



# **Higher Education Equity Across the Globe**

**Vienna, 7 October 2020**





A dark blue header banner. On the right side, there is a circular icon of a globe with latitude and longitude lines. The background of the banner has a faint, light-colored world map.

*JAMIL SALMI*  
*Global Tertiary Education Expert*





JAMIL SALMI

Talent is universal, but  
opportunity is not

Tanitoluwa Adewumi, a refugee from Nigeria who lives in a shelter in New York City, went from chess novice to chess champion in little over a year.





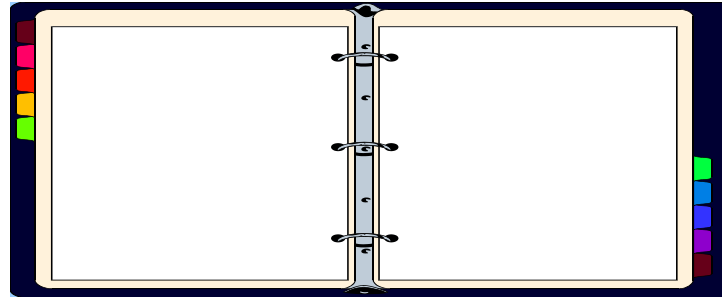
# suicide

suicidal  
person  
grief  
awareness  
unhappy  
desperate  
denial  
preventing  
death  
solidarity  
abuse  
concept  
issues  
education  
depressed  
help  
rejection  
frustration  
pain  
stress  
gun  
prevention  
danger  
antidepressants  
warning  
hopeless  
lifestyle  
desperation  
trapped  
despair  
hopelessness  
idea  
problems  
quitting  
illness  
sadness  
loss  
noose  
lonely  
loop  
guilt  
knot  
fear  
life  
communication  
worry  
pressure  
hanging  
contemplation  
hope  
fall  
protest  
punishment  
jump  
support  
prevent  
problem  
medicine  
loneliness  
brandy  
emotions  
wam  
serious  
pill  
dead  
drink  
shame  
quit  
people  
anxiety  
mental  
down  
lost  
tablets  
campaign



# Outline

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- HE equity policies around the world
- What works: national and institutional policies
- Impact of Covid-19

