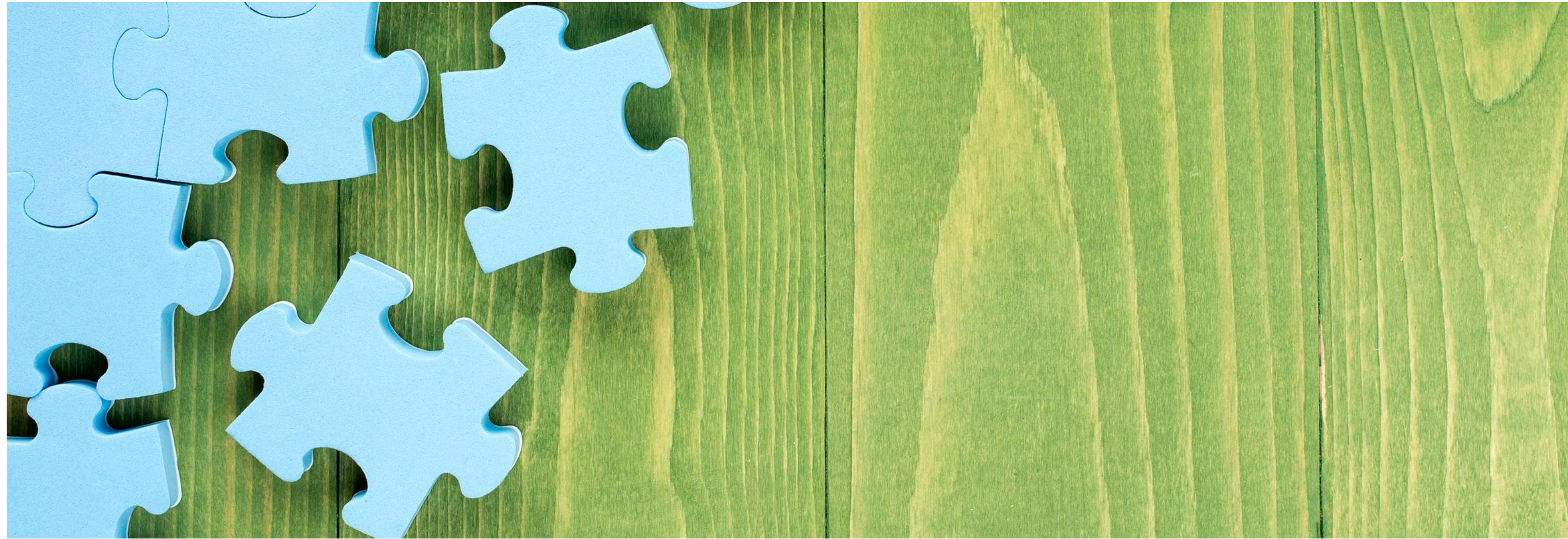


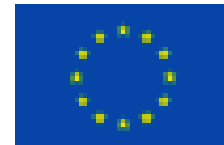


FOUNDATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT
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Breaking the mould? International placements in VET sector of Erasmus+: between promise and practical challenges.



Julita Pieńkosz



Co-funded by
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European
Funds

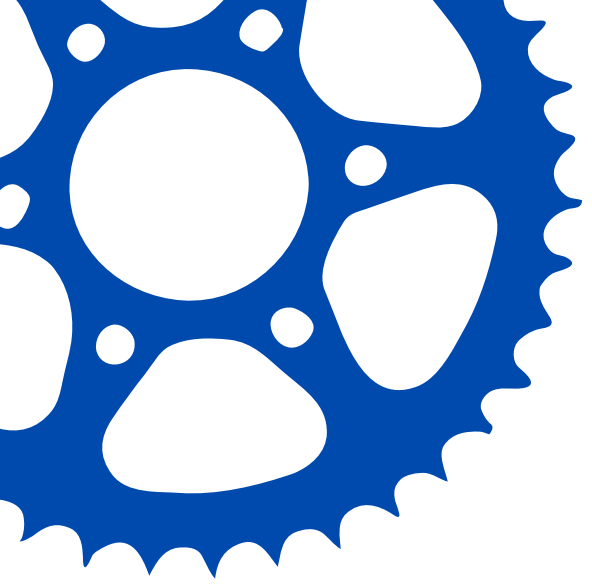
Knowledge Education Development



Republic
of Poland

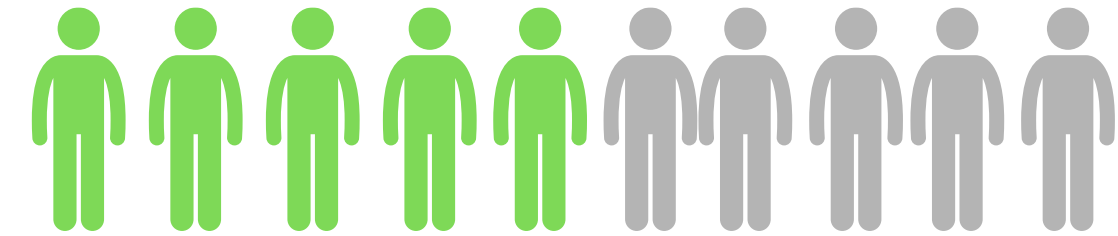
European Union
European Social Fund

**Vocational Education and
Training**



Nearly half of upper secondary students in EU are in IVET.

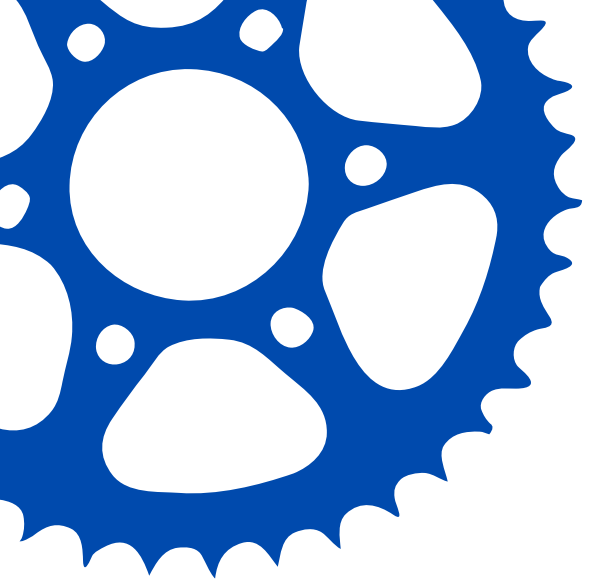
Cedefop calculations based on Eurostat data, 2023



74% EU citizens agree that 'general education has a more positive image than vocational education' in their country,

75% agree that 'students with low grades are directed towards vocational education' in their country.

Cedefop European public opinion survey on vocational education and training, 2017



Disadvantaged students are more likely to enrol in upper secondary vocational education.


OECD (2023), PISA 2022 Results (Volume I): The State of Learning and Equity in Education, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris,

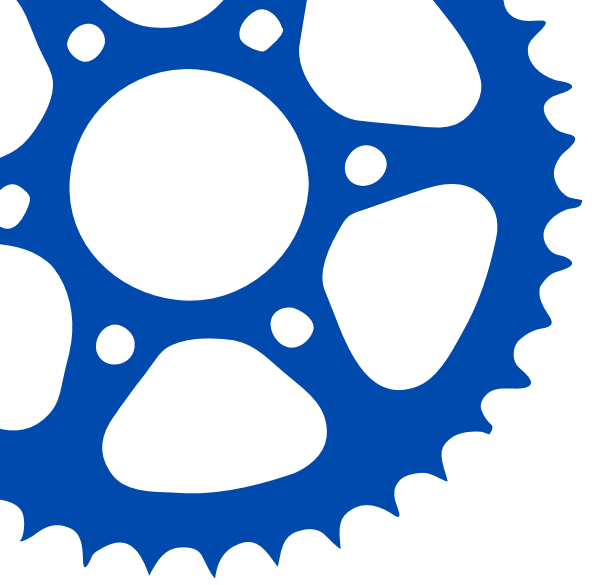
VET students are less likely to complete their programme within its theoretical duration (62%) compared to students in general education (77%).

OECD (2023), Spotlight on Vocational Education and Training: Findings from Education at a Glance 2023, OECD Publishing, Paris.



Key questions

- 
- What do mobility experiences give to VET students in terms of their skills and competences?
 - Do mobilities also affects other students who do not take part directly in international placements?
 - How inclusive are mobility opportunities in practice, both for students and schools?
 - Can mobilities help change how vocational schools are perceived and make them more attractive in their local community?
 - What are the main challenges in organizing mobilities for better inclusion for students and schools?



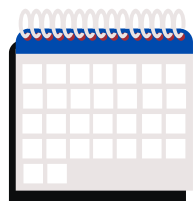
About the study

'The Impact of VET placements on National Educational Systems in Central and Eastern Europe'

Study design



Countries: 6



Year: 2023



Methods



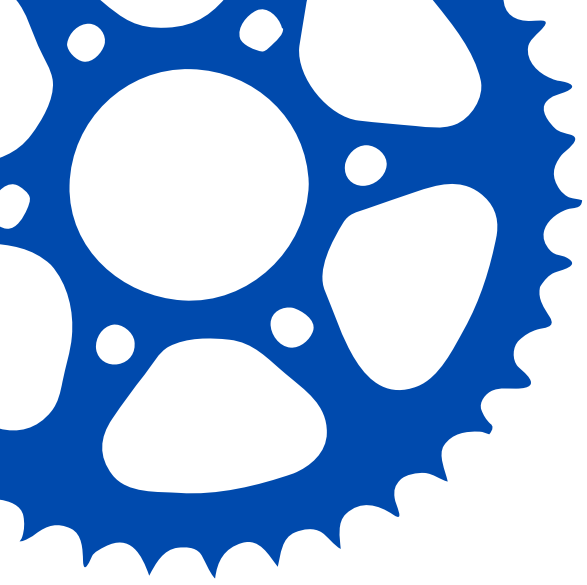
Existing data analysis



Online survey (CAWI) among schools participated in Erasmus+ between 2014-2020



Interviews (IDI) with Erasmus+ coordinators, teachers and school headmasters









About the study

'The impact of VET placements on National Educational Systems in Central and Eastern Europe'

