



Native Women's
Association of Canada

L'Association des
femmes autochtones
du Canada

INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS

WHAT-WE-HEARD REPORT ON SURVEY FINDINGS & RESULTS

MARCH 28, 2025

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE ----- 3

METHODOLOGY ----- 4

RESPONDENT PROFILE ----- 5

SUMMARY / KEY FINDINGS ----- 6

SECTION 1: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ----- 9

SECTION 2: PRACTICAL IMPACTS & APPLICATIONS ----- 21

SECTION 3: COMMUNITY-LED CONSERVATION ----- 28

SECTION 4: FUTURE OUTLOOK ----- 39

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The goal of this survey was to gather the perspectives of Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, transgender, and gender-diverse (W2STGD+) peoples on Indigenous-led conservation such as Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs), the effects of climate change, and the importance of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)

This survey represents part of NWAC's partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC). The Government of Canada is committed to advancing an Indigenous Climate Leadership Agenda to support and increase Indigenous-led initiatives in environmental conservation.

For the purposes of this research, **Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)** was defined as the accumulative and continuous knowledge of the local environment to ensure harmonious relationships between Mother Earth and all life forms.

RESEARCH METHODS

This report is based on an online survey completed by 451 self-identified Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, transgender and gender-diverse (W2STGD+) people, from December 11, 2024, to March 1, 2025.

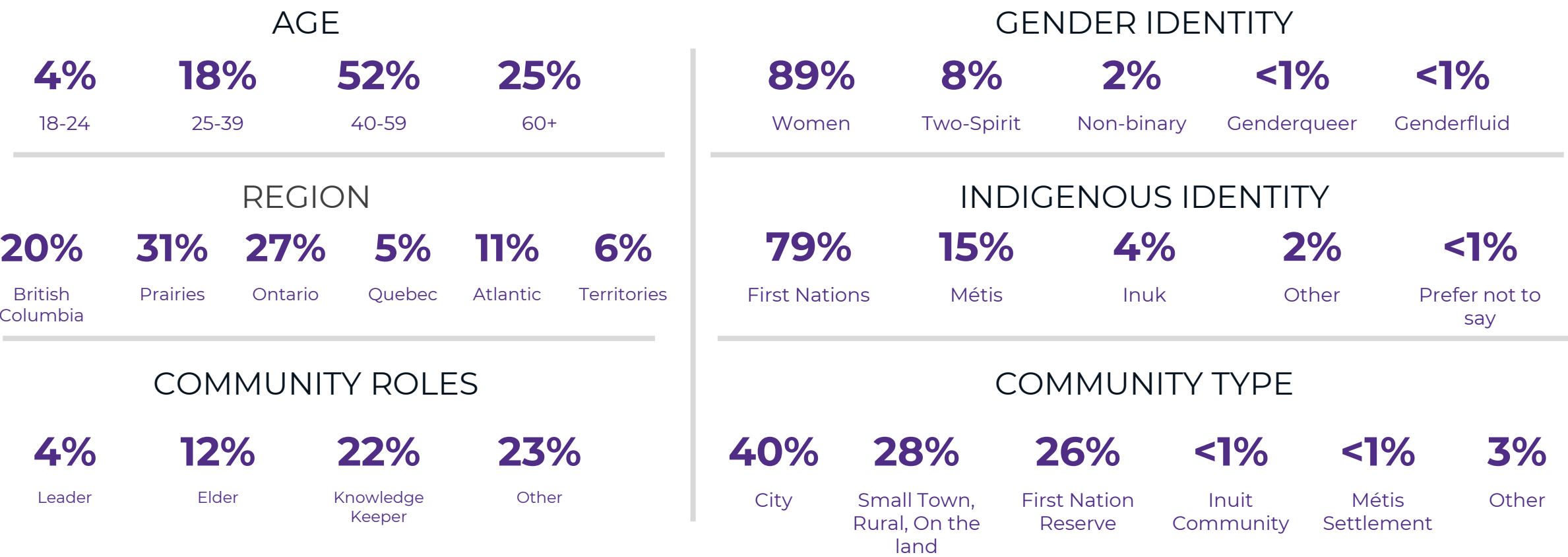
The questionnaire was designed by NWAC, with input and advice from Environics Research. Environics programmed the questionnaire on its survey platform, and NWAC distributed an open survey link via social media and email. A gift with cash value was offered to the first 100 participants to complete the survey. Due to the nature of social media and the offer of a cash incentive, several responses were determined to be invalid and removed from the final data set before analysis.

Interpreting the results: This sample is an unweighted convenience sample, meaning that it was drawn from a conveniently available group of individuals. Because it is not a probability sample (respondents were not randomly selected, nor did all individuals in the desired communities have an equal chance of being selected into the sample), the sample cannot be considered representative of all Indigenous women, girls, two-spirit, transgender and gender-diverse people. The results of the survey provide valuable insight into the lived experience of respondents, but the data should be interpreted within the limits of the survey design. Those who participated highlighted important perspectives on their connections to natural spaces and experiences with conservation which will inform future community-led conservation initiatives.

About this report: Unless otherwise noted, results for all questions are based on the total sample of 451 participants. Questions only asked of a specific subsample of respondents are indicated with a base size (N) of the subsample. Sometimes results do not add up to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses. Labels for values less than 2% are not shown.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Below is a demographic breakdown of those who completed the survey. Respondents are most likely to identify as First Nations women between the ages of 40-59. Over half (54%) come from rural areas like small towns and First Nations reserves and 40% are located in cities. 22% of respondents have taken on community roles like Knowledge Keeper.



SUMMARY

KEY FINDINGS

Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, transgender and gender-diverse (W2STGD+) people often have a deep and personal connection to nature formed from ancestral knowledge and traditions.

Indigenous W2STGD+ peoples are connected to the land through ancestral land management practices (i.e. agroforestry, harvesting, etc.) that have been taught to them from caretakers and older generations. Thinking about their relationship to the land, respondents often view the land, water, and nature as a part of themselves. They view the natural environment as a provider of life and feel a strong sense of gratitude and responsibility to protect it. Knowledge of the history and traditions of the land extensively influences their relationship with the land.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is highly valuable but there are some barriers to sharing this knowledge more broadly.

TEK is primarily shared through land-based activities, storytelling, and ceremonies, with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and women playing key roles in sharing knowledge with the next generations. A majority (70%) cite limited resources or funding as the main obstacle to accessing or learning more about TEK which could be because there is limited information about where to find this knowledge transfer. While 44% of respondents are aware of local programs or initiatives teaching TEK, a similar proportion (40%) are unsure whether their community has formal programs, suggesting that informal, community-based knowledge-sharing may be more common.

Environmental changes are causing noticeable impacts in Indigenous communities – namely impacting food security (i.e. traditional food sources) and access to resources like land and water.

Nearly all respondents (90%) have observed environmental changes, particularly in land and water use, food security, and traditional practices like hunting and fishing. A significant majority (69%) report that these changes have major impacts, yet action to address them is limited due to funding and knowledge gaps. Roughly half recall their community ever being involved in an environmental conservation project, and about half of those that have participated in a local conservation initiative believe the initiatives were Indigenous-led, with leadership often coming from community councils and Indigenous organizations.

KEY FINDINGS CONT.

Indigenous-led conservation is seen as essential but systemic discrimination is seen as a major challenge to increasing Indigenous W2STGD+ leadership in conservation. As traditional caretakers of the land, Indigenous People have valuable knowledge and conservation practices rooted in respect for Mother Earth. They believe Indigenous-knowledge must be included along with Western science for responsible and equitable environmental conservation. Nearly all respondents (99%) believe Indigenous Peoples should be the primary decision-makers in conservation initiatives that impact them. A strong majority (79%) believe it is very important for Indigenous Women, Girls, Two-Spirit, Transgender, and Gender-Diverse (W2STGD+) people to be active leaders and participants in conservation initiatives. Systemic discrimination and bias are seen as the biggest challenges preventing Indigenous W2STGD+ people from obtaining leadership roles. Other barriers include lack of access to training, limited environmental education, and time constraints.

Interest in expanding Indigenous-led conservation is high. Inclusive collaboration and youth engagement in environmental conservation are key. A majority (83%) of respondents believe their communities would benefit from structured conservation programs. They believe these programs can provide a number of important benefits, namely they can improve environmental health, ensure cultural preservation, and help maintain spiritual connection and overall well-being in communities. In particular, there is significant interest in a land-based program with NWAC. Nearly all (96%) respondents indicated interest in NWAC hosting a land-based program, with the majority (77%) saying they are very interested in this type of program. Early and inclusive engagement, particularly through youth education, hands-on learning, and financial support, is seen as essential for the future of conservation. Respondents advocate for long-term collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups, ensuring that conservation efforts prioritize action over acknowledgment, uphold Indigenous rights, and empower future generations to lead in environmental stewardship.

SECTION 1

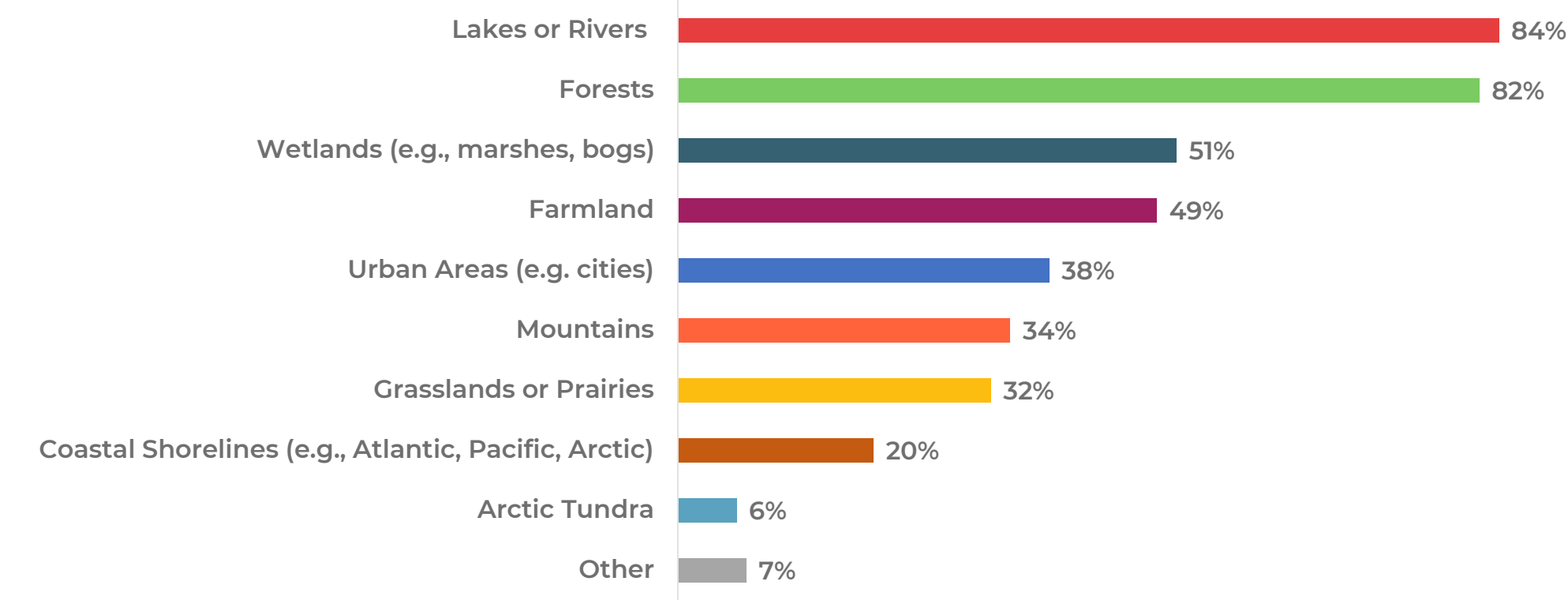
PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Understanding the relationship between Indigenous
W2STGD+ peoples and Mother Earth

Personal Reflections | **Local Landscapes & Natural Areas**

Lakes, rivers, and forests are the most common type of nature found near respondents. Over half of respondents (54%) were from small towns and First Nation reserves; these areas are often close to or surrounded by lakes, rivers, and forests.

