Wonder Project

2025 Impact Report

Engineering New Zealand
Te Ao Rangahau

Contents

Kupu guide

We use kupu Māori throughout this report because it's a small but important way of encouraging others to do the same, to help keep the language alive. Kia kaha te reo Māori.

Ākonga	Student
Hapori	Community
Kaiako	Teacher
Kaimahi	Staff
Kaitiakitanga/kaitiaki	Guardianship/guardian
Kōrero	Speak/conversation
Kupu	Word
Kura	School
Mahi	Work
Mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge

Mauri	Lifeforce
Pākehā	Non Māori
Rangatahi	Young people
Ranginui	Sky father
Rōpū	Team
Tamariki	Children
Taonga	Treasure
Te ao Māori	Māori worldview
Wai	Water

A note from *a believer in magic*

This year marked a big moment for the Wonder Project as we became a fully industry-led and funded initiative. While born out of necessity after government funding ended, this milestone signals a shared belief across our partners that the spark of curiosity in our rangatahi is powerful. It is a privilege to be entrusted to nurture that spark.

2025 was a year of strengthening programmes and partnerships, and preparing for the moments of magic yet to come. While funding dictated a pared-back year in terms of programme reach, it was far from static. Industry stepped up in remarkable ways, with collective partner support increasing by 70%, enabling us to reach over 20,000 ākonga. This growth in partnership value is tangible proof that belief in what we are creating together continues to grow stronger each year.

And the wonder continues in classrooms across the motu. This year, 738 classes across 417 schools participated in a Wonder Project challenge, supported by 422 volunteer STEM professionals who brought real-world experience and inspiration directly to rangatahi. We witnessed encouraging shifts in perceptions, with 86% of ākonga reporting that the Wonder Project helped them feel more positive about STEM subjects, and 70% reporting a boost in confidence.

2026 will be a year of growth and possibility. With growing industry backing, we aim to reach 40,000 ākonga, our biggest year yet – surpassing even what we achieved in 2023 with government support. We're excited to continue creating experiences that leave young Kiwis inspired, curious, and believing in what they can achieve.

To our partners, ambassadors, and wonder kaiako – thank you. Your belief in the Wonder Project and the power of STEM is what keeps us going. Together, we are building a brighter, more innovative future for Aotearoa – one small magic STEM moment at a time.

Shelley Pearce
Wonder Project Director

Thanks to those *that make it happen*

2025 partners

Power Challenge

Partner: TRANSPOWER

Supporters: EECA, Mercury, OMEXOM

Water Challenge

Supporters: Beca, Fulton Hogan, GHD Foundation

Ice Cream Challenge

Partner: Fonterra Dairy for life

Gold supporters

engineering new zealand FOUNDATION, Tonkin+Taylor, spirax sarco, Wright Family Foundation

Silver supporters

AROA, Holmes, Stantec, xero

Bronze supporters

Auckland Council Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau, Apex Water, DAVIS OGILVIE, egis, ERGO CONSULTING, frequency, goodearthmatters sustainable solutions enabling communities, HERA innovation in metals, Jacobs, index ENGINEERING LTD Consulting Mechanical Engineers, KENNIE TSUI, McCONNELL DOWELL CREATIVE CONSTRUCTION, TEKTON CONSULTING ENGINEERS, RILEY, UC UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY Engineering Pūhanga, WEL ENERGY TRUST, WEL Networks

Our why *keeps us going*

From the food we eat, to travelling around, to keeping in touch with friends and whānau, we experience the magic of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) every day. And we know there are some big challenges in this world that STEM professionals will be vital to solving.

But there's a crisis happening in our education system, resulting in a lack of belief, under achievement and negative perceptions towards science and maths subjects.

Just 1.8% of rangatahi aged 7–13 aspire to an engineering career, with 37% of intermediate aged ākonga believing they aren't good enough at science and maths. And research shows this problem starts early: over 80% of Year 4 tamariki achieve at or above the expected level for maths and science, but this drops drastically when they reach Year 8 to 58% and 80% of tamariki being below the expected level, respectively. It's no wonder this has led to a decline in NCEA students doing STEM subjects, with the number of graduates being assessed and achieving for senior maths and physics papers dropping by up to 20%.

And yet the demand for STEM skills has never been greater, with 80% of future jobs in Aotearoa needing STEM skills, and over 2,300 engineers required each year to keep supporting our economy.

When it comes to diversity, the stats are even more disheartening. Women make up just 19% of engineers, 23% of technology professionals and 40% of scientists in Aotearoa; and Māori and Pacific Peoples make up around 3% of engineers and technology professionals, and just 2% of scientists.

So, it's become our mission to provide fun and impactful STEM experiences for all rangatahi in Aotearoa, so they can believe in themselves and become our future STEM superstars.

And impact ***means everything***

The Wonder Project is the industry-led STEM education initiative, founded by Engineering New Zealand. It's delivered free to schools nationwide, inspiring rangatahi with STEM and career opportunities. We exist to champion a diverse and thriving future STEM industry. That means making STEM learning relevant, accessible, and understandable for all rangatahi, and especially girls, Māori and Pacific Peoples.

Our programmes are carefully curated to do just that – delivering hands-on, engaging learning experiences aligned to the New Zealand Curriculum.

Rocket Challenge
Level 3 | Phase 2
Year 5–6

Ice Cream Challenge
Level 3 | Phase 2
Year 5–6

Power Challenge
Level 4 | Phase 3
Year 7–8

Water Challenge
Level 4 | Phase 3
Year 7–8

STEM Careers
Year 7–13

Research shows that Year 5–8 is when kids are making decisions on which subjects they're interested in and good at. It also shows that positive, sustained engagement with STEM is more impactful than one-off talks or experiences. So, our challenges cater to Year 5–6 and Year 7–8, and are run across the duration of a school term. This ensures kids have consistent access to Wonder Project challenges during their most impressionable stages of life. Our STEM careers programme is then available to kids from Year 7–13 to open their eyes to the many incredible STEM career opportunities available to them.

Challenges are fully supported with a high-value kit, online learning modules, videos, and challenge guides – all free for Aotearoa kaiako. We connect classrooms with volunteer industry professionals who work alongside kaiako and ākonga as Wonder Project Ambassadors – sharing their wisdom, knowledge and passion for STEM and raising confidence along the way.

Fun	Hands-on, project-based learning, competition
Accessible	Inclusive design, free for schools, available nationwide
Confidence	Kaiako support, STEM professional volunteers, ākonga work in rōpū

How our **challenges work**

Plan

Design or refine challenge materials based on research and feedback from kaiako, ākonga and STEM professionals.

Recruit

Advertise to kaiako and STEM professionals across the country and encourage them to register to be part of the challenge.

Match

Interview all registered STEM professionals and then match them with a class in their local area, to be their Wonder Project Ambassador.

Send

Send out free challenge kits to participating classes, and training and teaching materials to support kaiako and Wonder Project Ambassadors.

Run

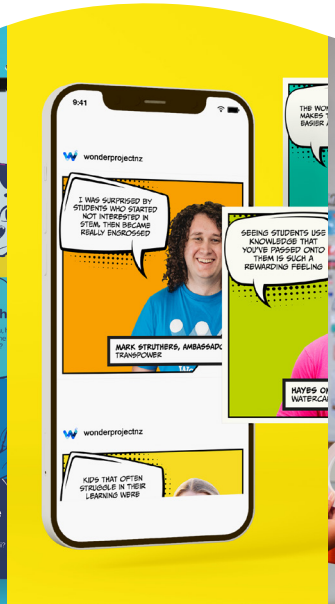
Kaiako and Wonder Project Ambassadors deliver the challenge to the classroom, over the specified school term.

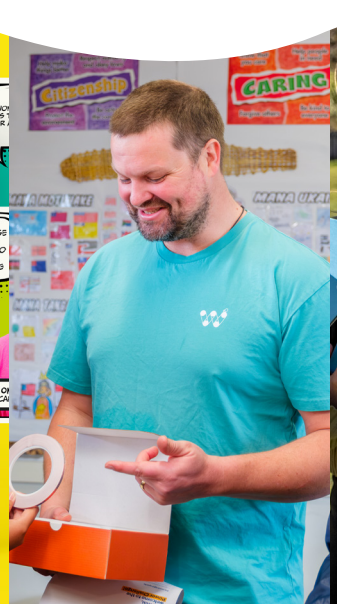
Review

Survey participants to find out how the challenge impacted them, and what they liked or didn't like.

