

2020

ANNUAL REPORT

giving water a voice



Xylem Middle East & Turkey play the H2O Games

A PANDEMIC YEAR

The team's resilience was tested in 2020 and they came through with amazing new programs!

A year to be tested

2020 started off well for Water Alliance. The transition year was behind us and we had a full calendar of school bookings through the spring.

Then pandemic hit. The year was turned upside down; school bookings from March onwards were cancelled and our annual plans went out the window.

The team quickly shifted direction and devised an immediate response to COVID-19 with our online Hand Washing Hero school program.

The team's ingenuity was put to the test this year and they pulled another rabbit from their hat. They conceived and implemented a new initiative to connect directly with students - the Water Alliance Youth Water Ambassador program which launched to great success in September 2020.

While the Water Alliance team was tested and all previous plans were abandoned, the pandemic brought a positive opportunity to reach more individuals through the power of online learning and make a greater impact by educating more individuals than before on the value of water.



PROGRAMS

- **Hand Washing Hero schools**
- Youth Water Ambassadors
- Water: The Global Passport
- H2O Games
- Water Workshops

THE HAND WASHING HERO SCHOOLS

initiative was our response to the pandemic.

A train-the-trainer community mobilization initiative, the Hand Washing Hero program enables schools to inspire student leaders to take on board the importance of proper hand hygiene and water conservation.

In June, we presented the program to WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office who enthusiastically commended us for developing an initiative that connects both good health (SDG3) and sustainable water use (SDG6). They introduced us to the Sharjah Health Authority and Sharjah Supreme Council for Family Affairs (SCFA) who subsequently invited Water Alliance to present the Hand Washing Hero initiative to schools all across Sharjah in a July webinar. This proved decisive in our ability to reach schools for the program.

Corporate funding earmarked for 'Water: The Global Passport' program was re-allocated to allow us to reach over 3,000 individuals. This direct impact can be multiplied 10-fold as these heroes were inspired to share their learning with family back home reaching people as far as Africa, Australia, Japan, India and more.



2020 FEATURED SCHOOL

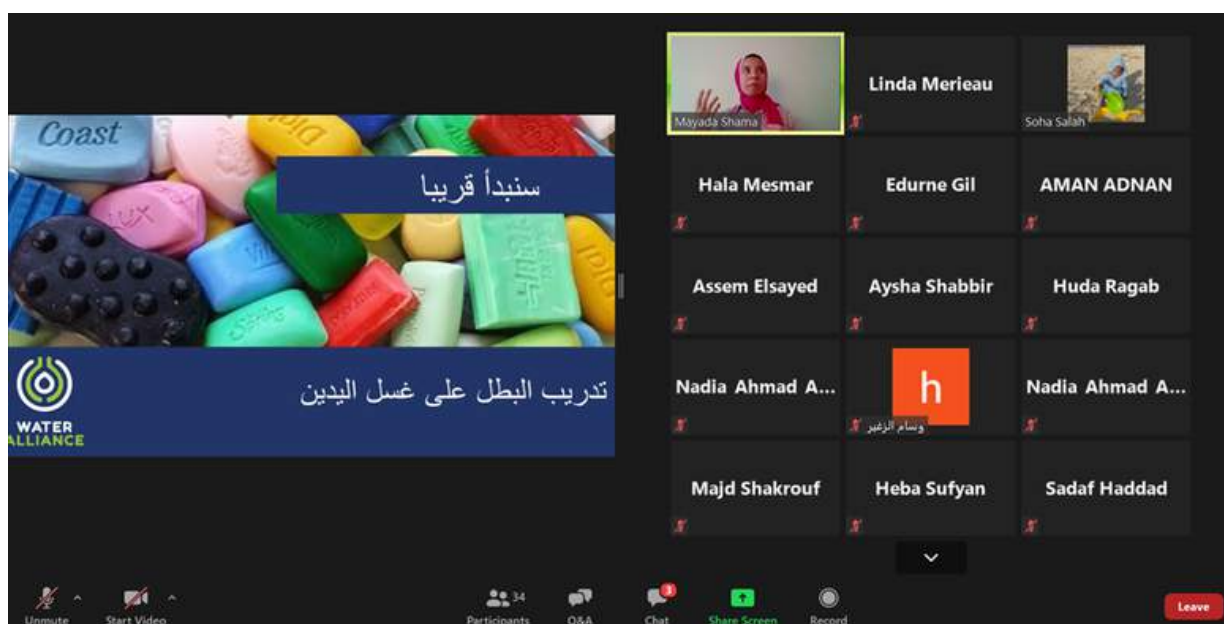
GEMS New Millennium School

It started with just one student, Manvith Lobo. Over the summer, he was trained by his friend Bhakti. She inspired him to go on and train more than 100 people, earning his Gold badge like she did.