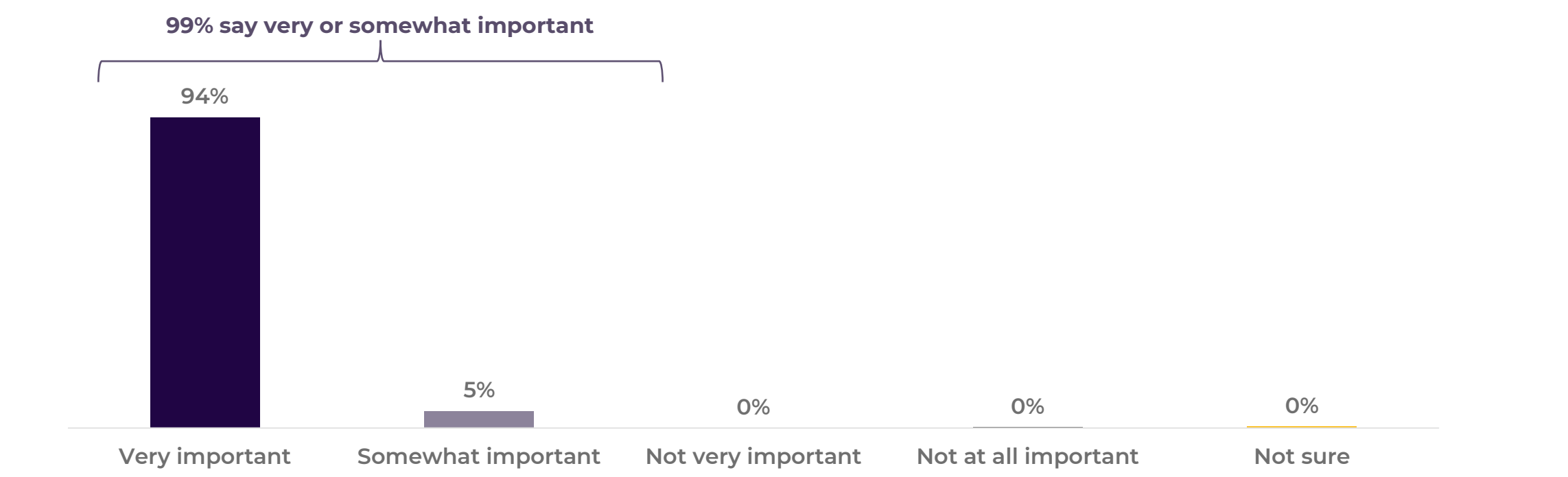
Q. 8 Which of the following landscapes can be found in your community or traditional territory?



Personal Reflections | **Importance of cultural knowledge**

Learning about their history, culture, location, language and traditions is highly important to respondents, with nearly all (94%) saying it is very important to them and the rest saying it is at least somewhat important.

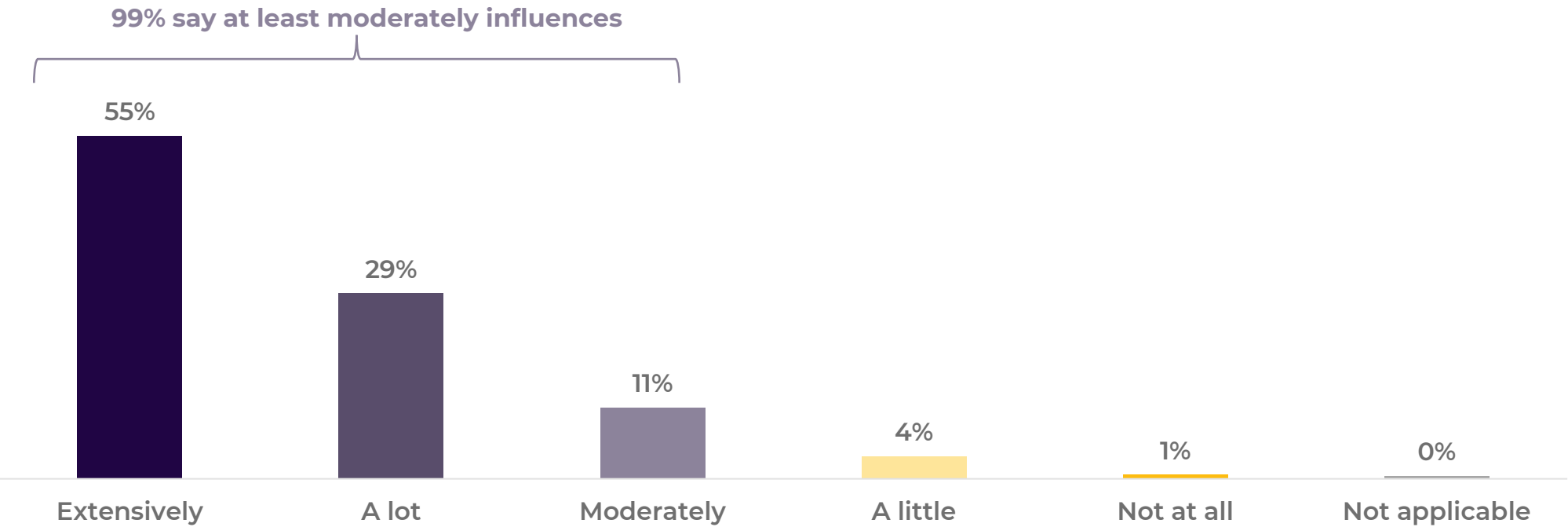
Q. 9 *How important is learning about your history, culture, geographical location(s), language, and traditions to your community/territory/current location?*



Personal Reflections | Relationship with the land

Knowing the history and traditions of the land heavily influences respondents' relationship with the land, with over half (55%) saying cultural knowledge extensively influences their relationship with the land.

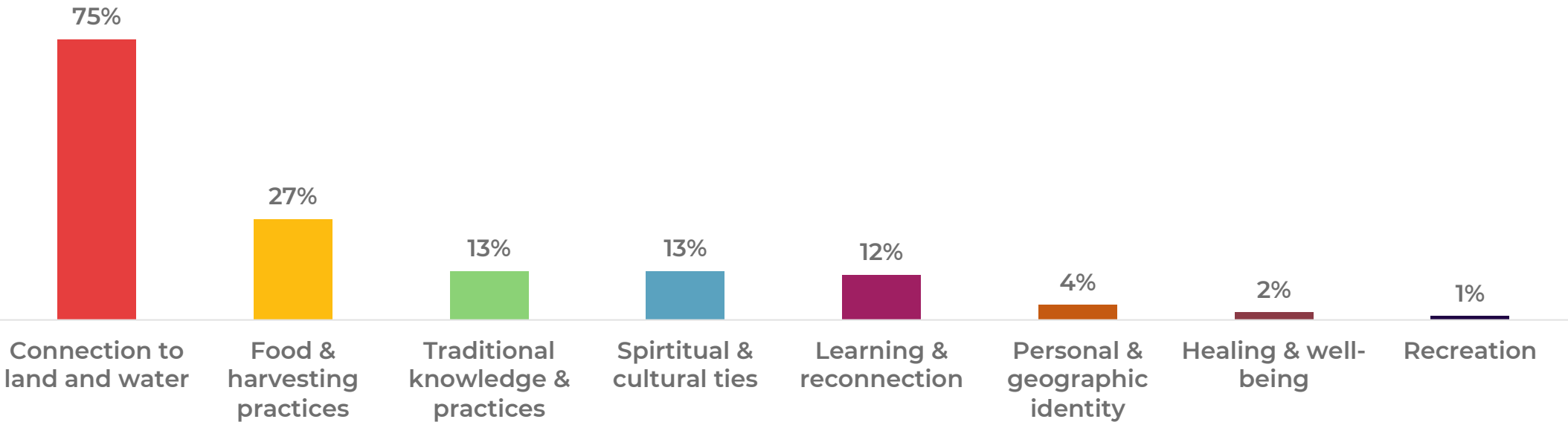
Q. 10 To what extent does the knowledge of your land's history and cultural traditions influence your current relationship with the land?



Personal Reflections | Relationship with the land & ancestral practices

When asked to describe how their relationship with the land relates to the historical practices of their ancestors, respondents described numerous factors and associations – most commonly their connection to land and water. The theme of connection is important because humans and nature are not seen as separate, humans are seen as part of nature which means we are all connected. Land is of high spiritual significance; land, water, and environment are thought of like relatives, and there is a strong belief that humans share a reciprocal and cyclical relationship with the land, waters, and all living beings.

Q. 11 Briefly describe how your relationship with the land relates to the historical practices of your ancestors.



Personal Reflections | **Relationship with the land & ancestral practices**

Quotes from Indigenous W2STGD+ Respondents

Q. 11 Briefly describe how your relationship with the land relates to the historical practices of your ancestors.

“ Reciprocal Relationship

The land, waters and natural environment are our relatives. They help us thrive in our whole beings as a physical beings. They take care of us in such a perfect way we Indigenous peoples reciprocate that love and kindness by taking care of the land and water.

“ Source of everything and connection

Land is the foundation of everything. It is where our food grows, our homes stand, and our bodies connect.

“ Sacred, important, and responsibility to protect

Water is life and scared to me. we are born of water and need water to sustain life. Land is scared and important. Land houses our four-legged relatives and we must protect them. Natural environment is the home of our ancestors, where we go as spirits.

“ Essential and honoured bond

The deep connection between my Wendat culture and our ancestral territory is invaluable. Protecting and honoring this bond is essential to keeping our culture alive and thriving.

“ Extension of self

My awareness and understanding of the connection I share with the land, as being a part of me and not separate. The energy of the water has healed me so much, that is where I go to recharge.

“ Deep rooted relationship and teachings

I have a deeply rooted relationship with the land from my childhood. It taught me everything without me even knowing it. I learned that I am not bigger or better than anything out there, and I'm pursuing a career in land based healing

Personal Reflections | Relationship with the land & ancestral practices

Quotes from Indigenous W2STGD+ Respondents cont.

Q. 11 Briefly describe how your relationship with the land relates to the historical practices of your ancestors.

Important provider

I grew up with teachings from my parents that helped me practice my culture on the land which included hunting, fishing, and gathering. I was taught since my childhood to respect and honour the land around me and be grateful for nature's gifts..

Keeper of the water

As a woman I am a keeper of the waters. It is my responsibility to speak for the water. I have a strong connection to Mother Earth

Healing

I grew up on the land. I miss the river. I missed the land I was evicted from my land. Land is healing- mentally physically and spiritually, I wish to go back. But lateral violence was abundant and I no longer have land.

Part of who we are

Our parents taught us that the land is part of who we are and we must always respect it. When we harvest we do not take everything, we must only take what we use and leave some for others. I go to the land to gain strength and to renew my being.

Medicine and food source

My personal relationship goes back to my ancestors who came before me. Growing up as a child my family took me out on the land, my community took us kids in the community out on the land; through these experiences we learned how to harvest food, plants, our own medicines...

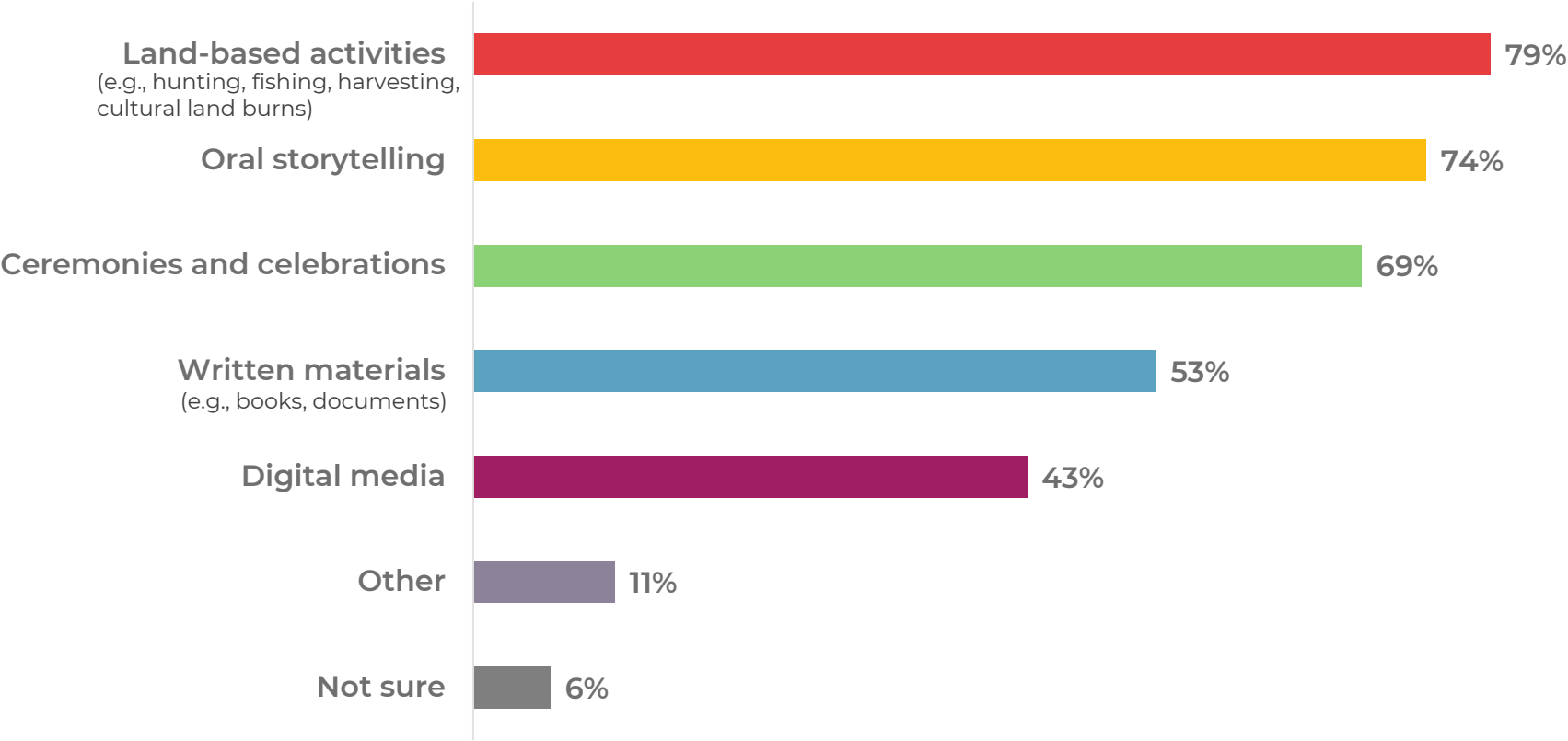
Grounding

I've always felt a connection with land, water and vegetation since I was a child. I firmly believe that we are all connected in some way and that First Nations people have to ground themselves (i.e. walk on the earth barefoot) as much as they can.

