



EFFECTIVENESS AND EQUITY
IN EDUCATION

LESSONS FROM THE PAST,
CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

FINAL REMARKS

Aim

- To identify recent trends and factors that influenced the development of education in Portugal
- To bring data and knowledge that would be helpful in creating a clear and guiding vision for the future
- To spot the areas where research and experimentation is most needed
- To present and discuss evidence that might be relevant in political decision-making and formulation of long-term strategies resilient enough to endure through various political cycles

SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE DEBATE: THE PORTUGUESE CASE

Data on the performance of Portuguese students collected over more than two decades - eight editions of PISA - make it possible to find trends in students achievement, to identify the factors associated with changes and figure out where we stand in the international context



SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE DEBATE: THE PORTUGUESE CASE



Trends in student achievement in Portugal

Progress

- Started in 2000 as one of the worst performing countries, progressed
- Until 2012 the overall improvement was mostly driven by better performances of students from all different backgrounds, either with more or with less qualified parents

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OECD average

- After 15 years, Portugal reached the OECD average
- Able to maintain overall scores aligned with the OECD average.

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- **Overall achievement level sustained by the improved qualifications of the students' parents**

How much of the trend is explained by the efficiency of the educational system or by factors of a broader and systemic nature, such as the evolution of the educational level of the population

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Decline

- In 2022, after the pandemic, results declined substantially, more than the OECD average, going back to levels of more than 10 years ago.

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Inequalities

- There is a gap in performance between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds
- Compared to other OECD countries, the more disadvantaged students perform better in Portugal than similar students in other countries
- The high prevalence of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, is a limiting factor

SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE DEBATE: THE PORTUGUESE CASE



The outlook: Uncertain

- Lack of knowledge about whether students are recovering, or not, their learning losses since the pandemic
- Before the pandemic, there were signs of a decline in performance
- School closures increased the downward trend

SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE DEBATE: THE PORTUGUESE CASE

Impact of educational reforms in Portugal

Increase of CSL age

- CSL effects are heterogeneous, with Lower-Achieving students benefiting more
- Students stay longer in school
- On average Graduation probabilities were not affected, BUT there were positive effects for some lower-achieving students
- Effects can be enhanced if accompanied by other measures targeting specific groups of students.



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VET

- The public perception is negative
 - Less demanding educational path (attainment gap)
 - Share of students not studying and not working doubles the share students in the same situation coming from general education
- BUT there are signs of change
 - VET increased the probability of secondary level completion
 - Students enter the job market earlier and the difference in wages is no longer so pronounced

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High-stake exams and teacher grading

- Courses without national exams exhibit markedly higher grades.
- The phenomenon is a widespread trend in the country
- Grade inflation is potentially problematic, undermining signaling for students, institutions, and society and impacting access to HE

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM PORTUGAL AND OTHER COUNTRIES?

Regular monitoring through a range of national and international assessments is key to monitor the quality of the system



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Equity across the pupil population
Raising literacy and numeracy outcomes
Policy measures targeted to disadvantaged students and support to higher achievers



