About the 4th ASEF Young Leaders Summit (ASEFYLS4)

The 4th ASEF Young Leaders Summit (ASEFYLS4) is a 10-month long youth leadership programme connected with the 13th ASEM Summit (ASEM13) in Cambodia. The ASEFYLS4 focuses on ‘Sustainable Development in a post-COVID-19 World’ and incorporates 3 spheres for youth leadership:

1) self-leadership (you)
2) team leadership (we) and
3) societal leadership (all).

To demonstrate the youth’s role in driving Sustainable Development, the programme encourages participants to collaborate & volunteer on meaningful community projects with an Asia-Europe twist. Based on the four ASEFYLS4 focus areas (SDG3, SDG4, SDG8 and SDG13), participants are allocated to specific working groups and work on “Leadership in Action” activities. In total, the ASEFYLS4 facilitates 15 community projects, each led by 1 ASEFYLS4 Navigator and supported by up to 10 participants from different Asian & European countries. See the list and outlines of all “Leadership in Action Projects” here.

About the Leadership in Action Project #10

The Adjustment Manual - Work from Home Edition

This challenges functions on two main levels that need to be addressed:
First, on an individual level with WFH professionals and the skills and techniques they need to help adapt better to this professional environment.
Second, on a more macro-level with mental health policy in these institutions. How can policies be developed to help address the needs of WFH professionals showing that mental health is a consideration and a priority in professional spaces?

Outline and Objectives

The project “The Adjustment Manual: Work from Home Edition” helps work from home individuals learn the essential skills and techniques to adapt better to new demands in the current scenario and to mitigate a potential negative impact on their mental health.

The project will work on two areas:

1) Designing and executing a series of skill-building workshops for resilience; and
2) Collating mental health policies from diverse institutions across ASEM to identify good practices and to develop recommendations.

The project team will plan and organise a Wellbeing Workshop Series that teaches participants key skills & mindsets to help navigate the WFH experience. The team will also develop a policy brief that outlines recommendations to institutions to help better WFH for these professionals in a more top-down approach.

Background

Mental health was an invisible consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The world observed a steep increase of mental health distress, specifically in work from home (WFH) professionals who struggled to adjust to these unique circumstances.

The loss of personal and professional spaces has had deep psychological ramifications with many people experiencing anxiety, depression, decreased focus and reported signs of compassion fatigue and burnout. These outcomes severely affected the efficiency and productivity of businesses.
Planned Activities

Creation & organisation of a Workshop Series on teaching skills, techniques & mindsets for the WFH environment

- Up to six activity and simulation-based workshops covering the three main themes to teach both practical tools and theoretical mindsets:
  1) On-Time: Communication over an Online Medium
  2) Off-Time: How to Stay Connected Online
  3) Self-Time: Mental Wellness
- Development of a community & support network for WFH professionals
- Follow up sessions/surveys to gauge impact of workshop lessons

Development of a Policy Recommendation Brief for WFH Institutions

- Literature review & research on the topic
- Survey & information gathering from WFH professionals and institutions

The majority of the above listed activities will be first implemented online, with the possibility to apply them on site in ASEM countries should human & financial resources and time allow.

Expected Results & Outcomes

Tangible

⇒ Training Manual (Adjustment Manual), based on resources shared by speakers in the workshop sessions
⇒ Policy Recommendation brief and any other relevant research materials/resources formed through the process.
⇒ Info materials of the project, including infographics, social media content, photos, videos and other visual materials as well as participants’ testimonies & feedback from the workshops

Intangible

Assessed through qualitative evaluation with target groups (participants engaged in workshops; institutions reached out to)

⇒ For WFH professionals
  - Reduced stress and improved wellbeing in a WFH environment.
  - Increased productivity and efficiency at work.
  - Better access to resources to continue good practices and develop skills.
  - Access to a support network and community

⇒ For WFH institutions
  - Increased awareness of the challenges of WFH and impact on mental health
  - Understanding of the importance of institutional support for mental health concerns.
  - Better WFH environments with more productive and efficient professionals
Project Team

India  Ms Prakriti Sharma, Recent Graduate, Symbiosis School for Liberal Arts (Project Lead)
Bangladesh  Mr Abdullah Ar Rafee, Deputy Manager (Programs & Projects), The Institute for Policy, Advocacy, and Governance (IPAG)
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Latvia  Mr Gustavs Upmanis, Founder, Youth platform "All Opportunities"
Myanmar  Ms Htet Maw, Community Project Assistant, International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Viet Nam  Ms Trang Nguyen, Student, University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City

Further Information

www.asef.org

4th ASEF Young Leaders Summit (ASEFYLS4)

Project on Instagram

Project on Facebook

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