Frequently Asked Questions

What is Loop and how does it work?

What is Loop?

Loop is an independent feedback mechanism for anyone receiving or in need of Aid. Affected people can feedback about what is important to them: thanks, requests for support, questions, complaints, or sensitive feedback. Loop can be an organisation's feedback and engagement tool, complaints reporting mechanism and safeguarding mechanism.

What is the goal of Loop?

Loop's vision is a world where the most marginalised, vulnerable, and underserved people can share their experiences in a safe, open and transparent way, to affect positive social change at the individual, community and global levels.

Who is Loop for?

Loop is for:
• People who receive humanitarian or development Aid;
• People in their communities at home or abroad (Diaspora);
• Providers of Aid such as NGOs, Civil Society Organisations;
• Donors, philanthropists and individual givers;
• Researchers, Evaluators, think tanks, policy makers and influencers;
• And all other actors involved in reducing inequality.

Why do we need Loop?

Some people do not feel safe to report abuse by those who give them life-saving work or food in case they then receive nothing.

1 of 14 Some people do not know how to read or write so cannot use feedback boxes or SMS reporting.

Some people live in rural areas or work long hours so cannot travel to information desks.

Some people report into organisation specific mechanisms but never hear back or have any resolution.

Some people are asked the same question in different ways from numerous people doing needs assessments or surveys or evaluations but never hear back or receive help, so they feel frustrated, isolated and loose trust in the people who are supposed to help them.

In the humanitarian and development field, it is widely accepted that the needs and perspectives of the most marginalised, vulnerable, and underserved people are not effectively incorporated into the design and funding of the services aimed at supporting them.

talktoloop

See these reports for evidence and attempts at addressing this need to date:
From the Ground Up – ODI
People Driven Response – CGDev
People Power in Humanitarian Action – ICRC
Changing the Referee instead of the Game - HPN

How does Loop keep people safe?

How are stories moderated?

Host organisations which are well established and meet due diligence requirements of major donors, recruit and employ moderators. They sign Loop codes of conduct, data and safeguarding policies. They receive training in moderation, safeguarding, data security and participate in global monthly Moderators training sessions.

Moderators speak the local languages, come from the local civil society network and know the main risks, opportunities, actors and systems in place in their own country. They are supported by the rest of the host organisations operational team and CEO. They are also supported by the Loop Case manager who is a trained specialist in managing Sensitive Feedback about Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, Fraud, Misconduct etc.

The platform has built in data protection systems and is GDPR compliant. Loop has SOPs, Protocols and is constantly reviewing and improving our processes to ensure accurate, authentic and safe moderation and tagging of all feedback onto the site.

Anyone can request a review of any story on the platform. Every piece of feedback is moderated by a human before it is posted on the open platform.

Will responses to a particular thread be moderated as well?

Yes. Anything posted on the Loop website will be moderated before it is posted online.

All moderation follows our Community Guidelines and is implemented by moderators from that country who speak the local language and know the possible risks.

How do I know if feedback is authentic?

We have a number of mechanisms to authenticate feedback.

This includes:
• If there are too many stories being submitted from one IP address within a certain amount of time, then it is blocked.
• We have humans moderating content before it is posted and they will be trying to identify if something is not quite right - tone of voice, repetition, etc.
• We can reject stories if we think that are not authentic, based on our community.
• Finally, anyone can flag a specific piece of feedback and request for it to be removed.

What is Sensitive Feedback?

Sensitive Feedback refers to all stories which are not posted on the open platform for all people to see because the author has chosen that it is not for public information and/ or the information could do harm.

See Loop Community Guidelines and Moderator Protocols for more information.

We have additional security and data protection protocols in place for sensitive feedback and no identifiable information is posted online.

How are Sensitive Stories managed?

An author of feedback and the Moderators can tag a story as Sensitive.

It is then removed from the platform and Moderators no longer have access to the information.

It is sent with an alert system to the Loop Case Managers.

