

Dear friends, good morning everyone present:

It is my great pleasure to be here as an Ambassador of our Foundation Iruaritz Lezama and Santa María la Blanca School. First of all, I would like to thank Fondazione Centesimus Annus and Mr. Domingo Sugranyes for having invited us to participate in such an important Congress held at The Vatican. We are more than pleased to have the opportunity to share with you all our innovative education project whose main purpose is to foster an educational system consistent with the digital age in which we live. So, allow me to introduce myself, my name is Iñaki Echeveste and I work as Director of Institutional Relations for the Foundation Iruaritz Lezama which is an educational reference entity at a national and international level.

However, my dear friends, there is one person whom I would especially like to appoint who is Father Luis de Lezama, president and founder of our foundation Iruaritz Lezama and St. María la Blanca School. Don Luis your whole life is a moving example of dedication to the others and it fills us with pride and learn under your leadership through all these years. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR BEING HERE TODAY!

1) THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK WHICH INTEGRATES ALL THE STAKEHOLDERS; STUDENTS, FAMILIES AND TEACHERS:

The right response is in order to address challenges in the field of education, the role of the family and the digital cultural revolution we have to go back to 2008. That was the date in which we founded our school in Madrid by starting the project from zero. I would like you to take into account that our St. María la Blanca is one of the biggest schools not just in Spain but in Europe. More than 2.400 students are part of our great family and a team of 180 teachers are able to work within the same pedagogical framework. This makes a huge difference since it is not an isolated experience but a way of understanding education which is changing schools all over the world.

Our pedagogy the EBI System, to let you understand very briefly how it works, is supported on two fundamental criteria:

- A) All educational action must be understood and develop to maximize each student's learning profile. **1 STUDENT = 1 LEARNING PROFILE**
- B) All educational action must facilitate the building of meaningful relationships. **ONE ON ONE; WORKING AS A TEAM; IN OUR SURROUNDINGS**

Today we proudly state that more than 10.000 students have already benefited from the EBI System in Spain, USA and Dominican Republic. The best colophon was the publication of Father Lezama's book "The School of the Future" by PPC (A Spanish Catholic publishing company) and himself handed it to the Holy Father Pope Francisco.

2) THE FUTURE OF PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

From our Foundation we do believe we are living through a fundamental transformation in the way we work and educate. Automation and “thinking machines” are replacing human tasks and jobs, and changing the skills that organizations are looking for in their people. Rapid social, economic and technological change presents new challenges and more ambitious goals for society, and consequently, new and greater demands on its education system. The shape that the workforce of the future takes will be the result of complex, changing and competing forces. Some of these forces are certain, but the speed at which they unfold can be hard to predict. The outcome of this will determine the future of work in 2030.

Education is a service of public interest since it equips people with the capacity for life-long learning and active participation in democratic society, and with a critical spirit and solid values. From the perspective of a Catholic school like ours, family participation in schools is an undeniable quality factor, since the results of our study indicate that this has positive impact on academic achievement and improving school climate.

There are many challenges that education must address in the 21st century, and this requires the involvement of all sectors of the educational community. Relevant aspects specific to families include the influence they exert through parenting style, care and upbringing of children at home, and the connection they establish with the school and other informal educational environments. Parenting style is affected by the socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of the population.

We locate family participation in school education at the forefront of the educational debate and identify it as a subject of great importance in management aimed at improving the quality of school systems. Therefore, any analysis of the future of family participation in education must necessarily consider changes in the context.

3) AN EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT BUILDS INNOVATION CAPACITY SKILLSETS IN YOUNG EUROPEANS.

We think that Europe must produce a new crop of skilled workers and entrepreneurs because there is currently, an ever-widening skills gap. Youth unemployment, unfortunately, remains high at 18%, while almost 30% of the employers find it difficult to fill vacancies: THIS IS A CLEAR EVIDENCE OF A LARGE SKILLS MISMATCH. There is need to inculcate the much needed 21st century skills including **complex problem solving, communication, collaboration and creativity or innovation to bride the skills gap**.

Our Foundation believes that education promotes the capacity for innovation and integration if four key aspects are comprehensively addressed:

- a) **Teaching and learning methods:** To promote equality and inclusivity, European Union trends in the education process are shifting towards more personalization

of the pedagogic offer and enhancing pro-activity from the students to encourage to see themselves as co-investors with their families and the state in their own education. **FROM UNIFORMITY TO INDIVIDUALIZATION; ONE OF THE HALLMARKS OF OUR EBI SYSTEM.**

- b) **The educators (including parents and future employers) and administration:** They need to be innovative themselves and need comprehensive training. We observe a positive correlation between the levels of teachers' cognitive skills to the performance of the student. Moreover, the role of parents and commercial partners in the education circle can stimulate change and innovation faster; especially when technology provides the platform for communication and collaboration, linking everyone and eliciting the best out of students.
- c) **Skills required, KPIs and the assessment methods:** The drive towards inculcating soft skills like entrepreneurship and innovations needs to be counterbalanced by the right support including proper assessment (the right KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS), curriculum or inclusion in the curriculum, accreditation and recognition at various levels.
- d) **Governance:** To spur innovation and remarkable improvement there is need by governments to provide more autonomy to institutions and internationalize the system (ITS OPENNESS TO STUDENTS, FAMILIES, IDEAS, TEACHERS AND THE REST OF THE WORLD)

