South Staffs Water

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# Young Innovators' Panel

## Report Final: post expert review

September 2024

# Contents





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Your chance to be part of Cambridge Water's Young Innovators' Panel

Gain valuable work experience and have your voice heard!

Cambridge Water is looking for ideas from young people aged 17 to 22 to help better understand how households of different cultures and faiths use water when cooking. The aim of this year's Panel is to help communities save water, which helps to protect the region's precious chalk streams.

Participants will:

- gain valuable work experience in social research working with one of the largest businesses in the region
- have real influence on decisions made by senior management
- obtain a formal reference to be used in job or further education applications
- receive a £100 'thank you' payment

We are looking for participants who:

- have a connection to south Asian or Indian subcontinent cultures
- have a view on how culture and/or faith shapes water usage in these communities, including common culinary traditions – e.g. from growing vegetables, to preparing staple foods like rice, to cooking diverse Asian cuisines
- live or study in Cambridge or the surrounding region
- Are aged between 17 to 22

Just scan the QR code below to apply.

Applications close 10 June 2024.

Need to know more?

Email cwpanel@bluemarbleresearch.co.uk or call 07732901572. Visit www.cambridge-water.co.uk/community/young-innovators-panel to hear participants from the last panel talk about how much they enjoyed it.

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Young Innovators' Panel

Securing your water future

# Research method and sample

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## The philosophy behind the YIP model is to bring the views of future customers into the heart of the business

**The overarching business objectives for each YIP are as follows:**

- To understand mindset & expectations of future customers
- To provide a forum for future customers to deliberate on issues pertinent to the business
- To look for innovative solutions to a real business problem
- To engage with the education community, enabling schools to participate in future decision-making

## The focus of this year's YIP was slightly different, as it forms part of SSC's initiative 'Water efficiency in faith and diverse communities' (WEFDC)

This wider project is funded by Ofwat's Innovation Fund, set up to drive innovation in the sector for the good of customers, society, and the environment – and therefore presents an ideal basis for future customers to have their input

A specific objective for this YIP was to deepen understanding of how South Asian/Indian subcontinent cultures use water to:

**Grow food**

**Prepare food**

**Cook**

**Wash/ clean up**

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**The conventional YIP format of a two day panel and schools survey was out of scope this year – so we used a one-day format combined with a briefing Webinar and extensive pre-task activities to maximise the insight gained from students over a short period**

**Pre event: briefing webinar (45 minutes)**

- 19th June
- Covered:
  - Introduction to the water company
  - Water resource information and comments / questions
  - Introduction to the WEFDC project
  - Introduction to the main challenge (designing a behaviour change strategy)
  - Briefing on pre-task activities

**Pre task activities (completed by students before the workshop)**

- Students sent us:
  - A one-week diary tracking water usage around food preparation, gardening and cooking at home
  - Written summaries of discussions with family and friends about water usage, faith and culture
  - Three videos demonstrating key findings from their diaries and/or interviews

**Face to face workshop (all day)**

- 4th July at Cambridge Water HQ
- Content:
  - 'Speed immersion' with Cambridge Water experts on 3 key topics: Water insecurity, Environmental challenges and Water efficiency
  - Working on the main challenge in teams and main challenge presentations
  - Round table discussion with Cambridge Water

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## For this year's YIP, students had to:

- **Have a connection to South Asian or Indian subcontinent culture, through either:**
  - Personal experience of being a part of one of these cultural groups
  - Having a strong interest in these cultures through wider family or friends
- **Have a view on how culture and/or faith shapes water usage in these communities**

| Sample category | Number of attendees |
|---|---|
| **Gender** | 6 x female, 3 x male |
| **No. and type of schools** | 3 x state sixth form colleges and one university represented |
| **Cultural background** | Students with links to Bangladesh (3), India (3), Africa (1), the Philippines (1) and Poland (1) |
| **Faith** | 5 x Muslim and 4 x Christian students |
| **Year group** | 1 x year 13 student, 7 x year 12 student, and 1 x 1st year University student |

### "What makes you a good candidate for the Young Innovators' Panel?"

*"I care about water conservation. In my Muslim household, our cooking practices use a lot of water, and I want to find ways to save water while respecting our traditions."*

*"The way religion and culture shape people's thinking and behaviour is an interesting topic, and it would be an opportunity to educate myself on how a belief system can impact something as simple as water usage."*

*"I come from a mix of British/American/Indian cultures and grew up in SE Asia before returning to Cambridge, so I understand some cultural practices in water usage and cooking from each area."*

*"As a Muslim, it is part of my faith to not be wasteful, but this clashes with the typical Bengali style of cooking. So, this panel will create an opportunity so that no water is wasted, allowing me to practice religion to its fullest."*

# Recruitment methods




## Initial recruitment efforts

- **Blue Marble engaged a number of sixth form colleges to encourage participation:**
  - Email(s) to Heads of 6th Form and/or lead for work experience
  - Follow up phone calls to check and clean our contact list
  - Explaining the project and encouraging dissemination of application form with students
- Flyers were also distributed to mosques

## Approach to tackling slow response rate

**1. Expanding pool of potential applicants**

- Extended upper age range for applicants from 19 to 22
- Encouraged applications from those studying in the area (even if they didn't live in Cambridge all year round)

**2. Disseminating flyers to a wide range of community locations**

- Charities working with young people/ethnic minorities
- Cambridge Jobcentre
- Faith schools
- Additional places of worship

**3. Snowballing**

- Encouraging applicants to spread word about the YIP among their family and friends

