



Saïd
Business
School



Skoll Venture Award

Impact Report 2012-2020

Contents

Foreword	3
Nine years of the Skoll Venture Award	4
About the Skoll Venture Award	4
Award overview	5
Impact summary	6
What the Awardees say about the Awards	6
How we calculated the numbers	6
The Awardees 2012-2020	7
Overall winner impact	8
Collective impact	8
Overcoming the pioneer gap	12
Venture growth	12
Awards use	13
How the Awards enabled ventures to overcome the pioneer gap	14
Venture showcase	17
I-Drop	17
Redbird Health Tech	18
Powermarket	19
Sociability	20
Adelie Health	21
Boresha Tech	22
Looking to the future	23

Foreword

‘If you want to understand the entrepreneur, study the juvenile delinquent. The delinquent is saying with his actions, “This sucks. I’m going to do my own thing.”’

Yvon Chouinard, Founder of Patagonia

We believe that the multiple crises we are facing are symptoms of a broken system, as demonstrated by deforestation, lack of accessible healthcare, and contaminated drinking water. Yet, a new narrative is emerging – one that tells a new story about who we are, why we participate and how we seek meaning in our work.

There is immense power within the combination of people and ideas, they are responsible for the world we see around us, and without them we would still be living a primitive existence.

The Skoll Venture Award is here to celebrate and nurture those people that have chosen to follow their ideas and demonstrate their meaning through building a venture. People that are embracing the entrepreneurial journey, navigating entrenched patterns of power, and hopefully having fun along the way.

In doing so, they are bringing forth a different world, and proving that we can develop new ideas, as much as escaping from the old ones.

We are deeply grateful to our partners at the Skoll Foundation and our colleagues at Saïd Business School for their immense support and guidance.

We are excited to share this report that tells the impact story of the Skoll Venture Award, the incredible people behind the social ventures and how we are playing our part to help address the world’s greatest environmental and social challenges.

Here’s to the juvenile delinquents inside us all.

With respect

Dr Peter Drobac and Chris Blues



Dr Peter Drobac

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Nine years of the Skoll Venture Award



About the Skoll Venture Award

At the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship ('the Centre'), we know social ventures can accelerate positive systems change and tackle the world's most urgent challenges.

The Skoll Venture Award ('the Award') is an annual prize for early-stage social ventures founded by University of Oxford students, alumni or staff. The Award aims to help high-potential social ventures overcome the pioneer gap, demonstrate traction, and access mainstream impact investment.

Since 2012, we have invested £250,000 in 15 ventures working across accessibility technology, healthcare, mental health, agribusiness, energy, education technology, water and sanitation, Internet of Things, and machine learning.

It should be noted that the Skoll Venture Awards are distinct from the Skoll Awards for Social Entrepreneurship (<https://skoll.org/about/skoll-awards/>), prestigious prizes given annually by the Skoll Foundation to social entrepreneurs who have already demonstrated substantial impact. Whilst entirely separate, both awards recognise the importance of investing in and supporting social entrepreneurs at critical stages in their journeys to impact.



What is the pioneer gap?

In the early stages of a social venture's development, when they need money most, impact investors will not invest.

For social ventures, there is a funding gap of between £15,000 and £150,000 per venture that stops them from reaching the scale where they can leverage large scale impact investment and go on to fulfil their potential. There are many names for this – the missing middle, the chasm, and the pioneer gap.

The pioneer gap persists due to the additional costs and risks for the investor. There is concern that investors will rarely realise the expected financial returns on their investments

to compensate them for taking on these riskier early-stage ventures. Most investors choose to invest at a later stage when social ventures can provide a track record that reduces key impact and execution risks to an investable level.

This behaviour scaled across multiple sectors and geographies is a structural challenge that is stopping social ventures and impact investment from reaching its potential.

Early stage funding builds the venture's entrepreneurial capability and track record. It allows ventures to clarify their business model and understand the problem they are seeking to solve.



Award overview

15

Awardees

£250,000

in funding

\$17.6 million

raised by ventures

– 97% of this is impact investment

400 +

applications received

67% : 33%

male/female teams

80%

ventures still running

33%

of these ventures have pivoted their venture since winning the Award

One acquisition

Accomable in November 2017

Whilst the Centre's three-year plan comprised an ambitious agenda, the Centre, Skoll Foundation and Oxford Saïd leadership agreed on four priority goals for the Skoll Foundation award, as outlined in the grant agreement. Our accomplishments and progress on each of the goals is detailed in the body of the report. The following is a brief summary:

'I think it is a great aspect of the Skoll Centre. I really felt like the team's attention was towards finding entrepreneurs who are solving great problems, who really need the funding and who can scale impact with that without resource.'

