



GOVERNO DE  
PORTUGAL

MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO  
E CIÊNCIA

**IAVE** INSTITUTO  
DE AVALIAÇÃO  
EDUCATIVA, I.P.

# Improving English language learning in Portugal: an integrated approach

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# Overview

**Project background: why a Key for Schools test at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade?**

**Project funding: an innovative approach**

**2014 KfS results: strengths and weaknesses**

**Conclusion: impact and future perspectives**



# Why a KfS test at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade?

Social, political and educational awareness of the importance of English learning in Portugal

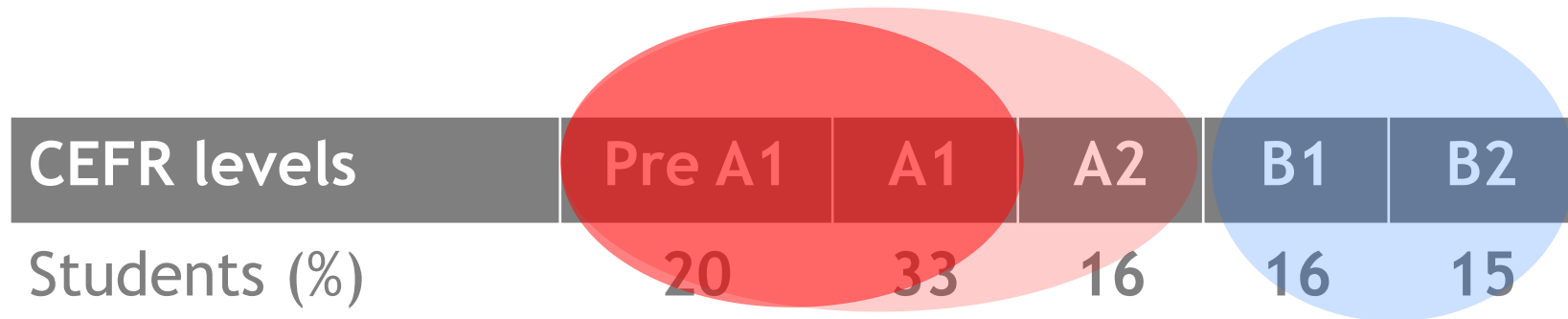
Need for an internationally acknowledged language proficiency certification

The impact of portuguese students' performance in *Surveylang (2012)*



# Why a KfS test at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade?

At the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade (lower secondary) students should have reached level B1 ... but Surveylang showed a quite different picture



# Why a KfS test at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade?

The role of external assessment in the Portuguese educational system: major goals to achieve with Key for Schools (1)

1. To have a diagnosis of the full cohort of students at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade
2. To develop a comprehensive teacher training programme



## Why a KfS test at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade?

The role of external assessment in the Portuguese educational system: major goals to achieve with Key for Schools (2)

3. To have an internationally acknowledged foreign language proficiency certification accessible to Portuguese students, regardless of their social or economic background, or place of living
4. To create an opportunity to include Speaking in a large external assessment context in Portugal for the first time in more than 40 years



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# Project funding: an innovative approach

