This is why we evaluate

- Understanding better the reality – *where we were, where we are, where we want to go* – in a public policy strongly financed by the ESF (since at least the 2007-2013 period, but not yet evaluated)

- Public Policy cycle
  - Evaluate to understand the state of the art
  - Evaluate to know where we are, to help to decide were we want to go

- Public Policy as an incremental process

  Support (better) decisions

The Policy Cycle

Agenda Setting

Formulation

Adoption

Implementation

Evaluation

Support / Maintenance
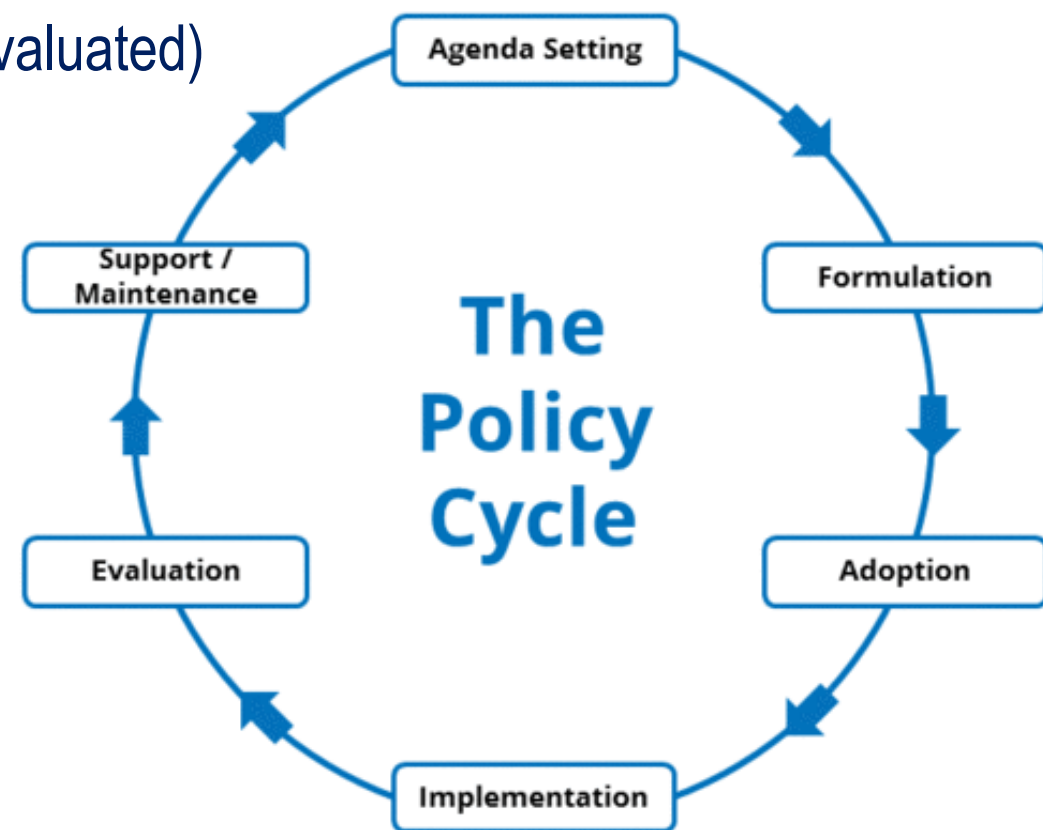
What we have been doing
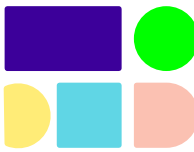
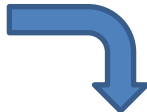| Type	Name of Evaluation	Starting	Timeframe	Status
Program	Midterm evaluation of the POCH	1st semester/2021	2 semesters	Tender launched in August 2021
Thematic (Human Capital)	Evaluation of the Contribution of the European Structural and Investment Funds for Doctoral and Post Doctoral Training	2nd Semester 2017	2 semesters	Follow-up closing in August 2021
	Evaluation of the Contribution of PT2020 to the Promotion of Educational Success, Reduction of Early School Dropout and Youth Employability	1st Semester/2019	3 semesters	Follow-up beginning in July 2021
	Evaluation of the higher education grant system for less privileged students in Portugal	**1st Semester/ 2019**	**3 semesters**	**Data analysis (2nd phase)**
	Evaluation of the Contribution of the Portugal 2020 to qualification improvement and reintegration into the labour market of adults	1st Semester/2020	2 semesters	Midterm report in July 2021
	Evaluation of the Contribution of the Portugal 2020 to the improvement of qualifications and employment conditions of employed adults			
	Evaluation of the Contribution of the Portugal 2020 to Digital Transition in Education	2nd semester 2022	2 semesters	New evaluation

