2021 Annual Report
2021 was a difficult year for so many around the world. At Uncommon.org, we are grateful that all of our employees and students managed to stay safe and healthy, despite the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.

We send our sincerest wishes to everyone reading this report, that they too are in good health and spirits.

Like any year, 2021 was defined by highs and lows. We expanded the scope of our curriculum, made strategic partnerships, won grants, secured sponsorships, doubled our capacity and launched our first Innovation Hub outside of Harare.

We welcomed more young adults into our program than ever before, promoted students & staff, and made our first external hires. In many ways, we have grown tremendously and we are excited about the impact we will make for years to come.

Simultaneously, we faced sincere challenges in 2021.

Quality internet is still one of our greatest hurdles, despite being one of our largest expenses. School closures have been constant and in some communities, schools have only just opened again in February, 2022. We are eager to run our youth coding program with more consistency, as soon as our partner schools are ready.
Despite the challenges, or perhaps because of them, the team has grown stronger. Young staff members have emerged as leaders and eager students have lined up to fill the void left by those who have landed jobs outside of Uncommon.

Our capacity as a technology nonprofit has grown tremendously. In 2021, we introduced tools and methodologies to improve the efficiency and productivity of our team and students – something we’ll be doubling down on in 2022 through our recent collaboration with the Project Management Institute.

We’ve also built a volunteer Development Committee and have outlined plans for a Strategic Advisory Board that will help usher us from startup to established non-profit.

There is so much to be proud of and thankful for in 2021. Despite a COVID-related delayed start for our cohorts which will end between April and September of 2022, we’ve already seen 20 students begin full-time employment, both inside & outside of Uncommon.

2021 was a tough year, but one full of amazing and memorable moments that simply would not have been possible without the incredible support of our donors and the Uncommon community.

On behalf of everyone at Uncommon, and with the utmost amount of gratitude, I sincerely thank you for your continued support and belief in the students, team and mission at Uncommon.org

Sincerely,

J. Peter Kazickas
proud CEO of uncommon.org
In 2021 we built three new Innovation Hubs. Two in the Harare neighborhoods, Kambuzuma and Warren Park, and our first just outside of Bulawayo's city center in Emganwini.

This increased our total number of Innovation Hubs from three to six and gives us the capacity to train 120 young adults and teach coding to nearly 6,000 youths annually.

Our hope is that COVID-19 will soon be behind us, and that we can again strive for maximum efficiency and output from each hub.
We were delighted to welcome Nedbank Zimbabwe as our first corporate sponsor in 2021. Their annual sponsorship will cover a majority of the operating expenses at the Nedbank Innovation Hub.

Since this hub was launched, we've received a fair amount of interest from other companies and we're looking forward to finding sponsors for our remaining 5 locations.
Youth Education

On & off again school closings in Zimbabwe dramatically reduced the number of youth we were able to train in our after school coding program in 2021.

The main priority of local educators was to make up for lost time, which meant prioritizing their lessons over extra curricular activities and using all available spaces on school premises. Even so, grade 7 pass rates were just 37% in 2021.

In 2021 we had only 300 students in our youth program, down from our high mark of 1,470 in 2019.
05 Young Adult Education

While enrollment in our youth coding program, which relies heavily on partnerships with the government schools, was a bit out of our control, we were able to fill our Hubs with amazing young adults in 2021.

For 12 months, we provided free, full-time, technology education to 79 wonderful students who live in low-income communities across Harare and Bulawayo.
When we piloted the idea for a Mentorship program in 2020, it became clear right away how valuable this experience was. And not just for our students, but for the Mentors too!

In 2021, we were able to match all of our students and most of our staff with Mentors from all over the world!

With many students citing Mentorship as one of the most interesting and valuable perks of being a part of Uncommon, we are eager to continue growing and improving this initiative to turn it into a fundamental part of our student's learning experience.
07 Strategic Partnerships

We were able to make a few key partnerships that dramatically improved our offering and strengthened our organization in 2021. We are looking forward to building upon these relationships and deepening them in 2022 and beyond.

**UpMetrics** - 1 year sponsorship for their Data Analysis and Visualization tools.

**Digital Marketing Institute** - Sponsorship for 6 students to enroll in their internationally accredited Digital Marketing certificate program

**Nedbank Zimbabwe** - $25k sponsorship of our Bulawayo Hub

**BakerTilly** - 2 years of pro-bono financial audits

**ROI Training** - weekly, software development training led by Google and Amazon award winning trainers
We had the great privilege of winning two major grants that undoubtedly propelled our organization forward in 2021.

In March, we received notification that our grant application from the Australian Embassy had been successful. We were awarded $44,500 to put towards the construction of our three new Innovation Hubs.

In September, we received the extraordinary news that we'd won a three year, $300,000 grant from Oak Foundation. The purpose of the grant is for "Core Support" which means the funds should be used to augment our ongoing efforts.

Receiving this type of support from such outstanding institutions has been a wonderful testament to the hard work and innovativeness of our team in Zimbabwe.

We are extremely grateful to the Australian Embassy, Oak Foundation and to all of our supporters who are believing in us and empowering us to do this work.

Thank you so much!
Each year since inception, we have managed to raise more funds to support our students and team in Zimbabwe and we are grateful that we have been able to continue this trend in 2021, despite no additional development investments.

In 2020, we had increased our fundraising totals by nearly 30% from the year before, an amazing achievement for our small team.

With that said, it is extremely humbling to share with the Uncommon community that in 2021 we were able to raise roughly $330k, a nearly 70% increase from 2020!
Having crossed the $250k annual fundraising threshold for the first time, we are now subject to audited financial statements. To perform our audit, we have hired Todres & Company, LLP in New York.

This is a major milestone for our young organization and, in addition to our 2019 & 2020 audits conducted on our Zimbabwean entity by BakerTilly, represents the evolution of our organization from startup to more established nonprofit.

We are eager to work with the Todres team and will be posting our audited financial statements on to our website as soon as they are completed.
There is no doubt that COVID-19 impacted our organization in 2021, as it did companies large and small all over the world.

Despite the uncertainty, our team persevered and our employees and students should be incredibly proud of all that they accomplished in 2021.

As we look ahead to 2022, there are a few key initiatives that we are eager to focus on.

First and foremost, we will be listening to our students and instructors and putting sincere effort into updating and improving our curriculum and learning experience.

Secondly, we will be reflecting upon our organizational structure and working hard to implement more structure and best practices to empower our team to be as successful as can be.

Finally, we will be continuing to approach the issue of our financial sustainability and scalability creatively.
We believe wholeheartedly in our mission and are inspired by the students and graduates we get to work with on a daily basis.

We recognize the opportunity we have to be the leading provider of a free, technology education with zero student fees or prerequisites in Zimbabwe and beyond.

We also know that there is so much we don't know, and so much more we have to learn before we can truly achieve our goals as an organization.

This is something that we are excited to lean into. We are excited by the challenges and the unknowns and the opportunities to put our skills to the test and build an organization that will empower the next generation of Zimbabweans to be tech savvy, purpose minded and entrepreneurial young adults.

Thank you for being a part of this uncommon journey.