



UNIVERSITEIT  
GENT



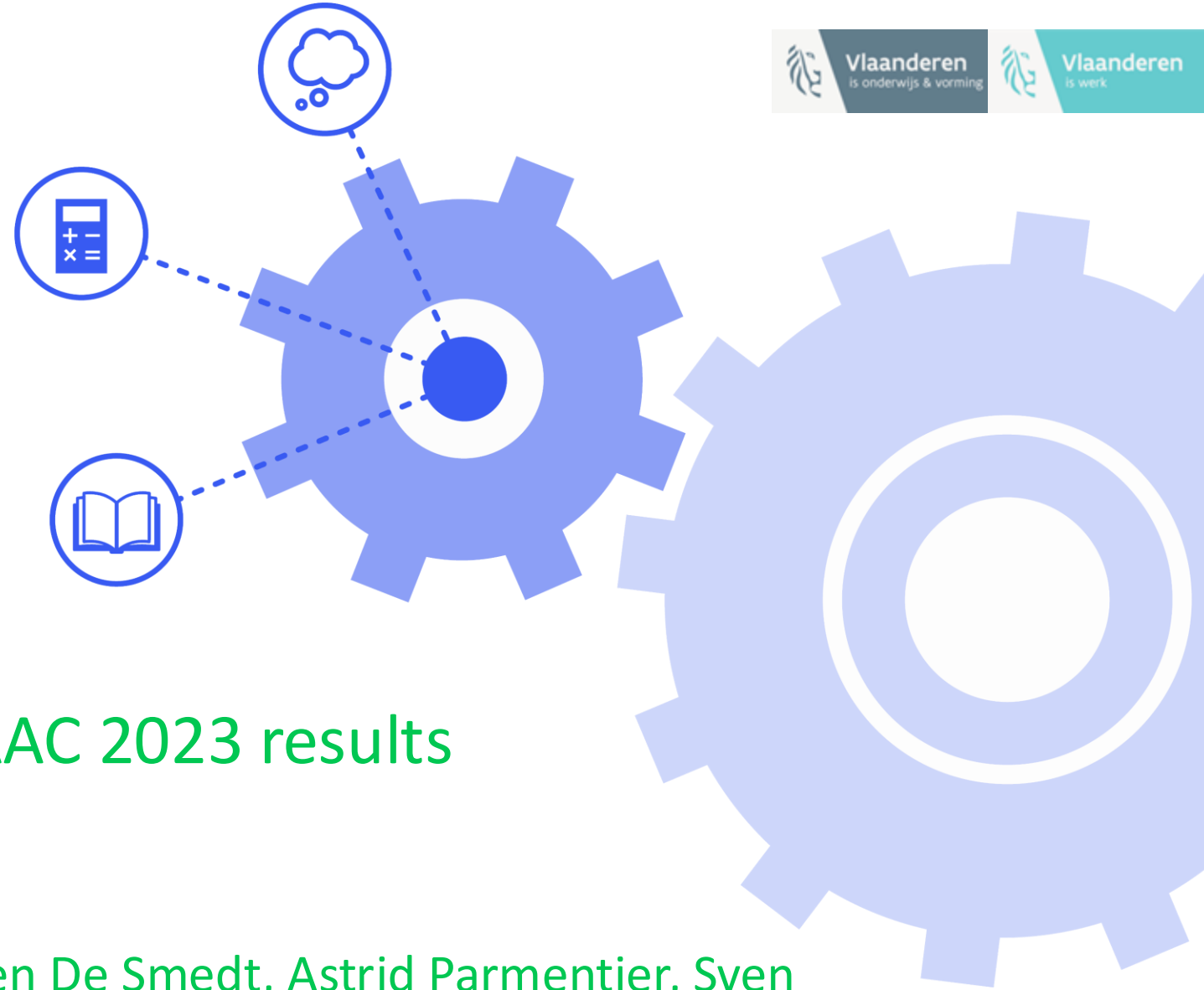
Programme for the International  
Assessment of Adult Competencies



Vlaanderen  
is onderwijs & vorming



Vlaanderen  
is werk



# PIAAC in Flanders

## An analysis of the Flemish PIAAC 2023 results

Bram De Wever ---- Thanks to:

Lisse Van Nieuwenhove, Lisa Dewulf, Fien De Smedt, Astrid Parmentier, Sven Sierens, Hilde Van Keer, Jan De Neve, & Martin Valcke

# Overview

- ▶ What is PIAAC?
- ▶ Results of PIAAC 2023
  - ▶ Educational background
- ▶ Lifelong learning in PIAAC



Programme for the International  
Assessment of Adult Competencies



▶ Goal = examining how well adults'