His school took notice and signed up the Student Council to take part. Just 50 student leaders were trained by Water Alliance and they subsequently trained the entire school of some 500 pupils.

“Water Alliance made me believe that I can be a change maker. I’m elated to earn my Gold Badge! Sustainable living starts with a small effort by each one of us following responsible water behaviour.”

-- Manvith Lobo, GEMS New Millennium School, Dubai



In November 2020, thanks to support from Xylem Middle East & Turkey, the Hand Washing Hero program was translated into Arabic and introduced at several schools in Sharjah.

The following schools received the HAND WASHING HERO SCHOOL training in 2020:

- Alahliya Private School, Sharjah
- Delhi Private School, Sharjah
- English College, Dubai
- Cambridge Intl Private School, Sharjah
- GEMS New Millennium School Al Khail
- GEMS Wellington Intl School, Dubai
- Global Indian Intl School, Dubai
- New Delhi Private School, Sharjah
- Saint Mary's Catholic School, Dubai
- Taryam American Private School, Sharjah
- Shola Private School, Sharjah
- Victory Heights Primary School, Dubai

2020 FEATURED STUDENT

The first Gold Badge for training over 100 people was awarded to BHAKTI HEGDE.

"It's been a wonderful learning experience for me training water heroes from Australia, India, London and Korea which has helped me build my confidence and knowledge. Join hands to save water and save earth. Every drop counts!"

-- Bhakti Hegde, Delhi Private School, Sharjah

2020 FEATURED TEACHER

Ritika Oberoi, Delhi Private School Sharjah

After hearing about our community mobilization initiative through the WHO Sharjah Healthy Cities program, Ritika was among the first Heros to be trained. She made it her summer project to reach 1000 people and she succeeded! A passionate educationalist and environmentalist at heart, this is what she had to say about our program:

"It's simple, informative and interactive for everyone to learn the proper hand washing techniques and most important, not waste water!"



This program has been made possible thanks to support from: Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group, Edrington, MAS Paints and Xylem.



In 2020, we have impacted over 4,870 individuals to protect and preserve our world's water !

PROGRAMS

- Hand Washing Hero schools
- **Youth Water Ambassadors**

AMBASSADORS PROGRAM

The Student Ambassador program launched in September 2020 with seventeen students from a dozen schools across Dubai and Sharjah.

We welcomed applications in August and held the induction session in September. The students got off to a great start focusing on a new topic each month. We explored the issues behind water pollution, the impact of food waste on water, the challenges of water access, water as a human right and the importance of water for soil biodiversity.

2020 Field Trips:

- Uns Farm to understand vertical farming and hydroponics
- Virtual Field Trip to the Emirates Soil Museum
- Sustainable City to explore Dubai's first operational net zero community

In 2020, Water Alliance Ambassadors entered the FAO Contest on Soil Biodiversity with the expert support of the Emirates Soil Museum. See the section on Special Events for read all about their collaborative story writing project and 'Cory's Adventures'.



Our learning with Water Alliance has been phenomenal. We have a sense of satisfaction that we can do something to give water a voice. We just can't say it enough - you are the best mentors EVER. If every teacher in every school in the world was like you, this world would be a place full of changemakers.

-- Mishal and Mir Faraz, brother & sister Ambassadors, Winchester School, Jebel Ali



PROGRAMS

- Hand Washing Hero schools
- Youth Water Ambassadors
- **Water: The Global Passport**
- **H2O Games**
- **Water Workshops**

WATER: THE GLOBAL PASSPORT

Sadly, this popular program was put on hold in March 2020 due to COVID-19. Prior to this decision, we had a full schedule of bookings for in-school sessions which could not go forward due to local restrictions. Nevertheless, we conducted sessions with our volunteers in January and February for:

- GEMS Metropole
- Kings School
- Latifa School for Girls
- Southview School

FEATURE: Dubai College

Water Alliance was invited to join Dubai College's Positive Education Day for Year 7 & 8 students in January 2020. We organized a full day of sessions on Our Water Footprint and the Water-Energy-Food Nexus for over 300 students to sensitize them on good water stewardship.



Corporate volunteer with students from Kings School

CORPORATE H2O GAMES

The Water Alliance Team delivered a half-day corporate workshop for Xylem as part of their annual sales conference in February. Over one hundred participants from across the Middle East & Turkey gathered for this meaningful team-building activity.