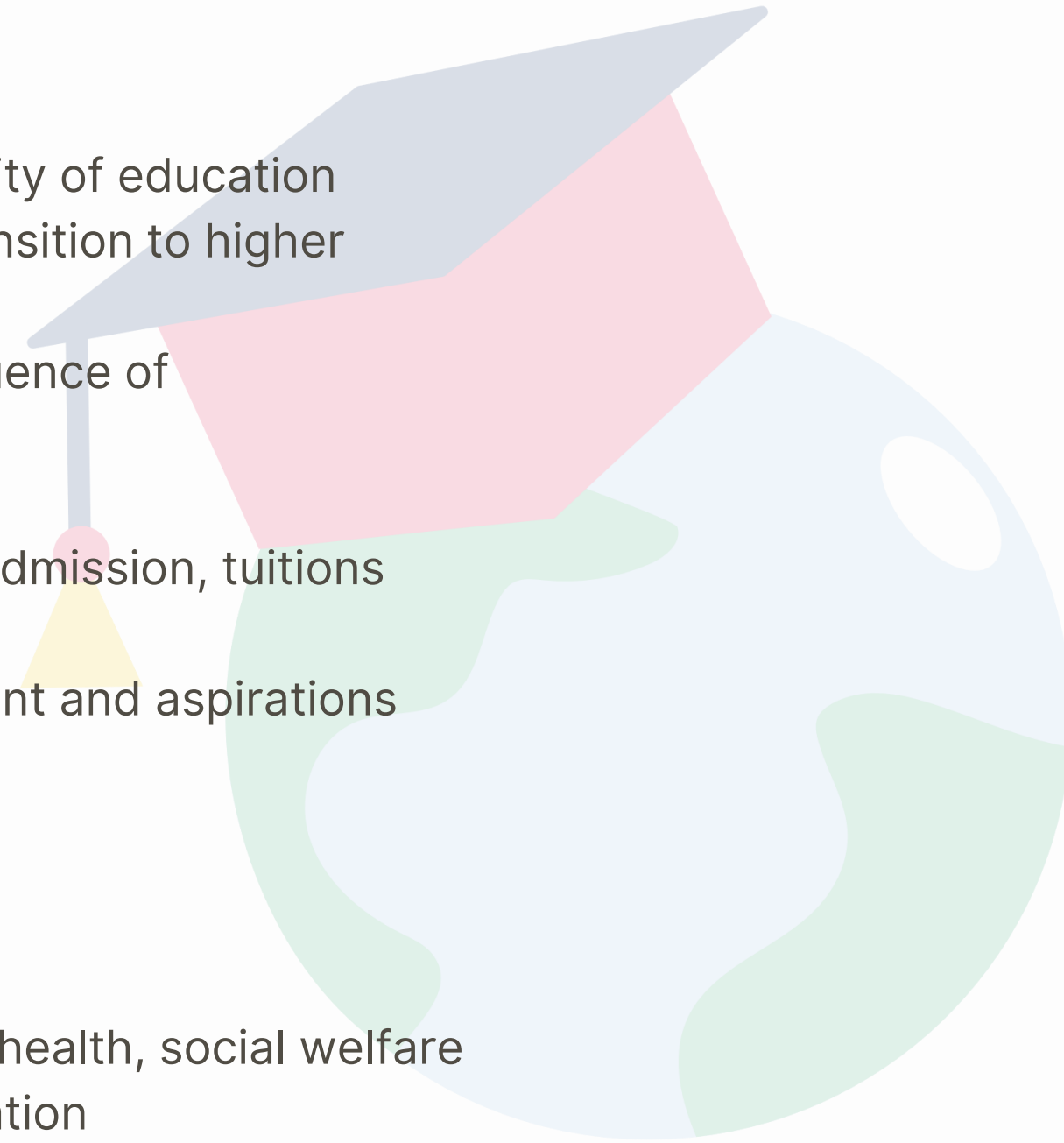
POLICY MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

01 Equity

- Equal opportunities to access quality of education across all stages, including the transition to higher education
- it is necessary to consider the influence of
 - school system features,
 - state governance
 - the higher education system (admission, tuitions and vocational tertiary)
 - the cultural capital of the student and aspirations

02 Preschool

- Quality of preschool
- Link between childcare programs, health, social welfare and female labour market participation
- Balance between investment, positive returns and potential negative effects – quality matters!



