



Practice Interview Event

21-22 April 2021

50 Million Voices aims to create a world where everyone who stutters can enjoy a fulfilling working life and where more organisations benefit from the talents and skills of people who stutter.

Interviews are particularly stressful for people who stutter due to the expectation of needing to communicate fluently in time-pressured situations, where so much can hang on the outcome. This is compounded by most interviewers having little experience of candidates who stutter or of getting the best from them.

After the success of our pilot Practice Interview event held in October 2020, we organised a larger event with 35% more participants and a wider geographical reach.

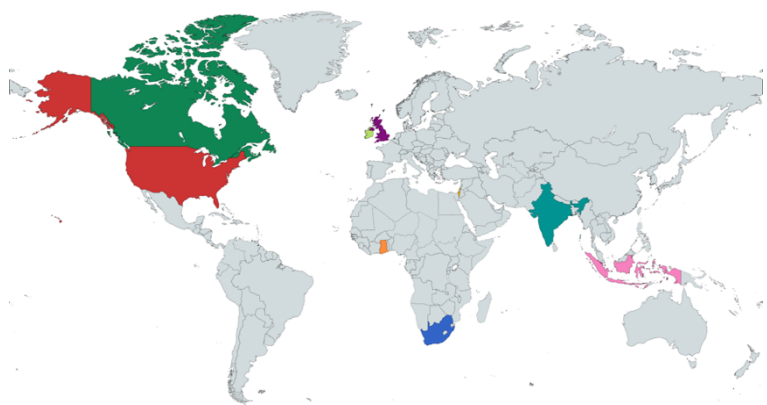
Who took part?

The event involved a total of 102 people from 9 countries: Canada, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, South Africa, UK and USA - spanning 4 continents: Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. The majority of participants came from the UK, Ghana and India.

There were 45 interviewees who stutter and 51 interviewers (19 who stutter & 32 allies who do not stutter).

Both the interviewee and interviewer groups comprised 53% females and 47% males.

A core team from the UK, Ghana, India and the USA organised the event. Please see note 1 for the names of our core team members which included interviewers and an interviewee.



What happened?

There were 69 one-to-one interviews, including confidential individual feedback for interviewees and interviewers.

To help prepare for the interviews, all participants attended a mandatory 90-minute educational briefing on stuttering in the workplace and interviewing people who stutter.

All interviewees then received either 1 or 2 individual interviews to help improve their interview skills. Interviewers each gave 1, 2 or 3 interviews to help broaden their interview skills.

Keen to maximise their learning and development, most participants attended a closing 60-minute group feedback session where they shared experiences and ideas.

What didn't happen - and why?

Unfortunately, 20 further planned interviews did not take place. Reasons for this included poor internet connections and sadly, the serious Covid situation in India. This was unforeseeable and our thoughts are with all those who have been affected. There were also a handful of late cancellations and to reduce these going forward, we plan to make changes to the scheduling of future events.

Did the participants find it valuable?

94% of participants providing feedback rated the **Value** of the event as '*extremely valuable*' (65%) or '*very valuable*' (29%). 6% rated the event as '*valuable*'.

98% of participants providing feedback would either '*definitely*' (92%) or '*probably*' (6%) **Recommend** the event to others. 2% '*possibly*' would.

A variety of comments from interviewees and interviewers are given in the two appendices.

Conclusions

- ⇒ The event provided a high-quality interview and learning experience which benefitted the 96 interviewees and interviewers involved.
- ⇒ 64 people who stutter benefitted directly as interviewees or interviewers.
- ⇒ 32 allies benefitted directly as interviewers.
- ⇒ Building on this, we will be running further Practice Interview events in 2021.

We are very grateful to all the interviewers and interviewees for your time, skill and generosity in making this experience happen.

Thank you TSB Bank, our main sponsor, without whom this event would not have been possible.

We are also grateful to Compass Group, EY, the NHS, Page Group, Reach PLC and Sage Group. The event would not have happened without your support either.

Subsequent updates – events in French and Spanish

⇒ In June 2021, our 50 Million Voices leader in France organised a pilot French-speaking Practice Interview event involving 30 people.