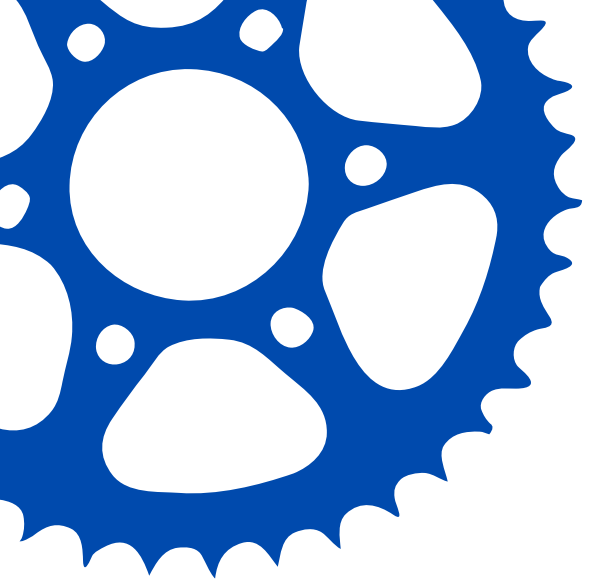
Distribution of interviews by country

Total number of interviews

 <p>Latvia: IDI: 15 Number of valid questionnaire: 40 Rate of completion: 89%</p>	 <p>Slovenia: IDI: 10 Number of valid questionnaires: 57 Rate of completion: 22%</p>
 <p>Czechia: IDI: 12 Number of valid questionnaires: 162 Rate of completion: 42%</p>	 <p>Hungary: IDI: 12 Number of valid questionnaire: 85 Rate of completion: 18%</p>
 <p>Poland: IDI: 25 Number of valid questionnaire: 463 Rate of completion: 25%</p>	 <p>Romania: IDI: 8 Number of valid questionnaire: 102 Rate of completion: 20%</p>

CAWI: 909

IDI: 82

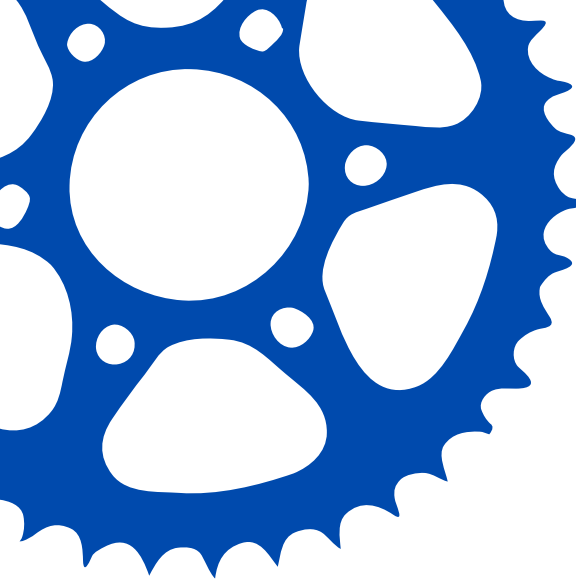


European Union priorities for Vocational Education and Training



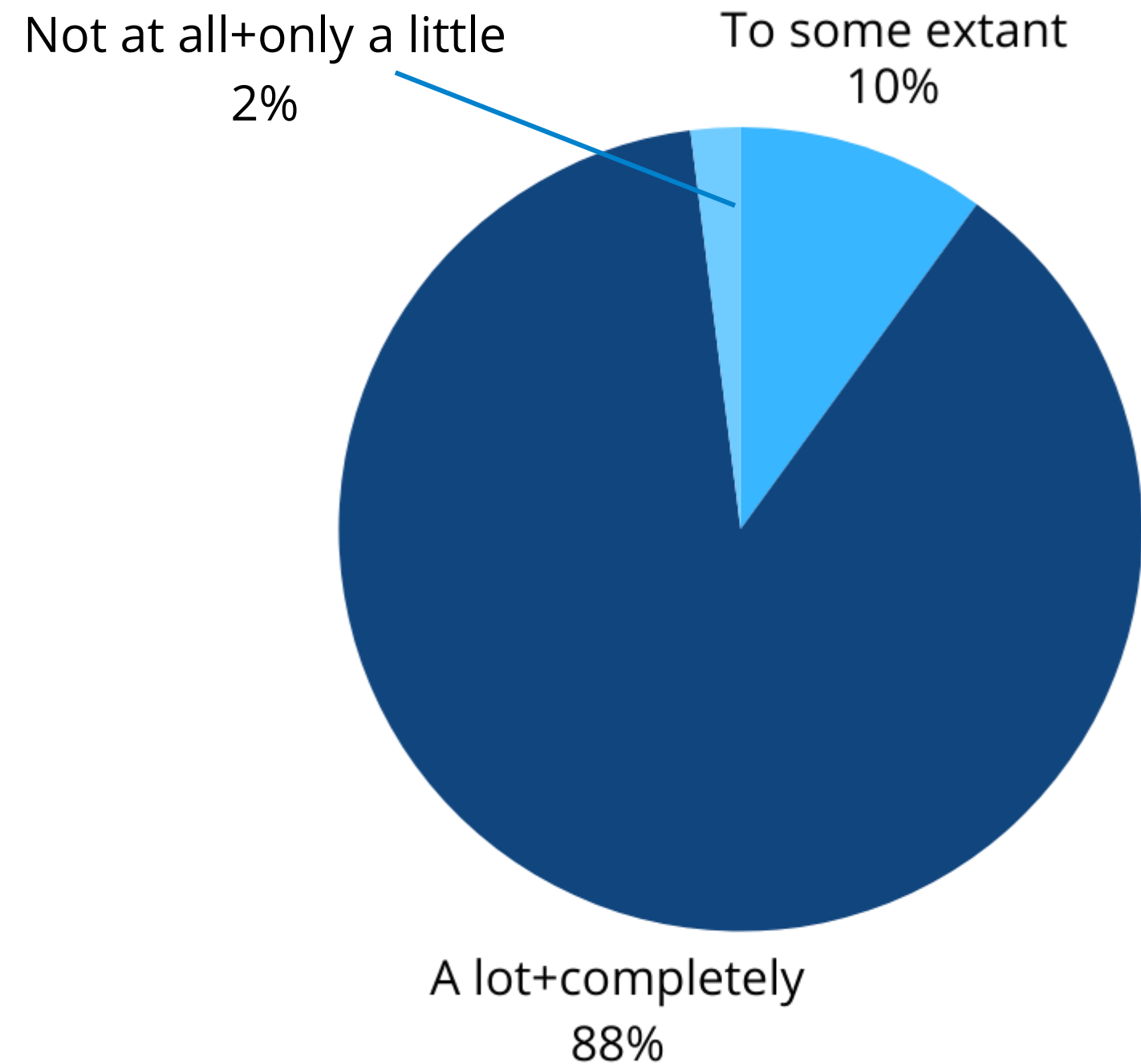
- Agile, flexible
- Attractive and inclusive
- Linked to labour market needs
- Inclusive of emerging trends such as green and digital transitions

Osnabrück Declaration (2020), the Council Recommendation on VET (2020,) Union of Skills (2025)

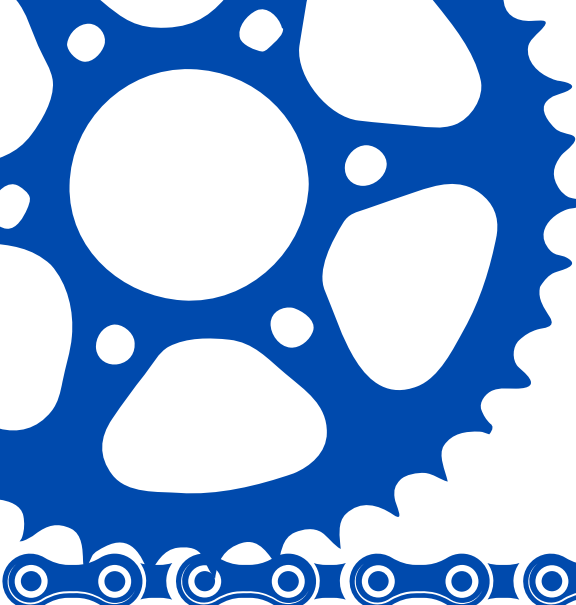


How international placements affect students' future pathways?

Distribution of responses to the question 'To what extent do you agree that international placements positively impact the educational and career pathways of VET graduates?'

