
ASEM Network of MOOCs: Draft Proposal for the 6th ASEM Education Ministers' Meeting in 2017

1. Introduction

Over the last decade, the ASEM Education Process has been playing the role as a facilitator of multi-level dialogue as well as a platform for the exchanges of ideas in the field of education amongst the ASEM partners. It has paved the way for enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation between Asia and Europe. On the other hand, there is a notable demand to pursue more substantive cooperation with tangible results from the ASEM partners.

Amidst such background, social innovations, such as progress towards a knowledge-based, virtual and hyper-connected society are rapidly changing the environment for the ASEM education collaboration. Social changes, including an unprecedented speed of technological innovation, demand every member of our society to possess a different mixture of skills and competences to reap the benefits they bring out. Thus, providing opportunities for quality education and lifelong learning for all is gaining more importance than ever before.

However, looking at the current status of education in the ASEM region, there is a wide educational gap between the two regions as well as within each region and country. Eliminating illiteracy still remains the main policy agenda to the substantial number of the ASEM partners, whereas it is noted that some ASEM partners have reached the stage of universalization of higher education. Therefore, the ASEM partners and stakeholders should pay attention towards reducing the educational gap and inequity between and within regions, as they could become a critical factor to hinder sustainable development and cooperation at ASEM.

In this context, the technological advancement in education is expected to play a key role in addressing and solving the educational gap to show its promise to reduce the cost and increase the quality of education. In particular, the ASEM partners acknowledge the potential

of MOOC, which provides unlimited free access to high quality learning resources, regardless of time and space. Under active support from governments, universities, and other stakeholders, MOOC has been adopted as a new educational strategy exponentially in the two regions.

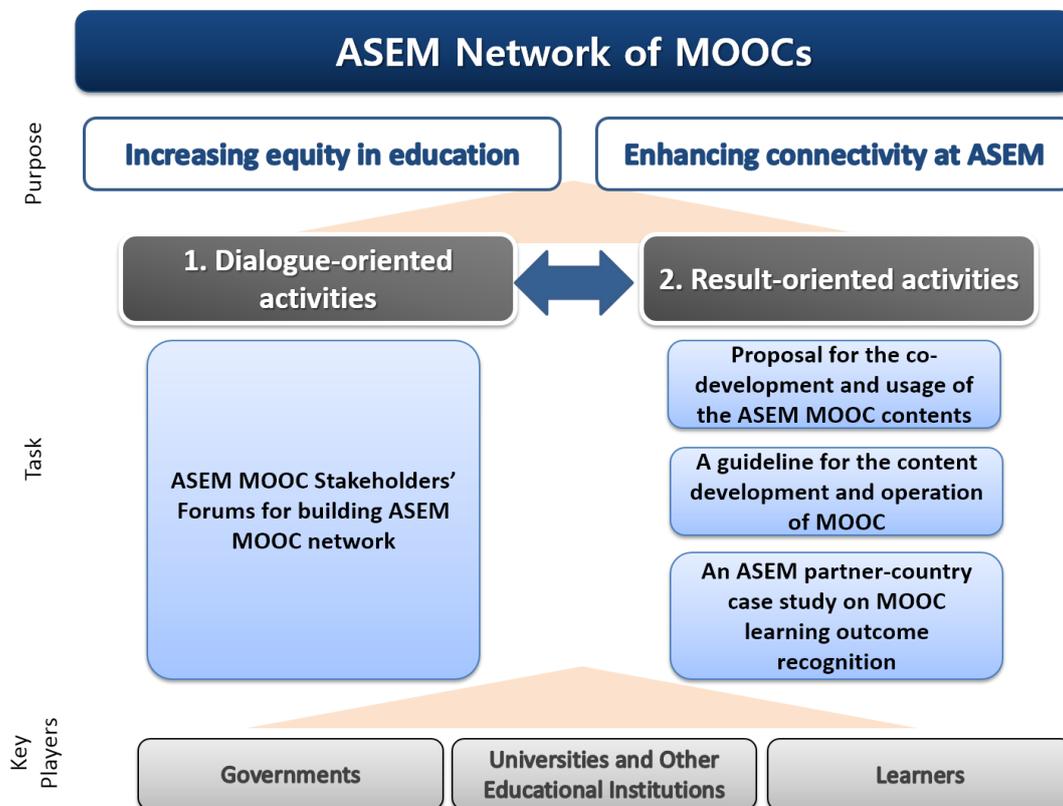
The rapid growth of MOOC will also have a considerable impact on connectivity between the two regions. As confirmed from the 11th ASEM Summit held in Ulaanbaatar in 2016, digital connectivity will become an important leading factor in increasing economic and social connectivity in ASEM region. MOOC is an exemplary case to show how to go over traditional barriers such as geographical distance to access quality teaching and learning opportunities and resources. By eliminating the barriers of mobility, education can make a commitment to enhancing connectivity within ASEM.