Repeat

Do it all again the next year!

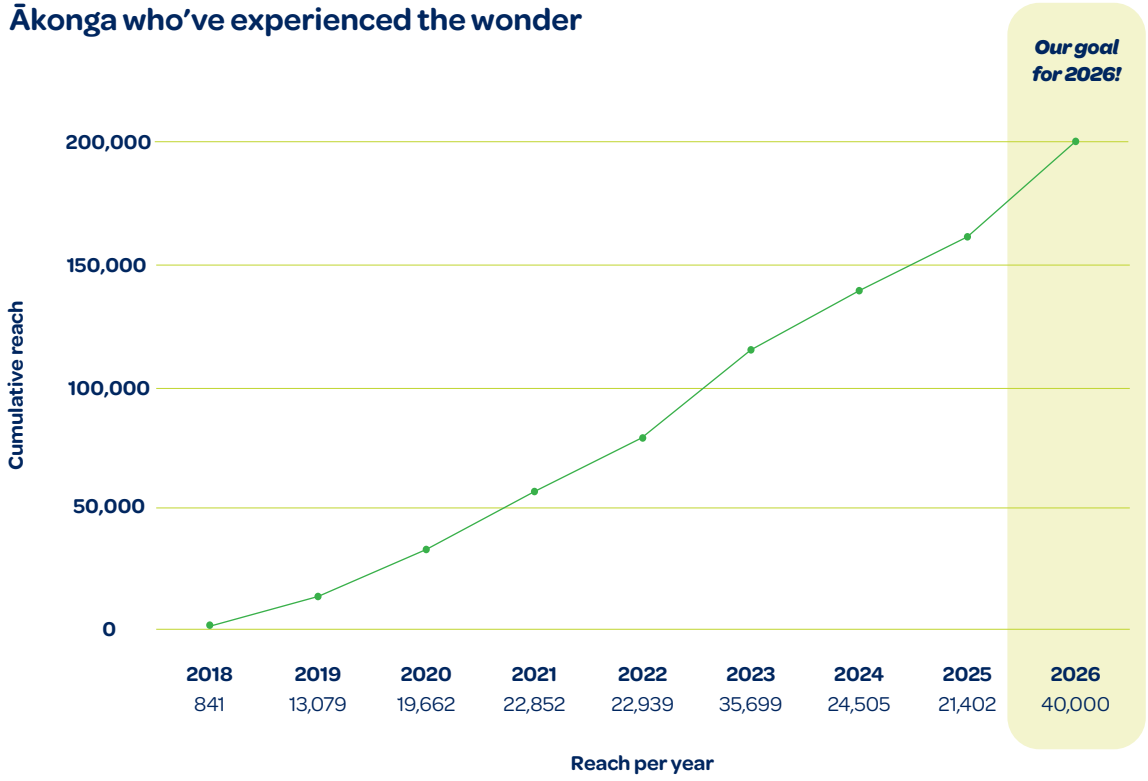




8 years of *STEM wonder*

Our mission is to provide fun and impactful STEM experiences for all rangatahi in Aotearoa.

Ākonga who've experienced the wonder



160,000+
ākonga *across*

5,551
classes *in*

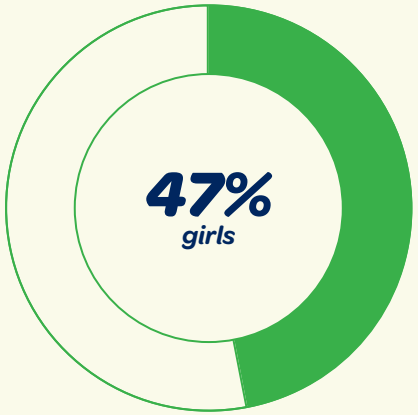
1,545
unique schools *with*

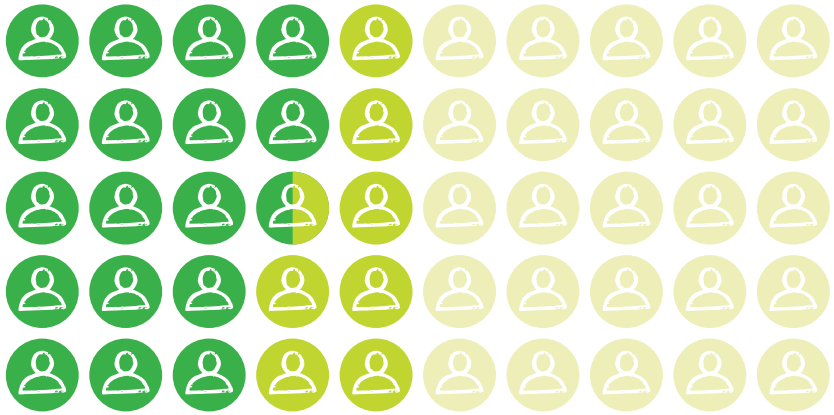
3,000+
STEM professionals *and*

4,628
free kits provided to schools
(valued at nearly $1.5M)