Personal Reflections | **Methods of Sharing Traditional Ecological Knowledge**

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) can be shared in many ways. Land-based activities are the most common method, followed by storytelling, and ceremonies meaning many learn about TEK from interactions in their community.

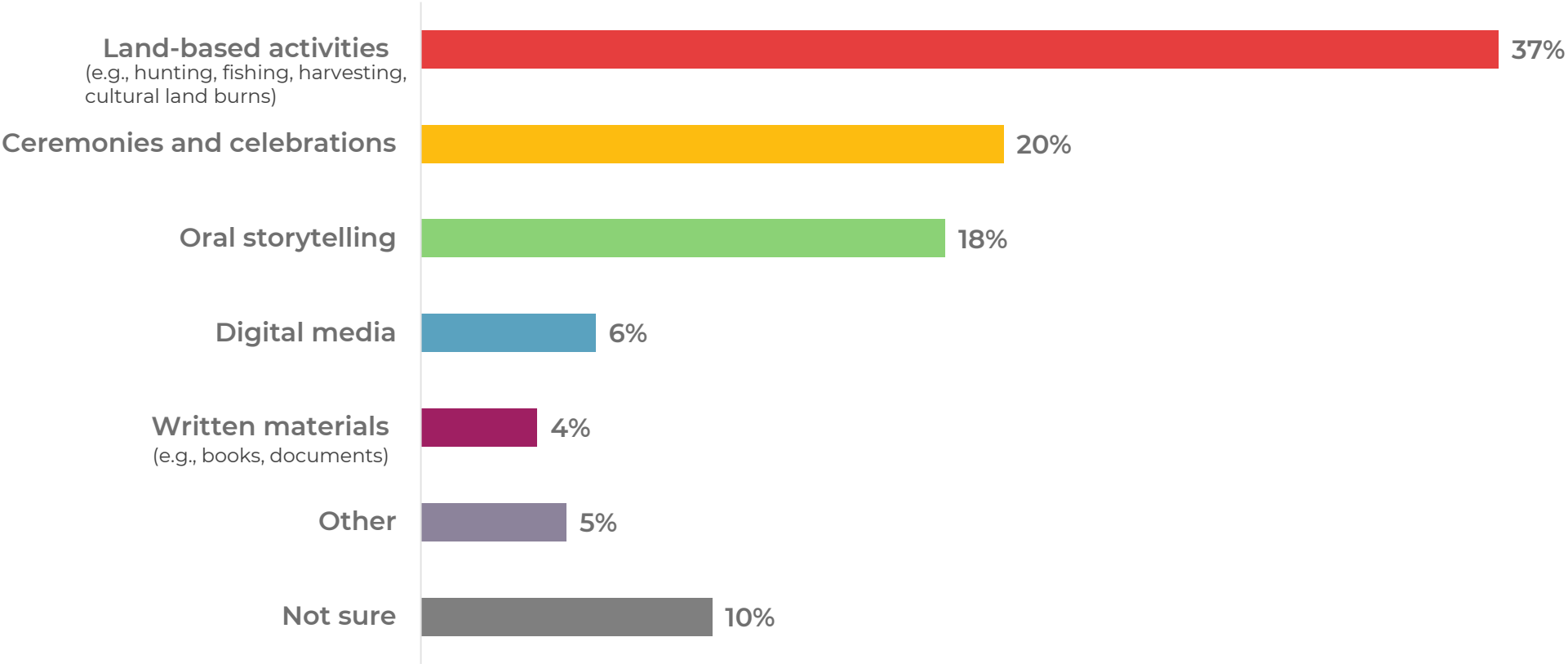
Q. 12 *In your community/territory or current location, how is Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) primarily shared?*



Personal Reflections | **Most Prominent Method of Sharing Traditional Ecological Knowledge**

Considering the variety of different ways that TEK can be shared, the most common methods are also considered the most prominent. Land-based activities are the most prominent way to share TEK.

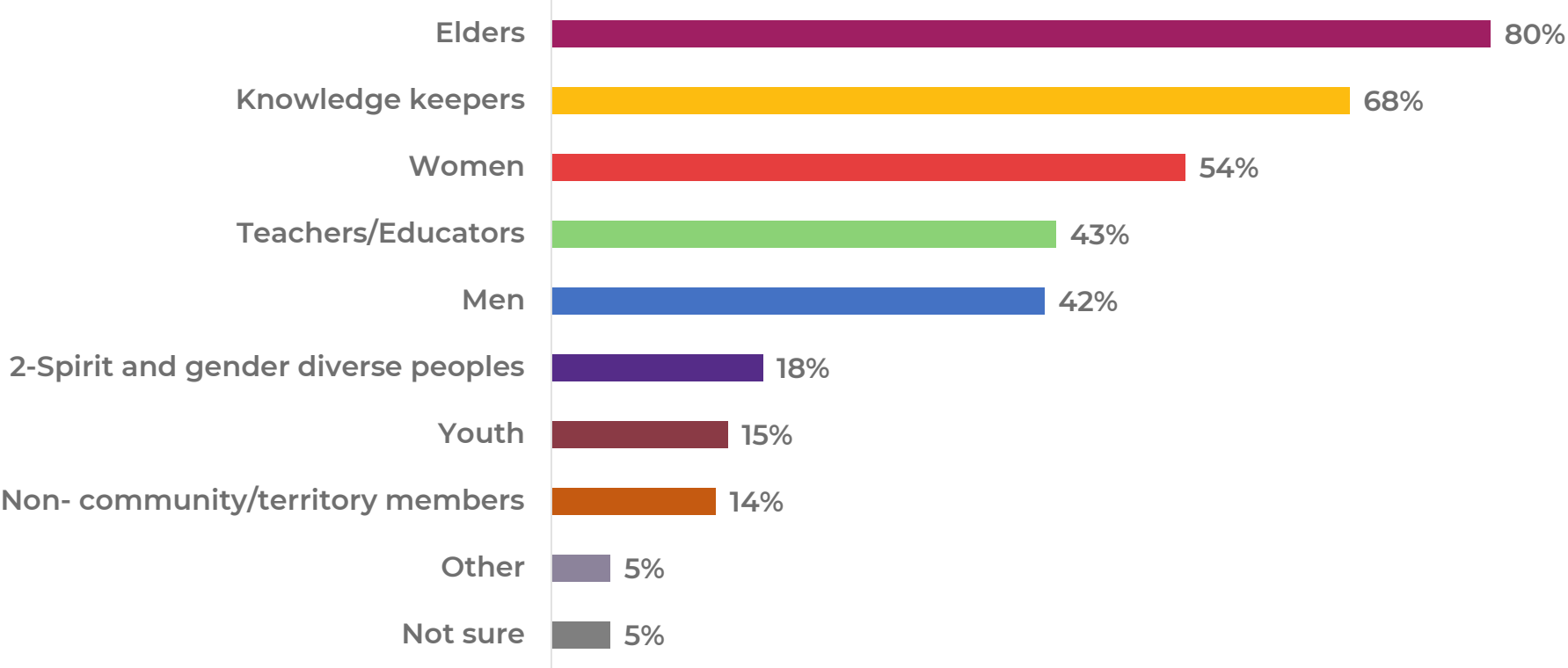
Q. 13 *In your community/territory or current location, which of the following methods of knowledge transfer is most prominent in sharing Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)?*



Personal Reflections | **Who shares Traditional Ecological Knowledge**

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is shared by many members of the community, but primarily shared by Elders (80%), Knowledge Keepers (68%), and women (54%). Elders and Knowledge Keepers are those who chose to self-identify as Elders and Knowledge keepers, regardless of their gender identity, meaning that women, two-spirit, and gender diverse peoples are also within these categories.

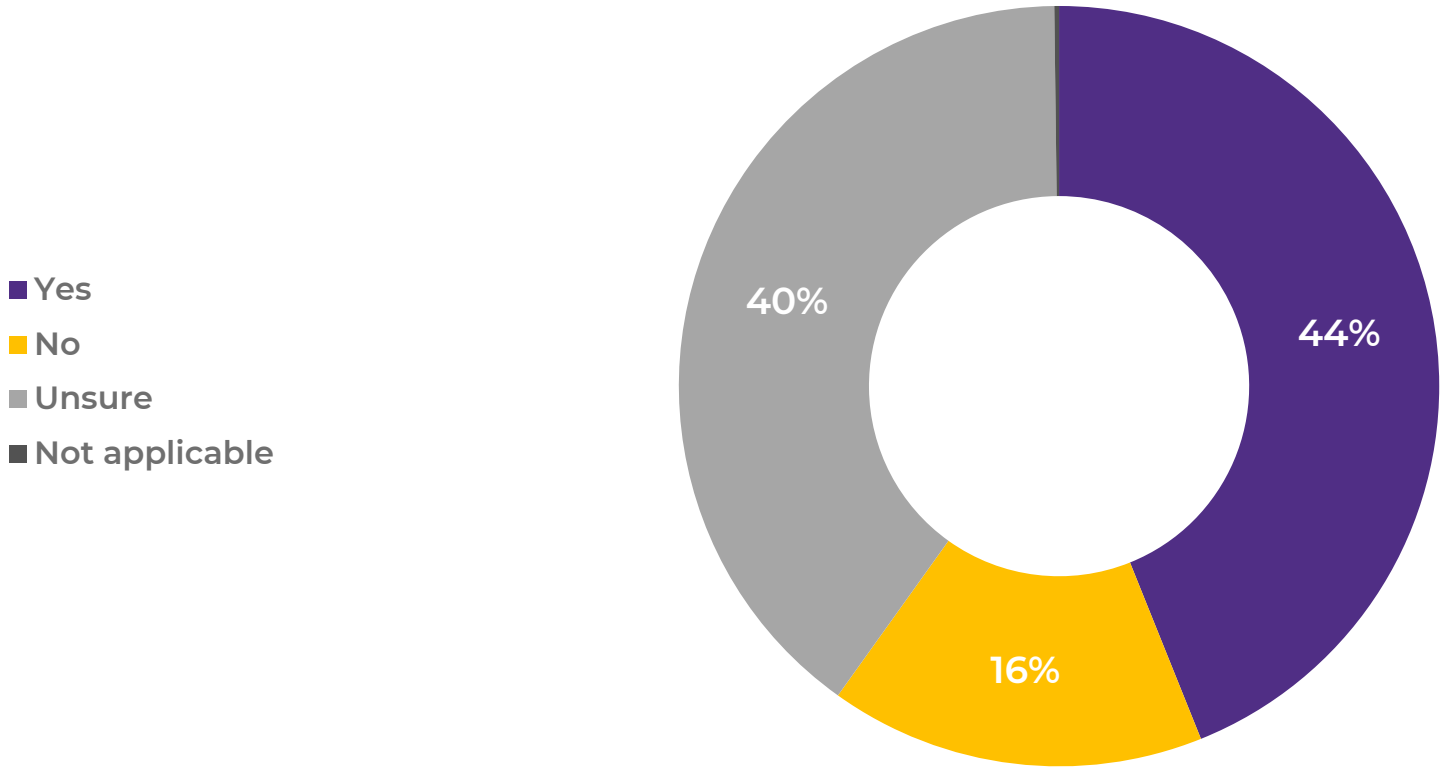
Q. 14 *In your community/territory or current location, who primarily shares Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)?*



Personal Reflections | **Presence of Traditional Ecological Knowledge Initiatives**

Forty-four percent (44%) know about local programs or initiatives teaching TEK, but a similar sized proportion (40%) are unsure whether their community has formal programs which may indicate informal sharing of TEK, perhaps through family.

