-26 September 2012. It gathered about 50 students from 37 countries.

The Students' Forum followed up on the call made by ARC1 and ARC2 held at the Freie Universität Berlin (October 2008) and Korea University (October 2010) to further engage students in the ASEM Education Process, specifically in the ASEM Rectors' Conference series. Themed *Are You Fit For The Future?*, the Students' Forum complemented the topic of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference which explored the topics of university-business and university-community engagement.

Two panel discussions looked at employability and entrepreneurship education from students' perspectives while an interactive session explored the role of universities in ensuring graduate employability and entrepreneurship. The results of these discussions were presented at a plenary session in the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEM Rectors' Conference and are detailed in the following section.

## II. STUDENTS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ASEM EDUCATION DIALOGUE

"Learning opens the door to building a satisfying and productive life, quite apart from a person's employment status and prospects" (Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, 2000). Recognising that the aim of education and learning should not be limited to employability alone, but one that encompasses a humanistic understanding of global citizenship, ASEM university students recommend the following to university and business leaders:

**1. To ensure that students have the skills to acquire work life balance in their future working lives, the students recommend that universities integrate time management training in their teaching and learning environment.** While it was acknowledged that a considerable part of this challenge is personal responsibility, students called on universities to make teacher-training sensitive to this issue. Rewarding good teaching that incorporates time management training was also highlighted as good practice. Students agreed that universities regularly evaluate students' progress to detect and improve time-management at an early stage in the learning process. Including voluntary service and community engagement in the study experience were also mentioned as examples of how to improve the teaching and learning environments.

**2. To prepare graduates for an increasingly diverse multicultural workplace, universities should foster cultural awareness and sensitivity throughout their studies.** The participants stressed the importance of learning from others such as student-to-student learning, student-teacher (and vice versa) as well as teacher-teacher learning. Language courses, mobility and exposure to diverse cultural settings, both abroad and within one's own institution, are important aspects. Institutions should be pro-active in facilitating their international

students' engagement with home country students for mutual enrichment. Mobility should not be limited to academic mobility, but also open up to multicultural workplace experiences and community service.

**3. To make subjects relevant to students' possible future workplaces, universities should enable students to make informed choices about designing their own curricula, which should include soft skills learning and counselling.** The need to integrate internship opportunities, mobility windows, community learning in the curricula and public-private partnerships were highlighted in the discussions. Students would like to be given the opportunity to customise their curricula according to their specific interests and career choices. However, for students to be successful in making the right choices in designing their curricula, they need to be informed. To this end, university career counselling centres for graduates and other professional departments should be put in place to maintain high-quality external relations and ensure proper conditions for innovative programmes and career development. The feedback and involvement of students and alumni in the provision of these services were stressed as crucial. In addition, a wide range of stakeholders such as the faculty, employers and the community should also be asked for feedback and be involved in the curriculum development. Offering soft skills training and assessment to all students and graduates (based, for instance, on the Tuning Generic Competences) was also discussed.

**4. To make sure that a mobile workforce does not encounter issues of cultural prejudice, universities should foster mobility with a focus on intercultural communication and intercultural training and skills.** International classrooms and diversity at home were also stressed as an indispensable way to foster intercultural skills. A concern on mobility as a privilege based on financial means, instead of achievement and ability, was raised. Mobility should also include international work placement and voluntary service. Universities should encourage alumni networks to better support mobility of future generations of students. It was further acknowledged that education should be equally accessible, and that minorities be supported. The challenge of avoiding brain-drain is at the systems' level and needs to be tackled across countries together with policy-makers.

**5. To encourage students to become more entrepreneurial, universities should provide greater resource support, access to critical business dialogue and start up incubators at every institution.** The main challenges mentioned by the participants were lack of guidance and common risk adversity. Furthermore, it was pointed out that failure is not commonly accepted and, thus, not seen as an opportunity to learn. The proposals to overcome this challenge consist of talks, courses and seminars on entrepreneurship, e.g. on financing, risk-management, human resource management, psychological training, etc. Examples of practical resource support include office space for students striving to start up a business, loans or grants, and formalised mentorship programmes for such students. Universities should facilitate the translation of students learning into practice. In the spirit of thinking outside the box, entrepreneurship education and learning should not be limited to business students. Providing opportunities during university studies to learn from other young entrepreneurs and opportunities for entrepreneurial work-place learning was seen as a way forward. At the same time, universities should create networks of alumni, recognising their achievements as entrepreneurs and as role models.

**6. For universities to effectively involve student stakeholders in the development of higher education, students should be considered as equal partners. Students are a large stakeholder group within the higher education community.** They are the centre of teaching and learning. Although they should be responsible for their own learning, they need to be involved in the development of higher education. Therefore, they should have a possibility to participate in the governance of higher education. As students are the ones who know best about the barriers, challenges and needs they are facing, their feedback and ideas should be used for higher education development and improvement. Students can provide different perspectives which can enrich creativity and efficiency. It should further be kept in mind that part of the current student body also constitutes the future generation of academics. To ensure transfer, they should be involved in their future working field at an early stage. Another area where students' feedback and ideas can play an important role is the quality assurance of institutions. As can be seen in the Bologna Process where students are already integrated and playing an important role, equal partnership between students and the higher education community is beneficial.