- ✓ Evaluation integrated in a national plan, that involves the evaluation plan of the HC OP…
- ✓ …that covers the main areas of investment in the 2014-2020 period in the human capital domain (funded by more than one OP)…
- ✓ …and, in that context, the support of ESF to the higher education grant system involves almost 750 Million € of investment until 2020, with more than 175 thousand students involved.

Cofinanciado por:

Evaluation best friend – Monitoring
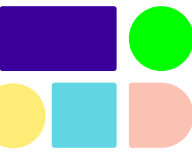
- Monitoring systems to feed Evaluation - especially needed for Counterfactual impact evaluation, that needs (a lot of) information about participants and non-participants, in this case, in the higher education system

- Monitoring as ongoing knowledge production system

- Understanding different levels of outcomes and results:

    i. Data desegregation on the characteristics of participants and non participants (attention the need to respect personal data protection rules)

    ii. Indicators to support political decision and political adjustments of higher education grant system, bearing in mind the main target – increase the population with higher education, in line with the target for 2020 in our national reform programme

    iii. As the full understanding of the reality isn't possible ("the holly grail"), monitoring is especially useful as the starting point to evaluate the effects/impact of the policy

"If you don't reveal some insights soon, I'm going to be forced to slice, dice, and drill!"

It's not only the destination, it's the ride
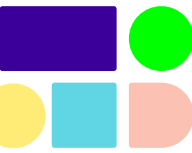
- In every policy process, and in every stage the involvement and alignment of the stakeholders is crucial – a continuous learning process

- Steering Group (as always) created to support evaluation process - in the case presented, involving especially the Directorate General for Higher Education (DGES), national body responsible for this public policy in Portugal and the Directorate General of Education and Science Statistics (DGEEC), besides the OP's that support this policy under evaluation and our national agency responsible for the technical coordination of the European Funds, the Agency for Development and Cohesion (AD&C).

- Relevance for the consolidation of an "evaluation culture"

General challenges and perspectives
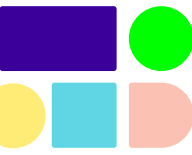
Main Challenges

- Limited specialized resources in evaluation, especially in counterfactual methods, in quantity and quality, in the market and in our public administration

- Data Protection Legislation
  - ➢ Example of Evaluation of the higher education grant system for less privileged students in Portugal

- Follow-up of conclusions and recommendations

Main Perspectives

- Growing evaluation culture, associated with the needs of more transparency and accountability

- Stakeholders stronger involvement
  - ➢ Monitoring committees/groups

- Government institution to support political decision - PlanApp

Counterfactual impact evaluation – specific challenges
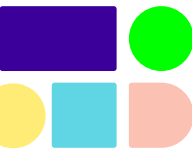
- It's accuracy **depends on the type of policy and dimension**

Examples

➤ Evaluation of the higher education grant system – it's hard, but possible, to have individuals with similar profiles to compare with the control group

➤ Evaluation of the Contribution of the Portugal 2020 to qualification improvement and reintegration into the labour market of adults – In this case CIE is quite accurate because we can isolate the treatment group and compare it with the society in general (individuals with the same characteristics in control group)

- If the policy is too specific or variations through the territory, **it's harder to established groups to compare participants and non-participants**

Example

➤ Evaluation of the Contribution of PT2020 to the Promotion of Educational Success, Reduction of Early School Dropout and Youth Employability – to find similar enough individuals we had to decrease the groups dimension (yet still representative)

We're just starting to plan our evaluation. Which methods should we consider?