Literacy skills,



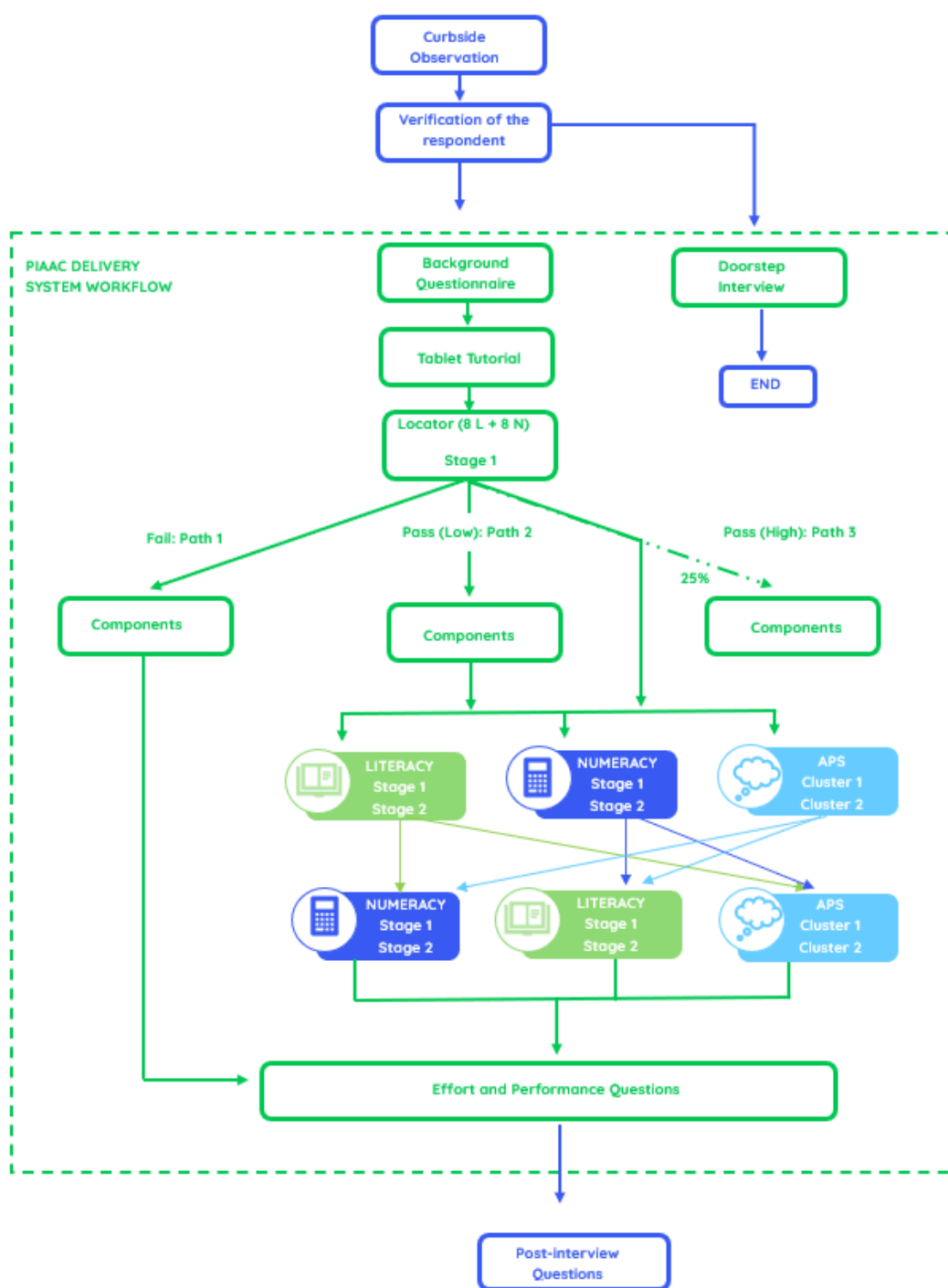
Numeracy skills,



Adaptive problem-solving skills

are to fully participate in society

- ▶ Target group: adult population aged 16 to 65 from 31 countries  
Flemish sample: 3909 adults (RR: 35%) = representative of the adult population from Flanders (Belgium)
- ▶ Timing = PIAAC 2023= second cycle  
(cycle 1= 2012, follow-up to IALS)



PIAAC = interview conducted by an interviewer with the respondent (tablet only, duration 2 hours)

Complete interview (n= 3694)

- ▶ Background questionnaire (conducted by interviewer)
- ▶ Cognitive test with adaptive design (self-administered by the respondent)
- ▶ Doorstep interview (n= 215)

## ▶ Background questionnaire

- ▶ Socio-economic and demographic background
- ▶ Education and training
- ▶ Current status and work history
- ▶ Social participation
- ▶ Social-emotional skills
- ▶ Use of skills in work and everyday life
- ▶ Data on participation in lifelong learning






Country/region	Average	St. error
Finland	296	1.2
Japan	289	0.9
Sweden	284	1.0
Norway	281	1.0
The Netherlands	279	0.9
Estonia	276	0.6
Flanders (Belgium)	275	1.0
Denmark	273	0.8
United Kingdom	272	1.0
Canada	271	0.9
Germany	266	0.8
Switzerland	266	0.7
Ireland	263	1.0
New Zealand	260	2.0
<b>OECD average</b>	260	0.2
Czech republic	260	1.0
United States	258	1.4
France	255	0.6
Singapore	255	0.7
Croatia	254	1.8
Austria	254	0.9
Slovakia	254	1.2
Korea	249	0.8
Hungary	248	1.0
Latvia	248	0.9
Spain	247	0.9
Italy	245	1.5
Israel	244	1.1
Lithuania	238	1.0
Poland*	236	1.1
Portugal	235	1.7
Chili	218	2.2

- ▶ Flanders ranks between 6th and 8th place for the average literacy performance
- ▶ 5 countries perform significantly better than Flanders
- ▶ 2 countries do not perform significantly different
- ▶ All other countries perform significantly lower
- ▶ International leader: Finland

Significantly higher than Flanders	
Not significantly different from Flanders	
Significantly lower than Flanders	

# Skill levels

Skill level	Literacy 		
5	376-500	Top performers	18%
4	326-375		
3	276-325		
2	226-275		
1	176-225	Low performers	18%
Below level1	0-175		

# Examining socio-demographic characteristics

# Skipped: Gender – Age – Migration background

Reference countries: Finland, Sweden, Norway, The Netherlands, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, UK, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Poland and France

# Education level

Reference countries: Finland, Sweden, Norway, The Netherlands, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, UK, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Poland and France



# Education levels



**Low-educated:** no secondary education degree



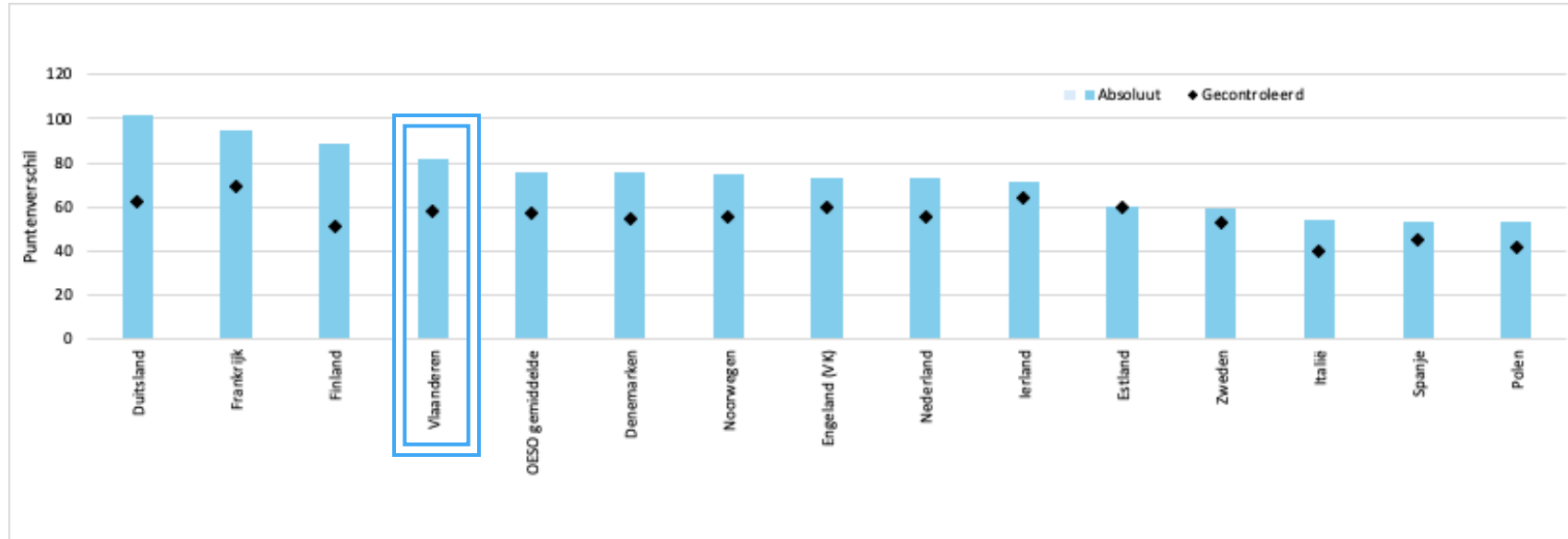
**Medium-educated:** secondary education degree



**Highly educated:** higher education degree



# Education level



- ▶ Highly educated adults score significantly higher in literacy than low-educated individuals (absolute and controlled difference)

- ▶ Both in Flanders and in the reference countries



Level	Literacy					
	OECD			Flanders		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
Low performers	62%	30%	13%	55%	23%	8%

# Trends: PIAAC cycle 1 & 2

Reference countries: Finland, Sweden, Norway, The Netherlands, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, UK, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Poland and France