The impact of the economic crisis and the sponsorship approach

Parents' commitment to enroll their children for the certificate



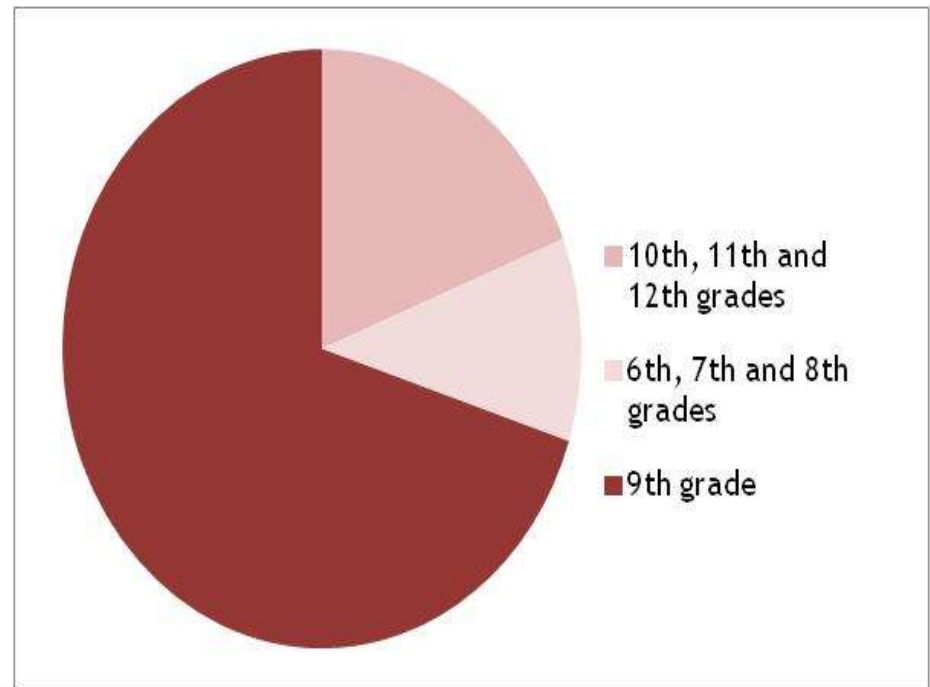
# Project funding: an innovative approach

## The funding scheme

The Sponsors – 4 leading companies and 1 foundation

The parents' contribution – the enrollment for the certificate

- Optional for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students
- Compulsory for non 9<sup>th</sup> grade students



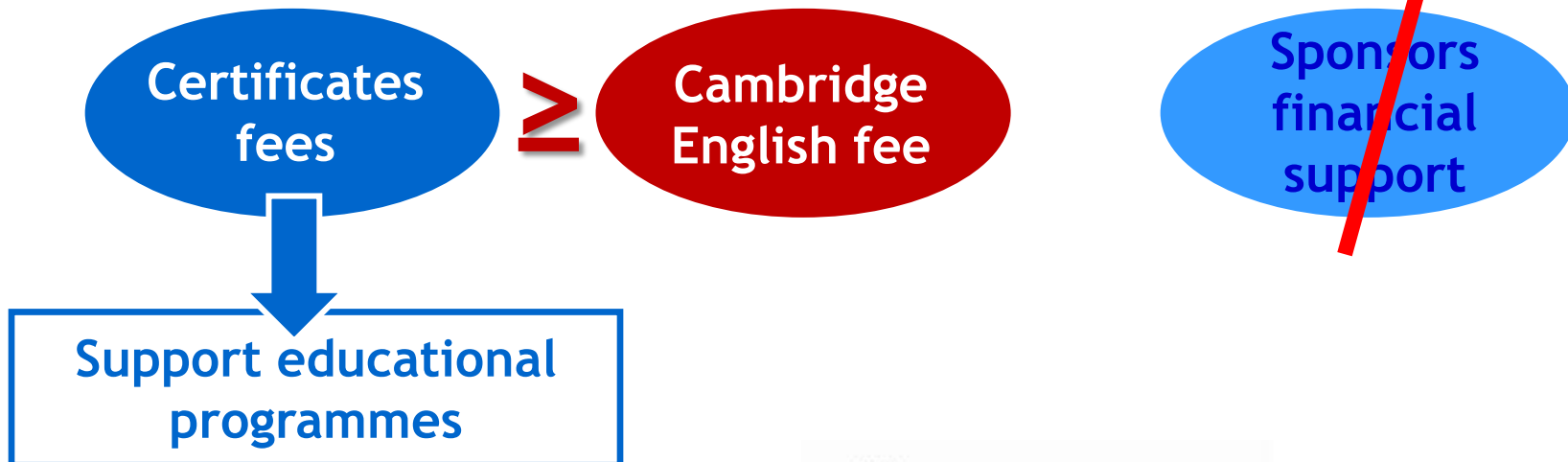


# Project funding: an innovative approach

## Scenario A



## Scenario B



## 2014 KfS results: strengths and weaknesses

The test was delivered in 1,325 schools (both public and private)

