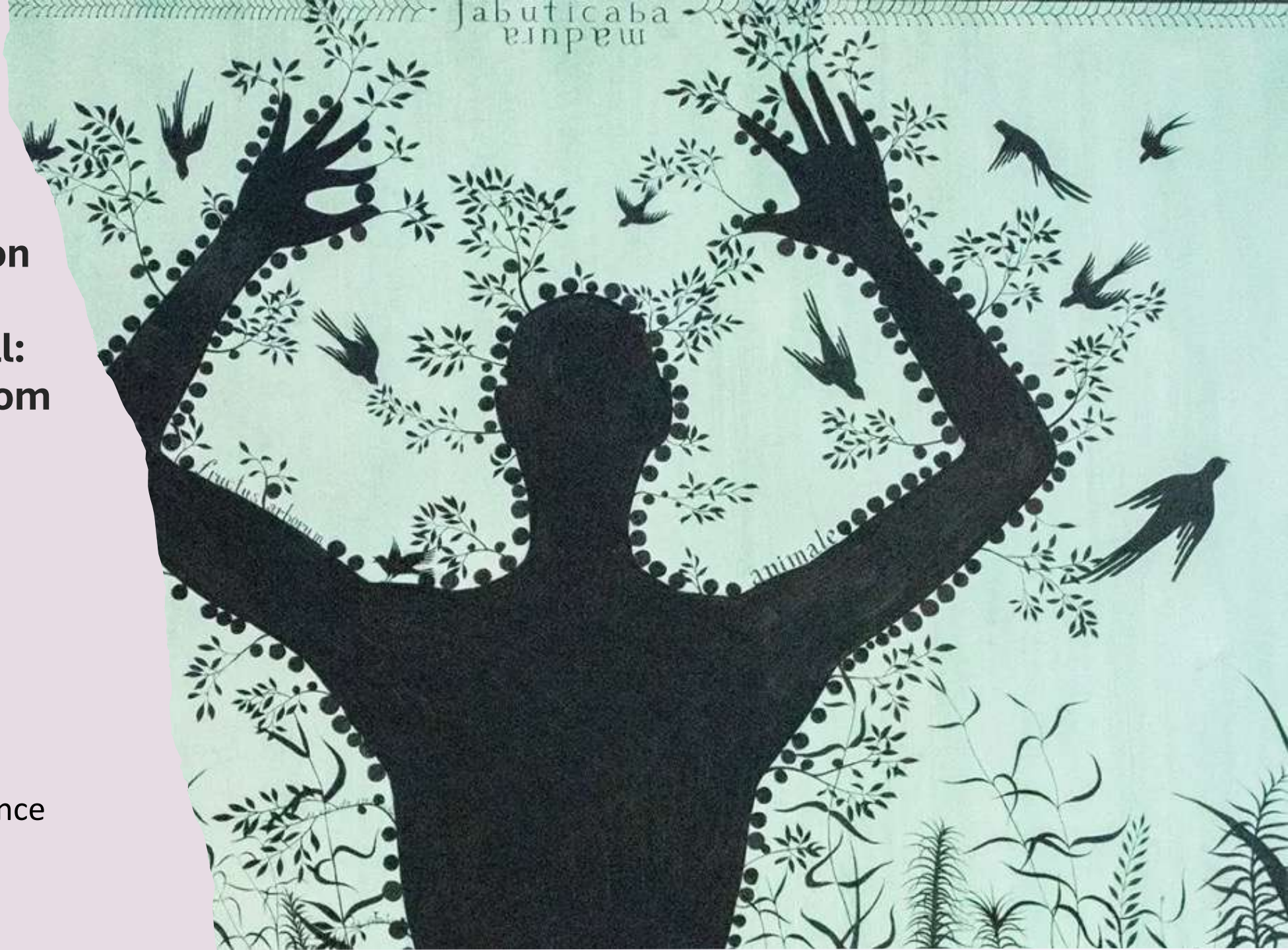


Advancing Education for Sustainable Development for All: The Contribution from the Early Years