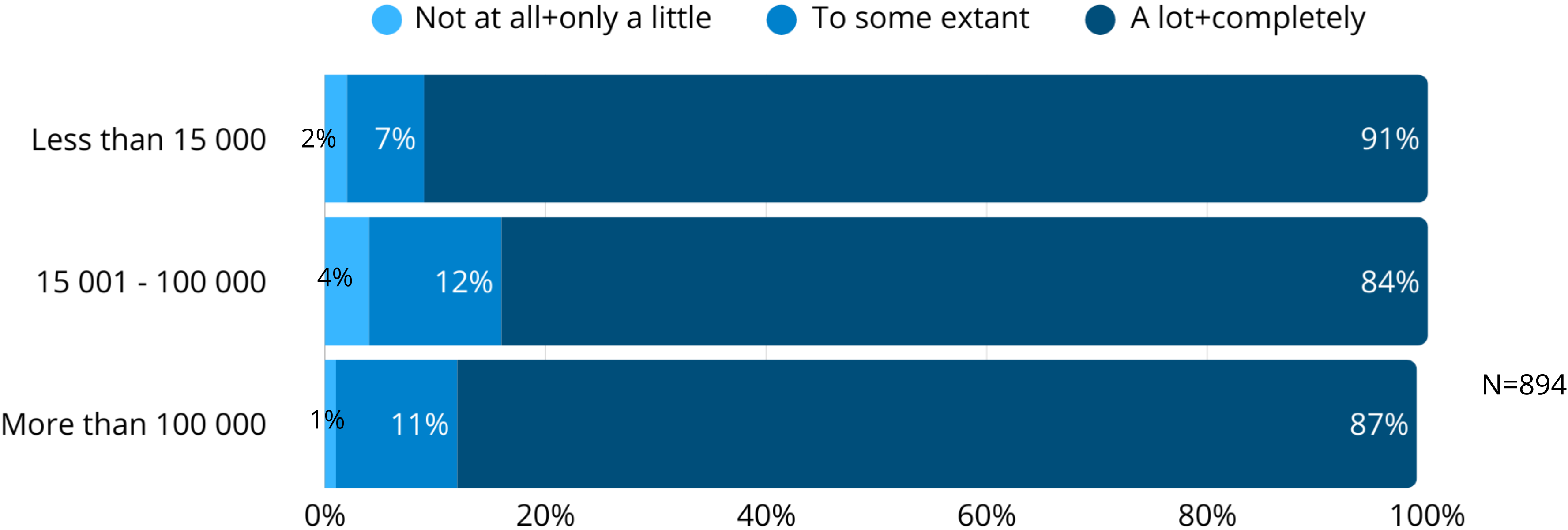


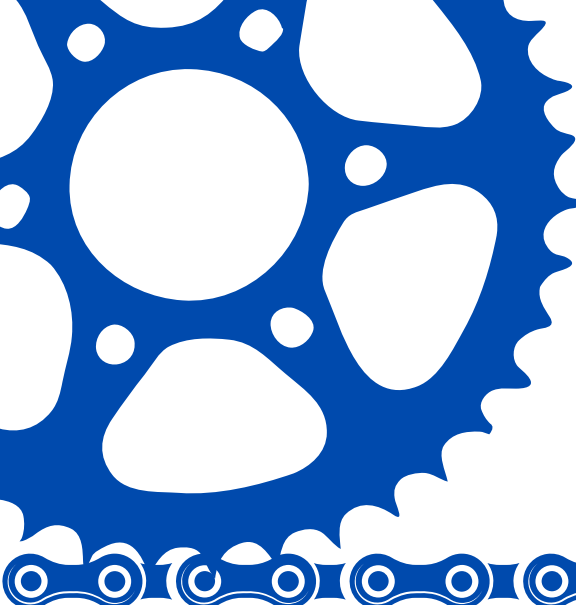
N=894



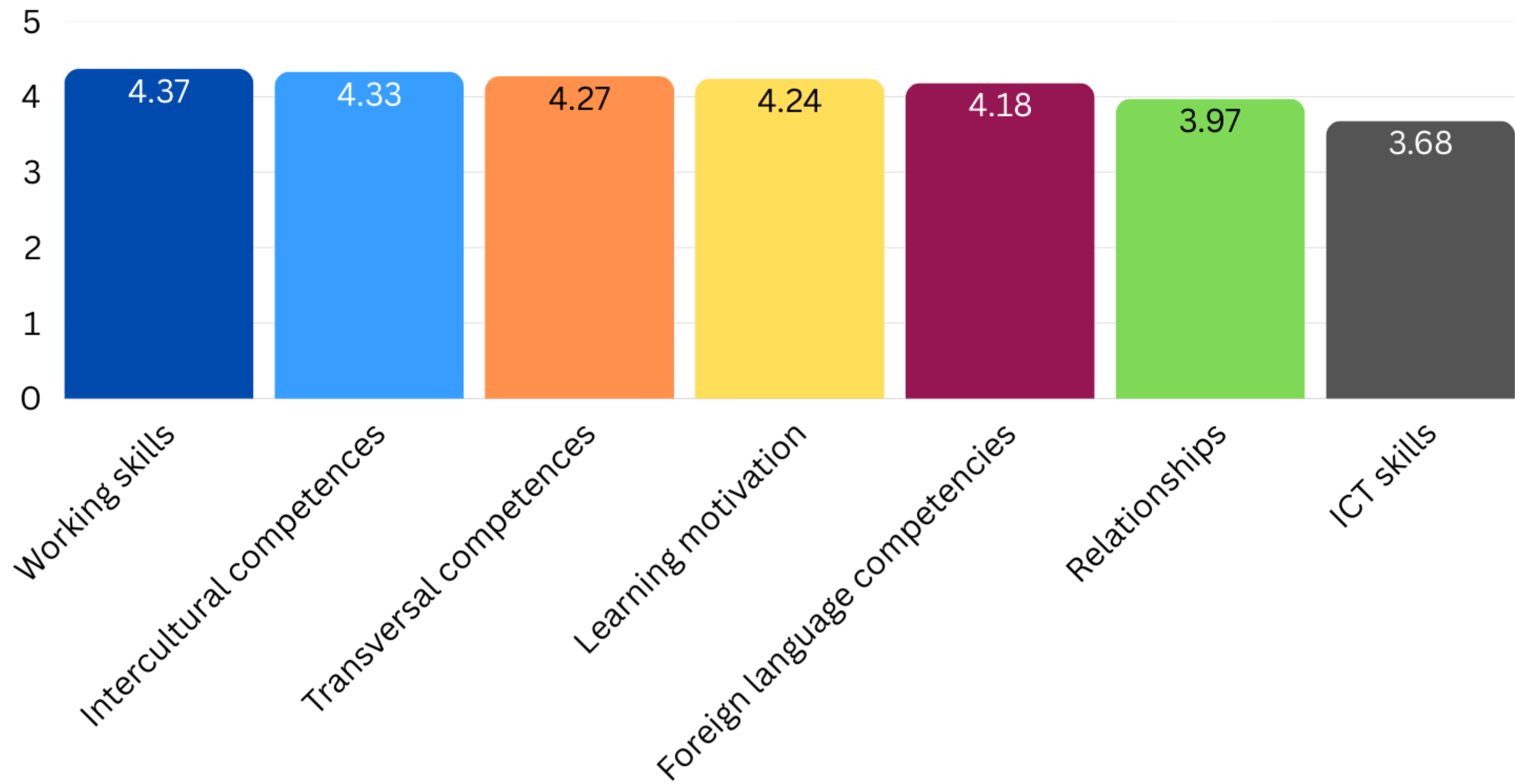
Does the size of the school's locality matter for the impact of international placements on students' future pathways?

Distribution of responses to the question 'To what extent do you agree that international placements positively impact the educational and career pathways of VET graduates?', by the size of town where school is located

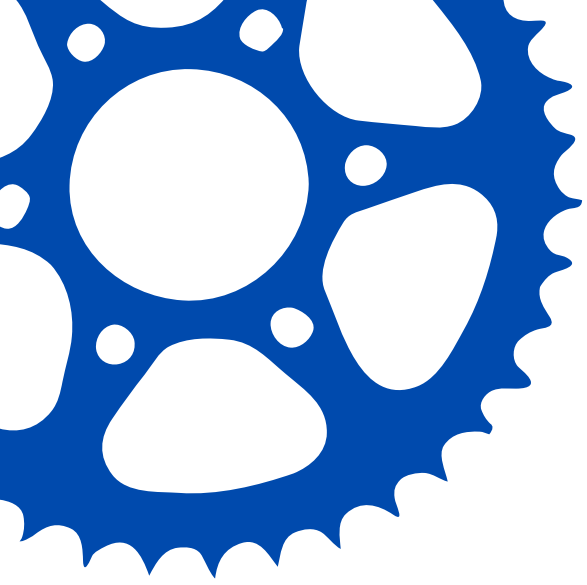




How do international placements affect skills, competences, and personal traits of students participating in them?

