

Flexible Learning Pathways: Asia-Europe Conference on Lifelong Learning and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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CONFERENCE REPORT



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INTRODUCTION

By Professor Arne CARLSEN, former Director of UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning, former Chair of the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub

Organised by Asia-Europe Foundation, the Ministry of Education and Training of Viet Nam, Hanoi Open University, and supported by Hanns Seidel Stiftung, this conference has taken the discussion on how to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030 several steps forward in the area of higher education. It took its starting point in an analysis of the role of universities in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular in Sustainable Development Goal 4 “To ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. A new, holistic lifelong learning culture in higher education is being developed, with a focus on the role of universities in providing access to lifelong learning by making qualifications and degree structures more flexible.

There are several strategies for universities to make flexible learning pathways to lifelong learning. At this conference was discussed three strategies. Flexibilisation of degrees through recognition of non-formal and informal learning in relation to credits within degree programmes. Flexibilisation of curricula and learning content to meet the needs of non-traditional learners in their different life contexts. And flexibilisation of methodology and learning design by offering self-organised learning programmes, adopting learner-centred pedagogy supported by ICT and open educational resources.

Universities and governments can certainly cooperate in creating lifelong learning strategies and integrate lifelong learning policymaking with sustainable development strategies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

There are already innovative practices in university lifelong learning policymaking in a number of countries. Some countries have introduced advanced assessment processes for recognition of non-formal and informal learning, with universities giving credits in relation to bachelor and master programmes. Others have established professional bachelor and master programmes that recognize practice and experience. And some make

extensive use of internships. There are also countries that have established a National Research Fund in Lifelong Learning for innovative partnerships between universities and stakeholders outside of universities. And there are examples of Learning Cities, that promote inclusive sustainable urban development through lifelong learning, with local universities in a leading role.

Countries need to make their education systems more flexible and enable education institutions to provide flexible learning programmes for all, in a lifelong and life-wide learning journey.

All age groups, including adults, should have opportunities to learn and to continue learning. Beginning at birth, lifelong learning for all, in all settings and at all levels of education, should be embedded in education systems through institutional strategies and policies, adequately resourced programmes, and robust partnerships at the local, regional, national and international levels. This requires the provision of multiple and flexible learning pathways and entry points and re-entry points at all ages and all educational levels, strengthened links between formal and non-formal structures, and recognition, validation and accreditation of the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through nonformal and informal education. Lifelong learning also includes equitable and increased access to quality technical and vocational education and training and to higher education and research, with due attention to relevant quality assurance.

The Education 2030 Framework for Action, that guides the implementation of SDG4 states that Technical and Vocational Education and Training, including universities as well as adult learning, education and training, are important elements of lifelong learning. Promoting lifelong learning requires a sector-wide approach that encompasses formal, non-formal and informal learning for people of all ages, and specifically adult learning, education and training opportunities. It is necessary to provide opportunities for equitable access to university

for older adults, paying particular attention to vulnerable groups.

The conference agreed that the most innovative practices are linking lifelong learning policy development to the SDG's, and not only to SDG 4, but in an inter-sectoral approach to all 17 SDGs. It was suggested for countries to adopt an Act on Lifelong Learning, by learning from other countries, that already have such an Act. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning has a database available on its website with such examples. Policy Learning can also happen from UNESCO, ASEF and ASEM Education Secretariat, as well as from ASEAN and the SEAMEO Regional Center for Lifelong Learning in Ho Chi Minh City in Viet Nam.

There were also concrete proposals to set up National Research Funds for applied lifelong learning research projects in partnerships with universities, private sector, NGO's and with an international advisory board, like it has been done in Singapore.

A measurement, evaluation and monitoring project on indicators for lifelong learning could be developed in the ASEM context, as well as developing Learning Cities to be pillars in learning society development.

The 4th Industrial revolution with next level digitalization, artificial intelligence, big data, robotics and automation based on machine learning, is already changing the labour markets in all regions of the world and making much un-skilled and lower skilled work redundant. Quality Education and Lifelong Learning can be a response to the 4th industrial revolution, if universities develop new curriculum, new pedagogical methods, blended learning, self-directed learning, transversal or soft skills, learning to learn, and flexible online learning like MOOCS.

Lifelong learning will transform our education systems, from initial to continuing education. ASEF and the ASEM Education Process could provide a platform to share good practice in flexibilization of degrees, curricula and methodology, recognition of prior learning, and transversal skills such as learning to learn, creativity and entrepreneurship.

There is a need for flexible learning pathways, for National Qualification Frameworks for Lifelong Learning, and for Quality Assurance.

The results of this conference discussions should be taken to ASEAN, to Open Universities, The ASEM Rectors Conference, and to UNESCO by ASEF and the ASEM Education Secretariat.



VISION 2030: HOW DO FLEXIBLE LEARNING PATHWAYS LEAD TO LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL?

Summary of the panel discussion featuring Dr Melinda dela Peña BANDALARIA, Dr WANG Libing, Prof Seamus Ó TUAMA, moderated by Ms Nadia REYNDERS

The conference included two panel discussions to explore the topic. The first panel discussion addressed the question of what roles universities have to play in lifelong learning to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and why is it important to make qualification and degree structures more flexible. The second panel discussion was focusing on government-university cooperation and showcased good practices on initiating lifelong learning policies that support sustainable development strategies.

The 4th Industrial revolution is completely transforming the skills landscape and changing the labour market needs in all regions of the world. At the same time the sustainable development goals are putting great pressure in higher education stakeholders to take action and support the achievement of the social, environmental and economic global goals. Lifelong learning can be a response to these challenges, if university leaders and policy makers take up the mission to develop new curriculum, new pedagogical methods, and make lifelong learning frameworks more flexible.



Rethinking the Traditional Mission of Universities

The panellists of the opening session of the conference first explored, how the traditional concept of university education focusing on knowledge-transfer, disciplines and courses could be transformed into a more holistic vision of education, offering lifelong learning

opportunities and flexible learning pathways for all. One key element of change is mindset. Universities were advised to shift their mindset from a traditionally defensive one to a “more open to sharing” mindset. An example for this shift in mindset was presented by Professor Seamus Ó TUAMA. His university, University College Cork, has a great history in working with the local communities together in different forms of partnerships to offer learning opportunities. The latest initiative is the “Cork Learning City” project under the UNESCO umbrella, which is about promoting learning at the neighbourhood level. He has also recommended to use the phrase “neighbourhood” rather than community, since this is more inclusive. A neighbourhood is a geographical space and everyone within that space is considered a neighbour, regardless of citizenship.



Technology Enabled Lifelong Learning

E-Learning was discussed as a crucial enabler for universities to offer flexible learning programmes. The fundamental advantage of e-learning that it is inclusive, and thereby directly promotes the Sustainable Development Goals. Universities can develop content using different multi-media solutions, and students can pick the most suitable way of learning for themselves, independently from their schedule or location. Universities should be using the achievements of the technical revolution to upgrade their programs, and they need to increase collaboration with each other to share content, jointly invest in technology, and to improve the recognition and credit transfer systems – said Dr Melinda dela Peña

BANDALARIA, President of the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU).



Competence Based Lifelong Learning

Although the concept of LLL has been around for a while, it is only a recent development that universities are changing their mentality and incorporating lifelong learning into their institutional strategy and budget as well - highlighted Dr WANG Libing, Chief of Section for Educational Innovations and Skills Development (EISD) at the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education.

Competence-based learning is of especial interest to UNESCO when it comes to mainstreaming an LLL approach in curriculum development. Competences have to be related to the learning outcomes, which must be based on a country's national qualification framework. This is still missing in many countries.

