

# **THE DEMOGRAPHIC QUAGMIRE AND THE URGENT NEED TO INNOVATE**

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To maintain quality of life standards What has currently been achieved, the Basque Country and its productive and social fabric are facing a great productivity challenge that is a direct consequence of what I call the "demographic quagmire" that I explain in a simple way below.

Since 1980, the population in the Basque Country has changed little in global terms. It has gone from 2,141,353 people in 1980 to 2,174,033 in 2010 (32,680 more people; 1.5% total increase). However, as a consequence of a very low fertility rate (1.20 in 2006) and the progressive increase in life expectancy at birth (84.3 years for women and 77.2 for men), the structure of the population It has been radically transformed and has gone from a typical population pyramid with a broad base of people in the lowest age cohorts, to one in which these have drastically decreased and the core cohorts (people of working age) have increased and the older ones (see graph).

✖ Currently, and even in the short, medium term, this population structure does not present great tensions, but the changes that can be intuited for the coming decades present a bleak panorama: the Basque population pyramid in 2050 (see graph) shows a drastic drop in the number of people of working age (256,960 fewer people since 2010) and a very notable increase in the potentially inactive and, in particular, those aged 65 and over, which increased by 77.8%.