Loop Annual Report 2022

By Alex Ross, Managing Director of Loop

This is the third annual report for *Our Loop Stichting* (operating as Loop) and covers all of 2022.

For wide dissemination.

Executive Summary

2022 has been a year of consolidation and learning with regards to the Loop programme.

We have been able to evidence a wider variety of use cases using Loop throughout this year than expected. We have learnt about the relative importance of some aspects of the platform that we didn't recognise in the previous year, such as the ability to report in to an independent actor to get around failing reporting systems, and the value that anonymous reporting brings to people who are vulnerable to exploitation or abuse.

We have also learnt a huge amount about being a global tool that is nonetheless owned and adapted locally and how different the uses and approaches are for Loop's deployment in each country. This has helped to reinforce the decentralised, locally-owned structures over time. We still need to learn how to establish clear yet flexible roles and responsibilities to ensure strong ongoing partnerships. We also need to learn how to better articulate this structure and enhance the potential benefits for local actors.

What we have not been able to adequately address however, is how to gain collective buy-in and agreement to use Loop at a systems-wide level – either at response or organisational level across countries. We do see a growing number of individuals within these larger institutions seeing the value of Loop and becoming internal advocates. We also see a growing number of local organisations asking Loop to come to their country.

We remain vulnerable to limited funders and insufficient funds to improve the platform based on learning. However, as will be seen in the case studies in this report, the potential for positive impact of Loop at scale is undeniable.

Contents

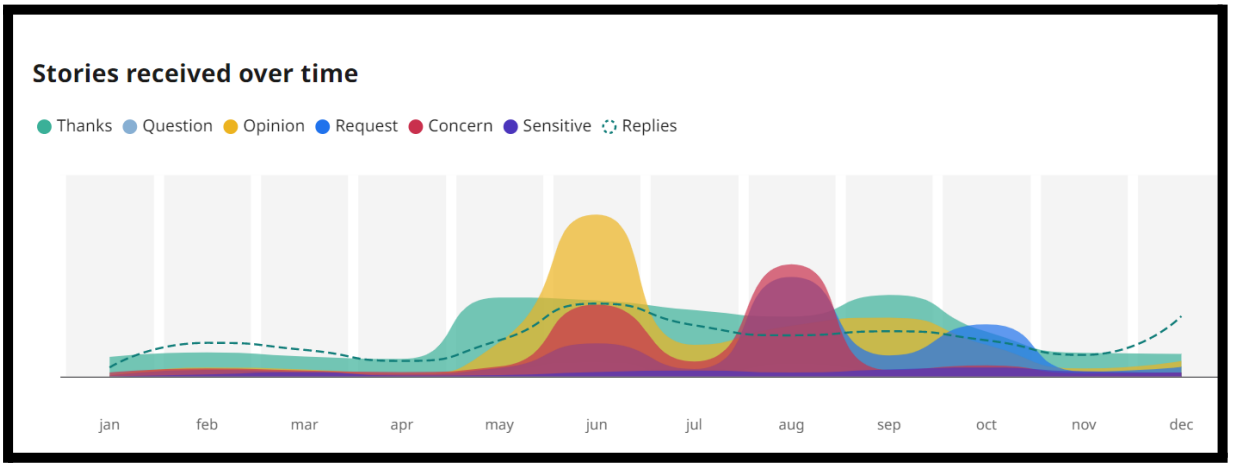
How was Loop used in 2022

Numbers of feedback on Loop

In 2022 Loop received nearly 2,500 individual instances of feedback, constituting the majority of stories to date, with 500 received in the previous, (partial) first year of operation. We also received over 100 Sensitive Reports.

As can be seen below, the majority of feedback was collected between May and October with significant peaks around key activities instigated by partners in Indonesia and the Philippines.

Image A: Stories received on Loop from January 1st to December 30th



The vast majority of the feedback was positive.

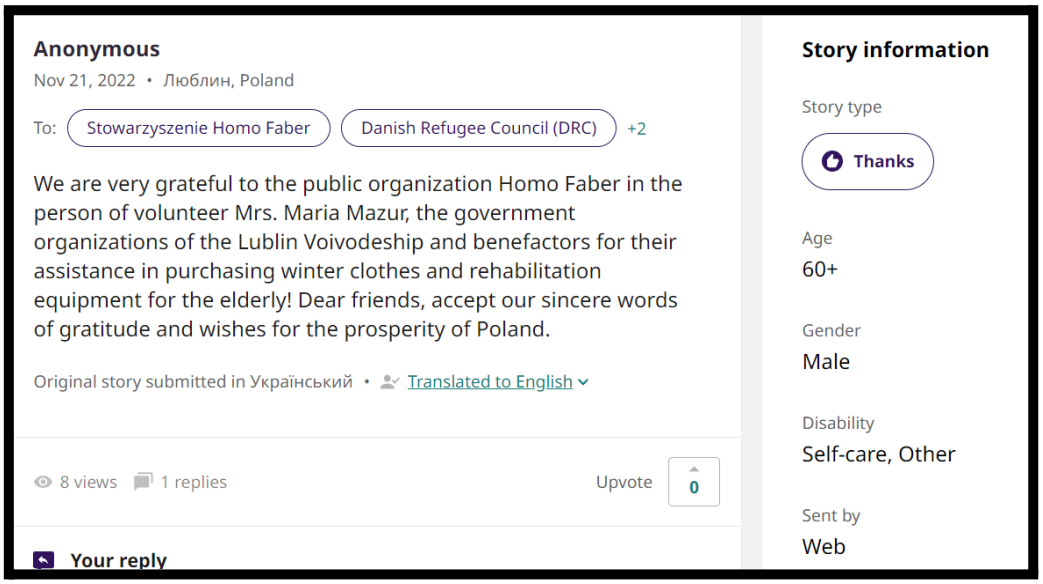
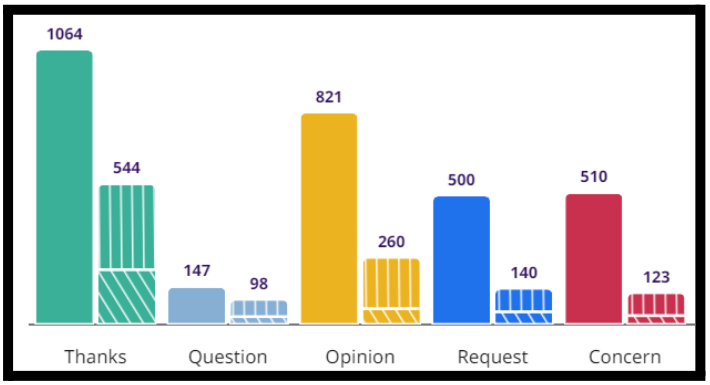


Image B: Type of feedback received on Loop from January to December 2022



We see a low number of replies from organisations back to the authors, across the board. This is even when the data has been used to inform programming and policy work by that organisation, which will positively influence the community.

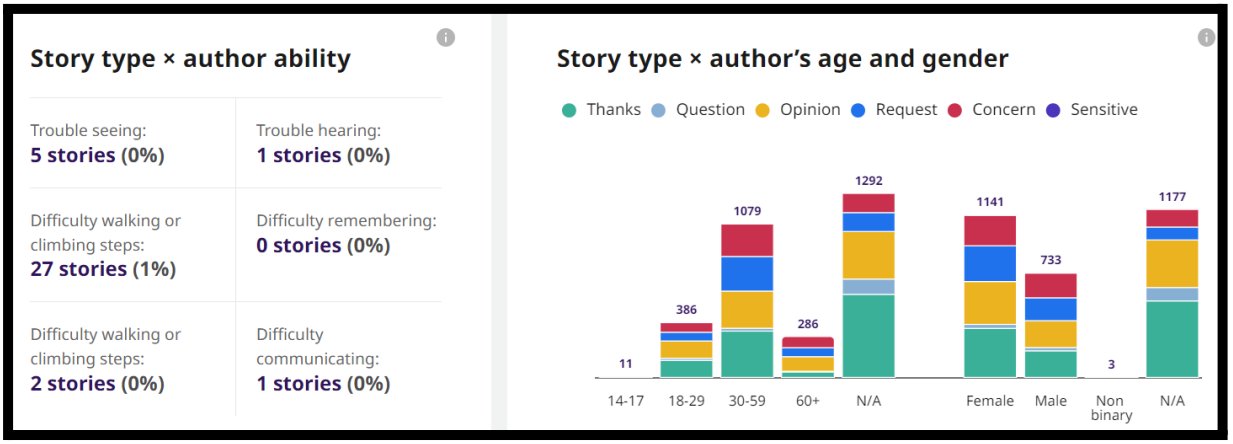
We are still learning about the reasons for this and will be doing some external research on barriers in 2023.

Demographics of people using Loop

As can be seen in Image C below, more than half of the feedback was from women, but only 3 stories were from people self-identifying as being non binary. 36 stories were submitted from someone self-identifying as having a disability.

The majority of stories came from people between the ages of 30 and 59, but 286 were from people over 60 years of age and 11 were from people between the ages of 14 and 17. We would have expected the younger age group of 18 to 29 year olds to be the largest group submitting stories but this is not the case in any country.

Image C: Authors submitting open feedback on Loop by Age, Gender and Disability



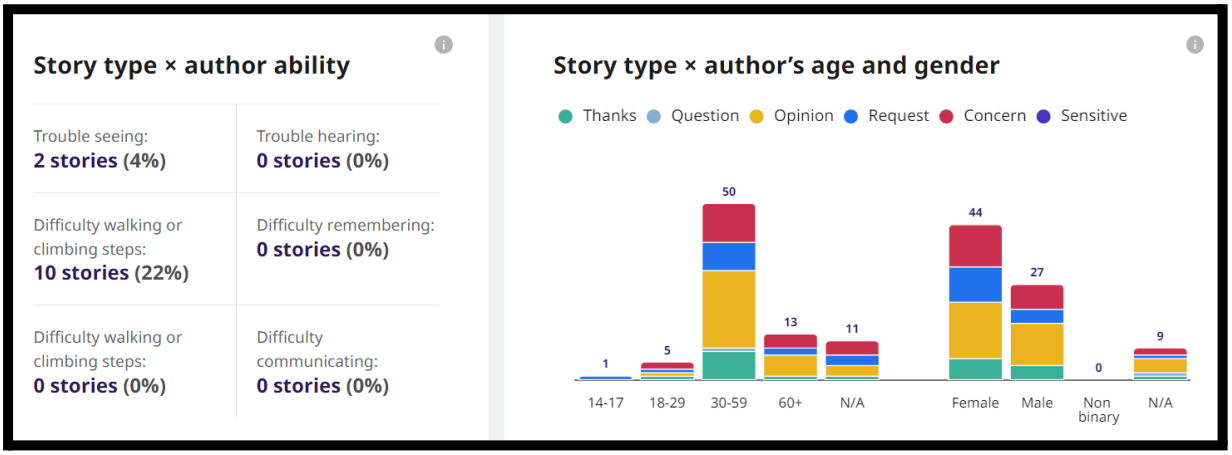
There is still a considerable number of people choosing not to identify their age or gender. For the first 6 months this was primarily due to feedback on Facebook being significantly quicker if the user chose not to complete this information. We then adapted the process to make it just as easy to choose one's gender, disability and age range as it was to skip this step if you prefer not to share this data. We expect the data on gender and age to be more robust in 2023. Preliminary results suggest

that the design changes have had an impact on the resulting data, although without eliminating people choosing not to share their age or gender completely.