Professor Ó TUAMA pointed out that in Ireland, they have both a national framework of qualifications as well as the European transfer credit system, and both were created by independent experts, not by universities, to be free from any institutional biasness. However, recognising prior learning in these frameworks is still a challenge.



Recognition of Prior Learning

The supporting role of the government in recognising qualifications is something that all three panellists agreed upon. Dr BANDALARIA

pointed out the special importance of government policies in the recognition of prior learning. In the case of Malaysia, students can obtain 30% of their credits from any open education providers, but the assessment still happens by examination.

National Qualifications Frameworks in Lifelong Learning

Governments should focus on the establishment of national qualification frameworks to address post-school education - highlighted Dr WANG. Elementary school curriculum standards are in place, but after secondary education different standards apply. A common framework should make all earned credits comparable and compatible; and establish a type of credit bank. Learners can deposit and claim credits, thereby establishing a credit market. He believes governments should focus on creating such credit infrastructures. To make mobility and recognition of credits easier, governments should trust each other and make a common effort to harmonize their quality standards.

Value of Lifelong Learning outcomes

It has been also discussed that some research-oriented universities are quite critical towards a holistic LLL approach as they worry about decreasing standards. Professor Ó TUAMA answered that research-oriented universities too, have a duty towards the wider community. Rather than only conducting specialist research and targeting the '5-star' publications, real world issues should also be targeted. As Dr BANDALARIA explained further, there has to be a shift away from the perception of impact being limited to citations and/or downloads when it comes to 'high-impact' publications. Dr Wang concurred, adding that impact should be perceived in terms of the "end user". For example, a research can be high impact if it is used by the government as basis for policy.

Panellists also highlighted that we need to remember the overarching idea of the SDGs: a good life and of human flourishing. Sometimes we get too instrumental in our thinking and see LLL as a ladder, which people are going upwards and onwards - said Prof Ó TUAMA. Learning outcomes presume that there is a straight line that a person would follow. This type of thinking restricts our understanding of learning and limits our creativity in creating

flexible learning pathways. ASEM could be also a valuable platform to share and synergise the work of universities and partner countries in this field.

Dr Melinda dela Peña BANDALARIA, President of the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU), Chancellor of the University of the Philippines Open University, The Philippines; Dr WANG Libing, Chief of Section for Educational Innovations and Skills Development (EISD) and Senior Programme Specialist in Higher Education, UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education; Prof Seamus Ó TUAMA, Steering Committee Member, European University Continuing Education Network (EUCEN); Director, Adult Continuing Education (ACE) at University College Cork, Ireland; Moderated by Ms Nadia REYNDERS, Co-Director, ASEM Education Secretariat; Higher Education and Adult Education expert, Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, Belgium



INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN LIFELONG LEARNING POLICY MAKING

Summary of the panel discussion featuring Prof Arne CARLSEN, Mr Guntars CATLAJS, Dr Suwithida CHARUNGKAITIKUL, moderated by Dr NGUYEN Van Quang

This session was dedicated to exploring how governments and universities cooperate to create lifelong learning strategies; what are the policy implications of lifelong learning strategies; and how to integrate lifelong learning policies with sustainable development strategies?

Comparative research on lifelong learning policies in Asia-Pacific

Professor CHARUNGKAITIKUL, an expert in non-formal education, started off the panel by introducing her recent comparative policy research in life-long learning in Asia-Pacific, and asked the members of the audience to think about their own definitions of life-long learning other than the UNESCO and OECD definition. She explained how the different countries translated these definitions into different lifelong learning concepts, and how some of them like Korea and Japan seem to be moving from an LLL model towards “developing a learning society” model. She recommended that countries focus more on collaboration on the regional and international level on LLL-friendly policy.



Linking LLL policy with the SDGs

According to Professor CARLSEN, former Director of UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning, the most innovative way to form new lifelong learning policies is by relating it to sustainability. A key goal should be to look at how LLL can advance all 17 SDGs through a trans-sectoral approach for all people. It is

naturally related to SDG4 Education, but it shall advance all the other 16 goals as well. He advised that innovative policies in this regard could be created by learning from the examples of other countries. Policy makers should either reach out to international organisations to learn about these good practices; like the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) or the UNESCO and its various programmes (like the Learning Cities initiative); or to build personal relationships with international partners. Another practical recommendation he made was to create a research fund that can be used for comparative and applied research and lifelong learning.

Prof CARLSEN elaborated on the relationship of LLL and SDG 4 on access to quality education. Nowadays lifelong education for all is just as important as quality education. Formal, informal and non-formal school education should be followed by continuing education opportunities, because when access to learning in a knowledge society is not available to everyone, it leads to societal destabilization. Especially with the advent of the 4th industrial revolution, integrated digital networks and artificial intelligence, it is even more necessary to constantly upgrade and reskill and learn to live in these societies that are heavily impacted by these new forms of production and manufacturing. The change in the labour market structure makes governments realise the growing importance on lifelong learning.

LLL policy example from a small country

Mr Guntars CATLAJS, Director, National Centre for Education of Latvia mentioned that sustainable development was the overarching goal of national development in the last 60-70 years, and LLL as a concept is recent. As a small state with an aging population, there is fierce competition for learning institutions and employers. In his opinion individualization of learning programmes should be a key factor in education policy, and also creating special programmes for persons with special needs,

young mothers, returning students and so on. Latvia is a small country with humans as it's only resource. Therefore, with its aging population, a key focus of the government is to provide quality education for everyone regardless of age, etc. Regardless of future occupation, Mr Catlaks emphasised the importance of critical thinking, cooperation skills, problem-solving skills. Emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills are key to the nation especially in post-industrial society.

The role of private sector in LLL policy

Professor CARLSEN elaborated on the role of private sector (small and medium enterprises) in lifelong learning. In his opinion the private sector has often been seen as the main driver of lifelong learning policy development, because they have a need for workplace competence development. If you ask people where they have learnt the most important

things in their life, they do not say school, they say at their workplace. Private sector has a vast interest in instigating workplace training.

Mr CATLAKS has confirmed that workplace learning is one of the key priorities in Latvia too. For example, the IT industry is growing fast in Latvia right now, and the government was facilitating 3-year programmes for students who are not simply interested in getting into the workforce quickly, but also ensuring that future society is IT literate. Instead of being only consumers, they want to work for the sustainable development of their society. SMEs and enterprises in Latvia seem to have a long-term interest in societal development, and they were cooperating with the government to enhance innovation very successfully.

Prof Arne CARLSEN, former Director of UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning, founding Chair of the ASEM LLL Hub; Chair professor at Zhejiang University and at Sungkyunkwan University; Mr Guntars CATLAKS, Director, National Centre for Education, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia; Dr Suwithida CHARUNGKAITTIKUL, Professor, Department of Lifelong Education, Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand; Moderated by Dr NGUYEN Van Quang, Dean, Faculty of English, Hanoi Open University, Viet Nam



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The conference aimed at engaging academics and practitioners from Asia and Europe and promote exchange of information, practices, institutional policies, relevant research at national, regional and international level. The topic “flexible learning pathways” examined how could traditional education systems adapt to the needs of economy from 3 angels:

- › **Flexibilisation of degrees:** Recognition of non-formal and informal education/ learning and prior learning as credits within degree programs, enabling learners to accumulate learning, experiences and qualifications through flexible participation at different stages.
- › **Flexibilisation of curricula and of learning content:** Meeting the needs of non-traditional learners in their various life contexts (adult retraining, skills upgrading, dropouts, women and mothers, etc.), and design responsive learning programmes to their demands.
- › **Flexibilisation of methodology and learning design:** Offering self-organised learning programmes in various forms, adopting learner-centred pedagogy, supported by information and communication technology (ICT) and open educational resources.

