

# STARTALK

## Building a Critical Language Proficient workforce: Where are STARTALK alumni now?

Catherine Pulupa, Rebecca Rubin Damari

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## Mission

To increase the number of U.S. citizens learning, speaking,  
and teaching **critical need foreign languages**



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**Welcome...**

**Lynn Clark  
Joan Micka  
Servia Del Villar**

**STARTALK Program Office, NSA**



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## Program Elements

### **Student Learning**

summer language learning experiences for K-16 students

### **Teacher Development**

summer professional development for language teachers

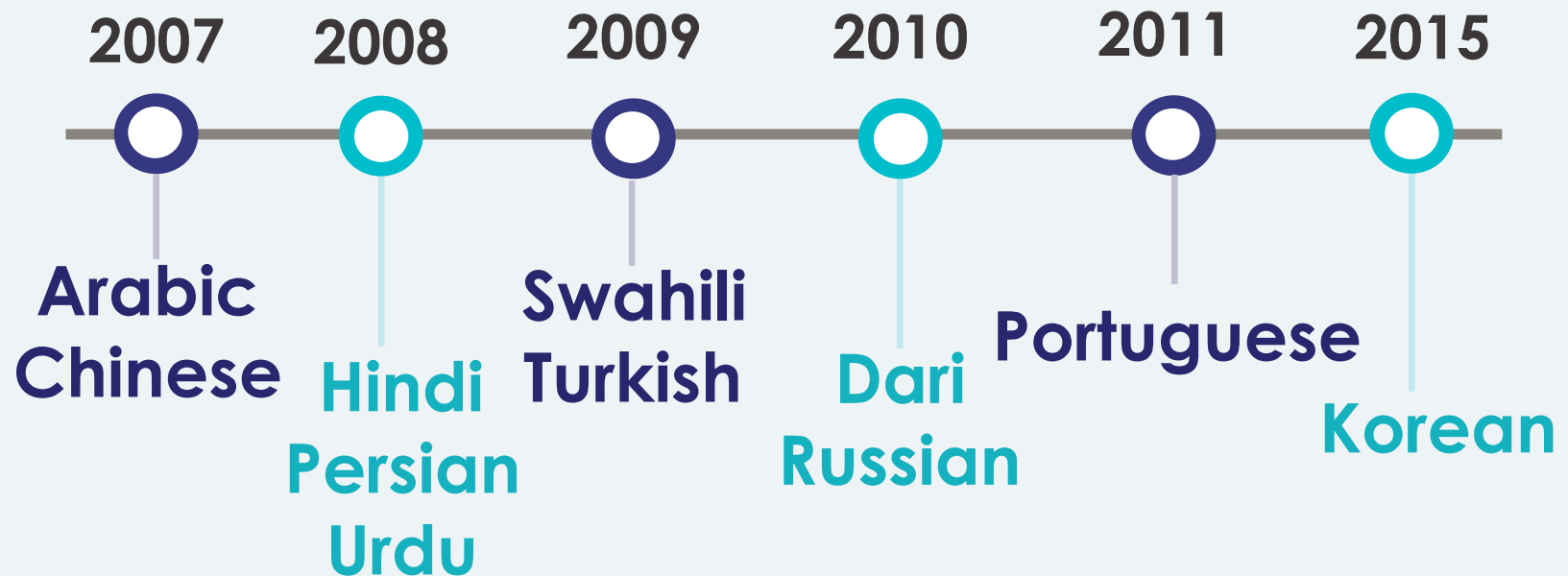
### **Material Development**

create resources that build an infrastructure to support STARTALK languages



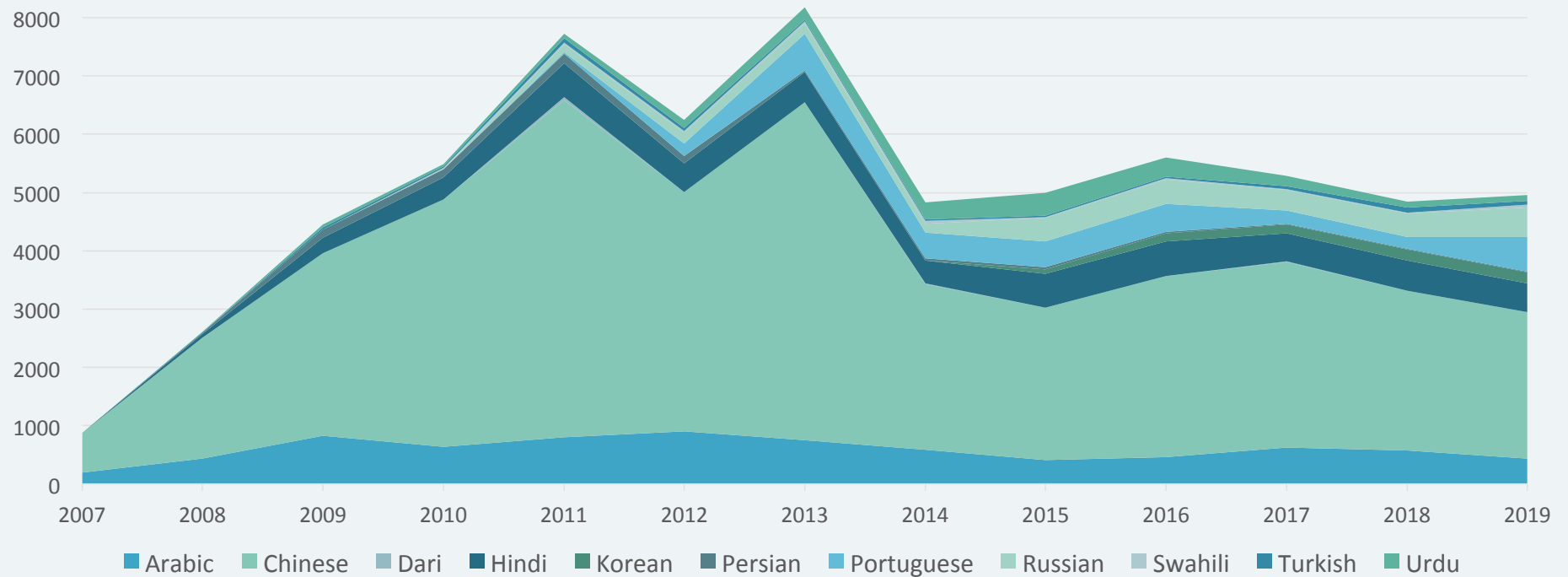
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## Longitudinal Report Motivation

1. Do STARTALK alumni continue to study their STARTALK language following their program experiences?
2. What kinds of impact does STARTALK have on alumni careers, education, and worldview?
3. What kind of careers, especially world language careers, do alumni pursue?



