

EDUCATION & SKILLS

Learning about the Outcomes of Investment in Preschool Education through the PISA Programme

International Seminar - Preschool: Policies, Practices and Development Strategies”

Stéphanie Jamet, Senior analyst

Head of the Early Childhood Education and Care team

OECD, Directorate for Education and Skills

Rabat, 11 February 2026

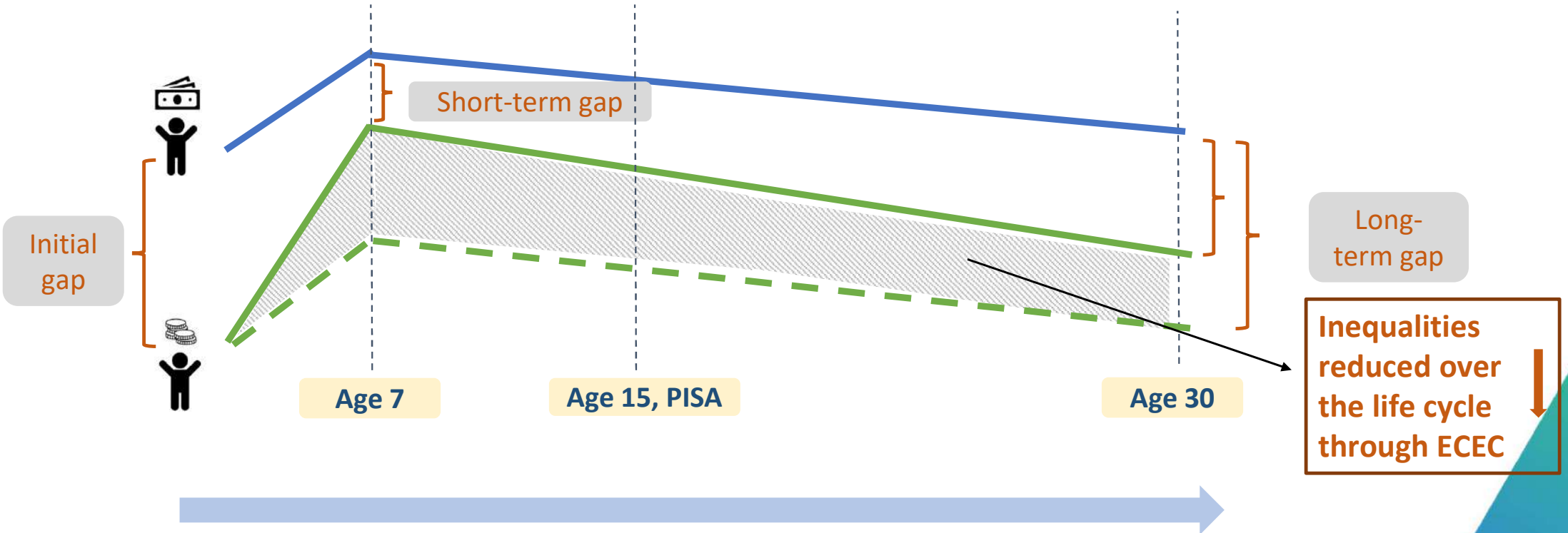
OECD
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

Mechanisms and drivers behind long-lasting effects of Early Childhood Education and Care

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is a cost-effective way to close achievement gaps before they widen

Hypothetical scenario

Effect of ECEC on individual outcomes and performance gap:



Restricted Use - À usage restreint

Factors that contribute to long-lasting effects of ECEC policies

Combining the quantity and quality of ECEC

- Starting age of ECEC
- Number of hours
- Quality-quantity nexus

ECEC quality features

- Areas of development targeted by ECEC
- Parents and families engagement

Sustaining environments and dynamic complementarities

- Primary and later education
- Co-ordination with other services

Restricted Use - À usage restreint

Mechanisms behind long-lasting effects of ECEC policies

Positive long-lasting effects on individual outomes later in life

+

Stronger effects for children from low SES backgrounds

=

ECEC mitigates inequalities

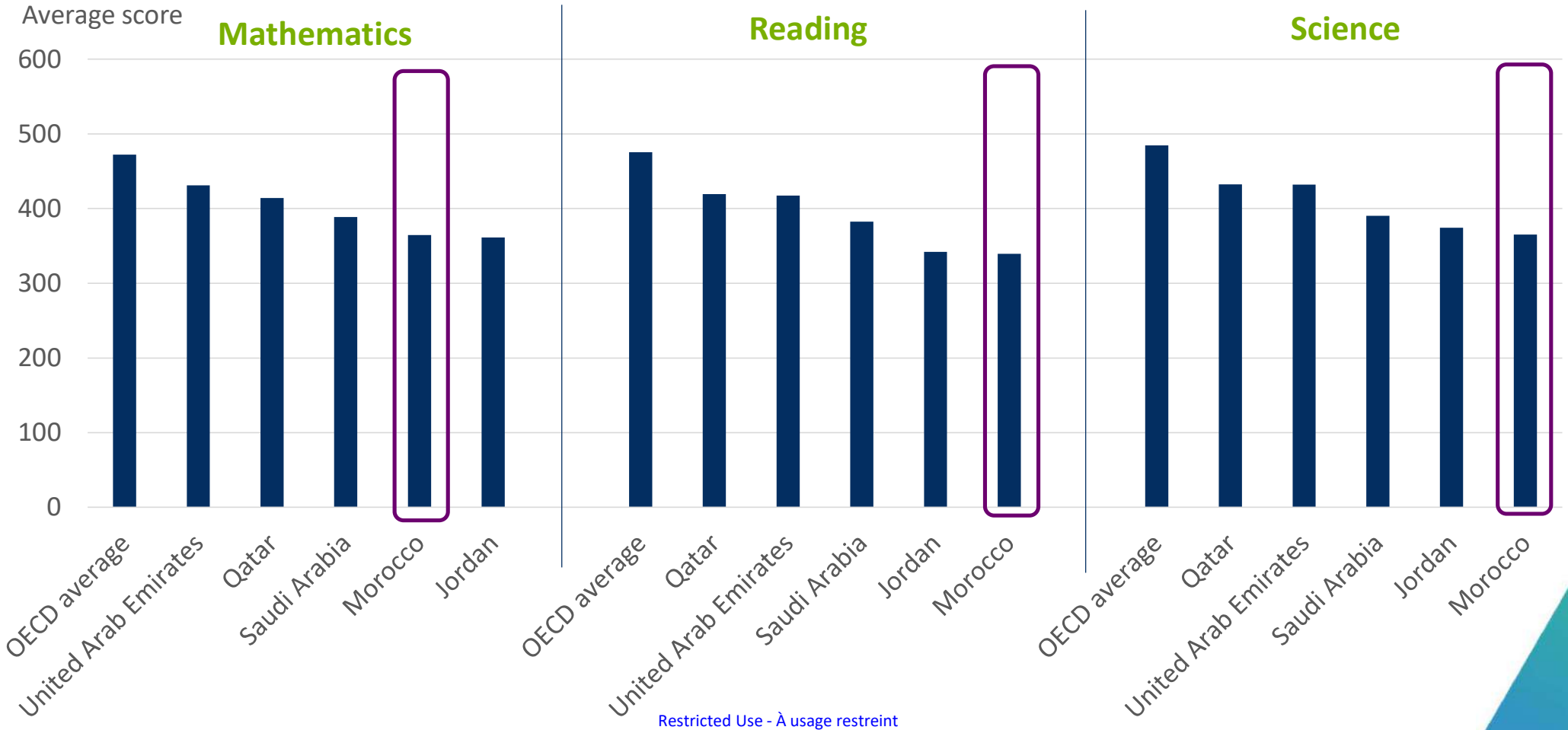
Identifying ECEC effects on inequalities has not been systematic

ECEC vs other inequality-targeting policies 	Value of short-term effects 	Lack of evaluation 	Role of counterfactuals 

Restricted Use - À usage restreint

How does Morocco compare to other countries according to PISA (students' assessment at the age of 15)?

