

ReferNet Spain: Basque country VET innovation offers good practices for future employment

04/09/2018  [European Skills Index](#), [European Skills Index](#), [People and Skills](#), [Matching Skills and Jobs](#), [Future Jobs](#), [Labour Market Context](#), [Spain](#)

Vocational education and training (VET) in Spain, although small in terms of volume of students and graduates, has examples of excellence as in the case of the Basque Country.

Transforming vocational training to respond to changes arising from the so-called fourth industrial revolution was discussed at the international congress Anticipating the future that gathered some 1 100 specialists from 47 countries in San Sebastian in May 2018. Jorge Arévalo, regional Deputy Minister for vocational training, highlighted in his speech When the improbable happens, the features that make the Basque Country VET system unique, supporting high student employability in programmes related to industrial branches.

Supporting youth employability

More than 40000 students (5.2% of the total VET students in Spain in the 2017/18 school year) are enrolled in VET programmes offered in the Basque country. The employment rates of those in industrial programmes such as mechatronics, robotics or mechanical manufacturing has varied between 82% and 100%. More than half of VET students are in higher VET (47.7% in the whole of Spain).

The success of these programmes is mainly due to the use of more practical and innovative learning methodologies; the constant support from the regional authorities to teachers, tutors and heads of VET centres and close links with companies (including SMEs). Another key element of their success is the development of cutting-edge training programmes: cybersecurity, intelligent manufacturing, collaborative industrial robotics, intelligent autonomous vehicles, 'big data', augmented reality, sustainable agriculture, implantable technologies in the body, and 3D printing applied to health and to the preparation of food or clothing.

Innovative teaching and learning methods

The [High performance programmes](#), in place since 2013/2014, illustrate innovative methodology with collaborative learning based on challenges: students (currently 5600 enrolled) carry out specific projects through analysis of information, teamwork and creative problem-solving to elaborate prototypes. Such programmes carried out in 52 centres, and in different specialties, represent 30% of all VET programmes in the Basque country. They offer is expected to reach 70% by 2020.

The system strength is such that it can adapt to the constant evolution of technologies in industry and quickly respond to companies' demands for new professional profiles. Since a company requests a

quickly respond to companies' demands for new professional profiles. Since a company requests a technician for a specific job with skill shortages, it only takes two or three months to analyse the company's technology and to design a specialised, tailor-made training programme that will create the respective professional profile. The classrooms, equipment, and furniture are different from those that usually exist in training centres, designed into flexible, open, interconnected spaces that favour and promote active-collaborative work.

Arévalo highlighted the work carried out by the teaching staff and management teams and the creation of new roles, such as the connectivity and digitalisation promoter, the innovation promoter, and the big data specialist). Strong collaboration between all VET stakeholders (the Basque Government, social agents, VET centres, tutors and instructors) might also be added as assets, setting VET in the Basque Country as a [reference point at European level](#)

Success is also evident in the low rate of early leavers in the region, at 7.9% and the lowest in Spain, against 19% in the whole of Spain in 2016. This is already below the European and national targets set in the [Europe 2020 strategy](#) to reduce drop-out rates respectively, to <10% and 15%.

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