



10th ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education

[Un]debated Ways of Rethinking Higher Education

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 16 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.

In this report, the achievements in 2024 - the first year of this biennial project - are featured.

ABOUT THE TOPIC In January 2024 the 9th ASEM Education Ministers Meeting underlined the importance of working towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the SDG4. The Ministers supported continued cooperation and dialogue as well as knowledge and people-to-people exchange between Asia and Europe, and ASEF was “encouraged to continue doing research on the ASEM Education Priority topics.”

In this capacity, ASEF designed the 10th edition of ARC around the future of higher education in Asia and Europe. To address current trends and upcoming global challenges, ARC10’s work encompasses interactive webinars, capacity building activities, and policy dialogues towards an output focused on the theme “[Un]debated Ways of Rethinking Higher Education”.

KEY FACTS 2024

PERIOD:
2024-2026 (ongoing)

FORMAT:
Online and Onsite in Thailand

PARTICIPANTS:
661 registered event participants
19 speakers including policymakers, university and student leaders

AUDIENCE REACHED:
228,000+ reached on social media
6,270 website visits
1310 reached onsite

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 | DEBATE WEBINAR SERIES

October to November 2024, Online

As the starting point for this initiative, we hosted the ARC10 Debate Webinar Series from October to December 2024. With each session focusing on key themes such as Digital Transformation, Access and Equity, and Recognition and Balanced Mobility, we gathered experts from all over Asia and Europe to join us in incisive discussions on the future of higher education in these areas. Each webinar had a Moderator who set the stage by providing the status quo contextualising the debate prompt of the session.

Session 1: Rethinking Digital Transformation, 15 October 2024

Will teaching and learning benefit from AI in the next decade?

Yes

Prof Dr Blaženka DIVJAK

Head of Learning Analytics Laboratory
Faculty of Organisation and Informatics
University of Zagreb, Croatia
Former Minister of Science and Education of Croatia



Ms Fatima AURANGZEB

Founder, Women in Computer Science,
Pakistan



No

Mr Ron SALAJ

Member, Expert Group on AI in Education of the
Council of Europe; and
MA Coordinator, "ICT for Development and Social
Good" Programme, ImpactSkills & University of Turin
Italy



Prof Wen WEN

Director, Division of Higher Education
Institute of Education, Tsinghua University
China



MODERATOR

Dr Wayne HOLMES

Professor of Critical Studies of Artificial Intelligence and Education, University College London, United Kingdom

Session 2: Rethinking Equity & Access, 07 November 2024

Who has more responsibility in making higher education more equitable and accessible: **universities** or **policymakers**?

universities

Prof Verity FIRTH AM

Vice President for Societal Impact, Equity and
Engagement, University of New South Wales
Australia



Dr Huw MORRIS

Honorary Professor of Tertiary Education
Institute of Education, University College London
United Kingdom



policymakers

Dr Edizon FERMIN

Vice President for Academic Affairs
The National Teachers College
Philippines



Ms Lisa SCHIVALOCCHI

Executive Committee Member
European Students Union



MODERATOR

Dr Graeme ATHERTON

Director, National Education Opportunities Network, United Kingdom
Head of the Ruskin Institute for Social Equity (RISE), Ruskin College Oxford

Session 3: Rethinking Recognition & Balanced Mobility, 05 December 2024

In ensuring balanced mobility of people and knowledge, does transnational education (TNE) bring more **opportunities or **risks**?**

more opportunities

Atty Ron SALO
Congressman, KABAYAN Partylist
House of Representatives
Philippines



Prof Rozilini FERNANDEZ-CHUNG
Associate Professor & Executive Director, Faculty of
Social Sciences, University of Nottingham
Malaysia



MODERATOR
Dr Wesley Teter
Research Fellow, University of Tokyo, Japan

more risks

Mr Luca LANTERO
President, Lisbon Recognition Convention; and
Director General, Academic Equivalence
Mobility Information Center (CIMEA)
Italy



Ms Elana WONG
Coordinator, Civil Society Action Committee & GFMD
Civil Society Mechanism, International Catholic
Migration Commission



Read our report from the webinars with their recordings available [here](#).

2 | POLICY DIALOGUE SESSIONS

19-22 November 2024, Bangkok, Thailand

The onsite part of ARC10's Year 1 took part in Bangkok, Thailand in conjunction with two back-to-back events:

ASEM Education Intermediate Senior Officials' Meeting (ISOM)

18-19 November 2024

Over 50 senior officials and stakeholders from Asia and Europe attended the ASEM Education ISOM organised by the [ASEM Education Secretariat](#) on 18-19 November 2024. Guided by the theme "Navigating the Digital Age: Lifelong Learning and Future Skills for a Hybrid World," this two-day meeting was co-organised and hosted by Thailand's [Ministry of Education](#) and [Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation \(MHESI\)](#).