Conference participants proposed policy recommendations at cross-regional level for higher education institutions and policy makers on how to foster ASEM cooperation in achieving the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially Goal 4 through promoting lifelong learning.

The below recommendations were discussed during the working group sessions, coordinated by 3 moderators: Mr Cesare ONESTINI, Director, European Training Foundation; Dr Ketan V KOTECHA, Director, Symbiosis Institute of Technology; Dean, Faculty of Engineering, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), India; Mr Claude-Emmanuel LEROY, Asia-Pacific Regional Project Coordinator, L’Agence universitaire de la Francophonie.

The Recommendations are listed according to the alphabetical order of the family name of the presenters.



01 Adopt a Bologna-like agreement is recommended across ASEM Member countries to facilitate accreditation of prior learning acquired through MOOCs and other Open Education practices for employment.

Presented by [Dr Melinda dela Peña BANDALARIA](#), President of the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU), Chancellor of the University of the Philippines Open University, The Philippines

Dr BANDALARIA explained that life-long learning is especially relevant for non-traditional learners (NTL) such as those who are attending college part-time, does not have a high school diploma, are single parents or have dependents other than spouse. Non-traditional learners have significantly different needs than traditional learners, since their family responsibilities compete for their time, energy and financial resources. Adult learners want to minimize the amount of time they spend in class while maximizing the economic payoff of their effort.

NTLs are more demanding in terms of academic support and services, are likely to ask more questions, want more attention during the admissions process and seek out third-party experience and endorsement. In short, they are likely to be proactive and expect a high level of engagement from institutional staff. NTLs tend to have bigger and broader perspective about their careers and, at the graduate level, their research interests, their expectations towards faculty members are different from the younger students. NTLs have greater degree of consumer intelligence as well as have a stronger span of attention for deeper dialogues and building relationships with fellow students.

Since non-traditional learners (NTL) are the new majority, higher education teaching methods and curriculum has to adopt to their needs. Having a flexible curriculum is a cornerstone of the LLL models, which allows for flexible modes of participation, negotiated outcomes and a negotiated learning path. There are 3 main approaches on how to make curriculum more flexible:

- › allow for flexible modes of participation on the part of students: e.g. flexibility over place of study, flexible timescales for study and timing of assessments;

- › negotiated outcomes: 'content' remains relatively stable, but assessment is flexible according to learners' goals), (bridges and pathways / nanodegrees / certification programs); can exit at any point
- › negotiated curriculum or learning path: outcomes and final assessment remain relatively stable, but learners can work towards this as they wish. Often, but not always, this involves separating course 'content', 'tasks' (including assessment tasks) and 'support' so that they can be recombined flexibly to suit learners' needs. (Assessment based on Qualifications Framework- content is flexible and up to the learners to pursue)

Flexible learning can also come in the form of both Open Educational Resources (OERs) and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). These formats can present the content in

- › multimedia format (learners on the go / multiple paths to learning);
- › non-linear format (I do not need to go from Chapter 1, then 2, then 3. I can go to Chapter 5 before 1; stand-alone / independent bits and pieces of learning content);
- › responsive format to any type of gadget (allow learners to use the materials as it suits them, especially OERs, digital format; physical format);
- › resource-based format (resources to study the lesson is not fixed; can be changed especially if there are updates; what is fixed is the learning goals; assessment mechanism (there are many ways to learn a lesson);
- › flexible learning/reading/reference list (up to the learner to choose which material to access to learn to achieve

the articulated learning goals and assessment.

For example, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency released the guidelines on awarding credits for MOOCs programmes, enabling anyone who completes a MOOC to obtain credits and transfer them to formal academic programme.

Dr BANDALARIA argued that there are several methods to make flexible curriculum and

learning pathways a reality in Asia and Europe, and she suggested a three-step approach. First, ASEM countries could initiate an agreement similar to the Bologna Process to facilitate the recognition of prior learning acquired through accredited sources for employment. Secondly, ASEM could have partner organisations such as UNESCO and SEAMEO to facilitate open education harmonisation. Thirdly, countries could come up with national policies for education to standardize guidelines for NTLs.

02 Recognition, validation and accreditation are the key pillars in creating lifelong learning systems and flexible degree programmes. Increase recognition for internships and international experience during studies.

Presented by [Prof Arne CARLSEN](#), former Director of UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning, former Chair of the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub

Prof CARLSEN was approaching the topic of flexibilization of degrees by highlighting how the 4th Industrial Revolution affects lifelong learning. The concept was first discussed on the World Economic Forum in 2016, as a new trend of using smart, connected digital networks and artificial intelligence in production. There are 4 major areas of impact of the 4th industrial revolution:

1. Shaping society: embracing transformative societal changes
2. Developing new strategies: Delivering quality education and lifelong learning for living and working in the 21st Century
3. Tapping new sources of creative and entrepreneurial talents for workforce and social development, but also enabling new pathways to lifelong learning for all
4. Disruptive innovation: digital connectivity in production and supply channels including cultural industries

Education systems are designed to meet some of the demands coming from the labour market, therefore they change with each industrial revolution. What kind of education and lifelong learning is the response to the 4th industrial revolution? How to develop talents but also assure quality education and lifelong learning for all?

There are a few milestones to answer these questions. The UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, 2015 suggested to ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all and use an inter-sectoral approach as learning is in all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and the UNESCO Recommendations on Adult Learning and Education 2015 and the Belém Framework for Action issued by the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFITEA VI) 2010.

Due to the changing society, science and technology, universities are called upon to focus on skill development related to innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship for all. Many governments are requesting universities to play a big role in social responsibility through providing lifelong learning opportunities. Universities engage in different types of research, but the new trends push them towards applied research and more bonding with their societal surrounding.

One of the ways universities developing more flexible pathways and extending to non-traditional learners is through international cooperation. One example is the ASEM Lifelong Learning Hub. ASEM LLL Hub is a network of 40

Asian and European Universities conducting joint lifelong learning research projects on the following five topics

- › ICT and culture of e-learning
- › Workplace learning
- › Professionalisation of teachers
- › National and Learning City strategies
- › New Competences – new literacies

How to benefit from the new potential of the 4th Industrial Revolution and turn it into a learning revolution?

- › Bring creativity and innovation to what we learn and what we do
- › Develop new curriculum and new pedagogy

- › Facilitate learning through feeling via Virtual Reality
- › Create learning platforms that provide tutors with real time feedback and help identify every student's learning needs
- › Embrace new learning technologies in a learning revolution to help develop 21 Century non-cognitive skills, like creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship, self-confidence, and learning to learn.

Recognition, validation and accreditation are the key pillars in creating lifelong learning systems and key to create more flexible degrees. Importance of recognition of internship experience during BA and MA programmes and international experience (for example a semester spent abroad) must be increased.

03

Life-long learning is meant to ensure a learning society, where everyone can participate, and constantly update their knowledge and skills. General education must give transversal skills for learning; VET needs to keep doors open for continuous requalification; HE needs to ensure ongoing research and innovation.

Presented by [Mr Guntars CATLAJS](#), Director, National Centre for Education, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia

Mr CATLAJS introduced the ongoing comprehensive reforms in the Latvian education system. The economic, social and political situation has radically changed in the country in the last decades, and the Latvian students seemed to lag behind in future employment skills according to international comparison. Therefore, the government decided that the entire education must undergo a comprehensive change in order to meet requirements of the 21st century.

Main reforms at the basic and secondary education included having fewer subjects, a modular approach in course design, allowing more time for deeper learning (“less about everything and more about something”), greater school autonomy in implementing the programmes, and emphasising evaluation of transversal skills.

