

PUBLICATION CONTENTS SUMMARY

10th Anniversary of Ikaslan Bizkaia



This year, Ikaslan Bizkaia celebrates its tenth anniversary. Ten years of combined work for promoting Vocational Training. A project that was sponsored by a group of Principles of centres teaching Vocational Training, concerned about the changes that were taking place after the implementation of the new educational system. With this association, they found the appropriate vehicle for sharing those concerns and for obtaining better solutions for them.

The name they chose for the association gives sense to the activities included in the action framework of the organisation, that is, Vocational Training and Integration. Ikaslan Bizkaia's centres have the common objective of training people for being integrated into the labour market with the best guarantee, after a training period. Nevertheless, this route presents a way back for the centres, in which people can improve their working skills after another training period. The idea of bringing to the association those initiatives fostering this mixture of study and work is the roots of its name, which could no way be chosen with a better criterion (Ikasi means 'to learn' and lan means 'to work').

Many centres joined this initiative from the very beginning. The association's progress began with 17 institutes. 14 of them still form part of the association, and the other 3 left during the first years because of the joining process with other centres of Bachillerato (Higher Secondary Education) in which Vocational Training was not so visible, or the new centre was located in another territory. These centres thanked the help received from the association, wishing that the Ikaslan Bizkaia project were on the right track. Time has proved that wish.

Nevertheless, the joining process that was carried out at that time did not only produce the disappearing of some of the initial centres, it also created a network of big-sized centres, with a wide and varied training offer. This way, it was possible that, in many cases, the training process of some students has a reference in centres where, starting from the first course of ESO (Obligatory Secondary Education), and after the Bachillerato,

they opt for attending an Advanced Training Cycle. Afterwards, they continue their education with the Continuing Vocational Training, so that the link between the student and the centre, in many cases, influences their all-around training in a great extent.

During the following years, there was a steady stream of new members, and in some cases, this meant the creation of new centres, resulting from the separation of some of the member centres. Those new centres took on the organisation form introduced by the Basque Vocational Training Plan 1997 during its development. This process of new members finished in 2003, getting the present shape of 23 centres.

As in many other cases, the beginning had a certain temporary character. The different meetings among the Principals were rotating, since a final central office for those meetings had not been established. They began to settle around the office linked to the Secretary's office of the association, in which all the documents on the association's operation were gathered and filed. Supporting staff joined the office and from there, they have been dynamising the different projects, which gave cause for the increasingly higher activity of the association, by virtue of agreements and collaborations with different institutions. The result of the organisation's growth, as it is constituted, has allowed the member centres to collaborate in the development of the Basque Vocational Training Plan, constituting the association as an appropriate negotiator in the employment policies, together with the social partners. This makes us look at that project's future in a positive way. In its ten years of existence, it has known a real process of reforms to which it has been able to adapt thanks to its dynamism.

A day for reflection and celebration

Under the title "Vocational Training: We look at the future, without forgetting our present", the 10th Anniversary of Ikaslan Bizkaia was celebrated last 18th May at BECI, the Bilbao Exhibition Centre, with around 200 people present.

This event received many personalities, as well as principals, management teams, and staff of the different centres making up the Ikaslan Bizkaia Association.

After the presentation of the event by the Chairman of Ikaslan Bizkaia, José Ignacio Angulo, Soledad Iglesias, Deputy General Director for Vocational Training of the Ministry of Education and Science opened the conferences with "The challenges of the new Vocational Training". In this lecture, she made a long exposition about the professional qualifications in the European framework, their development and effects in Vocational Training, and its corresponding degrees in Spain and the Autonomous Communities.

About 10.30 in the morning, José María Vázquez Eguskiza, Chairman of CEBEK- Bizkaia Business Confederation, started his lecture "Training for the new jobs", exposing the difficulties, challenges, and opportunities with which Bizkaia's productive sector deals, from his point of view. The Chairman of CEBEK explained the importance of Vocational Training, both at present and in the near future, for the new jobs and pointed out that these new jobs will be essential for Bizkaia's professional development.

After the questions made to the speakers and the later discussion, those present were able to have a coffee before beginning the second part of the conferences, with a presentation by the Secretary of Ikaslan Bizkaia, Pedro María Basagoiti.

This presentation gave way to a video about the activity carried out by Ikaslan Bizkaia and the member Centres. Next, José

Ignacio Angulo, Chairman of Ikaslan Bizkaia, began with his lecture "Ten years of Ikaslan Bizkaia in Vocational Training". He made his exposition remembering and thanking the work done by the Principals who have taken part in this exciting project called Ikaslan, throughout these years. He also thanked the management teams and all the staff who develop a highly important task from the Centres.