Prof Graeme ATHERTON
Head, Ruskin Institute for Social Equity (RISE),
Ruskin College Oxford; Director, National
Education Opportunities Network (NEON)
United Kingdom



Dr Romyen KOSAIKANONT
Centre Director, Southeast Asian Ministers of
Education Organisation (SEAMEO) - Regional
Centre for Higher Education and Development
(RIHED)



Ms Ana GVRITISHVILI
Former Executive Committee Member European
Students' Union (ESU); Steering Committee
Member, Global Student Forum

We hosted the ARC10 Policy Dialogue Workshop titled "**Campus to Career: Redefining Equity, Access & Success in Higher Education in the Digital Age**" on 19 November 2024 as part of the parallel sessions hosted at the ISOM. Our expert speakers from various organisational backgrounds and contexts fuelled an insightful discussion on how fostering inclusive education looks like in the two regions.

Read more about our session [here](#)!

A key highlight of our participation is the confirmation of ASEF as the third **Co-chair of the Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals and Education**. In this capacity, we aim to contribute to the EG's on-going work and expand it to tackle access, equity, and success in higher education to promote SDG4 on Quality Education.

SEAMEO RIHED 2024 Inter-Regional Research Symposium (IRRS) 20-22 November 2024

Between 20-22 November 2024, more than 200 university leaders, researchers, policymakers and NGO stakeholders attended the [2024 Inter-Regional Research Symposium](#) hosted by the [Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization – Regional Centre for Higher Education Development](#) (SEAMEO RIHED). The three-day Symposium carried the theme “Transforming Higher Education: Towards Sustainable Development”.



Prof Wayne HOLMES
Professor of Critical Studies of Artificial Intelligence and Education, University College London, United Kingdom

As a proud member of the organising committee, ASEF made strong contributions to the programme, chief among them sponsoring an engaging, spirited panel discussion and moderating one of their parallel sessions on micro-credentials.



Prof Dr Blaženka DIVJAK
Head of Learning Analytics Laboratory, Faculty of Organisation and Informatics, University of Zagreb, Croatia

On the opening day, ASEF presented a panel discussion themed “**Digital Transformation: Will Teaching and Learning Benefit from Artificial Intelligence in the Next Decade?**” The session, moderated by Ms Reka TOZSA, our Director for Education, featured experts representing various perspectives on the topic of technology in education.



Ms Saedah HASNAL
Lead Organiser, Women Techmakers Brunei Brunei Darussalam

Read more about our session [here](#)!



← KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Support to the ASEM Education Process
as the ASEMME Official Dialogue Partner



661 Registered Participants
of the Debate Webinar Series



19 Academics and Thought Leaders
provided their insights on current trends



97% Want to Learn More
on session topics after attending



228,000+ Reached
on social media with different messages



100% Gained Better Insights
as a result of webinar participation

← PARTICIPATION IN POLICY EVENTS

Part of our work in the ARC10 Project is to contribute to the strengthening of the higher education ecosystem in Asia and Europe. This year, we participated in key events where we shared our work, sustained connections, built our network, and supported intellectual exchanges and discourse on key higher education topics.



← FUTURE PLANS

2025: Year 2: Capacity Building and Dialogue Events | March-October 2025 | Online and Onsite

Based on the outputs of 2024, ARC10 activities in 2025 will primarily focus on a series of policy dialogues to bring the ARC10 report consisting of the thematic papers closer to ASEF's partners and stakeholders.

We aim to build on partnerships with key global players such as WAHEN, SEAMEO RIHED, the ASEM Education Secretariat, and the EG on the SDGs and Education guided by ARC10's themes.

Through these policy dialogues, we will work in close collaboration with the ASEM Education Process Expert Groups and Stakeholders and gather policy recommendations with the aim of forwarding these to the ASEM Education Ministers.

2026: Project Closing: Inputs to the 10th ASEM Education Ministers Meeting | Mid-2026

ARC, as the Official Dialogue Partner of the ASEMME, will present its collection of policy recommendations based on our work from 2024-2025. These recommendations will include highlights of the Debate Webinar Series narrative reports and results of the capacity-building and dialogue events with our partners. We will present these at ASEMME10 for the Ministers' consideration and guidance of the policymakers across Asia and Europe.

← PARTNERS

This project is implemented by:



Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

ASEF is an intergovernmental not-for-profit organisation located in Singapore. Founded in 1997, it is the only institution of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). ASEF promotes understanding, strengthens relationships and facilitates cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe. ASEF enhances dialogue, enables exchanges and encourages collaboration across the thematic areas of culture, education, governance, sustainable development, economy, public health and media. For more information, please visit <https://asef.org/>.

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