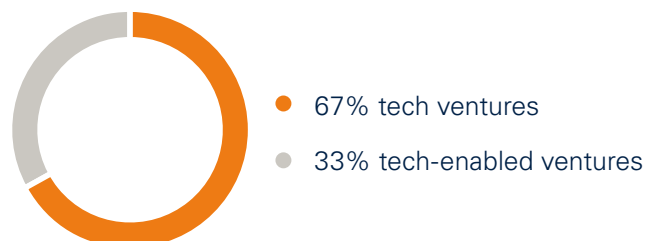
Arfa Rehman, Chorus Health, SVA 2017

'I see now in hindsight, that's part of the spirit of the award. It's probably the earliest piece of support and earliest acknowledgement of some of these ideas.'

James Thorogood, Boresha Tech, SVA 2018

'To this day we would not have the transformational impact to help people with disabilities to travel more easily, and get out and about more easily, were it not for the Skoll Venture Awards taking a chance on us back in the early days.'

Srin Madipalli, Accomable, SVA 201



Impact summary

1. By providing a small amount of investment and input at the right time, the Awards had a catalytic impact for the Awardees. Key growth indicators (such as number of beneficiaries reached, customers served and countries of operation) showed a five to nine-fold increase 24 months after winning the Award. The majority of this growth occurred between 12 – 24 months after receiving the Award.
2. Venture growth varied across the Awardees, with 20% of them showing substantially higher growth after the Awards. These are more established 'tech-enabled' ventures which have been trading for over three years.
3. The Awards predominantly enabled ventures to validate their business and impact models and demonstrate traction. 59% of the funds were used for the development of current and new products and services.
4. In addition to funding, the Award built a community for social entrepreneurs, increased the founders' entrepreneurial capability, and provided external validation and publicity.
5. The Award created breathing-space and runway for social ventures to understand their customers and the complex problems they face. This enabled entrepreneurs to have the resources to focus on solving systemic problems and validate hypotheses in their business model.

What the Awardees say about the awards



Combined percentages of agree and partially agree



How we calculated the numbers

To understand the impact of the Award, we administered an online survey and conducted virtual interviews. The response rate for the survey was 11 out of 15 for interviews. The analysis also includes online research of publicly available resources (e.g. venture websites and news articles) to gain insights in to the 15 Awardees.

We are tracking venture growth metrics including beneficiaries, customers, countries in operation, products, and numbers of employees.

Our analysis excludes the impact of Accomable after it was acquired by Airbnb. When Accomable was acquired in 2017, it listed 1,100 properties in 60 countries. As of September 2020, Airbnb has 5.6 million active listings, 800 million guest bookings and is in over 220 countries.

The Awardees 2012-2020

Uses technology to increase access to home-care in Africa.



2020



Provides affordable, secure and accessible therapists in Africa.

Devie was created by early years teachers to support every parent to be their child's best first teacher.



2019



Empowers greater social inclusion for people with access needs of all kinds. By making it quick, easy and free to find access information.

Aims to provide reliable and low-cost sources of working capital for smallholder farmers.



2018



Is revolutionising the self-management of diabetes.

PowerMarket is a deep-learning powered CleanTech platform to help customers achieve their net-zero emission target. The platform provides turn-key solar project management solution, starting from solar discovery, going all the way to operations and maintenance.



2017



Is changing the way patients interact with non-communicable and chronic disease.



Chorus Health develops scalable digital therapeutics for underserved health conditions.

Tulivu Imaging was a medical diagnostics service provider initially focusing on affordable ultrasound in Kenya.



2016



Aims to change the cost structure of drinking water sales by purifying water at the point of sale in formal and informal general grocery stores throughout Africa.

2015

2014



Aims to counter industrial-scale deforestation using industrial scale reforestation.

Designs, develops and delivers affordable sensor technology, networks, and Internet of Things innovations for smallholder farms.



2013



A web platform designed to make it easier for disabled people to organise and book travel across the globe. Accomable was acquired by Airbnb in November 2017

2012



Aims to bring -interactive game-based learning aims to bring to schools, NGOs, and businesses.

Overall winner impact

Collective Impact

245,000

direct beneficiaries

‘We don’t usually go for health apps, but this one is different. I feel like I’m getting wise words from a mother, sister, or friend, plus a much-needed dose of motivation to take better care of myself... I’m so glad that it exists!’

User of Chorus Health (formerly Virtue Health) products, 2017 Winner

450

venture customers

‘Dendra helps Glencore overcome these challenges by providing unprecedented insights into the condition of the land and ecosystems using ecology-driven data science and artificial intelligence. Complemented by drone-based aerial seeding which increases the rate of planting and mitigates on-site risks. Together, Glencore and Dendra are restoring thriving ecosystems.’