2025, *maximising resources*

21,402
ākonga

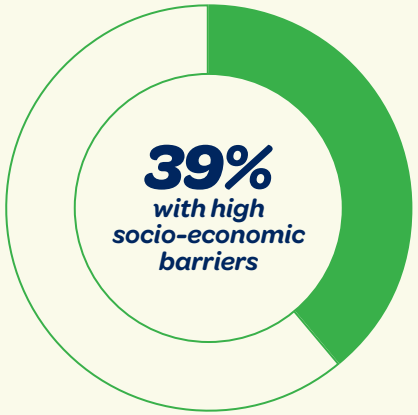




35%
Māori

15%
Pacific Peoples

417
unique schools



738
classes

551
kaiako on waitlist

15,000
ākonga missed out

495
free kits given to schools

$190,000
invested directly into schools

$40
per ākonga programme cost

422
STEM Professionals

81%
participants

had a great experience

46%
rangatahi

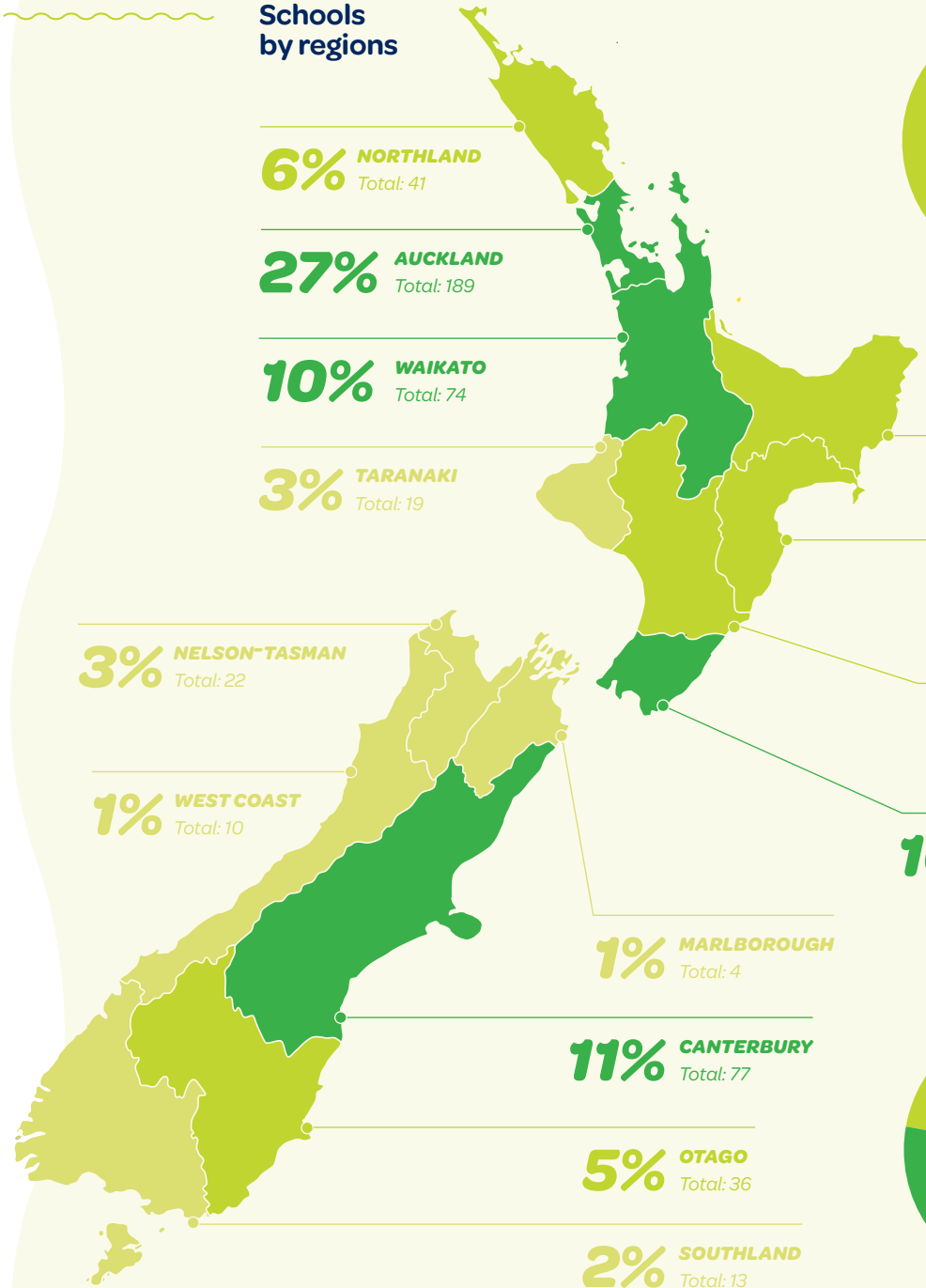
more interested in a STEM career

70%
ākonga

96%
kaiako

increased STEM confidence

Schools by regions



- **6%** NORTHLAND Total: 41
- **27%** AUCKLAND Total: 189
- **10%** WAIKATO Total: 74
- **3%** TARANAKI Total: 19
- **8%** BAY OF PLENTY Total: 55
- **6%** HAWKE'S BAY Total: 23
- **3%** NELSON-TASMAN Total: 22
- **9%** MANAWATŪ-WHANGANUI Total: 61
- **1%** WEST COAST Total: 10
- **10%** WELLINGTON Total: 69
- **1%** MARLBOROUGH Total: 4
- **11%** CANTERBURY Total: 77
- **5%** OTAGO Total: 36
- **2%** SOUTHLAND Total: 13

47% *main centres*
53% *regions*

78% *urban*
22% *rural*

"Every school should book to have the Wonder Project so that kids can have the experience that we had."

Selota, *Ākonga – Naenae Intermediate*

Rocket Challenge

Product

Houston, we have lift off! Ākonga blast off into STEM by designing, building and launching their own water rocket. While the rockets are flying, they learn about Newton's laws, the engineering design process, and working as a rōpū.

Year 5–6
Level 3 | Phase 2, NZ Curriculum

Reach

	Total (since 2018)	In 2025
Ākonga	124,000+	11,919
Classes	4,285	411
Free kits	3,458	181
Schools	1,416	268
STEM professionals	2,000+	231

School socio-economic barriers

45%

Goal: 25%

of classes have high socio-economic barriers

Ākonga ethnicity

36%

Goal: 20%

of ākonga were Māori

18%

Goal: 10%

of ākonga were Pacific Peoples

"It was so engaging for my neurodiverse tamariki too, giving them a creative outlet and a role in the team that suited them."

Liah Hughes,
Kaiako – Westown School

Goal

Ākonga have a positive STEM learning experience

Outcome

92% *of kaiako* — *said their ākonga were engaged with the learning journey*

83% *of ākonga* — *said they would do it again*

Goal

Ākonga boost STEM confidence

Outcome

88% *of kaiako* — *noticed a positive shift in ākonga perceptions of STEM*

81% *of ākonga* — *said the Rocket Challenge made them feel more confident in STEM subjects*

Goal

Ākonga expand future career options

Outcome

56% *of ākonga* — *were more interested in STEM jobs after the challenge*

81% *of kaiako* — *believed their ākonga were more curious about STEM career opportunities*

Goal

Kaiako increase STEM teaching confidence

Outcome

95% *of kaiako* — *increased their confidence in teaching STEM*

88% *increase* — *in kaiako feeling fairly or completely confident teaching STEM subjects*

Goal

Kaiako are supported to deliver New Zealand Curriculum

Outcome

89% of kaiako — were fairly or completely satisfied with the teaching content

94% of kaiako — were fairly or completely satisfied with the ākonga module content

Goal

Kaiako have a positive STEM teaching experience

Outcome

55 (NPS) — Net Promoter Score

92% of kaiako — enjoyed teaching the Rocket Challenge

96% of kaiako — said they would do it again

Goal

Ambassadors have a positive volunteering experience

Outcome

53 (NPS) — Net Promoter Score

90% of ambassadors — enjoyed supporting the Rocket Challenge

88% of ambassadors — said they would do it again

Click here to view full Rocket Challenge impact report

Out-of-this-world STEM learning *lifts off in high barrier schools*

Accessibility is at the heart of the Wonder Project's mission. It means all Kiwi kids having an engaging, inspiring STEM experience they can relate to, no matter their circumstances. That's why, in 2025, 70% of free Rocket Challenge kits went to high-moderate barrier schools.

The diversity of the STEM sector in Aotearoa is not good enough. Women, Māori and Pacific Peoples are drastically underrepresented across these industries, with statistics especially disheartening in the engineering industry at 19% women, and 3% Māori and Pacific Peoples.

Aotearoa is lucky to be one of the most diverse countries in the world. And real change is driven from diverse perspectives, identities and lived experiences. If we want innovative solutions that work for everyone, then we need diversity of thought and we need our STEM industry to represent the communities it serves. That starts by making STEM education more accessible for our rangatahi.

This was one of the main reasons that Lisa Hill registered for the Wonder Project Rocket Challenge. As the Principal of Avon School, Lisa looks after the learning outcomes of ākonga experiencing some of the highest socio-economic barriers.

"Being able to offer STEM to a high equity index kura makes such a difference," she says.

"[Wonder Project] STEM activities engage challenging students and can help with improving attendance of students at school." offers Mark Hill, one of her kaiako.

For the Rocket Challenge, Avon School was sent a free kit with over $300 worth of STEM learning equipment. All equipment is carefully curated to engage ākonga, and build their confidence alongside the confidence of their kaiako. Feedback shows this access to resources has made a huge impact on their tamariki:

"I was in love with learning and making water rockets," Ava-Ray, wonder ākonga, Avon School.

"It was good and fun and cool and interesting and the best thing ever," Shayera, wonder ākonga, Avon School.

"I learnt that doing STEM changed my whole life." Pippa, wonder ākonga, Avon School.

This impact was echoed by Lisa, emphasising the importance of the programme for improving the STEM experience in schools like hers:

"I have not seen our ākonga so engaged and excited in their learning as well as the opportunities to experience such great STEM resources," said Lisa.

"You've made such an impact on our kura. We are a lower socio-economic community with one of the highest equity index numbers. [The Rocket Challenge] has really opened the door for many of our students, who are moving onto high school next year, to engage with science."

By prioritising schools that typically wouldn't have access to resources like the Rocket Challenge, the Wonder Project ensures that all ākonga go into high school believing they can do anything they set their mind to. The aim? To have more Ava-Rays, Shayeras and Pippas leading our STEM future.

"I learnt that doing STEM changed my whole life."

Pippa, *Wonder Ākonga – Avon School*

Right: Ākonga setting up their rocket

Below: Blast off!

"It was really exciting when all the lights came on and it was super fun thinking, drawing and explaining your design ideas."

