

A MOTIVATED TEACHERS' NETWORK SPREADING ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE AMONG BASQUE STUDENTS

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Ikasenpresa is a mini-company programme (Ikasenpresa means Student Company in Basque language) which aims at promoting the entrepreneurial culture among VET students. This programme first run in 2005-06, and ever since 200 VET teachers have been networking to find better ways to nurture the skills students need to become better professionals and more employable. For further information about Ikasenpresa programme: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6jBMEWuHpo>

This network of VET teachers makes the programme something unique. For instance, in the school year 2015-16 53 VET centres, 132 teachers and approximately 3000 students are working together under the coordination of **Tknika** (the public agency, responsible of the programme), and as a result of this networking, 421 Ikasenpresa educational companies have been created.

SCHOOL YEAR	VET SCHOOLS INVOLVED	COMPANIES CREATED
05-06	5	7
06-07	21	34
13-14	40	227
14-15	46	325
15-16	53	421

Ikasenpresa figures

During the last 10 years **Ikasenpresa Programme** has produced a vast array of materials, handbooks and assessment tools extensively used by teachers whose commitment and good work is a key factor behind the success of the programme.

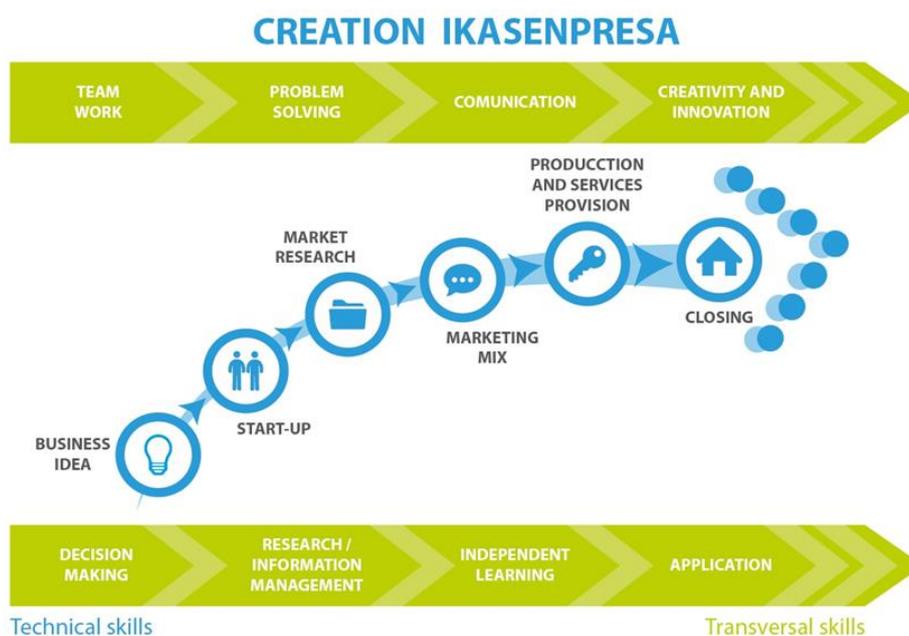
How the innovation came into being

During the 2014-15 school year we decided to take a big leap forward. The **Ikasenpresa Programme** team at Tknika (Pilar Diez, Javier Aretxederreta and me, Inge Gorostiaga) decided to create a toolkit to strengthen the programme, which is mainly focused on active learning methodologies where students play the main role and teachers act as learning facilitators.

Due to the hard work done in Tknika and thanks to the contributions of **Ikasenpresa teachers** network and **Innobide** (training provider for Ikasenpresa teachers and students), all the resources elaborated during the last 10 years were collected, so that the **Ikasenpresa package**, a really **powerful innovative tool**, is ready to be used.

After an initial period of reflection, the Ikasenpresa (mini-company) start-up process was divided in 6 stages. The end result is a powerful learning package that includes detailed lesson plans, assessment system (technical and soft skills) and a six-page content description of every stage in the Ikasenpresa Handbook.

Technical skills (in blue) are successively developed in a six-step process encompassing the creation, management and closure of the mini-company. The acquisition of **soft skills** (in green) takes place throughout the entire programme, see the picture below:



Piloting the new Ikasenpresa package

Being an Ikasenpresa teacher and a collaborator at Tknika, I had the opportunity to introduce the new six-step programme with VET students from September 2014 till March 2015 and it was a big success.