User of Dendra (formerly BioCarbon Engineering) services, 2014 Winner

77

countries where ventures operate

A representation of the beneficiaries



NGOs

Energy companies

- People with dementia
- Caregivers
- Women
- Smallholder farmers
- Disabled people
- Energy companies
- Elderly
- NGOs
- Learners
- People with diabetes
- Pregnant women
- Parents of toddlers and pre-schoolers

3,588,040

products sold

60

people employed

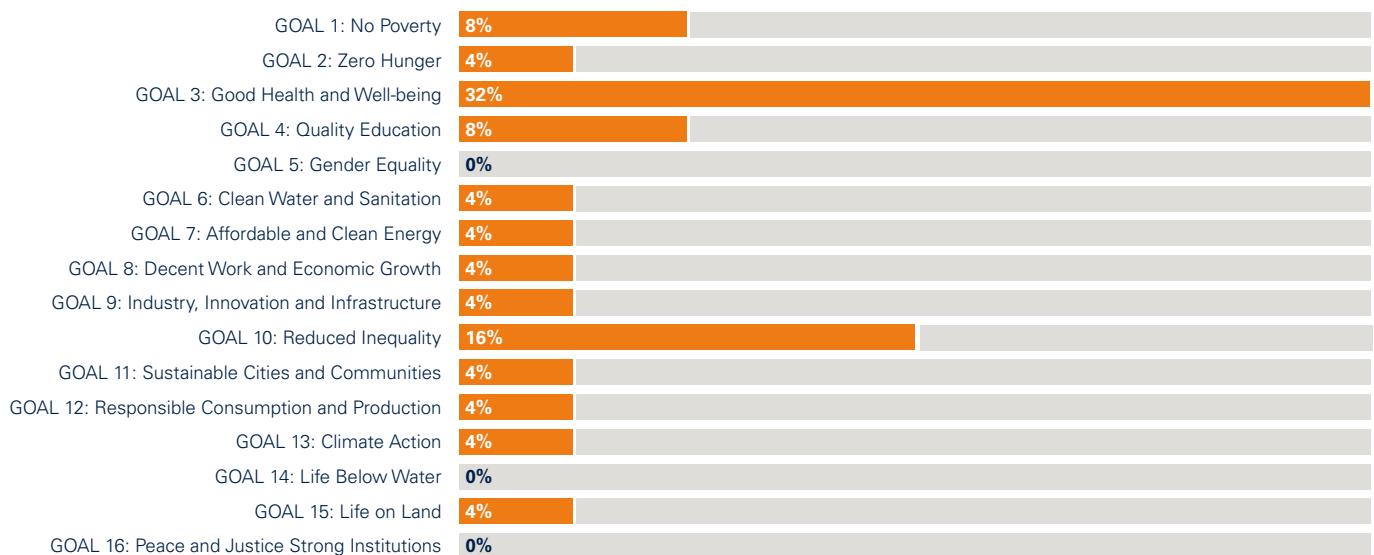
The Awardees work across a wide range of geographies, sectors, and communities. Their work aligns with several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The primary SDGs tackled by the Awardees are GOAL 3 Good Health and Well-being (32%) and GOAL 10 Reduced Inequality (16%). GOAL 1 No Poverty (8%) and GOAL 4 Quality Education (8%) seem to be a secondary focus for the Awardees.

Over time, there is a shift towards ventures solving GOAL 3 Good Health and Well-being. Three SDGs remain unaddressed through the Award; these are GOAL 5 Gender Equality, GOAL 14 Life below water and GOAL 16 Peace, justice, and strong institutions.

Key countries of operation

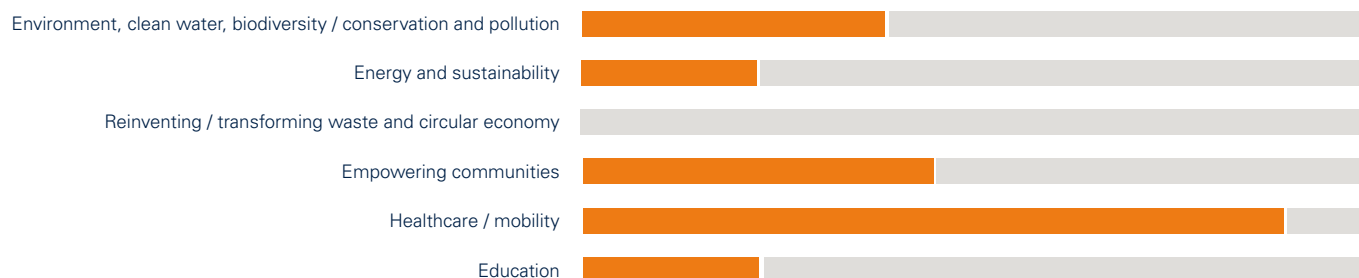


Contribution to SDGs



We asked the Venture to select all SDGs that relate to their business operations

Impact Sector



We asked the Venture to list the impact sectors most pertinent to their business model

20% of Awardees account for the majority of direct beneficiaries reached, products sold and countries of operation. These ventures are more established 'tech-enabled' ventures which have been trading for over three years. We can see that 'tech only' ventures are gaining early-stage traction, currently reaching between 500 - 1000 beneficiaries. However, 'tech only' ventures are pivoting more often and taking longer to hit product-market fit and reach scale. 33% of ventures have pivoted their product or service since winning the Awards.

Ventures are predominantly working in the UK, USA, and southern, western, and eastern Africa with limited presence in Asia. There is no presence in South East Asia and South America.