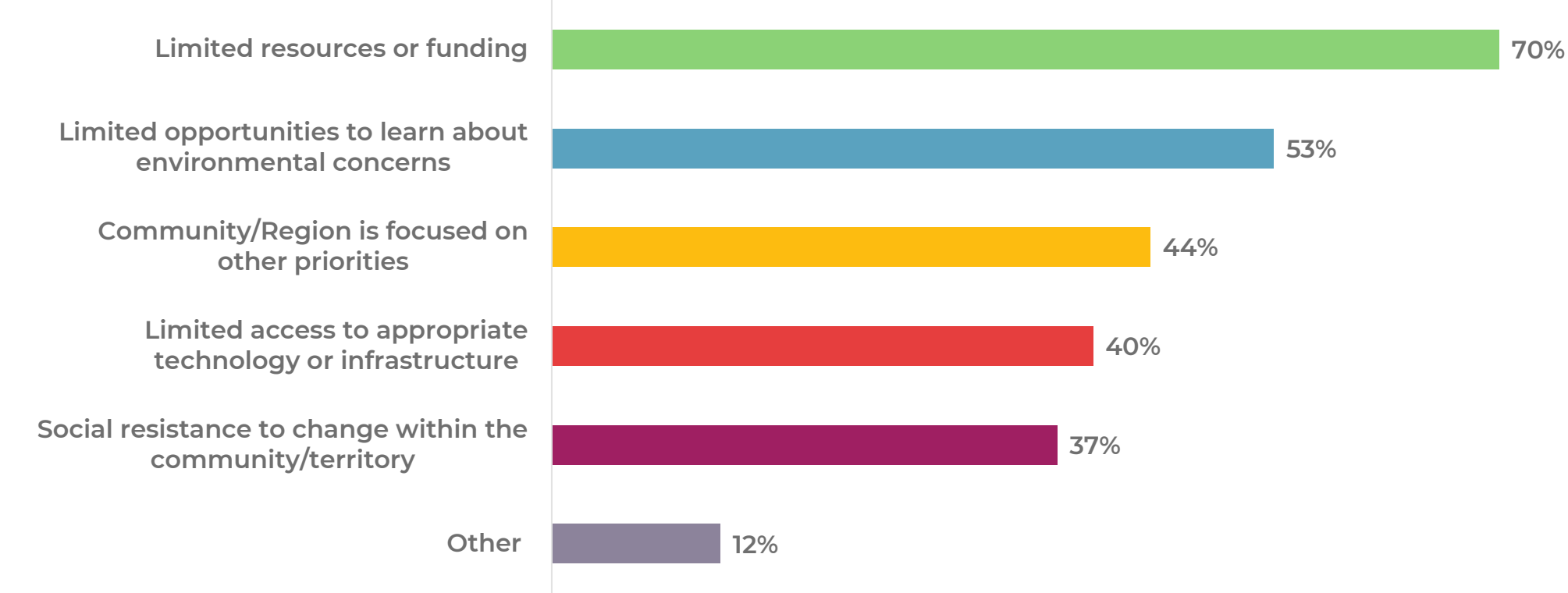
Q. 15 Does your community/territory or current location have initiatives or programs teaching Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)?



Personal Reflections | **Barriers to Traditional Ecological Knowledge Initiatives**

Limited resources or funding is seen as the biggest barrier to accessing or learning about TEK. Lack of opportunities to learn about environmental concerns and regional/community government’s focus on other priorities are other common barriers.

Q. 16 *What barriers might challenge you or your community/territory from accessing or learning Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)?*



SECTION 2

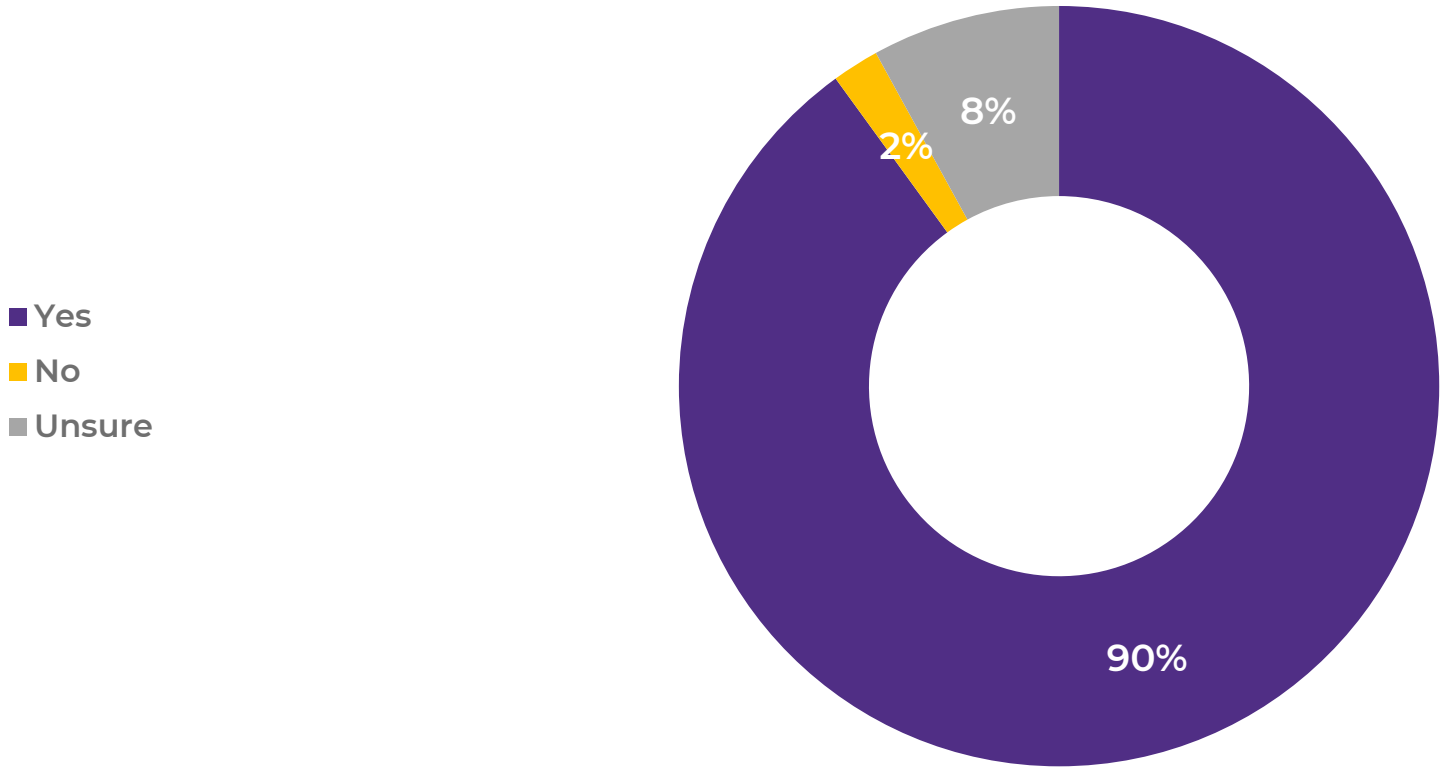
PRACTICAL IMPACTS & APPLICATIONS

Understanding the impacts of environmental changes

Impacts & Applications | **Noticing environmental changes**

Thinking back on the past 5 years, most respondents (90%) say they’ve noticed environmental changes due to climate change in their community.

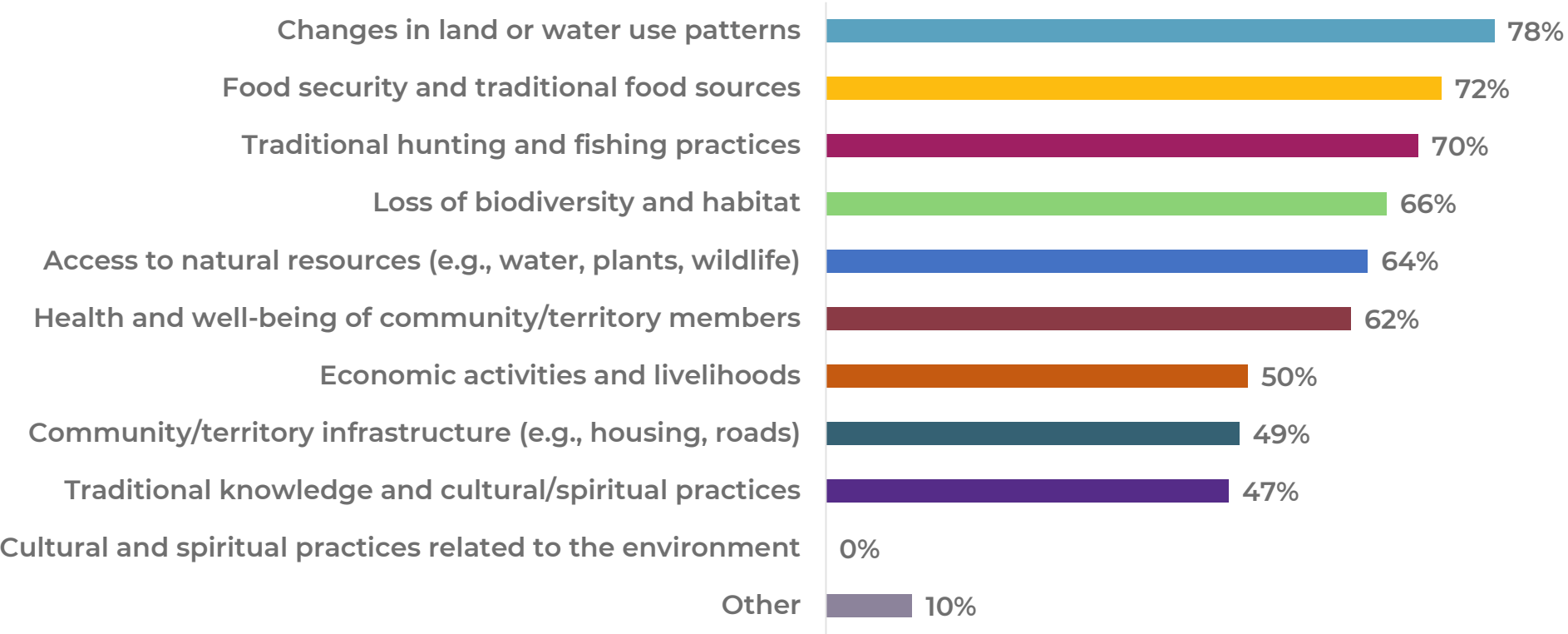
Q. 17 *In the past 5 years, have you noticed any environmental changes due to climate change in your community/territory or current location?*



Impacts & Applications | **Aspects impacted by environmental changes**

Respondents have noticed a range of different environmental changes over the past five years. Among those who noticed changes (N=404), the three most common are changes in land or water use, food security (i.e. traditional food sources), and hunting and fishing.

