Data-driven approach to early school leaving

Barcelona Education Consortium
Stay Tuned Network

To further reduce the occurrence of absenteeism and early leaving from education and training (ELET) in Barcelona, the Barcelona Education Consortium has developed a data-driven approach for following individual students at risk of dropping out of the education system. The ELET rate in Barcelona is relatively low at 8.5%, but that still corresponds to 1100-1200 people per year, totalling around 9000 people in the 18-24 age bracket.

1. Monitoring Challenges

Implementing this approach comes with a number of practical challenges. To test the system, it was first introduced in 2 districts, Sants-Montjuic and Sant Marti, in May 2018. This test serves to detect and solve practical problems. Interim results of this test already show a reduction in absenteeism levels in both districts, proving that the approach is effective.
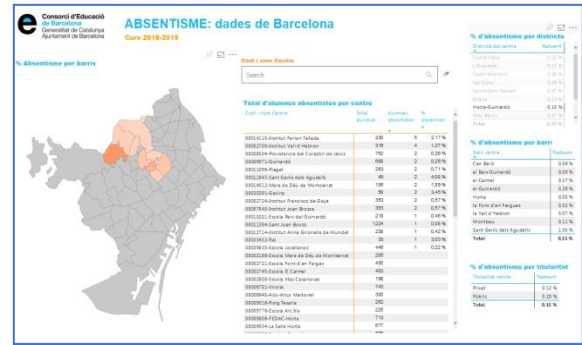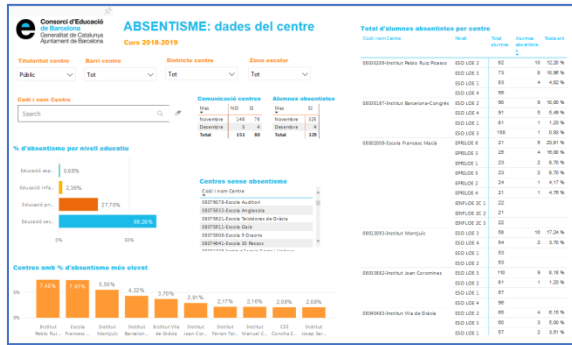
2. Data-collection interface

Another challenge was how to ensure that data is complete and accurate, when it has to come from so many different sources – there are 422 schools in Barcelona. The Barcelona Education Consortium solved this by making the data collection interface very easy and user friendly. They also organised conferences in 10 districts of the city to train school principals in using the system. This approach proved successful: at the city-wide launch of the system in November 2018, all participating schools provided their data within a 1-week period, with very few errors.

The Consortium also managed to keep the operational costs of the approach to a minimum, by using no-/low cost software solutions. They could use an existing data collection tool called GenCat forms from the Generalitat de Catalunya to collect the input from the schools. The business intelligence software to analyse and process this data was already available and used by the consortium.

Figures of the first year of working with this approach will be available in September 2019. These will show the results of the whole city and identify the situation per school, district and type of support given to students. With this data, the Barcelona Education Consortium is able to further target and improve their work to reduce early school leaving in Barcelona in the coming years.

Images: Dashboard interface of the Absenteeism database – information at city and district level.

3. Sources

-Barcelona Implementation journey with Stay Tuned