Average PISA scores in Morocco and other MENA countries, 2022

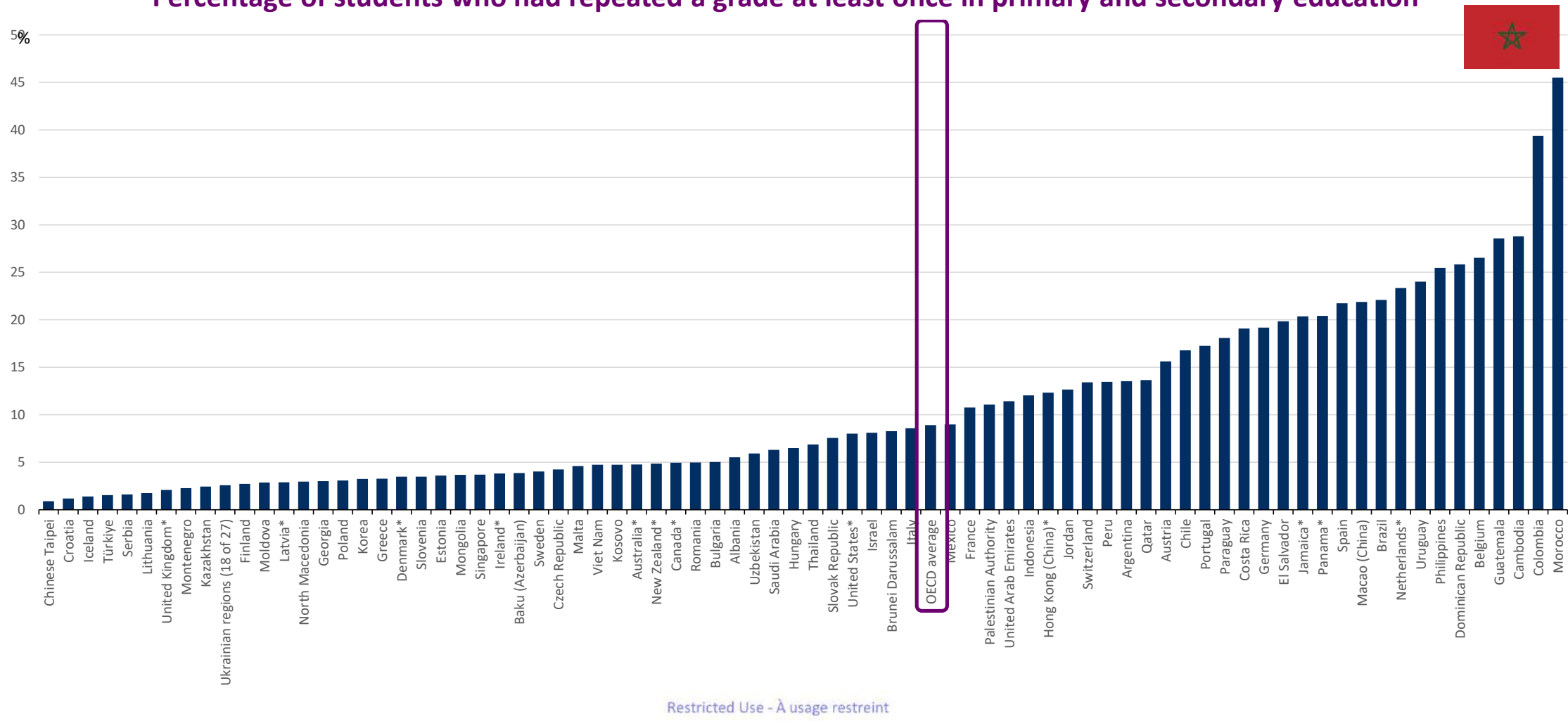


Restricted Use - À usage restreint

Grade repetition according to PISA, 2022

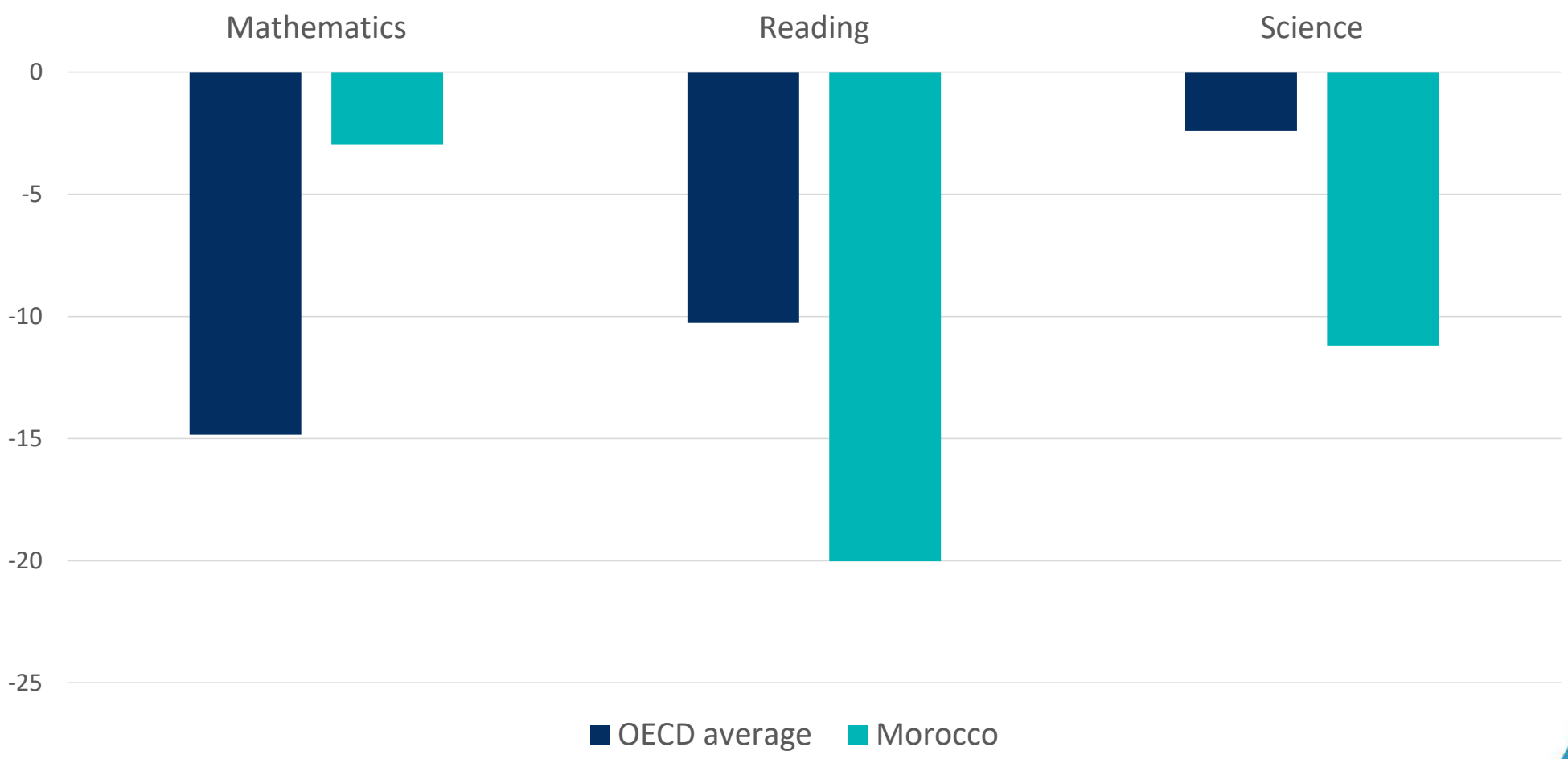
Figure II.4.6

Percentage of students who had repeated a grade at least once in primary and secondary education