Both the video and the aforementioned lecture carried out a historical report on the challenges, projects, illusions, etc. of the Association's development, making a very positive assessment of these years.

After this, Iñaki Mujika, Vice Minister of Vocational Training and Continuing Education of the Basque Government, gave his lecture "The importance of the centres in the framework of the Basque Vocational Training Plan". He started his exposition

standing out the important task carried out by Ikaslan during the last ten years, and the essential role played by the Centres. We also had the opportunity to see the Basque Government's approaches with regard to the future Vocational Training and the development of the 2nd Basque Vocational Training Plan.

After the round of questions and the later discussion, they celebrated the recognition ceremony awarding outstanding personalities related to Vocational Training, because of their important and constant work in favour of this kind of training. The conferences were closed by the Vice Minister of Vocational Training and Continuing Education, Iñaki Mujika, and the Deputy for Employment and Training of Bizkaia's Provincial Council, Julio Artetxe.

From Ikaslan Bizkaia, we declare our commitment to continuing working for Vocational Training.

Interviews with the Regional Commissioners of Education

Iosu Gangoiti. Commissioner of Education in Alava



"Vocational Training is a strategic investment, which requires support and cooperation from everyone"

Holding a degree in Philosophy and Educational Sciences from the Universidad Central of Barcelona, Iosu Gangoiti was the principal of Vitoria's Aranzabela School, and, later, he worked as a special education needs adviser in the Berritzegunes (Centres for Educational Training and Innovation). He has been the Commissioner of Education in Alava since 1995. After more than ten years leading the Regional Department, he has become the voice of experience...

– As the most veteran Commissioner of the three territories, which have been the greatest successes of your Department during this period?

– We have to be reasonably happy with what we have achieved in comparison to 10 years ago. We have a consolidated Vocational Training, which acts as a reference for other territories. A radical change has occurred in the last decade and now we look at the Vocational Training as something characterised by more innovative, flexible, adaptive, and modern systems. Our Vocational Training provides a solid education, with a flexible structure, facilitating the integration of

all the present training systems, both in the official and non-official education, and the response to the needs of the education system.

–What are the particular characteristics of Alava's Vocational Training and how has it developed?

– All the centres are obtaining quality certificates. In 2005, we have granted three Silver "Q" certifications and every effort is being made in order to promote the introduction of the Basque language into the system. Furthermore, we have had a considerable increase in the initial training, despite the fact that the number of students of these ages has fallen. During the last years, the Vocational Training enrolment rates have increased from 45% to 48%. We are also working in order to diversify and adapt the offer to the labour market's requirements, and from the next academic year on, we will include a new professional branch: Wood and Furniture.

–How have you improve the introduction of the Basque language in the centres?

– We are making an important effort to introduce the Basque language into the Vocational Training system in Alava. In 2002, only two courses were given in Basque; in the next academic year, we will offer sixteen. Nevertheless, we must continue striving to get more.

–How do you evaluate the work of IKASLAN?

– In a completely positive way. Every kind of collaborative work is necessary. They know first-hand the reality of the centres and give us very valuable information and suggestions. Thanks to this cooperation, we have obtained very positive results.

–Which are the action lines suggested for the next years by the Territorial Department of Education concerning Vocational Training?

– For us, it is paramount to facilitate the access to bilingual education. There is an important shortage we must face. We would also like to instil the training as something that does not come to an end after the apprenticeship, but as something that continues through all your life, emphasising the continuing character of education. Another challenge is to keep up-to-date in order to improve the facilities of the centres. From 2005 to 2007, we are making investments of 10 million euros for new workshops, enlargements, etc. Furthermore, we want to promote the integration of women into jobs traditionally held by men, especially in branches such as the car industry (2% women). And we also aim at extending and diversifying the public offer in the territory, focusing on areas where we have detected insufficiencies and adapting to new demands.

–Do you think there have been advances with respect to the teaching staff's stability and the management autonomy? How do you evaluate the centralised allocation in a single territory?

– In relation to the centralised allocation, the teachers have expressed a very positive opinion, and I think we must continue in the same way because the cooperation among territories yielded positive results. One of the objectives of the Department of Education is to work so that the centres can develop their own management. It is one of our priorities. Concerning the staff's stability, we have not had any problems to relocate the teaching staff in Alava.

–What would be your message with respect to the future of Vocational Training?

– Vocational Training is a strategic investment, which requires support and cooperation from everyone, the Department of Education acting as the driving force. It is also essential to promote the learning of languages, to continue supporting the centres in their bet for quality, to try to get a complete integration of Vocational Training in our geographical environment and in Europe. Moreover, I think that an essential issue is the need to integrate the present introductory vocational programmes, which will become the introductory qualification programmes under the new legislation, into the Vocational Training plans. These are the programmes targeted at the students who do not hold a school-leaving certificate and who have been forgotten during the last years.