# Premises

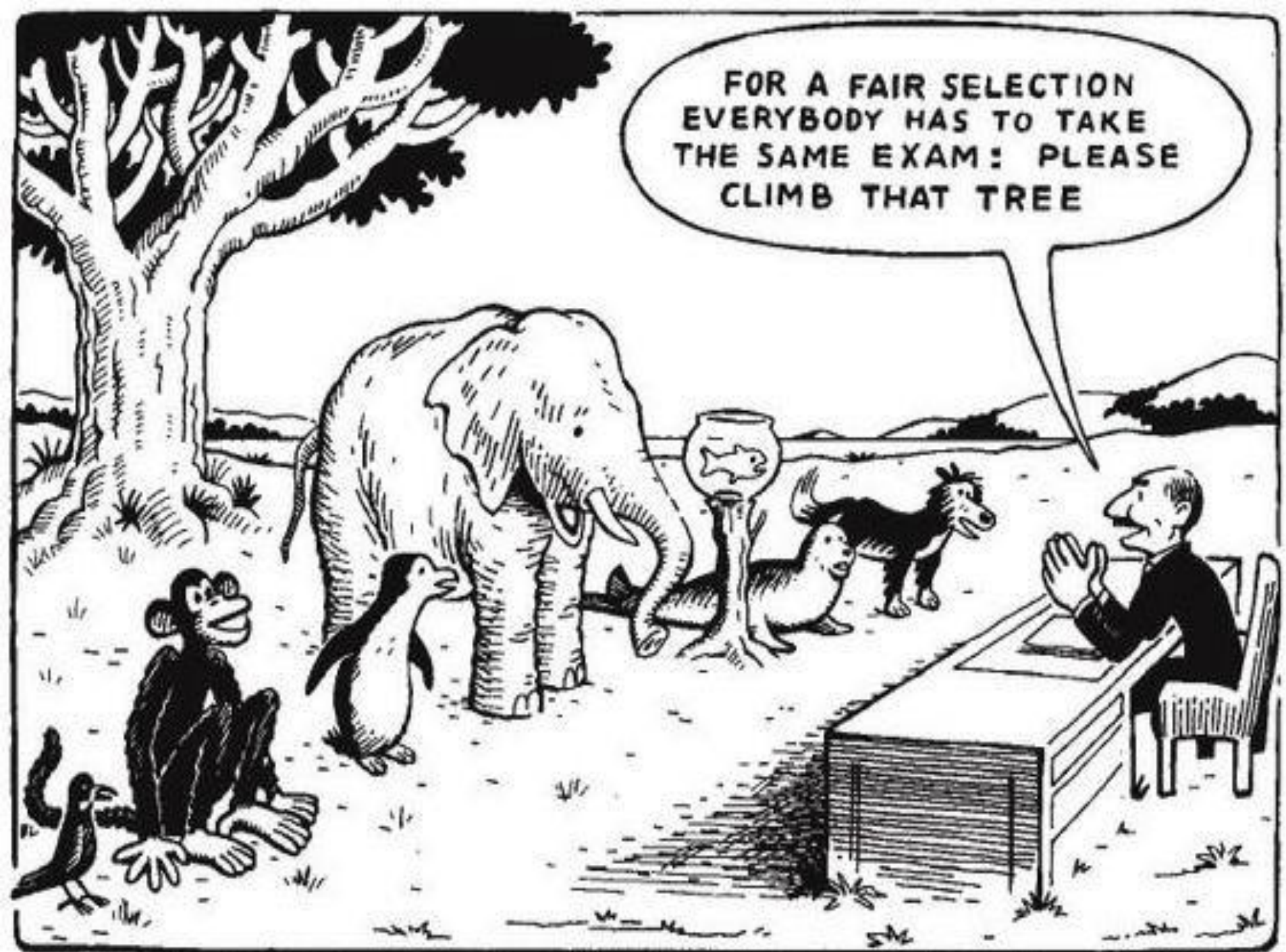
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- Equity = providing equal opportunities for access and success in tertiary education
- Circumstances beyond an individual's control should not influence that person's chances



FOR A FAIR SELECTION  
EVERYBODY HAS TO TAKE  
THE SAME EXAM: PLEASE  
CLIMB THAT TREE



# The Lumina Studies

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- Commissioned by Lumina Foundation
- Partnership with London Higher (Graeme Atherton)
- Background studies for the World Access to Higher Education Day (2018 and 2019)

# Study 1. Two Tasks

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- International Organizations
- National Policies

# International Organizations

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- ADB, AfDB, IDB, CAF
- OECD, UNESCO, World Bank
- European Commission
- SEAMEO

# Findings

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Organizations	Policy Setting & Regulatory Frameworks	Technical Assistance	Grants	Loans	Scholarships to Individuals
African Development Bank		√			
Andean Development Bank		√	√	√	
Asian Development Bank	√	√	√	√	
European Commission	√	√	√		
Interamerican Development Bank		√	√	√	
OECD	√	√			
SEAMEO		√			
UNESCO	√	√			
World Bank	√	√	√	√	√

# National Policies

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- 71 countries
- Official documents, websites, contacts
- Who makes policies
- Strategies for HE / Specific strategy for equity
- Equity targets
- Instruments
- Resources
- Separate agency dedicated to equity

# Equity groups

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- Low-income groups

A man with a beard, glasses, a nose ring, and a cap is sitting on a sidewalk. He is wearing a dark jacket over a graphic t-shirt and dark pants. He is holding a white sign with handwritten text. The background shows a sidewalk and a ground covered with fallen leaves.

One day the  
poor will have  
nothing left  
to eat  
but the rich.



