

Empieza Por Educar deliberately growing system leadership orientation

Snapshot

Empieza Por Educar (ExE) did not have enough program alumni in positions of systemic impact to achieve the organization's mission of reaching educational equality. Through having a more intentional recruitment and selection process, growing more system and mission orientation among fellows and entering strategic collaborations with other organizations ExE is continuing to have a bigger impact at the system level.

Context

Inequity is a challenge for the Spanish education system. Children from lower-income households are three times more likely to drop out of school. Moreover, students from families with the lowest incomes are 4 times more likely to repeat a school year. Children of parents without higher education are 8 times less likely to finish higher education.

ExE placed its first cohort in 2011. Since then, the organization has worked towards educational equality by placing 450 fellows impacting around 50,000 students in 89 schools, mostly in disadvantaged areas of Madrid and Catalonia, partly in the Basque Country. While some alumni were in positions of impact, ExE was expecting alumni to have more impact on a system level.

Choice

ExE made a number of choices to increase its impact. The organization developed a system leadership framework for the school, community, and system level that informs fellow selection and training. The critical part of ExE's new approach is having an intentional alumni approach in its recruitment and selection department. Fellows are chosen based on a set of competencies (ability to reflect, openness to feedback, humility, respect, communication, and responsibility) and trained to improve additional relevant competencies (constructing relationships, collaboration, systemic thinking, vision and planning). Moreover, given that ExE's cohorts are small, ExE also chose to collaborate with other organizations to enhance its mission towards education equality. ExE listened to the organizations' aspirations, learned from Teach For All network partners, and launched initiatives and partnerships that had already worked in other contexts. For example, the initiative Escuelas que inspiran is inspired by Teach First's work with the Gatsby foundation.

Collective leadership

Through a stronger focus on system and mission orientation, ExE grew collective leadership among fellows. Internal surveys suggest that every year fellows understand more about the systemic challenge of inequity. As of 2022, 93% of the 332 alumni work in the education sector, with 62% as teachers or school leaders, 14% in social innovation, educational projects, NGOs, or CSR, 5% as teacher trainers, 5% in public policy, and around 70% either studying or working in order to contribute to a more equitable education system. Moreover, alumni work on developing the alumni network, for example, by self-organized events.



Community impact

Alumni work from different angles to increase education equality in communities. More and more alumni are getting civil servant certifications which enable them to work in public administration. Moreover, ExE collaborates with public administration and universities to improve teacher recruitment, selection, training, and retention in the public system.

Further resources

- [Novice educator support and training \(NEST\)](#) and [Inspiring Schools \(EQI\)](#)
- [Vision-aligned innovation projects led or co-led by ExE impacting 475.000 students](#)
- [ExE's System Leadership Framework](#) (Spanish)