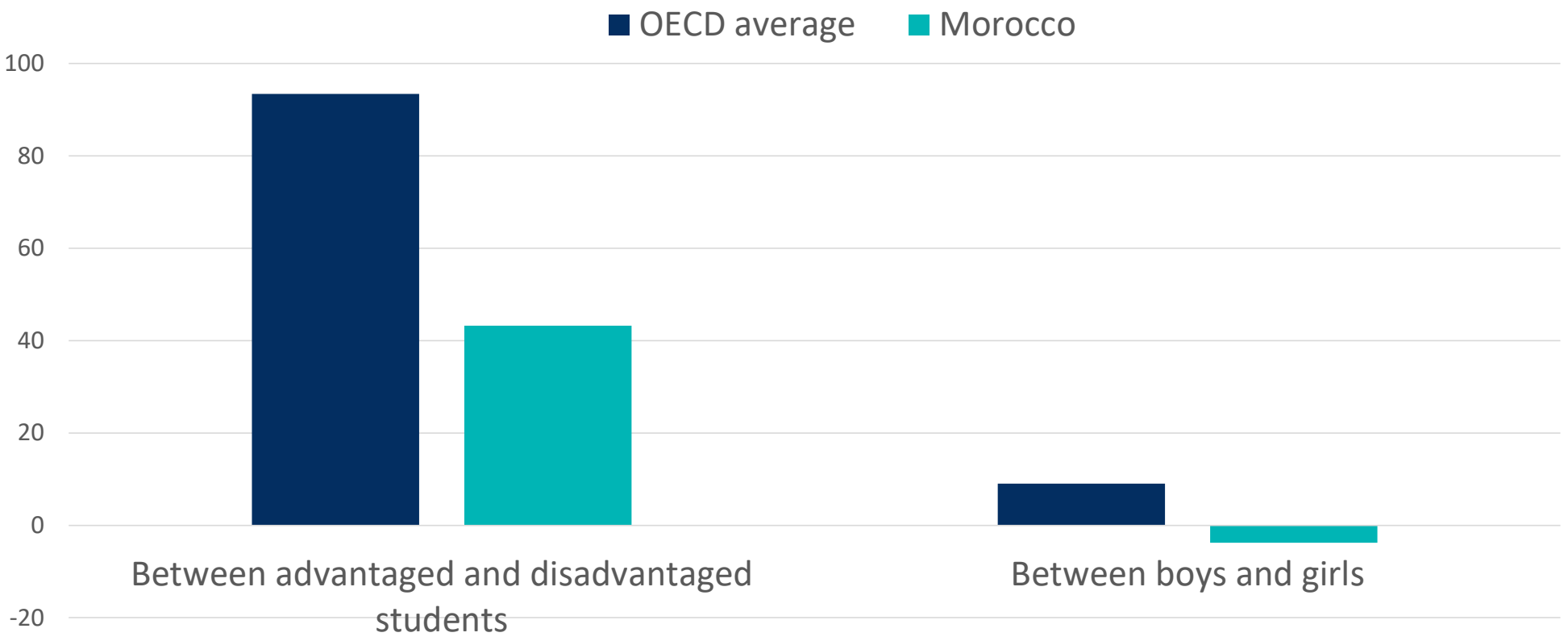
Restricted Use - À usage restreint

Short-term change in performance: PISA 2018 to PISA 2022



Restricted Use - À usage restreint

Difference in PISA mathematic scores according to social economic status and gender, 2022



Restricted Use - À usage restreint

What can we learn from PISA on Early Childhood Education and Care policies?