We believe some people who are living with a disability prefer not to self-identify on Loop, for various reasons. Country partners suggest that this is because of cultural ideas of disability, definitions etc. Since learning this, we have added in an entire thematic filter on Protection, this includes things like: LGTBQ+, Chronically Ill, Indigenous groups, legal status (refugees etc), low income families etc. The moderators can add these tags to help better understand the data.

When we add the filters *Persons with Disabilities* and *Chronically Ill* we see a much larger number of stories submitted and only a small percentage of these were tagged as being from a person with a disability. Some of the reasons for this are because people submit stories on behalf of others: for example a daughter submitting a story about her chronically ill, elderly parent. Therefore we can see greater numbers with this filter than just looking at the above self identifying data on disability.

Image 4: Stories received from January to December 2022, filtered by the thematic Protection (Persons with Disabilities and Chronically Ill People)



Should Loop moderators tag the story about the subject or about the author of the story? This needs to be assessed further.

We have learnt that organisations prioritise reporting the total numbers and percentages of people reporting into Loop, rather than the differences of Story Type that these demographic groups are making. For example, do more women have concerns than men? Therefore we have decided to simplify the Statistics page Age and Gender graphs to not include Story Type, as this results in duplication of author numbers. For example if I submit a story that is tagged as both a Thanks and a Question my demographic data is represented in both areas. In January we will adjust the logic to only show age and gender, and users can find the breakdown of the types of stories they submit elsewhere on the statistics page by using filters to identify differences in experiences among these groups.

Demographics of people submitting sensitive feedback

Over the course of the year we received over 100 sensitive stories. These all came from the six countries where we currently operate.

52 of the sensitive feedback items were from females, zero from self identifying non binary people and 20 from men. The remaining 18 did not identify their gender.

Two sensitive stories were from 14 - 17 year olds and two from over 60 year olds. There were 15 sensitive stories from 18 - 29 year olds. So once again the 30 - 59 year olds were the majority users of Loop.

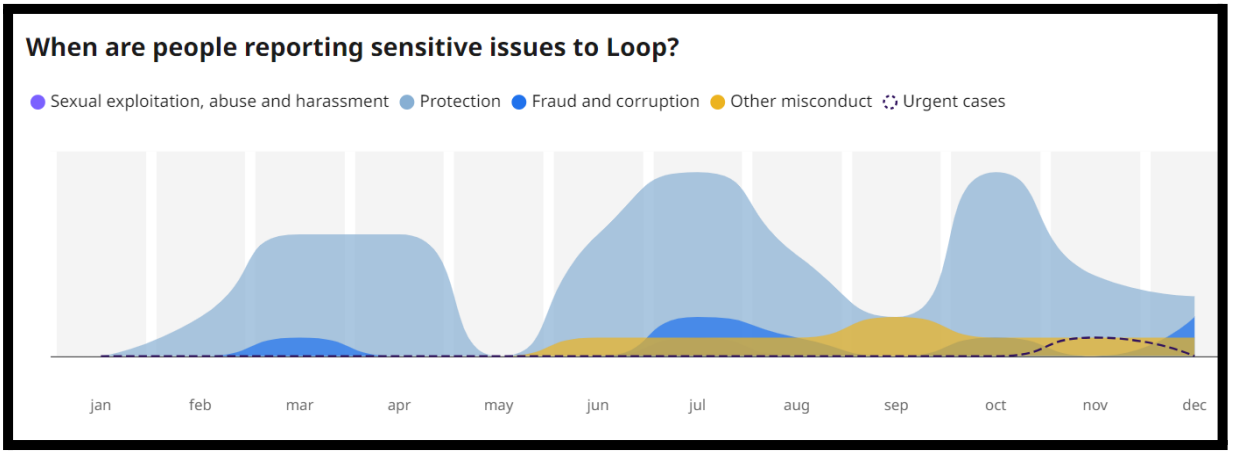
33 sensitive stories were from the survivors themselves and 16 from a witness. Only six came from survivors' friends or relatives. There was only one from a colleague at work. This is surprising considering there were 8 reports of misconduct, thus suggesting that staff reported about issues primarily affecting themselves directly.

The data on sensitive stories about: who reports; age; gender; and disability, is still not showing on the open aggregate and anonymised statistics page. This is to ensure the anonymity of authors; and we have not yet received sufficient Sensitive reports to reach the safe number to open up this data yet, however we continue to collect a wide range of data points.

Types of sensitive reports being received by Loop

We can see in Image 5 below, the types of sensitive issues being reported over the course of the year. The vast majority (50) are protection stories. Seven were for fraud and corruption and eight for misconduct. Surprisingly there was only one sensitive story about Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. There were some others that could qualify but the perpetrator was not identified.

Image 5: Sensitive Feedback Submitted on Loop from January 2022 to December 2022



In the Protection reports there was a high number of sensitive reporting pertaining to both Gender Based Violence (13) and Child Protection (14) from known people – government staff, community members etc.

Overall 17 people were referred for assistance while only 11 of these received it. The large drop is primarily due to the authors not being contactable following the initial 24 hours. We want to work on improving this data analysis further during 2023 to ensure that useful actionable insights can be gained from the open data. We will also continue to improve our processes and trust-building in each country and will build relevant partnerships and continue to map referral pathways.

Overall there were four closed investigations as a result of reporting through Loop this year. These were all managed through mediation and community forms of resolution. Interestingly, as reporting through Loop enables people to remain anonymous, the hosts of Loop were able to instigate discussions which could occur collectively.

For example: communities who were affected by the actions of a large private corporation in their community reported to Loop, who referred the story anonymously to the local authorities. The local representative called a town hall meeting, where everyone was invited to discuss the issue raised and come to a facilitated agreement.

Languages used on Loop

Loop is available in 15 languages and three scripts, that includes:

1) English, Arabic, French and Spanish
2) Nyanja, Bemba, Lozi and Tonga for Zambia
3) Tagalog and Cebuano for the Philippines
4) Bahasa Indonesia for Indonesians
5) Somali Maay and Somali Maxatiri for Somalia
6) Ukrainian and Polish

Throughout 2022, both sensitive reports and open stories were submitted in 12 of the languages on the platform (not in French, Spanish or Arabic). We added on new languages gradually throughout the course of the year based on national requests. For example: we added Cebuano in the Philippines due to an identified need to reach lesser served communities who did not feel confident speaking in Tagalog, the official language. We also added on the two Somali dialects which have been very well received and could add on a third if there is sufficient funding and demand.

We were able to add on Polish and Ukrainian within two weeks, across all digital channels, as soon as the invasion of Ukraine occurred. We are able to add Russian on within a week and have moderators who speak Russian. However, after consultation with local organisations and communities, it was decided that to ensure trust in the platform, we should not yet include Russian and review this on an ongoing basis. We would love to add on Roma but are seeking partnerships in Ukraine and Poland with Roma communities to ensure this is done with them, if helpful.

We see that some people who used Loop said that they speak a specific language, understood the content in that language but then chose to submit their written reply in a different language. For example, some people stated they wanted to engage in the Ukrainian language but then they submitted their written feedback in Russian. Or people from Zambia said they spoke English but submitted their reply in Nyanja. We also saw a lot of stories being submitted in a hybrid of languages - ‘Taglish’ (Tagalog and English) making it hard for any single language to be used as the base for translation.

We experienced this fluidity of languages in most countries. This shows how local people need to be able to choose how they receive information but also how they choose to respond. Our systems are being improved to be able to adapt to all of these use cases. This includes, for example moderators translating and retagging languages for improved machine translation.

We received open stories from nine countries, the six where Loop is present and also from Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan. The stories received from non partnership countries were requests for

support. Loop responded to the authors and suggested where they could go for further information. We expect to see an ongoing low number of stories from other countries as the knowledge of Loop grows. We will continue to be reactive and research possible actors to engage with these stories nationally.

All Sensitive Feedback came from the six countries where we operate.

Which organisations are using Loop?

Loop will only be sustainable and add value to local people if the feedback is heard and responded to, so the number of people and organisations engaging with feedback on Loop is a key metric to track for potential impact.

393 people have signed up to be notified about if a story is submitted. They have a password and can more efficiently submit feedback and replies as well as be notified if any stories are posted on Loop about their organisation.

They are from 202 organisations, registering from over 21 countries. This included primarily:

1) The Loop countries of operation (Poland, Ukraine, Indonesia, Philippines, Somalia and Zambia),
2) Head offices (Holland, United Kingdom, Switzerland) as well as
3) Other countries, such as eight from Kenya, four from South Sudan, Iraq, Yemen etc.

Organisations represented include, some individuals from:

1) The large International Organisations such as UNICEF, UNHCR, OCHA, IFRC etc
2) The large International Non Government Organisations such as Danish Refugee Council, CARE, British Red Cross, CARITAS, Catholic Relief Services, Humanity and Inclusion etc
3) Non program related organisations such as ALNAP, Clear Global and CashCap
4) National organisations across 21 countries including our six operational countries
5) National authorities, specifically in the Philippines, Indonesia and Zambia
6) Local organisations

The majority of these 202 organisations are not active users of Loop but rather signed on to be notified of any stories and to respond reactively.

The vast majority of active users of Loop are local and national organisations in the six countries of operation - primarily the Philippines, Zambia and Poland, with an increasing number in the last few months from Indonesia, Somalia and Ukraine. The uptake is significantly more rapid and positive by organisations closest to affected populations.

We see a small handful of international organisations supporting their local partners to use Loop as their organisation-wide Feedback, Monitoring and Evaluation, Complaints, and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse reporting mechanisms. These INGOs use Loop as one tool in the capacity building activities of local partners. Thus supporting partners to integrate a sustainable, long term, non project specific, tool which also contributes to them being able to meet international due diligence requirements of any other donors or partners.

We do not see INGOs using Loop in any country proactively as one part of their own feedback or reporting mechanisms.

Loop structure at the end of 2022

During 2022 we evolved into a Charitable Franchise structure. This means that networks of local organisations own Loop through Steering Committees and are hosted by a national organisation in each country. The small, dispersed global team manages the technology improvements as requested by local users as well as the quality and consistency of the user experience (Open and Sensitive feedback).

We are currently in six countries (Zambia, Somalia, Philippines, Indonesia, Ukraine and Poland) and hosted by five organisations (Zambian Governance Foundation, Centre for Peace and Democracy Somalia, ECOWEB Philippines, Predikt Indonesia, Elite Crew for Ukraine and Poland).

We have two active, functioning and integrated Steering groups (Philippines and Indonesia) and two more are being established (Poland and Zambia). It is important that the host and steering group/ franchise approach is adapted and led by local actors in the national ecosystem and will evolve over time.

We are being approached by other organisations and actors in different countries to discuss how to bring Loop to their country.

What evidence exists of Loop's potential for impact and use?

While the above analysis is interesting to see the growth and changes over the last year, the most important element is what is the impact, or evidence of potential Impact?

The variety of use cases and local level impact as a result of using Loop has been significant in 2022. It has been more varied and interesting than expected. We have built up evidence that Loop is being used by local people:

1) to get services they need
2) to report where services are not being delivered and
3) to report safely about abuse, fraud and misconduct

We can see evidence that this information has been used by organisations to:

1) to respond to people with relevant and timely information
2) to course-correct implementation plans
3) to celebrate their successes and impact
4) to keep people safe by informing them of an independent anonymous reporting mechanism
5) to use the data to inform policy and
6) to get additional funding

We do not yet have evidence of donors or policy influencers using Loop to inform their own work,nor of researchers using trends in Loop to inform further analysis or research. This is primarily due to a lack of scale.

