

HARMONY LABS

#TEAMWATER

MAKES IT
RAIN

The Rise of Creator-Led Fundraising

A UNIQUE CAMPAIGN WITH APPLICABLE INSIGHTS

In August 2025, creators MrBeast and Mark Rober launched #TeamWater, a campaign that mobilized thousands of online creators to raise funds for clean drinking water. In partnership with WaterAid, and led by campaign co-founder Matt Fitzgerald of fitz.partners, the campaign raised over \$40M to provide clean water to 2M people worldwide, becoming the largest creator-led fundraiser to date.

Over the course of one month, #TeamWater's reach grew beyond MrBeast and Mark Rober's fanbase to audiences across the cultural spectrum, thanks to the participation of thousands of diverse creators.

Harmony Labs—a nonprofit media lab interested in the immense power of media to shape a positive, pluralistic future—worked with fitz.partners to explore what makes creator campaigns work, analyze the strengths and challenges of #TeamWater, and provide actionable recommendations for funders and advocacy organizations considering similar initiatives.

Despite its singular scope, the #TeamWater campaign holds insights for funders and advocates interested in working with creators to engage communities at any scale.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY FINDINGS

DIVERSE CREATORS REACHED BROAD AUDIENCES

MrBeast and Mark Rober drove ~50% of donor awareness among survey respondents, but 15,000+ creators of all sizes expanded the campaign across diverse cultural audiences—from gaming communities to family vloggers to science explainers.

A SIMPLE MESSAGE TRAVELS.

“\$1 = 1 year of water for 1 person” was easy to share, nonpartisan, and adaptable to any creator’s format. 76% of creators who responded to our survey said their audience was equally or more engaged with campaign content than with their typical content.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION DRIVES FUNDRAISING.

Gamers, crypto communities, and creator-led community fundraisers made major contributions. Competitive elements like leaderboards and livestreams turned audiences into active participants.

CREATOR CAMPAIGNS ARE A GATEWAY FOR NEW DONORS.

99% of #TeamWater donors were new to WaterAid. Donor comments show children donating allowances; 62% of donors who responded to the survey were under 35.

PEOPLE WANT TO DO THIS AGAIN.

89% of creators who responded to our survey said they were “extremely” or “very likely” to participate in a similar campaign in the future; 76% of donors who responded to our survey said the same.

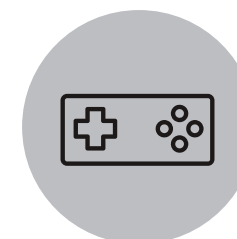
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDERS & ADVOCATES



LEAD WITH A SIMPLE, UNIVERSAL MESSAGE that creators can adapt authentically, and provide multimedia resources and guidance on messaging.



PARTNER WITH CREATORS AS CO-DESIGNERS, NOT VENDORS. Consider partnering with a diverse creator advisory group to shape a campaign that reaches audiences authentically and organically.



BUILD FOR YOUR AUDIENCE'S PARTICIPATION STYLE. Gamers respond to live streams and leaderboards; younger audiences need ways to engage beyond donations.



PLAN FOR LONG-TAIL ENGAGEMENT. Creators and donor survey respondents highlighted interest in deeper participation and connecting with each other, while donations continue even after the campaign fundraising goal has been achieved.



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IF ANYONE KNOWS HOW TO CUT THROUGH, IT'S CREATORS

Over the last two decades, the media ecosystem has been radically transformed by social media platforms, short-format video and algorithmic distribution. Audiences increasingly tune out institutional messaging — news, paid ads — and turn to individual creators they trust.

These creators have spent years making content that speaks authentically to the values and interests of their fans. With a finger on the pulse of their communities, they are the first to pick up on social and cultural trends and adapt accordingly. They know how to cut through the noise and reach people where they are, consistently turning distraction into engagement. To that end, brands were projected to spend \$37B on creator marketing in 2025, a 26% increase year over year.

This is why creators are a uniquely powerful channel for reaching and activating new audiences — because they understand how to build community in an increasingly fragmented social landscape.

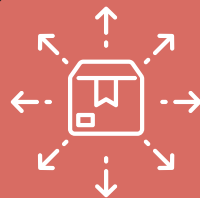
THE POWER OF CREATORS

WHY CREATOR-LED FUNDRAISING?



PLATFORM EXPERTISE

Creators have obsessively studied what makes people click, watch, and engage, and they know how to activate their audience at scale — more important than ever in a fragmented media environment.



ORGANIC DISTRIBUTION

Creators reach audiences directly and organically on multiple platforms (unlike paid advertising).



AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Creators have established trust with their audiences and know what they like.



CULTURAL RELEVANCE

Lifestyle and entertainment creators can make complex issues accessible and relatable.



ORIGINAL CONTENT CREATION

Creators can adapt calls to action and campaign messaging to fit their proven formats/styles.



GATEWAY TO NEW DONORS

Creator-led, entertainment-driven fundraising offers young people an entry point to participating in collective action.

IN 2022

the White House enlisted TikTokers, YouTubers and Twitch streamers like Benny Drama to encourage younger Americans to *get vaccinated*.

\$3.3M

The gaming community rallied on Twitch to raise over *\$3.3 million for cancer research* and treatment by hosting gaming marathons and friendly challenges that engaged their audiences in real time.

\$25M

YouTuber Jacksepticeye's annual *Thankmas livestream* has mobilized viewers worldwide and raised over \$25 million for charities like World Central Kitchen.

80K

Teen creator Salish Matter drew *80,000 fans* to the mall for her makeup launch.

\$50M+

The loyal fanbase that Markiplier spent 14 years building through gaming content drove the *breakout success* of his directorial debut and film adaptation of a video game, with \$50M+ earnings worldwide.



THE CAMPAIGN

THE CAMPAIGN

CAMPAIGN AT A GLANCE

*The single
livestream
charity record*

\$12M
IN UNDER
24 HOURS

100K+
DONATIONS

*of which the most common
donation amount was \$5*



2.8B

COMBINED VIEWS

*across YouTube, Facebook,
Instagram, TikTok,
and Twitch*

**SUPERCHARGED
BY NEW PLATFORM
FEATURES**

*like YouTube's Collaboration tags to
link teammates and TikTok's
Donation Amplification to embed
fundraisers in videos*

19K

VIDEOS

tracked from more than
**12,600 YOUTUBE
CREATORS**

\$40M
RAISED
IN 31 DAYS

*enough to bring
clean water to*
2M
PEOPLE
FOR DECADES



15K+
CREATORS
PARTICIPATED
*including YouTube
channels in at least*
172
COUNTRIES

A DISTRIBUTED ORGANIZING MODEL

#TeamWater builds on the success of MrBeast and Mark Rober's #TeamTrees and #TeamSeas campaigns. #Team co-founder Matt Fitzgerald's organizing model mobilizes creators worldwide to drive environmental action among a new generation, and #TeamWater expands on it with new tools and even bigger fundraising goals.

MESSAGE & MISSION

- CLEAR IMPACT METRIC (\$1 = 1 YEAR OF CLEAN WATER FOR 1 PERSON)
- RADICALLY SIMPLE AND NONPARTISAN

INFRASTRUCTURE

- LEAD GLOBAL PARTNER (WATERAID) WITH 40+ YEAR TRACK RECORD
- LOW-FRICTION FUNDRAISING WITH TOOLS THAT ALLOW FOR EASY DONATION
- OPEN CALL TO ACTION FROM ALL CREATORS INVITING AUDIENCES TO PARTICIPATE
- SHORT TIMEFRAME (1 MONTH) THAT ADDED URGENCY AND RAISED THE STAKES

COMMUNITY & MOMENTUM

- GAMIFICATION VIA LIVE LEADERBOARDS AND COMMUNITY FUNDRAISERS
- #TEAM ETHOS THAT WELCOMED ANYONE AND GENERATED COLLECTIVE ACTION
- STRATEGIC PLATFORM PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUSTAINED BROAD ENGAGEMENT

LEADERSHIP TEAM



**MRBEAST
(JIMMY DONALDSON)**
The world's most-watched
YouTuber with 470 million
subscribers



MARK ROBER
Former NASA engineer and
science communicator with
72 million subscribers



**MATT FITZGERALD,
FITZ PARTNERS**
Co-Founder and Campaign
Director of #TeamTrees,
#TeamSeas, and #TeamWater



WATERAID
Lead global NGO with decades of
water infrastructure experience



DIGDEEP



givepower



**INSTITUTO
ALOK**

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
DigDeep, GivePower, and Instituto Alok

OUR APPROACH

We tracked the performance of more than **19,000 YOUTUBE VIDEOS** published during the campaign to understand its scale and reach. Using our Narrative Observatory, a representative dataset of the media consumption of **300,000 U.S. PARTICIPANTS**, we mapped top #TeamWater creators to the diverse audiences watching their channels. Through Harmony's values-based framework, we analyzed how the campaign's core message adapted across cultural communities and interests.

We also surveyed **~960 DONORS AND 420 PARTICIPATING CREATORS**, capturing a wide range of motivations, experiences, and backgrounds. Together, these datasets reveal why people participated and how the campaign achieved unprecedented scale. See Methods in the Appendix for details.

WHAT MADE IT WORK: FIVE STRUCTURAL STRENGTHS



CELEBRITY LEADS

MrBeast and Mark Rober's combined platforms and MrBeast's reputation for philanthropic spectacle set the campaign up for massive reach, but other elements of the campaign's design were also critical to its success.



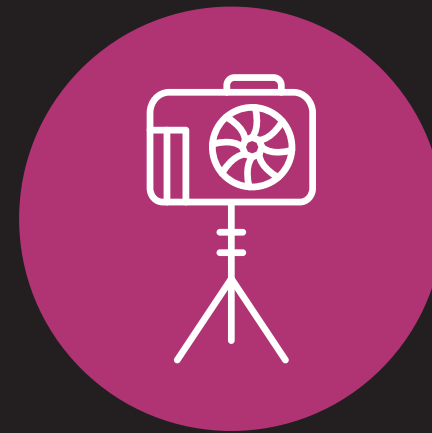
DIVERSE CREATORS

MrBeast drove engagement at launch but the campaign ultimately reached well beyond his core fandom thanks to the participation of 15,000 creators from around the world. These other creators reached diverse audiences to engage key fundraising communities, including gamers and the crypto community. They also engaged a younger donor audience than WaterAid's typical base.



RADICAL SIMPLICITY

A super simple, nonpartisan call to action and an easy-to-understand fundraising formula (\$1 = 1 year of water) were easy to share via social media and encouraged small donations and broad participation. Replicating the \$1 formula and branding of #TeamTrees (\$1 = 1 tree planted) and #TeamSeas (\$1 = 1 pound of trash removed) helped make the campaign instantly recognizable and relatable.



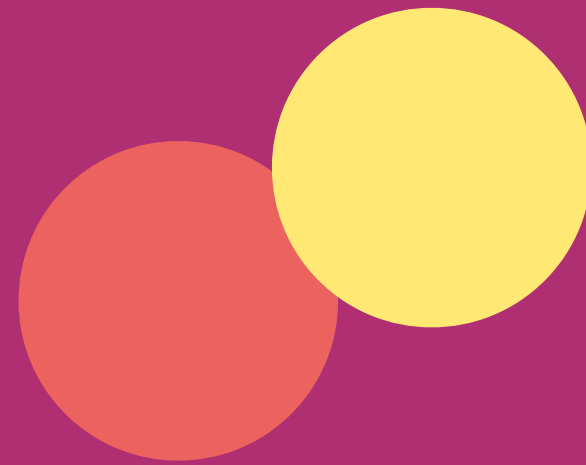
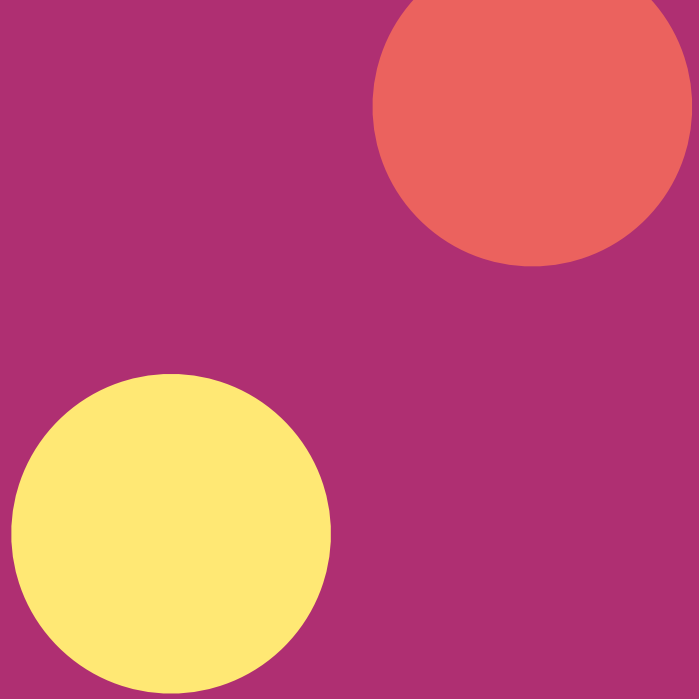
CREATIVE FREEDOM

Rather than pushing a top-down message, the campaign invited creators to make their own videos, in their own voices, tailored to their audiences—allowing the campaign to reach audiences that were unlikely to seek out water advocacy or engage directly with WaterAid content.

