

# Enviroschools Survey 2021:

## Topline findings

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## 1. Introduction and approach

This report presents topline findings of an online survey of Enviroschools stakeholders, conducted over June-July 2021. The survey explored the value of Enviroschools and future directions for the programme.

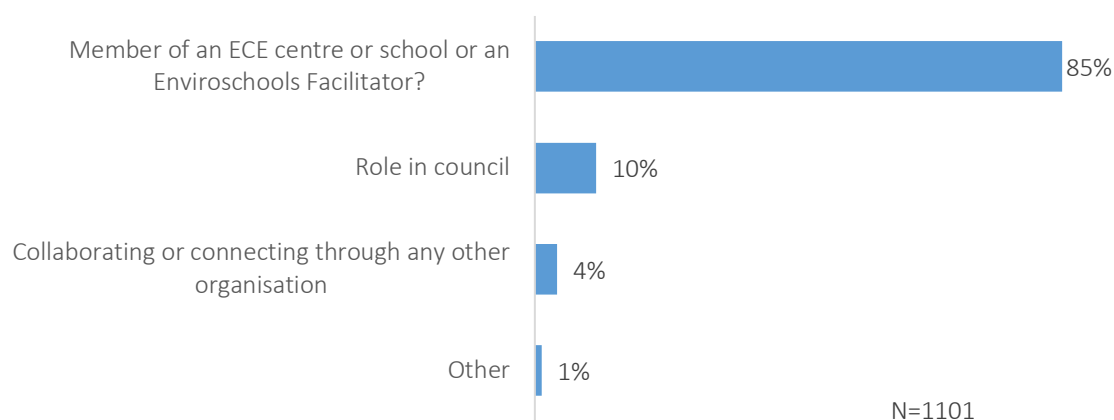
The survey was distributed via email, using the Survey Monkey platform, to people sourced from a range of databases in education, local government and other Enviroschools mailing lists.

The database included those involved with early childhood education (ECE) centres or schools, council members, and other collaborators. A snowball sampling approach was undertaken, in which recipients were encouraged to distribute the survey to others in their network, who may also have been involved with Enviroschools. In total, 1103 responses were received.

The sampling approach means that a response rate can not be accurately calculated. However, the large number of responses received (N=1103) indicates a high level of engagement with the programme.

Through a series of questions, survey respondents were asked to indicate their connection to Enviroschools. The highest percentage of responses came from those involved with an ECE centre, school, or were Enviroschools Facilitators (85%). This was followed by those with a role in council (10%) and collaborators with Enviroschools (4%) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Survey participant breakdown



