RED DE PROFES

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Starting Point II

A report on the teaching of entrepreneurial journalism in universities in Latin America and Spain.

Index

Acknowledgments

We are proud to present **Starting Point II**, thanks to the support of UNESCO. This report explores the evolution of entrepreneurial journalism courses in Latin America and Spain, and draws on quantitative and qualitative research to highlight the need to train journalists to tackle the challenges of digital transformation, media sustainability, disinformation, and threats to freedom of expression.

This work builds on our first report on this topic, Starting Point I, published in 2018 in collaboration with the Google News Initiative. That report focused on the academic background and professional experience of professors who teach entrepreneurial journalism courses, the content of their courses, and their impact on the journalism sector.

We extend our gratitude to the hundreds of professors who completed the questionnaire and participate in our network for their contributions and their time. Their names and universities are included on the interactive map.

More than 30 people contributed to this project, including researchers, directors, managers, editors, data analysts, designers, writers, and more. Their names, photos, and bios can be found in the *Who We Are* section.

Executive Summary

In the news industry, journalism universities and schools play a crucial role as protagonists in the defense of freedom of expression, and they serve as fundamental pillars of democracy. This report sheds light on t**he status of the teaching of entrepreneurial journalism**; explores the challenges and opportunities arising in the classroom; and evaluates courses' impact on the digital native media ecosystem.

In 2018, thanks to the support from [Google News Initiative](), we published our first study on the status of entrepreneurial journalism education in journalism and communication schools in Latin America and Spain. We designed a qualitative study and interviewed 25 professors from the SembraMedia network. We asked them about their academic backgrounds and professional experience, the characteristics of the entrepreneurial journalism courses they teach, the impact of these courses, and their students' reactions.

In that study, we found that professors who taught entrepreneurial journalism **in 2018 had an average of 13 years of professional experience in the media industry, and an average of 14 years of experience as professors of higher education.**

We also found that:

- **60% of the interviewees were full-time professors**, and the rest work as part time instructors in addition to other roles.

- **64% had experience working in entrepreneurial media outlets.**

- 48% mentioned **financial and editorial freedom as an incentive for students** to create their own media outlets.

- **76% of the entrepreneurial journalism courses were compulsory.** However, professors said that introducing business concepts to journalism students was a challenge.

The context in which our first Starting Point report was created changed suddenly and drastically because of the COVID-19 pandemic. To adapt to the new global scenario and support entrepreneurial journalists and media, we expanded SembraMedia's online school, offered virtual training programs in many countries, and led workshops and lectures for teachers and students throughout the region.

> At Sembramedia, **we see entrepreneurial journalism as a change agent** that slows down democratic erosion, fills information gaps, and fosters press freedom—starting in the classroom. After a health, financial and social crisis, and amidst many new threats to freedom of expression, we concluded that **it was crucial to update our research on how professors were adapting**, and where and how entrepreneurial journalism was being taught in the region.

Thanks to the support from UNESCO, we present **Starting Point II, a research project that aims to serve as a link between the journalism industry and academia.** The study included:

1. 101 professors (38% women, 56% men, 1% non-binary, 5% preferred not to say) from 16 Spanish-speaking countries.
2. 157 Latin American and Spanish universities.

Key findings in this research in 2023:

- Between 2017–2018 and 2021–2022, **the number of courses on entrepreneurial journalism has increased by 15%.**

- **How does learning entrepreneurial journalism impact students' professional lives?** 77% of professors reported that they know of former students working for digital native media outlets; 38% of their students have started their own projects.

- **Average years of experience and the percentage of full-time professors have decreased.** The average number of years of teaching experience is 10, and 48.5% of the interviewees are full-time professors.

- **28% currently work for a media outlet or run their own.**

- **More than half of professors have second jobs.** 16% of the interviewees work as consultants, 15% work at media outlets, 15% are researchers, and 8% are freelance journalists.

- Professors believe that **entrepreneurship labs are the main drivers of entrepreneurial journalism.**

- **The frequency of curriculum changes reflects the ongoing evolution of the media ecosystem.** In 2018, there were an average of eight curriculum changes per year; in 2023 there were nine.

- **Most courses on entrepreneurial journalism are compulsory.** In fact, the proportion of courses that are compulsory has increased by more than 6%—a significant amount, considering that the sample size is four times larger than that used in our first study.

- The **primary topics covered** by these courses are business models (51.5%), the status of the industry (45.5%), and funding sources and monetization (39.6%).

- When courses are compulsory, **students are four times more likely to learn about concepts connected to entrepreneurial journalism**, and three times more likely to learn related methodologies.

- The **major challenges that professors identify in entrepreneurial journalism courses** are following up on their students' projects after the courses end, and their schools' curricular emphasis on communications rather than entrepreneurship.

- **82% of the universities studied publish their curricula on their websites.** More than half of the curricula surveyed (56%) include entrepreneurship or innovation-related courses.

- **More than half of the professors (55%) are familiar with SembraMedia's curriculum.**

- Universities in **Mexico, Colombia and Argentina include more entrepreneurial journalism courses** than universities in other countries studied.

> SembraMedia seeks to contribute to building a future for journalists, starting in the classroom. We firmly believe that schools are the cornerstone for ensuring the continuity and sustainability of entrepreneurial digital journalism.

The findings of this research project align with findings from some of our previous studies, including our Inflection Point report, published in November 2021, that sheds light on the trends in independent digital native media in Latin America and other regions.

Our Inflection Point report revealed that in Mexico and Argentina, the 2016–2018 period witnessed the most significant growth in digital media.

Our Starting Point II report revealed that substantial growth in entrepreneurial journalism courses also occurred during that time.

This Starting Point II report is based on a non-probabilistic sample. The most recent research on communication and journalism education programs and institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean was published by UNESCO in 2009. That study showed that there were 1,381 Spanish-speaking universities offering communication and journalism programs in Latin America. Our study includes 11.3% of this total, and our findings address specific, up-to-date variables in a constantly evolving field.

Introduction

There are few certainties in today's world. Words like *virus, war, climate crisis, polarization, inflation, populism or disinformation* have become a part of our everyday language. In uncertain times, investigation and reporting become even more important. Journalism—a field in constant evolution—becomes more relevant than ever.

However, the structure of the industry is cracking. [UNESCO](#) reports that journalism has become a dangerous profession. In addition, numerous organizations agree that **freedom of speech and of the press, two cornerstones of democracy, are increasingly under threat.** 2021 Nobel Peace Laureate María Ressa pointed out that her startup sought to combine journalism and technology to show the absence of a democratic vision for the 21st century.

Other forces are pressuring the news industry, such as widespread internet access, new audience habits and behaviors, the monetization of disinformation, digital transformation, the rise of news platforms, the crisis of business models, information aversion, and more.

The challenges are evident and affect both democracy and the news ecosystem, from business models and advertising to its most vulnerable link: journalism students.

This **Starting Point II** report serves as a tool for assessing the status of entrepreneurial journalism education in Latin America and Spain.

At SembraMedia, we firmly believe that one way to reduce pressure and bolster the news ecosystem is **to connect and encourage collaboration among digital media entrepreneurs and academics worldwide.** Cooperation and teamwork can strengthen journalism, journalists, and the universities and schools that teach them.

In 2018, we developed and published an entrepreneurial journalism curriculum proposal, hoping to encourage universities and professors to **promote the development of new courses and support sustainable and transparent media initiatives** that serve their communities. We also started a network that has grown to more than 300 professors who collaborate and share resources.

For this study, we designed a questionnaire for professors to answer on topics such as their professional experience and academic background, their schools' curricula, and their students' projects. In addition, we collected data from universities to analyze their approaches to entrepreneurial journalism.

Our goal is that our recommended curriculum, the network, and this study will serve as tools that **help professors shape the future of digital journalism.**

Anatomy of a Professor

Profile

Interviewing entrepreneurial journalism professors from different countries gave us an overview of their current situation in Latin America and Spain. It should be noted that **54% of the interviewees teach at journalism and communication schools in cities that are not the country's capital.** This suggests a strong presence in less cosmopolitan areas, thus offering a promising outlook for local journalism.

The **average age of the participants is 44** (ranging from 28 to 68). The **average number of years of teaching experience is 10**. Approximately **48% of the professors started teaching entrepreneurial journalism courses in 2019 or later.**

Years of teaching experience	Percentage of professors	Years teaching entrepreneurial journalism courses	Percentage of professors
1 - 4	10%	1 - 4	48%
5 - 9	41%	5 - 9	41%
10 - 14	21%	10 - 14	9%
15 - 19	10%	15 or more	2%
20 or more	19%		

Evolution and digital transformation in journalism are fast paced, creating a need for constant updates in terms of metrics, user experience, design and business models, which are ever-changing concepts. Professors are not immune to this.

Our research suggests that in addition to the usual short courses and seminars on journalism, professors are compelled to seek further professional development and delve deeper into the concepts they teach. One of the most noteworthy variables in the study is that **83.2% of the professors hold a postgraduate degree** (54.5% have master's degrees and 28.7% hold a Ph.D.). **In each of the 16 participating countries, at least one of the professors held a master's or doctoral degree.**

"I applied for a Ph.D. program many years ago because I sought to pursue an academic career in the most comprehensive way possible: I wanted to be able to design and conduct research projects, coordinate research groups, and supervise doctoral theses."

Lluís Codina - Spain

"I began teaching when I was very young, before finishing my undergraduate studies. Since then, my needs and concerns have evolved in response to changes in the field and in my own interests. Upon completing my undergraduate studies, I started a teaching degree, which gave me valuable didactic and pedagogical strategies. Shortly after that, I undertook a specialization in educational planning".

India Molina - Argentina

In addition to their academic background, professionalization is demonstrated by the professors' work experience in the media industry:

33% have had managerial positions

50% have worked as editors

66% have worked as reporters

In Chile and Mexico, more than half of the professors have held managerial positions.

We found that, to round out their professional profiles, **28% of professors are currently involved in journalism, 13% run a media outlet, and 15% work at one.** An overall analysis of the academic formation, professional experience, and current situation of professors teaching entrepreneurial journalism courses shows a dynamic and complementary pattern of activities.

More than half of the interviewees (51%) have an additional job, and 20% have three or more occupations. In addition to this, 17% teach at two universities, while 3% teach at three or more.

