Overview
Background

Rapid urbanisation is a defining global trend of the 21st century. Today, more than 55% of the world's population live in urban areas. It is expected that this number will increase to 68% by 2050. This development brings along various socioeconomic and environmental challenges for policy makers, urban planners and urban citizens: urban sprawl and higher urban costs, rising inequality and poverty, lack of urban investments in infrastructure, weak financial and governance capacities, increased environmental degradation, etc..

To tackle these complex and interconnected issues, collective action & collaboration across institutional silos and sectors as well as disruptive & bold ideas are needed. Here, the unique creativity and potential for innovation of youth can play a crucial catalyst role in driving sustainable urban change and accelerating the realisation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 11: “Making Cities and Human Settlements Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable”.

Project Overview

The 23rd ASEF Summer University (ASEFSU23) is a virtual Hackathon on “Liveable Cities for a Sustainable Future” and focuses on three of the most populated countries in ASEM: Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. Implemented between October and November 2021, the Hackathon invites students & young professionals (age 18-30) from the 51 ASEM countries to participate and to tackle one of three urban challenges, linking SDG11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) with other SDGs:

Bangladesh (SDG11, SDG12 & SDG13): Creating Clean Cities: Tackling Urban Waste Management

India (SDG3 & SDG11): Creating Healthy Cities: Addressing Obesity among Children

Pakistan (SDG4, SDG8 and SDG11): Creating Accessible Cities: Enhancing Urban Mobility

The Hackathon consists of 3 Phases:

Pre-Hack Phase (11-29 Oct 2021): Ideation, including challenge definition, knowledge building & stakeholder engagement

Hackathon Phase (3-15 Nov 2021) with Grand Finale (12-14 Nov 2021): Prototype Development with Experts Mentoring

Post-Hack (up to 3 months post-Hackathon; relevant for Hackathon Winners only): Hackathon winners have the possibility for mentoring sessions and prototype testing & possible implementation after the project.

Further information on the project:

Watch the Video Teaser.
Read more on the 23rd ASEF Summer University Webpage.

1 See United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Urbanization Prospects
2 See Final Declaration, 4th ASEM Meeting for Governors and Mayors (ASEM MGM4), 24-27 May 2017, Lisbon, Portugal
3 Hackathon Phases

Participants are required to actively take part in the Pre-Hack and Hackathon Phases, which include the following elements:

**Pre-Hack Phase (11-29 October 2021)**

*Ideation, including challenge definition, knowledge building & stakeholder engagement*

During this phase, participants will attend online sessions (e.g. webinars and lectures) on Sustainable Development, in particular SDG11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and complete individual tasks & team assignments to gain a strong thematic understanding on the topic. E-Learning modules on the topic and human-centred design thinking will complement this phase to support in-depth and self-paced learning. Participants have the opportunity to select additional learning modules and receive a micro-credential from the University College Cork (10 credits).

**Hackathon Phase (3-15 Nov 2021) with Grand Finale (12-14 Nov 2021)**

*Prototype Development with Experts Mentoring*

During this phase, participants will join

- Kick-off event on 3 Nov 2021
- Mentorship sessions, community engagements & team building sessions, when needed, between 4-11 Nov 2021
- Grand Finale to develop prototypes from 12-14 Nov 2021
- Presentation & pitching of solutions event on 14 Nov 2021
- Awards Ceremony on 15 Nov 2021

Participants will collaborate & compete in 12 teams, each consisting of 6-8 team members from different ASEM countries and led by a youth leader from either Bangladesh, India or Pakistan. Through a human-centred design thinking process, the teams will develop proposals (analogue and/or digital prototypes) that could solve specific urban challenges and contribute to liveable & sustainable metropolitan areas.

4 teams compete per country on the following challenges, as identified by the respective local ASEFSU23 partner organisations.

- **Bangladesh (SDG11, SDG12 & SDG13):** Creating Clean Cities: Tackling Urban Waste Management
- **India (SDG3 & SDG11):** Creating Healthy Cities: Addressing Obesity among Children
- **Pakistan (SDG4, SDG8 and SDG11):** Creating Accessible Cities: Enhancing Urban Mobility

Read more about the challenges here.