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## 2020 Longitudinal Survey

### Preview of Results

**1. Respondent profiles**

**2. Impact on cultural  
worldview**

**3. Impact on education  
and career**

**4. Alumni in the  
workforce**

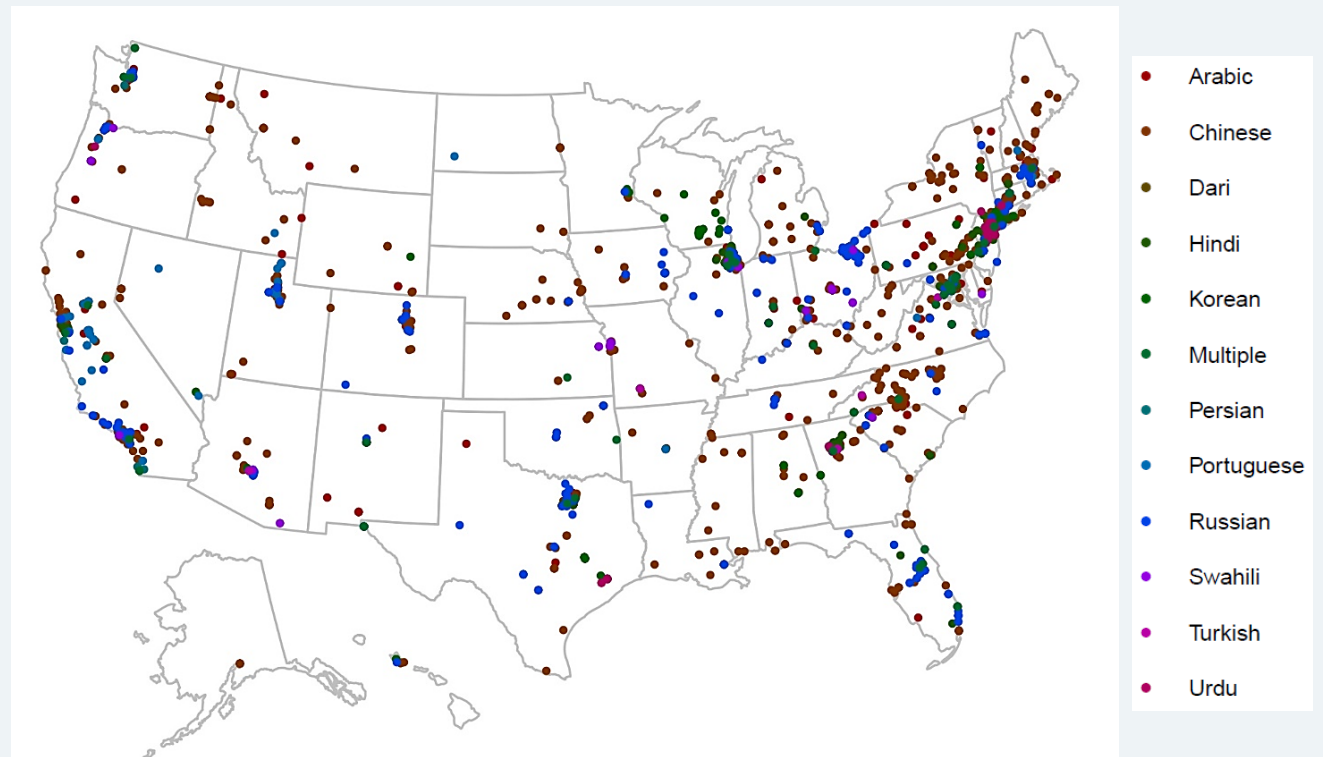


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## 2020 Longitudinal Survey

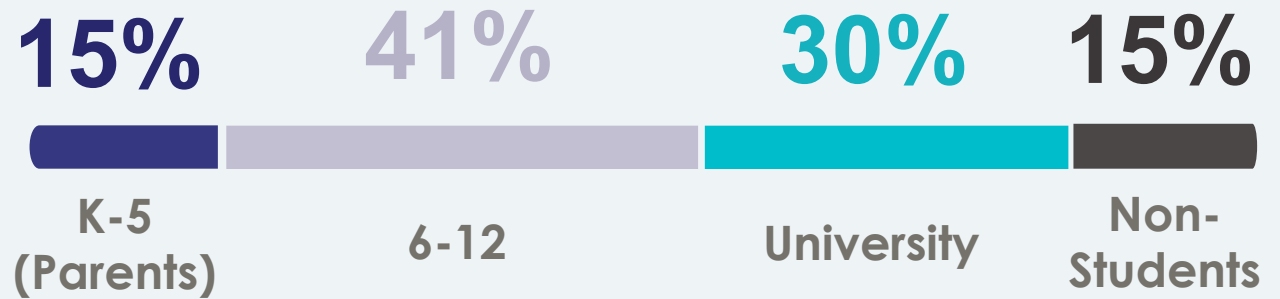
- Responses collected using online survey platform during spring and summer 2020
- 2985 respondents (6.15% of alumni)
- Every year of STARTALK represented
- Every language represented