Additional job	Percentage
Are consultants	16%
Work at a media outlet	15%
Are researchers	15%
Run their own media	13%
Are freelance journalist	8%

*Multiple answers allowed

This trend is particularly evident in Chile, Panama, Uruguay, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic, where all participants work secondary jobs in addition to teaching.
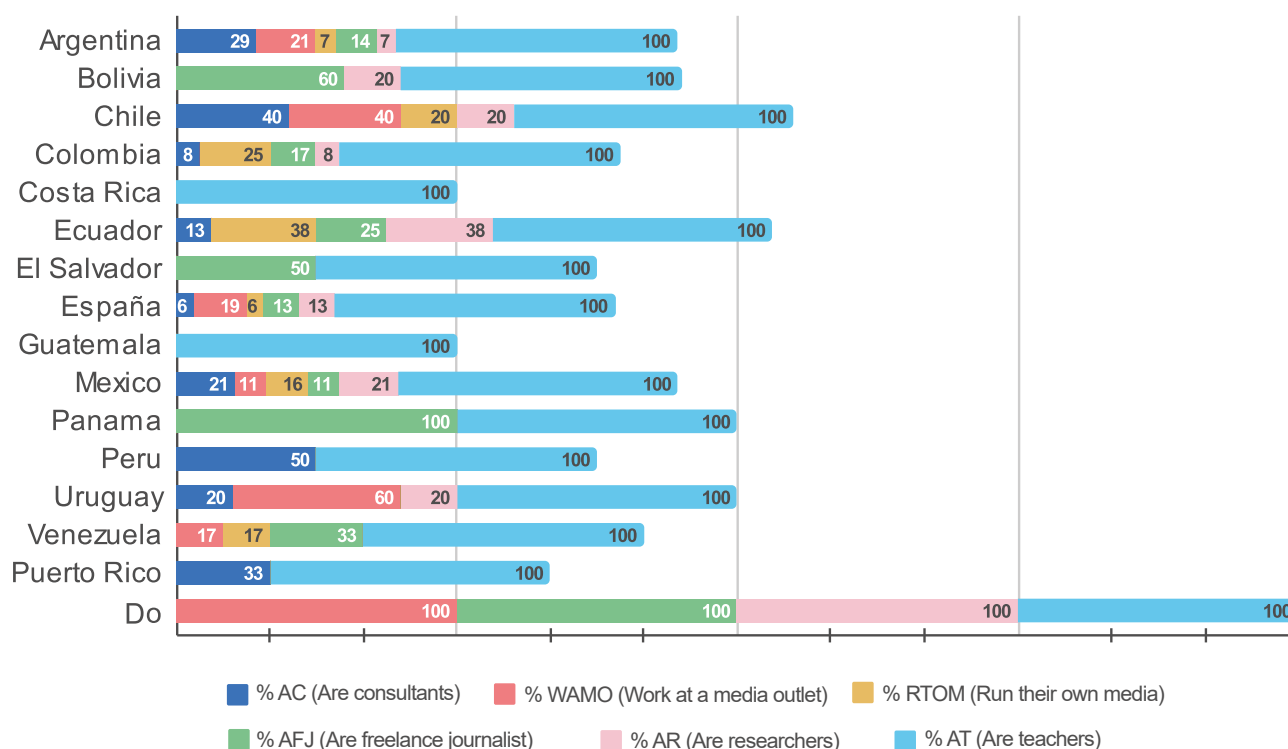
Women in education

For Starting Point I, we interviewed 13 women who taught entrepreneurial journalism courses. **For Starting Point II, 39 female professors answered our questions.**

Our research revealed that **25% of these professors have occupied managerial positions in the media.** In 2021, a [study by Wan Ifra](#) pointed out that women comprised approximately 58% of the editorial staff in digital media, while their representation in management teams was limited to 49%.

Female professors, on average, have 11 years of teaching experience. Notably, **92% hold postgraduate degrees,** with 70% having master's degrees and 30% holding a Ph.D.

"Teaching has always been a top priority for me, and I believed that a solid academic foundation would be essential. All my university professors held doctoral degrees. It seemed to be some kind of prerequisite for becoming one. This inspired me to pursue doctoral studies."

Carolina Albornoz - Peru

"My project, Negrita Come Coco, has its own social media platforms. Its purpose is to promote Afro-descendants and popular culture in my country. I know other women who lead digital media outlets and similar initiatives."

Indhira Suero - Dominican Republic

Among female respondents, **10% run their own media outlets.** In our Inflection Point report (2021), a broader study of media entrepreneurs, we found that nearly 38% of the founders of native digital media in Latin America were women.

Half of the female professors interviewed have an additional job. Among these, 21% work at media outlets, 15% are freelance journalists, 16% provide consulting services, and 15% are researchers.

Female professors' jobs

21%
Work at a media outlet

15%
Freelance journalist

13%
Consultant

10%
Run a media outlet

8%
Researcher
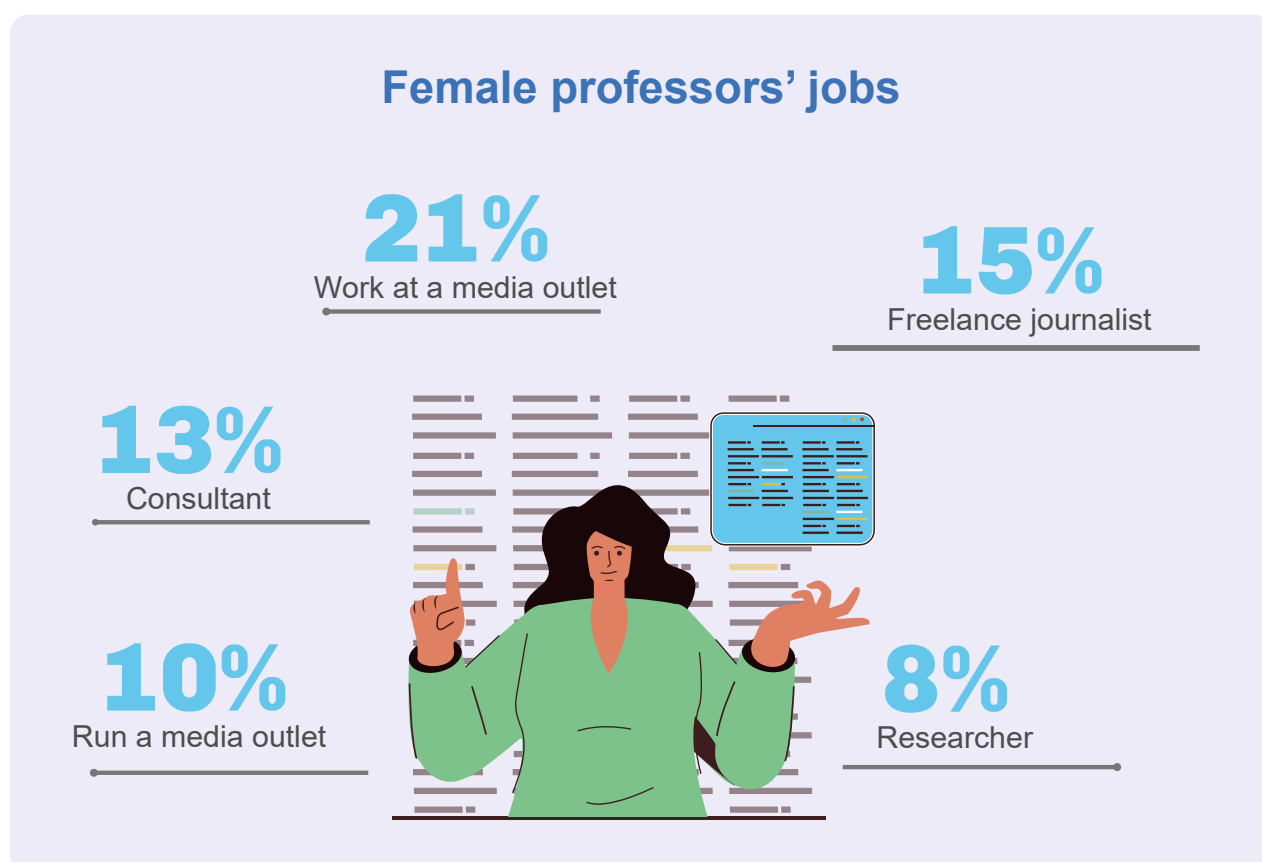
*Multiple answers allowed

"While surveys indicate that women bear a significantly greater caregiving burden, we are also more inclined to start entrepreneurial ventures to gain greater flexibility and achieve a better work-life balance."

Fabiola Gutierrez - Bolivia

The entrepreneurial journey

A Google Scholar search on "entrepreneurial journalism" reveals that it is a relatively new field of study, with fewer than 500 results; the oldest articles date back to the 2010s. In 2015, we developed the first [proposed SembraMedia curriculum on entrepreneurial journalism](#) to assist anyone interested in the entrepreneurial journalism journey. We also explored and evaluated various financial sustainability models, as our research showed that even though **the entrepreneurial journey does not have a specific, single route, it does include some essential stops.**

We also created a network of entrepreneurial journalism professors: the SembraMedia Professors' Network, **bringing together more than 300 educators from 16 countries.** This network is facilitated by moderators and coordinators who promote and enhance connections among members. The network is actively engaged in various academic and training initiatives, focusing on current topics, and it also participates in calls for proposals and funding opportunities.

"Based on my experience, students who are presented with entrepreneurial tools and strategies from the start of their degrees produce higher quality final projects. Every resource within the SembraMedia curriculum can be tailored to fit local contexts and requirements, and adapted to each institution's or group's challenges and possibilities."