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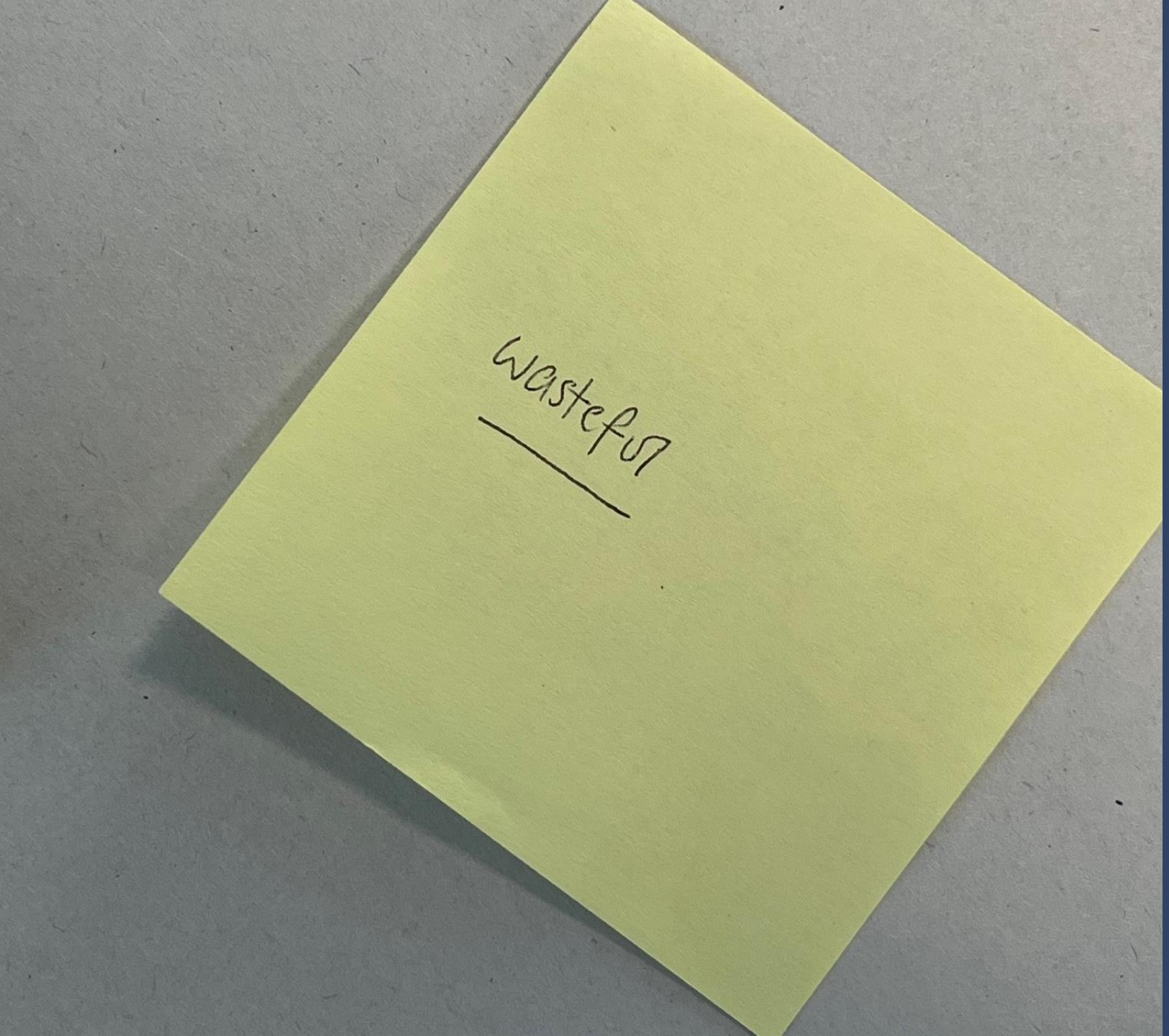


# Executive summary

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# Key findings

1. The cost-of-living crisis continues to impact families day-to-day. Students are informed by their parents of the rising cost of transport, groceries and energy. The impact of this is that parents are stricter on saving energy at home and are having to be more price conscious when buying day-to-day items.

2. The pre-task exercise asking students to keep a water usage diary opened their eyes to how much water is used every day for food preparation, cooking and washing up. Prior to this, students had not given their water usage much thought or consideration.

3. Students highlighted the link between certain cultures and faiths and valuing water; whilst it's not something they had actively considered before, there is potential to embrace this link and tailor messaging around water saving around cultural/religious values.

4. Some cultural cooking practices are water intensive; cooking water-based meals like curries or soups, washing rice or meat, soaking lentils etc. all use a lot of water. However, these are traditional methods of cooking passed down through generations and there is a reluctance to change.

5. In order to be respectful and inclusive when focusing on specific culture or faith-based behaviours, it's important not to point the finger and simply highlight what is 'bad'. Lead with best practice behaviours, supported by motivation/incentives and reasoning.

6. Students identified two key audiences to focus on: young people and mothers. Educating from a young age will help encourage best practice behaviours before wasteful behaviours become habits. Mothers in many cultures have a strong influence in the kitchen and are key to passing on good behaviours to the rest of the family.

# How the project fulfilled key objectives from the brief



| Key objectives from the brief | Insights/recommendations |
|---|---|
| **Support the WEFDC by providing ideas for educational content that SSC can discuss with faith schools and community stakeholders to help enable people ages 11-18 to be empowered to change attitudes around the "value of water" in their schools and wider communities** | • **The value of water:** Students highlighted the link between certain cultures and faiths and valuing water; whilst it's not something they had actively considered before, there is potential to embrace this link and tailor messaging around water saving around cultural/religious values e.g. water saving as a part of faith.<br>• **Key audiences to focus on:** students thought it would be a good idea to engage young people and mothers. Educating from a young age will help encourage best practice behaviours before wasteful behaviours become habits. Mothers in many cultures have a strong influence in the kitchen and are key to passing on good behaviours to the rest of the family.<br>• **Key activities to look at:** limiting food waste (which is also water waste) and making traditional recipes more water efficient. |
| **Build on WEFDC literature review findings by identifying any differences in cultural practices around cooking in South Asian/Indian subcontinent households** | • **Cultural cooking practices:** some of these are water intensive; cooking water-based meals like curries or soups, washing rice or meat, soaking lentils etc. all use a lot of water. However, these are traditional methods of cooking passed down through generations and there is a reluctance to change. |
| **Speak to future customers about their awareness of the local environment, where water comes from, and where appropriate, any links to their own faith** | • **Awareness of the water industry/their own usage:** the pre-task exercise asking students to keep a water usage diary opened their eyes to how much water is used every day for food preparation, cooking and washing up. Prior to this, students had not given their water usage much thought or consideration, or thought about where water comes from.<br>• **Environmental attitudes:** The Young Innovator's Panel continues to challenge the assumption that young people care disproportionately more about the environment than older generations, with students telling us that their environmental views rarely impacted how they live day-to-day. |

# How the project fulfilled key objectives from the brief



| Key objectives from the brief | Key insights/recommendations |
|---|---|
| **Consider the National Curriculum and faith based curriculum, and how teaching about water efficiency, water cycles and the hydrosphere relates to sustainable futures and our changing climate and links to faith** | • **Views on the curriculum as it stands:** Students don't feel well informed about water scarcity and how their actions can impact it by the curriculum/faith school teaching as it stands. Most don't have much an idea about how to save water beyond turning off running taps.<br>• **Suggestions for improvements:** when engaging young people, a combination of assemblies and class activities was felt to be the best approach. Young people can also be engaged with through social media, and making behaviour change into a game/competition with tools such as shower timers is also felt to be especially effective for this age group. |
| **Support the wider WEDFC project outcomes, such as tailoring content to viewers and how young people from diverse backgrounds could be engaged further to promote water efficiency in the region** | • **Tailoring content to viewers**: In order to be respectful and inclusive when identifying specific culture or faith-based behaviours, it's important not to point the finger and simply highlight what is 'bad'. Lead with best practice behaviours, supported by motivation/incentives and reasoning.<br>• **Key content to include in comms:** Most don't know which behaviours to adopt to save water: it's important to provide examples and dispel misconceptions, as well as to communicate the benefits and consequences of changing/not changing behaviours.<br>• **Engaging young people from diverse backgrounds further:** going into schools in person to explain opportunities to get involved, as well as using a diverse range of communication channels (including word of mouth and social media engagement) and stressing the benefits of taking part is key to engaging this audience. Instagram and TikTok were viewed as the most popular social media channels for their age group, with students more likely to follow water usage advice given to them by an influencer than a celebrity (as long as that advice is tailored to their own interests). |


