



Beyond Oil

Education for Growth, Inclusion
and Human Flourishing in
Venezuela



DAVID ROCKEFELLER CENTER
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Teaching Talent

How to Attract, Grow, Inspire and Keep Great Educators in Venezuela



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9:35 - 10:20

Moderated by Felipe Vergara



HARVARD



GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF EDUCATION

Teaching talent: How to attract, grow, inspire and keep great educators in Venezuela

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Based on a chapter by
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Agenda

- 1. Why teachers matter:** Global evidence on quality and learning
- 2. Venezuela's teacher crisis:** A profession hollowed out
- 3. A five-pillar framework:** Rebuilding the teaching profession



1. Why teachers matter: *Global evidence on teacher quality and student learning*



Teacher quality is the single most important school-based driver of learning

More effective teaching = months of extra learning

+1 SD effective teacher
≈
+0.20 SD learning gains



Improving teaching beats tech ~20x

Generic ed-tech ≈ 0.01 SD learning gains



Strong teaching adds up for vulnerable students

Multiple years of strong teachers ≈ 0.9 SD extra learning



Teacher quality is cost effective and has long-term economic and developmental effects

Once basics are in place,
invest in teaching practice

Effective teaching pays
off over the long run

Improving teaching is
central to closing learning
gaps

Selective recruitment

Finland, Singapore, and Korea draw teacher candidates from the top third of secondary graduates.

Practice-based preparation

Programs combine rigorous coursework with extensive supervised clinical practice in real classrooms.

High-performing systems playbook

Continuous learning

Embedded professional development, coaching, and strong school cultures that value collaboration.

Career structure & pay

Competitive salaries, structured ladders, and accountability mechanisms tied to support—not punishment.

2. Venezuela's teacher crisis: *An aging, shrinking, and deprofessionalized workforce*



A workforce in collapse: teacher shortage and profession characteristics

> 50%

of teachers exited
the profession
between 2015–2023

32%

of filled posts held
by people without
formal training

232,000

basic education
teachers—
down to about half of
pre-crisis levels

34%

of required teaching
positions remain unfilled

60%

of teachers report
10+ years of service—
younger cohorts absent

What it means

Systemic teacher shortages reshape schooling

De-professionalization of the teaching force

Unequal and fragile learning opportunities for students

Working conditions are no longer compatible with teaching

Infrastructure and resources



74% of public schools are in deteriorated physical condition.

73% lack reliable electricity; **81%** lack consistent water.

93% of schools have no regular internet access.

71% of teachers lack minimum didactic resources for instruction.

Working conditions are no longer compatible with teaching

**Wages, time,
and dignity**

95% real wage decline since 2015—the lowest-paid teaching professionals in Latin America.

USD 192/mo total income— only covers ~25% of basic food basket.

Flattened salary scale— novice and veteran teachers earn nearly the same.

Selection and evaluation: Politics over merit

Outdated rules

- Regulations governing the teaching profession date to 2000 and are weakly enforced.
- Promotions are seniority-based and discretionary.

Politicized hiring

- Positions are increasingly awarded through partisan channels.
- Interim appointments (*interinatos*) proliferate without clear criteria.

No evaluation

- There are no national teaching standards or regular evaluation cycles.
- There is no use of student-learning data to inform feedback or development.

Result: Strong performers receive no recognition; weak performers continue without support; principals are chosen for loyalty rather than instructional leadership; and individual effort has little bearing on income or career.

**3. A five-pillar
framework:**
*Rebuilding the
teaching profession at
the heart of recovery*



Five interlocking pillars for Venezuela

1	2	3	4	5
<p>Pre-service training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective entry • Practice-based curricula • Accreditation • Regulated alternative pathways 	<p>Selection and assignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomous agency • Multi-instrument competitive entry • Transparent, rule-based assignment 	<p>Evaluation for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-measure, formative-first • Consequential probation phased link to career 	<p>Professional development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction and mentoring • School-based learning • Evidence-based content • Scalable hybrid delivery 	<p>Pay, careers, and conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dignified wages, integrated bonuses • Multi-level career ladder • Hard-to-staff incentives • Decent infrastructure

Pillars 1 & 2 – Build the pipeline, then select on merit

Pillar 1 · Pre-service training

- Raise entry standards
- Reorient curricula toward practice
- Standardize quality
- Open regulated alternative routes

Pillar 2 · Selection & assignment

- Autonomous selection agency Multi-instrument selection
- Transparent rule-based assignment
- Merit-based principals

Pillars 3 & 4 — Evaluate to develop, develop to scale

Pillar 3 · Evaluation for improvement

- Multiple measures
- Regular cycles + actionable feedback
- Consequential probation
- Phased rollout & safeguards

Pillar 4 · Professional development

- Structured induction
- School-based learning
- Evidence-based content
- Hybrid + AI-assisted scale

Pillar 5 — Restore dignity: pay, careers, and working conditions

● Restore a dignified wage and improve working conditions

● Build a multi-level career ladder

● Reward hard-to-staff service

Implementation in three phases over a decade

Phase 1 · Stabilize <i>Years 1–2</i>	Phase 2 · Rebuild <i>Years 3–5</i>	Phase 3 · Transform <i>Years 6–10</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency salary support to USD 200–300/mo• National teacher and school census and basic learning assessment• Legal creation of autonomous teacher agency• Simple rule-based provisional hiring• Pilot AI-assisted mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roll out competitive recruitment and assignment; pilot evaluation• Regional PD centers in partnership with universities• Structured induction for novices and regularized interim staff• Reform initial teacher education curricula and accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consolidate the career ladder with significant advancement shares• Approach regional salary benchmarks• Fund promotion slots• Institutionalize PD, mentoring, and data-driven decisions• Reduce vacancies; embed reforms across political cycles

Putting teachers at the center of Venezuela's recovery

Policymakers

Commit to a multi-year plan to restore pay and social protection, depoliticize hiring, and build the data systems without which policy is blind.

Teachers & their organizations

Insist on standards, fair evaluation, and transparent rules—they protect ordinary teachers from arbitrary power.

International partners

Finance salary top-ups, support autonomous agencies, strengthen teacher education, and share regional tools and evidence.

If Venezuela is to rebuild its social fabric and its economy, it must first rebuild the profession that shapes every future citizen and every future worker.



Thank you!

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