Most European schools nowadays educate to equip children with knowledge. Today, everybody knows, knowledge is ubiquitous, constantly changing, growing exponentially and thus becoming an over supplied commodity. Today's world demands something further than a graduate full of information (now ubiquitous and free); they should demonstrate further skills to be employable and relevant in a world with environmental and socio-economic challenges and dynamic high technology, advanced manufacturing and ICT industries. Given such a case, only one set of skills can then ensure this generation's economic relevance in the future; **capacity for innovation**. The abilities of innovators include but are not limited to the behavioral skills to question, observe, find and test ideas through a diverse network of individuals, take initiatives, analyze information, have curiosity and imagination and finally experiment by constantly trying out new experiences and piloting new ideas. These brace them to solve problems in life's complex situations.

4) ¿WHAT DO WE TELL OUR FAMILIES AND STUDENTS AT ST. MARIA LA BLANCA SCHOOL?

When so many complex forces are at play, linear predictions are too simplistic. Businesses, governments, schools, families and individuals need to be prepared for a number of possible, even seemingly unlikely, outcomes.

We tell them from the management team that to stay ahead, you need to focus on your ability to continuously adapt, engage with others in that process, and most importantly

retain your core sense of identity and values. For students, it's not just acquiring knowledge, but about how to learn. For the rest of us, we have to remember that intellectual complacency is not our friend and that learning is a life-long attitude.

As a result of this we consider that no exploration of the future of work and education will ever be conclusive. Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of our age is its ability to surprise and confound. We have always had in mind that the starting point matters as much as the destinations: the best response might suppose radical change or perhaps just a few steps from where you are today.

The pace of change is accelerating. Competition for the right talent is fierce. And "talent" no longer means the same as ten years ago; many of the roles, skills and job titles of tomorrow are unknown to us today. ¿How can families and organizations prepare for a future that few of us can define? ¿How will your talent need change? **THIS IS NOT A TIME TO SIT BACK AND WAIT FOR EVENTS TO UNFOLD. TO BE PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE WE HAVE TO UNDERSTAND IT.**

5) WHAT TO DO FROM NOW ON?

EDUCATING FOR AN UNCERTAIN WORLD: The backdrop to 21st-century education is our endangered environment. At the same time, the interaction between technology and globalization has created new challenges and new opportunities. Digitalization is a democratising force: we can connect and collaborate with anyone. But digitalization is also concentrating extraordinary power.

DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND CHARACTER FOR AN AGE OF ACCELERATIONS: The dilemma for educators is that routine cognitive skills, the skills which are easiest to teach and easiest to test, are exactly the skills that are also easiest to digitise, automate and outsource. It will then be our capacity for innovation, our awareness and our sense of responsibility that will enable us to harness the power of artificial intelligence to shape the world for the better.

LEARNING TO BE CRITICAL CONSUMERS OF INFORMATION: The more knowledge that technology allows us to search and access, the more important becomes understanding and the capacity to make sense out of content. Families must participate actively on this process.

COLLABORATING WITH OTHERS: Schools and families must lead a change from a world in which knowledge is piled up somewhere, losing value quickly, towards a world in which the enriching power of communication and collaborative flows increase.

6) WHAT ARE OUR MESSAGES FOR LEADERS?

1º ACT NOW. This isn't about some 'far future' of education and work – change is already happening and accelerating. Families have to play a vital role on this.

2º NO REGRETS AND BETS

The future isn't a fixed destination. Plan for a dynamic rather than a static future. You will need to recognize multiple and evolving scenarios. Make “no regrets” moves that work with most scenarios – but you will need to make some “bets” too.

3º MAKE A BIGGER STEP

Don't be constrained by your starting point. You might need a more radical change than just a small step away from where you are today.

4º OWN THE AUTOMATION DEBATE

Automation and Artificial Intelligence will affect every level of the business and its people. A depth of understanding and keen insight into the changing technology landscape is a must. As catholic educators we must lead the digital transformation with a crucial participation of the families.

5º PEOPLE NOT JOBS

Organizations can't protect jobs which are made redundant by technology – but they do have a responsibility to their people. Protect people not jobs and this goes perfectly with the gospel message and the motto of our Foundation “Do not give fish but to teach to fish”. Nurture Agility, adaptability and re-skilling.

6º AN ENTREPRENEURIAL ATTITUDE IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REINVENTION AND COMPLACENCY

Entrepreneurship is not just a business term anymore; IT'S A WAY OF LIFE FOR FAMILIES AND STUDENTS. You don't need to be an entrepreneur to be entrepreneurial. It's about having an entrepreneurial attitude.

7º ADAPTABILITY – THE KEY TO THE FUTURE

One clear lesson arises from the analysis: adaptability in organizations, individuals, families and civil society is essential for navigating the changes ahead.