



Advancing equity through Schools2030:
How might a focus on the whole child
advance equitable learning for all?

CIES Conference 2023
Monday 20th February 2023

Ellen Smith, Schools2030 Global Research Officer



WHAT

Schools2030 is a ten-year participatory learning improvement programme based in 1000 government schools and community learning centres across ten countries.





Our goal is to raise holistic learning outcomes and to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values they need to thrive and to contribute to their communities.

OUR FOOTPRINT





Using the principles of human-centred design and focusing on the key transition years of ages 5, 10 and 15 years old, Schools2030 supports teachers and students to design and implement education innovations.

These **low-cost** and **scaleable innovations** will inform and transform education systems to improve holistic learning outcomes for the most marginalised learners worldwide.

In this way, Schools2030 is putting **teachers**, **students** and **schools** at the heart of achieving the UN's Sustainable Education Goal 4 – ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.



Our Three-Step process for supporting school-driven innovations for Holistic Learning



STEP ONE: **ASSESS**

Schools2030 supports teachers to determine the holistic learning levels of their students with simple and contextualised assessment tools.



STEP TWO: **INNOVATE**

Schools2030 supports teachers to create 'micro-innovations' through Human-Centred Design. This cyclical process moves through the stages of design, test, reflect and iterate.



STEP THREE: **SHOWCASE**

Schools2030 supports teachers to showcase 1000 innovations each year at national and global forums to inspire systems-level change for improving quality learning at scale.



STEP 1: ASSESS

Our approach to assessment is **context-driven**: in collaboration with our National Advisory Committees, Schools2030 has selected three holistic learning domains – in addition to literacy and numeracy – per age group that align to the curricular and national education priorities for each country.



A group of young women wearing hijabs and dark clothing are holding hands in a circle outdoors. They are standing on a dirt path with trees in the background. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The word "RESEARCH" is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image. Below the word is a short, thick white horizontal line.

RESEARCH



Schools2030 Global Research Partners

2021 cohort:

1. Catalysing locally-rooted education solutions to improve holistic learning outcomes in Pakistan and Kenya – *ITA Pakistan and Zizi Afrique*
2. Exploring school-based education stakeholders' perspectives on quality of education in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in the context of School 2030 initiative - *Nazarbayev University and OISE-University of Toronto*
3. Data Must Speak about Positive Deviant Approaches to Learning in Tanzania – *UNICEF Innocenti*
4. The effect of common attributes of Design Thinking and Play-based teaching approaches on raising holistic learning outcomes at Primary school level in Tanzania - *University of Dar es Salaam, University of Notre Dame and Right To Play International*
5. The Development of Picture Comprehension: Improving Learning Materials and Assessment Tools in Global Contexts - *University of California, Berkeley*
6. Helping Teachers Reduce Inequality in Education - *University of Amsterdam, Yale-NUS College and University of Texas at Austin*

2022 cohort:

1. Action research and equity: effects on innovative school environments – *University of São Paulo*
2. Holistic learning for SEND students in Ugandan primary schools - *Open Development & Education*
3. Mixed-Methods Research to Develop a Values-Alignment Approach for Holistic, Growth-Oriented Teaching Practices in Pakistan – *University of Texas at Austin & World Bank*



Schools2030 Global Research Partners

2021 cohort:

1. Catalysing locally-rooted education solutions to improve holistic learning outcomes in Pakistan and Kenya – *Saba Saeed, ITA Pakistan and Agatha Kimani, Zizi Afrique*
2. Exploring school-based education stakeholders' perspectives on quality of education in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in the context of School 2030 initiative - *Dr Duishonkul Shamatov, Dr Mir Afzal Tajik, Nazarbayev University*
3. Data Must Speak about Positive Deviant Approaches to Learning in Tanzania – *UNICEF Innocenti*
4. The effect of common attributes of Design Thinking and Play-based teaching approaches on raising holistic learning outcomes at Primary school level in Tanzania - *University of Dar es Salaam, University of Notre Dame and Right To Play International*
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A blue-tinted photograph of a teacher and two students in a library. The teacher, a man with glasses, is leaning over a table, pointing at a book. Two students, a girl and a boy, are sitting at the table, looking at the book. The background shows bookshelves filled with books.

Key questions:

1. What is meant by quality, holistic education in the contexts studied?
2. How are holistic skills defined by different stakeholders?
3. How might we advance equity through a focus on holistic skills development?

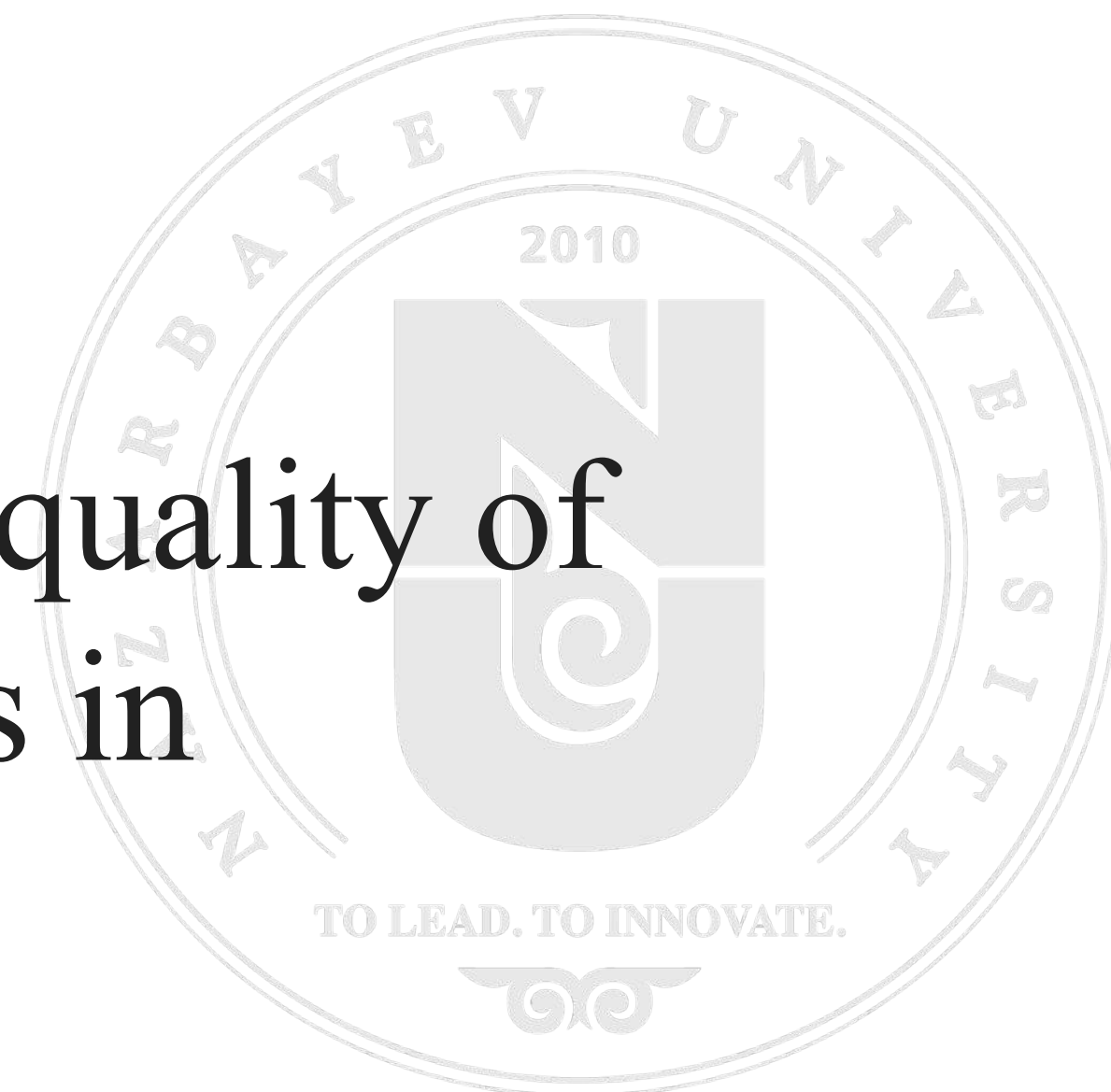
Exploring School-based Education Stakeholders' Perspectives on Quality of Education in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in the Context of School 2030 Initiative



NAZARBAYEV
UNIVERSITY

20 February 2023

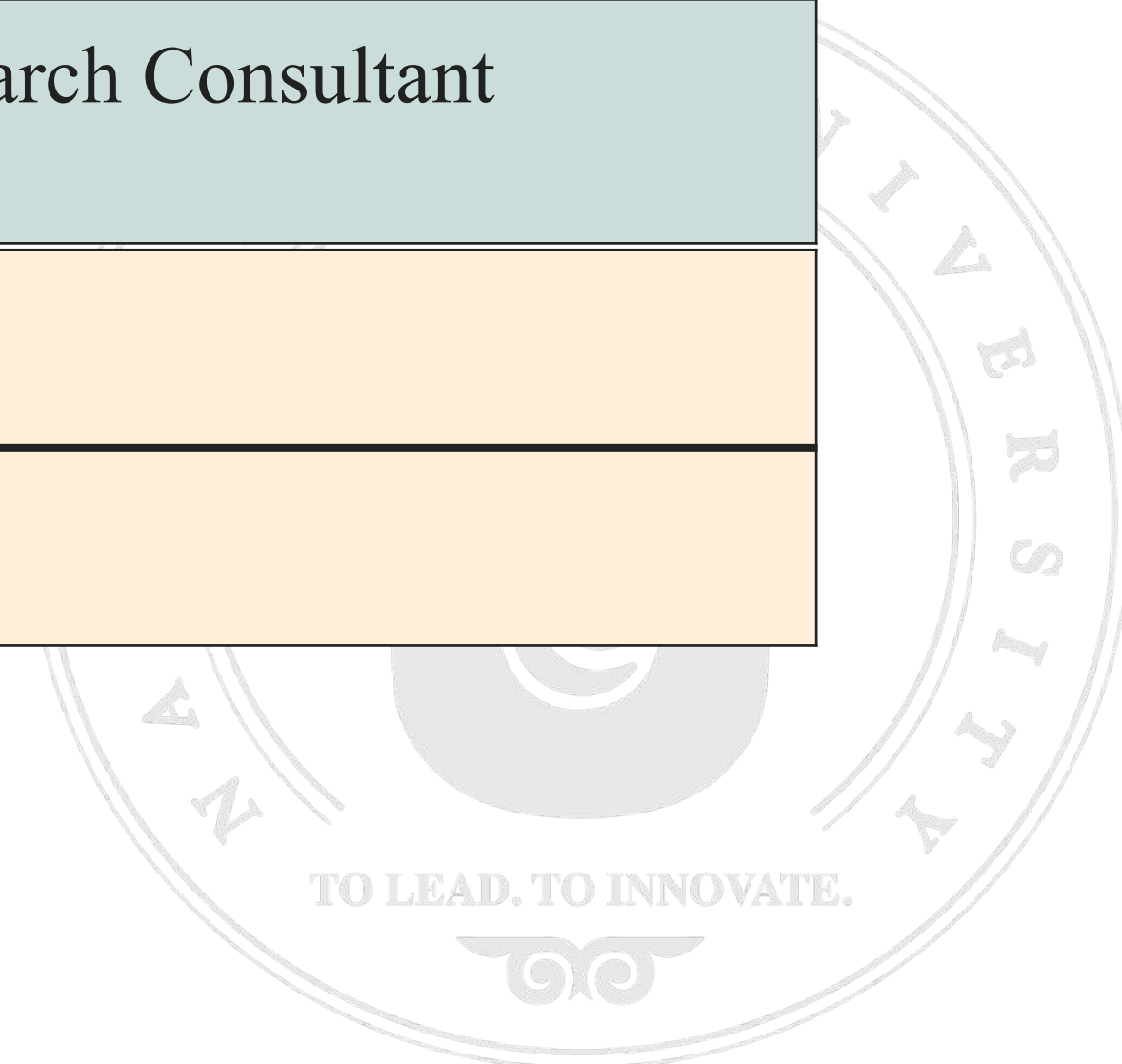
- Education quality has always been a contested concept, with no universally accepted standard definition.
- Education is a complex system embedded in a political, socio-cultural and economic context.
- This two-year research project seeks to understand quality of education from the perspectives of key stakeholders in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.



