



## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Transforming lives by providing equal access  
to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Uganda





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of the Equal Aqua team - both in Uganda and around the world - I would like to convey my appreciation to all those that supported our work in 2021. This has enabled us to grow and diversify our Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programmes, benefitting over **10,000 people** in 2021. We continue to provide our WASH training, facilities and infrastructure for those that need it most. This means that we have increased our focus on hard-to-reach rural communities, including refugee camps, in Uganda. In 2021 we also launched our successful **Menstrual Hygiene programme**, recognising that women and girls are impacted disproportionately by WASH inequality.

While it has not been without challenge - Ugandan schools have been closed for two years due to **COVID-19** - we managed to adapt our approach, ultimately reaching more people in total than planned. **Please consider sponsoring us again in 2022** so more communities can gain equal access to WASH.



**Abel Odeke**  
Managing Director,  
co-founder



*EAU co-founder Martin Ebeli leading a WASH workshop with Kalengo Village Women's group*



"Water, Sanitation and Hygiene are critical in the context of **health, gender, education and economic recovery**. WASH is also a crucial first line of defence against COVID-19 and future health threats. **Thank you to our sponsors** for really being of great help by giving us funds that has changed lives in Uganda for the better."

**Jovia Namihanja**, Project Officer

## OUR MISSION



Joan Adong  
M&E Lead

Access to water and sanitation is a necessity for living but also essential for **empowerment and dignity**. This is a fundamental human right to every human being regardless of age, race, gender, ethnicity and colour.

Unfortunately, there are high levels of inequality when it comes to access to WASH in Uganda. One of the most vulnerable groups in Uganda are children who contract **water borne diseases** through drinking unsafe water or eating with contaminated hands that have not been washed with soap. This in turn affects children's **cognitive development** and performance at school, especially among girls and other vulnerable groups.



Our focus is on achieving SDG 6 in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals: 'Ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all'.

At the same time, our programmes are designed to support delivery of multiple SDGs.







Nishay Nathwani  
Chair of the Board

Natasha Chadwick  
Trustee

Cecelia Atim Oyet  
Trustee

Michaela Ka Yan Chan  
Trustee

Garth Singleton  
Trustee



Abel Odeke  
Managing Director

Martin Ebeli  
Legal & Policy

Joan Adong  
Monitoring & Evaluation

Maurine Aber  
Communications

Peace Mbeiza  
WASH Co-Ordinator

Stanley Oburu  
Project Officer

John Ssendagire  
Logistics

Jovia Namihanja  
Project Officer

Tonny Opoka  
Communications



Tom McLenachan  
Strategy & Sustainability

Philippa Chapman  
Female Empowerment

Jesse Tomlinson  
Fundraising

Sarah Croft  
Public Health

Georgia Higgs  
Creative & PR

Josh Lord  
Programmes

Matthew Apping  
Project Manager

Genevieve Tanga  
Accounting Officer

David McLenachan  
Design & Fundraising

Deepa Mohankumar  
Project Officer

2021 was the year that Equal Aqua became a truly **international organisation**. Our volunteer base has expanded to countries beyond the UK and Uganda, with new members originating from Trinidad, India and DR Congo. It also marked the foundation of the **EAU Board of Trustees**, who have played an essential role in guiding and sculpting our vision, governance structures and business processes.

Our guiding philosophy remains the same. Our projects are driven by **Ugandan grassroots needs**, as identified by the Ugandan Team, who also design and deliver the solutions. This is supported by the UK/Global Team, who lead on fundraising, communications and other business functions.

We are always looking for additional volunteers with various skillsets to join the EAU family. Please contact us to explore opportunities. This will help us to achieve our aim of attaining **NGO status in Uganda in 2022**.