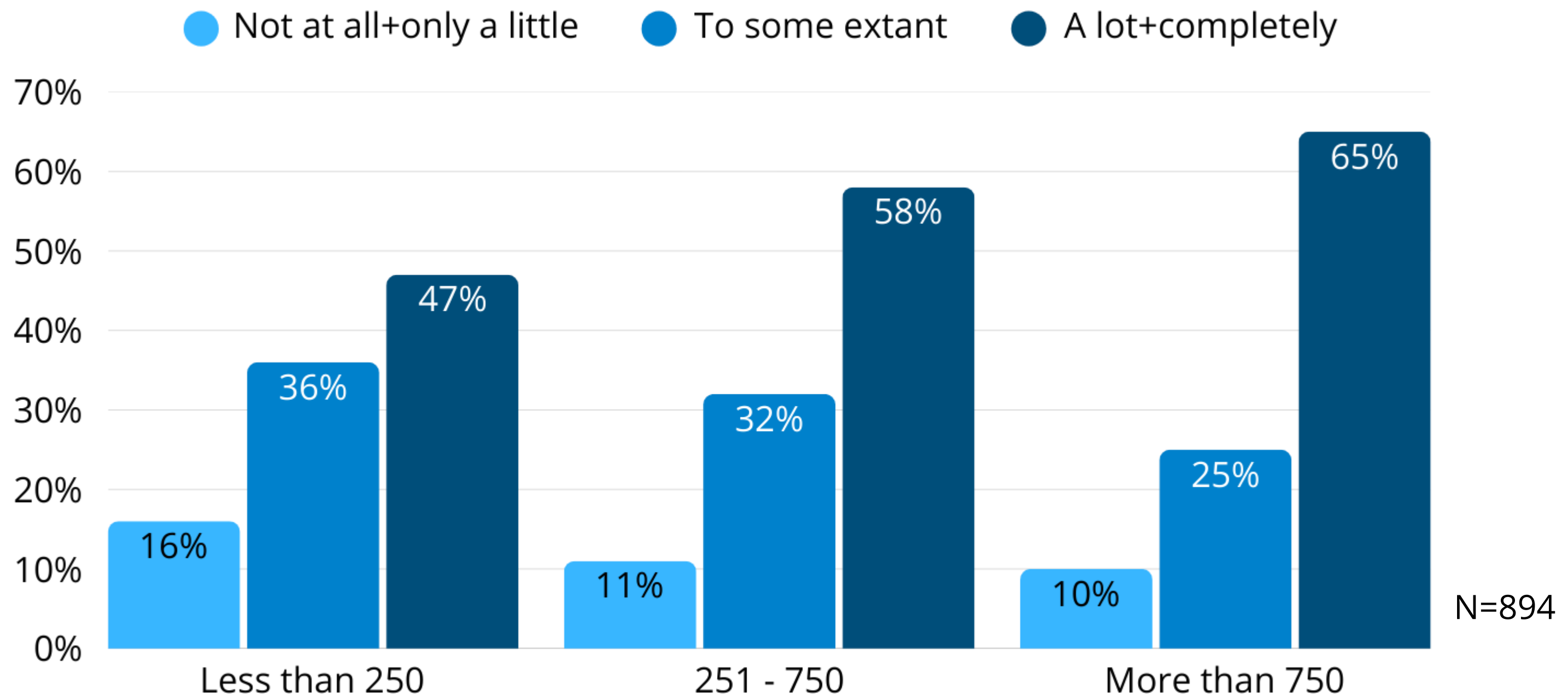


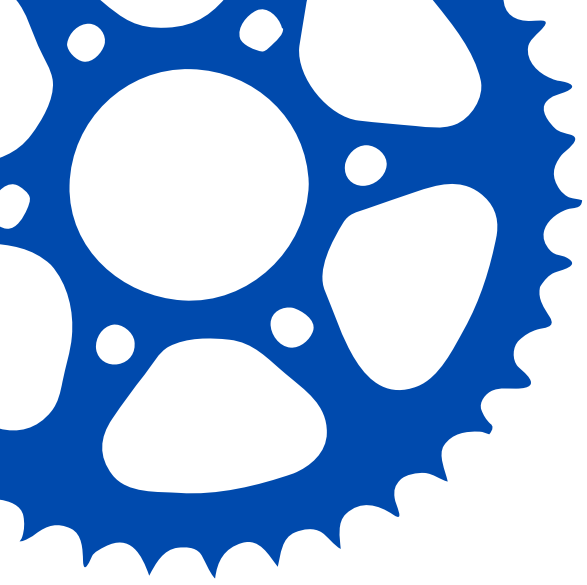
N=894



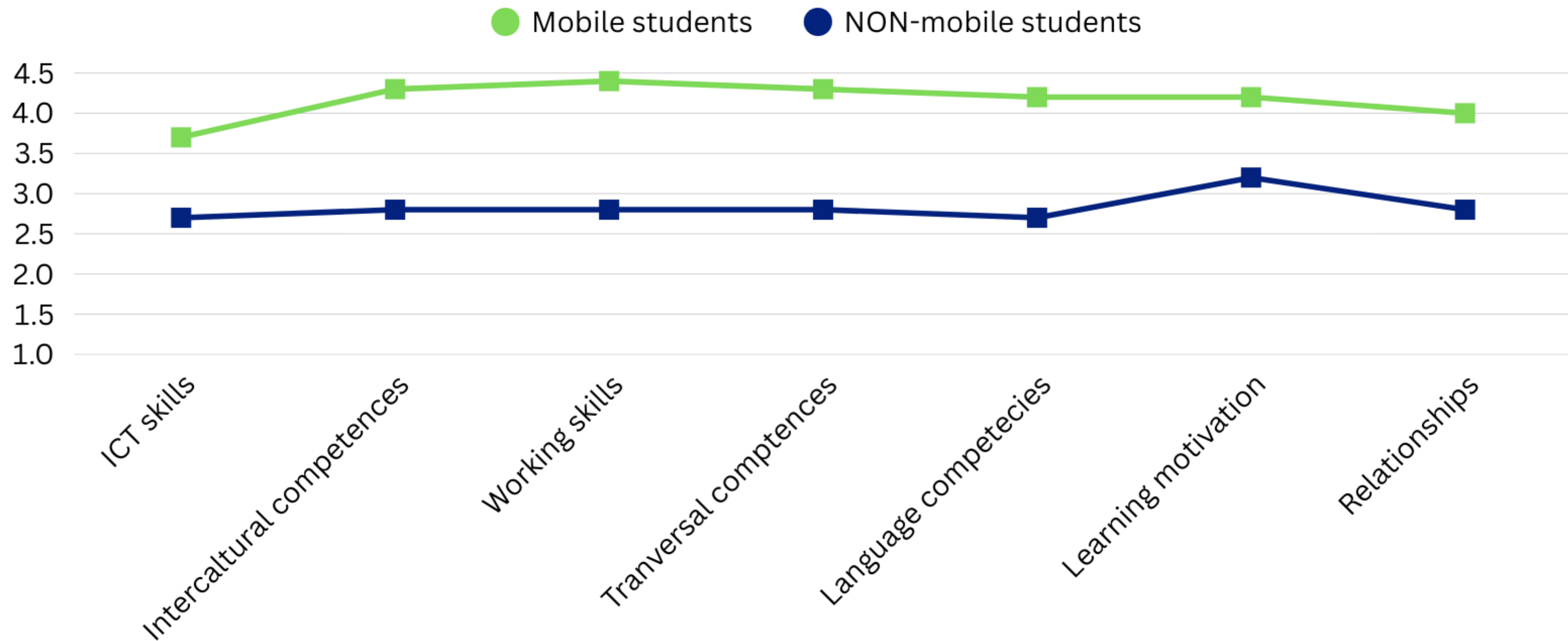
Positive impact of mobilities on increasing mobile students' ICT skills is more frequently declared by responders from larger schools

Distribution of responses to the question 'To what extent do you agree that international placements positively affect increasing ICT skills of students who participate in them?', by the size of school's locality

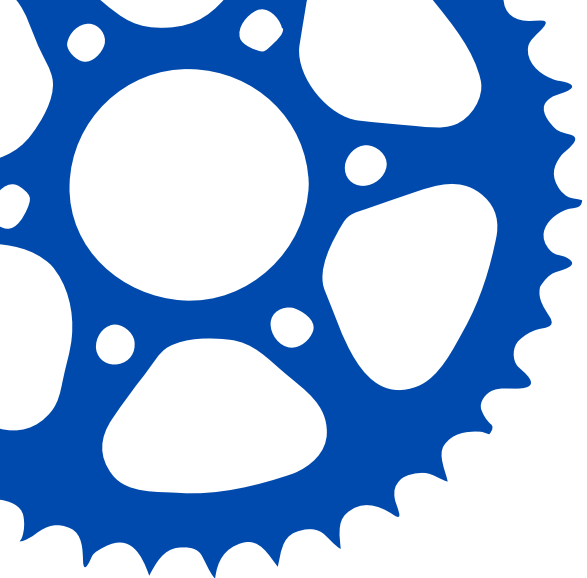




Impact of international placement: mobile students vs. non-mobile students

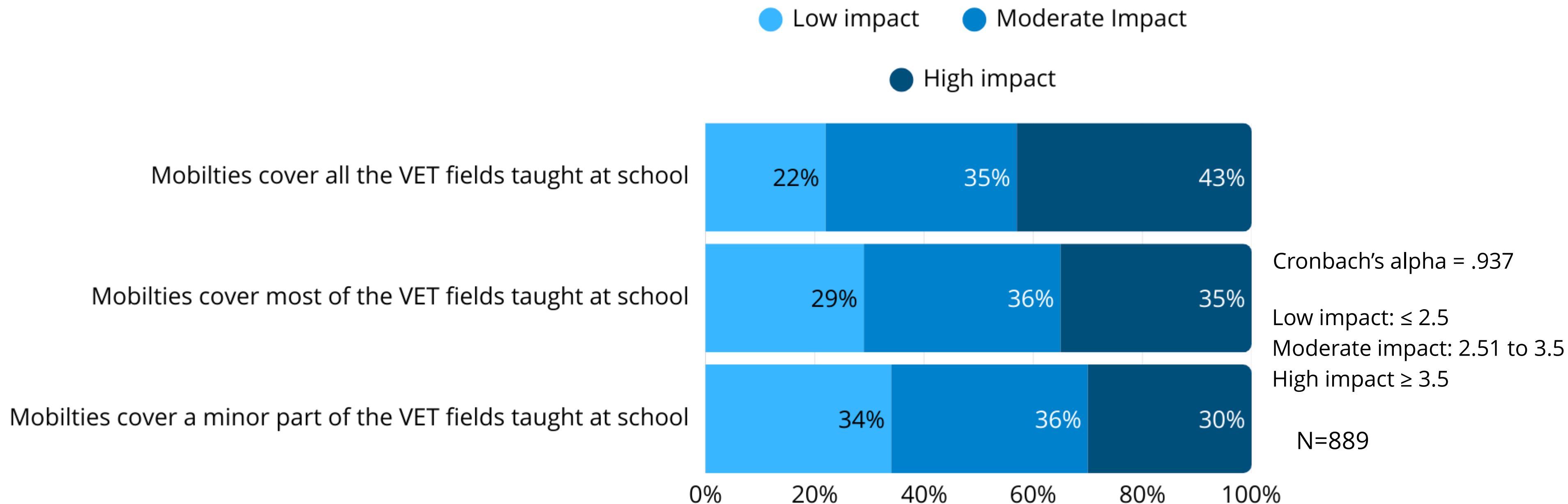


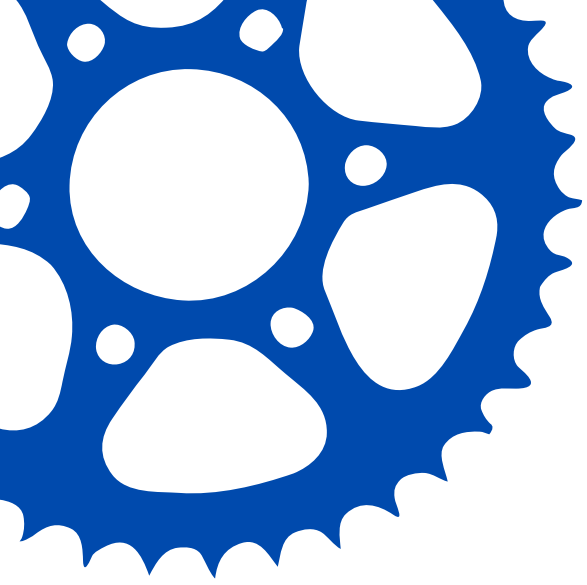
Differences between the mean scores of the individual impact indicators on students,
Mobile group: N=892; NON-mobile group: N=889



In schools organizing mobilities for a broader spectrum of vocational fields high positive impact on increasing motivation to learn is observed more often