We found that 86% of the ventures are operating a B2B business model, utilising on the ground and local networks to sell their products and services to reach beneficiaries. Ventures operating B2C business models are in early-stage traction and do not reach the same quantity of beneficiaries and customers compared to ventures operating B2B business models.



What are 'tech only' ventures?

For the purposes of this report 'tech only' ventures have no physical products and / or services that are owned or controlled by the ventures.

What are 'tech-enabled' ventures?

For the purposes of this report 'tech-enabled' ventures use both technology and physical products and / or services that they own or control





Skoll Venture Awards

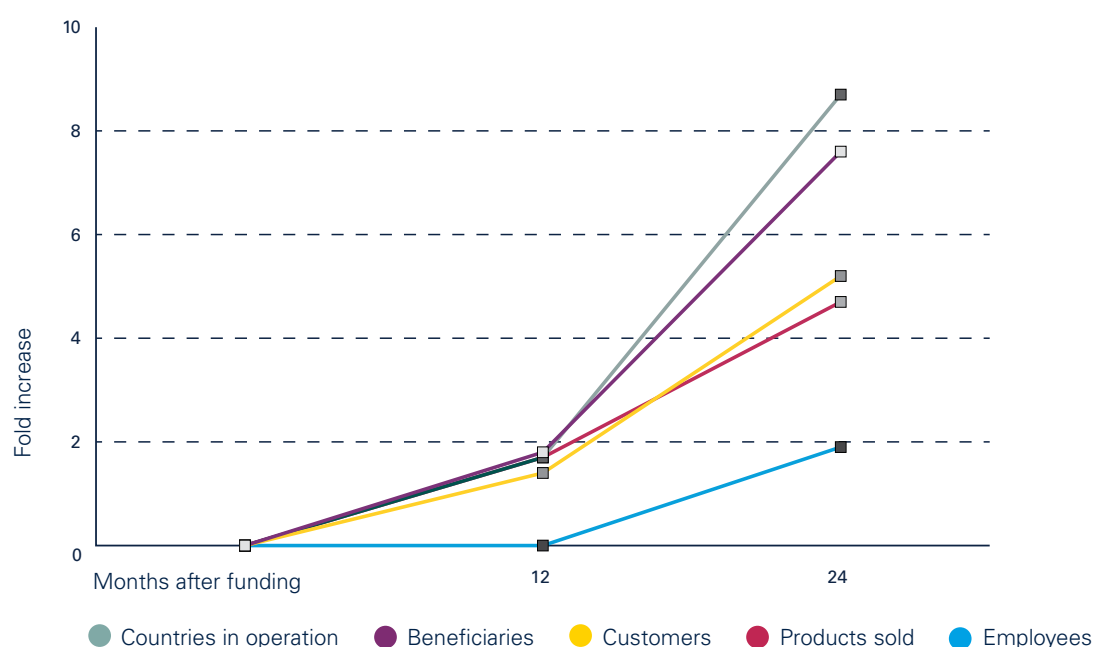
Award for the most promising start-up
in the UK, based on its potential for
commercial success.



Overcoming the pioneer gap

The pioneer gap is a systemic problem that prevents social ventures tackling the world's most urgent challenges. The Award aims to help social ventures overcome the pioneer gap and demonstrate significant growth and impact within 24 months of winning the Award.

Venture growth



9.8

fold increase – total revenues increased from £17,200 after 12 months to £168,560 within 24 months of winning the Award

Our findings show that the Award accelerates growth across all growth metrics, with significant change occurring between 12 and 24 months after receiving the Award. After 12 months, we anticipate ventures shift from a validation phase and increase maturity by serving early adopters and proving a profitable business model.

Increases 24 months after winning the Award:

Beneficiaries:	7.6 fold increase
Customers:	5.2 fold increase
Countries in Operation:	8.7 fold increase
Products:	4.7 fold increase
Numbers of Employees:	1.9 fold increase

The number of countries and beneficiaries accelerate fastest after funding, with the number of employees lagging after these metrics and growing slower. Customers and products sold track a similar growth rate. 20% of ventures showed more significant growth within a 24 month period of receiving the Award, compared to the other ventures.





Award use



59%

of awarded funds used for current and new product and service development

Ventures used 59% of awarded funds for current and new product and service development. At such an early stage, we anticipate funding is needed to continue product development and find product-market fit before the venture is ready to scale. Once a venture creates and tests a product ready for the market, focus is placed on increasing beneficiaries, customers, and geographic growth.

How the awards enabled ventures to overcome the pioneer gap



We spoke with the Awardees and asked them to share how the Award helped them grow their venture within a 24-month period after receiving the Award:

1 Enabling ventures to reach their first investment

The journey for social ventures to receive mainstream investment varies hugely depending on a venture's business model, impact sector and geography. Receiving the Award enabled ventures to secure and leverage further capital. By providing a small amount of investment at the right time, the Award had a catalytic impact on the ventures. To date, ventures have raised USD 17.6 million; 97% of capital raised is impact investment.