All of them.

Counterfactual impact evaluation – specific perspectives
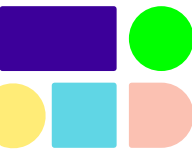
- The **reinforcement of the monitoring systems/administrative data bases** (big data) and of the capacities to treat that information **as a key condition for CIE**

Example

➢ Evaluation of the higher education grant system – the different data bases mobilize for the evaluation, from the monitoring system of the European funds/ESF, from DGES and the statistical data from DGEEC, were crucial to support the CIE still underway

- The **development of "know-how"** in programming and implementing CIE

Examples

➢ The Evaluation of the higher education grant system (almost finished) and the Evaluation of the Contribution of PT2020 to the Promotion of Educational Success, Reduction of Early School Dropout and Youth Employability (finished) - evaluations integrated in the Human Capital OP evaluation plan that mobilized counterfactual evaluation methodologies (exclusively, in the first case, and integrated with other methods, in the second one)

ORGANIZAÇÃO:

European Commission

Evaluate or Evaluate...
the question is how and when

Joaquim Bernardo | POCH Board President

Cofinanciado por:

Evaluation of the Higher education grant system for less privileged students

Elena Meroni

September 16, 2021,

Why CIE?

1. **Design**

2. **Data**

European Commission

Design: how are treated students selected?

1. The students household does not have an adequate minimum level of financial resources.

2. The student completed successfully the previous academic year

▶ We focus on **first year students,** applying for the **first time** to the scholarship, and that the year prior to application were enrolled in **0 credits**.

   ▶ "*To have a **household per capita income** less or equal to (14)16 times the indexing of social benefits in force at the beginning of the school year, plus the amount of the annual tuition fee set for the 1st cycle of studies of public higher education.*"

Very clear selection process: all students whose income is below the threshold receive the grant, all the ones whose income is above do not receive the grant

European Commission

Data

The information used for this analysis comes from two sources of **administrative data.**

1. Information on students applying to the scholarship from 2012 to 2018 provided by the Directorate-General of Higher Education in Portugal (**DGES**).
   - Cross sectional information referred to the application year
2. Information about their academic career and progression provided by the Directorate-General for Statistics on Education and Science (**DGEEC**).
   - Student situation measured in December of each academic year

- These two datasets are merged based on a **unique student identifier**.
- The analysis includes more than **90.000** individuals (first year, first applicants)

European Commission

Outcome variables

The main outcomes of interested can be grouped into five categories:

1. Whether the student is enrolled in the course in December of the first year(**immediate drop out**)
2. Whether the student is **enrolled** in the course at the end of the first year (beginning of second year),
   - In the course applied for the scholarship
   - In another course of the same level for which she applied for the scholarship
   - In any course of the same level for which she applied for the scholarship
   - Drop out (not found in database for that year)
3. If the course he applied for the scholarship, how many **credits** were obtained that year,
4. Whether the student **graduated** and if so, if graduation was **on time**
5. Which is the **final grade**. (only for graduation from the same course)

European Commission

Other variables of interest

Variables available for each year a student applies to the scholarship:

- ► **Socio-demographic characteristics** (gender, date of birth, region of residence, household composition, nationality, disability, etc.)
- ► Detailed **information of the university** chosen by the student (type of university, type of degree, field of study, exact name of the course, attending regime, region, current academic year, current curricular year)
- ► The **per capita income** (which is used to determine whether the student is eligible for the scholarship)
- ► The result of the application, and in case of rejection the reason why the scholarship was not granted.

European
Commission

Empirical Strategy

- **Objective:** To analyse the effect of the higher education grant on academic success.
- We exploit the fact that only students with per-capita income below the income threshold received the scholarship: Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD)
- The per-capita income used to assess eligibility is the **"running variable"**.

European Commission

Summary: Full sample

- The analyses on the full sample of first year students show:
  - A -small- negative probability of immediate drop out (1 percentage point)
  - a positive effect of the scholarship on the probability of being enrolled in higher education at the end of the first year. (2 p.p. higher)
  - no difference in the number of credits obtained.
  - a positive effect on the probability of graduating. (4.5 p.p) and of graduating in time (5 p.p.)