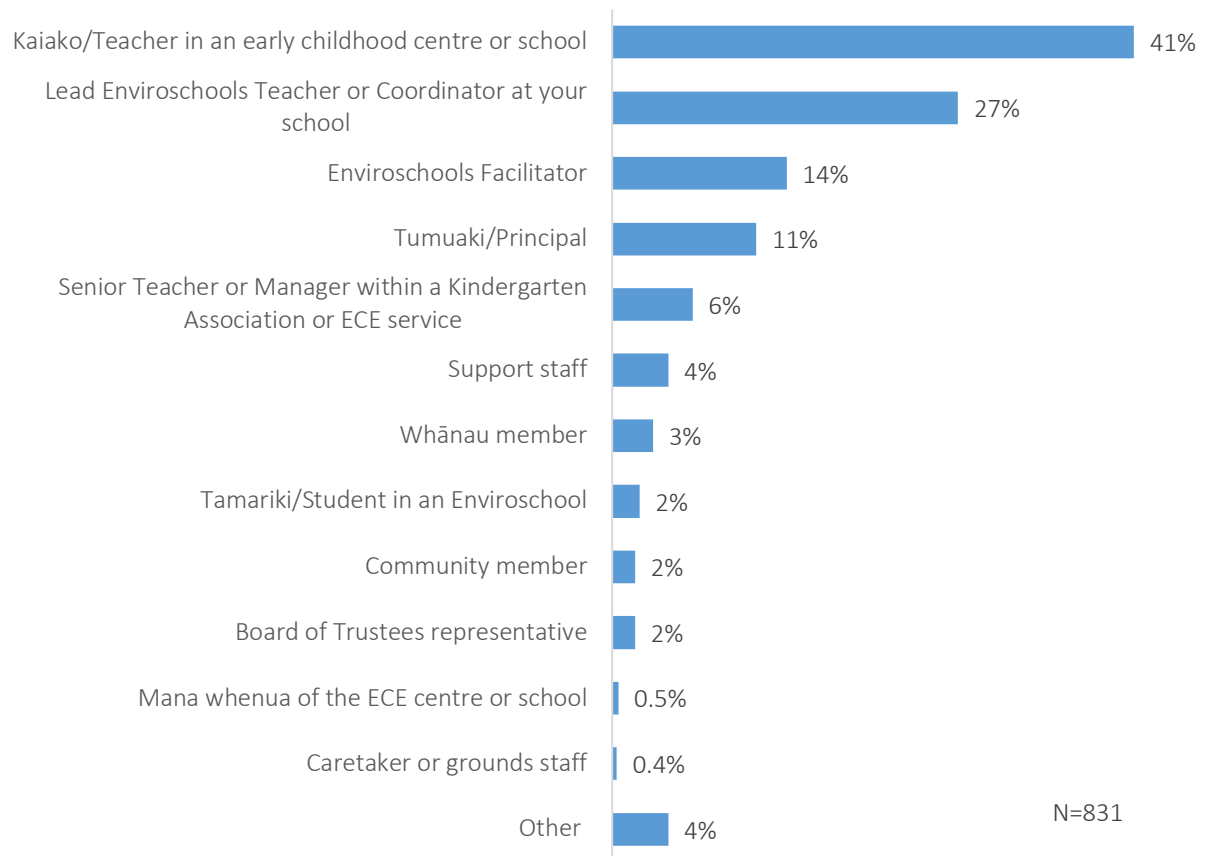
## 2. School-based respondents

### Role in ECE centre or school

For those that were involved with an ECE centre, school (as a member or whānau) or were a Facilitator, just under a half identified as a teacher (41%), and nearly a third responded that they were a lead Enviroschools teacher or coordinator (27%). Some were an Enviroschools Facilitator (14%), principal (11%), or a senior teacher or manager (6%). Smaller proportions of respondents were support staff (4%), whānau members (3%), and students (2%). The remainder of respondents were community members (2%), mana whenua (0.5%), and grounds staff (0.4%). Those that responded

'other' (4%) mentioned roles such as deputy principal, kindergarten head teacher, and regional co-ordinator (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Roles of participants associated with a school or ECE centre



Note: Multiple responses were allowed

### Making a difference

Survey respondents were asked a series of statements about the difference Enviroschools had made to their ECE centre or school. Respondents were asked to rate the statements from a 'strongly positive difference' through to a 'strongly negative difference'; don't know/not applicable answers were also possible (Figure 3).

The areas where Facilitators or members of an ECE centre, school thought Enviroschools had made the most positive impact were:

- There was high agreement that Enviroschools had resulted in environmental improvement in and around their ECE centre/school (54% strongly positive, 40% somewhat positive).
- Likewise, respondents also felt that Enviroschools had made a difference to students taking action in areas of sustainability (50% strongly positive, 44% somewhat positive).
- Enviroschools also seemed to make a positive difference with understanding the connections between people and the environment (te taiao) (48% strongly positive, 45% somewhat positive).

- Respondents also agreed that Enviroschools had resulted in student empowerment (53% strongly positive, 40% somewhat positive); and produced a culture of care/manaaki (47% strongly positive, 45% somewhat positive).

The degree to which respondents thought Enviroschools had made a positive difference was slightly smaller for the following statements. However, still over half of respondents agreed that there was a positive difference:

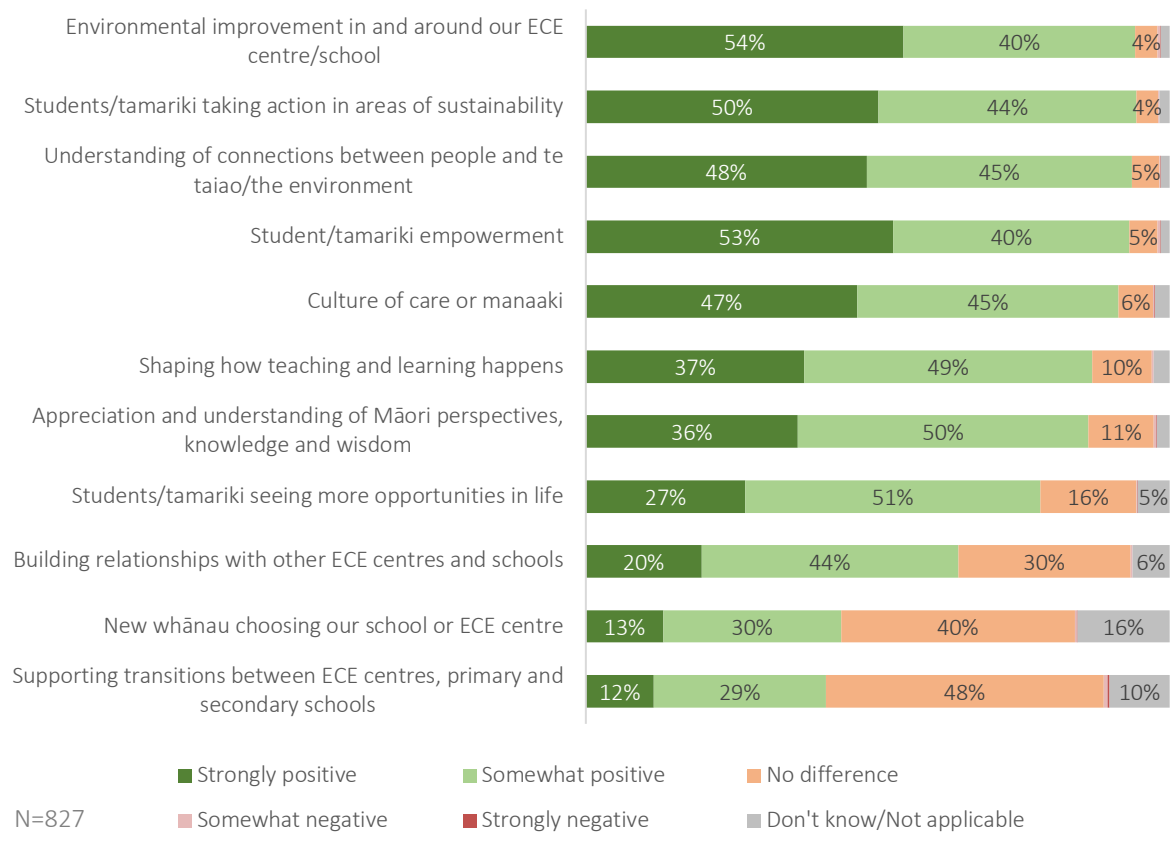
- Most respondents agreed that Enviroschools made a positive difference in shaping how teaching and learning happens (37% strongly positive, 49% somewhat positive).
- Enviroschools was seen to make a positive difference in the appreciation and understanding of Māori perspectives, knowledge, and wisdom (36% strongly positive, 50% somewhat positive).
- Respondents also felt as though students were seeing more opportunities in life (27% strongly positive, 51% somewhat positive).
- Similarly, respondents thought there was a positive difference in terms of building relationships with other ECE centres and schools (20% strongly positive, 44% somewhat positive).

Most survey participants thought that Enviroschools had made little impact in the following areas:

- Fewer respondents thought that Enviroschools had made a difference to new whānau choosing their school or ECE centre (13% strongly positive, 30% somewhat positive, 40% no difference).
- Most respondents did not think that Enviroschools supported transitions between ECE centres, primary and secondary schools (13% strongly positive, 30% somewhat positive, 48% no difference).

It is worth noting that there were very few respondents who reported Enviroschools making a negative difference to ECE centres or schools.