Nicolás Elabi - Argentina

*"The study and implementation of the SembraMedia Professors' Network curriculum proved immensely valuable in introducing entrepreneurship concepts across various journalism courses. It provided students with guidance on entrepreneurial journalism, presenting it as an alternative for establishing their own media ventures, and embracing the profession from a fresh perspective."*

José Hernandez - Puerto Rico

This research reflects part of the results of these efforts made thus far. **The number of professors teaching courses in both Latin America and Spain has increased,** as seen in the following graph:

Year when professors started teaching entrepreneurial journalism courses
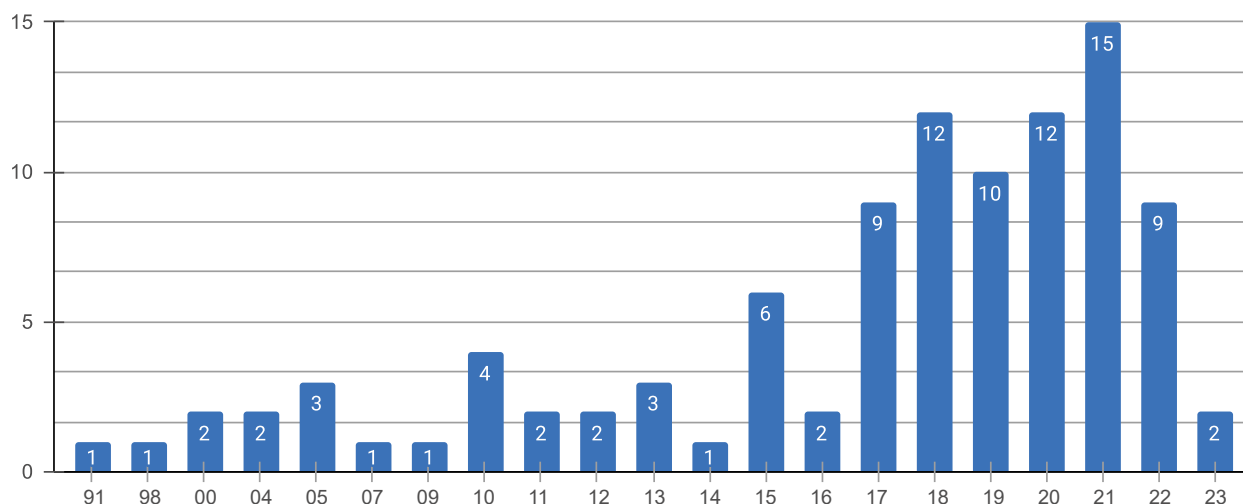
Our analysis reveals that, on average, professors have been teaching entrepreneurial journalism for 10 years. **Argentina, Ecuador and Spain** are pioneers, having introduced entrepreneurial journalism courses in the previous century.

70%

of the professors began to teach entrepreneurial journalism courses in 2017.
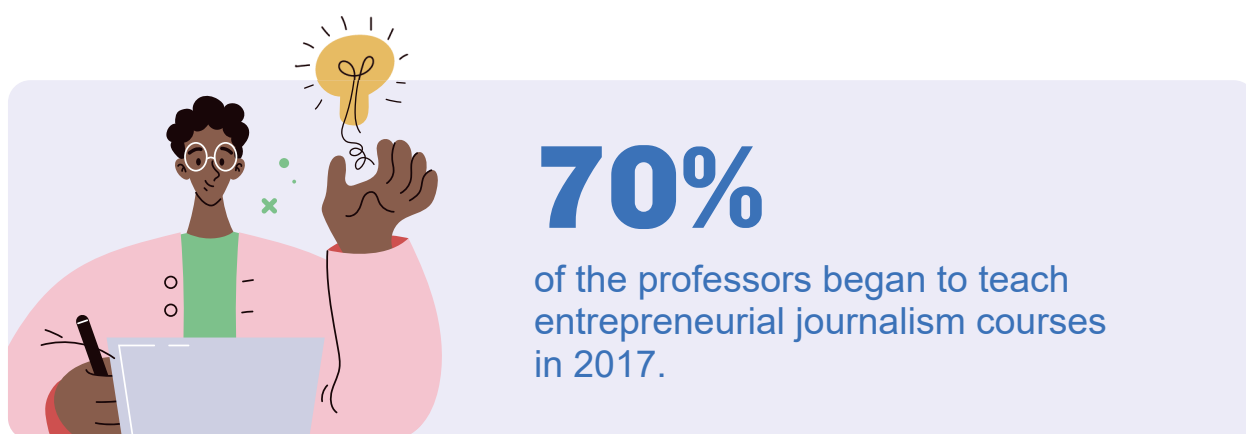
Between 2000 and 2010, countries such as Peru, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Costa Rica, Colombia and Bolivia joined this trend. The remaining countries did so between 2011 and 2020: Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela, Guatemala, Dominican Republic and Panama. The number of courses continued to grow in Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador.

Year in which professors started teaching entrepreneurial journalism courses, by country.
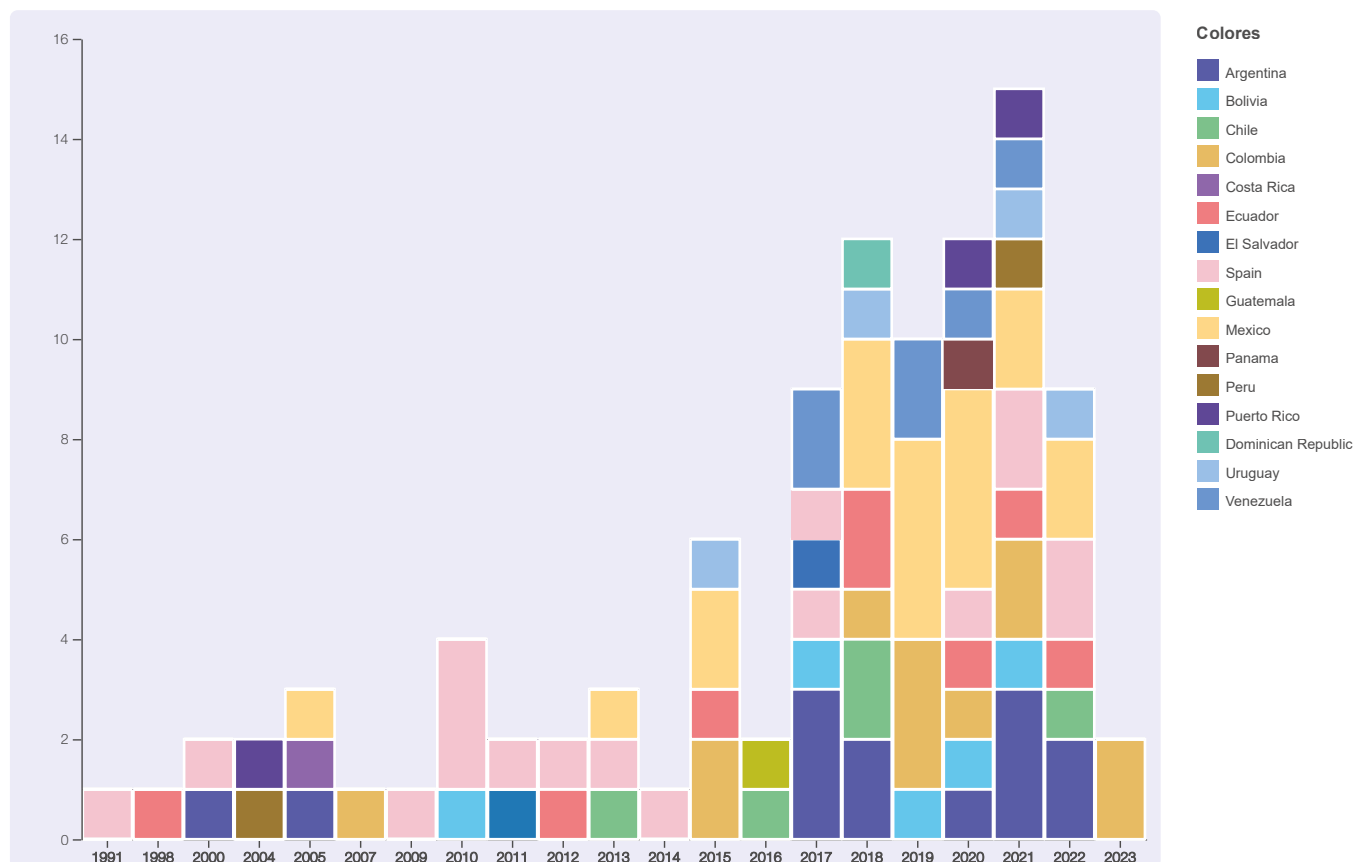
It is worth noting that **more than half of the professors (56%) are acquainted with and use SembraMedia's curriculum.** In general terms, our proposed curriculum for entrepreneurial journalism courses is divided into five sections. It begins with an introduction and fundamental theory; continues with ideation, selection and evaluation of methodologies, and business models; and concludes with media promotion and impact.

For this study, we delved into two subjects: the topics and methodologies taught in the courses.

We found that t**he most frequently taught methodologies are Design Thinking, Business Model Canvas, Pitching, Lean Canvas, LeanUX and Sprints.** These are known as Agile Methodologies.

Primary methodologies

Design Thinking	Business Model Canvas	Pitching	Lean Canvas	Otra	LeanUX	Sprints
44%	43%	25%	19%	8%	5%	3%
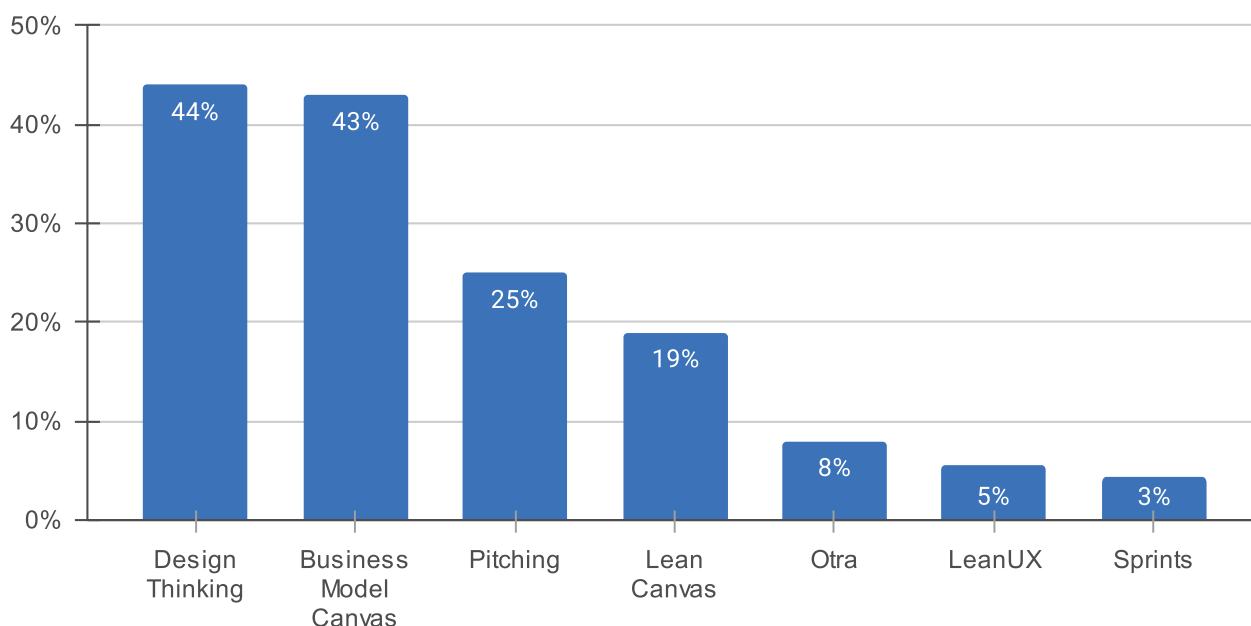
*Multiple answers allowed

However, **23% of all professors do not include Agile Methodologies in their courses**, resulting in an information disparity among students.

