

# From “overload” to “support” – Portuguese as Heritage Language teachers’ perceptions on the dynamics of a community of practices in changing times

## Abstract

Portuguese is the second most spoken language at home by the students of the Luxembourgish schools (MENJE, 2016) and Portuguese community represents 16% of the residents in the country (STATEC, 2018). Since September 2017, the Camões, I.P. offer of Portuguese as Heritage Language (PLH) comprises complementary courses, due to a disagreement which almost led to the end of PLH courses at the second most important town of the country (Esch-sur-Alzette).

These courses, based on the plurilingual and intercultural education’s principles (Beacco et al, 2016), count on the expertise of the same teachers of the extinct courses, who embraced the project with commitment, but also with many fears, insecurities and resistance.

In order to support these teachers, a community of practices group was created, with weekly meetings and the pedagogical support of the Co-ordination Unit for Teaching Portuguese in Luxembourg. Their work dynamics are organised around four axes: curricular management and development; pedagogical materials production and experimentation; teacher education and supervision; and observation/analysis of the process.

In this poster, we will describe the dynamics of these community of practices in more detail and present some preliminary results from teachers’ perceptions about possible implications of these dynamics on their professional development.

## METHODOLOGICAL OPTIONS

### Research question:

What perspectives do teachers have concerning the dynamics of the community of practices? How do they feel these experience?

### Data collections instruments:

3 individual reports (total: 27)

Beginning of the school year → End of the 1st term → End of the 2nd term

### Methodology of data analysis: Mixte approach

Qualitative approach – content analysis (SWOT matrix)

Quantitative approach – frequency

(Maroy, 1997; Quivy & Campenhoudt, 2008)