# Student deepdive

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# As the cost-of-living crisis continues, students are aware of the high cost of petrol, gas and electric and groceries, through their parents



## High awareness of increased cost-of-living from conversations at home, leading to more conscious spending and some changes to behaviour:

| Cost | Change | Impact |
|---|---|---|
| **Energy** | • Increased emphasis on **not wasting energy** at home | • Being encouraged to **turn off lights** when not in room, take **shorter showers** |
| **Transport** | • Being **more conscious** of the price of petrol and transport in general | • Limited impact, as **not much can be done** if you need to make a journey |
| **Housing** | • Thinking ahead, awareness **that house prices** in Cambridge have increased | • Likely to impact **where** they can move out to in future when they leave home |
| **Groceries, shopping, eating out** | • Marked increase in regular expenditures | • More **consciously considering** price of items before purchase |
| **Key staples bought in bulk** | • Rise in cost of big **bags of rice** or large **containers of cooking oil** - particularly important for some cultures that tend to buy specific brands of these things in bulk | • Limited – often families are wedded to particular brands<br>• Might be more inclined to **wait for offers** |

= High impact = Moderate impact = Low impact

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# The Young Innovator's Panel continues to challenge the assumption that young people care disproportionately more about the environment than older generations



## When asked about environmental causes that matter to them, students referred to:

**Waste –** litter in the streets, beaches and other public places

**Pollution –** air pollution and water pollution

**Recycling –** emphasising the need to recycle materials and for companies to use more sustainable packaging

**Electric vehicles –** carbon footprint associated with batteries and charging stations

*"Seeing waste everywhere, like litter on the streets."*

## But caring about environmental causes does not greatly impact their day-to-day lives

- When asked about actions taken to help the environment, students **struggled to identify specific environmentally friendly behaviours** that they follow, beyond recycling
- Students feel it's more important to **focus on the actions of larger companies** and ensure they are being sustainable and environmentally responsible
- When prompted, students reported that they **hadn't considered water saving an environmental action** until the briefing Webinar as part of this project

*"Some companies are able to get away with bad ethical practices."*

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# Students have limited knowledge of water companies and the water sector more generally



## The water sector is 'hidden'

- It's an industry that most **don't typically think about** or research in detail
- Students admit to **using water fairly mindlessly** without thinking about where it comes from or how it got there
- **Limited associations** with water companies in general; no interaction with them as non-bill-payers
    - No associations with Cambridge Water

## Only a few picked up on water company news stories

- For most, **limited awareness** of the various recent news/media reports surrounding water companies
- The few stories that cut through related to **contaminated** water:
    - Thames Water dumping sewage in waterways
    - Finding E.coli in water supply somewhere

### Students were surprised to hear that the region could face water supply issues

- Assumption that the UK would be safe in terms of water supply given frequency of rain
- An issue they'd expect to see in hotter and/or less developed countries

### Students would expect water companies to act responsibly

- Perception that water companies could **do better at educating customers** on issues of supply and demand
- Should be encouraging people to save water – through **education**, **incentives** and **explaining** what will happen if usage isn't controlled
- As non-bill-payers, no spontaneous mention of value for money or fair bill prices

Photo by Catt Liu on Unsplash

# Water usage behaviours

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# How water is used in ways specific to culture or faith – cultural behaviours and ritual practices



| Behaviour | Motivation | Water saving wins | Water saving challenges |
|---|---|---|---|
|  *Baptism* | • Christian practice of initiation involving immersion in, or sprinkling or pouring of water | • Infrequently practiced – only once per lifetime<br>• Doesn't use a lot of water | - |
|  *Wudu/ ablution* | • Islamic ritual of cleansing before worship<br>• Done 5 x per day, every day | • Scripture says to use 1 litre | • Often use more than 1 litre if tap is running, especially if it's cold (waiting for water to heat up) |
|  *Holy water* | • In Christianity, holy water is water that has been blessed by a member of the clergy or a religious figure | • Not generally used, but some collect this from certain places or church | - |
|  *Washing* | • People from certain cultures (e.g. Nigerian) showering twice a day – every morning and evening | - | • Wouldn't consider a different washing routine as this is considered the norm in this culture |

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# How water is used in ways specific to culture – cooking and food preparation



| Behaviour | Motivation | Water saving wins | Water saving challenges |
|---|---|---|---|
|  *Washing meat, seafood, veg* | • Ensures it's clean and free of sand, impurities, feathers etc. | • Use a bowl to wash rather than running water<br>• Veg water can be reused | • Meat washed separately from other food items to avoid cross contamination |
|  *Washing rice (multiple times)* | • Cleans rice and removes starch<br>• Washed multiple times until water runs clear to ensure all starch is removed | • Water can be used for other purposes e.g. to soak seafood or as a hair mask | • Water is used and drained multiple times during the washing process |
|  *Soaking lentils, beans, pulses* | • Shortens cooking time<br>• Yields a better end result in terms of texture | • Water can be used to water plants | • Need to use fresh water for cooking |
|  *Defrosting meat in water* | • Cleaner than other methods of defrosting | - | • Can defrost without water<br>• Water cannot be reused |

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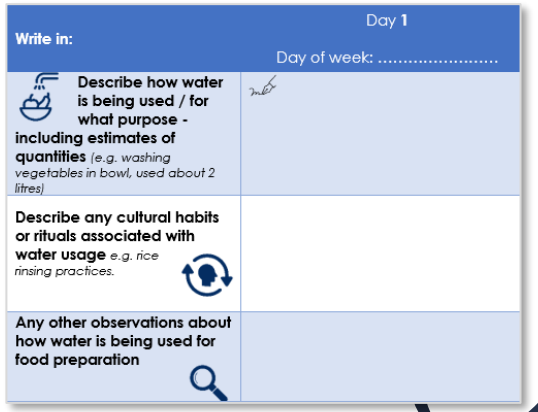
# On reflection, students were surprised at how much water they were using day-to-day






All students completed a pre-task asking them to fill out a '**water usage diary**'

(see appendix for full task)

**Students were surprised to see just how much water they were using for day-to-day activities**

- Generally, water **volumes are difficult to understand**, and students found it hard to measure how many litres come out of a running tap, for example
- Some reflect that they **only use as much as they need** to adequately complete the task at hand

**Students identified some general barriers to water saving:**

- **No obvious work around:** certain activities need to be done in the kitchen in a certain way, in order to be clean and hygienic
- **General misconceptions or misunderstanding of what might be saving or wasting water:** e.g. many came from families who tend to cook in bulk for multiple meals; students were unsure if using one big pot once, or a small pot multiple times would use more or less water
- **Being mindful with regular activities is a challenge:** a lot of food prep, cooking and washing activities are conducted on auto-pilot – it's difficult to consciously track your usage and change ingrained behaviours
- **Limited impact:** as non-bill-payers students don't directly suffer the financial consequence of having to pay a higher bill
  - Without education of wider issues of water scarcity, motivation to change behaviours is low
- **Limited control:** as children within the household, they will often not have much control over how things are done in the kitchen and subsequently how much water is used