Andoni Anasagasti. Commissioner of Education in Bizkaia



"We want a Vocational Training integrated in its geographical environment"

Andoni Anasagasti has been leading Bizkaia's Department of Education for four months. He had been teaching Natural Sciences for almost thirty years, serving on several schools' board of directors. Before taking up this Commission, he had also worked at the Educational Inspectorate, which has enabled him to gather a great knowledge about the structure of the education system in his region.

– How would you evaluate the Vocational Training in Bizkaia?

– In our society, the Vocational Training goes side by side with the company. It is a quality and highly valued training that responds to company needs while keeping in direct and close contact with the company, adjusting the training objectives to the labour market and the society, in a perfect interaction with the present education system, and playing an important role in the field of post-compulsory education.

– How has the Vocational Training developed in your territory? How would you describe the Vocational Training in Bizkaia?

– The Vocational Training courses and centres have developed very positively, getting the professional recognition they deserve. The centres have opened up to their environment, becoming a reference point in the places where they are located. The introduction of the Basque language into the system is keeping pace with the society in which it is immersed, and this year, there are already 60 training courses that are given in Basque, which represents a 16,67 percent increase over the previous academic year. Furthermore, Biscay has also promoted bilingual training courses (Basque and Spanish), has generated an initial response to the Vocational Training public education in Basque in new areas of the territory.

Bizkaia's industrial fabric is very compact, showing a high density of population in the area of the Great Bilbao. Most of the Vocational Training centres are located in this area, with some professions of long-standing tradition. That is why we want to foster Vocational Training in not so industrialised places. On the other hand, the centres have bet for quality, obtaining significant recognitions at all levels and taking part in promotion and quality improvement activities.

–What is your assessment of IKASLAN, of the work they are doing and of what it represents?

– IKASLAN has enabled a relationship between the centres, allowing them to communicate their needs to the educational administration, and it is therefore an invaluable tool to get to know the realities of the centres. It provides very interesting data that helps to improve the Vocational Training.

– Do Bizkaia's Vocational Training centres respond to the needs of the labour market and to the students' demands? Is there still work to be done?

– The training is being constantly adjusted. At present, we have two main projects in Bizkaia. The project of Uritxe in Amorebieta will start in September, and the project of Miribilla, the reference centre in Bilbao, is being planned, with a large amount of training courses in order to meet the demand of the area. We are also making researches in each region trying to adjust our offer to the potential demand, especially in those areas where we have detected an insufficient Vocational Training offer. In Bizkaia, there are 21 professional branches (there is only one missing: Glass and Ceramics). There are 52 advanced degrees and 33 intermediate degrees.

– Which are the action lines suggested by the Territorial Department of Education concerning Vocational Training?

– Apart from what has already been mentioned, we are working to offer a public bilingual service in the whole territory. We would also like to enhance the contacts between the centres and the Department and the companies, the whole economic fabric, and the administrations, increasing the In-Company Training as a complement to the student's coursework. Furthermore, we continue with the staff training, fostering both general plans of action and private initiatives within the framework of territorial jurisdiction, providing them with the necessary resources.

– What do you think about the teaching staff's stability and the management autonomy?

– Legislation forces us to create integrated centres, with certain characteristics, which involves changes in the educational scene, and consequently, relocation of the teaching staff. Thanks to the creation of these integrated centres, they hold now in their hands powers that used to belong to the administration, so that they can carry out a better management.

–How do you evaluate the centralised allocation in a single territory, in this case, in your territory?

– That only marks the beginning, with mistakes and successes, from which to learn for the future.

– What would be your message with respect to the future of Vocational Training?

– We want a Vocational Training integrated in its geographical environment and offering a complete and quality offer of training courses. We want a constantly updated offer, which guarantees quality and efficiency, closely linked to the demands of the business world, in order to achieve the integration of our students into the labour market. We have to achieve a strong public image, beyond the stereotypes and the organisational structures that do not reflect the reality of the 21st century, trying to increase the participation rate in Vocational Training as part of the post-compulsory education.

Arantza Laca. Commissioner of Education in Gipuzkoa

"Vocational Training in Gipuzkoa is dynamic, closely linked to the business world"



Last January, Arantza Laca became part of the Management of the Gipuzkoa's Territorial Department of Education, coming directly from the schoolteaching. She has worked 23 years as a high school teacher. She spent 12 of these years taking management responsibilities, which serves as a guarantee of her knowledge of the education system from the inside. Now she faces the challenge of applying this experience to the education world from the Administration.

track of technological advances. The management of the centres must be dynamic, and must foresee the future needs, types of training courses, and teaching staff.