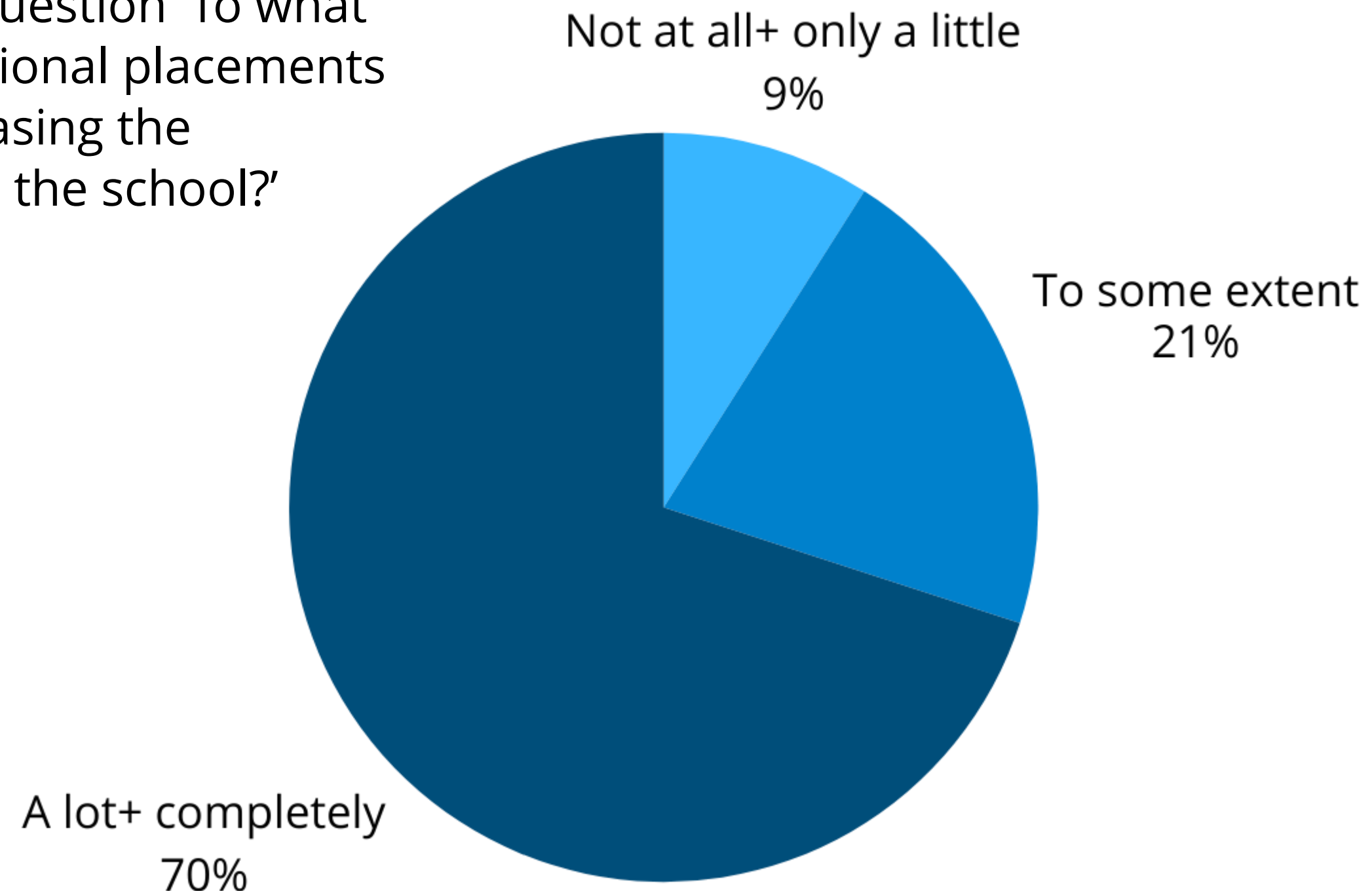
Mobility impact on non-mobile students' motivation to learn, by the scale of mobilities organizes by school



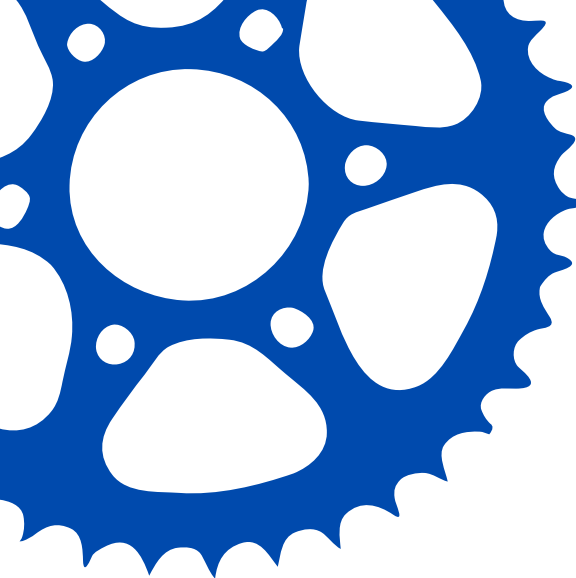


Does organizing international placements increase the number of candidates applying to the school?

Distribution of responses to the question 'To what extent do you agree that international placements have positive impact on the increasing the number of candidates applying to the school?'

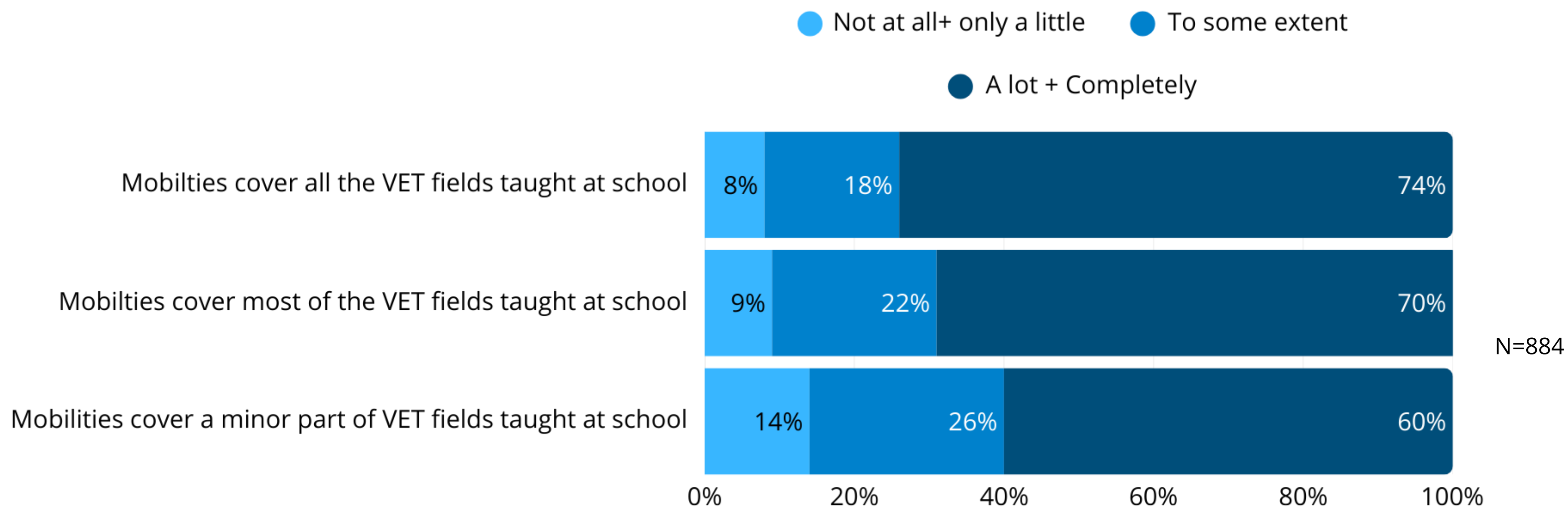


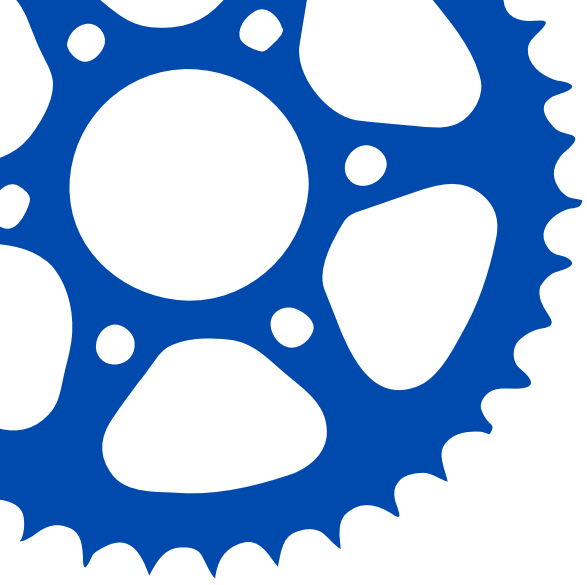
N=884



The broader the range of mobilities organized by a school, the more often respondents perceive a positive impact on increasing the number of candidates

