

Lifelong Learning in ASEM Countries

The Way Forward

Final Report

August 2002

 **ASEM Lifelong Learning**



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List of Abbreviations

APL	Assessment of Prior Learning
APO	Asian Productivity Organisation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEM	Asia-European Meeting
ASOBAE	Asian South Pacific Bureau for Adult Education
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Education
EAEA	European Association for the Education of Adults
EC	European Commission
ELLI	European Lifelong Learning Initiative
ESREA	European Society for Research on the Education of Adults
EU	European Union
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRM	Human Resource Management
IACET	International Association for Continuing Education and Training
IAI	Initiative for ASEAN Integration
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
K-economy	Knowledge Economy
LLL	Lifelong Learning
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WTO	World Trade Organisation





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PREFACE

The proposal on the ASEM Lifelong Learning Initiative, which was approved by the ASEM Foreign Ministers meeting in Beijing, May 2001, stipulates that an overall report on the initiative will be produced and presented at the ASEM Heads of States Meeting in Copenhagen, September 2002.

This report presents the findings of the work carried out under the ASEM Life-long Learning Initiative, and it is envisaged that the report will be taken note of at the Heads of States Meeting.

Following a brief introduction to the background and objectives set out for the ASEM Lifelong Learning Initiative in section 1, the report is divided into the following parts:

In the analytical part of the report, the background, challenges, and the characteristics of the rapid rise of life-long learning are analysed in section 2, the specific characteristics of lifelong learning in Asia and Europe are presented in section 3, while common challenges to both Asia and Europe are presented in section 4. Based on these characteristics, challenges, and findings common visions for the development of lifelong learning and the continued cooperation between ASEM member countries are outlined in the form of policy statements in section 5, while the findings of good practice by the initiative within key themes are described in section 6.

Based on the common visions and the documented examples of good practice in ASEM member countries, section 7 contains recommendations made by the initiative at three different levels, firstly, on policy level, secondly, in relation to the establishment of networks for continued cooperation and, thirdly, on potential pilot activities to be undertaken.

This report is based on discussions at international conferences and analyses undertaken by the thematic working groups established under the ASEM Lifelong Learning Initiative. A sincere vote of appreciation is therefore extended to all academics, regulators, policy makers and practitioners from the ASEM member countries that have devoted their time and energy and made a substantial contribution to the work carried out. A special vote of thanks is extended to the people who through remarkable dedication have coordinated the inputs leading to the finalisation of thematic reports as well as to the people who have coordinated and contributed to the international conferences held in January 2002 in Copenhagen, in May 2002 in Kuala Lumpur and in July 2002 in Singapore.



The challenges, visions and recommendations for the promotion of Lifelong Learning and future cooperation among ASEM countries presented in this report "Lifelong Learning in ASEM Countries - The Way Forward" provides a common inspiration to ASEM governments, policy makers, regulators, researchers and practitioners involved in lifelong-learning-related policies and measures for putting lifelong learning into practice. More specific information provided by the ASEM-Lifelong Learning Initiative is provided in three reports including the following themes: Ensuring Basic Skills for All, Integrated Approaches to Lifelong Learning and Recognition of Prior Learning, and Policies and Incentives to Promote Access to Lifelong Learning.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ASEM Initiative on Lifelong Learning has provided a framework for closer cooperation among ASEM member countries. The outcome presented in this report to fulfil the mandate of the initiative and to be submitted to the ASEM 4 Heads of States meeting in Copenhagen September 2002 is intended to serve as a basis for strengthening the cooperation between ASEM member countries and to support further promotion of lifelong learning in ASEM member countries.

During the activities undertaken, a common understanding of challenges, key issues and visions in the field of lifelong learning has been identified and further developed. Exchange of experiences, discussions and in depth studies of key themes and practices in lifelong learning have provided substantial input to the formulation of recommendations on the promotion of lifelong learning in ASEM member countries as well as to the issue of how cooperation between ASEM countries can be strengthened in the future.

ASEM countries acknowledge that globalisation and the rapid development of knowledge-based economies and societies require new skills and competences. In an increasingly globalised world, national strategies to improve competitiveness, increase welfare and utilise human resources to the full will only be successful if active measures are taken to ensure opportunities for all to acquire skills and competences throughout their entire life.

The ASEM countries share the view that the promotion of lifelong learning plays a crucial role in the pursuit of the overall goal of building an inclusive society and ensuring sustainable economic growth in the future. To achieve this goal, lifelong learning policies should promote employability, active citizenship and work towards social inclusion as well as the personal fulfilment of individuals. The implementation of policy and practical frameworks to promote access, investments, adequate approaches and equal opportunities for learning that will make lifelong learning a reality is therefore seen as a major challenge for ASEM countries.

Characteristics and challenges related to lifelong learning in ASEM-countries

The report outlines key characteristics arising from globalisation and the increased political focus on human resource development. The fast-moving development of knowledge-based economies leads to increasingly rapid changes in global, societal as well as economic structures. The changes in economies and societies towards a knowledge-based society have caused a change in the conception of human capital from a focus on basic schooling and initial education to a lifelong learning process enhancing the continuous development of skills and competences of individuals.

The concept of lifelong learning has wide-ranging implications due to the inherent complexity in terms of definition, policy and practical implementation. Despite the differences in national conceptions and lifelong learning concepts, there is broad consensus on a number of crosscutting issues constituting a common approach to lifelong learning among ASEM countries. Lifelong learning encompasses all learning undertaken throughout life, whether formal, non-formal or informal. Learning must be seen as a learner-driven, active process that empowers the learner to adapt skills, competences and values to continuously changing economical and societal structures and circumstances.

Introduction

Characteristics and challenges

Lifelong learning is in this context perceived as being of mutual benefit to employers, employees and society at large, since the continuous improvement of the competences of citizens supports economic growth, employability and social inclusion for all segments of the population.

A number of implications and lifelong learning challenges shared by Asian and European countries are analysed to provide a basis for identifying key issues to be considered when converting lifelong learning strategies into practice. The main challenges for governments, systems and institutions are the rapid changes in the labour market as well as the social and cultural changes caused by the globalisation process. This calls for a change in mindsets and a strong emphasis on the development of individual as well as institutional learning cultures, motivating people to improve their competence to meet the new requirements.

The report presents a number of common challenges shared by Asia and Europe regarding lifelong learning. One major challenge is related to the transformation of skill structures in the labour market. Another challenge highlighted is the active involvement of citizens in social as well as economic activities through the provision of learning opportunities that enable individuals to fulfil meaningful roles in society. In this context, it is stressed that special attention must be paid to the least skilled segments of the population to promote social inclusion and ensure social cohesion in society at large.

Another major challenge to be addressed is the need for further investments in lifelong learning and the effective utilization of resources allocated to support the development of a skilled and adaptable workforce. Despite differences in national approaches, Asian and European countries share the view that lifelong learning cannot be successfully promoted by governments acting alone, as lifelong learning cuts across existing financial, institutional and organisational boundaries. Thus lifelong learning requires the establishment of partnerships between different organisations involved in various types of learning in a variety of settings.

Visions for the future development of lifelong learning

Visions

In the report, common visions for the future development of lifelong learning are established to provide a basis for continued cooperation between ASEM member countries and the promotion of lifelong learning in general. The report states that lifelong learning is recognized as the overarching concept for the successful development and implementation of policies to promote access, investments and learning opportunities for all citizens in a lifespan perspective.

Lifelong learning policies must promote employability and active citizenship in a complementary manner and ensure social inclusion and personal fulfilment as well as empowering individuals to acquire the knowledge, competences and values they require by offering equal opportunities for learning. These should involve learning at primary, secondary, tertiary as well as continuing levels acquired in formal, non-formal and informal settings.

Individual ASEM countries have chosen different lifelong learning strategies and approaches, and these should be protected and sustained in the future. Based on the work undertaken, it is acknowledged that the promotion of lifelong learning requires a coherent development of policies, frameworks and practices reflecting national economic, social and cultural characteristics and values.

To master this new area of knowledge, comprehensive policies and strategies are required to foster learning cultures and the development of both human and social capital in society at large.

Investments in lifelong learning are viewed as a prerequisite for all ASEM countries to ensure sustainable social development and economic growth.

High quality provision of education and training designed to suit individual needs is important, as are incentives aimed at promoting access to and participation in learning. In the ASEM countries, formal, non-formal and informal learning are viewed as equally important. By the same token, the recognition of skills acquired through work experience and prior learning should form an integral part of lifelong learning agendas in the future.

The ASEM Initiative on Lifelong Learning recommends that lifelong learning be placed high on national agendas based on the recognition that its implementation requires serious political commitment as well as increased dialogue and cooperation between governments, organisations and institutions. Governments and labour market and community stakeholders are facing a joint challenge to secure access to and adequate provision of lifelong learning to promote employability, active citizenship as well as social inclusion and personal fulfilment.

Key themes in the political and practical implementation of lifelong learning

The thematic work undertaken in the initiative has focused on three key themes. The first theme involves the question of how to ensure access to basic skills and competences for all segments of the population through lifelong learning programmes and learning activities. A second key theme addresses the need for integrated approaches and recognition of prior learning and the ways in which policies can improve the links between formal, non-formal and informal learning taking place in a variety of settings. The final theme addressed by the initiative relates to the ways in which policies and incentives can promote access to lifelong learning. Based on the thematic reports, a number of issues are highlighted in the following as being important for future cooperation and the successful implementation of lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning must provide personal and labour-market skills and competences to promote employability as well as to enhance learners' potentials for active participation in social life and create the basis for active citizenship. The motivation process can be strengthened by flexible financial and logistic incentives supporting all kinds of learning. Incentives to promote motivation for further education, training and learning thus play an important role.

In order to enhance social inclusion and address means of widening participation for specific target groups, flexible strategies for integrated approaches to lifelong learning must be formulated and implemented. Basic skills and competences are significant means of tackling social- and labour-market exclusion. E-learning and distance education are constructive examples of policies and practices drawing on new learning settings and flexible approaches to education and training to achieve the aim of providing lifelong learning for all. This calls for the development of learning infrastructures where inclusion is accorded high priority.

The development of learning processes geared towards learner need and learner-centred approaches result in a redefinition of the role of the teacher. Learning processes, pedagogical tools and the organisation of learning thus need to be adapted to the different needs, expectations and motivation of individual learners, and this creates the need for new and flexible support systems for both teachers and learners, where guidance and counselling are accorded a more important role.

Key themes

Flexible provision in terms of time, providers, place, learning methods and materials taking into account different kinds of formal, non-formal and informal learning are key areas requiring further development. A multi-faceted approach to the policy development process must avoid fragmented and compartmentalised learning strategies. Such an approach to learning strategies and the delivery of flexible provision would include various partnerships as well as formal, non-formal and informal settings for lifelong learning.

The acknowledgement of all kinds of learning requires integrated approaches to the recognition of skills and competences acquired through formal academic learning, non-formal workplace learning as well as informal leisure-time learning. Still stronger emphasis needs to be placed on transparent and coherent education and training systems, covering social, educational and labour market policies and practices, and there is a general need to develop national frameworks for the recognition of competences acquired in different settings to facilitate the transferability of learning.

The way forward – Recommendations on lifelong learning

Recommendations

To fulfil the mandate of the ASEM Lifelong Learning Initiative, recommendations have been formulated on the basis of the work and discussions undertaken by the initiative. These include recommendations on policy and the practical implementation of lifelong learning with a view to supporting continued ASEM cooperation and the promotion of lifelong learning on national agendas as well as the promotion of networks and pilot activities to strengthen closer cooperation between ASEM member countries.

Three sets of guiding principles for the further enhancement of lifelong learning policies and practices in the ASEM countries are recommended. These reflect the diversity of ASEM countries at the same time as they seek to adopt an ambitious, inspirational and forward-looking perspective.

ASEM countries must address government policy and financial and legal frameworks. Strong emphasis must be placed on the coherent development of policies, the establishment of financial frameworks to facilitate investments in incentives supporting the creation of lifelong learning opportunities as well as on the design of legal frameworks covering the whole spectrum of education and training in support of overall requirements and objectives.

ASEM countries must establish institutional and practical frameworks to secure a flexible learning infrastructure and high quality provision designed to suit all groups of society and promote increased coherence between different kinds of learning and the optimum use of resources allocated to education. Furthermore, priority must be assigned to diminishing the gap between work of life and education and training systems.

Finally, ASEM countries must encourage the development of collaborative partnership frameworks and address the need for a variety of partnerships in the promotion of lifelong learning. Dialogue and cooperation in partnerships between community and labour-market stakeholders must be accorded high priority, since these play a significant part in the creation of knowledge and skills and the formation of social and cultural values.

The ASEM countries participating in the initiative voiced strong interest in exchanging and sharing knowledge on policies and national practices across the two regions and their respective countries

with a view to promoting closer cooperation and establishing concrete partnerships and projects. Closer relations between national authorities, institutions and different stakeholders are a necessary prerequisite in promoting future cooperation and concrete partnerships on lifelong learning between the ASEM countries.

The ASEM initiative recommends that the member countries establish networks for the continued exchange, dissemination and development of lifelong learning approaches and policies as well as frameworks for provision and learning methods. ASEM countries may in this context commit to establishing and facilitating information and research centres, thematic networks, partnership seminars and lifelong learning reviews to strengthen future cooperation in the field of lifelong learning.

A number of potential pilot activities and key issues have also been identified for further cooperation. The ASEM initiative calls on ASEM member states and their institutions to initiate and engage in pilot projects to improve lifelong learning policies and practices.

The experience gained from the initiative clearly points towards the mutual benefits to be derived from closer international cooperation. Taking the agenda forward within the ASEM cooperation, this would not only bring added value to economic and social development in ASEM countries but, equally importantly, make a substantial contribution to furthering mutual understanding between cultures in all their diversity throughout Asia and Europe.



1:



ASEM LIFELONG LEARNING INITIATIVE

1.1 Background

The recent rise of interest in policies promoting lifelong learning has been quite remarkable. Its growth has been rapid, it is potentially path-breaking, it commands wide consensus and it is largely international. Due partly to the effects of globalising tendencies, similar factors seem to be at work across a wide variety of nations that despite differences in history and culture appear to be facing similar tasks in ensuring adequate national responses to the challenges inherent in globalisation.

