



wasteaid

# WasteAid Annual Review 2020/2021





# Contents

3

Foreword

4-5

WasteAid: The story so far

6-7

Theory of Change

8-11

Programmes

12

Sustainable Development Goals

13

Our impact

14-15

Corporate partnerships

16-17

WasteAid in 2022 and beyond

18-19

Waste Management and Development – Supporting People and Planet

20-21

Global Waste Management is a Climate Issue

22

Accounts

23

Thank you

# Foreword

It gives me tremendous pleasure to be writing the foreword to WasteAid’s very first annual review. WasteAid is such a dynamic organisation with so many things happening at any one time that it is only at times like this I am fully able to appreciate the depth and breadth of our work, and the extent of our impact.

I joined WasteAid in April 2020, barely two weeks into the first UK national lockdown. As did so many of our partner organisations and supporters, WasteAid faced unprecedented challenges as the reality of a global pandemic took hold. Our resilience was truly tested as was that of our partners across Africa and Asia. But even in the midst of such challenging and tragic circumstances, WasteAid still continued to thrive, our partners continued to deliver and our valued supporters continued to support us. Amidst all the uncertainty, chaos and restrictions, WasteAid was still able to identify new areas of need, successfully develop new programme interventions and obtain new sources of funding. WasteAid’s scale and reach increased significantly in 2020 and early 2021, underpinned by the expansion of our dedicated team.

WasteAid was helped through these trying times by the fact that we are lean and agile, with no unwieldy infrastructure supporting our work. That is not to say that we have not felt the impact of Covid 19 acutely. As an organisation working with an international network of partners, we had to find new ways of supporting them and facilitating our work. We pivoted to work swiftly to support Covid resilience in communities and continued to support partner organisations even when some of our institutionally funded projects were suspended. We had to rethink the delivery of our Circular Economy Network to ensure that this would achieve the desired impact as a predominantly online initiative, and we had to support and care for our own team members who suffered personal loss during the pandemic. Knowing the challenges that WasteAid, partners and supporters have overcome over the last 18 months, makes the achievements highlighted in this review all the more impressive and the support even more valued.

The last 18 months has strengthened WasteAid’s commitment to share waste management and recycling expertise where it is most needed and to develop sustainable and scalable models. During the period of this review, we have developed programming focused on supporting middle-income countries and within that entrepreneurs and innovation, we have engaged more closely with policy makers at local and national level, we have further developed our impact monitoring tools and reviewed our programme participants’ experience. We continue our work at community level in Sub Saharan Africa, but have added new elements of programming as we evolve. We have also sustained crucial corporate partnerships and forged new ones. Our early programming has given us a solid foundation on which to build and looking ahead I am excited for WasteAid’s future.

However, we are simply the sum of our parts, without our partners, supporters, donors and WasteAid’s fantastic team, we would not have been able to achieve this level of success or this trajectory of growth. It’s all about partnership and collaboration and at WasteAid we know that and celebrate that fact. Thank you sincerely to all who have been a part of our journey so far....

Yours



Ceris Turner-Bailes, CEO WasteAid





# WasteAid: The story so far...

**WasteAid is an independent UK registered non-governmental organisation set up to share practical and low-cost waste management expertise with communities in lower- and middle-income countries.**

With 1 in 3 people globally lacking a waste management service and 90 per cent of waste in lower-income countries being openly dumped or burned, the need for urgent action has never been clearer.

WasteAid began in 2014 as a network of consultants who were motivated to share waste management expertise with communities across Africa.

From these humble beginnings, it quickly became evident that there was a pressing need for waste management expertise to be shared with the Global South and that WasteAid seemed to be one of very few actors operating in that space. At that time waste management was not high on the development agenda and was relegated to being a niche technical area with little cross over into other sectors such as health, livelihoods or marine pollution, despite the obvious links. In the early years of the organisation, WasteAid built a strong online presence and found that their services were more and more in demand. To respond to all the requests for support WasteAid needed to grow.

From the outset, WasteAid enjoyed unrivalled support from the UK waste management sector. In those early days, it was this link that truly sustained the organisation. WasteAid's supporters from that sector supported the organisation through fundraising, volunteering and through a grant from the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM) to develop the award-winning WasteAid Toolkit. This support allowed the organisation to further develop its approach and build a solid international reputation.

The organisation was able to forge links with Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in Sub Saharan Africa and utilising the UK Government's Small Charities Challenge Fund (SCCF) started projects in The Gambia and Kenya. WasteAid began to manage projects that increasingly used waste management skills as a tool for development – improving livelihoods through the sale of recycled materials, providing business support to community-based recyclers, as well as reducing waste pollution in communities and transforming how waste was viewed and disposed of. WasteAid used these projects to develop and test its model for transformational change.

With the release of Sir David Attenborough's documentary Blue Planet II, the world finally woke up to the terrible impact of marine plastics pollution on both people and planet. This happened around the same time that China banned imports of mixed plastic waste. It seemed that these two events had a profound effect on the public's understanding of the global waste crisis. It also sparked a growth in corporate enterprises feeling the need to invest their CSR funds into tackling waste, and human development agencies began to earmark greater funds for projects which previously may have been considered as outside of their remit.