Caden, *Ākonga – Te Atatu Intermediate School*

Power Challenge

ENERGISED BY

TRANSPOWER

SUPPORTED BY

EECA Mercury OMEXOM

Product

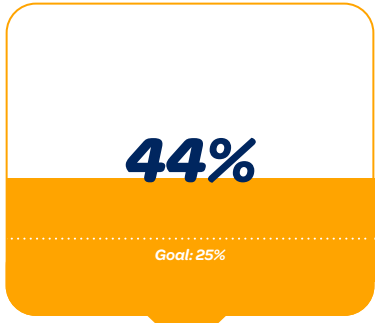
Power up! Ākonga design and build a wind turbine and light up a mini town. Along the way they discover the amazing phenomenon of electricity and renewable energy, and learn how teamwork can keep the lights on.

Year 7–8
Level 4 | Phase 3, NZ Curriculum

Reach

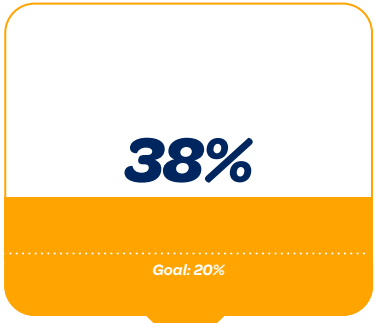
	Total (since 2021)	In 2025
Ākonga	26,000+	5,104
Classes	923	176
Free kits	797	118
Schools	451	141
STEM professionals	700+	120

School socio-economic barriers

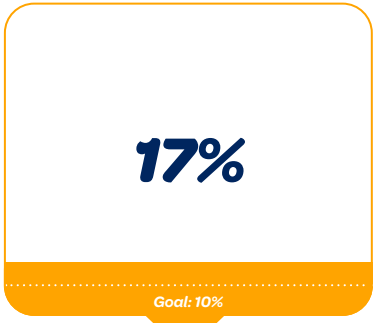


of classes have high socio-economic barriers

Ākonga ethnicity



of ākonga were Māori



of ākonga were Pacific Peoples

"It was fantastic to see young minds engaged in the challenge. The design was impressive, well thought out, with strong logic integrated throughout. Truly a clever and creative effort."

Chandrakant Mathurkar,
Ambassador – Transpower

Goal

Ākonga have a positive STEM learning experience

Outcome

100% of kaiako — *said their ākonga were engaged with the learning journey*

67% of ākonga — *said they would do it again*

Goal

Ākonga boost STEM confidence

Outcome

89% of kaiako — *noticed a positive shift in ākonga perceptions of STEM*

67% of ākonga — *said the Power Challenge made them feel more confident in STEM subjects*

Goal

Ākonga expand future career options

Outcome

41% of ākonga — *were more interested in STEM jobs after the challenge*

81% of kaiako — *believed their ākonga were more curious about STEM career opportunities*

Goal

Kaiako increase STEM teaching confidence

Outcome

97% of kaiako — *increased their confidence in teaching STEM*

97% increase — *in kaiako feeling fairly or completely confident teaching STEM subjects*

Goal

Kaiako are supported to deliver New Zealand Curriculum

Outcome

90% *of kaiako* — *were fairly or completely satisfied with the teaching content*

95% *of kaiako* — *were fairly or completely satisfied with the ākonga module content*

Goal

Kaiako have a positive STEM teaching experience

Outcome

73 *(NPS)* — *Net Promoter Score*

97% *of kaiako* — *enjoyed teaching the Power Challenge*

100% *of kaiako* — *said they would do it again*

Goal

Ambassadors have a positive volunteering experience

Outcome

54 *(NPS)* — *Net Promoter Score*

86% *of ambassadors* — *enjoyed supporting the Power Challenge*

89% *of ambassadors* — *said they would do it again*

Click here to view full Power Challenge impact report

Shifting STEM perceptions *at the flick of a switch*

Research shows that Year 5–8 is when kids are forming perceptions on school subjects – making decisions on which ones they're interested in, and good at. That means STEM can get a bad reputation, early on. And these unfortunate stereotypes often stick with young Kiwis until they're too late to be broken.

Before they took on the Power Challenge, STEM perceptions amongst ākonga at Hutt Intermediate School were stuck in stereotypes. Descriptors from their Year 7–8 ākonga included "boring", "mid" or "hard" with multiple tamariki stating they weren't confident or that they didn't have the brains.

"I'm not the best at maths, and sometimes science can be boring to me. I'm not too confident in these subjects. I don't know why." – Olivia, wonder ākonga, Hutt Intermediate School.

Unfortunately, this sentiment is all too common for rangatahi in Aotearoa. In TEC's drawing the future report, just 1.8% of tamariki aged 7 to 13 wanted to be an engineer, 2.2% wanted to be a scientist and 0.5% wanted a technology job. It also cites that ākonga who aren't interested in STEM careers at age 10 are unlikely to develop an interest by 14. And this lack of interest is strongly represented in our education data – with Aotearoa facing up to a 20% reduction in ākonga being assessed for NCEA science and maths subjects over the past 10 years.

These unfortunate statistics are what the Wonder Project was designed to address. And making STEM engaging and fun at school is the first step. That's why Jane Wooster got her class involved in the Wonder Project Power Challenge.

"The Power Challenge is fun, real-world and easy to follow. The equipment provided makes for a much better STEM experience and helps bring science to life." said Jane.

Using this free hands-on equipment alongside an online Learning Hub and the support of a volunteer STEM Ambassador, ākonga were tasked with designing and building a wind turbine to light up a mini town. The combination of hands-on activities and learning content helped ākonga apply their knowledge, cementing the learning as the challenge progressed, and leading to an almost 70% confidence increase in STEM amongst ākonga.

"My confidence wasn't very high at the start because I didn't know very much about it but I've learned so it's higher now," said Olivia.

"I like STEM more now because before I thought it was just for smart people. But other people can do it too."

Their Ambassador, a STEM professional from challenge parter Transpower, had an equally enlightening experience, commending the programme's impact on the ākonga he supported:

"Working with Year 7–8 students to build wind turbines and explore renewable energy has been nothing short of inspiring. Their curiosity, creativity, and enthusiasm for STEM reminds me why it's so important to invest in the next generation of innovators,

"If you're passionate about STEM and want to help shape the future, I highly recommend getting involved. Let's keep powering possibilities together!" – Chandrakant Mathurkar, Wonder Project Ambassador.

"The Power Challenge is fun, real-world and easy to follow. The equipment provided makes for a much better STEM experience and helps bring science to life."

Jane Wooster, *Kaiako – Hutt Intermediate School*

Right: Testing turbine performance

Below: Hutt Intermediate ākonga with their final turbines

"It's a refreshing change of pace to go and hang out with a bunch of 10-year-olds for an hour in your day."

Jock McNaught, *Ambassador – Beca*

Water Challenge

SUPPORTED BY

Beca Fulton Hogan GHD Foundation

Product

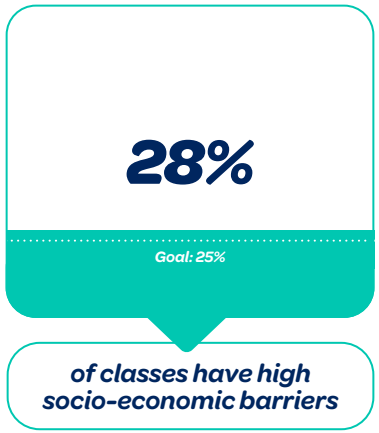
Ready, set, flow! Ākonga construct and test a mini model of Aotearoa New Zealand's water network. They explore the journey of wai and how STEM is used to collect, clean, connect and care for one of Earth's most precious taonga.