# Equity groups

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- Low-income groups
- Females

# How many talented girls are lost?

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# Equity groups

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- Low-income groups
- Females
- Minorities

*It is not wrong to be different.*



*It is wrong to be treated differently  
if you are.*



Black



White



Gay



Straight



Religious



Atheist



You

# Equity groups

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- Low-income groups
- Females
- Minorities
- People with disabilities



<b>Equity Groups</b>	<b>Country Examples</b>
<b>First-generation students</b>	United States
<b>LGBTQIA</b>	Brazil, Colombia
<b>Victims of sexual abuse / violence</b>	Colombia, Ecuador, Spain
<b>Deported migrants</b>	Ecuador, Mexico
<b>Children of invalid veterans or civil servants</b>	Mexico, Russia, Vietnam
<b>Foreign refugees</b>	Australia, Colombia, New Zealand
<b>Internally-displaced people as a result of civil war or natural catastrophes</b>	Colombia, Georgia
<b>Demobilized guerrilla fighters and paramilitaries</b>	Colombia
<b>Students who do not speak the national language</b>	Denmark
<b>Students with care experience, orphans, youth without parental care</b>	Austria, Georgia Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Scotland
<b>Single mothers</b>	Ecuador
<b>Families with more than 3 children</b>	Georgia, South Korea
<b>Children of parents deported during the Soviet era</b>	Georgia
<b>Jailed people, ex-offenders</b>	Venezuela, Wales
<b>Students from occupied territories</b>	Georgia



# National Policies

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- Financial
- Non-Monetary

# Financing Policies

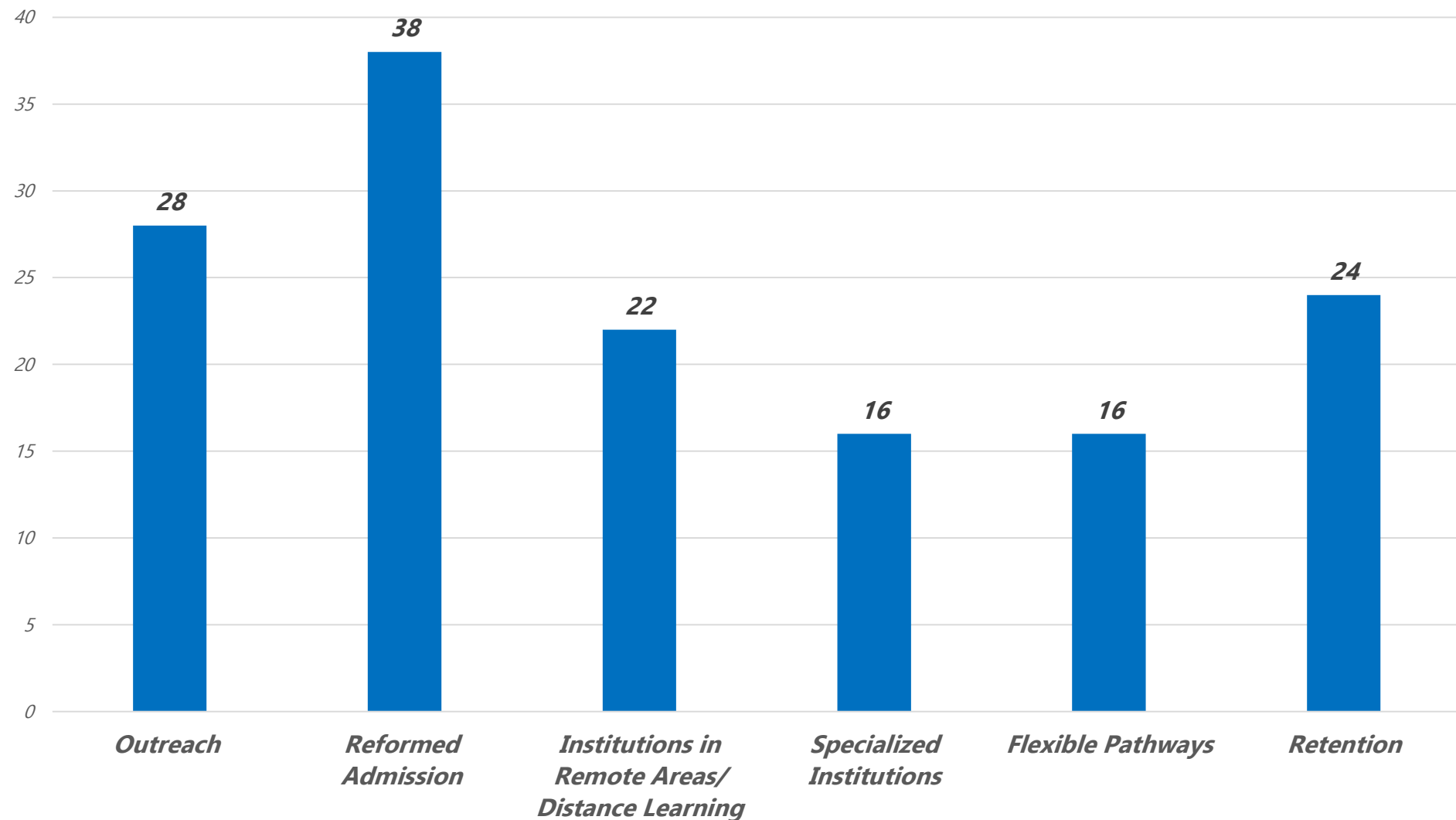
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- Fully or partially subsidized education
- Targeted free tuition
- Needs-based scholarships and grants / grants targeted for equity groups others than low-income students
- Student loans
- Equity-linked financial incentives built into the funding formula to allocate public resources to higher education institutions
- Financing-related regulations

