

ESITH

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What started as a school to train students in line with the needs of the job market has become an institution ahead of its peers. With cutting-edge and transversal training, ESITH has branched out into new domains, such as two crisis units to help Morocco fight.



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What have been the main milestones of ESITH in the last 24 years?

MOHAMED LAHLOU From the beginning, the school's function was different compared to

other conventional engineering schools that were more rigid and less reactive. The school is organized around three cycles of engineering training, specialized master's, and professional licenses. 2007 represented an extremely significant milestone due to the creation of an R&D department composed of two laboratories: research laboratory on textile materials (REMTEX) and a center of excellence in logistics (CELOG). Since its creation, this department has established solid relationships with various Moroccan, European, and Canadian research centers. For a better immersion into the world of research, in collaboration with ENSAIT France, we started an international ITMC conference on technical and intelligent textiles and mass customization. In 2019, we organized the seventh edition of this biannual conference in Marrakesh. In addition, there have been four editions in Casablanca and one each in Ghent, Belgium, and Roubaix, France. This conference was so successful that three new partners—Ghent University, Shinshu University in Japan, and CTT Group in Canada—joined the two founders to form a solid consortium that will allow the conference to grow internationally. The next editions will be held in Canada in 2021 and Japan in 2023.

What is the goal of ESITH?

ABDERRAHMANE FARHATE The School of Industry, Textiles, and Clothing was established in 1996 with an innovative model. ESITH was created as a PPP, but it is a public school that awards public diplomas. At the time, it was the only higher educational institutions that was created as a PPP. It is an association between the Moroccan government and the Moroccan Association of Textile, Clothing, Industries (AMITH). The idea was to establish a school in collaboration with the private sector to train students in line with the needs of the job market. After 23 years, ESITH continues to serve its purpose. Since 2002, the ESITH, Engineering Training School, by setting up cutting-edge and transversal training, has been able to open up to other sectors of industrial activity and service. For example, ESITH was the first engineering school in Morocco to train engineers in international logistics. Today, more than 90% of our graduates secure a job in less than six months.

How did ESITH adapt its operations to COVID-19, and what is your main focus during this crisis?

ML ESITH had to face two major concerns: the continuity of student training and supporting industrialists in their retraining to manufacture protective masks and gowns. In terms of initial training, our response was extremely reactive. We set up two crisis units, one to manage the operation of human resources, administration, and school infrastructure and another entirely dedicated to ensuring educational continuity through distance learning. This upheaval in the pedagogical approach is so significant that it will open up new hybrid training methods post COVID-19. In terms of support for companies, ESITH has been extremely responsive. LEC, its laboratory, actively participated in the work of developing the standards and technical specifications of masks with the Ministry of Industry (IMANOR). We provided manufacturers with educational capsules to explain the technical characteristics of the materials and methods of manufacturing barrier masks according to IMANOR standards. At the same time, ESITH developed and shared innovative methods to optimize the production of masks. Our R&D department was also mobilized to create new tissue functionalization processes to meet the most stringent requirements of barrier masks. In addition, we have launched three free online training cycles to improve the management skills of companies and hospitals to better cope with this crisis.

How do you keep up with the latest international developments?

AF Industrialists are part of the school's management bodies. At ESITH, we help companies with ongoing training and technical assistance. Due to this, we are constantly aware of what is happening in the textile sector and in the different industrial and service sectors at a global level. For example, at present, the textile industry is shifting to lean industry. Globally, the focus is on waste recycling, sustainable development, circular economy, automation, and Industry 4.0. In line with this, we have invested in equipment, automation, and intelligent workshop layouts. We have to recover procurement waste and adopt better organizational industrial models. We have to adapt not only our equipment, but also the way we organize our workshops. In my opinion, it is time for the school to move toward Industry 4.0 technologies, such as AI and big data.