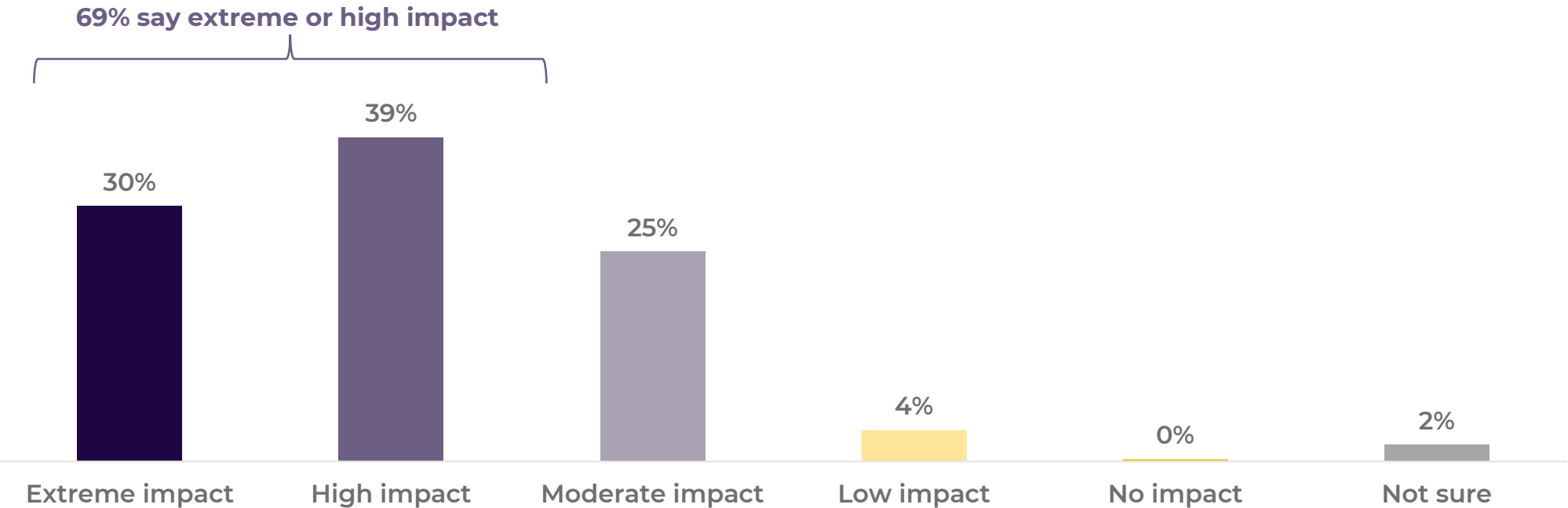
Q. 19 *What aspects of your community/territory or current location have been affected by environmental change?*
BASE: Those who have noticed environmental changes at Q17 N=404



Impacts & Applications | **Perceived impact of environmental changes**

A majority (69%) of those who noticed environmental changes (N=404) say these changes have significantly impacted their communities. Thirty percent (30%) note an extreme impact and another thirty-nine percent (39%) note a high impact.

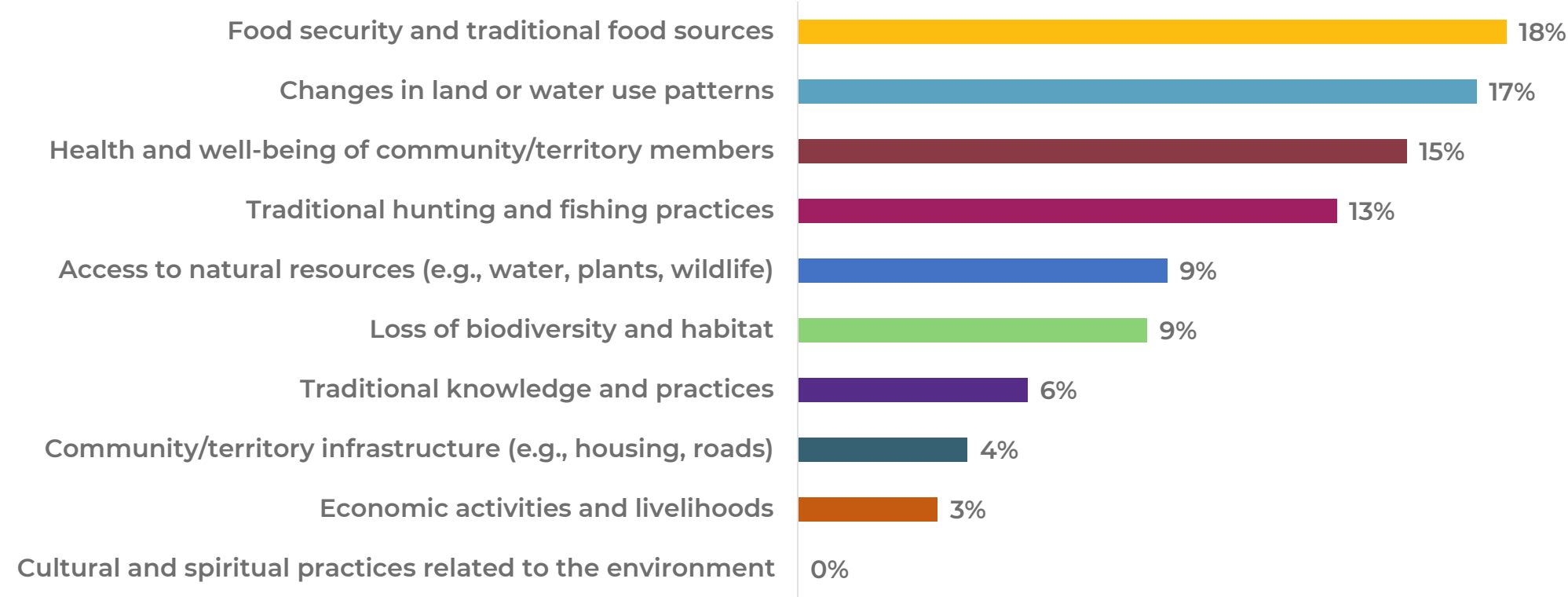
Q. 18 *To what extent have these environmental changes impacted the ecology and landscapes of your community/territory or current location?*
BASE: Those who have noticed environmental changes at Q17 N=404



Impacts & Applications | **Aspects most impacted by environmental changes**

Those who noticed changes (N=404) were asked about which aspects of their lives are most severely impacted. While many areas are impacted, traditional food sources, land/water use, and overall health and well-being are seen as most impacted by environmental changes.

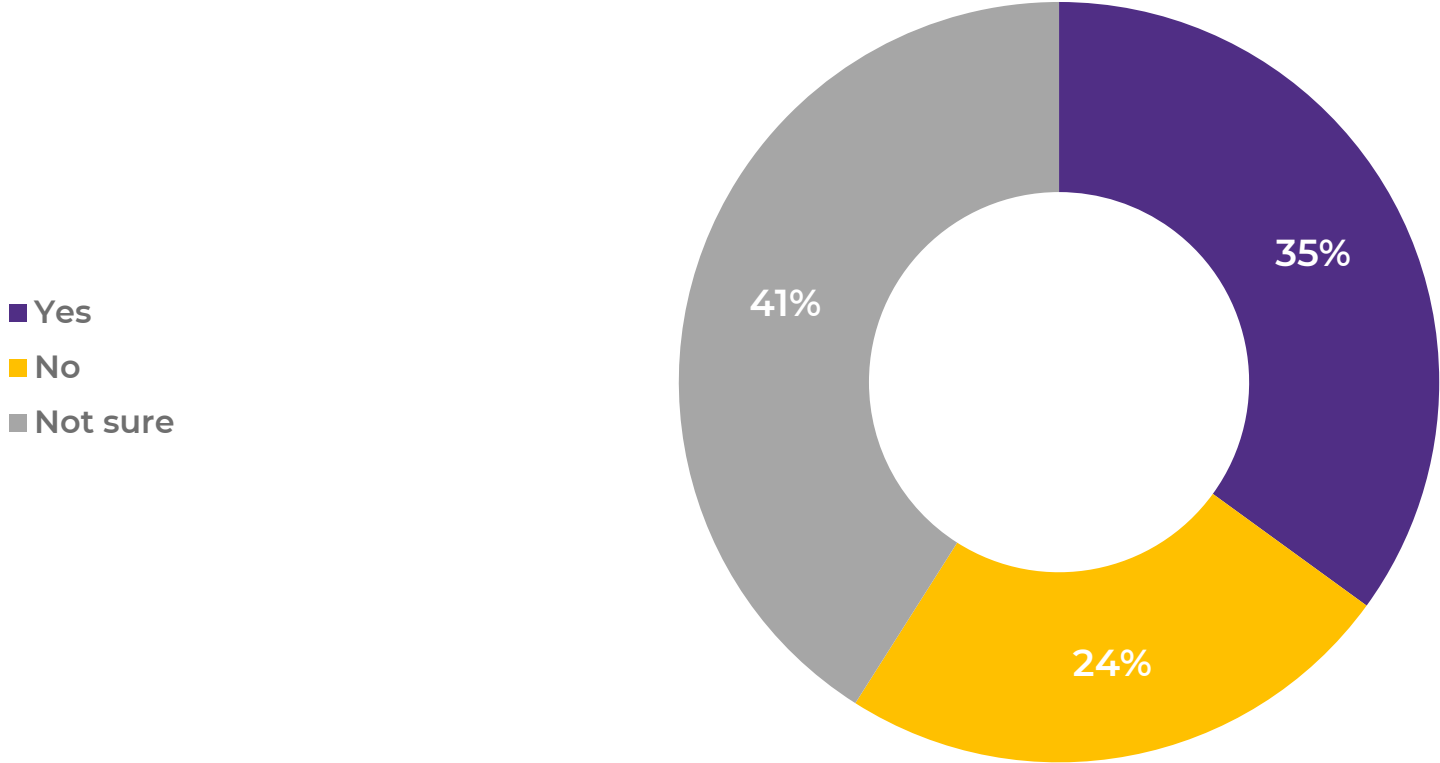
Q. 20 *Out of the aspects you chose, which seems to be the most severely impacted in your community/territory/current location?*
BASE: Those who have noticed environmental changes at Q17 N=404



Impacts & Applications | **Addressing environmental impacts**

A minority (35%) of those who noticed environmental changes (N=404) say their community is addressing the areas impacted by the changes. Roughly forty percent (41%) are unsure whether action is being taken to address environmental impacts.

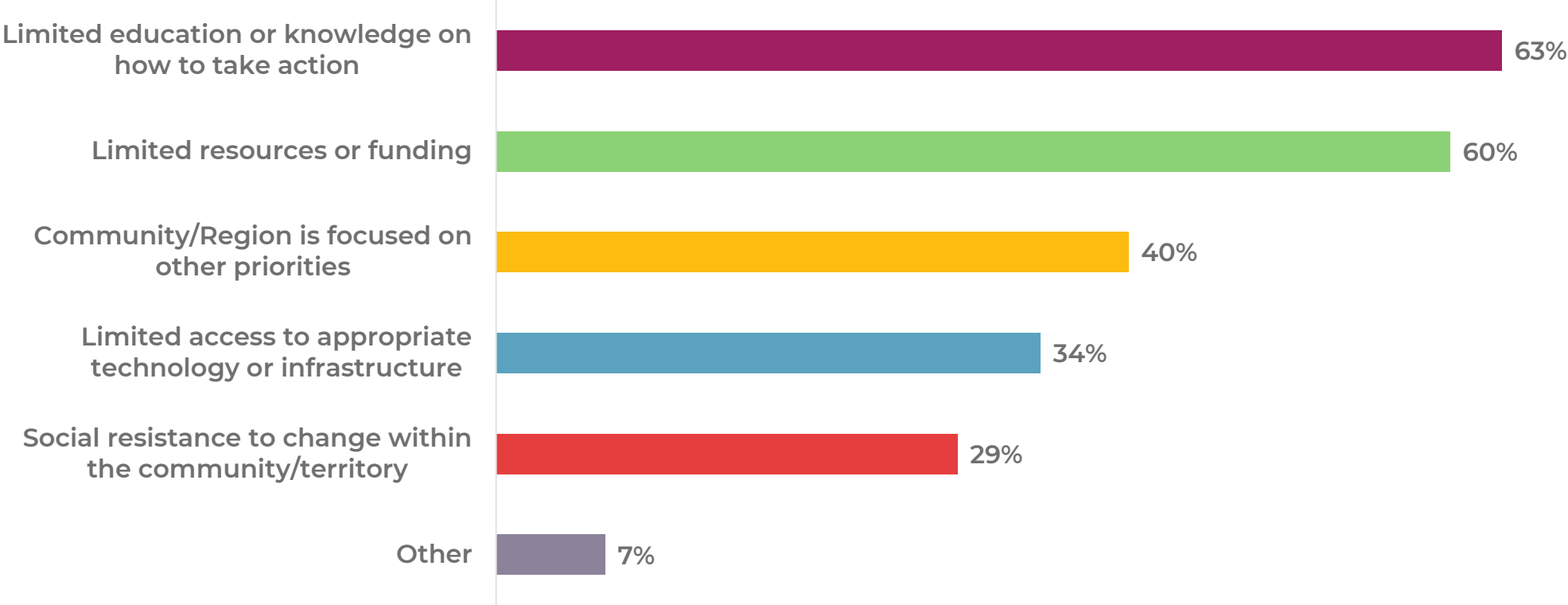
Q. 21 *To your knowledge, is your community/territory or current location addressing the areas impacted by environmental changes?*
BASE: Those who have noticed environmental changes at Q17 N=404



Impacts & Applications | **Barriers to addressing environmental changes**

Limited knowledge on how to take action and limited funding/resources are seen as the two largest barriers to addressing environmental changes for Indigenous People.

