



9th ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education

Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping: Working Towards the SDGs

PROJECT REPORT

BACKGROUND The ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARC) is the “Official Dialogue Partner of the ASEM Education Ministers Meeting (ASEMME)” and the only bi-regional multi-stakeholder dialogue platform for university and student leaders, policy makers and ministers to discuss higher education issues and shape the education landscape in Asia and Europe.

For the past 15 years, ARC has continuously evolved and contributed with various outputs (policy recommendations, research, and events) to the ASEM Education Process, and created opportunities for key Asian and European stakeholders to connect.

ABOUT THE TOPIC In December 2021 the ASEM Education 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” and adopted “sustainable development” as a horizontal priority of the ASEM Education Process.

In May 2022 at the World Higher Education Conference (WHEC) UNESCO presented a Roadmap titled “Beyond Limits – New Ways to Reinvent Higher Education”, which encourages higher education systems to build bridges and promote partnerships that put sustainability at the core. I

It was in accordance with this international context, that the 9th edition of ARC was initiated with the objective of better understanding the current state, policies and practices of promoting sustainable development in higher education and identifying areas where stakeholders could work better together.

To address this gap, ASEF decided to focus the ARC9 project on the topic of ‘Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping: Working Towards the SDGs’.

KEY FACTS

Period:
2022-2023

Format:
Online and Onsite in various ASEF counties

Participants:
*>327 participants including policymakers, university and student leaders
>189 consulted for policy recommendations
>47 speakers*

Audience reached:
*> 500+ dialogue participants reached in person and heard about ARC9
> 63,000+ reached online and through dissemination
> 3,400+ website visits*

KEY OBJECTIVES



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Facilitate the exchange of good practices and networking among policymakers, universities and student organisations in Asia and Europe



INFORM POLICY

Inform policies by collecting evidence and conducting policy dialogues with stakeholders of the 51 ASEM Partner Countries, the EU and ASEAN

PROGRAMME TIMELINE AND STRUCTURE

1 | RESEARCH PHASE

June 2022 to March 2023

The project started with collecting and mapping evidence on the topic across the ASEM countries, in order to lay the foundation for policy discussions. The following study was published:



ARC9 Report: “Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping: Working Towards the SDGs”

Authors: Dr Miguel Antonio Lim, Dr Icy Fresno Anabo, Dr Doria Abdullah, Dr Anumoni Joshi

Part 1: Mapping Policymakers Perspectives

Covering **31 national contexts** in Asia and Europe, the study maps how governments are encouraging HEIs to contribute to the SDGs, provides concrete examples of enabling measures, and identify opportunities that may be leveraged to strengthen the HE policy-practice interface towards the SDGs.

Part 2: Mapping Higher Education Institutional Perspectives

This study maps 240 institutional perspectives **from 42 countries** in Asia and Europe, showcasing how universities engage with the SDGs. The study was conducted in partnership with the [International Association of Universities \(IAU\)](#).

[Download the Report here](#), or watch the recording of the Launch of the ARC9 Study [here](#).

We thank the members of the **Advisory Board** for providing guidance and expert insights throughout the drafting process of this report:



Dr Hilligje van't Land and Ms Isabel Toman, International Association of Universities (IAU)



Dr Bruce Wilson, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT)



Dr Azirah Hashim and Dr Miandy Munusamy, Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya (UM)



Dr Wesley Teter, Senior Consultant, UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education



Dr Romyen Kosaikanont and Mr Philip Masterson, SEAMEO Regional Institute for Higher Education Development (RIHED)



Mr Luca Lantero, Head of the ASEM Education Secretariat (AES)

2 | DISSEMINATION AND DIALOGUE PHASE

March 2023 to March 2024

Policy Dialogue events and Policy Recommendations

Policy Dialogue Workshop with ASEAN+3 students and university leaders titled “Working Towards the SDGs: Mapping University and Student Perspectives in ASEAN”, 18 July 2023, Online

- Organised in partnership with the [ASEAN University Network \(AUN\)](#) and [Universitas Airlangga \(UNAIR\)](#)
- Policy recommendations emerging from the workshop are available [here](#).

Policy Dialogue Workshop with ASEM Policymakers titled “Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping: Working Towards the SDGs”, 27-29 September 2023, Rome, Italy

- Co-organised by ASEF and the [European Higher Education Area \(EHEA\) Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue \(CG GPD\)](#), in partnership with the [ASEM Education Secretariat](#) and [Associazione CIMEA](#) through the [IN-GLOBAL Project](#)
- Policy recommendations emerging from the workshop are available [here](#).



Policy Dialogue with Student and Youth Leaders titled “Asia-Europe Higher Education Mapping: Working Towards the SDGs”, 2-5 November 2023

- Organised in Partnership with the [ASEAN Youth Organisation \(AYO\)](#)
- Policy recommendations emerging from the workshop are available [here](#).



