

Rethinking Knowledge triangles – external stakeholders as an advocate for Lifelong Learning

According to European Commission , the contribution of higher education to jobs and growth, and its international attractiveness, can be enhanced through close, effective links between education , research , and innovation – the three sides of the ‘knowledge triangle’. The recent shift towards open innovation has resulted in increased flows of knowledge and new types of cooperation between education institutions, research organizations and business .

I would like to invite the panelists to reflect upon making stronger pressure in European universities towards building closer cooperation between HEI and various external partners (‘stakeholders’), including employers. There are new opportunities but also threats, as being one –sided (weather its university as an ‘ivory tower’ or university as a ‘graduates factory’ for the market) always brings a risk of excluding some social partners from the world of HE or ‘hijacking’ the concept of education by measurable economic markers and narrow concept of employability.

However, the need for social innovation is growing in Europe, and if such an incentives could actually promote creativity, interdisciplinary approaches and cutting- edge solutions, the wider benefits for the knowledge, individuals and society could be an amazing intake of ‘knowledge triangles’. Yet, if we wish for universities of the future to become something more than just ‘ efficient innovation assembly line’, a debate needs to be focus on the quality of relation between all stakeholders and partners of ‘knowledge triangle’ and balanced presence of different types of capitals. Supportive and inclusive ‘learning cultures’ or ‘learning environments’, both at the universities and in workplaces and research institutes could create a ground for ‘knowledge triangle’ which are creative, socially relevant and innovative.

Key questions:

1. What are the benefits and challenges when it comes to your experiences with collaborations between universities, research institutions and external stakeholders?

2. What are the conditions for such cooperation, so it brings new quality for all involved partners?
3. How do you see the future of such cooperation, its social relevance and innovative factor?

Any other thoughts, comments or reflection upon the subject are welcome as well

On behalf of the Scientific Committee,

Panel moderators

Adrianna Nizinska, University of Lower Silesia, Poland

Antonio Fragoso, University of Algarve, Portugal