# Non-Monetary Policies

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# QA and Equity

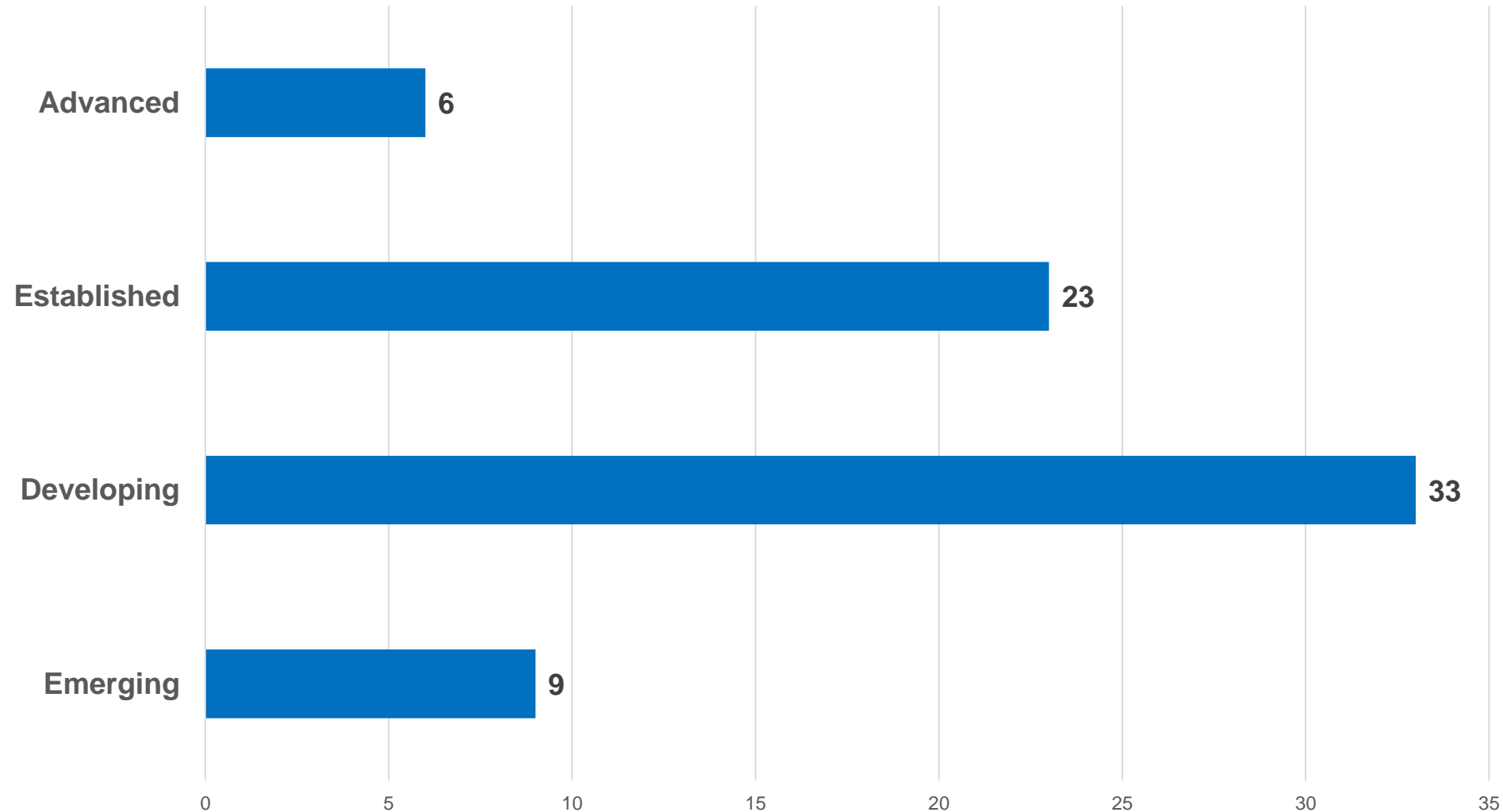
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Region	Category	Frequency of Countries who Monitor Equity only	Frequency of countries who include equity in QA only	Frequency of countries who do both QA and Monitoring)
East Asia (11)		0	0	0
Eastern Europe & Central Asia (5)		0	2	0
Latin America and Caribbean (19)		0	7	4
Middle East & North Africa (4)		0	0	1
North America (2)		0	0	0
Pacific (2)		1	1	0
South Asia (5)		0	2	0
Sub-Saharan Africa (13)		2	0	0
Western Europe (10)		0	1	4
Total (71)		3	13	9