Dissemination Events

- **In partnership with International Association of Universities (IAU):** IAU 16th General Conference 2022 titled “Relevance and Value of Universities to Future Society”, 25-28 October 2022, Dublin, Ireland
- **ARC9 Roundtable Discussion** titled “How do Higher Education Policies and Higher Education Institutions (HEI) across Asia and Europe engage with the SDGs?”, 22 November 2022, Online
- **In partnership with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Regional Institute for Higher Education Development (RIHED):** 2022 Inter-Regional Research Symposium titled “Sustainable Learning in Higher Education: Towards Sustainable Development”, 23-25 November 2022, Asia Hotel Bangkok, Thailand
- **In Partnership with British Council:** Going Global Asia-Pacific 2022 Conference titled “International Education in the UK and Asia Pacific region: How to pursue equity in an inequitable world”, 28 November – 1 December 2022, Singapore
- **ARC9 Study Launch and Webinar** titled “How do Higher Education Policies and HEI Practices across Asia and Europe contribute to the SDGs?”, 10 March 2023, Online
- **Asia Pacific Association of International Education (APAIE) 2023 Conference**, 13-17 March 2023, Bangkok, Thailand
- **In partnership with ASEAN University Network (AUN):** 6th ASEAN+3 Rectors’ Conference on “Future and Potentials of University-Industry Collaboration”, 20-21 September 2023, Surabaya, Indonesia



INFORMING POLICYMAKERS

ASEM Education Intermediate Senior Officials’ Meeting (ISOM)

Over 40 Education Senior Officials and Stakeholders met from Asia and Europe between 24-25 November 2022 in Malta to attend the Intermediate Senior Officials’ Meeting (ISOM) for the first time since Covid-19.

The meeting was organised under the theme “Implementation of the ASEM Education Strategy and Vision 2030” and ASEF was invited to conduct a workshop with policymakers to discuss the preliminary findings of the ARC9 Report. Learn more about the event and the presentation [here](#).

9th ASEM Education Ministers’ Meeting (ASEMME9)

ASEF participated in the 9th ASEM Education Ministers’ Meeting (ASEMME9) held on 25-26 January 2024 in Malta. Prior to this, the 2nd Senior Officials Meeting (SOM2) was also held. Both meetings were co-organised by

the [ASEM Education Secretariat](#), the [Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research, and Innovation](#), and the [Malta Further & Higher Education Authority \(MFHEA\)](#).

The ASEFEdu team presented the outcomes of the ARC9 project. **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.

“ The Ministers “recognised the organisation of three ARC9 Policy Dialogues in 2023 inviting policymakers, student and university leaders, and expressed appreciation for the tangible and intangible outcomes of the events, in particular the ARC9 Policy Recommendations by stakeholders. **The Ministers encouraged Senior Officials to explore and discuss the recommendations further, and ASEF to continue doing research on the ASEM Education Priority topics across the partner countries and organising policy dialogues to discuss the findings, exchange knowledge and good practices, as well as to support the work of the ASEM Expert Groups.**”

The [ARC9 Policy Recommendations](#) were also included as annex to the [ASEMME9 Chair's Conclusions](#).

KEY OUTCOMES



31 National Contexts

Studied in the policy research



240 Universities

Surveyed and provided insights



327 Dialogue Participants

Consulted online and offline



500+ Academics and Experts

Learned about the research results through the dissemination



63,000+ Reached

On Social media with different messages



100% Learned

has a better understanding of efforts to integrate SDGs in higher education



94% Got New Ideas

on working towards the SDGs that they will apply in the future



88% Wants to Take Action

and apply new ideas to work towards the SDGs



FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS



Participating in the ASEF Policy Dialogue with Youth was a truly excellent experience, providing invaluable insights into the concerted efforts to integrate the SDGs in higher education across Asia and Europe. The event not only deepened my understanding of how SDGs are localised within the educational landscape of these regions but also shed light on the challenges faced by policymakers, university officials, and youth organizations in advancing SDG-related initiatives.

Ms Merlina Dewi Khaerun Nisa
Student Representative for the SDGs Centre
Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia



Exploring the similarities and differences in higher education between Southeast Asia and Europe was both enjoyable and exciting. Despite the constraints of time, we engaged in meaningful discussions, fostering connections and delving into issues, challenges, opportunities, and thoughts related to higher education and development. I would gladly participate in such dialogues again if given the chance.

Mr Yee Teng Low
Regional Representative
AIMS Alumni Network, Thailand



The dialogues themselves focused on the reports and they helped us get more understanding in an active discussion among the representatives towards the efforts contributing to the SDGs in higher education.

Participating Policymaker
Policy Dialogue Workshop with ASEM
Policymakers



The dialogue allowed me to know the policies related to SDGs in each university, the constraints and problems, and solutions that have been taken. It was a good medium for benchmarking and understanding the best practices of programs that are in accordance with the conditions of each country and university.

Participating University Manager
Policy Dialogue Workshop with ASEAN+3 Students
and University Leaders

PARTNERS

Success of ARC9's activities is made possible with the support of these partner organisations:



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