

# OUTDOOR CLASSROOM DAY

A young boy with curly hair is blowing bubbles. He is holding a pink and blue bubble wand. Several colorful bubbles are floating around him. The background is a blurred green forest. The text 'OUTDOOR CLASSROOM DAY' is in the top left corner. The text 'The difference we have made' is in the bottom left corner. The text 'SEMBLE' is in the bottom right corner.

**The difference we have made**

SEMBLE



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This report was funded by Unilever's Dirt is Good brands OMO/Persil/Breeze as part of their sponsorship of Outdoor Classroom Day globally from 2016 to 2020. Its content was developed by:

- **Cath Prisk**, founder of Outdoor people and Outdoor Classroom Day's Global Partnerships Director from 2016 to 2020
- **Claire Colvine**, Outdoor Classroom Day's Global Communications Manager
- **Ségolène Méheust**, Outdoor Classroom Day's Global Campaign Manager





## History of the movement

In 2011, at the launch of Tim Gill's Sowing the Seeds report, a group of educators and environmentalists discussed how schools in particular could address the issues that stop children getting outdoors. Their solution was a new campaign they called Empty Classroom Day.

In 2012, a handful of schools in London got involved. By 2015, over 600 schools in 15 countries were involved. As the campaign grew, the volunteers who were running it recognised the need for dedicated investment. So, from 2016-2020, Semble partnered with Unilever's Dirt is Good brands Persil/OMO to grow the movement and take it global.

Following consultation with school leaders, play experts and NGOs around the world, Empty Classroom Day became Outdoor Classroom Day. Schools in over 170 countries have now been involved and over 10 million children have taken part. Millions of parents now know that getting outdoors every day is important for their children's health, happiness and connection to nature.

Since getting involved, two-thirds of schools have increased outdoor learning and play. That is the real, long-term impact that is at the heart of the Outdoor Classroom Day movement.

Founder and advisory board member, Anna Portch, continues to be involved in the movement.



# Outdoor Classroom Day: a global movement

## Vision

Through everyday engagement with the outdoor world, future generations across the planet are more resilient, more environmentally aware and happier.

## Goals

1. Outdoor learning part of every school day
2. A consistent minimum target for recess/playtime
3. Schools to advocate for more time outdoors

## Purpose

To make being outdoors part of every child's day.





## Our partners

Sponsorship of Outdoor Classroom Day by Unilever's Dirt is Good brands Persil/OMO came to an end in December 2020 after 5 terrific years of partnership.

Alongside Semble, who has led the movement globally since 2016, fantastic organisations have adapted it to their local context and delivered it on the ground. They include:



India



Turkey



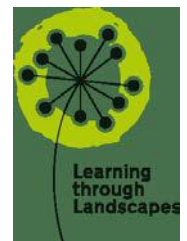
Indonesia



Finland



Chile



UK & Ireland



Brazil



Portugal



Australia



South Africa



Finland



Colombia







# Thank you!

We want to say a massive thank you to all of you for fighting to make outdoor play and learning part of every child's day.

From the very first teachers who took children outdoors in 2012, to the thousands who have joined the community to date.

From the people that kept the day alive in the beginning, to our wonderful NGO partners who have embedded Outdoor Classroom Day in their country.

From the organisations with a shared vision who have helped grow the movement, to Unilever's Dirt is Good teams who funded us for five years.

**This is a summary of the transformation and impact that happened because of you.**





# What have we achieved so far?

A summary of the successes, reach and impact of the Outdoor Classroom Day movement.





## Outdoor Classroom Day in numbers

- **35** million extra hours of children outdoors
- **10.4** million children have participated in the days around the world
- **4** million more children in Indonesia joined through a dedicated app
- **126,000** followers across social media platforms
- **105,000** schools are involved in the movement
- **70,000+** people have signed up to receive emails from
- **7,000** teachers consulted in surveys 2016 - 2020
- **322** inspirational play and lesson resources on our websites

\*Data as of December 2020





# Outdoor Classroom Day in numbers

- **350+** newsletters sent out
- **23** global education and play organisations on the advisory group
- **17** Outdoor Classroom Day websites developed
- **12** languages (resources available in)
- **8** countries with active campaigns plus global
- **5** global surveys conducted – longitudinal quantitative and qualitative data
- **2** reports published
- **1 HUGE movement**

