



Cooperative and Non Formal Learning – From Flat to Round Education

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During last year 2011 European Commission priority, youth (un)employment, a series of projects and conferences involving different stakeholders were organized. One of the last ones, serving also as summary for the rest was Bridges to Work conference [1]

During this conference and many times before, youth always rose the same issues, the will to receive more practical knowledge, their predisposition to learning through experience and the need of an "added value" in this situation of high competition.

These three main improvement points can be achieved through the promotion of competences training, non formal and life long learning both as a side training and in formal institutions.

We are facing education in an archaic way while we are surfing the XXI century. We are improving our media, e-learning and technology methodologies and skills, but using them in the same old fashioned way that stakeholders agree is not working well and its failure is more obvious each day.

The educational paradigm needs to face an evolution. Society is thinking about education as in the XVI century people used to think about flat earth. We need to change our minds from a flat educational system, where students have to follow the path, close to the shore, or they will fall away, into a global educational system where there are different paths to follow, as there are different useful methodologies.

Current educational system focuses in the average student, leaving out the below average student and not offering enough to the over average group. Every student is different, and these methodologies should be student centred. This change needs an important involvement and contribution from the educators, in many cases reluctant to change or improvement and stuck in their old and outdated methodologies.

This is a specially relevant topic during 2012 and the following years, when big moves are being made for non formal learning recognition [2] and at the same time the European Commission is debating joining together the formal and non formal projects into the Erasmus for All project [3].