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- Anticipating the demands placed on the teaching profession and the needs of the system is essential for adapting to rapid changes
- Other professions can bring relevant knowledge, experience and examples of collaborative practices
- School leaders can support teaching, create a rewarding and healthy environment, and ensure that teachers participate in decision-making
- Policy makers should attend the specific needs of different contexts and stages of the teaching career

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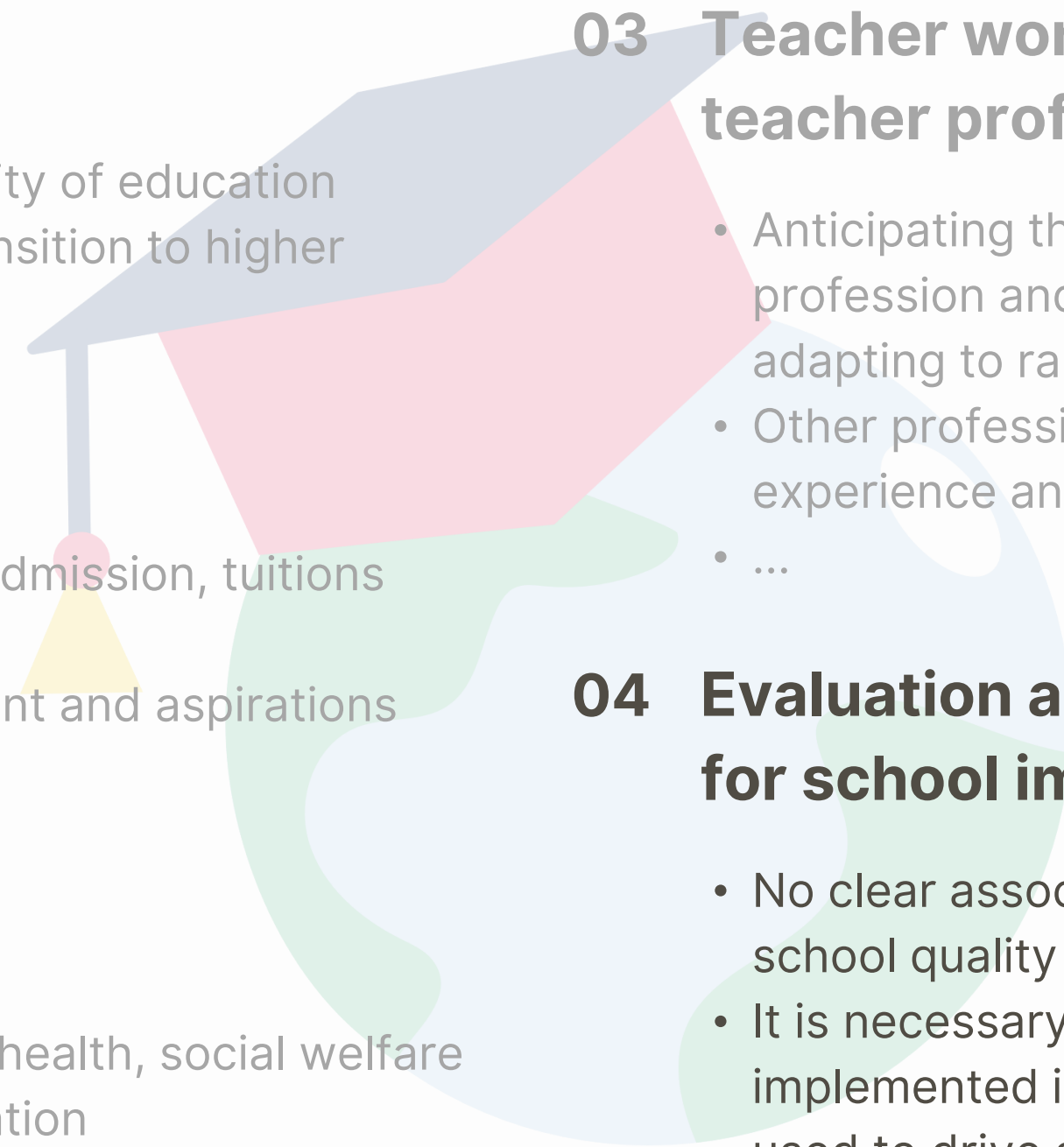
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- No clear association between an accountability regime and school quality
- It is necessary to explore how accountability systems are implemented in order to ensure that the evidence gathered is used to drive system-level improvement
- impact on students attainment and unintended negative effects can provide relevant insights to policy and practices