One of WasteAid's first corporate partners was Biffa Plc who entered into a three-year partnership with WasteAid in 2019, further supporting the development of the organisation. Their support, and the support of their engaged workforce, has been a terrific boost for the organisation.



This impactful partnership was quickly followed in 2020 by a partnership between WasteAid and Huhtamaki Group, a key global provider of sustainable packaging solutions. Huhtamaki supported WasteAid to develop another aspect of their programming – support to waste innovators and entrepreneurs through the Circular Economy Network. For the first time, WasteAid began work in middle-income countries, in this case India, South Africa and Vietnam. Bunzl Plc also threw their support behind WasteAid's work through a partnership that to date has delivered projects in Indonesia and in Cameroon in 2020 and 2021.

Over 2020, despite the pandemic WasteAid continued to develop – there was a change of leadership and the organisation expanded its team bringing in diverse and much needed skillsets. Waste managers were joined by development specialists with experience of managing larger-scale international operations as the organisation's horizons expanded and greater needs and opportunities were identified. By the end of 2020, WasteAid had delivered projects in eight countries across Africa and Asia and had enjoyed further success in securing UK Aid funds to deliver a project in Douala, Cameroon focusing on livelihoods improvement through recycling to prevent ocean plastic pollution in the Douala basin. Funding from the Scottish Ministers for work in Malawi was also secured.

The pandemic put an enormous strain on the organisation and its partners; WasteAid did its best with limited resources to continue to support its partners, but many of our government-funded projects were put on hold. WasteAid also pivoted activities to support communities with Covid resilience measures, for example the building of hand washing stations in our project area in Kenya. Despite the obvious challenges of 2020, several new partnerships were developed with international development organisations, local structures

in the countries where we work and corporate enterprises wanting to support our work.

WasteAid began to incorporate engagement with local and national governments into its projects, knowing that without this level of buy-in, the change we want to see would always be limited. 2020 offered an opportunity for a strategic review of where we were and where we wanted to be which has culminated in, amongst other things, our first Theory of Change. In early 2021, WasteAid commenced its first European Union funded project focused on organic waste in The Gambia in partnership with a municipal council.

WasteAid has had an enviable trajectory over the last seven years which is testament to the relevance of its programmes and the quality of its work. WasteAid continues to move forward, increasing in scale and reach, but equally not straying far from its founding principles and core values. The waste crisis shows no signs of slowing, but what we are seeing is greater awareness of the issues, greater engagement and a real desire for change from institutions, enterprises and individuals. This serves to constantly remind us that WasteAid has not only captured the zeitgeist, but can provide a practical response to the issue of waste pollution.



# Theory of Change



## Enablers

- Political engagement and the global focus on pollution and climate change have grown
- Funding opportunities for environmental programming are increasing
- WasteAid is a small and agile organisation with significant development potential
- The UK waste management sector is very supportive of WasteAid's work

## Assumptions

- The potential of better waste management and livelihood opportunities is recognised in countries of operation
- Waste management and recycling solutions are economically viable and create jobs and value for local populations
- Donors and the public are willing to invest in waste management as a tool for sustainable development
- WasteAid maintains its strong reputation and no major crises challenge this



## Values



### Collective Strength

We are collaborative and work in a collegiate spirit with a set of diverse partners and funders, guided by principles of partnership.



### Knowledge Sharing

We believe in the power of appropriate technology transfer, training and skills development to create long-term sustainable livelihoods and an environment free of pollution from waste.



### Demonstrated Impact

We strive for programme excellence, demonstrated impact and being transparent about our use of resources.



### Strong Communities

We are inclusive in our approach, and seek to empower communities in lower-income countries to innovate and manage their own waste in a safe and sustainable way.

# Programmes

Our recent programmes across eight countries have positively impacted more than 100,000 people.

## Countries with programmes



## Recycling training and livelihoods

Following our UK Aid Match fundraising appeal, WasteAid launched a new project in Cameroon to offer **training and livelihood opportunities** to vulnerable and marginalised people in the coastal city of Douala. Through a **social programme with private company** RED-PLAST and community organisation YICAPED, 164 people will be trained in plastics collection, paving manufacture, community sensitisation and sales and marketing. On completion of the WasteAid internship, the trainees will be offered employment with RED-PLAST.

In The Gambia, WasteAid partnered with Women's Initiative The Gambia and Trust Agency for Rural Development to develop a **plastic recycling training centre** in the coastal village of Gunjur. Here, WasteAid trained 24 trainers and 90 unemployed youth, illiterate older women and people with disabilities, to collect, sort and process low density polyethylene (LDPE) waste into durable paving tiles. The products are sold to local residents and businesses, generating income for the **social enterprise**, Innovative Plastic Recyclers, and reducing the amount of waste that is openly dumped and burned. Over the course of the UK Aid project the team recovered the equivalent of 3 million plastic bags, and the enterprise has become a pioneer for recycling in The Gambia. With a new tranche of support from St. James's Place Wealth Management and the Marlborough Brandt Group, the core team will benefit from targeted **business management training and mentorship** to enable them to expand their market reach and grow their enterprise in 2021/2022.

