

PROJECT REPORT

► Executive Summary

This year, the [ASEF Higher Education Innovation Laboratory \(ASEFInnoLab6\)](#) placed the spotlight on the critical role that universities play in developing skills for an AI-powered future. As the project's biggest year to date, ASEFInnoLab6 welcomed **200+ participants from 39 countries** in its online phase and more than **70 participants, 34 expert speakers and facilitators, and 24 resource persons of varying roles** across in-person events in China, the Philippines, and Slovakia—all coming from **34 countries** through a vast network of partners and sponsors.

Lasting 11 weeks in total, the **Online Learning and Collaboration Phase** ran from May to July 2025. Our participants gained insights and knowledge on the theme during the four-week Self-Learning Phase, and the seven-week Team Learning Phase where they grouped up to work on either micro-credential programmes or academic papers.

Outstanding teams working on promising outputs were invited to join one in-person event:

- **ASEFInnoLab6 Conference in Shanghai, China** in partnership with [Fudan University](#) on 14-17 October 2025
- **ASEFInnoLab6 Conference in Manila, Philippines** in partnership with [De La Salle University](#) on 3-7 November 2025
- **ASEFInnoLab6 Conference in Košice, Slovakia** in partnership with [Pavol Jozef Šafárik University](#) on 2-5 December 2025

Outstanding **academic papers** will get the chance to be published in a book of conference proceedings as part of [Springer Nature's Lecture Notes in Educational Technology](#). Teams with promising **micro-credential programmes** will be closely guided towards a clear roadmap for testing and running their course towards full implementation.

► Key Highlights

Based on feedback data available to date, we are closing strong with all of the project's target outcomes achieved:



Learn

98% said they **acquired new knowledge** and learnings from the programme



Network

99% have embarked on a **new prospect for collaboration** by joining or confirming their membership in the Asia-Europe for AI (AE4AI) Network, our dedicated community of practice



Collab

17 academic papers with the possibility of publication under Springer and **7 micro-credential programmes** under development

In addition to the foregoing, we have completed major programme components and activities for which we received excellent feedback from participants, resource persons, and partners:



Sustained **long-time partnerships**, built on synergies with the **ASEM EG on Digitalisation and AI**, and embarked on new collaborations



300+ academics, experts, professionals, policymakers engaged in various capacities throughout a single edition



Engaged participants, resource persons, and partners from **41** Asian and European countries for the entire programme

- ✓ **98%** were **satisfied** with their experience
- ✓ **98%** confirmed their intention to **stay in touch** with contacts they made
- ✓ **72%** heard of and engaged with **ASEF for the first time** through this edition

► Activities

Online Learning and Collaboration: May to July 2025



The project **welcomed 212 participants from 39 countries** in the **11-week long** online learning and collaboration phase from 14 May to 23 July.

At the **Self-Learning Phase**, experts shared their thoughts and insights on key trends and developments related to skills needed to thrive in this AI Era.

During the **Team Learning Phase**, **25 multidisciplinary groups were formed** to pursue either an academic paper or a micro-credential programme. During this phase, their work was supported by the ASEFEdu team alongside our Strategic Advisor and Expert Facilitators. From the 22 successful teams, **73 outstanding participants** were invited to join one of three in-person events hosted by Fudan University, De La Salle University, and Pavol Jozef Šafárik University.

We are proud to have launched ASEFinnoLab6 with the strong support of our implementing partners, as well as our supporting partners the [ASEM Education Secretariat](#), [German Academic Exchange Service \(DAAD\)](#), [European Training Foundation](#), [European Students' Union](#), [NetMission.Asia](#), and the [Asia-Europe for Artificial Intelligence \(AE4AI\) Network](#).

Read more about the Online Learning and Collaboration Phase [here](#).

Conference Series: October to December 2025

We were delighted to co-organise this impactful series of in-person events with our implementing partners, represented by longtime collaborators and alumni who brought with them their own networks of active partners and generous sponsors.

ASEFInnoLab6 in Shanghai

7 teams + papers
33 participants and speakers from
19 countries



ASEFInnoLab6 in Manila

7 teams + micro-credential programmes
36 participants and speakers from
23 countries

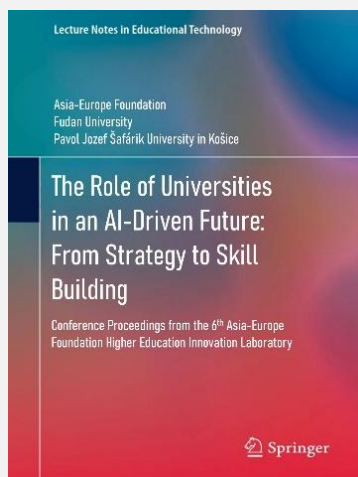
ASEFInnoLab6 in Košice

8 teams + papers
46 participants and speakers from
21 countries, including
7 Representatives of the ASEM Expert Group on Digitalisation & AI



These conferences formed a cross-regional journey for our participants that translated dialogue into action on universities' role in developing skills for an AI-powered future. Through these events we convened academics, policymakers, and practitioners from Asia and Europe to learn more about AI-driven skills needs, co-create micro-credential programmes, and advance research grounded in ethics, inclusion, and the common good.