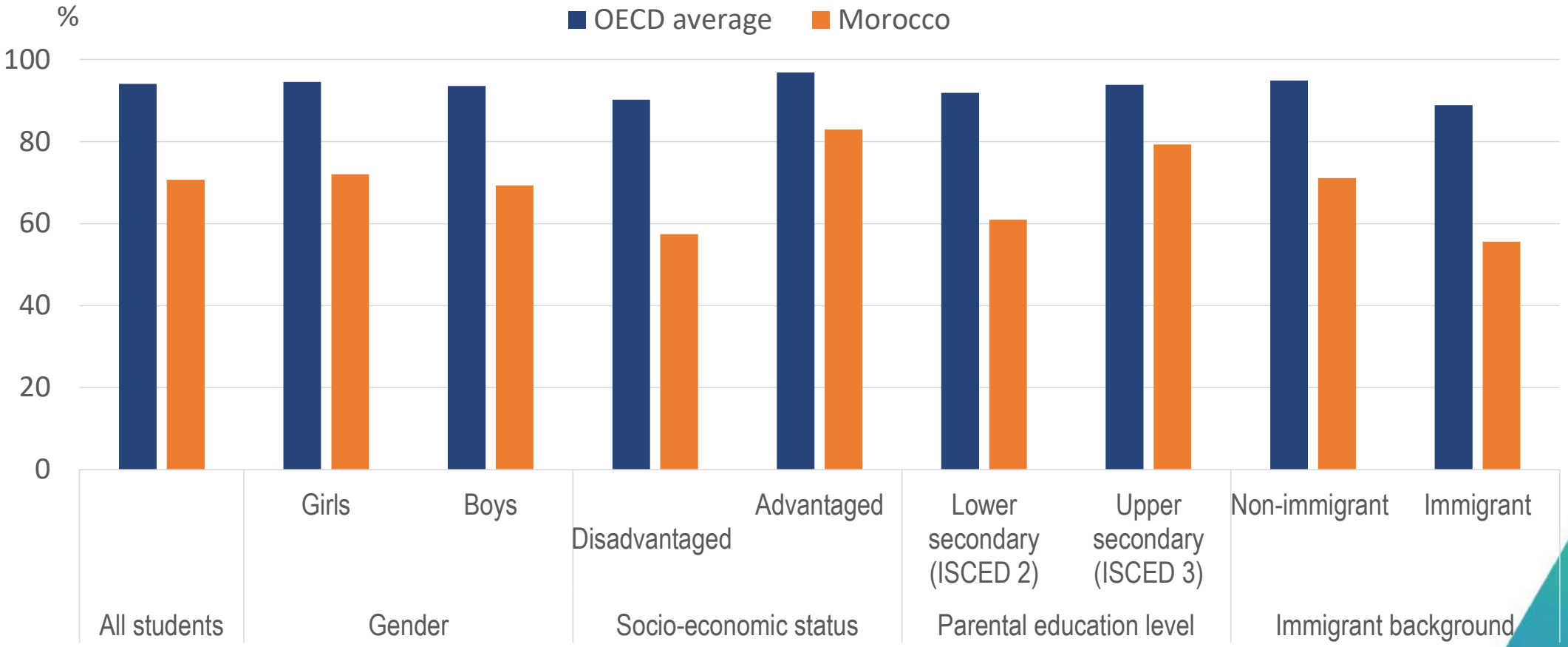
How to interpret the information coming from PISA on early childhood education and care

- 15 years old students were in pre-primary education 10 years ago
- Reflect participation in and quality of ECEC 10 years ago
- Information comes from questions to students
- Yet, a big source of internationally comparable information available at several points in time
- Allowing to look at the links between ECEC participation and students' outcomes at age 15 (**not causal effect**)
- As in most OECD countries, 1 or 2 years of pre-school has become almost universal, it becomes more difficult to learn about these links, particularly for pre-primary education

Restricted Use - À usage restreint

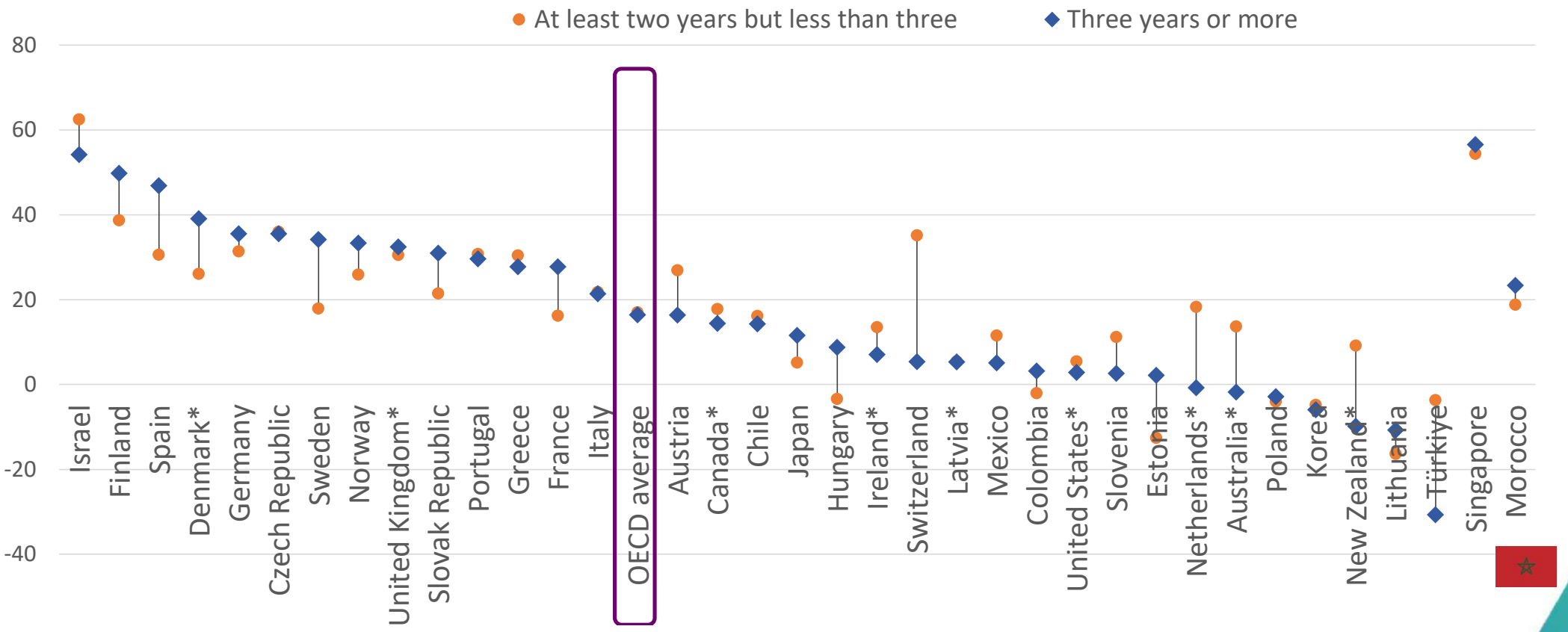
Gap in participation in pre-primary education