The growth of interest in lifelong learning is striking for a number of reasons. *Firstly*, it is remarkable for its speed. From the early 1990s and increasingly from the mid-1990s onwards, a variety of governments across several continents have embraced the goal of lifelong learning. *Secondly*, it is marked by a clear conceptual and linguistic shift, which has involved a move away from established notions of education and into the broader field of learning. *Thirdly*, reflecting the fact that globalisation has been the main force triggering the enormous interest in lifelong learning, there is a conspicuous consensus, spearheaded by international organisations and supported by national policy makers, employers' associations, trade unions, NGOs and community leaders.

One of the reasons for this development is that lifelong learning is perceived as addressing effects caused by the globalisation process and therefore commonly experienced by many countries. The fast-moving development of the knowledge society leads to increasingly rapid changes in societal as well as economic structures and thus to the demand for a labour force equipped with adequate qualifications for participating in the ever-changing labour market. Access to lifelong learning resulting in the continuous upgrade of qualifications is therefore seen as a support for the development of adequate qualifications of the labour force and hence an enhancement of productivity as well as the inclusion of all segments of the population in the rapidly changing labour market. Thus lifelong learning is perceived as being of mutual benefit to:

- Employers - as lifelong learning enhances the productivity and competitiveness of the labour force and thus sustains participation in the national as well as the global economy;
- Employees – as lifelong learning supports sustained employability, thus safeguarding the livelihood of employees' families;
- Society at large – as lifelong learning promotes economic growth and the welfare of citizens and prevents segments of the population becoming unemployable and marginalized, thereby contributing to social cohesion and a strengthening of democratic structures;
- Individuals as such – as lifelong learning facilitates personal fulfilment and thus the realisation of individuals' potentials and aspirations.

However, due to the complexity of the notion of lifelong learning, the general political consensus at national and international levels regarding the relevance and importance of lifelong learning has so far been confined to approaches of a largely inspirational nature and requires further cooperative and supportive efforts if it is to be fully translated into tangible actions and results. The inception of the ASEM Lifelong Learning Initiative is thus a response to the acknowledged need for further international cooperation to develop and enhance lifelong learning approaches and modalities leading to improved practices in ASEM member states.

1.2 Objectives

The idea of an ASEM initiative on lifelong learning originated in the conclusions of the conference on "States and Markets", which took place in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 8-9 March 1999.

One of the main conclusions arrived at in this forum was that globalisation leads to new structures and demands in the labour market and that lifelong learning must be viewed as a prerequisite for ensuring economic development and social inclusion. In the course of the conference, it was agreed that the ASEM countries have a common interest in identifying and exchanging experiences relating to lifelong learning. At the 3rd ASEM summit in Seoul, October 2000, the heads of states voiced their support for further development of an ASEM initiative on lifelong learning.

A proposal outlining the present ASEM Initiative on Lifelong Learning to be undertaken from August 2001 to August 2002 was subsequently formulated by Malaysia, Singapore, Ireland and Denmark and approved at the ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Beijing, May 2001. A steering committee chaired by Denmark with representatives from the four countries was assigned responsibility for the overall implementation and coordination of the initiative, and a secretariat funded by Denmark was established to support the ASEM Lifelong Learning Initiative.

Overall objectives

The overall objectives of the initiative were to:

- Create a framework between ASEM countries for dialogue and exchange of lifelong learning experiences;
- Contribute to the promotion of lifelong learning in ASEM member countries;
- Develop and strengthen cooperation between ASEM countries in the field of lifelong learning.

Specific expectations

The specific expectations of the Lifelong Learning Initiative were that the following would be achieved:

- Establishment of international networks for lifelong learning;
- Formulation of recommendations and policy advice on lifelong learning to be presented in a final report submitted to the ASEM Heads of States Meeting (ASEM 4) in September 2002;
- Identification of potential pilot activities involving ASEM countries to be continued after the ASEM 4 meeting in September 2002.

Key Themes

Reflecting the above objectives and to ensure the successful contribution of lifelong learning to the development of human resources, it was decided that the initiative would focus on the following thematic issues:

- Approaches to *ensure basic skills* for all are of highest importance if national human resources are to be utilised through full participation in the labour market and social cohesion is to be sustained.
- *Integrated approaches to lifelong learning and the recognition of skills* based on partnerships and dialogue between private, public and voluntary sectors and increased coherence between learning in different settings are essential if the benefits of lifelong learning are to be more widely shared.
- *Lifelong learning policies and incentives* reflecting the new challenges related to the everchanging demands for the qualification of the labour force will have to take into account the substantial differences in access to and participation in further education and training. Policies for lifelong learning must address these differences if they are to ensure the development of adequate qualifications and tackle social exclusion successfully.

1.3 Main activities

The ASEM Lifelong Learning Initiative included the following main activities:

Decision-makers from national authorities responsible for education/training and labour market matters as well as social partners from ASEM countries attended the Opening Conference in Copenhagen - "Lifelong Learning - a challenge for the future". The aim of the conference was to establish a common understanding of the concept of lifelong learning and its importance for economic and social development. Key challenges for the promotion of lifelong learning were identified and a number of thematic working groups were established.

The three thematic working groups established under the initiative covered the following themes:

- Ensuring Basic Skills for All coordinated by Denmark;
- Integrated Approaches to Lifelong Learning and the Recognition of Skills and Prior Learning coordinated by Malaysia;
- Policies and Incentives to Promote Access to Lifelong Learning" coordinated by Ireland.

The thematic working groups were composed of national experts appointed by the relevant national authorities of the individual ASEM countries. In connection with the appointment, emphasis was placed on the involvement of relevant representatives from research institutions, educational institutions and social partners. Reflecting their respective terms of reference, the thematic working groups exchanged experience and documentation concerning policies and good practices in different fields of lifelong learning and identified possible areas for future ASEM cooperation through meetings in e.g. Bangkok and Dublin and via Internet communication.

Furthermore, an International Conference in Kuala Lumpur, 13-15 May 2002 hosted by Malaysia took place as part of the ASEM initiative. Each thematic working group produced working papers and reports on good practices, including recommendations for future ASEM cooperation in their respective fields.

Members of the thematic working groups, experts, government representatives and social partners were attending the Closing Conference "Lifelong Learning - The Way Forward" hosted by Singapore. Presentations and discussions of the findings of the thematic groups were included in the programme and afforded opportunities for a presentation of ideas and proposals for concrete cooperation initiatives. The three thematic working group reports were presented at the closing conference and endorsed together with an outline of the overall report.

Based on the work carried out under the initiative and the comments elicited from the Closing Conference in Singapore, thematic reports as well as an overall report were prepared and submitted to ASEM member countries for review and comment. These comments have been coordinated and incorporated into consolidated reports that have been formally submitted for the ASEM IV Heads of States Meeting in Copenhagen in September 2002.

Reflecting its international nature, the ASEM Lifelong Learning Initiative has been coordinated with existing activities related to lifelong learning undertaken by international organisations such as the EU, ILO, OECD, UNESCO, CEDEFOP, APO and other relevant organisations. The steering committee established to ensure adequate organisation and management of the initiative will furthermore assess the potentials for continuing cooperation between ASEM member states that have emerged through the implementation of the initiative, and ensure an effective dissemination of the outcomes from the work undertaken.

Opening Conference in
Copenhagen,
January 2002

Thematic Working
Groups, January to
June 2002

International
Conference in Kuala
Lumpur, May 2002

Closing Conference
in Singapore,
July 2002

Submission of
Reports,
August 2002

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LIFELONG LEARNING CHALLENGES AND CHARACTERISTICS

2.1 Globalisation

In order to establish a deeper understanding of the context for the rapid rise of lifelong learning and although the nature and content of lifelong learning as well as the reasons why the benefits potentially to be derived from general political support have not yet fully materialised, this report will in the following chapters further analyse the significance of globalisation as well as the general characteristics of lifelong learning leading to a discussion of the specific characteristics of current lifelong learning approaches and modalities in Asia and Europe.

The increasing attention paid to lifelong learning is largely perceived as stemming from the present globalisation process and an emerging political focus on human resource development in general. While the development of a global economy is self-evident, it is rather more difficult to establish a unified view of what globalisation actually entails.

Generally, the conception of globalisation contains some of the following characteristics:

- Globalisation of production and trade, where corporations move their capital and factories around the planet at ever-increasing speed in search of labour, nearness to markets and governments willing to accommodate investments;
- As markets globalise, businesses have to adapt their structures and production processes more and more quickly in order to remain competitive. This has also led to changes in the organisation of production processes in those segments of the economies affected by globalisation, since the intensive use of team work, flattening of hierarchies, devolved responsibilities as well as increased multi-tasking are seen as adequate responses to the demand for continued value addition and flexible production processes;
- Rapid and increasing technological change leading to changes in production methods and patterns and thereby also to new requirements for the qualification structures of the workforce;
- Explosion and communication of scientific knowledge generated worldwide, leading to a change in the nature and dissemination of information. Globalisation is also seen as leading to a new paradigm of knowledge that is integrative rather than disciplined, applied rather than abstract, and produced through team efforts rather than individual genius;
- Dissemination of information is due to the rapid development of ICT at ever-increasing speed, breaking down traditional geographic barriers for production and trade and at the same time potentially allowing people to upgrade their skills to meet the new qualification requirements generated by the globalisation process.

Thus globalisation does not only lead to increased and changing demands regarding skill structures on the labour market but also to the demand for new types of skills, as traditional technical skills now have to be supplemented by communicative and innovative skills and competences matching the new production structures and processes in the workplace. These changes in skill requirements may lead to the marginalisation of segments of the population from economical as well as social life and thus negatively affect social cohesion in countries affected by globalisation.

Key factors



The pace of change in economic activities caused by the globalisation process and its impact on social cohesion also appear to have generated significant changes in the way human capital investments are treated. As knowledge is an increasingly important factor in economic success, the level and type of investments in human capital are likely to be significant facilitators of competitive performance. For previous generations, the consequences of this insight were usually limited to what may be called the 'front end' of the lifespan. Governments, families and individuals were likely to concentrate on the outputs of the initial education system, while firms and governments were also interested in securing a robust initial training system for new entrants on the labour market.

This front-loaded model was generally perceived as suiting the needs of industrial economies until confronted with the combined impact of globalisation, the increasing rate of technologically induced changes as well as the explosion of service-based industries with concomitant requirements for new types of workers. This in turn led to a renewed perception of the front-loaded education and learning systems, as they were found to be inadequate in meeting the demands for continued and new qualification upgrades and thus gradually replaced by learning systems aimed at the continuous upgrade of skills and competences.

2.2 Historical Background

The international debate on lifelong education initially arose during the late 1960s and the early 1970s, marking an early attempt to shift the focus of educational attention away from the front end and towards a system of recurrent phases of education and training throughout life: throughout employment, child-caring and retirement. Inspired by the work of UNESCO, with the report *Learning to Be* in 1972 as a turning point, the debate derived from humanistic concerns with the "fulfilment of man" instead of a limited focus on employment.

Following the oil shock in 1973 and the subsequent surge in unemployment rates experienced by many countries, the focus turned away from lifelong education, concentrating instead on the problems of youth training for entry into the labour market and on the re-integration of the unemployed into the labour market. During the 1980s, this focus on front-loaded labour-market-oriented training was widely maintained.

The beginning of the 1990s, however, brought change. Following the UNESCO conference in 1990 on Education for All and based on the growing evidence of the changed demands on life and labour-market-related skills caused by the globalisation process, a general appreciation of changing perceptions of qualification development became widely shared by policy makers and academics at international and national levels. The focus on the education systems themselves was found to be inadequate if the continuous need for qualifications was to be met, and the focus thus shifted towards the actual attainment of competences throughout life.

The recent rise of interest in policies promoting lifelong learning has been quite remarkable. Among the reasons leading to the wide support for lifelong learning are:

- that corporations need lifelong learning in order to have access to a highly qualified labour force so that they can continue to grow;

- that the populace needs lifelong learning in order to grow and develop as individuals and to sustain employability;
- that nations need lifelong learning to sustain employability, and thus economic development, as well as a population that is capable of participating in democratic processes so as to sustain the social evolution of nations.

Lifelong learning can therefore be seen as serving several purposes at societal as well as individual levels, namely to ensure a qualified labour force to sustain economic growth, active citizenship and social inclusion as well as to provide the basis for the fulfilment of man. The focus on lifelong learning at the threshold of the third millennium thus to some extent merges the notion of the 1970s – the focus on humanistic aspects relating to the fulfilment of man – with the overriding concern of the 1980s – the focus on economic aspects related to the labour market.

2.3 Definition of Lifelong Learning

While the concept of lifelong learning under slogans such as "From Cradle to Grave" or "From Womb to Tomb" has in recent years generated much support, the specific definition as well as the actual application of the concept varies considerably.

Unpacking the concept has wide-ranging implications for education providers, as the focus is no longer on lifelong teaching, lifelong education or lifelong schooling but explicitly on learning, and learning as an active process. This process is therefore regarded as learner-driven, where self-motivation, self-empowerment and self-reliance become dominant features.

Lifelong learning is often encapsulated in the idea of the lifelong development of human potential to empower the learner to adapt to continuously changing circumstances. It is therefore generally agreed that lifelong learning marks a paradigm shift away from an emphasis on the supply of education and training opportunities provided by systems and institutions towards a demand for actual acquisition of learning in many different settings reflecting changing needs over the lifetime of the individual. Many conceptualisations of lifelong learning promote a multi-faceted aetiology consisting of active citizenship, personal fulfilment, employability and social inclusion, and embrace learning at primary, secondary, tertiary as well as continuing levels.

It is however in general agreed that lifelong learning includes all forms of learning acquired in formal, non-formal and informal settings. This notion is based on the understanding that formal learning mainly takes place in education and training institutions and are leading to recognized diplomas and qualifications, that non-formal learning mainly takes place outside education systems at the workplace and through learning activities provided by stakeholders, institutions etc. within the civic society, and finally, that informal learning is seen as the learning we acquire through our daily life activities as human beings.