European Commission

Heterogeneity analysis

- The results from the heterogeneity analysis show that the impact of the scholarship is different by students' characteristics:
  - The effect is higher for **males** (Probabilities are double!)
  - for students residing in **regions funded by ESF,** (no effects in non-ESF funded regions)
  - for students attending Public universities
  - and most of the effects are driven by the Arts and Humanities, Services, and Engineering fields.

European Commission

Discussion, challenges & next steps

► **Challenges:**

    1. Data protection issues (personal data) and type of data (income)

        ► Long process involving several parties
        ► Need to find a compromise!
        ► Now we have an agreement to legally get the relevant data

    2. Data coming from 2 different data sources

► **Next steps:**

    1. Extend this analysis on the full sample of students:
        ► Study the impact on students in higher grades
        ► Study the dynamic impact of receiving the scholarship for students receiving the scholarship for several years.

    2. Use both eligibility criteria:
        ► Per capita - income
        ► Number of credits the previous years

European Commission

Thank you for your attention!

European Commission

Evaluating the impact of the support from the Regional Operational Programme for Podlaskie Region for 2014-2020 (ROPPV 2014-2020) on the promotion of vocational education in Podlaskie

Porto, 16.09.2021

Podlaskie

Population - 1 152 000
3% of Poland

58 People per km²
Poland - 122
EU (27) - 109

GDP per capita -
(in purchasing power
standards)
52,6% of EU average
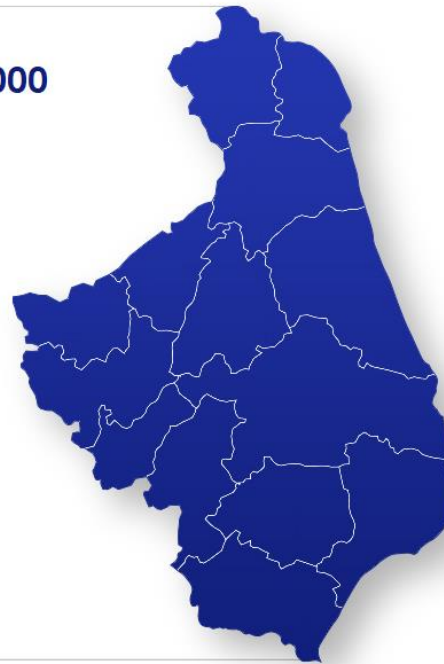
The diagnosis of the situation in the vocational education:

- ✓ low attractiveness of vocational education,
- ✓ stereotypical approach to the quality of vocational education,
- ✓ insufficient cooperation with employers,
- ✓ insufficient practical preparation of school graduates,
- ✓ skills do not match the needs of employers.

Objective: promotion of vocational education

ROPPV 2014-2020- ESF PI 10iv

Implementation period – 04/2017-04/2019

Beneficiary: Białystok Foundation for Professional Training + 6 partners (2 cities, Association of Bialystok Functional Area, Łomża Local Government Forum; Chamber of Crafts and Centre of Teacher Training)

EU funding:

1 100 000 Euro

The area of project implementation –

the whole region/ 4 subregions

Target groups:

✓ 145 lower secondary schools (minimum 60% of schools from each subregion),

✓ 9400 students of lower secondary schools,

✓ 2400 parents of students,

✓ 420 people – employment counsellors, psychologists, educators,

✓ 61 vocational schools,

✓ 178 people – school headmasters and staff of vocational schools.

