

Josef Hochgerner

Advanced comprehension of innovation and cyclic learning in the knowledge triangle

Abstract

The concept of the knowledge triangle comprises education, research, and innovation to denote a set of activities supposedly capable to facilitate desirable social change. In this context my presentation will focus on the role of innovation in the triangle and, first of all, to discuss an extended concept of innovation, including the social dimension of innovations in technology and economy as well as what is specific in social innovation. The challenge is to avoid the fallacy of regarding social innovations fundamentally different compared to technological innovations on the one hand, yet to make clear and useable their distinct properties on the other hand.

Innovations are socially relevant, never mind whether social or technological innovations are being explored. They may have an impact on social change but do not determine social change at large. Innovations are part of the multitude of processes generating social change: The usually gradual, sometimes rapid variations of social structures, evolving institutions aside with institutions passing by, cultural patterns, related levels and directions of awareness and social practices. Many of such developments are not intentional. Some are, most outstanding those who are (or result from) innovations, because intentionality is a specific feature of innovations. Some of unintended changes as well as innovations are welcome, some disregarded, though any such notion may differ depending on e.g. social strata and milieu, age, education, experience, profession and interest. Pertaining to the definition of innovations it is essential, that idea and intention are followed by implementation and diffusion, i.e. acceptance either in markets (indicated by demand and sales figures) or in social practices (indicated by adoption and repetition).

Based on such considerations of a varied notion of innovation dynamic relations and interactions in the knowledge triangle will be analysed and exemplified. An important assumption here is that education provides for the potential, research signifies the intention, and innovation leads to the implementation of social development, which in turn feeds back to improved education. This is called cyclic learning in the knowledge triangle.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND INNOVATION FOR SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Towards a dynamic relationship within the knowledge triangle?

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