Vocational schools were taken over by the government and funded directly. The

curriculum went under a comprehensive reform, starting with the transformation to a module-based system, where learners are not bound to lengthy study programmes, but they can select short study modules according to their emerging needs. In the first phase of the reform 56 modular VET programmes were developed, and another 185 programmes will be introduced during the second phase (2016-2021). In 2015 work-based learning regulations were adopted, which is the primary interest of the private sector. Currently 1054 students are involved in such work-based programmes, 330 being entrepreneurs from among them.

The role of Higher Education Institutions was also redefined in the new system. They should serve as “knowledge hubs” in the digital age, with four dedicated missions:

1. To create a diversified knowledge base in all science areas by focusing research and development to areas that have the largest potential of growth;
2. To increase the innovation capacity of enterprises;
3. To create human resources in R&D that are both locally embedded and globally connected;
4. To merge resources from different sources and to collaborate with different universities in the region.

A new higher education financing model was also introduced, a research-oriented pillar and an innovation-oriented pillar was added to the funding structure, instead of solely focusing on

enrolment numbers-based funding as in the past.

Mr CATLAKE explained that small countries should especially ensure that everyone participates in the education system, as it could be the key for their survival. It is of vital interest for small countries that they include underrepresented groups into their education system (NEETs, young mothers, PWD, etc.) and develop specialised learning and teaching materials. One way to create an inclusive national education system is to clearly segment the different levels and give them specific mission within the system: general education must give transversal skills, vocational and technical education should keep doors open and offer continuous (re)skilling, and higher education should focus on research and innovation. These levels need to be closely harmonised and building on each other, it cannot function well if there are any gaps.

04

Flexible learning is a good method for lifelong learning due to its flexibility and individualisation. Universities should change their mindset and regard teaching as a service catering to students' needs. Universities should invest in flexible learning to expand their capacities.

Presented by [Dr DINH Tuan Long](#), Director of Technology and Learning Materials Center, Hanoi Open University, Viet Nam

Hanoi Open University (HOU) was established in 1993, celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. It is a public university, member of the Southeast Asian Ministers' of Education Organisation (SEAMEO), and the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU). The mission of the university has been providing access to quality learning opportunities for all via ICT solutions, especially catering to the remote areas, so that students no need to commute for face-to-face lectures. In 2008 HOU became the third university in Viet Nam to provide bachelor's degree through e-learning. To date, 150,000 students have graduated from HOU in 17 multidisciplinary major degrees from BA to PhD level.

According to HOU's approach, an e-learning system has to ensure flexibility of learning in 3 main aspects:

- › Teaching material. This includes diverse materials, mainly interactive content, e-books, videos, quizzes, everything that facilitates learning by doing. Micro courses is a new form of teaching materials, such as the podcasts HOU is producing in cooperation with the "Voice of VietNam" radio channel.
- › Lecturers. HOU lecturers are expected to take care of the entire learning process and closely monitor the students' progress and engagement. They need to log in the system every day and answer students' questions within 48 hours. Since e-learning is new way of delivering courses, everyone needs IT skills and support to succeed.
- › Technology. In HOU's philosophy technology is only an enabler of teaching, which needs to be adjusted to

the purpose. They prepare all course content and learning outcomes in advance and support the delivery by technology. Modernisation of technology tools was largely enabled by foreign development investment, the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has invested in HOU to increase quality and programmes.

At HOU, each student can choose the most suitable learning method for themselves, including the location, the scheduling and the mode. Industrial revolution 4.0. is a great enabler of collecting information automatically from e-learning systems, log every activity, create and analyse databases, to help students. However, examination still has to be conducted face-to face, according to the regulation of the Ministry of Education and Training in Viet Nam.

Dr LONG has also shared, that the teachers' role is transforming at HOU, they are become guides and trainers instead of lecturers. The mindset of the teachers needs to change accordingly, they are not only teaching any more but providing a learning service to students. They shall concentrate on their needs and demands, instead of what the university can (ready-made) supply them with. This change in mindset requires investment to human resources and content development.

Dr LONG ended his presentation by giving 3 recommendations: (1) Flexi-learning being a good method for lifelong learning due to its flexibility and individualisation. (2) The mindset of HE needs to change to looking at teaching as a learning service in which the needs of the student must be considered. (3) Invest more in flexi-learning to expand its capacities.

05 Adopt national policies on LLL and Qualifications Frameworks to be flexible and capable of bringing about the shift to a learner-centric approach. Credit systems and recognition procedures need to be adapted to LLL.

Presented by [Mr Sebastian GRIES](#), Programme Manager, European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE), German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) – Regional Office Jakarta.

Mr GRIES has introduced the EU-SHARE programme's experience in the field. SHARE is the flagship program to support ASEAN as a community to build an effective higher education space and has been operating for 4 years now. It mainly draws on EU experience (such as Bologna Process, Erasmus, ECTS, etc.), however, everything is adapted to the ASEAN context.

SHARE guided and supported the development and the adoption of the first ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework, based on extensive discussions with ministers, industry representatives, university networks and other stakeholders. The implementation of this framework is at least in stage 4 in all ASEAN countries (out of 10 stages) and it is the most advanced in Malaysia, being at Stage 8.

SHARE has recently organized a regional conference titled *"Preparing for the Future: The Role of ASEAN (Higher) Education Frameworks in a Disruptive World"*, 29-31 October, Bangkok, Thailand, which included sessions on lifelong learning. Mr Gries has summarised the main messages of these sessions as follows. The traditional "through-train" education model of pre-employment education is no longer suitable to meet the fast-changing economic environment. There is a need for a paradigm shift away from traditional provision and forms of learning at higher education institutions:

- › Towards open systems instead of closed one, with a focus on andragogy instead of pedagogy;
- › Towards multi-modal learning tracks instead for single tracks;

- › Towards micro-credentialing instead of degrees.

This paradigm shift is already happening in the ASEAN region, but more dialogue would be needed on this topic, and a clear consensus on the definition of lifelong learning. National level policies on lifelong learning are often absent, or there is a lack in implementation, or support to implementation. There is a significant need in ASEAN countries to equip low-skilled workers with specific skills and domain knowledge (no need for a degree) in the framework of lifelong

learning, however universities are not (yet) catering for lifelong learners. The paradigm needs to shift from a degree based to a skills-based thinking.

Mr GRIES emphasized the importance of a national education framework and brought the Hong Kong qualifications framework and practices as a good example. Mr GRIES recommended policy makers to create a national education framework for lifelong learning, considering inputs from industry stakeholders, with a secretariat at national level responsible for the implementation of the framework.

06 Create flexible learning pathways by aligning graduate attributes and the university quality assurance framework.

Presented by [Prof Loretta O'DONNELL](#), Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan.

Universities face many challenges today when it comes to contribution to the achievement of the SDGs, ranging from VUCA challenges (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) to disruptive technological changes, fake news and rapidly changing skills demands. Universities have to cater to all seasons of people and society and create flexible learning pathways for all in order to remain relevant and active.

Nazarbayev University (NU) defined a set of “graduate attributes”, which shall result from the learning outcomes of their programmes. NU programmes must deliver the followings to their graduates:

1. Possess and in-depth and sophisticated understanding of their domain study;
2. Be intellectually agile, curious, creative and open-minded;
3. Be thoughtful decision makers who know how to involve others;
4. Be entrepreneurial, self-propelling and able to create new opportunities;

5. Be fluent and nuanced communicators across languages and cultures;
6. Be cultured and tolerant citizens of the world;
7. Demonstrate high personal integrity;
8. Be prepared to take a leading role in the development of their country.