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## 2020 Longitudinal Survey

Respondents



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## 2020 Longitudinal Survey

### Respondents

**18.7%**

**13.8%**

**64.9**

**81.3%**

**18.7%** Heritage language learners

**13.8%** English language learners

**64.9%** Female

**81.3%** Had used their STARTALK language since their program



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## Impact

**95.3%** of alumni report that STARTALK impacted their cultural worldview

L2 alumni: **96.2%**  
Heritage learner alumni: **90.5%**

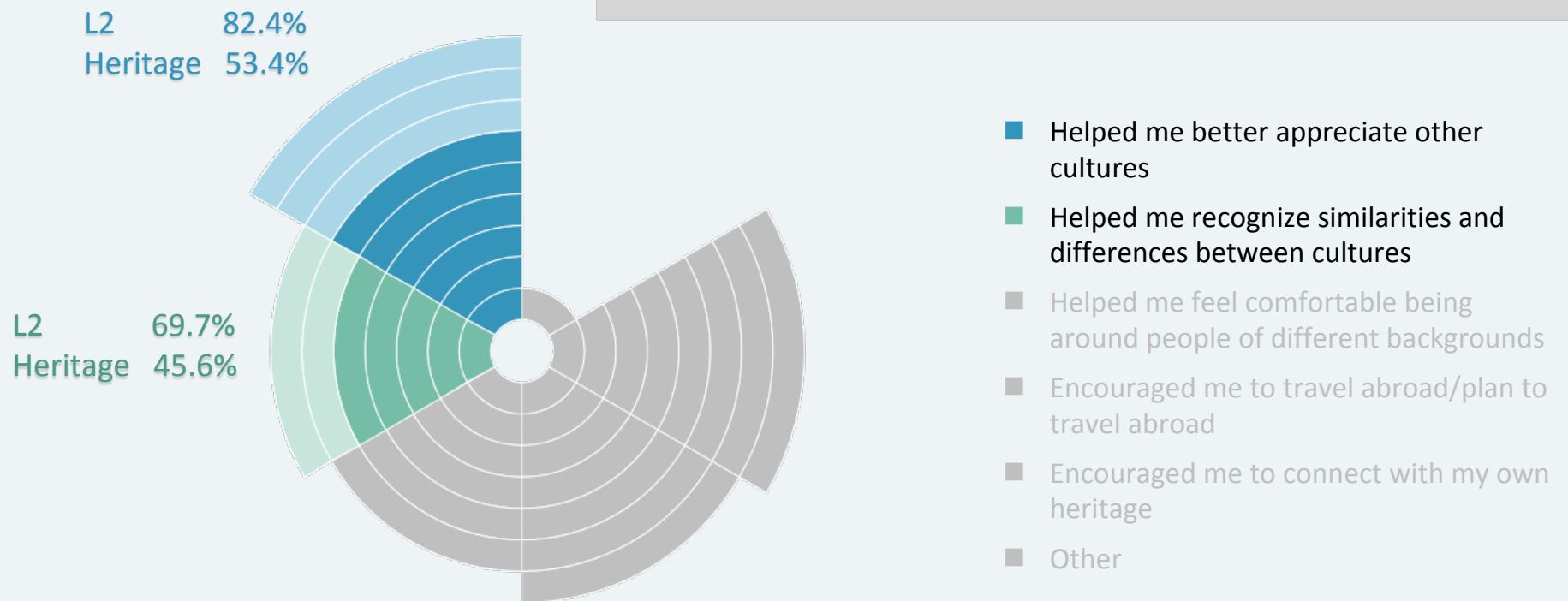


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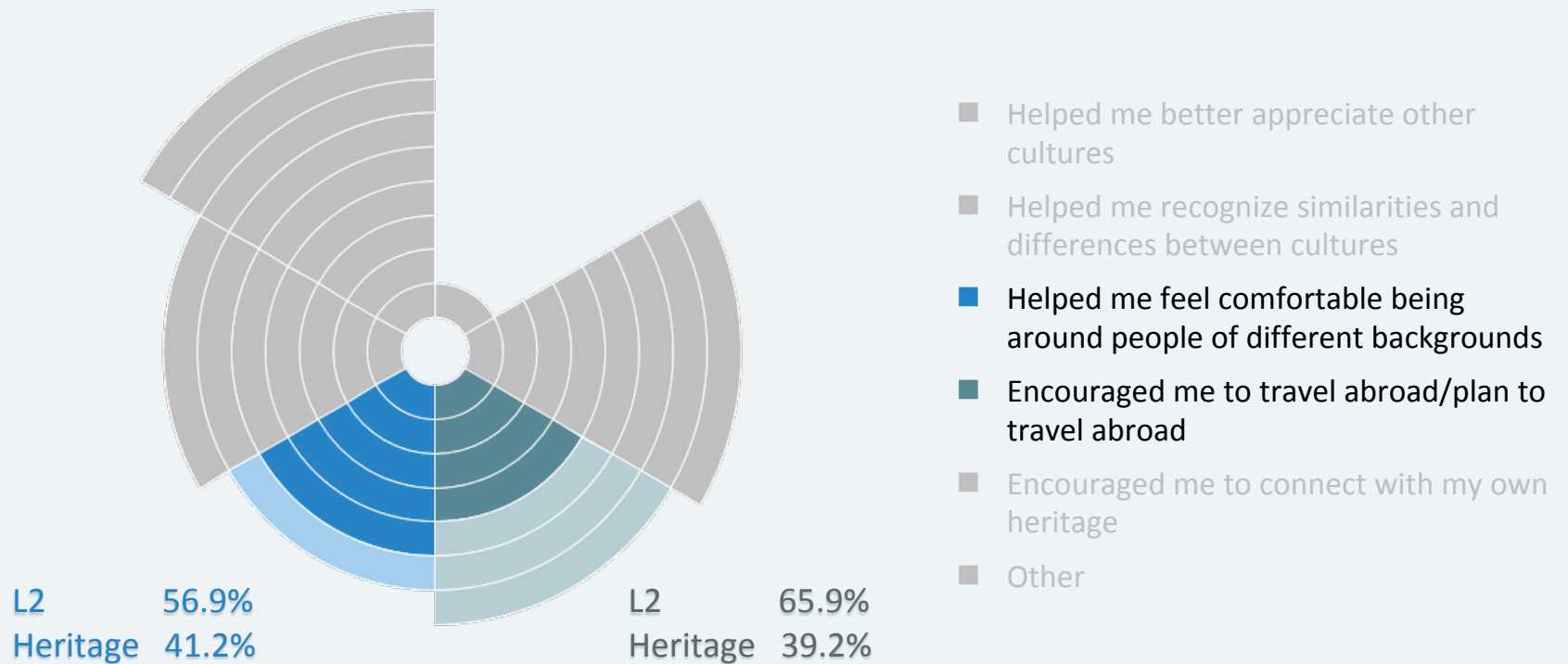
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## 2020 Longitudinal Survey

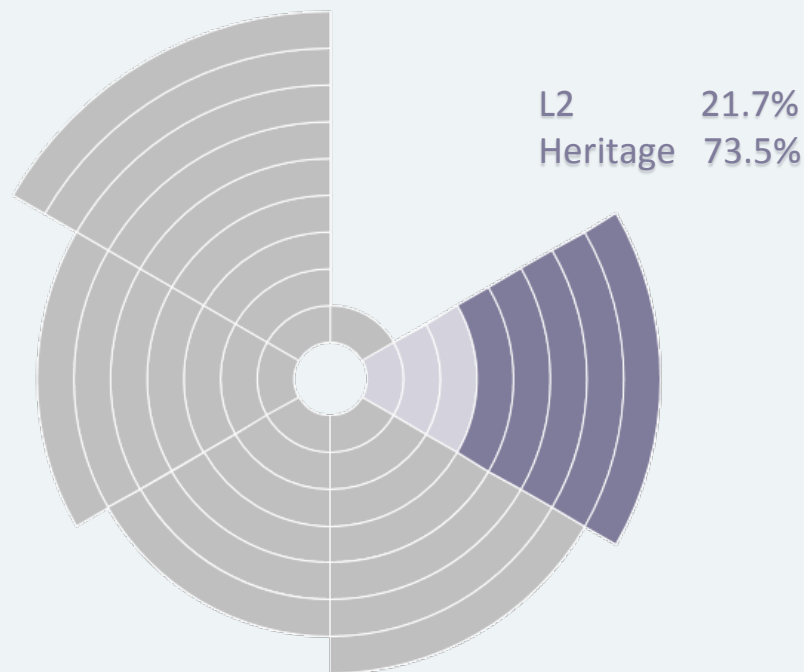
### Impact of STARTALK on Alumni Cultural Worldview



### Impact of STARTALK on Alumni Cultural Worldview



### Impact of STARTALK on Alumni Cultural Worldview



- Helped me better appreciate other cultures
- Helped me recognize similarities and differences between cultures
- Helped me feel comfortable being around people of different backgrounds
- Encouraged me to travel abroad/plan to travel abroad
- Encouraged me to connect with my own heritage
- Other



