

Empieza por Educar



Spain

We are an NGO working for educational equity. We attract and develop equal educational opportunity professionals. We seek and train people who, inspired by teaching experience in disadvantaged environments, lead initiatives that guarantee equal educational opportunities. We collaborate through initiatives and projects that contribute to ensuring that no student is left behind.

Our work within the framework Global Career Readiness Initiative

[Inspiring Schools](#) supports schools to strengthen academic and career guidance by providing resources, training, and strategic partnerships, positioning career guidance as a core component of the school's educational framework. A central element of the model is the Academic and Career Guidance Coordinator (CEAP), responsible for designing and coordinating a whole-school guidance strategy and strengthening collaboration between teachers, school leadership, employers, and other external partners. The role draws on the [Careers Leader model](#) in England. Implemented across three regions in Spain, Inspiring Schools supports more than 200 secondary and vocational education centers and trains over 600 teachers to integrate career guidance into everyday teaching practice, helping establish it as a cross-cutting pillar of the school experience.

Organizational priorities

Work with Public Administration to support the assessment and potential development of new regulations for career guidance, drawing on the learnings from the project to ensure the highest standards of quality. The aim is to strengthen guidance processes in schools so they become more comprehensive, transversal and equitable, ensuring that all students have access to high-quality career guidance.

Evidence of Impact

An independent evaluation of the Xcelence – Schools that Inspire initiative, implemented in partnership by Empieza por Educar, Fundación Bertelsmann, and the Community of Madrid, examined how the model strengthens academic and career guidance in secondary schools. The study compared participating schools with similar non-participating schools through surveys of students, tutors, guidance counselors, and school leadership teams. The evaluation finds that participating schools demonstrate stronger coordination of career guidance, better integration of career exploration across the curriculum, and more frequent engagement between students and the world of work, including interactions with professionals, workplace visits, and job-shadowing opportunities. Students in participating schools also reported higher participation in key career preparation activities such as CV writing (43% vs. 37%) and job interview practice (29% vs. 25%). These findings suggest the Inspiring Schools implementation model helps schools embed career guidance more systematically, strengthening employer partnerships and supporting students to make more informed education and career decisions (UNED et al., 2023).

Partnerships & Alliances

Beyond training, we help schools build sustainable support networks by connecting them with 7 municipalities, 4 universities, 1 national vocational school network, over 450 volunteer educators, and other local education authorities. So far, 5,870 students have benefited from these partnerships with universities and vocational schools.



Spain Landscape

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Data - Transition From School To Work (Spain)

Indicators for youth between 15 - 24 years old

Labor Force Participation Rate (ILO, 2025)	Share Of Youth Not In Education, Employment Or Training (“NEET”) (ILO, 2025)		Unemployment Youth (ILO, 2025)	
34% total	11.1% male	9.9% female	24.1% male	25.8% female

Current State of Career Readiness

- Four regions in Spain have introduced legislation allowing 15- to 16-year-old students to undertake job shadowings in professional settings.
- Recent national reforms—particularly the Organic Law on Vocational Training (LO 3/2022)—have created an opportunity to more systematically embed career guidance within vocational training centers, strengthening the link between education pathways and labour market outcomes.

Challenges and Gaps

- UNESCO recommends a ratio of 1 career adviser per 250 students, but in Spain this currently stands at approximately 1 adviser per 800–1000 students, highlighting the need for greater investment in personalised guidance.
- Career guidance and connections to the professional world need to be explicitly embedded in the curriculum to ensure all students develop the skills and understanding needed for their future pathways.

Emerging Trends

- **Integrating Career Guidance into the Curriculum:** Recent years have seen a shift toward embedding career guidance within subject teaching, moving beyond the sole

responsibility of guidance counselors. This approach engages all teachers in supporting students’ career development from an early stage, helping ensure equitable access to guidance for all learners.

- **Reframing Vocational Training and Strengthening Local Ties:** The new Organic Law on Vocational Training (LO 3/2022) has introduced a more holistic and personalized approach to guidance within vocational education. It emphasizes connections between schools and local industries and expands guidance to include academic, professional, and personal development—beginning early and continuing beyond compulsory education.

Recommendations for Leaders Shaping Career Education Policy and Practice

- Strengthen structured partnerships between schools and local institutions—including municipalities, universities, training providers, and adult education centers—to expand student access to career guidance and real-world learning opportunities.
- Embed these partnerships within local education systems to improve continuity across education pathways and support the development of more coordinated, community-based guidance ecosystems.