

Volunteering - The WASUP Model

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Figure 1

Professor Gatrad OBE founded WASUP (World Against Single Use Plastic) in 2017. It is run by unpaid volunteers.

WASUP has 4 principles:

- Raising awareness of dangers of plastic to humans, animals and the environment.
- Education in schools.
- Litter picking.
- Putting pressure on the plastic supply chain.

WASUP:

- Brings people together - from different communities. Litter picking improves social cohesion. Above all these activities are fun - with often a picnic after a litter pick.
- Has put the region on the map - WASUP started as a single person's vision and now many up and down the country know of its existence and provide volunteers.
- Has helped the region to grow and succeed - the West Midlands schools have seen the biggest WASUP impact, facilitated by the local education partnerships.
- Now there are WASUP Ambassadors in over 50 countries including 22 African Countries www.wasupme.com.



Figure 2

Volunteers:

- They receive appropriate training from Prof Gatrad e.g. project management, leadership and confidence in public speaking. Volunteers are rewarded with certificates of achievement.
- Eight-year-old - youngest WASUP Ambassador planted 300 trees in Pakistan!
- Hundreds of volunteers planted fruit trees in Sri Lanka and Malawi - to help the environment, and as a food source.

The 2022 challenge saw two winners of the Commonwealth Games WASUP trophies for collecting 2022 bags of litter in two years.

Miss Jennifer Carless, Miss North Yorkshire and a Miss England finalist is the International Chief WASUP Ambassador.



Figure 3

Jennifer Carless - Miss England WASUP Queen.

WASUP has carried out over 100 canal cleaning events and innumerable street litter picking events under Balbir Seimer's leadership - she is our National UK Community WASUP Engagement Ambassador.



Figure 4

WASUP has been attached to many organisations including the United by Birmingham, the community brand of the Commonwealth Games, the Miss England Pageant, Lions Clubs and many corporates such as Lendlease Ltd. Many Miss England finalists, including Jennifer Carless expound the principles of WASUP and are involved in the 'Let us make a spectacle' campaign. Here the girls collect discarded but reusable plastic glasses from opticians, and the Lions Club sends them to various poor resourced countries.

Prof Gatrad has given talks to well over 100 schools, corporates and faith organisations locally, regionally and internationally about the dangers of plastic entering our food chain. He is on the climate change committee of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and advises the Walsall and Wolverhampton NHS Trusts on sustainability. He has introduced into the Birmingham medical students' curriculum the impact of climate change on children e.g. air pollution and its particulate matter on lungs and other organs.

During the Pandemic, it had been difficult to deliver the WASUP principles effectively - hence a slight change in direction towards WASUP Gardens for schools and communities. WASUP already has 4 gardens - 2 in Walsall and 2 in the region.

Children in schools come to learn about biodiversity and what is needed for plants to grow, and also appreciate and respect the environment with a long-term view on understanding sustainability. They carry out nature-based activities and bring wildlife into the garden, such as hedge hogs or bees to live.

Prof Gatrad's vision is that 'growing a garden', with wildlife will be fun for children too, with lots of different types of minibeast and insects such as ladybirds, bees, spiders and woodlice living in bug hotels. These minibeasts can then use bug hotels as a safe space to shelter, lay their eggs, raise their young, and seek refuge from predators.

More recently WASUP has adopted a small area at Goscote Greenacre. Many Muslim lady volunteers from Walsall joined Balbir Seminar and made this a memorable event - the first WASUP Community Garden.



Figure 5

Zahra Yasin- WASUP Ambassador for Pakistan and West Midland.

Balbir Semar - the WASUP Chief Community engagement Ambassador leads this project - she is in red.

A WASUP Song produced by three schools is regularly played in schools. A WASUP musical (2019) was inclusive of all communities including the black community. This was followed by a play called the Plastic Migrant, with black and white actors. It was based in UK and in Ethiopia along the Nile that is clogged up with plastic with 86% of fish having microplastic inside them. A book is under publication. Bollywood has collaborated with Professor Gatrad and produced a WASUP song in Hindi that has gone viral.

Prof Gatrad's book The Story of Three Plastic Bottles has been distributed free to many schools in the West Midlands and to Commonwealth Countries through the Commonwealth Games. WASUP book that was translated into Urdu has been distributed in Pakistan schools.

Prof Gatrad has driven this project relentlessly and made it a success. Volunteers have provided enormous benefit to the communities, leading to a natural sense of accomplishment and pride. WASUP could not have done it without the love, affection and support from these volunteers nationally and internationally, who have worked passionately and relentlessly to make our world safer for our future generations.



Figure 6

Eshal Shaukat – the chief youth Pakistan and international Ambassador with her sister Aneesha who is her deputy (8 years old). Both exhibiting the International WASUP Sign. The Shaukat Family is having the book translated into Chinese.



Figure 7

Lubaina Majid - Chief Azad Kashmir and International WASUP Ambassador with the English and the Urdu versions of the book - The Story of Three Plastic Bottles.

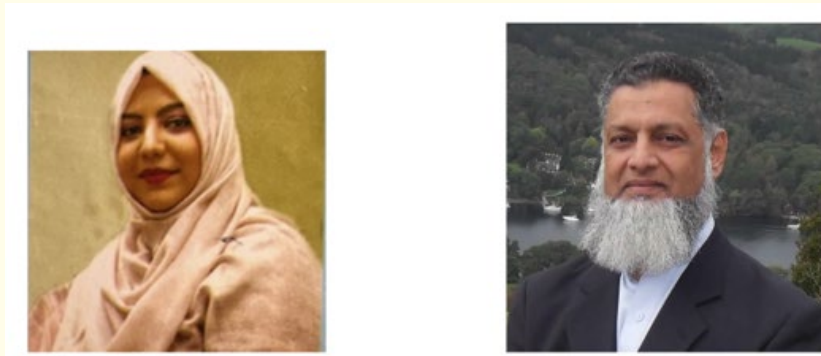


Figure 8

Rabia Bashir - Chief Pakistan WASUP Ambassador. Dr Ijaz Bashir (Chief Pakistan WASUP Coordinator) arranged translation and Mrs Samiya Ijaz Bashir narrated the story of three Plastic Bottles in URDU - for distribution in schools in Pakistan.

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