The good practice took place with a group of students of **Childhood Education and Care programme**, a Higher VET Programme at "Meka Lanbide Eskola", a VET school in Elgoibar, Spain. The result of the experience was described by the students themselves:

"This has been an amazing experience; we had no idea how this subject would work, and we learned so much, we worked in teams, and all of this added up to a really valuable experience for us, something we can apply both now and in our future jobs."

"... it would be great if some other subjects, or all of them if possible, could be taught like this, because we think you learn a lot more this way."

"The Ikasenpresa project is a different way of learning. When we saw that we'd be studying a subject called 'Business' we thought it would be all theory, but when you only study theory you don't learn about the problems that real companies have and how to solve them, and problems between co-workers, but this way you see what types of problems there are, and how to solve them, how to deal with conflicts with your co-workers and things like that..."



Teamwork: students working the Canvas Business model

To hear students' comments, please, watch students' video talking about their experience <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYXZPTjXGMk>.

So what began as a pilot of the new Ikasenpresa package in one VET Centre ends up being a **good practice**. As a teacher, I was able to achieve an excellent result in the classroom as a result of having introduced an **innovative methodology** in the classroom, and the perfect matching between the **new tools of Ikasenpresa Programme** (lesson plans, evaluation system and Handbook) and the process for creating a start up as a learning tactic for developing the technical and transversal skills of the **student**, in order to become an entrepreneur, the type of **professional that the society is looking for**.

IKASENPRESA NEW PACKAGE

For developing this six steps we create:



This includes tasks, dynamics, videos and other materials used in the programme before.

New tools of Ikasenpresa programme

A ready to-go Entrepreneurship Education Toolkit

That successful piloting experience, led us to scale things up and make Ikasenpresa new materials available for all the Basque VET teachers in 2015-16. We produced an open educational resource for our network of VET teachers, an **interactive pdf** which includes all the necessary tools to go through all the steps of the Ikasenpresa model, and nowadays 132 teachers are using it in the classroom.

The ICT component is present in almost every lesson. In addition to this, we encourage students to use **digital tools** throughout the start-up process. In this sense, they draw mind maps to organize the work, design a CANVAS Business

Model, and so on, and we work hard on the communication aspects, encouraging students to start using different social media (twitter, facebook) from a business perspective to communicate with their customers.

Teachers, the key factor for change.

The core of the Ikasenpresa programme are **VET teachers** who implement the programme in their VET Schools.

Our goal from Tknika is to provide all our teachers with all the necessary tools to assume a **learning facilitator role**. We want to give the **main role of the learning process to the students**, while the teachers should be there to assist them through all the steps of creating an Ikasenpresa.

From Tknika we have ensured that teachers feel free to adapt Ikasenpresa model to their own situations, giving them the opportunity to improve inclusion or diversity.

Moreover, we are aware of the importance of our teachers, so the Ikasenpresa programme coordinators at Tknika, Pilar Diez and Inge Gorostiaga, keep in touch constantly with these teachers trying to provide them with **quick answers to all their needs**.

We have collected some teachers' opinions about it:

"Ikasenpresa tries to give a quick, effective and efficient response to our numerous questions..."

"... all the material has been put at our disposal, and rather than constrain the work of teachers, it is an open and flexible type of material, ..."

"The materials, as they have been previously tested, offer us an added value and, besides, we can adopt them to the classroom according to the characteristics of the groups."

"Our job is to choose the one (activities) that suits better the characteristics of our group and implement them."

Ikastraining programme: teachers as learning facilitators

The **“Ikastraining programme”** designed and delivered by Ikasenpresa staff at Tknika and Innobide prepares VET teachers to act as learning facilitators and to get familiar with all tools at hand for developing the programme in a successful way.



Ikastraining: Teachers training sessions for using the new Ikasenpresa programme

This is what the teachers involved in the programme said about **Ikastraining**:

“Apart from the very detailed lesson planning (a dream for beginners) TKNIKA (in collaboration with INNOBIDE consultants) has provided a TRAINING PROGRAM to all those teachers that require further assistance to develop the group dynamics in class.”