The case managers are trained professionals in managing complex cases and ensuring our processes aligns with and exceeds industry best practice.

The Loop Case management tool has additional data protection mechanisms in place. It enables case managers to stay on top of all cases and to refer on and follow up where needed.

There is an inbuilt referral mapping which is constantly updated, of where to refer what type of cases to which organisations. Case managers also participate in sector coordination forums to stay networked with relevant actors.

We try to sensitize organisations and people to Loop before they receive a referral – this is for assistance and investigation so that cases are processed more rapidly. This is an ongoing task and we can come and do information sessions online or in person in your chosen language at any time. We can also be a part of trainings if helpful.

Why is sensitive data about my organisation held by Loop?

Loop's top priority is the safety and protection of people who use Loop.

To do that we must earn the trust of the sector.

We are not a donor. We are not an operational actor.

We are here simply to channel information to the right people in a timely safe way.

We are survivor centered. With the survivor's permission we hand it over and step back.

We are not whistle-blowers.

We do not want to keep sensitive information or be involved in any way with a case. We do want to contribute to a safer more impactful environment.

When Loop receives a sensitive report where your organisation is involved we refer it into your organisations existing mechanisms. From there you can manage it as you would any other Complaint or report of SEA.

How does Loop work with Inter-Agency PSEA responsibilities?

Loop has developed standard operating procedures for managing Sensitive Stories, which have been drafted with reference to the IASC's Global Standard Operating Procedures for Inter-Agency Cooperation on Inter-Agency Cooperation in CommunityBased Complaints Mechanisms for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

This means that Loop's procedures for receiving complaints of SEA and referring onwards are consistent with international best practices and inter-agency cooperation. They ensure that principles of consent, confidentiality and survivor-centered approaches are observed.

In addition, Loop's case management tool enables the Case Manager to have an overview of the accountability process and to follow-up with organisations about key milestones.

Loop does not want to duplicate existing work on the ground but rather seeks to complement and strengthen existing systems and networks. As such, in the countries where we operate, we are reaching out to PSEA Networks and Taskforces to make sure that we can support the systems in place (e.g. CBCM). How this works will depend on the country context and referral procedures.

Please contact us to discuss further.

Who can use Loop?

I am from a community affected by crises, is Loop useful for me?

Yes. You may not have any other feedback mechanism to use, so use Loop and we will let relevant actors know and invite them to reply.

You may also have many different back mechanisms available to you but you are confused about who to feedback to about what, when and how. Or you have feedback but not received a reply or you do not trust the organisations or people for some reason.

In all cases, Loop can help. When you provide feedback on Loop, there is a higher likelihood of a reply because:

Your story is referred to more organisations than it is addressed to. Our moderators and community do a fantastic job ensuring that the most appropriate organisations are tagged into stories based on the story content.

Your story is translated into a language that international organisations are working in. If a reply is given in this language, Loop will translate it so you can understand it easily.

Your story will be public within 48 hours of you sending it, and you can see what other people have posted as a comparison. Organisations are more inclined to respond to stories that are public.

You will be notified of any replies or comments to your feedback, to keep you up to date.

Your story will be safe with us. We will refer on sensitive complaints or reports of Exploitation, Abuse or Harassment to the appropriate actor WITHOUT publishing it on the open platform.

We are an independent charity with moderators and strong data protection policies.

In addition, you can use Loop to see what other people are saying about an organisation, or about their needs and issues. You can reply to them to help in solidarity, and you can use this information to inform you and your communities actions.

Any more questions, please ask. We are here to help.

I am a donor, is Loop useful for me?

Of course. You hold a lot of power.

Promote real accountability by providing a safe mechanism for anyone to use, whether the organisation asks or not.

Use the data on the statistics page to learn what is important to local people and fund that – analyse data based on Age, Gender, Ability, Thematic of Geographic interests.

Use the data on the statistics page to see which organisations are on Loop, and if quickly and appropriately closing the feedback loop.