'Our first eight months was largely funded by the Skoll Venture Award...it allowed us to get just far enough to say, 'do we have something here'. It was indeed enough to get us to our first angel investment. It would have been very difficult to take some of those risks without some of that catalytic capital.'

James Thorogood, Boresha Tech, SVA 2018

'Without having tested in the field, you will always have a question in your mind. Is this something that we will push on someone, or will this actually be demanded?... With a small amount of money, you are able to buy down a lot of risk for a future investor.'

Stephen Honan, Odyssey Sensors, SVA 2013

'The Skoll Venture Award, although quite small, because it hit at the right time and we used it wisely, ended up having a huge effect for us as a company...both of these things enabled us to demonstrate traction that built onto a pre-seed round of about \$500,000.'

Patrick Beattie, Redbird Health Tech, SVA 2017

The Award enabled ventures to validate their business and impact models, and demonstrate traction. This helped overcome investors' fundamental concern that they will not realise the expected financial returns on their investments if they invest in early-stage social ventures. The Award enabled social ventures to create a track record that de-risks critical impact and investors' execution risks.

2 Building a community for social entrepreneurs

The entrepreneurial journey can be lonely and isolating for founders. The lack of validation and nourishment from a supportive community is an important reason why many social ventures fail to reach scale. This is particularly true for social entrepreneurs working within complex power structures, unbuilt markets, and regulatory landscapes. The Awardees shared with us how the Award helped create and build their community.

'To have people that are supportive and smart and to say 'you are not insane', but also provide very blunt feedback. That network is irreplaceable.'

Kate Thiers & James Steere, I-Drop, SVA 2016

'Having conversations with this network of people that have been brought in to curate the awards has shifted the way I think about what we do and also has brought a lot of new ideas, both organisationally and also on a strategic level.'

Alex Royea, Wazi, SVA 2020

'A number of people that we didn't know reached out to say 'how can we help you', which is incredible...those connections and the fact that they have been all over the world is really incredible.'

Zeenith Ebrahim, Jamii Life, SVA 2020

For many of the Awardees, the Award is the start of a long-term relationship with the Centre. We walk alongside the entrepreneurs, inviting them to engage in our work and form part of their supportive network.

3 Building entrepreneurial capability

In addition to funding, the Awards incentivise ventures to accelerate learning and development outcomes. This benefit applies to a wider portfolio of ventures, including the 400+ applicants of the Award and ventures invited to the final pitch event. The Awardees shared with us how participating in the Awards process had numerous benefits.

'Just the very act of participating in the competition...is equally important I believe. The business plan, the pitch deck, you are forced to clarify your own thoughts. That was a very good experience.'

Shubham Anand, iGBL, SVA 2012

'Just that process of compiling financials and models is helpful...it is also a good insight into what the conversations will be like when we start to speak to other funders or even other organisations...it's a good training for the rest of the journey.'

Matt Pierri, Sociability, SVA 2019



'The process in itself was very helpful because we started learning how to teach ourselves about our idea and it's potential. If it weren't for the Skoll Venture Awards we wouldn't be where we are right now,'

Arfa Rehman, Chorus Health, SVA 2017

'It forced us to sharpen our pitch or how we present ourselves...there's real merit the competition because it forces us to apply some rigor, that was very helpful.'

Kate Thiers & James Steere, I-Drop, SVA 2016

The process of participating in due diligence for a competition can help founders to clarify their ventures business and impact model. It can also help to build a repository of documents, models, and a pitch deck that they can use to leverage further funding.

4 Creating breathing space for social ventures to solve wicked problems

Awardees are working to solve wicked problems for marginalised customers and beneficiaries; these are often hard to reach communities with complex and emerging needs. Very few impact investors are willing to invest in companies targeting underserved customers, and even fewer are willing to invest at the early stages of the creation of these ventures. The Awardees shared with us how the Award enabled them to have resources to focus on solving real problems and validate hypotheses in their business model.

'It made possible having proximity to the people that we wanted to solve problems for... spending any time with your potential beneficiaries with your clients is quite resource intensive...reaching people who are excluded is a pretty costly endeavour. It takes time, it takes personnel and people who can help you to navigate and gain access to different communities.'

James Thorogood, Boresha Tech, SVA 2018



‘What Skoll [Centre] did was push us to actually focus on what that impact is and how to truly translate figures into social impact, that allowed us to actually improve the messaging.’

Abhinav Jain, Powermarket, SVA 2017

‘It was hugely beneficial to us in that came at just the right time and was enough money for us to transform it into some early traction...it enabled us to pilot in our first two pharmacies...at that point we were trying to prove out the hypothesis that, if we have diagnostics in pharmacies people will buy them and then get tests done in a pharmacy.’

Patrick Beattie, Redbird Health Tech, SVA 2017

5 Providing validation, momentum, and publicity

For early-stage ventures, building and maintaining momentum is essential to overcoming the pioneer gap. It helps leverage resources, evidence traction, and build publicity. For social entrepreneurs, validation from an established academic organisation and panel of expert judges helps ventures to overcome the pioneer gap.