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## Impact

**94.7%** of alumni report that STARTALK impacted their education and/or career

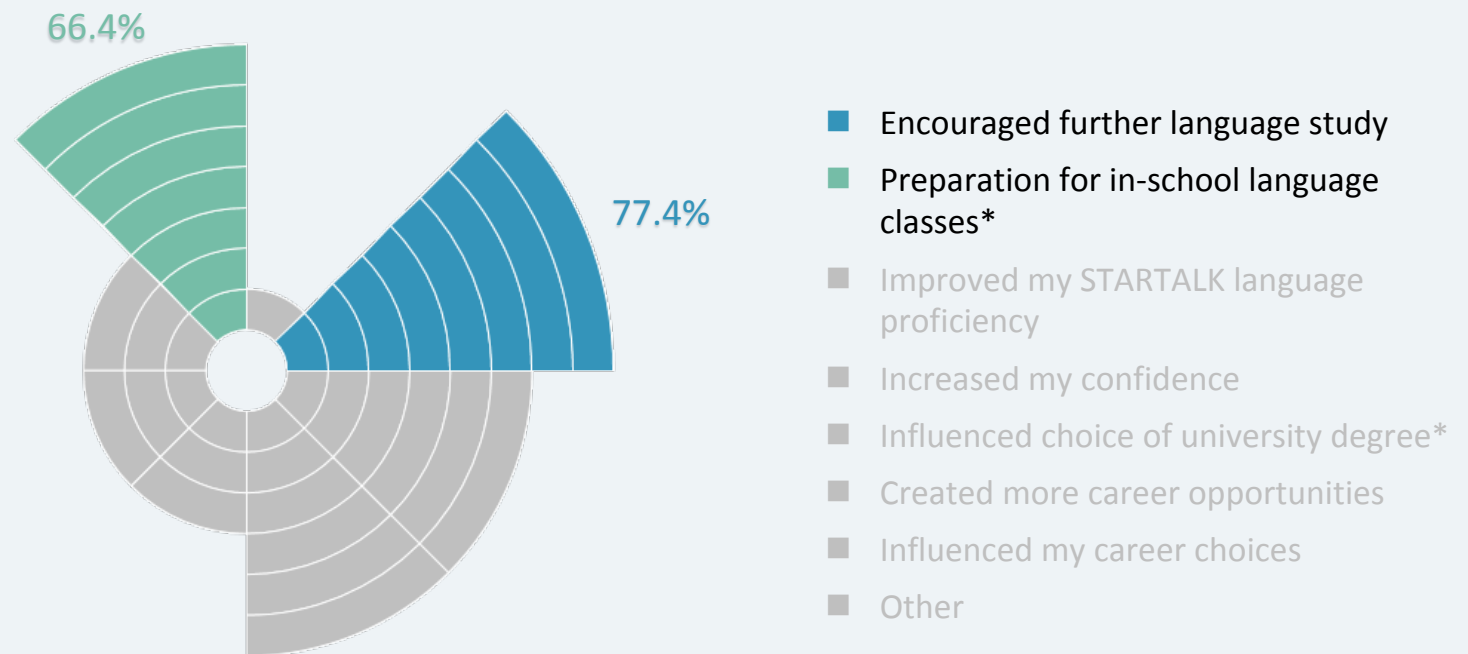
L2 alumni: 94.2%

Heritage learner alumni: 94.8%

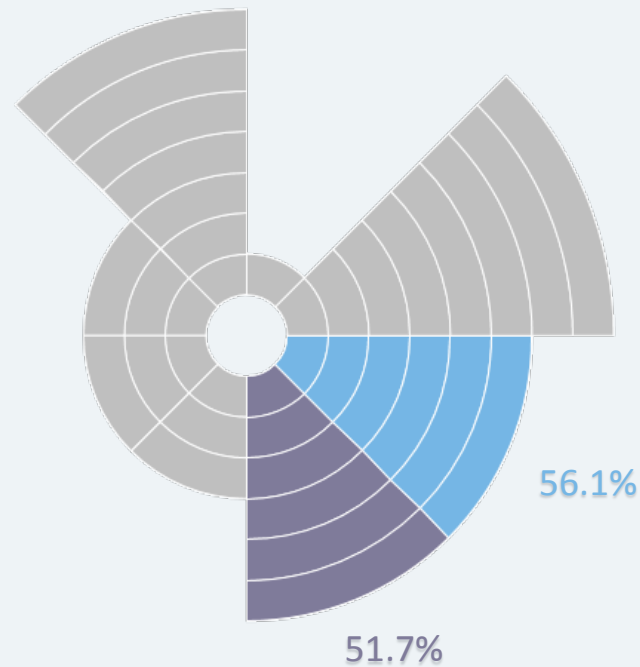


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### Impact of STARTALK on Alumni Education and/or Career



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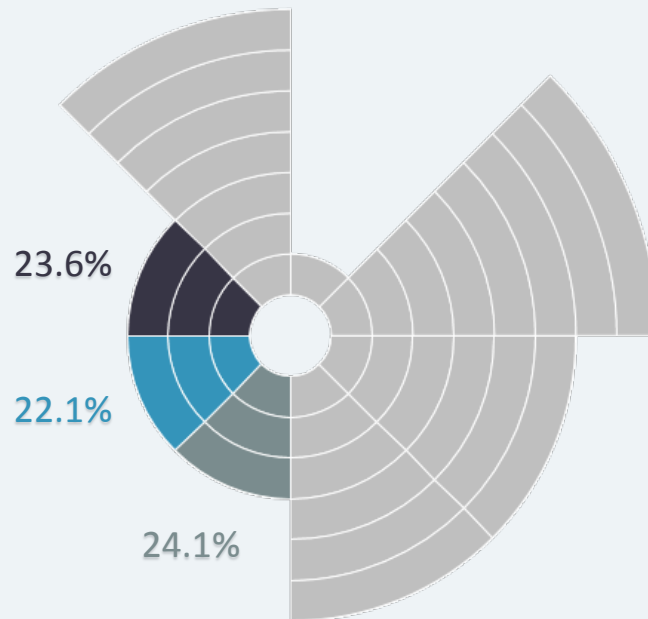


- Encouraged further language study
- Preparation for in-school language classes\*
- Improved my STARTALK language proficiency
- Increased my confidence
- Influenced choice of university degree\*
- Created more career opportunities
- Influenced my career choices
- Other

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## 2020 Longitudinal Survey

### Impact of STARTALK on Alumni Education and/or Career



- Preparation for in-school language classes\*
- Influenced choice of university degree\*
- Improved my STARTALK language proficiency
- Increased my confidence
- Influenced choice of university degree\*
- Created more career opportunities
- Influenced my career choices
- Other