Dr Fabio Dovigo
Professor of Education
Northumbria University

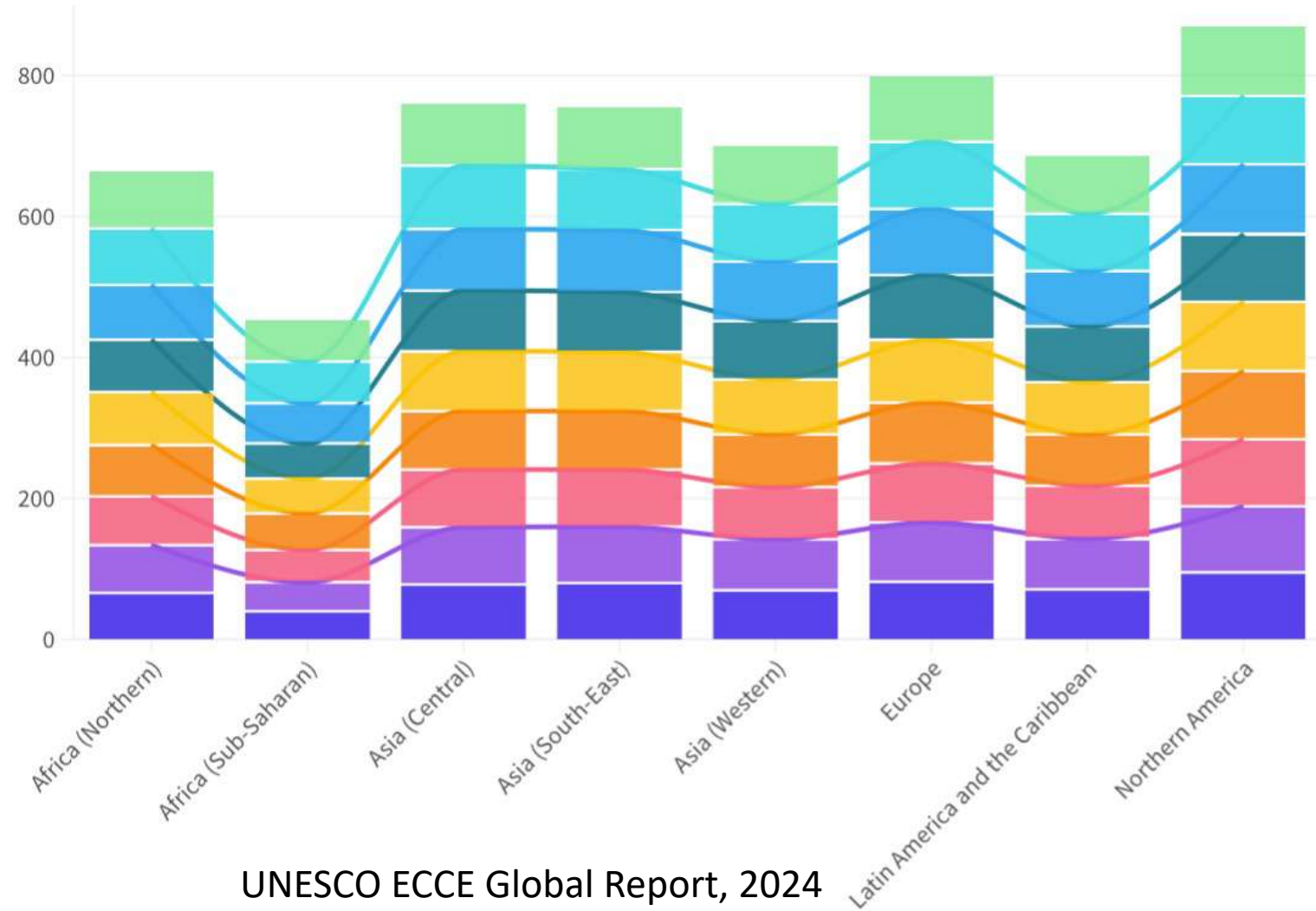
OMEP European Conference
25th April 2024
Kristianstad, Sweden