## COVID response

As an early response to the coronavirus pandemic, WasteAid ensured that all our partners in waste and recycling programmes were protected. We undertook emergency fundraising through an online WasteAid safari and fundraising appeal. In Kenya, we provided financial support for the establishment of **handwashing stations** in the community of Kwa Muhia; and in partnership with UK specialists in waste and health (ISSL and Open University) and practitioners Barefoot College, we developed a suite of **resources for waste handlers** in lower- and middle-income countries to help protect them from COVID-19, which were in turn shared by local partners and other groups.

## Total community waste management

With UK Aid funding, WasteAid partnered with Kwa-Muhia Environmental Group (KMEG), a small community enterprise on the shores of Lake Naivasha in Kenya to help **expand waste collection and recycling activities**. Household waste generated by the 7,000 residents of Kwa Muhia was previously dumped and burned, contributing to the spread of disease and polluting Lake Naivasha, an internationally important site of biodiversity. WasteAid connected KMEG with our partners in the Gambia and other stakeholders in Kenya through a **knowledge-sharing webinar** to discuss experiences and ideas for development. KMEG has now been awarded the municipal waste management contract to collect 19 tonnes of waste every week, creating **local livelihoods** and a cleaner, healthier environment.



WasteAid also ran a 12-month project funded by Bunzl Plc in Indonesia, which saw a partnership with ROLE Foundation and Bondalem Eco Village in Bali. At ROLE Foundation, we created a training curriculum for vulnerable young women to be able to **gain employment in Bali's hotel chains** as Zero Waste champions, as well as infrastructure to allow for the safe handling and sorting of plastic waste. In Bondalem, WasteAid developed infrastructure to enhance community waste management. Through **training, capacity building and investment in infrastructure**, the Desa (local council) recycling rate has increased from 10% to 90%, generating income and providing a cleaner environment that will also make the area more attractive to tourists.

With funding from Corra (Scottish Government), WasteAid delivered a feasibility study in Malawi with local partner International Conservation and Clean-Up Management. Through stakeholder consultation, the study assessed the range of **informal waste management and recycling** activities taking place, their level of effectiveness, and made recommendations for **developing inclusive and sustainable resource management** across the country.

## Global networks

Through its new Circular Economy Network funded by Huhtamaki, WasteAid has developed a global network of entrepreneurs, innovators, business owners, academics, and other interested parties in South Africa, India and Vietnam. Through a series of **webinars and events** in Johannesburg, Guwahati and Ho Chi Minh, the Circular Economy Network is bringing together stakeholders and identifying opportunities to improve resourcefulness in the cities, reduce waste, and develop approaches that provide **livelihood opportunities** for vulnerable and marginalised communities.

A key output of the Circular Economy Network is the Zero Waste Cities Challenge, which will award six €10,000 prizes and free business mentoring **support to circular economy innovators** in the three cities.

“Huhtamaki is proud to support this initiative which will help fast track local solutions to the circular economy. This initiative complements our own efforts to design for circularity and embed sustainability in everything that we do, both in our local communities and across our global enterprise.”

**Thomasine Kamerling, EVP Sustainability and Communications at Huhtamaki**

## Looking ahead

In order to strengthen our programme quality, we appointed both a Head of Programmes and Impact and a Head of Finance and Compliance who have been working with our team and partners to consolidate our work on **monitoring, evaluation, learning and accountability**, as well as strengthening our approach to **project development and management**.

We have also undertaken exploratory work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Laos.

Going forward into 2021/22 we want to:

- Strengthen our monitoring, evaluation and learning capacity and publish our first impact report
- Improve our needs assessment capacity and better define our target areas of intervention.



# Spotlight on Cameroon

In the coastal city of Douala, four major rivers meet at the Wouri Estuary, an internationally important marine biodiversity site. With very little formal waste collection in place, people burn their waste or dump it, in which case it eventually gets washed into the rivers and results in vast quantities of plastic being carried out into the Atlantic Ocean, contributing to the 8 million tonnes of plastics leaking into the ocean every year.

In spring 2019, donations from WasteAid’s supporters were matched by the UK government under a UK Aid Match funding scheme to reduce poverty and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. £168,000 was raised to prevent plastics pollution in the Cameroon estuary and Atlantic Ocean.

To stem the flow of plastics into the ocean, we have partnered with RED-PLAST, a government supplier for paving products with recycled content, and YICAPED, an initiative for environmental protection and sustainable development. Together we are training a new cadre of nearly 100 youths, women and men in one of four work streams: plastics collection, paving manufacture, community sensitisation and sales/marketing. The trainees are currently undergoing an internship as part of our programme before entering into employment with RED-PLAST. A second cadre will be trained and folded into the company next year, bringing the total up to 164. In partnering with RED-PLAST, we are improving the economic outlook of participants by embedding them into an existing successful enterprise with the opportunity for long-term employment.

The project has seen significant growth of RED-PLAST’s operations, enabling them to offer stable livelihood opportunities to the project’s trainees whilst expanding a system of plastics collection to three of Douala’s key markets and 20 surrounding businesses. By the end of the project these trainees will have collected 16 tonnes of plastic and created 12,000m2 of paving tiles made from this collected plastic.

**Rodrigue Ngonde, RED-PLAST General Manager said:**

“RED-PLAST is happy to work alongside WasteAid to step up the fight against plastic waste pollution in Douala and the creation of green jobs, mainly for underprivileged populations.”



# Circular Economy Network

WasteAid’s Circular Economy Network was launched in 2020 in South Africa, India and Vietnam with funding from Huhtamaki, a key global provider of sustainable packaging solutions.