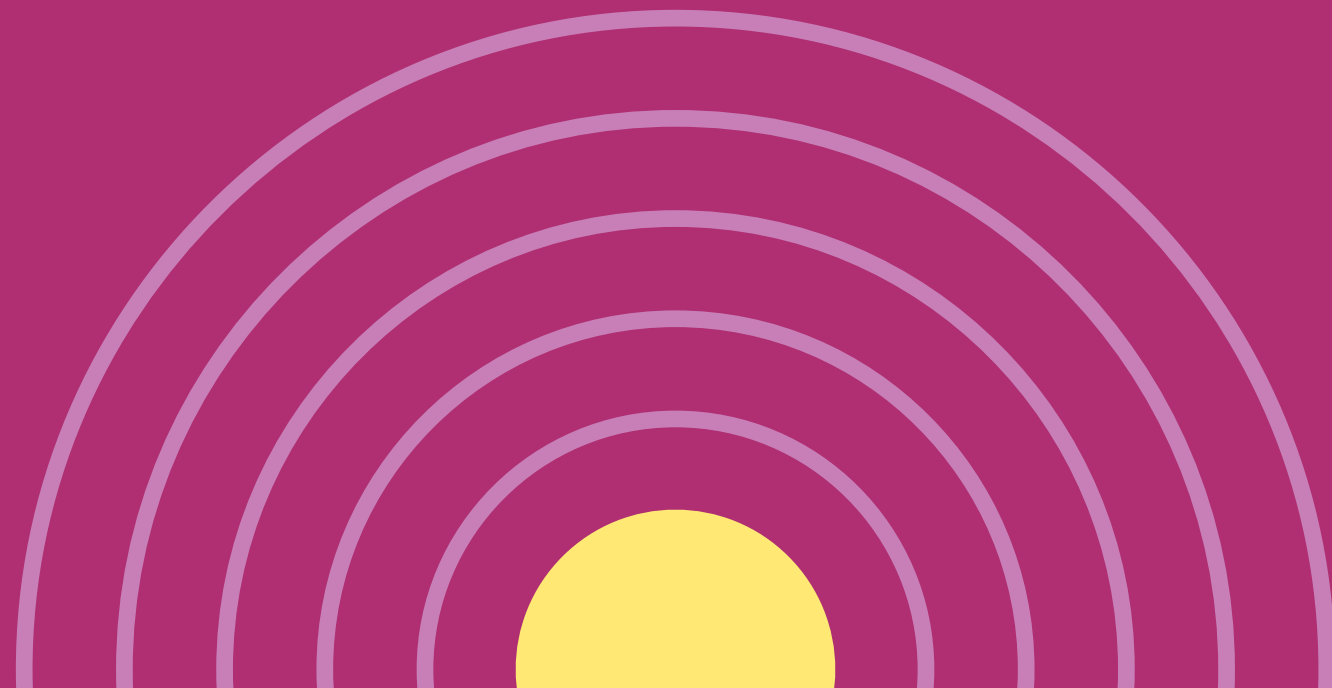


#TEAM ETHOS

The massive fundraising goal and short timeline turned fundraising into another high stakes, seemingly impossible MrBeast feat. The campaign welcomed anyone to join the #team (whether they donated or not) and encouraged community fundraisers, creating a powerful sense of collective action that participants found meaningful—generating record-setting participation.



THE CREATORS



THE MRBEAST EFFECT



Not just a creator, MrBeast is also a brand and a business that has been *valued at \$5B*. With over 470 million subscribers, he drove the lion's share of engagement for the campaign. His massive reach and fundraising track record helped motivate donors and mobilize creators at scale:

MrBeast and Mark Rober were responsible for **DRIVING AWARENESS FOR ABOUT 1 IN 2 DONORS** among survey respondents.

41% OF RESPONDENTS MENTIONED MRBEAST, 10% Mark Rober (with 3% mentioning both MrBeast and Mark Rober), 26% YouTube generally, and 26% mentioned another source.

MrBeast and Mark Rober were able to recruit top creators to make content for free, launching a movement.

“My son is a huge fan of MrBeast and Mark Rober, so it is fun for him to be able to participate in something with people he looks up to.”

CREATOR, SURVEY RESPONSE

MrBeast personally called top creators and other high-profile contacts to solicit donations while live streaming and shared real-time updates on the campaign on social media over the course of the month.

MRBEAST'S APPROACH TO PHILANTHROPY HAS SPARKED A DISCUSSION OF ITS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES:

Some media coverage has characterized MrBeast's past philanthropic work as *driven by spectacle* and *exploitation*.

The #TeamWater campaign took steps to center *community perspectives* and design for long-term impact (bringing water to 2M people for decades).

While many creators and fans commented positively about the #TeamWater campaign and MrBeast's leadership, some creators suggested that MrBeast took an *undue amount of credit for the success of the campaign* or used *pressure tactics* to convince others to donate.

THE CREATORS



BAYASHI
54M/TIKTOK



THE STOKES TWINS
138M/YOUTUBE



SINCERELY, AURORA
54K/YOUTUBE



BIGJERM_8
11K/YOUTUBE



TWISHORTS
10M/YOUTUBE



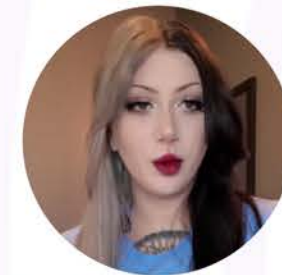
ADIN ROSS
7M/TWITCH



IAN FUJIMOTO
2K/INSTAGRAM



THAT LITTLE PUFF
37M/YOUTUBE



RAVEN GRIMM
3M/TIKTOK



COOKING AND CALM
32K/YOUTUBE



MASSUCCI MEDIA
332/YOUTUBE



YOANGELOLO
10M/YOUTUBE



XQC
12M/TWITCH



KOOP
98K/YOUTUBE



DEGENSIOTTER
1M/INSTAGRAM



JORDAN AND SALISH MATTER
34M/YOUTUBE

MARK ROBER
74M/YOUTUBE

MRBEAST
473M/YOUTUBE



MINUTEARTH
3M/YOUTUBE

MRBEAST & MARK ROBER MADE THE FIRST SPLASH, BUT 15,000 OTHER CREATORS SENT RIPPLES AROUND THE WORLD.

CREATOR FOLLOWERS/PLATFORM



ADAMW
12M/INSTAGRAM



DHAR MANN
26M/YOUTUBE



A.J. AND BIG JUSTICE
3M/TIKTOK



CLEO ABRAM
7M/YOUTUBE

THE CREATORS

ENTERTAINMENT CREATORS SHOWED UP—NOT JUST ADVOCATES

The open call to action allowed creators of all stripes to participate, introducing the topic of water access into their content about science, gaming, comedy, food, music, animals, viral stunts, and more. E.g. Alan Becker (stickman animation), TwiShorts (musical parody), YoAngelolo (family/lifestyle), MrSpherical (geopolitical comedy), Dr. Rena Malik (medicine/health), MinuteEarth (science).

“The combined effort of big named YouTubers was very incredible to see. Every creator of every genre was able to turn their niches into a way to promote this fundraiser.”

CREATOR, SURVEY RESPONSE

79%

THE DESIRE TO HAVE REAL IMPACT ON WATER ACCESS *was the leading motivator for participating in the campaign among creators' open-ended survey responses, alongside*

28%

BEING PART OF A LARGER MOVEMENT WITH COLLECTIVE ENERGY AND SHARED PURPOSE

27%

THE IMPORTANCE OF GIVING BACK AND USING THEIR PLATFORM FOR GOOD

11%

CAPITALIZING ON A VIRAL MRBEAST MOMENT FOR AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

SHARING
OTHERS' POSTS

33%

86%

CREATING
ORIGINAL CONTENT

66%

MADE TWO OR
MORE PIECES OF
CONTENT

38%

DONATING

21%

RERCRUITING
OTHER CREATORS

Creators who responded to our survey participated by creating original content—not just donating, sharing others' posts, or recruiting other creators—with 66% making two or more pieces of content.

THE CREATORS

BUILT BY CREATORS OF ALL SIZES WITH REAL COMMUNITY TIES

This was a campaign built by authentic creators both big and small, not mainstream Hollywood celebrities.

“Knowing there’s so many creators out there and we’re all working together for good felt incredible.”

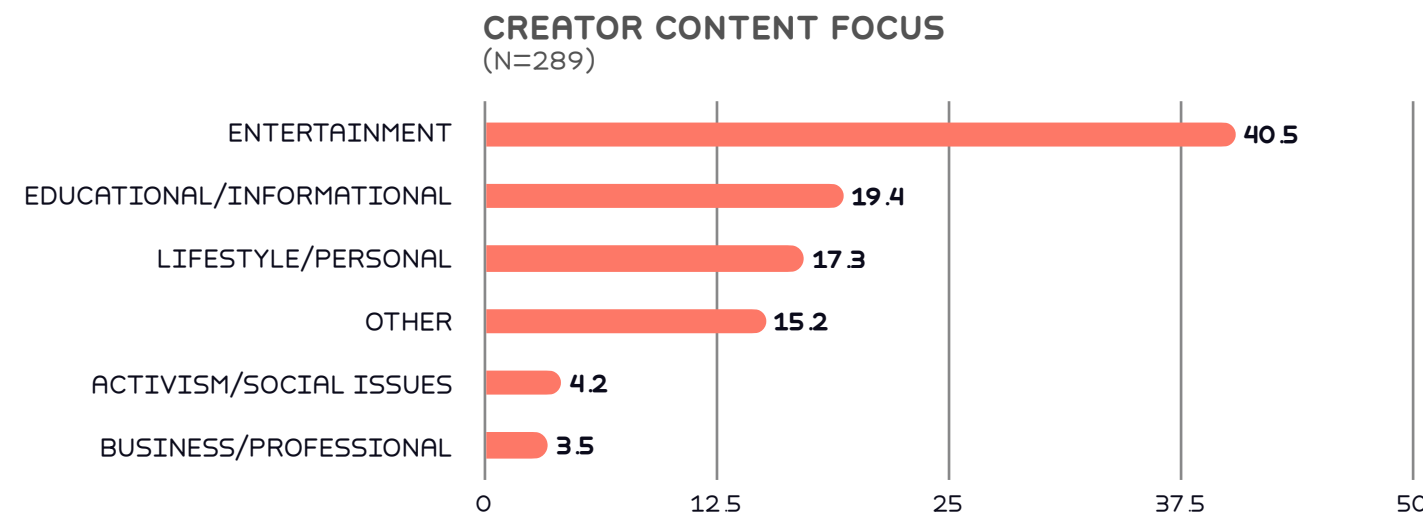
CREATOR, SURVEY RESPONSE

ENTERTAINMENT **10:1** ACTIVIST

In our survey, entertainment creators outnumbered activist creators nearly 10 to 1.



69% of creators who responded to our survey had fewer than 100K followers.

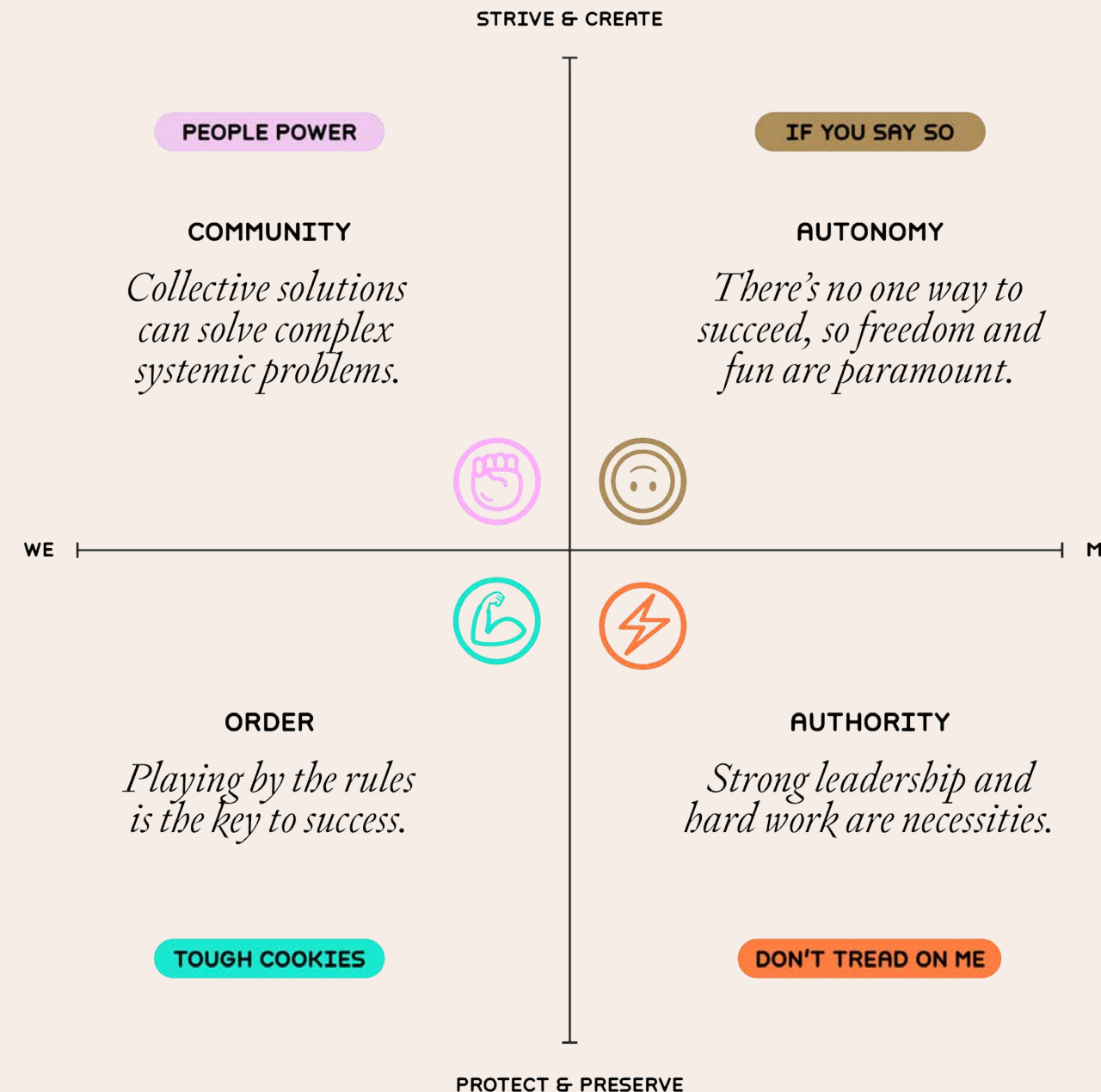


Only 4% of creators from our survey described their content as focused on activism or social issues

MAPPING #TEAMWATER CREATORS' AUDIENCES

PEOPLE'S VALUES SHAPE WHAT THEY WATCH, who they trust, and what kind of creators they connect with. We've *analyzed the media behavior of hundreds of thousands of people* and developed four values-based audiences that each hold distinct attitudes, distinct cultural affinities, and participate in distinct media cultures.

