

# Loop Annual Report 2020



By Alex Carle

**This is the first Annual report for Our Loop Stichting and covers the last seven months of 2020.**

**This report is for the Loop Governing Board, the Loop Advisory Board and the partners invested in supporting Loop.**

## Executive Summary

2020 has felt like a roller coaster:

High of starting Loop with confirmed funding. Low of that funding being withdrawn in the first week due to COVID.

Highs of having interest in the concept from senior leaders from across the sector who joined the Advisory Board and linking up with the Relief Watch team. Lows of not finding an organisation to incubate Loop for the first two years and having to start 'yet another' charity.

Highs of on boarding a strong representative Governing Board. Lows of extreme blockers to registering Loop as a charity due to our Governing Board members nationality.

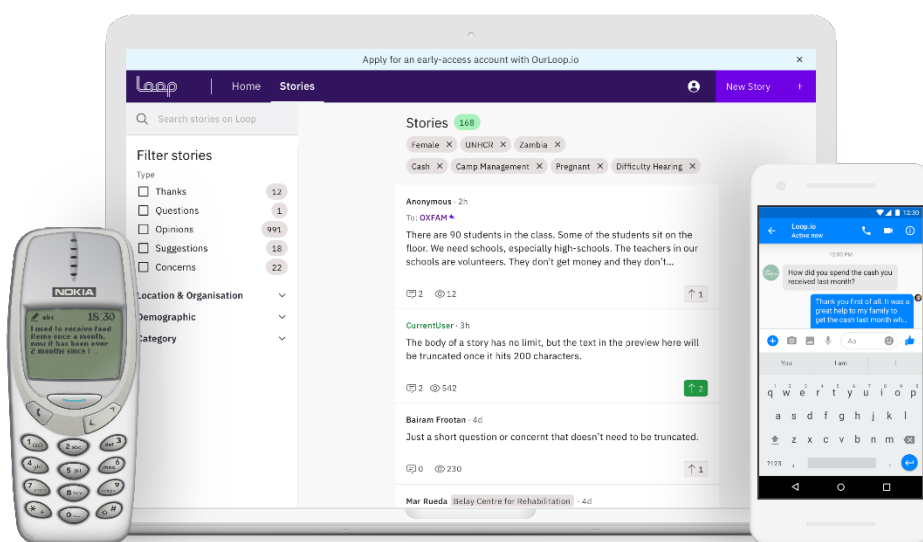
Highs of approved funding from Humanity United. Lows of not being able to receive those funds due to multifaceted issues with the banks: COVID reduced face to face signing; a surge on banks for COVID furlough schemes; UK and Dutch addresses; Increased legal requirements for Dutch Banks due to money laundering fears and our Governing Board's nationalities<sup>1</sup>.

Highs of meeting and having commitment from local Civil Society Partners in Zambia and the Philippines and learning from them. Lows of delays and absorption capacity due to COVID and funding flow issues - all involvement from their side has been entirely based on good will and investment for a useful tool in the future, even during COVID, droughts and many typhoons.

Highs of having a platform ready to use. Low of it not being used yet because it requires further investment in local roll out, communications and integration.

Highs of being invited to speak and contribute to many events, including internal organisation level meetings. Lows of not receiving more funding from those who express real interest, including 56 declined funding applications. Finally, ending on a high of raising £1 million of grants in the first 7 months - if signed - from three different donors.

The rest of this report shares key deliverables of the first seven months of Loop as a Registered Charity and the status as of December 2020.