Figure 3: Perceived impacts for members of ECE centres or schools

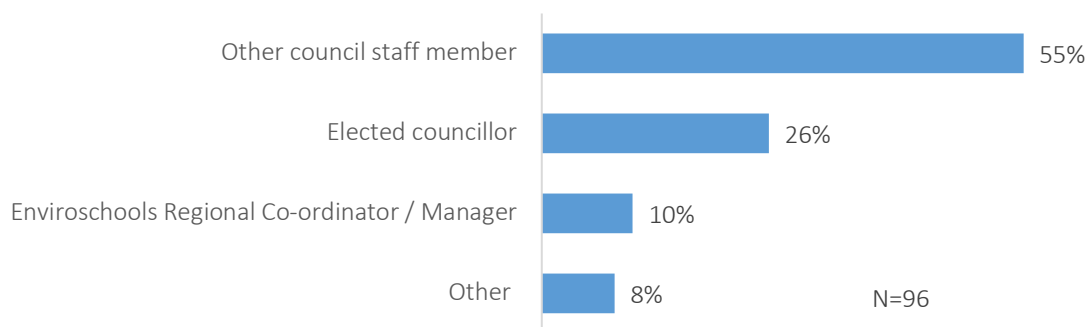


### 3. Council-based participants

#### Role in council

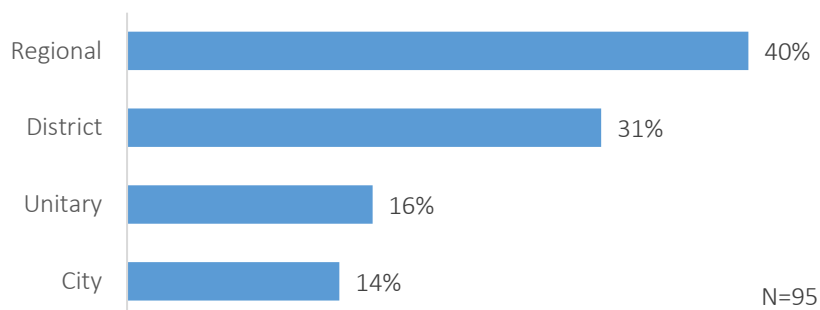
Among councils who were Enviroschools partners, 10% were Enviroschools Regional Co-ordinators, 26% were elected councillors and, 55% were other council staff members. The remaining 8% that responded 'other' mentioned roles such as support staff and programme manager (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Participants' roles in council



Those with council roles were mainly from Regional (40%) or District councils (31%). Some were from Unitary (16%) or City councils (14%) (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Type of council participants are from



#### Making a difference

Survey participants were asked a series of statements about the difference Enviroschools had made to their council. Respondents were asked to rate the statements from a 'strongly positive difference' through to a 'strongly negative difference'; don't know/not applicable answers were also possible (Figure 6).

The statements that were identified as having the strongest positive difference are discussed below:

- Those in council roles generally believed that Enviroschools had made a strong positive difference in the ability to achieve council community outcomes and priorities (44% strongly positive, 46% somewhat positive).

- EnviroSchools was seen to create a positive difference with community participation in council initiatives (34% strongly positive, 53% somewhat positive).
- EnviroSchools was also seen to contribute to a positive difference in the complementary relationship with council's other educational initiatives (48% strongly positive, 37% somewhat positive).
- Similarly, those in council roles believed that there was a positive difference in authentic engagement between council and community (44% strongly positive, 40% somewhat positive).
- There was value seen in being part of a nation-wide initiative with EnviroSchools (37% strongly positive, 46% somewhat positive).

There was still overall a positive difference reported with the following:

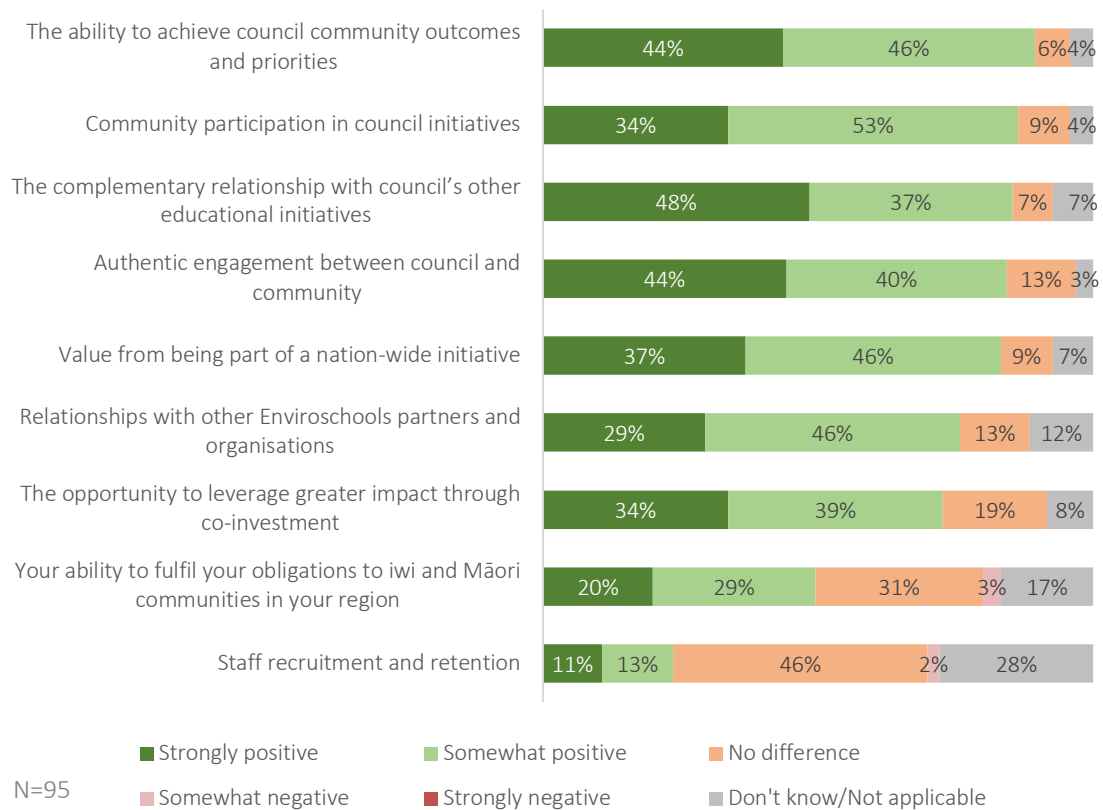
- There was generally a positive impact on relationships with other EnviroSchools partners and organisations (29% strongly positive, 46% somewhat positive).
- Those in council roles generally reported that there was the opportunity to leverage greater impact through co-investment (34% strongly positive, 39% somewhat positive).