In 2018, when we conducted Starting Point I, **Design Thinking, Business Model Canvas and Pitching were also the most frequently mentioned methodologies**, which speaks of their consolidation in the classroom. Design Thinking focuses on the creative and innovative process; Business Model Canvas is centered on business model building; and Pitching is about enhancing short presentations to sell ideas or projects.

Among the less frequently mentioned methodologies are the Lean Canvas, a simplified version of the Business Model Canvas, and two other Agile Methodologies: Lean UX, which focuses on iterative processes, and Sprints, which works on achieving specific project milestones within set timeframes.

Entrepreneur professors that inspire students

Innovation and entrepreneurship are intertwined. Innovation is the tool that exploits change in a given service. In journalism, new digital media outlets emerge from innovative approaches, areas of interest, formats or audiences identified by entrepreneurs.

Our research found that **76% of professors invite entrepreneurs to share their experiences and inspire students.** 13% of the interviewees are entrepreneurs who run their own media outlets. Two-thirds of them have a defined business model.

To understand how these courses, which last a maximum of five months, are organized, **we asked whether entrepreneurial journalism courses are compulsory or elective.** We found that **81% of the courses are compulsory, an increase of five percentage points compared to 2018.**

39% of professors reported cases of students who have created their media projects during or after their entrepreneurial journalism courses; **two-thirds of these initiatives remain active.**

The collected data reveal two significant findings:

All the professors who have founded a media outlet had prior media work experience.

Professors with postgraduate studies (master's or Ph.D.) owned more startups than those who held only undergraduate degrees.

Universities as incubators

The professors who responded to our questionnaire represented 85% of the universities where we found courses or classes related to entrepreneurial journalism. **An analysis of their responses reveals three main trends:**

1. A shortage of professors

Although 80% of the professors teach at only one university, **over half of them (56%) teach more than two courses on entrepreneurial journalism.** Among the professors who teach at multiple universities, 16% teach two or more courses. Based on this, we can conclude that there is a **high demand for entrepreneurial journalism courses and a shortage of specialized professors.**

"As the upward trend in journalism entrepreneurship continues, future educators must receive adequate training to prepare them to share their experiences in the classroom, offering valuable, real-world insights to young journalists eager to enter the professional arena."

José Hernández - Puerto Rico

2. Regional leadership

Argentina, Ecuador and Spain were the first countries where entrepreneurial journalism courses were offered. However, **when it comes to the number of courses available, Mexico, Spain, Argentina and Colombia are in the lead,** showing a strong correlation with the number of digital media per country mapped in our Latin American media directory.

The data show that receiving training on entrepreneurship in communication and journalism projects promotes entrepreneurial intent among students.

Countries with the highest number of entrepreneurial media outlets in our Directory

18%
Colombia

8.6%
Spain

13.1%
Mexico

6.5%
Chile

10.7%
Argentina
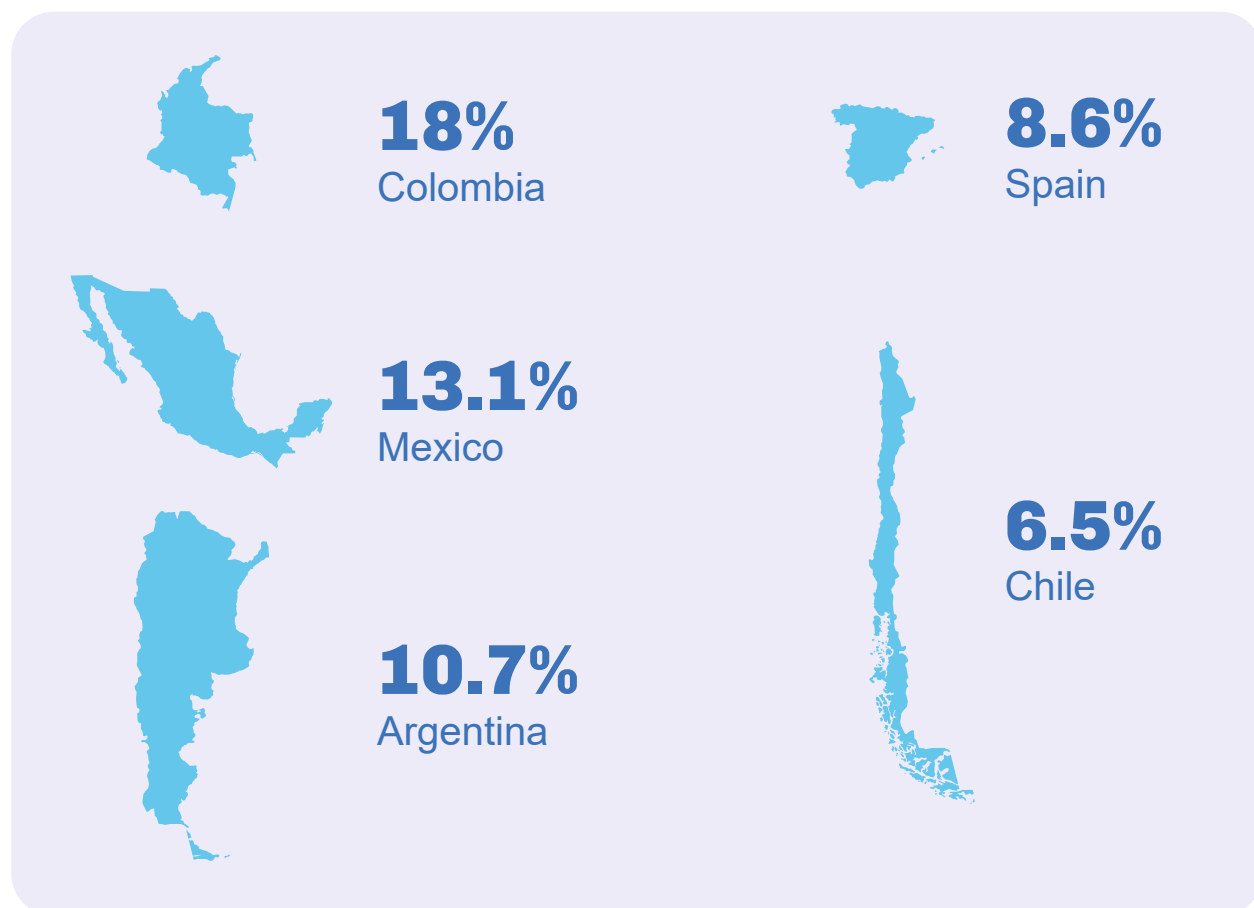
3. Curriculum design

When courses are compulsory, **students are four times more likely to be exposed to topics connected to entrepreneurial journalism**, and three times more likely to learn about related methodologies. While the curricula must correlate to the job market, **it is equally vital for students to develop diverse, cross-cutting skills** that enable them to envision and create opportunities for their future through entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurial Journalism in Classrooms

There are more than [1,000 Spanish-language digital media organizations across Latin America, Spain, Canada, and the United States](#). This fact reflects a thriving media ecosystem that can impact the future of democracy. These media do much more than simply inform their audiences: they also defend human rights, build a culture of legality, and advocate for accountability. In these uncertain times, however, **launching a media project, monetizing it, and achieving sustainability requires deep understanding that goes far beyond a quick training** or reskilling.

The industry is dealing with budget cuts, reduced advertising, news avoidance, algorithms, digital platforms, and artificial intelligence. **Guidance for media entrepreneurs needs to provide evidence, training, consulting services, and financial support.** This approach will allow them to build sustainable organizations that guarantee the future of journalism.

We see **education as the cornerstone for creating new and sustainable media projects** that consolidate and strengthen freedom of the press and democracy. The vision and ethics of entrepreneurial journalists who will serve their communities and audiences are shaped during their first interactions with professors.

Students

Even though our research is based on questions for professors, our efforts are motivated by their students and their projects. Our study reveals that more than 200 entrepreneurial journalism courses are taught every year, reaching nearly 4,500 students in 16 countries. The impact of these courses extends beyond the classroom: **39% of the professors reported cases of students who started media projects, and two-thirds of these initiatives remain active.**

Students are receptive to the courses that universities offer. Half of the curriculum changes noted in the study took place after 2020; we believe that the reasons for this include changes in the industry, digital transformation, and the global health crisis. However, as seen below, curricula remained unchanged for the first 16 years of the 21st century.