‘Even just the existence of the award was a flicker of hope... Just having someone say “hey, you should do this, this isn’t a bad idea, this could be really interesting”. That stamp of approval as a first-time entrepreneur is quite important. I hate to admit it. I think that it gave me a boost that I needed in terms of morale, I haven’t looked back since.’

James Thorogood, Boresha Tech, SVA 2018

‘The full PR value of having Skoll [Centre] behind a very new organisation and idea, that carries a lot of weight. That is an area where it is a real amplifier effect.’

Kate Thiers and James Steere, I-Drop, SVA 2016

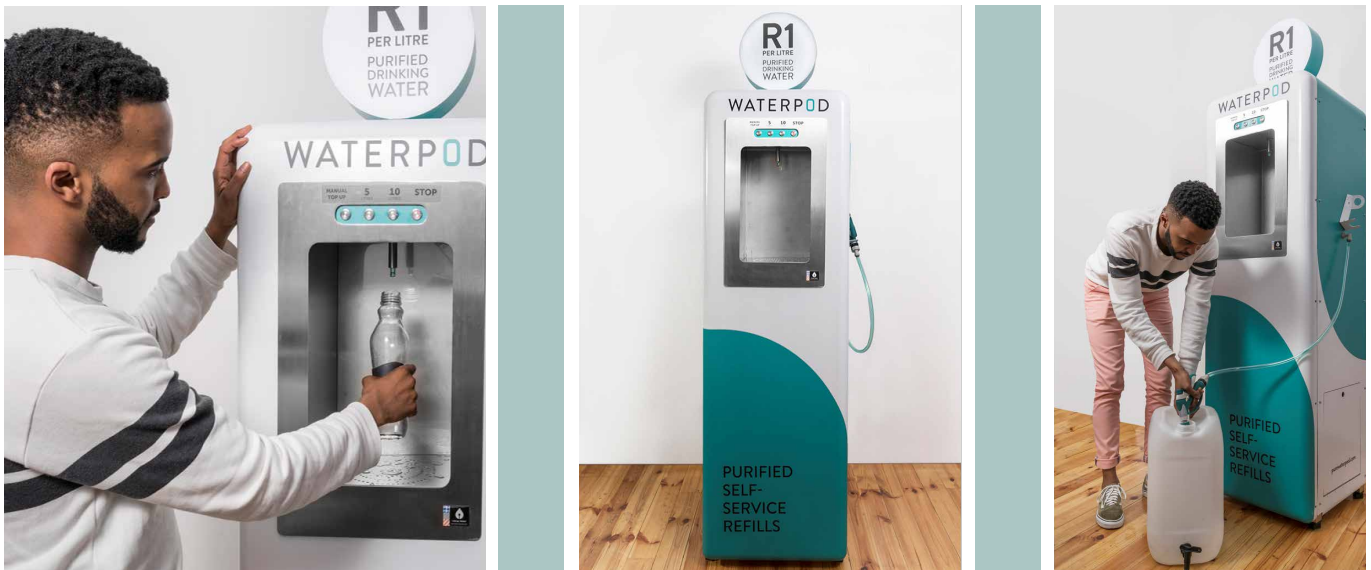
‘The Skoll Venture Award really helps with you overcoming that gap at the start, because you get that boost and to get some faith at the start. Once you have got something, it’s a lot easier to keep going...It gave a bit of legitimacy and credibility to us, to go and raise money for the seed fund and subsequent grants and awards...it all definitely snowballs.’

Matt Pierri, Sociability, SVA 2019

Venture showcase

I-Drop

2016 Skoll Venture Awardee



Funding received: £10,000

Description: I-Drop builds and installs Waterpods (water purification and dispensing machines) in grocery stores at no cost to shop-owners. Shop-owners provide a water source, Waterpods purify it and shoppers refill their own containers with filtered water and pay by the litre at ~80% less cost than bottled water

Impact Area: Environment and clean water

Operating in: South Africa, Namibia and Eswatini

Beneficiaries: People who buy affordable, environmentally friendly, purified drinking-water from I-Drop self-service dispensing machines in local grocery stores

'Social entrepreneurship attracts well-meaning dreamers in a way, you want to see a better world, it is more difficult, so you need to be more passionate about it.'

I-Drop is changing the cost structure of drinking water sales by purifying water at the point of sale in formal and informal general grocery stores throughout Africa. In addition to providing safe drinking water, they have avoided 59,416 kgs of carbon dioxide and saved 12,917 kgs of plastic waste.

'There is one store on Port Elizabeth where we installed two machines... we ran some numbers and we figured out that, if we were selling 500ml bottles of water, we would be selling a bottle of water from this one shop every 45 seconds of trade. We really geeked out about this. To imagine what that looked like...that was pretty cool.'

Kate and James are seasoned social entrepreneurs and they openly admit "we have been through the mill". Nevertheless, it seems like I-Drop is at an inflection point and is ready to move to the next level.