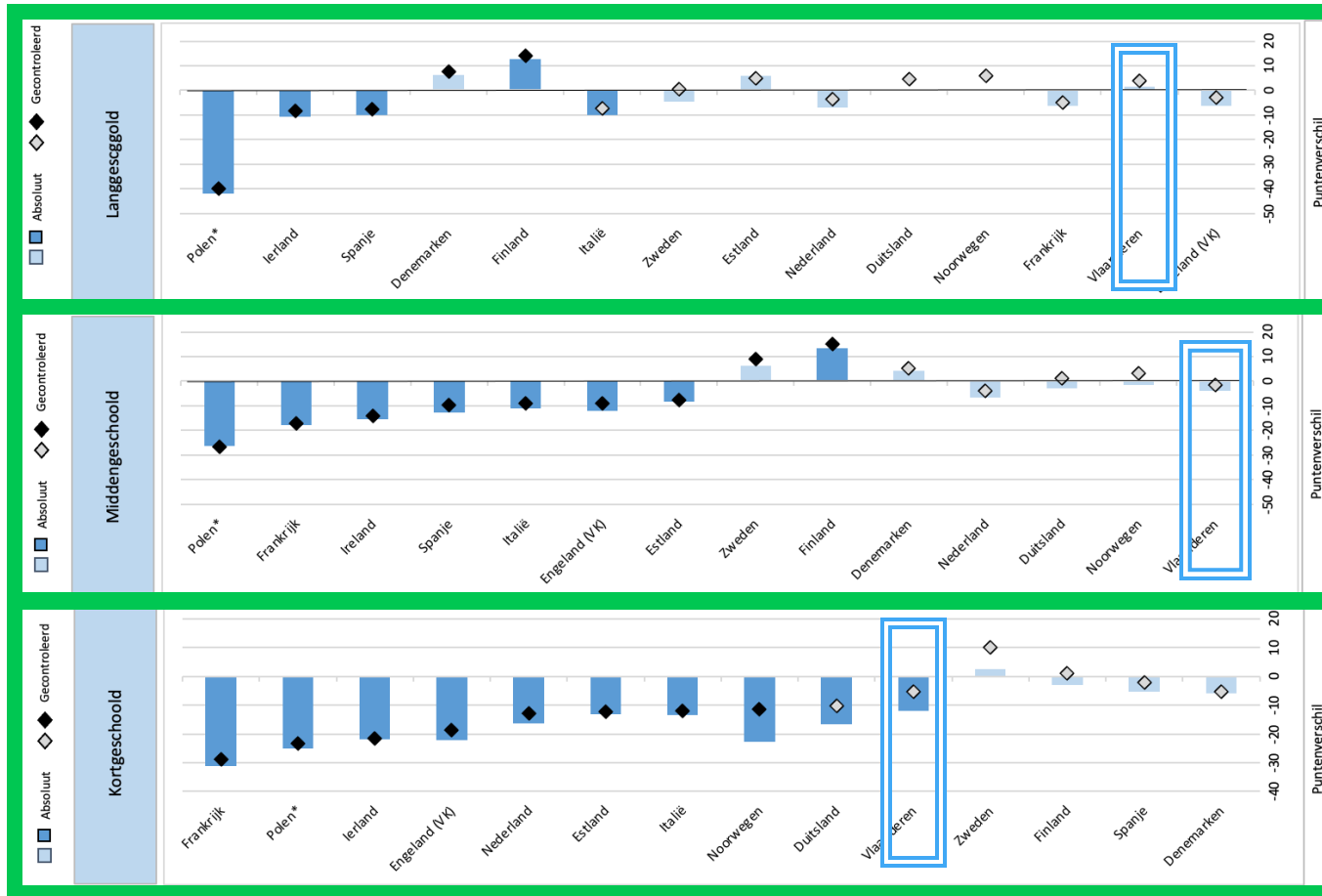
# Literacy

	IALS (1996)		PIAAC Cycle 1 (2012)		PIAAC Cycle 2 (2023)	
	Average	St. Error	Average	St. Error	Average	St. Error
Finland	287	0.9	288	0.7	303	0.9
Sweden	306	1.0	279	0.7	284	1.0
Norway	294	1.1	278	0.6	283	1.0
The Netherlands	286	0.9	284	0.7	282	0.9
Denmark	289	0.8	271	0.6	280	0.8
Flanders	277	3.5	275	1.1	278	1.0
Estonia	-	-	276	0.7	277	0.6
United Kingdom	-	-	273	1.1	272	1.1
Germany	282	1.0	270	0.9	270	0.8
Ireland	264	3.2	267	0.9	263	1.0
OESO average	268	0.4	266	0.2	262	0.2
France	-	-	262	0.6	255	0.6
Spain	-	-	252	0.7	249	0.9
Italy	243	1.9	250	1.1	246	1.6
Poland*	232	1.1	267	0.6	236	1.1

► Status quo for average literacy performance in Flanders between IALS, PIAAC 2012, and PIAAC 2023



# Literacy Education level



► The literacy score of low-educated adults has significantly declined in 2023 compared to 2012 (12 points absolute)

► The literacy scores of highly and medium educated adults have remained unchanged between 2012 and 2023



**Why lifelong learning?**

- ▶ In today's **rapidly changing society**, it is important that people continuously develop their skills
- ▶ **Participation** in lifelong learning **varies** greatly, with highly educated individuals participating more frequently
- ▶ Internationally, participation **in Flanders is limited**
- ▶ The **participation gap** indicates **structural barriers** for certain population groups



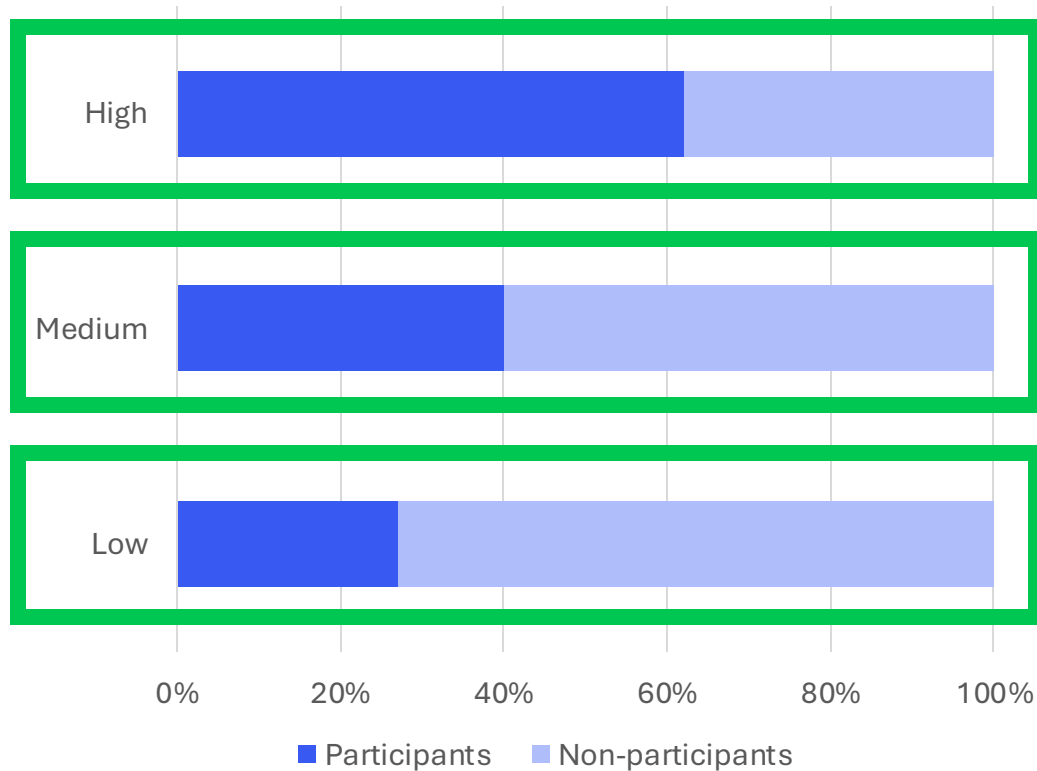
- ▶ Lifelong learning as **formal** and **non-formal** learning
- ▶ Formal learning leads to recognized diplomas or certificates from accredited educational institutions
- ▶ Non-formal learning includes training activities for professional reasons and during leisure time
- ▶ In this presentation: focus on participation in non-formal learning