Those with council roles were less inclined to see a positive difference with the following:

- Almost half thought EnviroSchools had made an impact on their ability to fulfil their obligations to iwi and Māori communities (20% strongly positive, 29% somewhat positive). A further 31% indicated no difference and nearly one in five did not know (17%).
- A larger percentage found that EnviroSchools created no difference to staff recruitment and retention (11% strongly positive, 13% somewhat positive, 46% no difference). A considerable percentage also did not know (28%).

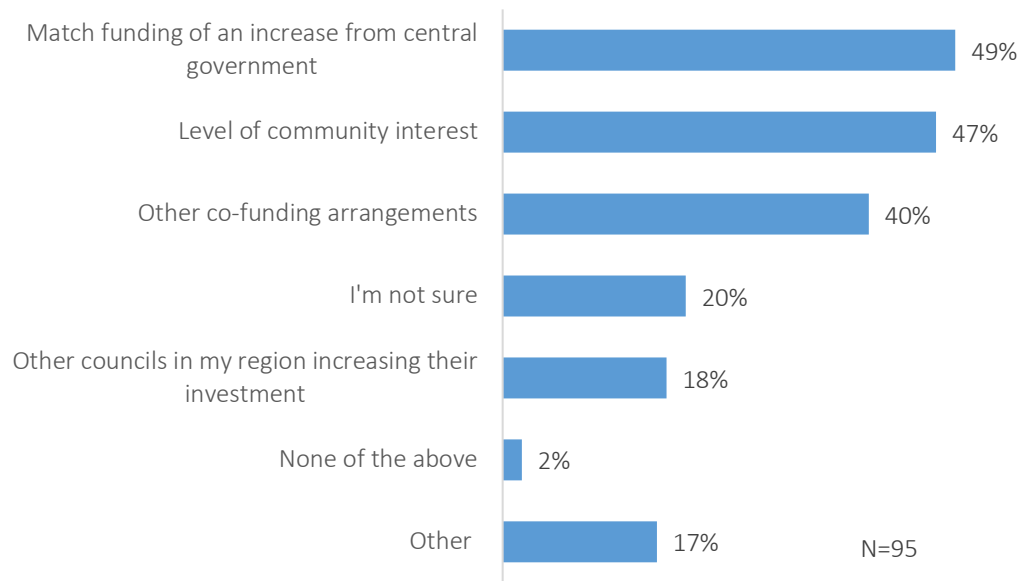


Figure 6: Perceived impacts for members of council



Members of council were asked to select what options would encourage their council to increase its annual investment in Enviroschools. Nearly half of respondents reported that they would match funding if it increased from central government (49%), a similar percentage would be encouraged by the level of community interest (47%). Some councils would be encouraged by other co-funding arrangements (40%), or other councils in their region increasing their investment (18%), and some were not sure (20%). Those that mentioned 'other' (17%) mentioned showing benefits of Enviroschools, waste levy increases, commitment from schools and community/business investment (Figure 7).

Figure 7: What would encourage council to increase its annual investment in Enviroschools