GOOD PROFESSION – GREAT LIFE: Promotion of Vocational Education in Podlaskie region

Tasks:

- ✓ Educational and vocational fairs
- ✓ Study visits of students to enterprises
- ✓ Mentoring meetings of students with employers
- ✓ Competitions dedicated to different professions
- ✓ Implementation of short video forms about professions (publication i.e. on youtube)
- ✓ Educational and vocational counseling
- ✓ Support for parents (workshops)
- ✓ Support for vocational training schools in the field of promotion and recruitment

Project evaluation:

✓ The purpose of the evaluation - the assessment of the impact of the support from the ROPPV (from the project) on the promotion of vocational education in the Podlaskie region

✓ Scope of contract prepared in cooperation with the Evaluation Steering Group

✓ Evaluation timeline – the use of recommendations

✓ The methodological minimum for the Contractor:

- TBE (theory based evaluation)

- CIE (counterfactual impact evaluation)

- Desk research

✓ The evaluation concept assessed during evaluation of tenders

Lessons learnt:

✓ recommendation workshop - MA + evaluator - **good practice**;
   more useful recommendations
✓ 9 recommendations - to be implemented partially or fully
✓ counterfactual methods useful for evaluation of ESF support
   effectiveness; limitations of control group availability
✓ challenges during evaluation: limitations of public tenders, Covid
   restrictions

Thank you for your attention

Wioletta Dąbrowska
Deputy Director of
Regional Development Department
in the Marshal Office of Podlaskie Voivodeship

wioletta.dabrowska@wrotapodlasia.pl

Impact of the "GOOD PROFESSION – GREAT LIFE" project on the promotion of vocational education in the Podlaskie region

Małgorzata Zub

Porto, 16 Sep 2021

Evaluation funded from Technical Assistance under the Podlaskie region Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020

The educational system in Poland and project participants

At the beginning of the project:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		

Early childhood education 0-3 | Early childhood educ. 4-6 | Primary school 7-12 (optional: 6-11) | Lower secondary 13-15 (option. 11-14) |

Basic vocational

Upper secondary vocational

Upper secondary general

Tertiary / postgraduate | LLL

Participating students

Reform during the project:

Early childhood education 0-3 | Early childhood educ. 4-6 | Primary school 7-14 |

Industry schools (= basic) | Optional upper-sec.

Upper secondary vocational

Upper secondary general
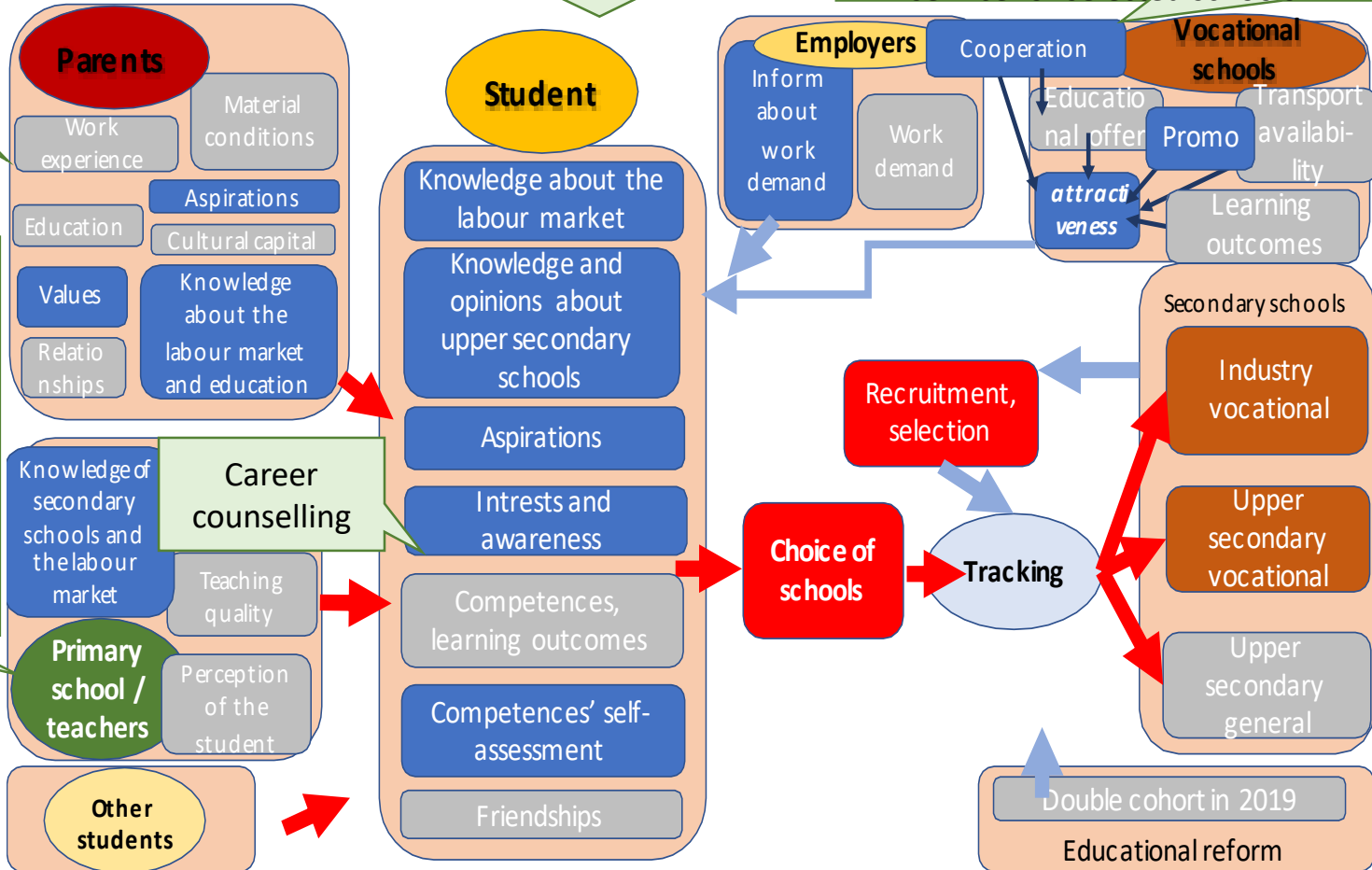
Tertiary / postgraduate | LLL

