

Queen's University Belfast &
Environment and Heritage Service

Environmental Education Survey

Final Report



Graduate *school*
of Education



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1. Background and Research Objectives

Report: **Mapping Environmental Education Provision in NI**

Prepared for: **Environment and Heritage Service**

Date: **October 2005**

Background and Research Objectives

This report presents the findings of surveys of the provision and providers of environmental education in Northern Ireland which were carried out to provide information from which a map of such provision can be produced.

In Northern Ireland at the start of the twenty first century we are witnessing rapid political, social, economic, educational and environmental change. The political climate of reconciliation and co-operation engenders feelings of confidence that progress can be made in areas hitherto bound by sectarianism and suspicion. Environmental education in Northern Ireland has the potential to benefit enormously from the new spirit of cooperation, which it is hoped will prevail during the rest of this century and beyond.

It could be argued, however, that too little attention has been paid to environmental education in schools in Northern Ireland, particularly at secondary level. There are examples of individual excellence regarding environmental education in particular classes or schools, but no real progress will be made without the statutory requirement to teach children about, in and for their environment. To this end, there have been recent drives to more explicitly integrate environmental education into the school curriculum. In June 2004, the Minister for Education, Barry Gardiner MP, accepted CCEA's advice on their proposed changes to the statutory curriculum and assessment arrangements, which include:

- Adding education about citizenship and employability to the curriculum
- More flexibility for schools to decide what is best for their pupils
- More emphasis on developing children's thinking skills, and their ability to solve problems and handle information

These changes will not be fully implemented for a few years and to be effective, will require the support of statutory and non-statutory environmental educators all over Northern Ireland.

The Department of the Environment's Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) is concerned that environmental education is not being delivered as effectively as it might be in Northern Ireland. In particular, the EHS is concerned that there may be unnecessary duplication and overlap in the services offered by different organisations, on the one hand, and gaps in provision on the other. It is also concerned that there is no easily accessible source of information for organisations which wish to access environmental education services.

For these reasons, the EHS commissioned a research study to provide comprehensive data on the providers of such education and what they offer, and to provide a database containing summary information on all providers of environmental education in Northern Ireland.

The overall aims and objectives of the research were as follows:

Overall aim

The project is designed to provide the EHS with high-quality and comprehensive information about the current provision for environmental education, and any gaps and overlap in that provision to enable it to plan for better provision, and to facilitate the development of partnerships in order to achieve more effective co-ordination of such services. The project focused on the schools sector, which formed the primary focus of interest of EHS.

For the purposes of this project, environmental education will be defined as encompassing the following two broad areas:

Environmental Education

Activities with organised groups designed to develop understanding, appreciation and caring for the conditions and causes of pollution, waste of natural resources, and of ways to preserve the Earth's intricate ecology.

Education for Sustainable Development

Activities with organised groups designed to ensure a better quality of life for everyone now and for generations to come through recognising the needs of everyone, effective protection of the environment, and prudent use of natural resources.

Objectives:

1. To identify current users of environmental education programmes in nursery, primary, secondary and special schools in Northern Ireland, and to gather sufficient information to enable provision to be planned more effectively, including the following:

- problems currently encountered in accessing environmental education e.g. lack of awareness of opportunities available, geographic distance, cost
 - data on the needs within the schools sector in terms of the type of provision which is sought or desired, among both current and potential users, including the extent to which it appears those needs are not being met currently
 - users' perceptions of the quality and standards of current provision
2. To identify all providers of environmental education throughout Northern Ireland, and to establish what each provider currently offers in terms of services, including:
 - summary information on topics and issues offered, and on the learning and teaching approaches used
 - an assessment of the quality and standards of such provision, based on feedback from users
 - the geographic spread of provision within Northern Ireland
 - data on the current fees, if any, charged by each of the main providers
 3. Taking into account all data on both the market and on current provision as outlined above, to identify the following:
 - gaps in current provision
 - areas of current service overlap between providers
 4. To present useful data on current provision within Northern Ireland on an Access database

2. Research Methodology

The aim of this study was to provide information about both the provision and providers of environmental education in Northern Ireland. The methodology thus comprised two major surveys, one targeting all schools in Northern Ireland and the other targeting all providers. This approach included both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analyses, following the advice of Cohen *et al.* (2000, p. 112). Cohen *et al.* (2000) stated that a multi-faceted approach maps out, or explains, more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data. This approach was considered most appropriate for a study which sought to obtain findings that reflected the main challenges and future opportunities for environmental education across Northern Ireland.

School Survey

For the school survey, data was collected by means of a postal survey, developed by the project team (Appendix 1). MORI Ireland sent questionnaires to 1300 primary, secondary, nursery and special schools across Northern Ireland in June 2005. One reminder was sent to those who had not responded after a set time. In total, 598 usable questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 46%.

The first part of the postal survey instrument comprised questions designed to collect data relating to the type, size and location of school. The rest of the instrument was designed to collect data relating to the opportunities and constraints which schools experience in relation to their provision of environmental education. Schools were asked to indicate three external providers of environmental education which they had used in the past year. This information was used to target organisations for the survey of providers (Appendix 1). Data from the questionnaires were coded and a report of the main findings was provided for the research team.

Survey of Providers: telephone and face-to-face interviews

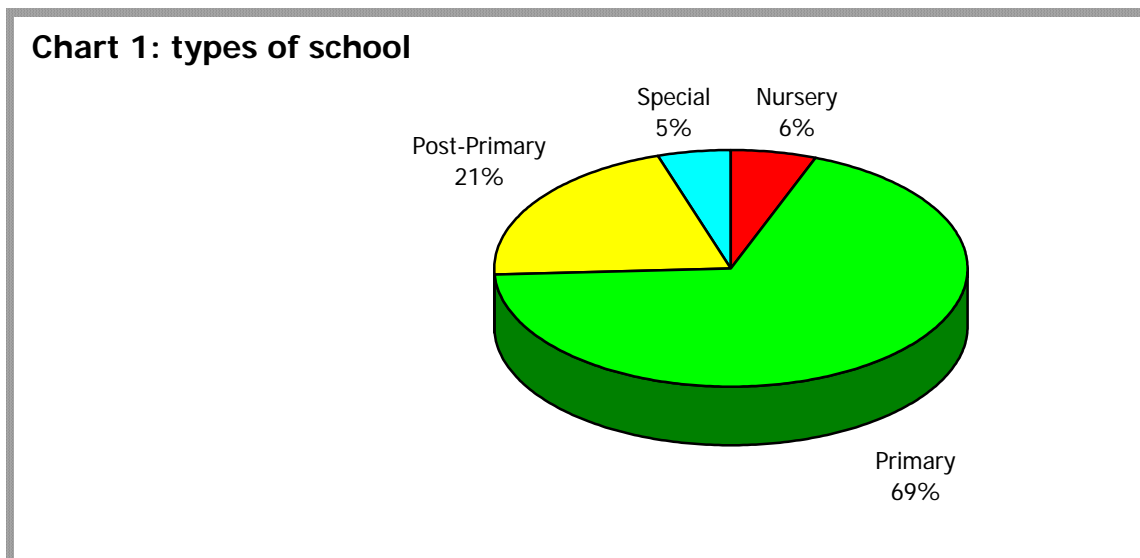
The school survey provided a list of organisations which, among other organisations, was targeted for the survey of providers. Additional organisations were identified principally by EHS and by contacts of the research team. The final list of those selected as potential interviewees for the survey of providers is provided in Appendix 2. A telephone survey was carried out in which respondents were asked questions relating to the findings from the school survey. In addition, a small number of major providers agreed to participate in face-to-face interviews about their work. The telephone and face-to-face interviews were carried out in August/September 2005. A list of those organisations who were invited to take part in the survey interviews is available in Appendix 3.

3. Survey of Schools

This survey was carried out by MORI Ireland using a questionnaire developed by the Queen's University project team (Appendix 1)

3.1 The participant schools

MORI Ireland sent questionnaires to the principals of 1300 primary, secondary, nursery and special schools across Northern Ireland. One reminder was sent to those who had not responded after a set time. In total, 598 usable questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 46%. The breakdown of the types of school is shown in Chart 1¹. The proportions of the different types of school in our sample were very close to the actual proportions of each category of school in Northern Ireland².



Respondents were asked to categorise their school as either 'rural' or 'urban'. 'Rural' was defined as 'situated in a townland or other rural area, or a village or town with less than 10,000 inhabitants'. 'Urban' was defined as 'situated in a town or city with 10,000 or more inhabitants'. On this basis, 50% of respondents described their school as 'rural' and 49% as 'urban'. Our sample was similar to the figures from Northern Ireland as a whole³.

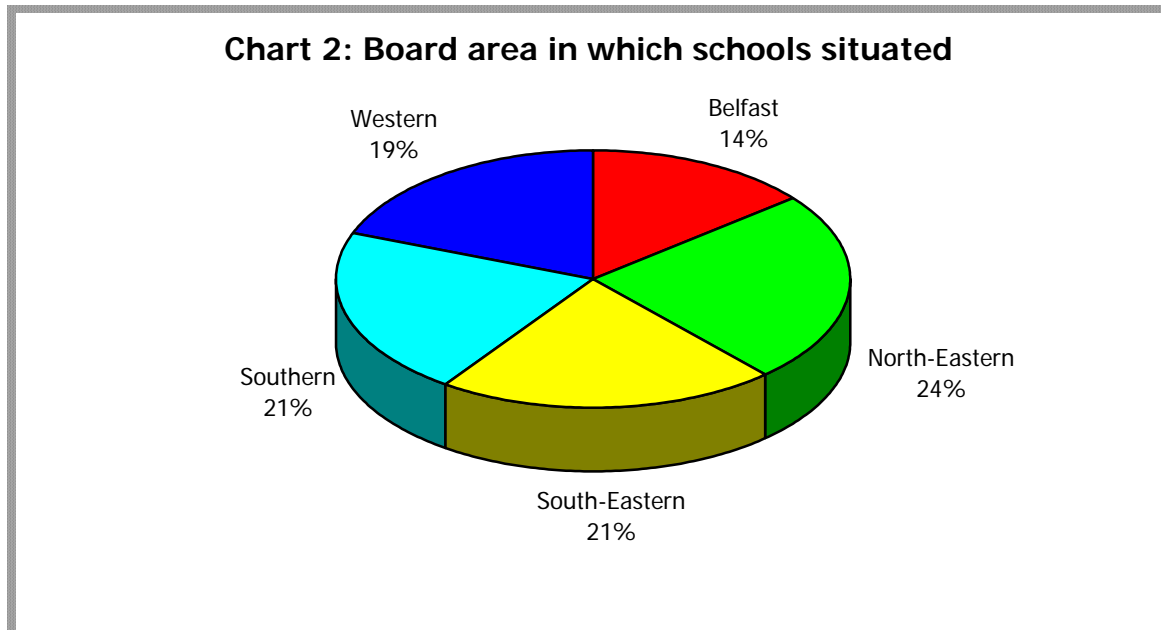
21% of the schools sampled were situated in each of the Southern and South Eastern Education and Library Board areas. Just under a quarter were situated in the North Eastern board area and 19% in the Western Board area. Belfast schools accounted for 14% of the total sample (see

¹ In all instances, charts omit the generally very small proportion of schools which did not respond to a particular question. All percentages have been rounded up or down to the nearest whole number. For these reasons, percentage figures in the pie charts do not always add up to 100.

² 18% secondary level, 70% primary, 4% special and 8% nursery.

³ 45% rural, 55% urban

Chart 2). Again, the sample data is similar to the actual percentages of schools in each ELB area⁴.



In order to try to ascertain whether schools in catchment areas of social need faced any particular problems, schools were asked to state whether or not the proportion of their pupils entitled to free school meals was at least 40%. There were 22% of schools which came into this category, of which 19% were primary schools. The actual proportion of primary schools in which at least 40% pupils are entitled to free meals throughout Northern Ireland is 16%.⁵

We are satisfied, therefore, that our sample of schools for this survey reflected the entire population of schools in Northern Ireland. Since the response rate was also high, we feel that we can generalise the findings of this report to represent those of most Northern Ireland schools.

3.2 What schools provide

The survey focused on two types of environmental education provision: visits to sites of environmental interest, and the delivery of talks and workshops on environmental education themes provided by an external speaker or facilitator.

Just over half of all schools were satisfied with the amount of such provision which they were able to offer. 51% described their provision of such opportunities as either 'very good' (18%) or 'satisfactory' (33%) (see Chart 3). However, nearly half of the schools (44%) said they were unable to offer as much as they would like, and this dissatisfaction was greater in post-primary schools; 62% of post-primary schools said they could not offer as much of this type of opportunity as they would wish. Schools in the Western Board area expressed a higher level of

⁴ Belfast 14%, North-Eastern 22%, South Eastern 19%, Southern 23% and Western 20% (Data from Department of Education (NI): www.deni.gov.uk)

⁵ Data from Environment and Heritage Service.

dissatisfaction than those in other board areas; 58% said they were unable to offer as much as they would like. 50% of schools with a high proportion of pupils entitled to school meals were also dissatisfied with their level of such provision. Only 2% of all schools said they had not offered any environmental education opportunities from external sources in the previous year.