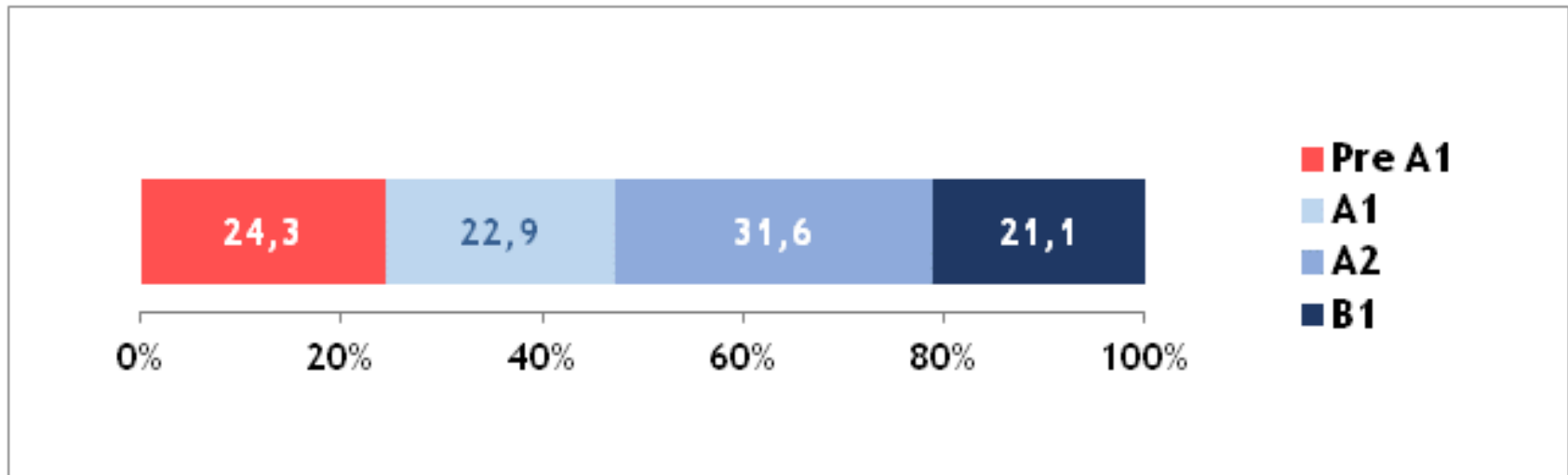
Approximately 101,000 students took the test:

- 9<sup>th</sup> grade students – 92% (compulsory);
- 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students – 3% (optional)
- 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students – 5% (optional)

3,954 speaking sessions



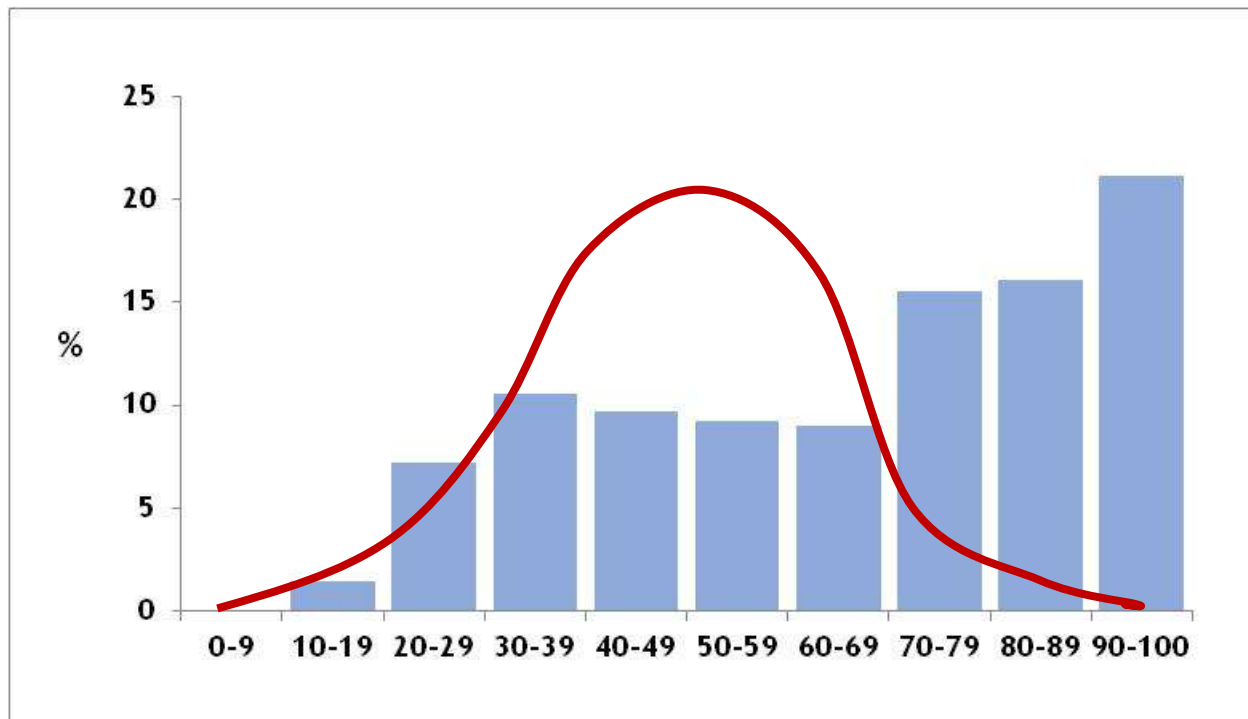
# 2014 KfS results: strengths and weaknesses