We have not yet been able to evidence large scale actors deploying Loop for their own purposes or collectively and as such the data is not impacting the systems level approach or thinking. We had hoped to be adopted or 'approved' as a tool by Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)/ Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) or Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) groups but this has not yet occurred in any country. Even though we have been receiving a lot of Gender Based Violence reports we have also not yet been adopted by key actors as a mechanism that they are rolling out as part of their action plan. However, we have been referenced and included on lists of possible feedback and reporting mechanisms by numerous actors including some government authorities.

Below is an outline of what we do have evidence for and also what we have learnt.

Learning 1: We have evidence that Loop can be used to give early warning data for a sudden onset crisis and continue to be used throughout the disaster management life cycle.

We can see that in a sudden-onset climate-related crisis, Loop enabled populations to use a reporting mechanism throughout the life cycle of the crisis, helping them to trust the platform, and to get direct responses to their calls for help and requests for provision of basic needs.

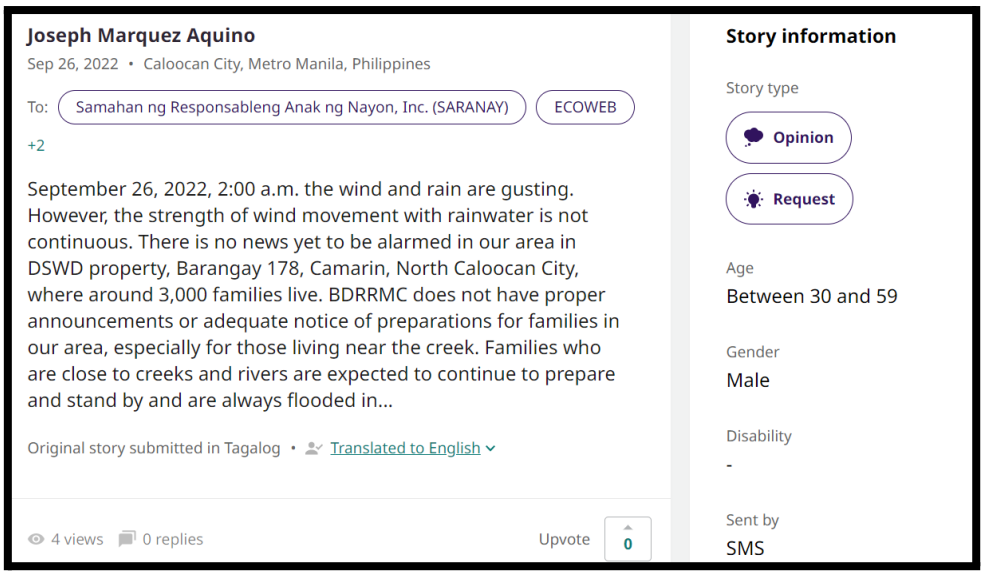
The resulting data showed the patterns of the needs changing over time by location and potentially population type (elderly people had additional needs in the Philippines and children in Indonesia). This shows that Loop can offer value before, during and after a crisis, thus having impact at the human to human level.

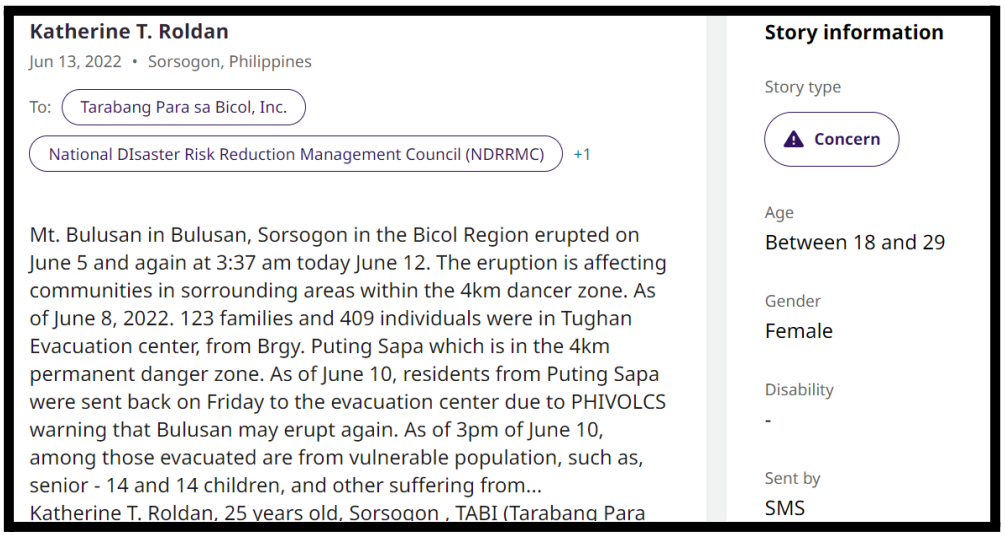
The secondary benefit is the use of the patterns of the resulting data to be openly available for project adaptations, funding decisions and to inform policy for future crises. All of which has been evidenced this year:

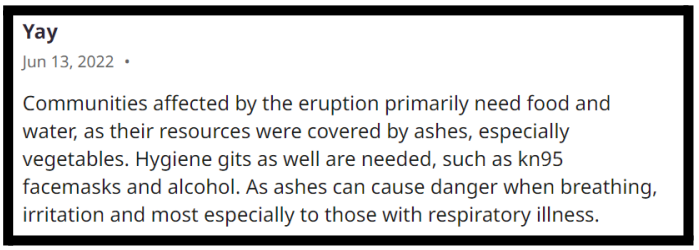
Case Study 1: Early Warning in Sudden Onset Climate Crisis. Typhoons in the Philippines.

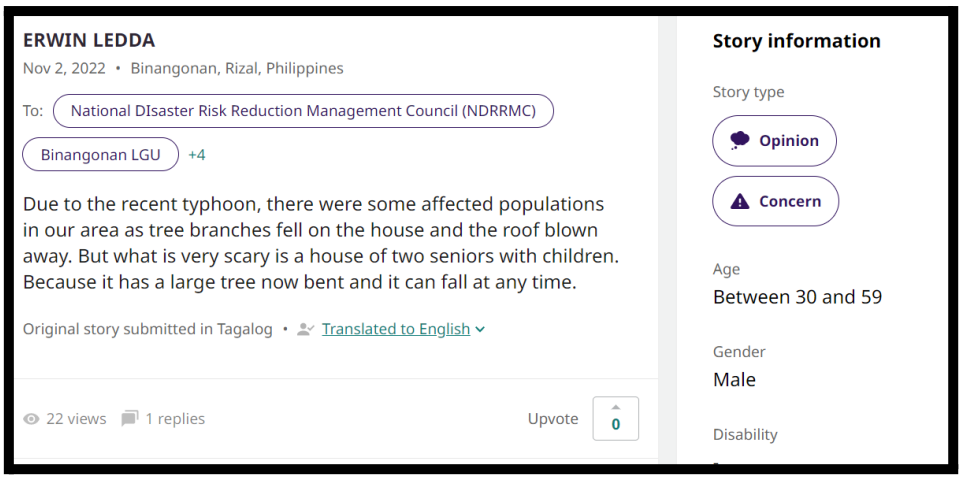
In the Philippines, Loop was used by the local authorities and Disaster Response Committees to warn people, on the public platform, about the impending cyclones, volcanic eruptions and storms.

In the communities where Loop was used during the sudden onset crisis, we also see it continues to be used to share updates and information about where people in need were located and what help they required in real time. The data was translated and sent into the Emergency Response Data Centre and integrated with other information sources.


Joseph Marquez Aquino
Sep 26, 2022 • Caloocan City, Metro Manila, Philippines
To: Samahan ng Responsableng Anak ng Nayon, Inc. (SARANAY) ECOWEB
+2
September 26, 2022, 2:00 a.m. the wind and rain are gusting. However, the strength of wind movement with rainwater is not continuous. There is no news yet to be alarmed in our area in DSWD property, Barangay 178, Camarin, North Caloocan City, where around 3,000 families live. BDRRMC does not have proper announcements or adequate notice of preparations for families in our area, especially for those living near the creek. Families who are close to creeks and rivers are expected to continue to prepare and stand by and are always flooded in...
Original story submitted in Tagalog • Translated to English
4 views 0 replies
Upvote 0
Story information
Story type
Opinion
Request
Age
Between 30 and 59
Gender
Male
Disability
-
Sent by
SMS


Katherine T. Roldan
Jun 13, 2022 • Sorsogon, Philippines
To: Tarabang Para sa Bicol, Inc.
National DIsaster Risk Reduction Management Council (NDRRMC) +1
Mt. Bulusan in Bulusan, Sorsogon in the Bicol Region erupted on June 5 and again at 3:37 am today June 12. The eruption is affecting communities in sorrounding areas within the 4km dancer zone. As of June 8, 2022. 123 families and 409 individuals were in Tughan Evacuation center, from Brgy. Puting Sapa which is in the 4km permanent danger zone. As of June 10, residents from Puting Sapa were sent back on Friday to the evacuation center due to PHIVOLCS warning that Bulusan may erupt again. As of 3pm of June 10, among those evacuated are from vulnerable population, such as, senior - 14 and 14 children, and other suffering from...
Katherine T. Roldan, 25 years old, Sorsogon , TABI (Tarabang Para
Story information
Story type
Concern
Age
Between 18 and 29
Gender
Female
Disability
-
Sent by
SMS

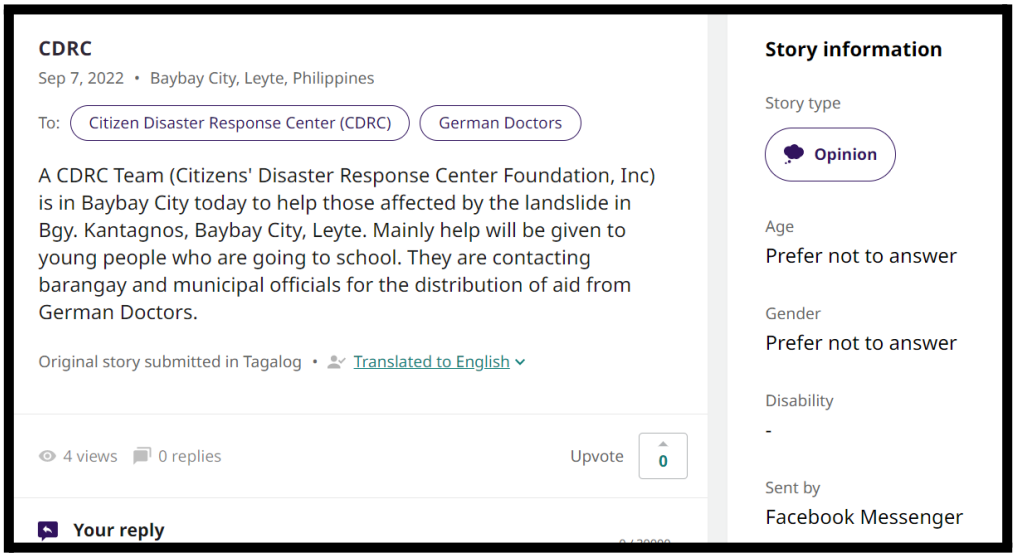

Yay
Jun 13, 2022 •
Communities affected by the eruption primarily need food and water, as their resources were covered by ashes, especially vegetables. Hygiene gits as well are needed, such as kn95 facemasks and alcohol. As ashes can cause danger when breathing, irritation and most especially to those with respiratory illness.

