

Session 3 (Parallel)

New Challenges for the Formation and Accumulation of Human Capital

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The twentieth century was the period of “great learning,” to quote a title in *The Economist*. This period of transformation is far from over and that the extension of the frontiers of education and the invention and adoption of new human resources management practices are challenges which are still ahead and need to be met for countries that aim to commit to a knowledge economy. In this session, the discussion will focus on the following four issues.

1. How old are new skills?

Education and training are at the heart of the problem of adjusting skills and abilities to the constraints of a knowledge-based economy. But the necessary skills are multiple and, in any case, do not amount simply to knowing how to use a computer. It is, more globally, the acquisition of cognitive and interactive competencies that has to be facilitated.

2. Does the education and training system support the transition to a knowledge economy?

This is by no means a trivial issue and involves a lot of questions about “what works” in schools to facilitate the learners’ acquisition of social capital, ICT proficiency, creative capabilities, etc. It is probably enough to say that the last two decades have been characterized by widespread dissatisfaction in the business, civic and political community with the general performance of education systems.

3. Does the education system influence the quality and intensity of R&D activity?

There is a fundamental complementary relationship between R&D investment and human capital in the process of building research capacity. Most R&D policies try to stimulate the demand for scientists and engineers in the private sector through tax incentives or grants. To succeed, they depend on a positive supply response that the educational system has to provide.

4. Are our universities prepared to face global competition to recruit the best faculties and students?

Globalization does not make an exception for human resources. The mobility of human resources beyond national borders is becoming a common practice not only in MNCs, but also in universities. The vitality of universities depends on the quality of faculties and students, so it has become crucial for universities to enhance their attractiveness to compete for the best faculties and students all around the world.