5 YEARS OF IMPACT

Fast Forward is creating a world in which the best tech is applied to our biggest social problems. By bridging the tech and nonprofit sectors, we mobilize funding and support critical to accelerating tech nonprofits.

The result?

Fast Forward’s mission is to accelerate good.

GOOD. AT SCALE.
When Fast Forward launched in 2014, the term “tech nonprofit” didn’t exist. Today the sector is flourishing, with over 400 tech nonprofits creating impact across the globe.
Fast Forward dramatically raised visibility for TalkingPoints and expanded our network as we scaled from an idea to a nationwide edtech platform. Thanks to Fast Forward’s support, TalkingPoints supported 5 million conversations between the parents of underserved students and their educators in 2018.

Heejae Lim
Founder & Executive Director of TalkingPoints, 2015 Accelerator Alumna
51M LIVES IMPACTED

$102M FOLLOW ON FUNDING
78% have personal experience with the problem they are solving

63% have a founder who identifies as a woman

73% have a founder who is a person of color
Fast Forward is this vital, not just accelerator, but gatherer of intelligence and resources and mentors and advisors for some of the most amazing and potentially world changing ideas.

Charles Best
CEO of DonorsChoose.org
In 2009, Michelle Brown walked into her classroom in rural Mississippi, eagerly anticipating her first day as a literature teacher. But reality didn't meet expectation. She was met with 50 students spanning 7 reading levels, in a dirty classroom without books or enough desks for her students.

Michelle spent her free time scouring the internet for high-quality classroom materials, but it didn't feel like enough. Her students - all students - deserved better than this. So she built a solution: CommonLit.

When we met Michelle in 2015, CommonLit was essentially printable PDFs for teachers. The next summer, the potential of CommonLit was actualized. She went through Fast Forward's Accelerator, which Michelle says, “taught [her] how to be a tech company,” helped her build a vital San Francisco network, and coached her on how to tell the CommonLit story - a story she tells the same way today.

By the end of the Accelerator, CommonLit launched a robust platform full of high-quality literature and standards-aligned assessment tools. After Demo Day, CommonLit won a $3.9M grant from the U.S. Department of Education. She was featured in TechCrunch. Thousands of students registered every day. The team grew 10x. 11 months later, CommonLit hit 1M users.

Today CommonLit has over 8 million registered users and is in over 65% of U.S. public schools. International expansion is in the works too; Mexico's Ministry of Education has endorsed CommonLit for country-wide curriculum.

We're excited for a future in which CommonLit transforms outcomes for all students.
Josh Nesbit was immersed in a research project in Malawi when he met Dickson Mtanga, a community health worker. Dickson walked 35 miles each week to check on patients and seek clinical advice from the “local” hospital.

While chatting with Dickson, Josh noticed he had stronger cell reception than in his Stanford dorm. He realized the mobile phone could unlock the system and tools health workers desperately needed to provide care. This idea became Medic Mobile.

Medic Mobile was at a technical turning point when Josh joined Fast Forward’s inaugural Accelerator cohort. A parallel SIM application ran its software - which powers analytics and communication for tracking vaccinations, disease outbreaks, and postnatal care - on any phone. The challenge was streamlining the software for accessible and efficient distribution. That summer, they built the Medic Mobile Standard Package, out-of-the-box software that any community can implement in one click. Hello, scalability.

Medic’s growth was augmented by an opportune Accelerator connection with Living Goods, which serendipitously needed a partner to help track health data and coordinate care in hard-to-reach places.

Medic Mobile dramatically expanded its impact footprint through the partnership, which enabled care for more than 1 million children over the past two years. Living Goods now equips community health workers with the SmartHealth App, powered by the Medic Mobile’s open-source technology, which guides health workers through diagnoses and supports real-time management for thousands of frontline workers.

In 5 years Medic Mobile has gone from serving 9,000 health workers to serving 24,450 health workers who provide care for 14 million people. Together, Medic Mobile and health workers like Dickson are changing the definition of healthcare for the last mile.
The problem was clear: nearly half of Americans can’t cover a $400 emergency. The issue hit close to home for Ronnie Washington, who as a teen, had been the financial cushion for his uncle, an extremely hard worker who fell into financial hardship. While at Stanford GSB, Ronnie began an ambitious journey to help America’s working poor break the cycle of poverty.

His solution? Onward, an employee benefit platform empowering low-wage workers to start savings plans. Fast Forward learned of Onward early on and kept in close contact.

In the meantime, Ronnie connected with Fast Forward’s 2016 GSB fellow, Jamie Poskin, at a professor’s house. Jamie’s Dad, Joe, ran a small manufacturing company, Prier Products, in Kansas City, MO. Prier employed weekly wage workers who would benefit tremendously from Onward. A few months later, Ronnie moved into Joe Poskin’s extra bedroom and launched the first Onward pilot with 30 Prier employees.