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# Students drew a link between faith and valuing water



## Faith based associations with water

- **Students spoke about the significance of water to their own faiths/those of others:**
  - Seen to signify purity
  - Felt to be a gift from Allah/God
  - Some (particularly Muslim students) can cite specific examples of the importance of water saving from scripture/proverbs
- **As mentioned, water is used symbolically for religious rituals such as baptism and wudu**

## Impact on usage

- **Water saving is seen as an important part of faith**
  - Conserving resources given by Allah is seen as key to being a "good Muslim", and linked to rewards in the afterlife
- **However, not all students could describe water saving actions which matched their intentions**
  - Some had parents modelling careful water usage behaviours that they didn't follow
  - Others had families which didn't think much about their usage in general

Conscious thought is required for students to be more mindful about water usage, but pre-existing **faith-based emphasis** on the value of water/conserving resources provide a **powerful motivation** to change behaviours

*"After a campaign at Cambridge Central Mosque, my parents started using a jug for ablution. They were surprised at how much was wasted. If we save more - we get more rewarded as a Muslim, plus we save water – there's a 2 in 1 benefit."*

*"Being a Muslim, our prophet told us to protect the environment, water as well. It's one of our religious duties."*

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# Students also explored how culture can influence attitudes to water



## Cultural practices are adopted through watching or listening to parents or family at home

**These practices are often influenced by the families' country of origin – some students had parents or grandparents who were not born in the UK, and the cultural behaviours from where they grew up have held strong**

- **Those with family connections to hot countries had specific associations with water:**
  - Seen as scarcer/more difficult to obtain and important to conserve
  - Conversely, as it's hotter – frequent showering is encouraged e.g. in Nigeria and India
  - Some continue these behaviours on their return to the UK
- **Some also spoke about a general cultural focus on the importance of conserving resources:**
  - Seen as the right option when some people in society are very poor and/or don't have access to certain resources
  - Can give examples from parental behaviours e.g. soaking fruit skins and using the water for planting in the garden

**Whilst students can identify these traditions, not all say they consciously try and adopt them**

*"Some of my aunties would always judge me for only showering once a day."*

*"My father was born and raised in India, so the majority of my paternal relatives live in South India. I was born in Singapore and regularly visited cities and villages in India where water was either delivered by trucks, people went to pumps to get water or sometimes water at home could be turned off for hours at a time."*

# When exploring behaviour change in general, students identified two key challenges



## Legacy behaviours are performed without thinking

- Influencing subconscious thought or behaviour is notoriously difficult to do
- Many behaviours are learned from a young age through modelling parents' behaviours
- This is particularly true when exploring cultural behaviours – in all cultures there are 'traditional ways' of carrying out tasks that have been passed down through generations for many years

*"It's not necessarily wrong [to change your habits], but it feels odd."*

*"It keeps going down family trees, that's how it is. But families can also change their minds."*

## Once a behaviour becomes a habit, it is very difficult to change

- Students don't have the time, energy or motivation to consciously think about everything they do as it requires extra effort
  - For example, they brush their teeth in the same way, twice a day, every day - and it is low effort
- Habits can also be strengthened if linked to other "natural rhythms" e.g. sleeping/waking cycle, hunger or thirst.
  - Using the same example, brushing your teeth becomes part of your 'natural rhythm' as it's linked to waking up in the morning

**Students also acknowledge that whilst there are some behaviours that could be quite easily changed, it may feel 'odd' to suddenly do things differently to how they were brought up**

# There are some areas where culture or faith-based water usage behaviours may be difficult to change



## Ritual behaviours

- Where it's necessary to use water and they are performed frequently
- E.g. Cleanliness before prayer seen as a **sign of respect to Allah** – difficult to cut down on

## Generational behaviours

- Recipes and cooking practices **passed down** within families
- **Conserving** these traditions feels important to **maintaining cultural identity**

## Dietary

- Some faiths / cultures have specific **dietary requirements** and traditional meals – the preparation of these things could require more water

## Social norms

- View that current practices are **"just the way it's done"**
- Possible **judgment** from peers/family members if diverging from traditional practices

**Students felt that telling people to change their lifestyle/habits is inappropriate in some cases. They also questioned why their faith and cultural practices were being looked at above others.**

*"Cleanliness is half our faith – it's important."*

*"Getting us to change our recipes could change our traditions."*

*"Most South Asians are vegetarians, so vegetarians usually use more water."*

*"We grow a lot of ingredients implemented in our cooking."*

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# Main task

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# We asked students to work in teams to design a strategy promoting best practices for water usage amongst south Asian communities



## Main challenge: behaviour change plan

**You will have 1 hour and 30 minutes to design a behaviour change campaign in your teams, encouraging south Asian/Indian subcontinent communities to reduce water usage when cooking**

- Explain what behaviour/s your campaign will change (you can choose to focus on one, or more than one)
- Who will your campaign be aimed at?
- What interventions will you use to break down barriers to behaviour change?
- How will you ensure behaviour change over time? Or know if the campaign is successful?

**You can draw on everything you've learnt/discussed today, and your own research**

**Ideas will then be discussed with Cambridge Water:**

Prepare a 10-minute presentation explaining your campaign

Justify your decisions, and explain why the campaign will be effective

## Design a poster as part of your plan

**As part of your plan design a poster encouraging the behaviour you have chosen, aimed at a particular south Asian/Indian subcontinent community audience**

**When designing your poster**

**Remember to include:**

- Persuasive headlines/images/messages
- Any incentives or tools you will use to get your audience on board
- Use of colour/bold font to highlight key points to your audience

**When presenting your poster**

**Explain who your main audience is, bring them to life for Cambridge Water:**

- Who are they?
- What behaviour do they need to change and why?
- What are the barriers to them doing what you are asking them to do?

**Then show how your poster will influence them to change their behaviour, specifically:**

***The list above isn't exhaustive - get creative – and be prepared to justify your decisions!***

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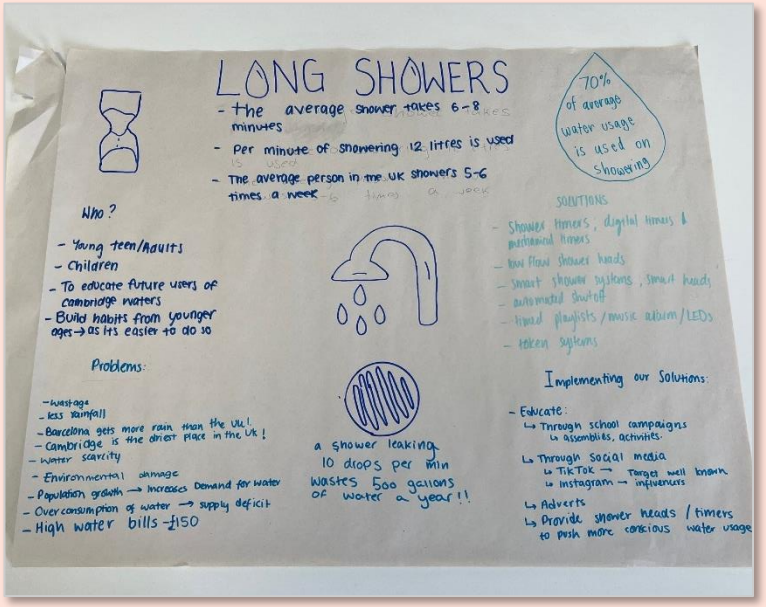
*"For children, it would be quite good to implement them [shower timers] to **make showers a bit more fun.**"*