Some of the individual comments from schools regarding their provision of environmental education highlighted both general and more specific issues:

Environmental education has been squeezed out by other subjects in the primary school. Perhaps the new curriculum might address this...

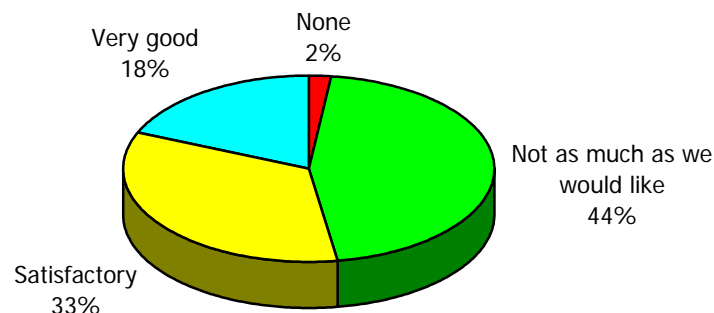
We have an environmental/recycling scheme. Pupils/staff/caretakers active. However we have had to suspend the scheme due to ELB not providing safe caged storage for waste material scheme on hold now for 11/2 years!

I don't suppose my school is different from others. In the present financial situation we cannot look at additional learning experiences for the pupils which don't have teacher substitute cover built in to them. It's a simple fact of life for us now. I wish it wasn't.

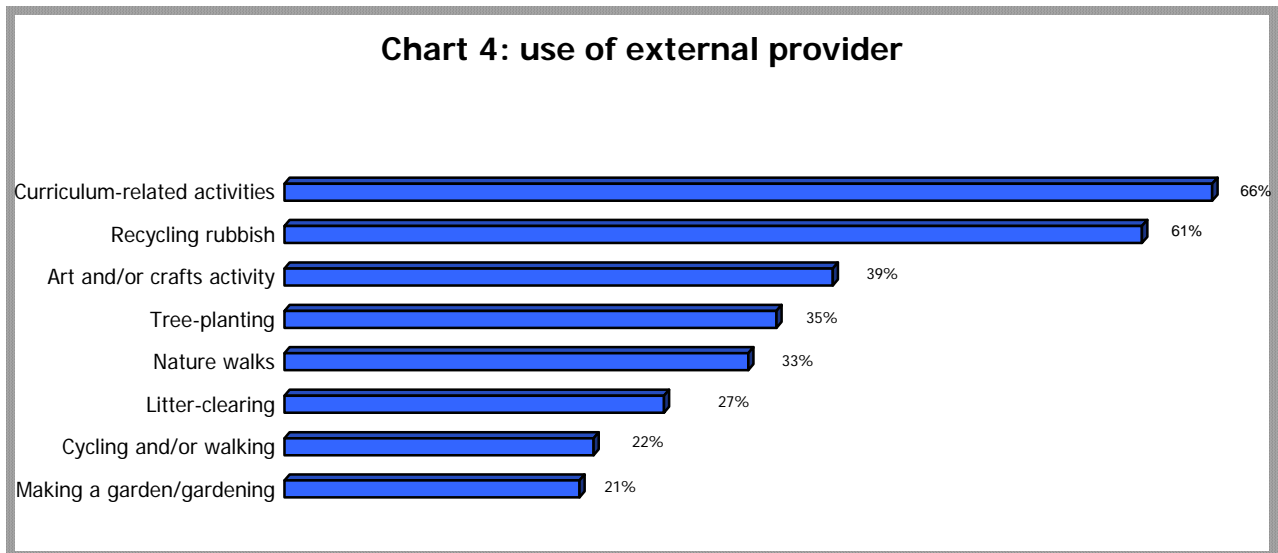
Much environmental education is provided for our pupils within our own extensive school grounds. Our grounds provide a range of habitats e.g. woodland and riverside and we have our own pond and conservation area. As part of their GCSE geography coursework pupils undertake traffic/ town planning studies and at A Level our students undertake river studies as part of their coursework.

Not all schools/ teachers are aware of the environmental grants available for environmental projects for schools. Some grants should also be available to take groups out for trips to centres or for participating in eco schools...

Chart 3: overall level of satisfaction with environmental education opportunities



Schools were asked to state for which aspects of environmental education activity they currently used external providers (see Chart 4). The questionnaire provided a list of possible options, although respondents were also able to add other activities not included in the list⁶. Two-thirds of schools (66%) said they had used external providers for curriculum-related activities. Of the different specific categories of activity listed, recycling rubbish was the most popular; 61% of schools said they used an external provider for this activity. Arts and craft activities, tree-planting and nature walks were other popular types of activity; more than a third of all schools said they had used an external provider for such activities.



Post-primary schools were also less likely than the overall sample of schools to use external providers for any of the activities listed in the questionnaire; for example, just 50% of post-primary schools said they had used external providers for curriculum-related activities. Some comments on the use of external providers are as follows:

We enjoy taking the children on trips as we believe they are an important learning tool. The only constraints are money and time.

Field centres need to be maintained despite cuts. Field centres need to be more aware of curriculum requirements and exam specifications.

I feel that the information or level of work provided at environmental centres is focusing more on the primary sector. When we take pupils the level of interest is low as the amount of talking by the provider is nearly too much- more activity-based activities would be better.

If we are successful in securing grant aid we intend to develop the school grounds further to broaden the range of activities we can offer. Any outside assistance in this would be greatly appreciated.

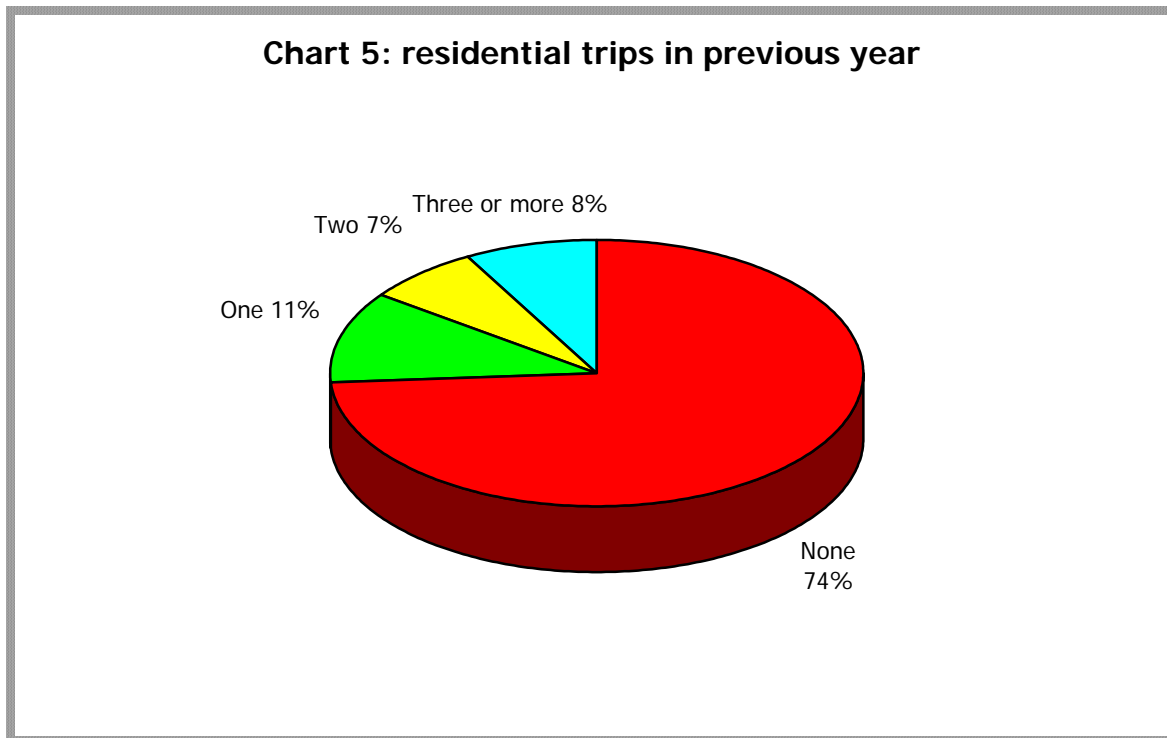
Financial restraints on schools make it more and more difficult to undertake educational visits or invite speakers to conduct workshops.

⁶ 7% of respondents specified other, additional types of activity, not included in the list.

Environmental issues and education are high on our curriculum. We absorb so much from our environment and recycling is a large issue. We compost, plant, walk, bug hunt, pond dip, look after and feed the birds, look after a rabbit, compost the droppings and sawdust. We recycle parents card, cereal boxes, egg boxes, yoghurt tubs, butter tubs and newspaper. We use the play resource warehouse and take every opportunity to use scrap for art and craft. We have a garden and plant all year round. We have planted 3 trees and grown 3 new oaks which we will pass onto conservation volunteers. We have litter wardens. We have a pond in which we have frogspawn and pavilions in which we develop butterflies from caterpillars. We have our own compost bin.

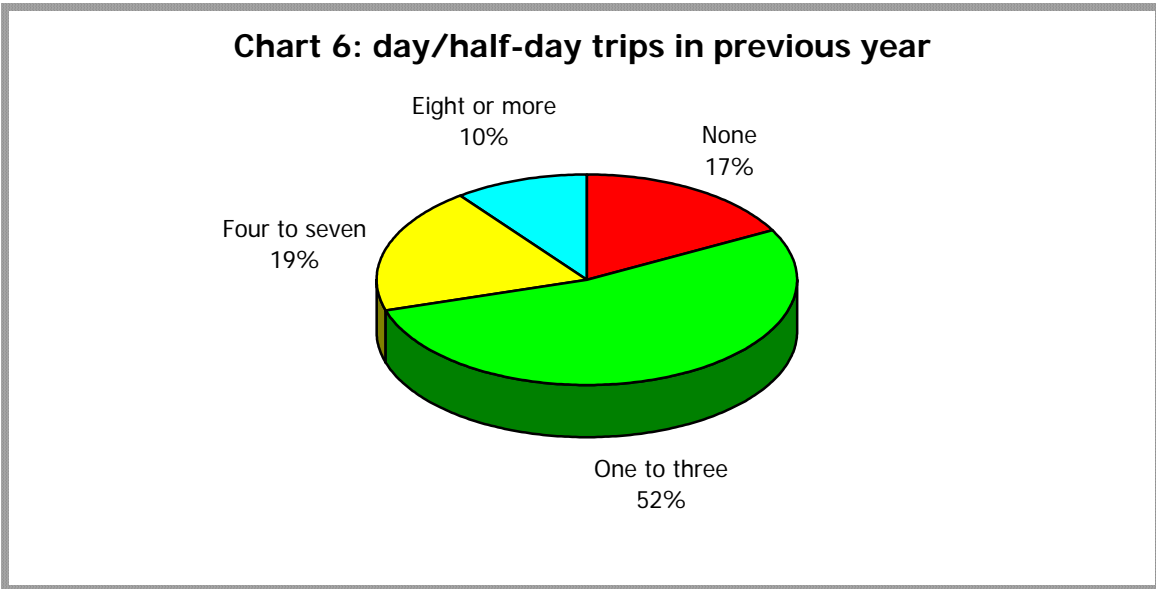
Schools were also asked about their use of different ways of delivering environmental education which involve the use of external providers. As can be seen from Chart 5, most schools had not provided any residential trips for environmental education purposes in the academic year preceding the survey.

Post-primary schools were more likely to have organised such trips; 40% said they had organised at least one such trip during the previous year. This figure is quite low, considering all post-primary schools would offer subjects which lend themselves well to residential field trips, such as geography and biology.