Year 7–8
Level 4 | Phase 3, NZ Curriculum

Reach

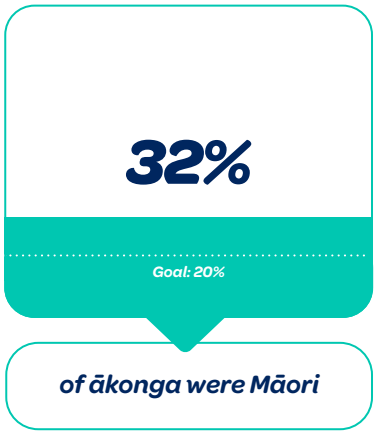
	Total (since 2024)	In 2025
Ākonga	5,000+	4,379
Classes	181	151
Free kits	181	151
Schools	124	109
STEM professionals	100+	71

School socio-economic barriers

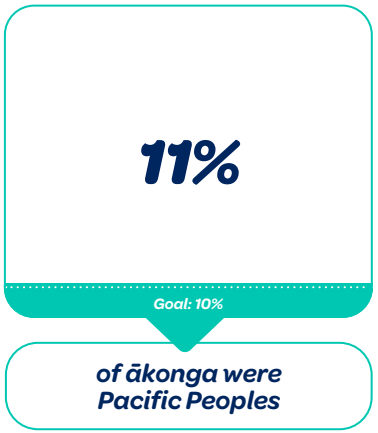


of classes have high socio-economic barriers

Ākonga ethnicity



of ākonga were Māori



of ākonga were Pacific Peoples

"STEM has definitely become one of my favourite subjects now that I know more about it."

Allysha, *Ākonga – The Gardens School*

Goal

Ākonga have a positive STEM learning experience

Outcome

87% *of kaiako* — *said their ākonga were engaged with the learning journey*

61% *of ākonga* — *said they would do it again*

Goal

Ākonga boost STEM confidence

Outcome

82% *of kaiako* — *noticed a positive shift in ākonga perceptions of STEM*

63% *of ākonga* — *said the Water Challenge made them feel more confident in STEM subjects*

Goal

Ākonga expand future career options

Outcome

42% *of ākonga* — *were more interested in STEM jobs after the challenge*

72% *of kaiako* — *believed their ākonga were more curious about STEM career opportunities*

Goal

Kaiako increase STEM teaching confidence

Outcome

95% *of kaiako* — *increased their confidence in teaching STEM*

54% *increase* — *in kaiako feeling fairly or completely confident teaching STEM subjects*

Goal

Kaiako are supported to deliver New Zealand Curriculum

Outcome

84% of kaiako — were fairly or completely satisfied with the teaching content

93% of kaiako — were fairly or completely satisfied with the ākonga module content

Goal

Kaiako have a positive STEM teaching experience

Outcome

54 (NPS) — Net Promoter Score

87% of kaiako — enjoyed teaching the Water Challenge

92% of kaiako — said they would do it again

Goal

Ambassadors have a positive volunteering experience

Outcome

43 (NPS) — Net Promoter Score

82% of ambassadors — enjoyed supporting the Water Challenge

89% of ambassadors — said they would do it again

Click here to view full Water Challenge impact report

STEM learning that shapes *sustainable world views*

Real-world alignment is a core principle in Wonder Project challenge design. It deepens cultural relevance, strengthens learning connections for ākonga, and helps them see how STEM can influence everyday life. That's why sustainability and kaitiakitanga sit at the heart of the Wonder Project's newest Year 7–8 programme, the Water Challenge.

Created in collaboration with te ao Māori advisors, the Water Challenge follows the journey of wai from Ranginui to our hapori and back to the sky. Its narrative is guided by Mātauranga Māori, prompting participants to view wai as a treasured taonga rather than a resource to be used. In doing so, it encourages rangatahi to consider how STEM can help protect natural resources, so future generations can all benefit from clean, healthy wai.

With sustainability already a strong focus at their kura, the Water Challenge was an easy and meaningful addition to Middle School West's learning calendar:

"Everyone was very supportive of the work our students did towards being kaitiaki of the local waterways through the Water Challenge. We currently work in collaboration with Project Twin Streams to look after the Epping Reserve behind the kura. The Water Challenge fits nicely alongside that mahi" says Greg Mason, Middle School West kaiako.

Underpinning the challenge's sustainability focus is the concept "the mauri of wai". In te ao Māori (the Māori world), wai is understood to have its own mauri (lifeforce), which is a direct reflection of the health of the land, and the people. Through this lens, ākonga learn to assess the mauri of wai by observing the health of the surrounding environment, and hapori.

This concept was particularly exciting to Water New Zealand's 2024 Stormwater Professional of the Year, Charlotte Arcus – a long-time Wonder Project supporter, ambassador, and advisor who uses the Mauri Compass in her mahi as a Water Engineer:

"The highlight of the Water Challenge was using the Mauri Compass with the class. These interactions are a reminder of the valuable perspectives we can all learn from when we look at the world through diverse lenses. Can't wait to see these young ones turn into tomorrow's guardians of this precious resource." says Charlotte.

And it wasn't just the ambassadors who enjoyed the learning, with tomorrow's guardians of wai sharing their new appreciation for STEM.

"I did not care for STEM until we started doing the Water Challenge. It helped me improve a lot," – Taya, wonder ākonga.

"It was an exciting experience to extend our STEAM learning and get hands on experience with how water gets to us and different places." – Kelly, wonder ākonga.

Reflecting on her experience supporting Middle School West on the Water Challenge, Charlotte Meyer says "The connection you build with them really makes you feel like you're making a difference in encouraging the next generation towards STEM careers."

"These interactions are a reminder of the valuable perspectives we can all learn from when we look at the world through diverse lenses. Can't wait to see these young ones turn into tomorrow's guardians of this precious resource."

Charlotte Arcus, *Ambassador – Tonkin + Taylor*

Right: Wonder Project Ambassador, Charlotte Meyer, helping ākonga with their network

Below: Middle School West ākonga filtering some wai

New challenge!

Ice Cream Challenge

NOURISHED BY

Fonterra

Dairy for life

Product

Let's chill! Ākonga experiment with flavour, texture, and techniques, using dairy or alternative ingredients to create their own sweet treat. In rōpū, they'll explore states of matter, food composition and nutrition and discover the science behind ice cream innovation.