'We are like a coiled spring in a way, we have amazing product, we have five years of experience, we know our market better than anyone...now we are at the point where we are ready to go. We have started to let the spring go.'

In the short term I-Drop are refocusing on the South African market, they are aiming to build a solid foundation before expanding to international markets.

'We know what we are doing now, we can be a lot more bullish, we know the true value of what we have, and we can short-circuit a lot of mistakes we made at the start of the company. We are in a really good sweet spot for growth...we want to build our foundation in South Africa and get a really solid base.'

* All quotes: Kate Thiers & James Steere, I-Drop, SVA 2016

Redbird Health Tech

2017 Skoll Venture Awardee



Funding received: £7,500

Description: An all-in-one solution to offer rapid diagnostic testing and health monitoring pharmacies

Impact Area: Healthcare, mobility

Operating in: Ghana

Beneficiaries: Health care monitoring for children and adults

'Everything is incentive driven, you have to understand what the incentives of each person in the problem are, anywhere from the owner of a pharmacy to the counter staff, to the patient.'

Redbird is changing how patients interact with the Ghanaian healthcare system to better combat the rising burden of non-communicable and chronic disease. In partnership with local pharmacies, Redbird have performed over 50,000 tests and they have served over 30,000 patients.

Redbird have relentlessly aimed to seek traction, validate their product-market fit, and build a social venture with an aligned impact and business model.

'At Redbird I think we benefit from two things, we've structured our financial success to our patient usage, which then directly correlated with our theory of change. We feel we have a very aligned model.'

Working within a very complex healthcare system, Redbird have built a solid track record of pharmacy growth and engagement. They are leveraging existing health points, where people are already comfortable going, and building technology on top of that behaviour. The team are now seeking to increase the number of tests run by each pharmacy.

'We've figured out how to bring in more and more pharmacies, they obviously like the pitch we are making...The next problem is, can we take our pharmacies today and get them doing 4x times the number of tests that they are doing today.'

* All quotes: Patrick Beattie, Redbird Health Tech, SVA 2017

Powermarket

2017 Skoll Venture Awardee



Funding received: £7,500

Description: Powermarket provide a mapping solution to locate ideal solar sites. They help public and private sector organisations install solar, therefore reducing greenhouse gas emissions

Impact Area: Sustainable energy

Operating in: Belgium, Italy, United Kingdom

Beneficiaries: Energy companies and end consumers of renewable energy

'We just wanted to show how rooftop solar was the largest unused real estate in the world.'

Powermarket was founded with a mission – to provide sustainable energy for all. It uses downstream satellite data and deep learning to help individuals and companies globally assess their potential solar within a couple of clicks.

'Our technology could provide them with analytics to understand and decide whether solar was the right choice for them and we could help them kickstart that journey...We realised that there was an organic need among businesses now to join solar because there was a pressure from their customers to be more sustainable, to be more impactful.'

Powermarket is leveraging a growing understanding that the effects of carbon emissions are not limited to certain parts of the world, it impacts both the world as a whole and individual businesses ability to operate.

'We started focusing on the analytic side of things and completely focussed on the B2B side...The pilot was with a Fortune 500 energy company in Belgium, so it truly had to be up to their standard and their level of acceptance.'

Powermarket has had to pivot significantly over the years; they have had to navigate an uncertain and constantly changing regulatory landscape. They are continuing to focus on analytics and are targeting large organisations that manage a lot of buildings.

'I always thought you may have to alter the product a bit, but with technology ventures there is so much unknown and the world changing so rapidly and it is incredible how much one keeps pivoting and continuously learning and adapting.'

* All quotes: Abhinav Jain, Powermarket, SVA 2017

Sociability

2019 Skoll Venture Awardee



Funding received: £25,000

Description: For enterprise businesses, Sociability provides a software platform that allows them to audit, monitor and analyse the accessibility of their store networks. For app users, Sociability provides information enabling them to know which local venues are accessible or not

Impact Area: Empowering communities, healthcare, mobility

Operating in: United Kingdom, Australia, United States

Beneficiaries: Sociability's beneficiaries are disabled people and their friends and family

'What sets us apart of other players in the space, is that we are trying to be much more collaborative than anybody else. Most platforms, charities or companies typically only focus on one thing...you never gain momentum to generate information at scale and be able to then change the problem.'

Sociability empowers greater social inclusion for people with access needs of all kinds. By making it quick, easy, and free to find access information, Sociability is making the world a more SociAble place for all.

Sociability is navigating a challenging business landscape; the uncertainty within the retail and hospitality sector is having knock on effects across the economy. Nevertheless, Sociability is persistent in building a well overdue solution.

'It is a grounded reminder that this will help real people, who for the longest time, haven't had opportunities open to them because they don't have the right information to make decisions.'

Scaling a tech platform is no easy task and Sociability are in the process of navigating a 'chicken and egg scenario' of building a product that works better at scale.