**Focused on showers** as a key site of water wastage

## Key Insights

- **Focus on young teens and children** would **educate future users** of water and **develop habits** from younger ages
- **Solutions included tools** such as low flow shower heads, shower timers and **timed playlists**. They also suggested introducing **tokens** to reward cutting down shower times (which can be exchanged for vouchers/other rewards)
- **Implementation through education**: social media, schools, adverts
- **Key statistics about water scarcity can promote behaviour change** – stressing consequences of not acting was felt to be especially effective

NB: This group misunderstood the task and chose to focus on a non-cooking related topic

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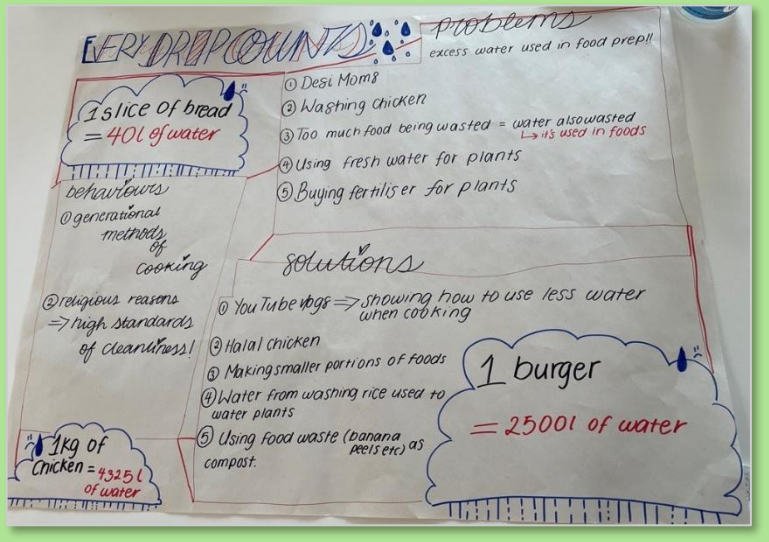
*"Most Hindu, Muslim religions are vegetarian, so you can't tell them, 'You can't use this much water' - you can't really force them to eat other recipes. We grew up culturally learning our parents' recipes, and it's getting handed down, so saying that we've got to change our recipes could affect tradition."*




**Focused on cooking**, noting food wastage as a contributor to water waste

## Key Insights

- **Cultural differences**: more tea drinking, more vegetarianism, high use of water in curries etc.
- **Changing recipes is not an option -** would challenge tradition
- **Solutions**: smaller portions, using food waste as compost, **reusing** rice water used for watering plants
- **Food labelling** could also allow consumers to make informed decisions about how water efficient their shop is – but labels must compare "like for like" products to avoid confusion
- **YouTube videos and influencers** could show how to use less water in cooking
- **Educate** on amount of water used to produce certain foods to reduce waste

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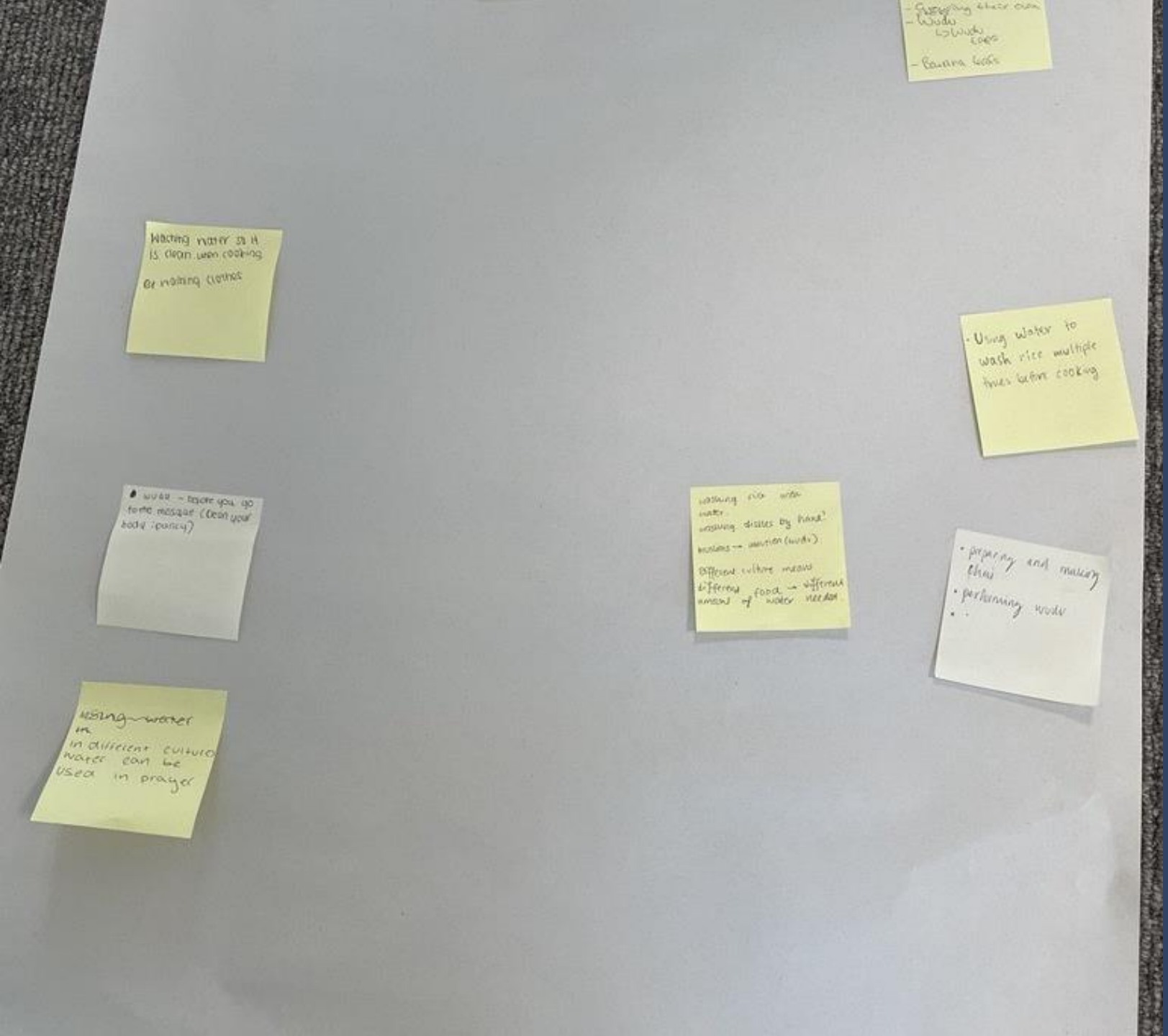


