

EMPLOYABILITY PLAN

A REWARDING EFFORT

We wanted to recognise, through a round table, the effort made by many of our members over the last few months in the Employability Plan that ULMA has implemented in the last two years.

On behalf of them all, the following people have shared the round table with ULMA; Elena Iglesias, Mikel Martín and José Manuel Mata.



Elena Iglesias (right), Mikel Martín (centre) and José Manuel Mata (left) during the round table

E.I. ELENA IGLESIAS
ULMA ADVANCED FORGED SOLUTIONS
 Profile achieved: Industrial Machinery and Equipment

M.M. MIKEL MARTÍN
ULMA MAINTENANCE SERVICES
 Profile achieved: Mechanical manufacturing

J.M.M. JOSÉ MANUEL MATA
ULMA ARCHITECTURAL SOLUTIONS
 Profile achieved: Mechatronics and Materials

When did you start to hear about the Employability Plan? What was it that prompted you to take the step?

E.I. I heard about it at the plant. I think it was in 2019 when we started to hear a bit and it was the head of personnel who called us to a meeting and told us a little about how this would work. Then they came from Miguel Altuna to explain it to us. It caught me a bit off guard because I didn't know of the existence of an initiative like this.

J.M.M. In my case, I found out at the Executive Board as I was there at that time and they explained a bit of what they were going to do. Later, when they told us from personnel it became clearer.

Did it create any doubts for you? Did you have to think about it very much before giving an answer? Was it difficult for you to make the decision?

M.M. Well, at first I had some doubts, yes, because until we had Miguel Altuna's assessment, we didn't know how many hours we were going to have to do, how many hours were required to qualify you, if the profiles offered in Miguel Altuna matched yours, what possibilities there were of being accepted... Like everything, at first it was a bit complicated.

E.I. Yes, I thought about it a lot. Especially at the beginning I was very hesitant with the issue of hours, how many hours would it be and if I really had the time to do it; above all it was a matter of time.

M.M. The first thing was to get home and arrange everything because at first we didn't know what the timetables of the courses would be, if it was possible go in the morning or in the afternoon, and if it was the afternoon, it was three hours, so you had to bear in mind that you wouldn't get home until 8.

Did they give you good options in terms of combining work with studies?

M.M. Yes, for me, it's absolutely brilliant. For our cooperative staff, at least, it was really easy to do both.

J.M.M. Yes, for us knowing that you could go to the course in the morning and also in the afternoon

was important. They delivered the same course in the morning and in the afternoon depending on your shift. With the exception of one course, they were all available, and these were the ones that were relevant to me.

Was the process explained to you as well as what was involved, its objective and the steps to be followed, the conditions that you would be under, etc., and did you go through the interviews with Miguel Altuna? How was the experience?

E.I. There was a bit of everything. You would explain your previous experience in the cooperative and, above all, in the profiles that they offered in the industrial field. You

would tell them a little about your experience and then we would fill-out some questionnaires they gave us as well as some cards. In the end, all the questions were intended to assess the level of each individual.

J.M.M. Yes, in the end there were questions. They gave me a lathe, tools, even a drawing. They were a bit focused on our profiles.

E.I. Yes, warehouse forms too.

M.M. Some of us had several profiles; you went to the interview and they asked you questions based on those profiles to find out which was the one that validated you the most hours, and that's the one you did.

J.M.M. It was like that for me, too.

I was going to do the Machining course, but in the end I did the Mechatronics course for hours and because that profile was more important for the Business.

E.I. In my case, I had so little industrial experience that I had no idea which one I was going to fit into. I had to do all the tests. I did the whole thing. And I'm happy with what I've done because now I have it, even though it's hard, not the course itself, but dedicating so many hours to it after work.

J.M.M. It's been 20 years since I studied, so starting again with classes, at first it was a bit hard ...

E.I. I saw, in them, in the guys in general that almost all of them had been involved in something with

electricity or lathes or whatever. The thing is I had no experience. For me it was all new.

J.M.M. I had one of the old medium-level degrees in machining, so I continued in that branch, but of course, 20 years after I finished my studies, lathes have changed. All mechanical manufacturing is different, the machinery is new, and the programs too, I was a bit out of place.

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Then with the pandemic, how did the initial conditions or guidelines change? How was it for you? Did you experience lockdowns while taking the online courses? How did you solve the practical part?

J.M.M. In our case it was all face-to-face. Miguel Altuna delivered other online courses but, as there were not many of us, we did them face-to-face. Only people who had to self-isolate missed a few days. We started classes at the beginning of March and it was just when the pandemic started so they stopped the classes.

E.I. Yes, we had only been going a short while, two or three weeks. We stopped in mid-March and didn't go back until July.

M.M. At the beginning the classes were held here at Central Services and they lasted for two weeks. Then the classes stopped for three months and for that reason the end of the course was extended for three months. The idea, at the beginning, was to finish in December, if all went well. Then, with the pandemic, it ended in April of the following year and that put us out of kilter.