The most innovative solution per country will receive an award, which encompasses mentoring by tech companies for further development of the prototype developed during the Hackathon, certified training opportunities for digital leadership or digital perks.

**Post-Hack (up to 3 months post-Hackathon; relevant for Hackathon Winners only)**

Hackathon winners have the possibility for mentoring sessions and prototype testing & possible implementation after the project.

The Hackathon is preceded by a Train-the-Trainers programme (20-30 September 2021). 12 youth leaders from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, selected through an Open Call, will be trained in facilitation & team collaboration techniques as well as human-centred design thinking. The online training will equip them to lead the ASEFSU23 Hackathon teams, comprised of participants coming from the 51 ASEM countries.
Hackathon Timeline

**PRE-HACK PHASE (11-29 OCT 2021)**
*Challenge Identification, Knowledge Building & Stakeholder Engagement for Ideation*

- **MON, 11 OCT** Welcome & Introduction
- **TUE, 12 OCT** Hackathon Briefing
- **WED, 13 OCT** SDG11
- **THU, 14 OCT** Optional: Social Session
- **FRI, 15 OCT**

- **MON, 18 OCT** SDG11
- **TUE, 19 OCT** SDG11
- **WED, 20 OCT** Bangladesh
- **THU, 21 OCT** Optional: Social Session
- **FRI, 22 OCT**

- **MON, 25 OCT** India
- **TUE, 26 OCT** Pakistan
- **WED, 27 OCT** Closing & Wrap-up
- **THU, 28 OCT**
- **FRI, 29 OCT**

**HACKATHON PHASE (3-15 NOV 2021)**
**GRAND FINALE (12-14 NOV 2021)**
*Prototype Development with Experts Mentoring*

- **WED, 3 NOV** Kick-off Event
- **THU - THU, 4-11 NOV** Mentoring and Stakeholder Engagement – as needed
- **FRI, 12 NOV**
- **SAT, 13 NOV**
- **SUN, 14 NOV**
- **MON, 15 NOV**

- **Grand Finale – Development**
- **Pitching of Solutions**
- **Awards Presentation**

**POST-HACK PHASE (UP TO 3 MONTHS)**
*Prototype Testing*
Participants

ASEFSU23 connects young hackers, developers, programmers, designers, innovators, urban planners and SDG experts from 51 ASEM countries (age range is 18-30 years). Participants are selected through an Open Call for Application.

Organisers & Partners

The ASEFSU23 is a collaboration led by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in partnership with Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSS), Daffodil International University in Bangladesh, KREA University in India, Superior University in Pakistan, the ASEM Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning (ASEM LLL Hub), University College Cork (UCC) in Ireland, University of Glasgow in the United Kingdom, and the Centre for Sustainable, Healthy and Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods (SHLC).

Project Results & Learning Outcomes

- 12 Prototypes (analogue or digital) created by participants to solve specific urbanisation challenges in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan
- ASEFSU23 e-learning modules with multi-media materials on Sustainable Development Goal 11, ASEM and country specific learning materials with the option for participants to receive 10 ECTS from University College Cork (UCC), Ireland
- 86 participants equipped with certificates of participation, upon completion of the Pre-Hack phase and the Hackathon, conducted by ASEF, Higher Education institutions in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, as well as international leadership institutes
- Increased understanding and knowledge on Sustainable Development among participants, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 11, through non-formal and informal education & training opportunities
- Skills development and team building for participants, both on a technical and soft skill level
- Creation of an Asia-Europe youth network for future joint collaborations

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Yarns are a symbol of the cotton production and textile industry in South Asia which greatly contributed to its economy and opening up to the rest of the world. Along with this evolution, the region’s growing urbanisation has been a driving force, reshaping modern cities and societies.

Like a fabric with its distinct pattern, a city is a network of interdependencies and intertwined social interactions: a complex eco-system where every element is closely connected to each other. This intricate crisscross is a fragile equilibrium contingent on every thread which needs to be carefully sewn and integrated within the broader structure. To shape urban frameworks and images, urban policy makers and planners need intentionality and a comprehensive understanding of all its constituting elements. To weave and build liveable cities for a sustainable future, holistic and transformative visions are needed. Our ASEFSU23 participants will develop these for Bangladesh, India and Pakistan during the project.