



Pioneering policies and practices tackling educational inequalities in Europe

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Evidence-based co-authored and open-access report of most promising pioneering policies and practices

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## Spain: country-specific practical implications and recommendations

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### 1) Common equity-focused policy

The decentralisation of social and educational policies is a defining feature within the Spanish context. Educational competences (with the exception of the curriculum) are under the purview of each autonomous government. This framework leads to significant regional disparities in priorities, approaches, and methods for fostering equity. Moreover, it underscores the absence of cohesive structural educational policies and a systematic 'top-down' approach to initiatives. Additionally, interventions are decentralised based on geographical territories, as well as with respect to pivotal agents (ex. third sector entities) crucial in developing socio-educational programs, highlighting the essential role of the 'grassroot dimension' within Spain. Consequently, a common policy framework (guidelines) is needed to define and articulate the core lines of action while complementing regional efforts aimed at addressing socio-educational inequalities.

### 2) Preventive and tailored/context-specific initiatives

Even though Spain allocates a comparable percentage of its GDP to education, similarly to its neighbouring countries, it contends with one of the highest rates of young individuals failing to complete compulsory education. This situation leads to school segregation and increased early school dropouts, and later in life, in job insecurity and late emancipation for young adults. While various programs have been launched, they primarily concentrate on remedying educational exclusion rather than preventing it (some of the programs and practices that were introduced in chapter 4.1 are exemplary of this). To effectively address this, the focus should be shifted towards preventive measures and compensatory interventions, especially targeting early childhood stages to positively influence long-term educational paths. Emphasising retention and continuity as integral components, especially within programs targeting vulnerable groups, becomes crucial. Additionally, implementing participation strategies that account for individual needs and specific contextual singularities is an essential of the strategy.

### 3) Evaluation of educational policies and practices

An overall conclusion that emerges from assessing and analysing initiatives aimed at tackling educational inequalities in Spain is the need to foster a culture of evaluation. Although incipient trends have been observed in this sense, comprehensive empirical evaluations of public policies are not yet common nor fully embedded across all stages (ranging from design to implementation, and assessing results and impacts). Considering that evaluation guarantees quality and accountability, incorporating evaluation and monitoring systems progressively and consistently becomes crucial in measuring the progress of educational and social policies and practices.