As lifelong learning heavily focuses on the possibilities of individuals to learn throughout life at all levels, lifelong learning is a highly complex concept. As lifelong learning serves both individual and societal purposes, the concept should be viewed in the context of the needs of individuals as well as the society in which they are living, and as these vary between nations – and even within nations – so do the definitions and applications of lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning should therefore be seen in light of the contextual characteristics of the society in which it is being applied and thus includes an array of meanings. Some Asian countries for instance, sees lifelong learning as education and training resulting from integration of formal, non-formal, and informal learning so as to create ability for continuous lifelong development of quality of life. The European Lifelong Learning Initiative (ELLI) defines the term as the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills, and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and environments.

In order to establish a deeper understanding of lifelong learning, the main contextual factors affecting the application of the concept as well as facets of the actual substance of lifelong learning will be further discussed below.

2.4 Emerging New Economies

Reflecting the changing production structures and processes, the economies of many countries have developed into a Knowledge Economy (known as the K-Economy) and have thus led to a renewed conception of the role of human resource development.

The Knowledge Economy

The K-Economy is characterised by knowledge as the driving force for the creation and application of new knowledge enabling growth in businesses and industries. The K-Economy is dominated by intangible assets such as ideas, creativity, skills and innovations, which become important factors of production as part of the new notion of tangible inputs. Non-visible goods, skills and brainpower are the greatest sources for investment and are frequently among the highest-priced commodities. As compared against previous, more conventional resource economies, where inputs were consumed and depleted in the production process, knowledge in a K-Economy is used, shared and multiplied.

The K-Economy in many ways represents a paradigm shift in terms of developments from:

- tangible to intangible factors of production;
- resource-driven to innovation-driven growth;
- scarcity of resources to multiplication of resources;
- diminishing return to growing rates of return.

Whereas production and service workers dominate in agricultural, industrial and service economies, the knowledge worker is in high demand in the K-Economy. This calls for new ways of interpreting information and turning it into knowledge as well as new ways of organising work in order to use, exchange and apply knowledge. As continuous improvements in work performance are of pivotal importance in the K-Economy, the continued upgrade of competences is needed.

The role of human resource development is also subject to change in the K-Economy, as there is a greater need for building knowledge reservoirs, and a culture of continuous learning, unlearning and relearning is required in order to enable greater creation, transfer and application of knowledge. As much as these knowledge reservoirs are not restricted to the companies themselves but are generated in conjunction with the learning culture in society at large, the notion of the 'knowledge society' has been widely accepted.

2.5 Renewed Notions of Society and Citizenship

Based on a distinction between the state as an apparatus of governance and society as the way people relate within a given territory, the last decades have been characterised by the development from agriculturally and industrially based societies towards societies characterised by the increasing availability and acquisition of information and turning it into knowledge. As mentioned above, this has led to the notion of the knowledge society being widely accepted.

It should, however, also be noted that a substantial number of academics have argued that the notion of the knowledge society does not adequately describe the ways in which societies are affected by the globalisation process. This is due to the fact that the rapid dissemination of new information requires members of society who do not passively maintain their levels of knowledge but, rather, actively update their knowledge through continuous learning. As people learn differently and independently, this may lead to a society of individuals or even a society that is fragmented and individualised. People may be perceived as human capital, some worth investing in, the remainder becoming redundant; some are accepted as members – citizens - of society while others may be kept out.

In a globalised world, the issue of citizenship has acquired new meaning. As a result of the globalisation process, traditional perceptions of citizenship are gradually being changed from active citizenship to a more consumer-oriented perception, where citizens in some sense passively consume services from the private and public sectors, and this might lead to negative attitudes to societal change. This notion of citizenship may result in a deficit of democratic, social and economic participation by certain segments of the population, contributing to social exclusion and thus threatening the social cohesion of any nation.

As loss of social cohesion may constitute a threat to the knowledge society, increased focus is placed on the active involvement of citizens in social, cultural as well as economic activities through the provision of learning opportunities to ensure that they can play meaningful roles in society.

Knowledge Society

New meaning
of Citizenship

2.6 The Changing Role of the State

The appreciation of globalisation varies according to one's values and, accordingly, the concept may inspire different sentiments. In some cases, globalisation is defined as being connected to the process of corporations transferring capital and factories around the planet at ever-increasing speed in search of qualified labour and governments willing to accommodate investments. Globalisation may be seen as the process by which sovereign nation states are criss-crossed by transnational corporations with varying prospects of power, orientation, identities and networks.

Globalism on the other hand refers to the values attached to the belief that we share one fragile planet, the survival of which requires mutual respect and careful treatment of the earth and all its inhabitants. In this way, the two concepts may supplement each other, as globalisation primarily refers to the internationalisation of production and trade while globalism refers to the internationalisation of common values.

These processes of globalisation and globalism also imply that (externally initiated) changes affect states and that these therefore have to redefine their roles.

Policy challenges

In the first instance, the state in this context faces a general challenge constituted by globalisation – namely to ensure the development of climates attractive to international investments including the provision of adequate pools of qualifications – at the same time as states face the challenge of globalism – namely to foster the development of adequate values that respond to internationalisation within the context of national values and beliefs.

While the general challenges to the state embedded in the globalisation process long have been recognised as requiring national responses of a financial, economic, trade- as well as labour-market-related nature, an appreciation of the importance of developing adequate values and beliefs in response to the internationalisation process is now receiving considerable attention in many countries. Among the reasons for this is the increasing recognition that internationalisation processes are leading to rapid and dramatic labour-market as well as cultural changes. This calls for a change in mindsets and a strong emphasis on the development of individual as well as institutional learning cultures, motivating and assisting people in improving their competence to meet the new requirements.

Secondly, the role of the state is also changing specifically in relation to education and learning as a consequence of globalisation and globalism. National education policies do represent a new challenge to the state, as they have to reflect national needs at the same time as they must be based on the fact that the internationalisation of companies sets the agenda for a significant range of skills and competences as well as value requirements. As a result, the state has to continuously balance national priorities regarding development of skills and values against requirements defined beyond the state and national economies.

Thirdly, the very concept of lifelong learning also constitutes a fundamental challenge to the state. Traditionally, education and training opportunities were provided by the state in the public domain, whereas learning – by its very nature – takes place in the private domain. This leads to the question: How can the state develop and enforce a public policy for lifelong learning, which is public, and for learning as such, which is private by nature, while taking both public and private promotion of lifelong learning into account?

As no final answer has yet been found to this question and since learning is a highly complex process, the result is a frequent confusion between learning seen from the perspective of the individual citizen, who is often oriented towards personal objectives, from the perspective of companies, which are typically oriented towards company specific and short-term objectives, and, finally, from the perspective of the learning strategies implemented by governments, which often seek to institutionalise learning in order to serve common, national, long-term purposes.

In conclusion, lifelong learning may be seen as serving a number of main objectives, namely to ensure availability of labour-market-related qualifications to sustain economic growth as well as to ensure active citizenship, social inclusion and personal fulfilment in order to sustain social development. These objectives are anchored in two different perceptions of the effects of the globalisation process on individual societies.

The purpose of upgrading labour-market qualifications in order to enable nations to participate and compete in a globalised economy and thus ensure national economic growth is linked to the concept of the K-Economy and points towards the importance of meeting rapidly changing demands towards skill structures on the labour market with adequate development of competences among the workforce to ensure the provision of qualified employees and sustain the employability of individuals. Lifelong learning thus also supports production processes in the ASEM countries and, by extension, the development of human capital.

The aim of ensuring active citizenship, social cohesion and personal fulfilment, on the other hand, is primarily linked to the concept of the knowledge society. In order to avoid a deficit of active participation in the social and economic spheres of society by all segments of the population and prevent social exclusion threatening the social cohesion of any nation, active measures are needed to provide possibilities for individuals to realise their potentials through self-development. Lifelong learning is therefore viewed as playing a crucial role in terms of enhancing active citizenship to sustain social inclusion and personal fulfilment and thus leading to an increase in social capital in ASEM member countries.



3:



LIFELONG LEARNING IN ASIA AND EUROPE

3.1 Trends in Asia

Asia has long embraced lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is enshrined in the constitutions of a number of Asian countries. Since the 1980s, the regional ASEAN group has focused its attention on education as part of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), largely through encouragement of regional cooperation in such areas as the emerging network of skills training institutions, the mutual recognition of skills, the promotion of ICT as a means of facilitating networking opportunities between ASEAN education and training centres and the establishment of shared labour-market monitoring systems.

Reflecting the region's heterogeneity, the approaches to lifelong learning present a very complex and diverse picture. In several countries, institutionalised discourses and specific research institutions are working specifically in the field of lifelong learning. In some countries, community-based learning is a key educational strategy; in others, the vocational and technical education sectors are being introduced to the official discourse of lifelong learning and are in some cases closely connected to national master plans for the K-Economy.

At regional level, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has been supporting approaches linking training in the workplace in the non-formal sector to training at institutions in the formal sector through various Asian programmes, and experience indicates that high-performance groups in the workplace may be established if there is a culture conducive to team work, innovation and enthusiasm and if cognitive skill development is supplemented by the development of communication skills. The ILO has further found that returns on investments in learning can be increased through workplace learning as compared to traditional classroom-based learning if employees are properly targeted and if the workplace already has a learning culture. This points to the importance of the recognition of workplace learning linked to workplace competence standards and the recognition of workplace outcomes.

In light of this, the role of the Asian governments is changing and increased emphasis is placed on policy formulation governing national approaches to lifelong learning supported by adequate incentives targeting core competences to create an enabling environment. Governments now also play a major role in the provision of information constituting the foundation for continuously upgrading lifelong learning activities as well as for reforming the general education systems.

3.2 Trends in Europe

At the national level, lifelong learning in Europe can be traced back to the 1970s where many countries, inspired by e.g. the UNESCO report on Learning to Be, paid substantial attention to ensuring lifelong education options based on humanistic concerns for their citizens by focusing on aspects linked to the "fulfilment of man". Following the oil shock in 1973 and the subsequent surge in unemployment rates experienced by many EC member states, the focus in many European countries turned away from lifelong education, concentrating instead on the problems of youth training for entry into the labour market and the reintegration of the unemployed into the labour market.



At the European level, education and training were not a key field for cooperation in the 1970s as compared to the 1980s. As a result of increased international focus on lifelong learning generated by, for instance, lifelong learning conferences conducted by UNESCO (1995) and the OECD (1996), the mid-1990s marked a change, as the European Community increasingly engaged in influencing the broad parameters of policy debate about education in general. This influence proved elusive to the extent that all the EC's founding treaties have confirmed that educational policy should be determined at national rather than European level, although the treaty on the European Union does contain a clause enabling the European Commission to encourage cooperation between member states.

While the European Community in the early 1990s restricted itself to primarily promoting mutual recognition of skills between member states and stimulating mobility among university students and teachers, the European Commission entered the field around the mid-1990s as a much more active player, increasingly seeking to foster debate over lifelong learning as a means of enhancing economic competitiveness in Europe and, from the late 1990s, to support the development of active citizenship. Another change in the European Community approach can be noted in as much as it has moved from a relatively focused concern with measures designed to underpin the completion of the single market to the design of a comprehensive framework within its member states, where each will develop national policy measures in the pursuit of lifelong learning.

This comprehensive framework is formulated in the EC Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (2000), which primarily addresses issues pertaining to employability and active citizenship development. The EC Memorandum was followed by a communication on lifelong learning from the Commission. National lifelong learning priorities were analysed in a recent review undertaken by CEDEFOP on official policy concerns expressed by EC member states in connection with the national consultation process leading to the finalisation of the EC Memorandum on Lifelong Learning. The study concluded that eight of the present member states found that these two aspects – employability and citizenship development – were equally important, while seven found that citizenship development was the single most important issue – and none said that employability was the most important issue in its own right.

Compared to the present EC member states, the candidate countries in Eastern Europe assign greater emphasis to the role of the state, the formal education systems and government policies and give less attention to social partnership development, combined investments undertaken jointly by governments and the private sector and flexible individualised learning in non-formal learning systems.

There is in recent years within EC however general political consensus on supporting lifelong learning involving the labour-market organisations, and at European level the employers' associations and the trade unions are increasingly playing an active role in the promotion of lifelong learning.

3.3 Approaches in Asia and Europe

Generally, the state tends to play a stronger coordinating and planning role in Asia than in Europe. In many Asian countries, education policy has traditionally been highly centralised and largely geared towards the requirements of nation building. This characteristic has often led to rather tight feedback loops between skill requirements and the outputs of the education and training systems as well as to a state of affairs where trade and industry policies tend to be clearly set out at national levels. While this system in many cases initially focused on the production of new labour market entrants, it has in some countries been successfully adapted to support continuous upgrading for those already on the labour market. Employers still largely perceive the state's interest in human resource development as legitimate.

In many European countries, continuous upgrading of the labour force has largely been perceived as the responsibility of employer and employee organisations with relatively limited direct involvement by government, and tripartite systems have been developed in the area of, for instance, adult vocational education and training. The rise of interest in lifelong learning has therefore awakened some concern among some employers about the government interfering in areas that have traditionally been a private concern. On the other hand, it has also led to renewed discussion of how closer cooperation and partnerships between governments, associations and companies can be developed to promote lifelong learning.

The policies on lifelong learning have in many Asian countries been related to national developments of K-Economies and have largely focused on two main aspects, namely upgrading the academic and vocational skills of the growing number of new entrants on the labour market through the formal education system and upgrading general skills in adult numeracy and literacy through the non-formal system.

In response to recent OECD reports showing that relatively high proportions of the adult population lack general skills deemed adequate in a knowledge society, European countries have also focused on upgrading the numeracy and literacy skills of disadvantaged adults. A major difference between Europe and Asia, however, is that the policies implemented in Europe during the late 1990s have increasingly focused on European as opposed to national agendas and, furthermore, that many European countries have assigned relatively high priority to the issue of lifelong learning as a remedy for unemployment with a view to ensuring social cohesion and active citizenship.