Tom McLenachan  
Executive Director





## 2021 - OUTCOMES

- 4,751** people provided access to safe, sustainable water with five ecobrick water tanks and two conventional rainwater harvesting tanks
- 105** households provided with water filters, giving access to purified drinking water to almost 600 people
- 5,085** trained in our WASH workshops, of which 78% were women and girls, who learned practical and entrepreneurial skills
- 482** people completed our Menstrual Hygiene curriculum, which we organise for schools and women's groups
- 3** three WASH committees, with majority female representation, were formed in order to create sustainable, grassroots change
- 500** trees planted to support groundwater recharge, improve the local environment and tackle the climate emergency

### Our progress so far...

**9,542**

people provided access to safe, sustainable water

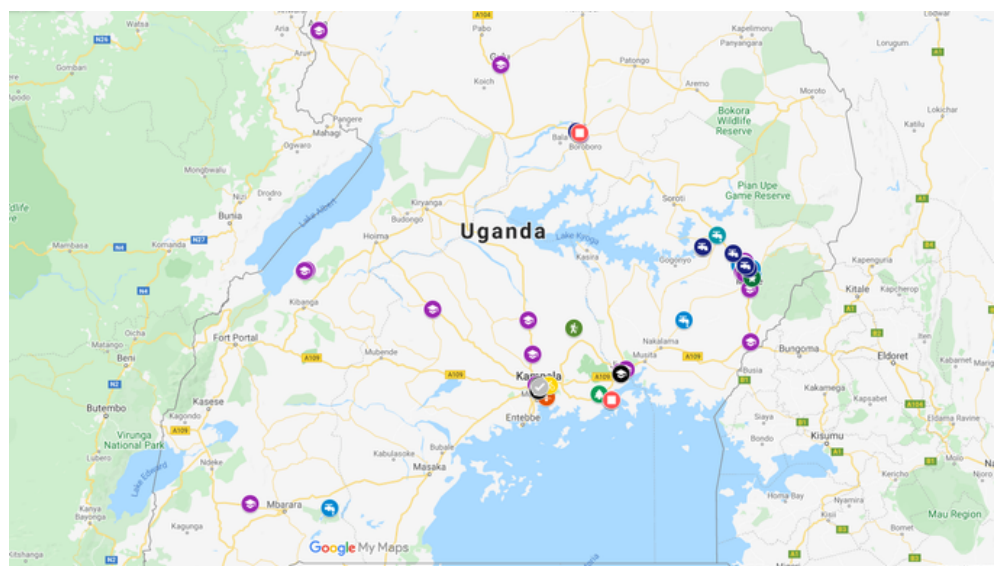
**6,627**

people trained in Equal Aqua's WASH skills workshops

**482**

people trained in Menstrual Hygiene Management sessions

*Our operations continue to focus on rural communities in Eastern Uganda, in particular Bukedea District. In 2021, with the help of NGO Partners we have expanded our outreach to groups throughout Uganda, including refugee camps.*



# TRUSTEES REPORT

Nishay Nathwani  
Chair of the Board



In this first full period of operation as a registered CIO, the Trustees of Equal Aqua (UK registered CIO) are pleased to report significant progress in the activities undertaken both in the UK and by our partners, Equal Aqua Uganda (Uganda registered CBO). Firstly, our fundraising team has raised over £13,000 during the period, a significant achievement. This was accomplished, in the main, by successfully bidding for 2 grants and we would like to thank The Kitchen Tables Charities Trust and The Waterloo Foundation for their support during the year. In addition, we would like to thank the Steel Donkeyz for their efforts, cycling through Africa in raising £2,500 towards our activities. Every penny raised in the UK is put towards funding WASH activities in Uganda.

These sums have enabled our Uganda partners to support the construction of 5 water tanks at schools in Bukedea District, enabling access to improved water supplies for over 3,000 school children and teaching staff. Despite the Covid epidemic, resulting in school closures in Uganda, our partners have been able to use these physical improvements to increase the understanding of WASH-related issues within these schools and their communities. This has been achieved by facilitating the formation of WASH committees in the school communities and supporting WASH workshops to combat WASH inequalities and promote menstrual hygiene health.

Other activities of the Uganda team have included supporting WASH improvements in refugee camps for those fleeing the conditions in Rwanda, South Sudan and DRC, tree planting to combat deforestation and, in coordination with the District Council, the supply of water filters to needy families in Bukedea District.

The Trustees would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to the volunteers, split between the UK and Uganda, and now internationally, who have enabled this successful year of funding raising and WASH implementation in Uganda. Finally the Trustees would like to congratulate the Equal Aqua volunteers in UK for overcoming the many administrative hurdles to obtain registration with the Charities Commission in England and open a bank account to enable the regularisation of our accounting procedures as a sound basis for future activities.