*Note: Multiple responses were allowed*

## 4. Collaborators with Enviroschools

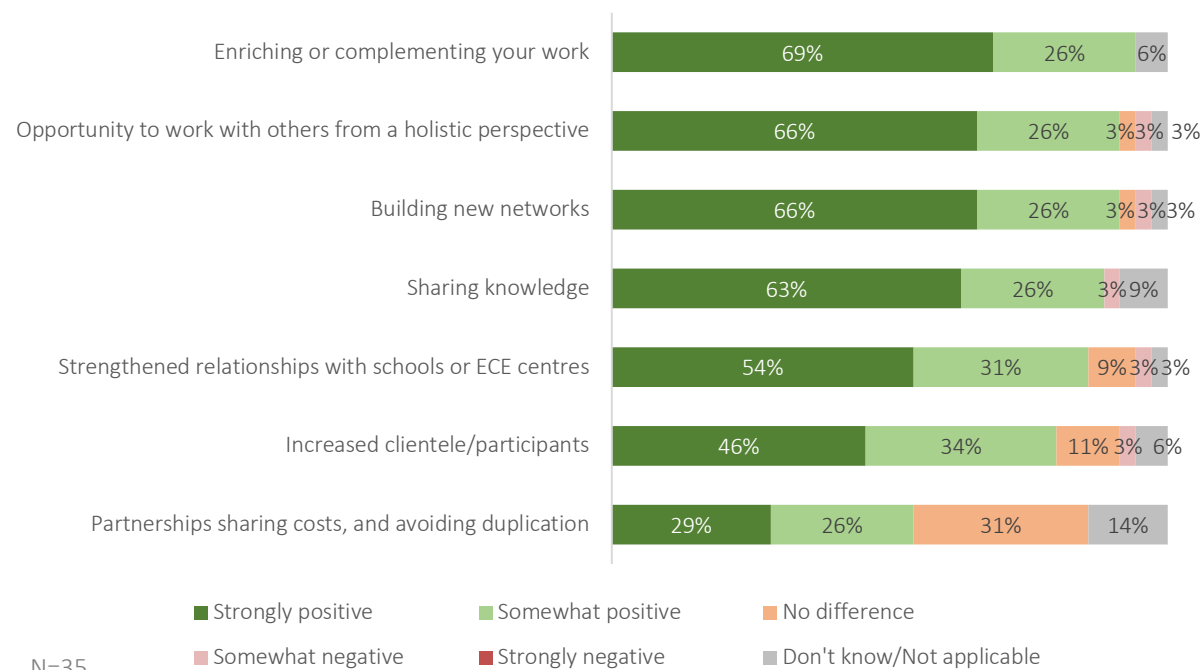
A much smaller number of respondents (N=35) indicated they collaborated with Enviroschools in other ways. However, for this group it seems that the partnership with Enviroschools and collaborators has made a positive difference overall. Survey participants were asked a series of statements about the difference Enviroschools had made to collaborators. Respondents were asked to rate the statements from a 'strongly positive difference' through to a 'strongly negative difference'; don't know/not applicable answers were also possible (Figure 8).

Statements where collaborators felt that Enviroschools had made the greatest positive difference include:

- Collaborators believed that Enviroschools had complemented their work (69% strongly positive, 26% somewhat positive).
- Enviroschools had allowed the opportunity to work with others from a holistic perspective, and build new networks (66% strongly positive, 26% somewhat positive).
- Additionally, collaborators reported that there was a positive difference in sharing knowledge (63% strongly positive, 26% somewhat positive).
- There was general agreement that Enviroschools had strengthened relationships with schools or ECE centres (54% strongly positive, 31% somewhat positive); and increased clientele (46% strongly positive, 34% somewhat positive).

Only half of collaborators thought that Enviroschools had made a positive difference to partnerships sharing costs and avoiding duplication (29% strongly positive, 26% somewhat positive, 31% no difference).

Figure 8: Perceived impacts for collaborators



## 5. Enviroschools community

All survey participants were asked a series of statements about the difference Enviroschools had made to the community. Respondents were asked to rate the statements from a 'strongly positive difference' through to a 'strongly negative difference'; don't know/not applicable answers were also possible (Figure 9). The reported impact of Enviroschools on the community was overall very positive.