Both Asia and Europe have realised that lifelong learning cannot be successfully promoted by governments acting alone, and it is often asserted that lifelong learning requires the creation of partnerships with organisations involved in various types of learning. In Europe, this principle has tended to take a rather formal shape, as governments in most European states have engaged in formalised consultations with trade unions and employers' associations on the framework and development of learning. This has supported the development of general consensus for modernising reforms, but, as a side effect, it has in some cases tended to inhibit the extent to which the new systems could meet the needs of adults and other groups.

Policy Frameworks

Policy Focus

Partnerships

In Asia, employees' and employers' associations tend to play a more complex role and are thus consulted in a less formalised manner. Furthermore, governments tend to involve various other social groups, and in some countries religious institutions, in their lifelong learning consultations.

Industrial Structures

Although Asia is very heterogeneous with regard to industrial structures - some countries are characterised by strong agricultural structures and family-based micro-enterprises, while other countries are characterised by large-scale companies integrated in the global economy - Asia and Europe do share some characteristics. *Firstly*, in both Asia and Europe, a growing proportion of industry is owned by international companies and thus organised as part of huge industrial complexes. *Secondly*, these organisations are rapidly expanding and changing from industrial to service- and information-oriented activities. As a result, there is a common challenge related to the transformation of skill structures.





4:





LIFELONG LEARNING CHALLENGES SHARED BY ASIA AND EUROPE

The globalisation process is adding to the tremendous rise in complexity being experienced by most governments in policy formulation and implementation. Lifelong learning in many ways marks a paradigm shift, i.e. by replacing the traditional emphasis on education and training opportunities supplied by systems and institutions at times and places largely reflecting the present capacity of providers with a focus on the demand for actual acquisition of learning in many different settings reflecting the changing needs over the lifetime of the individual.

Policy Implementation

Lifelong learning also serves numerous purposes such as active citizenship, personal fulfilment, employability and social inclusion and embraces learning at primary, secondary, tertiary as well as continuing levels acquired in formal, non-formal and informal settings.

Due to the complexity of lifelong learning, it is highly difficult for governments to formulate and implement lifelong learning policies or even to anticipate the likely impact of future decisions, some of which may have unintended consequences. One common problem seems to be that privileged segments of the population are in the best position to actually take advantage of lifelong learning services offered by the government and companies.

If lifelong learning is not to lead to increasing skills gaps and higher levels of social inequality, policy implementation must not only address the provision of initial and continuing education and training, but also, and particularly, how lifelong learning can be made more accessible for the least skilled segments of the population.

As stated above, lifelong learning by definition takes place within an individual perspective, that is to say, within the learners themselves. Governments and their institutions may support the learning process by supplying infrastructure, incentives, etc. and thus shape and influence the behaviour of individuals, families, communities and companies, but they do not control the learning processes. Learners' aspirations are not necessarily identical with those of the government. This may lead to a distortion of the government's goals, since it is individuals themselves who decide to what use the acquired learning will be put, and this may in some cases conflict with the declared objectives of the lifelong learning activities.

Risk of Goal Distortion

While incentives may engage new partners in the promotion of lifelong learning, they may also lead to subversion and even misuse. Incentives may also lead to rent-seeking behaviour in terms of individuals or groups becoming adept at gaining government grants, and this in turn could reinforce clientelism and patronage in the communities; effects potentially in conflict with government policies aimed at ensuring the active participation of said communities.

As a consequence of the difficulties of actually measuring the outcome of investments in learning, human capital theory has been gaining ground over the past 40 years, partly because it operates with relatively simple indicators. Traditionally, the value of human capital has been measured by economists by means of proxy indicators such as years of schooling, gross/net enrolment rates and retention rates. This may – despite admittedly being far from perfect – have been sufficient in the past,

Measurement and Evaluation

where the focus was on measuring education and training systems provided by governments in the public domain.

Due to the fact that lifelong learning comes in many different guises and its content and settings are characterised by considerable diversity, the ways in which measurable indicators can be operationalised for the purpose of research and policy evaluation clearly merit investigation. This has far-reaching implications for policy making and it is imperative that more attention be paid to this issue.

Investments in Lifelong Learning

Investments in human and social capital are unlike other forms of investment in that they are inseparable from the borrower. Within the realm of lifelong learning, where there is virtually no public control over the outcomes of learning processes except through measures delimiting the learning experience, the return on investment is very uncertain as it is subject to decisions made by individuals regarding the type and level of learning sought and – importantly – the actual utilisation of the learning acquired.

This investment risk applies to government ministries and employers as well as to individuals considering a commitment to a programme of learning. Consequently, direct intervention by the state is imperative to offset any differential in interest rates accruing from the perception of risk. Many examples bear witness to the fact that the provision of financial support is best managed by organising lifelong learning by means of partnerships involving several stakeholders, which diminishes the risk to any one actor or sector.

With regard to inclusion in lifelong learning activities, it has generally been found across OECD member states that there were considerable variations within certain sectors as well as at either end of the life cycle. This implies that segments of the population in certain sectors as well as younger and older segments do not fully participate in lifelong learning activities, which possibly contributes to the social- and labour-market-related exclusion of these groups.

With regard to incentives, it has been found that investments from private sources recently increased as compared to those from the public sector, despite the fact that the internal rate of return from investments in lifelong learning is not written in stone, thus implying that a number of factors affect internal rate of return calculations. Among those factors, the cost of foregone earnings appears to be decisive. Furthermore, recognition of prior learning reduces learning time and thus learning costs.

However, it has also been concluded that benefits from lifelong learning are difficult to measure, as lifelong learning serves multiple purposes. Thus more work is needed to develop methodologies and produce data to conclusively determine the benefits – related to social as well as human capital – to be derived from lifelong learning.

Institutional Framework

Lifelong learning is by definition a complex and diverse area of policy development cutting across existing institutional boundaries because learning takes place in a variety of settings and must be accessible for different segments of the population. Most governments have assigned service provision to line ministries responsible for their respective areas. However, as lifelong learning transgresses existing institutional boundaries, the application of this modality runs the risk of compartmentalising the provision of lifelong learning opportunities.



This represents an enormous challenge for policy makers, who have to formulate, monitor and evaluate the impact of policy decisions across a number of ministries and departments.

While this section has primarily explored lifelong learning challenges shared by Europe and Asia, the next section will present common visions for development and continued cooperation in the field of lifelong learning among ASEM countries.



5:





VISIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Globalisation and the rapid development of knowledge-based economies and societies in general lead to the demand for new skills and competences. In an increasingly globalised world, improved competitiveness, increased welfare and the utilisation of human resources to the full will only be possible if active measures are taken to ensure opportunities for all to acquire skills and competences throughout their entire life. To master this new area of knowledge, comprehensive policies and strategies are required to maintain social cohesion and bring about a change in mindsets to foster a learning culture and the development of both human and social capital in society at large.

The ASEM countries share the view that the promotion of lifelong learning plays a crucial role in the pursuit of the overall goal of building an inclusive society and ensuring sustainable economic growth in the future. To achieve this end, lifelong learning policies should promote employability and active citizenship and work towards social inclusion and the personal fulfilment of individuals by offering equal opportunities for learning.

These objectives must be seen as equally important for the successful development of lifelong learning policies and practices, since they complement and support each other. Supporting these objectives in a complementary manner is a key challenge to all ASEM countries and requires that ASEM countries find and maintain a balanced approach to the development of lifelong learning that incorporates solutions promoting both employability and active citizenship.

In the ASEM countries, lifelong learning is widely recognized as the overarching concept for the development and implementation of policies and appropriate frameworks to promote access, investments, adequate approaches and learning opportunities including formal, non-formal and informal learning for all citizens in a lifespan perspective.

Lifelong learning opportunities must stimulate and empower individuals to acquire all the knowledge, competences and values they require and apply them with confidence, creativity and personal aspiration in their working as well as their social life. This includes all learning activities undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and, not least, employment-related perspective.

Reflecting national economic and social developments and priorities, the ASEM countries have chosen different lifelong learning strategies leading to considerable differences in approaches and traditions. These should be recognised, protected and sustained in the future. Despite the vast differences in policies and national experiences, it is acknowledged that the promotion of lifelong learning requires a coherent development of policies, frameworks and practices reflecting national economic, social and cultural characteristics and values.

Investment in human resources and the creation of opportunities for lifelong learning must be seen as a strategic prerequisite for all ASEM countries to ensure sustainable social development and economic growth. Policies to develop a skilled and well-educated workforce are thus vital for all ASEM countries in the promotion of economic growth and the well-being of all citizens. The ASEM countries

Overall vision

Promotion of Lifelong Learning

Investments and provision

share the view that lifelong learning policies must support a general rise in the level of skills and competences of citizens in terms of basic and vocational competences as well as high-level skills.

Promoting lifelong learning for all as a key principle for further development not only requires particular attention to public investments but also the development of adequate legal and practical frameworks covering the whole spectrum of education and training including basic, vocational, continuing and higher education and training. Public investments and appropriate frameworks are just one aspect of a broad set of measures required to promote lifelong learning, thus it must be assigned high priority as a major responsibility of governments.

The ASEM countries acknowledge the need to review and conduct reforms regarding funding and provision of high quality education and training with special attention to the promotion of learning opportunities designed to suit individual needs and, not least, disadvantaged groups in the labour market. The ASEM countries share the view that particular attention must be paid to strengthening equal opportunities for learning and increasing efforts to close gender gaps in education, training and employment in order to avoid social exclusion and promote employability, personal fulfilment and active participation in social life.

The successful transition to a knowledge-based economy and building an inclusive society can only be achieved through the effective utilisation of resources to develop skills and competences. In the ASEM countries, non-formal and informal learning are seen as equally important as formal learning for the development of social as well as human capital in society. Companies constitute important areas for learning and the development of skills and competences. Financing and provision of learning opportunities through working life have been and will continue to be a task of increasing importance for companies.

Partnerships for Lifelong Learning

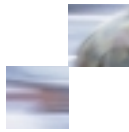
Increased coherence between different public policies and formal, non-formal and informal education and training provision must be assigned high priority. The link between working life and education systems must be strengthened with a view to ensuring the acquisition of skills and promoting recognition of skills acquired through work experience and prior learning. National frameworks for assessing, and recognising skills and competences accepted by all major actors and stakeholders can be seen as one important factor in facilitating lifelong learning.

Stakeholders of the civic society play an important part in the creation of knowledge, skills and social values through learning, particularly at regional and local levels, by providing community-based learning opportunities. Fostering skills for the knowledge society taking all forms of learning into account is a major challenge to all ASEM countries. This challenge can only be met by ensuring a range of measures to facilitate lifelong learning in all settings as well as developing adequate frameworks for pursuing collaboration among all relevant actors and stakeholders.

Although the ASEM countries have chosen different approaches to introduce comprehensive and coherent strategies and policies for lifelong learning, they do recognize that putting lifelong learning into practice requires increased dialogue and cooperation in a variety of partnerships including governments, relevant national, regional and local bodies, education and training institutions, organisations representing employers and employees and civic actors. Particular attention must be paid to closer cooperation and a better interplay between providers of formal, non-formal and informal learning.

There is a strong awareness in ASEM countries of the need to identify new approaches to further the development of learning opportunities of a high quality. To strengthen investment in improving overall quality in terms of both the output and the outcome of education and training for individuals, companies and society at large must become a central feature of policy initiatives and of the provision of lifelong learning programmes and opportunities in education and training institutions, companies and local communities.

The ASEM countries share the view that the promotion of lifelong learning requires a strong political commitment. The work undertaken within the ASEM Initiative on Lifelong Learning has clearly shown that lifelong learning must be put high on national agendas to improve employability, sustainable growth and active participation in social life.



6:



KEY THEMES IN LIFELONG LEARNING IN ASEM COUNTRIES

As previously described, lifelong learning can be seen as serving several main purposes at societal as well as individual levels, namely to ensure a qualified labour force to sustain economic growth, ensure active citizenship, sustain social inclusion as well as to provide the basis for the fulfilment of man. While the visions on lifelong learning outlined in section 5 of this report are based on the policy discussions conducted at international conferences under the ASEM Initiative on Lifelong Learning, they are also supported by the work carried out by specialists in the thematic working groups established under the initiative. The thematic working groups have focused on the following themes:

- Adequate development of basic work- and life-related skills and competences that complement each other in order to allow all segments of the population to participate actively in education, society and the labour market;
- Appropriate development of integrated approaches to lifelong learning, where forms of learning in different settings complement each other and where skills and competences acquired in formal, non-formal and informal learning situations will be valued and recognized;
- Policies stipulating the development of lifelong learning systems as well as incentives facilitating the involvement of key stakeholders from the public and private sector, whose roles should be perceived as complementary.

To date, representatives from the ASEM countries have held numerous discussions in the working groups as well as at the international conferences to identify thematic challenges to the promotion of further access to lifelong learning and have analysed good thematic practices in the ASEM member countries in light of these challenges through more than 100 case studies. Based on this work, key areas for policy and practical implementation and cooperation have been identified within each theme.

The thematic challenges, the conclusions from the analyses of good national practices as well as key thematic areas for further cooperation are further described in the thematic reports published under separate cover and will be summarised below.

6.1 Ensuring Basic Skills for All

Main Challenges

In light of the general aims of lifelong learning mentioned above, the implementation of policies and practical measures to foster the acquisition of basic skills and competences within the workforce and the population is seen as a core component of lifelong learning strategies among the ASEM countries. While the actual appreciation of the concept of basic skills should be seen within a national context, and national differences therefore do exist, a number of common challenges facing all ASEM countries have nevertheless been identified.

Firstly, it should be noted that, while the globalisation process affects more and more countries, the actual nature of its impact varies not only between countries but also within the boundaries of indi-



vidual countries due to the fact that the globalisation process also contributes to regional differences and thus potentially to increasing differences in the livelihood conditions of various segments of the population. In light of growing regional differences, one general challenge faced by all ASEM countries is to ensure access to basic skills for all segments of the population.