Model of the intervention theory

- Dobryzawod.pl website
- School fairs
- Study visits at employers' and schools
- Videos by students
- Visits of employers at schools
- Competitions

- Training on promotion and cooperation with employers,
- Press articles and radio broadcasting,
- School networking,
- Comprehensive marketing service for selected schools

Workshops for parents

- Training about the labour market and the market-oriented career counselling
- Study visits at employers' and schools

Career counselling

Parents
- Work experience
- Material conditions
- Aspirations
- Education
- Cultural capital
- Values
- Knowledge about the labour market and education
- Relationships

Knowledge of secondary schools and the labour market

Primary school / teachers
- Teaching quality
- Perception of the student

Other students

Student
- Knowledge about the labour market
- Knowledge and opinions about upper secondary schools
- Aspirations
- Intrests and awareness
- Competences, learning outcomes
- Competences' self-assessment
- Friendships

Employers
- Inform about work demand
- Work demand

Cooperation

Vocational schools
- Educational offer
- Promo
- *attractiveness*
- Transport availability
- Learning outcomes

Secondary schools

Recruitment, selection

Choice of schools

Tracking

- Industry vocational
- Upper secondary vocational
- Upper secondary general

Double cohort in 2019

Educational reform

Research methods

- ✓ **Desk research**

- ✓ **Surveys with students (→ counterfactual method)**

Student group:	Participants	Non-Participants
Sample:	n=200	n=401
Data protection:	Participants agree to evaluations	Data available for scientific research from the registry of inhabitants
Challenges related to Covid-19:	• Only address, no telephone for non-participants, so in home interviews for both. • Due to Covid outbreak, non-participant sample was changed to „snowball" recruitment and telephone + web interviews.	

- ✓ **Web surveys with participant teachers:**
  - ✓ Primary / lower secondary school teachers (n=86),
  - ✓ Vocational school teachers (n=24).
- ✓ **Telephone surveys with employers** (n=86).
- ✓ **Qualitative studies**:
  - ✓ 6 interviews with project coordinator and partners,
  - ✓ 4 local case studies (12 interviews in each study: with **teachers, students, employers**).
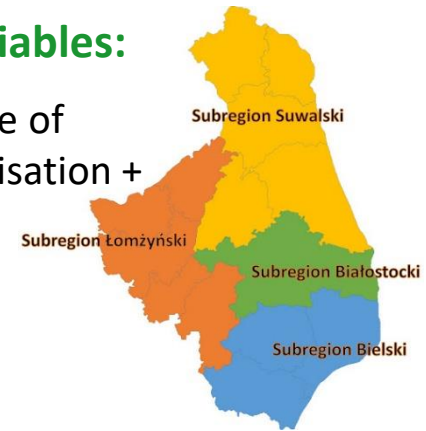
Counterfactual method