# Comms recommendations

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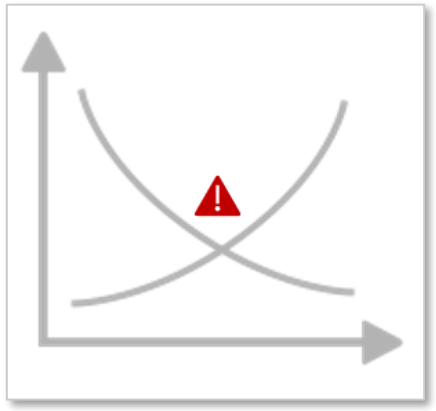
# Outlining benefits and consequences of changing behaviour is key



## Knowledge about water scarcity in Cambridge and the UK (and the risk of future shortages) is low



- Students aren't bill payers and **don't think about how water is resourced** – especially given perceived high rainfall in the UK
- The "jaws of death" graph **showing future issues with supply if demand doesn't decrease** surprised students, and was felt to encourage motivation to preserve water
- Students feel that people will be more likely to try and save water if they can **envision the consequences** of not doing so e.g. water shortages, and their impact on society/daily life

*"We need more campaigns raising awareness of how scarce water is in our community."*

*"People are more likely to listen if they know what will happen to them if they don't."*

## But students felt that people tend to react badly if they are "told what to do" to resolve the issue

A combination of explaining the **benefits** of behaviour change and the **consequences** of not doing it was felt to be the ideal approach. **Benefits mentioned by students included:**

- **Financial incentives (from SSC/ lowered bills)**
- **Reducing risk of future shortages**
- **Spiritual reward**
- **Helping the environment**

*"Incentives work better than just telling people what to do."*

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# Most don't know which behaviours to adopt to save water: it's important to provide examples and dispel misconceptions



## Key knowledge gaps

- **Knowing what to do** is the biggest challenge
- When it comes to water saving, most **struggle to think of what they can do** beyond turning the taps off when not in use
- It's also **difficult to compare water usage** across behaviours – gauging water volume is difficult, especially from a running tap:
  - Dishwasher or handwashing
  - Batch cooking or small portions
  - Bath or shower (though most assume the former uses much more)

## Solutions

- Communication should focus on **dispelling misconceptions** in short, sharp bursts/quick facts:
  - E.g. Barcelona rainfall example stuck with many
- Give **clear instructions** on how to save water, with specific examples:
  - Explain **how** to perform them
  - Explain **why** they are effective
- Where possible, outline **additional benefits** beyond water saving
  - E.g. compost made from food waste (which is also water waste) can improve results in the garden
  - E.g. water from washing rice makes an effective hair mask

*"My parents batch cook a lot, so a lot of water is being used at once."*

*"Batch cooking means that you use less water day to day as you're reheating food rather than cooking it."*

*"Sometimes we use our rice water to water our plants because it has a lot of minerals."*

*"The webinar opened my eyes up to more ways I could save."*

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# This generation are social media natives, and have developed ideas about how to engage people on water saving



*"People who pay for the water bill are older, so Facebook would be better for them."*


*"Everyone's on social media nowadays."*

## Best channels to use

- Students feel that most people are on social media – but the **best channels to use depend on who you want to reach**
  - Facebook felt more appropriate for billpayers (who are older), but not used by students
  - TikTok and Instagram popular with younger generations

## Delivery method: influencers vs celebrities

- **Influencers are influential! –** this generation are more likely to listen to them than celebrities and they are considered the **best way to deliver messages through social media**
  - Feel more **relatable** as people
  - Feel more likely to give **genuine advice** rather than "paid for" content
  - **More frequent touchpoints** for this generation (who are less engaged with traditional media)
  - Can engage a very **specific niche** of people through common interests – highly effective

## Key topics to cover

- Comms campaigns need to cover multiple topics within each channel
  - Specific **subcultures** exist within each social media site, and these have to be **approached individually**
  - E.g. not everyone's feed will show them content about cooking or gardening

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# Dialogue surrounding faith and culture must be approached sensitively



## Guidance on approaching sensitive topics

- **Avoid "telling people what to do"**
  - Focus on benefits, incentives, and the idea of "providing support" rather than accusing or placing blame
- **Acknowledge the motivations behind cultural cooking practices**
  - These often have a **historical root** e.g. washing rice/chicken for hygiene reasons (important in times/locations where butchery practices are less reliable)
  - Comms need to **focus on the motivation behind the practice**
- **Show, don't tell**
  - Identify appropriate places for appropriate behaviours, and **demonstrate** the 'best practice' alternative
- **Address people as individuals, rather than solely through their minority status**
  - There is a risk of making cultural groups feel alienated, and encouraging questions around focusing on specific groups if comms are too direct

*"It would be quite tough [to get people to change behaviours] because they're so adamant on their culture. It's literally been ingrained into their lives about washing the chicken."*

*"It feels like someone's telling them what to do. If we can get people to make the choice on their own that would be better."*

→ e.g. Showing evidence that halal chicken is cleaner than non-halal could dispel hygiene worries

→ e.g. Publish recipes which make efficient use of water, but don't directly market them as such

→ e.g. Publishing water efficient South Asian recipes will automatically draw in South Asian audiences – you don't need to single them out in comms

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# Students identified two key audiences to engage: young children and mothers



## Behaviours and habits are passed down – it's difficult to change ingrained behaviours of older generations

- **Focusing on young people would break this cycle**
  - Learning new behaviours around water usage from a young age could help encourage better habits
- **Students suggested doing this by going into schools**
  - A combination of assemblies and class activities was felt to be the best approach
  - Young people can also be reaching through social media
  - Making behaviour change into a game/competition with tools such as shower timers is also felt to be especially effective for this age group

*"It would be best to target primarily school children – because they're the most easily influenced."*

*"Educate future users of Cambridge Water and build habits from younger ages so it's easier to do so."*

## Mothers play a key, authoritative role in South Asian kitchens

- **If mothers change their behaviours, they can model good behaviours for others**
  - As the gatekeepers of cultural cooking traditions, mothers' opinions are likely to be listened to in this sphere
- **Students suggested creating YouTube vlogs aimed at "Desi mums" specifically**
  - Mothers are felt to consume a lot of cooking related content on YouTube already – a captive audience
  - Vlogs could encourage careful use of water and reducing food waste