This map visualizes the audiences based on what they care about most: from community ("we") on the left, to the individual ("me") on the right; and from a desire for change ("strive & create") at the top, to a desire to keep things as they are ("protect & preserve") on the bottom. *Take our quiz here* to find out where you land on the map.



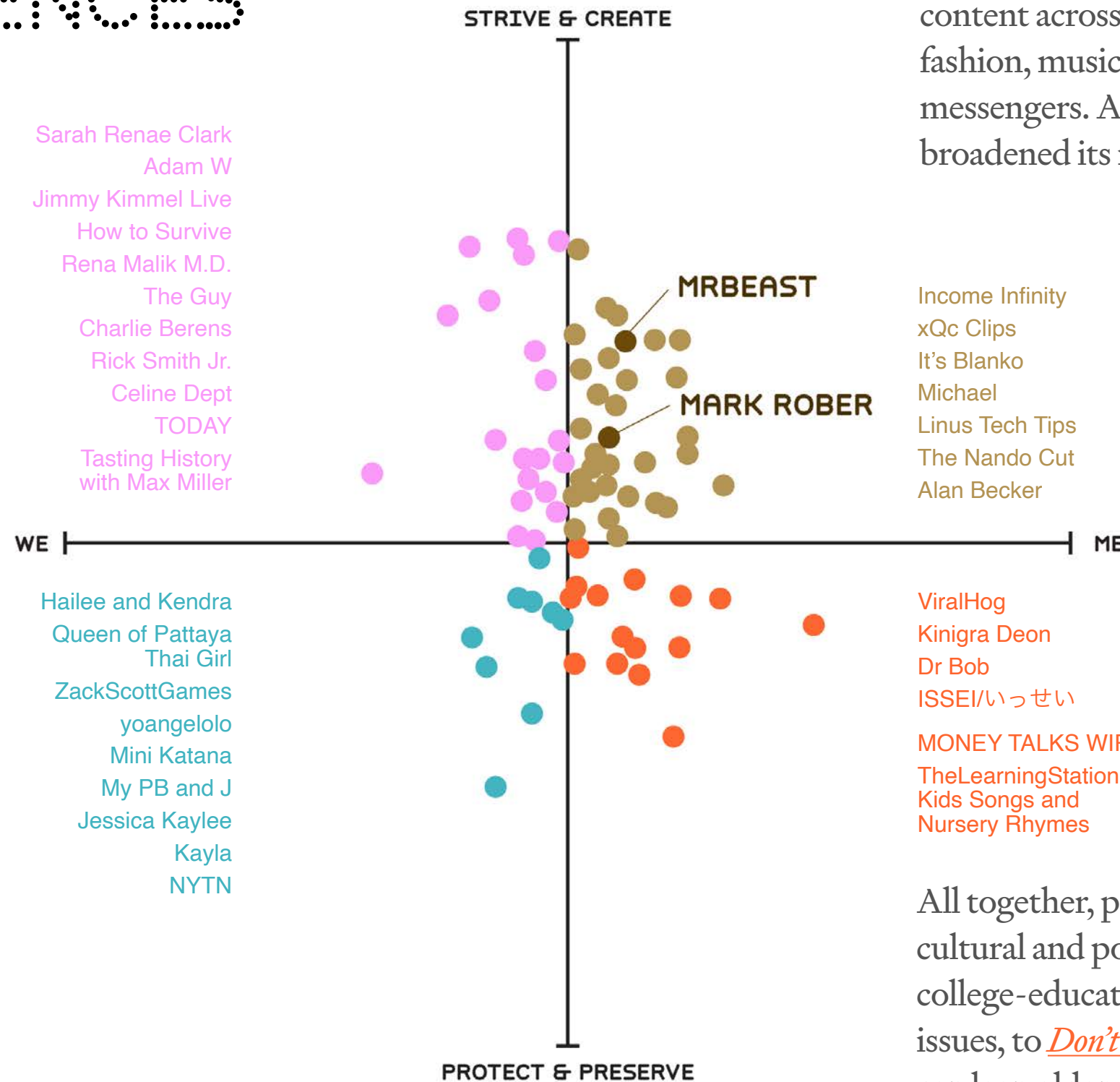
UNDERSTANDING WHERE PARTICIPATING #TEAMWATER CREATORS LAND ON THIS MAP CAN HELP US UNDERSTAND WHO THEY REACH AND WHY THEIR CHANNELS RESONATE WITH DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES.

THE CREATORS

DIVERSE CREATORS ENGAGE DIVERSE AUDIENCES

- WestJett
- GorTheMovieGod
- What If
- Myst
- Adin Live
- ShadowByYoongi
- DBZimran
- Lewis Howes
- Monterey Bay Aquarium
- Cleo Abram
- The Infographics Show
- Scammer Payback

- Sarah Renae Clark
- Adam W
- Jimmy Kimmel Live
- How to Survive
- Rena Malik M.D.
- The Guy
- Charlie Berens
- Rick Smith Jr.
- Celine Dept
- TODAY
- Tasting History with Max Miller



MRBEAST AND MARK ROBER'S CHANNELS reach a predominantly *If You Say So* audience—young, diverse, and very online. This audience both consumes and creates video content across platforms, driving trends in entertainment, fashion, music, and more—making them effective early messengers. As other creators joined the campaign, they broadened its reach beyond MrBeast and Mark Rober's fanbase.

- Income Infinity
- xQc Clips
- It's Blanko
- Michael
- Linus Tech Tips
- The Nando Cut
- Alan Becker

- Ian Fujimoto
- Gawr Gura Ch. hololive-EN
- EclipsedVO
- Quinton Reviews
- MiZkif
- Blaze

- Hailee and Kendra
- Queen of Pattaya
- Thai Girl
- ZackScottGames
- yoangelolo
- Mini Katana
- My PB and J
- Jessica Kaylee
- Kayla
- NYTN

- ViralHog
- Kinigra Deon
- Dr Bob
- ISSEI/いっせい
- MONEY TALKS WIRELESS
- TheLearningStation— Kids Songs and Nursery Rhymes

- Jordan Matter
- That Little Puff
- Triple Charm
- Angel
- Bayashi TV
- Dhar Mann Studios
- Teeth Talk Girl
- Jay

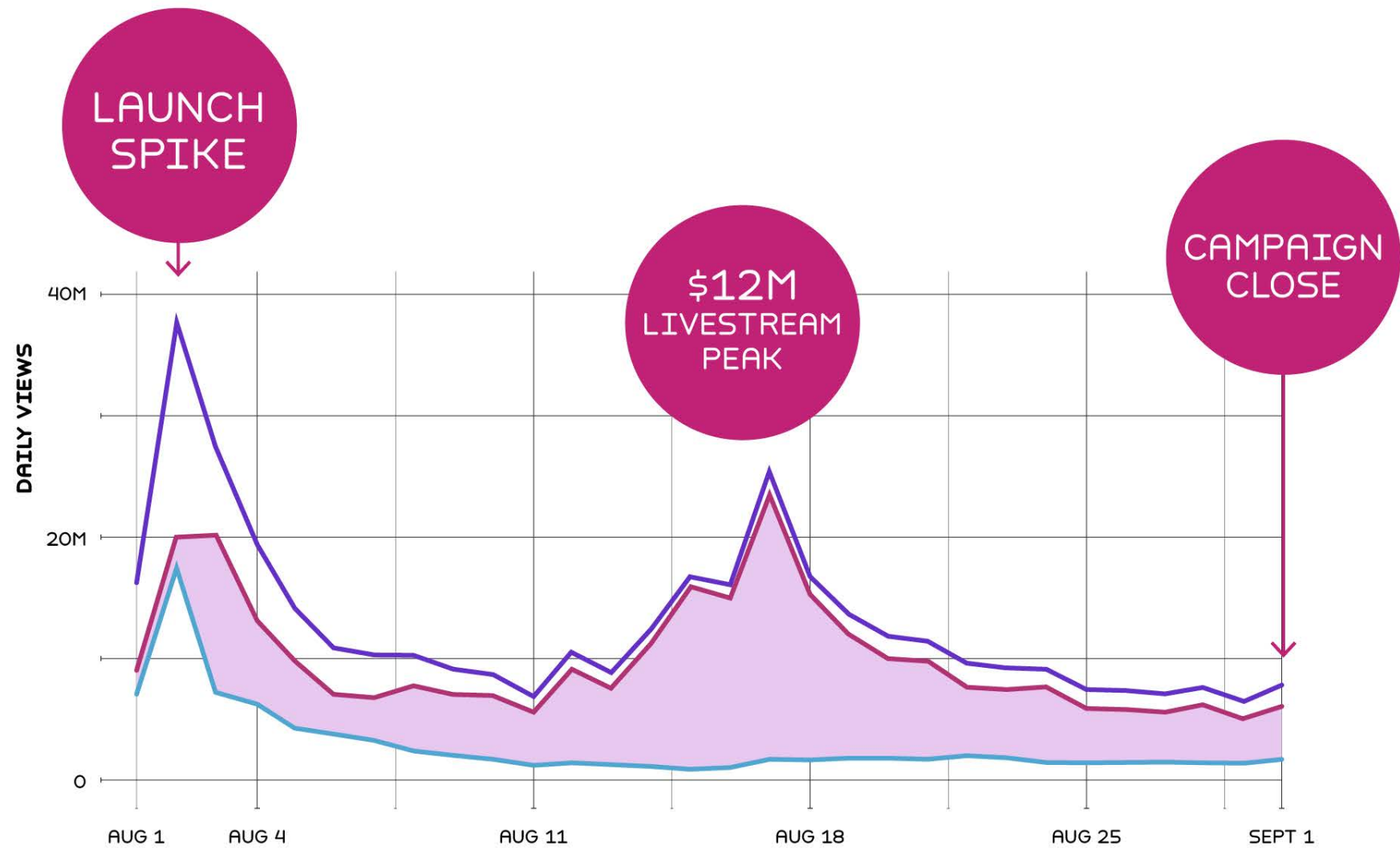
All together, participating creators tapped audiences across the cultural and political spectrum—from *People Power*, a more college-educated cohort and a base of support for progressive issues, to *Don't Tread on Me* and *Tough Cookies*, audiences that can lean older and more politically conservative.

Official Campaign Channels

Each dot is a YouTube channel from the #TeamWater campaign, positioned based on the weighted average audience profile of its US viewers. Official campaign channels also include #TeamWater (27k subscribers) and WaterAid (11k subscribers) which are too small to map.