Changes in curricula, per year
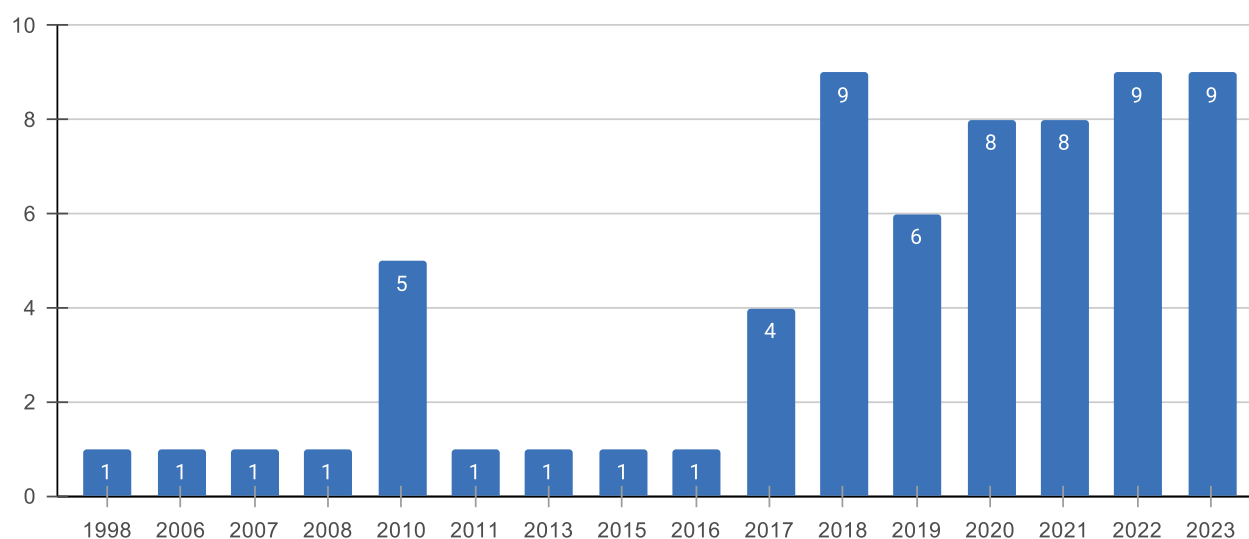
Argentina, Colombia and Mexico, which are the countries with more presence in our Media Directory, **are also in the lead in terms of the number of changes made to curricula,** followed by Ecuador, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Changes in the curricula since 2020

Country	Changes made	Country	Changes made
Argentina	7	Spain	1
Colombia	7	Chile	1
Mexico	5	Rep. Dominicana	1
Ecuador	3	Costa Rica	0
Uruguay	3	Guatemala	0
Venezuela	3	Panamá	0
Puerto Rico	2	Bolivia	0
El Salvador	1	Perú	0

In terms of the topics covered, **the most frequently mentioned (50%) relate to business models, industry, and monetization.** That is, teachers devote a significant amount of their time to sustainability.

> *"As a SembraMedia teacher and ambassador for my country, what I have learned about entrepreneurship and sustainability has had an impact on what I teach and how I teach it."*
>
> Indhira Suero - Dominican Republic

In contrast, only one out of three professors mentioned audience, communities, and team management topics. **Topics related to operations and accounting are the least frequently mentioned.**

Main topics taught

46%
Industry context

29%
Communication with audiences

20%
Community building

40%
Financing sources

26%
Key performance indicators

10%
Budget and cashflow

37%
Unique value proposition

26%
Team management

3%
Accounting

31%
Website creation

26%
Pitches

31%
Ideation of projects

24%
ICTs in journalism

Characteristics of the courses

In 2018, we found that 76% of the entrepreneurial journalism courses were compulsory. This percentage rose to 81% for this study, showing consistency over time.

The most frequently cited option is semester-long, compulsory courses (40%). Year-long and four-month-long courses are the second most mentioned modalities, which is noteworthy considering the nature of the methodologies and topics covered.

Type and frequency of entrepreneurial journalism courses

■ Compulsory   ■ Elective

	Two months	Four months	Six months	Annual
Compulsory	3%	15%	41%	22%
Elective	1%	3%	6%	8%
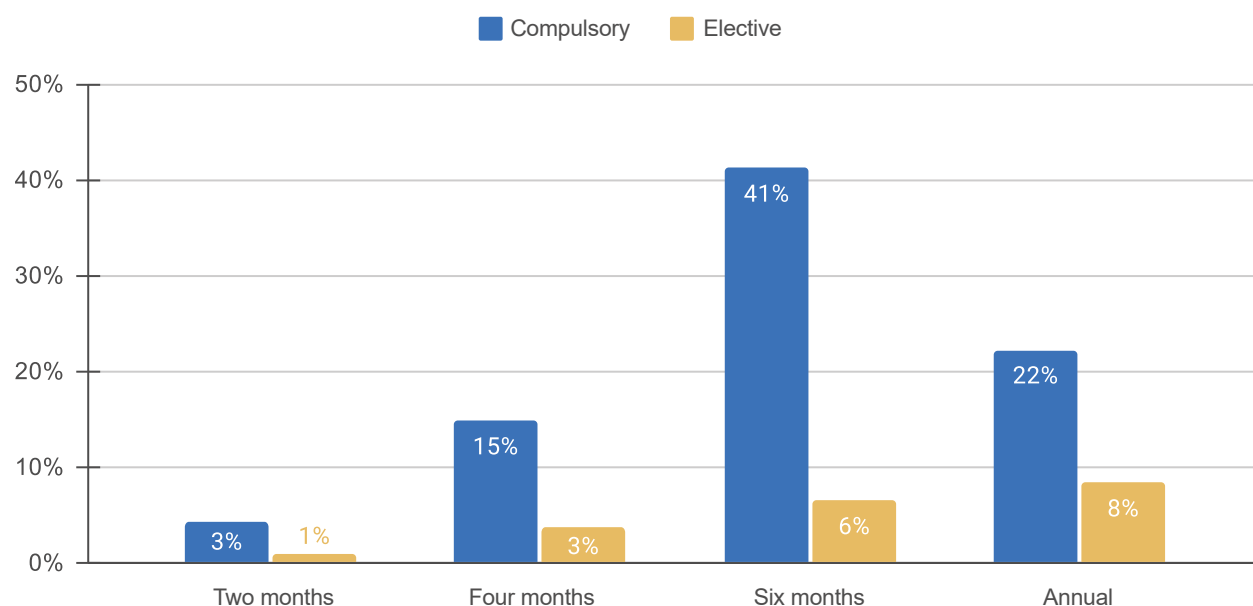
Teachers, learners, entrepreneurs

The average age of professors who run their own media outlets is 44. Their projects have been active for six years on average. **Entrepreneurs have work experience as reporters (77%) and editors (62%). Only 30% of them have occupied managerial positions.** One of the most notable features is that more than 80% hold postgraduate degrees.

> *"Journalism schools in Puerto Rico have incorporated entrepreneurial topics into their curricula, which is a positive change. However, it has become evident that many professors teaching these courses lack entrepreneurial experience, which is a lost opportunity for enhancing student learning."*
>
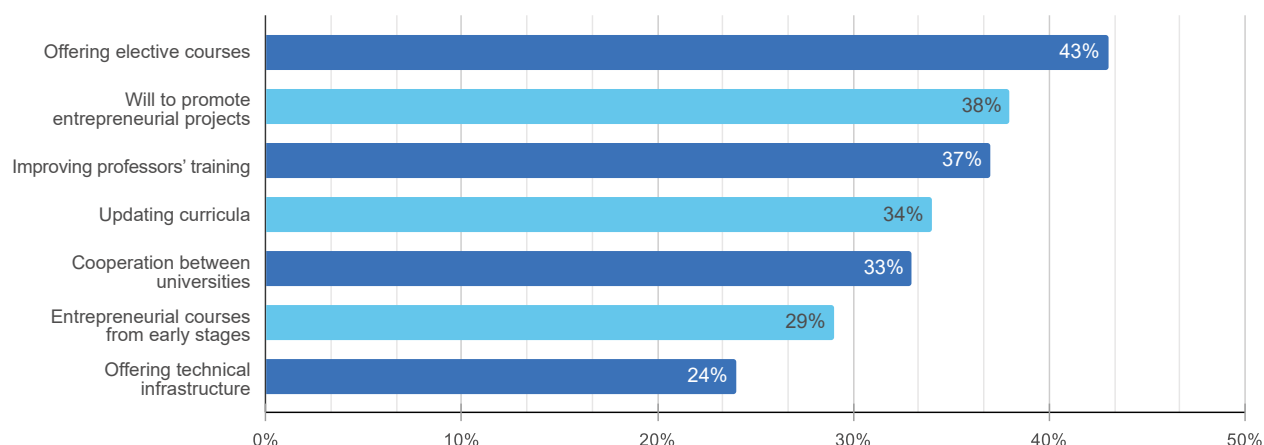> José Hernandez - Puerto Rico

Challenges and complexities

The challenges of teaching an entrepreneurial journalism course have radically changed since our previous report. In 2018, professors identified among the most challenging aspects: 1) for students, their lack of a business mindset and the struggle to understand the industry transformation; 2) for professors, difficulties related to course planning and offering updated content.

Things have changed. According to the interviewees, **the main challenge is following up on the students' projects upon completion of the course**. The second most mentioned challenge is the programs' orientation toward communication. The third place was shared by the students' uncertainty over making a living out of their projects, and concerns about the teachers' training, the latter of which had been mentioned in 2018, too.

All this creates new questions and suggests hypotheses for future research. Given that most courses are compulsory and last six months, **there might be room for follow-up activities that can provide continuity for students' projects.**

Challenges related to entrepreneurial journalism courses

Category	Percentage
Offering elective courses	43%
Will to promote entrepreneurial projects	38%
Improving professors' training	37%
Updating curricula	34%
Cooperation between universities	33%
Entrepreneurial courses from early stages	29%
Offering technical infrastructure	24%

Professors' training and professional development are two aspects that stood out in connection to both challenges and complexities. **The combination of technology, information dynamics, and the crisis in journalism demands constant revision** of the latest industry data and technologies, audience behavior and metrics, and technical competencies, which poses a clear challenge for professors.

"Courses usually focus on ways to finance projects and make them sustainable, considering the context and other entrepreneurs' experiences. But we do not delve into the how-to for various reasons, perhaps the main one being the lack of follow-up and turning the projects into a reality."
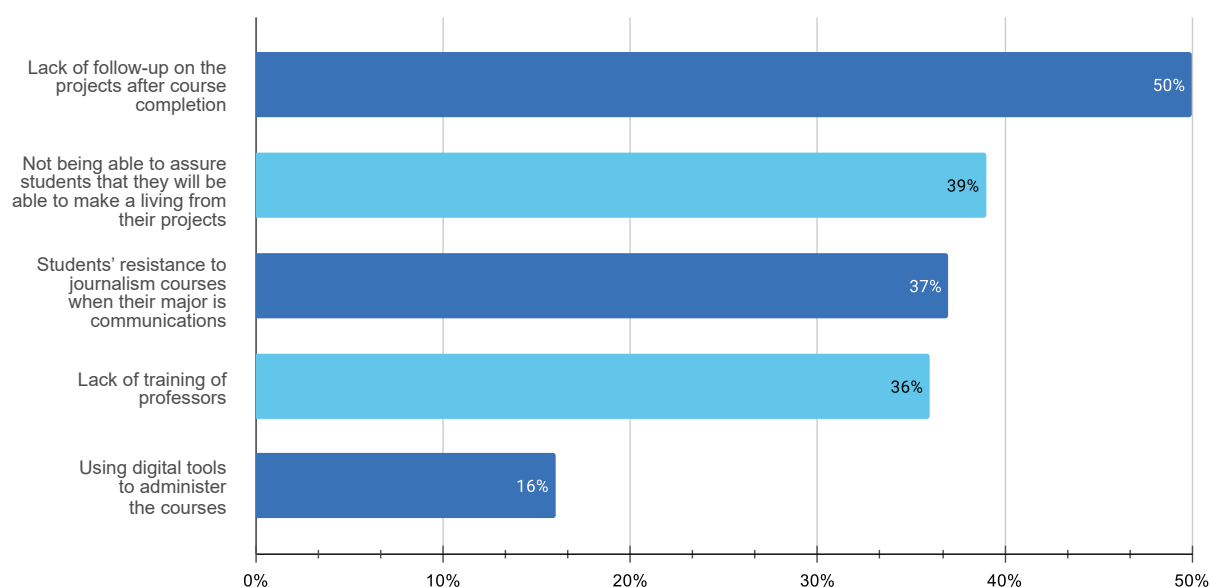
Rodolfo Huallpa - Bolivia

"Most business models in current media ventures are not profitable. As professors, we are not trained in business models or entrepreneurship, so the only basis we can use to prepare our students on these topics is our colleagues' research and our own."

