

## Garnering ideas for progress

*Opinion article - Today's entrepreneurs, the State and society as a whole face a major challenge: to create a process whereby innovation and integration include the majority.*

By Gustavo Grobocopatel (President of Los Grobo)

In California, ideas that change the world are conceived and carried out. Visiting California helps us understand and anticipate many of those changes. Safer, more comfortable automated cars that provide numerous services (cameras, sensors, GPS), powered by renewable energy and shared by multiple users will probably change the paradigm of transportation and traffic in the cities; fewer cars without emissions, less traffic and enhanced mobility. Somebody mentioned the idea that a car will be a "computer on wheels". The possibility of manufacturing cars with 3D printers is also disruptive and prompts reconsideration of scale and series production. A new labor division is being created and this is not futurology or pure utopia. At Tesla plant, you can see almost every worker consult and operate his or her own workstation. The plant increasingly resembles a software company office. What will unions look like in the future? How do they prepare to stop advocating for a job that will no longer exist? How do they plan to adapt to the new jobs that will be created in the future? How can a smooth and inclusive transition be made with enthusiasm and discipline?

At Stanford Research Institute (SRI) you can experience life with virtual assistants. New smartphone programs will help us with the agenda, to solve traffic problems or remind us about the medication we need to take. Young people today use the Apple's Siri program, the most advanced technology tool in this respect but Siri will soon become an old version.

The idea of individual & community is constantly changing. There is a cultural change that produces a sort of infatuation and confusion. However, these tools can help bring those people who are very far away closer, integrating them and creating new opportunities for them. Snapchat offers more emotional forms of collective communication. How can adults, youth and children reeducate themselves without falling into this kind of hypnosis that keeps us away from reality and brings us closer to things far away in time? Distances become shorter, as in times of the first trains.

There is a full range of topics involved: the use of robotics and its benefits for the elderly and health; electro adhesion that revolutionizes logistics or cleaning services; nanotechnology, genomics, artificial intelligence and the convergence of all of them.

Although California's interest and reputation are based on technology industries that changed forever the way things are done –the world's culture— there are many surprises for people like us who are distracted by the intense daily course of affairs; and the renewable energy revolution is one of them. The experience prompts us to imagine a very near future where the light and wind "harvest" will help reduce global warming significantly, lower the price of consumer products, and encourage the development of new geographies that were impossible to imagine in relation to a specific economic activity.

The world has not stand still in facing this development. Renewable energy accounts today for 32% of Germany's total consumption that has 40% more wind power installed capacity only in terms of wind energy compared to Argentina's overall sources. Italy installed in just more than 5 years, an amount of

solar power similar to Argentina's demand as a whole (20GW), and its system includes a renewable component equivalent to nearly more than 2 "Argentinas" (50GW): no need to go further. Uruguay changed its energy matrix and today, a combination of wind, solar and biomass energy provides for 28% of its total consumption. In the United States they estimate that in 5 years, the cost of solar energy storage will cross over the break-even point to stop generating electricity in thermal power plants, even with an oil price below \$ 50 a barrel.

The new legislation and public policy initiatives will help Argentina to start walking down that path. The challenge is to reach a 20% penetration of renewable energy into the matrix, a technical limitation due to the lack of a large scale storage system. But the world is working hard on that: to remove such limitation by focusing on the lowering the price for lithium and making technological advances related to new storage batteries, new formulas, and another chemical combination. We are not far from that objective, wind and solar energies are no longer intermittent and this is being achieved through competitive costs.

According to Sebastian Kind, Undersecretary for Renewable Energy, reaching a target of 20% in 10 years would replace fuel imports for the amount of \$ 30 billion (equivalent to one Central Bank reserve). In a world where the price of renewable energy falls consistently year after year, where there is no need to subsidize it, everybody prefers it because it is reliable, safe and results in minimal environmental impact, but mainly, because it is economically more convenient than the energy involved in the generation of conventional power. In protected beautiful areas, as much of our country, the use of renewable energy also mitigates the risks associated with the transportation and use of fossil fuels. On the other hand, the fight against global warming is really much closer than we imagine and we need to go quickly in that direction.

In the next 30 years we will go from 7 to 10 billion inhabitants, including 3 billion more middle-class members, life expectancy will rise rapidly and the urbanization process will continue to grow. Amidst these realities, and many more taking place in a garage in Palo Alto or Buenos Aires, the challenge for politicians, academics, the civil society and businessmen is to find the way to include society in this rapidly rising new world: a world where 7 out of the 10 jobs of the future are nonexistent today. Keeping jobs in the future will be related to the ability to change them, and failing to do so can doom us to poverty and insignificance.

These initiatives come far and fast in the United States because they are aware of the need; the State accompanies development by providing infrastructure, knowledge centers and access to financing in different ways. Without access to money, ideas become utopias, unrealized wishes, give place to the sense that we cannot and we are not able to do things. Are we prepared to move into this world? Are there lawyers, accountants, historians, sociologists and political scientists who can lead, accompany or revise this process?

We need to talk about this without shouting and deprived from prejudices. The Argentine society has a great opportunity to lead because it has the necessary things to do it. Argentina has sophisticated human resources; there are numerous recognized entrepreneurs both at home and abroad, but still more with the potential to become so. We have a country with resources of all kinds without social conflicts, except for those resulting from our own prejudices, fears and ignorance. Today's entrepreneurs, in collaboration with the State and the whole society face a great challenge: to create a process whereby innovation and integration include the majority. We must not fall into the mistake of paralyzing ourselves, and in the name of good causes, condemn ourselves to increasing poverty. We must build a society characterized by hope, dignity and well-being: an Argentina to the world.

Non official translation of the article published in Clarin 05/22/2016

Available at: [http://www.ieco.clarin.com/economia/Cosechando-ideas-progreso\\_0\\_1581441859.html](http://www.ieco.clarin.com/economia/Cosechando-ideas-progreso_0_1581441859.html)