Secondly, it should also be noted that the globalisation process leads to such drastic and rapid changes that many countries have found the term basic skills, which has a narrow connotation, to be inadequate in the context of the knowledge society and have, therefore, increasingly focused on the concept of basic competences. Thus another general challenge faced by all ASEM member states is to develop learning systems that ensure access to adequate basic competences.

Good Practices

The focus of the work to evaluate good national practices in ensuring basic skills for all has especially been targeted at identifying good practices regarding promotion of participation and social inclusion through provision of learning in terms of delivery of programmes at institutional level. The studies on good national practices bear witness to the strong and rapid promotion and enlargement of national lifelong learning initiatives and underline the value of trans-national exchanges of experience in order to understand different mechanisms and solutions regarding the implementation of frameworks, measures and institutional change supporting the participation in and the outcomes of learning.

Flexible learning approaches and providers

The most significant finding from the case studies is the development towards learner need and learner-centred approaches to learning and training processes. This approach is characterised by the differentiation of learning initiatives, learner outcome sensitivity, community relevance and tangible support.

Another significant finding is the move towards the flexible learning provider. This involves projects or institutions that are able to provide learning and training in dynamic and tailor-made modes that draw on the diversity of learners or groups of learners. The role of the teacher is changing into a person who can design learning initiatives and alter the learning environment to suit the needs of both the learner and the community. Teaching and counselling are increasingly being assigned equal status and their interrelation is explicitly acknowledged. Pedagogy is moving from the class-room into the communities, and projects are trying out initiatives where the interaction between formal, non-formal and informal training and learning is developed in new ways.

Enhanced participation

A number of projects try out a variety of incentives to combat social exclusion by motivating excluded groups to take part in learning. This requires learning possibilities spanning from a personal one-to-one level, where training and advisory services are combined, over working in small and site-based groups, to more traditional training. The process is strengthened by counselling or financial and logistic incentives to ease entrance and improve motivation. The use of media and broadcasts has in some cases proved to be a successful way of reaching out to learners traditionally excluded from the educational system.

To strengthen participation and transparency, new systems of accreditation have been developed. Experience to date has shown that innovative measures, both in national education systems and in a cross-national context, are required to facilitate the exchange of competences and to afford a broader view. This is intimately connected with another important finding: the promotion of lifelong learn-

ing seems to be most successful when based on partnership models, i.e. when stakeholders join forces to provide financial support and share responsibility

Key Areas for Policy and Practical Implementation

The case studies have revealed a number of innovative strategies and practical measures to increase participation and promote social inclusion through more flexible and learner-centred provision of education and training programmes to improve basic knowledge and competences in a lifelong perspective.

In terms of ensuring participation in lifelong learning programmes by the adult population, and particularly by different vulnerable groups, a number of key principles and areas for further development may be highlighted as being of particular importance for the successful provision of "basic skills for all":

Participation requires an active involvement of the participants in the learning process, in the selection of learning objectives and in the planning of the content of the learning process. This requires that learning activities be based on active involvement and participation of all relevant users in the design of the programmes. The social inclusion of vulnerable groups in particular may require strong involvement and tailor-made learning processes targeting vulnerable groups.

The learning programmes must to the highest possible extent be community related. To improve participation, learners must be able to recognise the relevance in their local or regional context where they will utilise the abilities gained from the learning process. The learning environment must provide tangible support in order to solve some of the logistic problems that vulnerable learners in particular might face and that can create barriers for stronger participation (transport, childcare, opening hours, etc.)

The learning programmes must be developed and designed in such a way as to provide labour-market-related competences promoting employability as well as to enhance participants' potential to take an active part in social life and create a basis for active citizenship. This requires a clear understanding of the interrelation between employability and active citizenship, and the development of learning approaches that integrate and support these objectives

The delivery of "learning" itself is yet another key field for intervention to support future changes and developments. It can be noted that there is a major shift from the learning process as a schooling process towards a conception of the learning process that emphasises the outcome for individual learners. This changes the learning process from a standardised process to a tailor-made and situated mode. This has a strong impact on the organisation and methods of learning and, not least, significant implications for the future role of the teacher.

It is a great challenge to most educational institutions to develop flexible provision and delivery of education and training programmes in such a way as to reach different target groups in accordance with the needs and expectation of the various users. This is not only important to ensure the participation of people who need or wish to attend but also in the sense that it may be an important factor affecting motivation and the personal outcome of the learning process. The promotion of flexible delivery in terms of time, place, learning methods and materials are key areas for further development at institutional level to enable institutions to adapt programmes to suit new target groups.

Active involvement

Community relevance

Integrated learning

Provision

Flexibility

The implementation of new approaches requires a redefinition of the role of the teacher and possibly a change in mindsets among teachers and their organisations. It may also require further investments in teacher training and locally based activities to develop and create the competences needed to organise learning activities in new ways.

A more dynamic conception of the role of the teacher and more flexible learning modes require institutional change, as increasing emphasis is placed on teambuilding, collaborative learning systems, utilisation of ICT and involvement with the community as a learning environment. Such institutional change will alter the traditional organisational position of the institution from an "island in the community" towards a network organisation that will depend on its ability to establish relations and turn these relations into benefits and outcomes for learners.

6.2 Integrated Approaches to Lifelong Learning and Recognition of Prior Learning

Main Challenges

There is a common understanding that lifelong learning strategies need to meet several main aims, namely to ensure and sustain employability for all, to enhance active citizenship and personal fulfilment and limit social exclusion. Given these ambitious and far-reaching aims, ASEM countries have realised that integrated national policies supporting these aims must be developed. Furthermore, in the development of national strategies, attention must be paid to all kinds of learning including formal, non-formal and informal learning taking place in a variety of settings.

In recent years, a major shift towards developing learner-centred learning possibilities has taken place in most ASEM countries. However, still stronger emphasis needs to be placed on transparent and coherent education and training systems as well as on coordinated strategies for lifelong learning covering both educational and labour-market policies and practices.

Coherent strategies for integrated approaches to lifelong learning must take into consideration the great variety of learning settings. Thus a main challenge to the ASEM countries in promoting lifelong learning is to develop sustained strategies that reflect integrated approaches to formal learning, non-formal workplace learning as well as informal leisure-time learning.

Since lifelong learning focuses on the personal learning of the individual, ASEM countries face a joint challenge in constructing support systems for this type of learning process. The learning processes, the pedagogical tools and the organisation of learning therefore need to be adaptable to the different needs, expectations and motivations of individual learners. Developing learner partnerships as well as flexible and individualised learning environments successfully reflecting the needs and expectations of learners is therefore another joint challenge faced by ASEM countries.

Good Practices

The case studies presenting good national practices on integrated approaches and recognition of prior learning have clearly pointed to the fact that the comprehensive nature of the notion of lifelong learning together with the complexity of securing adequate access to lifelong learning opportunities for all segments of the population call for the development and application of integrated approach-

es to lifelong learning. While the actual substance of integrated approaches should reflect national characteristics and thus varies between ASEM countries, it has been found that the formulation of strategies on integrated approaches should be based on national assessments of the following factors:

- Systems – i.e. combination of learning in formal, non-formal and informal systems;
- Learning fora - i.e. relations between institutional learning, workplace learning and social learning;
- Competence areas – i.e. combinations between specific/technical competences, general competences and personal competences;
- Types of learning – general learning, vocational learning and liberal learning.

As learning may be acquired in many different systems and fora and even target different aspects of competences, the studies of good national practices also point to the fact that there is a general need to develop systems for assessment of prior learning (APL) acquired in different settings with a view to ensuring transferability of learning. APL therefore constitutes a substantial element in integrated approaches to lifelong learning. However, the purpose and substance of APL systems may vary, and it has been found that the following perspectives should be considered in the development of national APL systems:

Firstly, when specifying the aims of APL systems, a distinction should be made between:

- APL targeting recognition of prior knowledge and skills with a view to facilitating credit transfer for students entering training and education programmes;
- APL used in connection with national standards targeting recruitment of staff;
- APL targeting career development in the workplace.

Secondly, a distinction also has to be made between whether the APL system is primarily designed to target vertical aspects, that is, assessing vertical competence development within one line of employment, or to target horizontal aspects related to the assessment of prior learning enabling the learner to change career path. Most countries are facing the challenge of combining the above facets in ways that adequately respond to the social, economic and cultural context and characteristics of the individual country, and national aims for integrated approaches to lifelong learning and APL systems therefore differ substantially.

Key Areas for Policy and Practical Implementation

In the work undertaken within the ASEM initiative regarding integrated approaches to lifelong learning and recognition of prior learning, a number of key areas where ASEM countries could benefit from continued and intensified cooperation have been identified. These are:

In order to avoid fragmented and compartmentalised lifelong learning approaches, national governments need to establish coherent overall education and learning strategies. This requires a multi-faceted approach to the policy development process itself to gather adequate data cutting across existing institutional boundaries, and consultations with key stakeholders with a view to responding to considerations of supply and demand for lifelong learning opportunities.

The focus on equity in providing learning for the many and not the few is of essential importance when formulating and implementing strategies for integrated approaches to lifelong learning. A re-

assessment of the role and scope of teaching and training institutions together with the adequate development of learning infrastructures promoting access to learning are of primary importance. Another important issue is the promotion of learning cultures in communities and vulnerable segments of the population so as to ensure that all are not only afforded learning opportunities but also equipped to utilise them.

Partnerships

Due to its complexity, lifelong learning may appear an overwhelming task and, consequently, responsibility may be assigned to one party only. Thus there is a need to develop effective and inclusive partnerships that share responsibility for different aspects of lifelong learning. These partnerships may – subject to national characteristics – not only cover areas such as involvement in strategy formulation and provision of learning opportunities but should also include acceptance of the concept of co-investments in lifelong learning.

Flexible learning opportunities

In light of the emphasis on individual learning, one principle for the development of integrated learning approaches is that learning opportunities should be based on an appreciation of the importance of providing a variety of diversified learning opportunities to all segments of the population. Due to the importance of human resource development in the knowledge society, another principle is the dual acknowledgement of the need for quality as well as flexibility in the provision of learning opportunities

Integration of learning settings

There is, as stated earlier, a need for securing the development of approaches and systems to integrate learning acquired in formal, non-formal and informal settings. In this regard, it is generally important that various forms of learning in different learning contexts are combined so as to overcome the fragmented provision of training and learning opportunities. There is also a specific need to further analyse and explore interfaces between development of general and vocational competences and, particularly, interfaces between workplace learning and formal learning.

Development of APL systems

The development of national standards for the recognition of competences acquired in different learning settings occupies a central place in the discussion of national APL systems, as APL systems must be recognised by many stakeholders to be effective. In order to support individuals in pursuing personal aspirations as well as to facilitate the functioning of the labour market, it is important to maintain a focus on methods and tools for the assessment of individual competences. This calls for partnerships between government and stakeholders inside and outside the labour market in order to develop adequate lifelong learning approaches ensuring the provision of training based on recognition of prior learning and competences acquired in the labour market and in society.

6.3 Policies and Incentives to Promote Access to Lifelong Learning

Main Challenges

Policies and incentives for lifelong learning must, to some extent, be seen in relation to the discourse of the global economy and the increasing globalisation of economies and trade. Since economies in their turn are becoming increasingly dependent on knowledge and information, strong political emphasis needs to be oriented towards education, learning and human resource development. There is on the other hand a risk that globalisation may lead to substantial inequality of opportunities, poverty and social and cultural exclusion. Rapid technological and industrial change in production

calls for a stronger political emphasis on lifelong learning in order to prevent marginalized groups from social and cultural exclusion from the labour market and from society as such.

Increased investment in the development of human resources, both publicly and privately, is, as such, a prerequisite for continued economic and social development. Despite much rhetoric about the need for continuous education and training, many people still lack access to learning, particularly those with only basic education and skill assets.

The globalisation of education and learning itself is a large challenge to national policies. The increasing trade in education services provides new ways of delivery of education and learning. New technologies will open up new delivery of knowledge and skills and new teaching and learning arrangements that evade the traditional operational modes.

Providers of lifelong learning must not simply provide education and training but also "produce" citizens who are aware of their own individual surroundings and of the society of which they are members. Government, social partners and other stakeholders are therefore facing the joint challenge of securing access to lifelong learning to promote employability as well as active citizenship, social inclusion and personal fulfilment.

Good Practices

The case studies on policy and practice in lifelong learning in ASEM countries have sought to identify the main barriers to participation and the kinds of incentives that have been operationalised to help overcome these barriers. There are two key target groups in particular that governments have been targeting in their policies for lifelong learning; namely adults who did not benefit from mass second-level education and early school leavers who, in sizeable minorities, fail to complete second level.

In terms of the overall social and economical purpose of lifelong learning, two policy concerns are pre-eminent. Chief among them is the concern by governments in rapidly globalising economies to maintain the competitiveness of their respective workforces. While there are differences in emphasis in terms of approach, ranging from one that focuses on basic learning to acquire skills, to a much more instrumental, tightly focused vocational orientation, the purpose of human capital development remains paramount. A second policy goal, but one which is less evident than the former, is that of social cohesion. While many policies identify cohesion as an aspiration, it is not always clear if their impact is one of enhancing cohesion. Indeed, there is some evidence that the advantages to be gained from participation in lifelong learning accrue to those who have already been most advantaged in early life and education.

Furthermore, a main challenge of educational provisions is how to encourage learning and motivate individuals to participate in education and learning processes throughout life. Lack of motivation of adult learners is a significant barrier to further access to lifelong learning in many ASEM countries. There seems to be a distinction between the needs and demands of societies and enterprises for improving learning in all fields and the needs and expectations of human beings in general. Incentives to promote motivation for learning therefore play a crucial role in the ASEM countries' overall policies. The learning process is a private matter, and therefore policies relating to motivation and to engagement in learning are highly complex. Learners' needs and aspirations are complex as well and call for a synergism involving multiple incentives, which take into account the many facets

Enhancing social
inclusion

Motivation

of human motivation. Furthermore, inadequate learning infrastructures, lack of basic skills, lack of access to ICT and social and work settings that do not value learning all constitute barriers and obstacles that hinder access to lifelong learning.