Triangulate reports and information from organisations not on the platform with people's voices on Loop.

Promote an independent safe reporting tool to protect communities from harm.

Save money by funding a collective, safe mechanism for all of your partners to use. Loop is 30% of the cost of the siloed, disparate alternative tools.

Register on Loop to receive notifications if you are tagged in a story.

Reply to people directly, in solidarity.

I am a CSO, NNGO, INGO, IO, is Loop useful for me?

Yes, It can help your programs, trust building, impact and fundraising.

The Loop platform is permanently available, so it can fill gaps when setting up a response, or program, or if monitoring and evaluation budget lines are tight.

Loop provides qualitative, and quantitative, comparative, and longitudinal data to inform decision making, course correction, and triangulate other sources of data.

Loop provides an independent way to gather ongoing feedback remotely, through multiple channels that are adapted to the local context. This feedback will be channeled to you and the data can be integrated with and complement your existing feedback mechanisms and reporting.

Feedback is openly available, thereby empowering local people (including staff and volunteers) to see and share their experiences and empower local solutions.

We have developed a way to safely refer on complaints and SEAH reports, without posting them online, to the appropriate person in your organisation, to respond to privately. Using and promoting Loop helps to collectively contribute to a safer response!

I work with people who are illiterate and do not use smart phones. Can Loop help them?

Yes, you only need to borrow a phone to feedback through Loop.

You can use anyone's phone.

We have short code, reverse charged numbers (easy to remember and free) in our partner countries.

People who are not confident writing can leave a voice message. Loop will transcribe, translate and post it on their behalf and also translate and send back through a voice message of any replies that we receive. Thus closing the feedback Loop using Voice.

This enables anyone who cannot express themselves comfortably in written form to also share their feedback and get replies in their language from anyone. Thus, raising the voices of even more people.

Does Loop apply to Government projects, or is it only for humanitarian organisations?

We are not just for humanitarian activities. Local people do not decipher between these abstract titles.

Loop does not distinguish between silos. Loop has been designed around what local people say they want. We help people to voice what is important to them.

This might be about local government authorities' services, elections etc. It could equally be about a civil societies' development project or an international actor responding to an emergency.

People are able to share what is important to them and we will do our best to get the right people on the platform listening and responding.

How can I use Loop?

How does Loop work?

A person hears about Loop from their community, a program provider or on the radio.

They feedback in their own language, on any device they can get access to, when they want, for free.

The organisation they feedback about is tagged and notified of the feedback.

The organisation can respond directly in their own language, in their own time.

Loop gets the feedback to the original author in their language on their device and the feedback Loop is closed or can start again!

Loop tags the data and displays it on the open statistics page in real time for anyone.

 If the person shares feedback which is sensitive or an allegation, then it is sent to a trained Case Manager to refer on to an appropriate actor for assistance or investigation.

Loop refers things, based on Survivors wishes and through global Standard Operating Practices and strong Data Privacy processes.

How can I share feedback on Loop?

You can share your feedback on our platform.

Or visit our country pages for details on how to submit feedback...
• Philippines
• Zambia
• Somalia
• Indonesia
• Poland/Ukraine

You can also look at other people's feedback on the platform.

Or look at the statistics and trends based on filters you are interested in.

If you don't have a story to share, you can still reply to other people who have shared their feedback and tell your friends, family and colleagues about us.

You can find us on Twitter, Facebook or sign up to get our newsletter.

How can I start using Loop today in my programs and activities?

Sign up here so that you are notified of any feedback that comes in related to your organisation.

Proactively ask for feedback if you have programs in any of our current countries:
• Philippines
• Zambia
• Somalia
• Indonesia
• Poland/Ukraine

Contact us to help you with:
• communications asking people to feedback
• training staff on how to integrate Loop
• supporting your systems to respond in a timely way and
• using the data to improve programs and get funding
• being an accountability champion in your area

Email us if you would like to find out more about using Loop.