–Which are the action lines the Gipuzkoa's Territorial Department of Education is proposing for the next years with respect to Vocational Training?

– Following with the things I have just explained, the great difficulty for our Department lies in meeting flexibility concerning the assignment of teachers to schools, because there are certain courses in which the teacher's profile is very complex. The allocation of teachers to schools is indeed very demanding and our challenge is to respond adequately to this demand.

– Do you think that there have been advances in terms of staff's stability and management autonomy?

– Since its foundation, IKASLAN had planned action lines relating to quality management and relating to the implementation of many other projects. Every time a new project is introduced in a centre, there are internal reflections and the teachers see their roles modified. The projects are based on the individuals that promote and carry them on, and they need stability. There is often a clash between stability and flexibility, and we are trying to balance these aspects. The stability of the management team is also very important, as they are behind the projects. That is also linked to the management autonomy; the networks of centres that work together in different projects are the ones that have a better understanding of the surrounding reality and of the realities of the centres.

– How do you evaluate the centralised allocation in a single territory?

– It was introduced last year and it has had positive effects. When it was carried out in the three territories, it used to cause management and coordination problems; every year, they make a provision of resources that are transferred and reallocated. It is carried out in Bilbao and that may involve travel difficulties, but the unification and centralisation was a major step forward.

– What would be your message with respect to the future of Vocational Training?

– It is always changing, the implementation of the courses is being revised, we have to offer the appropriate courses in the

– What do you know about IKASLAN and about the work they are carrying out?

– In 1998, I took up the management of the Lizardi High School in Zarautz. It was then when I got to know a group of directors of Vocational Training centres that had created IKASLAN. I, for my part, also participated in the foundation of an association for high school teachers; I know IKASLAN and their work from the very beginning. My first year as high school principal coincided with the implementation of Vocational Training courses in high schools. Before the LOGSE (a Spanish Education Act), there were either Vocational Training Centres or secondary education schools, but from then on, there were centres combining both trainings.

– What is, in your opinion, the particular fact that distinguishes Vocational Training in Gipuzkoa from other territories?

– In Gipuzkoa, there is a long tradition in Vocational Training and it is a very dynamic world. These centres are closely linked to the business world, and have strong relationships with the company. Therefore, it has been possible to develop all the strategic lines that had been proposed.

– Do the centres in Gipuzkoa meet the needs of the students and of the labour market?

–Vocational Training must be constantly adapting to the changing labour market. The centres have made an enormous effort in order to get to know the market, to respond to the needs and to keep up-to-date. The work is being done well but it is a bit complicated because the adjustments involve changes in the centres. If the training course is modified, within a professional branch, the teacher's required qualifications may also vary. There must be a regular staff training, as they are preparing the students for working in companies where these innovations are already applied. The teaching staff must keep

appropriate places. Vocational Training is well organised and it has a promising future in Gipuzkoa; it is demanded by companies. We have students and its number will increase more and more. The important thing is to be prepared in order to offer a quality Vocational Training, adapted to the company's real needs. I think that will be achieved thanks to all the people working in the field of Vocational Training in Gipuzkoa.

A Strategic Plan for Vocational Training

Within a few months, the Strategic Plan for Vocational Training will be ready, a project promoted by the Basque Vice-Department of Vocational Training and Continuing Education, run by Iñaki Mujika. It is a plan whose aim is to take concrete actions within the framework of the Basque Vocational Training Plan 2004-2007, reaching a consensus among all the participants in the Vocational Training process in the Basque Country.

The Vice-Department of Vocational Training is currently working on the Strategic Plan 2005-2010, a reflection on the actions to be taken within the framework of the Basque Vocational Training Plan 2004-2007, a proposal that is still in force and that regulates the Vocational Training activities in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, which sets itself up as a key element of the policy designed to tailor training towards the labour market for competitiveness purposes.

Iñaki Mujika, as head of the Vice-Department of Vocational Training and Continuing Education, explains us how this reflection is being carried out, and seizes the opportunity to take stock of the years spent in this position. "Firstly, I would like to thank the Basque Government, which made an important strategic investment in Vocational Training with the Basque Vocational Training Plan of 1997, renewing its commitment in 2004. We must also thank the centres and their involvement, because they have believed in the project of the Government, both the management and the teaching staff, and because they are highly motivated to carry it on. Without their commitment, the successes would not have been possible. And finally we would like to thank the business people and the social partners such as the trade unions, who understand that Vocational Training is necessary and important."