Concepts of e-learning and distance education are examples of policies and practices as to how new learning settings and flexible offers of education and training can be developed in order to include new target groups of learners, especially those with the lowest skills and/or those being culturally or socially excluded from learning. Adequate ICT infrastructures might have a positive impact on access to digital global learning in all countries.

There is a strong need for partnership among public authorities, social partners, training providers and civil society to put policies and measures into place, which would enhance motivation and promote further access to training and learning activities, not least targeting the group of people with the lowest level of skills. Incentives should adequately support participation and investments in education and training.

Key Areas for Policy and Practical Implementation

The identified crosscutting issues in the good national practices mentioned above are, naturally, areas for further action in order to secure policies and incentives that promote access to lifelong learning. The following areas are common to all identified good practices and therefore constitute key areas for action:

Communication & Cooperation

Since there is a noticeable bias in the contributions as they reflect the mandate and legitimate interests of contributing ministries, it is strategically desirable to ensure that the various departments and ministries work co-operatively, if not synergistically, in similar undertakings both nationally and internationally. Therefore inter-/intra-ministry communication and cooperation both nationally and internationally is vital in order to secure a coherent and integrated policy that provides lifelong learning for all.

Targets for Learning

Recent years have seen a major governmental thrust in several countries in the direction of lifelong learning. While comprehensive, primary and second-level systems are in place in all the countries looked at, and most also have a well-developed third-level sector, 'out of school' provision is not so systematised. It is recommended, therefore, that governments set targets for learning for their respective out of school population and that these are carefully monitored. It may be considered that such targets are set within agreed national learning strategies.

Finance

There exist various models of financing lifelong learning dependent on the different national contexts. Arguably the key issue here is that of learning as a private/public good. A concern with learning as a public good would prioritise public funding for those who are socially/economically or educationally disadvantaged and those from whom a 'multiplier effect' of the education investment can be expected. In this regard, the advantages of concentrating education investment on mothers in terms of its positive spin-off for the education of children should be noted.

If governments are to guard against the regressive tendencies of participation in adult education in particular, investment must positively discriminate in favour of those who have benefited least from early life education. This calls for considering to what extent students should be expected to pay fees

for such courses, and the need for other financial rewards in order to reduce the opportunity costs of participation.

For those for whom fees may be less of a concern and/or for whom the returns on investment are likely to reside more in the private than in the public domain, there is less justification for government investment and a stronger case for the employer and/or participant to bear the cost of the programme. The review has instanced a number of useful models such as loans, individual learning accounts and training leave from work, which have the potential for wider application.

Generally a credentialist education system relies primarily on limiting access to courses in guaranteeing quality, and only secondarily on supervising the exit from such courses. A policy for widening access would fundamentally shift the focus of quality control from the entry point to the exit point. It would also change the focus of assessment from standard, end of term, terminal examinations to a more flexible, less time specific and criteria referenced model. On the basis of the cases explored in this review, it would appear essential that policies for lifelong learning move in this direction at the supply side if generalised access is to be provided.

The case studies also document that considerable progress is being made in many countries in putting in place comprehensive credit transfer and progression arrangements within the overall education and training systems of each individual country, although this is less evident between countries. Such comprehensive, relatively seamless qualifications and accreditation frameworks are an essential element of a comprehensive lifelong learning system.

Flexible access criteria must also be reflected in flexible, more differentiated delivery systems involving different public/private partnerships. The expansion in self-directed learning, the increasing utilisation of ICT in supporting distance and e-learning and the increasing modularisation of provision were all in evidence in the countries looked at, and clearly illustrate the ever-widening modalities of participation in lifelong learning.

Consistent with widely shared ideologies of lifelong learning, government policy should be underpinned by a commitment to supporting its individual citizens to take responsibility for their own learning. The provision of a comprehensive adult guidance and counselling service is an essential component of such a commitment. A service such as this has been developed in some of the countries looked at. This particular service is predicated on close community engagement and clearly sees its role as embracing a 'capacity building' dimension as well as one of pure information and counselling. The capacity building function of such a service is particularly important in contexts where motivation to participate may be low and where the returns on such participation may not be evident or are not the most pressing priority.

A number of official reports have cogently argued the case for the necessity for highly skilled educators in underpinning a comprehensive lifelong learning provision. In addition, educational institutions should consider themselves primarily as learning facilitators and not merely as repositories of established standardised knowledge. There is a perceived need for a paradigm shift in outlook from "education" to "learning" within these institutions. This also calls for a reappraisal of teacher training with the appropriate emphasis on promoting reflective facilitated learning and a range of appropriate methodologies, with the ability to adapt curricula flexibly as needed.

Accessibility and flexibility

Guidance and counselling

Governments should counsel and encourage citizens to adopt and adapt to the new paradigm of lifelong learning and to take responsibility for their own learning. Furthermore, during the period of state compulsory education, learning facilitators should inculcate in their charges both a desire for learning and a personal responsibility for the same and encourage these values .

Inter-Culturalism

In a period of rapid globalisation and increasing patterns of population movement, the objective of inter-culturalism is less prominent in the case studies than might have been expected. As recent world events have shown, the challenges of cultural co-existence, and the possibility of serious inter-cultural frictions, are greatly increased by globalisation. It is recommended, therefore, that this issue be prioritised in lifelong learning policies at national and international levels.

Furthermore, with the advent of trans-national provision of learning opportunities via the Internet and other electronic arrangements and with the recent WTO decisions on regarding education as a trade commodity, there is growing concern at the possible convergence to a dominant mono-cultural point of view.

Moreover, as the process of individuation as well as self and community identity are linked to a consumer attitude to learning (whether to content, process or finished product), consumers must be afforded appropriate consumer protection, while facility providers in the global market should be subject to the same producer obligations as obtain for other goods and services.



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FUTURE COOPERATION BETWEEN ASEM MEMBER STATES

Since its inception in 1994 and actual establishment in 1996, ASEM has developed into a framework for cooperation between Asian and European countries, which can be characterised as being multi-dimensional, as political, economical and cultural activities constitute the three pillars of the cooperation supplementing each other and facilitating broad consensus. The ASEM cooperation is pursued between equal partners, facilitating processes of mutual interest and priority based on dialogue and consensus at both political and practical levels, which supplements rather than duplicates cooperation anchored in other multilateral and bilateral fora. Finally, the cooperation focus at the highest political levels, which is secured through the vital role performed by heads of states meetings, should be stressed.

Furthermore, as a non-funding organisation, ASEM is not in a position to directly cover expenses related to the recommendations made under the Lifelong Learning Initiative. International cooperation within the ASEM framework is therefore based on the voluntary and self-financed involvement of governments, their institutions and other stakeholders in lifelong-learning-related activities.

The recommendations provided in this report are based on the work and discussions undertaken by the initiative to fulfil the mandate of the ASEM Lifelong Learning Initiative and build on the understanding that:

- Policy advice on lifelong learning is important to promote and firmly establish lifelong learning on national political agendas as part of future continued ASEM cooperation;
- Establishment of international networks on lifelong learning to promote dissemination is regarded as a bridge to national responses and needs and must be prioritised as a way to strengthen exchange of knowledge;
- Finally, scope for potential practical pilot activities involving institutions in ASEM countries to be continued after the ASEM 4 meeting in September 2002 have been developed to serve as a basis for strengthening cooperation among ASEM countries.

7.1 Policy Recommendations on Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning has long been embraced in both Asia and Europe. The first set of recommendations to be presented, policy advice on lifelong learning as a framework for further development and cooperation, should reflect the diversity of the ASEM member countries. Each ASEM member country may – based on historical background and present set of political priorities – chose and prioritise policies on lifelong learning.

Driving the agenda forward, policy advice on lifelong learning must be ambitious and relevant but, on the other hand, also acceptable to all ASEM countries to be able to support interventions and actions aimed at promoting lifelong learning and collaboration among ASEM countries. This report

Overall mandate

Guiding principles

provides recommendations on three sets of guiding principles for further enhancement of lifelong learning strategies contributing to national prioritisation and development of policies and practices.

Based on the work of the thematic working groups established under the initiative and bearing in mind the distinction between government, learning providers and stakeholders representing the learners, these guiding principles are proposed to include the following fields for intervention: *firstly* "Government Policy, Financial and Legal Frameworks", *secondly* "Institutional and Practical Frameworks" and, *thirdly*, "Collaborative Partnership Frameworks".

Government Policy, Financial and Legal Frameworks

In light of the overall aims to enhance employability, active citizenship, social inclusion and personal development, lifelong learning is widely recognized as the overarching concept for the development and implementation of policies and appropriate frameworks and should be seen as the master concept to promote access, investments and equal learning opportunities for all citizens within a lifespan perspective.

As a result and since governments play a vital role in creating the overall framework for development of public lifelong learning, interventions should address the following guiding principles:

- *Firstly*, promotion of lifelong learning requires coherent policy development as well as financial and legal frameworks taking into account all forms of learning, including formal, non-formal and informal learning;
- *Secondly*, incentives supporting the creation of opportunities for lifelong learning require investments by governments, the private sector and learners to promote participation by all segments of the population;
- *Thirdly*, development of legal frameworks covering the whole spectrum of education and training including basic, vocational, and higher and continuing education and learning is of the highest importance to support overall requirements and demands for skills and competences.

Institutional and Practical Frameworks

Provision of lifelong learning requires institutional and practical frameworks at all levels and in different settings to foster the acquisition of skills and competences required for active participation in the knowledge-based economy and in society as such. Existing barriers regarding access to lifelong learning and institutional capacity building promoting quality learning together with the need for increased transparency and coherence in lifelong learning delivery are major concerns in relation to the implementation of lifelong learning programmes.

It is therefore recommended that further development of institutional and practical frameworks should in particular address the following guiding principles:

- *Firstly*, it is important to review and strengthen institutional and practical frameworks to ensure flexible learning infrastructure and provision of high quality education and training designed to suit individual needs and, not least, the disadvantaged groups;
- *Secondly*, the promotion of increased coherence and interplay between formal, non-formal and informal learning systems and learning settings must be given high priority to create adequate learning opportunities and effectively utilize resources available for education and training;

- *Thirdly*, the link between working life and education and training systems must be strengthened to promote recognition of skills acquired through work experience and prior learning through the development of adequate frameworks and measures valuing learning.

In particular, it should be highlighted that lifelong learning cuts across existing institutional boundaries and often falls under the mandate of numerous line ministries, regional bodies and the private sector. Institutional reforms may be required to ensure adequate and more coherent provision of lifelong learning opportunities.

Collaborative Partnership Frameworks

Development and implementation of lifelong learning requires involvement of stakeholders and actors at many levels to promote policies and practices. The importance of building up partnerships in the field of lifelong learning seems to be evident in terms of the overall framework providing legal, financial and practical measures to enhance lifelong learning opportunities. Lifelong learning is such a complex concept that all parts of society have a role to play and, therefore, should be involved in lifelong learning in ways reflecting their respective positions and capacities.

On the other hand, lifelong learning can only be successfully achieved if the desire and motivation to learn is anchored within individual citizens and community- and work-based learning cultures are developed. Promoting the value of learning must therefore also be considered as a key field for intervention and cooperation among the different actors.

In this light, the following set of guiding principles related to initiating and developing frameworks for collaborative partnership is recommended:

- *Firstly*, it is highly recognised that putting lifelong learning into practice requires increased dialogue and cooperation in a variety of partnerships including governments, relevant national, regional and local bodies, education and training institutions, organisations representing employers and employees and the many different civic actors;
- *Secondly*, civic society plays an important role for the creation of knowledge, skills, competences and social values, which must be strengthened to make lifelong learning more accessible and to foster the development of learning cultures and the promotion of the value of learning, particularly by providing community-based learning opportunities at regional and local levels;
- *Thirdly*, workplaces increasingly represent important venues for learning and development of skills and competences pointing to the importance of involving employers' and employees' representatives in the promotion of lifelong learning.

The set of three guiding principles is found in Annex 1 of this report and is further substantiated through inclusion of proposed guiding measures to be considered by the ASEM member countries.

7.2 International Network on Lifelong Learning

One of the conclusions arrived at by the thematic working groups is that there is a need for developing national, regional and international networking frameworks for lifelong learning in order to continue the discourse for follow-up meetings and actions and to sustain the dialogue between Asia and Europe that has been initiated by the ASEM Initiative on Lifelong Learning.

There is therefore a felt need for developing infrastructure to enable exchange of ideas and learning across borders – multicultural learning, intergenerational learning, cultural sensitivity, understanding of different cultures and beliefs, tolerance and cooperation – and to plan and implement joint development programmes in relation to integrated approaches to lifelong learning.

For the Asian and European countries taking part in the ASEM Initiative on Lifelong Learning, the initiative has provided a framework for exchange of experience and ideas, and, furthermore, created a common understanding of national concepts, key issues and visions for future development of lifelong learning in ASEM countries. The experience gained from the initiative therefore clearly points to the mutual benefits to be derived from closer international cooperation.

The ASEM initiative has also led to the initiation and establishment of closer contact between many different actors involved in lifelong learning at a political as well as at a practical level and has demonstrated a strong interest and need across the two regions and their respective countries to promote closer cooperation and initiate concrete partnerships and projects. Closer relations between national authorities, institutions as well as other stakeholders, will be a very important step towards future cooperation and concrete partnerships between the ASEM countries.

ASEM networking

To strengthen future cooperation within lifelong learning, it is recommended that the ASEM countries initiate and organize networking modalities for continued exchange, dissemination and development of lifelong learning approaches, policies, frameworks for provision and learning methods.

It is therefore recommended that the ASEM countries consider the following types of measures in the pursuit of closer cooperation between national authorities, education, training and research institutions, employers' and employee' organisations and civic actors:

Lifelong Learning Centres

ASEM countries may commit to setting up virtual information centres to promote dissemination of publications and other sources of information on web sites to all ASEM countries and to establish research centres to provide research-based knowledge on lifelong learning across the two regions, and, where possible, build on existing institutions and links to international organisations in Asia and Europe.