Percentage of students who had attended pre-primary school for at least one year



Restricted Use - À usage restreint

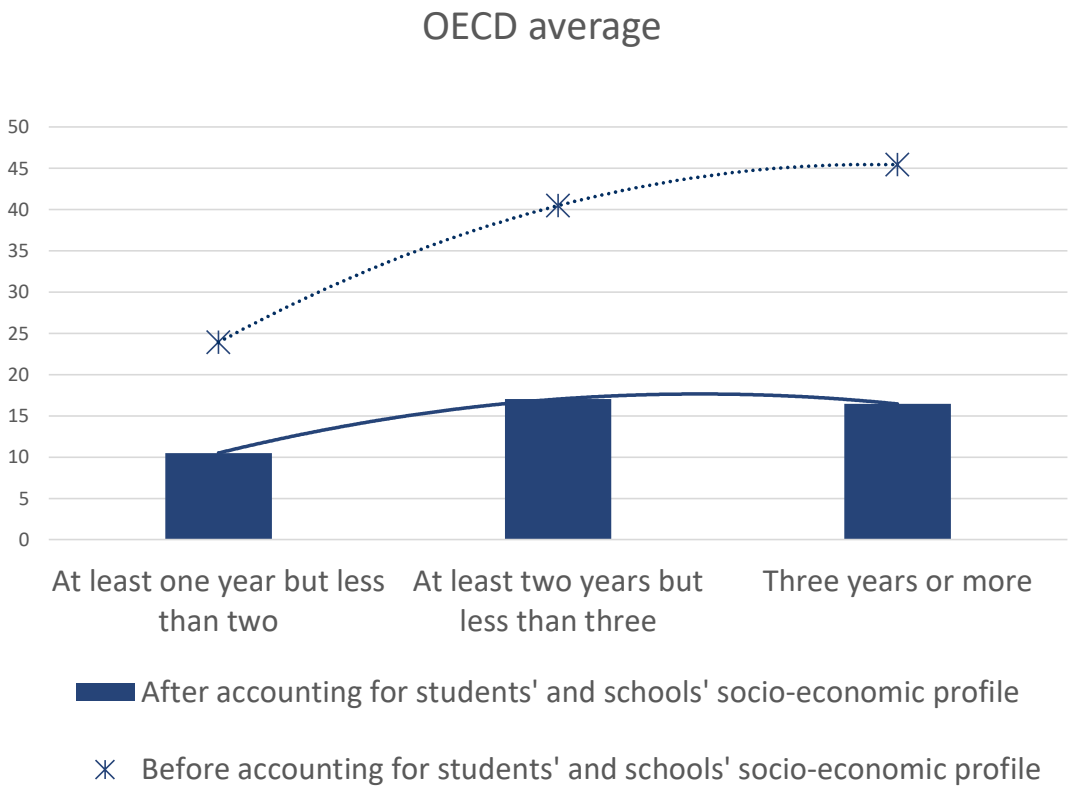
In most countries, children who have attended at least one year of pre-school have higher scores in mathematics