# Socio-demographic characteristics and participation in non-formal learning

**Focus on education level**

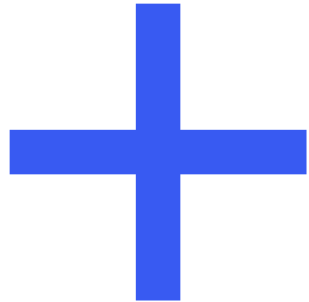
# Education level



- ▶ Among the low-educated, 27% participated
- ▶ Among the medium-educated, 40% attended a non-formal training course in the past year
- ▶ Highly educated individuals participate the most, with 62%

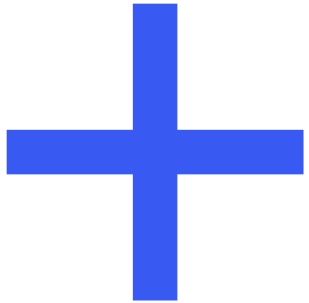
# Benefits of lifelong learning

# Benefits of lifelong learning



- ▶ Participants in non-formal learning score on average 31 points higher in literacy than non-participants
- ▶ Significant association between participation and social trust
  - ▶ Participants score significantly higher on social trust than non-participants, and the likelihood of participation increases as social trust rises
- ▶ Participation is related to health
  - ▶ Participants feel healthier than non-participants, and adults who feel healthier are more likely to participate

# Benefits of lifelong learning



- ▶ Life satisfaction and lifelong learning are related
  - ▶ Adults who are satisfied with their lives participate more often, and adults who participate are more satisfied with their lives
- ▶ Participation in non-formal learning is associated with monthly income
  - ▶ On average, participants earn more than non-participants, and as adults fall into higher income categories, they also participate more frequently

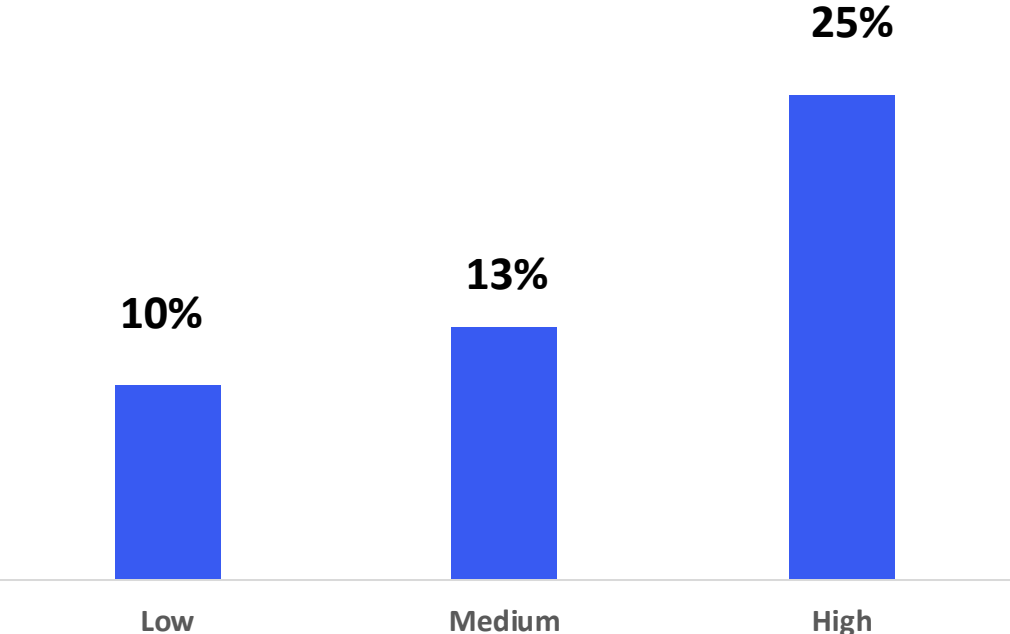
# Barriers to participation



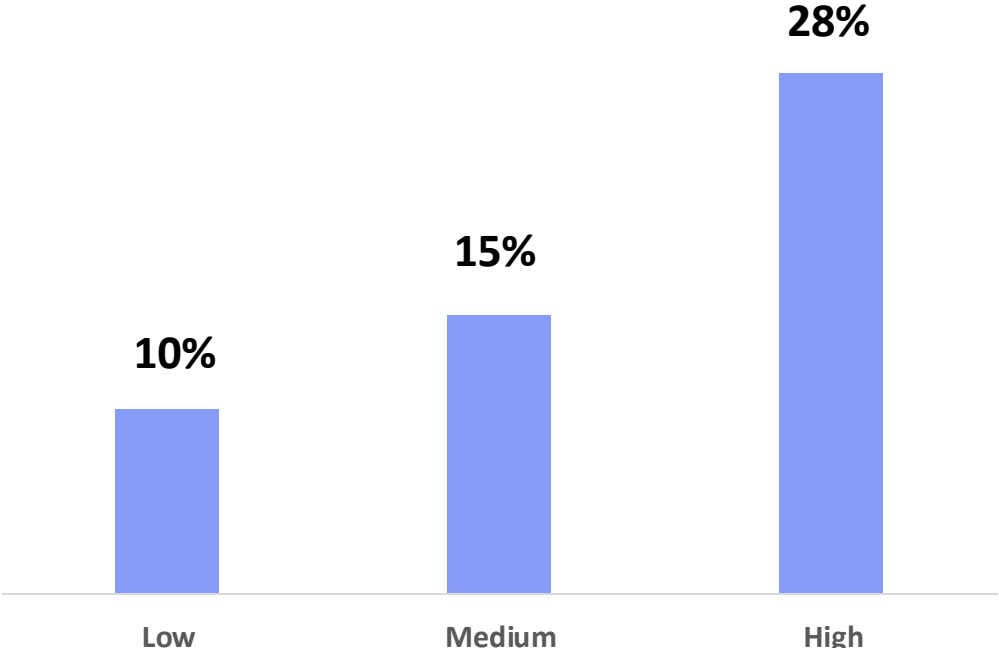
- ▶ Among participants:
  - ▶ 29% wanted to participate more often but were hindered by barriers
  - ▶ 71% experienced no barriers or had no interest in participating more often
- ▶ Among non-participants:
  - ▶ 12% wanted to participate but experienced barriers
  - ▶ Nearly 9 out of 10 had no interest