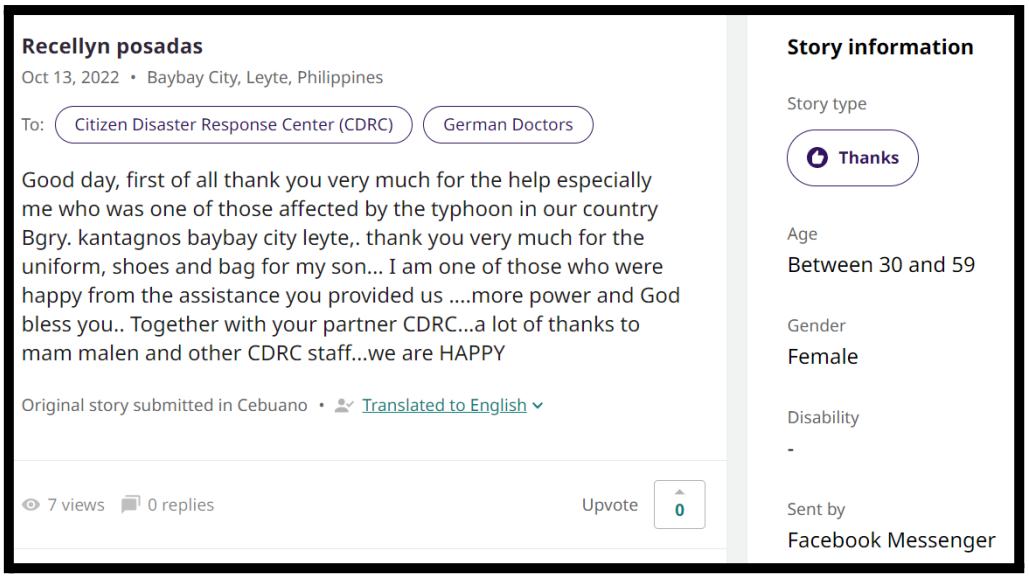


Loop was first used in the Philippines for Typhoon Rai, where a large population was affected. After this first experience it was then better understood and more efficiently integrated into the Philippines National Disaster Risk Management Council's Emergency Response Framework but also the Data Management Systems. This meant that later in the year it was also activated for the volcanic eruption and for two subsequent cyclones that hit different parts of the country.

Case Study 1b. Use of one feedback mechanism throughout the full Emergency Response Cycle - Typhoons in the Philippines

After being used for early warning and needs identification phases of the crisis in some communities, Loop was then used by the same communities to report their gratitude for the outpouring of help and to identify ongoing unmet needs through the response and into the recovery phase. We also saw people using it later for unrelated events such as election preparedness or the impact of COVID.

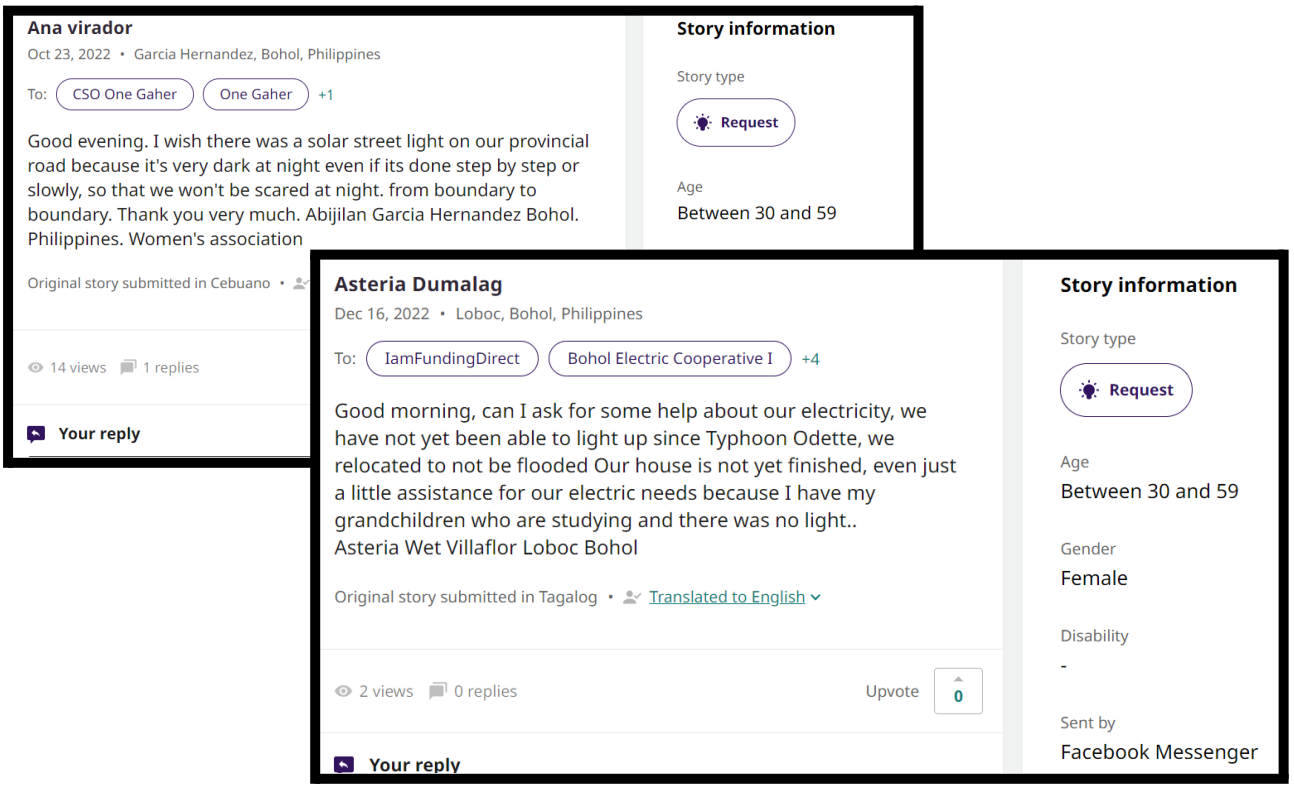




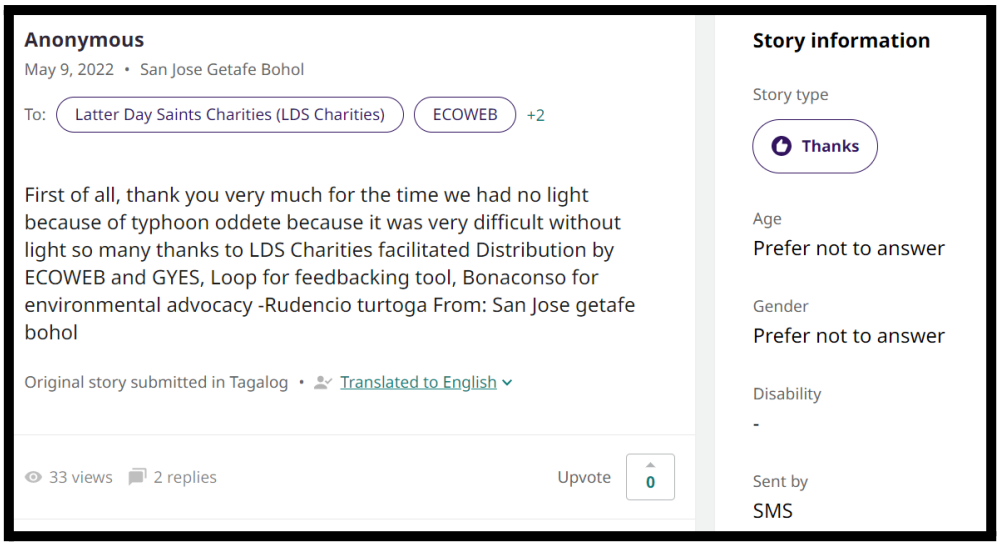
This pattern continued through into recovery phases where communities' needs and priorities changed and the patterns of this data could be seen by organisations using Loop. Organisations took this data, both qualitative and quantitative, to seek additional funds to deliver the new emerging needs.

For example, after shelters were built in the Philippines people then asked for lighting because the electricity was still not connected. ECOWEB raised funds and distributed solar lighting. We can see that the organisations and donors that were responsive are recognised for this in the feedback directly.

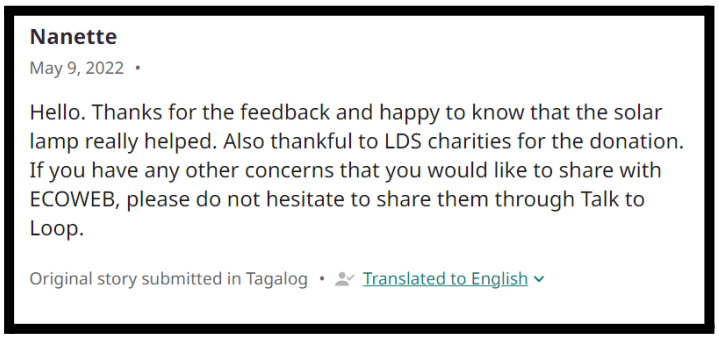
Feedback



Feedback on delivered services:



Reply from Charity



What we learnt from using Loop in a sudden onset crisis

We learnt that during the first sudden onset response where Loop was deployed – Typhoon Rai in the Philippines – there were issues with some populations not having internet connectivity and therefore not being able to use Loop or any other communications tool to report.

Some found workarounds, including typing in the full story to WhatsApp, instead of following the full flow. Then when they got internet connectivity the message was sent to Loop. Our moderators were able to pick this up and post the story anyway. We made a small adaptation to make this workaround more effective. We also have a technology solution – to develop an App so that Loop can be used offline and messages sent when connected. This can be built in the future when funding permits.

We found younger people reporting on behalf of older family members who felt less digitally literate. As a result in the Philippines and in the Ukraine regional response, we have trained some volunteers who understand the use of Loop, can encourage others to use it and can help them to input their feedback if needed. These volunteers are not involved in moderation but rather helping to sensitise community members to the opportunity that Loop provides and helping them to learn about how to use it effectively themselves on an ongoing basis.

In the Philippines, all of the Loop moderators were living in the location which was impacted by the typhoon. Their families and homes were badly affected. We now have a policy to have moderators located in different parts of a country and plan to develop a way to onboard volunteers to manage feedback, which is not tagged as sensitive or a complaint, to be able to scale up rapidly in a crisis.

In Indonesia we learnt that a moderator could moderate up to 70 stories in one day. There were delays compared to some contexts due to the lack of machine translation services and the long and complex feedback being received. While more efficient than a call centre, we will continue to monitor the average moderation time it takes in different contexts and find ways to increase efficiencies.

We also learnt that while organisations may not reply directly to authors through Loop, they do sometimes take the data and use it to improve programs and activities. We want to find ways to encourage organisations to respond, easily and efficiently to positively reinforce those who give feedback and to encourage the closing of the feedback loop directly, thus valuing local people's agency and experience.

In the future, as Loop scales, we would hope to see a greater use of Loop by local people, a greater number of replies to feedback by organisations and authorities and therefore a wider referencing of the more statistically viable data to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and ultimately impact of Aid.

Learning 2. We have preliminary evidence that Loop can be used as an additional data point for early warnings in a complex, slow onset context of protracted conflict.