THE CREATORS

CREATORS CARRIED THE MOMENTUM



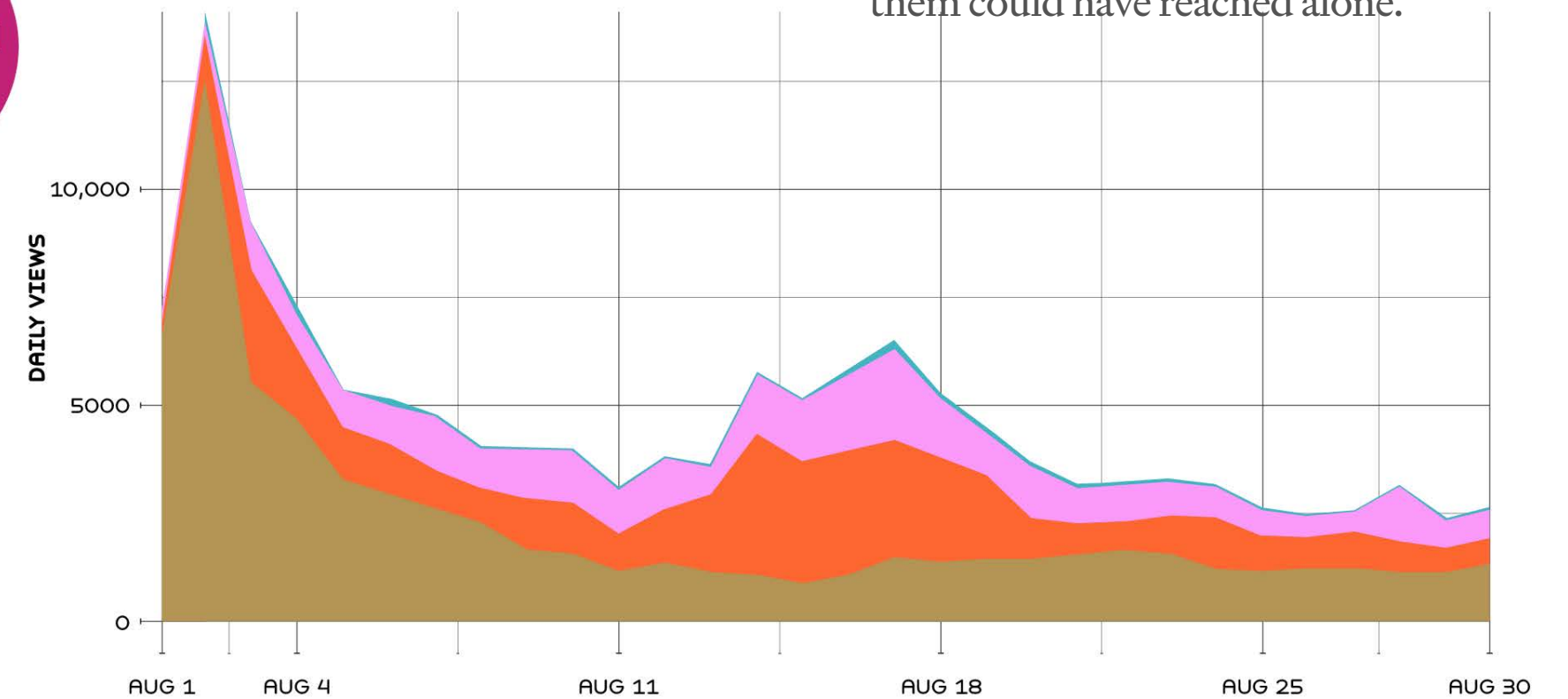
ESTIMATED DAILY YOUTUBE VIEWS: PARTNER CREATOR VS. OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN CHANNELS

- CHANNELS
- TOTAL
 - PARTNER
 - OFFICIAL

THE OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN CHANNELS—#TeamWater, WaterAid, MrBeast, and Mark Rober—drove an immediate spike at launch, but partner creators sustained daily views throughout the campaign, with organic spread far exceeding what the official channels generated on their own.

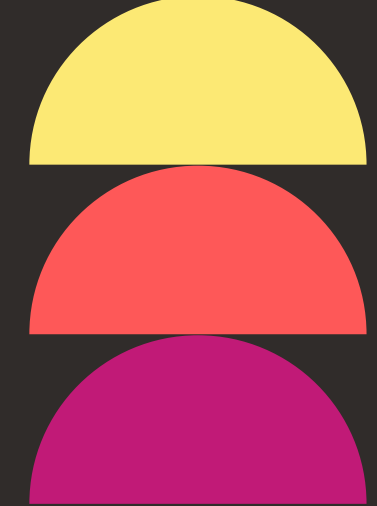
Breaking down estimated daily views by audience quadrant: MrBeast and Mark Rober drove initial reach among their *If You Say So* fan base.

Over the following weeks, other creators expanded that reach to *People Power* and *Don't Tread on Me* audiences—communities neither of them could have reached alone.



ESTIMATED DAILY YOUTUBE VIEWS BY AUDIENCE QUADRANT

- AUDIENCES
- IF YOU SAY SO
 - PEOPLE POWER
 - DON'T TREAD ON ME
 - TOUGH COOKIES



CREATORS WERE CONFIDENT, ENGAGING, AND READY TO DO IT AGAIN

70%
CONFIDENT

70% of survey respondents were somewhat or very confident that their participation made a meaningful impact on the campaign's goal (compared to 14% neutral, and 15% not confident).

76%
EQUALLY OR MORE
ENGAGED

76% said their audience was equally or more engaged with their campaign content than with their typical content, compared to 24% who said there was less engagement.

89%
VERY LIKELY

89% were "extremely" or "very likely" to participate in a similar campaign in the future—or 99% when including "somewhat likely."

“It’s about using our platform for something that truly matters.”

“It wasn’t about numbers; it was about lives changed.”

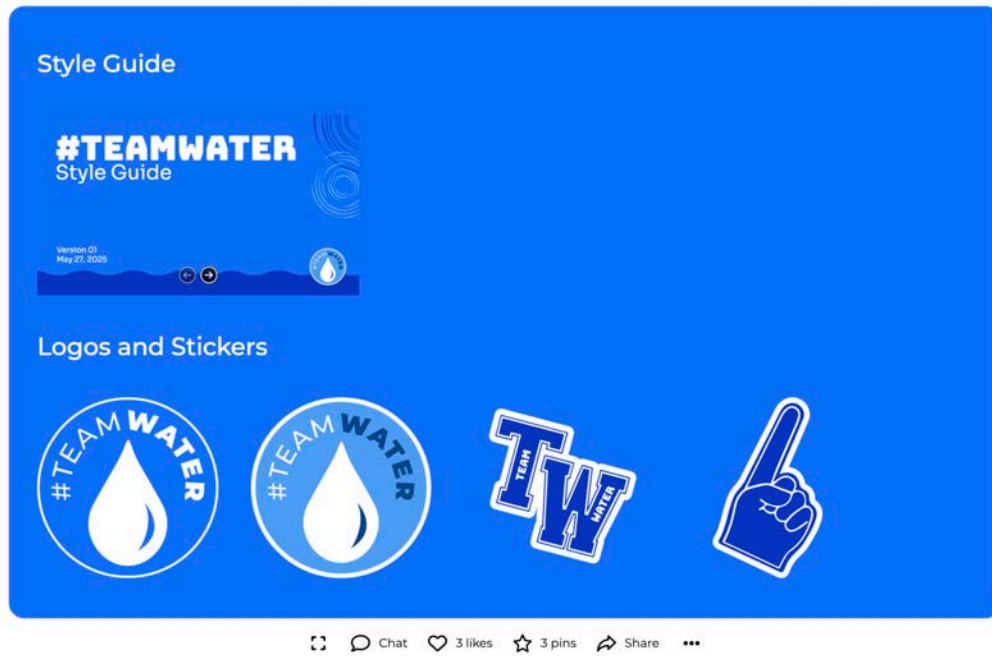
“It made everyone feel like that their contribution, no matter the size was making a real difference.”

CREATORS, SURVEY RESPONSES

THE CREATORS

THE INFRASTRUCTURE BEHIND 15,000 CREATORS SHOWING UP

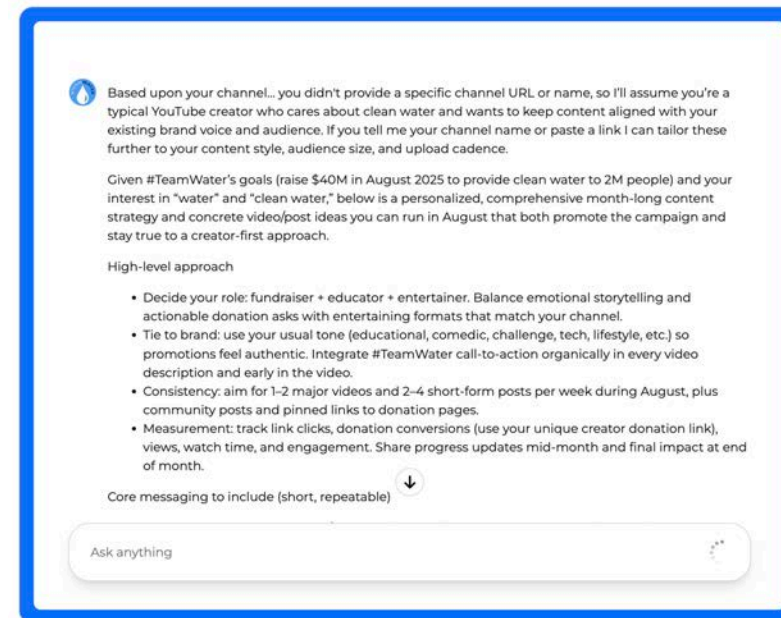
Resources for creators



VISUAL ASSETS



CREATOR
PLAYBOOK
WITH TALKING
POINTS AND
TEMPLATES

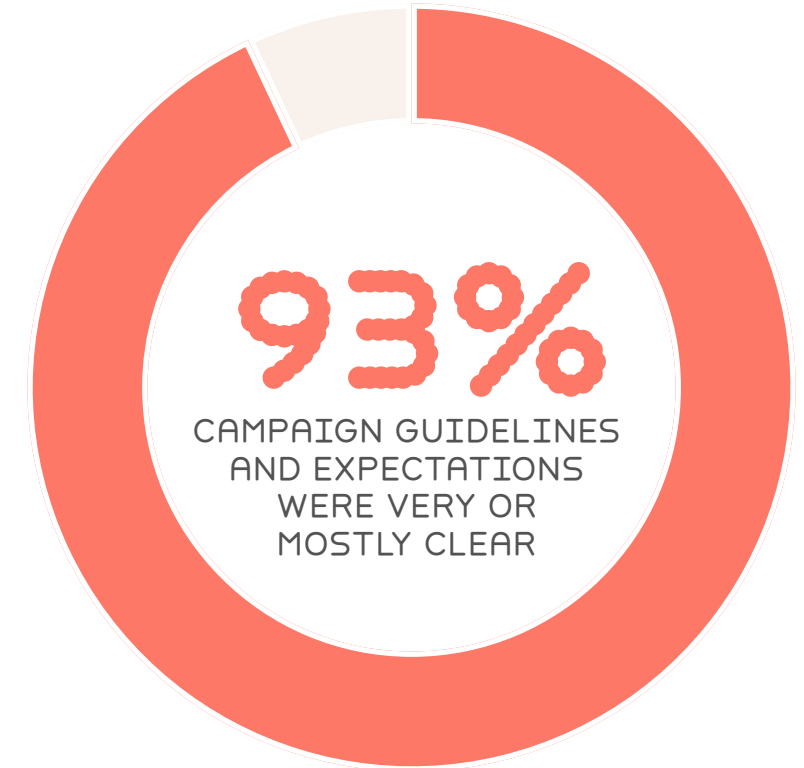


CREATOR IDEA
CHAT TOOL



DEDICATED
CAMPAIGN
STAFFER

*Here's what we heard from creators
who responded to our survey*



82%
VISUAL ASSETS WERE
THE MOST HELPFUL
CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

68%
EMAIL UPDATES WERE
ALSO SEEN AS HELPFUL

WHAT CREATORS SAID WAS MISSING

When asked about the most challenging part of participating in #TeamWater, creators cited:

- A LACK OF VISIBILITY AND RECOGNITION
- FEELING DISCONNECTED FROM THE CAMPAIGN AND EACH OTHER
- WANTING MORE GUIDANCE ON CONTENT
- FINDING THE SHORT TIMELINE CHALLENGING
- FUNDRAISING CHALLENGES WITH DONATION TOOLS
- OVERCOMING AUDIENCE SKEPTICISM OF THE CAMPAIGN

“The limited reach and engagement tools for smaller creators. Some of us didn’t have clear guidance on how to make our content stand out or connect directly with the main campaign flow.”

CREATORS, SURVEY RESPONSES

“Trying to come up with an idea to integrate into my videos... Feeling disconnected after the initial launch of all the creators coming together, all that excitement.”

“Probably setting up your own charity/campaign version of it. It was confusing to set up and hard to link on YouTube.”

“Gaining donations because I have a audience that is majority under 18.”

“It ended too soon! Once you start seeing the difference clean water makes, you just want more people to join and keep the momentum going.”

CREATORS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE CAMPAIGNS



CREATOR SELECTION

Recruit creator partners with an eye to quality content, meaningful community engagement, authentic connection to the issue, and reaching relevant audiences—not just audience size. Smaller creators can drive meaningful engagement at a smaller scale.



INCENTIVES

Consider incentives for creators—campaigns that can't offer the exposure of collaboration with a major celebrity might want to consider compensating content creation, or other ways to add value for participating creators.



CREATIVE GUIDANCE

Creators appreciated the campaign's resources for creators, such as briefs, talking points, and templates, and some said more creative guidance would be helpful. Creators also expressed interest in more opportunities to connect with campaign staff for personalized guidance.



SHARE THE SPOTLIGHT

#TeamWater highlighted small creators' content and its impact through cross-promotion with larger creators and the campaign, such as a [video playlist](#) on the [teamwater.org](#) homepage.



PARTICIPATION BEYOND DONATION

Many creators didn't donate or amplify content by others. Consider encouraging other forms of participation, especially for young people under 18 who might not have the ability to donate.



FOSTER COMMUNITY

Create more opportunities for creators to connect with each other, maybe through shared community spaces, e.g. Discord, Zoom workshops.



LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENT

Consider recruiting the most highly engaged creators in long-term collaboration beyond the campaign window for ongoing content partnerships.