## Preliminary conclusions

✓ Focus on internal factors of the community of practices

### ✓ STRENGTHS

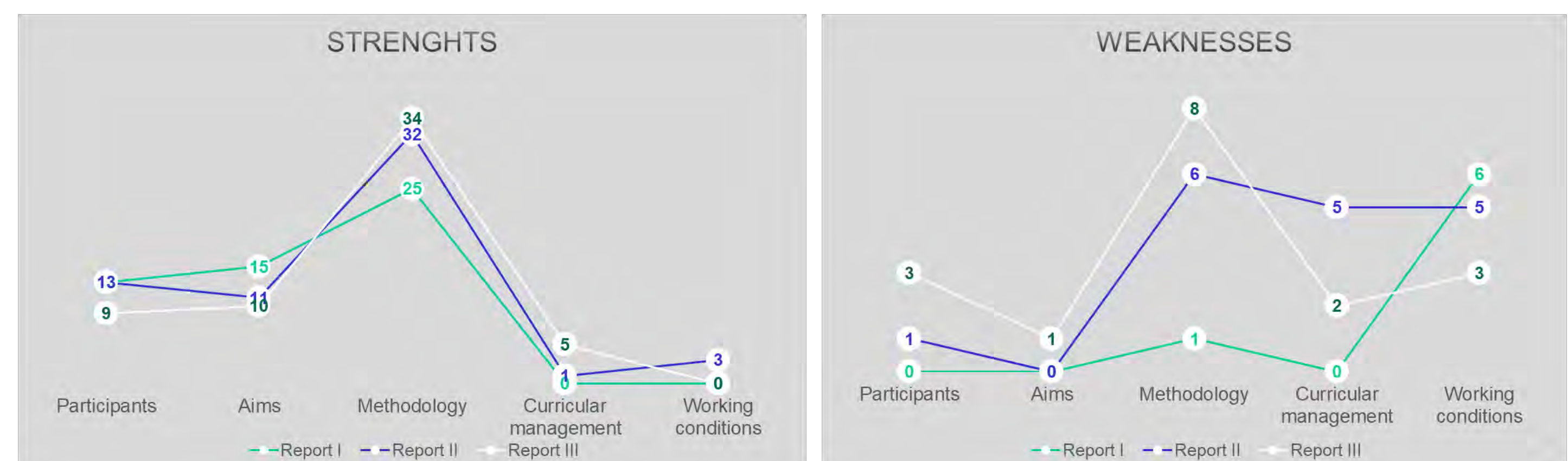
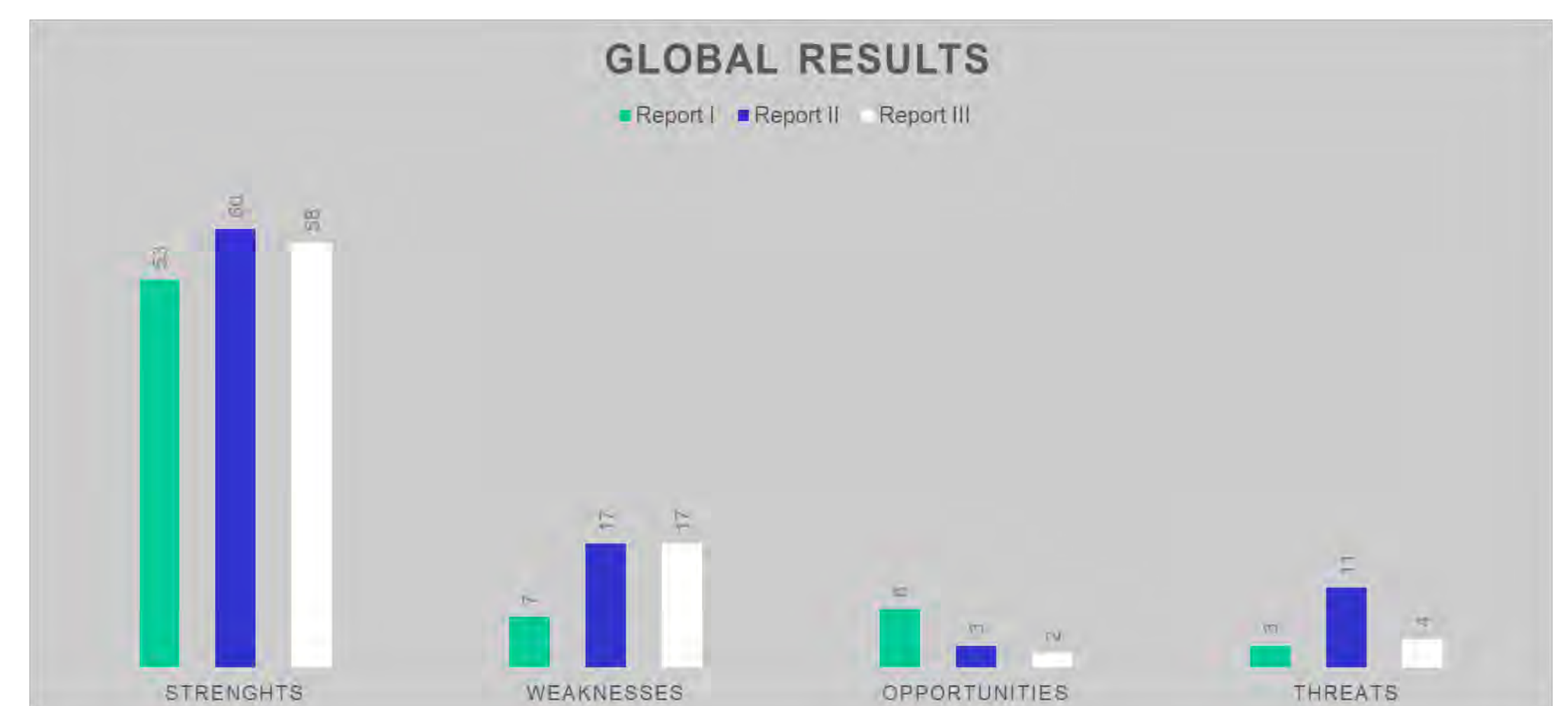
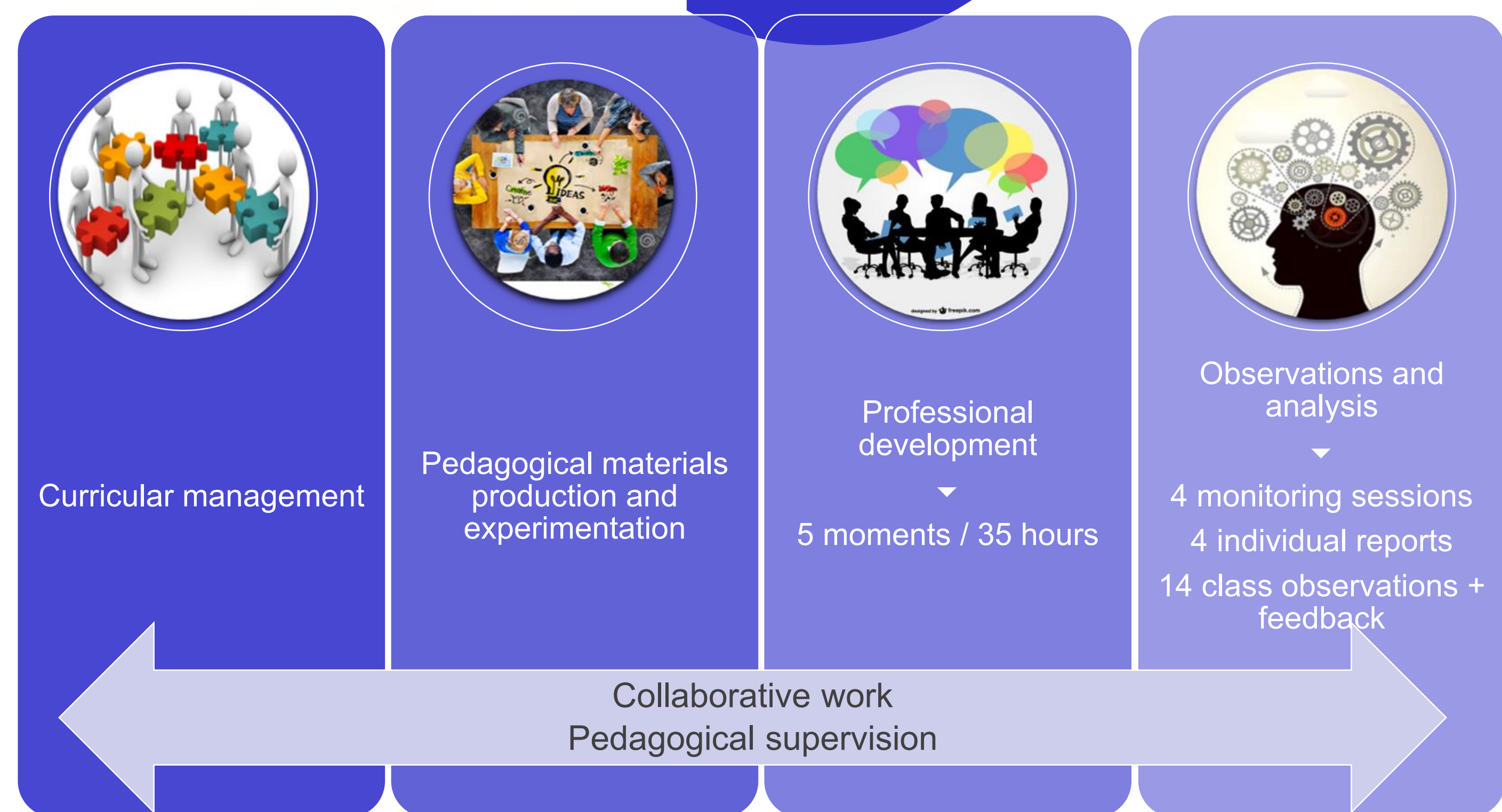
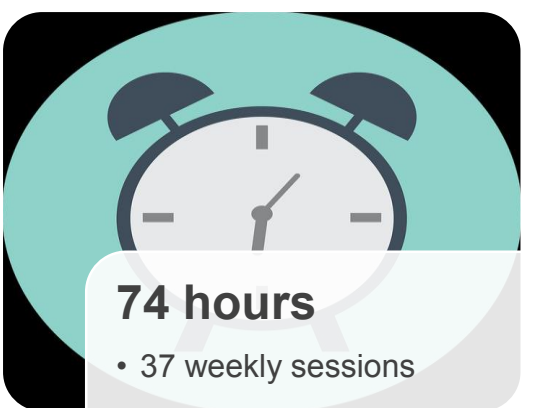
- ✓ Collaborative work;
- ✓ Focus on practices;
- ✓ Contextualised professional development offer;
- ✓ Class observations (constructive feedback);
- ✓ Teachers’ commitment / motivation;
- ✓ Pedagogical support/supervision;

### ✓ WEAKNESSES

- ✓ Work overload;
- ✓ Diversity of functions of the weekly sessions;
- ✓ Class observations (pressure).



9 teachers  
2 elements of the  
Co-ordination /  
Camões, I.P.  
1 element of the  
Luxembourgish  
Ministry of  
Education



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