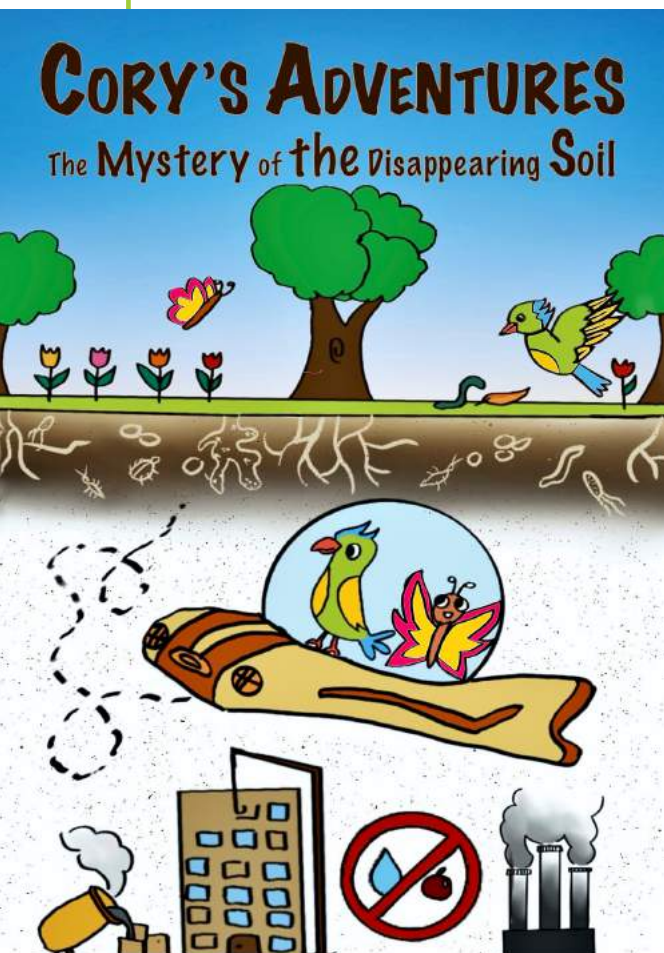
WATER WORKSHOPS

In April, Water Alliance hosted its first online workshop called 'A Bag for Good'. The aim was to discourage single-use plastic bags and inspire kids to create their own long-lasting, fabric bag.

In October 2020, Water Alliance partnered with Yes4Us to deliver their first online session on the topic of biomimicry and nature. The aim was to inspire people to preserve nature as our source for future innovation.

TOTAL IMPACT:

In 2020, our Programs directly reached 4,870 individuals. Despite the pandemic, we increased our direct reach by 82%.



Cory's Adventures can be viewed on our website [here](#).

"I really enjoy teamwork and it was refreshing to see how different views and ideas converged into a beautiful story with a strong message. I wish children around the world could read our book."

-- Isha R. Nair
Student, Kings School

SPECIAL EVENTS

Highlight: FAO Short Story Competition

Promoting sustainable behaviors

Special Events to promote awareness of the global water crisis and the need to conserve water in the UAE are an integral part of our program work.

This year, Water Alliance collaborated with the Emirates Soil Museum to enroll our Youth Water Ambassadors in the Food and Agriculture Organization's short story writing competition. The group took on the project with gusto and pulled off a full scale collaboration with thirteen youth ranging from ages 7 - 14 able to contribute their talents. Every student played an important role from story creation, illustration, fact-finding and research to publicity efforts about the final story.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank Mai Shalaby at Emirates Soil Museum for her expert support and Julia Johnson, renowned children's author for giving the youngsters her amazing feedback and advice!

SPECIAL EVENTS

Water Alliance participates in public events to inspire sustainable living habits that protect and preserve water. Our Ambassadors spoke at the Emirates Soil Museum virtual event for World Soil Day, shared their story at the Down to Earth event at Jameel Arts Center.

We celebrated Global Hand Washing Day by teaming up with Project Maji for their #sweatforsoap run to promote the importance of good practice, scrubbing well and saving water at the same time!

In 2020, World Water Day was marked with a virtual campaign #WaterVoices supported by many corporate Allies. This campaign highlighted the water stories of our staff, core volunteers and corporate partners. The effort encouraged individuals to share their personal stories about water.



**hand washing stops the spread of COVID-19
BUT don't waste water others need!
ON GLOBAL HAND WASHING DAY ...**



MARKETING & PR

**48% of our
Instagram
followers are in
Dubai, 7% in
Sharjah and 6%
in Abu Dhabi.
65% are women**

Brand recognition

Our 2020 social media focus remained on Instagram. We increased our community by 36% (from 1,138 to 1,552 followers) during the year. We held two online awareness competitions.