# WASH SKILLS WORKSHOPS



In 2021 we ran over 50 WASH workshops for women and girls' groups in Uganda - benefitting 5,085 people. We taught practical skills relating to WASH, such as how to make liquid soap, bar soap, shampoo, petroleum jelly and reusable sanitary pads. These community events were also an opportunity to raise awareness around WASH and provide a platform for dialogue on local WASH issues.

Trainees indicated a marked increase in awareness of WASH, as measured by pre and post surveys, establishing knowledge, skills and empowerment. Our workshops are designed so that Ugandans can use these new skills to support their families and communities, or create entrepreneurial opportunities.



Many groups - for example Abwala Women's group and Nakanyonyi Women's group - have started their own initiatives selling products in the community. The groups have been using this money to reinvest in additional materials and to fund their respective organisations.

We continue to monitor outcomes of EAU interventions over time and support trainees to apply these skills and pass the knowledge to others in the community, creating a sustainable development model. We have set up and funded three local WASH Committees to enable such community-led projects and act as ambassadors for local WASH management, empowering especially women and girls who are often marginalised.





# MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT

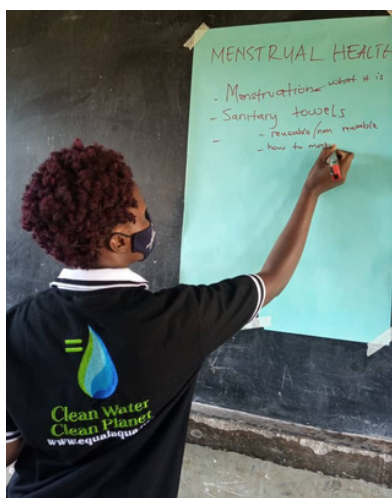
Thanks to your support, our new Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) sessions reached **482 people**, of which 57 were men, across multiple locations throughout Eastern Uganda. Due to the fact that Ugandan schools remained closed due to COVID 19, we had to adapt our approach by delivering the training on school grounds, inviting students who live locally, as well as the local community.

Each of the sessions included a variety of educational modules, showcasing **MHM best practice** and uncovering common misconceptions. This encouraged meaningful conversations and raised awareness of WASH-related **gender disparities** in the communities reached. The males and older women who attended also found value in the content, allowing for further realisation of the specific barriers women and girls face.



Trainees indicated a **substantial increase in awareness of MHM**, as measured by pre and post surveys, establishing knowledge, skills and empowerment.

We also provided additional training to EAU WASH Ambassadors and on-going support so they can deliver their own MHM sessions in their communities.





# ECOBRIK WATER TANKS

In partnership with the Ichupa Upcycle Project, we supported the construction of **five rainwater harvesting tanks** for schools in Eastern Uganda. These have provided convenient, free and safe access to water for thousands of students and staff. This means that they do not need to walk for several hours per day to collect water - a task often carried out by girls and young women - leaving them more time for the important things: **education, development and play**. We continue to work with schools to ensure that all tanks are properly maintained and used efficiently.



THE ICHUPA UPCYCLE  
**PROJECT**



The master craftsmen at the Ichupa Upcycle Project construct the tanks using **ecobricks** - recycled plastic bottles filled with sand, which are stronger and cheaper than conventional bricks. With a lack of recycling and waste disposal services in Uganda, communities have to resort to burning their plastic waste, releasing harmful toxins into the air, and discarded plastic often blocks up and pollutes waterways.

We thereby tackle two problems simultaneously: **plastic pollution and WASH inequality**. The tanks enable us to create awareness, both locally and internationally, about these intersecting issues.



# CERAMIC WATER FILTERS

In 2021 we distributed 105 ceramic water filters that use a natural process to eliminate 99.9% of bacteria. Our supply Partners, Spouts of Water, employ local Ugandans in the manufacture, and have strong environmental credentials. Selecting beneficiaries was a two-step process: 1.) we worked with local government to identify schools & women's groups 2.) through them we identified families facing the greatest WASH inequalities,

prioritising gender, refugees and those with disabilities.