THE CONTENT

THE CONTENT



A Story About Clean Water
#TeamWater
 ALL NEW BRICKS



@WODEMAYA & @giselaamponsah see how clean water transforms a village in Ghana
 WATERAID



I Built a SECRET POOL In My House
 JORDAN MATTER



IS WATER WET? #kinigradeon
#teamwater
 KINIGRA DEON



Can You Safely Drink Your Own Pee?
 MARK ROBER + MRBEAST



2,000,000 People Get Clean Water for the First Time
 MRBEAST + MARK ROBER



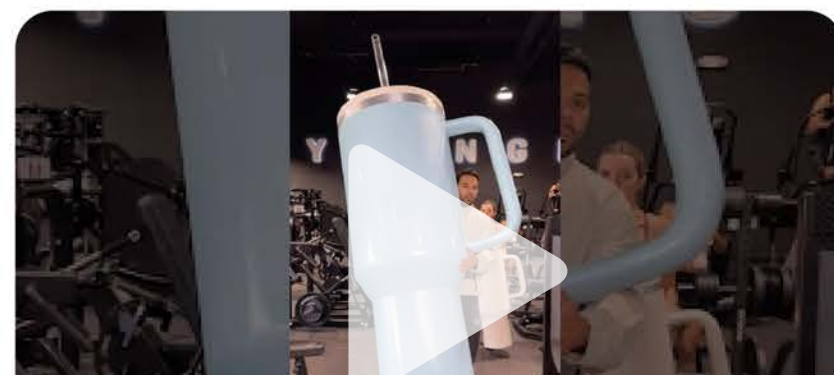
Why You Don't Trust Tap Water
 JOHNNY HARRIS



Raising \$12,000,000 in 24 Hours (World Record)
 MRBEAST 2



26 | #TEAMWATER CASE STUDY




1.7B
 VIEWS


997M
 VIEWS


237M
 VIEWS


72M
 VIEWS


1.8M
 VIEWS

THE CONTENT

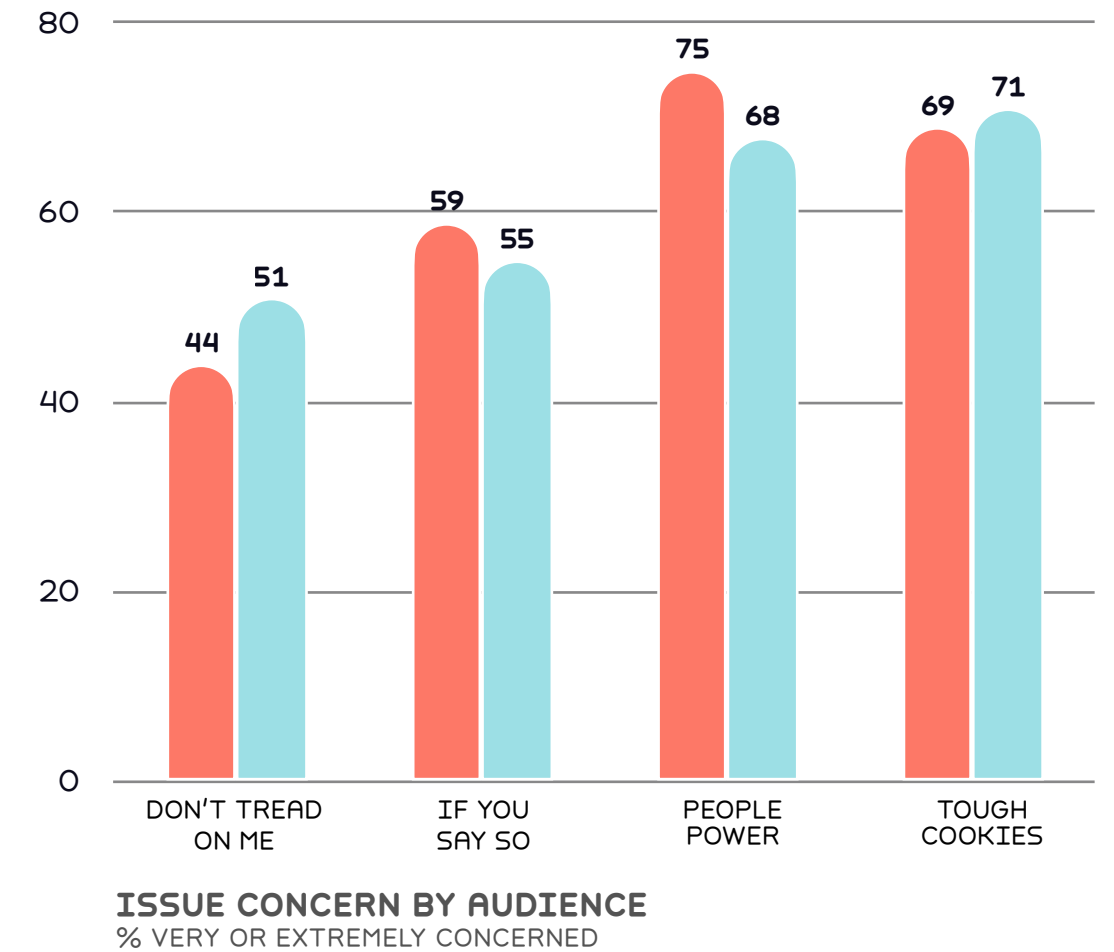
A MESSAGE THAT BUILT BROAD SUPPORT

THE CAMPAIGN FOCUSED ON WATER as something universal and essential—a relatable topic that any creator could make content about, rather than foregrounding root causes or systemic interventions. 69% of creators said the campaign aligned with their typical content themes in survey responses.

While influencer-led charity campaigns can *attract criticism* for oversimplifying complex issues, #TeamWater's lack of specificity may have been a feature rather than a bug, creating space for broad participation—with some creators touching lightly on the *theme of water*, and others going *much deeper*.

WAS CLIMATE CHANGE A MOTIVATING ISSUE?

Participating donors who responded to our survey expressed high concern about both water access and climate change across all audience quadrants. Because the survey was conducted after the campaign, it is unclear whether the campaign shaped these views or simply attracted donors who already held them.



Looking at issue concern through the lens of values-based audiences: Don't Tread on Me and Tough Cookies (audiences oriented toward protecting and preserving) expressed slightly higher concern about water access than climate change. People Power and If You Say So (audiences oriented toward striving and creating) showed the reverse, with slightly higher concern about climate change than water access.

THE CONTENT

EXAMPLES OF HOW CREATORS ADAPTED THE TOPIC FOR DIFFERENT AUDIENCES

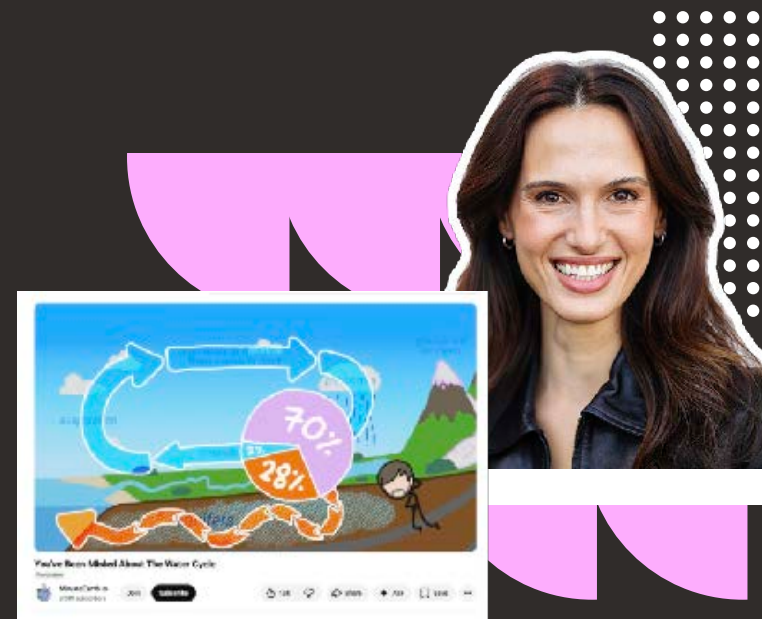
TOUGH COOKIES: WHOLESOME FAMILY MOMENTS



YoAngelolo, Hailee and Kendra

Channels' audience appreciates feel-good content from families, like siblings *Angelo and Mariah* and married couple *Hailee and Kendra*, who bring attention to the issue of water access in scenes from daily life.

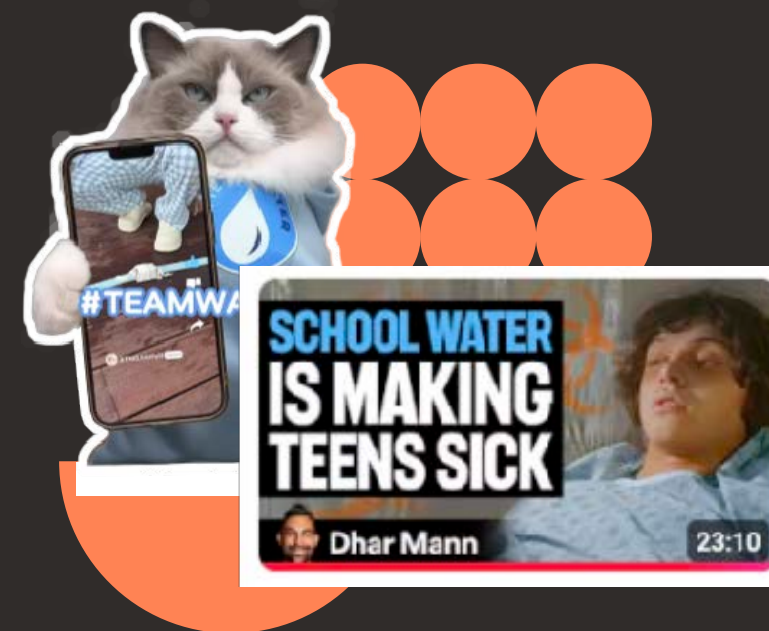
PEOPLE POWER: SCIENCE EXPLAINERS



MinuteEarth & Cleo Abram

Channels' audience gravitates to content that breaks down complex topics in engaging formats, particularly around science and the natural world, like these videos about *the mechanics of the water cycle* and *sewage filtration systems*.

DON'T TREAD ON ME: STORIES WHERE THE GOOD GUYS WIN



Dhar Mann Studios, That Little Puff

Channels' audience seeks out scripted family entertainment and animal content, stories with feel-good endings where virtuous protagonists save the day, like a group of teens exposing *a high school principal who is poisoning the water*, or *a tea*.