# Benchmarking

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# The Champions

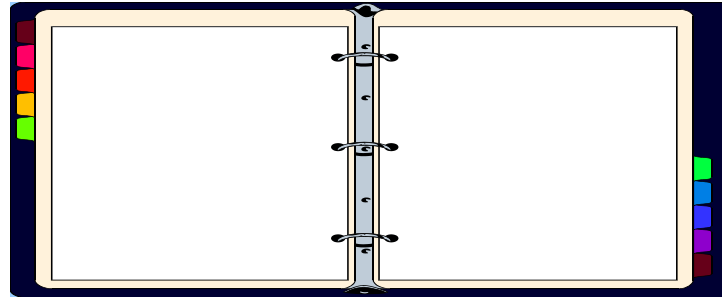
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- Australia, Cuba, England, Ireland, New Zealand and Scotland

# Outline

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- HE equity policies around the world
- **What works: national and institutional policies**

# Two Tasks

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- Measurement of disparities and impact studies of equity promotion policies
- Five national case studies
  - Government policies
  - Institutional policies



# Case Study Countries

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- Australia (ICL)
- Austria (tuition fees & social dimensions)
- Colombia (SL, retention)
- South Africa (legacy of apartheid, TFT)
- Vietnam (tuition fees, affirmative action)

# Theory of Change

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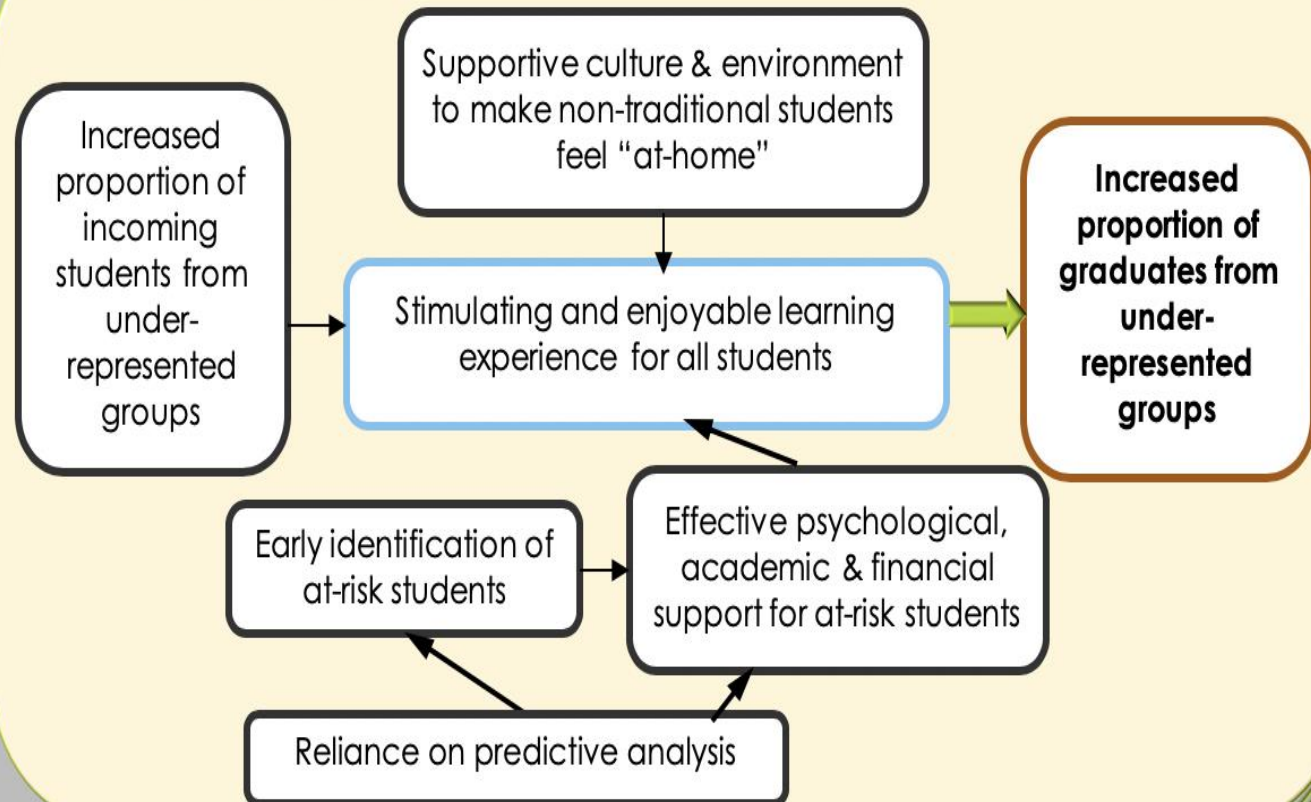
## System-level enabling conditions

Admission policies  
Pathways & bridges  
Quality Assurance  
Level of subsidies & distribution among institutions & students  
Tuition fee policies  
Funding for student aid (grants and student loans)

- Outreach activities
- Targeted admission policies
- Retention measures
- Financial aid (tuition exemptions, grants, loans)