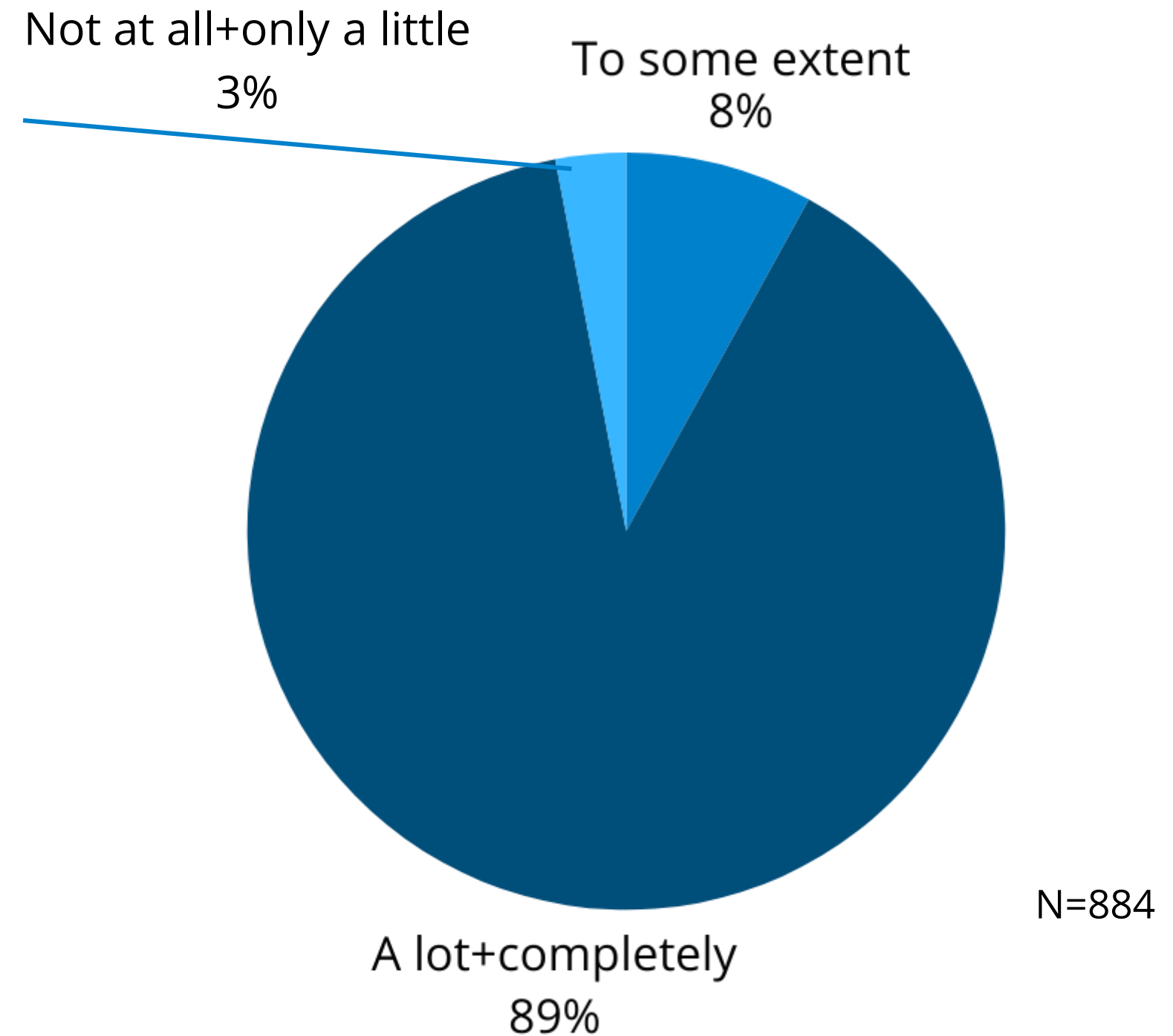
Distribution of responses to the question 'To what extent do you agree that international placements have positive impact on the increasing the number of candidates applying to the school', by the scale of mobilities

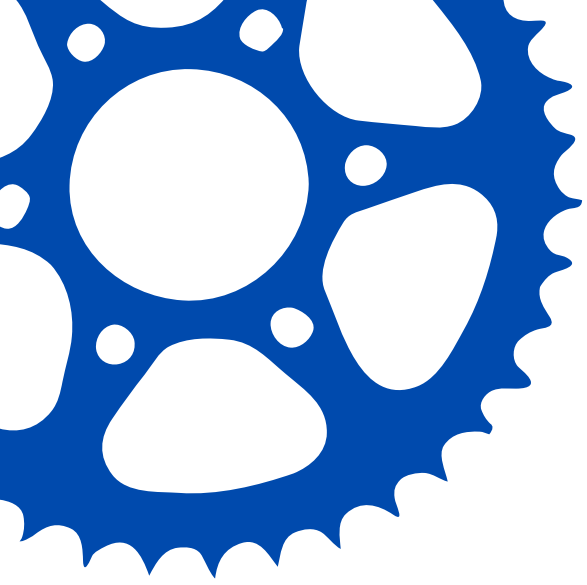




Does organizing international placements increase the schools' prestige?

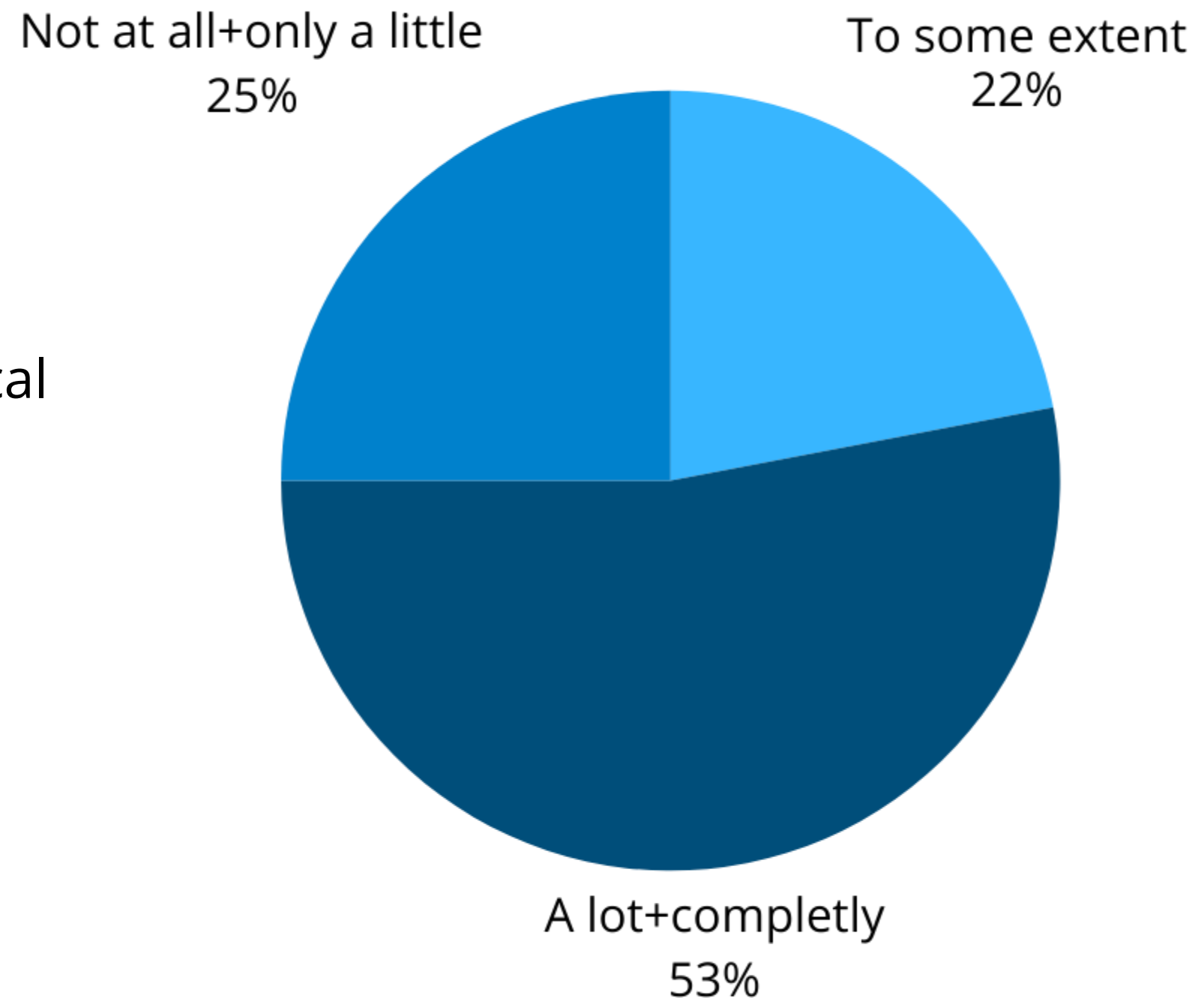
Distribution of responses to the question 'To what extent do you agree that international placements have positive impact on the increasing the school's prestige and positive image in the town/region?'



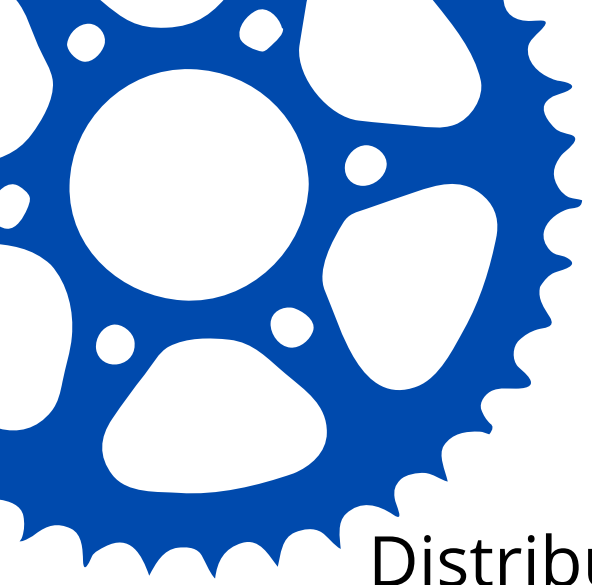


Does organizing mobilities increase local authorities' focus on school internationalization?

Distribution of responses to the question 'To what extent do you agree that international placements have positive impact on paying more attention to the school internationalization activities by the local authorities.'