15 interviewees who stutter each had a one-to-one interview with 15 interviewers who don't stutter.

Feedback has been very positive with the benefits to interviewees and interviewers matching those experienced in our English-speaking events in October and April.

We're excited at this further expansion of our Practice Interview programme. It included local support from global employers Page Group and Sage Group who both provided several interviewers.

⇒ A Spanish-speaking Practice Interview event is also being planned for later this year.

Invitation

If you are interested in participating in future Practice Interview events, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Please contact Iain Wilkie at chair@50millionvoices.org or visit our website at www.50millionvoices.org

*50 Million Voices Trustees
June 2021*

Notes

1. The 50 Million Voices Practice Interview core team:
Elias Apreko, Mounah Bizri, Helen Carpenter, Norbert Lieckfeldt, Pamela Mertz, Carmen Savvas, Shilpa Sagwal, Sam Simpson, Iain Wilkie, Charlie Wiltshire.
2. 50 Million Voices is a community of leaders who stutter from 15 countries and 6 continents. We work with allies and employers to transform the world of work for the 50 million adults globally who stutter.
3. We are registered by the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Charity number: 1189541.
4. Our trustees are: Iain Wilkie (chair), Helen Carpenter, Norbert Lieckfeldt.
5. To support our work, including our practice interview events, please click here <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/17227#!/DonationDetails>
6. For further information see <https://www.50millionvoices.org> and Twitter @50MillionVoices.

Appendix 1 – Interviewee Feedback



Interviewees

“I was an interviewee and got great insights into my CV and career opportunities. It was a very valuable session for me in terms of preparation for the world of employment.”

Person who stutters, India

“Thank you for bringing such a sensitive topic to the borders of the world.”

Person who stutters, South Africa

“I found it extremely valuable to get personalised advice from someone much further ahead of me in my field.”

Person who stutters, UK

“Was a nice experience, because I had one interviewer from my home country and the other from UK.”

Person who stutters, Ghana

“I had such a great time with people who stammer from around the world and gained very thoughtful knowledge.”

Person who stutters, Indonesia

“It allowed me to connect with new people, they each offered me great advice with how to break into the world of work.

It was also nice to have the opportunity to speak about my stuttering with the allies and answer any questions about stuttering they may have.”

Person who stutters, Anonymous

“As I enter my final year of academic life, I would definitely attend another event and work further on my interview skills.”

Person who stutters, UK

“I wish I could have more of such platforms to express myself.”

Person who stutters, Ghana

“It was a good learning experience. This was my first time interacting with international people.”

Person who stutters, India

Appendix 2 – Interviewer Feedback

Interviewers

“The incredible candidate that I interviewed really opened my eyes to some of the challenges people who stutter face – most powerful take-away for me was that it takes two to stutter!” *Ally, UK*

“I was left feeling overwhelmed at the bravery of the individual I met. He chose his words very carefully and each one had power that is lost when too many words are used.” *Ally, UK*

“Humbling and inspiring, and jam packed with practical learning about how my organisation can improve the experience for people who stutter, to make sure we're not missing out on great candidates.” *Ally, UK*

“It helped to remind me of the (fluency) privilege I enjoy and take for granted sometimes.”
Ally, UK

“Insightful - I've interviewed candidates with stammers before but it was helpful for me to understand more at the briefing session about stammers and how to best support candidates.” *Ally, UK*

“It [the event] meets a real need that PWS have to become more comfortable in such interviews and thus be more impressive.”
Person who stutters, Canada

“Positive and great to be able to help and share my experiences.”
Person who stutters, UK

“It's really inspiring to be able to support someone and the individual I interviewed went on to be considered for a role I'm recruiting for. I hope he found it as helpful and enjoyable as I did.”
Person who stutters, UK

“Really useful to understand more about stammering and the language with it - it helped me make sure I was prepared as an interviewer.” *Ally, UK*

“I found the whole experience a real eye opener from start to finish - I've learnt some important life lessons around society's obsession with perfect communication and articulation and how I feel that. Also, the importance of staying present in the moment and really listening to another person.” *Ally, UK*