Speaker Network Impact Report
2021/22

Inspiring talks and workshops bring our work to life
Sadia collects water from the pond sand filter in Kathamari, Shyamnagar region, Bangladesh, September 2018. The water in Shyamnagar region is saline, so it is unsafe for drinking. Pond sand filters are a simple technology, pumping water from a pond through a number of chambers containing sand and gravel that clean it for drinking.

Clean water. Decent toilets. Good hygiene.
Three things that change lives, but talking about them is always the start.
Thank you to our WaterAid Speakers for your incredible support through another year.
As always, our dedicated Speakers have been:
- Educating audiences about water, sanitation and hygiene.
- Breaking down stigmas and talking about taboo subjects like periods and toilets.
- Inspiring people to take action and support us.

And thanks to the passion and dedication of our volunteers, the Speaker Network now runs talks and workshops in three ways: face-to-face, virtually, and internationally.

Speakers make change happen
Since 1981, WaterAid Speakers have delivered more than 11,000 talks and workshops.

The Speaker Network’s achievements from April 2021 to March 2022:
- 81 Speaker volunteers
- 425 talks and workshops
- 713 views of our YouTube talks
- 17,907 audience members

WaterAid/Habibul Haque
WaterAid/Oliver Dixon
Keeping it clean

As we continued to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic this year, we have been especially focused on hygiene across all our work.

Our branded and trusted hygiene campaigns:
- Reached 181 million people.
- Distributed 1.8 million hygiene products, including soaps and sanitisers.
- Delivered 2,700 large-scale innovative handwashing facilities in key public places.

In the UK, our Speakers also promoted good hygiene to big audiences. This meant tackling important and sometimes taboo subjects, like toilet habits and managing periods.

No matter where we live, good hygiene always starts with talking about it. And alongside our campaigns around the world, your talks are putting good hygiene at the top of the agenda for everyone, everywhere.

Thank you!

Getting the message out

Judy specifically addressed problems that young women face once their menstrual cycle begins, which resonated with the Rangers that age.

Judy, volunteer Speaker.

Rangers Leader
1st South Woodham Ferrers Rangers

How we support our Speakers

Each year, we support our Speakers with the training and resources they need to talk about taps and toilets with confidence.

While 2021-22 was made tougher by continued pandemic restrictions, we were still able to facilitate and support 425 Speaker requests.

The Speaker Network team provided:
- Ready-made WaterAid presentations
- Speaker handbooks and guidance
- Refreshed online Speaker training
- Webinars for Speakers
- Updates to our Speaker Network Facebook Group
- Newsletters for Speakers
- WaterAid branded resources
- And responses to your emails and phone calls

It’s always a pleasure to support our Speakers as best as we can and ensure you are empowered with everything you need to deliver your talks and workshops.

A town crier raises vital hygiene awareness for us in Sierra Leone during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Virtual talks and workshops

COVID-19 restrictions may have moved the Speaker Network online over the last two years, but virtual talks have become a preference for many Speakers and audiences.

One of our busiest Speakers, Adele, explains how virtual talks became the perfect blend of inspiration and convenience for her:

I joined the Speaker Network during the first COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, as it let me undertake voluntary work from home.

I found it so rewarding that I have continued to give talks virtually to schools and youth groups around the country. The interest and enthusiasm of both the young people and their teachers is amazing.

As online technology is now commonplace, I am pleased to be able to support WaterAid from my desk.

Adele

How you reached people

Going international

Virtual talks and workshops have provided the Speaker Network with another opportunity – we can now offer them internationally!

This year, Speakers have been engaging new audiences in the USA and Europe. Long-time Speaker Geoff told us about his experience:

“Two years ago, I wouldn’t have dreamt of giving a talk to the International School in Stuttgart to mark World Toilet Day, or liaising with people in Poland and Italy to give a talk at a virtual European conference. This gives us a whole new audience who may not be aware of WaterAid’s work and the millions of people it has helped.”

Meanwhile, a talk from Rebecca to Far Brook School in New Jersey resulted in a major donation. The school told us:

“Rebecca delivered an amazing presentation from the UK, detailing WaterAid’s work and the urgency surrounding clean water and sustainability issues. It inspired the children to fundraise for your organisation. We raised over $5,000 for WaterAid America.”

We are looking forward to working closely with WaterAid offices in different countries to support them with more international talks and workshops.