Results for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students by level of proficiency according to CEFR



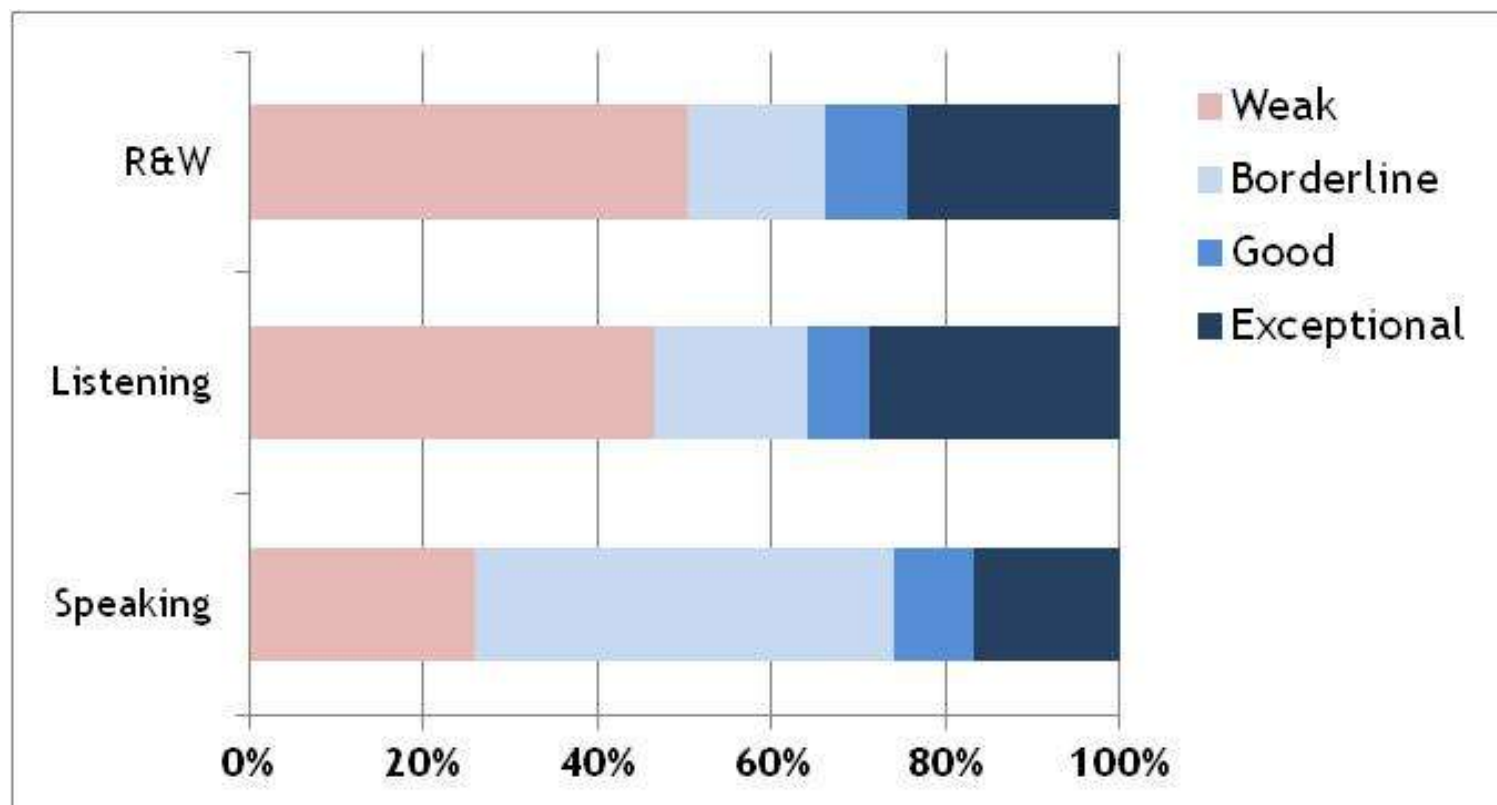
# 2014 KfS results: strengths and weaknesses