## Institution-level enabling conditions

### Sequence of causal links





# Findings

# Country Headlines

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- Australia = model, with effective, comprehensive equity policies
- Austria leader in the areas of gender and refugees
- Colombia pioneer in targeting student loans well and implementing widespread retention policies
- South Africa working hard to remove long-lasting effects of apartheid, pioneer with Targeted Free Tuition
- Vietnam has comprehensive equity plan but invests insufficient resources

# Equity Target Groups

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Country	Australia	Austria	Colombia	South Africa	Vietnam
Category					
Low-Income Students / First In the Family	√	√	√		√
Gender / LGBT	√	√	√	√	√
Race			√	√	
Ethnic Minorities	√		√		√
Students with Disability / Special Needs	√	√	√	√	√
Migrants	√	√			
Victims of Conflict / Orphans			√		√
Remote Regions	√	√	√		

# Financing Instruments

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Equity Policy Instrument	Australia	Austria	Colombia	South Africa	Vietnam
No Tuition / Low Tuition in Public Institutions		√	√		
Targeted Free Tuition				√	
Grants & Scholarships	√	√	√	√	√
Student Loans	√	√	√	√	√
Competitive Grants to Institutions	√				
Funding Formula	√	√		√	

# Student Loans

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Design	Australia	Austria	Colombia	South Africa	Vietnam
Income Contingent	√				
Public Agency – Mortgage Type			√	√	√
Private Bank – Mortgage Type		√			