Year 5–6
Level 3 | Phase 2, NZ Curriculum

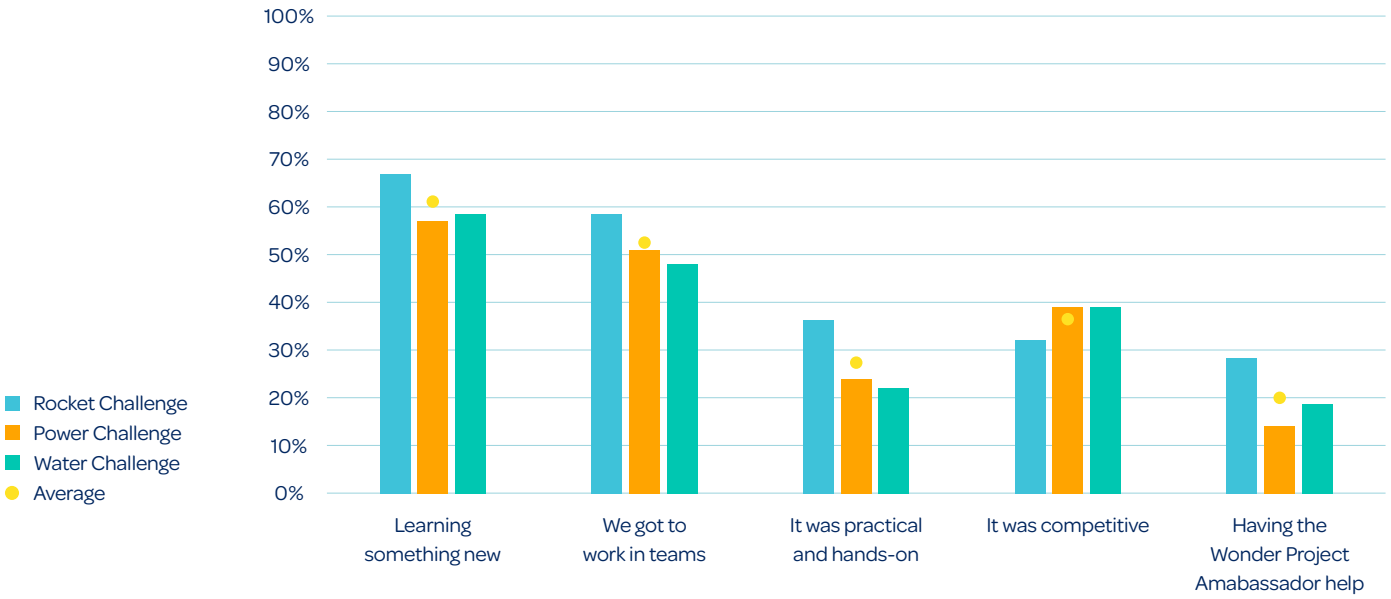
Reach

	In 2025 (pilot)
Ākonga	1,479
Classes	51
Schools	22
STEM professionals	41

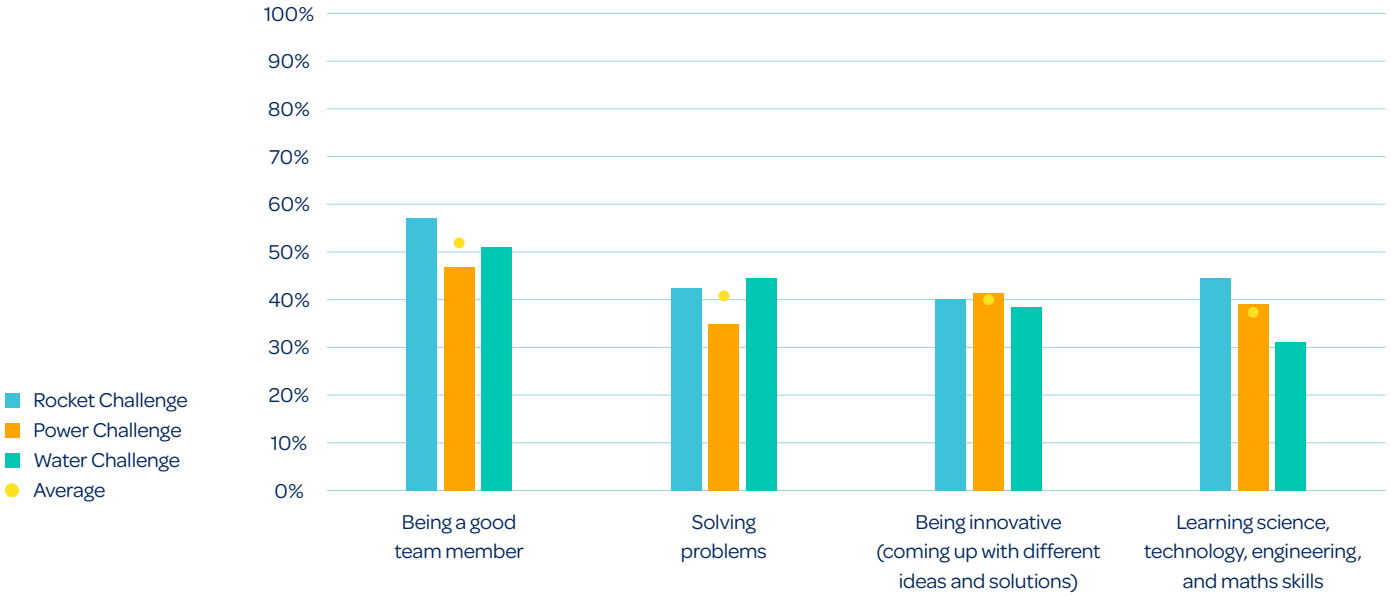
We had around 200 kaiako register to be part of the pilot!

Ākonga *experience*

What ākonga enjoyed about the Wonder Project



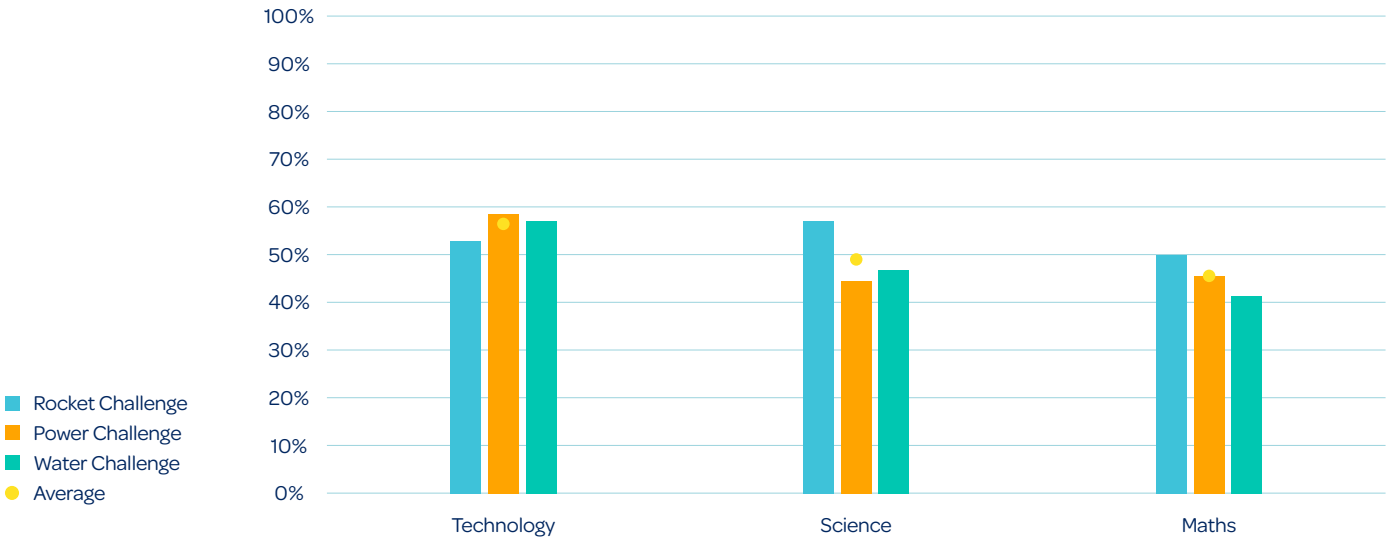
STEM skills ākonga said they learned a lot of during their experience



"I felt a bit scared at the start but as I kept improving and practicing, I felt more confident."