According to Mujika, it must be emphasised that "the Basque Country has achieved the coordination of all the partners involved in Vocational Training. The 1997 Plan was reached by consensus; the 2004 Plan, too. Therefore, in Vocational Training, we started from a calm and stable situation." In the same way, the Vice-Department is working now to reach an agreement on the Strategic Plan with all the partners engaged in Vocational Training.

Research lines

In this sense, and in order to continue shaping the Basque Vocational Training Plan 2004-2007, an analysis of the entities that make up the Vice-Department of Vocational Training and Continuing Education has been carried out. It encompasses both directorates, and it consists of the Basque Institute for Qualifications, the Basque Agency for the Evaluation of the Competence and Quality of Vocational Training, and also the TKNIKA Centre (Innovation Centre for Vocational Training). We have analysed the functions of each of these entities, focusing on the key processes of the Vice-Department, and we are working in their improvement.

These are the research lines:

- Market positioning in Vocational Training: whom to approach, provide a service (students, companies...)

Furthermore, we have managed to revitalise and improve the image of Vocational Training among the youth. In the future, we will also face the challenge of responding to the immigrants' demand. Now there are many children attending basic education classes, and many of them will decide on Vocational Training.



- Strategic positioning: organisation, Vice-Department structure, legislation to be promoted in order to take actions, etc.

- Key processes in Vocational Training: Initial Vocational Training, Continuing Vocational Training, Continuing Education, People Management, because the results depend on them, information and communication (telling people what Vocational Training is), etc.

A Vice-Department "by processes"

The market positioning process's main task is to keep close watch over market movements, training needs of the different sector's companies, and technological advances. In order to achieve that, TKNIKA conducts an innovation process. Each entity has its own participation, with the aim of establishing relations among all entities as these are shared processes, not tight processes.

"It is another way of managing the Vice-Department, by processes," states Iñaki Mujika. "These processes have indicators on which we would also like to reach an agreement with the partners. The first approach will take place at the beginning of June, when we will work on the 2007 budget, and we hope it will be ready in autumn."

The Vice-Department wants to share this reflection with all the partners involved, with the Basque Council for Vocational Training, with principals' associations of public and state assisted private centres, trade unions and other departments with which it collaborates, such as Administration and Services, Personnel, Computing, Infrastructure, etc., so that they can become part of this project.

Concerning the objectives, these would fit into the framework set and approved by the Basque Vocational Training Plan 2004-2007, still in force, which has mapped four strategic spheres:

- Updating and improvement of the Integrated System of Qualifications and Vocational Training.
- Quality in Vocational Training in the Basque Country.
- Fostering innovation in Vocational Training in the Basque Country as a process of continuous improvement.
- The NICTs (new information and communication technologies) in Vocational Training in the Basque Country.

Appropriate resources

At present, Vocational Training has a significant financial allocation, although there are always aspects to be enhanced. However, as Iñaki Mujika points out, "a better management of the present resources would lead to more efficiency. We must

provide the Vocational Training centres with equal opportunities in relation to the tasks to be done and in the resources earmarked for these areas. I also include the state assisted private centres; those participating in the Vice-Department policies will have at their disposal the resources needed to implement the projects."

Thanks to the work carried out by all the involved partners, the Basque Vocational Training has consolidated its position at European level and is equipped with cutting-edge technology, which allows that, in some cases, small projects that cannot be carried on in the companies are conducted in collaboration with the centres.

"Now that our teachers and principals are travelling to other countries, they become aware of our strong position, and if they come upon something interesting, we implement it immediately. We are willing to learn and to teach." The Basque Vocational Training is, in fact, a reference for Spain, implementing plans that serve as an innovation model for other Autonomous Communities.

Vocational Training as a banner

IKASLAN, as an active and referent partner in the Basque Vocational Training sector, will work together with the Vice-

Department on the Strategic Plan. "I really appreciate IKASLAN, since I was part of the organization since its very beginning, I have worked as secretary there for many years, and, through all of the stages of the association that I have witnessed, they have always shown a willingness to work together with the Department of Education so as to improve Vocational Training. IKASLAN has taken on the cause of advancing Vocational Training and they have been acclaimed as excellent ambassadors everywhere they have gone, collaborating with other Autonomous Communities and centres. We must thank them for the work both the principals and the teachers of the centres are carrying out, often silently.