In addition, NU programmes have to align with the academic quality framework of the university, and have to go through rigorous quality monitoring, external and periodic reviews. Through this approval process NU make sure that its programmes are student-centred, research-integrated, innovative, inclusive, outcome based and therefore aligned with the desired graduate attributes.

Nazarbayev University takes various actions to become a social elevator and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. One of the main tools is to offer flexible and online learning programmes which result in the above graduate attributes, while not compromising internationally benchmarked quality standards.

07 Be cognitively flexible in the face of the grand Global Challenges.

Presented by [Prof Seamus Ó TUAMA](#), Steering Committee Member, European University Continuing Education Network (EUCEN); Director, Adult Continuing Education (ACE) at University College Cork, Ireland

Professor Ó TUAMA shared the experience on the Cork Learning City project, as a for a for flexible learning pathways for all. Cork hosted the UNESCO Learning City Exhibition after Beijing 2013, where they have acknowledged the importance of learning in informal and non-formal settings; and Mexico City 2015, where they have acknowledged that lifelong learning is a driver of social, economic and environmental sustainability in cities around the world. The main conclusion of the 2017 Cork exhibition was however that education and lifelong learning are at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and indispensable for their achievement. During the 2017 Learning City Exhibition in Cork, it seemed that Habermas' theory about the economy being a subsection of society had flipped and we live in an economy rather than a society. Economic activity has changed the lives of people on a fundamental way in the 21st century. Education has become a tool to let no one behind and build (1) social capital by developing one's social network (2) human capital by knowledge and skills (3) Identity capital by helping one understand themselves.

What societies need today, is a strengthened cognitive flexibility skill "... the ability to shift cognitive set, thought or attention in order to perceive, process or respond to situations in a different way... to produce diverse ideas, consider response alternatives and modify behaviour and cognition in response to changing environmental demands." According to Prof O TUAMA, the Learning City concept is just the right tool to achieve this.

Corks' Learning Environment consists of four circles of learning:

1. Lifelong Learning Festival. This event was first organised in 2001 and nowadays consists of 600 events, deeply rooted in the community, and wellspring for other developments. The main advantage of this circle of activities is that they create a collaborative way of thinking, as people understand that they do not need to compete with each other's initiatives but build on synergies in a collaborative project.
2. UNESCO Learning City. Cork is highly committed to the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities and create a city-wide learning environment, where wide range of stakeholders engage into neighbourhood learning, with a common sense of mission.
3. Learning Neighborhoods. These are people led initiatives with a local focus, everybody can participate in the consultation, there is no need to be a citizen. Recognition, respect and dignity are the values of this concept. Community wide learning exchange, it is not top-down but intergenerational learning.
4. EcCoWell. It is a mode of working, using this principle everything they do. "Ec" stands for Ecology & Economy; "Co" stands for Community and Culture; Well stands for Wellbeing and Lifelong learning.

08

Sign an ASEM agreement on the definition and standards of a learning citizen. Develop an ASEM pool of academic and vocational lifelong learning programmes through the cooperation of Asian and European Universities, accessible to all ASEM citizens.

Presented by **Prof PHAM Tat Dong**, General Secretary of Vietnam's Studying Promotion Association, Viet Nam

Professor PHAM, the Vice Chairman and General Secretary of Viet Nam Association for Learning Promotion, presented Vietnam's attitude towards lifelong learning and the most recent developments. He shared, that out of Viet Nam's 90 million people, about 30 million are adult learners, therefore the key focus of the government is to encourage non-traditional learning.

According to the Vietnamese philosophy, learning is the way of becoming a human being, and even little knowledge is better than nothing. Therefore, lifelong learning is of especial importance to the state, and the government continuously promotes continuous learning at three different levels of society.

The first level of learning happens in the family, and this is the most important one as well. More than 8 million families have been recognised as "learning families". However, in some cases, certain households do not see a need for the whole family to study, and in these cases the government encourages at least 50% of the family attain certain level of education. The second level of learning happens in the villages. The government is targeting village communities, if more than 50% of the population engages in a form of learning, the village is eligible to use the "learning commune" title. The third level of learning or target group are the civil servants, and universities are the most appropriate institutions to cater to their needs.

Professor PHAM highlighted the difficulties related to standards and terminology. It is a challenge to define who is a lifelong learner and who is not. In Viet Nam currently the authorities are deciding whether a person learning or not, but the assessment methods and evidence finding must be further sophisticated. Viet Nam is currently looking at the Singaporean model, where they tend to measure skills, and the Canadian model, where they tend to emphasise global citizenship related skills. Prof Pham suggested policy makers to sign an ASEM agreement on the definition and standards of a learning citizen.

Catering to the needs to the many different learners is another challenge. In order to motivate learners, one needs to provide them with appropriate learning programmes, content and methodology as well. The Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training is offering 500 programmes currently, which is not enough to cover the full spectrum of professions and needs, starting from the hairdresser qualification to the university teacher.

Prof PHAM recommended policy makers to look into the possibility of developing an ASEM pool of lifelong learning programmes, not just academic but vocational as well, through the cooperation of Asian and European Universities, which would be open source based, therefore accessible to all ASEM citizens.

09

Policymakers should provide a regulatory framework that supports and promotes flexible learning in distance learning and online education. Policy makers should provide funds for creating personalized and adaptive learning environments utilizing state-of-the-art technology.

Presented by [Prof Philippos POUYIOUTAS](#), Rector, University of Nicosia, Cyprus

Professor POUYIOUTAS shared the practice of the University of Nicosia and presented how they support flexible learning with a pedagogical model in distance learning/online education (DLOE).

His point of reference was the book titled 'Flexible Learning in a Digital World' written by Betty Collis and Jef Moonen (2001), identifying 5 dimensions of flexible learning models: time, content, entry requirements, instructional approach and resources as well as delivery and logistics. Prof POUYIOUTAS explained that there are at least five type of restrictions, which do not allow universities to fully comply in all dimensions with this flexibility framework. These include restrictions in pedagogy and learning principles, internal and external quality assurance regulations, legal requirements of accreditations, lack of resources, time and logistics. Therefore, University of Nicosia differentiates to which extent they comply with the different dimensions of this framework: little flexibility, partial flexibility and full flexibility. He went on to give examples of flexible learning in each dimension.

Flexibility related to time involves the starting/finishing of a programme/course, the interaction and submission of assignments, tempo of studying and the moments of assessments. Prof POUYIOTAS elaborated on the various challenges regarding this dimension. For example, the length of an academic year with a specific start and end date, the 2 semester structure and the amount of ECTS credits to be collected during these semesters is regulated by law and the Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency, therefore there is not much flexibility in these areas. The same is true for the tempo of studying, there is a national study guide defining the sequence of sessions, learning outcomes, etc. However, there is partial flexibility around scheduling the classes (morning, afternoon, evening), full- and part-time studies, and changing courses during the

semester. Prof POUYIOTAS's opinion changes to the regulatory framework are required, especially with regards to DLOE, the concept of an academic semester should be either abolished or flexible in a way that it would allow the completion of 90 ECTS within a calendar year.

Flexibility related to content involve topics of the course, sequence of classes, key learning materials, assessment standards and completion requirements.