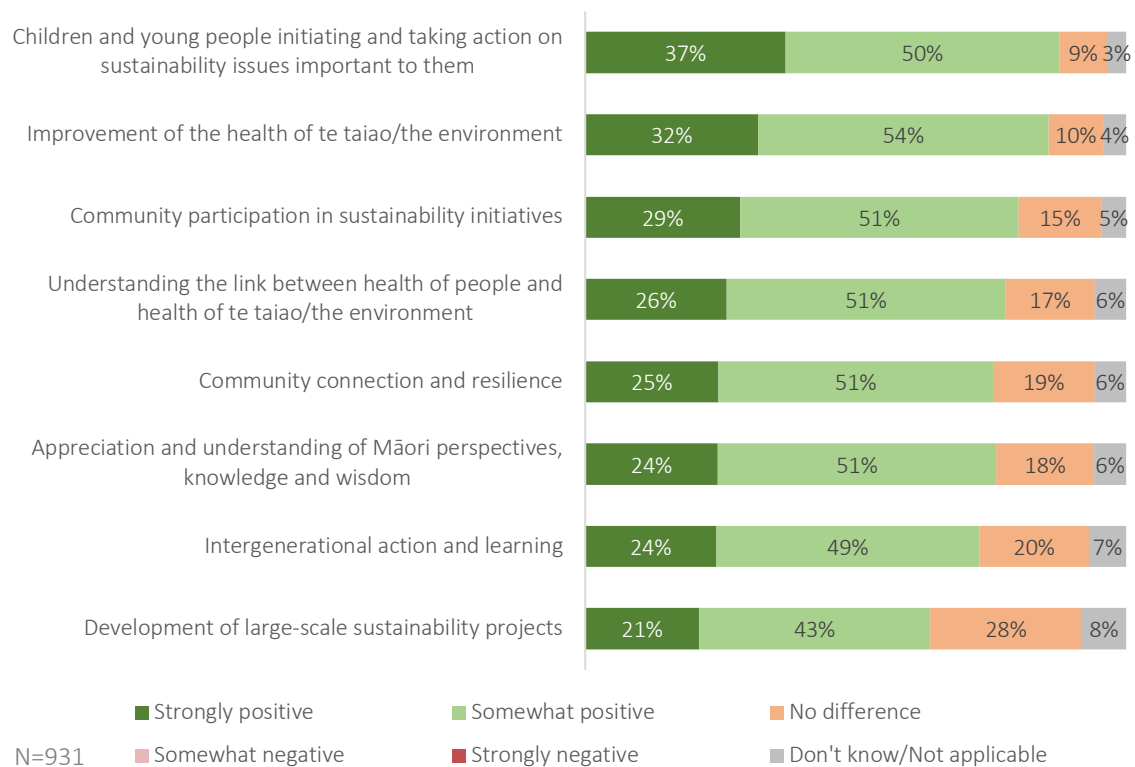
In the following areas at least 75% of respondents reported a positive difference:

- Enviroschools was seen to have a positive impact on young people initiating and taking action on sustainability (37% strongly positive, 50% somewhat positive).
- There was reported improvement in the health of te taiao/the environment (32% strongly positive, 54% somewhat positive).
- There was general agreement that Enviroschools made a positive difference in community participation in sustainability initiatives (29% strongly positive, 51% somewhat positive).
- Likewise, there was a positive difference seen in understanding the link between health of people and the health of te taiao/the environment (26% strongly positive, 51% somewhat positive); and for community connection and resilience (69% strongly positive, 26% somewhat positive).
- Due to Enviroschools there was seen to be an increase in appreciation and understanding of Māori perspectives (24% strongly positive, 51% somewhat positive).

Participants indicated that the following statements had less of a positive impact, although still relatively high:

- Enviroschools had a reasonable positive impact on the intergenerational action and learning (24% strongly positive, 49% somewhat positive).
- Participants reported a small change in the development of large-scale sustainability projects (21% strongly positive, 43% somewhat positive).

