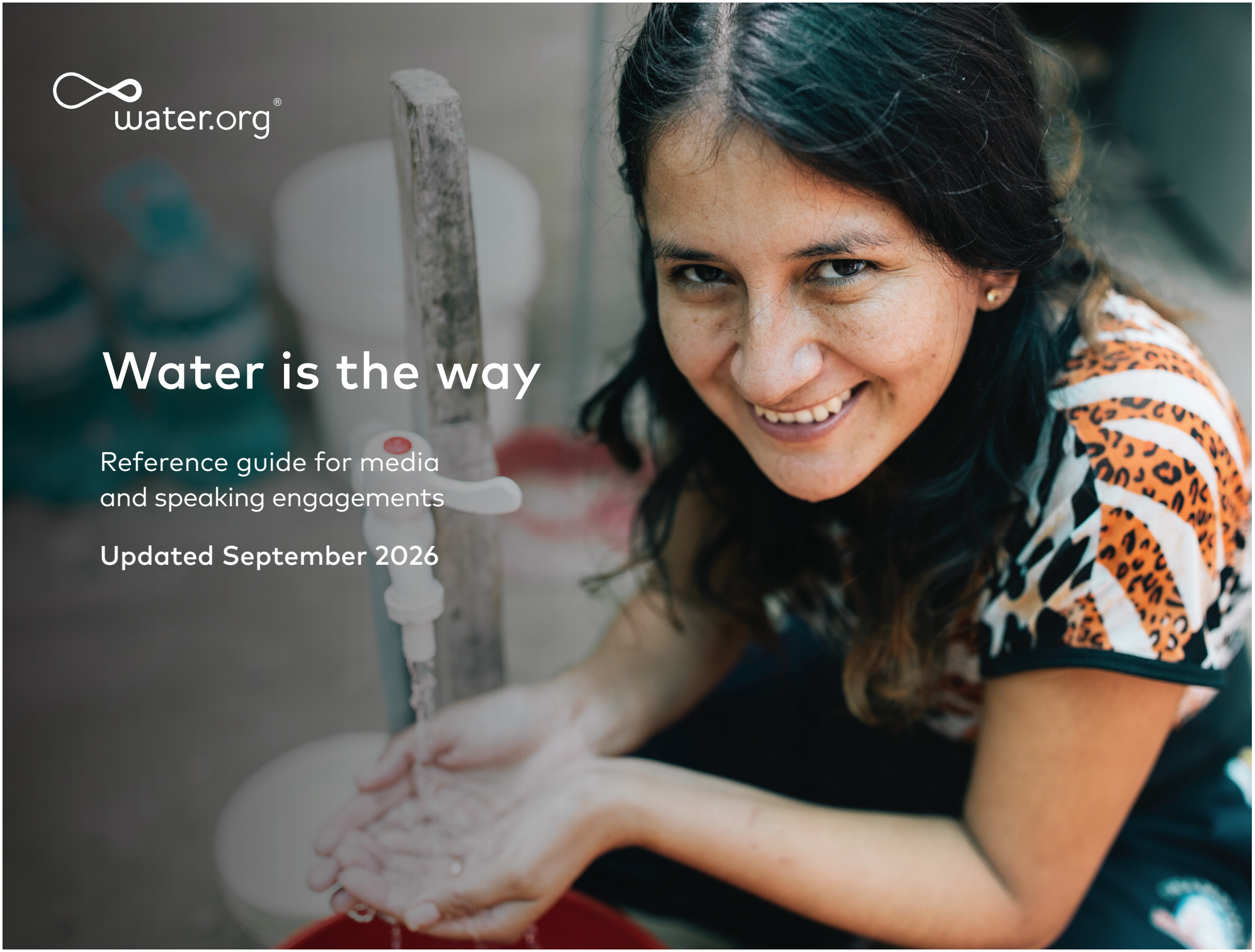


water.org®

Water is the way

Reference guide for media and speaking engagements

Updated September 2026

We believe water is the way

To break the cycle of poverty.
To protect and save lives.
To make a bright future possible for all.

Access to safe water can protect and save lives, just because it is there. Access to safe water has the power to turn time spent into time saved, when it is close and not hours away. Access to safe water can turn problems into potential: unlocking education, economic potential, and improved health.

Every human being deserves to define their own future, and water makes that possible. We've transformed more than 95 million lives with access to safe water or sanitation.

Let's work together to make the power of water available to all.

The global water crisis

Today, 2.1 billion people – 1 in 4 – lack access to safe water and 3.4 billion people – 2 in 5 – lack access to a safe toilet. These are the people we empower.

A women's crisis –
Women and girls spend 200 million hours every day collecting water. When women have access to safe water at home, they have time to work, go to school and care for their family.

A health crisis –
More than 1 million people die each year from water, sanitation and hygiene-related diseases. Access to safe water and sanitation contributes to improved health and helps prevent the spread of infectious disease.

A children's + education crisis –
Children are often responsible for collecting water for their families, taking time away from school and play. Access to safe water gives children time to play and opportunity for a bright future.