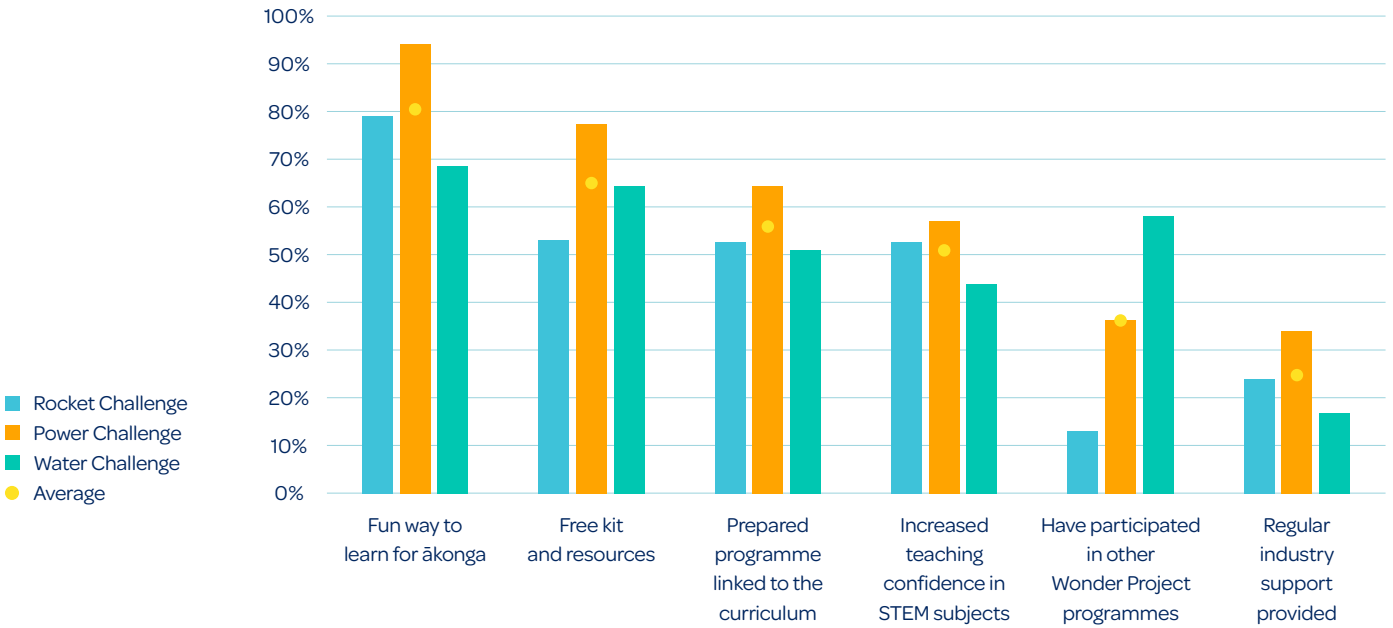
***Ben,** Ākonga – Bombay School*

STEM subjects ākonga said they liked after their experience

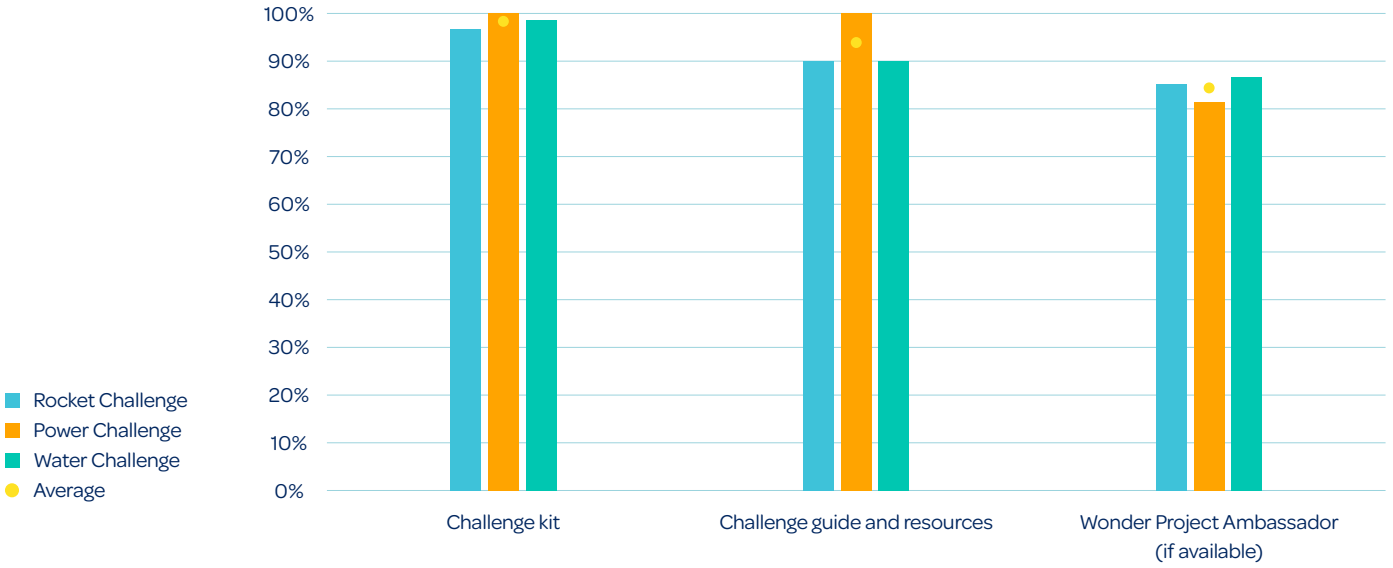


Kaiako experience

Reasons why kaiako signed up for the Wonder Project



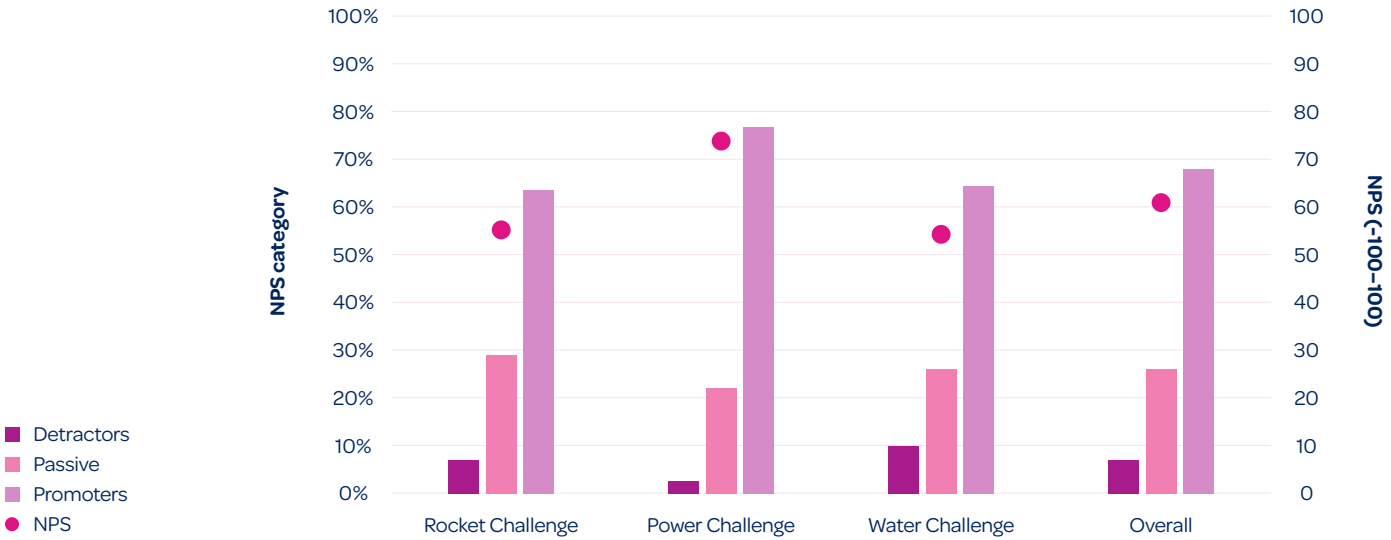
Challenge features kaiako said were helpful or very helpful



"Having all the resources provided made planning easy, and my students were fully engaged, excited, and inspired to explore STEM."

Debbie Wilson,
Kaiako – Naenae Intermediate

Kaiako Net Promoter Score (NPS)



A hapori of volunteers

Bringing the magic to the classroom is our hapori of Wonder Project Ambassadors – an ever-growing group of passionate STEM professional volunteers. They inspire with their career story, share their expertise, build confidence in kaiako, and act as a meaningful source of representation for rangatahi. This link between industry and schools is what makes the Wonder Project different.

We have over 3,000 STEM professionals in our hapori. And in 2025, they contributed an estimated $360,000 in volunteer time. Backing these volunteers is a network of committed employers who see the importance of giving back to their local schools, promoting the profession for future generations, and supporting their people to have enriching experiences.