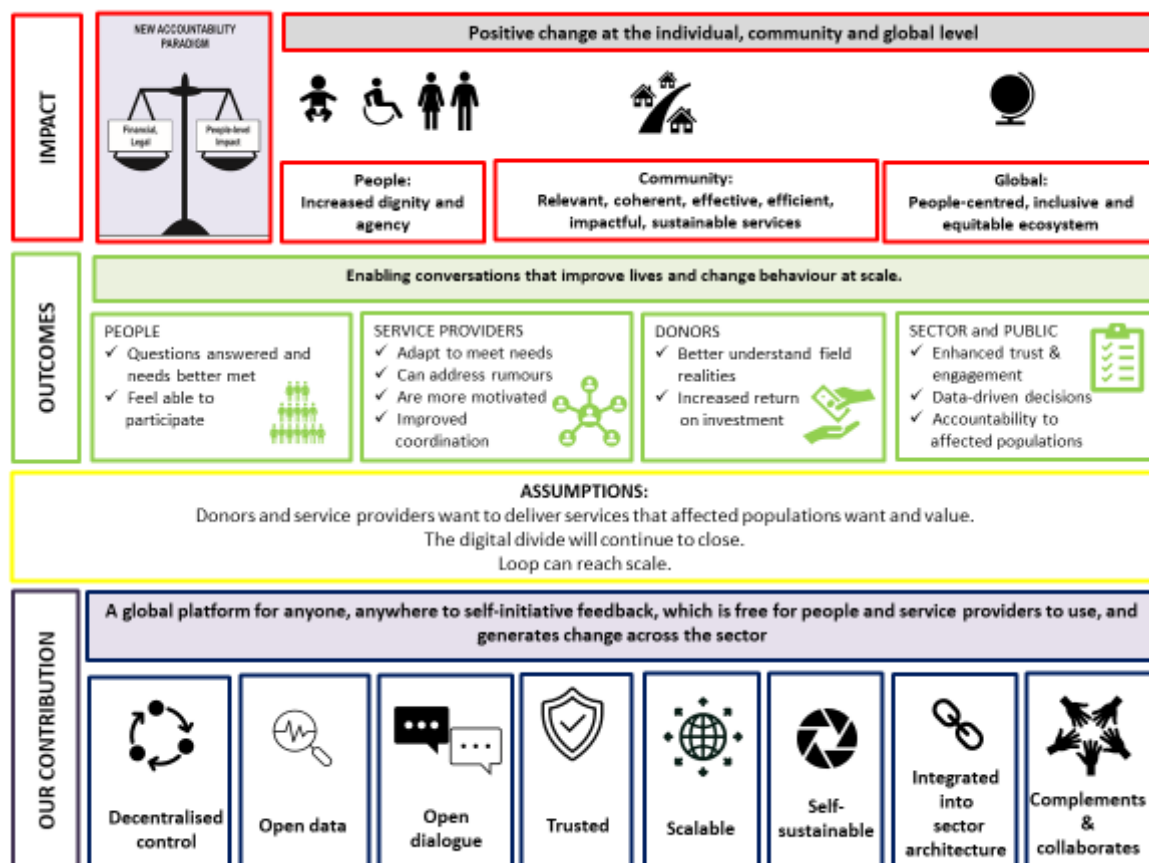


<sup>1</sup> See LinkedIn blog post on the systemic blockers encountered within this process: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/can-we-put-rhetoric-action-our-colonial-past-continue-alex-carle/>

## Loop Impact in 2020

Loop has had zero impact on the lives of affected communities in 2020.

We have invested in building a solid foundation and framework to design and grow the global independent and safe feedback mechanism. We have a strong Theory of Change diagram which guides our work and approach. The narrative is in Annex A.



We have a **Measurement Framework** to test assumptions, measure progress and assess impact against the Theory of Change. We have a Zambian partner to lead on our monitoring and evaluation and feed into our global Learning in 2021 and 2022.

By October 2020 we have a Website '**Platform**' hosted on AWS (Amazon Web Servers) in Europe, which is built to be able to scale, meets GDPR requirements and has features to:

- 1) Share a story, feedback to a story, up vote a story, all in English
- 2) Heat mapping based on: Thanks, Question, Opinion, Suggestion, Concern.
- 3) Filter functionality by: location, organisation, key demographic information and a wide range of thematic areas (to be tested but includes categories and sub categories for Health, Shelter, Cash etc).
- 4) Sign up to the platform and gain password access

We also have a **Website** with information about Loop, blogs, and contact information. Finally, we have a Data Flow Map and the foundations required too ensure we exceed Data Policy and Accessibility global standards and Policies in place which meet Government Due Diligence standards.

## Representation:

The **Loop Governing Board** holds full accountability for the Loop Charity. Loop now has five Governing Board members:

Who	Where	Professional Area of Experties	LinkedIn profile
Geoffrey Kateregga – President	Uganda. Africa	Geospatial mapping. Community led initiatives.	<a href="#">LinkedIn</a>
Salama Bakhlah	Yemen. MENA	United Nations and Red Cross. Gender.	<a href="#">LinkedIn</a>
Adeline Sibanda	Zimbabwe. Africa	Evaluation. Board Leadership.	<a href="#">LinkedIn</a>
Tey el Rujla	Syria. MENA	Refugees. Cryptocurrencies.	<a href="#">LinkedIn</a>
Marcia Alarcon	Paraguay. LAC	Civic Engagement. Youth	<a href="#">LinkedIn</a>

- Thanks to Sue Carswell for being a Governing Board member during the registration of Loop. [LinkedIn](#).
- The Safe guarding Focal Point will be appointed in the December Governing Board meeting.
- We expect to on Board someone from Asia in 2021.