Results for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students by score class



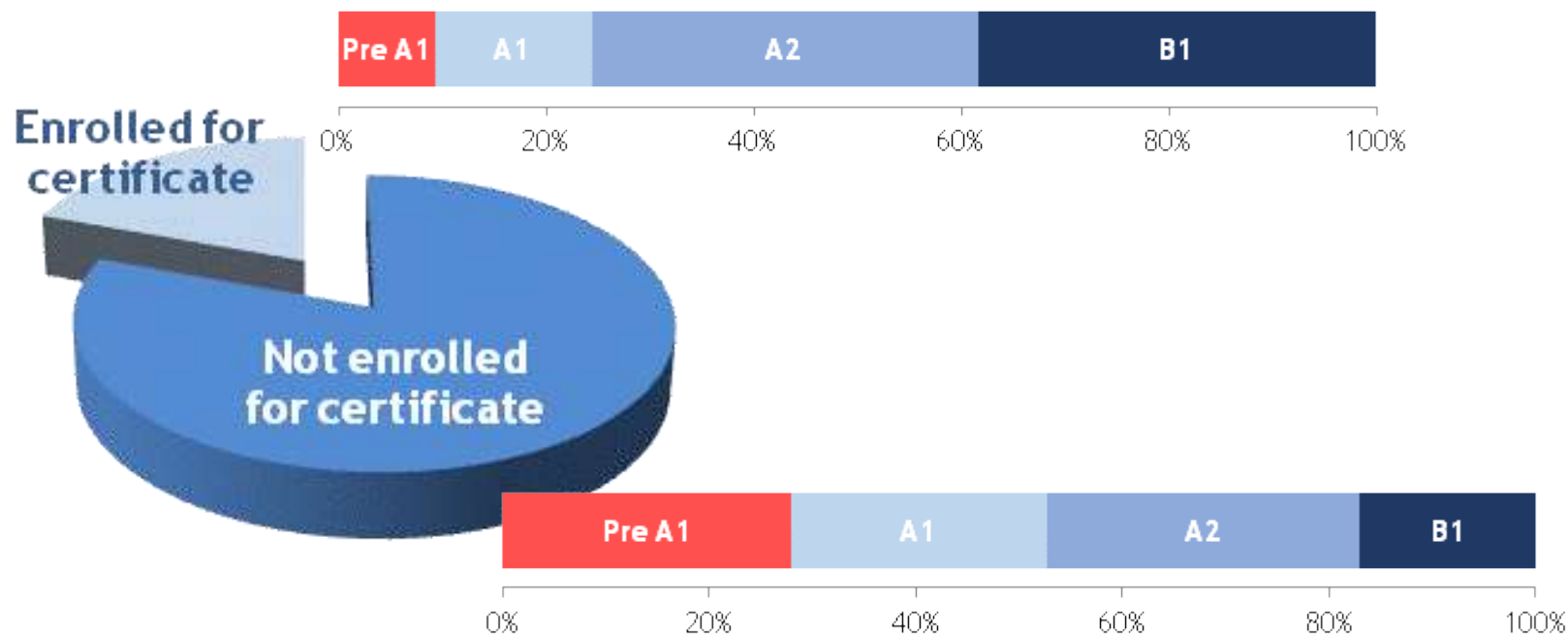
## 2014 KfS results: strengths and weaknesses