The network brings an inclusive approach to delivering a circular economy in middle-income countries, supporting locally appropriate innovation that keeps materials in the loop, prevents pollution, and provides green employment opportunities. Through a range of approaches, the network provides a platform for all stakeholders in each national hub to connect, share knowledge and identify mutually beneficial opportunities, identify gaps and obstacles to a circular economy approach and work with stakeholders to find and support solutions, provide business incubation and seed funding to selected enterprises.

In 2020 WasteAid developed a dedicated website (circulareconomynetwork.co) to share best practice in driving the circular economy in the three target countries, with an emphasis on the recovery and re-use of materials and diverting resources from disposal. So far over 500 members have registered on to the network and over 1,000 are now following the network on twitter and LinkedIn. We were encouraged to see such an appetite for discussion on Circular Economy topics with over 1,000 have registered onto various webinars held during the year including discussions on the advent of digital technology in waste management, end markets for plastics in Vietnam and hearing from recyclers themselves on how they got started in business. WasteAid also ran events in Johannesburg, Guwahati and Ho Chi Minh City to enable our partner Huhtamaki involved on the ground. The events, which included a river and beach litter clean up, and surplus food redistribution, were further amplified through social media, press and TV, to inform, inspire, and attract more people to circular economic activities.

Finally, the Zero Waste Cities Challenge was launched in April 2021 giving 36 entrepreneurs the opportunity to win one of six prizes of €10,000 and free business support for their circular economy innovations. Over 90 entries were received from innovators such as Bokashi Bran in South Africa working in the recovery and reuse of organic waste, Shree Guru Plastics in India who specialise in recycling low value and contaminated plastics and Limart in Vietnam who are addressing waste challenges in Ho Chi Minh City through a zero-waste grocery store that sells upcycled products. The six winners will be selected in the final half of the year.

Ultimately WasteAid is aiming to grow the Circular Economy Network from the three hubs into a global network.



“We are really excited by the potential of the Circular Economy Network to break down silos of working, to amplify the great work going on in these countries so that they can be adopted elsewhere, and to practically support entrepreneurs and innovators in making their business ideas a reality.”

**Michelle Wilson, WasteAid Circular Economy Network Director**





# Sustainable Development Goals

Inclusive and sustainable resource management is a cross-cutting issue that helps deliver the Sustainable Development Goals.



# Our Impact

WasteAid has worked in

09

countries worldwide



17

programme interventions since January 2020



101,260

People positively impacted



16

New recycling enterprises



12

Dumpsites cleared



20

New products from waste

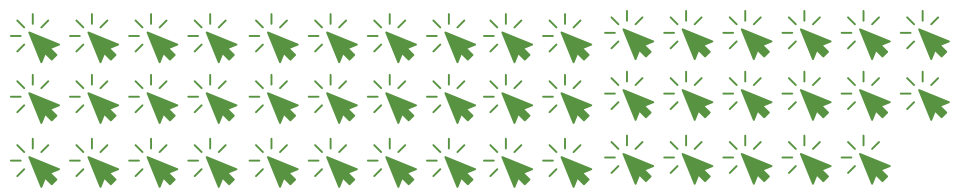


23

Mayors and municipalities engaged

230,000

Visitors to the award-winning WasteAid Toolkit



1 icon = 5,000



# Celebrating our corporate partnerships

WasteAid is fortunate to be working with fantastic corporate partners who share our values and commitment towards safe and sustainable waste management for all. We are hugely grateful to all our partners and donors and look forward to growing our impact together.



Our three-year Proud Partnership with waste and recycling company Biffa has enabled our organisation to grow, with core funding that allows us to carry out needs assessments in new locations and deliver innovation through our programmes. Biffa colleagues have supported WasteAid with a raft of fundraising and awareness raising activities, helping us reach new audiences with our message.



Bunzl plc has funded two WasteAid programmes in Indonesia and Cameroon, developing new waste collection and education programmes and providing livelihood opportunities for vulnerable and marginalised communities. Thanks to Bunzl's support, new teams are trained and equipped to collect and manage waste resources and bring them back into the loop through recycling and composting programmes, leaving a long-term positive legacy for people and planet.



Huhtamaki

Meanwhile, Huhtamaki Group has sponsored our two-year Circular Economy Network, supporting entrepreneurs and innovators in Vietnam, South Africa and India. Through a series of events delivered in partnership with Huhtamaki, WasteAid has brought together policymakers, researchers and businesses that want to be part of the change, regenerating natural systems, designing out waste and keeping resources in the loop.



musicMagpie

musicMagpie drew attention to the mounting e-waste crisis at the G7 summit in Cornwall with the striking sculpture "Mount Recyclemore" created by artist Joe Rush, and gave a generous donation to WasteAid to develop e-waste guidance for partners in lower-income countries.



Zumo

Zumo is sponsoring WasteAid with corporate donations and team fundraising activities. In 2020, team Zumo completed a virtual walk from Scotland to Cameroon, and has more exciting plans in the pipeline.



# WasteAid in 2022 and Beyond

WasteAid is keen to build on its successful foundations and is an organisation that has ambitions for continuous learning, improvement and growth. Following a strategic review process in early 2021, WasteAid's work over 2022 and beyond will concentrate on four key areas that are also reflected in our Theory of Change.

