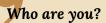# Can Web3 Save Small Charities?

an interview with **G.D Anderson, CEO** at **The Cova Project**

The Cova Project founder, G.D. Anderson, knows firsthand the challenges faced by global charities within the traditional philanthropy framework. In this interview, we will dive into her background with The Cova Project, how that experience has shaped her perspective on philanthropy, and what it is like to onboard a traditional organization into web3.

Who are you?

My name is Geena Dunne or G.D Anderson, depending on how you know me. I am the Founder and CEO of The Cova Project which is an Australian charity that provides menstrual health solutions to girls around the world. I started The Cova Project (Cova) in 2018 after becoming grossly aware of the negative ripple effects of period poverty. I knew that sustainable solutions existed and that the need for them was global. To date, The Cova Project has provided 15,000 reusable menstrual cups (which can last up to 10 years) to girls in Liberia, Ghana, Uganda, South Africa and Malawi. We also conduct in depth educational sessions and ensure that generations to come do not have to live with the same stigmas around menstruation. Our goals are simply to provide, Access, Education and Dignity!

What are the main challenges The Cova Project has faced from a financial perspective?

The Cova Project is an incredibly lean operation. We prioritize sustainability in all aspects of the organization, that includes financial sustainability...

...because of this we have fewer admin lines and a very small number of paid employees/consultants that are jacks of all trades. However, even with this strategy, the pandemic has significantly impacted us. Not being able to organize events and gather our supporters has made fundraising activities difficult and while there was a novelty to virtual activities at the beginning of 2020/2021, that has now worn off and we have had to start getting even more innovative.

What does web3 have to offer The Cova Project and similar organizations?

Web3 has been such an interesting step and fundraising avenue for The Cova Project. We were desperately searching for new supporters and new fundraising opportunities and web3 opened up a global network who were not yet familiar with us. Frankly, it is the land of opportunity.

You can't simply describe what web3 has to offer because it is whatever you make it. You can operate in a traditional charity sense, just opening yourself up to accepting cryptocurrency or you can dig deeper and explore NFTs and your own web3 fundraising initiatives.

In December 2021, we launched the Cova Dignity Collection which saw NFT artists around the world donate artwork and ongoing royalties to The Cova Project. This was an important campaign and revenue raiser for us.

What was the first step you took to introduce The Cova Project to web3? Who was your first point of contact?

Introducing The Cova Project to web3 required a lot of networking. It was about touching base with some of the influential women in the space and saying, 'hey, if you're ever looking for a charitable partnership, we're available'. One of the first people I connected with was Maliha Abidi from Women Rise and she made incredible efforts to spotlight the Cova Dignity Collection.

What were the main challenges in onboarding The Cova Project into web3?

Convincing our board! Look, there's no denying it, crypto is high risk. Any good board is going to have a million questions and want advice from lawyers and accountants before you touch the space. The good news is that as more and more charities enter the space, more information about that process is becoming available. My advice would be to gather as much information as possible before approaching your board, a great place to start is Philanthrop3.

How does The Cova Project benefit from web3 now? How can other projects do the same?

To date we have brought in close to $35,000 AUD from dabbling in Web3....

...just by having a presence and putting our hand up in a vastly underutilized space, we have been given revenue raising opportunities and the chance to create significant awareness for our cause!

What are some aspects of traditional philanthropy that should be avoided in web3?

While exploring the NFT space, I've been lucky enough to (separate from The Cova Project) look into decentralised philanthropy. This involves crowd funded, democratic grant-making that really flips the charity world on it's head. The parts of traditional philanthropy that this leaves behind are currency conversion, middle men and regulations around who and what you can fund. It's a fascinating way of giving, high in risk, high in impact. But, it has the potential to be very direct and low in admin, which is something worth celebrating. Frankly, for me, I'm ready to do away with constant need to donate to tax exempt causes and excited to bring in a new global system where those most in need can receive the funding they deserve.

Final thoughts: What are your hopes for The Cova Project in the future?

I hope The Cova Project can continue to benefit from web3 opportunities and stick around during these challenging times. Where a large number of charities have gone out of business, The Cova Project remains active and strong in it's ability to pivot. However, with the support of larger opportunities in web3, we can scale up our efforts and truly have a significant impact in combating the issue of period poverty. Access, education and dignity, it all starts here!