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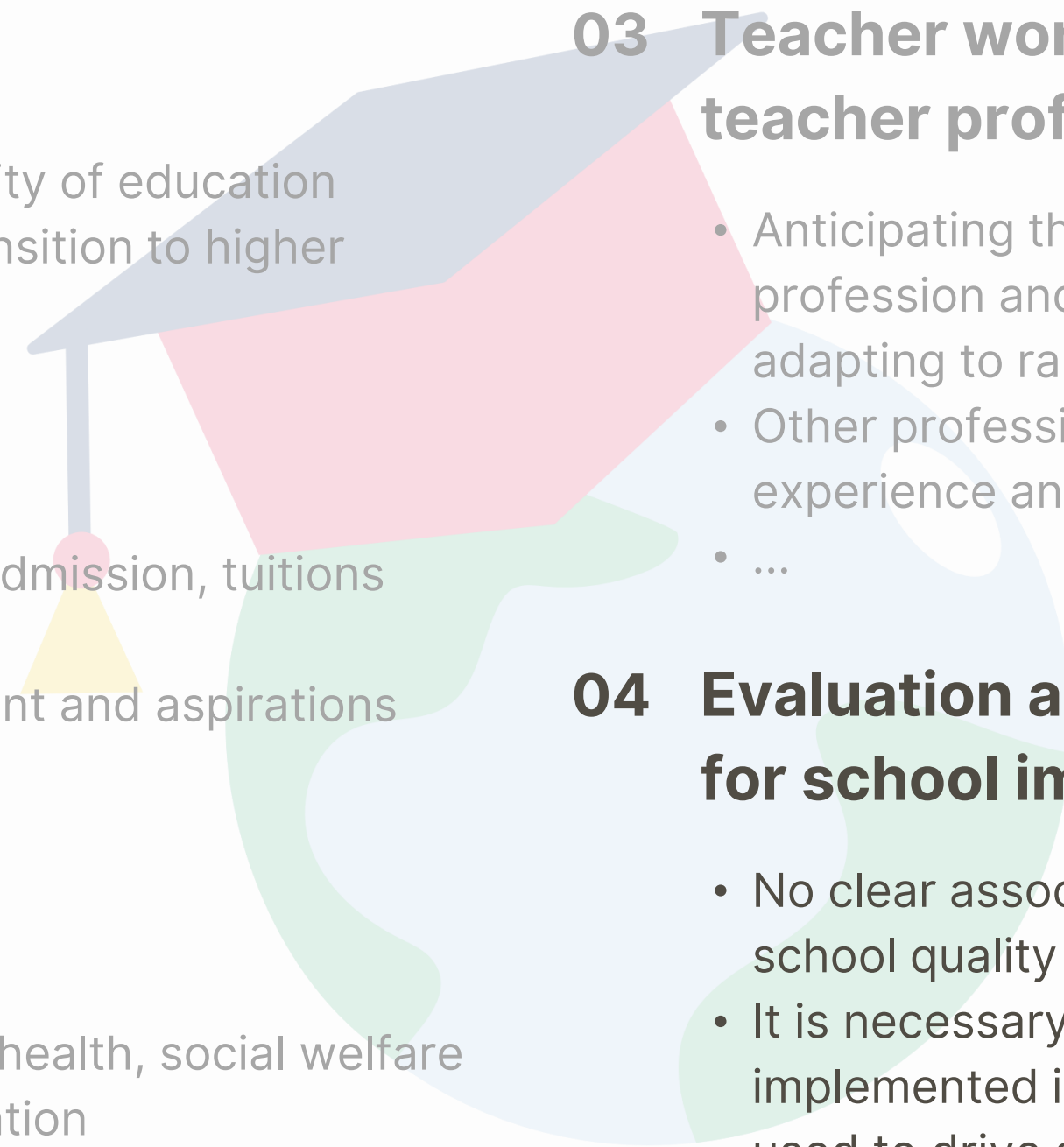
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UNDERSTANDING SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