Flexibility related to Instructional Approaches and Resources is less regulated at national level, so the university enjoys greater freedom in choosing their pedagogic model. They emphasize the following aspects:

- › Social organization of learning. Providing optional face-to-face meetings with instructors at Learning Centre in major cities; providing synchronous Webex sessions/online meetings with instructors, which are recorded and available for later reference; optional class discussion forums.
- › The language used. Some programmes provide the flexibility of offering courses both in English and in Greek.
- › Learning resources. Each Course Outline provide for Required Resources (including instructor's material, instructional videos, power point presentations) in a specific format and Recommended Resources.
- › Instructional organization of assignments and monitoring. There are peer and self-assignments, Multiple Choice and other interactive exercises providing instant feedback and help, Learning analytics, Intelligent Personalized and Adaptive Learning Environments

Professor POUYIOTAS specified the assessment requirements in Cyprus to be particularly

restrictive. According to law, each course is required to have a written final exam which must be physically invigilated, which affects distance learners especially. As such, he emphasized the importance of not just holding up technology as a solution to these restrictions but also the need for policymakers to create frameworks to support these solutions for flexible learning. He suggested changes to the regulatory framework to make assessment modes more flexible (continuous assessment and no final exams), use of [TeSLA](#) to make authentication (face and voice recognition, keystroke analytics) and authorship (anti-plagiarism, forensic analysis) easier.

In conclusion Prof POUYIOTAS said that University of Nicosia already provides flexible pedagogical model to support Distance and Online Learning, however legal obstacles and restrictions hinder enhanced flexibility. Technology provides solutions to most problems, and the use of artificial intelligence technology can help create flexible and personalized learning environments. Policymakers need to provide the Regulatory

Framework to support flexible learning and ensuring quality at the same time.

Policy and Decision Makers should provide a regulatory framework that supports and promotes flexible learning in Distance Learning/Online Education. Such a framework should provide for:

- › A Flexible academic calendar structure which redefines the concepts of semesters/trimesters/enrolment periods and provides for flexible start and end dates of a student's academic studies.
- › Flexible Summative Assessment providing (a) for alternative modes of assessment to Final Exams and (b) e-invigilation using trusted technology.

Policy and Decision Makers should provide funds for creating Personalized and Adaptive Learning Environments utilizing state-of-the-art technology (Artificial Intelligence, Virtual and Augmented Reality, Big Data Analytics).

10

Incentivise universities to adopt holistic digital transformation strategies for universities and link it to the national strategy. Invest in communities of education innovators.

Presented by [Mr Jan SVÄRDHAGEN](#), CEO of EduVocat, founder of Dalarna University Next Generation Learning Centre, Sweden

Mr Jan SVÄRDHAGEN presented good practices from Sweden. Universities are competing globally for students, academics and funding, and only those will stay relevant and benefit from the digital age, which have relevant digital capabilities. Digital devices are here to stay, they are all connected, and cloud computation creates new products. This disruption has an impact on higher education, and universities must adapt their traditions to the new digital age, with a focus on data literacy and quality assurance.

Dalarna University has become the leading university in online and blended learning in Sweden. The Next Generation Learning centre, with their pedagogical and technical competence has been the key part in the transformation and development of new

learning environments. It has created real-time digital environments that provide prompt and immediate support for teachers and students.

The need of lifelong learning is crucial today and to meet this demand the university has created a new training program: Dalacampus. This is a real time, online and social platform for students, with a focus on LIVE lectures/seminars, as social interaction is important, regardless whether it is face-to-face or virtual. Students prefer studying with interaction, as they feel they are being seen and expected to come more prepared. Dalacampus provides short courses of 1.5 credits, one can sign up to a course and start when it's most convenient, read at desired pace and take exams when one feels ready for it. During the course, the student has the opportunity

to interact with a teacher using web-based conferencing tools. Works are underway to enhance the communication between teacher and students, and in between students in all the courses.

Another programme, Dalarna Academy, was created to meet business needs of continuing education, to provide employees study opportunities while working for companies (convert experience to academic qualification). It has a very flexible course structure, allowing students to schedule their own pace and progress within the examinations as they wished. Mr SVÄRDHAGEN has observed some people were studying at 200% pace, because they know certain areas of the curriculum already very well from experience, and all that they wanted was a certificate. All the students had mentors, to guide them through the course. More and more students choose to study online, today Dalarna University has students studying online in over 60 countries, for example in Somalia, Rwanda, Kenya and Bangladesh.

Four recommendations on how to address digital development.

1. Understand that digital transformation affects every part of the university, not just the IT department, but the entire organization including the pedagogy, which needs to move from lecture-based education to student centred education. The role of the teacher has

been challenged many ways, and they need to be prepared to work in non-traditional ways.

2. Link all digital activity to the whole of university and link the university strategy to the governments overall digital strategy. It is not the job of a small public policy department or Digital Taskforce to address digital transformation, but universities and governments need to work together to address digital transformation of societies.
3. Invest in communities beginning with willing and capable digital innovators. Highlight people who are capable to think differently, who understand what is crucial for education and what is not. Stress interdisciplinarity, hire people with different education background like pedagogical experts, software developers, engineers need to form a group of digital innovators.
4. Adapt university approaches. Adapt an approach which focuses on addressing the needs, not one that is based on the university structure. Do not let university structure ruin the way we educate, for example, when someone says, we have always educated this way, we should continue to do so, ask WHY.

11 Develop and implement a national framework to formally recognise prior experience and learning, supported by explicit qualifications learning outcome.

Presented by [Dr THIAN Lok Boon](#), Director of Quality Advancement, Taylor's University, Malaysia.

Malaysia has published the “*Blueprint on Enculturation of Lifelong Learning for Malaysia 2011-2020*” in 2011 already, to support the steadily growing economy with formal, informal and non-formal learning opportunities accessible for everyone. Since then, Malaysia was focusing on addressing 4 main challenges:

1. Lack of legal framework to support lifelong learning policy
2. Lack of centralized coordinating body to promote and monitor the implementation of policy
3. Lack of comprehensive mechanism and infrastructure to ensure equal access

4. Unclear pathway and recognition to continue the formal education at higher education institution through lifelong learning

Various policies were released to address the above issues. The Malaysian Qualifications Framework implemented in 2007 provided the legal foundations of policies on lifelong learning (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Access policy in 2014; Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Credit Award for Credit Award in 2016), and eventually this qualification framework the learning pathways flexible, as it only determines learning outcomes, without determining the exact pathways on how to achieve them.

One of the main challenges remains to provide access to higher education. Malaysia has recognized that different forms of universities are needed, other than conventional degree providers. Open Universities are able to assess entry requirements differently (fulfilment of entry requirements is assessed and matched using adults' (informal and non-formal) learning

experiences against the normal requirements) and apply open learning approaches that focus on opening access to education and training provision, freeing learners from the constraints of time and place, and offering flexible learning opportunities to individuals and groups of learners.

Taylor's University has recently released the "Taylor's Curriculum Framework (TCF)" which allows students to tailor make their degrees according to their different interests. The framework is flexible and efficient at the same time. Students choose their primary major, a university core course and complementary studies. Also, they have the option of extension (going deeper and specializing in their main subject). All students take classes in life-skills in the first semester for example, where they craft their "life purpose" and career. This system allows for more flexibility and interdisciplinarity within the curriculum. Through the framework students came to recognize the importance of minors and different subjects and can adapt their degree to the future that they want to be part of.



ANNEX 1. SPEAKERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

In alphabetical order

**Dr Melinda dela Peña
BANDALARIA**

Chancellor
University of the
Philippines Open
University

President
Asian Association of
Open Universities



Dr Melinda Dela Pena BANDALARIA is Chancellor and Professor at the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) and also President of the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU). She has expertise and experience from 21 years of academic leadership in an open and distance e-learning institution. She is actively involved in teaching online courses at the graduate level and had done numerous researches on QA for MOOCs and OERs and ICT4D. She is a staunch advocate of democratizing access to quality

education for the vulnerable sectors of the society which led to numerous public service works and researches which aim to serve lifelong learners by enabling their socio-economic transformation, and contribute to the country's progress and to the sustainable development goals.