“...I get very good and very practical advice to apply in class, and I appreciate that a lot.”

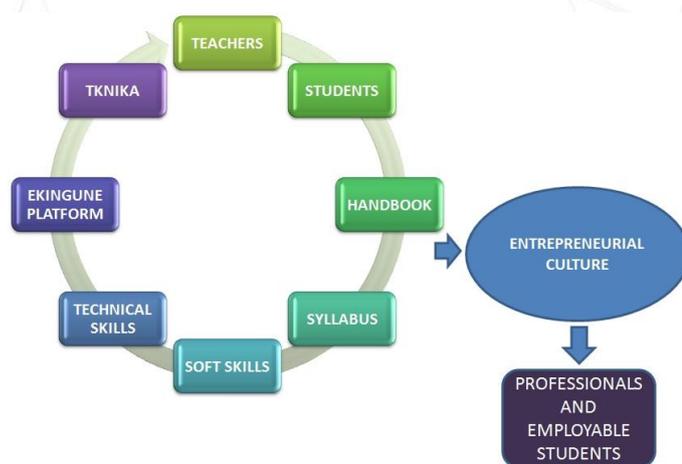
“Ikastraining ... allows teachers to share didactic aspects with their peers and provides confidence in such a creative module as this one.”

“This year’s training activity has given us a greater confidence in the classroom when working Ikasenpresa’s various dynamics.”

Moment of truth

As I said before, after the success of the piloting mentioned above, approximately 132 teachers are using it nowadays and these school year 421 mini-companies have been created.

The Ikasenpresa new package is available in our two official languages, Basque and Spanish. In addition, some of our teachers are implementing the programme in English. Recently, we have had the opportunity to share this good practice with some European colleges and some of them would like to implement it in their own countries. Shortly, it could be possible to do so, because the English version will be available soon.



Mix of elements for the success of the Ikasenpresa programme

We have collected the **opinion** of some **VET teachers** about the Ikasenpresa new package:

“Thanks to the generosity of a group of teachers and to the renovated effort made by TKNIKA eventually we count with a set of unified lesson plans (broken down into didactic units) where detailed activities and dynamics to correctly carry out IKASENPRESA are fully synchronized”

“Without impositions but with a flexible framework where the needs of both the advanced trainers and the beginners are satisfied and makes them feel comfortable.”

“It's creating a different methodological culture around ikasenpresa and that's what the students need.”

“we are totally involved in the project, because we believe in it and we are seeing that Tknika is leading the project with a lot of sense and rigor and with students in mind, which is the most important thing for us.”

"It's amazing to be a teacher, it is a pleasure to teach these things to the students and it is a pleasure to see how they start the course as children and leave it as something more than that..."

"...we greatly value "IKASENPRESA" programme from all points of view. For the methodological approach, for the materials, the technical support of the platform and the training and assistance received from their managers."

"IKASENPRESA offers umpteen educational tools and resources for Entrepreneurship teachers and, what's more, new learning models in order to make classes more attractive for students, developing out-of-the-ordinary activities that will keep those classes fun and lively. For me, it's like breathing fresh air."

"...Tknika has provided us with all the imaginable educational tools to make our work easier and motivating"

From now on

After all the work done we realized we still have a lot of work to do. Our aim is that Ikasenpresa should be constantly evolving which means that the Ikasenpresa package should be **updated after every school year to adapt it to the changing world**. But it seems like a quite hard and difficult task. How can we manage all the new resources provided by Tknika staff or from our more than 100 teachers involved in the programme every year? Nowadays we have problems to deal with such an overwhelming amount of teaching resources, but at the end we are sure we will figure it out.

Last but not least, I would like to **thank the collaboration of the teachers who share their opinion** with us about the new Ikasenpresa package for this article: Eduardo Monasterio (Ciudad Jardin), Ricar Montero (Ceinpro), Unai Diago (Salesianos Deusto), Luz M^a Laza Gómez (Somorrostro), Ander Loyarte (Salesiarrak Urnieta), Cristina Aldasoro (La Salle Berrozpe), Rafael Balparda Pilar (San José de Calasanz) and teachers from San Viator.

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