- This project is funded, managed, & implemented by:
 - * Jacobs Foundation
 - * Aga Khan Foundation
 - * Nazarbayev University in collaboration with researchers from University of Toronto, Canada, and Coventry University, UK.



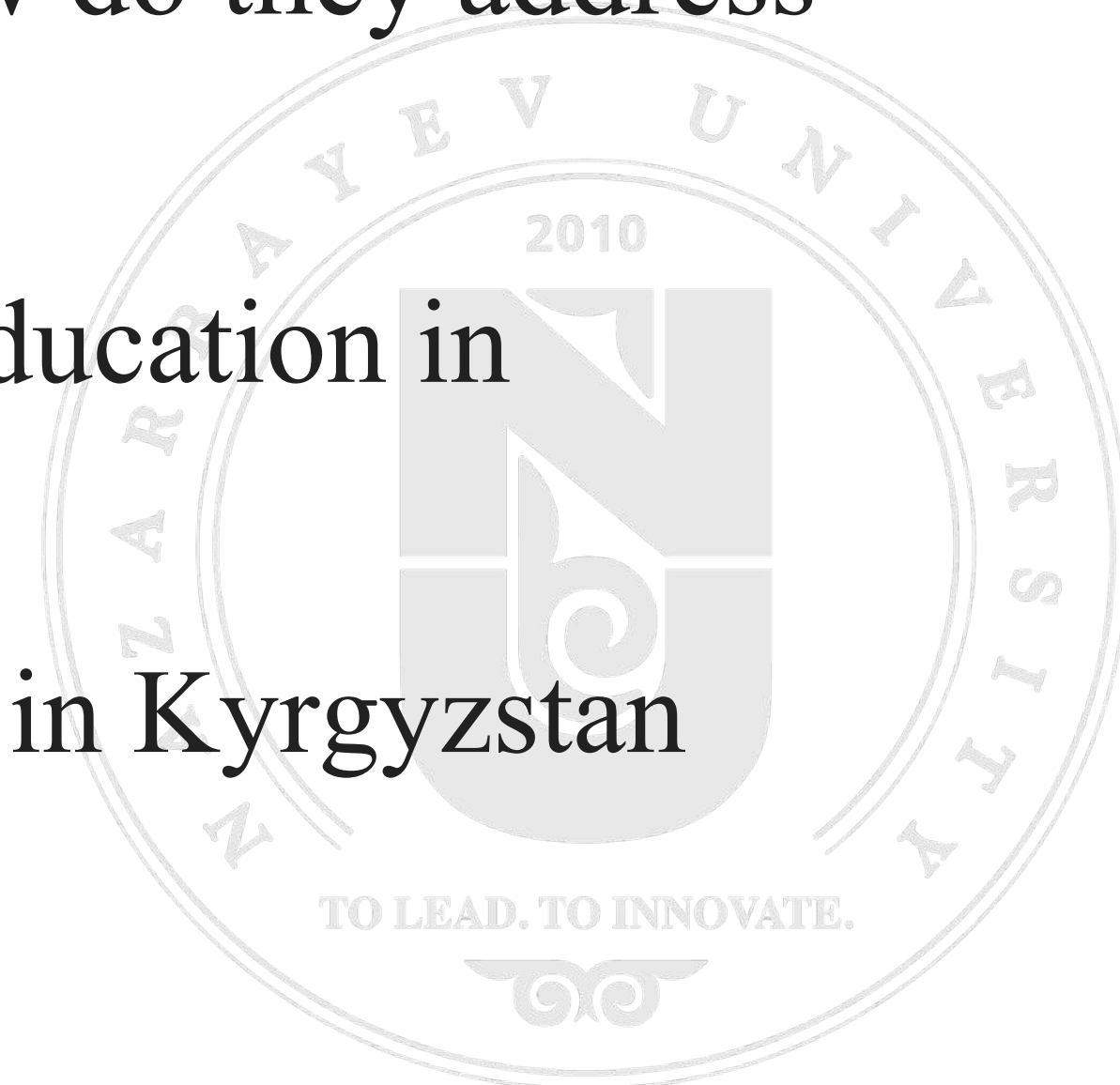
#	Name	Designation	Affiliation	Role in this Project
1	Duishon Shamatov	Associate Professor	Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan	PI
2	Mir Afzal Tajik	Associate Professor	Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan	Co-PI
3	Sarfarozi Niyozov	Associate Professor	University of Toronto, Canada	Senior Research Consultant
4	Stephen Bahry	Lecturer	University of Toronto, Canada	Research Consultant
5	Mehmet Karakush	Assistant Professor	Coventry University, UK	Research Consultant
6	Project Manager	1 Part-time project manager based at Nazarbayev University		
7	Research Assistants	1 RA each in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan		



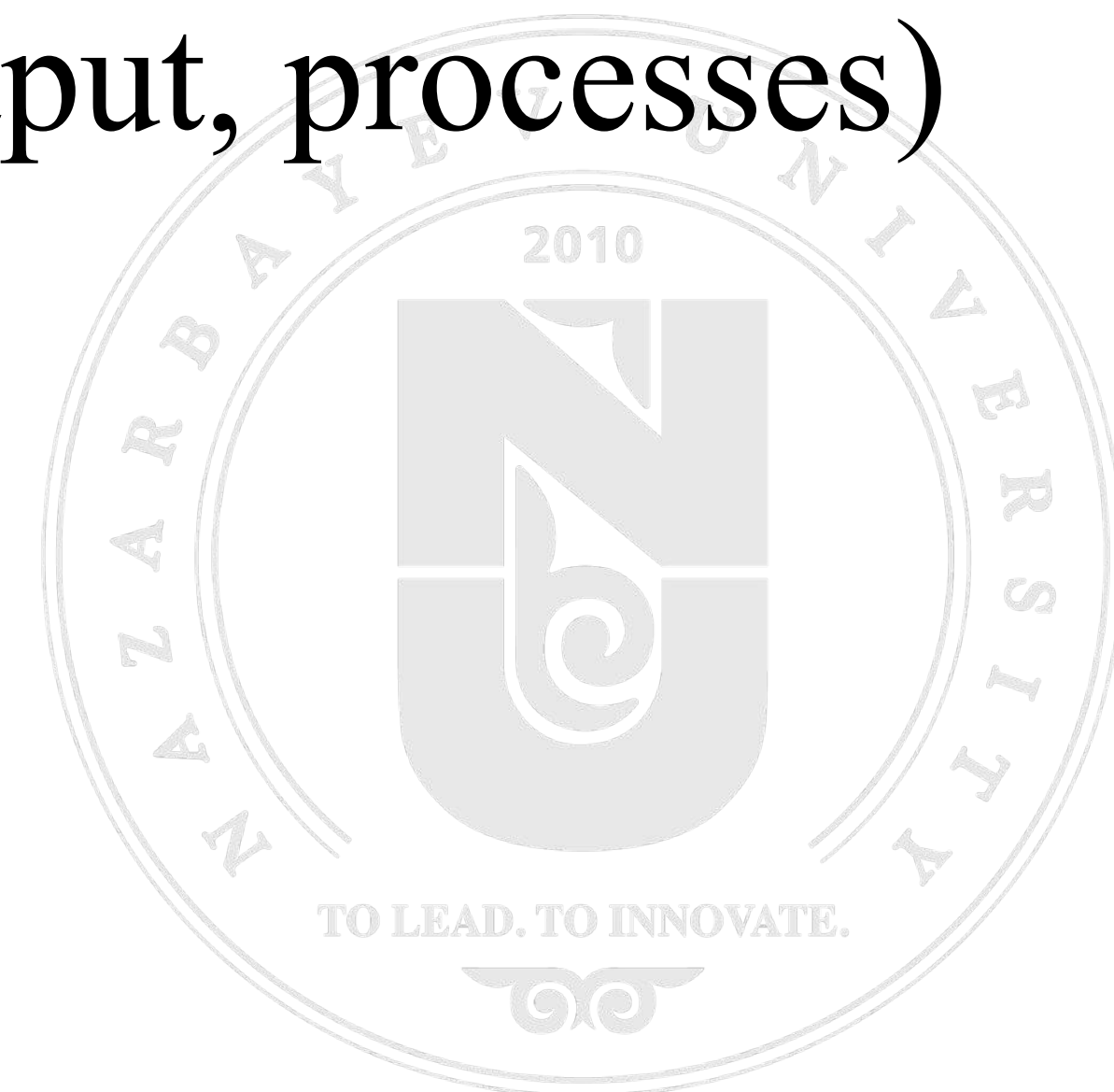
- The purpose of our study is to identify and generate classroom and school based effective, sustainable, culturally relevant and contextually workable ideas and practices around quality of education, so as to change the paradigms of thinking on how sustainable, workable and replicable solutions can be developed in countries like Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.
- The study will help develop evidence-based, actionable, and contextually relevant strategies to improve holistic development of children and young people through genuine commitment and meaningful engagement/partnerships among key stakeholders



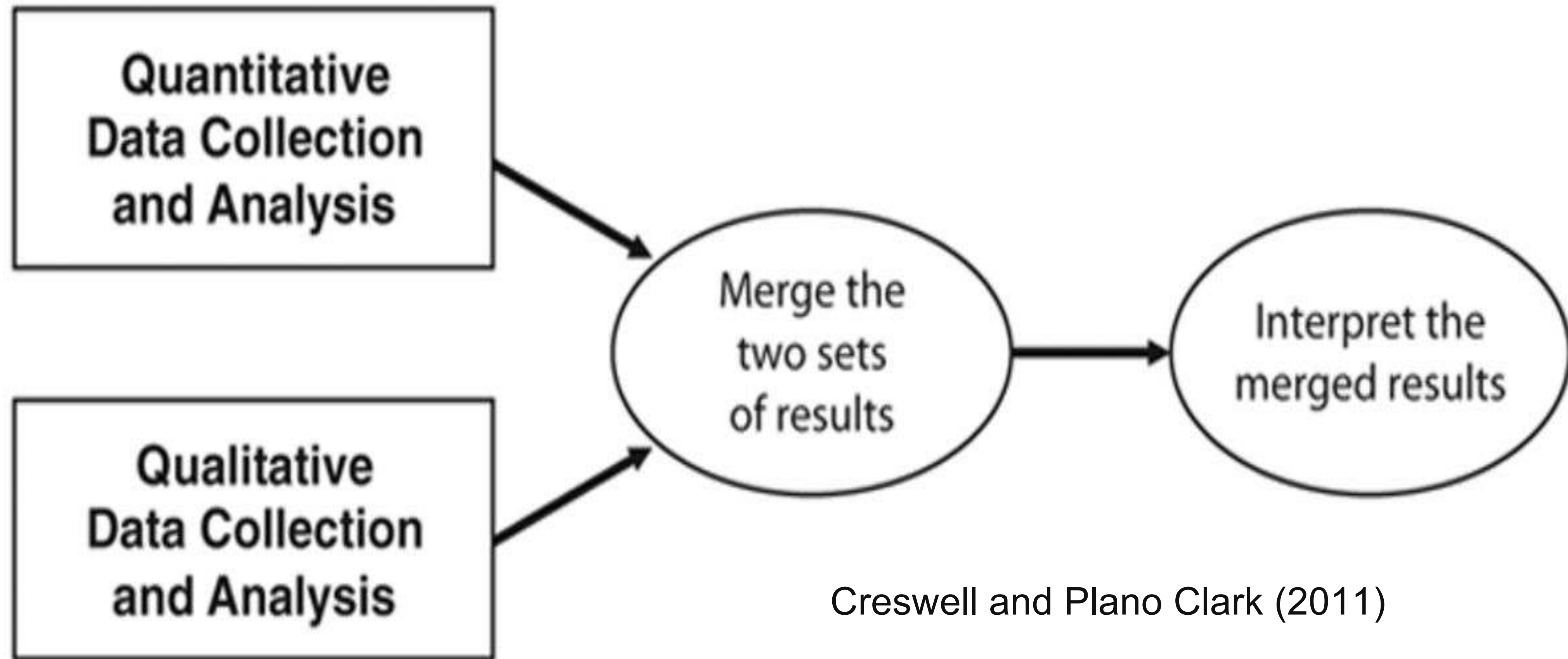
1. What are the stakeholders' conceptions of quality of education?
2. What teaching and learning strategies are used to achieve the quality of education?
3. What opportunities, resources, and support are available to these school leaders and teachers to achieve the perceived quality of education in their schools?
4. What issues and challenges do these school leaders, teachers, and students face in achieving the perceived quality of education in their schools? How do they address them?
5. How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected the delivery of quality education in schools in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan?
6. What recommendations can be made to enhance education quality in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan's schools?