Prof Arne CARLSEN

former Director of
UNESCO Institute of
Lifelong Learning

Chair professor at
Zhejiang University and
Sungkyunkwang
University



Prof Arne CARLSEN is currently Chair Professor at College of Education, Zhejiang University, P.R.China, and Chair Professor at College of Education, Sungkyunkwang University, Republic of Korea. He was Director of UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning 2011-2017, and he has previously been Vice-rector for Education at the Danish University of Education. He has been Chair of the University Consortium offering the Erasmus Mundus Masters Programme in Lifelong Learning: Policy and Management (Aarhus University, London University, Deusto University, Melbourne University). He was Founding Chair of the ASEM Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning, 2005-2011, a network of more than 40 universities and 100 researchers. He has been member of ASEF Advisory Board for Higher Education, and he is currently Chair of the Workforce Development Applied Research Fund Expert Review Panel, in Singapore. He is Honorary Professor or Honorary Doctor at eight universities, including the Vietnam National Institute for Educational Studies. He has received the Vietnam Medal Cause of Education and he is inducted in the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame.

Mr Guntars CATLAJS

Director
National Centre for
Education, Ministry of
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Mr Guntars CATLAJS is currently the head of the National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia. His work includes overseeing the development of curriculum and examination both in general compulsory and vocational and technical education, as well as special and non-formal education and continuous professional development. Guntars previously worked as senior research co-ordinator at Education International – World federation of education unions in Brussels, Belgium. His responsibility was monitoring on-going research as well as undertaking original surveys worldwide in the fields of education quality, equal access and teacher employment, development and work conditions. Born in 1963 in Riga, Guntars graduated from the University of Latvia as a Historian in 1986, and received a Doctor degree in History in 1995.

**Prof Suwithida
CHARUNGKAITTIKUL**

Professor at the
Department of Lifelong
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Dr Suwithida CHARUNGKAITTIKUL is an International Professor in the Non-Formal Education Division of the Department of Lifelong Education in Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. She holds a doctorate in Non-Formal Education (Adult and Lifelong Education) from Chulalongkorn University. From 2010-2011, she was a Research Fellow in the Andragogy Doctoral Emphasis Specialty Instructional Leadership Program at Lindenwood University, MO, U.S.A, where she completed her post-doctoral training in Education Andragogy and

Learning Society Development. Her most recent publication is a book titled "The eight pillars of lifelong education: Thailand studies" (Cameron Richards and Suwithida Charungkaittikul, Editors, 2016).

Dr DINH Tuan Long

Director
Technology and Learning
Materials Center
Hanoi Open University
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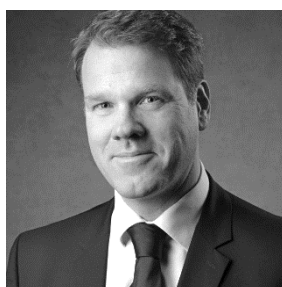
Dr DINH Tuan Long is Director of Technology & Learning Material Center in Hanoi Open University, Vietnam. His experience includes information technology, instructional design, multimedia and eLearning. He was lecturers in Faculty of IT, Vice Director of eLearning Center, Hanoi Open University where he researched about learning material development and how to apply information technology and telecommunication into education, especially open and distance education. He is also person who in charges of eLearning infrastructure &

eLearning development at Hanoi Open University. He studied IT in Hanoi Open University and hold a doctorate of technology from MATI Russian State Technological University.

Prof Ulf-Daniel EHLERS

Vice-President
European Association of
Institutions in Higher
Education (EURASHE)

Director
European Distance and
E-Learning Network
(EDEN)



Prof Ulf-Daniel EHLERS is a learning innovation expert and has been appointed Professor for Educational Management and Lifelong Learning at the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University in Karlsruhe in 2011. From 2011-2016 he held the position of Vice-president at the same university and has been responsible for Quality and Academic Affairs. He held positions as Associate Professor of University Duisburg-Essen (Germany), Professor for Technology Enhanced Learning of University Augsburg (Germany) and

Associate Professor of the Graduate School for Management and Technology of the University of Maryland University College (USA). Prof EHLERS holds degrees in English Language, Social Sciences and Educational Sciences from the University of Bielefeld, where he finished his Ph.D. with honors in the field of Technology Enhanced Learning in 2003. He was awarded a Habilitation in 2008 from the University of Duisburg-Essen. Prof EHLERS is founding member and past President of the European Foundation for Quality in E-Learning (2011-2014) and has also been the President of the Society for Media in Science, in addition to serving on advisory boards for several professional associations in the field.

Mr Sebastian GRIES

Programme Manager
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to Higher Education in
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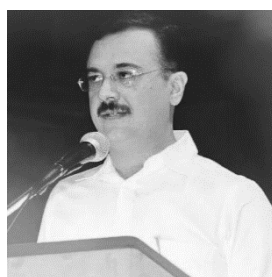
Mr Sebastian GRIES holds a degree in Politics, Sociology, History and Public Law from the University of Passau in Germany with a minor in Southeast Asian Politics and Society. He spent three semesters of his studies conducting field work in Indonesia, Myanmar and Vietnam. In 2014 he served as Research Assistant in the economic cooperation and development section of the German Embassy in Yangon, Myanmar. With the German Development Cooperation (GIZ GmbH) in Jakarta, he worked in a co-operation project funded by the German Ministry of Economic

Cooperation and Development (BMZ) on bureaucracy reform and financial governance in Indonesia. His focal areas included public sector innovation and civil society engagement on district level. Before joining EU SHARE in 2016, he worked with the department of Southeast Asian studies at the University of Passau in Germany evaluating the ASEAN Economic Community's impact on the Indonesian economy. In EU SHARE he is responsible for the delivery of the two result areas Qualifications Frameworks (QF) and Quality Assurance (QA) where he oversees the activities in the ASEAN member states as Programme Manager for the consortium partner DAAD.

Dr Ketan V KOTECHA

Director
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An advocate and practitioner of Emotional intelligence in workplaces, Dr Ketan Kotecha is at the helm of the Symbiosis Institute of Technology, Symbiosis International (Deemed University). He is also the Dean of Faculty of Engineering at the University. Dr Kotecha has a doctorate from IIT Bombay and a very illustrious and path-breaking research activities under his belt. A researcher- teacher of Deep learning, his interest areas are Artificial Intelligence, Computer Algorithms, Machine Learning, Deep Learning Higher Order Thinking Skills,

Critical Thinking and Ethics & Values. He has more than 100 papers published/presented at international conferences around the world, to his credit and 3 patents filed. A recipient of Erasmus + faculty mobility grant from European Union, Dr Kotecha was invited by Wroclaw University of Science and Technology and Poznan University of technology, Poland for delivering sessions on Machine learning.

Mr Claude-Emmanuel LEROY

Asia-Pacific Regional
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Dr Claude-Emmanuel LEROY is the Regional Project Coordinator for Asia and the Pacific of the Francophonie University Association (Agence universitaire de la Francophonie – AUF). Before that, he held different position for AUF since 2001. He holds a General Academic Studies Degree in Law, a Licence in International Law and Political Sciences, a Master's degree in Public law, Comparative Law and Political Sciences and a Post-Graduate Degree in International

administration from the University Panthéon Assas (Paris II). He has been supervising various publications on governance, Francophonie, international law, human rights, justice, etc.

Dr NGUYEN Van Quang

Dean
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Dr Nguyen Van Quang is Dean of the Faculty of English, Hanoi Open University, where he has been working since 1994. He holds a bachelor degree in English, a bachelor degree in Physics, an engineer degree in the Information Technology, a master degree in Applied Linguistics, and a PhD degree in Business Administration.