# Non-Monetary Instruments

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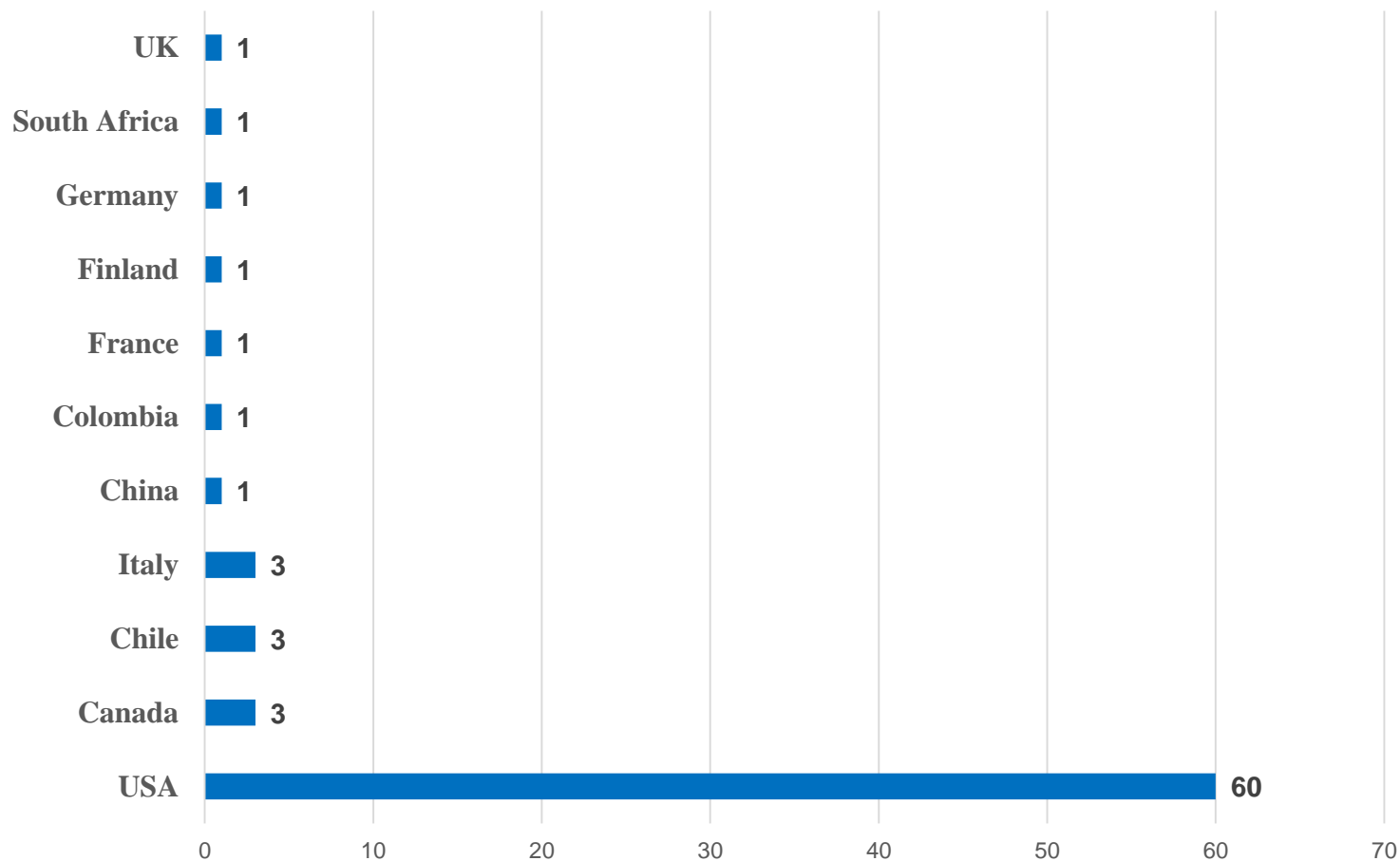


Equity Policy Instrument	Australia	Austria	Colombia	South Africa	Vietnam
Outreach / Bridge	√	√	√		
Affirmative Action	√	√	√	√	√
Retention	√	√	√	√	



# Not enough impact studies

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# Not enough relevant data

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Equity Groups	Number of Countries
Gender	47
Socio-Economic Background	36
Rural Origin	33
Adult / Mature Learners	33
People with Refugee Status	32
Disability	31
Ethnicity	29
Language	20
Indigenous Groups	16
Religion	14
Others	14