The Loop **Advisory Board** operates in an advisory function and holds no decision making authority. It now includes:

Who	Organisation	LinkedIn profile
Degan Ali	ADESO and NEAR network	
Christina Bennett	CEO of the START Network	<a href="#">LinkedIn</a>
Alexandra Sicotte-Levesque	Red Cross Movement. IFRC AAP	<a href="#">LinkedIn</a>
Elise Ford	Humanity United Foundation	<a href="#">LinkedIn</a>
Tanya Wood	Executive Director CHS Alliance	<a href="#">LinkedIn</a>
Sorcha O’Callaghan	Head of the Humanitarian Policy Group at the Overseas Development Institute	<a href="#">LinkedIn</a>
Stewart Davies	UN OCHA AAP focal Point. To be confirmed 2021	Stewart left this role in November 2020. He recommended that the incumbent join the Loop Advisory Board in 2021.
GSMA or a Mobile Operator	To be confirmed 2021	Have confirmed. Finalising representative.

We continue to seek representation from:

- An appropriate tech company and

- A Government Donor.

## External Representation:

Instead of direct impact we have instead talked about and raised the idea of: New Power; Decentralised open transparent systems; Democratised feedback mechanisms; an independent safeguard reporting mechanism and a New Accountability Paradigm which includes the voices and experiences of recipients of Aid alongside and equivalent to financial and legal accountability.

We have engaged in discussions and shared our thoughts with a wide range of actors in the Development, Philanthropy, Tech and Humanitarian sectors, resulting in: 1400 LinkedIn connections, 504 people on the Newsletter network, 12 people registered on the Loop platform and the following events and publications:

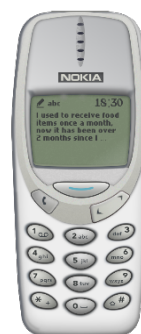
Conferences in 2020:		
IMMAP Latin America	On the use of technology in responding to the refugee crisis	Maria Alarcon and Alex Carle
Hague Humanity Hub	Start up Tuesday. Show casing innovative founders.	Alex Carle
PlayFair Capital and Tech Nation	Female Founders Pitch Event	Alex Carle
CDAC Network Annual Forum - Accountability in the Age of the Algorithm	<a href="#">Championing Pathways to Inclusion through Tech Driven Futures</a>	Salama Bakhalah and Geoffrey Kateregga
CHS Alliance	<a href="#">Humanitarian Accountability Report Launch</a> (from 56.50s). The Future of Accountability in the Humanitarian Sector	Salama Bakhalah
Feedback Labs	<a href="#">Lab Storm on Loop</a> – Closing the Loop on Anonymous Feedback	Alex Carle
Humanitarian Network Partnership Week	Participated in a discussion on Localisation and presented Loop	Alex Carle

Publications:		
Humanitarian Accountability Report document	<a href="#">Meeting CHS Commitment 4</a> page 45	Salama Bakhalah
CDAC Series: From Where I Stand: Unpacking 'Local' in Aid.	<a href="#">Can We Put the Rhetoric into Action?</a>	Alex Carle
Zambian Newsflash	<a href="#">Loop to #ShiftThePower</a>	Alex Carle

LinkedIn	<a href="#">Can we put the Rhetoric into Action</a>	Alex Carle
Feedback Labs	<a href="#">Harnessing New Power to #ShiftThePower</a>	Alex Carle
LinkedIn	<a href="#">Looking forward to the year ahead.</a> Jan 2020	Alex Carle

## Finances

We are a registered Charity in Holland and have received equivalency status of a 501c3 charity in the United States. We have passed the Due Diligence process with the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the British Government. We will produce audited accounts in euros, February of each year. We have an online Manual which includes all Policies and will be available in GitBook, linked to our website as an open resource from February of 2020.