## **We work with the most vulnerable and marginalised in target communities to provide waste management and recycling training and livelihood opportunities**

At WasteAid, we passionately believe that improved waste management can also offer enhanced livelihoods and income generation, helping to alleviate poverty while delivering a cleaner environment for all. In the future WasteAid will continue to focus its programming on both people and planet in lower-income countries. We will continue to expand in Africa, particularly The Gambia and Cameroon, whilst at the same time exploring opportunities to work with selected communities in South Africa, India and Vietnam. We have plans to work in the MENA region in 2022. We will also continue to undertake needs assessments in countries where we feel we could make a difference and will continue to grow our networks with CBOs, local authorities and governments across Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Over the course of 2021, WasteAid has worked hard to further improve its impact measurement and has started to focus in more detail on the participants' journeys, looking at improving our business skills offering, as well as diversifying end-products from recycled waste. We will continue to work with multiple waste streams, especially plastics, organics and e-waste, in both inland and coastal regions.

We will also continue to diversify our funding portfolio to work with funders whose aims and approaches match our own. At the time of writing, we have two new large-scale partnerships in the pipeline for 2022 that will enable WasteAid to expand further and reach even more people who can benefit from our programmes.

## **We support innovation and deliver appropriate systems for first-step resource management to maximise recovery and reuse of waste materials**

WasteAid's Circular Economy Network was the launchpad for WasteAid to work in the innovation and technology sphere. In 2020, WasteAid's programming focus shifted from more community-level interventions in lower-income countries to also supporting middle-income countries.

Staying true to its founding values, WasteAid will always work to improve the lives of the most poor and vulnerable within a community. At the same time, we recognise that innovation and technological solutions could both generate wealth for entrepreneurs and innovators, and also have a positive impact

on those at the very beginning of the waste value chain.

WasteAid will continue to support innovation with a social focus and has built up expertise, knowledge and collaborators in the technology and innovation space. This focus will continue and it is expected that WasteAid will deliver more programmes with a technology element in the future.

At the same time, the Circular Economy Network has allowed the organisation to gain skills and experience in challenge competitions. WasteAid plans to take this approach further and apply it to more of its programmes, providing seed funding and supporting pilot projects to showcase and incubate new approaches. We would like to extend this to lower-income countries, with plans to start this in The Gambia in 2022.

That said, whilst supporting innovation, WasteAid believes in delivering locally appropriate solutions, which may often be very low-tech. In many of the areas we work, even basic functions such as waste collection and segregation do not exist. Similarly, there is limited infrastructure and systems for sophisticated recycling initiatives. As such, WasteAid will continue to focus on establishing these basic services as a crucial first step.

Our approach is dictated by the location in which we work and the extent of waste management services.



## **We foster sustainable social enterprises, social programmes with private sector companies, and local and global networks of waste managers**

Our partners in lower- and middle-income countries include community-based organisations, social enterprises, municipalities and private companies, who share our strong social values and inclusive approach. Setting up a waste-related or circular economy enterprise in a country with limited supporting legislation, fiscal incentives or professional bodies can be extremely challenging, and WasteAid works hard to ensure that key stakeholders in government, civil society and the business sector are engaged and working together towards shared goals. We do this through

facilitated discussion, webinars, meetings and ultimately our programme design.

We also recognise the potential of solutions to be replicated and adapted across different countries and regions. We create opportunities to learn about successful technologies, processes and approaches, and share these with other groups and in different geographies. Our global network is strong and growing, and includes policymakers, innovators and practitioners on every continent. WasteAid is able to leverage this strong network to help drive innovation and accelerate the spread of sustainable waste management practices.

## **We undertake evidence-based advocacy to create an enabling environment for safe, sustainable waste management and recycling.**

Through our social media presence and our engaged staff and partners, WasteAid has regularly managed to advocate for better funding and more focus on waste management to tackle both environmental and development issues. That said, until now WasteAid has been more focused on practical action rather than developing an advocacy strategy.

Given the extent of the waste crisis, the frequency that WasteAid is asked to comment on issues and the engagement of many of our partner organisations, we have rethought our approach. Through the strategic discussions of 2020 and 2021, WasteAid has developed an ambitious plan to advocate with policy makers for greater focus and investment on waste management issues in lower- and middle-income countries.

Our advocacy strategy will take greater shape throughout 2022. The cornerstone of our strategy is advocating for the issues that we care about whilst demonstrating how improvements in waste management can impact so many different areas, such as marine pollution, climate change, poverty alleviation, and health.

As WasteAid matures as an organisation, we have developed more rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems as well as a comprehensive bank of indicators to be used across our programme portfolio. Armed with this approach and with



the skillsets and knowledge to better assess our projects' performance, we believe we are in a strong position to build our evidence base which will be the foundation of any successful advocacy strategy.

In terms of detailed advocacy, it is possible that in the future WasteAid will develop advocacy campaigns on specific issues, drawing on its network for diverse and expert perspectives. WasteAid is launching its first campaign in late 2021 focused on waste and climate change and will be timed to coincide with COP26. At the same time, WasteAid will also participate in a panel discussion at COP26 on this theme, facilitated by the liberal conservative think tank, Bright Blue. COP26 is enabling us to highlight the issue of burning waste and WasteAid will take advantage of this opportunity. However, our work on climate change will not stop there. We will link the results of our climate change programmes to our advocacy and continue to develop as a thought leader post COP26 and through to COP27 which is planned to be held in Africa.