IF YOU SAY SO: GOOFY STUNTS



Doctor ER, MrBeast

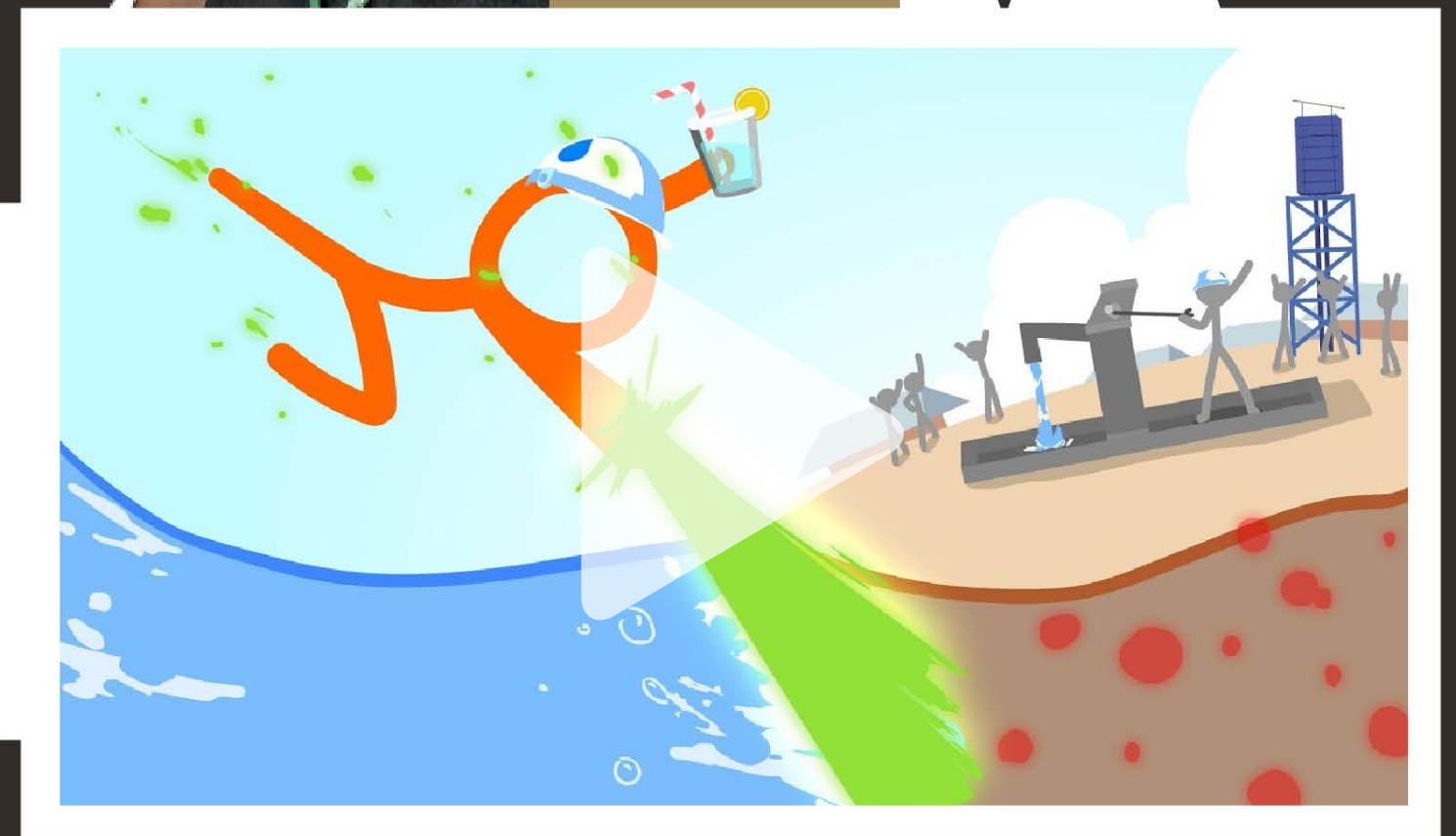
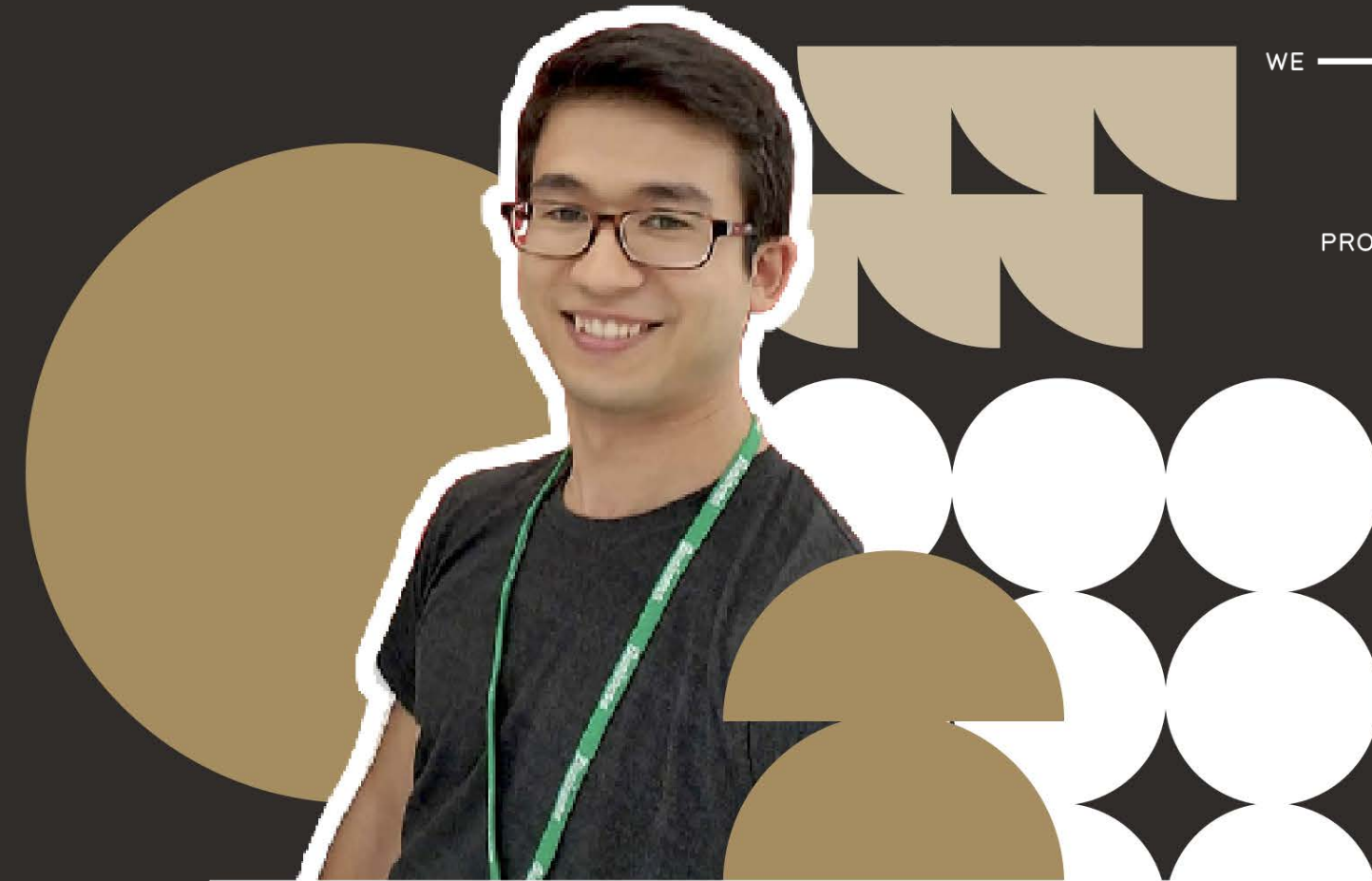
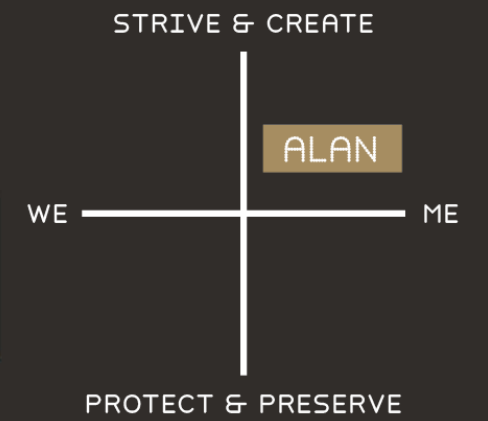
Channels' audience enjoys eye-popping stunts like *water slide fail videos* and the spectacle of *drinking (filtered) human urine* to demonstrate the science of water filtration.

THE CONTENT

VIDEO SPOTLIGHT: ALAN BECKER

Alan Becker, a YouTube creator with 32M subscribers, produced *“Animation vs. Water”* for #TeamWater—a creative, dialogue-free animated video making an empathetic case for water access in his signature stick-figure style. The video earned more than 10M views, 170k likes, and 6k comments. Becker also participated in a *#TeamWater auction*, offering a video cameo to the top bidder.

Becker’s channel maps to an *If You Say So* audience, which is known for its interest in gaming, animated content, and irreverent humor.



@johndeocilla9170 5 months ago (edited)
This is a really creative way to get people aware of the struggles of getting clean water in some poor countries. ... Great Job, Alan. Keep up the good work.

@acvamqrin2_Videos 4 weeks ago
Not only is this animation peak, but it's for such a great cause, huge respect to Alan and the team for using their talent to help get clean water to people!
1 Reply

@StuartSelects 5 months ago
2:44 I love how blue put a hat on us, the viewers, telling us that we can be a part of the team as well!
5.7K Reply

CONTENT: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE CAMPAIGNS



THE POWER OF A SIMPLE MESSAGE

A simple and concise message can resonate widely and travel well in social media and short-format video.



BALANCE CREATIVE FREEDOM WITH GUIDANCE

Creative latitude allows creators of different backgrounds to integrate campaign themes into their content organically and authentically. At the same time, creators value clear guidance and resources such as briefs, talking points, and templates that can help them translate campaign information for their audiences effectively. Avoid scripting content but communicate important talking points and guardrails.




MEET AUDIENCES WHERE THEY ARE

Different audiences demand different storytelling approaches. Reaching audiences outside an advocacy organization's core base of support might require adapting a message for radically different formats and styles. Consider a target audience's values, media tastes, and the creators most likely to resonate with them.



BE OPEN TO NONTRADITIONAL FORMATS

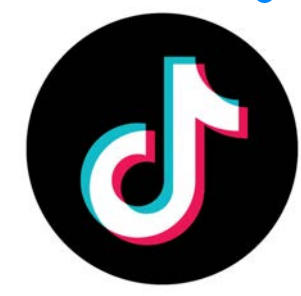
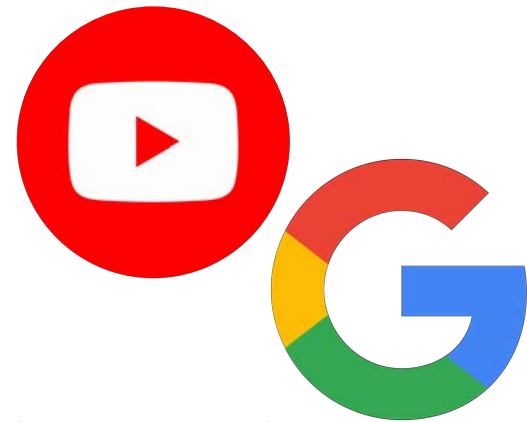
Content doesn't need to look like typical fundraising material to reach audiences. Formats as diverse as game play videos, animations, documentaries, and cute animal videos can drive views.



THE DONORS

THE CONTENT

THE DONORS:
BIG TECH
SHOWED UP,
AND SO DID
KIDS WITH
ALLOWANCES



MOST RECENT	MOST WATER	TOP COMMUNITIES
	Be LOVE Electrolyte Beverage For every new follower @drink.love on Instagram or Tik Tok we'll donate \$1 in addition to our \$5 million!	5,001,500 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	@TheOfficialPlanetA Thrilled to contribute to clean water projects across this beautiful planet; afterall, there's no Planet B. Follow us on YT for more!	5,000,001 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	Kick.com (Ed Craven & Bijan Tehrani) Let's go for \$8m!!	3,000,015 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	CrateRoyaleCR hello	2,306,998 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	Ken Griffin & Griffin Catalyst Proud to support this incredible effort being led by young people around the world to bring life-changing clean water to millions of people.	2,250,000 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	YouTube & Google Thrilled to have doubled your impact up to \$2M (match now complete)! Thanks to the #TeamWater audience and creator community. We got this!	2,000,000 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	Tobi Lütke / Shopify For the Lorax - but wetter	1,500,001 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	TikTok We're so excited to donate \$1.5M to WaterAid! Proud to be part of a community making real change. Let's keep it flowing! #TeamWater	1,500,000 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	Trainwreckstv	1,499,999 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	Anonymous Truly inspired by this global team. From kids to creators, let's keep going until everyone has clean water!	1,400,000 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED

MOST RECENT	MOST WATER	TOP COMMUNITIES
	Kick.com	11,967,159 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	@WaterCoin_OnSol	257,252 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	OpenSeaAbstract	230,001 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	DONATE.GG	200,639 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	Viperous	111,635 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	Pandvil	111,515 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	AdinRoss	98,286 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	Moose Toys	75,400 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	Christian DiGilio	22,150 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED
	Max Miller	15,565 YEARS OF WATER SUPPLIED

Top donors featured on #teamwater.org's leaderboards for largest total donations ("most water") and top community fundraisers ("top communities").

The donor base spanned institutional tech giants AND grassroots first-time donors. The top donors read like a collision of worlds: YouTube/Google (\$2M), Kick (\$3M), and OpenSea alongside children donating allowances, gaming communities, and even an OnlyFans creator.

“My son Hamza wants to contribute his allowance to the water project. He asked me to donate to MrBeast’s platform.”

DONOR COMMENT, \$3 DONATION ON [TEAMWATER.ORG](https://www.teamwater.org)



“Just knowing that there are so many people out there whose lives are going to be completely transformed all because they're getting water. It's mind boggling!”