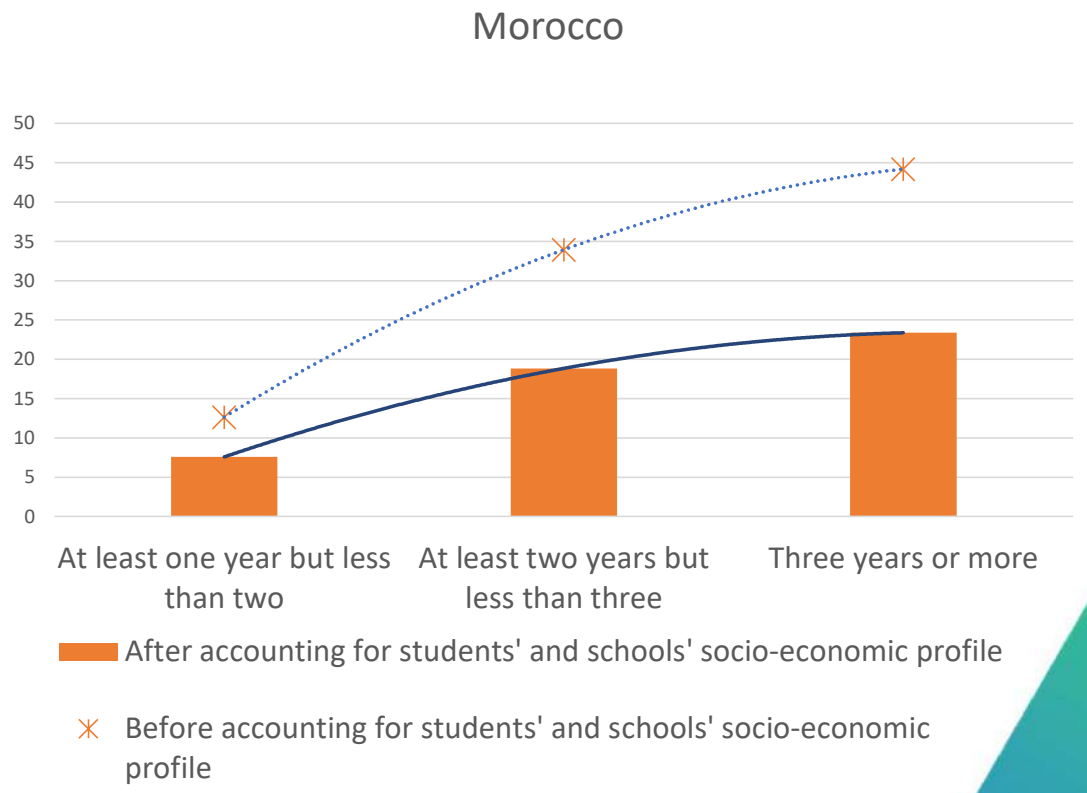


Restricted Use - À usage restreint

Link between an additional year of pre-primary school and mathematics performance at age 15

Score-point difference in mathematics relative to students who had not attended pre-primary school or had attended for less than a year