Mr Cesare ONESTINI

Director
European Training
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Dr Cesare ONESTINI took up the post of Director of the European Training Foundation in September 2017. Prior to joining the ETF, he was Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to India and Bhutan. He began working for the EU institutions in 1995, starting by promoting cooperation in education and training. He has developed intercultural education projects, coordinated school partnerships and teachers' mobility across Member States and was part of the team which developed proposals for the first EU programme for Life Long Learning. He has since worked for the European Union in external relations, international trade, security and crisis management and in the EU Delegation to the United Nations in New York. In the 2013-14 academic year, he was a Visiting Fellow at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy of the National University of Singapore. He is a graduate of Oxford University.

Dr Loretta O'DONNELL

Vice Provost
for Academic Affairs
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Dr Loretta O'DONNELL was appointed as the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs at Nazarbayev University in August 2013. As the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Dr O'Donnell coordinates with the Deans in developing international quality academic systems for educational programs. She liaises with Nazarbayev University strategic partners in implementing the mission of the University and sharing the experience with local and regional universities. She has over twenty years of experience in teaching Executive MBA, postgraduate and undergraduate business students in the Australian School of Business, University of New South Wales (UNSW) located in Sydney, Australia. She has won awards for her research on human capital analysis in financial markets. Previously, she consulted in organizational change for a large global firm in Sydney and Chicago.

Prof Séamus Ó TUAMA

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Prof Séamus Ó TUAMA is Director of ACE (Adult Continuing Education), University College Cork, Ireland, which initiated adult education in 1911. He has both administrative and academic responsibility for ACE, which has over 100 programmes and approximately 3,000 students. He is a member of the board/steering committee of several organisations including EUCEN (European University Continuing Education Network); Cork UNESCO learning city, which hosted the 3rd UNESCO Conference on Learning Cities; Cork Learning Neighbourhoods; Cork Lifelong Learning Festival; Skellig Centre for Research and Innovation; HELLIN (Higher Education Lifelong Learning Ireland Network); HERC (Higher Education Research Centre) hosted by Dublin City University. He is also active in ESREA; AAACE and PASCAL international. Themes within his research include adult education, identity, social and human capital, respect, dignity, and intergenerational learning. He has published, delivered papers and workshops on these and related topics globally. He is also a journalist and expert evaluator.

Dr PHAN Thi Ngoc Thanh

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Dr PHAN Thi Ngoc Thanh graduated with a PhD degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Texas Tech University, USA in 2015. Since returning to Vietnam, Dr. Phan has been devoting her time and effort for the development of online programs at Ho Chi Minh City Open University (HCMCOU). Dr. Phan is passionate about spreading online learning to the community to offer more learning opportunities for all learners and to foster a lifelong learning society. Her research interest focuses

on online learning management, instructional design, curriculum development, learning analytics and online teaching methods.

**Prof Philippos
POUYIOUTAS**

Rector
University of Nicosia
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Dr Philippos POUYIOUTAS is Professor of Computer Science and Rector of the University of Nicosia, Cyprus. He holds BSc, MSc, PhD from University of London. He worked as Lecturer and Programme Director at the University of North London and as Adjunct Lecturer at the University of London. He served as Bologna Expert for Cyprus and delivered presentations on the Bologna Process and European Higher Education Area (EHEA) reforms in Cyprus and abroad. He is a member of the Working Group of Quality Assurance of EURASHE. He developed software tools for implementing/adopting Learning Outcomes and ECTS and for mapping National Qualifications Frameworks. He also developed models and tools for awarding Quality Labels in Teaching/Learning, E-learning, and Engagement with Society. He chaired the Evaluation Committee of the implementation of [TeSLA](#) (Adaptive Trust based e-assessment System for Learning) at the UK Open University. Dr Pouyioutas serves as a chair, editor of proceedings and member of scientific committees of International Conferences and International Journals, and as supervisor of PhD students in the areas of Database Systems and Quality Assurance in e-learning. His research work has been supported by various research grants and has resulted in 100+ publications (25+ in EHEA reforms and Quality Assurance).

Ms Nadia REYNDERS

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Ms Nadia REYNDERS works since 2013 as a policy advisor and project coordinator at the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training in the field of lifelong learning. Before 2013 she has been managing different educational programmes in the sector of development cooperation, mainly in Teacher Training. In these programmes she worked closely with Ministries of Education in South-East Asia (Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam). Currently, Nadia is coordinating the ASEM Education Secretariat, as a representative from the Flemish Ministry of Education, together with her colleague David Urban (French Community representative). In this position she is responsible for supporting and following up the ASEM Education Process which consists of activities, programs and projects to stimulate Europe-Asia collaboration and exchange in the field of Higher Education and Lifelong Learning. More information about the ASEM Education process can be found on the website www.asem-education.org.

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Mr Jan SVÄRDHAGEN has worked with online education for more than 20 years and has been the founder of Dalarna University's Next Generation Learning Center in Sweden, which has been part of transforming the university into offering online education to a large extent. Now he works as an independent consultant in the field of IT, education and focuses in particular on student integrity online, AI, stress related to social media and quality in digital education. He has also been responsible for the development of a MOOC linked to midwives in developing countries like Bangladesh and Somalia.

Dr THIAN Lok Boon
Director
Quality Advancement
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Dr THIAN Lok Boon is the Director, Quality Advancement, at Taylor's University Malaysia. She is accountable for Taylor's University governance and academic policies. She is involved in the design and implementation of the new Taylor's Curriculum Framework. She represented Taylor's University as the Deputy President of the Malaysian Higher Education Institutions Quality Assurance Network (MyQAN) from 2015 to 2018. She is one of the experts who developed the Guideline for Good Practices: Monitoring, Reviewing and Continually

Improving Institutional Quality for the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). She is the trainer of the Guidelines for MQA since 2016. Her research interest is in higher education governance, policy and quality assurance. She is one of the editors for a book entitled "Public-private equilibrium: Balancing growth with quality and equity of higher education in Malaysia using benchmarking approach". She holds a PhD in education management, planning and policy.

Prof WANG Libing
Senior Programme
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Prof WANG Libing is currently Chief of Section for Educational Innovations and Skills Development (EISD) and Senior Programme Specialist in Higher Education, based at UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, Bangkok, Thailand. His areas of responsibility with UNESCO cover higher education, teacher education, ICT in education, TVET, ESD, and research and foresight in Asia and the Pacific region. Prior to joining UNESCO, he was a Professor of Comparative Education at

Zhejiang University, People's Republic of China. His career in China was closely related to UNESCO as he had served as director of UNESCO-APEID Associated Centre at Zhejiang University for more than ten years. He was secretary of the Global University Network for Innovation: Asia and the Pacific (GUNI-AP) from 2002 to 2012 and had coordinated the operation of the regional network since its inception in 2002. He was a member of the Asia - Pacific regional follow-up committee to the 1998 World Conference on Higher Education and a long-time consultant to the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO. He got his doctoral degree in Comparative Education in 1994 at Hangzhou University, People's Republic of China. He was a visiting fellow at the University of Sussex and University of Warwick in the United Kingdom in the early and late 1990s. He published widely in the areas of comparative education, higher education policies, and teacher education.

VISUAL CONCEPT

The United Nations General Assembly identified 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that encompass many aspects of contemporary society. The goals serve as globally-recognised standards that call upon stakeholders across all sectors, including higher education, to implement them by 2030. Sustainable Development Goal 4 is of particular importance to adult educators and other advocates of lifelong learning since it enjoins UN member states to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

In order to reach this target, nation states need to make their education systems more flexible and enable higher education institutions to provide flexible learning programmes for all. This visual is resembling the complexity of education pathways and indicates that strategic thinking is required to achieve the interconnected SDGs during a lifelong and life wide learning journey.