# Barriers

## Cycle 1

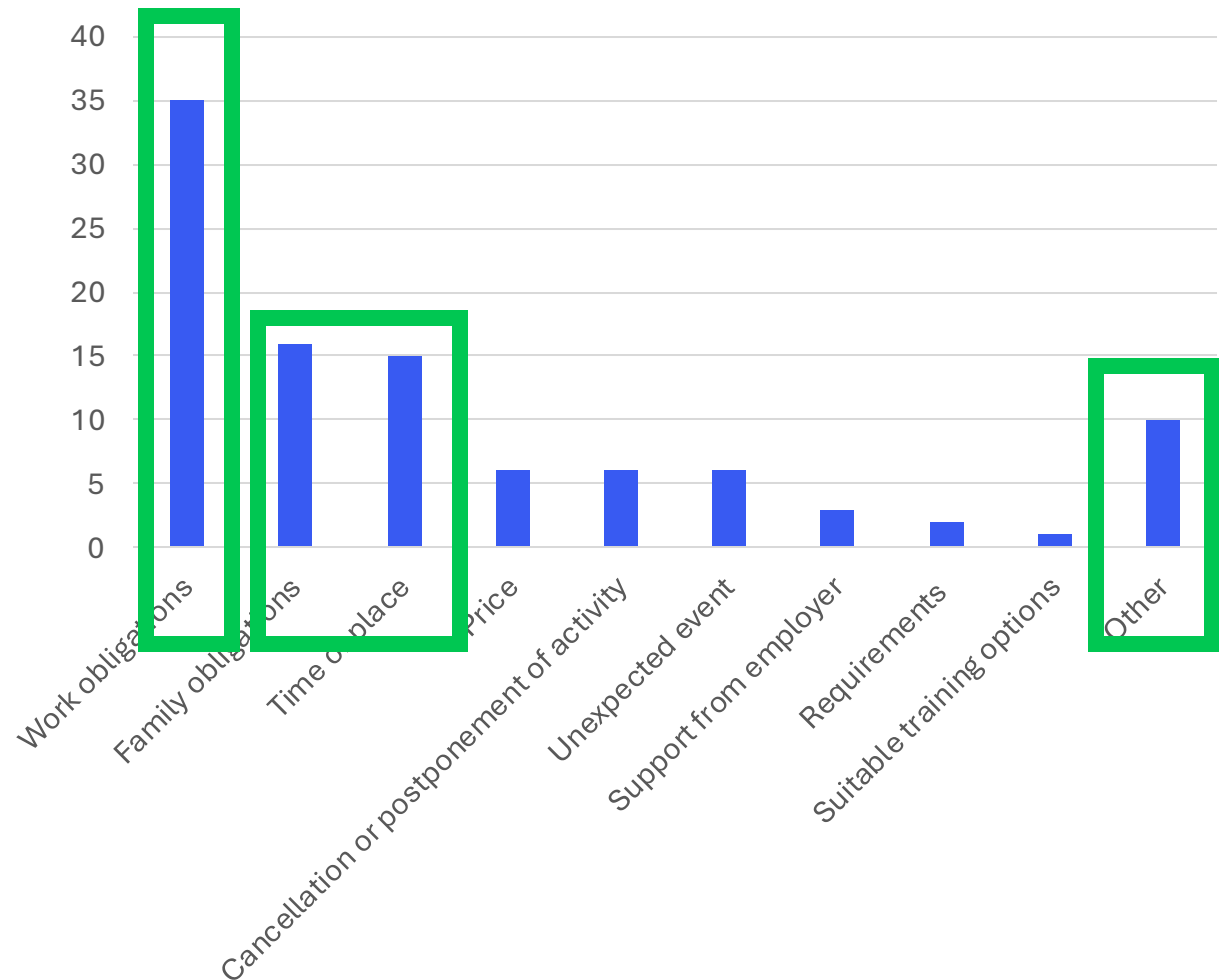


## Cycle 2



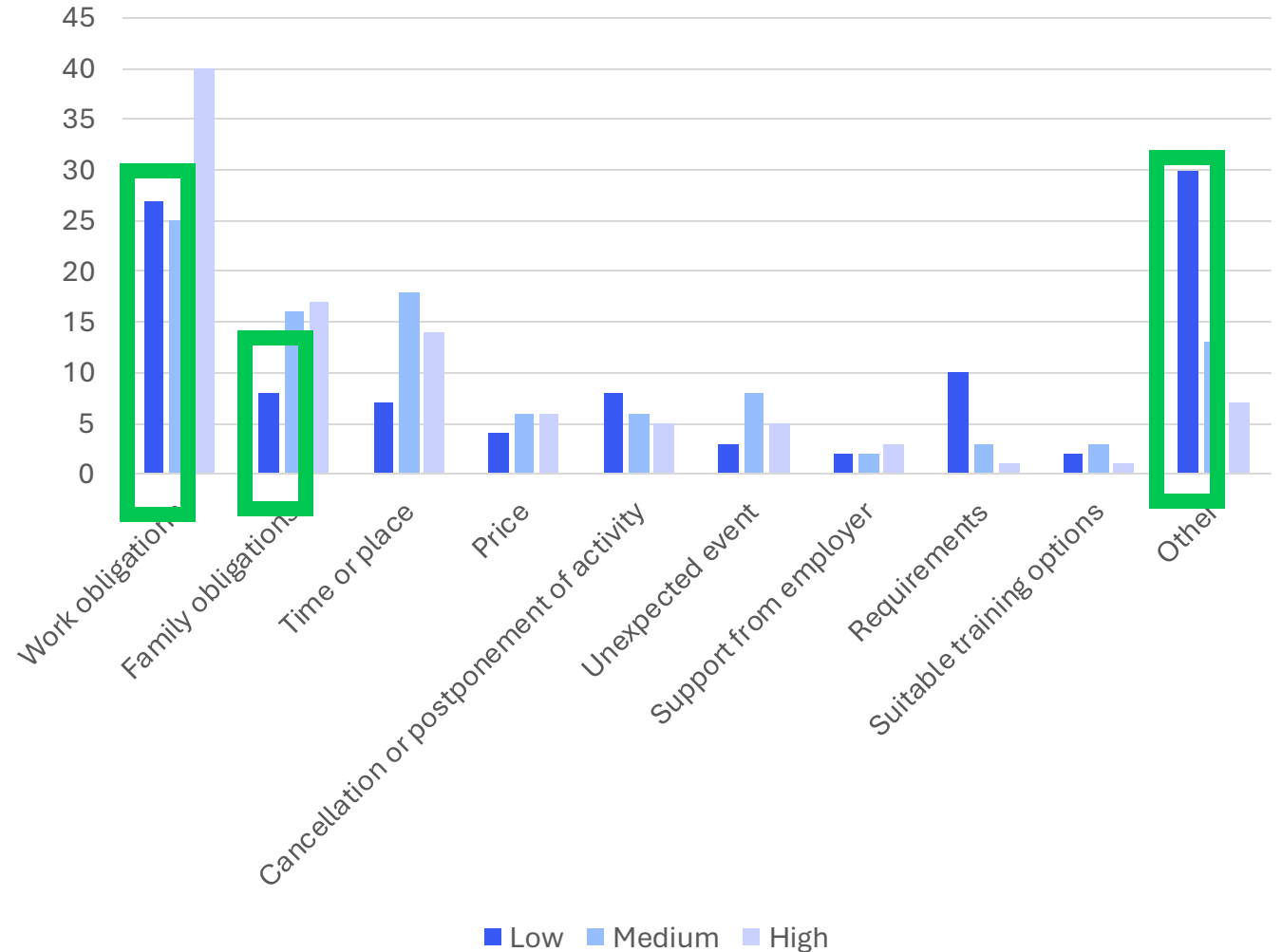
# Barriers to participation

- ▶ Largest barrier for those who want to participate: work obligations
- ▶ Family obligations as well as the time or location of the course are also important barriers