My organisation still has reasons not to use Loop

I am worried we will receive negative unauthenticated feedback.

There's no need to be.

75% of all feedback on Loop is positive.

Nothing is posted without being moderated.

Any serious complaints or allegations will be sent confidentially to the focal point in your organisation to manage safely.

If they don't then we escalate it confidentially.

I am worried that we will be overwhelmed with requests for support or queries?

There's no need to worry. This data can help to get more support to the right people for what they need.

Aggregate data on Loop will show the scale of need, and can be used to advocate to donors, for greater resources to go to the needed activities.

It is not a negative on you or your organisation.

People don't expect a perfect solution.

People have a right to basic information, and you can maintain trust by answering their questions, efficiently at scale, across languages through Loop.

Respond back to the source quickly and they will communicate it more widely, building trust and transparency in your process.

Cut off misinformation at the core. They will talk about these things with or without you knowing.

Why would I use Loop if we have our own M&E or feedback mechanisms?

Great news! You're a committed organisation!

Research shows people need options to be able to find the right mechanism for them.

We like to complement what is already working. Maybe we can help to extend your reach:
• Can all of your partners use it, long term?
• Can all communities access it?
• Can you manage all types of feedback and complaints?
• Will it be available during sudden onset or scale up?
• Do your partners have feedback, complaints and SEA mechanisms that meet global standards, available long term, across all projects, that are not dependent on specific donor budget lines?

Loop can easily be integrated with your existing systems:

If you are doing monitoring and evaluation you can leave behind information and invite people to share any other thoughts and ideas directly with you through Loop. We will get that data straight to you in your own language (thus providing direct and real time translations).

Loop can help you reach further – across different input channels or languages, so that you can hear from a wider section of the community. The data be extracted and integrated with your other data sources.

You can analyse the data in real time on the talk to loop platform directly, looking at what are the key things people are talking about and use that to inform your programming activities, funding applications, donor reports and policy influencing.

Support your partners to use Loop as they may need a long term, locally owned and affordable feedback, complaints and SEA reporting mechanism after your project ends.

Contribute to a safer response: Evidence suggests people report serious issues about actors not promoting Loop but hear about Loop from other sources who prioritise accountability. Is that you?

We would only need Loop in the first months of a crisis to fill a gap.

We understand. You have good strong systems in place at an organizational level but sometimes have gaps that need filling, for example during a rapid onset crisis, when your teams are overwhelmed, and it takes time to research, design and set up a new feedback or reporting mechanism.

We agree that local people know first, they respond first and that we, as a sector need to listen to them for a timely effective mitigation and response. Loop can provide this collective service during sudden scale up, to fill gaps and to share aggregate real time data.

You can switch back to your systems once established. Integrate Loop into your early warning, preparedness and response systems.

Train your staff, emergency response and surge staff about how Loop works in advance.

We want feedback mechanisms to be locally owned.

Do you know, from research and best practice that collective feedback mechanisms should be locally owned and adapted to each context's language, digital literacy levels and trust? So do we: that is why local organisations host Loop, permanently.

Loop technology is adapted for each country and different user groups based on their preferences.

Everything about Loop was designed with and by people from different backgrounds, cultures, and experiences of crisis.

We are adding on new languages and scripts, new input channels, and new ways of building trust in every community based on local peoples feedback and requests.

Join our steering groups in each country to help Loop evolve to add the most value.

There are so many systems out there collecting data. Do we need another one?

Are you concerned about duplication of data collection mechanisms, over burdening people with questionnaires, surveys and other extractive approaches? So are we.

Are you worried about having too many reporting systems available for people that they will be confused and lost?

So are we.

Research shows that people need options to find ways which best suit them to give feedback. It also shows that the majority of people in humanitarian crisis do not know how to feedback if they have a concern. People feel disempowered.