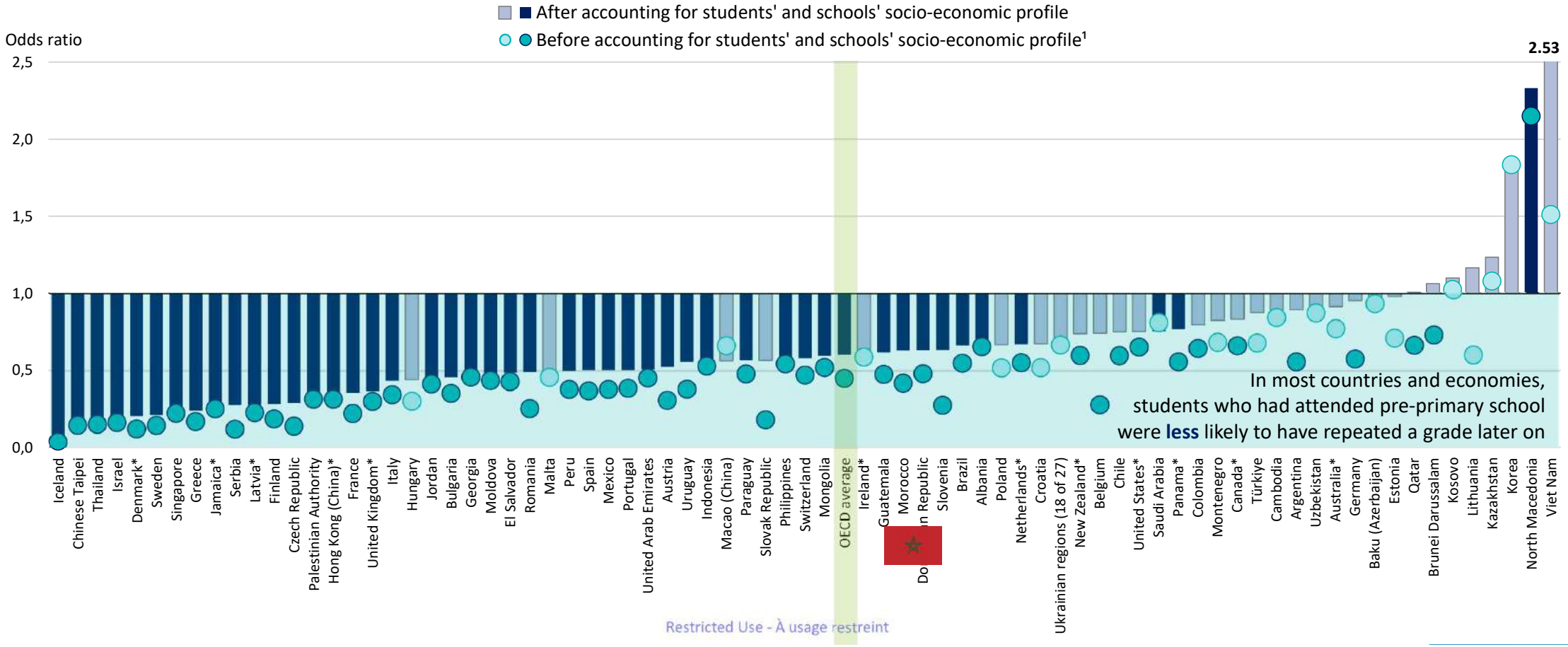
Restricted Use - À usage restreint

Attendance at pre-primary school and grade repetition

Figure II.4.5

Based on students' reports

Increased likelihood of repeating a grade at least once at any education level when students had attended at least one year of pre-primary school (ref: having not attended or having attended for less than a year)



Restricted Use - À usage restreint

Conclusions

- PISA shows positive links between children's participation in pre-school and outcomes at age 15: higher mathematics scores and lower grade repetition
- The size of these links is close to the OECD average
- There are gaps in the participation in pre-school in Morocco according to children's socio-economic background

Restricted Use - À usage restreint

EDUCATION & SKILLS



Thank you for your attention!

www.oecd.org/en/about/programmes/early-childhood-education-and-care-ecec

A policy roadmap for ECEC to support equity and inclusion with lasting impact:

1. Reduce gaps in participation in ECEC
2. Support meaningful interactions between children and ECEC staff
3. Make ECEC inclusive for all children
4. Connect ECEC services with families, schools and communities
5. Improve governance and funding for early years policies

Combine universal and targeted approaches

Align ECEC with the broader early years policies

Restricted Use - A usage restreint

How can universal and targeted approaches be combined? Some examples

Figure 6.3



Curriculum & Pedagogy

- ✓ Covering all aspects of development
- ✓ Play-based

- ✓ Culturally responsive pedagogies
- ✓ Avoid redundant content

Workforce

- ✓ Qualification requirements
- ✓ Support for CPD

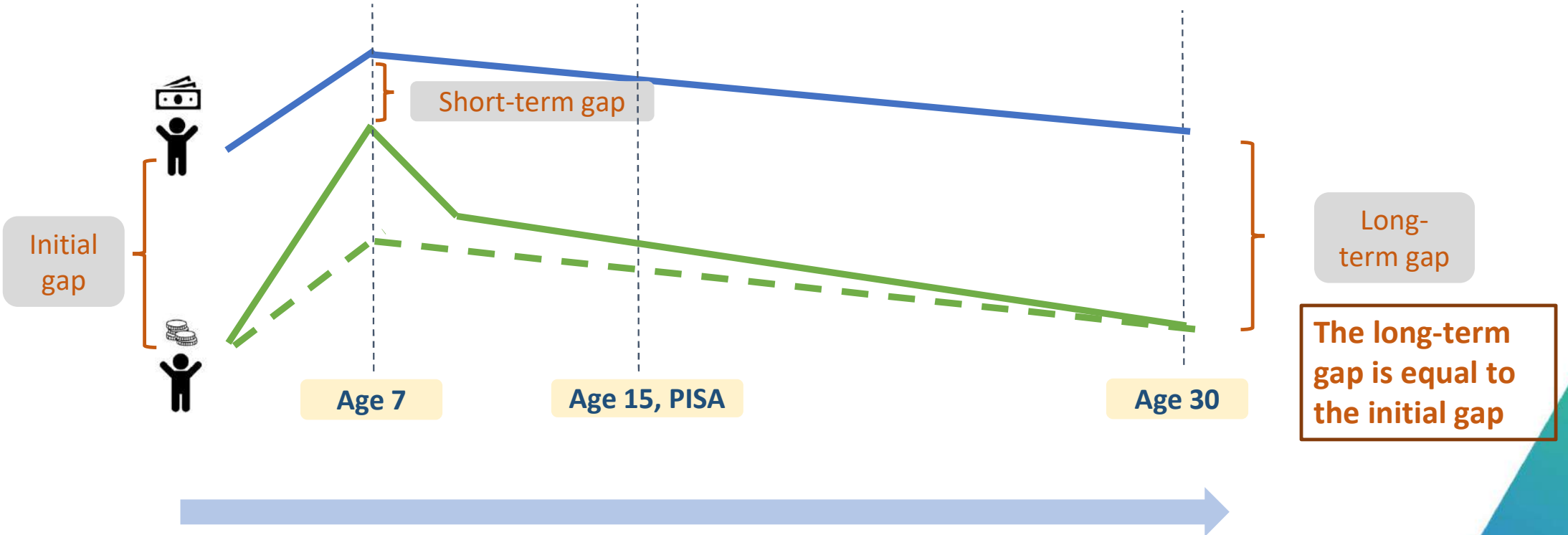
- ✓ Specific training
- ✓ Specialised staff/ favourable staff-child ratios

Restricted Use - À usage restreint

The effect of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) can fade out, particularly for disadvantaged children

Hypothetical scenario

Effect of ECEC on individual outcomes and performance gap:



Restricted Use - À usage restreint