Global Expansion of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

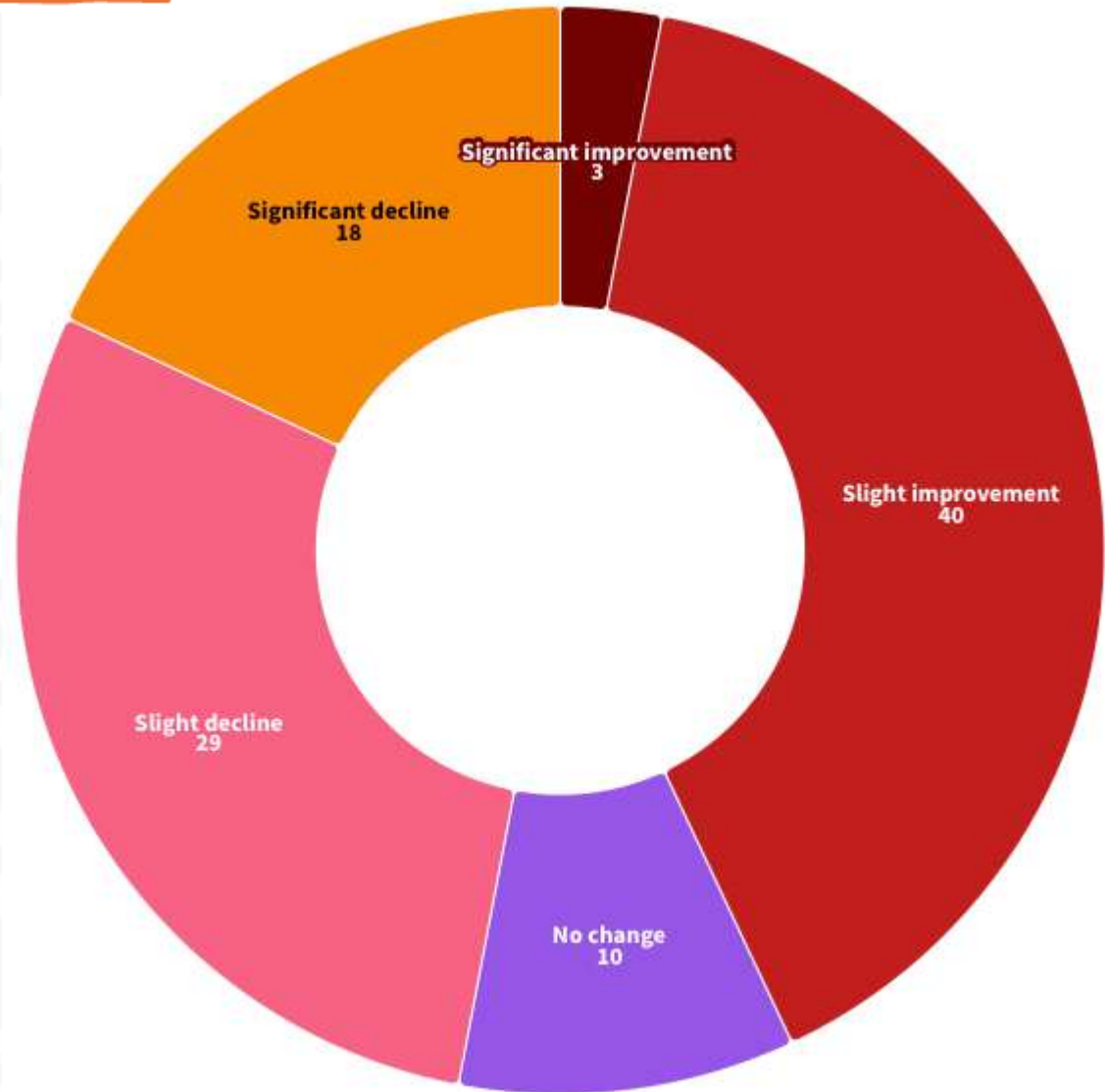
- A positive and rapid expansion of the ECCE sector at a global level.
- A slow growth in the proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications in pre-primary education over the last decade.