### 2020 Income and Expenditure

Our only donor in 2020 was Humanity United. See our top line Expense report below (\$150,000 = approx. equivalency of €130,000).

Item	Cost in Euros
Staffing and associated costs	€70,000
Office costs	€14,000
Developers costs	€46,000
TOTAL	€130,000

We have also received the following support:

- 1) Philippines and Zambian networks of CSOs time and commitment
- 2) Governing Board and Advisory time and commitment
- 3) AWS – the host server has provided \$1000 worth of free hosting services.
- 4) Volunteers supporting in:
  - Monitoring and evaluation,
  - Website design,
  - Impact Investment pitch development.

### 2021 Income and Expenditure

Our 2021 budget is going to the Governing Board in December 2020 for sign off.

Expenses 2021	Cost in Euros
Staffing and associated costs	€90,000
Office costs – legal, financial, phone, registration etc	€30,000
Fees – audits, communications etc	€50,000
Developers – SMS, Translation, Closed Loop, Facebook, Somalia scoping	€550,000
Partners and consultants for projects	€130,000
TOTAL	€850,000

Income 2021	Cost in Euros
Humanity United	€130,000
FCDO (+ € for 2022)	€578,000
DRA through NEXUS Somalia	€42,000
TOTAL	€850,000

## Chronology for Loop 2020

The following diagram outlines the key timeline relevant to the **legal**, **operational** and **financial** aspects of the Loop activities in 2020.

The Loop concept and idea had been discussed and conceptualised for at least a year prior to May 2021. The Managing Director was working on the initiative full time from April 2020.

Key =
○ Legal aspects
○ Operational aspects

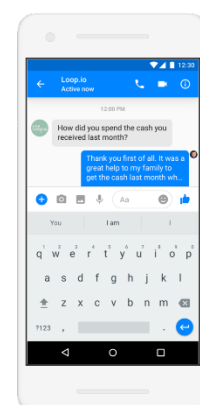
### Timeline for Loop 2020:



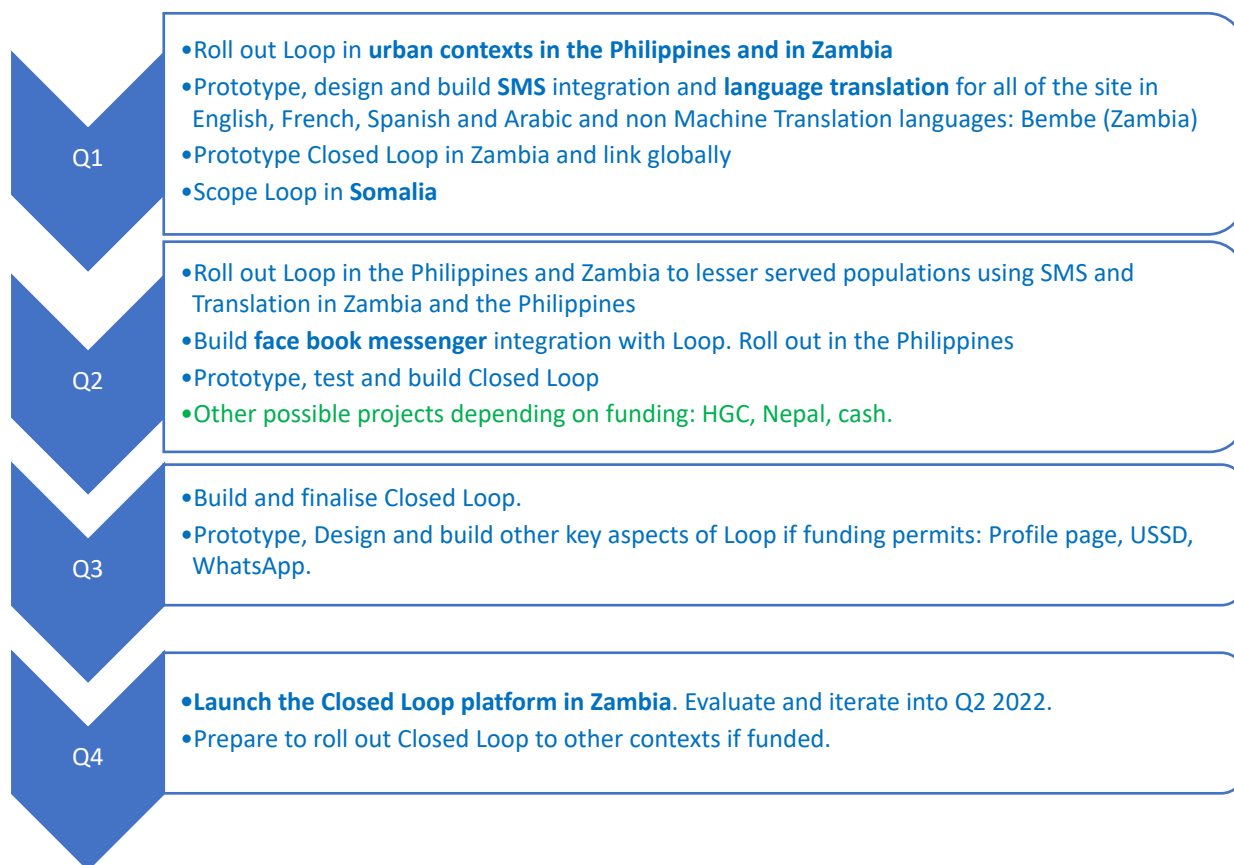
For 2021 the following main timelines will be relevant, highlighting the greater knowledge of opportunities in Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of the year. There are a number of funding proposals submitted and discussions of future partnerships ongoing, including in: **Nepal, Yemen and Somalia**, but these will be funding dependent.