Loop is like a safety net for people who:
• May not feel comfortable to use a different system
• Have used a different system but didn't get a response
• Cannot access existing systems – language, internet, distance etc • Don't feel safe to report directly – need anonymity
• An organisation that received feedback about another organisation call also put it into Loop

We want to be complementary, not a silver bullet.

You can integrate our data with yours safely. Cross reference it or triangulate your findings with communities on and off your beneficiary lists and without third party data biases.

That's why Loops data is open, aggregated, can be filtered based on your needs, is longitudinal and has qualitative and quantitative data to get more granular understanding of any complex situation, meaning you need to ask less questions of local people. This added value will be multiplied the more people who use and promote it.

By using Loop your data is contributing to better funding, policy decisions and impact in more ways than any of us know, based on local peoples' voices and experience.

What is the difference between Loop and Twitter or Facebook?

Unlike other platforms, Loop moderates ALL content before it is posted on the platform.

You can only be contacted through the Loop platform.

Loop actively tries to put your feedback in front of people who are likely to be able to respond and engage.

Loop helps to close the digital divide by enabling:
• people without internet connectivity or a smart phone to be a part of the conversation
• people who do not speak English or other major languages contribute and hear back
• people who are not literate to feedback through Interactive Voice on a phone line

The Statistics pages show aggregate real-time data which can inform programs, policy and funding decisions over time.

How will Communities become aware of this platform? Is there an info Campaign?

The more people who talk about Loop and recommend it the better. It's a common service for anyone to share information about. How did you learn about Facebook or WhatsApp? Your friends and colleagues told you.
• Organisations can invite their communities to feedback about them using Loop.
• Include the Loop details on your fliers and posters, alongside other information.
• Projects can ask people through their monitoring and evaluation activities to feedback through Loop.
• Invite people to share anything extra after a focus group discussion, survey or training.

Anyone can help to spread the word and raise people's voices. We can help you develop joint fliers, posters or radio programmes, for example.

What about other feedback mechanisms out there?

We love the work of Ground Truth Solutions, KujaKuja, Ushaidi, Kati Kati, Upinion, Kobo tool kit, Integrity Actions and many others work to help ensure greater accountability.

There are many tools to help deliver surveys, manage data, get feedback, measure community perceptions at the collective level or communicate with a specific group directly.

However, Loop is vastly different to anything available now. It's a revolution:
• Loop is a collective service – feedback about anything and we will try to find the right organisation to respond
• Loop makes closing the feedback Loop a priority
• Loop lets people feedback anonymously – protecting them from further harm
• Open feedback, complaints reporting, fraud, misconduct and sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual harassment can all be reported through the same entry point
• Loop is associated with feedback so there is no stigma in feeding back sensitive stories through it
• Loop is permanent, it does not depend on Emergency Response funding, or monitoring and evaluation budget lines.
• Loop is present before, during and after a crisis.
• Loop can scale, because it does not rely on having field staff present.
• Loop can be easily accessed through a wide variety of channels including: Voice, SMS, free messenger services (WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook.) and web.
• Loop is available anywhere there is text messaging of any kind or internet access.
• People can borrow someone's phone to feedback or ask someone else to do it on their behalf for free (reverse charged numbers)
• Loop is designed to be complementary to other existing feedback mechanisms, especially those which are face-to-face
• Loop is not extractive and is based on open principles of transparency, so all feedback, approved by a moderator, is available for anyone to see and engage with.
• Loop is based on a principle of decentralised control meaning local populations can give feedback on anything important to them at any time, whether they have been asked to or not.
• Loop gives more agency, long term to local peoples voices to improve accountability in a crisis.

Who is using Loop already? Will I suffer if we are a first mover on the site?

Donors and communities alike are calling for greater transparency and accountability. Being an early adopter will highlight your commitment to raising local voices, providing a safer environment for people you serve and ongoing engagement with local people to ensure your programs are effective and impactful.

Loop does not post on the open platform serious allegations about your organisation, but instead shares it with your organisation safely and confidentially to manage.