Figure 9: Enviroschools impact on community

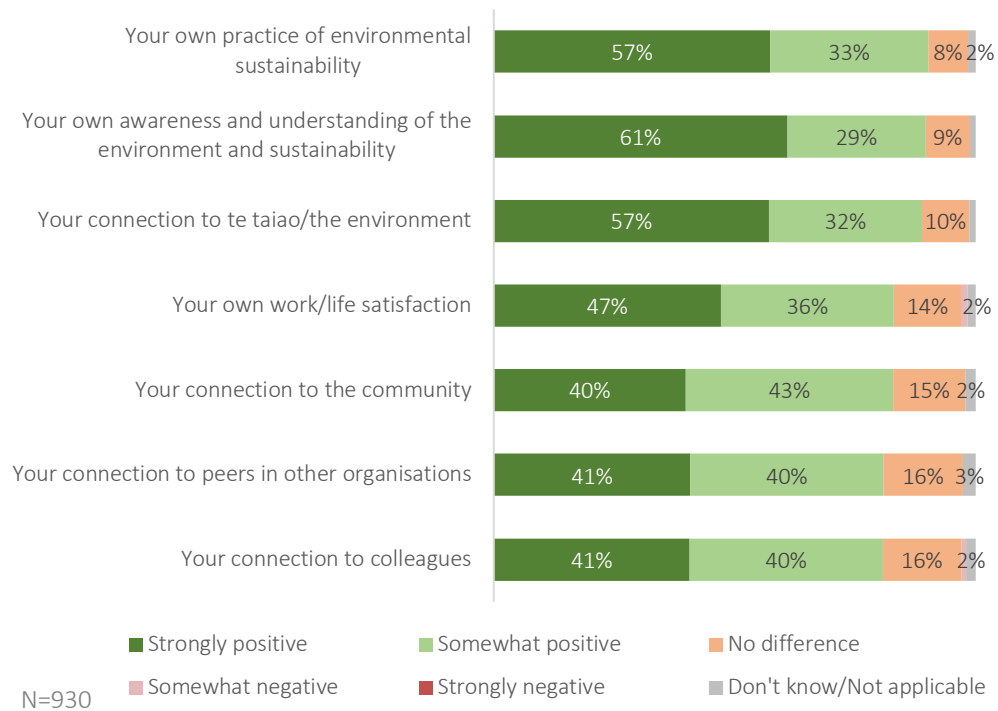


The impact that Enviroschools made on participants personally was even more positive than the identified impacts on the community. All survey participants were asked a series of statements about the difference Enviroschools had made to the community. Respondents were asked to rate the statements from a 'strongly positive difference' through to a 'strongly negative difference'; don't know/not applicable answers were also possible (Figure 10).

Overall, survey participants indicated that Enviroschools had benefited them:

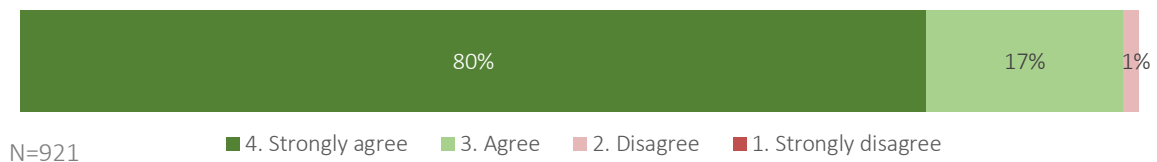
- Most respondents reported that Enviroschools had positively impacted their own practice of environmental sustainability (57% strongly positive, 33% somewhat positive).
- Likewise, respondents indicated that their own awareness of the environment (61% strongly positive, 29% somewhat positive); and their connection to the environment had improved (57% strongly positive, 32% somewhat positive).
- Respondents also reported a positive impact on their own work/life satisfaction (47% strongly positive, 36% somewhat positive).
- Similarly, participants believed that Enviroschools had benefited their connection to the community (40% strongly positive, 43% somewhat positive); to their peers in other organisations (41% strongly positive, 40% somewhat positive); and to their colleagues (41% strongly positive, 40% somewhat positive).

Figure 10: Enviroschools personal impact



There was strong consensus that Enviroschools should be accessible across Aotearoa. When asked what extent participants agree or disagree that Enviroschools should be made available to all places of learning in Aotearoa, the majority strongly agreed (80%) or agreed (17%) (Figure 11).

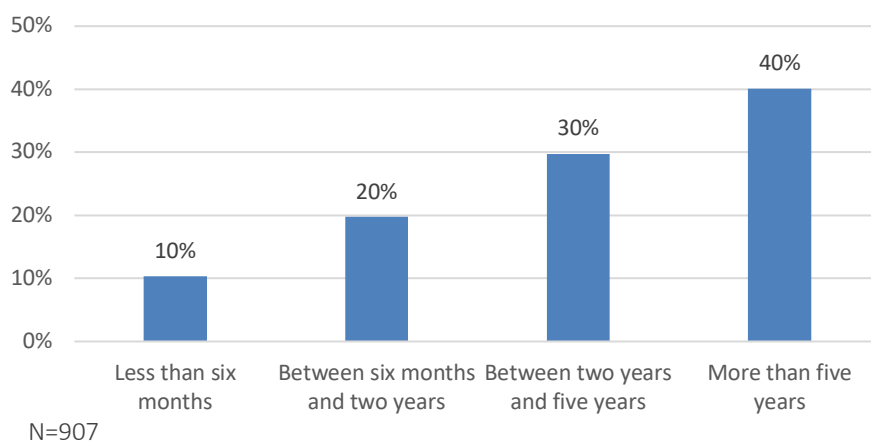
Figure 11: Whether Enviroschools should be made available to all places of learning in Aotearoa



## 6. Demographics

Most survey respondents had a long-term involvement with Enviroschools. Two out of five (40%) participants had been involved in Enviroschools for more than five years, followed by those who had been involved between two and five years (30%). Some had been involved between six months and two years (20%), and the smallest group of participants had been involved less than six months (10%) (Figure 12).

Figure 12: How long participants had been involved with Enviroschools



The main centres of Aotearoa accounted for the largest percentage of responses, with the largest group being participants from Tāmaki Makaurau – Auckland (18%). This was followed by Waikato (11%), Ōtākou – Otago (11%), and Waitaha – Canterbury (10%) (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Regions where participants are based