# Barriers according to education levels

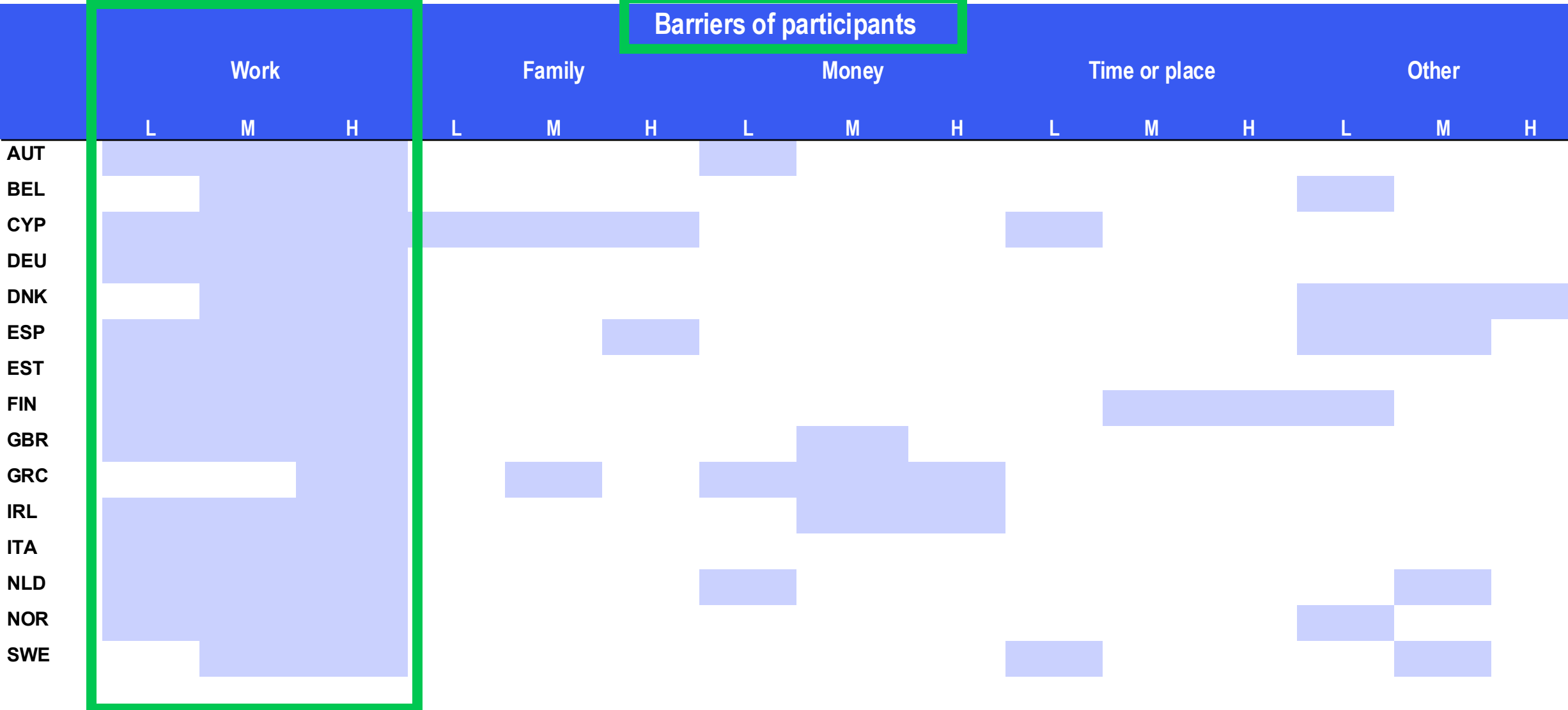
- ▶ Lower educated adults are less hindered by work and family obligations
- ▶ The category 'other' is notably more often selected by adults with lower education levels
- ▶ The barriers experienced lower educated adults are different and often overlooked



# Barriers cycle 1

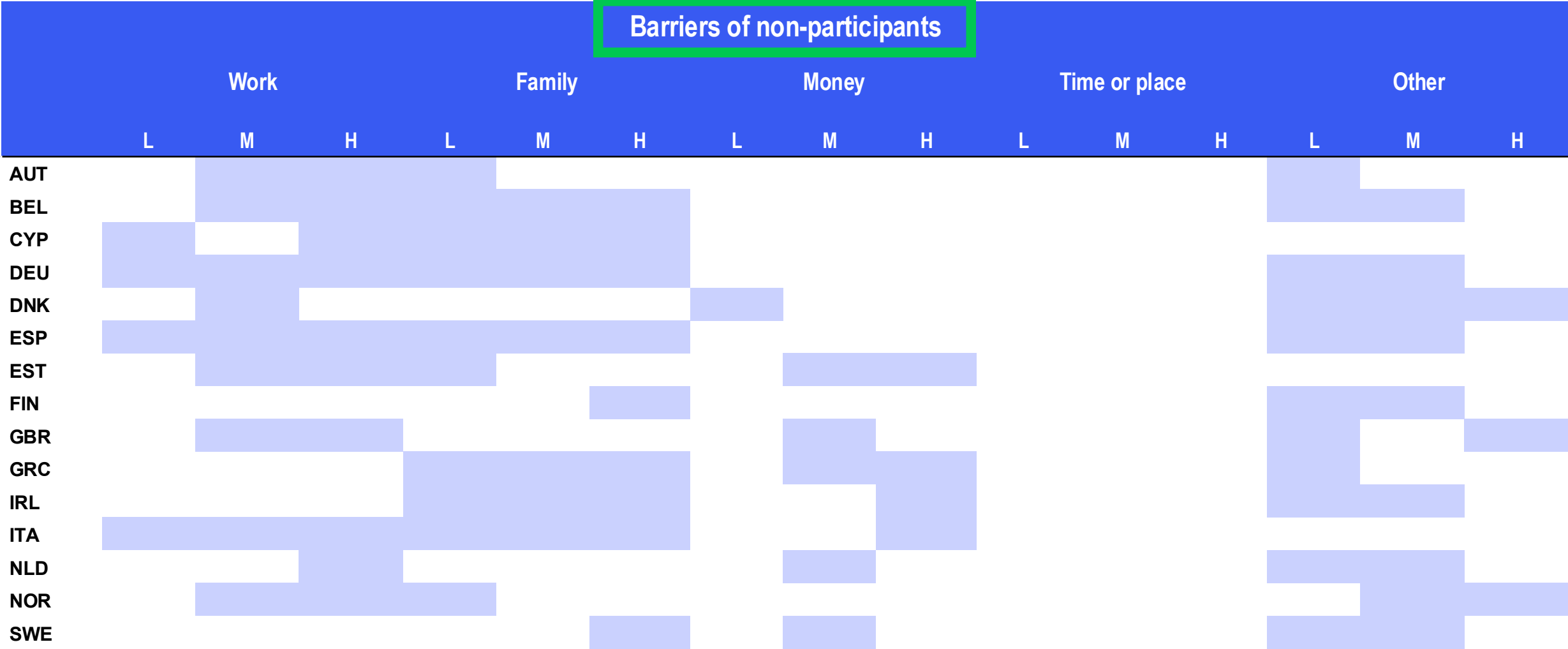
Barriers of participants															
	Work			Family			Money			Time or place			Other		
	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H
<b>AUT</b>	27.3	35	43.1	9.1	11.9	14.4	24.2	12.8	9	12.1	16.6	16	12.1	10.6	9.6
<b>BEL</b>	19.2	31.9	40.1	15.4	17.5	14.9	7.7	6	5.2	19.2	18.7	19.6	34.6	14.5	8.9
<b>CYP</b>	34.5	26.7	36.2	24.1	32	22.1	6.9	12.8	11	20.7	9.3	15	10.3	7	7.1
<b>DEU</b>	24.3	30.1	40.1	13.5	8.9	11.9	16.2	10.3	7.1	5.4	15.7	17.7	18.9	17.3	10.9
<b>DNK</b>	17.6	30.2	28.1	7.4	3.9	4.8	11.7	10.5	12.7	6.9	10.5	10.6	29.3	24.6	20.9
<b>ESP</b>	24	30.4	31.8	14.1	15.9	21.1	12	11.9	10.1	6.4	9.3	10.4	30.4	22.5	16.8
<b>EST</b>	31.6	29.4	32.7	15.2	8.3	8.1	11.4	19.1	17.7	11.4	17.9	16.9	15.2	9.6	11.5
<b>FIN</b>	20.7	30.6	35	6.9	5.5	10.7	10.3	6.5	6	10.3	23.6	20.5	24.1	18.1	11.5
<b>GBR</b>	36.7	28.4	35.9	11.9	15.3	10.3	8.3	22.3	19	5.5	9	10.9	13.8	10.7	10
<b>GRC</b>	4.8	13.1	24.7	14.3	20.6	10.7	28.6	29.9	35.4	9.5	9.3	16.9	9.5	13.1	4.5
<b>IRL</b>	24.4	21.2	30.4	13	12.9	18.3	18.7	24	22.3	10.6	11.4	10.4	13.8	17.5	9.5
<b>ITA</b>	40.8	44.7	49	8.2	12.9	12.1	18.4	16.7	14.8	10.2	6.1	4.7	6.1	12.1	12.8
<b>NLD</b>	23.1	25.2	41.6	7.4	10.2	10.5	20.4	15	9.8	11.1	7.1	9.6	17.6	20.4	15.8
<b>NOR</b>	20.7	33.7	39.6	9.2	8.3	10.9	17.2	11.8	5.2	4.6	10.4	10.5	23	16.3	13.8
<b>SWE</b>	11.7	22.7	36	5	10.4	13.3	10	12.3	9.6	25	13.7	12	18.3	23.3	16.9