Food insecurity in complex protracted conflict, plagued by worsening climate crises, is always slow onset. Local people feel their own hunger, thirst and the impact on their livestock, long before any international calls for funding or support occurs, let alone before meeting any criteria for declaring a 'famine'.

Hearing from local people in their own words, and seeing the patterns, locations and scale of the need could be one aspect to contribute to an early warning system. This first hand qualitative and quantitative data could also be used to build wider international attention and understanding by centering local people's authentic voices.

Case study 2. Early Warning in Complex, Slow onset Environment: Drought in Somalia

During our short term prototyping session in Somalia in 2021 we received approximately 50 stories. The vast majority were about food and water shortages. Over 20% had the words 'thirsty' or 'hungry' in them.

Image Six: Somalia, October 2021, Stories by Thematic Area

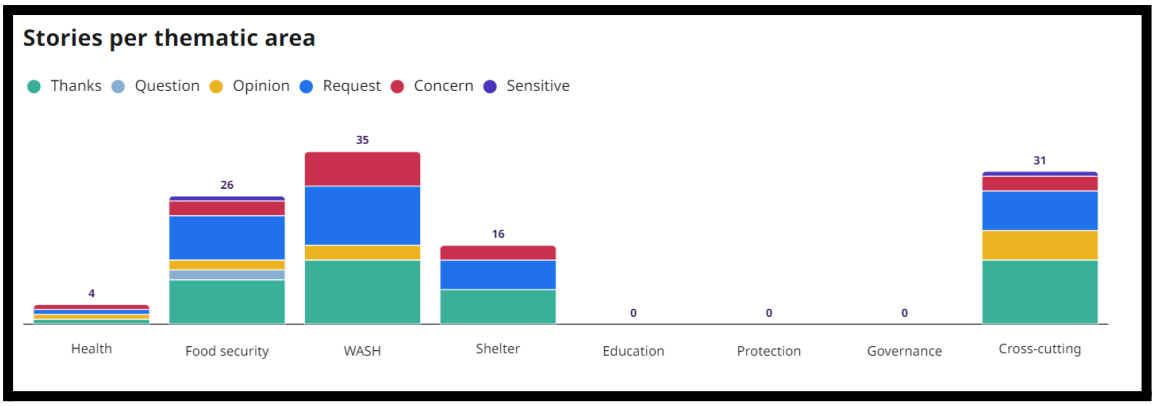
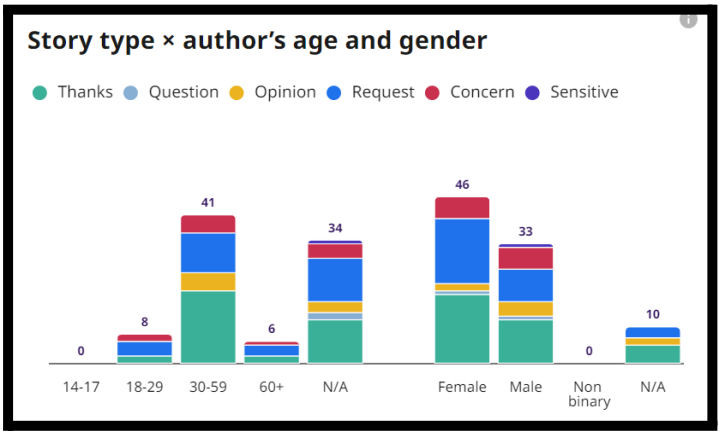


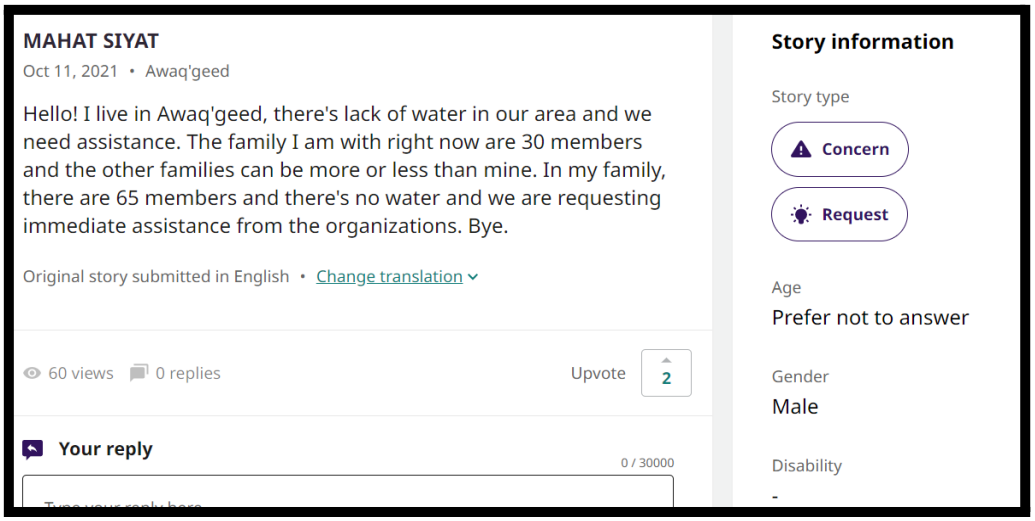
Image Seven: Somalia, October 2021, Stories by Author's Age and Gender

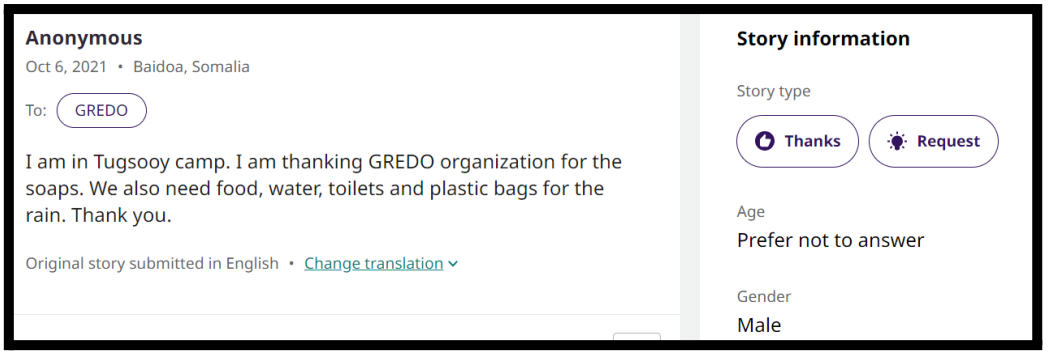


Interestingly a larger percentage of feedback came from women between the ages of 30 and 59. We had expected young men to be the early adopters and have increased access to new technology based approaches.

No-one self-identified as having a disability although we know some did.

In Somalia and in Ukraine we find that the vast majority of stories are about more than one person. The qualitative data brings the situation to life and is equally useful in funding, program design and course correction activities:





In February of the following year a Humanitarian Response was launched in Somalia with thousands of children, men and women as well as their livestock already perished. Now in November 2022, more than a year later, it is being declared as a famine-like regional crisis, with more than 755,000 people internally displaced in Somalia because of the severe drought this year and the number of people facing crisis hunger levels in Somalia reaching 7 million. A total of 397,342 children were admitted for treatment of severe acute wasting in 2022 and 1,625,874 people received emergency water.

While the Loop early warning is not a statistically significant analysis, the potential use of this first hand data, at scale, across a slow onset crisis is evident.

What we learnt from using Loop in a slow onset, complex crisis

Often in a slow onset crisis the needs greatly outweigh the ability to meet these needs. We can see this in the stories submitted in Somalia where people thank the NGO for their support and then go on to request additional items. We learnt that this does not portray poorly on the implementing or tagged organisation. Local people are aware of the funding issues, lack of resources and complex decision making processes. But they do want their needs to be logged, heard and to influence decision making. They also have the right to be responded to and informed of any relevant information.

We see that some organisations are reticent to sensitise local populations about Loop in fear that they will be overwhelmed with messages and requests for support. There is a fear of raising expectations. However, as Loop is an independent collective mechanism encouraging people to report, helps to build data for future funding proposals, requests for greater investment, adjustments to existing development activities and to get a sense of the changing needs over time. As Loop is a collective mechanism, it is not the sole responsibility of one organisation to respond to the needs reflected in the feedback. In 2023, we hope to explore why organisations are not yet replying at greater scale and how to help improve this.

In 2022, we also learnt that integrating Loop into existing well-established long term humanitarian response structures, even when there is an acknowledged gap in Accountability to Affected Populations, has not yet been achieved. Loop has engaged in AAP/CEA and PSEA cluster and coordination meetings. Being independent of multilateral actors, being new and as yet not sufficiently proven or understood, has been a barrier to getting greater scale than expected in both Somalia and the Ukraine regional response.

In Poland, the humanitarian response systems were not well established, including not having any coordinated SEA or Feedback mechanisms in place. In the initial coordination meetings on AAP, INGOs asked *"if we can't use a collective common mechanism now, then when can we?"*. Discussions around organisations' responsibility for managing their own accountability and questions about our Data Privacy Policy resulted in neither Loop, nor any other collective reporting mechanism, being broadly adopted. Now, a year later there is 'learning' that duplicate and confusing feedback mechanisms and reporting systems have been established.

In 2023 we hope to continue to share information about the value of using Loop as a collective mechanism to help address the many gaps and issues with existing approaches. We will also work to build trust in, and improvements to, the platform, so that it will be adopted more broadly to get greater scale and impact in a number of slow onset complex crises.

Learning 3. We have evidence that technology enables vulnerable populations to report highly sensitive information due to the anonymity it enables and that this information can be acted on.

We know that face to face feedback is generally the preferred feedback mechanism for about 70% of the population. However, in 2022 we learned that some feedback will only be shared if the author trusts that they can remain entirely anonymous and the data can be one part of an aggregated data set.

It is interesting to learn that technology enables a unique channel to provide this high level of anonymity resulting in significant positive implications. Anonymous reporting addresses one the largest barriers to reporting where large power imbalances exist. These situations are abundant in humanitarian crises. We know that survivors decide not to report because that will put them at risk of being further victimised. For example: being removed from a beneficiary list, being shamed or "defouled" and kicked out of their community, victimised or further blamed in work environments.

We can see in the Sensitive Reporting that so far 32 local, vulnerable people have chosen to report into an independent organisation anonymously, about very serious issues from every country where we are available. Thus Loop is providing a safe route around these existing barriers.

Case study 3: Anonymous Reporting: Somalia and Zambia

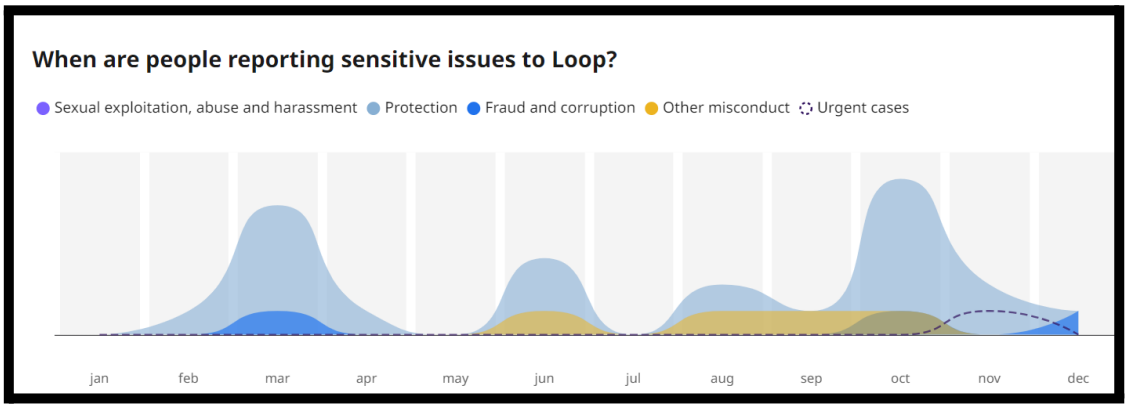
In the Loop design sessions, women in Somalia and LGBQT+ communities and survivors of assault in Zambia, said that while some people may have good intentions and work for an organisation that says they want to help, trusting that person means putting their and their families' lives in someone else's hands. Thus they often decide that it is too dangerous to speak to the staff member or even risk them recognizing their voice through a hotline.