*"My mum cooks for all our cousins but makes way more than is needed."*

*"My mum spends a lot of time watching cooking videos on YouTube."*

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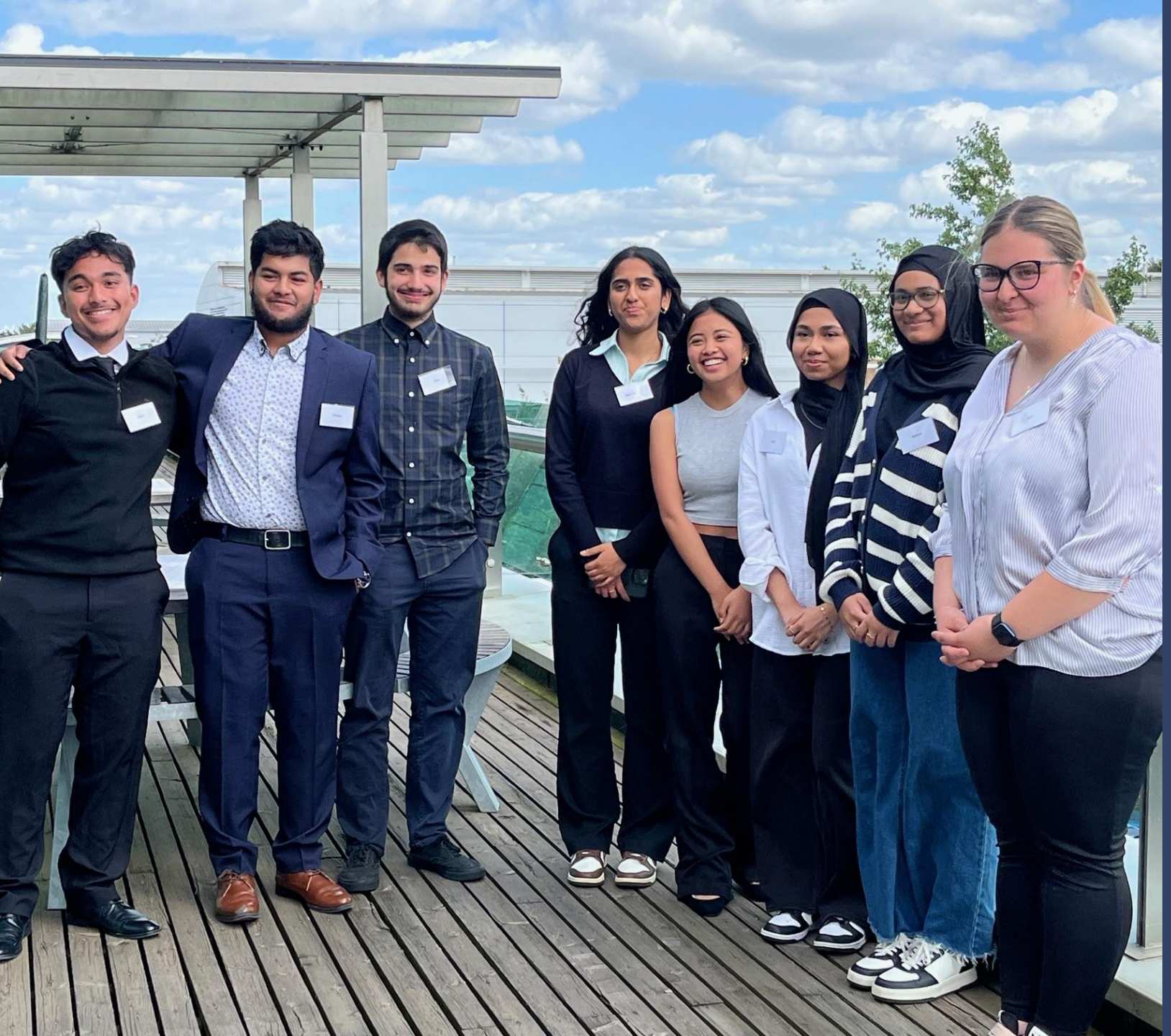

# Appendix: participant feedback and learning

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# Webinar feedback form summary



Average score: 9 (n=4)

Overall, how would you rate the South Staffs Water Young Innovators' Panel session today? (on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent

**Memorable positives**

- Facts about Cambridge Water, water supply and issues in the water system
- Well-constructed
- Team leaders and the quiz

**To be improved**

- Make the activity more engaging e.g. more games and quizzes

**Key takeaways**

- "The initiative where Cambridge water told residents to use a watering can instead of a hose and ended up saving a large amount of water."
- Information e.g. average water use; more demand than supply by 2050

"Super informative and interactive."

"I think it was very informing but quite boring."

"It was great to see that the problems Cambridge Water is facing were openly discussed with us and also how those problems are being combatted."

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# Workshop feedback form summary



Average score: 8.7 (n=9)

Overall, how would you rate the South Staffs Water Young Innovators' Panel session today? (on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is terrible and 10 is excellent

**Memorable positives**

- Making connections with friendly people
- Learning about other cultures
- Discussions and presentations
- Developing skills and experience

**To be improved**

- Increase attendance (e.g. more advertising on social media, scheduling on weekends)
- More interactive, whole-group activities e.g. competitions
- Knowing the plan / agenda beforehand
- More discussion facilitation within / between groups; mixing them more

**Key takeaways**

- Facts e.g. "Barcelona has more water than the UK"; the main ways that water is wasted
- Meeting new people
- Making the posters, presenting
- Discussion about culture and how it's related to water usage

*"The event overall was fun, well-structured and was a great opportunity to communicate with new people and to go out of my comfort zone."*

*"Loved the teamwork, and presentation opportunities which helped me learn from others point of view and develop my communication skills."*

*"I found the panel very engaging and have definitely found it incredibly insightful into learning and contributing to Cambridge Water."*