People in communities are talking anyway, surely it is better to build trust and understanding by listening and responding to them directly. That might be to clarify why a dispersement is late, what the criteria for being on a list is or why your organisation does not have the capacity to meet everyones needs, even if you would like to.

Global Commitments including the Grand Bargain, the Accountability Revolution, shift the power and Decolonising Aid are all looking for more transparent, locally owned accountability and safe reporting mechanisms. Show that you agree and are now going to do something about it. Help to create the change!

Does it meet Donor Due Diligence requirements?

Yes. Loop provides a safe input channel for feedback, complaints reporting and as a SafeGuarding reporting mechanism. That includes a mechanism for receiving reports about Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse, and Sexual Harassment (SEAH). We meet the requirements of the British SafeGuarding Team for PSEAH and can refer into InterAgency collective mechanism.

Local organisations can adopt Loop as a tool to receive from communities feedback, complaints and reports according to international standards. Their donors and partners can support them to adapt Loop for all of the programs, all of the disparate donor requirements and long term after the specific project with a budget line for feedback comes to an end.

While Loop can be used to get the information in safely, each organisation is responsible for ensuring the communities where they work are aware of the Loop and their right to use it. Each organisation is also responsible to ensure that the appropriately trained staff member(s) knows how to respond to different types of feedback and reports appropriately. Finally it is their responsibility that they have internal policies and mechanisms in place to appropriately manage things when they do come in. Loop staff and many others can help to signpost tools and resources to focus on this internally.

How is Loop financed?

What does Loop cost?

Local people have the right to feedback about what is important to them. Having money or an approved feedback budget line in a project should not be a barrier to access this right.

For this reason, Loop is free for local people and local civil society organisations to use.

We have short code free phone numbers you can use in the countries where we have a presence. Our website is designed on lo-fi to reduce the amount of data consumed.

International and large-scale organisations are asked to contribute a fee to support this collective, cost-efficient mechanism. You can include Loop in your project budgets. Please email us for support.

Donors are invited to fund Loop so we can reach further, raise more peoples voices, and ensure a safe, more accountable presence.

If you want to help bring Loop to a new country, please get in touch with our Managing Director on alex@talktoloop.org

We need to cover the costs of:
• Mobile Network Operator (MNO) fees
• Local staff and host organisation costs
• Case managers to manage Sensitive Reports
• Tech maintenance, integration and improvements

These costs look different in each country but range from $20,000 per annum, per country to $300,000, depending on MNO charges.

How is Loop funded?

We have been funded by generous Philanthropists, Government Aid budgets and local project level budgets to date.

We are open to partnerships for innovation grants, joint research, Country specific activities etc.

We seek funds to provide Loop as a Global Public Good.

We have a Sustainability Strategy which involves multiple sources of revenue streams. The profits of which fund the Collective Reporting Mechanism. We are looking for grants/ investment to build and scale further before those can come on line. For example:

Data Analytics and reporting – fee based.

The future of Loop

What does the future look like for Loop?

Loop has big audacious ambitions, but it is a long road to get there. Our goal is to be a global platform with millions of stories and visitors a year.

Loop will always be free to use and we are working to ensure that Loop will be financially self-sustainable. We plan to slowly grow our small, dispersed, global team of diverse professionals.

We want to be contributing to reducing the digital divide and leading by example on data protection and transparency as well as decentralised structures, leadership, and accountable Governance.

We have a lot to learn. We want to be providing a collectively owned tool that adds value. As such the platform will evolve based on insights from all stakeholders, and with strong principles that guide us on this journey.

Is there a plan to develop a mobile app aside from a website?

We are a direct web service because using an App creates a barrier for some people to use – data costs etc.

You can save the website to your phone home screen and have direct access that operates much like an app. Otherwise just look for www.talktoloop.org and navigate to the stories page.

We may create an App to help with using Loop offline for project staff and volunteers in the future.