WasteAid will develop a separate advocacy strategy in 2022 and look at further ways to engage its network, partners and supporters on waste-related issues.





# Waste Management and Development – Supporting People and Planet

By Ceris Turner-Bailes,  
CEO WasteAid



At WasteAid, we work with communities and policy makers in lower- and middle-income countries to implement waste management and recycling programmes. Our work improves the livelihoods of some of the poorest and most marginalised, promotes circular economy innovation and contributes to a cleaner and healthier future for all.

Anyone who has travelled or worked overseas in a development context will have had some exposure to the critical issue of waste management – whether this is through the sight of waste-filled open sewers, waste-strewn streets or polluted waterways, perhaps too the acrid smell of burning plastics adding to air pollution.

This is a sensory reminder that 1 out of 3 people worldwide are forced to dump or burn their waste. Apart from the obvious immediate unpleasantness of tonnes upon tonnes of unmanaged waste, perhaps there is little further consideration of 'the waste crisis'.

Although rarely at the top of the agenda, waste poses a significant risk to public health and the environment, as well as the climate. Those working informally in waste management (0.5% urban populations in LMICs) are usually among the most vulnerable, and WasteAid is all too familiar with the harsh realities these communities face in their day-to-day work.

Despite the negative effects of poorly managed waste, what we discard can also offer opportunities that may not

be entirely obvious at first glance. WasteAid will soon be celebrating six years of its pioneering approach to waste and development. Our programmes focus on waste management, recycling, microbusiness support and enterprise development, as well as circular economy innovation.

Through our growing Circular Economy Network in India, South Africa and Vietnam, we are supporting grassroots initiatives and the most marginalised whilst also rewarding innovation through business incubation opportunities and seed funding. We work at community level, we engage municipalities and interact with policy makers to improve systems and share knowledge. We take a market systems approach to our work. Our funding support and our response to the waste crisis can be rooted in both civil society responses and corporate sector collaboration.



The consequences of poor waste management are severe, particularly for lower- and middle-income countries, affecting both people and planet. Health consequences include increased respiratory illnesses due to burning waste, higher levels of insect borne illnesses due to open dumping, and greater prevalence of watery diarrhoea and other illnesses due to blocked and polluted waterways. In the era of COVID 19, effective disposal of face masks and of potentially contaminated materials adds an extra layer of complexity for countries already struggling to dispose of their waste safely. It is the poorest that often bear the heaviest disease burden and for those living in extreme poverty, this can lead to increased mortality. The environmental consequences of



poor waste management are no less serious: burning waste contributes to the climate crisis through greenhouse gases; contaminated soil and waterways put ecosystems at risk; and the dirt and odour from unmanaged waste degrades the general environment.

Waste and the work of WasteAid cuts across most of the Sustainable Development Goals and our work impacts directly at least eight of them. It is for this reason that waste management and recycling opportunities should be recognised as a crucial vehicle for sustainable development. In certain contexts, WasteAid recognises that technical innovation is critical to development, but the majority of our work in lower-income countries, particularly in Africa, is centred around low tech, locally appropriate solutions to ensure sustainability.

The link between waste, clean water and improved sanitation and health is likely clear to all, even if the direct contribution of waste management alone is often difficult to quantify. Waste collection and recycling opportunities can provide sustainable livelihood opportunities (particularly in green recovery activities). Livelihoods opportunities in waste can span the use of recycled materials to make crafts to the production of artisan-made household objects, right through to the cleaning, sorting and selling of waste materials, particularly plastic, on an industrial scale.

Many of these types of responses can lend themselves well to poverty alleviation activities that are pro-poor and inclusive of the most vulnerable groups. At WasteAid, we recognise opportunities for an ever-stronger gender focus in our programmes. Women are well represented in the informal waste management and recycling sector, since it can offer decent, flexible work; and women are also the most affected by a lack of waste management services as they are responsible for domestic waste disposal, often burning household waste in the yard while taking care of children. WasteAid is currently further developing its gender policy and reflecting on how we can strengthen this element of our work.

Waste occupies a central point in development where people and planet meet. By recognising the economic value of waste and developing responses that generate income, we are at

the same time reusing items of no or low value and cleaning the environment. Never has this approach been more recognised than in the post-Blue Planet world. Preventing waste, particularly plastics, from reaching waterways and the world's oceans allows eco-systems to thrive, and the marine life on which so many livelihoods are based to flourish.

Waste management and all its constituent parts is as much needed for land and sea as for the air we breathe! Urbanisation has a compounding impact on waste, as more people require more packaged products. In Asia the waste crisis is growing, out of control even, although it is heartening to see engagement in circular economy initiatives. In Africa there is still some way to go before the waste crisis reaches such levels. There is still time to act to prevent high economic, human and environmental costs. We ask that waste is always considered in whatever programming you implement – be it prevention, reuse or recycling.