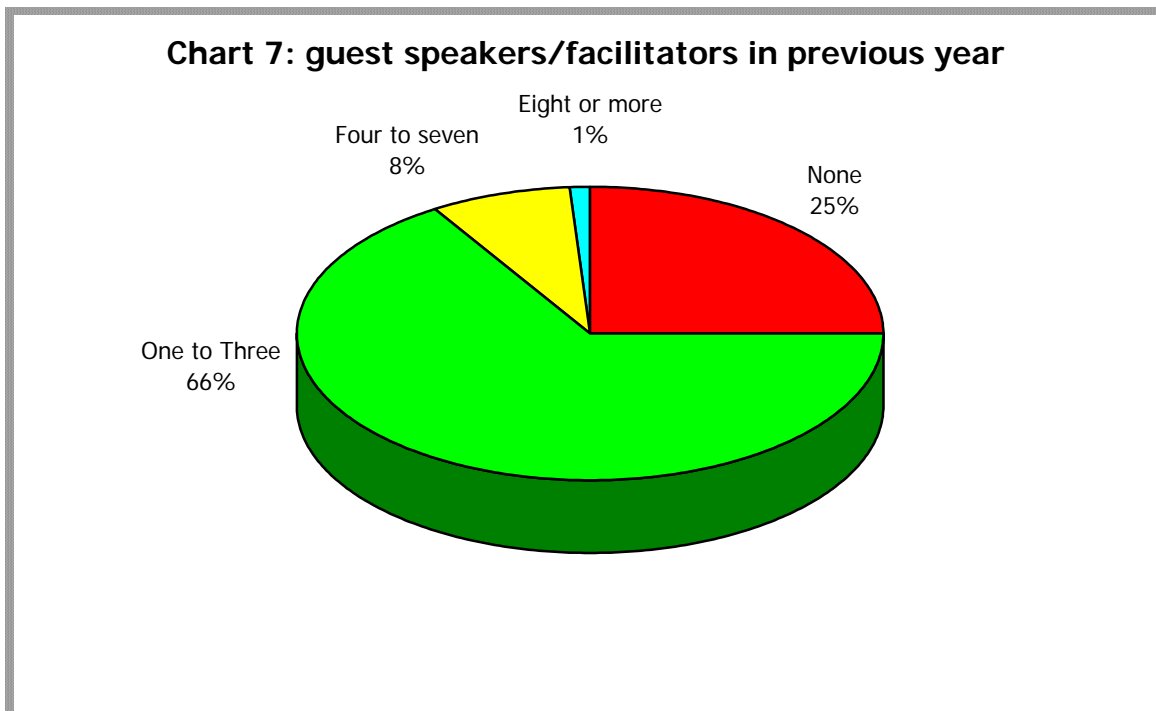


A much higher proportion of schools had undertaken day or half-day visits where the main purpose was environmental education (see Chart 6). 81% of schools said they had organised at least one such trip during the preceding year. However, most of those schools had only organised between one and three trips; given the number of year groups in most of the schools surveyed, this suggests that these opportunities were probably confined to certain year groups in many schools. Schools with a high proportion of pupils entitled to school meals were

somewhat less likely to have organised such trips than other schools; 24% said they had not provided any such trips, compared to 15% of other schools.



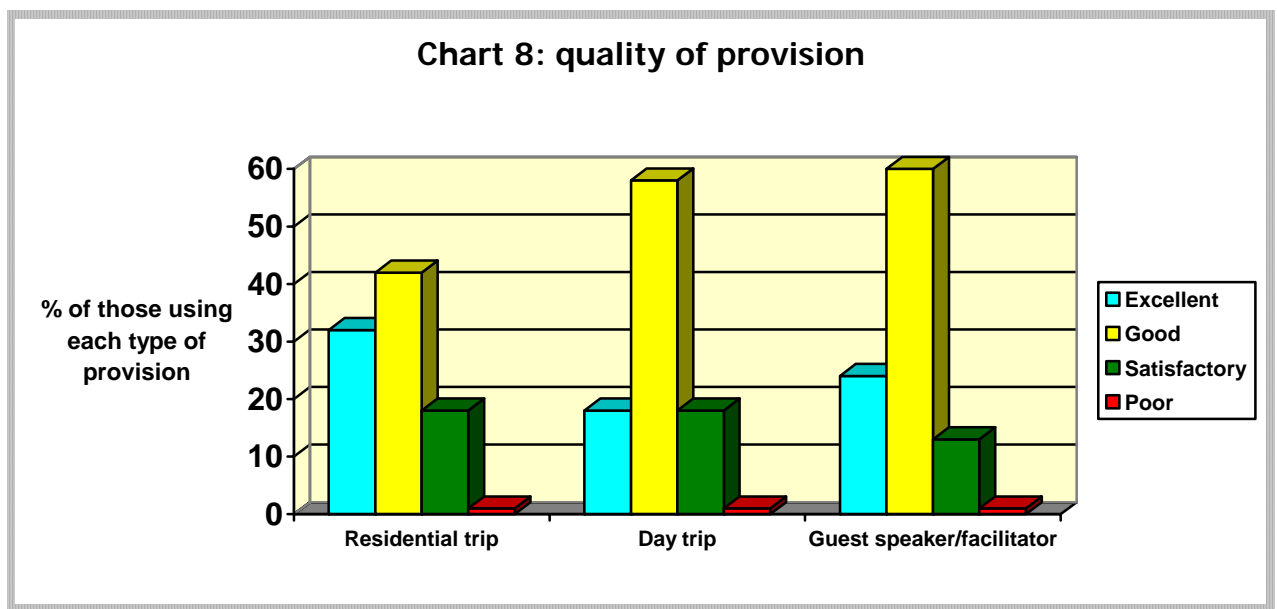
Most schools (75%) had made use of guest speakers or facilitators to enhance their delivery of environmental education (see Chart 7). However, most of these schools had only made use of such individuals on between one and three occasions, again suggesting that many pupils were probably unable to benefit from such opportunities. Primary schools were much more likely than the other types of school surveyed to make use of such individuals; while 82% of primary schools had used guest speakers or facilitators, 61% of nursery schools, 56% of post-primary schools and 59% of special schools had utilised such individuals.



Schools were also somewhat less likely to make use of such individuals if they were in any of the following categories: a rural area (70%), schools with a high proportion of pupils entitled to free meals (66%), or schools in the Western Board area (68%).

3.3 Quality of environmental education provision

Schools were also asked to rate the quality of the different types of environmental education opportunity they had accessed. Their responses suggested a high level of satisfaction with the external provision they accessed (see Chart 8).



3.4 Factors constraining access to environmental education provision

The cost of external provision

Schools were asked what factors they felt restricted the amount and range of environmental education opportunities they were able to access. As can be seen from Chart 9, by far the most significant perceived constraint was the cost of transport; 78% of schools said that the transport costs involved in accessing such opportunities were too high⁷. One primary school stated that it

⁷ Most of the factors listed in Chart 9 were listed in the questionnaire. However, respondents were also given the opportunity to specify other factors which restricted them. 'Constraints of curriculum time/lack of time', 'lack of money' and 'not aimed at our age group' were factors specified by respondents under a heading of 'other'. 4% of respondents specified other, additional factors.

cost between £180 and £200 to hire a bus and driver for a day. 41% said that lack of easy access to environmental education centres was a problem, while 24% said the cost levied by the provider was too high.

Some schools also cited the additional cost of hiring extra staff either to cover for teachers while they were out of the school, or to provide an adequate adult/child ratio for trips. One primary school stated:

*Cost of transport – bus companies charge around £80-200+ for a day. We have a day trip going out to an environmental centre next week. Individual cost will be £10 but this is at **cost**- no profit.*

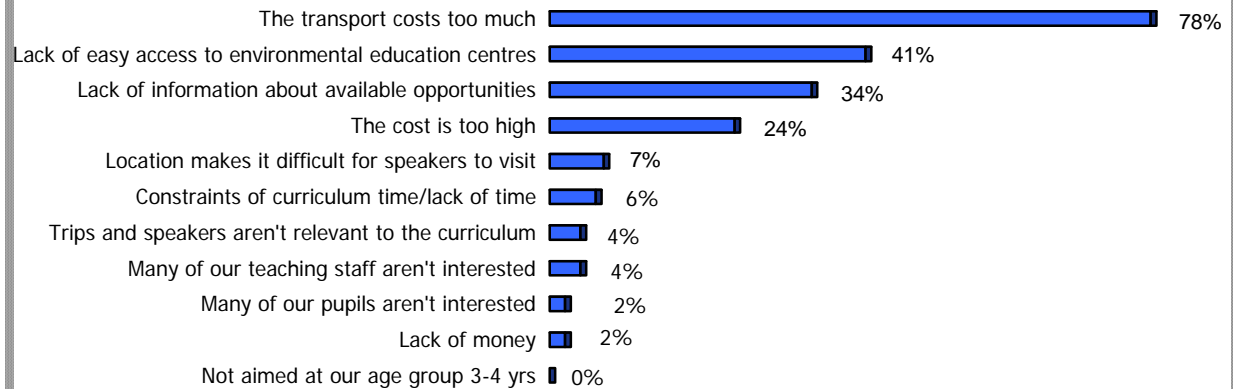
Another said that hiring an additional teacher on a casual basis for this purpose cost £150 a day.

Schools in the Belfast area were more likely than those in other areas to cite the cost levied by the provider as a problem (35%). However, schools with a high proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals were slightly less likely than other schools to cite the cost charged by the provider as a factor (23% compared to 25% of other schools). They were also less likely than other schools to see the cost of transport as a problem (67% compared to 82% of other schools).

While cost was clearly seen as a major problem by many schools, the results of the survey also indicated that the cost of the externally-sourced provision currently being accessed by schools is generally not excessive. Two-thirds of schools who made use of external speakers or facilitators said there had been no charge. Where a charge was involved, this was generally £50 or less, including any relevant expenses, such as travel expenses.

48% of schools which had organised a residential trip said that the total cost had been less than £50 per pupil, including costs incurred by both the school and by pupils' families. For a further 29% of schools, the cost had been between £50 and £99. Of those schools which undertook day or half-day trips, 83% said the cost had been less than £10 per pupil, again including costs incurred by both the school and by pupils' families.

Chart 9: perceived constraints on accessing opportunities



However, although the cost per pupil is often relatively small, the overall cost obviously places another burden on school budgets which are often already stretched. Thus the cost factor may well be deterring many schools from organising more than one or two trips a year. For example, one primary school stated that it had organised between one and three environmental education day trips in the previous year at a cost of less than £10 a head. Nevertheless, it made this exasperated comment:

Schools have no money in their budget to provide visits or additional resources. A school minibus and/or free transport is essential to enable schools to travel to places of interest and facilitate field trips. Without resources, children's experiences will be limited to books, videos and their own school grounds!!

Type of school: how big a factor?

As noted earlier, schools were asked to categorise themselves in various ways in order to ascertain whether certain types of school faced particular problems or had different patterns of usage, in terms of the types of environmental education provision accessed. What is notable is the broad similarity, in most cases, of the responses of different types of school, and schools in different areas.

Of the different types of school, post-primary schools appeared to face the greatest constraints in accessing externally-sourced provision. 62% of post-primary schools said they could not offer as much externally-sourced environmental education as they would like, and were less likely than the other types of school surveyed to make use of external providers for any of the thematic types of activity specified in the survey questionnaire. However, they were more likely to provide residential trips where the main purpose was environmental education. As with other schools, the main concern of post-primary schools was the cost of transport. Like other schools, lack of easy access to environmental education centres was also a problem for many post-primary schools (43%) However, post-primary schools were more concerned than other schools about a lack of information about available opportunities. They were also much more likely than primary schools to cite curriculum constraints and/or a lack of time as a factor hindering their ability to make use of such opportunities.

Surprisingly, there were no major differences between the responses of rural and urban schools, and few major differences between the responses of schools in different Board areas, although it is of note that there was a higher level of dissatisfaction with what they could offer among schools in the Western Board area compared to those in other parts of Northern Ireland.

There were fewer differences than one might have expected in the responses of schools with a relatively high proportion of pupils entitled to school meals, compared to other schools, although such schools were more likely than other schools to express dissatisfaction with their level of environmental education provision, and were somewhat less likely than other schools to have organised day or half-day visits related to environmental education, or to have used guest speakers or facilitators. Such schools also expressed greater interest than other schools in additional external provision related to each of the thematic types of provision specified in the questionnaire. At the same time, their responses suggested that the cost of accessing such opportunities was no more of a problem for this type of school than for other schools. They were somewhat more likely than other schools to cite lack of information as a problem (38% compared to 33% of other schools). However, they were not significantly more likely to see any other factors as a particular problem. It remains unclear exactly why this category of school appears to make less use of externally provided environmental education opportunities than other schools.