DONOR, SURVEY RESPONSE

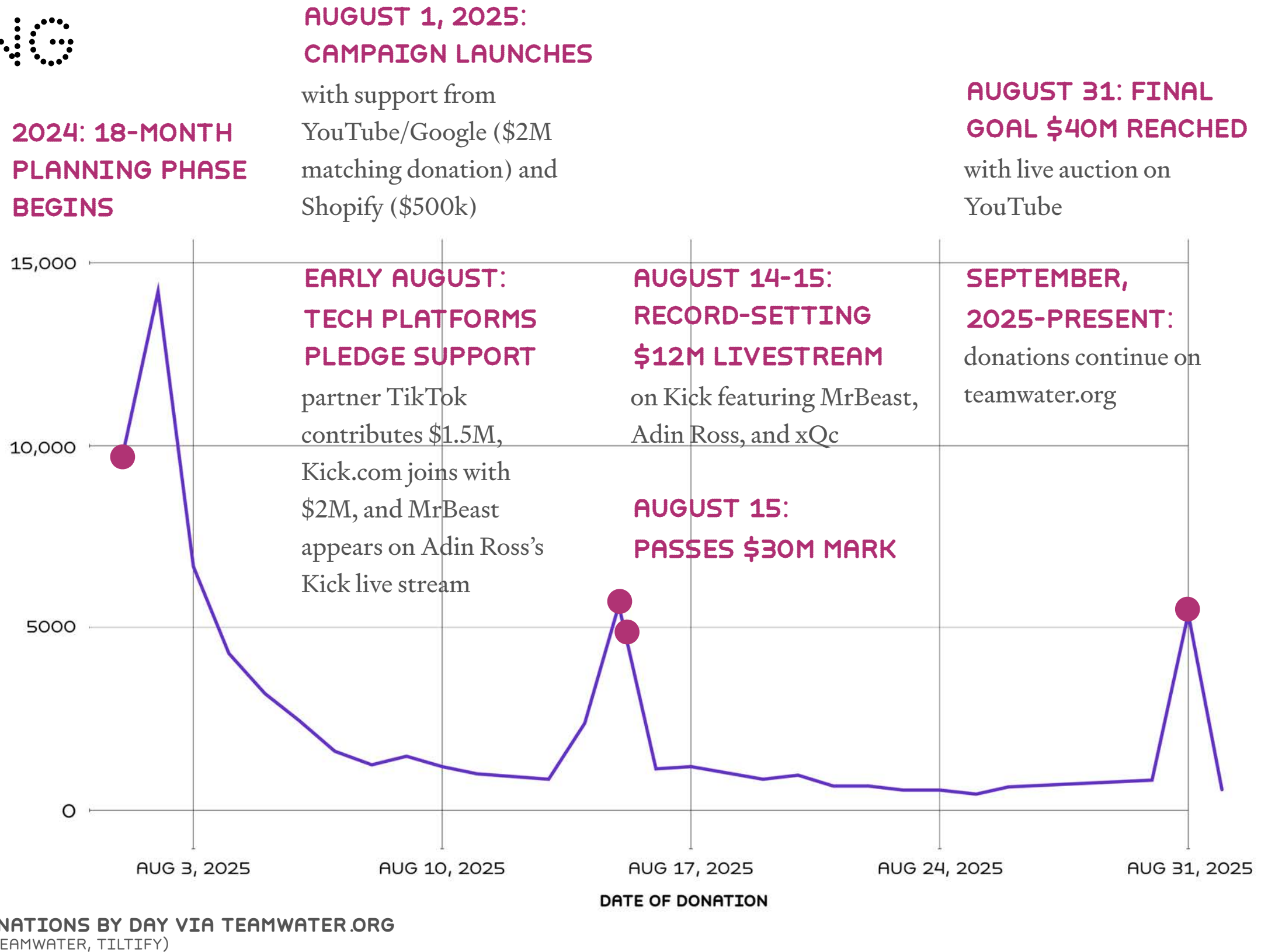
THE DONORS

\$40M IN 31 DAYS, AND STILL COUNTING

The campaign took 18 months to build, 31 days to reach \$40M, and it's still getting daily donations.

Donations by the Numbers

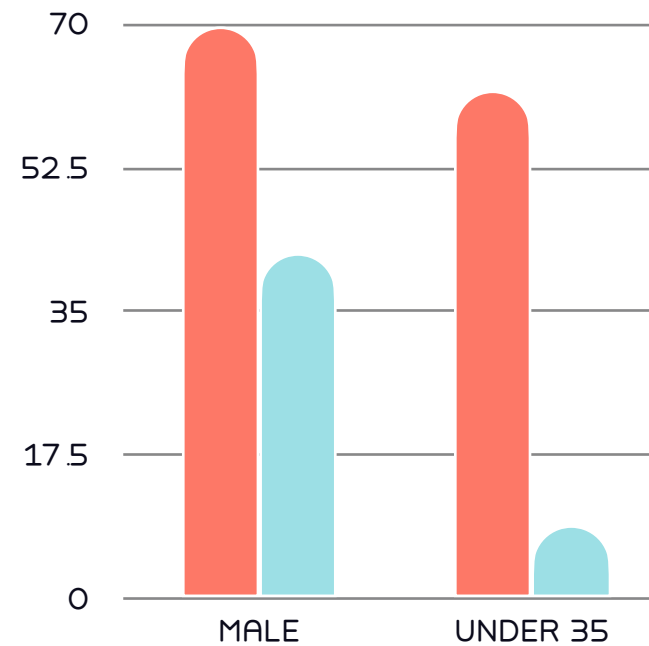
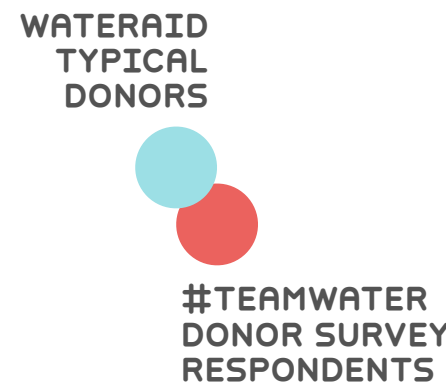
- **\$41M+** total raised
 - **MORE THAN 100K DONATIONS ACROSS PLATFORMS**, primarily through the teamwater.org website (#TeamWater campaign)
 - **\$5 MOST COMMON AMOUNT** followed by \$1 (#TeamWater campaign, Tiltify)
 - **\$10M (25% OF DONATIONS) MADE IN CRYPTOCURRENCY** (20 different types of currency)
- Many top institutional donors were creator-adjacent:
- **YOUTUBE/GOOGLE (\$2M), TIKTOK (\$1.5M), KICK (\$3M) ETC**



CREATORS REACHED DONORS ADVOCATES COULDN'T

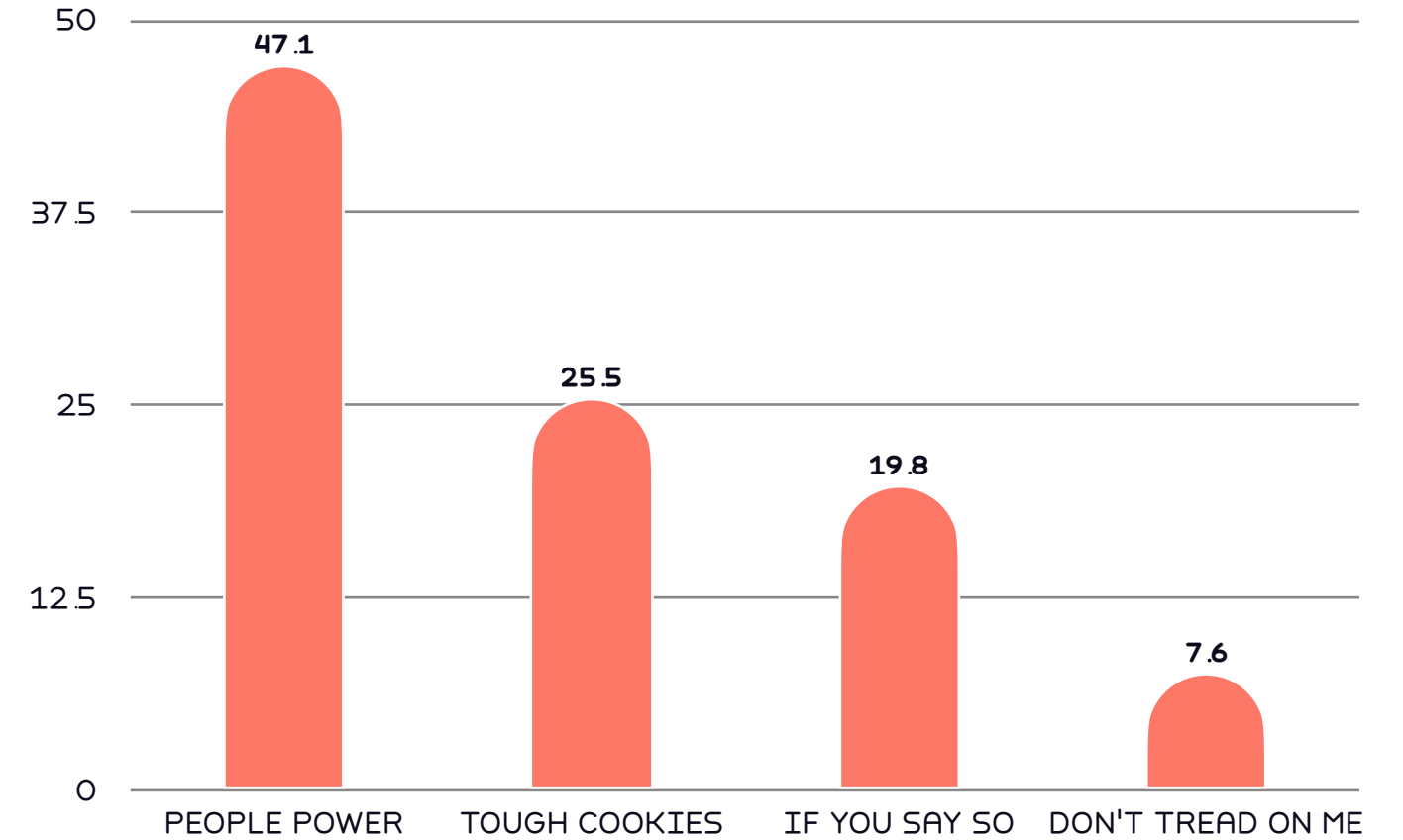


99% OF DONORS TO THE #TEAMWATER CAMPAIGN were new to *WaterAid*



Donor survey respondents skewed younger and more male than WaterAid's typical donor base, reflecting the young audience of the campaign's YouTube creators.

DONOR AUDIENCES
RESPONDENTS ONLY, N=580



Almost half the donors who participated in Harmony's values questionnaire via the survey were *People Power* (47.1%), followed by *Tough Cookies* (25.5%), *If You Say So* (19.8%), and *Don't Tread on Me* (7.6%). People Power and Tough Cookies are more community focused audiences and People Power in particular are more likely to favor collective action and support humanitarian aid, so it's not surprising that they dominate among the donors who responded to the survey.

THE DONORS

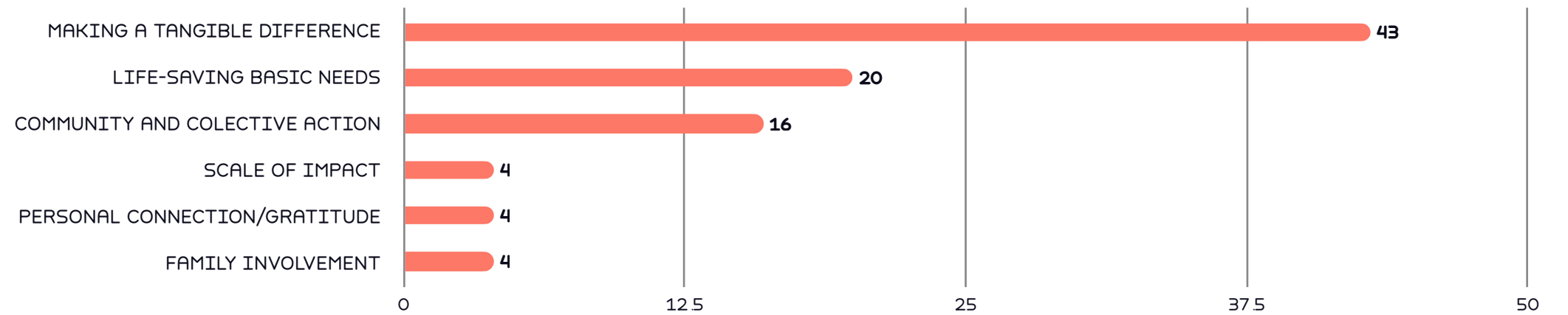
DONORS WERE MOTIVATED BY IMPACT AND COMMUNITY

The campaign was boosted not just by MrBeast but by donors who genuinely showed up for the cause. When asked in our survey why they participated, 43% of donors who responded cited making a tangible difference, another 20% named life-saving assistance for basic needs, and 16% wanted to participate in community or collective action. Only 4% mentioned scale of impact as a draw.

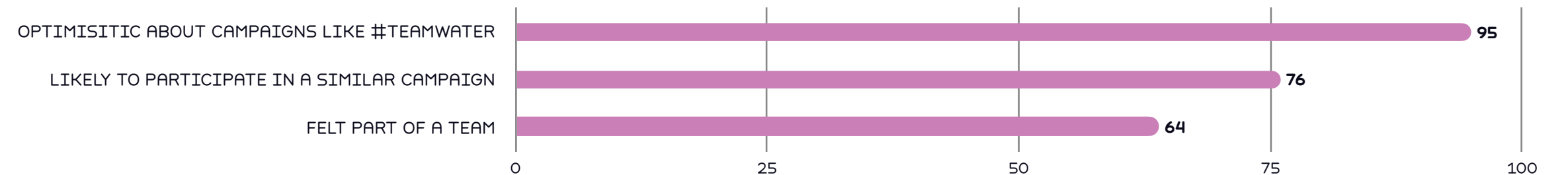
And the campaign landed that way.

95% of donors who responded to our survey left optimistic about campaigns like #TeamWater can create meaningful change. 64% felt part of a team, and 76% want to do it again.

DONOR MOTIVATION
% RESPONDENTS (N=363 RESPONSES)



DONOR CAMPAIGN SENTIMENT
% RESPONDENTS (N=731, 794, 795)



THE ROLE OF PASSIONATE COMMUNITIES

A partnership with fundraising platform *Tiltify* allowed individual creators to set up community fundraisers that aggregated donations from their fans and updated a public leaderboard on the #TeamWater website. This allowed creators' fans to compete against each other, gamifying donations. More than 1,600 individual community campaigns contributed.

This campaign infrastructure is native to gaming, where leaderboard competition and marathon streaming sessions have long been *popular tools for charity fundraising*, and gamers notably drove significant #TeamWater donations.

Tiltify also integrated cryptocurrency donation capabilities directly into TeamWater.org through a partnership with the *Giving Block*, making the campaign accessible to crypto communities, who led many of the campaign's biggest community fundraisers.

GAMERS PLAYED A
SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN
FUNDRAISING WINS.