After the conclusion of the conferences, we are looking forward to the teams' final micro-credential programmes and academic papers.



UPCOMING PUBLICATION

The Role of Universities in an AI-Driven Future: From Strategy to Skill Building

We are partnering with Springer — through the support of Beijing Normal University — to publish an open-access book under its [Lecture Notes in Educational Technology](#) series, which will showcase the best academic papers produced by this edition.

This book will offer a comprehensive collection of insights and research findings from ASEFInnoLab6, focusing on the pivotal role of universities in cultivating skills for an AI-powered future. The proceedings encompass strategic frameworks, curriculum innovations, ethical considerations, and collaborative approaches that higher education institutions are adopting or could adopt to

navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by AI. By bringing together diverse perspectives from Asia and Europe, this volume serves as a valuable resource for educators, policymakers, and researchers dedicated to advancing AI integration in higher education.

► Visibility and Communications

ASEFInnoLab6 has enjoyed good visibility and wide reach, thanks to its active partners and enthusiastic participants. Social media posts are regularly uploaded, especially during conference weeks, and linked to project update articles on the ASEF website with more details on component activities and outputs.

Participants freely shared these updates and worked with their home institutions and organisations in contributing to ASEFInnoLab5's visibility by producing news releases of their own.

Here are key communications stats from our own platforms:



Below are just a few of the pages and articles shared by our partners.

- [Fudan University](#)
- [University of Pavol Josef Safarik](#)
- [ASEM Education Secretariat](#)

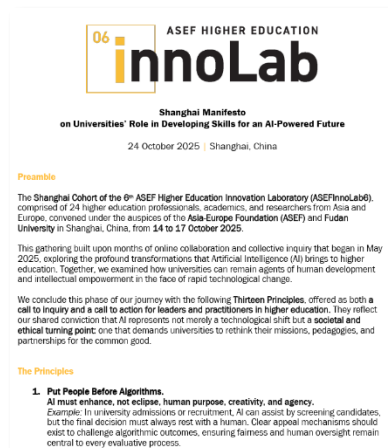
In addition to news releases, partners and participants have shared numerous posts on their engagement in the project. Some of these highlight collaboration milestones we had with partners, share learnings our participants gathered from the programme, announce partnerships born from connections our alumni made, or simply acknowledge the impact and value that ASEFInnoLab has had in their professional lives.

These posts can be found across major social media channels: [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter/X](#).



► Future Plans

The Shanghai and Košice Manifestos



Born from rich exchanges during our onsite events, the Shanghai and Kosice cohorts embarked on the development of two manifestos. Each serve as call for action for university leadership on two different but complementary areas:

- **Shanghai Manifesto.** This document calls on universities to put people before algorithms, ensuring that technology enhances, rather than diminishes, human agency, creativity, and critical thinking. Read the final version [here](#).
- **Košice Manifesto.** Currently undergoing development, it focuses on principles and priorities for making HEIs as enablers of smart AI dissemination for an inclusive, ethical, and future-ready society.

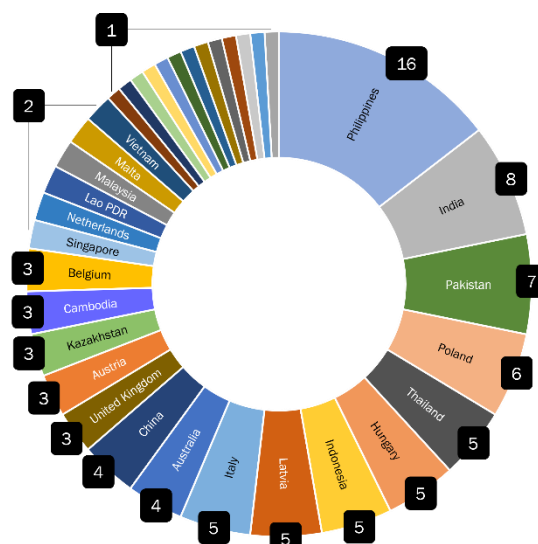
The Growing AE4AI Network

Earlier this year, we successfully held the network's first General Assembly attended by almost 50 of its active members. As of last year's record, our community is comprised of 110 members from 35 countries:

Our biggest working group to date is the AI in Education WG, with 61 members. The working groups on AI Governance and AI for Sustainable Development also enjoy active participation, as members can sign up for more than one group—and propose their own.

Following another successful edition, we are looking at the onboarding of **more than 160 alumni** of the ASEFInnoLab6 programme into the AE4AI Network.

Steps Forward and Future Plans



Project Closing and Outputs. Teams are finalising their micro-credential programmes and academic papers based on feedback and insights from the onsite events, with a focus on feasibility and academic rigour. For the academic papers that make it through the review process, the ASEFInnoLab6 Book of Conference Proceedings under Springer will be released in May 2026.