Globally, if we want to reach a point where waste ceases to pollute the very environment we need to live, we must work together in a cross-sectoral, collaborative way to achieve results. If policy makers receive compelling evidence of the cost saving that can be achieved by pro-poor waste management delivered from several diverse perspectives, if entrepreneurs recognise the potential business to be made through waste, if communities are enabled to avoid dumping or burning waste, and if funders recognise the central role waste management plays in development, then we will be well on the road to success. As 2021 is the year of COP26, WasteAid will be disseminating this message as widely as possible and we are optimistic of an increasingly receptive audience.



# Global Waste Management is a Climate Issue

By Zoë Lenkiewicz, Senior Technical Advisor and Head of Communications, WasteAid



In the “race to net zero”, the global waste management movement has a lot of work on its hands. While the focus on UK emissions is on iterative improvements, the elephant in the room is still the billions of people who lack a waste collection service and burn their waste in their backyards or at dumpsites.

The UK government says, “We cannot afford to wait to act against the threat of climate change. We must work together to protect our planet and people and ensure a greener, more resilient future for us all”. Surely this means an urgent move to deliver waste management services to the 1 in 3 people who have no alternative to dumping and burning.

Estimated to be causing twice the emissions of aviation, the commonplace practice of open burning is a public health travesty as much as a climate one. Mixed waste contains hydrocarbons, heavy metals, and other hazardous compounds that are released into the atmosphere on a regular basis by households across the globe. Children play and walk to school in clouds of fumes and soot known to cause cancers, and reproductive and developmental diseases.

Waste management systems have been proven to be excellent value for money, in terms of protecting public health (waste collection was introduced in the UK under the first Public Health Act in 1875), reducing flood risk from blocked drains, and improved economic opportunity. Thus far however, waste management has failed to attract anything

like the amount of climate finance that is invested in decarbonising aviation, and which arguably benefits only a tiny percentage of the global population.

## Attracting climate finance to waste management

Under the Paris Agreement of 2015, countries are required to carry out every five years, a process known colloquially as the ‘ratchet mechanism’. Countries must submit Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions compared to a ‘business as usual’ scenario. Under the framework of the Paris Agreement, each country is expected to submit enhanced NDCs every five years, to ratchet up ambition to mitigate climate change.

Since the Paris Agreement was signed in 2015, the conference of 2020 was set to be the first iteration of the ratchet mechanism.

For countries to properly include waste management in their NDCs, they require a reasonable and internationally agreed approach to estimating current emissions, as well as avoided emissions as a result of improved systems. Determining emissions from backyard burning and dumpsite fires is no simple task, but without it, progress will stall.

WasteAid has been collaborating with partners including the International Solid Waste Association, the Royal Academy of Engineers’ Safer End of Life programme, and the UN’s Climate Change and Clean Air Coalition in an attempt to put waste on the agenda at COP.

Policymakers in lower- and middle-income countries are all too aware of the health impacts of burning waste, and the increased risk of flooding and cholera caused by blocked drains. With COP27 taking place in Africa, it is hoped that waste management will finally feature on the agenda.

## How WasteAid is making an impact through its projects

Most of WasteAid’s activities contribute towards the reduction of climate emissions from poorly managed waste,

whether that’s increasing recycling in Cameroon, reducing food waste in The Gambia or supporting circular economy entrepreneurs in India, South Africa and Vietnam with seed funding and business mentoring.

As open burning remains a default approach to waste disposal in lower- and middle-income countries, any activity that diverts waste from disposal can avoid climate change emissions by reducing the amount of “waste” that requires disposal, providing safe alternative routes for resource management, and displacing demand for raw material extraction.

Programmes managed by WasteAid also build climate resilience by removing waste from drains where it contributes to flash floods and associated water-borne and mosquito-borne diseases, and regenerating natural systems by returning organic matter to agricultural land.



Photo: Timothy Bouldry

## What WasteAid and partners are advocating for at COP26 and beyond

### Short-term goals:

- 1 Poor waste management is recognised by global decision makers as a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions and barrier to climate resilience.
- 2 Governments in lower- and middle-income countries recognise that waste management is a cost-effective and achievable way to reduce climate emissions.
- 3 Global decision makers to agree to an internationally agreed standard for estimating the climate impact of poorly managed waste in lower- and middle-income countries.
- 4 A circular economy approach and its positive contribution to preventing climate change is recognised by policy makers and supported through funding decisions.

### Mid-term goals:

- 1 Lower- and middle-income countries include sustainable waste management in their Nationally Determined Contributions.
- 2 Climate finance is directed towards waste management in lower- and middle-income countries.