The first was [#WaterVoices](#) over 10 days leading up to World Water Day 22nd March. We interviewed key volunteers and the core team and encouraged our followers to speak up for water. Those with the most likes received a gift from one of the campaign partners: Alesca Life, Careem, Kohler, Lamp Shaes Dubai, Liquid of Life, NRS Relief, Ripe Organic, Save Our World, Thaely Inc,

The second campaign [#JoinUs](#) aimed to bring in new paying Members. We wish to thank our corporate supporters for joining in this campaign: Armatai Spices, Ixora Organic Beauty, MMAC Design, No More Bottles, Save Our World, and So by Samira Olfat.

On Facebook, we grew organically by 71%, increasing to 261 followers in the year. We posted several stories on LinkedIn and our followers reached 95.



MARKETING & PR

more...

The three top posts in 2020 are featured on the right reaching, respectively: 35.9K, 25.4K and 19K individuals to date.

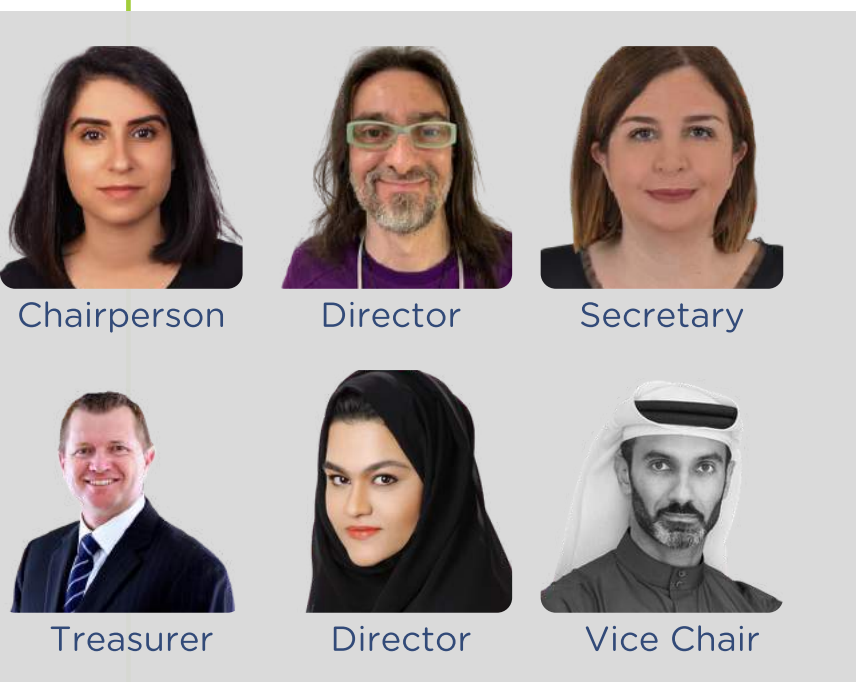
Our Executive Director was invited to Judge the Expo2020 LIVE Program with Suqia, the UAE Water Aid Foundation under the Mohammed bin Rashid Global Initiatives in June. It was a great opportunity to engage with university students on water issues. Our Program Director was invited to speak at the The Middle East Youth Expo on 5th March 2020 in Abu Dhabi.

Our Hand Washing Hero program was featured in the Sustainabilist ([Oct 2020](#)).

"This initiative is transforming people's lives, preventing illness and empowering individuals to take charge of their health and our shared future during this anxiety ridden pandemic."

-- Eman Rashid Saif, Health Promotion Department Manager, Supreme Council Family Affairs





Chairperson

Director

Secretary

Treasurer

Director

Vice Chair

ADMINISTRATION & OVERSIGHT

Our Board Members:

- Noora Al Mulla, Chairperson
- Abdullah Alatrash, Director
- Rania Barakat, Secretary
- Grant Bateman, Treasurer
- Khadija Behzad, Director
- Khalid Shafar, Vice Chair

Water Alliance counted a regular staff of three persons holding part-time positions in 2020. This includes the Executive Director, Program Director and Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator role has been vacant since April 2020 and has not been filled due to insufficient funds.

The core team is supported by a Board of Directors, assuring financial and administrative oversight, and team of volunteers who assist with program development and execution.

In terms of the organization's finances, Water Alliance continues to maintain an operational bank account with Emirates NBD since July 2019. VAT returns have been successfully submitted each quarter and our accounts audited by Al Ghaith & Co. Water Alliance employs TLB Advisory Services to support the accounting function.