People must be looking forward to working in Vocational Training in order our plans to be efficient and effective, and in this sense, the centres are excited, as they see the government is supporting Vocational Training. They are working with cutting-edge equipment and very high employment rates; because our ultimate goal is to integrate the students into the labour market, and at this moment the employment rate of Vocational Training students amounts to 83%." Thanks to these excellent results, the backing of companies and institutions and the willingness of all the partners involved in the project, we predict a great future for the Strategic Plan.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

M. Axun Larrañaga, responsible for the Urratsbat Project in TKNIKA



"We all opt for an enterprising Basque Country"

After being almost thirty years devoted to teaching at El-goibar's Vocational Training Centre, M. Axun Larrañaga now develops the exciting task of diffusing entrepreneurship in the Vocational Training centres of the Basque Country, helping to instil the students an enterprising culture. She carries out this task from TKNIKA, the Centre of Innovation for Vocational Training that was created more than a year ago, and the excellent results achieved have answered for her work. She directs the Urratsbat Programme, which has allowed the Vocational Training students to create more than forty new companies during the last years in the Basque Country.

– Let me begin with a classical question: the entrepreneur is born or made?

– I am sure the entrepreneur is made. Of course, you must have an enterprising profile, but you can also learn. We have recently visited Finland, a country with a great entrepreneurship tradition, and we have known a programme that includes the enterprising training in all the school stages. We have concluded that the entrepreneur is really made, and that is our task. We must understand that entrepreneurship must be present in the educational centres' curricula and, above all, we must transmit the enterprising values, convincing the educational authorities and, logically, the teachers.

– How can you foster, from the Vocational Training centres, an enterprising culture among the young ones?

– To enterprise means to begin, to start something, to dare to do something, to risk doing something..., from organising a game or an excursion with your friends to start up a business. We understand that enterprising is not only creating a company, we want to talk about entrepreneurship with a capital E. We must train enterprising students; some of them will start up their own business and others will be enterprising in their job positions. If we get the students of the Basque Country to be

enterprising, the companies will benefit from it, because these people will be capable of promoting new business units within them. Enterprising is an attitude: an enterprising person dares to carry out his ideas, by himself or with help, and he must have a series of values, the ones we would like to foster; an enterprising person is creative, courageous, has initiative, illusion, and believes in an idea. It is clear that failure exists, but we have to take it in a positive way. When a project does not result, it gives us the opportunity to learn. When you take part in something, you are already enterprising, and enterprising is necessary in a society that is changing, flexible... To enterprise is to decide. We all are enterprising people, and we enterprise every time we decide. An enterprising person is someone who decides to be enterprising.

– In TKNIKA, you have the challenge of innovating in Vocational Training. Is entrepreneurship related to this task?

– TKNIKA's objective is to be a pioneer centre in the field of innovation, and innovation also includes entrepreneurship. In the Basque Country, we are implementing a really new methodology that results really surprising when we show it outside the Community. To get Vocational Training students to consider the possibility to start up a business is innovating.

Another of our objectives is that the technological innovations TKNIKA is developing become business ideas, but this is something in which we must work. There are more and more companies related to technological innovation among the activities that are emerging. At present, two projects are being developed in Gipuzkoa in the field of technology and innovation.

– What kind of aid or support does the Urratsbat programmes offer to young people devoted to promote a business initiative? How does this programme work?

– Our network includes 25 centres (20 public centres and 5 state assisted centres) in which we are working with the programme, and the first thing to do is sensitising: through the collaboration with the Labour Department of the Basque Government, each centre has a person who is full-time helping the entrepreneurship. They are the pillars of the system; they have all the merits. Their task is to motivate, sensitise, and inform the students that they can set up a company using the centre's infrastructure and support. With the help of external consultancies –like Saiolan, Integra...–, the students are provided with sessions in the classrooms, and those who think about the possibility to enterprise can attend a 16-hours course, transforming their idea into a pre-project. These ideas enter business awards and, later, we study if those students want to take a risk and consider the business experience more seriously. That is how the Urratsbat Programme was born. From here, the centres' management decides which ideas become projects, according to their resources. From this moment on, the centre becomes an incubator of the new company: it provides an equipped office, facilities, and machinery to develop the project and the prototypes. A teacher/tutor, specialised in the activity of the company, supported by each centre's dynamiser, gives advice during the starting. Some centres are incubating several projects, although we want them to promote one company every year. So our goal is being largely achieved, and it is being overcome in many cases.

– Is there any other programme, besides the aforementioned Urratsbat, to promote entrepreneurship in the Vocational Training Centres?

– We are working in other practices that have been started as pilot programmes this year in Gipuzkoa. We hope that more centres and entities will be able to enter these programmes next year. This new experience is the EJE Programme, a programme by Valnalon, a public entity depending on Autonomous Community of Asturias that is responsible for promoting entrepreneurship inside the classroom. It has already been implemented in technical Vocational Training in five different centres –Mutriku, Bidasoa, Easo, Bergara and Zubiri-Manteo–, with the help of the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa. The object of the programme is that the students set up fictitious cooperatives and

start relationships with others promoted by student groups in Spain or in Europe. They simulate all the product sale process, etc, working as if they were a real company. In relation to all this, I want to note an important fact provided by the European Commission, which says 20 percent of the participants in mini-company activities in the secondary education have resulted to found their own company after finishing their studies.