Other factors

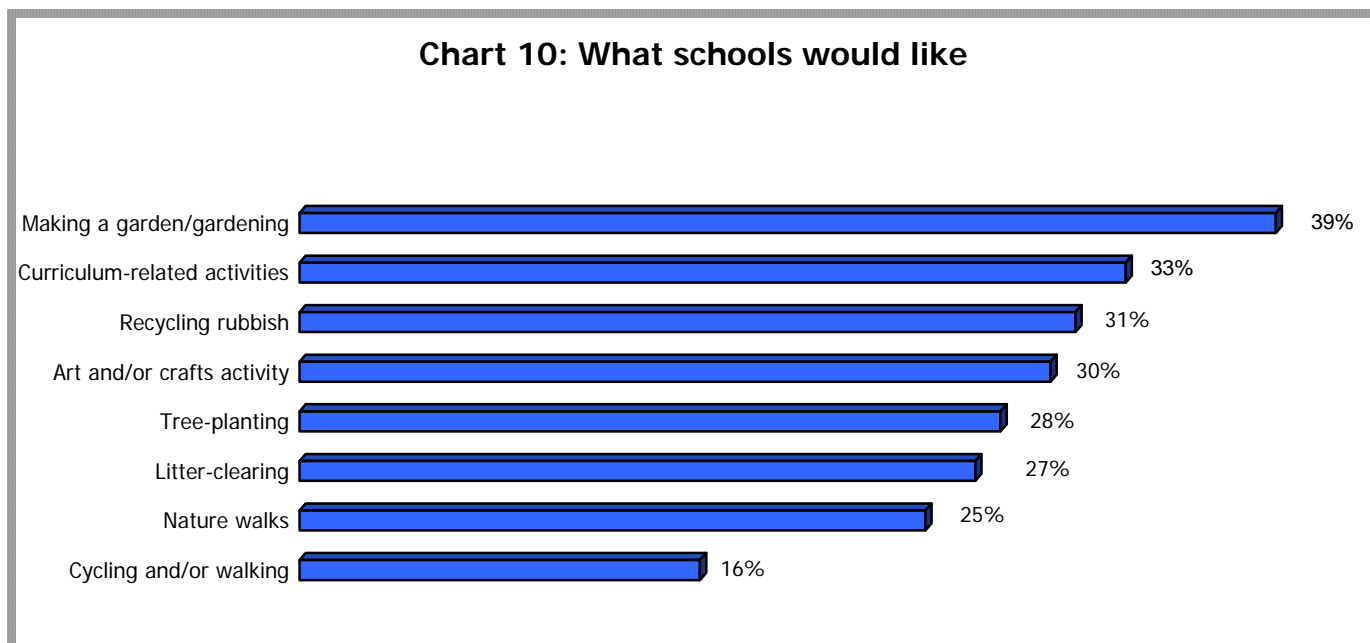
34% said that lack of information about available opportunities was a problem. Lack of information was cited by a greater number of post-primary schools (46%), nursery schools (44%) and special schools (44%) than primary schools (29%) as a constraining factor. Schools in the Western Board area (44%) were more likely to cite this as a problem than schools in other parts of Northern Ireland.

19% of post-primary schools said that curriculum constraints and/or lack of time were a problem for them. By contrast, just 2% of primary schools cited this as a factor. One post-primary school commented "The curriculum is already very over-crowded. To add more in, something needs to be taken out." A number of small schools also cited the difficulty of placing an additional burden on staff who were teaching more than one year group at the same time.

It is notable that very few schools felt that lack of interest on the part of either their staff or their pupils was a constraining factor; just 4% of schools said that lack of interest among their teachers was a factor, while 2% cited lack of interest among students. The comments of many schools suggested quite the opposite: a great deal of enthusiasm for environmental matters among both staff and pupils which, in many cases, was not being fully harnessed.

3.5 What schools would like

Schools were asked to specify those activities for which they would like external providers to offer more learning opportunities (see Chart 10)⁸.



The activity for which there was the highest degree of unmet demand in this respect was making a garden and gardening; 39% of schools said they would like providers to offer more opportunities related to this type of activity. A third of schools also wanted providers to offer more in terms of curriculum-related activities. As can be seen from Chart 10, at least a quarter of schools were interested in more provision in each of the categories of activity specified in the questionnaire, with the exception of cycling and/or walking.

Post-primary schools were particularly interested in additional provision for curriculum-related activities (45%) and recycling rubbish (43%). They were much less interested than the other types of school in additional provision for making a garden/gardening (24%) and in arts and crafts activities (16%). Schools in the Western Board area were also particularly keen to see additional provision for curriculum-related activities (45%) and recycling rubbish (39%) compared to schools in other parts of Northern Ireland.

⁸ In addition to the activities listed in Chart 10, 2% of respondents specified other, additional types of activity.

Schools with a high proportion of children entitled to school meals were much more likely than other schools to want additional provision related to litter clearing (40%) and nature walks (34%). They also expressed greater interest than other schools in more provision across all the categories of activity, suggesting a higher level of unmet demand among such schools.

A number of schools provided additional comments which highlighted the initiatives they were taking within the school to increase environmental awareness among their pupils. One primary school principal suggested that more financial support could be made available for this type of activity:

There are many very worthwhile and valuable environmental projects available, but schools face major challenges regarding accessing these due to things such as transport costs and supervision. The school grounds provide a useful venue for environmental study and more support for this type of project would be very welcome and useful.

Another primary school respondent commented:

Schools urgently need help in developing resources related to local studies: river study; [using the] school grounds as [a] resource for [the] development of history, geography, science skills; housing, transport trails etc. We simply do not have sufficient time or money.

A number of schools mentioned their participation in the Eco-Schools Programme, an international scheme run in the UK by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). This scheme provides a series of awards towards which schools can work. It focuses on pupil involvement in making the school as environmentally-friendly as possible.⁹

A few schools said they would like more environmental education learning materials, such as worksheets, to be made available. The teacher acting as environmental co-ordinator at one Belfast post-primary school commented:

I have contacted a wide range of environment agencies for help as environment co-ordinator. I have been appalled at the lack of support on offer. I would like to have a locally focused resource pack for at least years 8, 10 and 12, [so] that form tutors could provide at least one or two sessions a year.

One primary school was about to lose one of two teachers with a particular interest in environmental matters, a loss which it said would impact adversely on its ability to take forward current initiatives such as the creation of an 'eco garden'. It suggested that 'environmental mentors' could be made available to provide ongoing expert support to schools.

However, it was clear from the descriptions of their own activities provided by a number of schools that some schools have been remarkably innovative in the environmental education they offer their pupils with little or no external support. One Fermanagh primary school commented:

⁹ See <http://www.eco-schools.org.uk/index.htm>

For the vast majority of our biology/geography field work, teachers over the years have created study packs to use within the school – external providers generally aren't used. For example – a seashore trail for year 5, trails for trees, minibeasts etc. – around the school grounds and local forested areas...Our own school site provides a wealth of experience – trees, hedgerow studies, even a pond (under construction at present).

A few schools also said they would like greater emphasis on environmental education in the curriculum. One primary school principal commented, "Schools wish to move in this direction but we just require some direction from CCEA."

The responses from several nursery and special schools suggested that more could be done to meet the specific needs of each of these types of school. A number of schools in both categories said that they felt the available provision did not cater for the special needs of their pupils. Several nursery schools felt the available provision was not tailored to fit their age group. One respondent from a special school commented:

Because of the nature of the children in our school, who have very individual needs, it is not always easy to bring them to an outdoor centre or find someone who is able or willing, to come into the school. Most of the environmental education which takes place [in our school] makes use of the existing outdoor facilities.

Another special school commented:

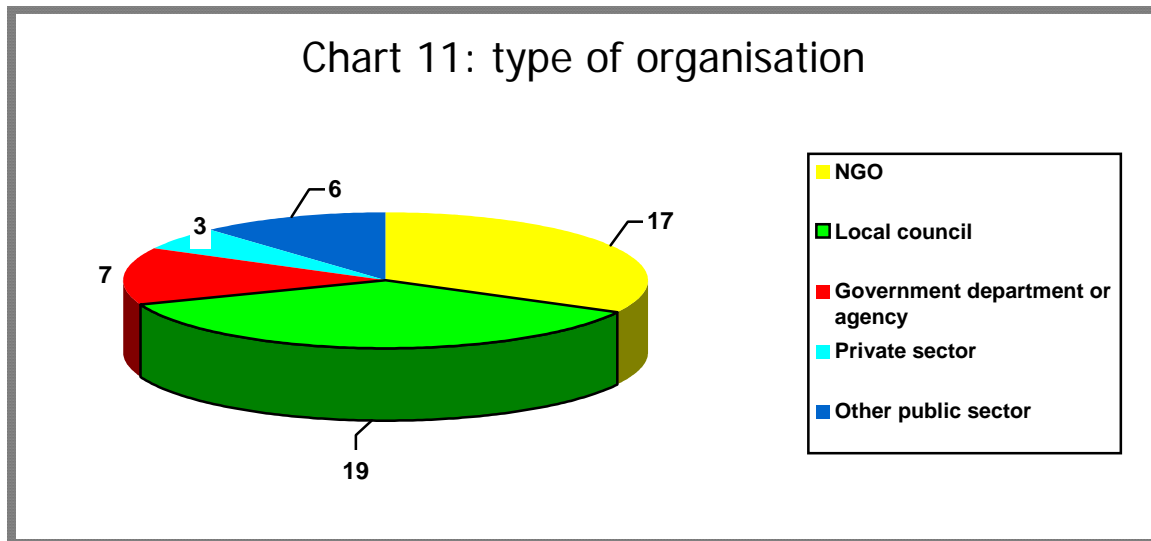
We need specialist input, and a curriculum developed and accessible at an individual level.

4. Survey of Providers

4.1 The respondents

In order to gather information on what environmental education providers are able to offer schools, a telephone survey was carried out. Seventy-five organisations, environmental education venues and individuals delivering environmental education throughout Northern Ireland were invited to take part in the survey. They included all organisations and venues, where contact details could be obtained, which the survey schools said they had used in the previous year.

The telephone survey was carried out using a questionnaire which included some open-ended questions and opportunities for comment. (Appendix 4) Representatives from a number of key stakeholder organisations were interviewed face-to-face, using the same questionnaire as a basis for the interview. In the summary below, they are grouped as 'respondents' along with those who responded by telephone. In all, 52 individuals responded to the survey. In the case of two major providers of environmental education, the DOE's Environment and Heritage Service and the Ulster Wildlife Trust, individuals employed at various locations/sites responded to the survey, in addition to a representative at headquarters.



As can be seen from Chart 11, the majority of those who responded to the survey were from local councils (19) or from NGOs (17). Most respondents (38) said that the environmental education services they offered were available to nursery, primary, post-primary and secondary schools. Five organisations said they had sites or venues offering environmental education provision to schools in every local council area in Northern Ireland.¹⁰

¹⁰ The organisations were as follows: Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland, the Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre, the Forest Service, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Woodland Trust.

Respondents were asked how many full-time or equivalent staff their organisations or centres employed for whom delivering environmental education would be a major part of their role. The organisations with the largest number of such staff employed on a permanent basis were the Forest Service and Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland, both of which had 10 such staff.

Four respondents said their organisations had no permanent or temporary staff in this category. Three of these organisations were local councils. However, most respondents (46) indicated that their organisation or centre had at least one permanent member of staff for whom delivering environmental education to schools was a major part of their role. There was less reliance on temporary staff than might have been expected; just eight respondents said their organisation or site was employing more temporary than permanent staff in this role.

No less than a quarter of all the respondents (13) said that they did not know how many classes, schools or pupils had received environmental education services from their organisation or centre over the previous academic year. The relevant organisations included two major NGOs, a number of local councils, two leading museums, and a centre run by a government agency. There were also differences in the way such statistics were kept with the number of classes, schools and pupils all being used by different organisations as the basic unit for their statistics. This made it impossible to use the available data to obtain any meaningful overview of the current extent to which schools are utilising environmental education provision.