- Human capital, human right and social justice approaches to quality of education as a theoretical lens.
- Tikly (2011) and UNESCO (2005) to explore stakeholders' conceptions of education quality (input, context, output, processes)
- Mixed-method research design



Convergent parallel design



Creswell and Plano Clark (2011)

- 15 schools (75 Survey participants, 5-6 interviews and FG at each school).
- Interviews with MoES, regional education managers, and AKF education team



. **Three regions:**

◦ **Chuy**

◦ **Naryn**

◦ **Osh**

. **5 schools in each region**



- Negotiated with MOES and gained permission in March of 2022
- Gained access to sites and schools in March-April of 2022
- Collected data in three regions in April-May 2022
- Preliminary analysis and interpretation June to Dec 2022
- Writing report spring of 2023
- Dissemination and capacity building in spring and summer of 2023



Surveys

Participants	Number
Parents	253
Teachers	293
Students	324
Total	870

Interviews

	Individual Interviews	FGD	Total
Quantity	22	39	61
Minutes	609	891	1500



Female Participants	Male Participants
70.7%	29.3%

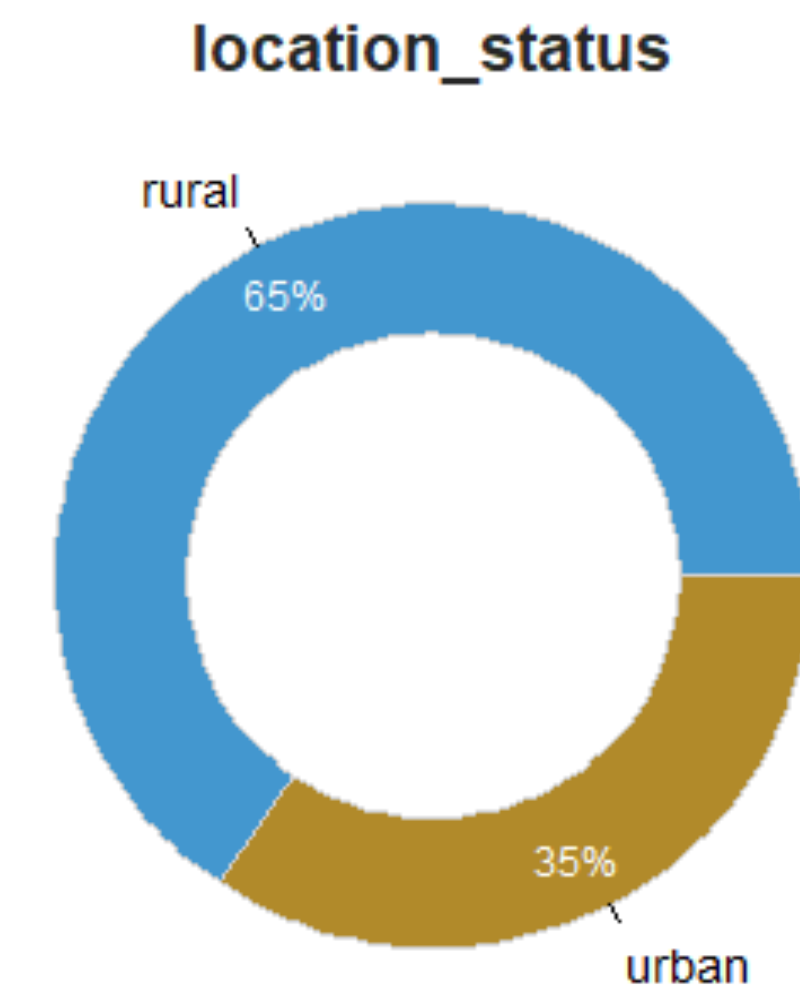
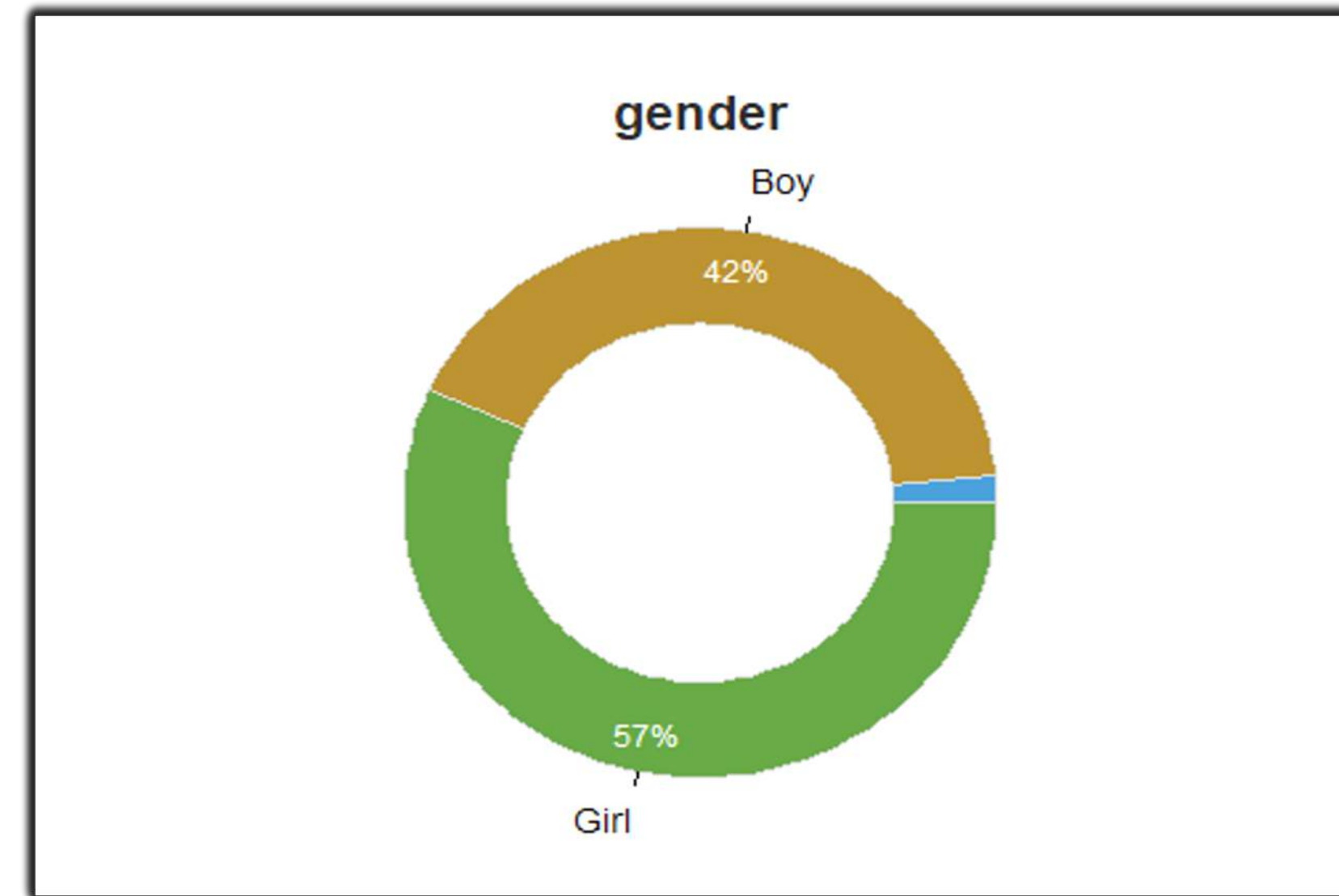
Study in Tajikistan



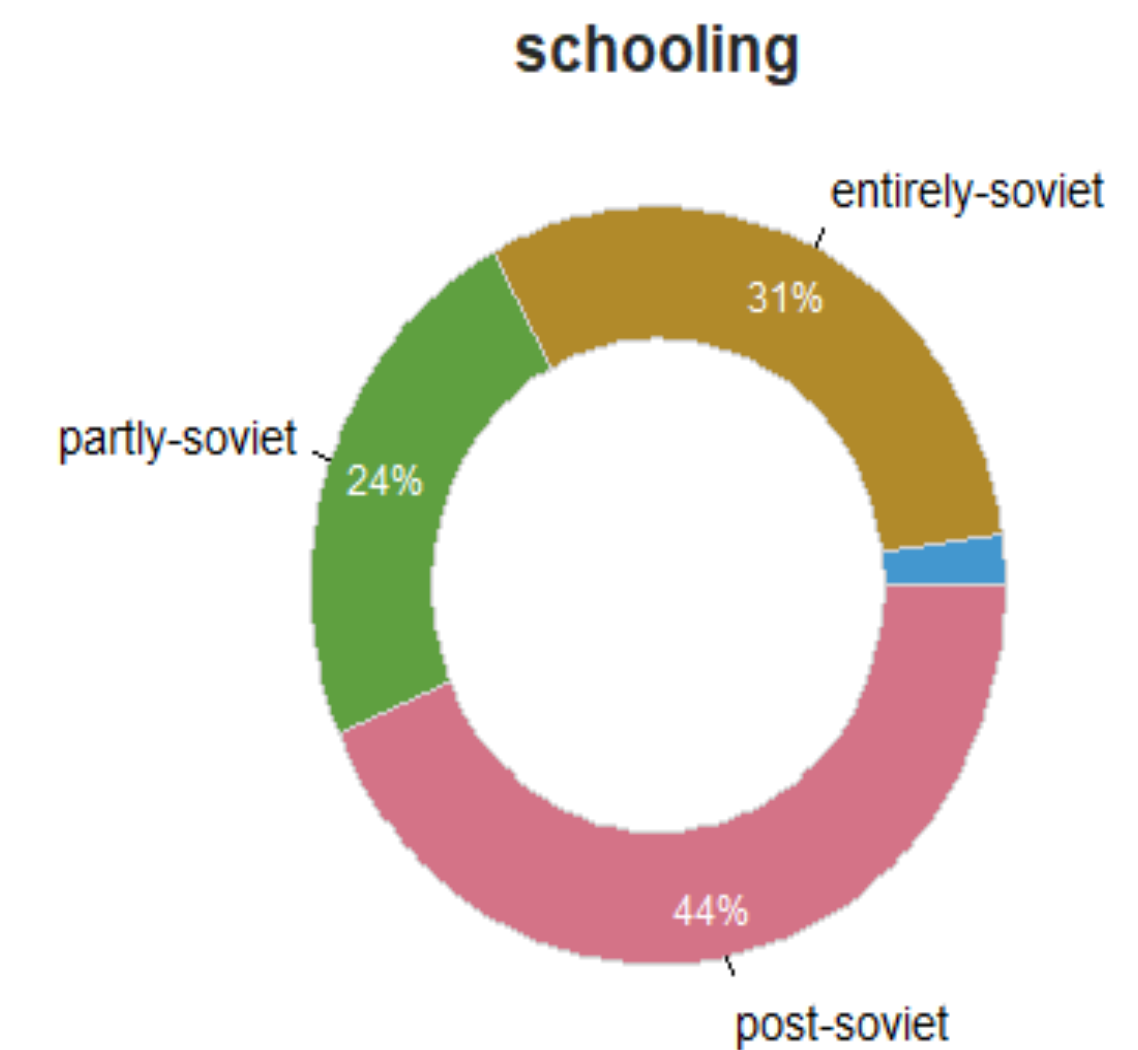
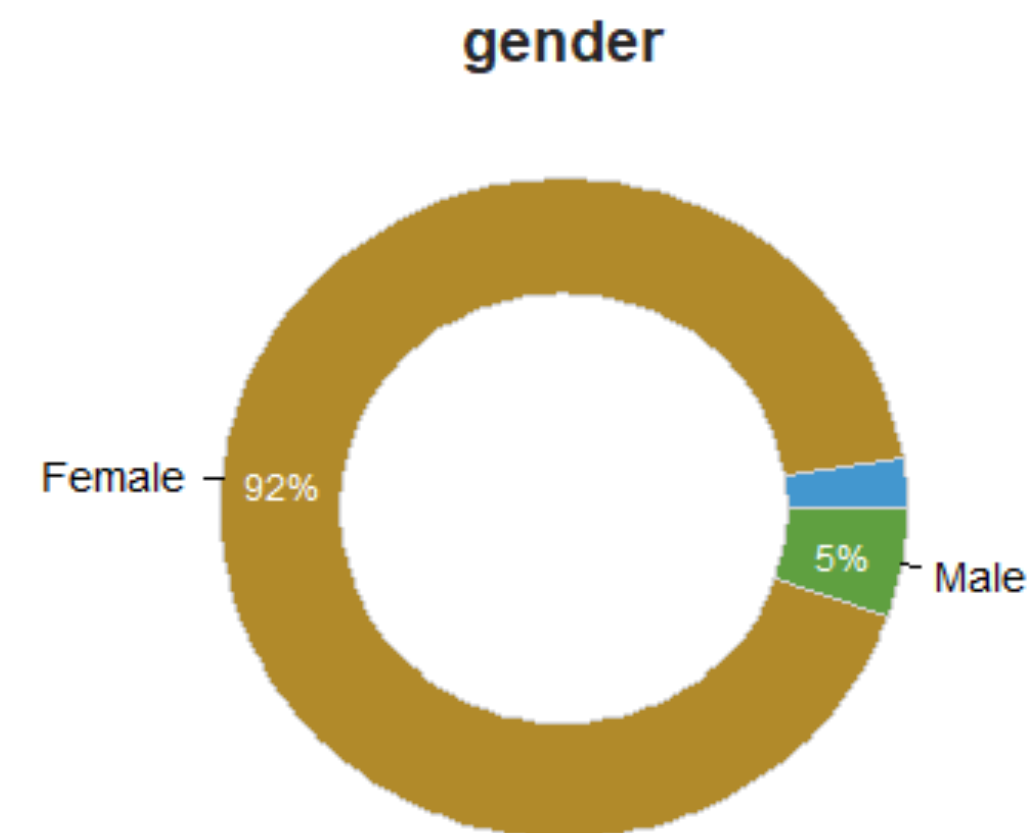
- From March 2022, regular contact/engagement with education authorities (RTTI and Academy of Education) to get permission
- Had several meetings with education authorities
- Got their feedback on our research instruments and made major revisions (context-sensitive)
- Did not receive approval for our study
- Modify and revise our research methodology in Tajikistan



