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PRESS RELEASE

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EVENT DATE & LOCATION

23 – 26 November 2026
United Nations University Institute in Macau (UNU Macau)
Macau SAR, China

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First ASEF Education Next (ASEF NextEd) Conference to Deliver Whitepapers on "Re-imagining the Future of Teacher Education in the Age of AI"

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), in collaboration with the United Nations University Institute in Macau (UNU Macau) and the Digital Education Futures Initiative (DEFI) at Hughes Hall, University of Cambridge, will bring together 40+ education leaders, researchers and teacher educators from across Asia and Europe in Macau SAR, China, from 23–27 November 2026 for the 1st Asia-Europe Education Next Fellowship (ASEFNextEd1) Conference. Under the theme "Re-thinking Intelligence: The Future of Teacher Education", the conference will explore how teacher education must evolve in response to Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital transformation and concomitant societal challenges, while strengthening human agency, professional judgement and ethical leadership in education.

As AI impacts how knowledge is created and applied, ASEFNextEd1 asks a fundamental question: **how can teacher education prepare educators for a world where intelligence is increasingly shared between humans and machines?** Bringing together perspectives from Asia and Europe, the conference will examine the future of teaching, learning and educational leadership, placing human agency and professional judgement at the centre of technological change.

The conference is a culmination of ASEF's inaugural eight-month Education Next Fellowship, which brings together 40+ education leaders and Fellows from across Asia and Europe, **including Fellows from the National Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technological University (NTU)**. Since its launch at the University of Cambridge in April 2026, participants have engaged in cross-regional dialogue and collaborative inquiry, working in **eight international teams to develop whitepapers on the future of teacher education.** In Macau, Fellows will present and review their eight whitepapers through a dedicated Whitepaper Review Studio and an Asia-Europe roundtable, refining recommendations for education policy, research and institutional practice.

The programme will feature contributions from education leaders and researchers, as well as global experts including Professor Jeremy KNOX (University of Oxford), Professor Wayne HOLMES (University College London), Dr Kevin MARTIN (DEFI, University of Cambridge) and Professor Seng Chee TAN (NIE).

Through keynote lectures, workshops and policy simulations, participants will explore the future of teacher education and human–AI collaboration. The conference will **strengthen Asia-Europe cooperation and produce practical recommendations** for ethical, inclusive and human-centred teacher education.

ASEF welcomes journalists who are interested in the topic and featuring participants of the conference. Please contact com@asef.org for inquiries.

About the Asia-Europe Foundation

ASEF is an inter-governmental 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 peoples, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe. ASEF has run more than 280 projects, mainly seminars, workshops and lectures, together with over 230 partner organisations. www.asef.org

About the Asia-Europe Meeting

ASEM is an inter-governmental process established in 1996 to foster dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe. ASEM addresses political, economic, financial, social, cultural and educational issues of common interest, in a spirit of mutual respect and equal partnership. It comprises 53 partners: 21 Asian and 30 European countries, the ASEAN Secretariat and the EU. www.ASEMinfoboard.org

About the Asia-Europe Education Next Fellowship (ASEFNextEd)

The Asia-Europe Education Next Fellowship (ASEFNextEd) is an international educational leadership initiative of the Asia-Europe Foundation that brings together academics, researchers, teacher educators and education leaders from Asia and Europe to explore the future of education. Through peer learning, collaborative inquiry, cross-regional partnerships and policy-relevant knowledge co-creation, the Fellowship strengthens educational leadership and supports future-oriented transformation of teacher education. Its inaugural edition, ASEFNextEd1 (2026), focuses on "Re-thinking Intelligence: The Future of Teacher Education", examining how AI, digitalisation and sustainability are redefining intelligence, human agency and professional responsibility in education. For more information, please visit: https://asef.org/projects/1st-asia-europe-education-next-fellowship-nexted1/

About United Nations University Institute in Macau (UNU Macau)

The United Nations University International Institute in Macau (UNU Macau) is a global think tank dedicated to research, training and education on digital technologies for sustainable development. It promotes evidence-based actions and policies to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Part of the UN family and being one of the 13 institutes and units of the United Nations University (UNU), UNU Macau works collaboratively to explore how digital technologies can be leveraged for sustainable development, addressing key issues expressed in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Established in 1992, UNU Macau stands out as the only institute among the UNU institutes focusing on the intersection of digital technologies and sustainable development. For more information, please visit: https://unu.edu/macau.

Digital Education Futures Initiative (DEFI) at Hughes Hall, University of Cambridge

Digital Education Futures Initiative (DEFI) is a global research and development hub based at Hughes Hall, University of Cambridge, dedicated to exploring and shaping the future of education in an era of rapid technological change. DEFI brings together educators, researchers, policymakers, and innovators to examine how emerging technologies can support meaningful, inclusive, and human-centred educational transformation. Through interdisciplinary research, dialogue, and innovation labs, DEFI supports evidence-informed decision-making and professional learning to help education systems navigate complexity and design future-ready models of teaching, learning, and assessment. For more information, please visit: https://www.deficambridge.org/.