Thematic Networks

The ASEM Initiative on Lifelong Learning has fostered a number of virtual thematic networks. These networks could be sustained to facilitate virtual thematic network and project clusters in order to promote exchange of information and experiences relating to various lifelong learning themes.

ASEM countries may also organise and host thematic partnership seminars and working groups to explore and develop common approaches to lifelong learning policies and practices and to develop proposals for lifelong learning initiatives and concrete pilot activities.

Furthermore, ASEM countries may organise study visits for policymakers, practitioners and researchers to promote mutual learning by studying lifelong learning policies and practices and by identifying common issues, interests and perspectives for pursuing a closer cooperation on lifelong learning between ASEM countries.

Finally, ASEM countries may organise peer review, case studies and research on lifelong learning in ASEM countries to systematically collect and develop information on lifelong learning policies and practices in Asia and Europe.

Partnership Seminars
and Working Groups

Learning Visits

Lifelong Learning
Reviews Visits

7.3 Pilot Activities

The networking modalities described above represent the practical framework that could constitute the basis for continued cooperation between ASEM countries on lifelong learning. As ASEM is an informal and a non-funding organisation, decision on the actual scope and content of pilot activities to be undertaken in different forms of networks within the ASEM cooperation should be based on the voluntary and self-financed involvement of governments, their institutions and other stakeholders.

Based on the analyses of thematic challenges and good national practices that have been implemented by ASEM countries as responses to these challenges, the thematic working groups and the international conferences have identified a long range of potential issues to be considered by governments when prioritising future collaboration on lifelong learning. Given the magnitude of the identified lifelong learning issues, they are presented in Annex 2 as a long list classified in accordance with the set of three guiding principles to serve as inspiration for national governments, institutions and other stakeholders.

Potential Pilot projects

In order to facilitate future cooperation among ASEM countries the following section presents a number of identified potential pilot activities targeting key issues which have been prioritised on the basis of the work undertaken by the initiative.

Virtual Lifelong Learning Information Centres

Lifelong Learning strategies, approaches and practices are developing with increasing speed and information pertaining to these issues is presently scattered in many different institutions. There is therefore a strong need for compiling and sharing information on lifelong learning policies, approaches and practices. In order to do so, virtual lifelong learning information centres may be established through the assignment of responsibilities to existing Asian and European institutions.

The pilot activity is recommended to target researchers, regulators and practitioners in ASEM countries and to focus on coordination of the compilation of existing knowledge – existing web sites, available funding, various projects undertaken, databases available in Europe and Asia and the dissemination of this information to lifelong learning networks and partnership seminars.

Lifelong Learning Research

Lifelong learning is a policy area characterised by considerable complexity and affected by rapid changes. Updated and comprehensive research is therefore a requirement for formulating relevant lifelong learning policies and strategies. Since much existing research is compartmentalised, it is recommended to initiate research activities on lifelong learning to be jointly undertaken by Asian and European research institutions, i.e. in the form of twinning arrangements. The pilot activity is proposed to target researchers in existing national research institutes and to focus on the identification and formulation of joint research programmes, the coordination and implementation of research programmes on lifelong learning policies, approaches and practices in ASEM countries as well as the dissemination of the research findings to lifelong learning policy makers, fellow academics, regulators and practitioners.

Thematic Network on Basic Competences

The continuously evolving globalisation process determines the basic competences required for actively participating in social activities in the knowledge society as well as in economic activities on the labour market of the K-Economy. In order to ensure social inclusion of all segments of the population, there is a strong need for improving the understanding of factors leading to the redefinition of basic competences as well as of approaches successfully contributing to the acquisition of the required basic competences by vulnerable groups.

It is recommended to target regulators and providers of basic competence and learning to focus on analyses of societal, economic and cultural factors affecting the redefinition of basic competences, on analyses and exchange of information on national approaches towards ensuring that all segments of the population acquire basic competences and on the dissemination of information through virtual networks.

Workplace Learning

The integration of learning in formal, non-formal and informal settings is critical for lifelong learning practices. In this context, increasing attention is paid to the potentials for enhancing the transition between acquisition and application of learning through situated learning in the workplace and the relations between this type of non-formal learning and other types of learning.

Through the involvement of regulators, training institutions and the labour market, it is recommended to focus on analyses of existing national practices related to workplace learning, analyses of the relations between workplace learning and formal learning systems in order to assess optimum modalities for the promotion of acquisition and application of learning and the dissemination of this information through partnership seminars.

National Partnerships on Adult Learning

Lifelong learning represents a paradigm shift away from education and training and towards an increased focus on learning throughout the lifetime of individuals. Due to the magnitude and complexity of this paradigm shift, lifelong learning calls for new ways of involving stakeholders in providing learning opportunities. As this is a new challenge to all ASEM countries, there is a felt need for

sharing experiences on national collaborative partnership arrangements, especially in relation to adult learning. It is recommended to focus on documentation of national examples on collaborative partnership arrangements, comparative analyses of national partnership arrangements with regard to different types of adult learning and the dissemination of experience through study visits. The pilot activity is envisaged to involve government officials, learning providers and stakeholders representing labour-market organisations and civic society.

Review of APL Systems

Experience among ASEM countries has clearly pointed to accreditation of prior learning as being of critical importance in allowing learners to plan learning processes, training and education providers to plan adequate learning processes and enterprises to ensure the adequate upgrade of employee competences. APL systems may therefore serve many different purposes reflecting national priorities. The structure and focus of APL systems do therefore vary considerably between ASEM countries.

As the interrelation between the societal and economic context and the needs of various stakeholders are very complex, it is recommended that a pilot activity on review of national APL systems be carried out. It is recommended to involve researchers, regulators and representatives of training providers and labour-market stakeholders and to focus on documentation of the multiple purposes of APL systems, comparative analyses of the purpose, structure, scope and substance of national APL systems to assess relations between APL systems and societal context and the dissemination of the findings through publications.

These recommended pilot activities are further described in Annex 3 of this report.

A high-angle photograph of a person in a dark suit standing in a room filled with blue office chairs. The person is holding a white document and is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the frame. The chairs are arranged in rows, and the floor is a light-colored wood. The lighting is warm and slightly dim, creating a professional and focused atmosphere.

8:



CONCLUDING REMARK

The accomplishments of the ASEM Initiative on Lifelong Learning have demonstrated a great interest and a tremendous commitment to the exchange and sharing of knowledge on policies and national practices and have underlined a common belief in knowledge as a crucial source for putting lifelong learning into practice.

The common achievements have in this respect provided a solid base for sustaining cooperation among ASEM countries in the field of lifelong learning. Taking the agenda forward within the ASEM cooperation can not only bring added value to economic and social development among ASEM members but, equally importantly, contribute to increase mutual understanding of cultures in all their diversity throughout Asia and Europe.

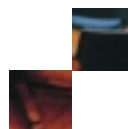
The final report "*Lifelong learning in ASEM-countries - The Way Forward*" and three thematic reports produced by The ASEM-lifelong learning provides in this context a common inspiration on how to further promote lifelong learning and the continued cooperation among ASEM-countries. More specific information provided by the ASEM-Lifelong Learning Initiative is provided in three reports including the following themes:

- *Ensuring Basic Skills for All,*
- *Integrated Approaches to Lifelong Learning and Recognition of Prior Learning*
- *Policies and Incentives to Promote Access to Lifelong Learning.*

In addition reports and documents has been produced from the international conferences conducted under the ASEM- Lifelong learning Initiative.

All reports have been published and forwarded to representatives participating in conferences and working-group sessions organised by the initiative as well as to national decision-makers in ASEM member countries. All publications have also been made available on the Internet on www.asemlll.dk

Requests for publications can be forwarded to the ASEM Lifelong Learning Secretariat, Ministry of Education, Denmark on www.asemlll.dk





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ANNEXES

Preface to Annexes

The annexes attached to the main report have been prepared with the aim to provide additional information highlighting issues, which for the sake of clarity have not been incorporated in the main body of the report.

The recommendations are based on the technical analyses carried out in the three international thematic working groups as well as the deliberations of the international conferences implemented by the initiative.

In Annex 1 the guiding principles proposed to form the basis for future cooperation between ASEM countries on Lifelong Learning will be described and expanded by further detailing guiding measures proposed to be considered by the ASEM countries for the application of the guiding principles.

Annex 2 provides a long list of different modalities and potential Lifelong Learning aspects to be prioritised by the individual ASEM countries.

Annex 3 presents recommended pilot activities and cooperation modalities targeting key issues with the aim to assist the ASEM countries to initiate pilot projects.

In Annex 4 summarised achievements made under the ASEM initiative on Lifelong Learning are presented as to establish an overview of the outcome of the initiative, which is perceived as constituting the basis for continued cooperation in the field of Lifelong Learning.

ANNEX 1: Summarised recommendations on Policy Advice

In light of the overall aims to enhance employability, active citizenship, social inclusion and personal fulfilment, Lifelong Learning is widely recognized as the overarching concept for the development and implementation of policies and appropriate frameworks to promote access, investments, and equal learning opportunities for all citizens within a life span perspective. In doing so Lifelong Learning shall ensure the engagement of all members of the communities in discovering common values of society and respecting diversity of cultures;

Guiding Principle 1

Government Policy, Financial and Legal Framework

Since governments play a vital role in developing the overall framework for development of Lifelong Learning it is recommend that following aspects on government policy, financial and legal frameworks would be included.

Firstly, promotion of Lifelong Learning requires coherent development of a policy, financial as well as legal framework taking into account all forms of learning, including formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Secondly, Incentives supporting the creation of opportunities for Lifelong Learning require investments made by the governments, the private sector and the learners to promote participation by all segments of the population.

Thirdly, development of legal frameworks covering the whole spectrum of education and training including basic, vocational, higher education and continuing learning is of the highest importance to support overall requirements and demands for skills and competences.

Based on the findings of the thematic working groups and the deliberations of the international conferences implemented under the ASEM initiative on Lifelong Learning it is recommended that the guiding principles on government policy, financial and legal framework would be best applied by considering following guiding measures:

- Lifelong Learning shall based on national priorities be a life-wide program offered to all citizens beginning from childhood until post-retirement age, which shall include formal, non-formal and in-formal learning programmes preferably delivered at the community level;
- Lifelong Learning policies shall be holistic, vertical, horizontal, comprehensive, and flexible. Policies and recommendations should encompass all levels:
 - Formal, informal and non-formal learning settings
 - Family, social, schooling learning settings
 - International, regional, national, community, workplace, family, individual learning settings;
- Lifelong Learning initiatives shall be based on an adequate legislative framework;
- Lifelong Learning shall be supported by incentives and motivation towards Lifelong Learning. Efforts need to be taken to encourage communities, work places and people to develop a learning culture;

Guiding Measures – Government Policy, Financial and Legal Framework

- Lifelong Learning shall take into consideration the cost and time involved in pursuing Lifelong Learning;
- Lifelong Learning shall involve sustained commitment among policy makers across nations
- Lifelong Learning policies shall reflect recommendations made by international organisations adapted to national characteristics.

Institutional and Practical Framework

With regard to the second set of guiding principles on institutional and practical framework promoting provision of Lifelong Learning opportunities following aspects are recommended as guiding principles.

Firstly, it is important to review and strengthen the institutional and practical framework to ensure flexible learning infrastructure and provision of high quality education and training designed to suit individual needs and not least to suit the disadvantaged groups.

Secondly, the promotion of increased coherence and interplay between formal, non-formal and informal learning systems and learning settings must be given a high priority to create adequate learning opportunities and effectively utilize resources available for education and training.

Thirdly, the linkage between working life and education and training systems must be strengthened to promote recognition of skills acquired through work experience and prior learning by development of adequate frameworks and measures valuing learning.

Based on the findings of the ASEM initiative on Lifelong Learning it is recommended that the guiding principles on development of institutional and practical framework providing Lifelong Learning opportunities would be best applied by considering following guiding measures:

- Lifelong Learning initiatives shall make available multiple sites and providers in order to promote access to Lifelong Learning;
- Lifelong Learning initiatives shall set up advisory and guidance bodies cooperating with learning providers in order to promote Lifelong Learning;
- Lifelong Learning practices shall positively promote the image of learning that is desirable – the outcomes of Lifelong Learning should be transformative;
- Lifelong Learning practices shall be based on recognition of prior learning – not always and not necessarily through formal qualifications acquired in the formal systems but also competences acquired in non-formal and in-formal learning settings;
- Lifelong Learning practices shall look into the need for coordinating informal learning with formal and non-formal learning;
- Lifelong Learning practices shall look into the coordination and integration of fragmented and compartmentalised approaches to Lifelong Learning and may therefore be accompanied by institutional reforms aiming at facilitating integrated delivery of Lifelong Learning opportunities;
- Lifelong Learning practices shall look into the dissemination of state-of-the-art information to marginalized and vulnerable communities;

Guiding Principle 2

Guiding Measures – Institutional and Practical Framework

- Lifelong Learning practices shall look into the need for flexible teachers who have mastery of competences enabling to act as learning facilitators as opposed to solely having paper qualifications. Students should also be equipped with competences rather than paper qualifications.

Guiding Principle 3

Collaborative Partnership Framework

The third set of guiding principles is focusing on the importance of building up partnerships. Lifelong Learning takes place at an individual level and can only be successfully achieved if a desire to learn is anchored within the individual citizens and if community and work based learning cultures are developed. Lifelong Learning is furthermore such a complex concept that all parts of society should be involved in Lifelong Learning in ways reflecting their respective positions and capacities. The recommendations related to guiding principles on partnership framework include following.

Firstly, it is highly recognised that putting Lifelong Learning into practice requires increased dialogue and cooperation in a variety of partnerships including governments, relevant national, regional and local bodies, education and training institutions, organisations representing employers and employees and the many different actors representing the civic society.

Secondly, the civic society plays an important role for the creation of knowledge, skills, competences and social values, which must be strengthened to make Lifelong Learning more accessible and to foster the development of learning cultures and the promotion of the value of learning, this particularly by providing community based learning opportunities at regional and local levels. Thirdly, work places do increasingly represent important venues for learning and development of skills and competences pointing at the importance of involving employers' and employees' representatives in the promotion of Lifelong Learning.