– Do you think that the institutions foster enough entrepreneurship or that there is still work to do? Do you see the need of a higher collaboration between institutions for that aim?

– There are many institutions involved in the entrepreneurship: the Basque Government, with the Departments of Education, Labour, and Industry, the three Provincial Councils, (Alava, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa), the BBK, DEMA, IKASLAN, the external consultancies, etc. Generally speaking, the institutions are very sensitive to this issue, but we need a very good communication and coordination among all of us. We must invest resources for sensitising, the educational system must implement entrepreneurship, the values related to it, above all, at every level. And, it is true we lack material for this.

Within the Urratsbat Programme, it would be also important to be able to give a scholarship as incentive to the good entrepreneurs, since they usually go for paid internships, so the world of work took this valid people away from us in order to promote the companies.

– How do you evaluate entrepreneurship in Vocational Training centres up to the present moment?

– Since the programme was started, in the 2001-2001 academic year, 45 companies have been set up, from which 38 are now working. Entrepreneurship is more and more present in the education world. For example, we have celebrated the Entrepreneurs Day in May, with the participation of 77 centres from Gipuzkoa. The achievements are due to the dynamisers and the teachers, but the leadership of the centres' management staffs is crucial. Those sure about the project are obtaining excellent results. We intend entrepreneurship to form part of the centres' corporate plans and annual planning.

– Finally, the future... does it belong to entrepreneurs?

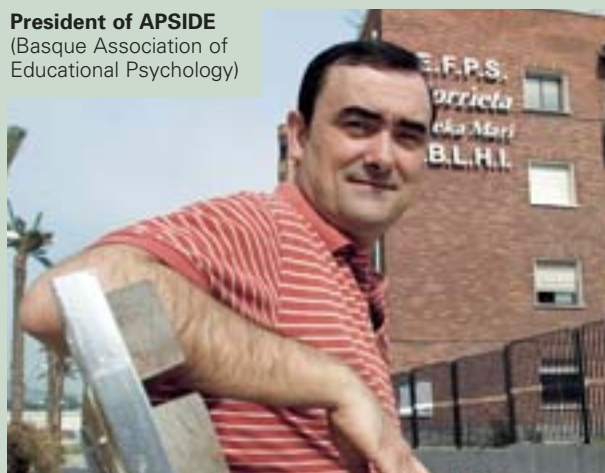
– The challenge is to train enterprising workers and enterprising people, since there also exists the idea of intra-entrepreneurship inside the company, creating new business units, and this can only be done by those companies with entrepreneurs within their staff. We all opt for an enterprising Basque Country, and this battle must be led from the institutions. In fact, there already exists an Entrepreneurship Department in the Basque Government, showing the increasing importance of entrepreneurship in our society.

Educational guidance,

An effective and necessary support

Ernesto Gutiérrez,

President of APSIDE
(Basque Association of
Educational Psychology)



Educational guidance takes shape as an essential tool when it comes to advise young people, help them to guide their professional careers.

Although the figure of the adviser has been recently implemented, it is gradually strengthening in the centres. Their task is very wide and needs the support of all the teaching staff and especially of the management teams so that they can develop their duties in an appropriate way.

All the centres that impart Bachillerato (Higher Secondary Education) and ESO (Obligatory Secondary Education) have an educational adviser. Nevertheless, it does not happen in the Vocational Training Centres. "We are worried about the fact that the centres only offering training cycles do not have an educa-

tional adviser. We are one of the few Autonomous Communities that have not generalised this figure in all the Vocational Training centres. There are more than 5,000 students without the support of an educational adviser," says Ernesto Gutierrez-Crespo, adviser at the IEFPS Elorrieta-Erreka Mari of Bilbao and chairman of ApsidE, the Basque Association of Educational Psychology.

In his opinion, "it is true that Vocational Training offers a module on careers advice, but guidance cannot be reduced to career questions. There are other problems also affecting the training cycles, especially the advanced courses: early leaving, social problems, behaviour in the classroom, lack of working habits, handicapped students, etc. These issues are also demanding an impulse of the tutorial and guidance actions, as well as a coordination effort of the staff teaching these cycles."

The educational advice cannot only be focused on the career area, since it includes three working fields: personal, academic, and professional; and the tasks the adviser develops to cover these three fields are very varied and depend on each centre's characteristics and context. The task of the guidance departments is essential for the tutorial coordination, the prevention and treatment of social problems, the dynamisation of the tutorial actions, the monitoring of the students' academic achievements, the promotion of healthy living habits, and the attention paid to the students with special educational needs.