The focus will be on delivering the SMS, Translation and Closed Loop aspects to a high quality, building a strong organisational and technological platform to grow as opportunities arise and investing in rolling out Loop in the **Philippines and Zambia** to get strong buy in, evidence and learning.

### Current Planned Timeline for Loop 2021







## Risks in 2020

In the first year of establishment we have been exposed to a large amount of risks. These have been mitigated through a variety of different approaches. The key risks to reflect on include the below areas.

For more detail on the risks please visit our Open Risk Register.

Risk description	Risk mitigation measures	Risk score
As a result of <b>NGO fear</b> of what to do with so much data and complaints coming in... there is a risk that the NGOs will choose not to engage with the service, which may result in no action resulting from the feedback and may result in reduced incentives of affected populations to provide feedback.	Talk about integration, complementarity and adding value. Get wide input into the design. Open live build up of the Moderator protocols of what is accepted onto the site and what is referred to the Closed Loop.	<b>8</b>

<p>As a result of <b>reduced funding in the sector</b> or minimal pots of funds available for systemic change and technical builds... there is a risk that there is not enough investment to sufficiently test and evidence the effectiveness of Loop... which may result in delays and slow progress in the roll out of Loop.</p>	<p>Doing a great job and proving the SEAH element of Loop should result in sector wide interest and potential buy in. Showing savings that result from a joined-up systems wide Feedback Safety net. Developing VC applications and opportunities for Impact investment and other income from different financial sources will help to increase potential for success.</p>	<p><b>8</b></p>
<p>As a result of <b>poor access to technology</b> there is a risk that the most vulnerable will not be able to access the loop platform, which may result in it not being used or adding value.</p>	<p>Perfect cannot be the barrier to good. Ongoing iterations and toolbox of input options to be adapted and tested in each context to increase representation of the population.</p>	<p><b>6</b></p>
<p>As a result of <b>service users not receiving feedback</b> or seeing change as a result of their engagement with Loop ...there is a risk that they will stop using the platform, which may result in fewer people feeding back.</p>	<p>The design must work closely with service providers and coordination systems in the sector (HTC, CHS etc) to ensure feedback is as actionable as possible. Design ways to incentivise feedback even if no direct response is received (how many read it, how many up voted it etc).</p>	<p><b>6</b></p>
<p>As a result of highly complex and multifaceted <b>data protection</b> regulations ...there is a risk that some organisations will not be able to share some information and individuals will have barriers to engaging ...which may result in fewer people using the Loop platform to share and engage with feedback.</p>	<p>Contract developers who have experience working in accordance with GDPR regulations, ISO, follow digital principles, have been tested in complex context and have an Opt in vs Opt out approach. Lead by example. Likely to be with UN agencies and have stated discussions with their DP teams in 2020</p>	<p><b>6</b></p>
<p><b>COVID 19</b></p>	<p>Delays and shift in approach in first half of 2020. COVID has supported the need for Loop. No more questions on why use technology. Travel managed by in country partnerships.</p>	<p><b>4</b></p>

## Annex A - Theory of change<sup>2</sup>

*“Smartphones alone do not bring rain, nor change the political power status quo. These tools, nevertheless, are serving as starting points around which conversations may emerge on how to address these broader challenges.”<sup>3</sup>*

**The problem** is that the current accountability paradigm which prioritises financial accountability over accountability to affected populations, limits the relevance, impact, and sustainability of support. The needs and perspectives of the most marginalised, vulnerable, and underserved people are not effectively incorporated into the design of services aimed at supporting them. As a result they are disempowered and less able to be active agents of the change required in their communities.