Guiding Measures – Collaborative Partnership Framework

- Lifelong Learning shall be a shared responsibility of the state at the national, regional and local levels and of stakeholders representing businesses, industry and employee organisations as well as organisations representing the civic society;
- Lifelong Learning shall be supported by the state by means of direct subsidies to Lifelong Learning providers and/or individuals and by promoting learning partnerships with non-government organisations or other agencies;
- Lifelong Learning shall give special focus to disadvantaged and vulnerable communities and therefore pay particular attention to the inclusion of stakeholders representing these communities;
- The development of partnership shall ensure participation of stakeholders in formulation of Lifelong Learning approaches as well as in the actual implementation of Lifelong Learning practices;
- Lifelong Learning provision shall take into account inter-culturalism in order to facilitate inclusion of disintegrated groups and communities.

ANNEX 2: Long list on potential Issues for Future Cooperation

Based on the analyses of thematic challenges and good national practices which have been implemented by ASEM countries as a response to these challenges the thematic working groups and the international conferences have identified a long range of potential issues which could be considered by governments when prioritising future collaboration on Lifelong Learning. Given the magnitude of the identified Lifelong Learning issues, it has been decided to present them in this Annex 2 as a long list classified in accordance of the set of three guiding principles summarised in Annex 1.

The long list should serve as inspiration for national governments and is furthermore used for making a prioritised list of recommendations in Annex 3.

Government policy, financial and legal framework

- Development and coordination of liberal and enlightened philosophies across nations in order to generate international and national support for Lifelong Learning;
- Commencement of work on exploring avenues leading to recognition of the Right to Learn for all citizens;
- Development of new cost-effective financial models and quality systems for Lifelong Learning initiatives focusing on vulnerable groups and unemployed including evaluation models on learner's outcome;
- Strengthening of the promotion efforts and incentives in relation to Lifelong Learning;
- Exploration of possibilities for development of individual learning accounts. Individuals should be encouraged through incentives to accumulate his/her own money for learning. Employers and the government could match the amount accumulated by individuals with their own funding of such initiatives;
- Establishment of integrated systems of funding to ensure that the funds go across all sorts of Lifelong Learning programmes at national, regional and local levels;
- Exploration of possibilities for funding in order to facilitate programs and initiatives related to integrated approaches to Lifelong Learning;
- Exploration of possibilities for establishing an ASEM Research Fund for Lifelong Learning;
- Conceptualisation and implementation of comparative research on national legislative frameworks for Lifelong Learning;
- Organisation of regional and international research programmes and to produce literature, which synthesizes the experience of Lifelong Learning and thereby provide the basis for future policy development.

Institutional and practical framework

- Comparative reviews of national initiatives on overcoming compartmentalised Lifelong Learning practices through promotion of integrated approaches to Lifelong Learning;
- Development of linkages between formal learning in the education and training systems and non-formal learning at the work place, including the role and functions of governments, training and education institutions and companies;
- Exchange of national experience related to institutional assessment and reform;
- Development of renewed inter/intra-ministry communication and cooperation modalities;
- Analysis of the renewed role to be performed by training providers with the aim to enhance accessibility and flexibility as well as to combine guidance and counselling with more traditional learning processes;
- Establishment of cooperation between open universities;
- Establishment of national centres for Lifelong Learning
- Conduct comparative reviews of innovative pedagogical approaches and practices and dissemination of the approaches;
- Development of curriculum that prepares students for Lifelong Learning at secondary and tertiary levels in order to help them cope with future changes;
- Development of new approaches and provision of basic skills targeted vulnerable groups and their participation in Lifelong Learning;
- Exploration of avenues for credit transfer/credit recognition between universities and higher education institutions nationally, regionally and internationally;
- Development and sustaining transnational resources, especially teachers, by conducting twinning programmes between ASEM nations;
- Making e-education more accessible in terms of cost and accessibility. It should also take into consideration elders, senior citizens, retirees, single parents, the handicapped, the culturally disadvantaged, the economically disadvantaged, indigenous minorities, hard-core poor etc;
- Development of educational websites to be used by regulators and training providers to enhance communication on Lifelong Learning across nations;
- Common efforts to strengthen transparency of competence assessments including development of self-assessment mechanisms and methods and tools for assessment and recognition of prior learning acquired in formal, non-formal and in-formal settings;
- Review of national practices in the accreditation of prior learning focusing on analysing the context of the education and economic structures of a country;
- Further development of evaluation models on Lifelong Learning initiatives and their outcome for vulnerable groups;
- To develop recognition and accreditation systems between countries in relation to the recognition of prior learning in order to increase the employability of workers across nations.

Collaborative partnership framework

- Enhancement of national partnership models based on comparative reviews of national practices regarding the involvement of stakeholders representing the labour market and the civic society;
- Establishment of network and cooperation between national agencies, stakeholders and institutions in modes of incentives and finance of Lifelong Learning;
- Development of smart partnerships between Asian and European institutions of learning;
- Strengthening of efforts regarding vulnerable groups and their participation in Lifelong Learning initiatives through exploration of various modalities for stakeholder involvement;
- Review of national approaches to non-formal learning taking place in the industry at the work place of the individual learner;
- Establishment of new modes of community/university collaboration;
- Exploration of securing community acceptance and involvement in Lifelong Learning activities addressing inter-culturalism based on celebration of cultural diversity;
- Experimentation with approaches to confront community passivity and consumerism;
- Development of partnerships addressing the issue of migrant education which as a consequence of the globalisations process is of growing concern to many ASEM member countries;
- Development of Learning cultures in companies and in communities by testing different approaches towards Inculcating Love of Learning.

ANNEX 3: Recommended Pilot projects

Recommendation 1	Establishment of Virtual Lifelong Learning Information Centres
Rationale	Lifelong Learning strategies, approaches and practices are developing with an increasing speed and information on these issues are presently scattered and kept in many different institutions. There is therefore a strong need for compiling and sharing information on Lifelong Learning policies, approaches and practices. In order to do so Lifelong Learning virtual information and dissemination centres may be established through assignments of responsibilities to existing Asian and European institutions.
Implementation focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To coordinate the compilation of existing knowledge – existing Web pages, funding available, various projects undertaken, databases available, especially in Europe and Asia; • To disseminate the information to Lifelong Learning networks and partnership seminars
Network modality	Virtual Lifelong Learning Centres
Target group	Researchers, regulators and practitioners in ASEM countries
Recommendation 2	Lifelong Learning Research
Rationale	Lifelong Learning is a policy area characterised by being highly complex and by being affected by rapid changes. Updated and comprehensive research is therefore a requirement for formulating relevant Lifelong Learning policies and strategies. As much existing research is compartmentalised it is recommended to initiate research activities on Lifelong Learning to be jointly undertaken by Asian and European research institutions i.e. in the form of twinning arrangements.
Implementation focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify and formulate joint research programmes • To coordinate and implement research programmes on Lifelong Learning policies, approaches and practices in ASEM countries; • To disseminate the research findings to Lifelong Learning academicians, regulators and practitioners
Network modality	Lifelong Research Centres
Target group	Researchers in ASEM countries

Recommendation 3	Thematic Network on Basic Competences
Rationale	<p>The basic competences required for actively participating in the social activities in the knowledge society as well as in the economic activities on the labour market of the K-economy are due to the globalisation process continuously changing. In order to ensure social inclusion of all segments of the population there is therefore a strong need for improving the understanding of factors leading to redefinitions of basic competencies as well as of approaches successfully contributing to securing acquisition of the required basic competences by vulnerable groups.</p>
Implementation focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To analyse societal, economic and cultural factors affecting the redefinition of basic competences; • To analyse and share information on national approaches towards ensuring that all segments of the population are acquiring basic competences; • To disseminate the information through virtual networks.
Network modality	Virtual Lifelong Learning Networks
Target group	Regulators and providers of basic competence learning opportunities
Recommendation 4	Work Placed Learning
Rationale	<p>Integration of learning taking place in formal, non-formal and informal settings is critical for Lifelong Learning practices. In this context increasing attention has been put on the potentials for enhancing transition between acquirement and application of learning through situated learning at the work place and the relations between this type of non-formal learning and other types of learning.</p>
Implementation focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To analyse existing national practices related to work place based learning • To analyse relations between work place based learning and formal learning systems in order to asses optimum modalities for promotion of acquisition and application of the learning • To disseminate the information through partnership seminars
Network modality	Lifelong Research Centres
Target group	Regulators, training institutions and labour market representatives

Recommendation 5	National Partnerships on Adult Learning
Rationale	<p>Lifelong Learning is representing a paradigm shift away from education and training towards an increased focus on learning throughout the lifetime of the individuals. Due to magnitude and complexity of this paradigm shift Lifelong Learning is calling for new ways of involving stakeholders in providing learning opportunities. As this is a new challenge to all ASEM countries there is a felt need for sharing experiences on national collaborative partnership arrangements. It is therefore recommended to explore national partnerships modalities specifically with relation to adult learning.</p>
Implementation focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To document national examples on collaborative partnership arrangements on adult learning • To comparatively analyse national partnership arrangements with regard to different types of adult learning • To disseminate the experience through study visits.
Network modality	Study Visits
Target group	Government officials, learning providers and stakeholders representing labour market organisations and civic society
Recommendation 6	Review of APL Systems
Rationale	<p>Experience among ASEM countries have clearly pointed at accreditation of prior learning as being of critical importance for allowing the learners to plan learning processes, for training and education providers to plan adequate learning process and for enterprises to ensure adequate up-gradation of development of employee competencies. APL systems may therefore serve many different purposes reflecting national priorities. The structure and focus of APL systems do therefore vary considerably between ASEM countries. As the interrelations between the societal and economic context and the needs of various stakeholders are very complex it is recommended that a pilot activity on review of national APL systems be carried out.</p>
Implementation focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To document the multiple purposes of APL systems • To comparatively analyse the purpose, structure, scope and substance of national APL systems as to assess relations between APL systems and societal context • To disseminate findings through publications
Network modality	Lifelong Learning Reviews
Target group	Researchers, regulators and representatives from training providers and labour market stakeholders

ANNEX 4: Main achievements by the ASEM Initiative on Lifelong Learning

16 delegates representing Malaysia, Singapore, Ireland and Denmark, which had jointly formulated the proposal approved in Beijing in May 2001 participated in an Expert Meeting held in Copenhagen from 23 to 24 August 2001 to set up the management structure and plan the commencement of activities under the ASEM Initiative.

In October 2001 a Steering Committee with representatives from the four countries formulating the proposal and chaired by Denmark was established. The Steering Committee has been responsible for the overall management of the Initiative. The Steering Committee has convened on 30th November 2001 in Dublin, 16th January 2002 in Copenhagen, 4th July 2002 in Singapore and expects to meet for a follow up meeting October/ November 2002 in Malaysia.

An Opening Conference attended by more than 85 delegates representing 19 ASEM member countries was conducted 16-18 January 2002 in Copenhagen. The Conference included presentations made by more than 10 keynote speakers representing researchers, politicians and administrators from Asian and European countries as well as international organisations such as ILO, OECD, APO and the EU. Based on these presentations common challenges and experiences within Lifelong Learning were discussed in panel sessions and further debated in three workshops.

As a concrete outcome of the Conference three thematic working groups were established at the end of the Conference, namely:

- Thematic Working Group I on "Basic Skills for All" coordinated by Denmark;
- Thematic Working Group II on "Integrated Approaches to Lifelong Learning and Recognition of Prior Learning" coordinated by Malaysia;
- Thematic Working Group III on "Policies and Incentives Promoting Access to Lifelong Learning" coordinated by Ireland.

The ASEM member states are widely represented in the three thematic working groups, which all comprise more than 10 members. Based on approved Terms of References the thematic working groups have completed their work regarding compilation of national experiences within their respective themes. As a result of discussions and more than 100 case studies identifying thematic challenges facing the promotion of further access to Lifelong Learning the three thematic working reports has been completed and published under separate cover and furthermore made available on the internet.

In addition to the conferences included in the proposal for the ASEM Lifelong Learning Initiative Malaysia hosted and sponsored as co-ordinator of Working Group II an international conference in Kuala Lumpur 13-15 May 2002. The conference, which were attended



by more than 70 delegates representing international organisations and ASEM member countries, primarily focused on presenting and discussing a wide range of facets related to formulation and implementation of integrated approaches to Lifelong Learning.

At the Closing Conference 2-4 July 2002 in Singapore, which was attended by 77 national and international researchers, politicians and administrators, the work of the three working groups were presented and discussed. The scope of the overall report was furthermore discussed based on a draft report. The conclusions of the conference were subsequently incorporated into the final overall report as well as the three thematic reports.

In order to support the actors of the initiative with relevant information a website (www.asemlll.dk) has been established, where all relevant information on the initiative incl. reports, papers, terms of references for the thematic working groups and relevant links are placed. The website is expected to continue providing informational support on the Lifelong Learning after the ASEM IV Summit in September 2002.

The activities carried out under the ASEM Initiative on Lifelong Learning have led to a number of achievements. Firstly, contacts between Lifelong Learning policy makers, academicians, administrators and practitioners in Asia and Europe have been made primarily through the international conferences and that informal networks have been established. It has also been assured that the ASEM discourse on Lifelong Learning through the involvement of a wide range of international organisations such as i.e. EU, ILO, OECD, has been related to debates on Lifelong Learning taking place in other international fora. It has also been noticed that the actual involvement in the Initiative in a number of ASEM countries have led to Lifelong Learning being more centrally placed on national policy agendas.

Other achievements made by the initiative are that formalised networks through the formation of the thematic working groups have been established and that experience on coordination and management of international cooperation on Lifelong Learning have been gained through the establishment and work of the Steering Committee. Finally, it should also be noted that information on Lifelong Learning has been made easily accessible on websites enhancing communication between ASEM countries and that a number of discussions between various institutions in ASEM member countries on continued cooperation on a bi- or trilateral basis presently are ongoing.