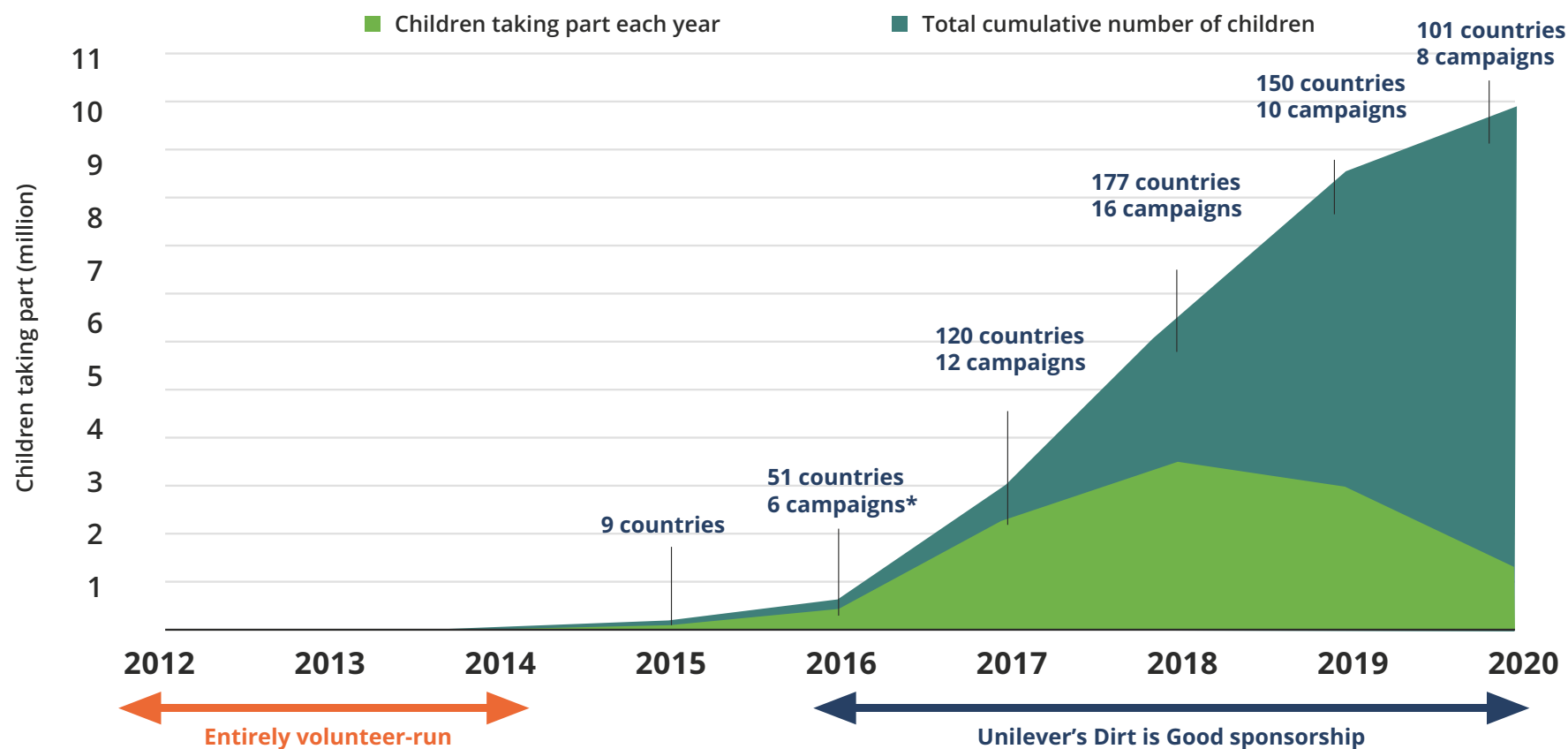
\*Data as of December 2020





# Participation in Outdoor Classroom Day 2012–2020

Over 10.4 million children have taken part in the movement so far



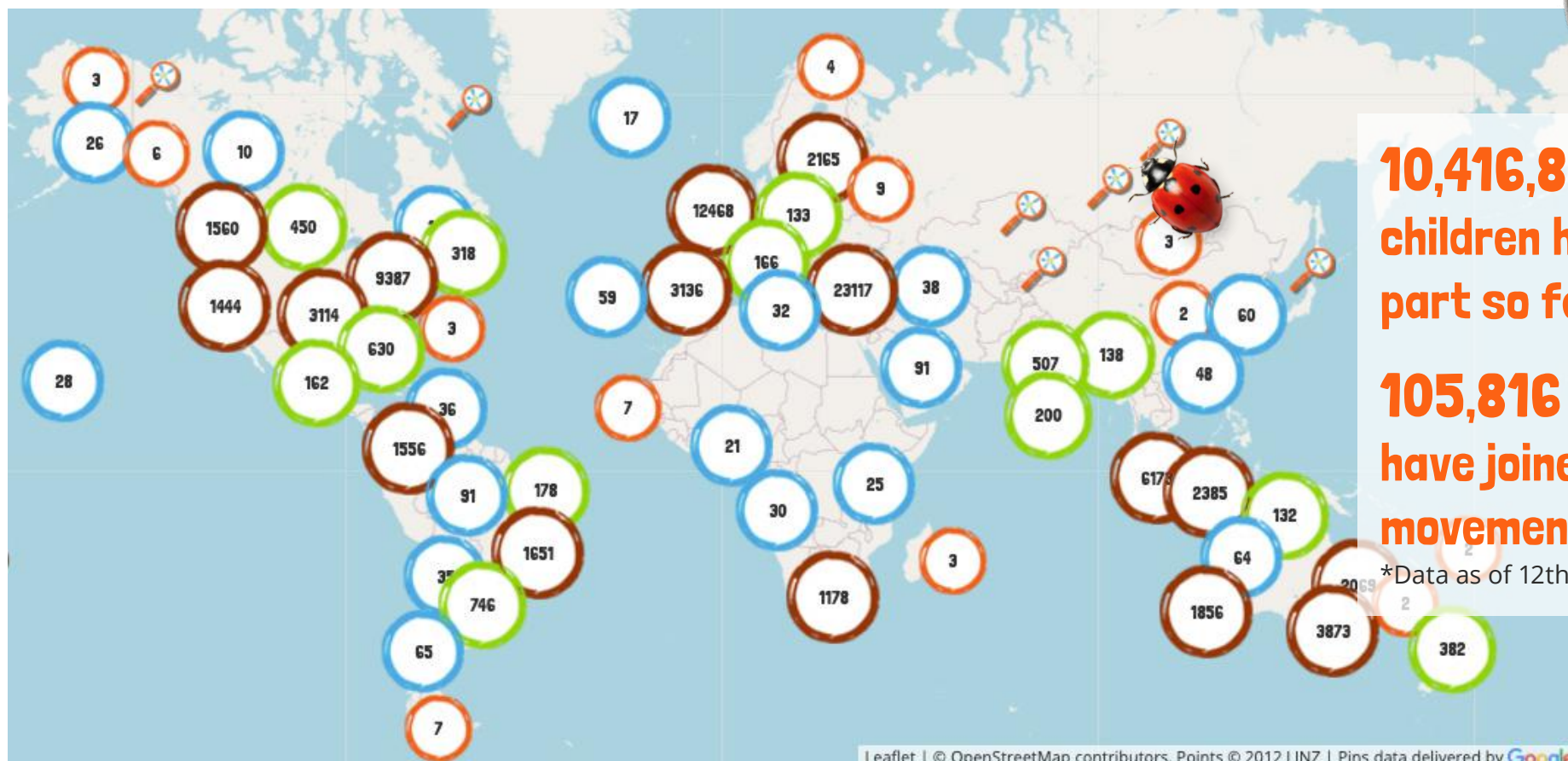
\* campaigns highlighted here are local and national campaigns run by our NGO partners, in addition to the global campaign run by Semble  
\*\* in light of the Covid-19 context, in 2020 we focused on depth, engagement and supporting our community

\*Data from annual surveys 2012-2020





# A global movement



**10,416,866**  
children have taken  
part so far

**105,816** adults  
have joined the  
movement so far

\*Data as of 12th January 2021





Have we achieved our purpose?