Therefore, we need to rethink the concept of mobility mainly premised on the geographical border between Europe and Asia. It is also be predicted that the ASEM partners are required to present a flexible and feasible direction of quality assurance and recognition about newly introduced learning methods and techniques in quality assurance and recognition within ASEM. It is certain that now is an important time for the ASEM partners to consider taking a role of an active facilitator in leading the innovation of education by adopting technologies, instead of passively waiting for the changes in the educational environment.

Against this background, the Ministry of Education in the Republic of Korea is suggesting the initiative through MOOC, under the theme of **ASEM Network of MOOCs**. The program aims to contribute to the increased educational equity within ASEM region by providing the quality learning opportunity for all including the marginalized. In addition, the program aims to increase connectivity amongst governments, educational institutions, learners and stakeholders through the materialization of MOOC-related cooperation. In order to achieve these aims, the program shall promote MOOC-related dialogue and direct cooperation among the ASEM partners regarding the creation of the quality learning environment and contents, and the establishment of infrastructure and institutional foundation to enable the ASEM partners to share outcomes and experiences in the field of MOOC.

2. Activities of the Program

The program consists of “Dialogue-oriented” and “Result-oriented” activities based on the two-pillar system adopted from the ASEMME5, to promote dialogue and substantial cooperation amongst the ASEM partners. The program shall establish virtuous cycle structure in order to connect the results of mutual communications (dialogue-oriented activities) with planning and development of MOOC process (result-oriented activities) based on the two-pillar system.



[Figure 1] Program Scheme

A. Dialogue-oriented Activities

ASEM MOOC Stakeholders' Forums for building ASEM MOOC network

The ASEM MOOC stakeholders' Forums aim to provide opportunities for mutual dialogue and to seek ways of cooperation on MOOC-related policy issues. The forums will be

organized at two levels; at the rector-level and at the working-level. A rectors' forum will be constituted with rectors from universities or national councils of rectors in the ASEM partner countries. It is evident that universities are expected to play a key role in decision making related to the critical issues for promoting MOOC, such as co-development and usage of MOOC content, utilization of existing MOOC platforms and mutual recognition of learning outcomes. Therefore, close cooperation with universities is essential to the development and implementation of the program. The forum shall invite rectors to identify how universities of the ASEM partners can work together on these issues as well as the more general issues relating to higher education.

Meanwhile, a forum for the working group will target officials from universities, experts from the relevant international and regional organizations and other key stakeholders. The forum aims to discuss how to implement in practice actions agreed by the rectors' forum, and other items to be included on the forum are: supporting capacity development of stakeholders, offering technological consultation, conducting joint research and identifying best practices. The relevant organizations can support the management of the forums and the network-building among stakeholders.

B. Result-oriented Activities

Proposal for the co-development and usage of the ASEM MOOC contents

The aim of the proposal for the co-development and usage of the ASEM MOOC contents is to develop the MOOC contents, which represent unique characteristics of ASEM, and could be used as common contents regardless of the educational and cultural backgrounds of the ASEM partners. The proposal shall consider developing a diversity of contents, such as degree-track courses, contents for enhancing mutual understanding between the two regions, as well as on ASEM itself, and for cultivating global citizenship and skills for the 21st century.

The transformation of the curriculum contents developed by the existing ASEMME initiatives, including the Joint Degree Curriculum Development Project and the ASEM

Studies' Curriculum Module, into the MOOC format, could be taken into account. Utilizing cultural contents developed by each ASEM partners and sharing educational contents in the areas of each partner's competitive advantage shall also be promoted in the process of the ASEM content development. To do so, a survey on the current status of MOOC contents provided in Asia and Europe, and learners' demand for the contents will be conducted as a part of the development of the proposal.

