Jón Torfi Jónasson (Iceland) was educated in physics (BSc) and psychology (MSc and PhD) in the UK and taught cognitive and educational psychology for many years.

In recent years he has studied the problem of drop-out in Iceland, but has also written on all levels of education – in many cases from a comparative perspective.


His presentation focused on the role of education, the importance of independence in the education system and the need to educate for the future in opposite of educating for the present.

The stagnation of education is the result of society’s mentality or the politicians will?

Jón Torfi Jónasson: It is actually two things: lack of foresight – we are not thinking enough about the future. But we are also stuck with old values which we are not ready to let go, both in terms of the content of Education and the way we do things or organize things... So it is a question of inertia.

There is nobody against change but we do not want to move to fast and, in fact, we are not moving fast enough.

What new subjects would you implement in schools?
**Jón Torfi Jónasson:** You want to educate people to be active in society, you want to educate them to be participants in democracy and you want them to be fluent in communicating with new technology...

**New platforms...**

Yes. And they will change dramatically in the next ten or fifteen years, so it is not a question of introducing them to technology as such but the culture of communication. And there are a lot of problems in communication that need to be solved: ethical problems, problems of clarity... For instance, if you move away from personal communication to electronic communication you are losing a lot of immediate communication, so you must be educated in how to communicate properly using all this new technology.

**How do you see the role of Education in Europe, during this time of economic crisis?**

**Jón Torfi Jónasson:** During a crisis you have to educate people to cope with all kinds of problems, tensions. When you are in a time of economic growth, the problems are there but you often do not see them. But, during a crisis you notice them all and the system must be more sensitive in dealing with them.

**Do you think that an Education for the Future could have prevented this economic crisis?**

**Jón Torfi Jónasson:** I think it would not have prevented it from happening. But one of the reasons why we should think about Educating for the Future is thinking about progress, for instance: how are we proceeding? What are the benefits and problems with very rapid progress? Most people know that it is best to develop gradually and not very fast - the infrastructures of the system can not cope with that. So if we had known more about development and progress, we had actually gone slowly and then we would probably still be progressing.
And so, is the European crisis an opportunity or an obstacle for Education right now?

Of course it should be taken as an opportunity. We may turn it in an opportunity. And we should do it. We should turn into the Education’s system and see what can be improved in terms of content, operations and organization and just make it an opportunity.