In addition, other important issues of the adviser's job is to take part in the centre's educational coordination structures, in the creation of vocational guidance programmes, and in the centre's innovation and training projects.

The adviser's role

Educational guidance must be understood as a task that the whole teaching staff must carry out. The adviser would have the task of coordinating this job. Moreover, his/her job is not only focused on the students. "We work in three fields: students, parents, and centres, although the natural target group are the students", says Ernesto Gutierrez.

The guidance departments should play a decisive role in the impulse and innovation of the centres. Nonetheless, as they are defined as non-didactic departments, they run the risk of occupying a peripheral place in the centres' structures.

On the other hand, the advising task is scarcely regulated. "We ask the Administration to draw a Guidance Plan that allows defining our tasks and that shapes guidance departments as powerful working teams to face the increasing needs derived from the students' diversity –also in Vocational Training, especially in intermediate cycles–, and, thus, to contribute to innovation and educational coordination," indicates Gutierrez.

Vocational guidance

Advisers develop vocational guidance programmes. "The objective of these programmes is to help the students to take an appropriate decision about their future studies or careers." We need to understand that many variables affect the student's decision about his/her studies after the Secondary Education or Bachillerato: his interests, his personal values, his academic achievement, the family's expectations, his economic level, his character, and a sufficient knowledge of the different academic options and their respective job opportunities.

"The student's decision is the result of a reflection on all those variables: his final decision will be a puzzle in which all those factors must fit. Therefore, the knowledge of the different options and job opportunities is just another issue we must take into account, although it results essential," points out Gutierrez. "It is impossible to have a 'deep' knowledge of a training offer in a Vocational Training with so many cycles. The advisers must know the relevant issues of each cycle, that is: academic and job competences and opportunities of each cycle. We must improve in this field, as in many others, since

the specific training offer for advisers is incredibly scarce."

An increasing number of students are inclined to a training cycle before attending University. "We think this is an option we must foster", says Gutierrez. Thus, the student attending a cycle acquires several competencies that will be really useful during his university education. In addition, after attending a cycle the decision to go to University is taken in a more conscious and mature way, in many cases. "Unfortunately, only a small percentage of the students finishing an advanced cycle continue their studies at University. It is necessary to break the idea that you 'lose two years' if you attend a cycle before going to University."

Guidance in Vocational Training

As an association, ApsidE has drawn a document with the aim to impulse guidance in Vocational Training, including the needs, objectives, and organisational structure. They want to spread it in the IKASLAN centres soon. "It is necessary to increase the relationship and the communication between the Vocational Training centres and the rest of secondary education centres. The celebration of Vocational Training Fairs or the open days are important, but they are still isolated cases. It would be interesting, for example, that the student can 'try' the cycle in which s/he is interested during a week." This way, the index of early leaving school would be reduced, avoiding the frustration this situation causes to the students.

"During the first month of the cycle, we make a re-guidance for those who have realised that they have made a mistake when choosing, so that they will not make this mistake again. There has been a great emphasis in the creation of programmes for supporting the students' job opportunities –job banks, self-employment...–, but there is a clear lack when it comes to welcome them, when helping the ones who arrive, when assessing whether the cycle is of their interest or not."

One of the great measures proposed by ApsidE is the creation – in each Vocational Centre and, especially, in the big ones– of a service of guidance and diffusion of Vocational Training, coordinated by an educational adviser. This service's tasks would be: to answer the questions in a personalised way, to coordinate the centres of the area, to guide advisers, students and parents of ESO and Bachillerato, to transmit periodic and relevant information about Vocational Training, access examinations, job opportunities, etc. Thus, this service goes beyond the simple particular propaganda of each centre.

"The advisers responsible for this service would work co-ordinately in each territory,

under the supervision of the Berritzegune adviser's consultant and of the Vocational Training Directorate. This measure takes advantages of the already existing resources in many centres and it would be very effective."

Looking forward

There are still some barriers to overcome when it comes to choose the career. "The sexual factor is still present, especially in those centres with technical specialties, but it is a cultural change that needs generations," points out the adviser.

The students gladly welcome the information and the guidance. "In the concrete case of my centre, we have been several years working in that line. This year, the department has given advice to more than 300 people, including students and people from outside, about the training cycles offered in our centre and in the whole territory. Each year, there can be around 600 consultations. We especially notice our work when the people receiving guidance has an idea of what Vocational Training is, so we are also contributing to diffuse this kind of information."

Therefore, educational guidance takes shape as an effective and necessary task to guide young people towards the most appropriate training for their profile, contributing to the consolidation of Vocational Training as an option with future and as a guarantee of professional and personal success.

"Our objective is to help the students to take an appropriate decision about their future studies or career"