Q. 22 *What do you think are the main barriers to addressing environmental changes due to climate change for Indigenous Peoples?*



SECTION 3

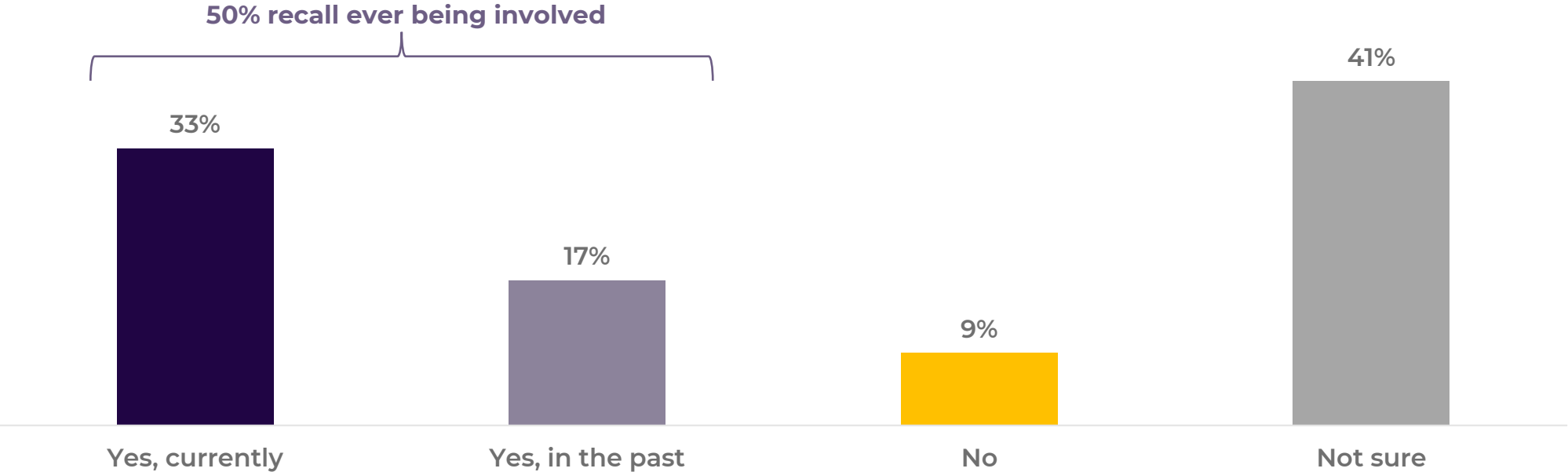
COMMUNITY-LED CONSERVATION

Benefits of community-led conservation for Indigenous
W2STGD+ peoples and their communities

Community-Led Conservation | **Involvement in conservation projects**

Half recall their communities being involved in an environmental conservation project. Thirty-three percent (33%) recall current involvement in conservation projects and forty-one percent (41%) are unsure.

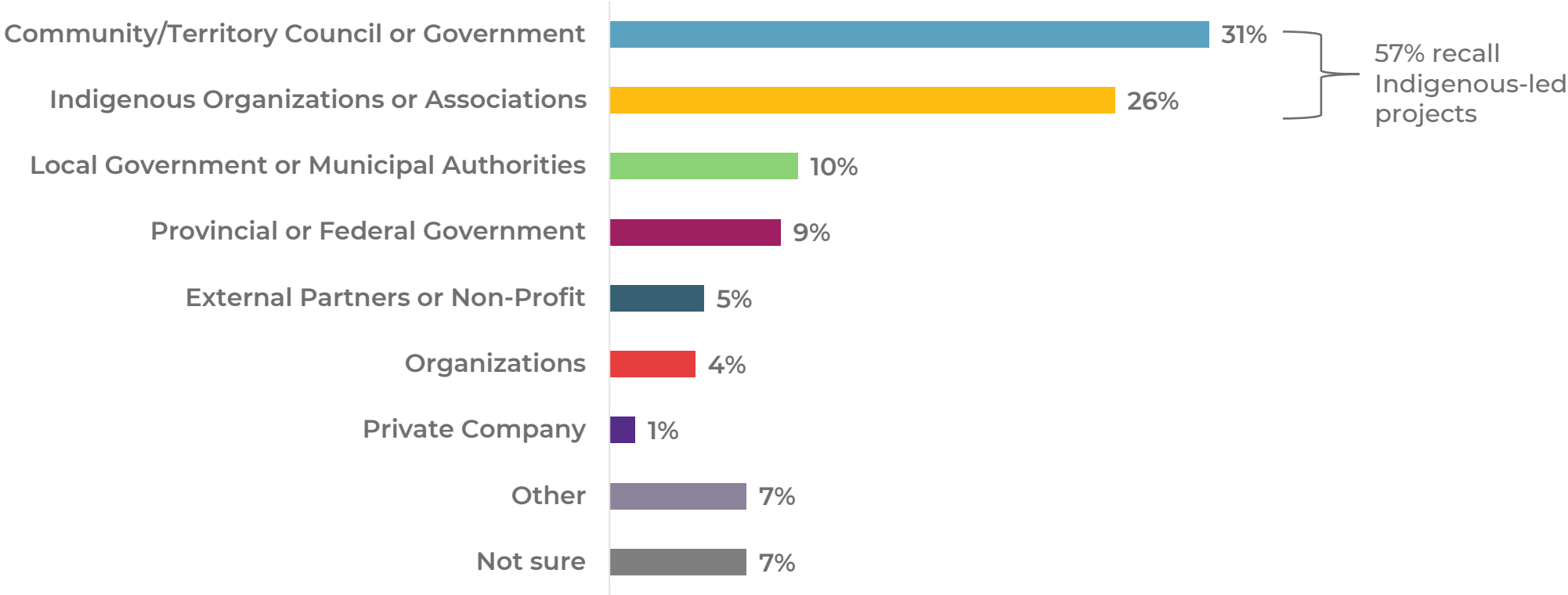
Q. 23 *Has your community/territory or current location been involved in any environmental conservation projects?*



Community-Led Conservation | **Past project leaders**

Those who were involved in conservation projects (N=227) were asked about leadership. Over half (57%) say the projects were Indigenous-led with the most common forms of leadership being community councils and Indigenous organizations.

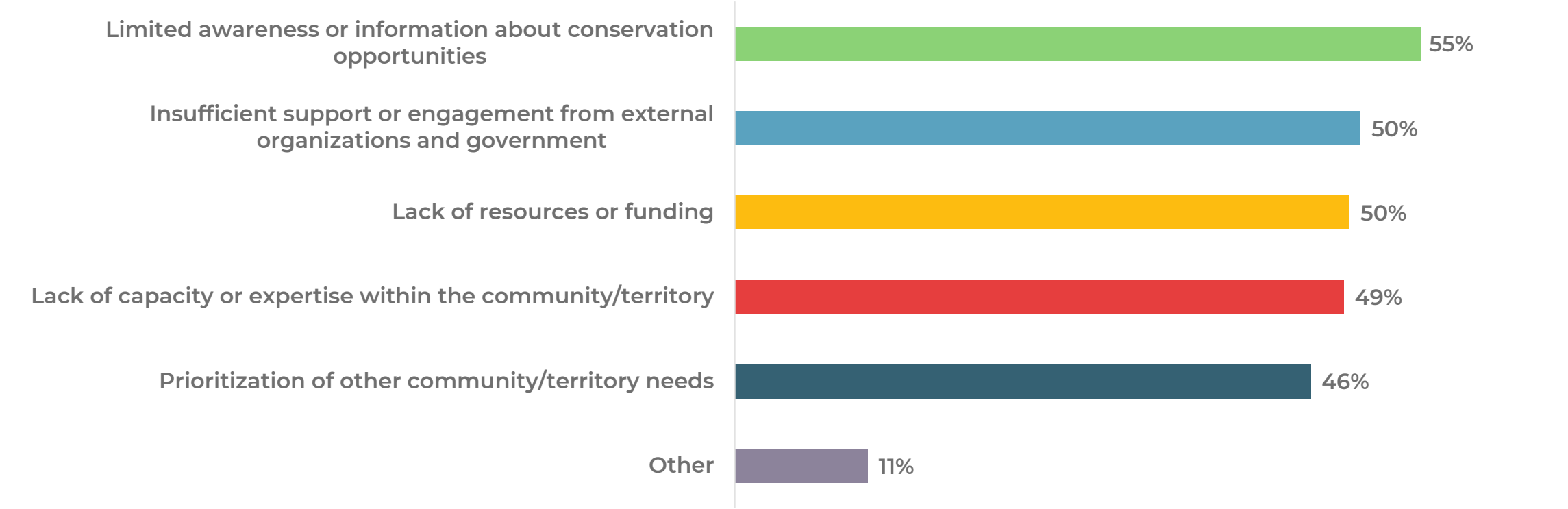
Q. 24 Who led the project? BASE: Those involved in conservation projects at Q23 N=227



Community-Led Conservation | **Perceived barriers to projects**

Limited awareness about conservation opportunities (55%) is seen as the top barrier among those who were not involved in local environmental conservation projects (N=224). Insufficient support, lack of resources, limited capacity, and lack of prioritization are also seen as reasons why there haven't been recent local conservation projects.

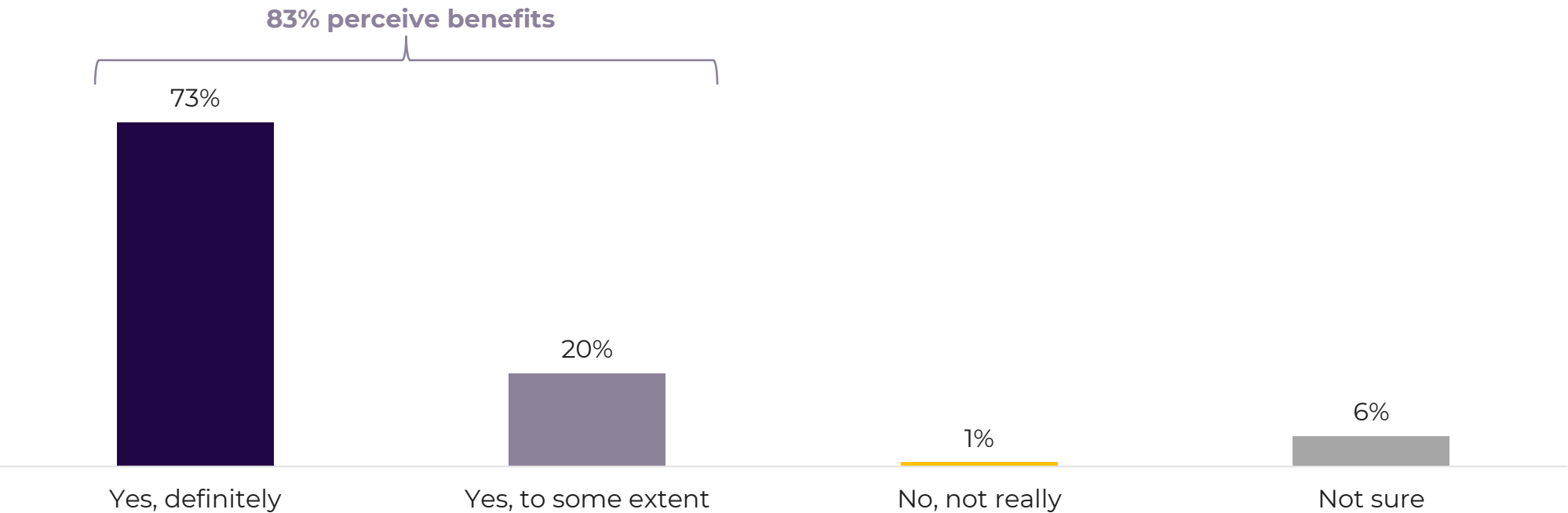
Q. 25 Why do you think there haven't been any recent environmental conservation projects in your community/territory or current location?
BASE: Those who were not involved or not sure about being involved in conservation projects at Q23 N=224



Community-Led Conservation | **Perceived benefit of programs**

A large majority (83%) think their community would benefit from a structured environmental conservation program. Strong opinions outweigh moderate views with seven in ten (73%) saying their community would definitely benefit.

