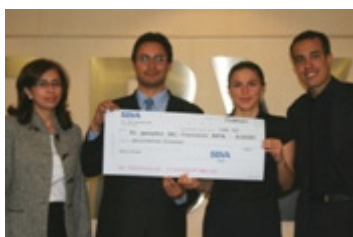


BBVA and AISEC reward initiatives by young Latin American entrepreneurs

As part of its corporate responsibility policy, BBVA joined with AISEC to organise a contest for university students in five Latin American countries designed to learn their ideas on education and financial inclusion, two strategic lines in this area.



AISEC (the International Association of Students of Economics and Business Studies) is the world's largest student-managed international organisation. The call for ideas for this contest went out to all students at the universities where the Association operates (more than 58 in Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, Chile and Argentina) and a shortlist of no more than five projects per country was drawn up.

The winners received a cheque for 500 \$ for their idea and the chance to have their project studied by the Group to determine whether it might actually be applicable.

The winners and their projects

The winning project from Colombia was submitted by Juan Carlos Giraldo and Luz Helena Castellanos. It is entitled '*Oficina de Apoyo y Consultoría para la Creación de Microempresas*' ["Support and Consultancy Office for the Creation of Micro-businesses"], and is linked to the *Jóvenes en Acción* ["Youth in Action"] programme. With the support of volunteers from BBVA and AISEC, the idea is to train young people aged between 18 and 30 attached to this Sisbén programme (which brings together the least well off people, who are not covered by the health system), most of whom are female heads of households. They are to be trained in the creation of businesses to help them acquire skills in leadership and team formation and then fund their micro-business projects.

In Peru the jury selected the project submitted by Romina Díaz of Universidad Católica, called *Mujeres de Piedra* ["Stone Women"], which seeks to break the vicious circle of poverty in the district of Puente Piedra by enlisting the aid of a local community organisation for mothers, empowering them to design and develop micro-businesses so that they cease to depend on state subsidies. It is envisaged that BBVA would provide not only financial support but also training.

The winning project from Venezuela is 'Human Resources Health' by Miguel Meléndez from Baquisimeto. The idea is for BBVA to train students belonging to AISEC so that they can then in turn train companies and workers in the use of financial tools and help them reach out to other markets. The project seeks not only to encourage the development of small and medium-sized companies but also to pursue better quality of life for workers and promote the creation of learning environments.

In Argentina the winner was a project called 'Proyecto Feed', which deals with exports and financial inclusion. Submitted by Mercedes Ponce de León, it entails support for SMEs to enable them to expand and access international markets. The idea is to help companies identify their needs and advise them on how to draw up an export plan. BBVA would provide support for training a trainee and would fund activities. The project is aimed at textiles, footwear, leather and technology companies, among others.

And finally in Chile the winning project was 'ConectaRSE' ["Connect"], submitted by María José Contreras. This project seeks to provide financial education tools for micro-businesses managed by women in the province of Concepción which belong to vulnerable sectors. The idea is to train them in family budgeting, basic financial services, business formation and marketing strategies and to advise them concerning access to government programmes for SMEs. The project would be implemented jointly with La Casa de la Mujer, a women's Association from the community of Lota, which has funding to support entrepreneurial projects. BBVA would participate by providing information on credit and loan products and funding for the project.

The next contest will take place in Mexico.