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Higher Education Taking Action towards the Sustainable Development Goals:  
Perspectives from Asia and Europe

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## Spanish education does not rectify youth unemployment

Spain records a staggering rate of youth unemployment – about 60%. In 2013, 50% of Spanish youth under 30 was unemployed, while there were almost a million jobs available across the EU in the IT industry which remained vacant. There is an important gap between the demand and supply which the current education systems cannot seem to rectify. In Spain, young people graduate after investing time and money in higher education, and then cannot find any job according to their capacities. At the same time companies cannot seem to find the necessary skills among new graduates in order to effectively undertake required tasks and operations. In today's job market, it is a minimum requirement to have at least an undergraduate degree in order to get hired. Yet most graduates will struggle to find employment despite availability of jobs in certain industries such as IT and technology.

Universities are undoubtedly essential for research and development; however, the majority of university graduates will not work in research. The current education system – starting from secondary education – focuses on building skills for academia that are eventually not valuable to the job market. Academic theoretical study is, for most, unengaging, and in fact, plenty of young graduates can't find a job despite their academic skills and the considerable number of jobs available out there.

There is a problem of curriculum. While keeping their essence as research institutions, universities also need to adapt the skills they teach to the current requirements of the job market. If universities want to carry on attracting young talent by remaining an important step towards a fulfilling professional career (an important chunk of their revenue is at stake after all) they need to reconsider

their curriculum and adapt to the job market by offering the skills that are demanded. These include languages, IT skills, teamwork and collaboration but also cross-cultural awareness, empathy, story-telling and public speaking.

Indeed, an increasing amount of schools and bootcamps - such as IronHack in Spain - are offering alternative and adapted technology-focused courses that students complete in 6 to 12 months. Most graduates end up finding a job in much demanded industries, having invested less time and money in their preparation.

Other incredible institutions such as Young Sustainable Impact or Minerva Schools offer a very human-centered and industry-oriented curriculum, leveraging online work technologies to engage young people from around the world to interact together in diverse environments. Immersion and adaptability are put forward and proactively nurtured as essential skills for a globally interconnected and digitally focused 21st century.

At a time where information is accessible everywhere, one should not limit themselves to what is told in class but instead be able to dig opportunities, interpret data creatively and convey engaging messages adapted to any audience.

I truly believe that an average education of the future will thus be more engaging, effective and useful to the world and challenges that are coming ahead, if it's applied.