Dependent variables:
- ✓ Upper secondary vocational vs other
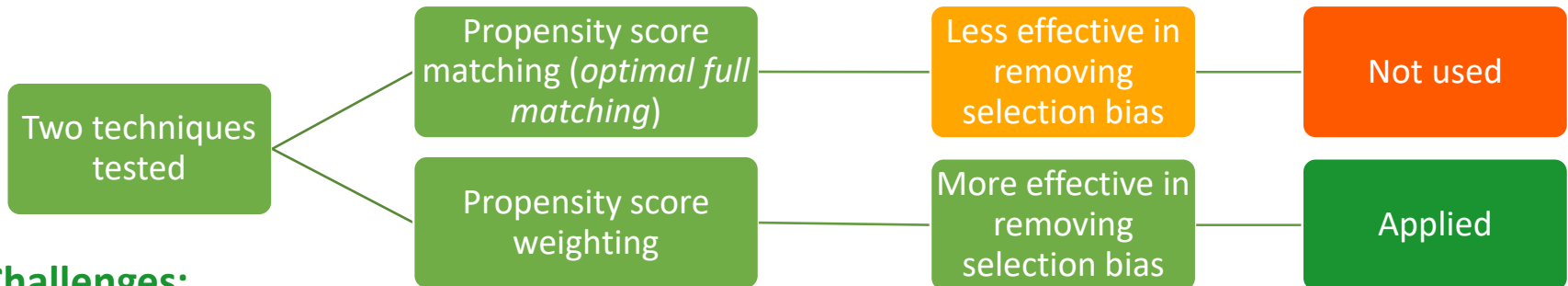- ✓ Industry vocational vs other
- ✓ Both vocational vs other

Quota variables:

Degree of urbanisation +

Subregion Suwalski
Subregion Łomżyński
Subregion Białostocki
Subregion Bielski

Construction of the control group:
- ✓ **Propensity score index** was calculated for interviewed participants and non-participants (based on quota variables + survey answers).
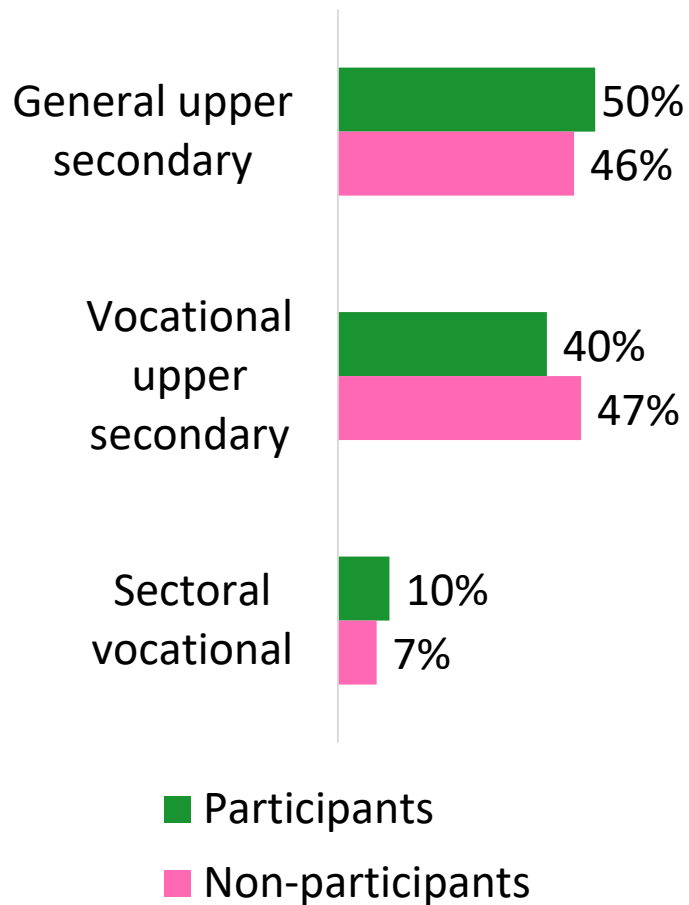
| Two techniques tested | → Propensity score matching (*optimal full matching*) | → Less effective in removing selection bias | → Not used |
| → Propensity score weighting | → More effective in removing selection bias | → Applied |