- STUDENTS



- TEACHERS



- Growing realization among key stakeholders to improve education quality and reduce inequalities in provision of education access and quality
- Schools, communities, and government desire to improve education quality
- The Ministry of Education is committed to support change and research that could lead to enhance education quality for all



- Quality of education is linked to only cognitive domain measured by students' marks in national level tests and Olympiads
- No importance given to other domains of a child's holistic development, especially by parents (growing competitions among schools...)



- The schools supported by AKF (Schools2030; Reading program etc.) and other organizations seem to have more enabling environment, teamwork, resources, and stronger partnerships with parents & communities as compared to other schools

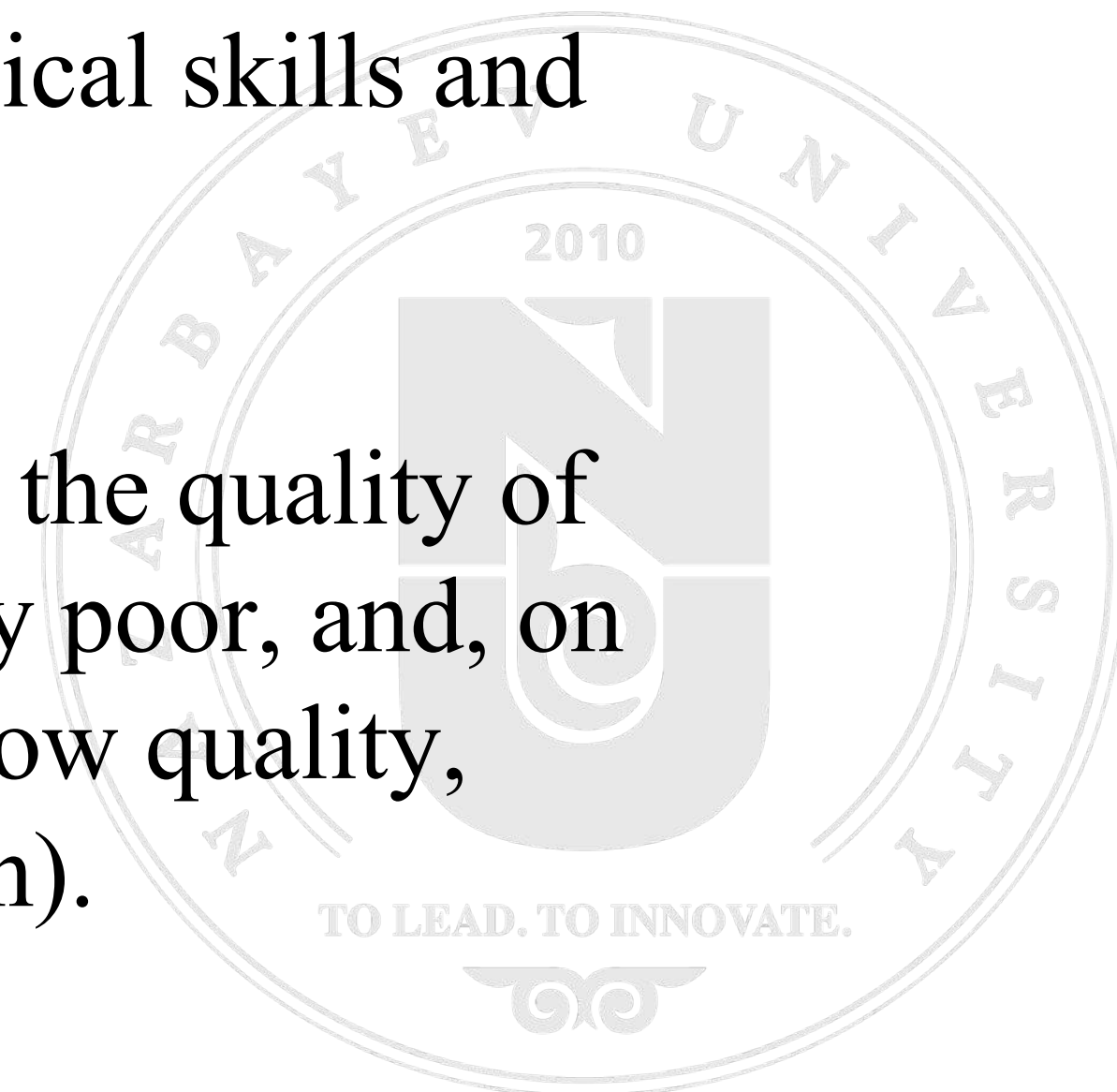


School Leaders' Voices

“Teaching, unfortunately, is not the career of first choice for many teachers. Therefore, bright graduates join other professions and those who could not get any other jobs end up doing teaching. These teachers lack not only subject content knowledge & teaching skills but also motivation” (Principal Alai Region)

“We have both old and young teachers. Old teachers closer to retirement have no desire to change and cooperate and young teachers lack experience, pedagogical skills and leadership skills” (Vice-Principal Naryn Region)

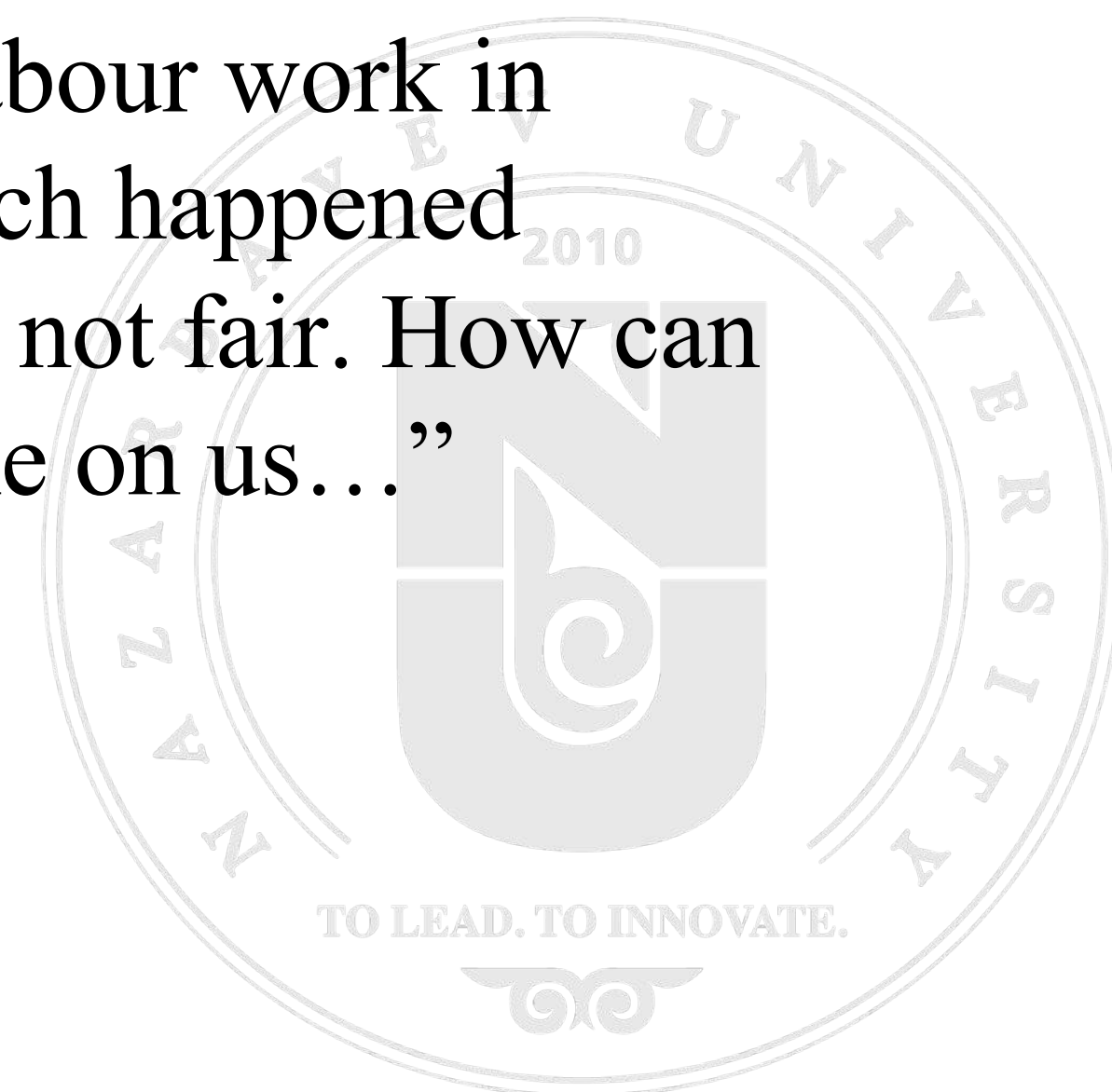
“Teacher quality has declined over the last 10 years. On the one hand, the quality of graduates who get admission to Pedagogical Universities (PUs) is very poor, and, on the other hand, the quality of training provided by the PUs is of very low quality, lacking practical teaching and research skills”. (Principal Chuy Region).