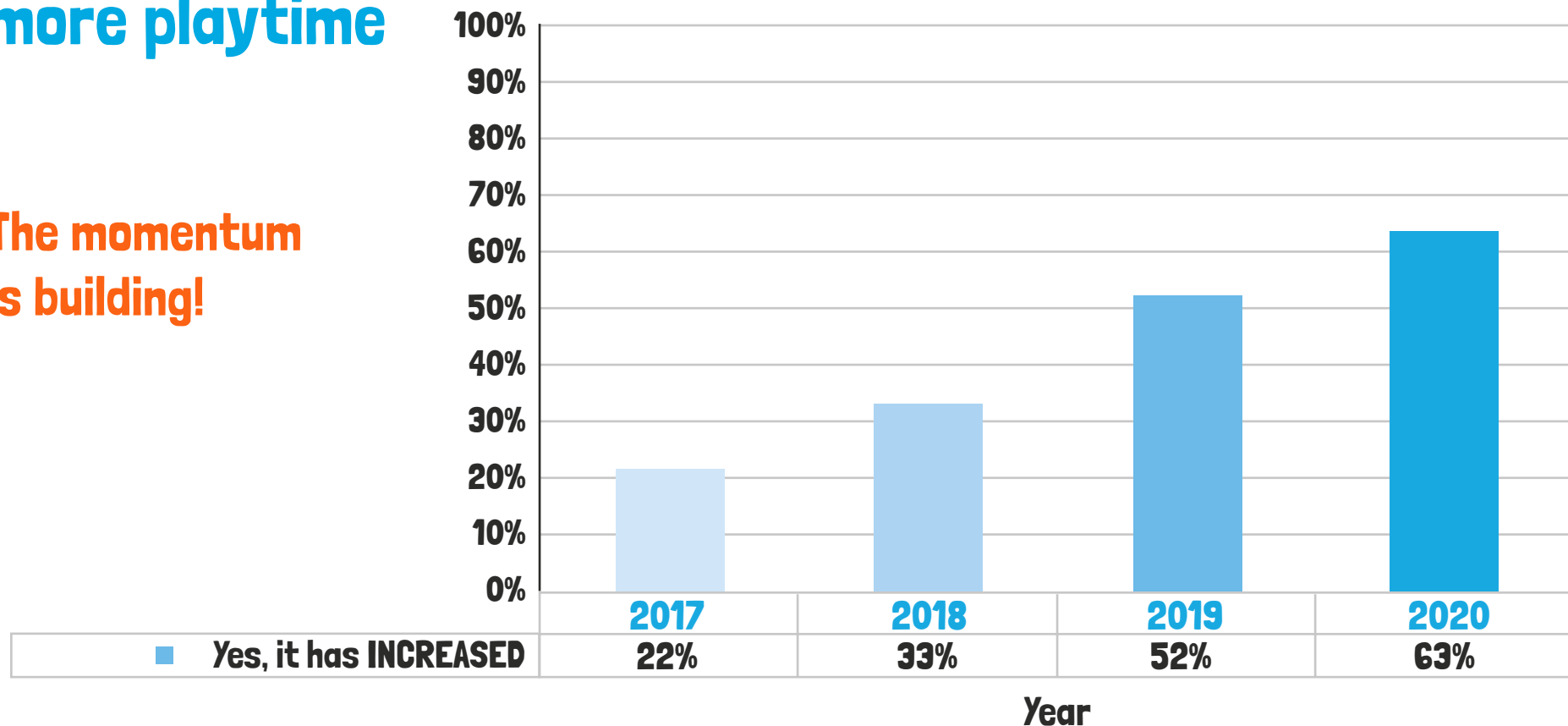




## Children now have more playtime

The momentum is building!