Challenges:
- ✓ Difficulty to retrospectively identify students' & families' attitudes towards vocational education before the project.
- ✓ Selection of participants was difficult to observe and could differ across schools. Self-selection to the more intense activities (like study visits or competitions).
- ✓ Difficult to make a distinction between participants and non-participants. Some activities were targeted at whole school communities (eg. teacher training) – their effect could not be estimated with counterfactual methods.

Net impact of the project on further education?

Gross differences:

Participants went to **vocational schools less often** than non-participants.

General upper secondary
- Participants: 50%
- Non-participants: 46%

Vocational upper secondary
- Participants: 40%
- Non-participants: 47%

Sectoral vocational
- Participants: 10%
- Non-participants: 7%

■ Participants
■ Non-participants

The counterfactual analysis demonstrated no net impact
- neither **on the type of further education (vocational** vs **general),**
- nor on going to **a specific type of vocational school (industrial** vs **upper secondary)**.

This may be because of the challenges, which the counterfactual method wasn't able to fully account for:
- Varied modes of participation in the project;
- Unobserved previous attitudes towards vocational education.

- Factors outside the project were stronger:
  - **Lower learning outcomes**;
  - Children of parents without upper secondary education were more likely to go to upper secondary vocational schools → **transgenerational educational advancement**;
  - Upper secondary vocational students were more likely to be **male** (not industry vocational, possibly due to small sample);
  - Students of industry schools were more likely to live in cities.

So, was the project successful?
Key findings from surveys and interviews

Despite no net impact on the type of further school, **students declared** in interviews that they:

- ✓ Learned about skills demand and increased self-awareness through job counselling.
- ✓ Got to know different professions through visits to schools & companies, school fairs and meetings with employers.
- ✓ Added value of one regional project **over** local projects: students got to know vocational schools from all over their subregion. Better access for underprivileged students from small communities.

- ✓ **Made better informed choices** of further schools.
- ✓ Became **more confident with their choices**, especially if going to an industry school school.

Primary / lower secondary school teachers:
- ✓ Increased their knowledge of the labour market
- ✓ and used it in educational & job counselling: put more emphasis on skills demand.

Vocational schools:
- ✓ Schools, which received the comprehensive marketing service, changed their thinking about promotion and improved their image. But for those only got the training, it had little impact;
- ✓ Schools' networking didn't impact their cooperation – competition was stronger;
- ✓ The project had some, but little impact on schools' cooperation with employers. Obstacles persist but cooperation is developing.

Recommendations in brief

Managing Authority:

✓ Continue (sub)regional projects to help students get to know vocational schools beyond their local communities and make better informed choices.

    ✓ Right timing: primary school students in their penultimate grade.

✓ Help vocational schools to improve and co-ordinate their educational offer, based on evidence:

    ✓ Work demand forecasts,

    ✓ Deeper knowledge of teaching quality.

✓ Promote dual education.

Ministry of Education:

✓ Update the vocational core curriculum, in cooperation with employers.

Evaluation client:

Managing Authority of the Podlaskie Regional Operational Programme

rot@wrotapodlasia.pl

Evaluation contractor:

Lead evaluator: Małgorzata Zub malgorzata.zub@gmail.com

Counterfactual method: Paweł Penszko pawel.penszko@lege-artis.com.pl

Report and summary in English:

https://www.ewaluacja.gov.pl/strony/badania-i-analizy/wyniki-badan-ewaluacyjnych/badania-ewaluacyjne/ocena-wplywu-wsparcia-rpowp-2014-2020-na-popularyzacje-szkolnictwa-zawodowego-w-wojewodztwie-podlaskim/