Teachers' Voices

“Majority of our students come from low socio-economic backgrounds. Their parents are usually away to Russia for labour work and there are no adults to take care of these children at home. These students, especially the teenagers, get involved in social issues which badly affect their learning” (Teacher from Alai Region)

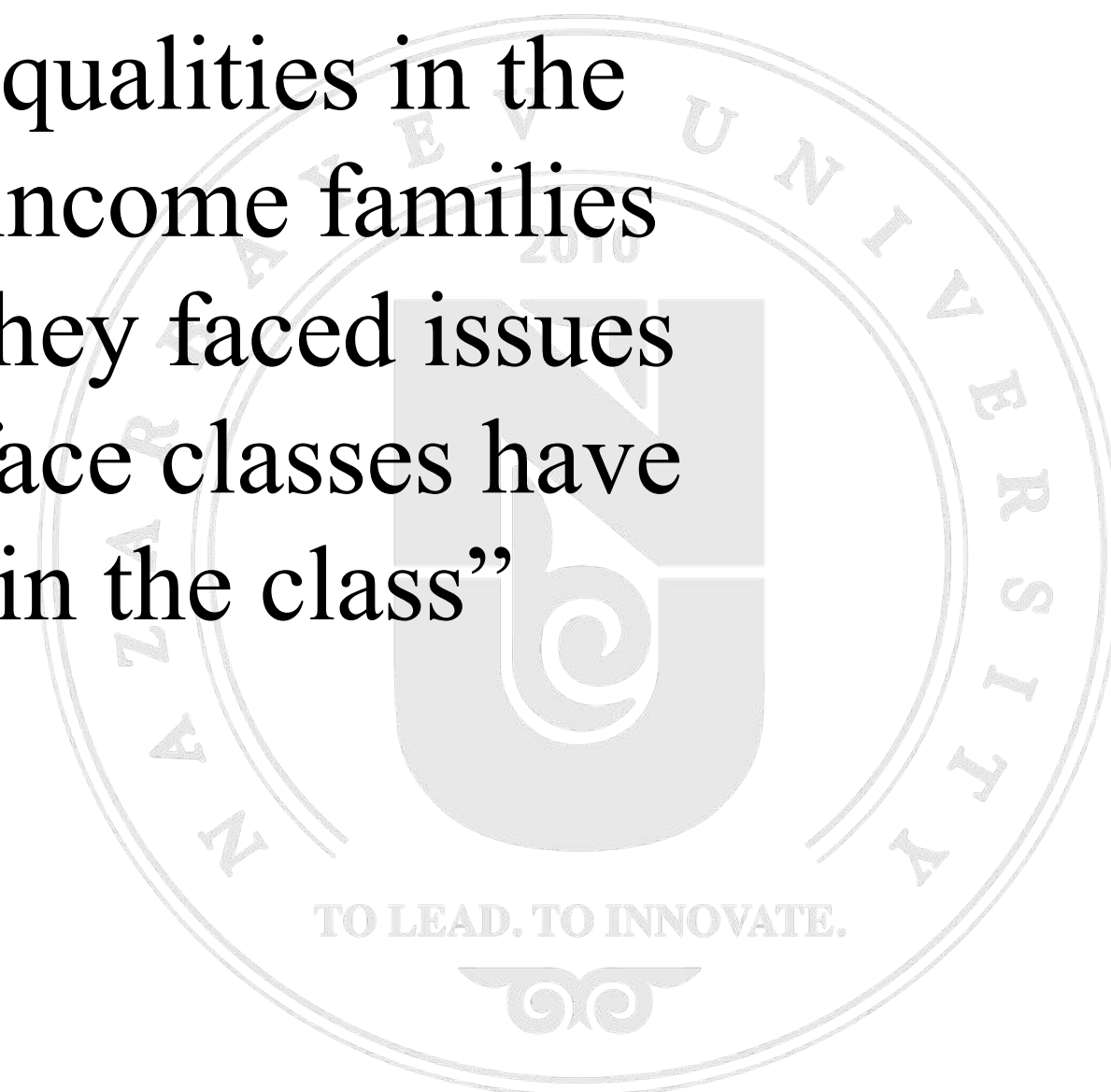
“Once a 9-grader committed suicide and another student got pregnant. Both children had no adult at home to take care of them. Their parents were doing labour work in Russia. The school management was punished for these incidents which happened outside the school hours. Teachers were also blamed for these. This is not fair. How can we control things that happen at home. The authorities put every blame on us...” (FG Teachers in Naryn Region)



Teachers' Voices

“Mental health issues and suicidal tendencies are common among teenagers from low socio-economic backgrounds in the country. Honestly, we [teachers] are afraid of giving a ‘Fail’ grade to a student who actually fails in the exam. We are concerned about the vulnerable mental state of students in certain age and background” (Teacher from Naryn Region).

“Covid-19 pandemic has further lowered the quality and increased inequalities in the public sector schools. During the pandemic, many students from low-income families could not afford to have laptop or iPad or smartphones and therefore they faced issues in attending online classes. Another problem is that although face-to-face classes have started, students are attached to their mobilephones and get distracted in the class” (Teacher from Chuy Region).

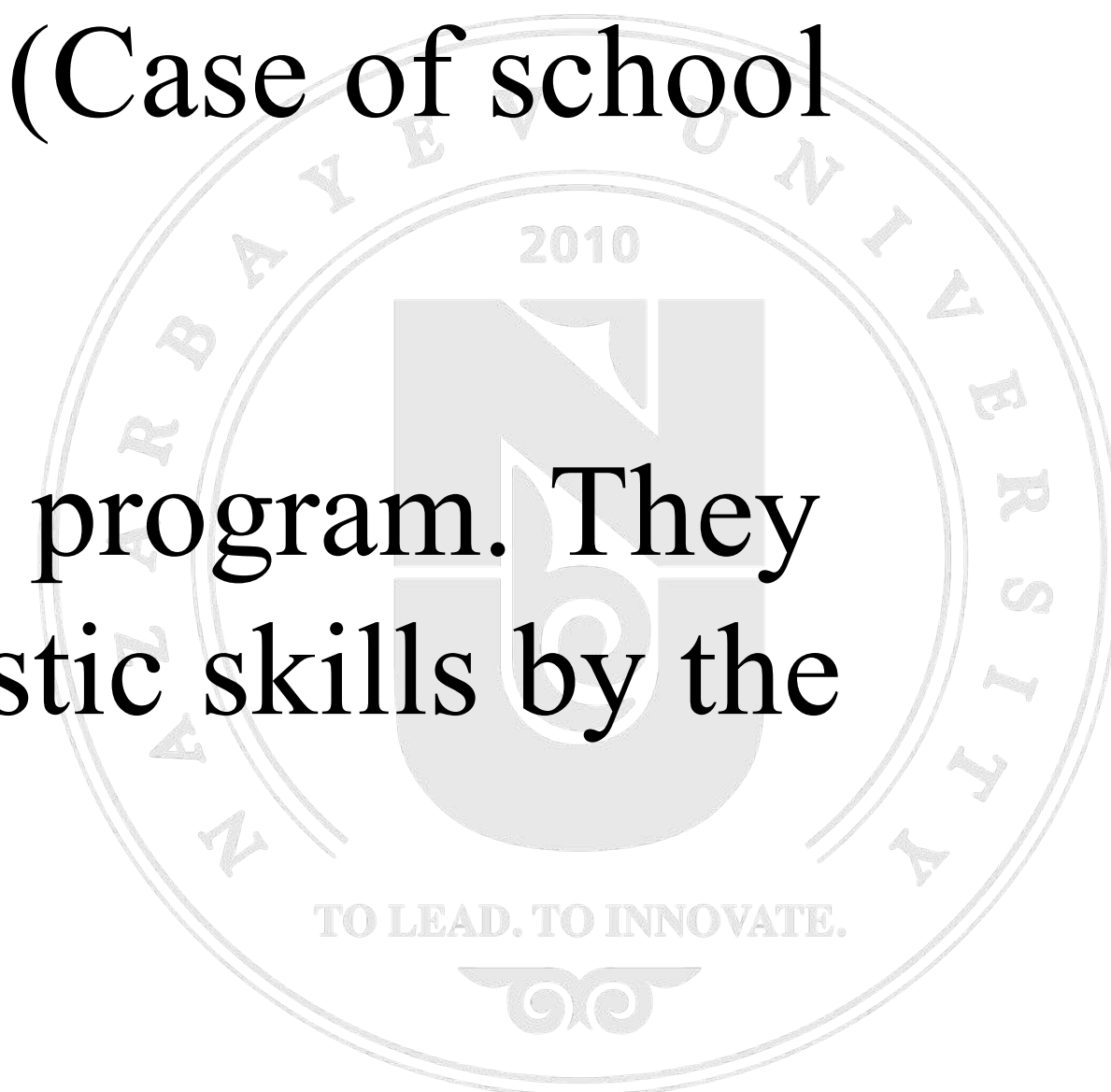


Although our study does not evaluate the performance of schools supported by Schools2030 Program, we did get a very positive impression about the program;

School leaders, teachers, students and parents are appreciative of the support provided by Schools2030 and have higher expectations from it;

Some schools with change-oriented leadership have already made remarkable improvement as a result of the support provided by Schools2030 (Case of school in a rural village in Naryn region)

The education authorities in KYG are supportive of Schools2030 program. They particularly like the practice-oriented approach and focus on holistic skills by the program.



- Lack of research culture, infrastructure and capacity in the region
- Language barriers with international researchers
- Political interference and policing on schools and researchers (In case of Tajikistan)
- Poor Internet connectivity and communication issues in rural areas
- School stakeholders tend to portray only positive aspects of schools and education quality
- Rural schools face more challenges than urban schools due to shrinking resources (human, financial and material) which in turn hinder schools from focusing on holistic skills;



- As the quality of education is measured mainly through students' scores in various tests and Olympiads, which mainly encourage rote-memorization, teachers are compelled to teach to the tests by focusing more on learning of subject matter than on any other domains of holistic development;
- School leadership matters. Principals appointed through political support and nepotism lack both leadership and management skills and thus unable to inspire such changes which could foster holistic skills in students;
- While school leaders seem to encourage parents' participation in schools, there are no viable structures, culture, and mechanisms for developing genuine collaboration and partnerships between schools and local communities;
- In all the 15 schools visited, one common challenge to quality and equity in education was lack of resources (human, financial and material). Several school do not have washrooms, playgrounds, adequate number of classrooms, library and laboratories...

Thank You!





IMPROVING EDUCATION FOR A
MORE EQUITABLE WORLD
CIES 2023 · February 14-22



Advancing equity through Schools2030: How might a focus on the whole child advance equitable learning for all?

SABA SAEED

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The Context

- Mixed-methods research is intended to produce **actionable** and **policy-relevant** evidence on *linkages between non-academic skill acquisition and academic learning* within specific schooling contexts.
- Evaluating the Schools2030 program in two countries—Pakistan and Kenya—across 25 schools and 2 youth centers in both countries for a period of 18 months.
- The schools are divided among the two regions
 - Pakistan - Chitral and Gilgit
 - Kenya - Mombassa
- Focus on students in primary to upper secondary education—key stages of education and transitions across education levels in both countries.

Intervention in Pakistan

- delivery of a series of Human Centered Design (HCD) workshops for teachers and headteachers (2-3 cycles ran for 3 days, 4 hours per day)
 - Day 1 focused on rapid assessment
 - Day 2 focused on 'solutions'
 - Day 3 focused on stakeholder mapping
- Review and pilot testing of child assessment tool (ECD and primary)
- Review and pilot testing of classroom environment assessment tool

Research Questions

- **Approach:** What is the current approach to non-academic learning within schools?
- **Technology:** What is the scale of technology used in delivering values and life skills? Does it accelerate overall learning?
- **Equity and inclusivity:** How inclusive is the approach towards non-academic learning for learners from marginalized backgrounds in a school?
- **Obstacles:** What specific obstacles do schools face in learning of values and life skills? —limited budgets, workforce capacities, other political economy aspects
- **Feasible methods:** What feasible methods can be/have been deployed by Schools2030 to conceptualize, deliver, monitor, and assess non-academic learning?

Research Sample

Round 1	Round 2
Schools: 18	Schools: 18
Children: 334	Children: 334
Parents: 200	Parents: 200
Head Teachers: 17	Head Teachers: 18
Teachers: 48	Teachers: 48
Region: Chitral and Gilgit-Baltistan	Region: Chitral and Gilgit-Baltistan

What Does the Qualitative Data Say?

