Executive Summary

This goes without saying, but 2020 was a difficult year. To all of you in this amazing, uncommon community who may have been hit particularly hard, directly or indirectly, by COVID-19, we are here for you.

If you are reading this letter, please know that in 2020 you made a difference. Your support has and will continue to directly impact lives.

Despite the challenges and set backs, 2020 was a year of remarkable progress for our organization. Though the road ahead is still full of uncertainties, we are in a far better position today than we were 12 Months ago.

For that, we are truly grateful.

To our Donors large and small, our Mentors, our Volunteers, our Supporters & Friends, our Board Members in America & Zimbabwe, and most importantly, to our Team, thank you.

Thank you for this opportunity. Thank you for your trust and patience. Thank you for your belief in our mission and our vision for the world.

In the following report, you will see all that we accomplished, together, in 2020. Against the odds - and thanks to this community - we did so much!

We will also layout our plan for 2021, a year that has started with great momentum.

In closing, there's just one last thing to say. Despite our oversized ambitions, we are still a very small team. It is hard to put into words how much you mean to us. We absolutely LOVE that you are with us on this journey, and we can't wait to look back years from now at all of the great impact we've made in the world, together.

Thank you for joining us. Thank you for being uncommon.

- J. Peter Kazickas

proud CEO of uncommon.org
Innovation Hubs

At the beginning of 2020, we built two new Innovation Hubs in low-income neighborhoods outside of Harare.

In Kuwadzana, we renovated an old shipping container and in Mufakose, we transformed a vacant classroom into a state of the art co-work space.

These new Hubs allowed us to triple our impact, growing from one to three communities.
To kickoff the year, we invited the 60 young adults from our three communities to join in a five day, Inner Engineering workshop led by Google Search Inside Yourself Fellow, Joe Pucci.

This was a transformative experience for us all. We gave our students a space for reflection, introspection and meditation - a rare opportunity. Our students were challenged to think about their lives & their purpose.

We connected the workshop with one of our organization's goals of nurturing entrepreneurial, tech savvy, purpose minded individuals.
In addition to training for the Tech workforce every day, our team of young adults was excited to teach after school coding lessons to 3,000+ students from our 18 partner schools in 2020.

Before COVID-19 shut down the schools, we were on pace to meet these goals.
Impact of COVID-19

Our initial response to COVID-19 was to digitize our work and run our Bootcamp remotely. The reality is, we built our Innovation Hubs because the infrastructure in our communities was so unreliable, and we faced extreme challenges simply reaching our young adults.

In August, after a few months of experimenting with various virtual learning strategies, we made the tough decision to suspend our Bootcamp - with a catch.

We downsized from 60 to 35 young adults. The 25 that were let go were promised a priority position in our 2021 applications. For the 35 who remained, we had a bold challenge.

Not only were we going to double in size in 2021 to six locations, we were going to offer two new courses: UI/UX Design & Digital Marketing. The 35 young adults left on our team were going to spend the rest of 2020 training to be Instructors in those fields.

Although we were quickly running out of money and our planned fundraising events were all cancelled, we promised our team that if they learned and prepared for 2021, we would find the money.

Remarkably, thanks to the uncommon community, we were able to do just that. Today, not only are we bigger and more complete, we've figured out how to teach our material virtually as well.
Building a Community

Our first task was simple: survive. Before we could even think about expansion, we needed to figure out how to keep the lights on for our team in Zimbabwe.

With our backs against the wall, we leaned into the uncommon community and launched a Monthly Donor campaign.

In just two months, we went from **ZERO to 125 Monthly Donors**. This gave us the time and space to raise the capital we needed to think realistically about growing our impact in 2021. Thank You!!
Our original name, SPROUT, was an acronym for Science Programming & Uncommon Technologies. We’ve always loved the word, "uncommon," and we have great pride in our Teams' creativity, and the unique approach we take to solving problems.

Everyday, we challenge our Team and students to be different, to be uncommon. So we were pretty excited when the time came to finally rebrand. Though our story is only just beginning, we couldn't be more proud of the brand we are today.

Huge shoutout to Joey Sbarro and Brianna Aikens who helped us design the initial look & feel of Uncommon.org!
We believe that in order to be scalable we must be sustainable, and in order to be sustainable, we have to think like a business. By combining the best of the nonprofit and for-profit industries, we believe we can build a truly special organization.

In addition to grants and donations, we generate revenue through:

- Income Sharing Agreements with our Bootcamp Graduates
- Designing, Developing & Marketing Websites for Clients
- Branding our Innovation Hubs for Corporate sponsors
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Uncommon Mentorship

Perhaps the most exciting development in 2020 was the introduction of our Mentorship program. What started by just getting a few uncommon friends involved has evolved into so much more.

Today, when our young adults pick a track to specialize in, they're matched with industry professionals for two, 30 minute sessions per month for 6 Months. It's hard to overstate the impact that this Mentorship has on our young adults.

Our Mentors are from all over the world and work at companies like:

Google, YouTube, Facebook, Amazon, Pinterest, Morgan Stanley and many, many more... THANK YOU MENTORS!!
As we've alluded to earlier, when COVID-19 struck, the future of our nonprofit was very uncertain. By leaning into this amazing uncommon community and building a Monthly Donor base, we bought ourselves some time.

With this time, we were able to focus on larger sized donations as well as various grassroots fundraising campaigns. Remarkably, when the final tally was made, we increased our fundraising efforts by 30% from 2019 and raised almost $200,000!!

All we can say is THANK YOU! We wouldn't be here without you.
In 2021, we are excited to grow our impact and launch 6 Innovation Hubs, including our first in Zimbabwe's second largest city, Bulawayo.

This will equate to roughly 120 young adults in our Technology Bootcamp and 6,000 youths in our after school coding program. As we look to the future of remote learning, we are exploring a hybrid model that leverages the best of our infrastructure and the internet for maximum impact.

Throughout the course of the year, our aim is to take concrete steps towards proving the sustainability of our business model.

Our goal is to continue to grow our web business and launch Social Media marketing campaigns for clients around the world.

We will be on the lookout for Corporate Sponsors for our Innovation Hubs and are excited to begin placing our first graduates into full-time employment.

There is so much to be excited about and one thing we're really looking forward to is building & engaging with this amazing, uncommon community. We can't thank you enough for all that you do. Now it's time to get back to work!
THANK YOU!!

FROM EVERYONE AT UNCOMMON.ORG