4.2 What providers offer schools

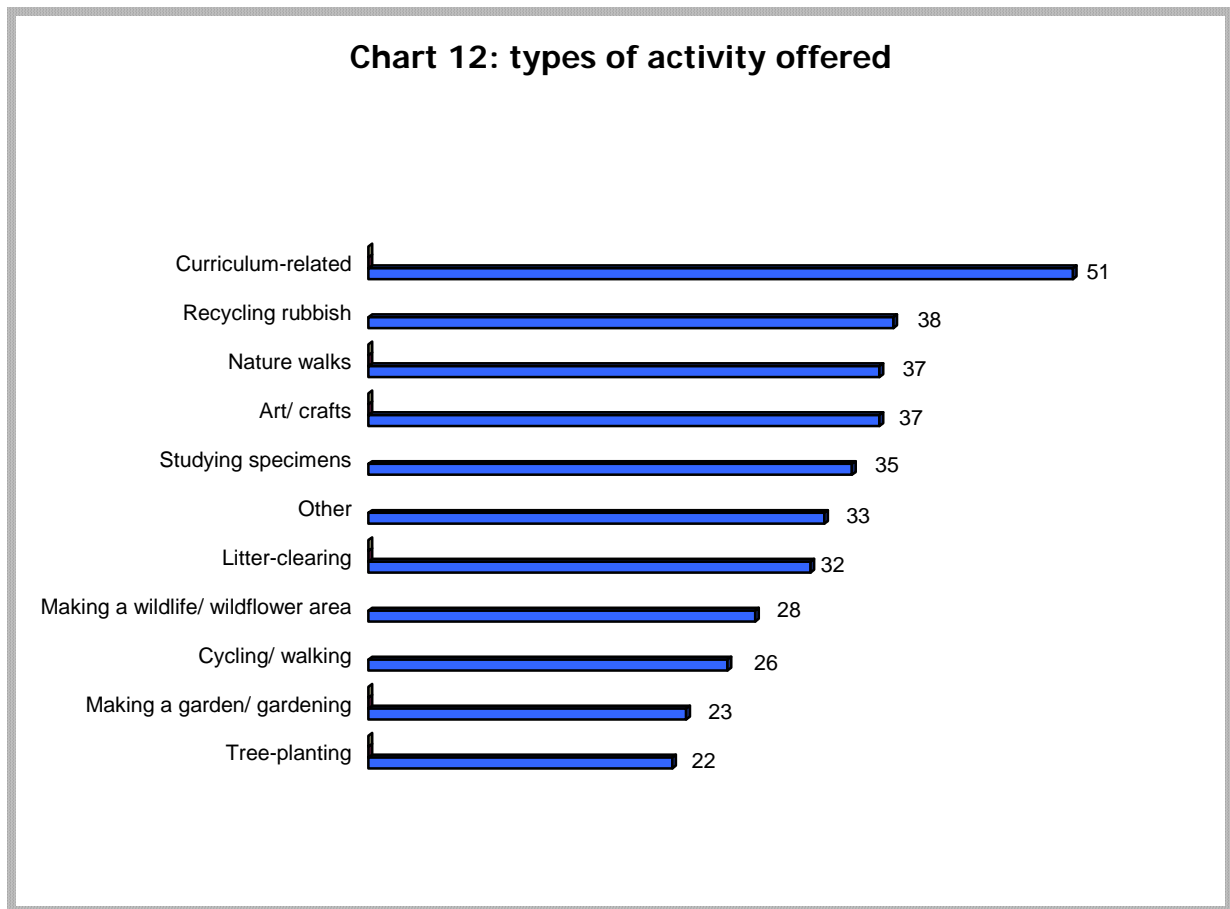
Methods of delivery

Just six respondents worked at centres which offered residential facilities for schools. None of these was located in the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) or North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) areas. All charged for this service and the charges and methods of charging varied. However, three centres said they charged £18 per pupil per day.

38 respondents said their organisations or centres provided a venue for day or half-day trips with an environmental education theme. There were centres making such provision in every education and library board area. 10 respondents said their organisations did not normally charge schools for this service.¹¹ Where there was a charge, in most cases it was between £2 and £4 per pupil, although a few organisations or venues charged a lot more than this. Most respondents (34) said they were also able to offer visits to locations of environmental interest other than those run by their own organisation. In most cases, there was either no charge, other than travelling expenses, or a modest charge of a few pounds per pupil.

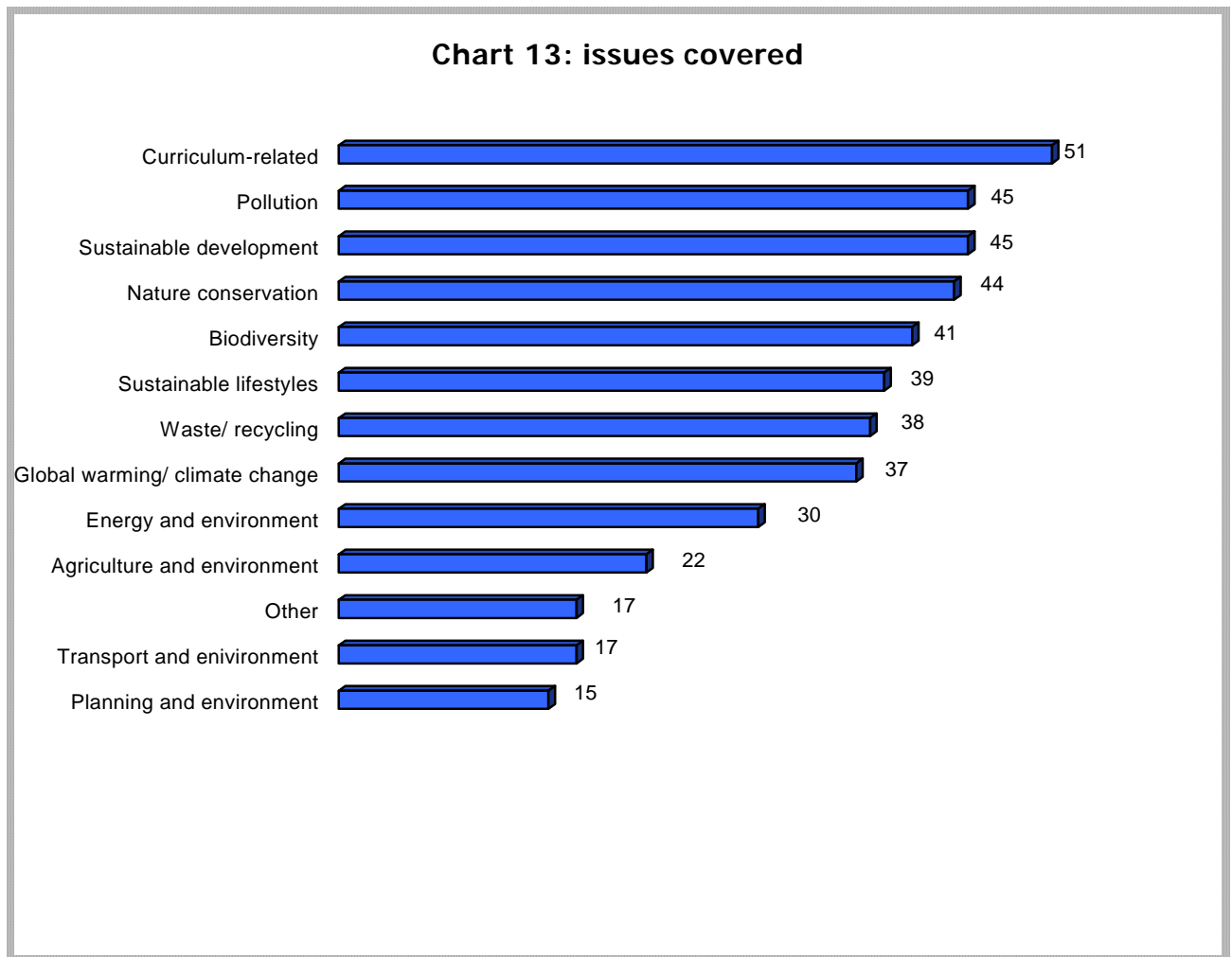
40 respondents said that their organisation or centre made available speakers to visit schools to give talks or presentations. Just over half (23) said that they made no charge, other than expenses, for this service. The same number (23) said their speakers or facilitators were prepared to travel to schools anywhere in Northern Ireland.

¹¹ In these cases, there was no charge other than expenses where applicable.



Issues covered

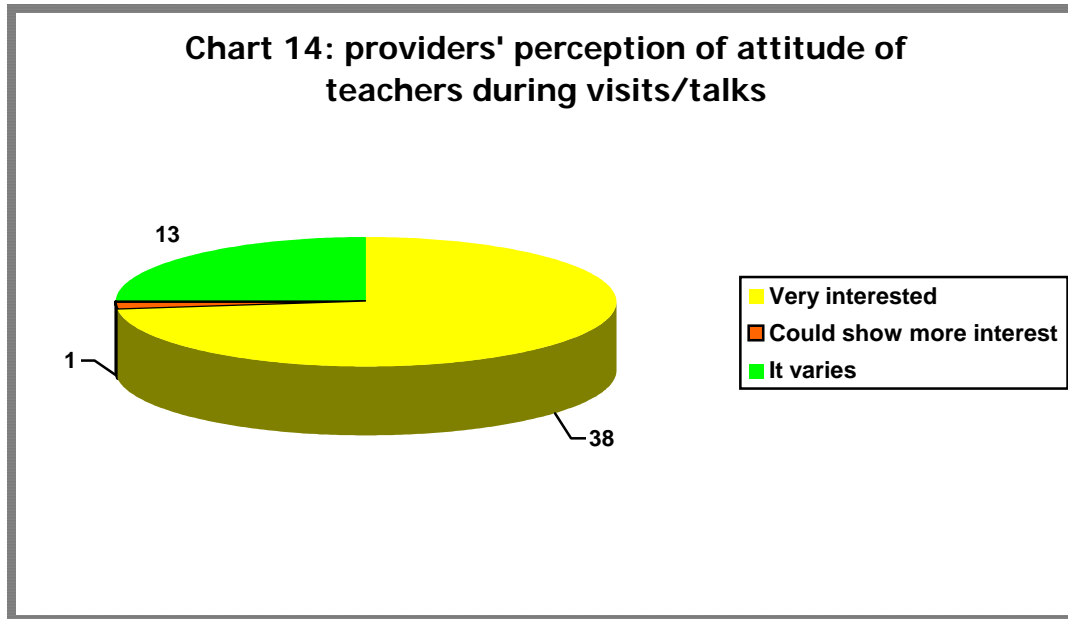
Just as nearly all respondents said that their organisations or centres offered activities relevant to the curriculum, almost all (51) said they covered issues of relevance to the curriculum in the environmental education provision they offered schools. Most respondents said their centres or organisations covered most of a wide range of possible issues included in the survey questionnaire (see Chart 13). The issues covered by fewer than half the respondents in each instance were: *transport and the environment*, *agriculture and the environment*, and *planning and the environment*. However, again, one must be cautious about concluding that these issues are less widely offered in practice for the same reasons as referred to above. *Transport and the environment*, and *planning and the environment* were both covered by the Woodland Trust, for example. The one issue that may, in practice, be less widely available is *agriculture and the environment*, partly because it is not offered by the Woodland Trust. However, as with the different types of activity, every issue was offered by at least one provider in each of the education and library board areas.



4.3 Attitudes of teachers

Most of the respondents felt that the teachers who supervised pupils taking part in environmental education activities usually had a positive and engaged attitude. 38 agreed with the statement: "Generally, they're very interested in what we do with the children, and are engaged in helping pupils make the most of the opportunity." (See Chart 14) 13 respondents said that it varied a great deal. Just one thought that teachers could usually show more interest, while none felt that teachers were not interested *per se*.

Many respondents stressed the importance of active interest and enthusiasm from teachers. As one respondent put it, "If teachers show interest, then learning is enhanced." However, a few reported problems such as teachers who spent the session on their mobile phone or who did not want the children to get dirty. Respondents' comments suggested that a teacher's degree of knowledge and awareness of the subject matter seemed to be linked to their level of interest.



Providers commented both positively and more negatively on teacher attitudes to environmental education:

In our detailed MFC action research evaluation forms we have an extremely positive response from both staff and students alike. The visit is an integral part of a process of pre planning and versatility of programme development with succinct follow up and this is central to a successful visit.

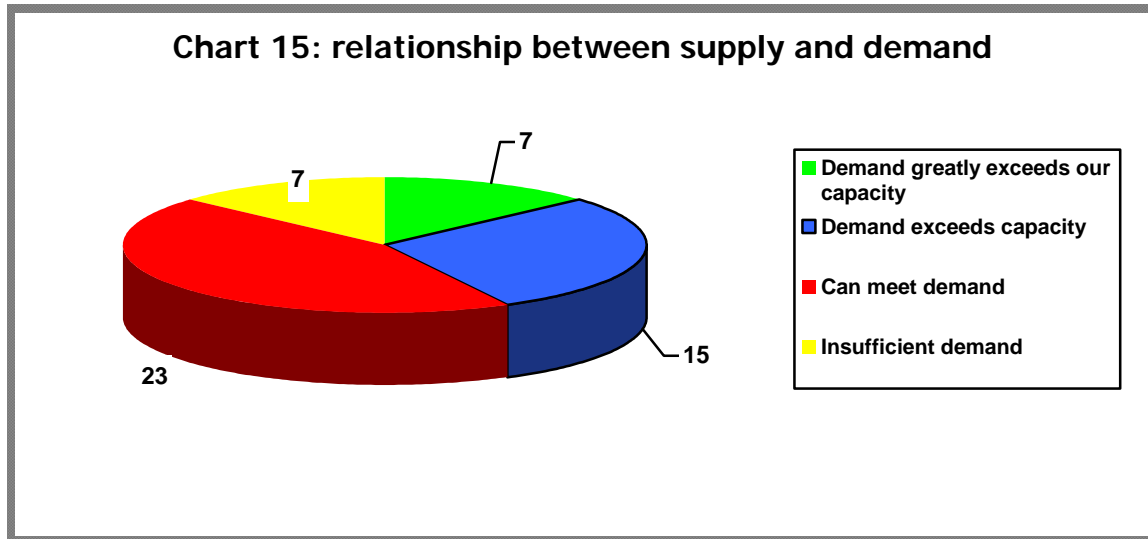
If teachers are positive this encourages the young people to be positive...