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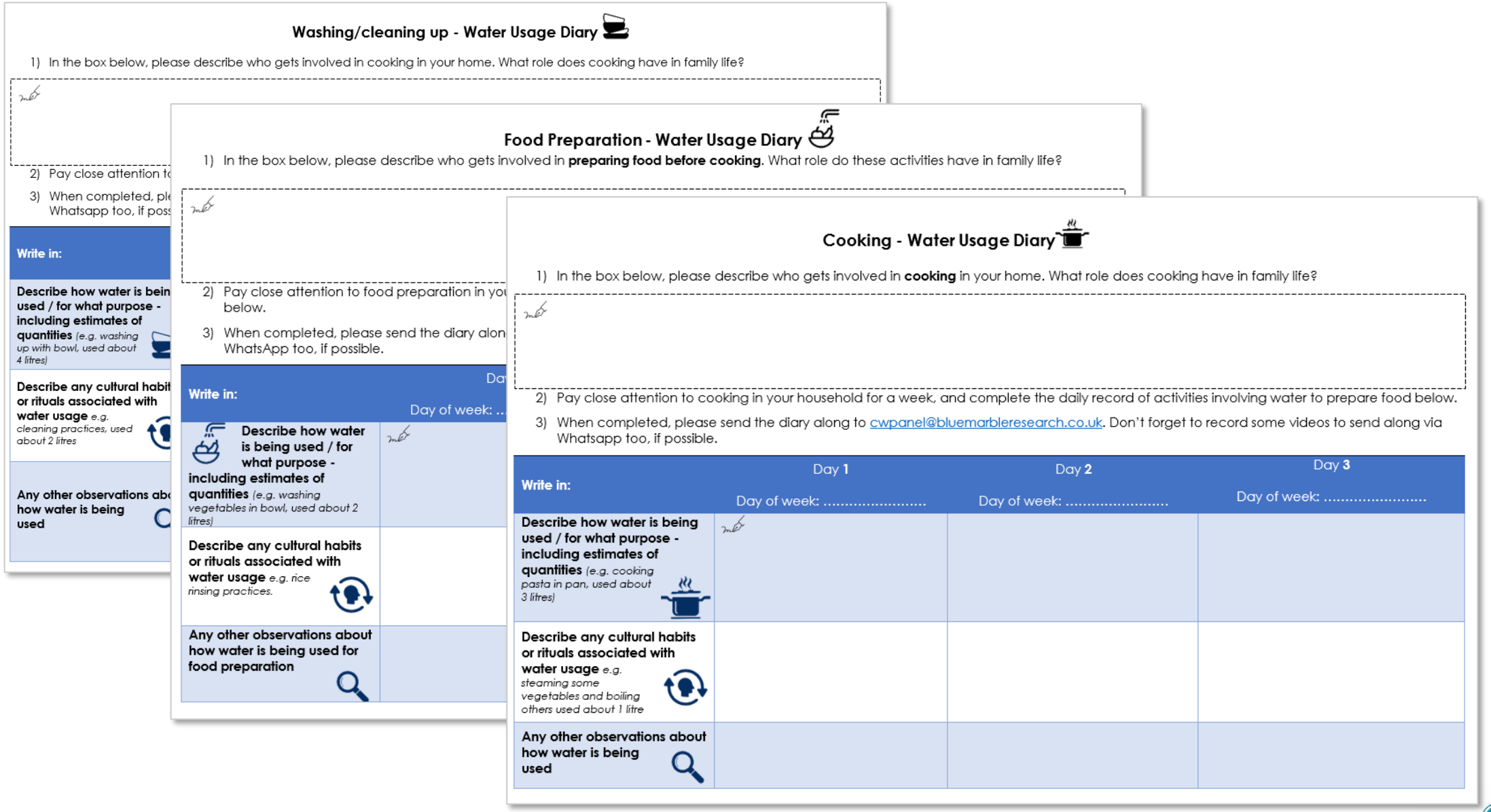
# Summary of pre-task activity completed by YIPers ahead of workshop session





Washing/cleaning up - Water Usage Diary

1) In the box below, please describe who gets involved in cooking in your home. What role does cooking have in family life?

2) Pay close attention t

3) When completed, pl
Whatsapp too, if poss

| Write in: |
|---|
| Describe how water is bein used / for what purpose - including estimates of quantities *(e.g. washing up with bowl, used about 4 litres)* |
| Describe any cultural habit or rituals associated with water usage *e.g. cleaning practices, used about 2 litres* |
| Any other observations ab how water is being used |

Food Preparation - Water Usage Diary

1) In the box below, please describe who gets involved in **preparing food before cooking**. What role do these activities have in family life?

2) Pay close attention to food preparation in yo
below.

3) When completed, please send the diary alon
WhatsApp too, if possible.

| Write in: | Da<br>Day of week: ... |
|---|---|
| Describe how water is being used / for what purpose - including estimates of quantities *(e.g. washing vegetables in bowl, used about 2 litres)* | |
| Describe any cultural habits or rituals associated with water usage *e.g. rice rinsing practices.* | |
| Any other observations about how water is being used for food preparation | |

Cooking - Water Usage Diary

1) In the box below, please describe who gets involved in **cooking** in your home. What role does cooking have in family life?

2) Pay close attention to cooking in your household for a week, and complete the daily record of activities involving water to prepare food below.

3) When completed, please send the diary along to cwpanel@bluemarbleresearch.co.uk. Don't forget to record some videos to send along via Whatsapp too, if possible.

| Write in: | Day **1**<br>Day of week: ..... | Day **2**<br>Day of week: ..... | Day **3**<br>Day of week: ..... |
|---|---|---|---|
| Describe how water is being used / for what purpose - including estimates of quantities *(e.g. cooking pasta in pan, used about 3 litres)* | | | |
| Describe any cultural habits or rituals associated with water usage *e.g. steaming some vegetables and boiling others used about 1 litre* | | | |
| Any other observations about how water is being used | | | |

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# Blue Marble thoughts on recruitment challenges



**Our approach and challenges:**

- Recruitment for this year's YIP proved difficult with the added criteria of having a connection to South Asian or Indian sub-continent cultures
- We went out to schools directly as normal, as well as engaging with local cultural/religious community organisations through flyer distribution and Cambridge Water contacts

**Recommendations for next time:**

- Many attendees were made aware of the YIP through other students – word of mouth is effective
- Students recommend going into schools and advertising opportunities through assemblies
- Students also recommend posting the opportunity on social media (Instagram or TikTok)
- Important to continue to highlight the benefits of taking part: incentives, experience, reference forms

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# Recommendations from peer reviewer: recruitment

## Boosting recruitment

- **Ensuring that leaflets are distributed to a wide range of centres of worship** (not just mosques). This could be achieved by building relationships with named contacts at Sikh Gurdwaras, Hindu Temples and Buddhist centres of worship
- **Disseminate flyers in high touchpoint locations**, such as youth centres, sports clubs, meditation and wellbeing centres, gyms, parks and walking tracks - this could be achieved using an in-person recruiter, or a designated member of staff
- **Engage further with Cambridge University** – this could include sending out communications as early as possible, planning events around university termtime and engaging individual colleges

## Additional groups to engage

- **Mothers/homemakers** (engaged through schools and relevant clubs and associations e.g. playgroups)
- **Gardeners** (reaching out through gardening clubs and leaflets in allotments)

*"I feel the students were smart to assume/expect that water companies could do more in terms of educating the public on demand, supply and efficiency of water usage in the areas they operate!*

*"In the next round, the study could include the participation of mothers and homemakers. This would bring out more information and also be able to influence at a larger, more immediate scale."*

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# Recommendations from peer reviewer: fieldwork

## Topics to cover in future

- **Additional faith based water usage behaviours,** such as cleaning places of worship, chanting practices and bathing/watering of holy plants
- **Lentil preparation** – using a pressure cooker instead of soaking was felt to be quite common in the cultures studied, which could affect the amount of water used

*"Are the students motivated to go back home and make any changes if required in their homes themselves, post challenge presentation? It would be good to have a report back mechanism to see if the outputs are really practical?"*

*"Regular washing and/or mopping the physical premises of the places of worship can also be added to types of consumption related to faith-based activities…this may require some focused research in future for further clarification. ."*

## Feedback on methodology/terminology

- **Incorporate a report-back mechanism** checking in with students to see if their usage behaviours/attitudes changed after participation – a post task diary could allow direct comparisons with their previous behaviours
- **Keep the focus on culture rather than faith when discussing cooking** related behaviours – as these are more related to ethnicities and geographical origin
- **Keep the focus on preparing, washing and cleaning practices, rather than the types of cuisine being prepared** – without additional research it is difficult to tell if one cuisine is more water efficient than another
- **Use "promoting best practices" rather than"behaviour change strategy",** which could imply that the cultures in question are more likely to waste water.

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