The filters have a lifespan of at least 2 years and can support large families - with over 600 people benefitting from clean drinking water thanks to our interventions. We are continuing to provide training to ensure that the recipients extract the full benefits from the filters.



*"When we heard about Equal Aqua and the work they were doing, we were so excited. For me, and the people in my community, we felt it was such a blessing. We quickly learn what safe water tastes like. Unfortunately, all of our families are not able to have a filter, so we share our water with one another." - Apolot, Aligoi Village*





# TREE PLANTATIONS



During 2021, Equal Aqua planted 500 trees, focussing on 3 tree plantations in Bukedea District, Eastern Uganda. The importance of this sustainable activity is:

- To improve the local environment - most rural schools have sufficient land to enable us to enhance the locality by planting a range of indigenous trees;
- To provide shade from the elements for the students and teachers;
- To help retain topsoil and when the rooting systems mature to retain water and reduce drain-off;
- With select fruit trees, to provide nourishment to the local community.



Our range of tree species



# SPECIAL PROJECT: REFUGEE CAMP AID

## Kyangwali Refugee Camp



Kyangwali Refugee Camp began in the 1960's with people fleeing Rwanda. The settlement is situated in Eastern Uganda, near Lake Albert. It is one of the largest camps in the country, with over 125,000 living there. It comprises of 81% women and 19% youths. The recent influx has been from the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan.



Equal Aqua provided skills workshops in the camp over several days. We were very heartened to see a strong interest, several hundred women and girls attended the sessions.

Our workshops focused on Menstrual Hygiene Management - including how to make sanitary pads - and how to make soaps and shampoo.



Following the success of our visit, we are planning to extend our support to Ugandan refugee camps in 2022





## EAU TEAM DEVELOPMENT



Generous donations have also provided the opportunity for us to run **training sessions for the EAU team** - improving capability in key areas and allowing us to reflect on lessons learned - which will help us to grow and meet our ambitious targets for 2022. The team spent three days together, conducting a number of activities, including:



1. Peer to peer knowledge sharing, facilitating skills acquisition from each other.
2. Workshopping ideas to test the viability of EAU's new programmes for 2022.
3. Designing a new community led sanitation approach based on IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) youth guidelines, focussing on modes of participation.

### Lessons Learned

- **Barriers to implementation:** groups in more hard-to-reach communities find it more challenging to gain access to materials to implement skills and therefore require extra support.
- **Pacing of delivery:** feedback indicated that some workshops were too fast-paced for some learners and will be adjusted accordingly.



## IMPORTANT EVENTS



Proud to be supporting the Flip Flopi Project - a boat constructed out of waste plastic - working to clean the Lake Victoria shoreline of plastics



CONGRATULATIONS  
TO OUR FRIENDS AND  
FUNDRAISERS THE  
STEEL DONKEYZ



SOON TO COMPLETE THEIR EPIC CYCLING JOURNEY FROM BELGIUM TO CAPE TOWN. ON THEIR WAY THEY SPONSORED THE CONSTRUCTION OF ONE OF OUR ECOBRICK WATER TANKS...AND HELPED BUILD IT TOO!



THANK YOU FROM ALL OF US AT  
EQUAL AQUA

[EQUALAQUA.ORG](http://EQUALAQUA.ORG)



Please help us to build clean water tanks for schools in Uganda. With your help this will give children a safer and healthier future.



Register for our #WaterWheel cycling event over Easter here:  
[equalaqua.org/waterwheel](http://equalaqua.org/waterwheel)





# FINANCIAL REPORT

## Receipts and Payments Accounts

For the period from 04/08/2020 to 31/12/2021

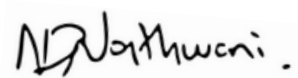
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £
<b>Receipts</b>			
Grants	-	7,600	7,600
Fundraising	4,683	-	4,683
Donations	1,028	-	1,028
Donations in Kind	186	-	186
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<u>5,898</u>	<u>7,600</u>	<u>13,498</u>
<b>Payments</b>			
Programme Costs	4,951	7,627	12,579
Administrative Expense	108	-	108
<b>Total Payments</b>	<u>5,059</u>	<u>7,627</u>	<u>12,687</u>
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<u>838</u>	<u>(27)</u>	<u>811</u>
<b>Cash Funds 03/08/2020</b>	199	-	199
<b>Cash Funds 31/12/2021</b>	<u>1,037</u>	<u>(27)</u>	<u>1,010</u>