Median Age = 18



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## Alumni in the Workforce

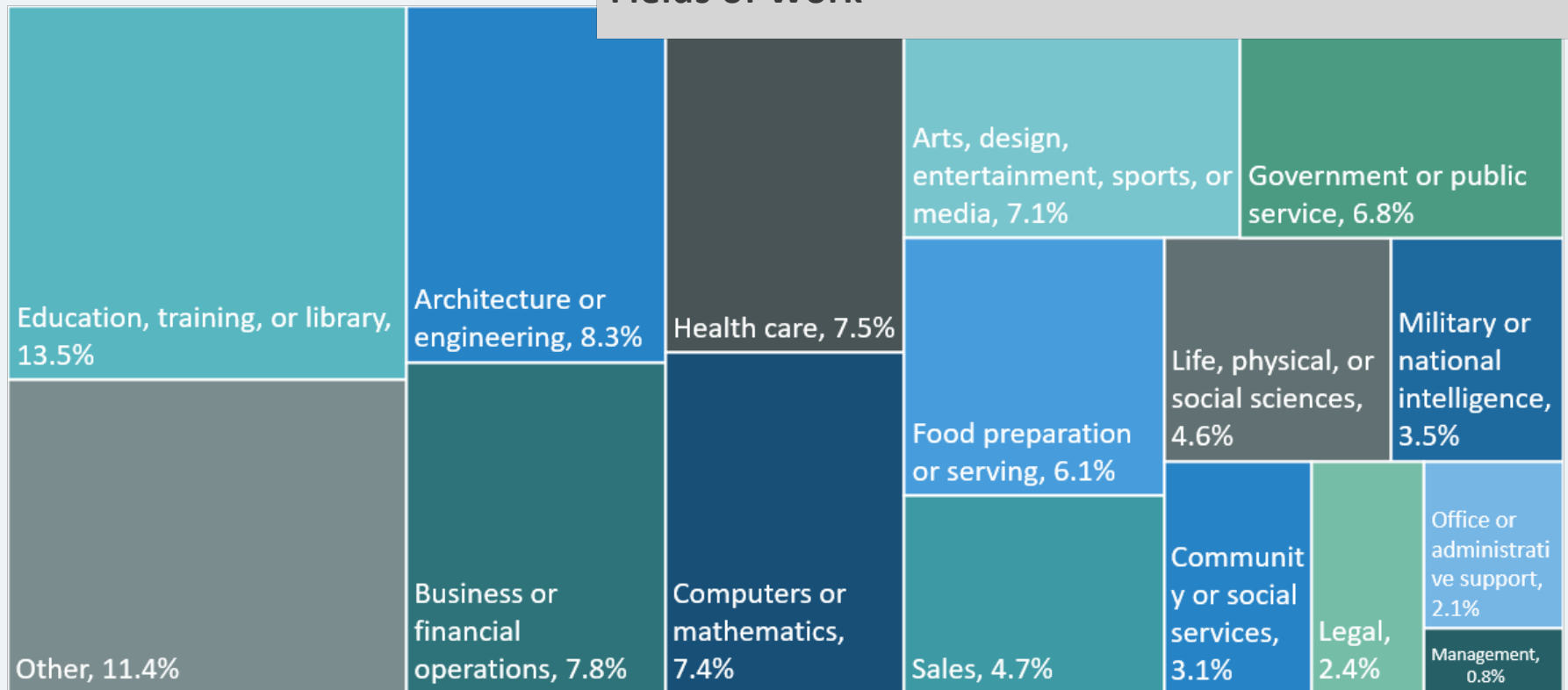


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## Alumni in the Workforce

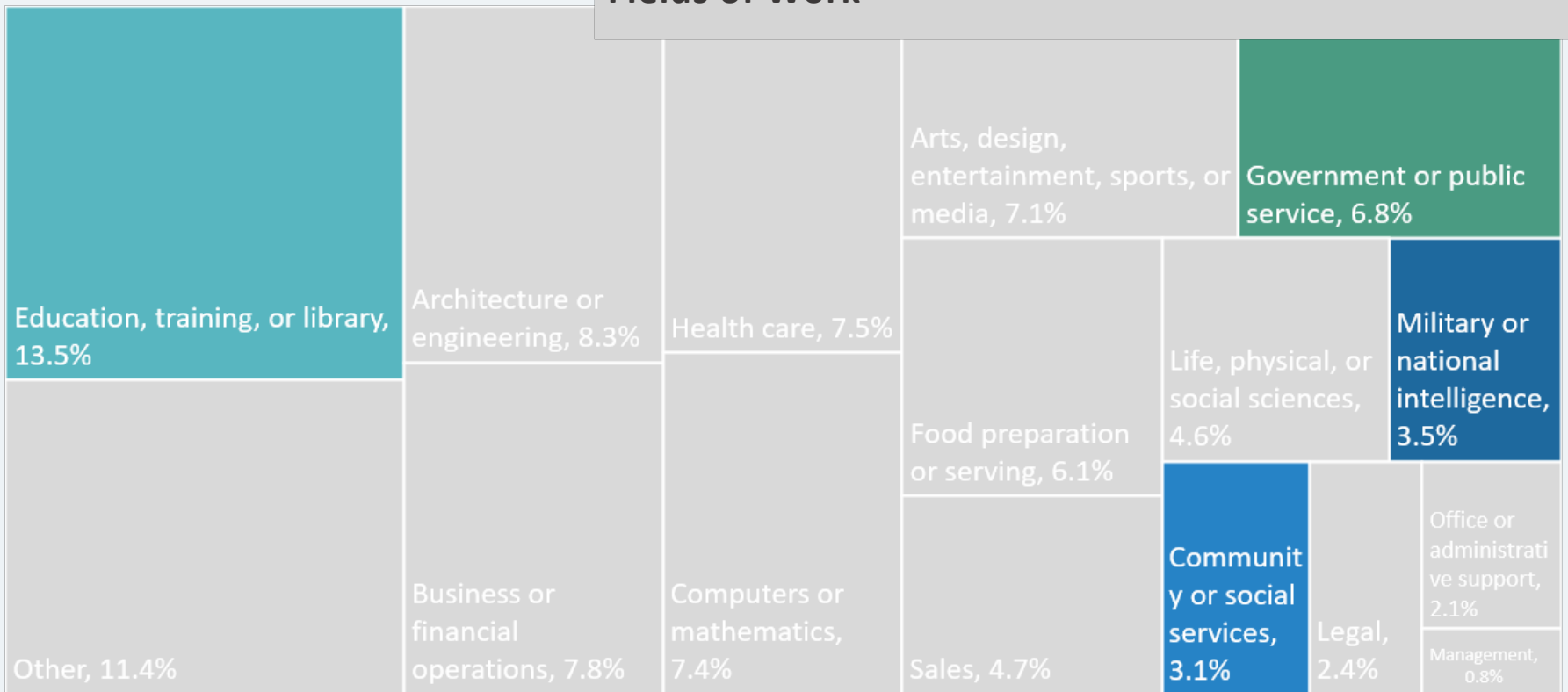
### Fields of Work



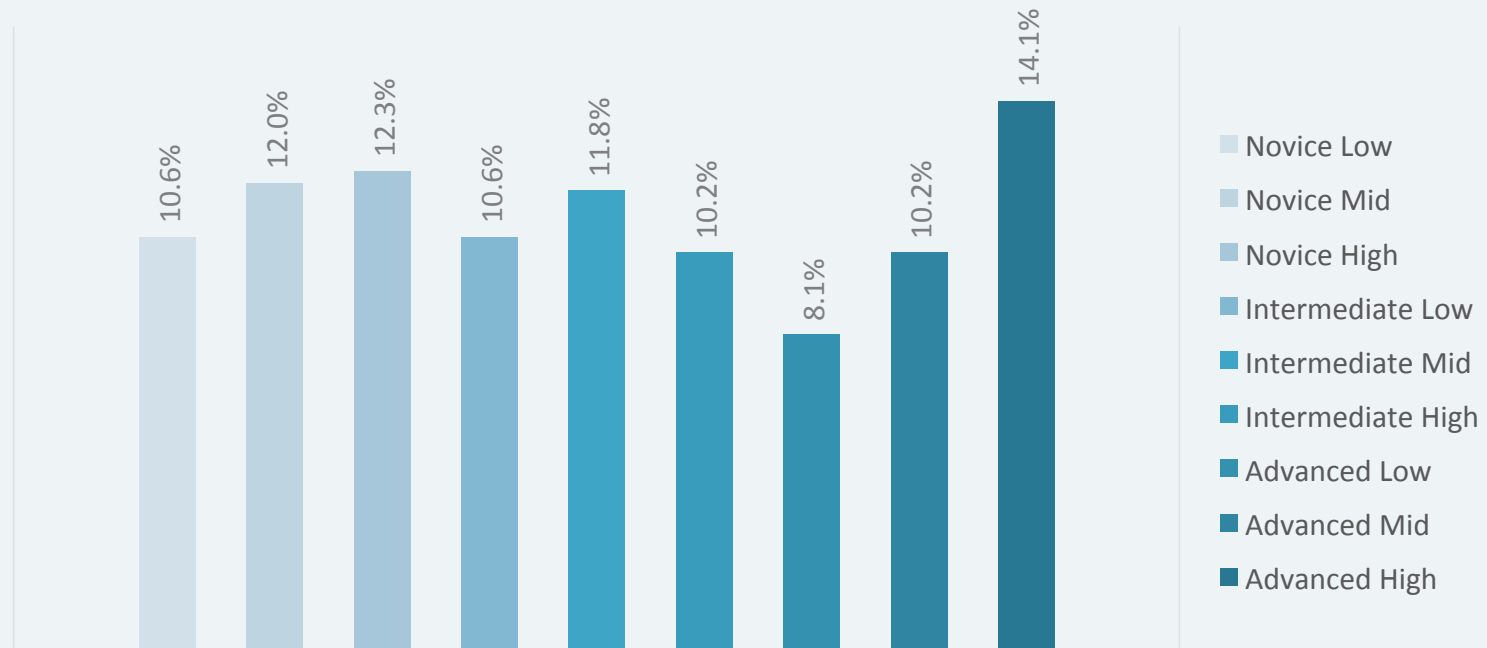
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## Alumni in the Workforce