J.M.M. When we resumed classes in



September a month later they made the whole class self-isolate. We tried to do the class online; at first it didn't go well because you would lose the connection and when you got connected again you'd already lost the thread a bit, so we decided to do the face-to-face classes once we came out of isolation. Sometimes we even had to go on Fridays to make up a missed class.

M.M. I was lucky in that for the mechanical manufacturing profile, classes were held in the morning or afternoon; because I worked in the afternoon I always went to class in the morning and, of course, many of the classes were like tutoring, as I was alone with the teacher.

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Most of you have passed through the Basque Government's system. Tell us about your experience with the evaluator.

J.M.M. Yes, we met with an evaluator who asked us some questions about the topics we had studied, to see if we knew them or not. Once you pass this phase, you have to apply to the Basque Government for them to validate you and they will give you the ok in terms of what you know and what you have done.

E.I. That's right. If I had proposed that part of the course and Miguel Altuna had judged that you had already passed it, the Basque Government had to back it up to really say if it was ok to make it official.

M.M. It was similar to the test they made us do at Miguel Altuna. In the end they took the printout from an IT system, in the same way as the Basque Government's evaluator.

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The Basque Government's system is an open door to continue self-managed training. Are you planning on completing this training? Have you considered obtaining an official qualification?

J.M.M. Until now we have been with ULMA and in the end all the help of being able to choose timetables, the support they were giving us if we want to obtain an official degree will no longer be like that. Now you have to adapt their schedules with those of your job and that is more difficult, more complicated, so you really have to give it some thought whether or not to continue with it. For now, it's impossible for me, but hey, the option is always there because the qualification we have achieved does not expire. That's how it is. If you want to do a 30-hour Miguel Altuna course or upgrade to a higher-level degree, that's another option.

M.M. Yes, you can go. As we have validated everything that we've done, in the end you can sign up for courses and you can subtract hours and get the higher-level degree.

E.I. I had no idea that this degree was as divided as it might be in the university by credits. You know, it's like everything is divided into units, so you are getting it completed little by little and when it suits you. It's interesting that you don't have to complete two full years because at any time you can say, well what am I

missing and what options do I have to finish everything.

J.M.M. Miguel Altuna offers courses every year and those are the ones that you can add and do little by little. This year I can sign up, it lasts two months, well, if you can do it, you'll always get the qualification.

E.I. Now it is clear to me that I have no intention of doing anything else, above all because of my age. As it's no benefit to me right now - yes, maybe the training that we have received would be applicable to what I am working on because it was more useful to me, but knowing more for a possible change of job, no - not at my age. If it was applicable to what I am doing, well ok, in administrative terms, yes, but in industrial terms, no.

J.M.M. The profile has been useful to me as I applied for a position within Architectural and they selected me for the position but always on the condition that I qualify for that profile.



M.M. Yes, also in my case, once I qualified for a profile in the cooperative, they also offered me the possibility of working in another position so at the moment I am in an impasse, I'm waiting to see.

E.I. Well, in my case, to get the coordinator position, at no time did

they tell me that I had to qualify, nor did they put conditions on me, but even if it's just out of self-pride ...

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What would you say to ULMA staff to convince them that the effort you have made has been worth it?

E.I. Given the conditions they imposed on us, I think anyone can do it and, furthermore, I think everyone should qualify in that profile. It is not that difficult or that complicated. Looking at the different situations we've been in, young people and people like me - I think I was the oldest - people with qualifications, people without qualifications, etc. and we all did it well and we were able to do it.

M.M. Yes, they have made it very easy for us. They were small groups with only ULMA workers. We were all ULMA workers rather than a normal class with 40 students. It was a matter of getting organised and in the end we completed 400 hours.

J.M.M. At first I thought it was going to be harder but with ULMA's support, in the end we had a good time. It is scheduled for three hours every day in addition to the eight hours at our jobs, so it's hard, but it's worth it.

E.I. Once we completed the training, what peace, what calm, you feel like you have so much spare time. Also, we all had a good time together there and it was really good. Pretty soon we felt at ease there and we even organised dinner parties and everything.

M.M. With the support the ULMA group gave us, it was an opportunity that you couldn't let pass you by. If there are some relocations, you

already have qualified for the profile required by ULMA.



E.I. If they provide us with the opportunity again, people should sign up. It shouldn't be missed. Yes, because in my case I've been relocated. I came from Fagor and at the time I came with nothing. At that time we were a little scared. There were almost 2,000 of us to be relocated and they were already requiring being qualified in the profile, in practically all the cooperatives. The same as those who are at ULMA, if you tell them that there could be a relocation, it may sound a bit like Greek to them, but for those of us who have been through the experience, it was tough. The more qualifications you have, the more opportunities come your way. Right now, workers relocated from Udalaiz and from Fagor Electrical Appliances that are not qualified in the profile have been accepted at ULMA but with the condition that, if a relocation were to take place, they would return to Udalaiz, so take this into account and get qualified in your profiles.

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