A guideline for the content development and operation of MOOC for the ASEM partners

The aim of developing a guideline for the content development and operation of MOOC is to support the ASEM partners to develop and manage the quality of MOOC contents through providing the minimum standards, in which the ASEM partners are able to use as a reference. The guideline will help the ASEM partners to meet the standards for exchanging contents amongst countries, so that it will facilitate the exchange and joint utilization of content, as well as the recognition of learning outcomes of MOOC.

With reference to the existing guidelines developed by the ASEM partners and the stakeholders, the guideline shall provide basic frameworks including essential elements regarding the MOOC content management and operation. Furthermore, the provision of consultations by experts will be considered so that the guideline can be applied to various circumstances in each country.

An ASEM partner-country case study on MOOC learning outcome recognition

The case study on MOOC learning outcome recognition shall be conducted to discover the ASEM partners' best practices, in terms of changing their recognition system for learning outcomes through MOOC. The case study will lay a foundation for the ASEM partners to make policy efforts for social recognition and utilization of MOOC learning outcomes for various purposes, including education and job-related activities. Furthermore, it will contribute to the realization of educational equity and the expansion of educational opportunities for disadvantaged groups by providing various opportunities to achieve education and vocational qualifications.

3. Benefits for the key players in the process

This program will provide benefits to learners, governments and the educational institutions as well as the whole of ASEM as follows:

Benefits to learners:

The provision of opportunities for learners in different regions to mutually interact with each other without physically having to move will be expanded. Through the interaction, learners will be able to enhance understanding of different cultures and abilities regarding active citizenship. The education and career paths for learners will become diversified as the provision of learning becomes flexible, and the learning outcomes could be utilized in different ways including achieving educational and vocational qualifications. Learners who lacked educational opportunities could supplement formal schooling and vocational training so that they will be able to have opportunities to improve their quality of life.

Benefits to governments and educational institutions:

The program will contribute to content diversification and quantitative expansion of MOOC platforms managed by the governments or institutions. This way, the provision of learning opportunities tailored to learners' background and needs could be ensured. Educational institutions could also enhance the learning outcomes through innovative teaching and learning methods, such as flipped learning. Also, governments and educational institutions could raise their profile in education within ASEM region by sharing their achievement in the field of MOOC, and the quality of MOOC contents. This will enable them to reach out to a wider group of learners and partners, and to have new opportunities for cooperation.

Benefits to the ASEM Education Process:

The most visible benefit of the program for the ASEM Education Process will be increased exchanges between the two regions. In particular, this program is expected to facilitate mobility from Europe to Asia as Europeans could enhance their understanding of and familiarity with Asian culture and the education system through the ASEM MOOC contents. The program shares a common vision with the Sustainable Development Goals in using ICT to facilitate learning for the marginalized group. The ASEM Education Process could contribute to the accomplishment of the global agenda by the successful implementation of this program.

4. Partners involved

- Higher education institutions willing to be part of the program
- Governments willing to participate and to appoint a higher education institution or MOOC-specializing institution to be part of the program
- International, regional and national organizations to participate or to appoint a higher education institution to be part of the program
- Learners to provide feedback on the ASEM MOOC contents

5. Period of development and implementation of the program

The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea would like to have continuous dialogue and to establish participatory process with the ASEM partners regarding the development and implementation of the program. Expert meetings, such as the Expert Meeting on MOOC, which will be co-organized by UNESCO Bangkok and the National Institute for Lifelong Education in 2017, will be considered to engage in dialogue about the program. More opportunities for European countries as well as European and Asian countries to meet together will be sought out. The tentative timeline of the program implementation from the ASEMME6 is as follows:

Presentation and endorsement of the program	ASEMME6, Seoul	May 8 – 10 2017
1st MOOC Stakeholders' Forum	Ministry of Education	In 2017 (TBA)
Working group process	TBA	2017 - 2019
Program Evaluation and Submission of proposal for further progress	ASEMME7 Romania	In 2019

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