Elba Díaz - Mexico

Complexities related to entrepreneurial journalism courses

Lack of follow-up on the projects after course completion	50%
Not being able to assure students that they will be able to make a living from their projects	39%
Students' resistance to journalism courses when their major is communications	37%
Lack of training of professors	36%
Using digital tools to administer the courses	16%

Which factors encourage or discourage entrepreneurship in students?

What do teachers believe encourages, or would encourage, students to become entrepreneurial journalists? **Two out of three interviewees believe that creating entrepreneurship labs may boost entrepreneurial journalism.** Even though these spaces, which took off professionally in the early 2000s, originated as a way to escape newsroom vertigo, **many labs have been adapted to explore interactive storytelling and product development.** There is a paradox in the fact that a space originally designed for experimentation could also serve to monitor and follow up on students' initiatives.

"In subjects such as Digital Journalism, Storytelling and Creative Project, several of my students develop projects for newsletters, podcasts and websites, although they did not go beyond the classrooms."
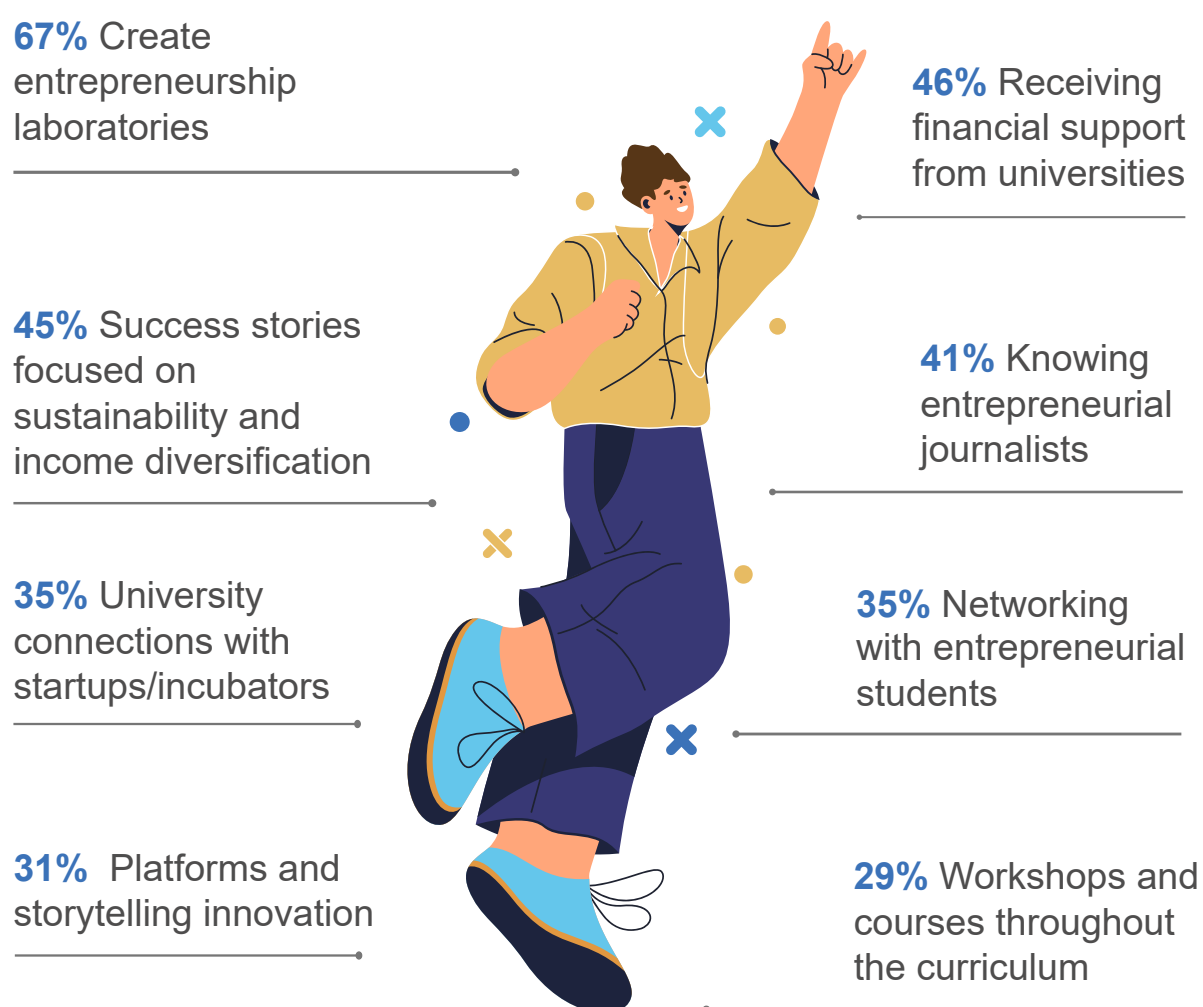
Indhira Suero - Dominican Republic

The second and third most frequently mentioned factors were financing and sustainability, respectively.

Less commonly cited (30%) but still notable were options that involved forging partnerships with startups and creating entrepreneurial networks.

This information regarding factors that encourage or discourage student entrepreneurship differs from the 2018 study. Back then, interviewees said that the two leading motivations the opportunity to create their own media projects with editorial and financial freedom (48%) and the chance to create alternatives to mainstream media (28%).

What motivates students to become entrepreneurs:

67% Create entrepreneurship laboratories

46% Receiving financial support from universities

45% Success stories focused on sustainability and income diversification

41% Knowing entrepreneurial journalists

35% University connections with startups/incubators

35% Networking with entrepreneurial students

31% Platforms and storytelling innovation

29% Workshops and courses throughout the curriculum

As for what teachers believe discourages their students from undertaking entrepreneurial journalism, the most common responses were:

70%

the fear of not being able to make a living from it

45%

uncertain industry conditions

39%

and a lack of resources

The latter was the most frequently cited option in Starting Point I (2018).

"At Santiago de Cali University, most students finance their education with loans and start repayment after graduating. As a result, many find that landing a stable job and income is the best way to close their academic cycle, as it allows them to cover their basic needs while paying off their student loans."