Administrative Improvements

The Association staff continue to manage its website domain (wateralliance.org) with content added regularly.

The major enhancement in 2020 was the purchase of cloud software for managing the Association's databases. The system was set-up and databases previously managed on Excel were shifted to the system. This is still work in progress, but it has proved an extremely effective and secure means to manage the organization's data.

Water Alliance trialed several free video conferencing platforms for delivering our programs in 2020, testing Zoom, Cisco Webex and Microsoft Teams. The latter solution was available with the domain bundle and has been adopted.

OUR FAMILY

Thank You to our
Corporate Champions

- MAS Paints
- Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group

and all our supporters and
members

We are grateful for the support of our corporate members who have contributed generously to ensure that Water Alliance continues to spread the message of sustainable living and water conservation among youth, across schools and the community.

We wish to thank MAS Paints for their fourth year supporting our programs at the highest level as a Corporate Champion. We are grateful to Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group for renewing their partnership for a second year and who not only provided financial support but also made a significant in-kind contribution to develop several professional videos to enhance our Hand washing Hero initiative. Xylem and Edrington joined the ranks of corporate member in 2020 with support for our Hand Washing Hero program. Herman Miller's support for our Blue Squad after-school program was re-designated to support the development of our Youth Ambassadors program. Many corporate Allies have continued to support in 2020 with in-kind donations highlighted by our 2020 social media campaigns.

In 2020, we established our annual individual student and adult membership program with seventeen members joining



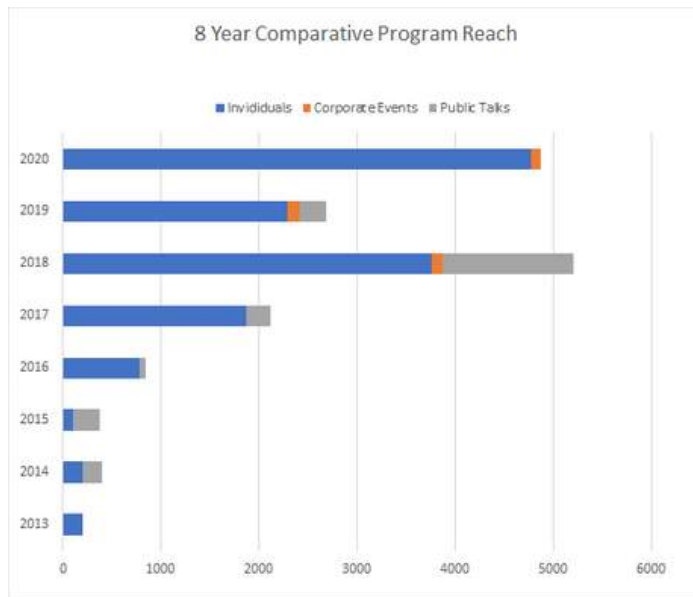
Linda Merieau, ED, presents membership certificate to Frank Ackland, Xylem GM

the Association this year.

Our core team must be congratulated for staying engaged in support of our program work throughout 2020. We wish to thank the following individuals for volunteering their time to the cause of safe water for everyone, everywhere:

- Cecilia Braidy
- Liz Chan-a-Sue
- Audrey Hametner
- Catherine Leach
- Soha Saleh
- Mayada Shama

Many volunteers contributed to the success of our programs by conducting their own Hand Washing Hero (HWH) training sessions and translating the HWH toolkit into Tagalog, Arabic, Malayalam, Hindi and Arabic. You know who you are and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Thank you also to Sylvie Moran for producing several Water Alliance videos that are used in our HWH program.



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Our total cumulative direct program reach since 2014 is 16,582 individuals

2020 Highlights in photos (pre-pandemic)



TAKE THE PLEDGE

Join us in giving water a voice

Our Board of Directors provides us with the guidance, inspiration and motivation to reach higher and plant the sustainability seed in as many minds as possible. With their backing, we've achieved amazing results in 2020 despite the pandemic and look forward to a better year in 2021.

With thanks and gratitude to all those who have played a role, large or small, in helping Water Alliance to inspire others to take meaningful steps toward a more sustainable lifestyle, starting with water stewardship. We look forward to your continued support.

A special wish for our teammate and friend, Mayada, who has left Water Alliance in 2020 to emigrate to Canada with her family. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours!



Linda, Edurne and Mayada

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Program Director
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Program Coordinator
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Photos in this report are from 2020 programs, most pre-pandemic, carried out by Water Alliance Association and must be credited as such. Parental permissions were obtained for photos of minors.

We thank the following companies for supporting our 2020 programs



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