Results by test component (skill) – 9<sup>th</sup> grade students



# 2014 KfS results: strengths and weaknesses



Results according to certificate enrollment – 9<sup>th</sup> grade students (19,5% of total 9<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled for the certificate)



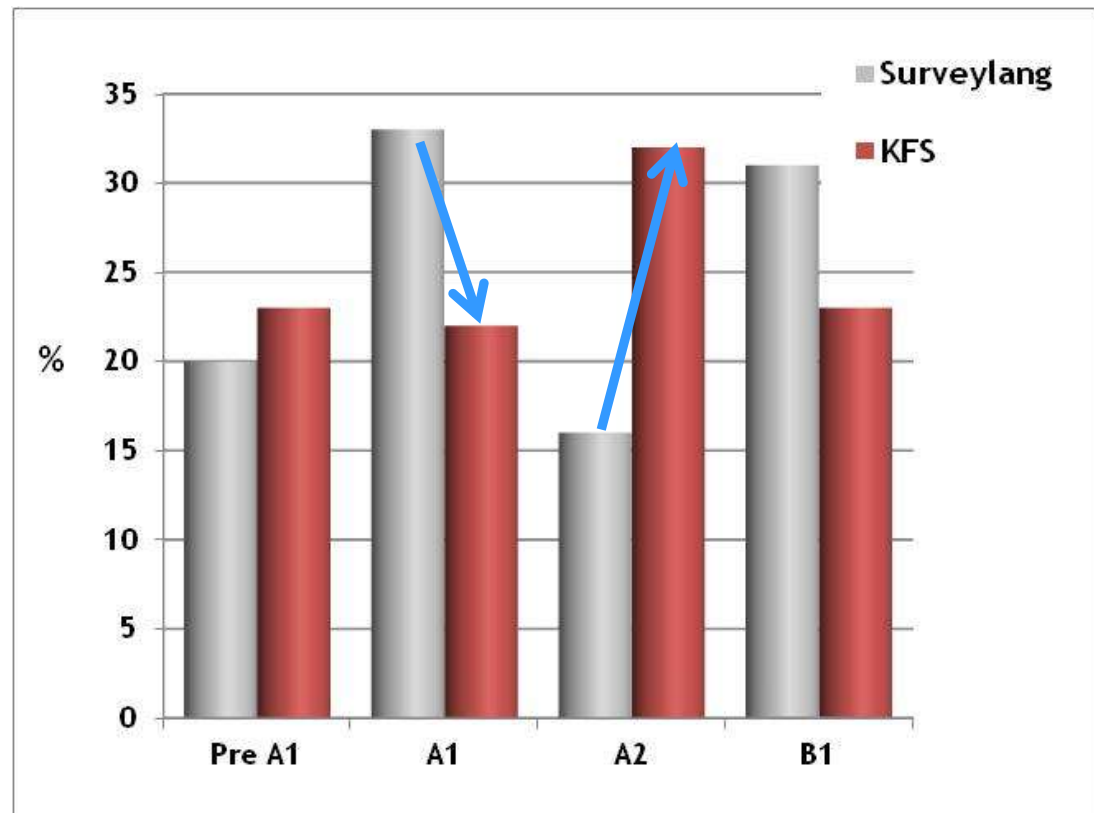
# Conclusion: impact and future perspectives

1. Feasibility of a large scale external speaking assessment
2. Putting English learning on the top of the educational agenda
3. Increasing teaching opportunities and quality training programmes



# Conclusion: impact and future perspectives

4. Improving results regarding *Surveylang* ... but still having Speaking as the weakest skill when it comes to students' performance





# Conclusion: impact and future perspectives

5. Evidence of a breakthrough over a negative attitude on speaking teaching and learning in classroom context
6. Evidence of an increasing commitment to improve teaching



# Conclusion: impact and future perspectives

## 7. Future steps

- Moving forward from KfS to PET at the 9<sup>th</sup> grade (2015)
- FCE at the end of upper secondary (11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade) in a near future (2017 or 2018?)

## 8. Curricular changes: English is going to be a compulsory subject since 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (2016)

***Assessment is probably  
the best tool to improve  
teaching and learning***



# Thank you!

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