Claudia Bedoya - Colombia

What discourages students from becoming entrepreneurs

70% Not making enough money from their projects

39% Lack of resources to start their projects

24% Do not want to own a media outlet

22% Fear of entrepreneurship responsibilities

45% Fear and uncertainty due to industry conditions

32% Lack of interest in entrepreneurial journalism

23% Lack of time

17% University only trains them to join already established media outlets
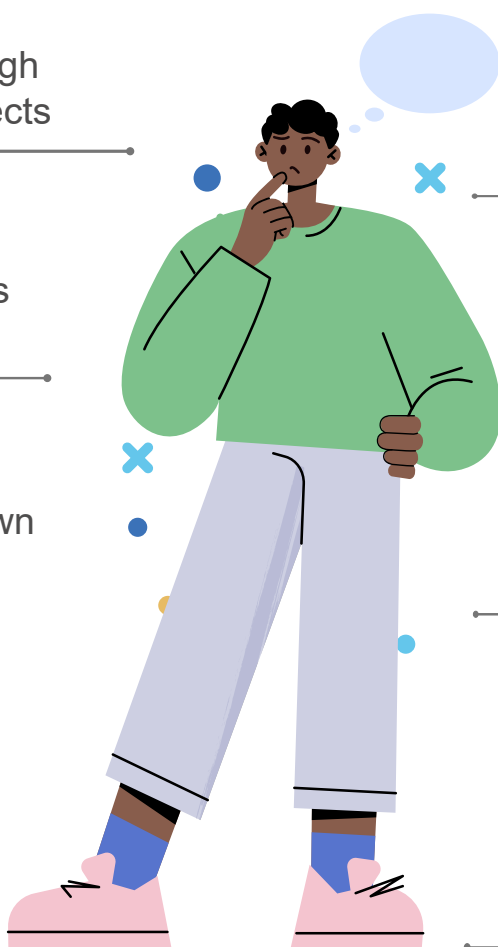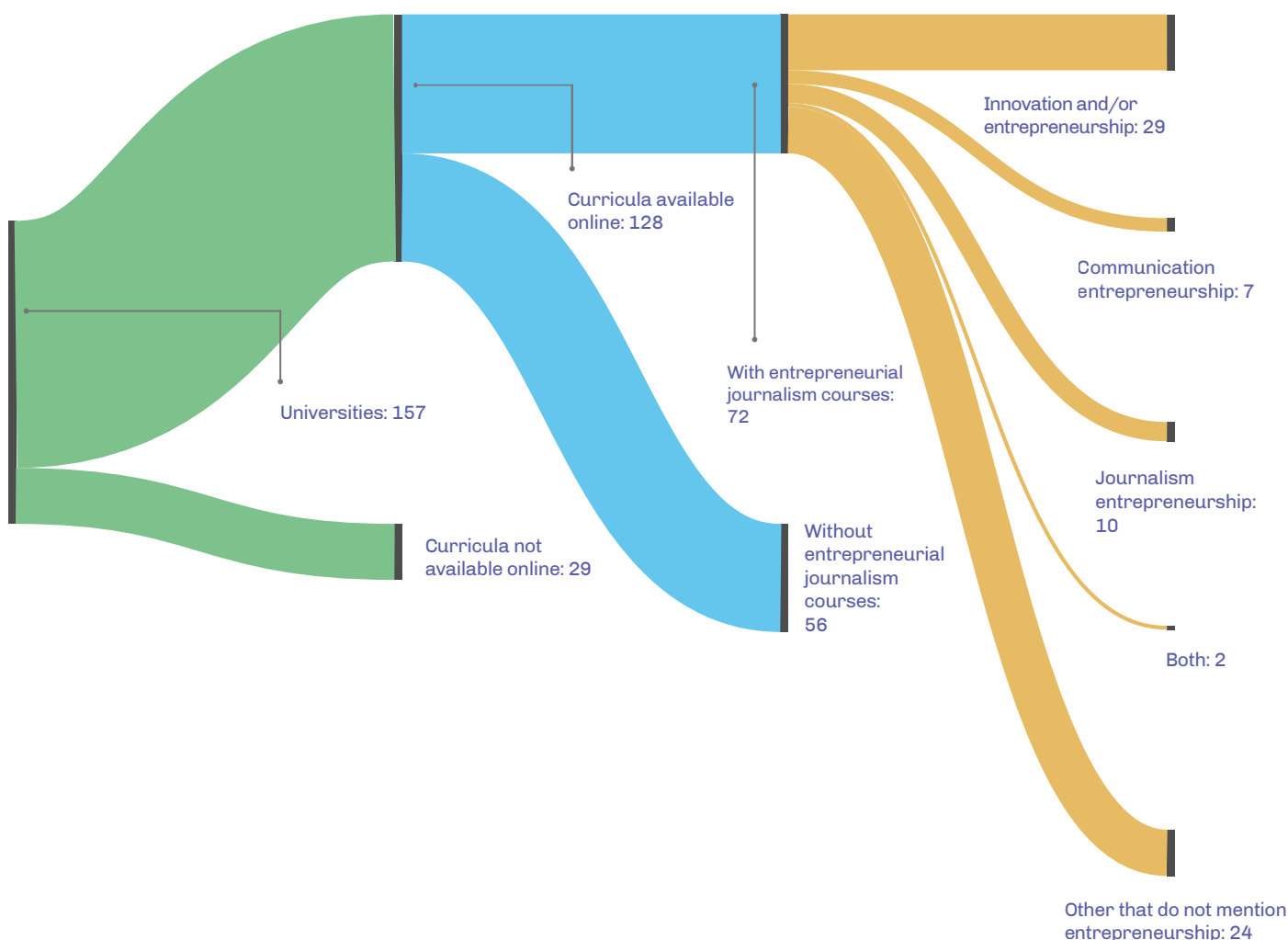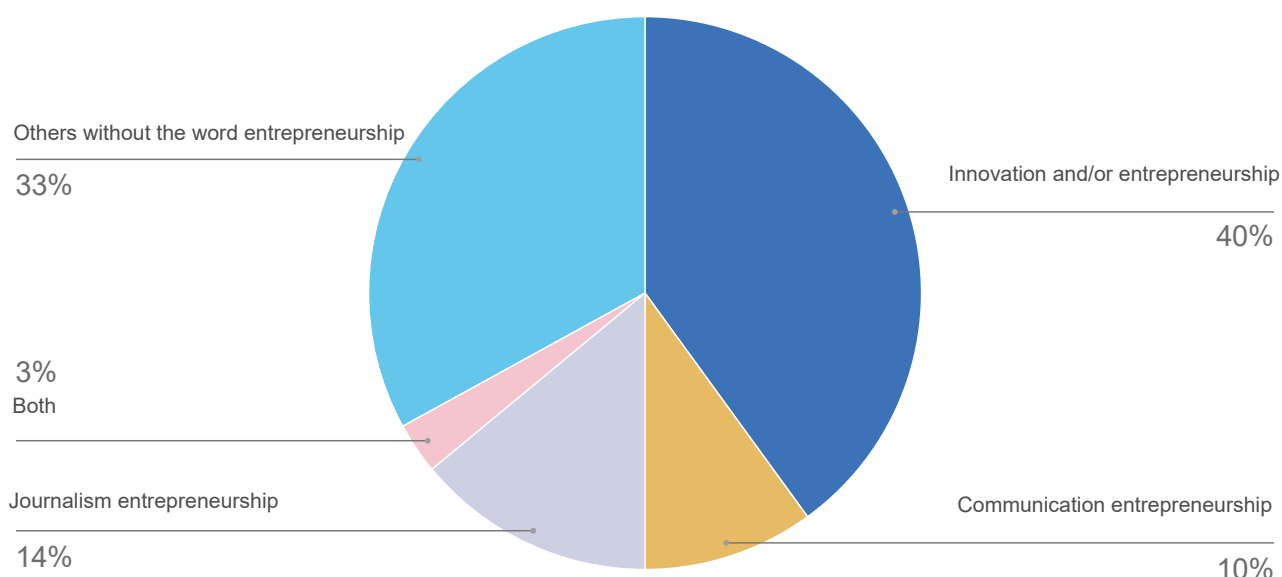
An analysis of university curricula

We used SembraMedia's Professors' Network to identify 157 universities across 19 countries and analyze the presence of entrepreneurial journalism courses within their curricula. 18% of the institutions do not publish their curricula online. **Of the remaining 128, only 72 (56%) include at least one course on entrepreneurial journalism.**

We found that courses receive different denominations: 40% include the word Innovation, Entrepreneurship, or both; 10% mention Communication Entrepreneurship; 14%, Journalism Entrepreneurship; 3%, Communication and Journalism Entrepreneurship; and 33% do not include the word entrepreneurship at all. That is, there are courses covering these topics with names that do not reference them

Flow analysis

Universities: 157

Curricula available online: 128

Curricula not available online: 29

With entrepreneurial journalism courses: 72

Without entrepreneurial journalism courses: 56

Innovation and/or entrepreneurship: 29

Communication entrepreneurship: 7

Journalism entrepreneurship: 10

Both: 2

Other that do not mention entrepreneurship: 24

Entrepreneurship-related coursess – percentage:

Others without the word entrepreneurship

33%

3%
Both

Journalism entrepreneurship

14%

Innovation and/or entrepreneurship

40%

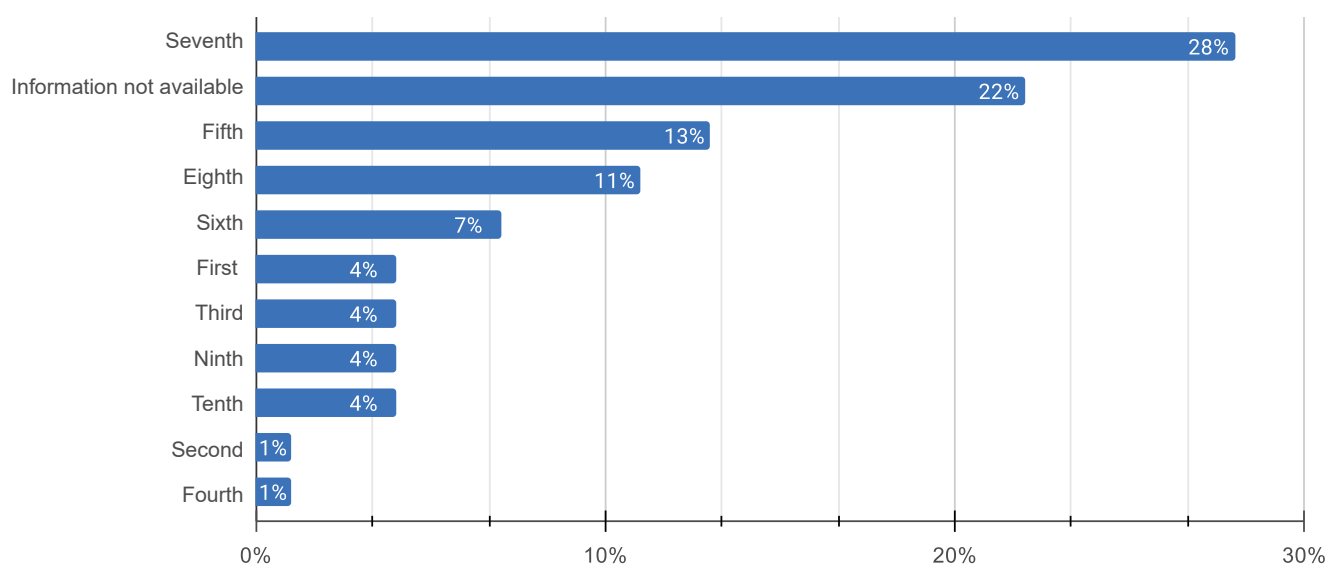Communication entrepreneurship

10%

We examined their curricula to determine the stage of the course of studies when entrepreneurial subjects are taught. **The most popular semesters for these courses were the seventh, the fifth, and the eighth, in that order.** Nearly 22% of the institutions surveyed do not specify this information.

Semester when the courses are taught

Semester	Percentage
Seventh	28%
Information not available	22%
Fifth	13%
Eighth	11%
Sixth	7%
First	4%
Third	4%
Ninth	4%
Tenth	4%
Second	1%
Fourth	1%

Finally, we analyzed the **location of the universities that offer the highest number of courses related to entrepreneurial journalism.**

Country	Universities surveyed	Universities offering entrepreneurial journalism courses	Percentage
Mexico	28	15	54%
Colombia	19	11	58%
Argentina	33	9	27%
Ecuador	11	8	73%
Spain	13	7	54%
Peru	13	6	46%
Bolivia	15	5	33%
Chile	6	2	33%
Venezuela	4	2	50%
Panama	2	2	100%
El Salvador	2	1	50%
Honduras	2	1	50%
Puerto Rico	1	1	100%
Dominican Republic	1	1	100%
Uruguay	1	1	100%
Cuba	2	0	0%
Costa Rica	1	0	0%
Nicaragua	1	0	0%
Guatemala	1	0	0%
Total	**156**	**72**	**46%**

Recommendations

For universities

Monitor outstanding projects to ensure their continuity

The incubation phase is the most challenging for entrepreneurial students. **One out of every two professors said that no follow-up is done on students' projects after the course has ended.** Time is a factor that hinders the iterative process that is typical of entrepreneurial undertakings, as 70% of the courses last for six months (48%), four months (18%), and two months (4%). These time frames are often insufficient to revise the concepts, contexts, design methodologies, sustainability, and creation and implementation processes.