### Fields of Work

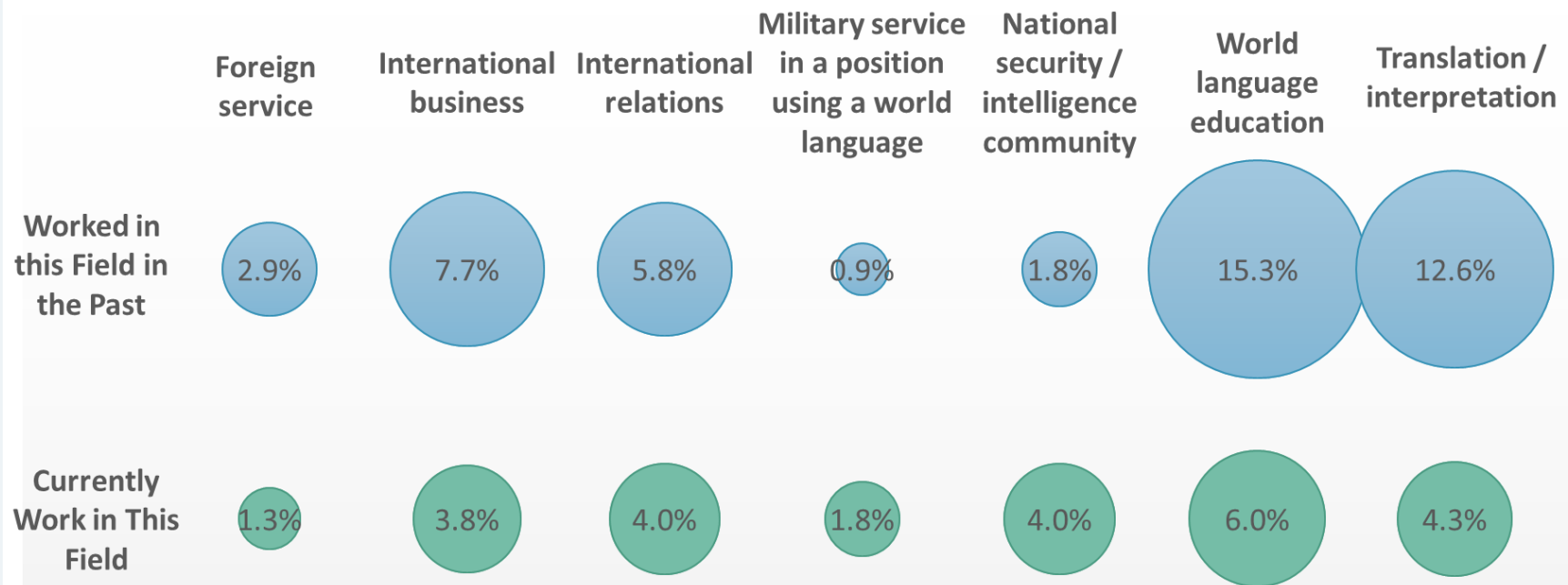


### Language Proficiency



N = 432

### World Language Careers



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## 2020 Longitudinal Survey

### Alumni in World Language Careers



**85.6%**

**67.1%**

**50.8%**

**85.6%** L2 learners

**67.1%** Had STARTALK language available in school post-program

**50.8%** Still studying their STARTALK language

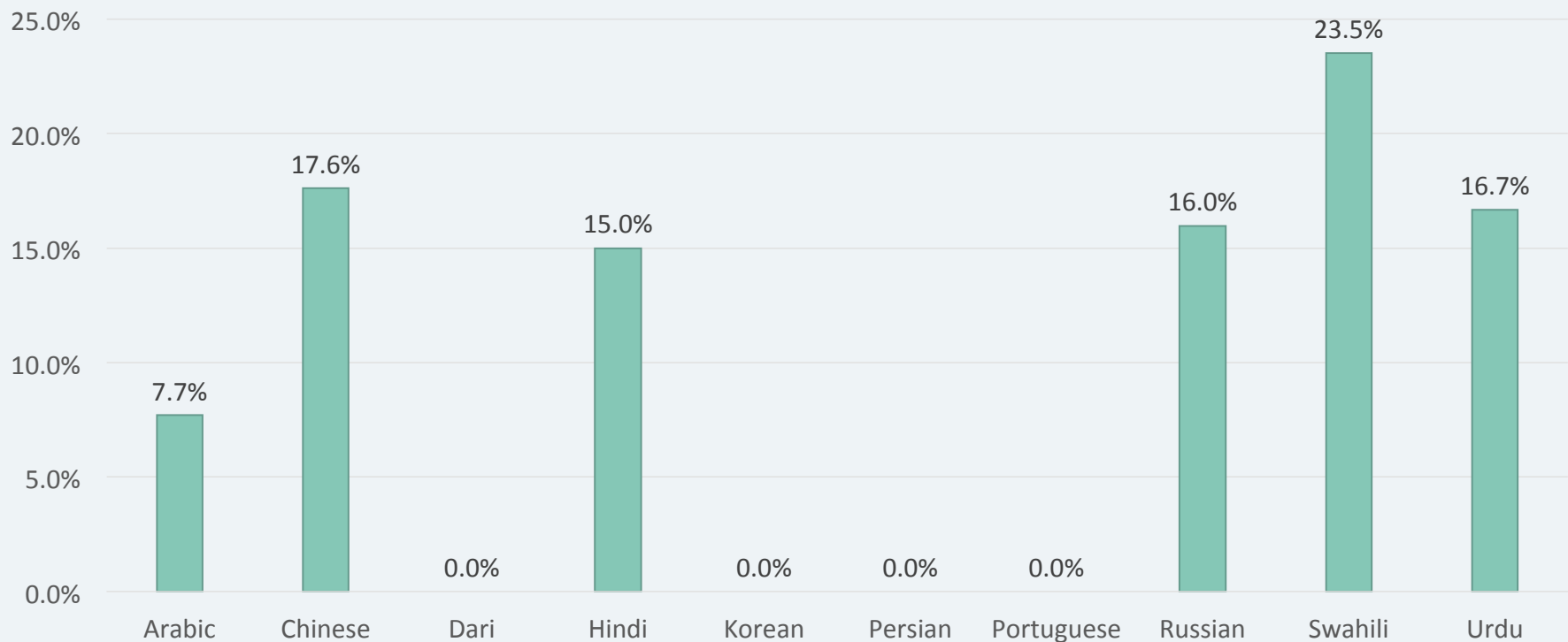


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## Alumni in World Language Careers