Round 1

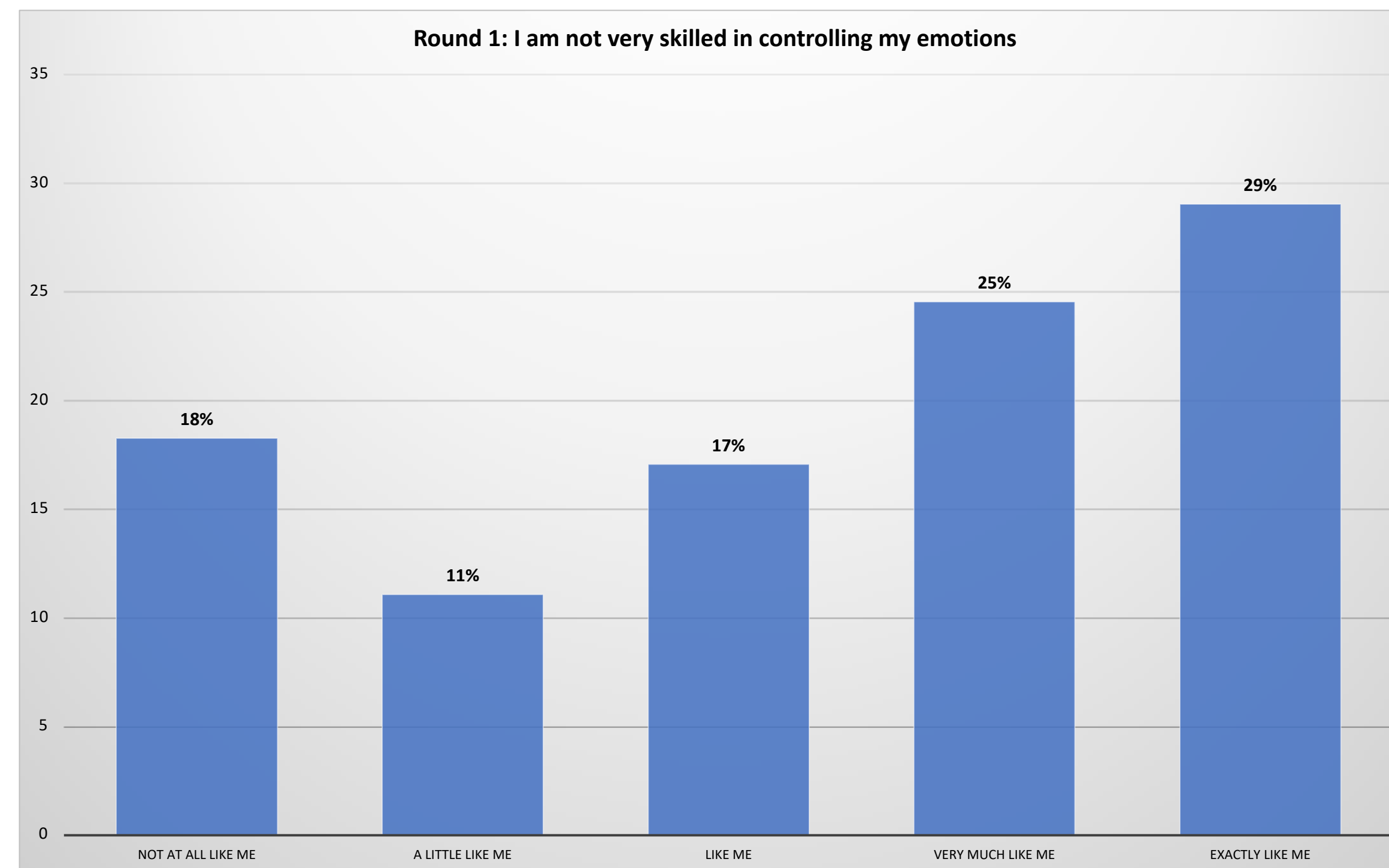
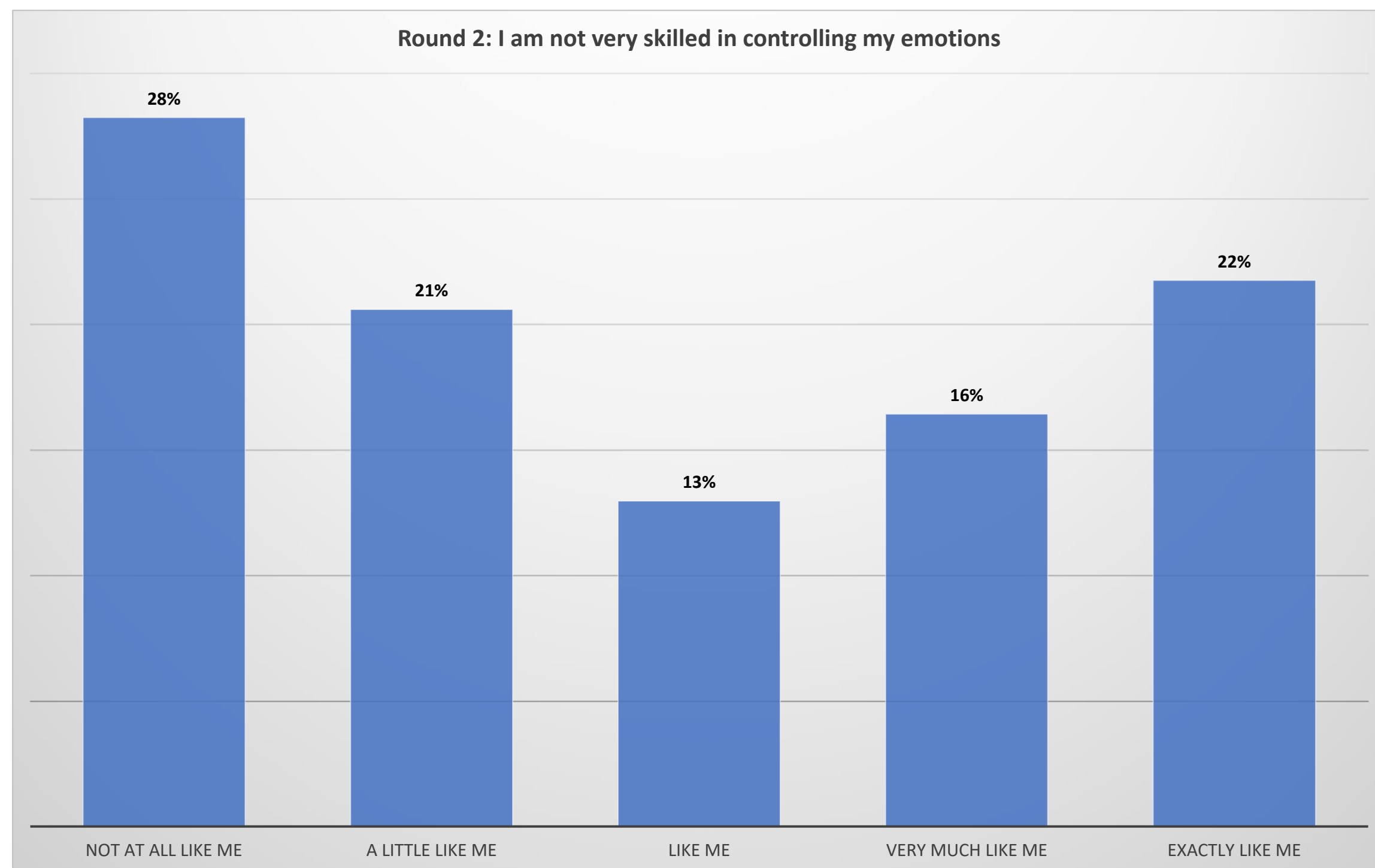
- **Approach:** (i) informal (ii) participatory
- Parents, teachers and head teachers perceive non-academic skills differently (mostly sports and communication), yet agree on their implications and critical importance for student success in job market and favorable life outcomes
- Parents perceive schools as the primary source of learning for acquisition of non-academic skills
- Culture plays a major role in shaping values and behaviors of children
- **Obstacles:** insufficient training for teachers; resistance and lack of knowledge of parents; insufficient resources & finance; lack of parental involvement; time constraint

Round 2

- **Approach:** (i) Classroom practices (role models, presentations, discussion) (ii) participatory
- Teachers and head teachers demonstrate a better understanding of non-academic skills; social-interpersonal skills, problem solving, critical thinking and leadership skills emerge as key elements of non-academic skills
- Culture plays a major role in shaping values and behaviour of children
- Students in higher grades face challenges in acquiring non-academic skills
- Parents perceive only academic skills are taught at schools
- There is an active engagement between parents and schools, however, non-academic learning is not a priority

