

TALEPAPIR

DET TALTE ORD GÆLDER

Anledning	Åbning af Learning Unlimited - ASEM Lifelong Learning Forum
Titel	Opening Speech
Målgruppe	Medlemmer af ASEM Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning – hovedsagelig forskere.
Arrangør	Aarhus Universitet
Taletid	Ca. 15 minutter
Tid og sted	Tirsdag den 29. maj 2012 kl. 09:00 – 10.30 på Aarhus Universitet, Campus København, Tuborgvej 164, København. <u>M taler kl. 9.15.</u>

Disposition

1. **Introduction – Welcome to Denmark**
2. **The Significance of Lifelong Learning (LLL) in an Economic Down Turn.**
3. **What are the Policy Challenges and How Can Research Contribute**
4. **What is the Scope for the ASEM Education Process in the Domain of LLL**
5. **Pride in the Past – Faith in the Future.**
6. **Acknowledgements.**

1. Introduction – Welcome to Denmark

- Deputy Minister of Human Resource Policy, Dr Kim Kwan Bok
- Ambassador, Dr Nguyen Quoc Khanh
- Vice dean, Jan Ifversen
- Chairman of the ASEM Hub for LLL, Klaus Holm
- Distinguished guests – ladies and gentlemen
- It is a privilege and an honour for me to open the ASEM Forum for Lifelong Learning.
- And it is also a pleasure to welcome all our honoured guests to Denmark and our beautiful capital Copenhagen.

2. The Significance of Lifelong Learning (LLL) in an Economic Down Turn.

- We have been brought together by important matters indeed. Europe is struggling against the consequences of a financial crisis.
- The crisis is deeper and has lasted longer than we had imagined and the damages – real as well as potential – are devastating.
- Many – predominantly low skilled – are at risk of losing their jobs, endangering the wellbeing of them, their families and of society at large.

- But there is hope. Weak signs of recovery have shown. And as we gradually will leave the crisis behind, we will also realize that the world has changed.
- The recovery will be driven by changes in production, trade and logistics – capitalising new technologies and new modalities of work.
- This will close down traditional jobs and subsequently open new opportunities.
- Redundant workers can not be allocated to the new job slots without the skills and competencies in demand by the new labour market.
- Societies who realize this and respond by running efficient LLL systems and foster work placed learning will pave their way through the crisis quicker and more smoothly than those who do not.
- I am therefore very satisfied with the proposal for EU's new education programme Erasmus for All, which has just reached a partial general agreement of the EU Member States during the Danish Presidency.
- Erasmus for All also puts substantial weight on LLL which is imminent in EU in these times of crisis.
- Let me give you an example of the benefits of LLL. A few years ago a sugar factory (Assens) in one of the Danish islands decided to automate the production and they would have to let most of their workers go.
- A responsible management, responsive unions and dynamic local adult training centres joined together in due time to avoid disaster. Together they provided individual training programmes for the workers well in advance to the closing down of their jobs.
- By the end of the process, the unemployment rate in the area was unchanged.
- Even though it is not always possible to find ways for everybody, this is somehow a blueprint to renewal in the Danish labour market. And we must go further down that road.
- That is why, in these last days of May, the Danish government is engaged in tripartite negotiations with the labour market representatives.
- One of the primary goals of these negotiations is to strengthen the LLL effort, so our workforce will continue to match the increasing demands of the labour market.

3. What are the Policy Challenges and How Can Research Contribute

- In this country, we build on a long standing tradition for lifelong learning and by large we have many of the structures and procedures needed for an efficient LLL system in place. In this respect, I believe that many countries could learn from our experiences.
- But by the end of the day, relevance is the crucial criteria. This is where the big challenges lie.
- The programmes must constantly be renewed in response to changes in the labour market and those who make a use of the programmes – the learners – must feel that the education opportunity is relevant for them. They must be motivated to take part in the ongoing learning.
- This does not only relate to unemployed. It would be far better to enrol people before they have lost their jobs.
- So our challenge is twofold – we must build capacities to cope with change and we must build incentives to utilize the potentials.
- People, companies and unions must engage in relevant pre-emptive action in terms of setting up learning opportunities related to the implementation of new innovative technologies in the companies.
- In order to do this, we need to know more.
- We know, that people learn even though they are not in a formal learning situation.
- And we know, that there is a gap between their qualifications in terms of certificates and what they can really do.
- Often their competencies are much stronger than their ‘papers’ indicate and often people struggle even though they have basic skills issues that could be easily remedied.
- So we need to draw up a profile of the real competencies of the adult population in our nations. And we need to know more about how informal and non-formal learning works.
- We must look deeper into the potentials of work based learning experiences.

- We must know what drives people in various cultural segments of the population to learning and how to avoid de-motivation.
- Finally, we must significantly improve the difficult discipline of skills forecasting. We must know what the future demand for competencies will look like.
- And we could certainly benefit from an international comparative study on successful interaction between governments, trade unions and business and industry.
- I know that these topics are at heart of the work that you are doing and I will strongly encourage you to keep up the spirit and make an enhanced effort to bring the evidence that you produce to public knowledge.

4. What is the Scope for the ASEM Education Process in the Domain of LLL

- In the ASEM context, LLL is prominently featured. It has for many years been a highly prioritised policy domain. And as I have already indicated – for very good reasons.
- However, we must all be aware that other international settings for the international cooperation on education policies are active in the domain.
- And we should also take their achievements into account.
- First of all, we should not reinvent the wheel by repetition of what has already been done by others and secondly – important inspiration might be gathered.
- The OECD is launching a skills strategy. It is a combination of existing data, analysis and policy recommendations. We are eager to look deeper into this.
- Based on our experiences with OECD work, I assume that the paper will be a good point of departure also for your further studies.
- We have also great expectations to the publication of the first PIAAC results – Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies.
- Like the well known PISA – PIAAC will provide a rich source of data on the competence profile in the participating nations.
- Nations, regions and clusters of nations sharing mutual interests in this matter will have access to the data and be able to undertake in-depth studies.

- I will strongly encourage the ASEM LLL hub to take note of these two major contributions and include them in your work.

5. Pride in the Past - Faith in the Future.

- Denmark can take pride in being the first nation to take LLL to the agenda in the ASEM context. It happened as soon as in 1999.
- I would also like at this stage to note that under the ASEM umbrella it has been possible to set up extremely beneficial bilateral cooperation.
- Today, we have a well established cooperation with Korea and Vietnam. And we are looking forward to taking this even further.
- In the ASEMME4 in Malaysia next year, we are in particular looking forward to the presentation of the outcome of the ongoing work of the ASEM LLL hub as well as the contributions from the conference that we will open in a few minutes.

6. Acknowledgements

- I would like to express my gratitude to all who made this event possible.
- Our co-sponsors –
 - The Republic of Korea.
 - The Asia Europe Foundation.
 - The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Aarhus University and the chairmanship of the ASEM LLL hub that carried the heavy load of all logistics.
- And not the least – all of you who made your long way across continents to be with us today.
- I wish you all a pleasant stay in Denmark and in Copenhagen.
- But first and foremost I hope that you will enjoy the good spirit of hard work and cooperation with single-minded, dedicated and diligent colleagues.
- Good luck and thank you for your kind attention.