LINEup
Longitudinal Data For INequalities In Education

EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITIES AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOL IN SPAIN
INSIGHTS FROM THE LINEup QUALITATIVE STUDY

1. LINEup qualitative research at a glance - Introduction

How can schools support student engagement with school?

LINEup's qualitative research explores how educational inequalities are experienced and addressed in everyday school life. The study combines the perspectives of school leaders, teachers, specialised staff, students, and parents to understand how school organisation, teaching practices, relationships and local contexts can support engagement, learning and more equitable educational opportunities. In Spain, the research examined 8 schools across primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education, selected to capture different combinations of socioeconomic contexts and school performance.

8 SCHOOLS

3 EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

10 SCHOOL LEADERS

56 TEACHERS

12 SPECIALISED STAFF

62 STUDENTS

54 PARENTS

194 PARTICIPANTS IN TOTAL

2. What did we learn? - Three Key Findings

Greater engagement does not necessarily mean higher achievement

In highly complex schools, the effort required to help students (and their families) develop a sense of belonging limits the effort that can be devoted to learning.



Without teacher engagement, there is no student engagement

Students clearly perceive when teachers are committed to the school, to learning, and to student well-being.

The emotional well-being of students (and teachers) has deteriorated in recent years

Even in high-performing schools, mental health issues affect the engagement of both students and teachers.

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3. What helps? - Enabling Conditions & Practices

- Educational leadership: a clear vision and the ability to build a cohesive teaching team.
- Methodological eclecticism: the best combination of traditional and innovative approaches.
- Curriculum adaptation: balancing the common curriculum and one adapted to students' interests and needs.
- Student participation with real impact and recognition.
- Safe environment: conflict mediation and the promotion of positive school coexistence.
- Engaged community: neighbourhood, municipality, and social networks supporting the school.

4. What gets in the way? - Structural & Contextual Constraints

- Insufficient material and human resources.
- School segregation and inequality between schools.
- Education policies favouring private schools.

5. Three messages to take away - Implications for Policy & Practice

Inclusive schools need resources.
Providing high-quality support for diversity requires smaller class sizes and more support staff.

Small details matter.
Keeping school doors open helps the community feel closer to the school.

Access to the teaching profession needs reform.
Building stable and committed teaching teams should be a priority in education policy.

6. Voices from the School Community

School leader
"Teacher, I don't want Friday to come, I want to stay here with you. These are not students who are eager to leave. Of course there is everything, but especially those students who face greater difficulties feel comfortable here."

Specialized staff
"If there is no emotion, there is no learning. If families do not provide emotional support for children, children will face serious difficulties in learning."



Student
"There is this feeling that you can trust that teacher and tell him anything."

Parent
"The principal knows everyone. She talks to people by name. She even knew the girl's name and her father's name. And I can't even remember them myself. She knows everyone, yes, and she remembers everything."

Teacher
"We have a good atmosphere in the staff room. There is a great deal of closeness with the leadership team, and I think all of this helps students feel they are in a welcoming and familiar environment."

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