Rather, **Loop envisions** a world where everyone, including those who are marginalised, vulnerable and underserved, can share their opinion and experience in a safe, open, transparent and equitable way to affect positive social change at the individual, community and global level. Increased engagement, learning and listening through this exchange will result in: Increased dignity and agency for affected populations, as well as more relevant, coherent, effective, efficient, impactful, and sustainable services, delivered via a people-centred, inclusive and equitable ecosystem.

**Loop will help bring this vision to fruition by** enabling conversations that improve lives and change behaviour at scale through the development of a global independent digital platform for anyone, anywhere to self-initiate feedback safely and anonymously. The platform will be free for affected populations and service providers to use and will be designed to drive change in the sector.

**Key design elements** of the platform to achieve this include:

- Decentralised control – anyone from anywhere can initiate the sharing of a story.
- Open Data – all stories which have passed the safeguarding filter, are available online for anyone to read.
- Open Dialogue – anyone can reply to, upvote or engage in the conversation thread of any story.

In addition, the platform will be designed to be **part of the architecture of the development and humanitarian ecosystems** (complaints mechanisms, CHS, PSEAH, due diligence processes, advocacy and sector wide reporting) and **complement and collaborate** with existing organisation level feedback mechanisms. It will also be accessible to the public, advocacy groups, researchers and other interest actors. We also aim to ‘walk the talk’ of the platforms objectives through our structure and policy, as well as meet, exceed and ultimately shape **regulatory standards** on data protection and transparency.

Thus, **the platform will result in:**

**People** being able to raise their voice safely, have their questions answered promptly, and feel able to participate.

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<sup>2</sup> Note that our Theory of Change is intended to function as a ‘living document’ – we will continue to iterate it as we test our assumptions and generate evidence that refines our understanding of how Loop creates changes that contribute to our vision.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/igp/news/2019/jul/citizen-science-and-botanic-knowledge-among-herders-and-farmers-kenya>

**Service providers** being able to: use peoples feedback to adapt services to better meet the needs of their users; use Loop data to inform communications to address rumours; motivate staff and benefit from improved coordination.

**Donors** will have an increased understanding of field realities and trends, have additional data to inform their accountability mechanisms and decision making and ultimately get a better return on their investments.

**The sector** having enhanced levels of transparency and engagement (listening and learning) between all stakeholders (people, service providers, donors). This will result in additional data that can contribute to more data-driven decision making and ultimately be one part of a new accountability paradigm where people-level impact is given equal weight to financial accountability.

For the desired impact to result we have made a few **assumptions** which need to be tested:

- Donors and service providers want to deliver services that affected populations want and value.
- Levels of technology penetration will continue to improve and extend our ability to reach the most marginalised, vulnerable and underserved people around the world safely and we will be able to harness investment to help to lead on initiatives to close the digital divide.
- Loop is able to be a successful pioneer in scaling humanitarian and development solutions.
- Ongoing consultation with varied users will enable the Loop platform to continually be improved and add value to all users and they will Trust and want to use Loop.
- Loop can come to market quickly enough to ensure a meaningful space is carved out before there are too many disparate, uncoordinated digital feedback mechanisms which are not based on open, transparent principles.
- We can access sufficient investment to get to proof of concept and sufficient scale before unlocking revenue streams, so that we remain sector and context agnostic and are not dependent on project or emergency response funding.

*“Old power works like a currency. It is held by few. Once gained, it is jealously guarded, and the powerful have a substantial store of it to spend. It is closed, inaccessible, and leader driven. It downloads, and it captures.*

*New power operates differently, like a current. It is made by many. It is open, participatory, and peer driven. It uploads, and it distributes. Like water or electricity, it’s most forceful when it surges. The goal with new power is not to hoard it but to channel it.”*