

## SPEECH: LEA ARTIBAI IKASTETXEA-MIKEL GOROSTIZAGA

We could begin by saying that phenomena such as globalisation, the knowledge society, delocalisation, the speed of change, advances in telecommunications, the protagonism of R&D, etc. are contributing greatly to significant changes in social and economic order. Or, on the other hand, we could say that the changes in social and economic order which have come upon us mean that our production sector, our civil society, our students, etc. are experiencing a cultural process that requires adaptation to these aforementioned phenomena. We could therefore talk about the factor which ever increasing voices say is the most important in terms of achieving economic growth and social development: Innovation - this has surely been mentioned here and repeated again and again, both actively and passively. And we should surely insist on this matter as it is obviously still necessary.

Our contribution today is more linked to two other aspects which are also considered necessary and shall be expanded upon in this congress:

- The role of Basque Vocational Training in a national and international framework of continual, innovative and progressive change.
- Micro-enterprises, innovation and Vocational Training centres

But we shall avoid possible theoretical pontificating and we shall try to centre ourselves on our own experience, which is just one example, although we hope it is a very good one, of a far broader project that we have been carrying out in the Lea Artibai area.

The mission of Lea Artibai Ikastetxea is to become a **“developing agent within its ambit, offering clients quality training that is supported by the close relationship between the business and institutional fabric. We are an institution with Social Initiative, committed to improving the quality of life in our environment and the participation of our workers”**.

From the mid 90's, the activities developed in the centre have contributed to developing two specific concepts of the mission: on the one hand “Developing agent within its ambit”, and on the other “the close relationship with the business fabric”. Within this framework, Lea Artibai takes on the challenge of activating a business promotion unit, linking these promotions with the technologies developed in the centre.

10 years later, this has resulted in an activity to be promoted in Training Centres and Universities, conceptualised (or better said reflected) in Lea Artibai in this way:

- Business promotion is an element that has not been assumed by any other institution.
- The school itself, is the result of a package of start-up initiatives from the beginning of the 70`s whose objective was to balance the distribution of the active population in our region which is unbalanced by 55% primary sector employment.
- The school has access to all the necessary and ideal resources for business promotion to be carried out in optimal conditions:
  - Human capital susceptible to becoming entrepreneurs
  - Knowledge in the ambits of specific technologies.
  - Up-to-date equipment for carrying out specific activities (production, prototype development, current software, ...)
  - Relationship with the productive fabric, above all in specific technological ambits
- Furthermore, Lea Artibai Ikastetxea realises that generating new business fabric in the region will:

- Give its students greater access to employment
- Give teaching staff constantly updated technological knowledge

In this context, in 1997, a number of companies from the Polymer sector in the region detected the need to create a mould producing company, to complement their activity and as such, Lea Artibai launched a team of three young people and used its own installations to create that mould producing company. With this, they also dedicated a member of the teaching staff to act as technological tutor and mentor.

Today, 20 young workers from the region, make up LEABAI, an associated work cooperative and they carry out their design, construction and mould injection activity in a recently inaugurated building in the small village of Gizaburuaga in our region. In the words of Rikardo Barainka, the elected member for Innovation and Economic Promotion in BFA, "a model innovative business project, not by its product, and neither for its production processes, nor for its generation model, but for the integration of its activities and for its integration in the environment".

Needless to say, the project achieved all its relative expectations (we shall give details about the current relationship with the school later on); on one hand a greater access to employment for our students, and on the other hand, to aid technological updating for its teaching staff. In fact, only a few months after launching the project, the assigned tutor was learning both technological issues from the project (in matters of design and mould construction) and also in the area of project management. We could recount out a long list of matters and issues, which through the development of the project up until the present day, demonstrate the project's technological contribution to our Centre. However, the aspects that we shall explain in our current collaboration agreement show this. Before we explain that, Borja Cazalis will briefly explain the company's current activity.