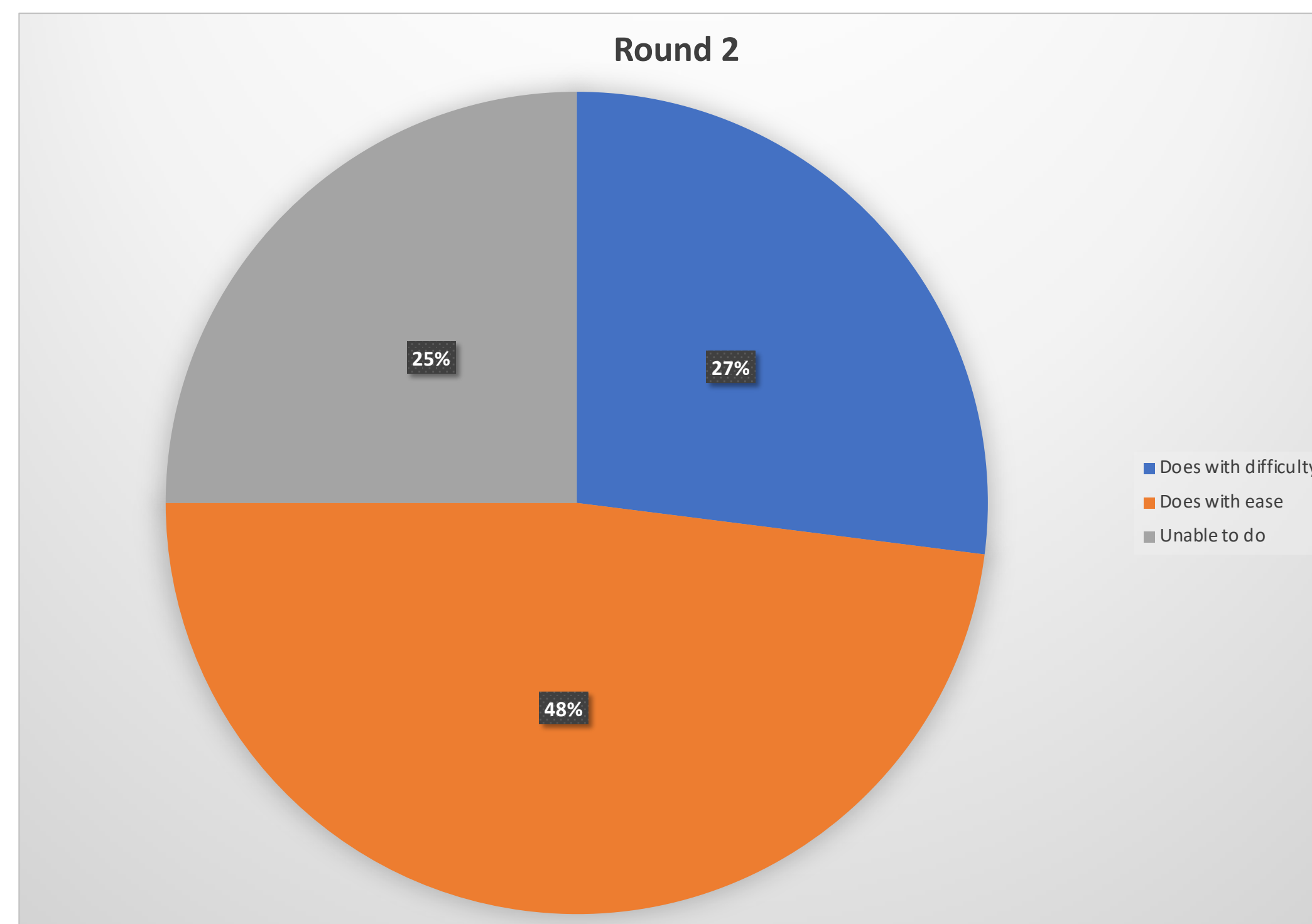
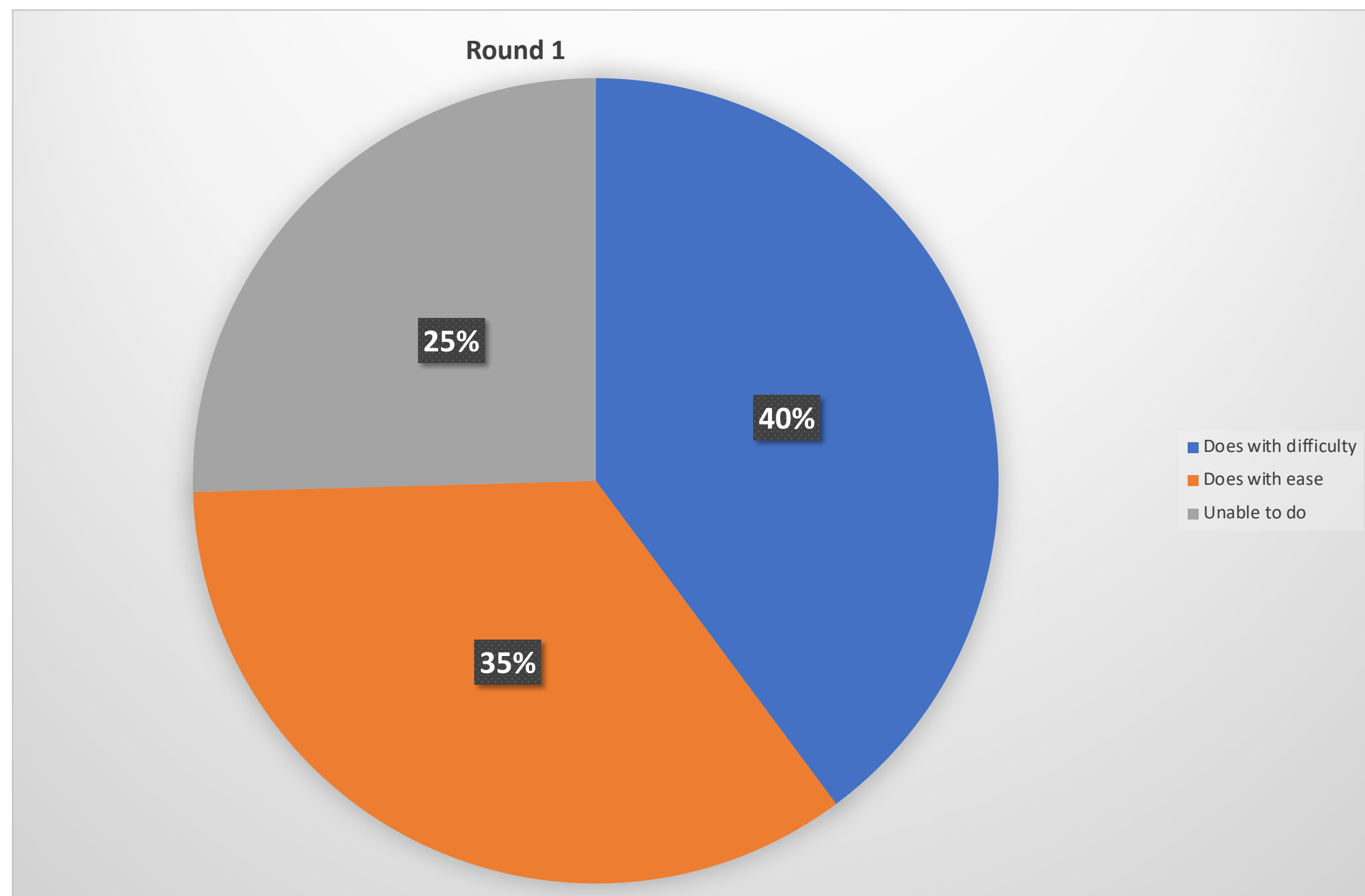
Findings from Quantitative Data

Findings from GRIT Scale



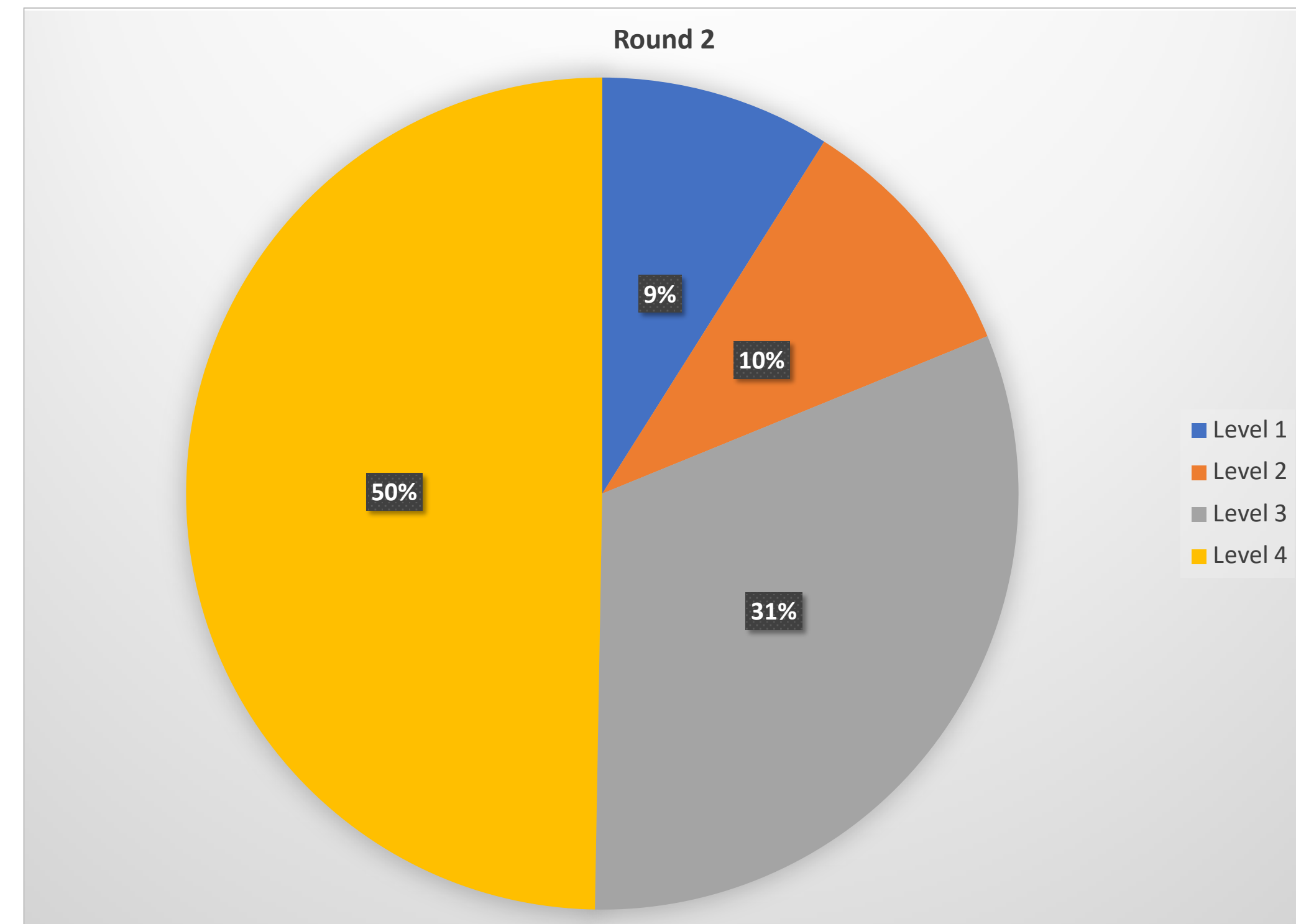
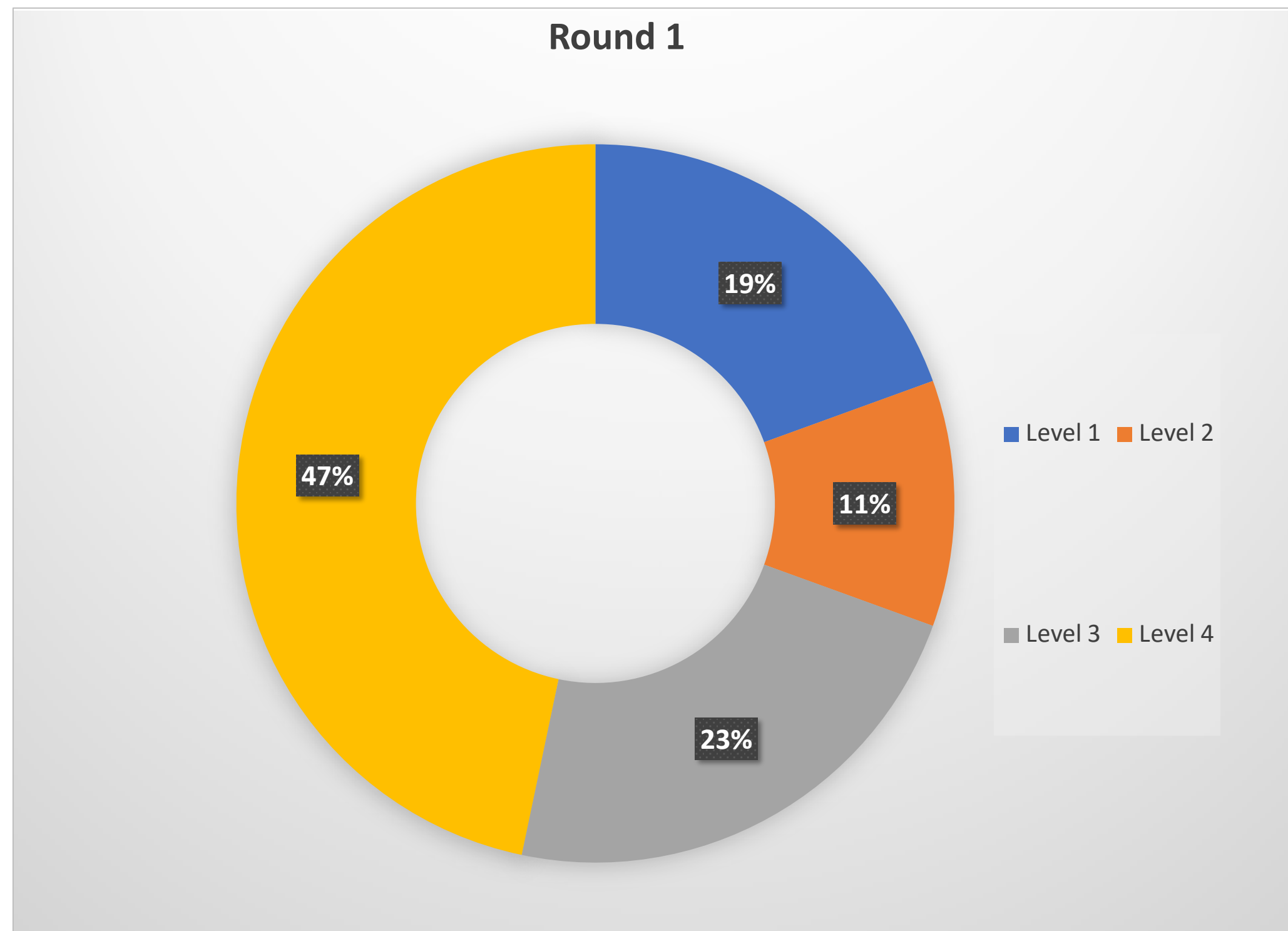
% children who demonstrate ability to control emotions increase from 29% in round 1 to 39% in round 2

Use of technology amongst learners



Instructions: Give adolescent a phone. Ask them to access the internet and visit their favorite site. Observe and score response

Tasks to Assess Problem Solving



Most learners (23% in Round 1) were at Level 3: they were able to recognize a problem from one perspective, then identify the main approach to solving the problem, and can justify it.