Percentage of schools that have increased the amount of time available for children's play since they started taking part in Outdoor Classroom Day



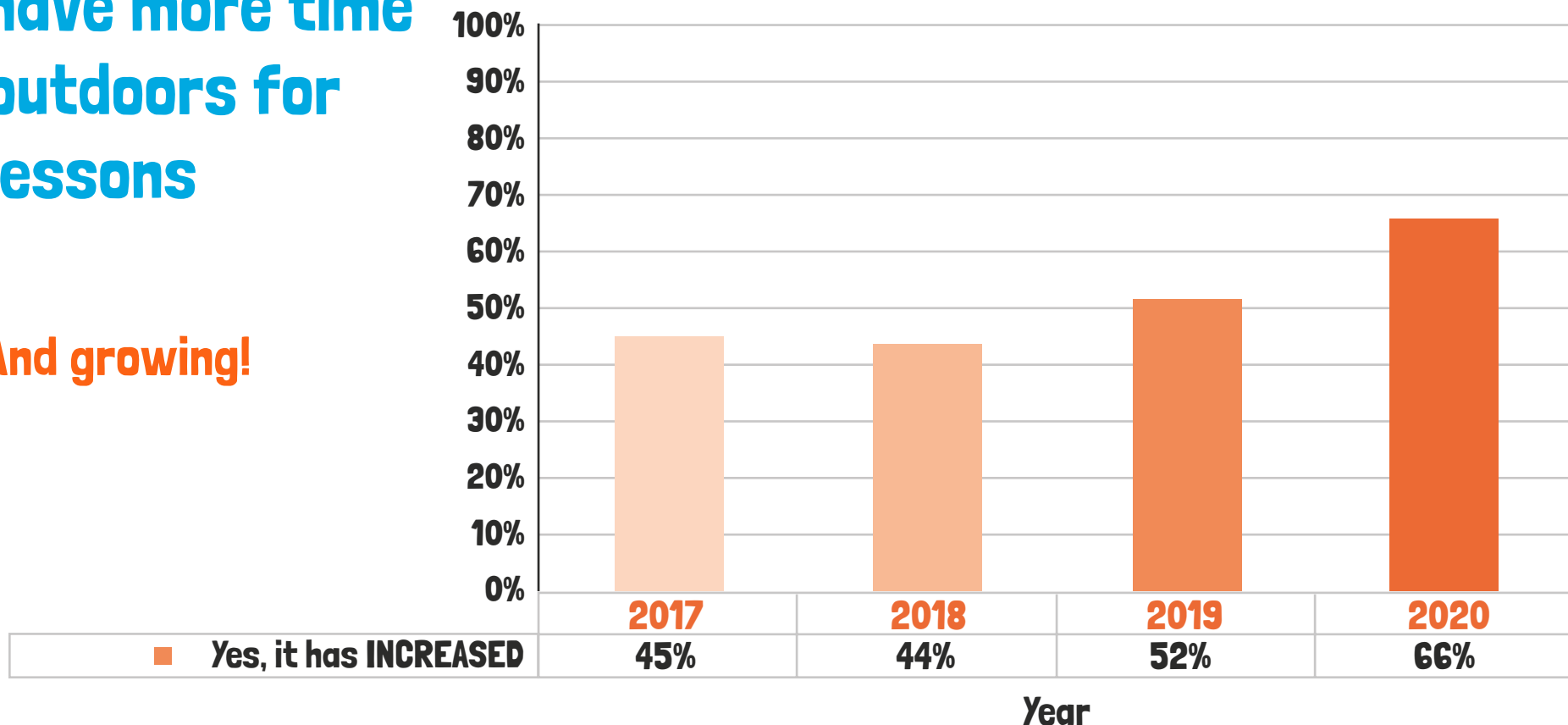
\*Data from surveys conducted from 2017 to 2020



Children now  
have more time  
outdoors for  
lessons

And growing!

Percentage of schools that have increased the amount  
of time available for lessons outdoors since they started  
taking part in Outdoor Classroom Day



