

The pandemic has had a major impact on the expectations of Basque youth for 2022



The Basque Youth Observatory presents the 9th edition of the study Aurrera Begira. Indicators of youth expectations

For almost a decade now, the Aurrera Begira research has been analysing how Basque youth perceive the present and what their expectations for the future are in the short term.

The data for this latest report was collected in December 2021 by means of an online survey of 4,356 young people in the Basque Country aged between 15 and 29.

With the responses of these people, the ten indicators that summarise the assessment of the current situation and future expectations of Basque youth have been updated.

The results of the study show that the Covid19 pandemic is taking its toll on young people aged 15 to 29 in the Basque Country, as can be seen in the personal satisfaction index, which in 2020 and 2021 obtained the worst scores in the series, although they are still high, 74 and 73 out of 100, respectively.

The evaluation of the present moment also dropped significantly in 2020 (with 64 points out of 100, compared to 70 points in 2019) and in 2021 it lost a further point to 63 points out of 100.

In the balance of vital aspects, young people show their greatest deficits in the economic, employment and leisure areas, where the level of satisfaction is far from reaching the level associated with their importance.

In terms of employment, the perception of the situation is more favourable as the risk of job loss or worsening of working conditions perceived by young people in employment decreases by 6 points, from 48% in 2020 to 42% in 2021. Even so, the perceived risk in 2021 is higher than in the pre-pandemic years (2017-2019), although it does not reach the negative figures obtained between 2013 and 2015.

Among those who are unemployed, however, the indicator showing the expectation of finding a job within one year has lost two points compared to 2020; 62% of unemployed youth expect to find a job within one year, compared to 64% the previous year. But if we

compare this figure with that recorded in 2019, a year in which the recovery in employment led to the best result since 2013 with 92 %, the drop is 30 percentage points. The pandemic has taken its toll particularly on the expectations of young jobseekers.

The expectation of embedded employment, which reflects the expectation of young students to find a job in line with their training at the end of their studies, remains at the same level as in recent years, despite a loss of two points compared to 2020. In 2021, seven out of ten students expect to find a job in line with their studies when they finish their studies (74 %), the same percentage as in 2019 or 2017 and well above the 46 % of 2013.

The expectation of forced migration abroad has decreased and is at its lowest level in the series; only 8% of young people believe that in the future they will have to go abroad to work without wanting to do so. This is a far cry from the 16 % reported in 2013. At that time, the crisis situation and the high unemployment rate made some young people consider this option as a solution to their employment problems.

The percentage of young people who would like to live on their own within a year and believe that they will not be able to do so, added to those who, being emancipated, believe that they will have to return to their parents' home without wishing to do so, has hardly changed with respect to 2020; then it was 41% and in 2021 it was 42%. The indicator reflecting this expectation of truncated emancipation remains similar to 2019, the year in which the best result was obtained since the beginning of the series (40%).

The index of confidence in the abilities of young people, which expresses the average score that those interviewed give to Basque youth in eight qualities such as capacity for work, responsibility, training, participation, entrepreneurial spirit, idealism, autonomy and solidarity, obtains the worst result since 2013 and is 64 points out of 100 in 2021.

Expectations regarding the evolution of the personal situation, that of young people in general and that of the Basque Country in five years' time, on the basis of which the index of confidence in the future is calculated, have worsened, making the result obtained in 2021, 61 points out of 100, the worst in the series.

A comparison of the 2021 results with those recorded in 2013, at the beginning of the series, shows that the realities experienced at one time and the other are very different. 2013 was the year in which the highest unemployment rates were recorded as a result of the economic-financial crisis of 2009. In 2021, at the time of the survey, we were in the sixth wave of the Covid19 pandemic, with its impact not only on employment, but also on physical and mental health, leisure and social relations, among others.

Thus, we see that, in 2021, the indicators relating to employment have improved significantly compared to 2013: the risk of job loss or job insecurity among young workers has decreased by 15 points, while expectations of finding a job have increased, both among the unemployed (8 points) and among students (28 points). On the other hand, the percentage of those who thought they would have to migrate to work abroad without wishing to do so has halved (from 16% to 8%).

However, young people's lives involve more than just work and so, although the assessment of the present moment has improved by 3 points from 2013 to 2021, personal satisfaction has fallen by 7 points and, more importantly, confidence in the future has also fallen by 3 points.

On the other hand, the information provided by these indicators has been complemented with in-depth interviews with young people who reflect and reason about their concerns, the evolution of their situation, the comparison with the youth in their environment or their expectations for the future.