"Those of us who want to teach entrepreneurial journalism do not have many resources for this task. Universities should adjust and expand their curricula to include the management of media organizations as businesses while maintaining their independent vision and mission."

Beisys Marcano - Venezuela

Improve access to curricula and foster cross-cutting entrepreneurial skills

18% of the universities surveyed do not publish their journalism program curricula online, which is an obstacle for people interested in learning more about these degrees. 43% of them do not offer entrepreneurship courses.

Undertaking an entrepreneurial project does not end with its creation. It involves setting one's intent and working as a team to get it done—skills that universities should cultivate across the board.

"At UNIMINUTO, one of the universities where I teach, we have developed an academic plan to link entrepreneurship to various educational stages, from elective courses to the possibility of obtaining a degree in entrepreneurship."

Alejandro Lopera - Colombia

For professors

Update and create links between academia and industry

60%

Of the professors interviewed began teaching entrepreneurial journalism courses in 2018. Two out of three of these professors carry out other activities apart from teaching.

That is, some professors have focused on their academic careers, but there is a second group that has started teaching more recently and that, in addition to their academic activities, run their media organizations or work as consultants, freelance journalists, or media employees. Scholars and specialists have recently agreed that **adding health, science, trauma and mobile journalism courses to the curricula would be desirable.**

"The world is no longer static, and we should seize every opportunity to expand and enhance the content we offer to our students."

Marco Antonio Abascal - Mexico

For media support organizations

Promote local media entrepreneurs

Research reveals a rise in the number of entrepreneurial journalism professors who join universities located outside capital cities. This presents an **opportunity to develop media with local impact,** fostering loyalty and differentiation. **The analysis of our Media Directory shows that only 50% of media organizations have a local focus.** Media organizations operating within specific areas should be prioritized when distributing training, resources, funding, mentoring, etc.

Number of professors that begin teaching entrepreneurial journalism, by year and university location
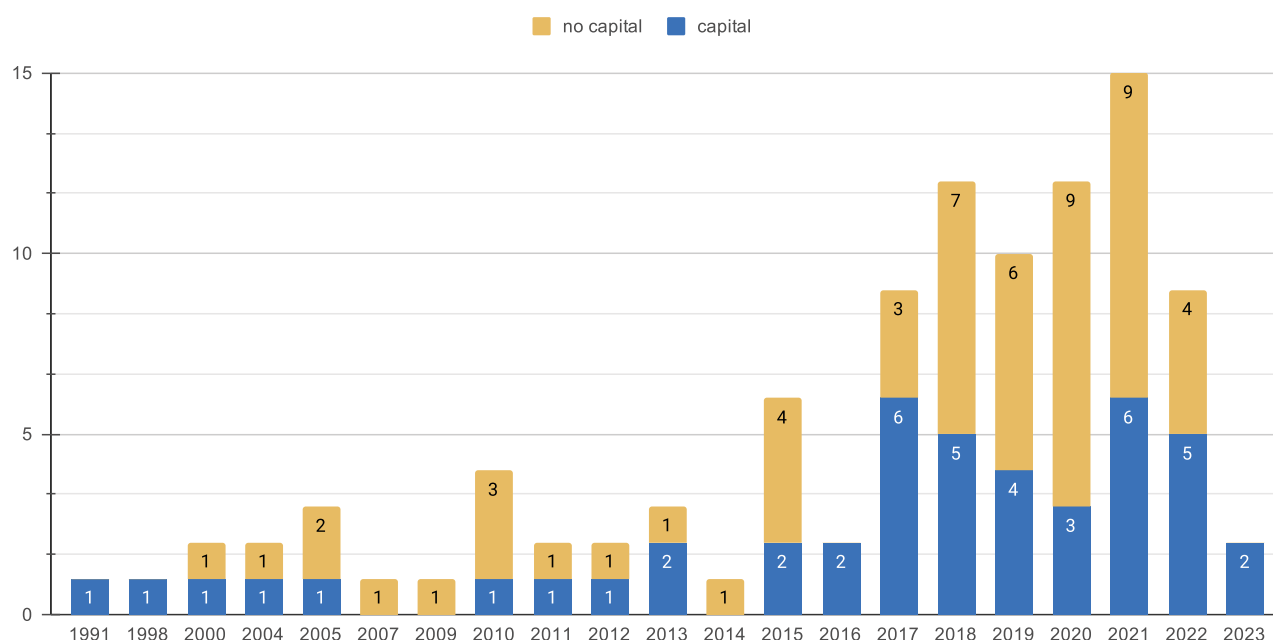
About the study

Methodology

This study was carried out with the support of UNESCO in an attempt to understand the entrepreneurial journalism ecosystem in classrooms and universities. Our research was conducted using convenience sampling, a non-probability and non-random sampling method. Participants were invited in two stages: the first group included SembraMedia Professors' Network members, and the second group was open to other professors. An online questionnaire was used to collect the information. This questionnaire was administered in April, May, and June 2023. Some countries are not represented because we have no records of professors there, or the professors did not respond to the questionnaire. The study includes Spanish-speaking Latin America and Spain, as the focus was Spanish-speaking countries. University web pages were visited between April and June 2023. Research on their curricula was conducted through their public websites.

Professors

Based on a pilot test with nine participants from seven countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Spain, Mexico, and Puerto Rico), we created a questionnaire for higher-education professors of communication and journalism programs. The questionnaire was designed to examine their entrepreneurial journalism teaching practices and some related variables.

The questionnaire comprises 15 sections with closed multiple-choice questions that explore aspects such as professional experience (years active, roles), academic background and training (years of teaching and educational level completed), experience as an entrepreneur, student perceptions and attitudes towards entrepreneurial journalism, basic characteristics of the courses (whether they are compulsory or elective, duration), and topics and methodologies, among others.

Following the open invitation, **we received 101 responses from professors.** From these responses, we built a database using variables that allowed us to evaluate and segment entrepreneurship courses and practices.

This research design did not aim to obtain a representative sample by age or country. We wanted at least 40% to be female professors.

The profiles of the participating professors can be found on the [interactive map.](#)

Universities

We conducted online research on the curricula of communication and journalism schools and universities in 19 Spanish-speaking countries. While the [Latin American Council for Accreditation of Training in Journalism](#) (CLAEP in the Spanish acronym) lists 23 institutions of higher education, **we included 157 schools and universities in Latin America and Spain.** Of these, 128 had published their curricula on their websites.

We analyzed the courses to determine the direct or indirect inclusion of entrepreneurship-related content, the semester in which they are taught, and the name of the institution and course, among other variables, to create a database.

All the data collected from professors and universities were entered and stored using Airtable, a data management and analysis platform. After collectively revising the information, we collected testimonials from participants to contextualize and complete the report.

Countries considered for this research

1. Mexico
2. Colombia
3. Argentina
4. Ecuador
5. Spain
6. Peru
7. Bolivia
8. Chile
9. Venezuela
10. Panama
11. El Salvador
12. Honduras
13. Puerto Rico
14. Dominican Republic
15. Uruguay
16. Cuba
17. Costa Rica
18. Nicaragua
19. Guatemala
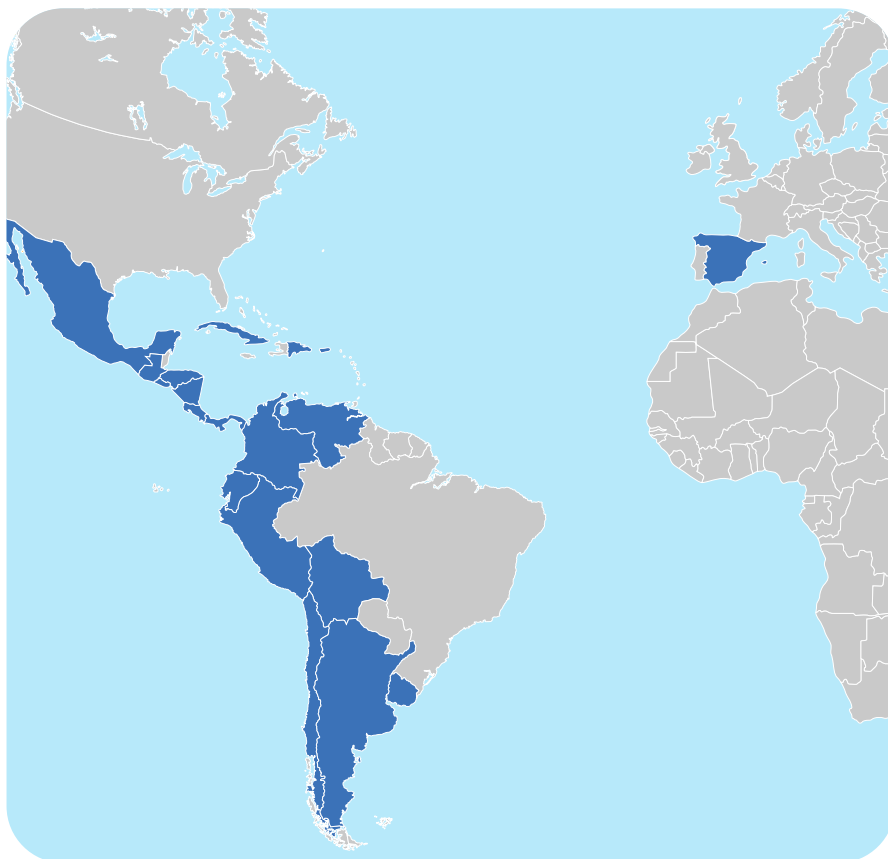
Quiénes somos

SEMBRAMEDIA

SembraMedia is a U.S. 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with offices in the U.S. and Argentina and a diverse team of consultants from more than 60 countries. Since 2015, we have helped journalists and other social entrepreneurs to build stronger media organizations with more diversified revenue sources so they can publish news with greater independence.

Our mission is to empower digital native media leaders so that they can publish news and information with independence, journalistic integrity, and a positive impact on the communities they serve. We provide journalists and other social entrepreneurs business and technical training, market intelligence, networking opportunities, consulting and financial support.

Our work is driven by a team of entrepreneurial journalists, consultants, and academics with deep knowledge of the political, economic, and media markets we work in. Our diverse team includes ambassadors who engage with a regional network of more than 1,100 digital publishers in Latin America, the U.S., and Spain.

unesco

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the body dedicated to achieving peace through international cooperation in the fields of education, science, culture, communication, and information. UNESCO programs contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out in the 2030 Agenda, approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.

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