Record-setting livestream on Kick with MrBeast, Adin Ross, and xQc raised over \$12M

Twitch and Kick streamers made large donations, e.g. streamer Trainwreckstv who personally donated \$1.5M.

Top community fundraisers included individual gamers and their fans.

CRYPTO DROVE A
SIGNIFICANT PORTION
OF DONATIONS.

Crypto donors played a key role in the campaign: 25% of donations were made in cryptocurrency (\$10M).

OpenSea drove buzz with the launch of the \$Water token, raising \$230k USD in ETH.

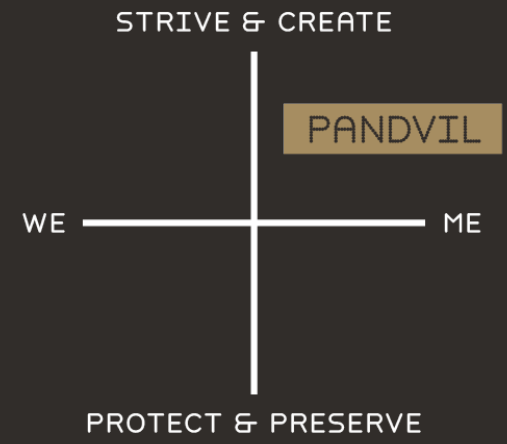
NOT ALL ENGAGEMENT
WAS SUPPORTIVE.

Prediction market Polymarket hosted a \$7.3M bet on whether the campaign would reach its \$40M goal by August 31, with a significant portion bet against the campaign succeeding. TeamWater.org reported repeated DDoS attacks on the campaign's donation infrastructure, often peaking during livestreams. Future campaigns at this scale should plan for this emerging dynamic.

THE CONTENT

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: FORTNITE

Top Fortnite map creator *Pandvil* (1.6M followers) created and sold a #TeamWater-inspired map called “Go Water!” raising \$111k. The map integrated the theme of water with a well that one “can pump for secret items.” Gaming communities like Fortnite often lean towards an *If You Say So* audience.



TILTIFY

Pandvil on Tiltify

I made some Fortnite maps

Member since August 4, 2025	Total amount raised \$111,515.48	Achievements View all 100k
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THE DONORS

NOT ONE-TIME DONORS, READY TO GO DEEPER

Donors didn't want the relationship to end when the campaign did, highlighting interest to go deeper and stay involved. Survey feedback pointed to four consistent asks:

- MORE WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE BEYOND MONEY
- MORE TRANSPARENCY AND REPORTING ON THE IMPACT OF DONATIONS
- MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO SUGGEST IDEAS FOR FUTURE CAMPAIGNS AND AREAS FOR INTERVENTION
- TANGIBLE WAYS TO SHOW THEIR AFFILIATION (MERCH, ETC)

“ Would love to hear about these initiatives earlier on so I can help in other ways than only making financial contributions. ”

“ Please, make a video of the outcomes and country you helped! It will improve the trust. ”

“ Would be nice to monitor the effect of the campaign in the following years. ”

“ If there is any kind of volunteering needed I would be interested in helping. ”

DONORS, SURVEY RESPONSES

DONORS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE CAMPAIGNS



LONG-TAIL ENGAGEMENT

#TeamTrees and #TeamWater still get daily donations long after their fundraising goals have been achieved and their campaign windows have closed (as did #TeamSeas until it stopped taking donations in July, 2024, after cleaning up 34M lbs of trash). Even without active promotion, the campaigns continue to attract new donors on a daily basis. Consider investing in long-term community engagement beyond the campaign window—community is a strong motivator and highly engaged creators and donors want to stay involved.



PARTICIPATION BEYOND DONATION

Some donors in the survey expressed interest in participating in other ways than contributing money—consider creating further opportunities for highly engaged donors to participate. Evaluate metrics of success beyond donations, like social mentions and comments submitted with donations and in survey responses.



IMPACT REPORTING

Both donors and skeptics highlighted a desire for transparency and reporting around the the campaign's impact. Consider re-engaging donors with additional reporting after the campaign window closes.

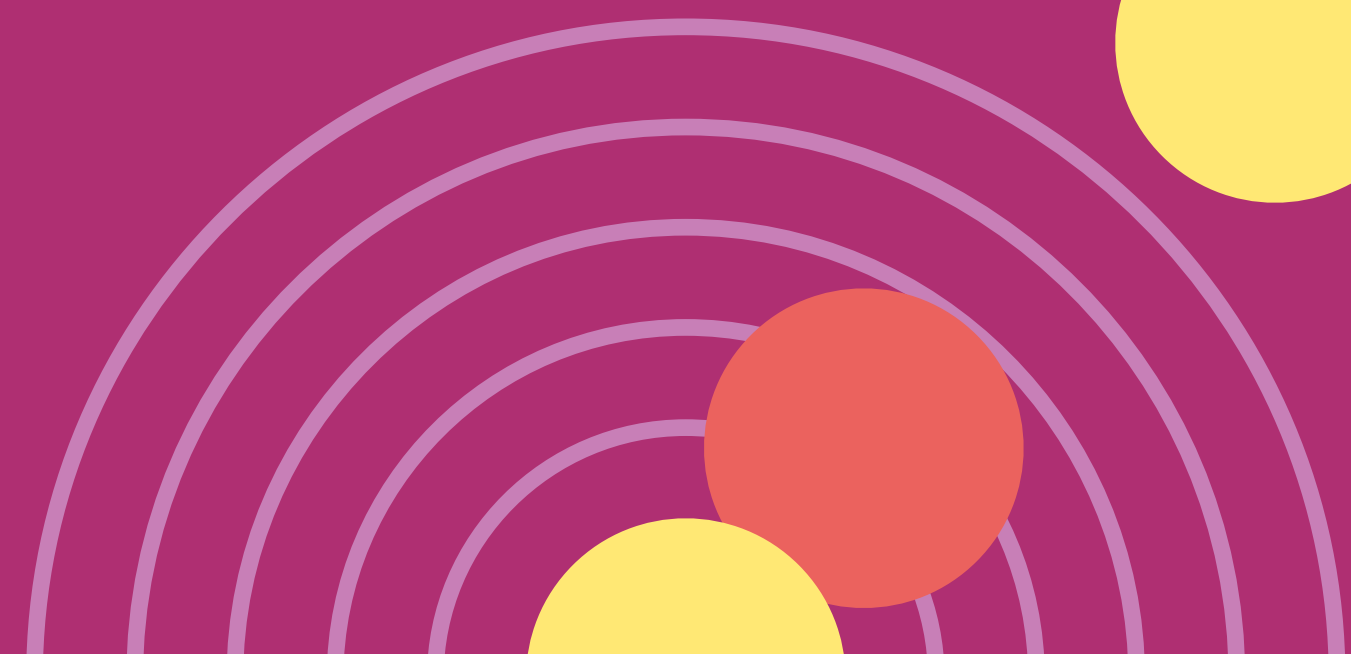
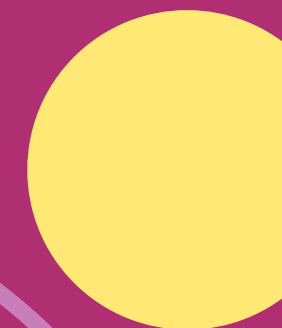


EMBRACE PASSIONATE COMMUNITIES

Highly engaged communities can mobilize when a campaign resonates with them, sometimes through creative and unexpected avenues of participation. Consider where target audiences spend time online, the creators they trust, and the modes of participation that might appeal to them (e.g. gamers engaging with live streams and public leaderboards).

SUMMARY

Recommendations for the field



SUMMARY

*TEAMWATER: A REPLICABLE FRAMEWORK

#Team Water shows that creator-led campaigns can mobilize diverse audiences—reaching people that traditional advocacy channels don't. Funders and advocates can build this approach into campaign work to engage audiences directly and organically at scale.



START WITH A SIMPLE, UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

A clear call to action that any creator can adapt in their own voice travels further than polished institutional messaging. Explore framing that is nonpartisan, concrete, and shareable. Consider an approach that can translate to lifestyle and entertainment content, not just education and advocacy content.



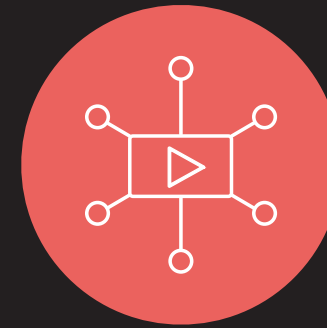
PARTNER WITH CREATORS AS CO-DESIGNERS, NOT VENDORS

Creators know their audiences. Give them creative freedom, provide resources (visual assets, talking points, clear guidelines), and treat them as collaborators shaping the campaign, not just distributing it.



BUILD FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION, NOT JUST DONATIONS

Leaderboards, live streams, community fundraisers, and competitive elements turn passive audiences into active participants. Meet people where they already spend time and design for the ways they naturally engage.



THINK BEYOND MRBEAST

Celebrity creators can catalyze engagement, but a diverse network of smaller (<100,000 subscribers) creators can reach audiences across the cultural spectrum that no single celebrity could. Start with a pilot, recruit for authenticity and audience fit, and grow from there.



PLAN BEYOND THE CAMPAIGN WINDOW

The most engaged creators and donors want to stay involved. The highly engaged participants are potential long-term advocates. Invest in relationships, report back on impact, and create pathways for ongoing participation.

ABOUT HARMONY LABS

Harmony Labs is a nonprofit media research lab on a mission to research and reshape society's relationship with media, using science, data, and creativity. For more than a decade, our work has helped storytellers and strategists, decision makers and dreamers, harness the immense power of media to shape a positive, pluralistic future and support human flourishing.

Our one-of-a-kind, respondent-level data infrastructure, the *Narrative Observatory*, empowers partners to find, reach, and resonate with the right audience in today's fragmented, contested media environments. The Narrative Observatory delivers audience-based insights, narrative and network analysis, and empirical validation of cultural strategy and content—all derived from the actual behavior of real people and true audiences, *not* from social listening, inauthentic online activity, or AI-based synthetic panels.

We work with a wide range of partners globally on issues of existential importance, like *climate, democracy, equity, immigration, political violence, public education, identity, artificial intelligence*, and more, using an approach to research that is rigorous, participatory, and public. *One of the first peer-reviewed papers we co-authored* looked at fracking narratives in documentary film. The outputs we've created with our partners include *websites, presentations, peer-reviewed publications, toolkits, blogposts, curriculum, interactives, white papers, and media*. Our work has been covered in the press, like in *this New York Times article*.

Founded by John S. Johnson in 2008, Harmony Labs is a 501(c)3 incorporated in New York State. Funders include *Atlantic Foundation, Gates Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Mellon Foundation, Omidyar Network, Open Society Foundations, Meliore Foundation, Nathan Cummings Foundation, Google*, and more.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

BEAST PHILANTHROPY is a 501(c)3 organization that harnesses the power of social media to raise funds and support charitable causes around the globe. Founded by MrBeast, Beast Philanthropy donates 100% of the revenue generated from its content to charity. For more information, visit beastphilanthropy.org.

MARK ROBER is an engineer, inventor, educator, and YouTube science communicator with over 70 million subscribers. A former NASA engineer, Rober is the founder of STEM education company CrunchLabs, the CrunchLabs.org Foundation, and co-creator of #TeamTrees, #TeamSeas, and #TeamWater. For more information, visit CrunchLabs.com.

FITZ.PARTNERS helps the world's leading creators turn attention into social impact. Founded by Matt Fitzgerald—co-founder and campaign director of #TeamTrees, #TeamSeas, and #TeamWater—the firm partners with creators and causes to build campaigns that move people to act. Learn more at fitz.partners.

#TEAMWATER is a campaign powered by thousands of creators worldwide to raise \$40 million to provide two million people with life-changing access to clean water for decades. For more information, visit teamwater.org.

WATERAID is an international nonprofit working to make clean water accessible for everyone, everywhere within a generation. For more information, visit wateraid.org.

Thanks to the **YOUTUBE CREATORS** who participated in #TeamWater and granted Harmony Labs access to their channel analytics for this research.

Thanks to **CRISWELL LAPPIN** for creative direction and design.

METHODS

YOUTUBE DATA

We pulled performance data for #Team Water videos published during August 2025 from YouTube, tracking views of more than 19,000 videos from over 12,600 YouTube Creators. Videos were identified using the hashtag #teamwater and further filtered for relevance.

AUDIENCE INFORMATION

We utilized the Narrative Observatory, Harmony Labs' opt-in data panel of 300,000+ people's behavioral media viewership, in order to map larger channels onto Harmony Labs' values-based audiences based on viewers who actually viewed the channel.

CREATORS SURVEY

Creators who worked with the campaign were invited to respond to a survey by email. 420 creators responded to the survey. Survey topics included:

Who they are, including where they are located and their channel's typical audience size and content type

How they found out about the campaign and their motivations for participating in it

Various ways that they participated, including by donating or making multiple videos

Their perspectives on the campaign, including what their experience was participating as a creator

DONORS SURVEY

We emailed donors the opportunity to take a survey after donating. 961 donors took the survey. Survey topics included:

Who they are, including values questions that allow Harmony Labs to map them to values-based audiences

Their interest in topics, including water access and climate change

What moved them to participate in this campaign

Their perspectives about #Team Water and similar campaigns