2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020



Challenges in Teacher Qualification and Training

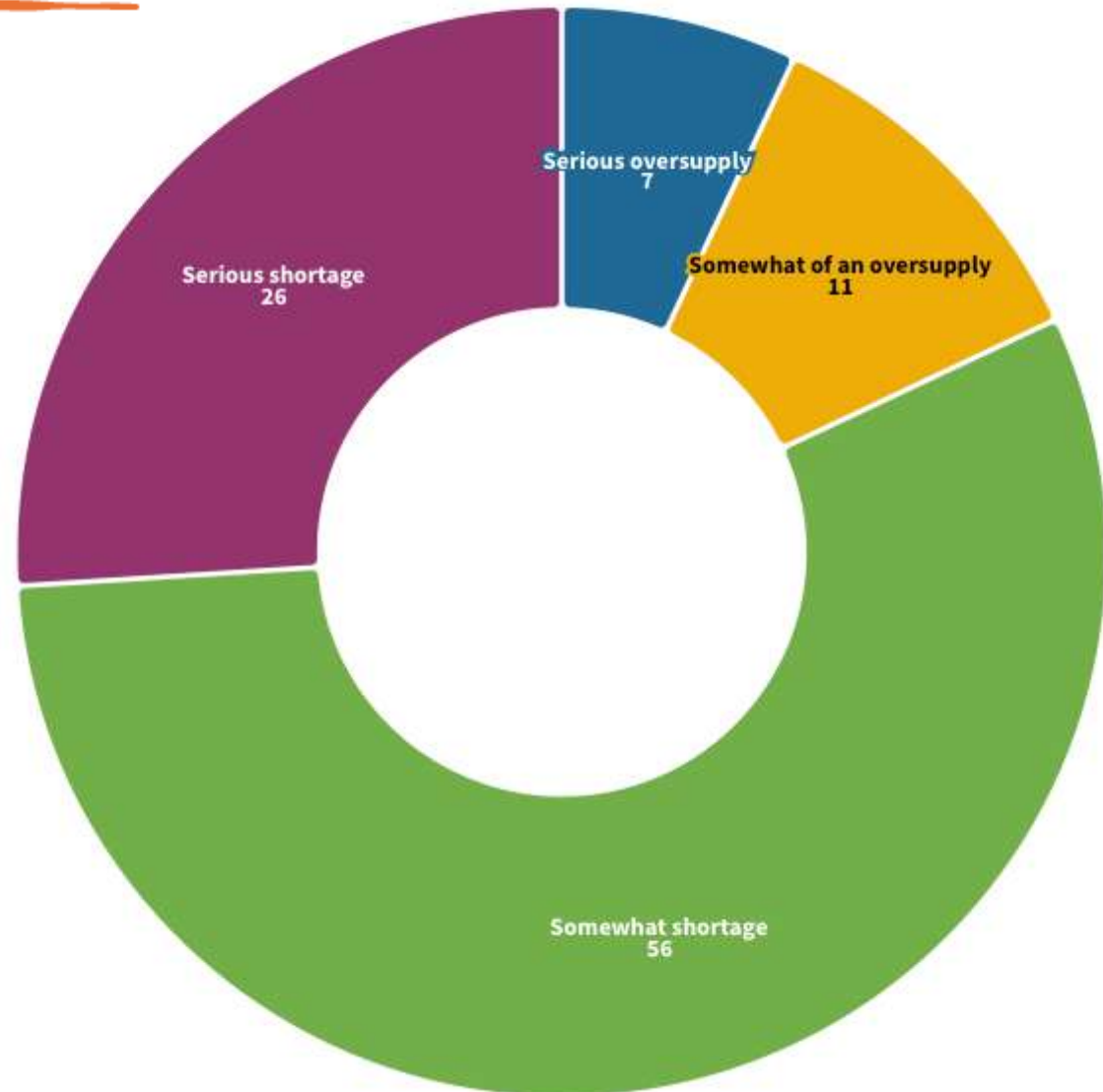
Many countries, especially LMIC, are still faced with a lack of qualified staff due to inadequate training and recruitment strategies.