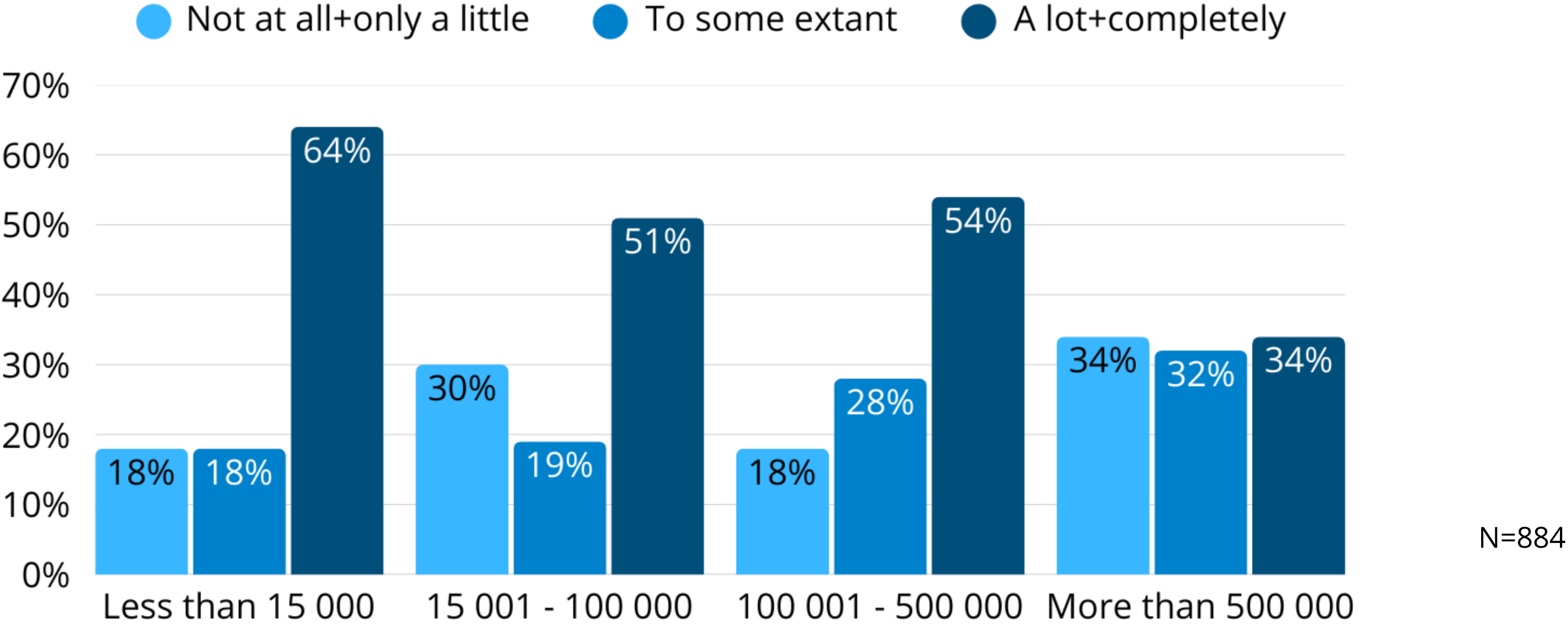


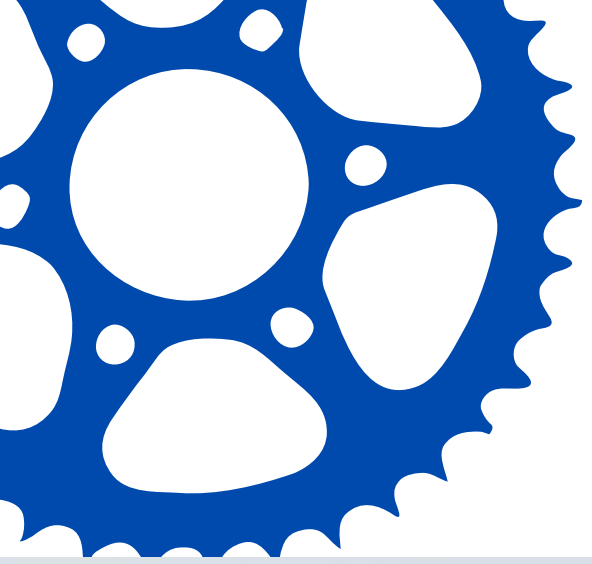
N=884



A positive impact is declared more often in schools located in smallest localities, and least often in the largest ones

Distribution of responses to the question 'To what extent do you agree that international placements have positive impact on paying more attention to the school internationalization activities by the local authorities', by the size of the school locality

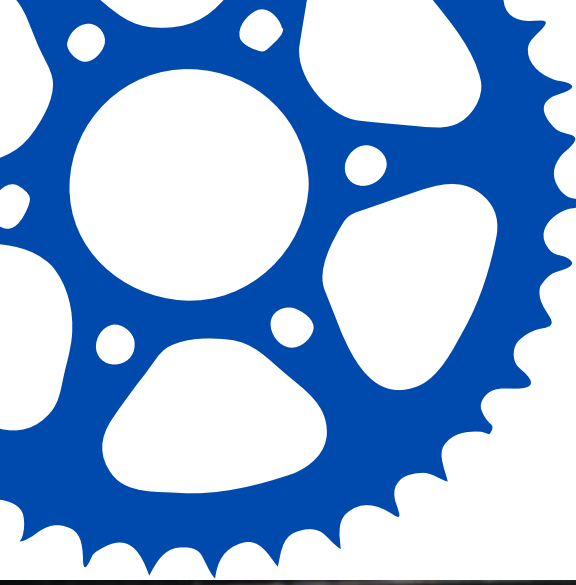




Conclusions



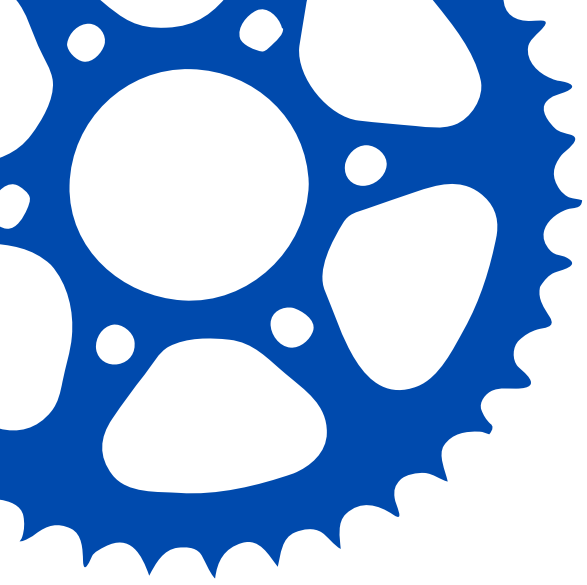
- ✓ Strong impact on students' skills and competences – ICT needs more focus.
- ✓ Limited effect beyond individual participants.
- ✓ Schools use mobilities to boost prestige and attract candidates – visibility to local authorities is limited.
- ✓ *Game changer* for small-town schools?



Challenges in organizing mobilities



- ✓ High entry barriers for schools without prior experience (resource-intensive process for schools, lack of staff and competencies, complex EU systems, evolving documentation).
- ✓ Growing demand vs. limited funds and staff.
- ✓ Complex recruitment for mobilities: often a reward for good performance risking exclusion of disadvantaged students.
- ✓ Lack experience and adequate support to include SEN students.



How can we improve?

ASI

The problem is clearly described and does not require clarification

The problem needs more clarity, add your suggestions

The problem is unclear or too vague, identify what is missing or confusing

Challenges in implementing without formalising during staff and student mobility

II.1.1 Difficulty in finding substitute teachers (particularly vocational teachers) for staff accompanying students on mobility projects during school year. Several contributing factors have been identified.

II.1.1 Staff shortages - many schools already operate with limited teaching personnel.

II.1.2 Lack of willingness among teachers to cover for colleagues, due to increased workload and lack of incentives.

II.1.3 No dedicated funding for substitutes or overtime pay for teachers involved in mobilities; substitution costs are often high and no clear legal or systemic regulations on how to organise and finance teacher replacements.

II.1.4 Limitations on how Erasmus+ funds can be spent, which prevents schools from using the budget to cover substitution costs.

2 Challenges with students catching up on learning after mobility

me students struggle to catch up on missed schoolwork resulting from their absence during the mobility period, particularly in general education subjects. often leads to tensions between students and general subject teachers, who don't the usefulness of international internships and the value of national mobility in relation to the academic losses incurred.

What funding? Where from?

Where do the limitations come from?

How to balance regulations and flexibility?

TASK 3:

What are the main causes of the primary problem

Is it possible to identify a root problem whose solution would unlock others?

Please indicate:

- Symptoms / Problems
- Direct Causes
- Deep Systemic Causes

1, 6, 3

4, 5

1-6

Symptoms / Problems

Direct Causes

Deep Systemic Causes

confusion of schools management due to lack of clear guidelines/regulations

Is E+ a part of national strategies? (E+ should be embedded in educational systems)

The problem affects all countries

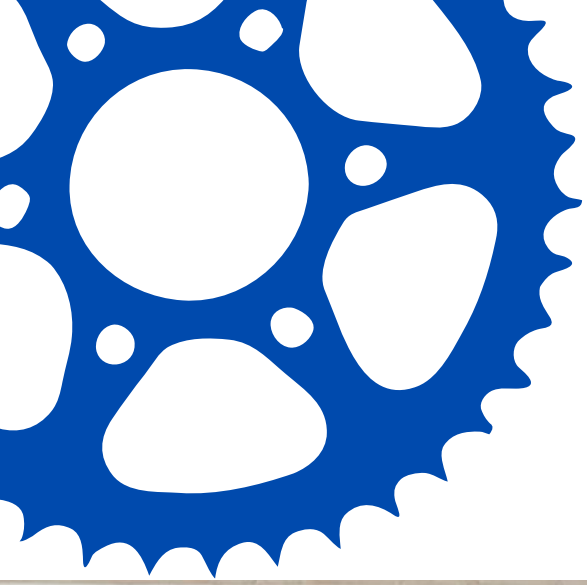
1 2 3 4 5 6

A non-blocking problem that can be lived with.