Most learners (50% in Round 2) were at Level 4: they were able to recognize a problem from multiple perspectives, knows that there may be multiple solutions

Feasible methods and recommendations

- (i) Empower teachers to engage with research and assessment
- (ii) Place child at the heart of interventions for holistic learning and development
- (iii) Support communities as active participants to nurture an environment where learners can acquire non-academic learning



THANK YOU



Advancing equity through Schools2030: **Context-specific factors that may catalyse better pedagogy and assessment practice**

Agatha Kimani

Zizi Afrique Foundation, Kenya.

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Context:

- Kenya's oldest town
- second-largest city
- Strategically located on the coastline
- an extra large port
- International airport;
- Metropolitan
- Historical business hub



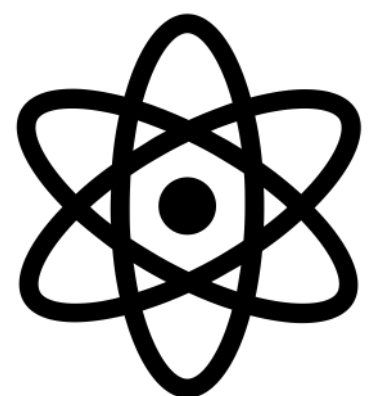
Our action research methodology

- Focus skills: Literacy; numeracy; digital literacy; problem solving; Collaboration
- Qualitative: Ethnographic interviews, FGDs
- Quantitative: ICAN; Uwezo Beyond Basics; RELI's ALIVE tool

Research Sample

Head teachers	Parents	Learners	Teachers	Key informants
10	120	213	26	11

Findings: No 1



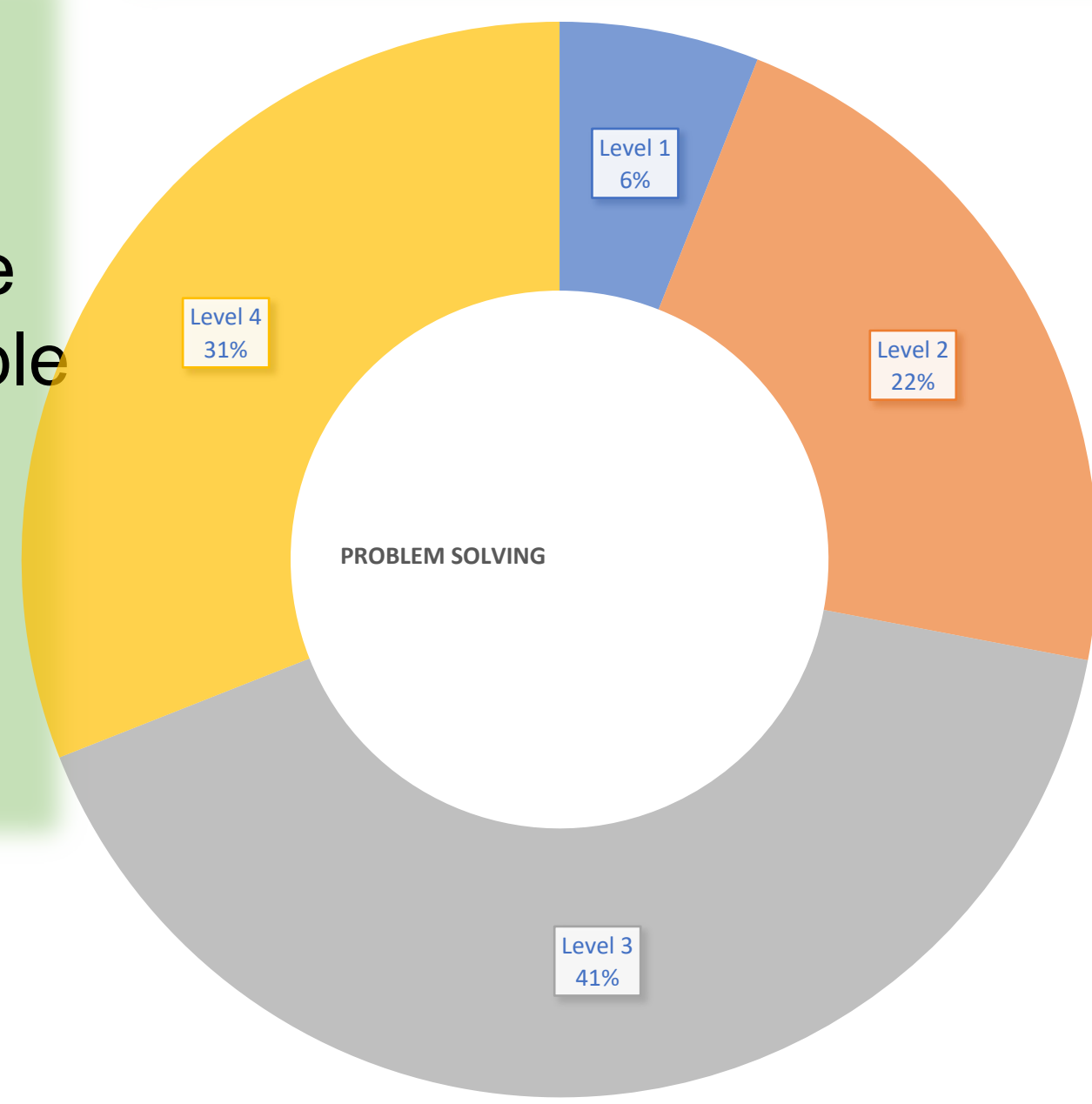
Little awareness hence little concern/teaching of VaLi.
Awareness is riddled with misconceptions.



Educate school communities for more awareness &
buy-in:
What's the relationship between non/academics?

4. able to recognise existence of a problem from multiple perspectives, understanding that there may be multiple solutions to evaluate and select from

3. able to recognise existence of a problem from one perspective, is able to identify a main approach to solving the problem and can justify it

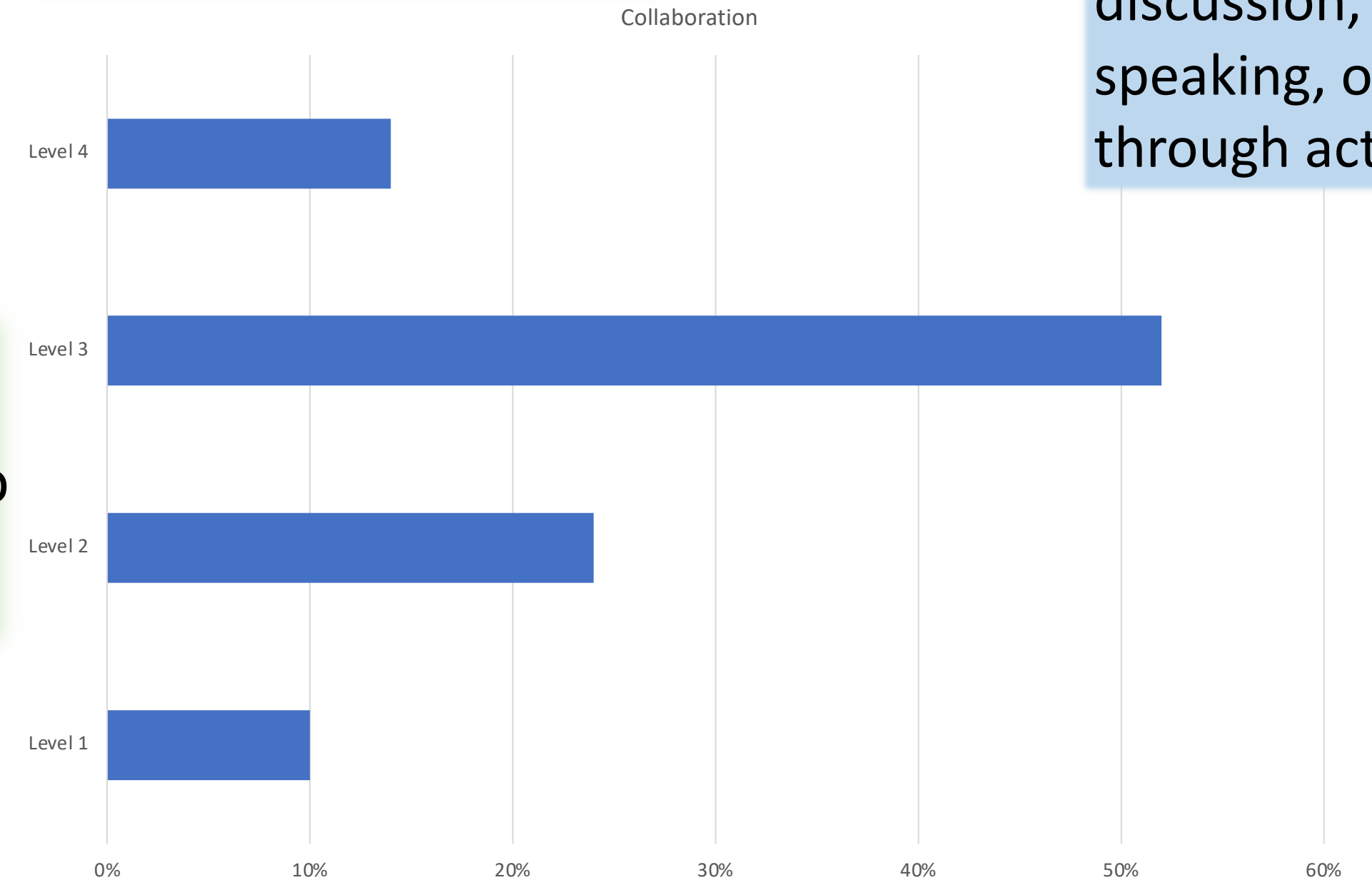


1. struggling to recognise a problem or its nature thus unable to identify possible solutions

2. able to recognise existence of a problem from one perspective, and act on that to identify a possible solution



4. Collaborates through taking position and contributing ideas, prompting others, and being attentive to others' inputs

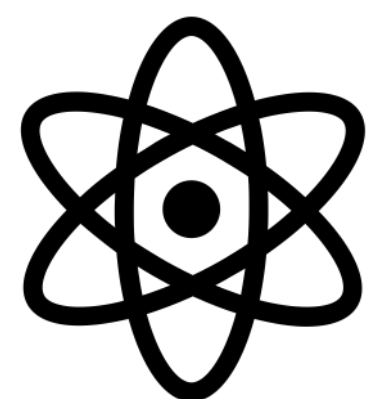


3. Collaborates thro speaking being attentive in discussions; engaging actively in performance tasks

1. Does not engage either by being attentive to discussion, speaking, or through action

2. Attentive to the discussion; may query the views of others, but does not contribute in word or action

Findings: No 2

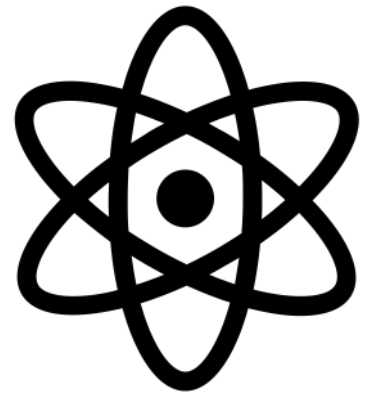


Lack of clarity of teacher – parental roles: Whose role is it? Where does it start? end?



High level parental engagement to reinforce acquisition
Experimenting parent-led VaLi sessions

Findings: No 3



- Pedagogical & cultural issues
- Our context is significantly conservative



- It will take the whole community to achieve transformation: training of passionate VaLi champions
- Participatory action research necessary for a reflective teacher

So what? Parent- led VaLi sessions

- Parent champions identified
- Co- creation workshop: Determined the most important values and life skills
- Host the sessions
- Admin & back-stopping
- Advocacy in the community
- Teacher champions identified
- Co- creation workshop: Reinforcing the VaLi sessions from the classroom
- Record keeping
- Advocacy in the school



THANK YOU