### Proportion by Language Studied



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## Alumni in World Language Careers

### Methods of Post-STARTALK Study

**45.8%**

Postsecondary study

**38.6%**

Self-guided study (apps,  
reading, videos)

**31.3%**

Pop culture / social  
media

**22.9%**

In-school (K-12) foreign  
language courses

**21.7%**

Extracurricular: camps,  
tutors, heritage schools



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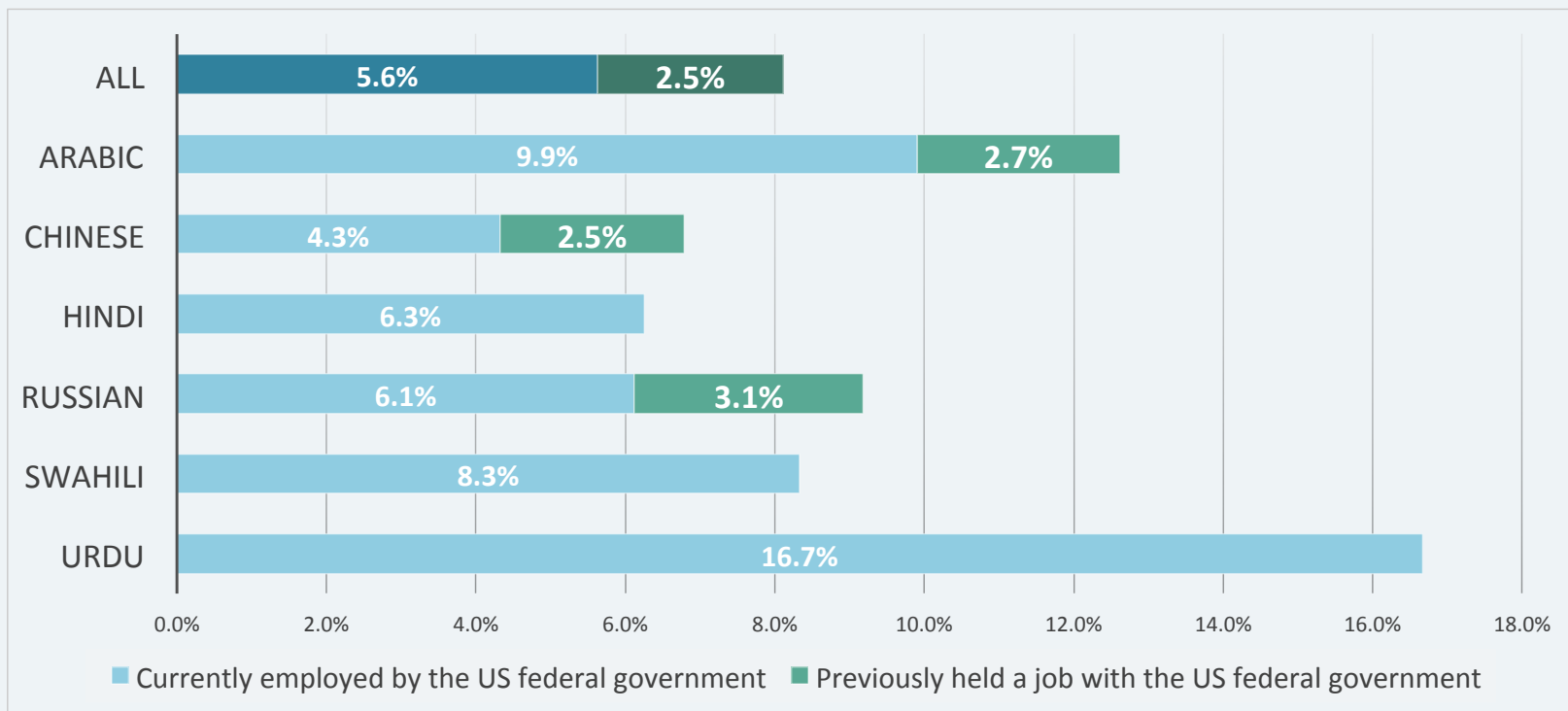