On the rare occasions when we do have laid back teachers who don't seem to be very interested in what the pupils are doing...the pupils seem to know that they will get away with a lot in front of those teachers.

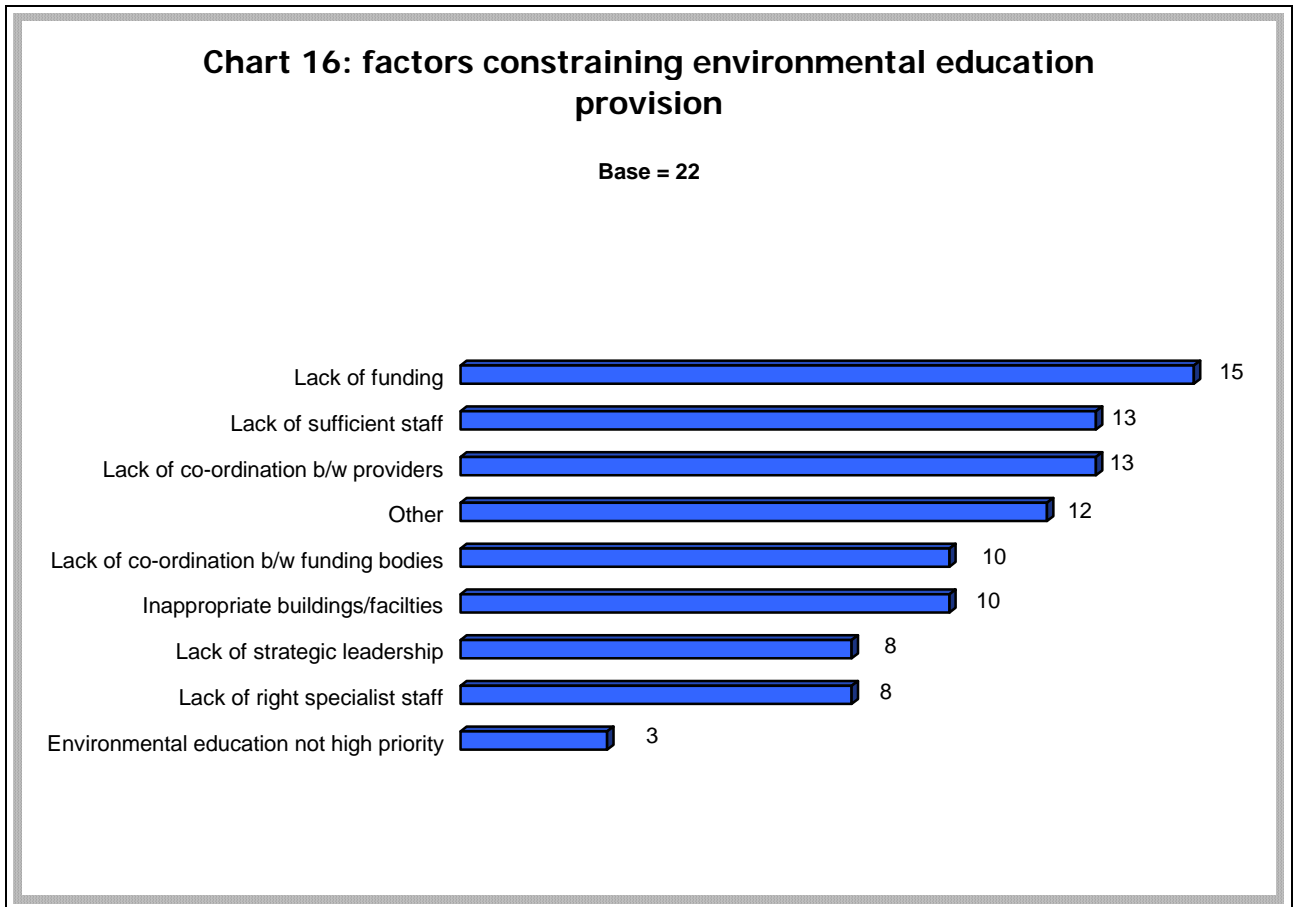
Depends on how important they find the activity. They have to make room for it. Some teachers don't want children to get dirty!! Then this is a problem.

4.4 Supply and demand for environmental education provision

As can be seen from Chart 15, just under half of all respondents felt that their organisation or centre had the capacity to meet the current demand from schools for the environmental education services they offered. However, a similar proportion said that demand exceeded or greatly exceeded their capacity to offer such provision. Just seven respondents said that they had the capacity to offer more, but that there was insufficient demand.



Those respondents who reported that demand exceeded their capacity to offer environmental education services were asked for their views on the factors which they felt contributed to this situation. They were provided with a list of possible factors and asked to select those which they felt were at least partially responsible. Three possible factors were selected by more than half the relevant 22 respondents (see Chart 16). They were 'lack of funding' (15), 'lack of sufficient staff' (13) and 'lack of sufficient co-ordination between the different organisations offering environmental education provision' (13).



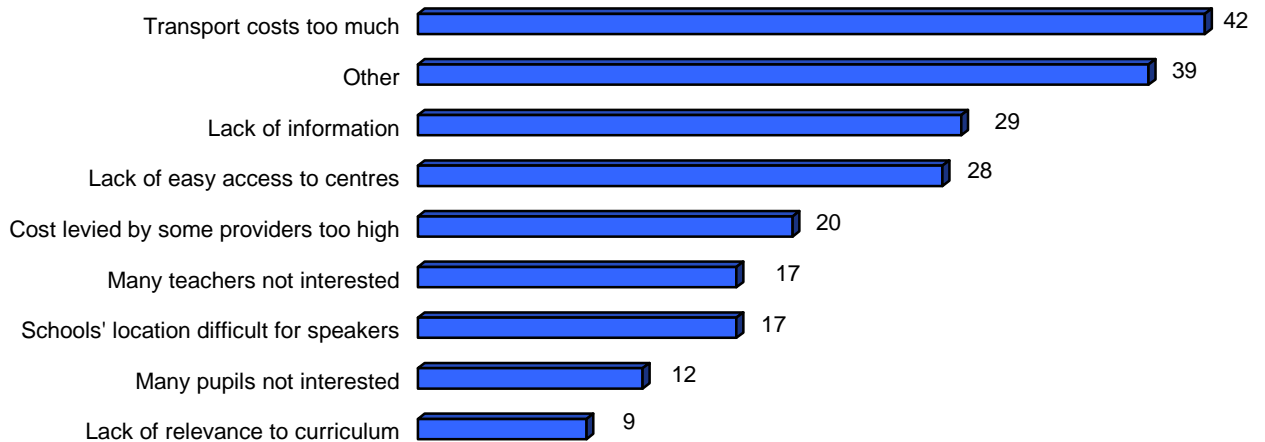
In relation to factors constraining the provision of environmental education in schools, some of the comments from providers illustrate these figures:

Too many other curricular demands on staff; environmental education may lose out to other topics or be used as a sort of 'post-exam' time filler.

Health and safety issues, teachers find it difficult to link into pupils lifestyles, afraid of the environment as there is so much information

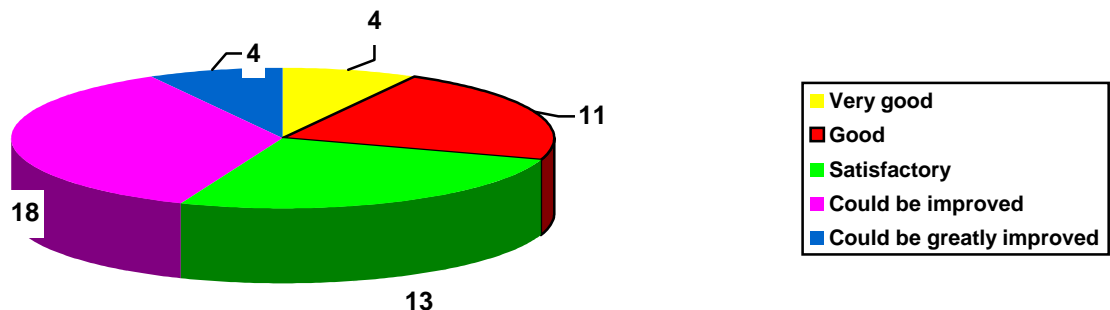
All respondents were also asked what, if anything, restricted the take-up of and demand for environmental education opportunities by schools. Again, a range of possible reasons was provided in the survey questionnaire. By far the most commonly selected reason was 'the transport costs too much' which was cited by 42 respondents (see Chart 17). More than half also felt that 'lack of information about available opportunities' (29) and 'lack of easy access to environmental education centres' (28) were contributory factors.

Chart 17: factors restricting schools' demand



Respondents were also asked for their view of the overall standard of environmental education provision for schools in Northern Ireland. There were mixed opinions on this question. 22 respondents felt that there was scope for improvement, while 15 thought current provision was good or very good, and 13 thought it was satisfactory (see Chart 18).

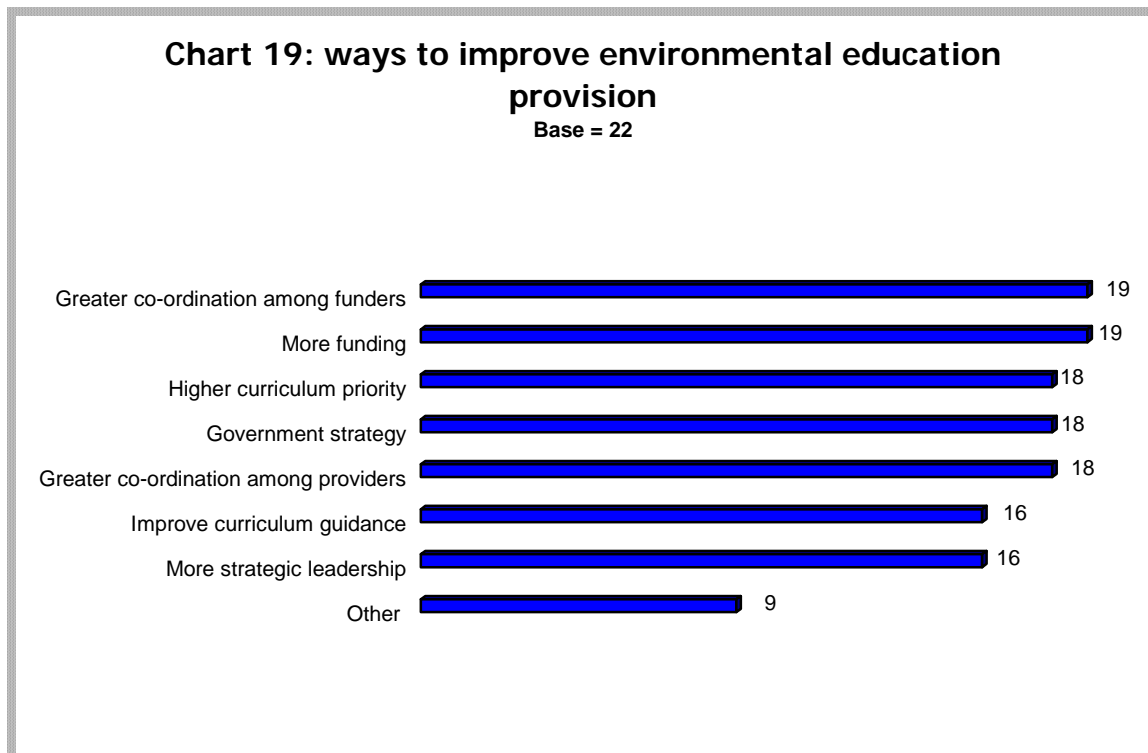
Chart 18: overall standard of environmental education provision in Northern Ireland



Those who felt there was scope for improvement were asked for their views on measures which might help enhance environmental education provision in schools. Seven possible steps were listed in the survey questionnaire and most of the relevant respondents felt that each of the proposed measures would help improve environmental education provision. Five of the options were selected by more than four-fifths of the respondents (see Chart 19).

The full wording of each of these options was as follows (with the number of respondents selecting each option in brackets):

- greater co-ordination by bodies which provide grants and funding to environmental education providers for schools-related projects (19)
- more funding for organisations which offer or would like to offer environmental education provision in schools (19)
- environmental education should be given a higher priority within the Northern Ireland curriculum (18)
- the development of a government strategy for environmental education provision for schools in Northern Ireland (18)
- greater co-ordination and liaison among the organisations which offer environmental education to schools (18)
- the CCEA's curriculum guidance to schools on environmental education should be improved (16)
- a higher degree of strategic leadership by EHS in the provision of environmental education (16)



Some providers commented fully on possible improvements, for example:

[There] needs to be more liaison between CCEA, boards, EHS etc. to make strategic leadership. Regular commitment needs to be shown.