'Tech platforms work at scale with low marginal cost, but to get them to that stage costs a lot...you need to demonstrate it to people, but you have no money to build it. People say come back when you have got something.'

In the short term, Sociability will aim to get a product to market. They will then increase the number of users and data on the platform, driving user engagement and revenue.

* All quotes: Matt Pierri, Sociability, SVA 2019

Adelie Health

2018 Skoll Venture Awardee



Funding received: £5,000

Description: A behaviour change platform to help people manage their diabetes

Impact Area: Healthcare, mobility

Operating in: United Kingdom

Beneficiaries: People with diabetes

'I will definitely be a lot [stricter] on myself next time, in terms of pretty basic questions like the business model before I take the jump.'

Adelie Health was on a mission to revolutionise the self-management of diabetes. They believed traditional care was not working for over 75% of people with diabetes. Unfortunately, after a few funding setbacks the venture decided to wrap up operations in the summer of 2020.

'The problem was always adherence of people with diabetes...teenagers with type 1 diabetes, but the market isn't big enough for a start-up, unless you have a high margin device.'

For Adelie Health, they were seeking to solve the problem of adherence and motivation. To create a product that empowered teenagers to manage their diabetes. They pivoted numerous times, switching from a hardware product to software products. Adelie Health found that building a social venture needs more than just incentives.

'It became very clear that an incentive wasn't enough. It became clear that needed to be more empathy...doing that with technology is very hard.'

* All quotes: Liam Mc Morrow, Adelie Health, SVA 2018

Boresha Tech

2018 Skoll Venture Awardee



Funding received: £20,000

Description: Boresha Tech are attracting more resources to value chains that rely on smallholder farmers

Impact Area: Empowering communities

Operating in: Uganda, Zambia, Tanzania

Beneficiaries: Smallholder farmers

‘There are so many things that can go wrong unexpectedly and so many things can go quite well unexpectedly. All you can do is push forward. If something stops working today, try something new and find out what sticks.’

Boresha acknowledges that small farmers need liquidity to operate their businesses. Boresha initially set out to provide better cashflow to businesses that work with smallholder farmers. Now they are digitising these businesses to attract financing and other support from a broader range of actors.

‘Instead of just helping businesses to keep track of their dealings with small farmers, we were now providing them with a system and the capital to give the farmers income early, so they could pre-pay farmers and give advances if they have an emergency. [In effect] we were creating more liquidity for the farmers.’

Boresha are determined to keep smallholder farmers and their value chains at the heart of their venture. Farmers needs are leading solutions with the use of technology products.

‘It’s definitely a different paradigm in terms of how to digitise... One of the cool things we are excited about is that a lot of businesses that haven’t been able to digitise are actually considering our system. For the first time, they are looking hard at this and saying ‘we could use this’.

Boresha have pivoted significantly in the last 12 months and are re-emerging with a totally new model that looks stronger and better than ever.

‘We took everything we learned from field ready, very simple, lightweight tech for SMEs and we retrofitted that to be more broadly useful by these large enterprise clients.’

* All quotes: James Thorogood, Boresha Tech, SVA 2018

Looking to the future



The award and prize ecosystem has grown and matured significantly since the inception of the Awards in 2012. Globally and locally, a breadth of organisations (corporates, governments, and universities) are building awards that catalyse social ventures.

The findings in this report highlight how the Award have accelerated the impact for our Awardees. By injecting a small amount of funding at the right time, the ventures can truly have a catalytic impact. The Award also plays a different role through providing community, support, and publicity. This Award would not be possible without the support of our partners and the fruitful University of Oxford entrepreneurial ecosystem.

However, there is still a significant need for an increase in funding available to help social ventures overcome the pioneer gap. Awards, such as the Skoll Venture Awards, play an essential role in backing innovative ideas, funding early-stage social ventures and enabling them to reach scale.

In the future, we see a growing movement that integrates the latest research and insights of systems change, lived experience and knowledge equity, and social entrepreneurship. We hope future awards will catalyse, showcase, and celebrate ventures that can truly influence and accelerate positive systemic change.

We aim to celebrate and nurture those individuals and teams that have chosen to follow their imagination, and to demonstrate that leadership through building a venture in order to contribute to positive systemic change.

'The future can't be predicted, but it can be envisioned and brought lovingly into being'

Donella Meadows, Author of *Dancing with Systems*



Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship

The Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship is a leading centre for the advancement of social entrepreneurship worldwide. The Skoll Centre's mission is to accelerate the impact of 'entrepreneurial' activity that aims to transform unjust or unsatisfactory systems and practices. The Centre fosters social transformation through education, research and collaboration. We offer world-class graduate education, providing students with the vision and skills to bring together market-based approaches and social innovation. We support the development of actionable insights that help to advance entrepreneurship, and we develop and support a network of academics and practitioners to disseminate this knowledge globally. We also connect social entrepreneurs with thought leaders and key players in business, government and philanthropy to enhance positive social impact.

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All information is correct at the time of going to press. Please check our website for the most up-to-date information.

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