Face-to-face talks and workshops

For some Speakers and audiences, in-person experiences are still the most dynamic and inspiring choice. So in August 2021, we were delighted to reopen the Speaker Network for face-to-face sessions with new guidance on how to keep everyone safe.

Thank you so much to Speakers who felt comfortable restarting these sessions in their local areas.

The Speaker Network teams hopes to support even more Speakers to take part in face-to-face sessions in their local communities in 2022 and beyond.


Adele, volunteer Speaker.

Martina, WaterAid volunteer.

Penelope, volunteer Speaker.
How you inspired people

Our audiences really value hearing from Speakers – and we really value being able to share their excitement with you!

Here is just some of the wonderful feedback Speakers received this year from their audiences.

Gurcharan was very clear and to the point! Thank you so much for providing a fantastic session, our Cubs loved it and we will definitely recommend it to other groups within our district.

Gerard was very good at interacting with the children and pitched the talk at the right level. We are very grateful to him for delivering three talks to our Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. We will soon begin our fundraising activities for WaterAid.

Brian and Carole were incredibly personable. The students really warmed to them, especially when Carole shared her own story. Wonderful team and a pleasure to work with!

Greg's talk was very well received by members of the Rotary. There were quite a lot of questions, which tends to indicate how well it went down.

Adele was articulate and knowledgeable, with a great mix of talking, slides, video, poems and questions. She pitched the talk perfectly for the age group and was at ease with taking questions and listening to them too.

Glynn's presentation style was excellent. He was clear, patient, and offered lots of praise to the children. Will be organising a speaker annually and will possibly look into workshops too. Thank you!

We wanted to take a moment to pay tribute to some of our busiest Speakers for their amazing commitment.

Our busiest Speaker this year was Deirdre, delivering an incredible 64 talks and workshops, and consistently receiving wonderful feedback:

“Deirdre was excellent, a real credit to WaterAid. She pitched the content just right for the age group. The children were engaged and interested, and we are going to continue learning about the charity.”

Other Speakers who went above and beyond this year include Adele, Gurcharan and Chris F.

We are also grateful to Elizabeth and Dave, who have spent many years enthusiastically delivering talks and workshops, and so often being our busiest Speakers of the year.

Finally, a huge thank you to some of our longest standing and most dedicated Speakers, Paul F, Chris C, David B, Barry H and Barrie G.

However, no matter how much time a Speaker can volunteer, every single talk and workshop makes an incredible difference by spreading our important messages.

Thank you to every single Speaker for your amazing efforts, on behalf of WaterAid!

The suspension of face-to-face talks during the pandemic left a considerable void in my life. Now that they have resumed, it’s rather like seeing bright sunshine after a prolonged period of dark cloud.

Being able to engage and enthuse school children while making them aware of WaterAid’s work is both a privilege and a pleasure, and something I hope to be able to do for many years to come.

Dave
Saidson using an accessible toilet block in Morondava commune, Menabe region, Madagascar, August 2018. Speakers’ talks and workshops help us show how inclusive solutions are vital to reach everyone, everywhere with clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene.

A message from Tim

Thank you all so much for another tremendous year of volunteering with WaterAid.

I am so pleased the Speaker Network has continued to evolve in challenging circumstances – offering face-to-face talks and workshops once more, and virtual talks to exciting new UK and international audiences. Our thriving Speaker Network is thanks to you all, for your dedication to volunteering and spreading our important messages far and wide.

As you all know, our work is still so vital and needed more than ever. It’s so heartening to know that our Speakers are as committed as ever to clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene for everyone everywhere.

Thank you again for supporting WaterAid. Together we are making a bigger difference.

Tim Wainwright
Chief Executive
WaterAid UK

The Speaker Network will continue evolving in 22/23. Speakers can expect:

- More in-person requests across the UK and international virtual requests
- New education resources covering Early Years to Sixth Form
- A new corporate partnership

And we will finally be hosting face-to-face Speakers at our new London office, to thank so many of you for your long-standing support.
WaterAid is an international not-for-profit, determined to make clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere within a generation. Only by tackling these three essentials in ways that last can people change their lives for good.

Front cover photos:

- Dennis, 14, stands in front of the crowd gathered to watch his performance in Namalu, Uganda, July 2017. As a member of his school’s hygiene club, he performed a rap about removing the stigmas around periods in his community.

- Kumari Maya Shrestha, 49, washing her hands at the tapstand near her home in Mayankhu, Katari Municipality, Nepal, March 2019.