Need a government strategy that encourages children to get outdoors. Inspectors should look for more use of the outdoor environment; how important is it is [in] the whole scheme of things. It must be given a higher priority. [There] needs to be a coordinated approach with Dept of Education, health etc,

In-service training for teachers...

Certain standards need to be set - monitoring is needed for bodies, providers etc. some places are doing the same thing they were doing 10 years ago. Schools need a person for a point of contact... Quantifiable measurement of how stuff is being used. Whether people are actually doing what you are telling them.

Some research would be good to determine the benefit of the work that conservation volunteers do. E.G. is there a correlation between pupils' health and outdoor education? Should look at whole environmental issues and the importance of being outside

Great that the mapping exercise is happening, need a unified strategy hopefully it will remove the paranoia from organisations and we can share more between different organisations. It will get everyone singing from the same hymn sheet. Free resources are an issue they can cause competing

5. Summary and Conclusions

The main findings from this research are summarized in this section and key conclusions are presented.

Survey of schools

The research identified current users of environmental education programmes in nursery, primary, post-primary and special schools. Of 1300 schools that were sent questionnaires, the response rate was 46%.

1. Nearly half of respondent schools (44%) reported that the overall level of satisfaction with the environmental education opportunities they offered was not as much as they would like. They indicated that the main problems encountered in accessing environmental education were transport costs (78%), lack of easy access to environmental centres (41%), lack of information about available opportunities (34%) and the general costs (24%).

The effects *of school type* and *school area* were as follows:

- Post-primary schools faced greater constraints in accessing externally sourced provision – 62% reported they could not offer as much as they would like. Some reasons for this were similar to those for other schools, such as transport costs, lack of easy access to environmental education centres and lack of information. However, 1 in 5 post-primary schools, compared with just 2% of primary schools, cited curriculum constraints and lack of time as hindering their ability to make use of such opportunities.
- Schools in which at least 40% pupils received free school meals were more likely to express dissatisfaction with their level of environmental education provision, and were less likely to have organised visits or speakers related to environmental education. The reasons for this are not clear, in that cost and access seemed no more a problem for these schools than other school, but they were more likely to cite lack of information (38%) than others schools types (33%). However, these schools expressed a greater desire than other schools for provision related to litter clearing and nature walks. More research is needed to determine why such schools are accessing external environmental provision less than other schools.
- Schools in the Western Board area indicated higher levels of dissatisfaction with their provision of environmental education opportunities than schools in other Board areas. They also made less use of external speakers/facilitators related to environmental education. Schools in the Western Board area were also particularly keen to see additional provision for curriculum-related activities (45%) and recycling rubbish (39%) compared to schools in other parts of Northern Ireland. The reasons for the differences between schools in the Western Board and those in other Board areas are not clear. It is unlikely that the higher proportion of rural schools in the Western Board is a factor, since there was little

difference in the overall responses between rural and urban schools. Travelling distances to and from schools to access provision might be a factor, but this would require further research.

2. In relation to the type of provision, there was some mis-match between what schools said they would like and what providers offered. The highest ranked activity for schools (almost 40%) was the desire for more opportunities relating to making a garden and gardening. Such activities were ranked second lowest as offered by providers. However, in most other areas, such as curriculum-related activities, recycling activities and litter clearing, the demand from schools matched the opportunities providers offered.
3. The quality of the provision of environmental education activities was perceived by schools to be at least satisfactory and in many cases was considered to be good or excellent.

Survey of providers

75 providers of environmental education were identified and of these, 52 responded (69%). Telephone interviews provided information for the creation of a database of the issues and topics offered by each provider and on the learning and teaching approaches used. Provision was analysed in terms of geographical spread, charges and an assessment of the quality of provision, based on the feedback from users.

1. The database of the issues and topics offered by each provider and on the learning and teaching approaches used has been created for EHS.
2. In terms of geographical spread, the respondents comprised 19 out of the 26 local councils in Northern Ireland, and 5 organisations said they had sites or venues offering environmental education provision to schools in every local council area in Northern Ireland. There were centres making provision for day or half-day trips in every Education and Library Board area. However, residential facilities were only offered by 6 respondents, none of whom were in the Belfast or North-Eastern Board areas.
3. Charges for residential visits varied among providers, but 3 of the 6 charged £18 per day. Most centres offering day or half-day trips did not charge (other than expenses, where applicable). Where they did charge, most were £2 - £4 per pupil, but a few were significantly more expensive. Half of the respondents only asked schools to pay their expenses when they made visits, and about the same proportion said their speakers were prepared to travel to any school in Northern Ireland.
4. When asked about how provision might be improved, providers indicated that the main improvements required were greater co-ordination among funders, higher levels of funding, higher curriculum priority for environmental education, improved Government strategy and greater co-ordination between providers. High priority was also given to improved curriculum guidance and more strategic leadership.

Gaps and Overlaps in Provision

Just under half of all respondents felt that their organisation or centre had the capacity to meet the current demand from schools for the environmental education services they offered. However, a similar proportion said that demand exceeded or greatly exceeded their capacity to offer such provision. Just seven respondents said that they had the capacity to offer more, but that there was insufficient demand. The main reasons why some providers felt they could not meet the demand were lack of funding, not enough staff and lack of co-ordination between different organisations.

When asked what might restrict take up of provision, the main reasons providers gave were prohibitive transport costs and lack of information about and easy access to environmental education centres.

1. When the overall data from schools and providers is taken into consideration it appears that the main gaps in provision relate to the relative lack of opportunities for the following school groups to avail of externally provided environmental education opportunities:
 - Post-primary schools
 - Schools with more than 40% pupils receiving free school meals
 - Schools in the Western Board area
2. The fact that nearly half of all schools were dissatisfied with their provision of environmental education, and that many providers are over-stretched, it could be suggested that *lack of resources* is a key issue.
3. Another issue which emerged from the study was lack of information. It is hoped that the next stage of this project – the creation of a website based on the database – might go a long way towards making information readily available to schools (including those with over 40% pupils who are entitled to free school meals and schools in the Western Board area), other users. This website of easily accessed information will also improve the capacity for providers to co-ordinate their activities more effectively.
4. In relation to the type of provision, there was some evidence of good matching between the types of activity desired by schools and that offered by providers. One specific 'gap' in content identified was related to activities relating to gardening (see earlier in this Section: Survey of schools, 3). However, since a quarter of the providers said that they did not know how many classes, schools or pupils had received environmental education services from their organisation or centre over the previous academic year, it is impossible to obtain a meaningful overview of the current extent to which schools are utilising environmental education provision at this stage.
5. It is also unclear from the current data to determine the extent to which the problem of unmet demand lies in lack of information about opportunities. The EHS could work with key providers, for which there is greatest unmet demand, to try to ensure that schools are aware of the opportunities that exist and that the providers have sufficient resources

to expand their provision as required. This could be reviewed after a year or so by surveying schools again.

6. The database will provide information relating to the issues, topics provided and teaching/learning approaches can be integrated (when complete) in relation to specific gaps and overlaps in content provision.
-

6. Recommendations

In the light of this research, the project team would make the following recommendations:

Policy Makers

1. Policy makers should provide schools with budgetary guidelines to ensure their environmental education activities are appropriately funded, particularly in relation to transport costs. More detailed research should be undertaken to explore the nature of funding for environmental education for schools.
2. There should be a review of curriculum content to provide greater opportunities for teachers to focus on topics likely to develop children's environmental awareness.
3. All new teachers should be provided with a solid background in environmental awareness and understanding of some of the major issues as part of their training. Initial teacher education programmes need to show new teachers how to make environmental education more relevant to the lives of the children they teach.

Providers

1. Increase the awareness between organisations about what they are each doing in respect of environmental education provision – it is hoped that the database produced as part of the current project might go some way towards achieving this recommendation.
2. Organisations need to start working *together* for the greater good rather than for themselves. The Environmental Education Forum (EEF) could coordinate this.
3. There needs to be a more 'joined-up' approach towards contacting schools who are confused by information coming from individual organizations. Again, it is hoped the database produced as part of this research might go some way to achieving this.
4. Providers should also monitor the 'usage' of their services and address the need to evaluate the type of provision being offered to schools in terms of pupil enjoyment, attitude change, inspiration for all ages (including nursery), etc. The EEF could provide guidance on monitoring usage to ensure greater consistency and quality of monitoring across Northern Ireland.
5. Links between environmental education and other areas of the school curriculum should be made more explicit and strengthened to help teachers relate visits and other environmental experiences to children's learning in other areas. EHS could circulate all schools with a leaflet emphasising the relevance of environmental education activities to specific parts of the curriculum, and that specific providers could be encouraged to stress the relevance of their activities in their information to schools.

6. Committees and advisory bodies should include people who are at the 'chalk face' and leading outdoor education programmes as well as policy makers, to advise on what might 'work' with teachers and students in applications for funding, etc. This could greatly improve the use of monies and the ultimate benefit to children.

Schools

1. Improve teachers' knowledge and awareness of the importance of environmental education for children and young people. Teachers could be provided with professional development work in this area.
2. Schools should (as far as possible) appoint a teacher to act as the coordinator of environmental education provision. More post-primary students should be given access to environmental education. In many of these schools, environmental education trips are provided exclusively for A' level biology and/or A' level geography students.

Research

1. In the light of this study, the authors would recommend a follow-on qualitative survey, using schools who have already indicated that they are willing to be interviewed, to explore more closely the problems faced by schools with high percentage of free school meals and in the Western Board area in relation to providing satisfactory levels of environmental education provision.

The success of all of these recommendations will rely on **greater collaboration between stakeholders** across environmental education to ensure the needs of all teachers in all schools in Northern Ireland are met.

6. Appendices

1 Telephone Questionnaire



Graduate *school*
of Education

Environmental Education Survey June 2005

This survey has been commissioned by the Department of the Environment's Environment and Heritage Service. The data will be used to **help ensure that schools have the resources they need to integrate environmental education more fully into the school curriculum in Northern Ireland, in line with the government's requirements.**

Your response to this questionnaire will remain confidential unless you stipulate otherwise

Please circle code(s) that apply (e.g. Nursery (1))

1. How would you describe your school (please choose one option)?							
Nursery	1	Primary	2	Post-primary	3	Special	4

2. Within which type of area is your school situated (see footnote below for definitions we'd like you to use)? ¹²			
Rural	1	Urban	2

3. Within which education and library board area is your school situated?									
Belfast	1	North-Eastern	2	South-Eastern	3	Southern	4	Western	5

4. Within which district council is your school situated? (please)					
Antrim	1	Coleraine	10	Lisburn	19
Ards	2	Cookstown	11	Magherafelt	20
Armagh	3	Craigavon	12	Moyle	21
Ballymena	4	Derry	13	Newry and Mourne	22
Ballymoney	5	Down	14	Newtownabbey	23
Banbridge	6	Dungannon	15	North Down	24
Belfast	7	Fermanagh	16	Omagh	25
Carrickfergus	8	Larne	17	Strabane	26
Castlereagh	9	Limavady	18	Don't know	99

¹² 'Rural' = situated in a townland or other rural area, or a village or town with less than 10,000 inhabitants. 'Urban' = situated in a town or city with 10,000 or more inhabitants.

5. Which of these descriptions best sums up the environmental education opportunities, involving outside visits and guest speakers/educators, which you are currently able to offer your pupils?							
Very Good	1	Satisfactory	2	Not as much as we would like	3	None	4

6. What may restrict the amount and range of environmental education opportunities in your school? (Please circle all that apply)	
Lack of information about available opportunities	1
Lack of easy access to environmental education centres	2
Our location makes it difficult for environmental education speakers to visit us	3
The transport costs too much	4
The cost levied by the provider is too high	5
Environmental education trips and speakers aren't very relevant to the curriculum	6
Many of our teaching staff aren't interested in environmental education	7
Many of our pupils aren't interested in environmental education	8
Other – please specify:	9

7. Please use the table below to indicate for (a) which of the following types of <i>activity</i> your school currently uses external education providers, and (b) for which types of activity your school would like external environmental education providers to offer more learning opportunities (please circle all that apply):		
Activity	7a. Have used external provider over past year for this topic	7b. Would like external providers to offer more learning opportunities
Curriculum-related activities	1	1
Tree-planting	2	2
Litter-clearing	3	3
Making a garden/gardening	4	4
Art and/or crafts activity	5	5
Nature walks	6	6
Cycling and/or walking	7	7
Recycling rubbish	8	8
Other- please specify:	9	9

8. How many <i>residential trips</i> (for example: biology & geography field trips) has your school undertaken in this academic year where the main purpose has been environmental education?							
None	0	One	1	Two	2	Three or more	3

If you answered 'none' to Q8, please go straight to question 11.