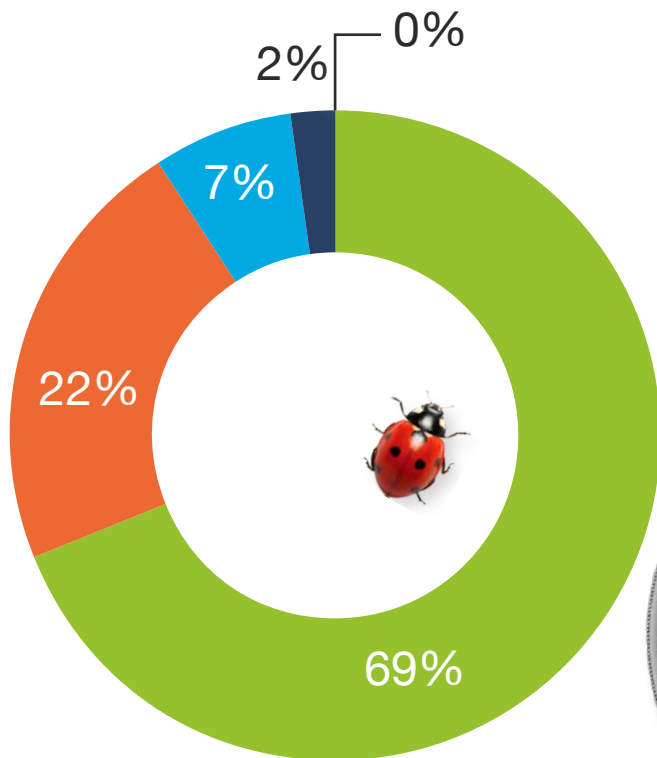
\*Data from surveys conducted from 2017 to 2020






## Everyday access to the outdoors is more important now than ever

**Compared to 2019, 91% of teachers think everyday access to outdoor space is more important to children now.**



- 
- Much more important
  - More important
  - The same
  - Less important
  - Not at all important

\*Data from November 2020 survey



## Where are we now?

- In more schools in more countries, learning outdoors happens every week. Teachers' confidence in getting outdoors has grown.
- More schools in more places are becoming aware that playtime is not just a break for teachers between lessons, it is critical to children's resilience, development and happiness.
- Around the world, teachers and parents are even more aware that connection to nature is important for children every day. Children who spend time outdoors grow to love the environment and take action to protect it.

This movement helps schools spread that message, changing children's life chances.







**Building engagement.  
Fostering change.**





# The Outdoor Classroom Day journey



When teachers hear about the campaign, they sign up.



When they sign up, they build confidence in getting outdoors.



When they build up confidence, they increase time and frequency children are outdoors at school.



When children are outdoors at school more, they are healthier, happier, more focused and more environmentally aware.



Then teachers tell their colleagues, who get the whole school involved. They tell parents. They tell friends at other schools.



## Policy impact

### Scotland

A Scottish Minister tabled a motion of support in Parliament which received cross-party support. They held a televised debate and visited a school on the day in May 2019.

### Australia

The Government supported the campaign and encouraged all schools to take part.

### Indonesia

The campaign was supported by the President and multiple Ministers, including the Minister for Children and Women's Empowerment. In November 2019, they went to schools on the day and launched a new initiative encouraging teachers to get outdoors.

### Finland

The Finnish President became the Patron of the campaign and attended an event on the day in May 2019.

### India

The West Bengal Board of Secondary Education has included Outdoor Classroom Day in its mandatory list of co-curricular activities for classes V - VIII and has linked it to the Right to Education Act 2009. Our NGO partner plans to campaign to extend this approach to other states.





## Policy impact

“If we want happy children, they need to play outdoors. We have to make playing outdoors every day routine again. By supporting Outdoor Classroom Day and by supporting the goal that playtime at school should be at least 60 minutes long, the Scottish Government can send the message that it believes that outdoor play is important, not just at school but every day.”

Ruth Maguire, Minister for the Scottish Parliament



## Words from our community

“Outdoor Classroom Day was a great way to get me thinking about getting students outside. It was almost like having permission to make it happen because it was a global event, which administrators and others can get behind!”

Charlotte, USA 

“It was a wonderful experience for the students. They become more involved with nature and they got conscious about the environment problem.”

Camila, Argentina 

“With the chaos that the world is in in general, connecting to the outdoors gives a sense of normality and safety.”

Stacey, Australia 

“We are aware of the science behind young children’s learning and development and know that being outside is paramount to healthy, happy learners.”

Sarah, United Kingdom 

“Outdoor Classroom Day in 2020 was special and different, because we were able to celebrate it even knowing all the care that would be necessary and, it also became really special because, it was 4 days since we had the school open after the 2 month period in confinement because of pandemic.”

Elisabete, Portugal 





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It was produced by **Semble** and the **global Outdoor Classroom Day team**.

### Acknowledgments

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- **Keir Barraclough**, Outdoor Classroom Day's Global Campaign Officer
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OUTDOOR  
CLASSROOM  
DAY

Thank you for getting  
children outdoors.

SEMBLE