

# 50MILLION VOICES

## Practice Interview Event

18-20 October 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.

However, 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 and then again in April 2021, we organised a more diverse event with a bigger geographical reach.

### Who took part?

The event involved a total of 113 people from 16 countries: Canada, Congo, Egypt, Germany, Ghana, India, Israel, Italy, Ireland, Kenya, Nepal, Senegal, South Africa, The Netherlands, UK, USA.



- ✓ There were 52 interviewees who stutter and 59 interviewers (18 who stutter & 41 allies who do not stutter). A total of 78 interviews happened over 3 days.
- ✓ Both the interviewee and interviewer groups comprised approximately 48% females and 52% males. Typically, among adults who stammer, only 20% are females compared to 80% males.
- ✓ 8 major employers from a variety of sectors supported the event namely TSB, Reach, Compass, EY, Michael Page, Bristol Myers Squibb, Sage Group and SMBC. Other interviewers came from a further 22 employers or were self-employed.
- ✓ 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 78 one-to-one interviews, including confidential individual feedback for interviewees and interviewers.
- ✓ Interviewees also received feedback on their CVs / Resumés from their interviewers.
- ✓ To help prepare for their interviews and to maximise quality, 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.

## **Did the participants find it valuable?**

- ✓ 99% rated the value of the event as ‘valuable’ (52% extremely, 39% very and 8% valuable).
- ✓ 98% would ‘definitely’ participate in the future events.
- ✓ Several interviewees have told us that since the event they have received a job offer, an internship or invitation to a formal interview from either their interviewer’s employer or another employer.
- ✓ Several highly encouraging 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 111 interviewees and interviewers involved.
- ✓ 70 people who stutter benefitted directly as interviewees or interviewers.
- ✓ 41 allies benefitted directly as interviewers.
- ✓ Building on this, we will be running further Practice Interview events in 2022.

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 whose wonderful support this event would not have been possible.

We are also grateful for the excellent support from Compass Group, EY, Page Group, Reach PLC, BMS, Sage Group and SMBC.

## **Invitation**

If you are interested in participating in future Practice Interview events, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact us at [info@50millionvoices.org](mailto:info@50millionvoices.org) or visit our website at [www.50millionvoices.org](http://www.50millionvoices.org)

*50 Million Voices Trustees - November 2021*

## **Notes**

1. The 50 Million Voices Practice Interview core team:  
Elias Apreko, Helen Carpenter, Norbert Lieckfeldt, Pamela Mertz, Carmen Savvas, Shilpa Sagwal, Sam Simpson, Iain Wilkie.
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. Our trustees are: Iain Wilkie (chair), Helen Carpenter, Norbert Lieckfeldt.
4. To help enable our practice interview events to continue, please donate here  
<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/17227#!/DonationDetails>
5. For further information, please visit <https://www.50millionvoices.org>, or connect with us through Twitter: @50MillionVoices and LinkedIn: 50 MillionVoices.

## Appendix 1 – Interviewee Feedback

### Interviewees

Practice interview has really helped me to be more confident and stammer without regret.  
And my interviewers were amazing, wish all the interviewers I will go to have the same qualities as my practice interviewers – Person who stutters, Ghana

*The practice interviews were extremely positive and useful. So far, they have helped me pass the first stage of my proper job interview – Person who stutters, UK*

The most valuable part of the experience for me was to meet other people who stutter. I haven't felt that sense of community in a long time – Anonymous

I learned how I can confidently present myself and my work when I stutter. I also learned the importance of letting my interviewer know about my stuttering. This helped me to focus on my interview and help me to gradually become comfortable during the interview – Person who stutters, India

*It was really beneficial to do a practice interview, plus have the interviewer look at my CV & give me advice on how to improve it. It was also useful to be asked real interview questions – Person who stutters, Egypt*

*I loved my interview because I realised that I don't need to rush; I can take time to talk my interlocutors will still listen. Slow down the rhythm – Person who stutters, UK*

*This was such a great opportunity to take away my initial fear of doing my first interviews and to experience them in a positive way. I was really touched by the deep empathy and compassion of my first interviewer without a stutter and inspired by my second interviewer's achievements with a stutter – Person who stutters, Germany*

*It made me believe that I can face the things I once feared as a stutter – Person who stutters, South Africa*

*Really open honest conversation with interviewers. It was great to have two interviewers rather than one. I learned a lot from both of them – Person who stutters, UK*

## Appendix 2 – Interviewer Feedback

### Interviewers

It was helpful to hear from so many different people with stutters / stammers. I felt it really broke any stigma attached from my end and when I went into the interview I really felt like I could listen fully and support the interviewee -- Ally, UK

*The experience reminded me that the essential things in life cannot be seen with the eye - patience and presence are both needed for a mutually beneficial partnership. "It takes two to stutter" captures this idea well – Ally, USA*

*The person whom I interviewed gave me heart warming feedback afterwards. I felt very moved by the experience, and felt a real connection with the person I interviewed – Ally, UK*

*I learnt so much out of this experience. I would recommend it to any recruiters as part of training sessions and also felt good about helping others – Ally, UK*

My interviewee was a great match. We spent time learning more about each other's careers and interests before conducting the practice interview where I helped to build their confidence when answering questions that had caused them worry in past interviews. A great session and I hope valuable for my interviewee; certainly valuable for me – Ally, UK

*I like the format and wished that it would have been available to me when I was a young professional – Person who stutters, Germany*

*It helped me to learn what individuals go through to secure a job, progress in the role and openly talk about their conditions. It was a mind-opening exercise that enable me to explore the ways to support this community and educate people with the ways to be a good ally – Ally, UK*