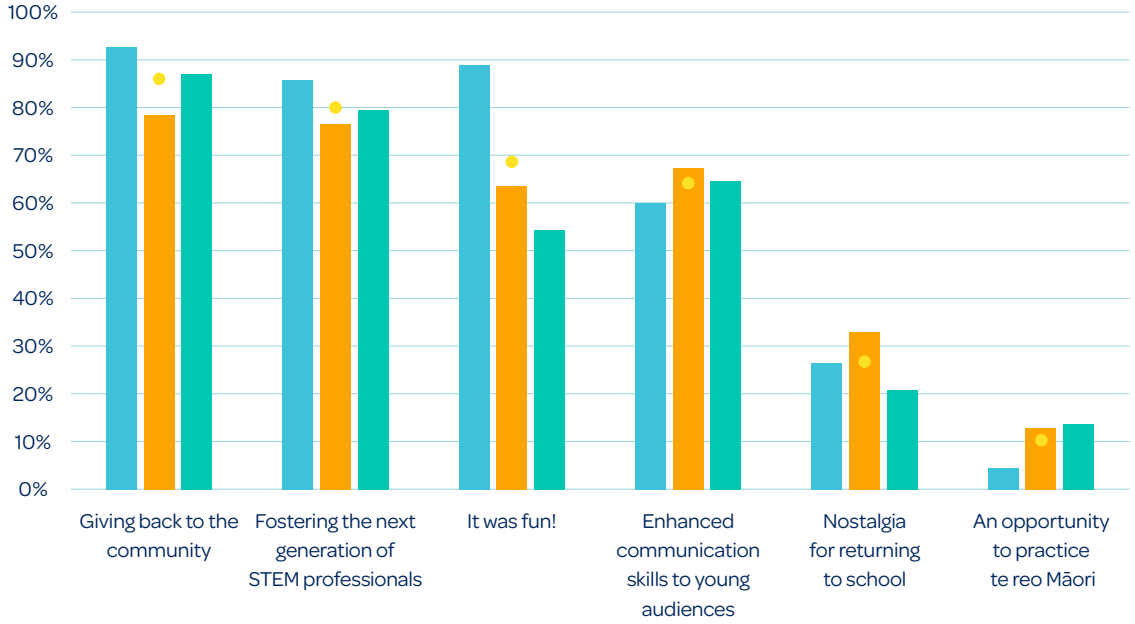
Ambassador impact

83% **of kaiako** said their ambassador's involvement and real-world experience made a big difference

86% **of ambassadors** had a great experience with the Wonder Project

89% **of ambassadors** said they'd like to be involved again

What ambassadors gained from their experience



STEM Careers

Image: Romanian Space Agency

Product

The future is bright! Ākonga are inspired to keep taking science and maths subjects through college, and given a taste of the real world with industry visits and motivating career talks from STEM professionals.

Year 7–13

STEM stories

HARITINA
Astrobiology
Milky Way Kiwi

ANDREW
Electrical Engineering
Transpower

SYTSE & MICHI
Mechanical Engineering
Wisk

WENDY, KOTISI & DARIA
Software Engineering
Serato

CAMERON
Conservation Technology
Envico

CHARLOTTE
Civil Engineering
Tonkin + Taylor

TAYLA
Engineering Geology
Aurecon

JEREMY
Software Development
Plink

JOSH
Video Game Development
PikPok

KANE & RACHEL
Food Technology
Fonterra

Wonder Experiences

Our Wonder Experiences give Year 11–13 ākonga the opportunity to visit inspiring Kiwi STEM companies to get a taste of the real-world, and help make informed career decisions for their future.

Our commitment *to te reo and te ao Māori*

Living in Aotearoa, we are in a unique and fortunate position to have two rich knowledge sources to draw from when it comes to STEM – mātauranga Māori and Western knowledge.

Unfortunately, this is not represented in our STEM industry, and let down by the lack of diversity in the profession. Māori make up just 3% of engineers, 2% of science and technology professionals, and only 8% of Māori are going into academic STEM related pathways at schools.

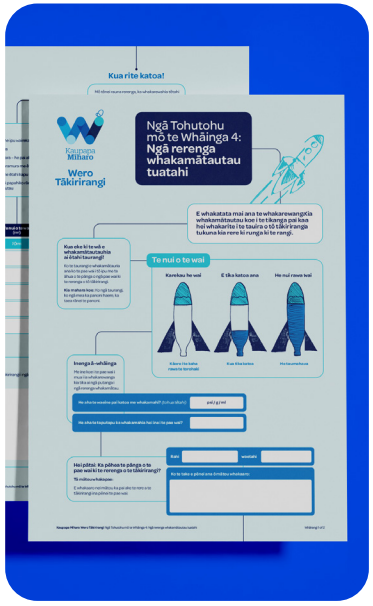
We envision a future where Western knowledge systems and mātauranga Māori are celebrated alongside each other, where our STEM industry is made up of diverse perspectives, identities, and lived experiences and represents the hapori it serves. That's why we are committed to strengthening our offering for both ākonga Pākehā and Māori.

We're on a journey towards developing challenges that incorporate mātauranga and te ao Māori, and increasing and strengthening the resources we offer in te reo Māori. We're also working to recruit more Māori ambassadors, as a source of meaningful representation for our rangatahi.

In 2025 we had 54 Māori medium classes take part in the Wonder Project. After the challenges, 96% of kaiako agreed they were appropriate for ākonga from different cultures and backgrounds.

Challenge resources

We offer challenges with both te reo Māori ākonga resources and mātauranga Māori embedded.



Rocket Challenge
Te reo Māori ākonga resources since 2021

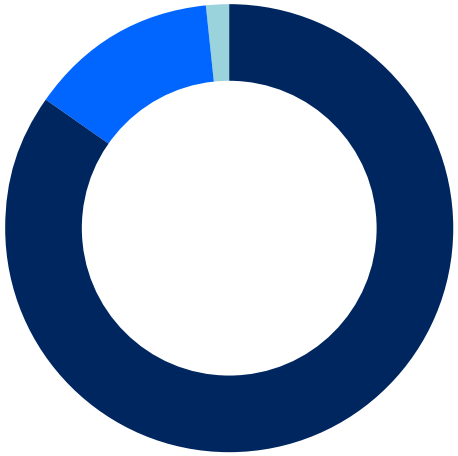
Power Challenge
Te reo Māori ākonga resources since 2025

Water Challenge
Mātauranga Māori embedded with te reo Māori ākonga resources coming 2026

An industry *investing in rangatahi*

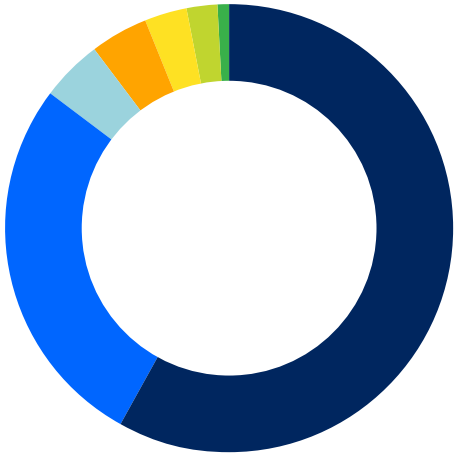
In 2025 we supplied 495 free kits and 65 funded refresh packs to schools across Aotearoa, to support them in teaching STEM in a fun and engaging way for ākonga. This is a direct investment of $190,000 into classrooms from the industry.

Income



- Partnerships, *$664,049*
- Donations, *$107,300*
- Shop sales, *$11,542*

Expenses



- Staff salary, *$503,318*
- Teaching resources, *$236,134*
- Programme design, *$37,741*
- Consultants and professional services, *$36,630*
- Marketing and communications, *$26,008*
- Technology, *$19,417*
- Team and travel expenses, *$6,602*

Keep the *wonder alive*

Since the end of our longstanding government funding in 2023, we've moved to a 100% industry funded model. Our 2024 and 2025 programmes have been delivered at a reduced scale, based on the funding we've had available in a difficult economic period.

But our aspirations are still high – we want the Wonder Project to be in every school in Aotearoa!

And we know that kaiako demand is there, with over 1,000 on our waitlist across 2024 and 2025 who we were unable to accept into a challenge.

By joining the industry-led STEM education initiative, organisations:

- *support thousands of ākonga each year to learn about and love STEM*
- *are recognised as a partner of an established, recognised, valued and impactful STEM education brand*
- *support kaiako to build confidence teaching STEM*
- *build purpose and engagement with kaimahi*
- *create social good in communities across Aotearoa, and*
- *secure the future pipeline of STEM professionals.*

If you share our mission to deliver fun, impactful STEM education, let's kōrero!

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou

Thank you to everyone who's been involved with the Wonder Project so far. Our incredible hapori of businesses, STEM professionals, kaiako, ākonga and kaimahi inspires us every day.

Poipoia te kākano kia puāwai.

Nurture the seed and it will bloom.

Wonder
Project

WHERE SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING AND MATHS COME ALIVE.

Engineering New Zealand
Te Ao Rangahau