## Statement of Assets and Liabilities at the end of the period

Cash in Bank 1,010

The accounts were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustee Board on 11 March 2022

Signed on behalf of The Trustees of Equal Aqua:

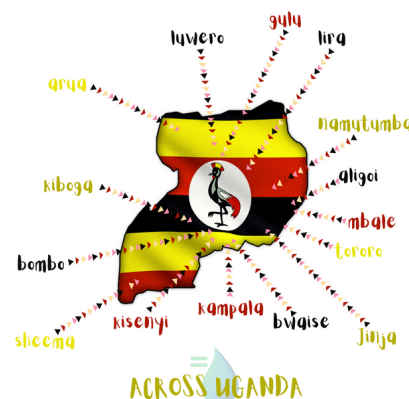


Nishay Nathwani  
Chair of the Board



## OUR VALUES

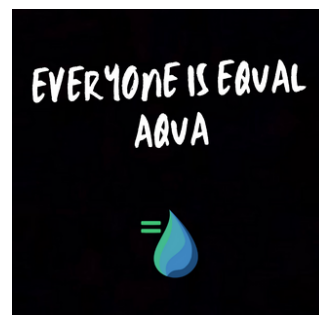
Our programs are targeted towards those suffering the greatest inequalities in access to water, sanitation and hygiene. In 2021 our activities focused on women and girls in rural communities, and young people in challenging urban areas. Our operations centred in Bukedea District in Eastern Uganda, while we also delivered sessions in over 30 towns and villages throughout Uganda.



Our underlying philosophy is that the team in Uganda set the vision, policies and programmes, and the UK team works to help this become a reality. There are now 24 team members in EAU, all volunteers. We have zero fixed costs in Uganda, and none of the money we raise is spent in the UK. 100% of all funds directly support our projects in Uganda and reach the communities that need it most.

(Art: Cindy Salim)

We are committed to running our charity in a fully inclusive, convivial and equal manner. All opinions are able to be voiced and respected. We are non-hierarchical in structure: EAU team members are empowered to design and run their own projects, supported by the wider team. This is one of our mottos:



We actively build partnerships and joint ventures, which help us deliver on our key aims. In 2021 we established more productive arrangements with IGOs in the UK, US and Uganda. We look forward to working with these groups in 2022, and exploring further opportunities to expand our network and reach more vulnerable groups in Uganda.





## SUPPORT EAU

Equal Aqua is run by a team of passionate volunteers. 100% of money raised goes directly towards our projects in Uganda.

We guarantee a professional service that ensures the best value for your investment into water facilities for those facing the greatest inequalities.

You will be providing **direct and verifiable aid** to those who need it most. We document all our projects and workshops on our social media channels and share messages from the beneficiaries of our projects.

All donations, of any amount, are always very welcome.



**WE ARE DELIVERING ON SDGS**



EQUALAQUA.ORG



Who We Are

**Sarah Croft**  
**Public Health**



Sarah joined Equal Aqua in early 2021 to contribute to the improvement of health in lower income countries - working in medical communications. Sarah is passionate about sharing important health messages to a wide audience and helping people make informed decisions.

Sarah recently received her Masters (MSc) in International Public Health. She is a migrant team mentor, and currently is working with the human rights network supporting refugees. She co-founded a vintage clothing business to promote the circular economy.

## VOLUNTEER

We are always looking to expand our volunteer base, inviting applications from a range of skillsets and all countries. This includes Project, Communications and Fundraising Officers, and also welcome general expressions of interest.

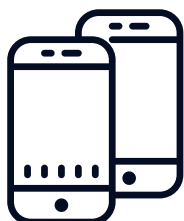
We cherish every person involved in Equal Aqua – whether volunteers, international partners or community members. We actively listen and learn from those around us and value each contribution. Team members are empowered to design and run their own projects, supported by the wider team.

[equalaqua.org](https://equalaqua.org)





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**EQUAL AQUA UGANDA  
2021**