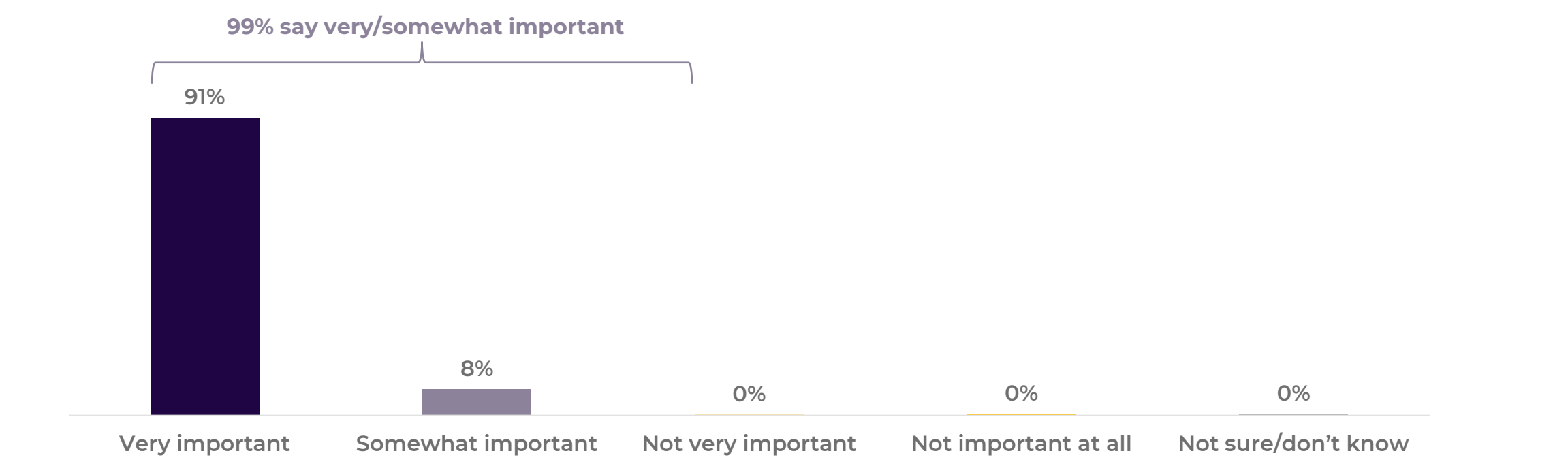
Q. 26 *Do you think your community/territory/current location would benefit from a structured environmental conservation program?*



Community-Led Conservation | **Importance of decision-making power**

Nearly all (99%) think its important for Indigenous People to be primary-decision makers in conservation initiatives that impact them. This view is strongly held with most (91%) saying Indigenous decision making is very important.

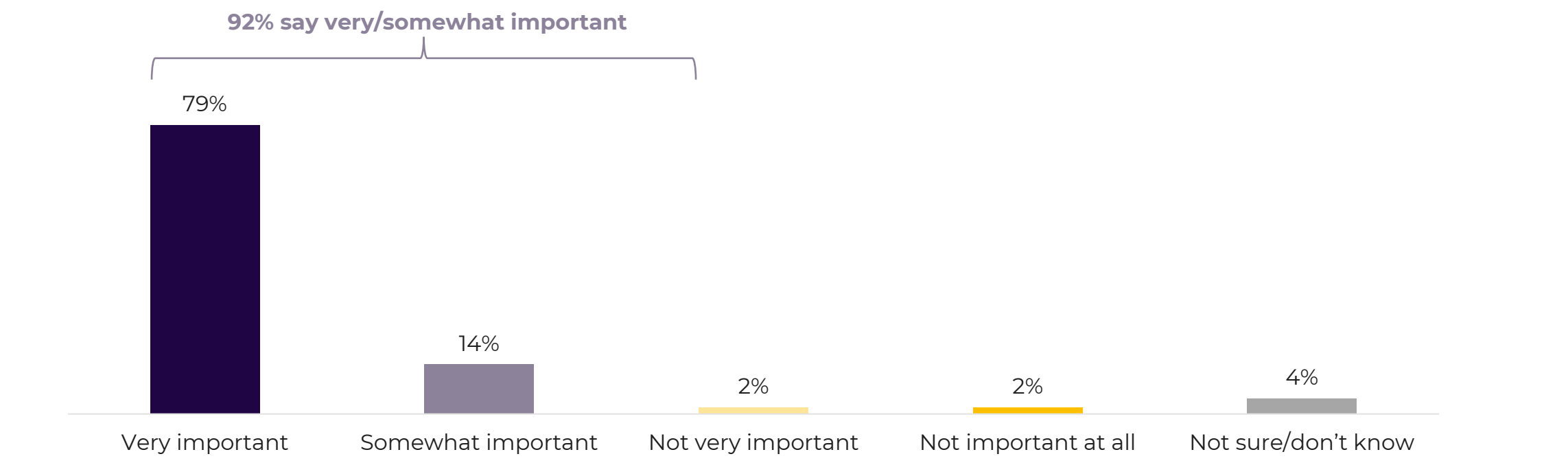
Q. 27 *How important is it for Indigenous communities to be the primary decision-makers in conservation initiatives that directly impact their community/territory or current location?*



Community-Led Conservation | Importance of leading & participating

Having Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, transgender and gender-diverse people as active leaders and participants in conservation initiatives is very important and this view is strongly held by a majority of (79%) respondents.

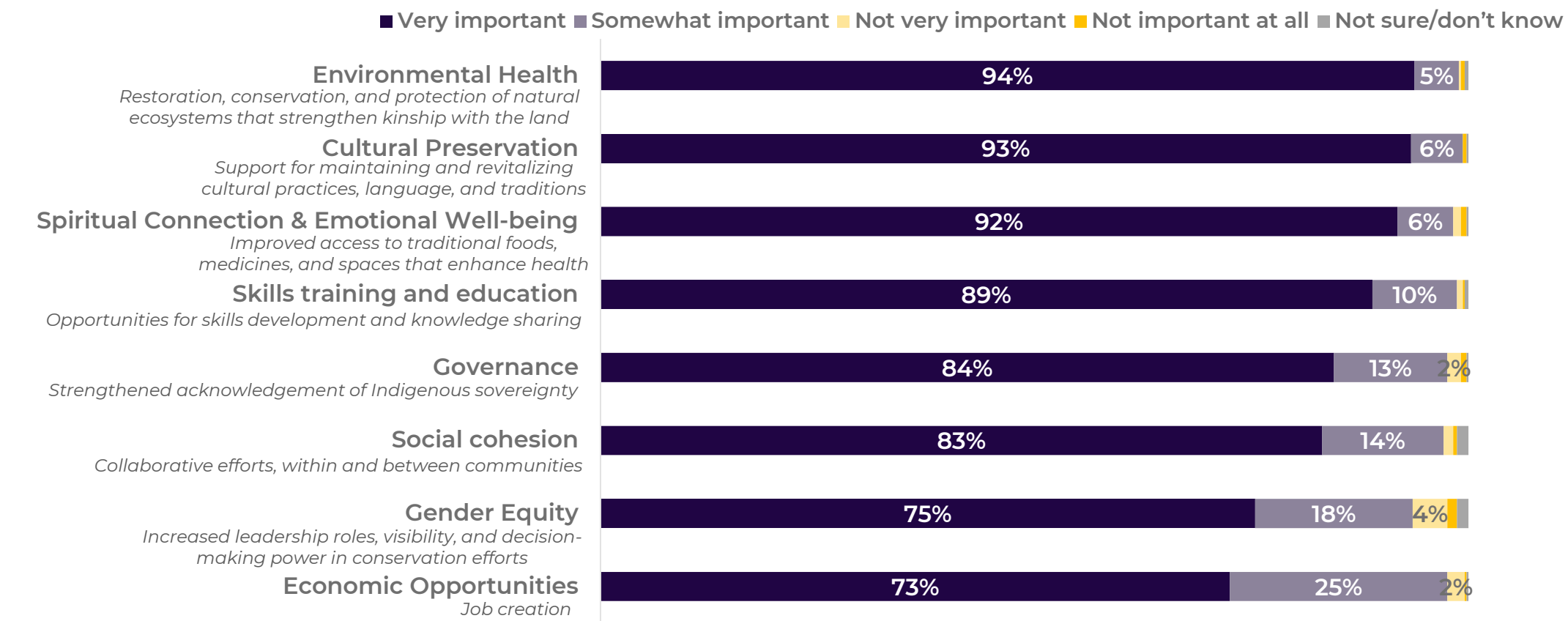
Q. 28 *In your opinion, how important is it for Indigenous WG2SGD+ peoples to actively lead and participate in conservation initiatives that impact their community/territory or current location?*



Community-Led Conservation | **Most important benefits**

All benefits of community-led conservation are highly valued by the majority of respondents (75%-94%). Environmental health, cultural preservation, spiritual connection are viewed with the utmost importance.

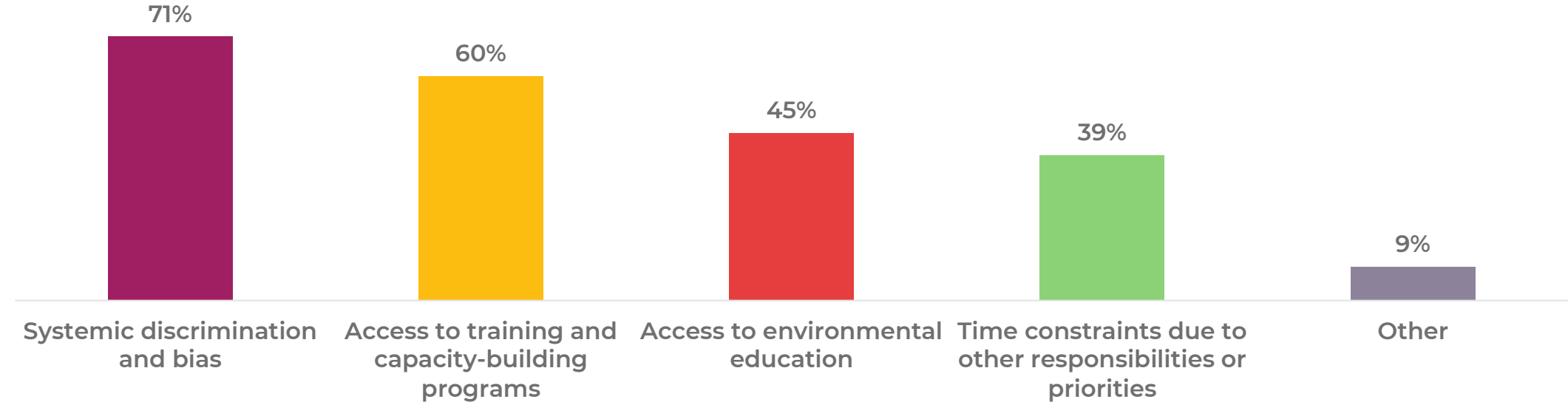
Q. 29 How important are the following benefits of community-led conservation initiatives for Indigenous WG2SGD+ peoples?



Community-Led Conservation | Challenges in taking on leadership

Systemic discrimination and bias is seen as the biggest challenge preventing Indigenous W2STGD+ Peoples in obtaining leadership roles. Access to training, environmental education, and time constraints are also seen as barriers.

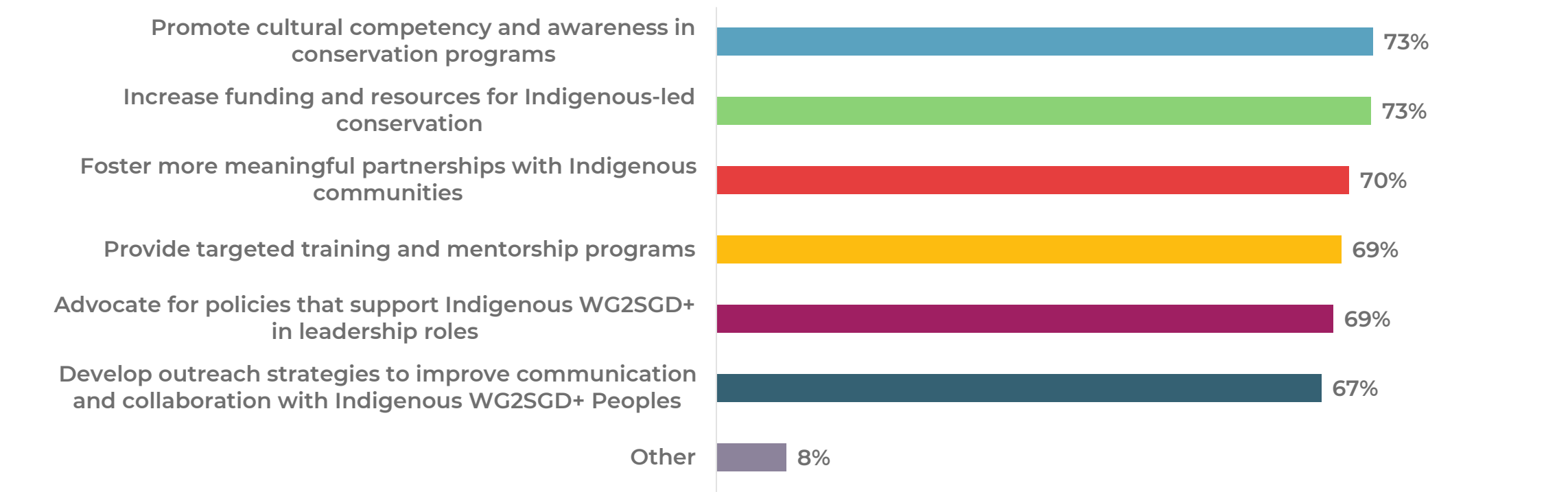
Q. 30 What challenges do Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples face in obtaining leadership roles in conservation initiatives? Select all that apply.