ASEFInnoLab7. Preparations for the next edition have already begun with discussions with possible hosts currently on-going. We envision the seventh edition to focus on Universities' Role in AI for the Common Good. We will be holding events in collaboration with key partners in Asia and Europe and continue to synergise our work with the ASEM Education EG on Digitalisation.

Need More Information?

If you are interested in reading more about this edition, below are some links to our materials:

Our [Project Page](#)

ASEFInnoLab6 Conference in Shanghai, China:

- [Programme of Activities](#)
- [Participants Booklet](#)

ASEFInnoLab6 Conference in Manila, Philippines:

- [Programme of Activities](#)
- [Participants Booklet](#)

ASEFInnoLab6 Conference in Košice, Slovakia:

- [Programme of Activities](#)
- [Participants Booklet](#)



Implementing Partners



The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

ASEF is an intergovernmental not-for-profit organisation located in Singapore. Founded in 1997, 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/>.



Fudan University (FDU)

Fudan University is a major public research university in Shanghai, People's Republic of China. Founded in 1905, today it is widely considered as one of the most prestigious and selective universities in the country. The QS University Rankings 2021 ranked Fudan as the 7th most reputable university in Asia, while it is classified as a Double First Class University by the Ministry of Education in China. Fudan also actively incubates high-tech industries and encourages them to convert knowledge to power. In return, the multi-pattern development of the high-tech industries helps the University to industrialize the research outcomes. For more information, please visit <https://www.fudan.edu.cn/en>.



De La Salle University (DLSU)

De La Salle University in Manila, Philippines is a Catholic coeducational institution founded in 1911 by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. It is a hub for higher education training renowned for its academic excellence, prolific and relevant research, and involved community service. For more information, please visit <https://www.dlsu.edu.ph/>.



Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice (UPJS)

Pavol Jozef Šafárik University was established in 1959 as the second classical university in Slovakia. The current structure of the institution includes five faculties: the Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Public Administration, and Faculty of Arts. It provides education in three main cycles – bachelor's, master's, doctor's and PhD studies in different fields. Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice provides higher education based on the newest scientific findings in a wide international context and cooperates very closely with academic institutions all around the world. For more information, please visit <https://www.upjs.sk/en/>.

Supporting Partners



The ASEM Education Secretariat (AES)

The AES was created by the ASEM Ministers of Education (ASEMME) in 2009 with the purpose of ensuring effective coordination of ASEM Education Process initiatives and activities. The Secretariat is hosted on a rotating basis, in which countries in Asia and Europe take turns to host on a voluntary basis. The current secretariat is hosted by Italy until end 2026. For more information, please visit <https://asem-education.org/>.



German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

DAAD is a registered association comprised of German institutions of higher education and student bodies. It supports the internationalisation of German universities, promotes German studies and the German language abroad, supports countries in the Global South in building and improving their higher education systems and advises decision makers on education, foreign science and development policy. For more information, please visit <https://www.daad.de/en/>.



European Students' Union (ESU)

The European Students' Union (ESU) is the umbrella organisation of 44 National Unions of Students from 40 countries. ESU aims to represent and promote the educational, social, economic and cultural interests of students at the European level towards all relevant bodies and in particular the European Union, Bologna Follow Up Group, Council of Europe and UNESCO. Through its members, ESU represents almost 20 million students in Europe. For more information, please visit: <https://esu-online.org/>.



Asia-Europe for Artificial Intelligence (AE4AI) Network

The AE4AI Network was established by 20 academics and university managers from Asia and Europe in 2023 with the intent to enhance universities' role in AI innovation ecosystems and together pursue collaboration and actions on AI Governance, AI in Education, and AI for Sustainable Development. For more information, please visit <https://asef.org/projects/asia-europe-for-artificial-intelligence-ae4ai-network/>.



European Training Foundation (ETF)

The European Training Foundation is a specialised agency of the European Union (EU), established in 1994 to contribute to the development of education, training, and labour market systems in the neighbouring regions and countries surrounding the EU. The ETF's mission is to assist these countries in developing their human capital, thereby supporting socio-economic development, competitiveness, and social inclusion. Its strategic focus is on fostering lifelong learning and human capital development, aligning with the EU's broader objectives of promoting sustainable economic growth, social cohesion, innovation, and union of skills. For more information, please visit <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en>.



Asia Pacific Policy Observatory (APPO)

The Asia Pacific Policy Observatory is a digital-native think tank offering insights into the governance of the Internet and evolving technologies, including AI. With a network of budding policy analysts across Asia and the Pacific, APPO equips young leaders with the necessary skills to engage more meaningfully in the multistakeholder discourse while making the development of digital policy discussions more accessible and comprehensible to all. APPO is part of NetMission.Asia's many digital governance capacity-development programmes for university students and youth. For more information, visit <https://netmission.asia/asia-pacific-policy-observatory/>.

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Flags represent countries that contributed to ASEF's General Pool for the previous year, as of 11 July 2025