Changes in Teachers' Working Conditions Over 2016-2021 (EIR, 2022)

Challenges in Teacher Qualification and Training

High-income countries deal with severe labor shortages and poor working conditions across income groups.



Perceived Extent of Teacher Shortage (EIR, 2022)

Challenges in Teacher Qualification and Training

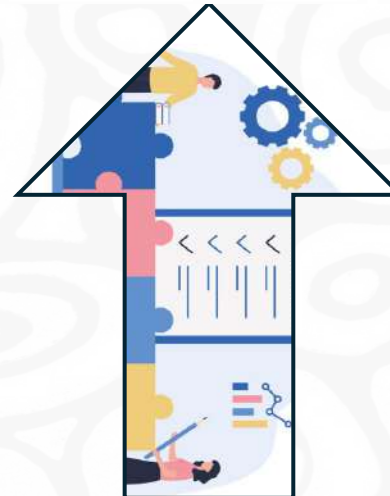
Evidence shows a high level of attrition among ECCE teachers.



ECEC teachers' attrition rates (OECD, 2022)

Conflicting Pressures on Early Childhood Educators

- Diverse needs of children and families.
- Reduction of educational subjects to literacy, numeracy, and science.
- Push to reduce educator roles to those of mere technicians.



Expanding Early Childhood Curricula

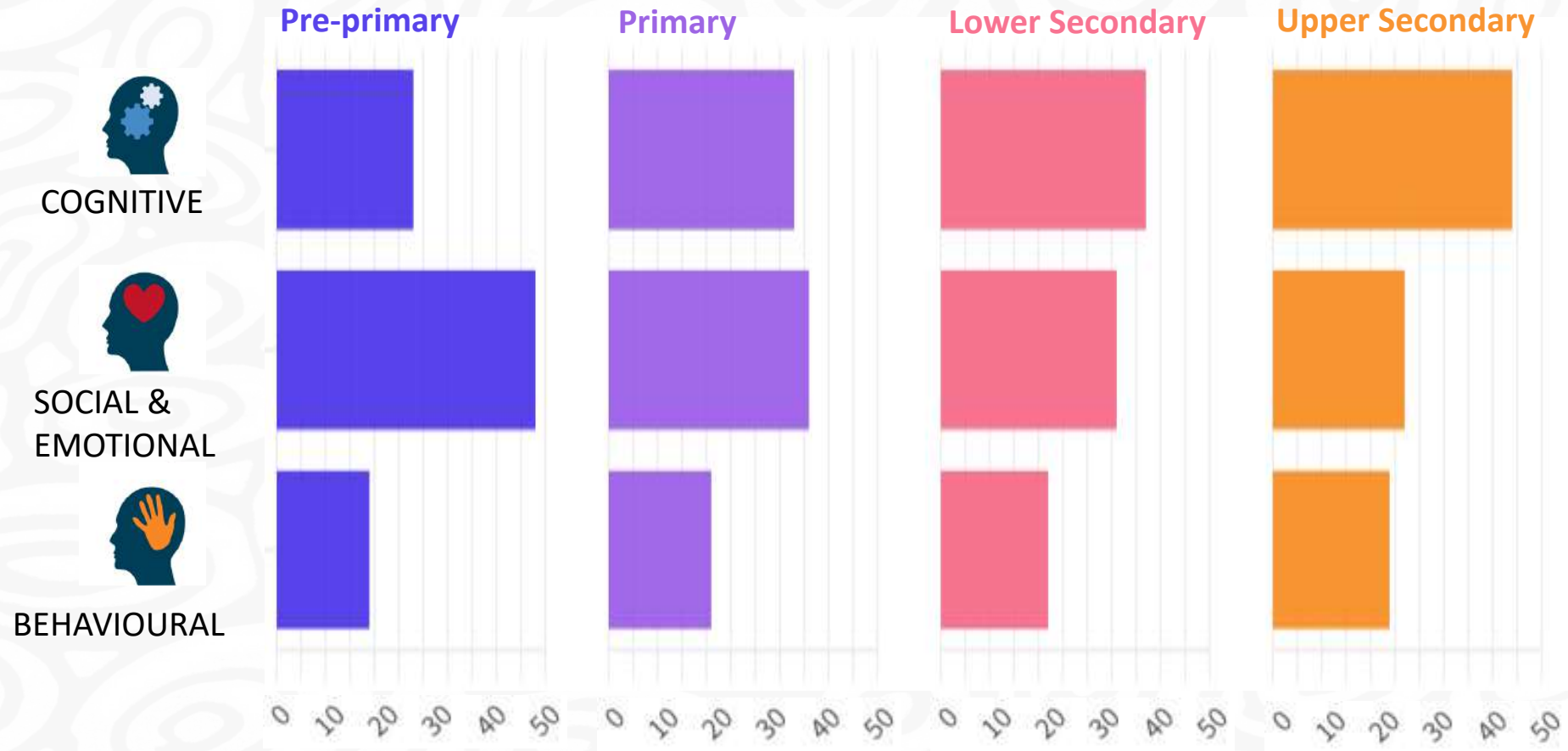
- Inclusion of environmental, sustainability, and biodiversity topics.
- Active developments particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean (López Rello, 2023).