An economic crisis –
Time spent gathering water or seeking safe sanitation accounts for billions in lost economic opportunities. Access to safe water and sanitation at home gives families more time to pursue education and work opportunities that will help them break the cycle of poverty.

About Water.org

Smart solutions
Powered by the people who need them
Creating progress that lasts

We are breaking down the barriers between people and access to safe water and sanitation. We are an international nonprofit organization that has positively transformed more than 95 million lives around the world.

Founded by Gary White and Matt Damon, Water.org pioneers market-driven financial solutions to the global water crisis. For more than 30 years, we've been providing women hope, children health, and families a future.

Smart solutions in action

Water.org works to create impact in these ways:

- **Direct impact** – Water.org enables access to critical financing for household water and sanitation solutions for those living in poverty. We partner with local financial institutions, by providing technical assistance, connections and small grants, where needed, so they can provide small, affordable loans to people in need of water and sanitation at home. We also partner with water and sanitation providers to enhance their capacity to obtain financing and improve service delivery for their customers.

- **Collective impact** – Water.org works with partners across sectors, including water and sanitation and financial services, and other international development organizations to expand access to affordable financing for water and sanitation. We provide technical assistance, share best practices, and collaborate with stakeholders so they can develop, implement and scale effective solutions.

- **System impact** – Water.org works with governments, sector institutions and other partners at a systems-level to influence public policy and practice changes that increase the flow of capital for household water and sanitation solutions.

Water changes lives

Our impact

Together with our in-country partners, Water.org is empowering millions of people around the world with lasting access to safe water and sanitation through affordable financing.

95 million +

people reached with water and sanitation

$8.6 billion

loans disbursed through our partners

13

active countries

163

active partners

WaterCredit

A proven, powerful solution

Water.org created WaterCredit to empower people with small, affordable loans to get access to safe water and sanitation at home. When given an opportunity to pay for water and sanitation improvements with loans, families opt to finance long-term solutions versus struggle day-to-day to find that next liter of water.

95 million+

people have benefited across four continents

21.1 million

loans disbursed through WaterCredit

$8.6 billion

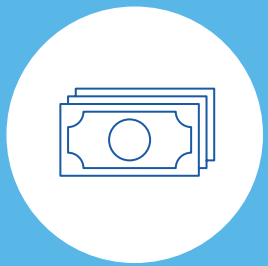
value of loans disbursed

98%

of WaterCredit cumulative loans are paid back

Here's how WaterCredit works:

We identify a region that is ready for a microfinance solution and then we partner with carefully selected institutions that provide affordable financing for water and sanitation to families in need.



These partners establish water and sanitation loans in their portfolio of offerings. We support them by providing technical assistance, connections and resources to get them started.

Every repaid loan can empower another family with safe water.

People in need use these small, affordable loans to put a tap or toilet in their homes and access local resources to do the work.

Resources

Photos
Water.org photos are available on Flickr. All photos are offered under a creative commons license and are free to use with proper attribution — "photo credit to Water.org."
https://www.flickr.com/photos/waterdotorg

Videos
Water.org videos are available on our YouTube channel for viewing, sharing and embedding. Please provide proper attribution when sharing — "video credit to Water.org."
http://www.youtube.com/user/water

Share graphics
Water.org uses share graphics to communicate with our social audiences. These can be made available for your use upon request.

Logo files
Download the Water.org logo files and usage guidelines here:
Logo files and guidelines

Resources

Stories from the field

We find the most compelling way to share our impact is through the stories of those we empower. Water.org has many stories from the field that show the impact that access to safe water and sanitation has in changing lives and creating bright futures.

Here are five stories available for immediate use:

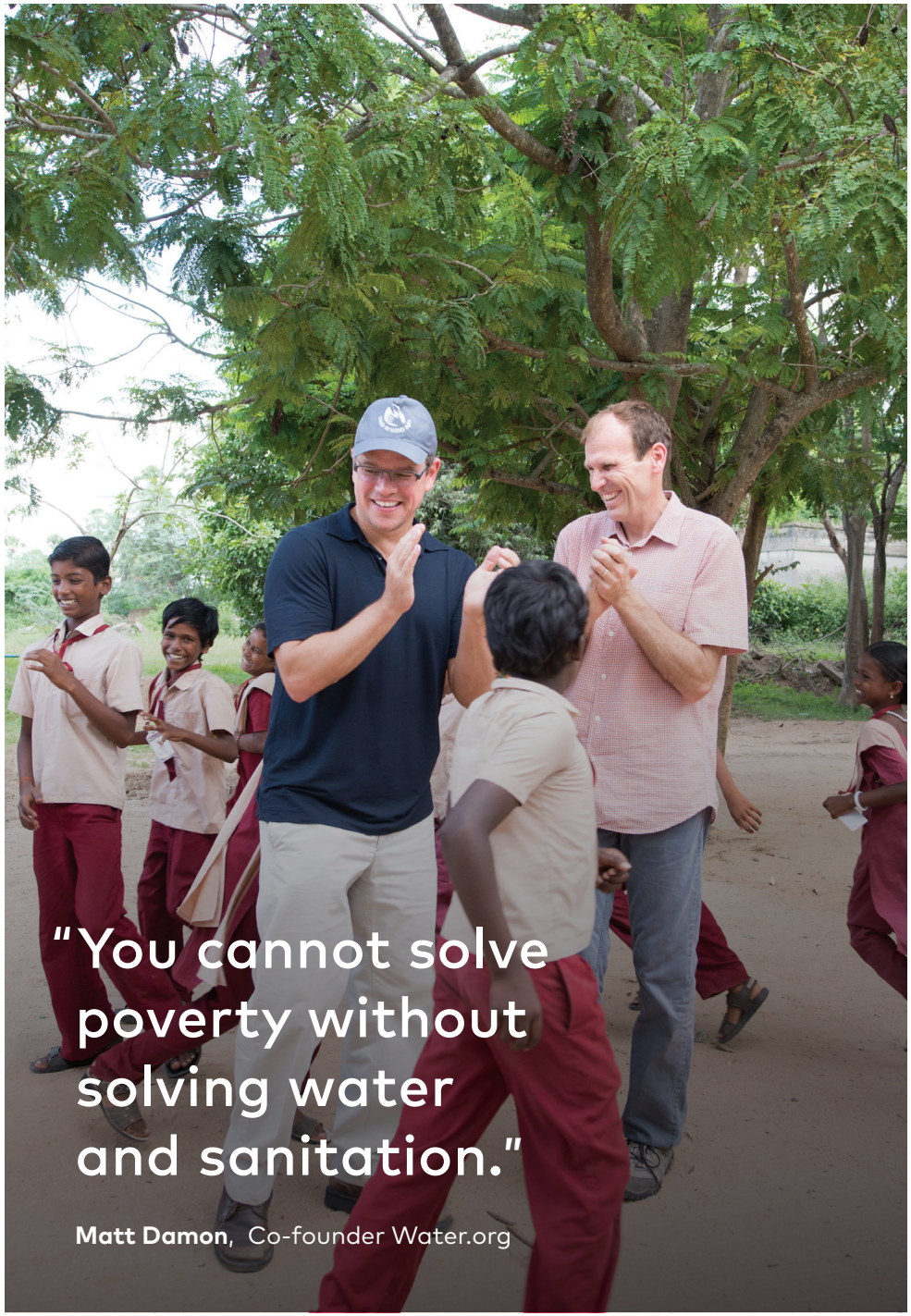
Aisyah (Indonesia)

Edita (Peru)

Elma (Philippines)

Nanda (India)

Sabina (Kenya)



Resources

Quotes from our Co-founders

Gary White, CEO and Co-founder, Water.org

- "We think about people in need differently. At Water.org, we see the 2.1 billion people who are living and dying for water access as individuals with financial power, rights, responsibilities, and the energy and ability to design their own futures."
- "No civilization, no society, no economy has ever developed without having a reliable source of water. It's the foundation. Yet so many people are living without it."
- "Families themselves are powerful agents of change, with rights and resources to bring to the table. If we are to achieve the ambitious targets of the SDGs, we need to think outside our typical boxes."

Matt Damon, Co-founder, Water.org

- "Access to water is access to education, access to work, access above all to the kind of future we want for our own families and all the members of our human family."
- "You cannot solve poverty without solving water and sanitation."

Available bookings

Gary White

CEO and Co-founder

White began Water Partners International in 1990 to address the global water crisis (which merged with H2O Africa in 2009 to become Water.org). He is a Skoll and Schwab Foundation Social Entrepreneurship Award winner and was named to the 2011 TIME 100 list of the world's most influential people.

Matt Damon

Co-founder

Damon founded H2O Africa, and in 2009 joined Gary White to launch Water.org. He has a strong commitment to solving the global water crisis through empowering those in need and providing access to affordable, sustainable solutions.

Vedika Bhandarkar

President and Chief Operating Officer

Bhandarkar champions all impact efforts within Water.org, overseeing the organization's strategy, growth and water and sanitation program expansion. She has more than 25 years of experience in international finance and building teams and businesses.

Rich Thorsten

Chief Insights Officer

Thorsten oversees monitoring, evaluation and innovation across Water.org's global programs. His expertise includes nonprofit management, advocacy, and international development, and he is passionate about improving the quality of life of current and future generations through sustainable water and sanitation solutions.

How to reach us

Contact us at media@water.org

Speaking requests:
https://water.org/about-us/resources/speaker-request/

Media requests:
https://water.org/about-us/resources/media-request/

Join us

Key dates

- **Building Bridges: Geneva, Switzerland (CICG)**
  6–8 October 2026
- **Forbes Middle East Sustainability Leaders Summit: Abu Dhabi, UAE (ADNEC Centre)**
  27–28 October 2026
- **Global SME Finance Forum: Singapore**
  18–20 November 2026
- **UN Water Conference: Abu Dhabi, UAE (ADNEC Centre)**
  8–10 December 2026

Together, we will see the day when everyone in the world has access to safe water and sanitation. **Join us.**

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