The aggregate, anonymised data received as a sensitive story during 2022, while still low in numbers, shows a few patterns:

People reporting in Zambia choose not to share any information, name, age, gender etc when they report. Reports are about Protection, including Gender Based Violence and Child Protection issues perpetrated primarily by Government Authorities or community members, including family.

Survivors who chose to report through Loop did not expect any accountability for the crimes committed against them but they did report to get assistance or safety when other mechanisms were not trusted, not working or failing them (promised action not happening).

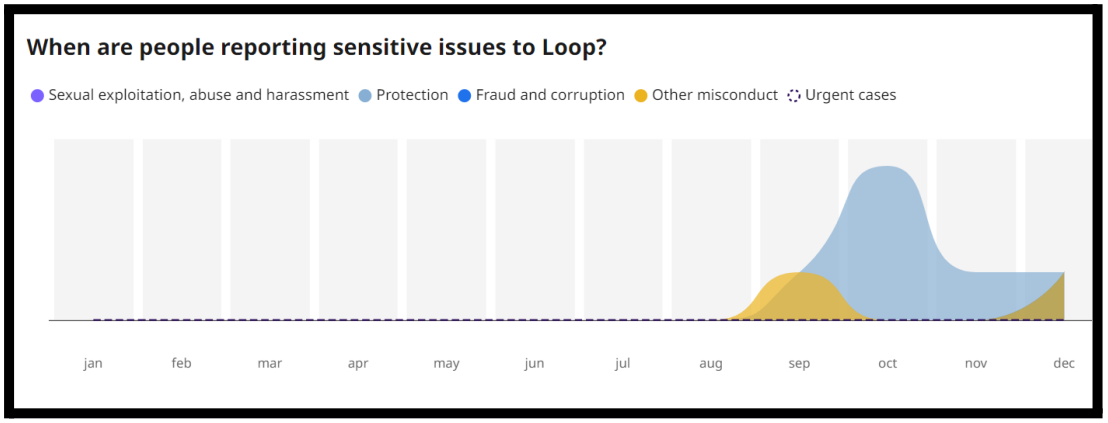
Image Eight: Sensitive Reports from Zambia in 2022



43 Sensitive reports came into Loop in 2022 in Zambia. There was a steady flow of reporting throughout the year but peaks tended to occur after awareness raising sessions were delivered on both the right to report and how to use Loop.

Surprisingly, only days after launching Loop in Somalia in September, serious sensitive stories from vulnerable groups were received. We saw disabled and single headed household women in Somalia reporting about sexual abuse on Loop and sharing their contact information as well as consenting to be referred for assistance.

Image Nine: Sensitive Reports from Somalia in 2022



We have been working successfully with National Organisations in Somalia who have promptly supported referrals for assistance.

Learning 4: We have evidence that an Independent actor allows people to get around systems which are failing them.

We have multiple examples where people have used Loop to get around a system which is failing them. For example, a reporting mechanism that is not being answered, a reporting channel which is not trusted due to the risk of further harm, a reporting mechanism which was started but nothing further happened, or where no existing safe reporting mechanism is available, known or accessible for the author. This has been a common element in the sensitive reports to date, across all countries and for reports about the private sector, public authorities, charities and employers.

For example: Staff who feel like the organisation they are working for is failing them and they do not know how to report safely without fear of retribution, have reported through Loop and we have been able to give information about possible options for them, includind organisations which might be able to offer support.

For example: Reports of suspected human trafficking rings, fraudulent acts of police, beneficiary list manipulation etc, have all been reported to Loop. We have reported these concerns, and escalated them where appropriate, at all times protecting the identity and respecting the wishes of the survivor or author of the story. Those actors to whom the individual should have been able to report, were not trusted or in some way were blocking the active management of the case. In all cases the author of the report had tried other mechanisms, had been threatened and nearly always were frightened. The anonymity of the technology and the independence of Loop was critical in these people using Loop and in the eventual conclusion of the case.

In many of the examples Loop experienced in 2022, we were able to help the survivor(s) get the support that was needed. However in some situations the system was too large or entrenched and our data was not yet able to result in the appropriate actions being taken. We see that this could change with time.

What we are learning about the role of an independent actor to create safer responses

Some organisations in the sector are worried about 'bad actors' saying falsehoods about their organisation or their work. Loop has inbuilt mechanisms to identify some such reports. We also do not share the details of the organisation or sensitive reports publicly.

Based on our learnings this year, we worry more about bad actors within the organisations using these excuses to protect their organisation over the wellbeing of local people or their staff. Fraud and abuse exists everywhere, in every organisation. To root it out people need options and workarounds to ensure issues are identified and addressed. Independent collective mechanisms will help to create a system that doesn't protect the wrong people.

At a very small scale we are seeing increased reporting of misconduct from staff after they have received training about Loop and SEAH. Thus making them more likely to use Loop to report misconduct within their organisation. The information can be passed on anonymously, thus protecting the complainant. This makes them less of a Whistleblower and more finding a quiet solution around perceived barriers, to an appropriate and responsive actor.

We are also seeing a pattern where those responsible organisations, actively promoting Loop as a safe reporting mechanism, are not the ones getting reports back about their own programs and staff but are rather contributing to a safer, more accountable environment. We see these same communities instead submitting sensitive, anonymised reports about other actors who may not be investing in feedback and safe reporting measures to the same degree. Thus organisations promoting the use of Loop appear to be contributing to a safer response/ environment more broadly.

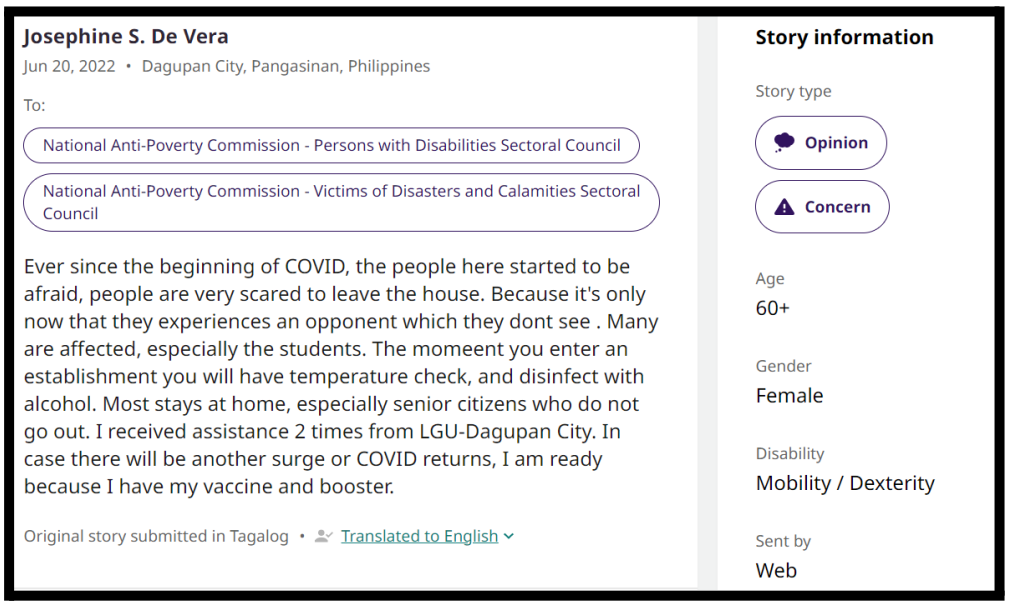
Some organisations are concerned about whether we can manage the authentication of authors and potential spam. Loop was tested on a number of occasions during 2022 and our multiple layers were able to stop misinformation and spam from infiltrating the platform - technology fixes, moderators, etc. This included duplicate feedback, election campaigning and misinformation.

Learning 5. We have evidence that technology enables aggregate data to identify clusters of red flags around key issues. This data can then be acted on or used to inform Policy and Funding decisions.

We have evidence of the aggregate data of very minimal and often vague information being shared by multiple, unrelated people. When this data is collated through an anonymous, open platform, the resulting information results in clusters of red flags which can then be acted on by leadership or technical specialists, thus contributing to a safer response.

Case Study 4: Aggregate Anonymous Reporting: Philippines

The national government used Loop to gather information from people across the Philippines about the COVID response to help inform a COVID People's Response Plan going forward. The information shared by the communities was quite consistent and reinforced data on the scale of the COVID outbreak in different geographic areas.



However, an unplanned outcome was that in one geographic area there was a cluster of reporting, by different authors, of vague accusations of beneficiary list manipulation. Each story did not name a perpetrator, and did not have sufficient detail to follow up on, it on its own. However, collectively there was enough independent information for national authorities to decide to investigate the specific office further. In a second location, there was a pattern of anonymised reporting of child sexual abuse, which was also followed up by specialists.

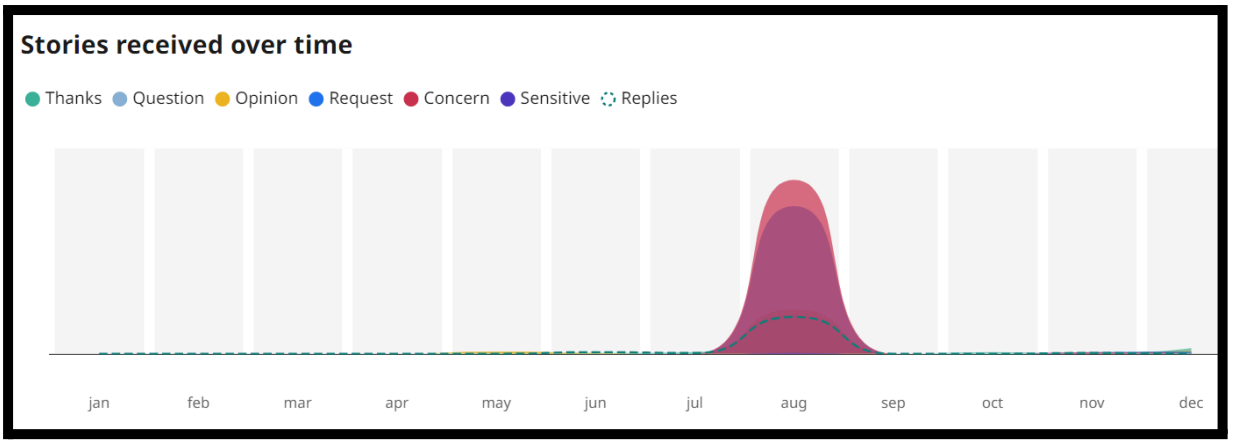
Resulting aggregate data can also be used to influence policy, funding and program decisions. We have seen that the clustering of data can show complex links between outputs and impact and this analysis can be used to influence policy:

Case Study 5: Aggregate Data and Policy Influencing: Indonesia

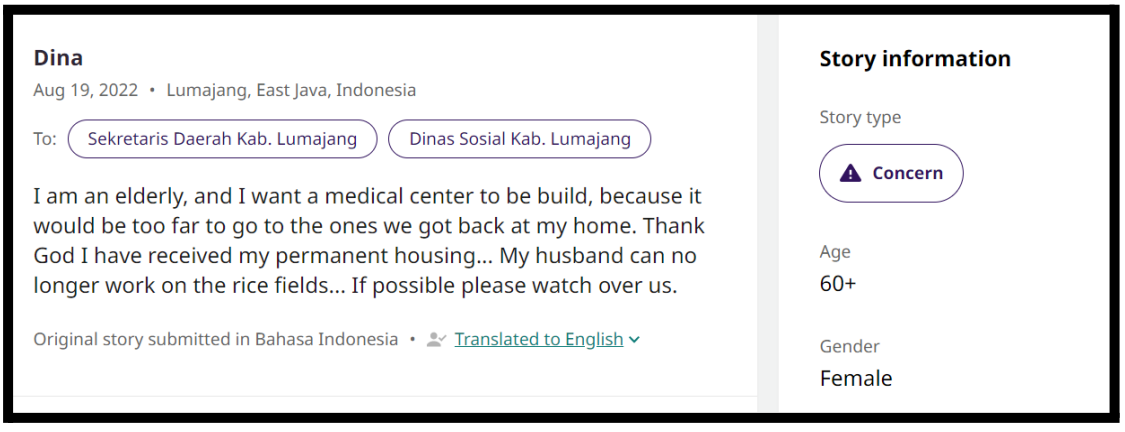
Following the Indonesian Lumajang Volcanic Eruption people were displaced and new housing was provided. During a learning session at the end of the project, Loop was used as a data collection mechanism.

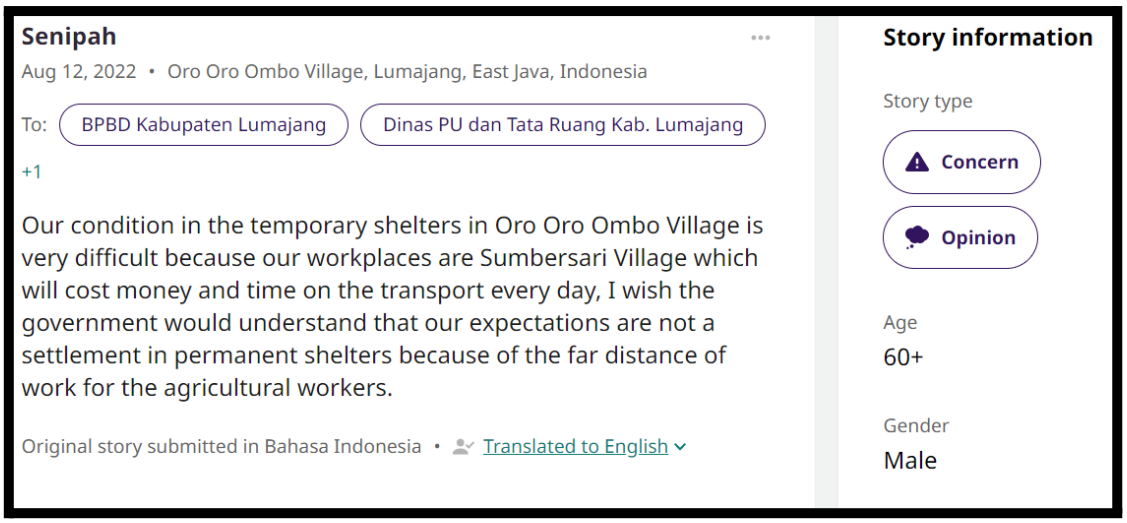
From this assessment there was a strong finding (427 responses of the 2,000 households affected population) that while the houses were beautifully built and met the stated specifications, they were often not used because the displaced populations could not live in them. The aggregate data showed that the majority of the feedback was a Concern or a Request for further support.

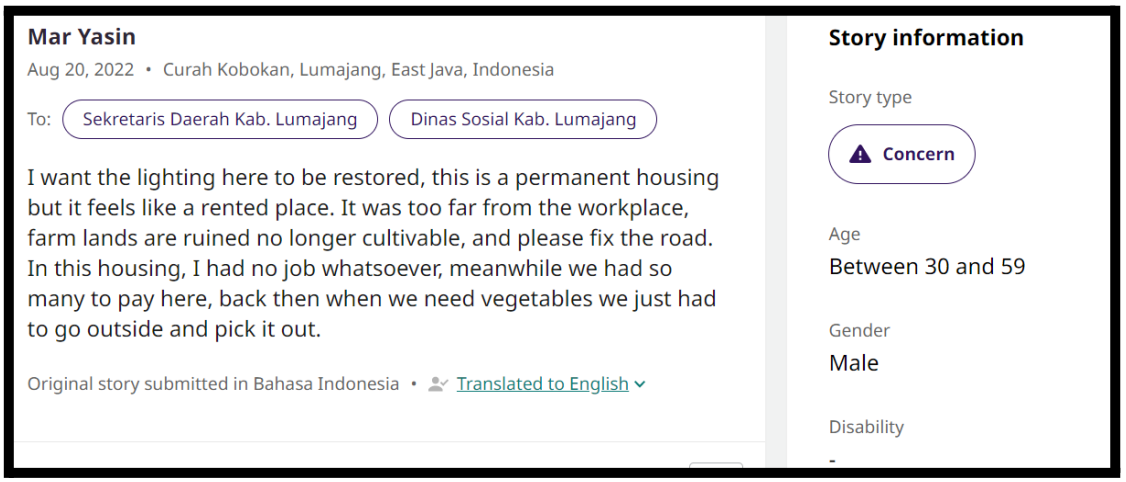
Image Ten: Stories on Loop from Indonesia Emergency Response



The qualitative data corroborates this and clearly shows that the area to which they were relocated was so far away from employment opportunities, their farmland and even schools or shops that some people chose not to live in them. While the elderly and disabled became more isolated, more dependent on the state and more vulnerable long term as a result of the relocation.







This data was used by a research company and presented to the Government Agencies After Action Review of the Emergency Response. While project reporting showed sufficient and well built houses these findings give a nuanced view of the attributed impact of this housing.

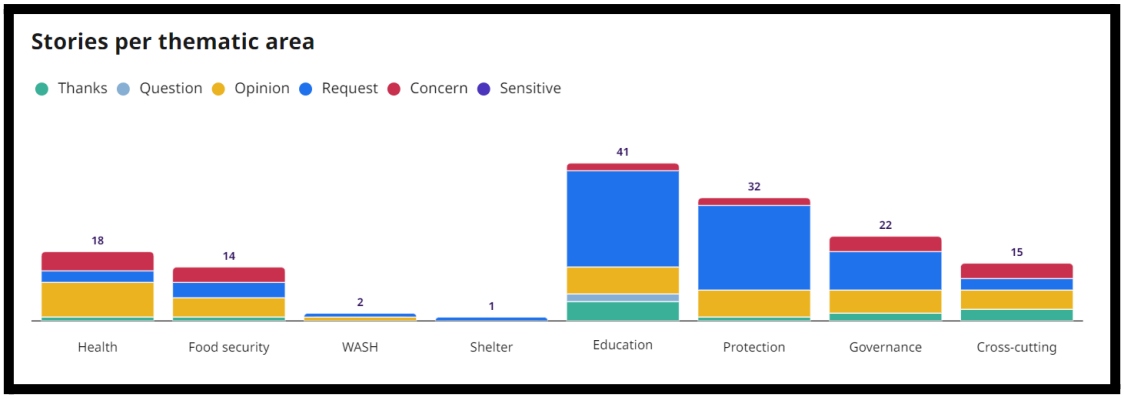
As a result, a policy paper is being written with recommendations on Government decision making processes when considering relocation of communities.

In this case study we see that the aggregate data is more powerful than organisation specific information about the quality of the shelters taken on its own. Giving people the freedom to talk about their priorities and to an independent actor (non-state), resulted in open discussion of the findings and agreement on ongoing support to the affected communities as well as learning for future displaced populations.

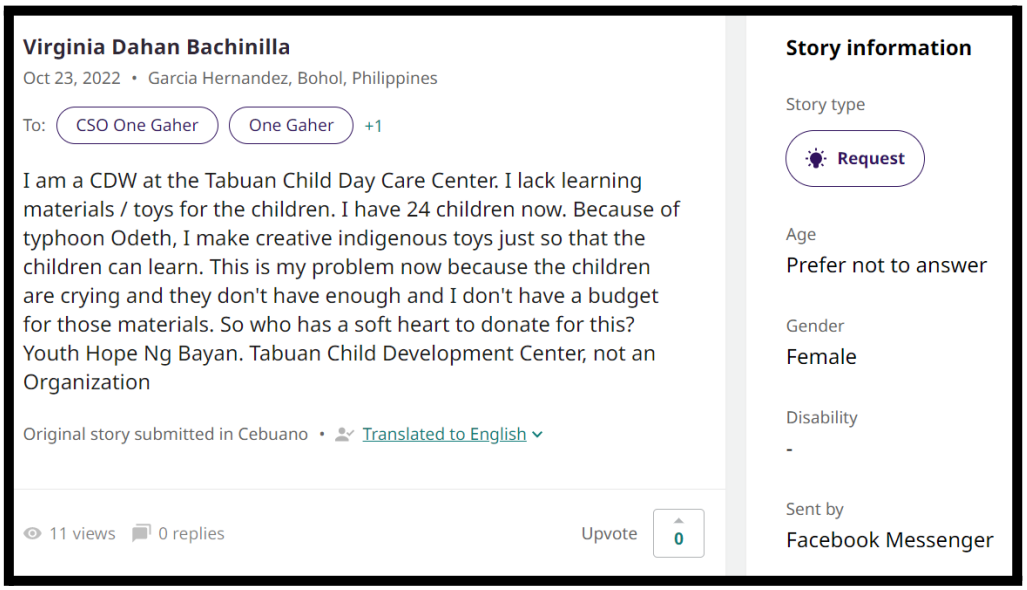
Case Study 6: Aggregate Data to seek additional funding: Philippines

In the Philippines one local government unit (LGU Garcia Hernandez) has used Loop as a key aspect of their community engagement campaign. They have invited all CSOs in their district to use Loop to gather feedback on their needs and the services they are offering. The LGU reviews the Loop reports to analyse the data in an open transparent way on an ongoing basis.