# What Works at the National Level

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- Alignment of vision, leadership, goals, policy instruments, and resources
- Continuity of policies
- Adequate governance (contrasting Australia and Vietnam)
- Supranational influence (Austria)

# Structural Features

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- Secondary education coverage and streaming
- Admission policies
- Institutional diversification
- Availability of financial aid (grants and loans)

# Institutional Diversification

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- Low-status institutions (South Africa)
- Private higher education institutions
  - With student aid (Colombia)
  - Without (SA and Vietnam)

# What Works at the Institutional Level

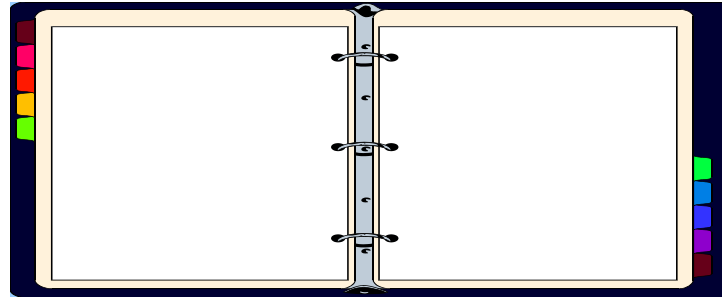
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- Clear vision and strategy (Wollongong, Uniminuto)
- Equity leader and dedicated department (Wits)
- Partnerships with local authorities and businesses (Antioquia)
- Model practices picked up by other institutions and/or Government (Valle)
- Appropriate institutional culture for first-generation students (Australia)

# Outline

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- HE equity policies around the world
- What works: national and institutional policies
- **Impact of Covid-19**

# Great equalizer or amplifier of disparities?

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- Financial resources
- Access to internet (laptop, connection)
- Readiness to study online
- Increased risk of academic failure and emotional distress





# Support at National Level

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- Financial aid (emergency grants, moratorium on student loan repayments)
- Increased broadband capacity and subsidized connection prices
- Capacity building for online teaching
- Flexibility in QA and assessment/examinations

# Support at Institutional Level

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- Financial aid
- Donation/loan of laptop
- Free/subsidized internet plans
- Flexibility in assessment
- Academic and psychological support



# conclusion

# Findings

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- In many countries, only lip service
- Increasing focus on combination of financing and non-monetary measures
- Incentives for universities
- Initiatives from universities taken on by national governments

# Recommendations

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- More impact studies
- More disaggregated data on various equity groups
- Continue to focus on gender issues

# Gender Imbalance

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- Gender parity in most countries
- But not in STEM programs
- And not in senior academic positions
- Even less in leadership positions

# Gender Imbalance

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Indicator	Australia	Austria	Colombia	South Africa	Vietnam
Share of female students	55.5%	53.5%	53.0%	58.0%	54.0%
Share of female university leaders	28.2%	33.0%	20.0%	15.4%	5.6%



Countries	2008	2013	2019
Austria	5.9%	17.4%	30.4%
Belgium	0%	9.1%	9.1%
Bulgaria	7.1%	18.1%	11.1%
Czech Republic	0%	5.0%	5.6%
Denmark	n.a.	n.a.	16.7%
Finland	11.8%	30.8%	23.1%
France	8.5%	10.7%	17.1%
Germany	5.1%	13.3%	23.4%
Italy	1.7%	6.8%	3.6%
Netherlands	0%	7.1%	28.6%
Norway	0%	11.1%	33.3%
Poland	0%	0%	0%
Romania	7.1%	10.0%	0%
Russia	5.6%	9.1%	13.3%
Spain	9.8%	10.9%	12.0%
Sweden	34.0%	44.0%	37.5%
Switzerland	0%	7.1%	23.5%
United Kingdom	9.5%	15.5%	19.0%
European average	5.5%	10.3%	14.3%

# Recommendations

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- More impact studies
- More data
- Continue to focus on gender issues
- More attention to the needs of students with disability
- Let us not forget refugee students
- Post-Covid, revisit structural determinants of inequality (funding, assessment)

# Equality of opportunity

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The impertinent courtesy of an invitation offered to unwelcome guests, in the certainty that circumstances will prevent them from accepting.

Richard Tawney



# Exclusion

# Integration

# Inclusion