## Alumni in the Workforce: Federal Careers

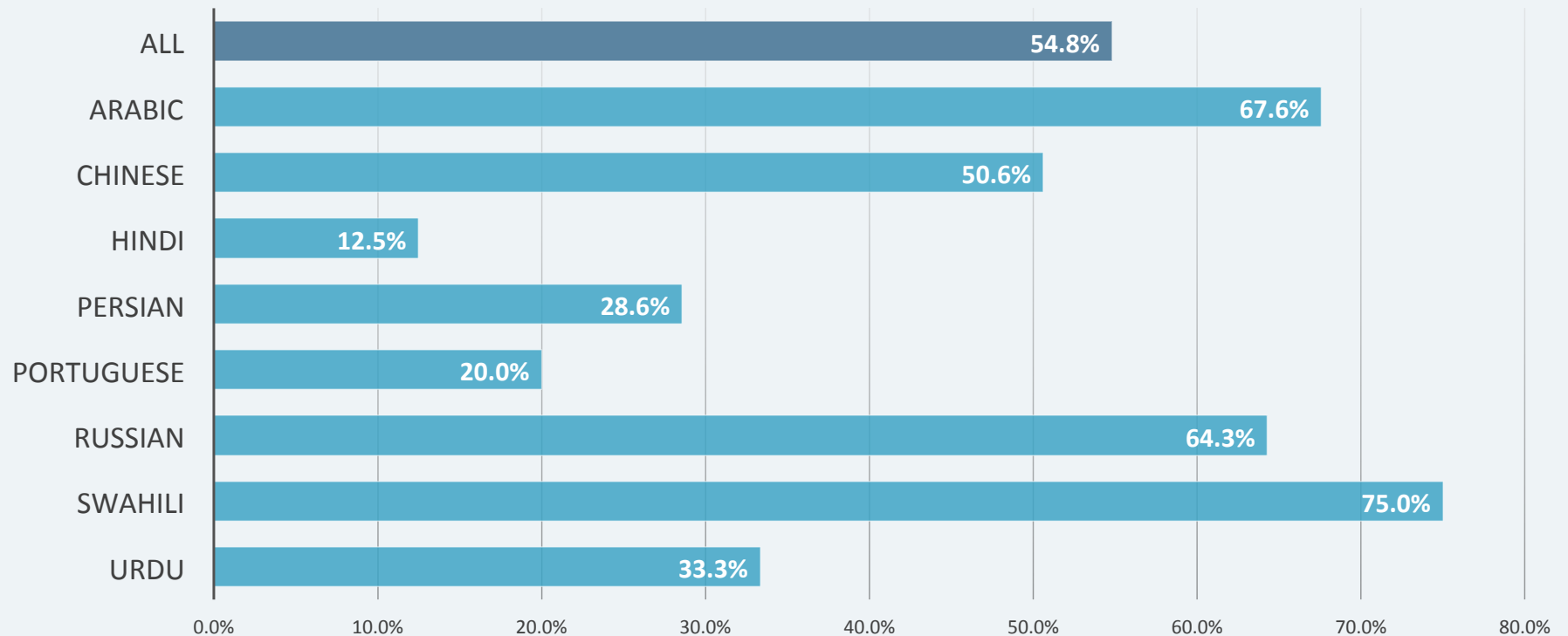


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# Federal Employment Rates Among STARTALK Alumni

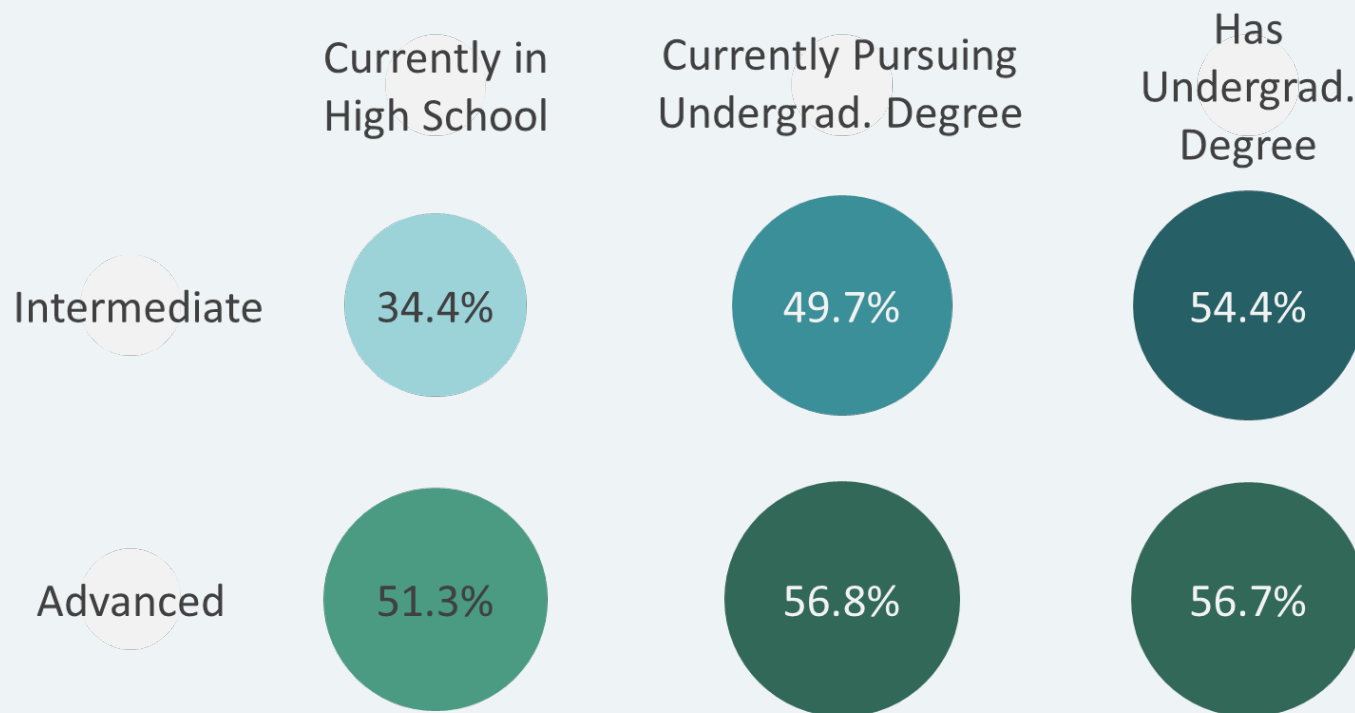


# Awareness of Federal Language Needs Among Alumni in the Workforce by STARTALK Language



## Alumni Awareness of Federal Language Needs

By STARTALK Language Proficiency and Education Level



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*I attribute studying and working with STARTALK to helping me win a Fulbright grant to Jordan during which I was able to study both Modern Standard Arabic and dialect Arabic at a post-advanced level and continue to study the language and use my Arabic in my career since.*

*– 2014, 2016 undergraduate Arabic participant*



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*[STARTALK] really was the first major springboard in my career & Hindi-Urdu language study. My university did not offer South Asian language classes until my final semester there, and most programs were reticent to give me funding and instruction without any formal training.*

*STARTALK was challenging and all too brief, but I progressed leaps and bounds in my writing, reading, listening, and speaking. I also formed long-lasting friendships and professional connections which have lasted years into my academic career.*

*In essence, STARTALK was the first step in a much longer path of Urdu study that included fully-funded immersive programs in India and Pakistan as well as graduate study of South Asia.*

*– 2015 undergraduate Hindi, Urdu participant*



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*STARTALK was what started me on the road that eventually led to my becoming a world language instructor.*

*– 2008 high school Chinese participant*

*I am currently a Cadet at the United States Air Force Academy, majoring in Aerospace Engineering and minoring in Russian.*

*– 2016 high school Russian participant*

*My decision to study International Affairs and minor in Arabic Studies was significantly influenced by this program. This has also led to my aspirations to work in foreign policy for the federal government.*

*– 2017 high school Arabic participant*



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## Recommendations for the Future

**Work with WL departments to strengthen critical language learning**

**Provide more guidance about available means of continued study**

**Work with heritage language programs to strengthen critical language learning**

**Provide more guidance about paths toward federal language careers**

**Work with NSLI-Y, Language Flagships, and State Dept. language scholarships**

**Encourage grant applications in communities with underserved students**



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## Questions

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