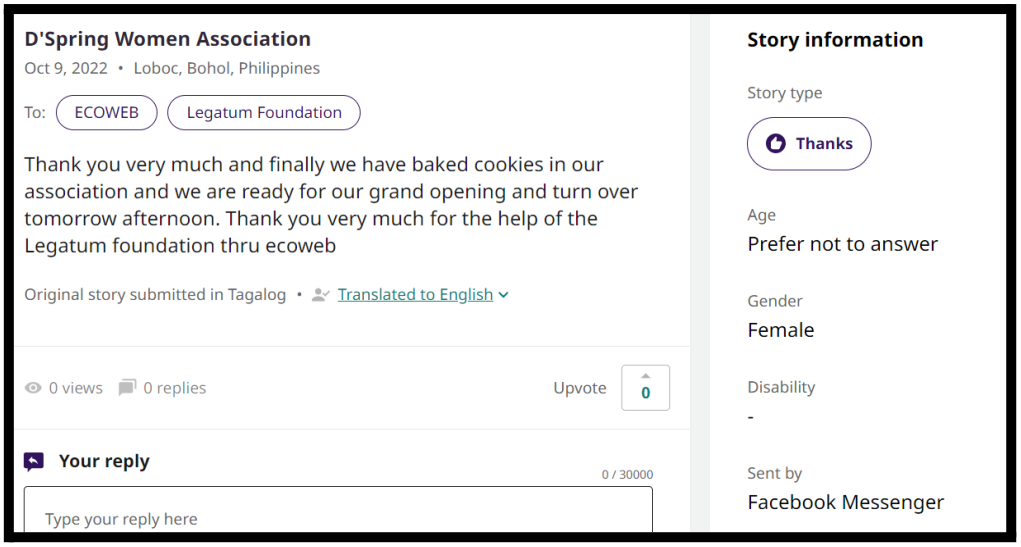
Image Eleven: Philippines October



The feedback showed a majority of needs were from schools and preschools requesting additional learning resources to help children in their transition back to school post COVID. As a result of reporting on Loop, the LGU has funded some centres and the Latter Day Saints Charity, who also saw the feedback on Loop, is reviewing proposals to do the same.



Similarly the Spring Women's Association responded to calls for support on Loop and coordinated with other NGOs to get additional funding to deliver Shelters and to rehabilitate a Women's livelihoods bakery that was affected by the Typhoon.



Hopefully with time, Loop can help to put the voices of local people on decision making tables everywhere, to inform funding, policy and program decisions.

What we learnt from collective aggregate open data:

Loop data shows that people feel confident to report vague, anonymised information to an independent platform and that collectively this information can be acted on. They reported the types of information and rumours that are often heard but where there are not enough facts to make an official report or complaint, but still somehow, 'everyone knows about it'. This pattern of everyone knowing but nothing changing was identified by investigations exposing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) cases which occurred in many humanitarian contexts including: in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Haiti, as well as the 'Oxfam Scandal'. Investigations show that, in these examples, significant action was only taken when it was exposed in the press years later, by journalists. How many victims could be avoided if a safe, collective, independent, anonymised reporting mechanism is made available, accessible and known about?

We have also learnt that the sector is not yet seeing Loop as a viable tool to fill this gap. The reasons for this need to be explored further. We have not seen international actors promote or use Loop for SEAH reporting anywhere yet and as such have only had one SEA report all year. It is unlikely that we will see SEA reports on Loop until organisations promote it as a tool and local people are made aware of their rights and the independent, anonymous facility.

Some organisations have queried the amount of Personal Identifiable Information (PII) that we share on Loop and how this aligns with sector best practice. As a result we have asked local communities and created country specific policies on what PII can be shared, if the author gives consent, and what we should redact, even if the author gives consent for it to be shared.

For example: women in Ukraine felt that Loop, redacting their name from posts, is paternalistic and condescending, suggesting they don't know how to manage their identity, especially considering they were already using Telegram and other social media platforms actively, where there is no moderation and people can contact them directly. Alternatively survivors of abuse from Somalia or Zambia appreciated this additional level of scrutiny on what was shared online. We have thus enabled a

controlled, redacting of data for trained moderators, based on country and story specific criteria, and securely keeping the original text confidential. See our blog for more information.

We also see that organisations, representing survivors, are not yet supporting survivors to report in through Loop. During the prototyping in Zambia legal aid clinics and organisations providing shelter for survivors of sexual abuse, said that they saw the value in the aggregate data that can be collected through Loop to help them to evidence the scale and patterns of abuse that they see in their workplace. They stated that the Statistics page could help them to advocate for and influence greater accountability and increased investment in assistance services. However, we have not yet evidenced this happening and need to work more closely with key agents of change to understand what barriers they see in starting to use Loop.

Learning 6. We evidenced that real time data helps to improve data collection approaches

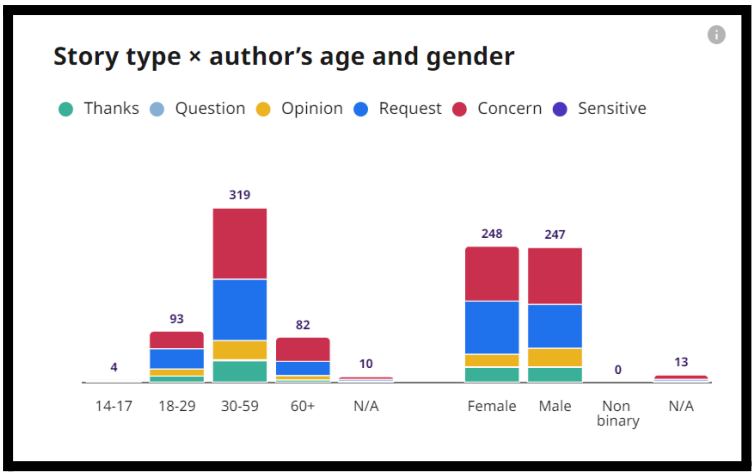
Often data collection approaches are designed by people from the head office and delivered by local populations. If these are done through systems which are paper based or offline, where all of the data is entered and analysed at the end, there is a potential to not be able to fix errors in the design process early on.

Many data collection methods involve a number of steps in the process, such as:

- an enumerator/volunteer writing a summary of what the 'beneficiary' said
- someone translating it
- someone inputting the data
- someone cleaning the data
- data analysis by one or two people who then write the report
- the report is then reviewed, cleaned and shared with a select group of people often months after the data is collected

The use of real time data collection methods can contribute to cutting out complex steps, potential errors in the processing and make the data more actionable by more people. We have seen that the real time analysis enabled changes to the collection processes in near real time.

Image Twelve: Data on Loop from Indonesia, Emergency Response in August



In Indonesia for example, after the first three days of speaking with communities the data showed that over 90% of respondents were female. Enumerators reported that this was because the men were out of the town, and had travelled back to their own land to cultivate it. Enumerators adapted their plans and went to collect data in the evenings as well, thus resulting in

the data representing men and women equally.

Other data collection tools also enable this ongoing analysis of data to inform and course correct the design of data collection processes. We have seen that the important ingredients of real time approaches include:

- Ongoing analysis of the data coming through while the data collection is ongoing,
- Live updated statistical analysis to show trends as they emerge
- Having the authors' qualitative input available to reinforce and add granularity to the quantitative data analysis and understanding
- Having the data analysis open and available for multiple users to inform their approach and activities and to make sense of the data

People have reported that aggregated data presented in a report often leaves the author wishing for more, to better unpick and understand the possible causes or appropriate next steps. Being able to filter the data further and to swap between the resulting qualitative and quantitative data helps to resolve this issue.

We have a number of design improvements to the statistics pages on Loop as a result of the learning so far. These improvements, once funding permits us to implement them, will help anyone to find patterns in the data more easily.

Finally we have learnt that we have a lot to learn.

We have learnt that Loop is only a shell of what it could be and that we have a lot of work to do. This includes implementing a long (and growing) list of technical adaptations, as well as improving our communications and outreach to help grow the platform and ultimately its potential to contribute to a more impactful response and to keep people safe. We need to create tools to help organisations onboard and mainstream Loop as part of their existing systems and approaches more efficiently.

While we had hoped for a larger scale uptake by now, the actual numbers can be expected after such a short period of implementation in each context: 14 months in the Philippines and Zambia; 9 months in Poland and Ukraine; 4 months in Indonesia and: 1 month in Somalia.

Digital platforms often suffer from slow uptake because value is created by scale and uptake is by word of mouth and product visibility. Platforms which have gone viral have often been on the market for 4 to 7 years before getting the hockey stick growth curve. We hope to shorten that delay by building partnerships with actors who want to help deliver a safe feedback and reporting mechanism to improve accountability and effectiveness in the Humanitarian and Development sectors, among others. The need and call for a collective mechanism has been evident for a number of years.

Finally, we have learnt that funding for innovation is slow. To get that funding for a new charity/ start-up is even harder. Getting funding from a system that the platform will potentially disrupt in a climate of reducing resources, is one of the biggest challenges we face.

What will it take to get to the next level?

1: Reinforcing Charitable Franchises

For Loop to succeed we need to get greater buy-in and funding directly to the host organisations and Steering Groups in each country where Loop is operational. This will enable them to build stronger local partnerships, integrate research, learning and sensitisation across their national ecosystems.

2: Recommendations and Introductions within networks to use Loop

At the global and systemic level we would benefit from suggestions, encouragement and recommendations to use Loop by key actors - donors, AAP/ CEA/ PSEA experts etc - to help build confidence. Questions or concerns about the tool can be reported directly to Loop, through the open mechanism or directly to the Managing Director for us to find fixes and improvements where appropriate.

3: Research and Partnerships

Investment in greater research to better understand some of the learnings to date and to partner with key stakeholders such as organisations working with minority groups, survivors etc will help to build greater trust and evidence and result in recommendations on how to adapt and improve the platform further.

4: Tech development and bridge funding

Significant investment to design and implement the learnings to date, and from the above research, both for the technology but also the communications is required. Currently, as a new charity we feel stifled by the low levels of funding and as such are delivering a product that is not as good as we would like it to be and not adapting at the pace of our learning. Our current policy is to prioritise existing funding to anything linked to security and safety.

So far Loop has been funded by Humanity United which was interested in supporting the development of systems change tools in the Humanitarian and Peace ecosystem. We were also funded by the British Government who had a specific interest in an independent tool to enable safe reporting of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment. Finally we continue to be funded by Global Giving for the Ukraine response. Global Giving are supporting the roll out and learning of a collective feedback mechanism which provides a consistent high quality tool for all of the organisations they fund to receive feedback and safe reports.

Based on our calculations, Loop at scale, is a fraction of the cost (calculated at 1/3rd) of numerous duplicative mechanisms and could provide more actors with greater value. However, like all technology it requires significant up front investment to continue to build and iterate on the tool, the data, the onboarding process and to improve accessibility.

Collective Action

Loop is only functional and operating today because of the disparate and passionate people operating across different parts of the humanitarian, development and funding sector who have rolled up their sleeves to help bring a new more accountable solution to their work. It is only in partnership and using a collective decentralised approach that Loop will continue to function and bring its potential to reality. The Loop Charity could be absorbed into any number of structures, it's the tool that needs to be collectively owned and shared for wide reaching impact.

I have learnt a lot from, and want to thank, all of the Governing Board members and the Host organisations in each country, especially the CEOs who are visionaries in their own fields.

I also want to thank the key donors who have kept Loop going to date: Humanity United's vision and commitment is impressive, as is Global Giving's decentralised powerful approach to funding. Thank you to the FCDO Safeguarding team for giving us a chance and seeing the potential so early on.

Finally, thank you to the many individual advocates and Loop staff who are busy working within their own circles of influence continuing to encourage more people and organisations to also be early adopters of a new decentralised, accountability system that is so widely called for.

Please help us shape this simple tool to centre the voices of affected people in all of your plans, activities, policy influencing and funding decisions.

For more information visit our website: www.talktoloop.org or email alex@talktoloop.org

Alternatively see:

- ☐ The Loop 2023 Strategy for further plans in 2023
- ☐ The Loop Annual Financial Reports
- ☐ The Loop Risk Register
- ☐ The Loop Theory of Change
- ☐ The Blog for more specific findings and learnings