Cognitive, Socio-Emotional and Behavioural Dimensions

- Extensive development of social and emotional dimensions at pre-primary level (UNESCO, 2019).

- Need for emphasis at all educational levels.



Addressing Economic Sustainability in Education

- Overlooked economic dimension in sustainability education (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2016; Višnjić-Jevtić et al., 2022; Fermín-González, 2022).
- Importance of systematic investment in teacher education and professional development.



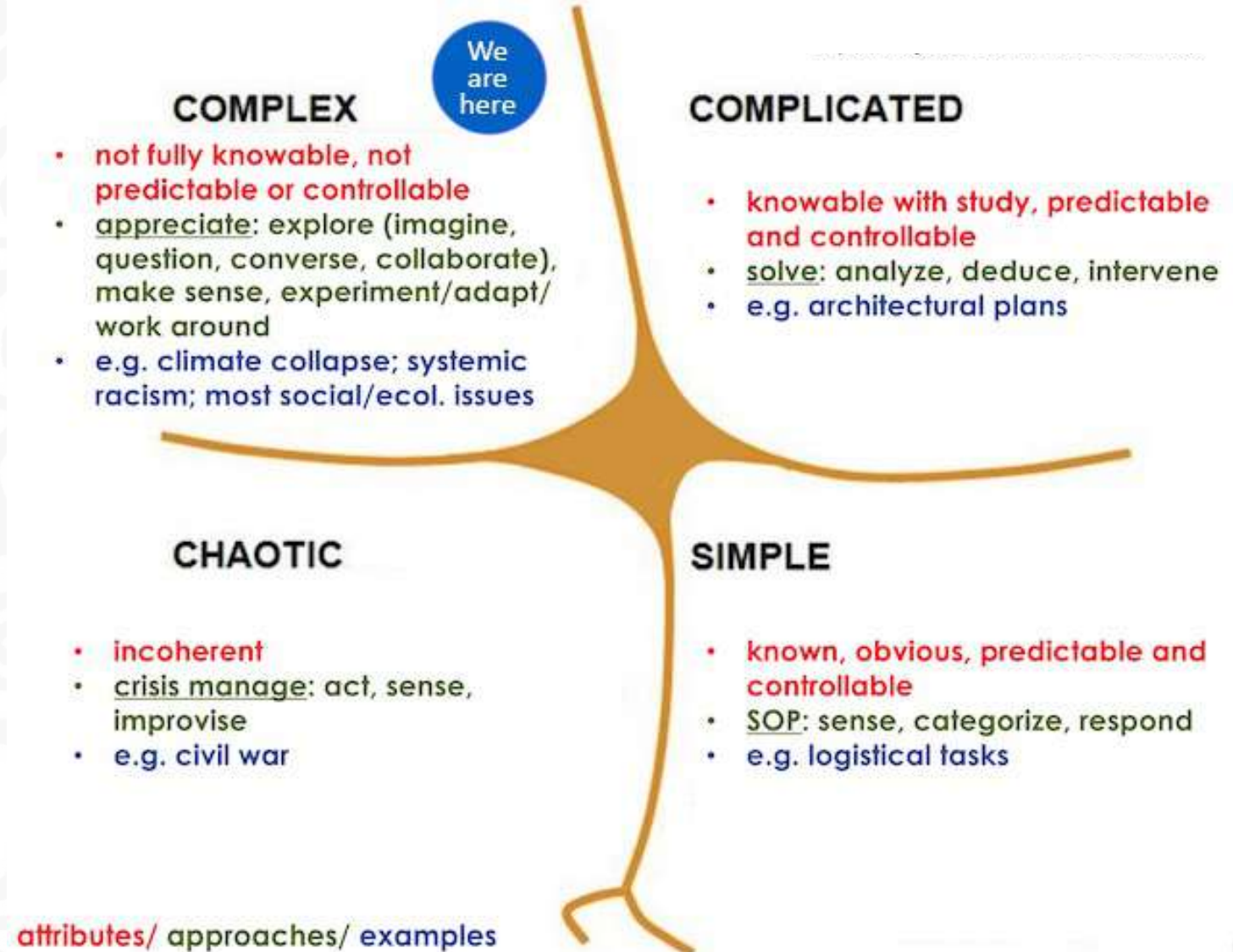
Addressing Eco-Anxiety Among Educators

- Emotional impact of climate change on teachers (Lombardi, 2013; Edwards, 2023).
- Need for mental wellness, resilience, and transformative change strategies.



The Complexity of Teaching Sustainability

- Climate change as a complex educational challenge.
- Teachers feeling unprepared and overwhelmed (Meyer, 2017; Collins, 2023).



Promoting a non-dogmatic view of sustainability

- Sustainability is 'sold out'.