- Curriculum coherence and curriculum control
- Data and valid interpretation
- Different levels of the educational system and the relations between them
- Relations between school and community
- Explanatory factors (global and domestic economy, culture, political structures and commitments, historical contingencies and natural environment)



LEARNING LOSS AND LEARNING RECOVERY

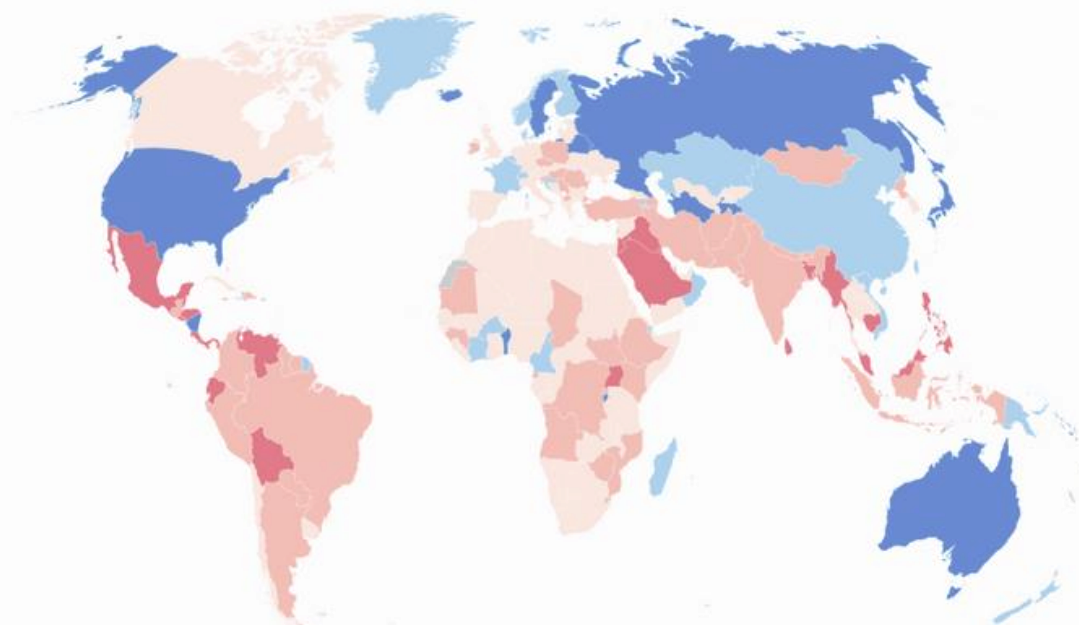
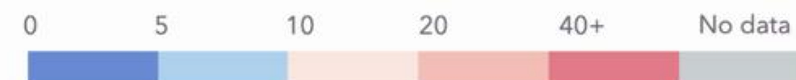
- Country studies show large learning losses that could cost this generation of students trillions of dollars in lifetime earnings.

- Efforts to recover learning have mostly fallen flat

- Test scores declined more than a year of schooling.

Class dismissed

School closures diminish learning, with developing countries facing a greater setback in lost class time.
(total duration of full school closures, in weeks*)



- Positive signs....

SUMMING UP

- Evidence base for action

- Rigorous, reliable, and comparable data that can provide a clear picture on attainment, equity and cause and effect between policy or contextual variables and outcomes
- Research: longitudinal, quasi-experimental and experimental

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HOW MANY TEACHERS HERE?

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**Lessons from the past,
challenges for the future**

**May 13 — 14
Fundação de Serralves
Porto**

THANK YOU

Website <https://evento.edulog.pt/>