

## Spain

Spanish organization founded in 1995 by Reinhard Mohn, predicated on the belief that financial wealth entails social responsibility. Our programs are therefore designed to strengthen society and help individuals reach their full potential by developing the resources needed to achieve those goals. From 2014 all activities were shifted towards alleviating youth unemployment in Spain through two complementary projects: The creation of the Alliance for Dual Vocational Education and Training (Dual VET) and Coordinated Career Guidance project.

### Our work within the framework Global Career Readiness Initiative

Fundación Bertelsmann works to strengthen academic and career guidance systems in Spain by developing practical tools, fostering partnerships across education and industry, and promoting evidence-based approaches to career readiness. The foundation developed the Xcelence framework, a model for strengthening career guidance in schools built around 10 key elements of effective guidance systems and a diagnostic self-assessment tool that helps schools evaluate and improve their guidance provision. To support implementation, Fundación Bertelsmann also develops practical resources such as the Xcelence self-assessment tool and Empresas que Inspiran, a platform that connects schools with companies to facilitate workplace visits, career talks, and job-shadowing opportunities. Through these initiatives, the foundation works with schools, employers, and public institutions to strengthen the connection between education and the labor market and support young people in making informed decisions about their future pathways.

### Organizational priorities

- Learn from other experts, engage with international organizations and corporations working on similar topics

### 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

- Public institutions, including city councils, regional governments, education ministries, schools, and training centers
- Private sector partnerships with companies, business associations, chambers of commerce, and employer confederations to support technological, training, and Dual VET initiatives
- Alliances with NGOs and foundations working on related topics (e.g., Empieza por Educar, Fundación Princesa de Girona, Fundación CEOE, Fundación MAPFRE)
- Collaboration with universities, research centers, and international networks to share knowledge and best practices in career guidance and vocational training

# Spain Landscape

Fundación Bertelsmann



## 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.
- There are specific regulations promoting and coordinating academic and career guidance programs in only 4 of the country's 17 regions.

### Emerging Trends

- [Xcelence tool](#) helps education centers across Spain self-assess the current status of career education against 10 key elements. A personalised report, action plan and resources support improved provision of careers education.
- [Empresas que Inspiran](#) ("Inspiring Companies") platform matches companies with schools to organise workplace visits, career talks, and job shadowing. It also offers career guidance materials, including over 100 videos of professionals and sectors for teachers.

### Recommendations for Leaders Shaping Career Education Policy and Practice

- Strengthen employer engagement in career guidance by supporting companies to partner with schools and provide students with exposure to real-world careers, including workplace visits, job shadowing, and mentoring.
- Embed career guidance as a whole-school responsibility, ensuring that teachers and school leaders—alongside dedicated counsellors—play an active role in delivering integrated, high-quality guidance across the student journey.