- Sustainability is more than a buzzword (Heinberg, 2012).
- Sustainability as a non-binary notion, a fuzzy concept.



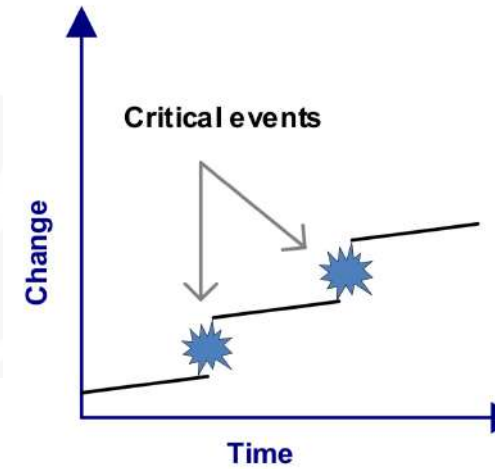
Debates on Change: Incremental vs. Radical

- Incremental change:
Gradual adjustments in attitudes and behaviours.
- Radical change:
Global renewal of societal and educational systems.



Transformative Approach to Sustainability Education

- Combining small victories with significant leaps.
- Supported by the theory of punctuated equilibria (Green-Pedersen & Princen, 2019).
- "Head, hands, and heart" approach (Cassidy et al., 2015).



Navigating ECEfS: Key points

- Counter the pressures to reduce childhood experiences to mere preparation for adult life.
- Cultivating neoteny by valuing diversity.



Navigating ECEfS: Key points

- Support teachers and children in maintaining and encouraging interdisciplinarity.
- Rotation and hybridization of educational experiences.



Navigating ECEfS: Key points

- Cultivating an ecological approach.
- Promoting teachers' relational agency.



Thank you!