Community-Led Conservation | **Actions by external organizations**

Respondents think external organizations can take a variety of actions to increase leadership of Indigenous W2STGD+ peoples in conservation. Promoting cultural competency, such as workplace cultural training, increasing funding, and fostering more meaningful partnerships with Indigenous communities are seen as the most beneficial actions.

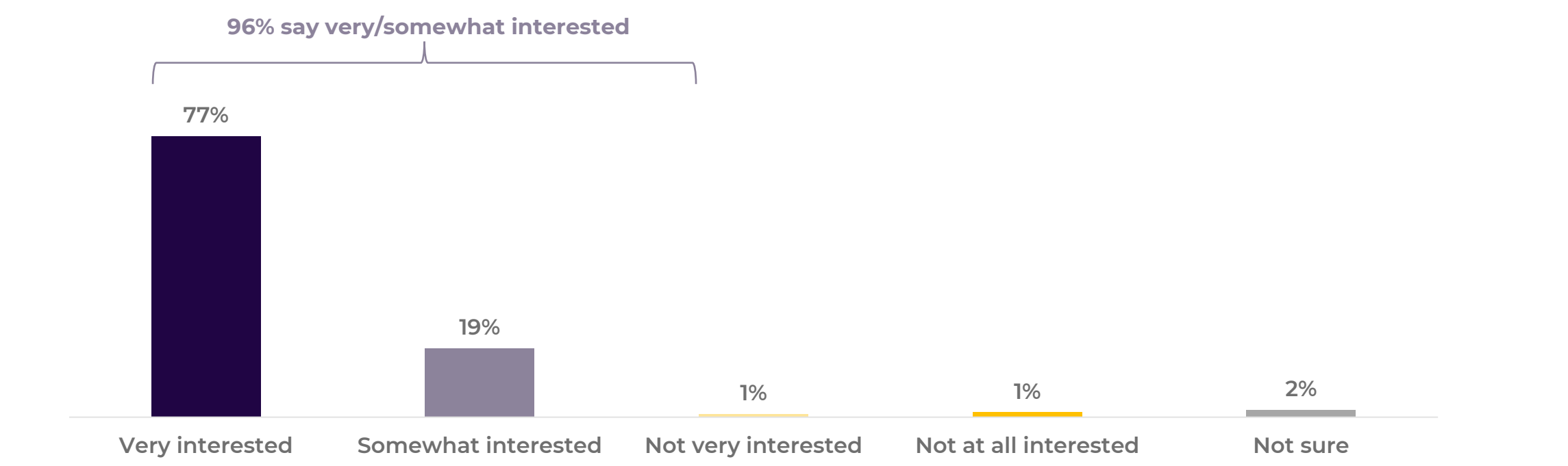
Q. 31 *What actions can external organizations (government, non-profits, philanthropic, and private) take to increase leadership of Indigenous WG2SGD+ peoples in conservation? Select all that apply.*



Community-Led Conservation | **Interest in NWAC learning program**

Interest in a land-based learning program facilitated by the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) is high. Nearly all (96%) are interested, with the majority (77%) saying they are very interested in this type of program.

Q. 32 *How interested are you in a land-based learning program facilitated by the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) for Indigenous WG2SGD+ Peoples?*



SECTION 4

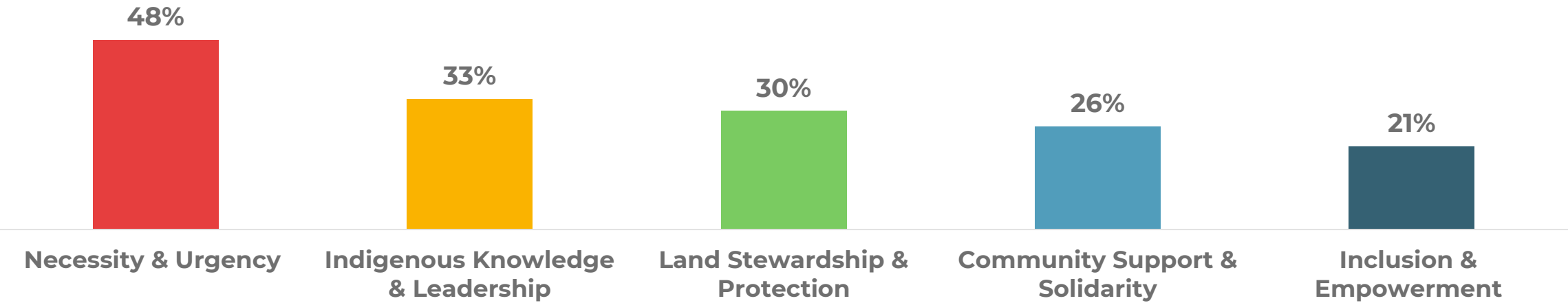
FUTURE OUTLOOK

Desired outcomes and the future of Indigenous W2STGD+ peoples in environmental conservation

Future Outlook | **Supporting Indigenous W2STGD+ leadership**

Five key themes emerged from the responses, emphasizing the importance of Indigenous leadership, especially W2STGD+ peoples, in conservation efforts. Respondents believe Indigenous-led conservation is crucial for environmental protection, that efforts need to be collaborative, prioritize action not just acknowledgement, and align with Indigenous rights and sovereignty.

Q. 33 *What key message would you like to convey to decision-makers about supporting Indigenous WG2SGD+ leadership in conservation?*



Future Outlook | **Supporting Indigenous W2STGD+ leadership**

Summaries of the five key themes in respondents’ messages for decision-makers on how to better support Indigenous W2STGD+ leadership in conservation efforts are shown below.

Q. 33 *What key message would you like to convey to decision-makers about supporting Indigenous WG2SGD+ leadership in conservation?*

Necessity & Urgency	Indigenous Knowledge & Leadership	Land Stewardship & Protection	Community Support & Solidarity	Inclusion & Empowerment
The need for action, policy support, and systemic change to empower Indigenous leadership in conservation is seen as urgent – excluding Indigenous leadership would negatively impact Indigenous communities and the environment.	Recognizing and valuing Indigenous leadership and the wisdom passed down through generations – Indigenous knowledge and governance should be central to conservation efforts.	Indigenous People often have a deep connection to the environment - conservation is not just about preserving nature but also about respecting Indigenous rights to land and self-determination.	Respondents view conservation as a shared responsibility that requires building strong relationships and breaking down barriers to collaboration across Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups.	Respondents highlight the need for gender equity and the dismantling of barriers that prevent/exclude Indigenous W2STGD individuals from leading in conservation efforts.

Future Outlook | **Supporting Indigenous W2STGD+ leadership**

Key messages from respondents about supporting Indigenous W2STGD+ leadership in conservation.

Necessity & Urgency

“We can't wait any longer, change must happen now.”

“We cannot ignore this fact anymore because the earth and nature has every right to thrive and exist as much as humans do. Every part of the natural world needs emergency care and restoration, education and awareness as for many species and spaces.”

Indigenous Knowledge & Leadership

“Attend and Learn Indigenous culture and practices first hand.”

“Bring Elders advice to decision makers about traditional conservation practices.”

“Indigenous people have perspectives that main stream society has never taken into consideration.”

Future Outlook | **Supporting Indigenous W2STGD+ leadership**

Key messages from respondents about supporting Indigenous W2STGD+ leadership in conservation.

Land Stewardship & Protection

“ Indigenous communities have long been stewards of their lands, and having the opportunity to learn sacred traditional knowledge of the land is a gift that should be honoured and protected....

“ We are Stewards of the Land, we need to step up and take action in our roles.

Community Support & Solidarity

“ Opportunities for coalitions between both Indigenous/Metis and non Indigenous/Metis supporters to work together on community conservation.

“ We must all collectively be working together towards the same goals to show strength | solidarity is important..

Future Outlook | **Supporting Indigenous W2STGD+ leadership**

Key messages from respondents about supporting Indigenous W2STGD+ leadership in conservation.

Inclusion & Empowerment

“

Don't talk about us without us. We have our own voice we can bring to the table.

“

Our Indigenous ways were never about gender, instead, were about the gifts we could offer to support our community.

“

Traditional practices have always included everyone. Unity is key....

“

Current policies are not working. It is time to listen to voices that have historically been suppressed. Having our voice at the table matters because WG2SGD+ were silenced in the past, we have a voice and we will use it.

Future Outlook | **Supporting Indigenous W2STGD+ leadership**

Quotes from Indigenous W2STGD+ Respondents

“

We have a connection to mother earth that goes beyond words. We feel the sickness in our core. We need to work together to heal.

“

Conservation and sustainability issues should not have tribal divisions. All nations , FN, Métis and Inuit should join together with a unified voice! Our grandmothers, great grandmothers and beyond were the custodians of the land. We all have a duty.

“

Women have always been exceptionally powerful change makers and leaders against environmental injustice. In so many culture across turtle island they are the water keepers. We need more protection for those who advocate for the environment

“

Ancestral knowledge is a thing. Bring harmony back to Mother Earth. Let our wisdom heal her. Allow us to educate you.

Future Outlook | **Empowering youth in environmental conservation**

Respondents shared suggestions for empowering youth in conservation. Four key themes emerged from their advice. Many messages emphasized the need for early engagement, learning opportunities, and hands-on activities/projects.

Q. 34 *How can we effectively empower the youth to become the next generation of leaders in environmental conservation?*

Earlier Education & Skill Development	Provide Opportunities for Hands-On Engagement & Leadership	Offer resources and funding to make participation accessible	Embed conservation in communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrate environmental education into school curricula from an early age.• Use digital media, storytelling, and gamification to make learning engaging.• Promote, indigenous and local ecological knowledge as part of environmental learning.• Equip youth with leadership, advocacy, and public speaking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organize hands-on activities such as tree planting, clean-ups, and habitat restoration.• Develop youth-led environmental clubs, councils, and advocacy groups.• Create mentorship programs that connect youth with environmental leaders.• Recognize and reward young environmentalists through awards and media exposure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide grants, scholarships and financial aid for pursuing environmental studies and for supporting youth-led initiatives• Promote and offer internships, apprenticeships, and job opportunities in conservation fields• Partner with businesses and NGOs to create funding opportunities and ensure accessible tools/resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocate for more green spaces, community gardens, etc.• Engage schools, families, and local organizations in community conservation efforts.• Foster collaborations between youth groups and environmental organizations• Integrate land stewardship into cultural traditions and community values.

Future Outlook | Empowering youth in environmental conservation

Quotes from Indigenous W2STGD+ Respondents

Q. 34 How can we effectively empower the youth to become the next generation of leaders in environmental conservation?

“

To help youth become leaders in environmental conservation, we need to mix traditional knowledge with modern education and give them hands-on experiences. It's important to connect them with their culture, land, and community...

“

I think it all starts with improving the overall lives of Indigenous youth, and then we can think about conservation. More programs and activities connected to land can help create a connection to the land, and create opportunities for the individuals to participate.

“

Develop and provide immersive opportunities to learn while giving academic credit, and financial incentives. Support meaningful employment that is connected to the learning that can be embraced both on and off reserve.

“

Invite them to the table and ensure it is set for them. Include everything to nourish their minds, bodies, and souls. Meet them where they are at. Honor and compensate their unique contribution. Celebrate their achievements and participation...

“

The younger they are taught to love and respect the air, lands and water, the more they will want to protect it.

“

Make these initiatives enticing and palatable so youth would want to join TEK initiatives.

Thank you.

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