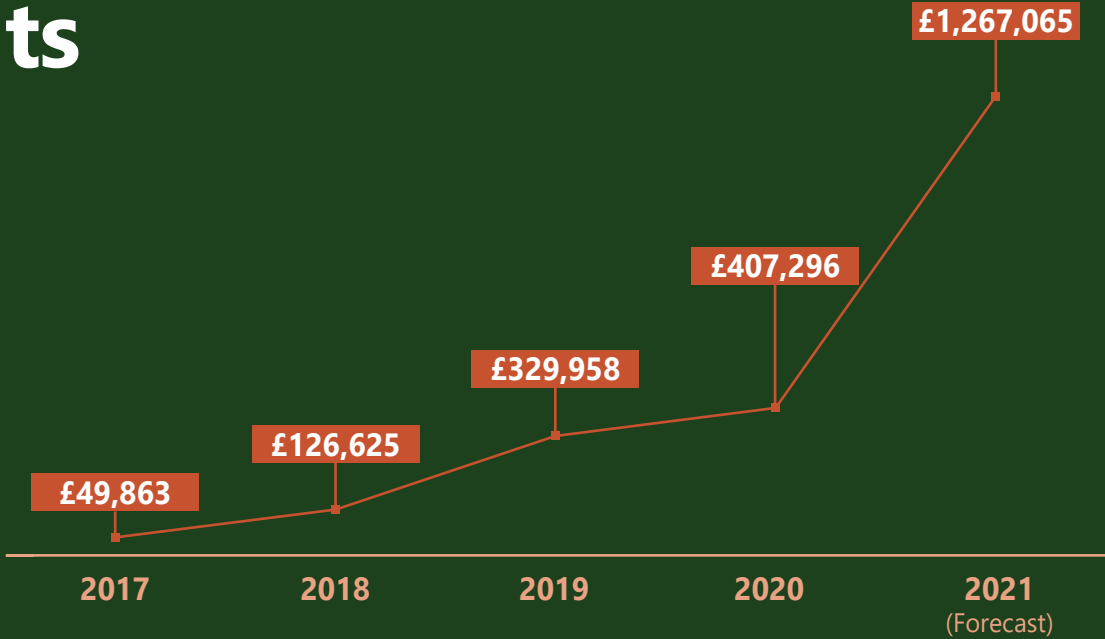
### Long-term goals:

- 1 Funding and policy focus leads to improved sustainable waste management in lower- and middle-income countries.
- 2 Improved sustainable waste management reduces climate emissions and builds climate resilience.

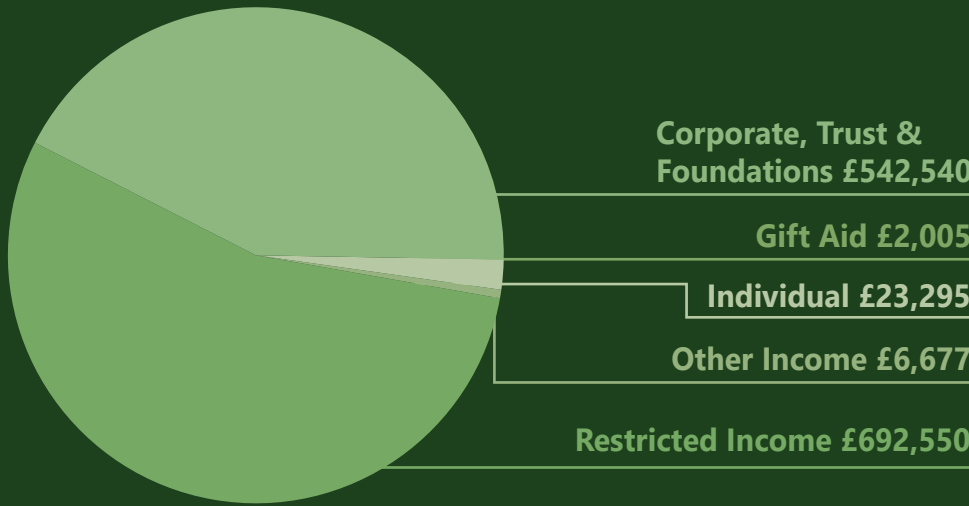


# Accounts

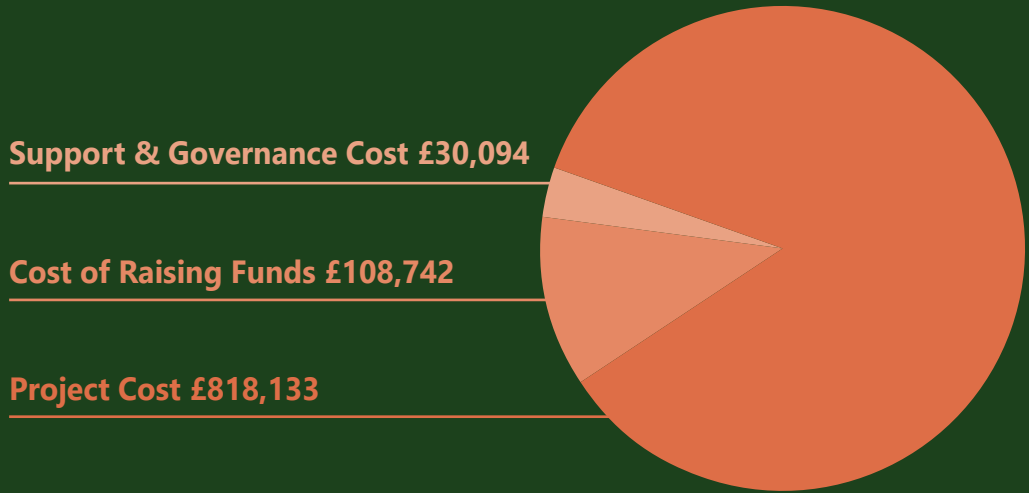
## Income Trend



## 2021 Forecast Income Breakdown



## 2021 Forecast Expenditure Breakdown



## 2021 Spend in the Pound



# Thank you

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our partners and supporters for joining WasteAid in our mission to deliver inclusive and sustainable waste management where it is needed the most.

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