

# Schools Publicity Pack

Once you have decided that you want to hold an event for WaterAid you may want to organise some publicity. This helps to both raise awareness of your schools fundraising activities within your local community, whilst also communicating WaterAid's message to a wider audience.

In this pack you will find some useful tips on how to go about successfully contacting the media, and gaining the maximum exposure possible.

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## Schools and WaterAid

Harvest is a time of celebrating what we have and for sharing with those in need. In your school you can help those less fortunate this harvest time by holding an event for WaterAid.

Many of the world's poorest children are unable to go to school as they have to spend their days collecting water. Even for those who can go to school, more often than not, there is little or no water supply. Put simply, poor access to clean water and sanitation prevents millions of children in developing countries from attending school. You can help to change this.

WaterAid can provide someone with a lasting supply of clean water and sanitation for as little as £15. By fundraising in school, you can help more children get the education they deserve.

These tips will help you get the most publicity for both your school and event, and help WaterAid provide water for harvest, and water for life.

## What is WaterAid?

WaterAid is an international charity dedicated exclusively to the provision of domestic water, sanitation, and hygiene education to the world's poorest people. WaterAid's work is fundamental; over a billion people do not have access to safe water and over two billion people lack adequate sanitation.

WaterAid works by helping local organisations set up low cost, sustainable projects using appropriate technology that can be managed by the community itself.

WaterAid also seeks to influence the policies of other key organisations, and governments, to secure and protect the right of poor people to safe, affordable water and sanitation services. We believe that our approach makes it possible for communities to sustain a better quality of life, and is an essential step in the eradication of poverty.

When you have decided which newspapers, radio stations and magazines you want to target, you will need to send them a press release. It's no surprise that local newspapers like local stories, especially those involving children. They may also send a photographer to cover your event if they receive a good release.

## How to write a press release

The most important thing when writing a press release is to think about your audience. It's the journalist's job to sift through information to get to an interesting story, so it's vital to get the point across straight away.

- If you are writing to your local paper, make the local link evident early on, e.g. where the school is, where the pupil is from etc, - be specific.
- Make sure the most important information such as the date, time and place of the event is included in the first paragraph.
- Mention WaterAid and give a definition early on. One of the simplest, least wordy ways is: "WaterAid, which provides safe water and sanitation to the world's poorest people..."
- Think concise: if possible keep your press release to one side of A4.
- Use double-spacing between lines so the release can be read at a glance.
- Don't use words of three syllables or more if you can help it.
- Try to think of a headline that will catch the journalist's attention, one that could be copied straight into the paper.
- Don't forget to add contact details for further information.
- A quote is always good, from a teacher or pupil, saying how much they hope to raise, or if it's after the event, how successful it was, how much money was raised etc.
- Before sending the release, find out who is the most appropriate journalist to send it to, and follow up the release with a phone call to check that they received it.
- Make sure the contact is available to respond to calls straightaway - journalists will rarely hang around to speak to you - they will simply move onto the next story.
- Don't forget to send the release to local radio and also any specialist publications who might be interested, for example if it involves hill walking it might interest walking/countryside magazines, especially if it comes with a good picture.

Here's an example of the sort of release you may want to write to publicise your schools activities:

## School Harvest reaps rewards for World's Poorest

WaterAid is appealing to all schools across UK and Europe to help some of the world's poorest children by taking part in its *School Harvest Appeal* this Autumn. \*

\* (i.e. *who, what and when in opening paragraph*)

WaterAid, which provides safe water and sanitation to the world's poorest people,\* has a pack of information and fundraising ideas. This year's school harvest focuses on WaterAid's work in Madagascar and how projects there have helped children understand the importance of water, sanitation and hygiene in their neighbourhood.

Staff and pupils at ..... (*insert schools name*) school are helping to raise money for some of the worlds poorest people

with the help of WaterAid's free *Water for Harvest, Water for Life* pack.

The pupils of class ..... (*insert class number*) have ..... (*devised puppet shows/ written poetry etc...*) as part of their harvest celebrations, based on the pack which focuses on WaterAid's work in Madagascar.

**Teacher/pupil** ..... (*insert name*) said "We were shocked to learn that over 1 billion people lack access to safe water, and over 2 billion have nowhere hygienic to go to the toilet, yet for just £15 WaterAid can provide someone with a lasting supply of safe water, sanitation and hygiene education.

"The whole **class/school** ..... have really enjoyed (*making puppets/writing poetry etc...*), knowing that their efforts will help those less fortunate than them selves this harvest time. We are hoping to raise ..... (*insert amount*) to help WaterAid provide clean water and toilets to the world's poor."

For more information contact (*spokesperson*) on ..... (*tel number*) or email [schools@wateraid.org](mailto:schools@wateraid.org)

## Ends

### Editors:

- For more information on this event/fundraiser please contact (**local contact**) ..... on ..... (**tel number**) or email .....
- For case studies, photos and/or information about WaterAid's projects in Madagascar, please contact **Kate Watson** on **020 7793 4793** or email [katewatson@wateraid.org](mailto:katewatson@wateraid.org)

## Case studies

You may find it useful to have some examples of WaterAid's work to talk about at your event. Have a look at these case studies from Madagascar, which will give you some background knowledge:



Ikognane, 50 years old. Vice president of a group of kitchen gardeners she has two children

"Fifteen people work here. Before the well we had no kitchen garden. Before the well was installed there wasn't anything you could eat on this bit of land (indicates the garden) there just wasn't enough rain to make things grow. We still don't have the rain, but now at least we can water the plants ourselves.

"The great thing is that, now we have a garden we are able to eat a much greater variety of vegetables than before rather than just manioc, which means we are eating a more varied diet. It is much healthier than before – we know our families will be healthier. We also sell some of our vegetables so make some money in that way."

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Rasoarimalala (nickname: Rasoary) 16

"I collect water for myself and my family – there are seven of us all together and we use four buckets of water a day. It is always the girls who collect the water.

I have to come here two or three times a day. Sometimes it takes a long time because there is a queue – we queue up to about an hour at a time."

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Lily, 7 and Bina, 4

Lily: We are collecting water for our family, sometimes we do it with our mother. It is always the girls and women in our family who collect water. I like doing it because it helps my mother."

## In Summary:

- See if you can get a local celebrity involved, or perhaps, a high profile business person to give the story more appeal.
- Think how to capture people's imagination to make your event stand out i.e. is it a fancydress bike ride with a prize?
- Follow up any press releases with a phone call to see if the newspaper a) has seen the press release; b) is interested; c) would like more information or perhaps details for a feature story based on the event.
- Identify your spokesperson. Make sure this person is well briefed on the event and its aims so that they can give an informed and entertaining interview to media. Quote this person in your press release.
- Get a good photographer to cover the event. If you've got good pictures the newspapers may print the story afterwards. Be imaginative with the picture - bear in mind the press are always looking for something different, so make good use of any props (e.g. water containers or water itself) and eye-catching costumes if you have them.
- Keep a list of all the media contacts you made during the event, so that next time you can personalise your press releases and build up an address book of people who can help.

For a more detailed guide, or information on WaterAid, go to [www.wateraid.org](http://www.wateraid.org)