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# THE AQUACULTURE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY: BOOM OR BUST?

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We live in an age of unprecedented growth in knowledge generation and exchange. The links between knowledge, innovation and economic development are frequently promoted. Government policies for enhancing education and training opportunities in a widening framework of Lifelong Learning are becoming increasingly central themes in strategies for economic recovery and growth. However, there is little evidence that more of the same i.e. traditionally structured education and training, is leading to the innovation and growth that policymakers desire. Graduate unemployment rates in Europe are reaching new highs and when new graduates are employed, it is often in lower skilled jobs than would have been the case in the past. In many ways it looks to be an economy of abundance; a massive increase in the availability of explicit knowledge gradually devaluing the people seeking employment on the basis of their accredited knowledge and skills. However, other interpretations are possible, not least that society generally, and large organisations and institutions in particular, are failing to grasp the opportunities that knowledge generation and exploitation can bring. The aquaculture sector is truly global and highly diverse; in parts relying on traditional tacit knowledge and elsewhere on the most recently generated explicit knowledge. A broader understanding of the role of different types of knowledge for aquaculture enterprise, and a deeper understanding of how that knowledge is generated, shared and communicated can provide a platform for dialogue and potentially new initiatives. Pointers for the future can also be found in new knowledge generating and sharing activities that are emerging on the Internet, and in different models of enterprise organisation found in innovative start-up companies.

One interpretation is that lifelong and lifewide learning are the norm and that the tendency for compartmentalisation and institutionalisation of knowledge and learning may be constraining the benefits that individual, group and social learning can bring. The evidence for this is explored, and consideration given to how the aquaculture sector can unlock greater potential from its human capital. Reference is made to case studies, current initiatives and new collaborative platforms within the sector.