

Return of Young People to Aragon: supporting access to employment in mountain regions

The "Return of Young People to Aragon" programme encourages young people to return to settle in the region of Aragon, Spain, by improving their access to employment. The initiative supports young people in their search for jobs, connects them with local businesses and facilitates their settlement in the region.

Access to employment drives youth outmigration

The lack of qualified and diversified jobs affects the attractiveness of some mountain areas. The recent [Euromontana report on mountain youth](#) shows that, on a European scale, access to education and employment are the two main factors that force young people to move elsewhere. In Spain, 87% of the young mountain people interviewed by Euromontana said they wanted to continue living in the mountains, but they also complained about the lack of jobs and housing opportunities.

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Youth employment is therefore an essential priority for mountain territories in order to maintain the attractiveness of these regions, to limit the brain drain to large urban centres, to halt the demographic decline and to maintain a socio-economic dynamism. To address this challenge, the programme "[Aragón Retorno Joven](#)" ("Return of Young People to Aragon") was launched in October 2018 by the Aragon region in Spain. This is a multi-annual initiative aimed at facilitating the return of young Aragonese who have left the territory due to the lack of jobs.

The initiative also aims to multiply the efforts of the different institutional and private actors to avoid this forced professional exodus. In the first year of the programme (2018-2019), 250 young people interested in settling in the region contacted "Return of Young People to Aragon", 14 of whom wanted to settle in the Province of Teruel. According to the statistics produced by the programme, in 53% of the cases, the factor that held back these young people was access to employment.

"Return of Young People to Aragon" is aimed at young people under 36 years of age who have left the territory of the Autonomous Community of Aragon for another country but who have either lived in a municipality in the region in the past or have graduated from a training institution there.



Support for finding a job, starting a business, settling down

To facilitate the return of young people to the region of Aragon, the programme offers assistance in finding a job. For example, "Return of Young People to Aragon" helps young people to adjust their CVs and find job offers in the region.

Thanks to various calls, 156 companies have joined the programme. They cover various sectors from health to education, computing, tourism, architecture, chemistry or automotive. Member companies of the programme can publish their job offers in a dedicated [online portal](#) and receive applications from young people.

Young people who want to start their own business can also benefit from entrepreneurship guidance. In addition to advice on administrative procedures, they can be supported in assessing the viability of their entrepreneurial project in the context of the needs of the Aragonese territory. Young entrepreneurs are also connected with the Aragonese Network of Entrepreneurship Centres (REDARCE), which informs and connects entrepreneurs.



Workshop with young people returning to the region
Credits Instituto Aragonés de la Juventud

Finally, young people can also receive economic support for their return, up to 3,000 euros. This can cover the following costs:

- Travel costs: the programme can provide young people with support for the full cost of the ticket to move from the former residence to the new municipality, as well as their dependent parents if necessary.
- Moving costs: support may be provided to help with the cost of transporting furniture and belongings
- Accommodation and/or storage costs: if no suitable accommodation is available, the programme can support the cost of temporary accommodation or furniture storage for two months.
- If the young person is self-employed, the programme also offers to cover the cost of a rental space in a coworking venue for two months for the exercise of his/her profession.

Thanks to the support offered by the programme, 332 young people have returned to settle in the region.

Resources and governance

The programme for the return of young people to Aragon covers the period 2018-2022. The programme is included in the Aragon region's Strategic Youth Plan 2016-2019. The overall budget of the programme amounts 2.509.500 euros.

All departments and agencies of the region are involved, and the programme is coordinated by the [Aragonese Youth Institute](#).



Innovative aspect

The "Return of Young People to Aragon" programme tackles a major issue for the future of the territory by encouraging the return of young people. The success of the programme lies in its comprehensive vision of the barriers to youth settlement in rural and mountainous areas of Spain. By supporting employment, business creation and access to housing, the programme offers comprehensive support to young talents.