9. What has been the approximate average cost per pupil (including cost paid by school and cost paid by pupil's family) for one environmental education residential trip over the past year?							
Less than £50	1	£50-£99	2	£99-£150	3	Over £150	4

10. What is your view of the overall standard of the environmental education opportunities offered by the residential centre or centres visited by your pupils over the past year?									
Excellent	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Poor	4	Very poor	5

11. How many day or half-day visits have pupils at your school undertaken in this academic year where the main purpose has been environmental education?							
None	0	1-3	1	4-7	2	8 or more	3

If you answered 'none' to Q11, please go straight to question 14.

12. What has been the approx. average cost per pupil (including cost paid by school and cost paid by pupil's family) for one environmental education visit over the past year?							
Less than £10	1	£10-£20	2	£21-£30	3	Over £30	4

13. What is your view of the overall standard of the environmental education opportunities offered by the environmental education centre or centres visited for day or half-day trips by your pupils over the past year?									
Excellent	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Poor	4	Very poor	5

14. How many guest speakers or educators have visited your school in this academic year where the main purpose of their talk has been environmental education? ¹³							
None	0	1-3	1	4-7	2	8 or more	3

If you answered 'none' to Q14, please go straight to question 17.

15. What has been the approximate average fee, if any, and expenses charged by environmental education speakers/educators over the past year (including any costs paid by school and any costs paid by pupils' families)?							
No cost	1	Under £20	2	£20-£50	3	Over £50	4

16. What is your view of the overall standard of the environmental education speakers/educators who have visited your school over the past year?									
Excellent	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Poor	4	Very poor	5

17. Please name up to three external providers of environmental education which you have used over the past year (either as centres for visits/trips or as organisations providing guest speakers/educators)							
1.							
2.							
3.							

¹³ 'Guest speakers or educators' includes people who have come to help pupils plant trees and similar activities.

18. What proportion of pupils at your school is entitled to free school meals?			
40% or more	1	Under 40%	2

IF YOU HAVE ANY OTHER COMMENTS, PLEASE WRITE THEM BELOW

The contents of this questionnaire will remain confidential. However we would be grateful if you could indicate if your school would be willing to be contacted by our research team for any follow-up queries.			
Yes, we would be willing	1	No, we would not be willing	2

If you are willing to be contacted again, please supply sufficient contact details below for us to be able to reach us (including telephone number and E-mail address if possible):

<p>THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION WITH THIS IMPORTANT WORK.</p> <p>PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED</p>

Appendix 2 List of Providers targeted for Telephone Survey

Providers
EHS all EHS education sites were invited:
Peatlands Park
Roe Valley Country Park
Crawfordsburn Country Park
Castle Archdale
Quoile Countryside Centre
Councils all local and district councils were invited:
Belfast
Carrickfergus
Down -
Lisburn
Magherafelt
Armagh
Omagh
Dungannon
North Down
Craigavon
Antrim
Ballymoney
Castlereagh
Coleraine
Ards
Fermanagh
Derry
Larne
Cookstown
Newry & Mourne
Strabane
Ballymena
Limavady
Moyle
Newtownabbey
Banbridge
All field centres were invited:
Magilligan
Killowen
Killyleagh
Shanaghmore
Gortatole
Ardnabannon

WWT Castle Espie
Lough Neagh
Belfast Zoo
Speedwell trust
Exploris Aquarium Portaferry
Streamvale open farm
TACT
Lagan Weir Lookout
Ian Patterson Birds of Prey
Arts Council of NI
W5
Ulster folk and transport museum
Bushmills education centre
Ark farm
Forest service
Delamont country park
Colin Glen
Woodland trust
Share centre
Energy efficiency group
Road safety
Happy hedgehogs
Women in agriculture
Marble arch caves Fermanagh
Ulster museum
Woodhall residential centre
Derrygonnelly field centre Fermanagh
Water top farm
World of owls
Action renewables
Greenmount Agricultural college
Enniskillen Agricultural college.

Appendix 3 List of Providers targeted for Face-to-Face Interviews

Face to Face Interviews
EHS Headquarters
RSPB Headquarters
Conservation Volunteers Headquarters
Bryson House Headquarters
UWT Headquarters
National Trust Headquarters (were invited but didn't get back)
Bryson House recycling / energy

Appendix 4 Questionnaire for telephone and face-to-face interviews



Graduate *school*
of Education

Environmental Education Survey (Providers) August 2005

Hi, my name is _____. I'm contacting you on behalf of the School of Education at Queen's University. It's in connection with a study which is examining environmental education provision for schools in Northern Ireland. The study's being carried out by the School of Education and has been commissioned by the Department of the Environment's Environment and Heritage Service (EHS).

The Department wants to find out more about existing environmental education provision for schools, so it can co-ordinate services more effectively and help to ensure that both providers and schools receive the support they need. It also wants to make publicly available on its website a database of environmental education provision in Northern Ireland – so schools will be able to find out easily what's available.

We've already carried out a survey of schools to find out more about their needs, what environmental education services they're currently using, and any problems they have in accessing those services. We're now carrying out a telephone survey of environmental education providers in Northern Ireland to find out more about what they provide to schools.

We'd be really grateful if a relevant person from your organisation could spend about 10 minutes answering some questions for this survey by telephone. Would you be happy to do that?

[If 'yes', check who the most relevant person is. Once you've got the right person, go through above blurb again and then ask them if this is convenient time for them to answer survey. If not, make alternative arrangement – either different time to phone or send questionnaire by E-mail].

[Before beginning questionnaire survey] I should point out that some of the factual information you provide will be used for the purposes of EHS's proposed database and will not, therefore, be confidential or anonymous. However, any opinions which you express will be treated as anonymous comments for the purposes of our research report, unless you stipulate otherwise.

I should also point out that, when we refer to schools, we're thinking of nursery, primary, post-primary and special schools.

[Briefly explain structure of questionnaire.]

Questionnaire ID no	
----------------------------	--

Circle code(s) that apply (e.g. Belfast **1**)

1. What is the name of your organisation? [<i>e.g. Woodland Trust</i>]

2. [<i>Where applicable</i>] What is the name of your particular site (or <i>relevant</i> sites offering environmental education provision to schools)? [<i>e.g. Florencecourt</i>]

3. What is the full postal address of your organisation/site/office (including post code)? [Headquarters or other main office where more than one site]

4. What is the best telephone number for schools wishing to find out more about your environmental education provision?

5. What is the best E-mail address for schools wanting this information?

6. What is the best website address for schools wanting this information?

7. How would you describe your organisation (please circle one option only)?	
NGO	1
Local council	2
Government department or agency	3
Private sector	4
Other public sector	5
Other – please specify:	6

8. Within which education and library board area is your organisation/office/site situated (or relevant sites offering environmental education provision to schools where applicable)?									
Belfast	1	North-Eastern	2	South-Eastern	3	Southern	4	Western	5

9. Within which district council is your organisation/office/site situated (or relevant sites offering environmental education provision to schools where applicable)? ?					
Antrim	1	Coleraine	10	Lisburn	19
Ards	2	Cookstown	11	Magherafelt	20
Armagh	3	Craigavon	12	Moyle	21
Ballymena	4	Derry	13	Newry and Mourne	22
Ballymoney	5	Down	14	Newtownabbey	23
Banbridge	6	Dungannon	15	North Down	24
Belfast	7	Fermanagh	16	Omagh	25
Carrickfergus	8	Larne	17	Strabane	26
Castlereagh	9	Limavady	18	Don't know	99

10. To which of the following types of school do you offer environmental education services (circle all that apply)?	
Nursery schools	1
Primary schools	2
Post-primary schools	3
Special schools	4

11. Could you tell me firstly, which of the following types of service and facilities you currently offer to schools (please circle all that apply) and, secondly, what approximate charges, if any, you make to schools for these services.					
Type of service or facility	Yes, we offer this	Usually or always no charge (other than basic expenses e.g. travelling)	Whether charge (A) per pupil (B) overall charge (C) both	Approx. average charge per pupil	Approx. average charge per visit or item
Venue for schools' residential trips related to environmental education (including biology and geography trips)					
Venue for day or half-day visits by schools related to environmental education					
Leading schools' day or half-day trips to locations					

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of environmental interest					
Supply guest speakers/educators to visit schools to give talks or presentations					
Supply educators/facilitators to go to schools to facilitate or teach relevant activities			n/a	n/a	
Produce and supply teaching materials for schools			n/a	n/a	
Produce and supply literature other than teaching materials for schools			n/a	n/a	
Provide information relevant to schools on our website			n/a	n/a	
Other – please specify:					

12. Are your speakers/educators prepared to travel to schools anywhere in Northern Ireland?			
Yes	1	No	2

13. Please use the table below to indicate which of the following types of <i>activity</i> you currently offer to schools, either at your site (sites) or in the schools themselves (please circle <i>all</i> that apply):	
Activity	Yes, we offer this activity
Curriculum-related activities	1
Tree-planting	2
Litter-clearing	3
Making a garden/gardening	4
Art and/or crafts activity	5
Nature walks	6
Cycling and/or walking	7
Recycling rubbish	8
Making a wildlife/wildflower area	9
Studying specimens	10
Other- please specify:	11

14. Please use the table below to indicate which of the following types of *issues* you currently cover in the activities and talks you offer to schools (please circle *all* that apply):

Issue	Yes, we cover this issue
Curriculum-related issues	1
Sustainable development	2
Nature conservation	3
Biodiversity	4
Pollution	5
Global warming/climate change	6
Waste and recycling	7
Transport and the environment	8
Energy and the environment	9
Agriculture and the environment	10
Planning and the environment	11
Sustainable lifestyles	12
Other- please specify:	13

15. Could you tell me how you would sum up the general attitude and approach of the teachers supervising the groups of schoolchildren you deal with? (This question *only* relates to teachers on visits to your site or hosting your visits to schools etc.)

Generally, they're very interested in what we do with the children, and are engaged in helping pupils make the most of the opportunity	1
Generally, they could show more interest in what we do with the children	2
Generally, they're not interested in what we do with the children	3
It varies a great deal	4

16. Any further comment relating to Q15 (re specific example or how teachers' attitude affects the quality of the pupils' learning)

17. Could you tell me how demand from schools for the type of environmental education provision you offer compares with your capacity to offer such provision?	
Demand greatly exceeds our capacity to offer such provision	1
Demand exceeds our capacity to offer such provision	2
We have the capacity to meet current demand	3
We have the capacity to offer more provision, but there's insufficient demand	4

If respondent answered (3) or (4) to question 17 above, go straight to question 18.

18. Which of the following factors restrict the amount and/or range of environmental education provision you are able to offer? (Circle all that apply)	
Lack of funding	1
Lack of sufficient staff	2
Lack of staff with the right specialist expertise	3
Inappropriate buildings/facilities	4
Environmental education provision is not a high priority for our organisation/site	5
Lack of sufficient strategic leadership on environmental education	6
Lack of sufficient co-ordination between the different bodies funding environmental education provision	7
Lack of sufficient co-ordination between the different organisations offering environmental education provision	8
Other – please specify:	9

19. In your experience, what, if anything, do you believe may restrict the take-up of and demand for environmental education opportunities by schools? (Circle all that apply)	
Lack of information about available opportunities	1
Lack of easy access to environmental education centres	2
Location of some schools makes it difficult for environment education educators and speakers to visit those schools	3
The transport costs too much	4
The cost levied by some providers is too high	5
Environmental education trips and speakers aren't very relevant to the curriculum	6
Many teaching staff aren't interested in environmental education	7
Many pupils aren't interested in environmental education	8
Other – please specify:	9

20. What is your view of the overall standard of environmental education provision for schools in Northern Ireland at present?
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Very good	1	Good	2	Satisfactory	3	Could be improved	4	Could be greatly improved	5
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If respondent answered (1), (2) or (3) to question 20, go straight to question 22.

21. Which of the suggestions do you feel could help improve the provision of environmental education for schools in Northern Ireland? (Circle all that apply)	
More funding for organisations which offer or would like to offer environmental education provision to schools	1
Greater co-ordination by bodies which provide grants and funding to environmental education providers for schools-related projects	2
Greater co-ordination and liaison among the organisations which offer environmental education to schools	3
The development of a government strategy for environmental education provision for schools in Northern Ireland	4
A higher degree of strategic leadership by EHS in the provision of environmental education	5
Environmental education should be given a higher priority within the Northern Ireland curriculum	6
The CCEA's curriculum guidance to schools on environmental education should be improved [Explain CCEA is statutory body with responsibility for the NI curriculum]	7
Other – please specify:	8

22. Do you have any other comments you wish to add? (Note below)

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Could you tell me the best telephone number and E-mail address for you, should I need to contact you again?	
23. Contact telephone number	
24. Contact E-mail address	

Thanks very much indeed for taking the time to take part in this survey. Some of the factual information you've given me will go on the new EHS website in due course.

7. Acknowledgements

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