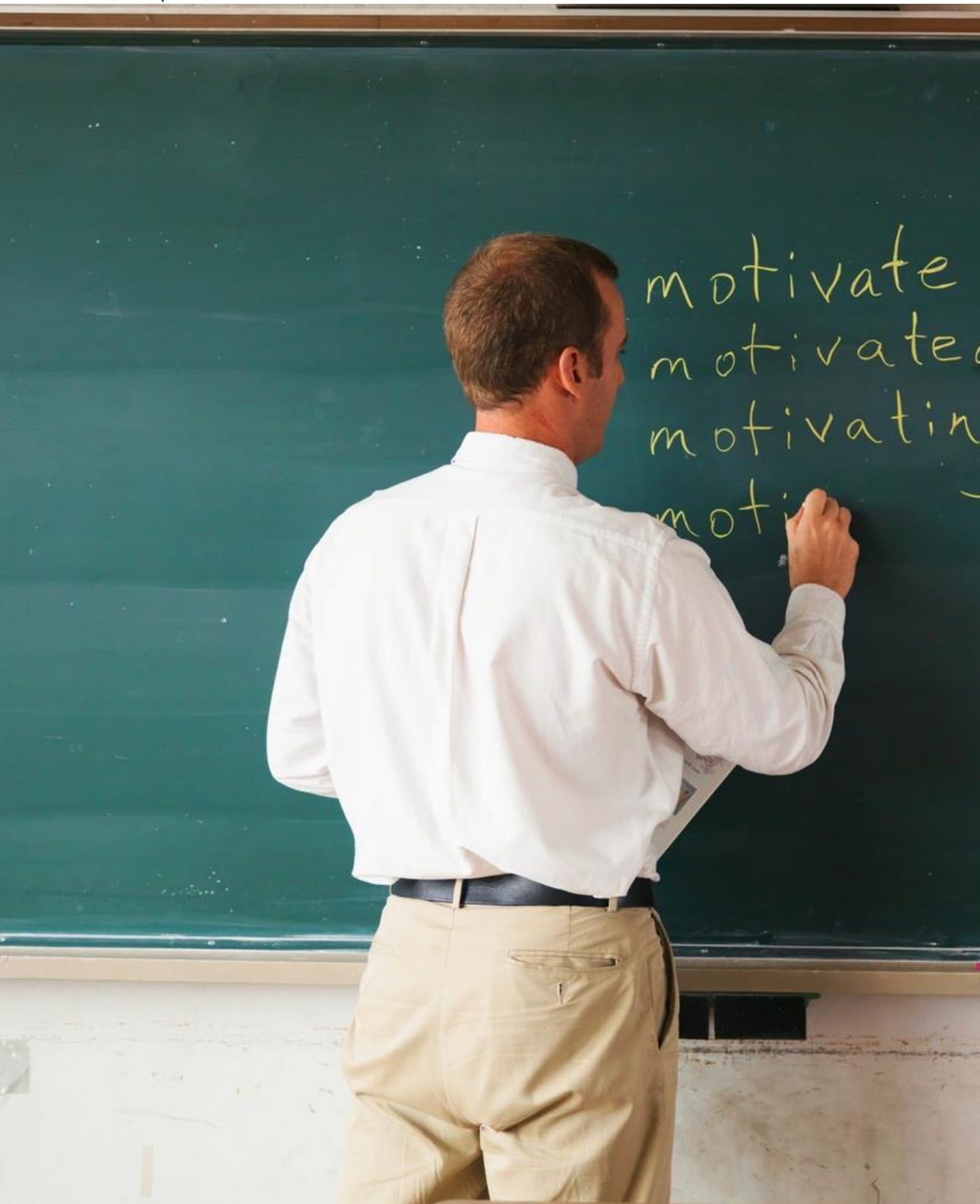
Relevant, yet not critical

A problem blocking quality or accessibility

1 can K4 m-block can be ant



What can schools do?



Start small

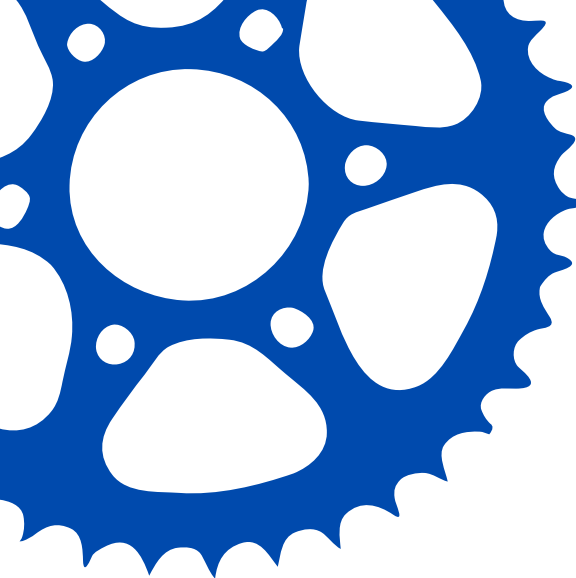
**Virtual and
blended
mobilities**

**Inclusive
preparation**

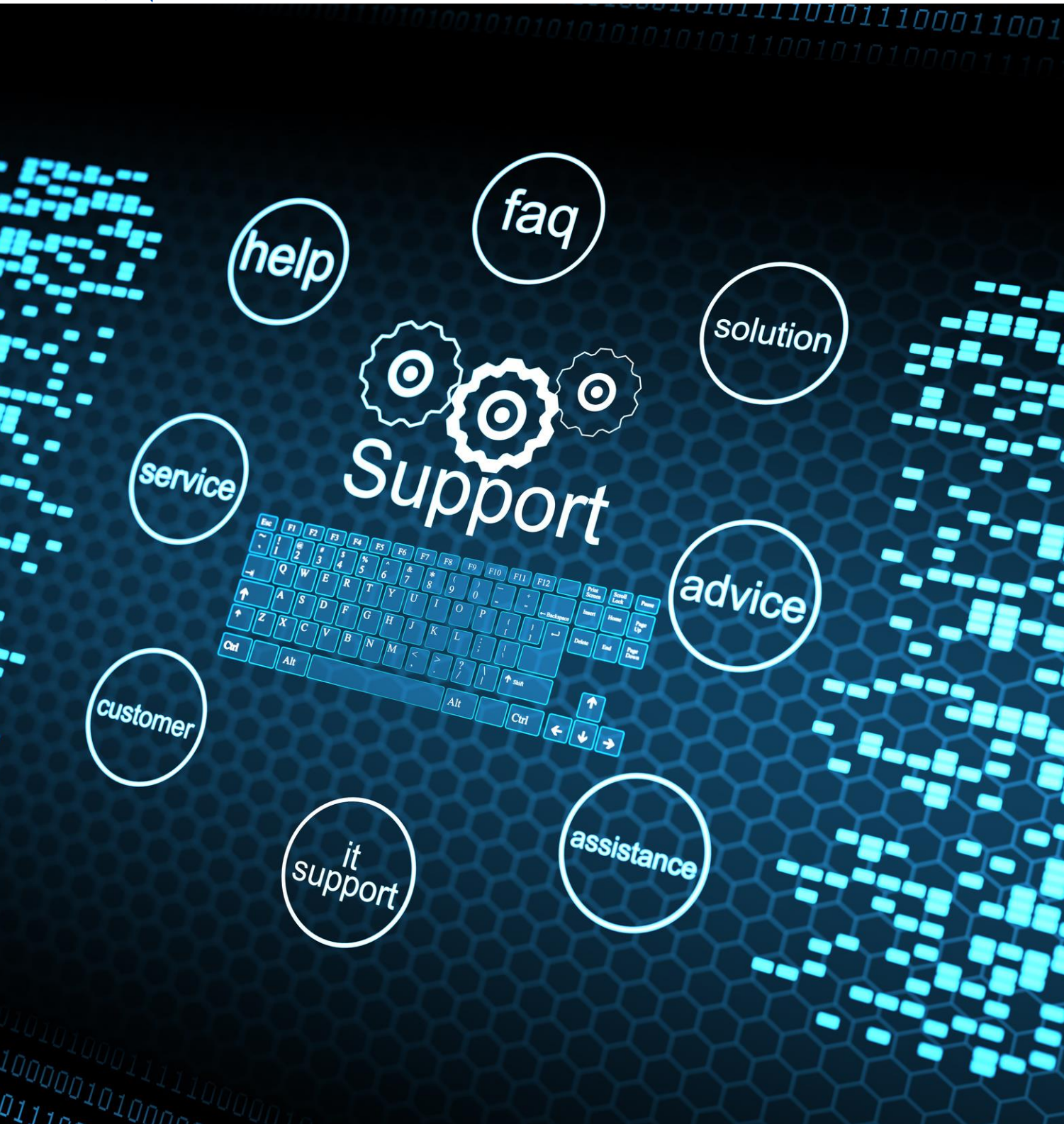
**Ensure
transparency**

**International
ization at
home**

**Hosting
incoming
participants**



What can National Agencies do?

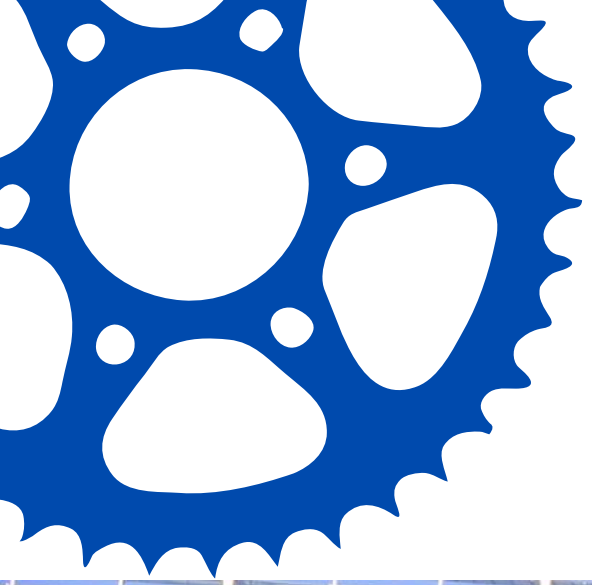


Provision of ongoing technical support for Mobility Tool+ users

Structured opportunities for the exchange of best practices

Establish systems of mentors

Promote strategic leadership and project management capacity within schools



What can decision-makers do?



Increase budget allocation for Key Action 1 in VET sector

Revise the budget allocation system for accredited applicants to better reflect the diverse needs and capacities of schools.

Enable access for small organisations by adapting eligibility or selection criteria to their scale and capabilities

Streamline the application form for completely new applicants under Key Action 1



What else can we do to break the old mould in VET through Erasmus+ international placements?

What else can we do to make mobilities more inclusive for VET students and more accessible for schools?



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Foundation for the Development of the Education System

Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps National

Agency, Poland Aleje Jerozolimskie 142A, 02-305

Warszawa, Poland tel.: 22 463 10 00 | e-mail:

kontakt@frse.org.pl

frse.org.pl | erasmusplus.org.pl | eks.org.pl

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