# Barriers cycle 1



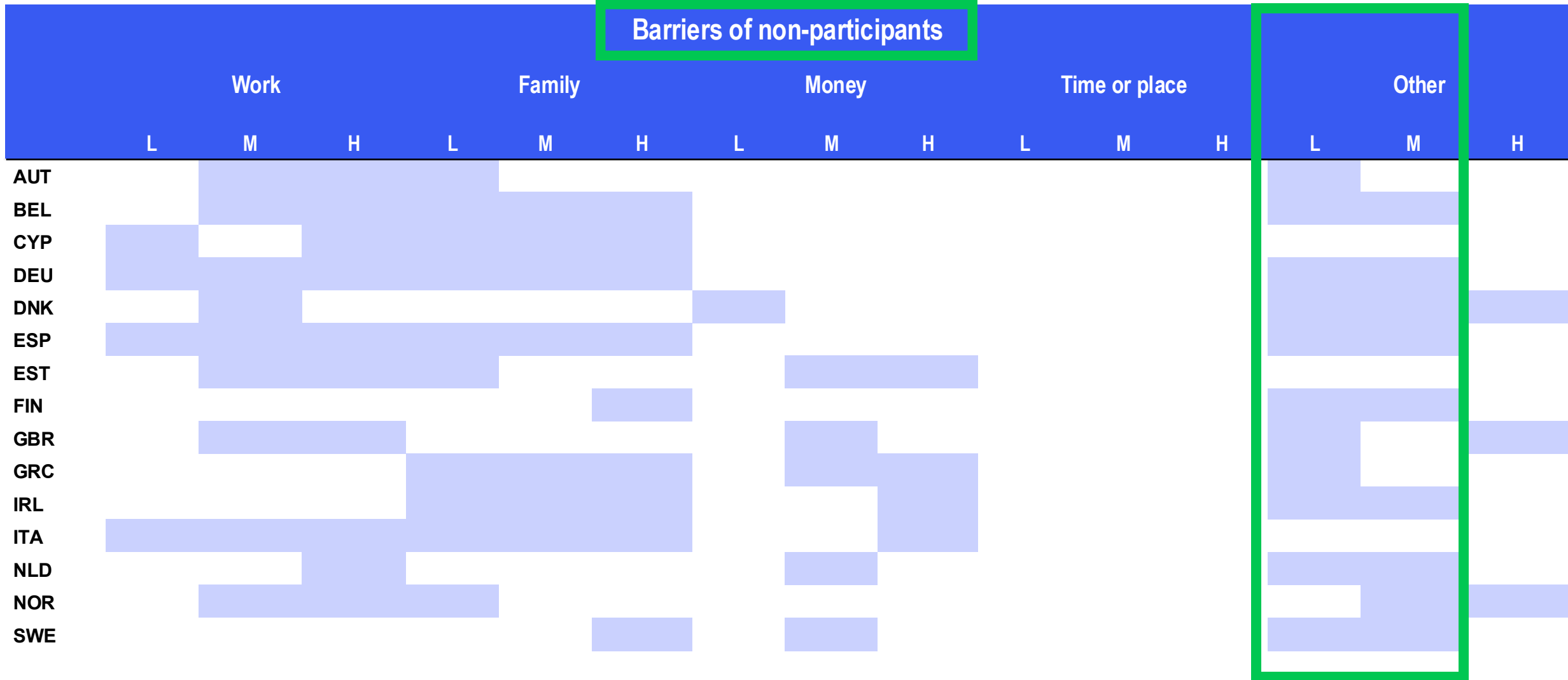
Van Nieuwenhove, L. & De Wever, B. (2021). Why are low-educated adults underrepresented in adult education? Studying the role of educational background in expressing learning needs and barriers. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2020.1865299>

# Barriers cycle 1



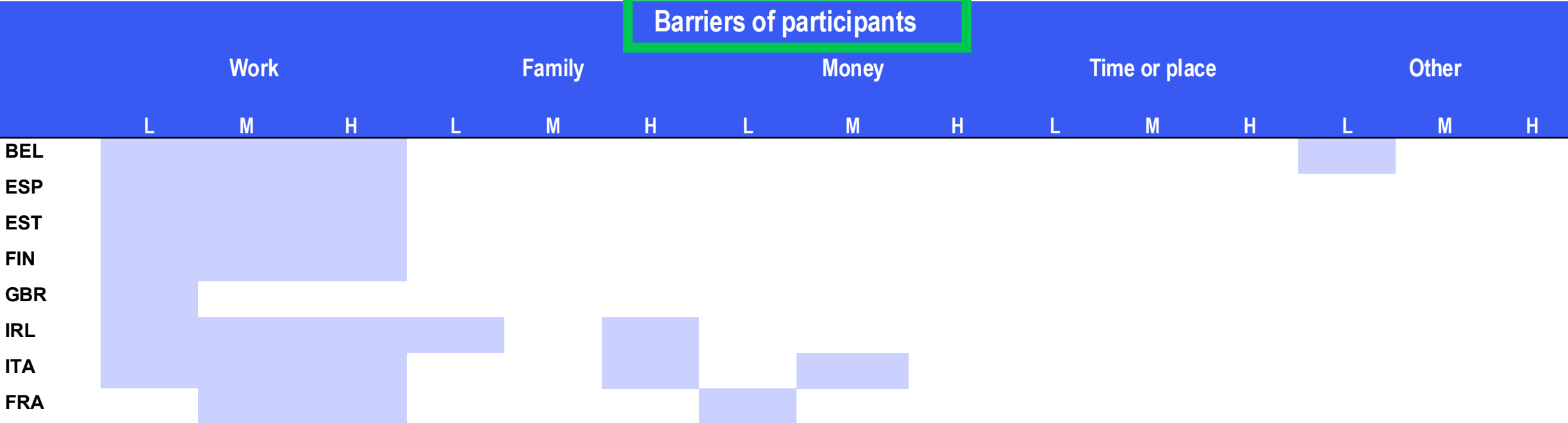
Van Nieuwenhove, L. & De Wever, B. (2021). Why are low-educated adults underrepresented in adult education? Studying the role of educational background in expressing learning needs and barriers. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2020.1865299>

# Barriers cycle 1



# Barriers cycle 2

## Barriers of participants





# Patricia Cross (1981)

## BARRIERS

### **Situational**

Personal situation

E.g. roles (parent, single...), work, family responsibilities

### **Institutional**

Practices and procedures (usually subconsciously) created by providers.

E.g. Accessibility, offer, support

### **Dispositional**

Personal attitudes and self-perceptions

E.g. myths and views adults have on learning, bad memories of education, self-confidence

### **Informational**

Lack of information about education, learning opportunities and the benefits of learning (OECD 2005; Rubenson 2010)

# Take-away Message

Focus on the usefulness of the learning activity (and the reward): What does it bring to the learner, what is the gain?

If the training includes self-study, use a humanistic approach for learning with explicit attention for the broader development and the learning process of the adult (Broek & Buiskool, 2013).

## How to attract low educated adults?

Make sure no specific skills are needed to participate (or ensure that they will be learned during the training).

Communicate clearly the learner-centered pedagogy through different information channels to attract non-participants.

Lisse Van Nieuwenhove & Bram De Wever (08 Jan 2024): 'Situational barriers are keeping me from participating', but are they situational? Examining low-educated adults' psychosocial views on adult learning, *Studies in the Education of Adults*, DOI: [10.1080/02660830.2023.2297462](https://doi.org/10.1080/02660830.2023.2297462)



UNIVERSITEIT  
GENT



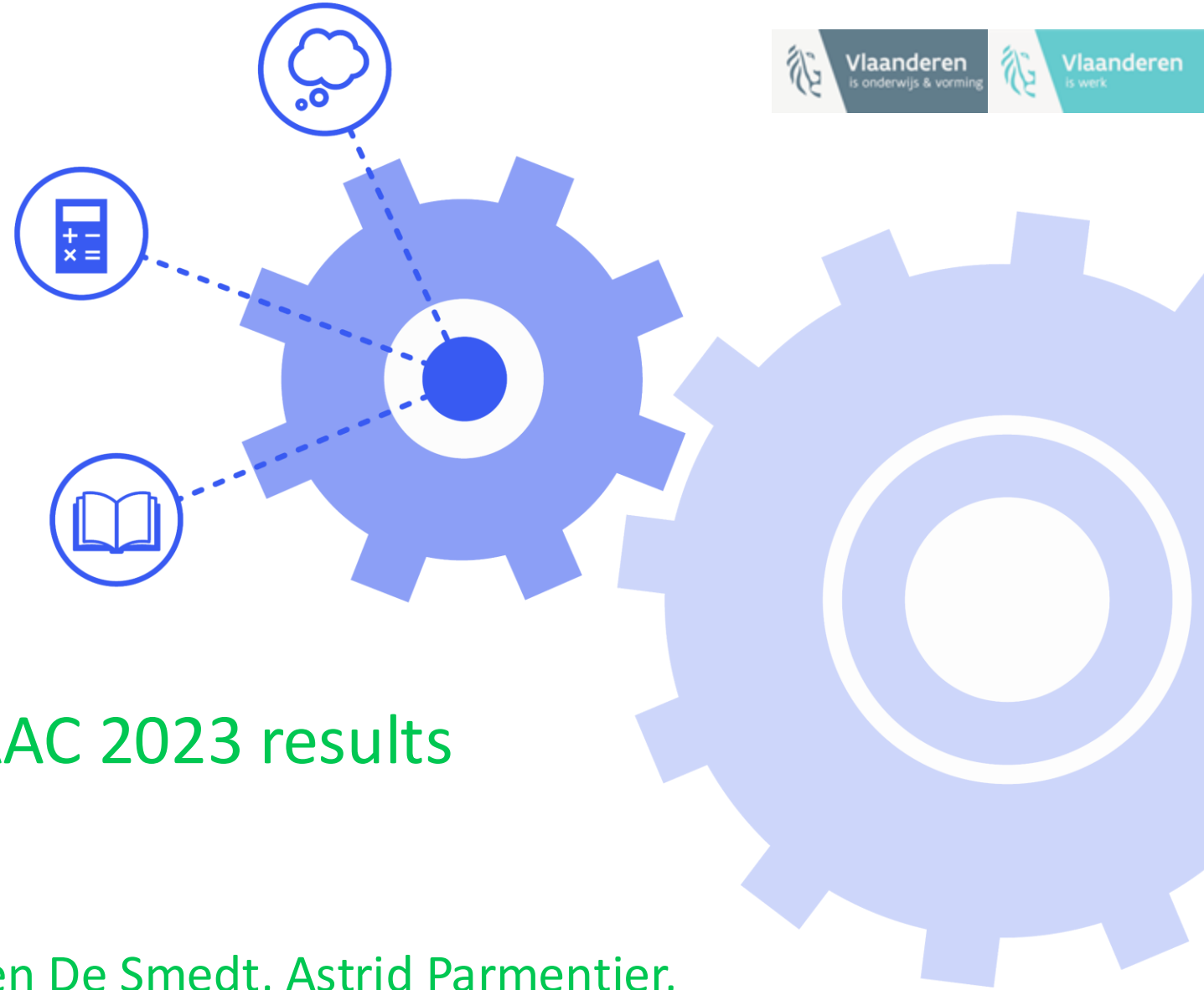
Programme for the International  
Assessment of Adult Competencies



Vlaanderen  
is onderwijs & vorming



Vlaanderen  
is werk



# PIAAC in Flanders

## An analysis of the Flemish PIAAC 2023 results

Bram De Wever ---- Thanks to:

Lisse Van Nieuwenhove, Lisa Dewulf, Fien De Smedt, Astrid Parmentier,  
Sven Sierens, Hilde Van Keer, Jan De Neve, & Martin Valcke