This momentum made Onward a fit for the 2017 Accelerator. Ronnie had yet to raise substantial funding, but that quickly changed. Onward won the $25,000 BlackRock Employee Choice Award at Fast Forward’s Demo Day, and Accelerator connections continued to augment the organization’s growth. A mentor connection with Google Site Reliability Engineer, Emmanuel Klu, expedited Onward’s technical development. Emmanuel helped Onward build a system architecture map, enabling automated user onboarding.

Returns on Accelerator connections didn’t end there. Onward received an additional $75,000 from BlackRock, $20,000 through Fast Forward’s partnership with StubHub, and eventually the biggest win of all. Chan Zuckerberg Initiative granted Onward $1M to fuel its growth, so that all Americans have a financial cushion.
I've spent my career bringing structure and clarity to complex problems, first as a Bain consultant and now at StubHub. In 2017 I met a founder who rocked my sheltered understanding of life in America, challenging me to channel my time and energy towards something bigger.

I met Brandon Anderson, founder of Raheem, while mentoring for Fast Forward's Accelerator. There was immediate chemistry in our 30-minute meeting, despite our wildly different skill sets and experiences. Brandon shared that his life partner had been shot and killed by a police officer with a history of bad behavior during a routine traffic stop. That tragedy propelled him to explore how technology could transform the culture of policing through increased accountability. After hearing Brandon’s vision, I knew he was going to change the world, and I needed to be a part of it.

We stayed in touch and I worked with Brandon to design his strategic plan and budget. Together, we've won almost $1M in funding. I feel lucky to be able to apply my corporate skills to something so meaningful, and to learn from someone like Brandon every week.

Last year Brandon invited me to join the Board as Chairman, and I jumped at the opportunity. So our journey continues. We're building the car as we drive it, and challenging each other as we scale a product that will radically change policing for the better.

It is incredible what a half hour has turned into, and I can't wait to see what is next for us.”

– Scott Spencer
Operational Strategy at StubHub & Chairman of the Board at Raheem
Coming from the tech world, we were unsure of the nonprofit route. After Fast Forward, we see a viable path forward that maximizes impact.

Atif Javed
Co-Founder of Tarjimly,
2018 Accelerator Alumnus
150 million women in India are low literacy. This generational lapse in education makes school readiness a challenge. Dost closes the gap with 1-minute daily audio messages that coach parents on how they can integrate learning at home. One message encourages teaching “big vs. small” by changing the size of rotis at dinner. In the past two years, Dost has grown from serving 300 families to 30,000.

With Tarjimly, the world’s 3 billion bilinguals can provide instant translations for the 25 million refugees across the globe. A life-saving app, Tarjimly recently connected a woman in her LA apartment with an NGO trying to communicate with the Turkish Coast Guard. The translation enabled a successful refugee rescue operation in the Mediterranean Sea. Through partnerships with leaders like the UN, Tarjimly aims to serve 1 million refugees in the next year.

WattTime’s flagship software detects surges in clean energy, enabling consumers to automatically choose clean power. Its newest invention, Emmissiorality, reverses the original tech to identify locations where renewable energy sources can have the most impact. This could reduce global CO2 emissions by 4.3 billion tons per year, equivalent to the EU’s annual energy-related emissions. The California Public Utilities Commission proposed WattTime provide the emissions software for the world’s largest energy storage program.

Upsolve is the TurboTax for Chapter 7 bankruptcy, making the road to financial rehabilitation accessible to low-income Americans. Through Upsolve’s platform, eligible individuals can file for bankruptcy in less than 2 hours, a process otherwise made prohibitive by high legal fees and cumbersome paperwork. In 2018, Upsolve gave 350 people a second chance, expanded to 47 states, and became the #1 nonprofit bankruptcy provider in the country.
Without Fast Forward we wouldn’t be where we are today. They go way above and beyond the norm. We’re routinely shocked to learn about resources and opportunities they’ve unlocked for us. And they’re pushing the whole tech nonprofit field forward. They’re completely unrivaled - the absolute best at this.

Jared Chung
Founder of CareerVillage.org,
2015 Accelerator Alumnus
Leaders across the tech & social sectors have mentored the Accelerator cohorts. 389.

41 Tech Nonprofits Accelerated.

OUR IMPACT

WE’VE FUNDED

WE’VE FUNDED

ALUMNI TECH TRENDS

13 Artificial Intelligence

8 Open Source

9 Crowd-sourced
OUR 5 YEAR JOURNEY

2014
The 1st Accelerator launches with 5 tech nonprofits.

2015

2016
With 23 Accelerator grads, an alumni program launches. Fast Forward is nominated for the TechCrunch Crunchies Social Impact Award. For the first year, more Accelerator teams come from outside the Bay Area.

2017

2018
Fast Forward publishes the first diversity report for the tech nonprofit sector. Signs of scale - the Tech Nonprofit Directory now contains 400 organizations. The Global Tech Nonprofit Community re-launches, now open to all tech for good enthusiasts.
OUR ALUMNI

2014
- MEDIC Mobile
- moneythink
- NOGRA Health

2015
- one degree
- SIRUM
- CALLISTO
- Career Village

2016
- Go forward
- #GottaMakeIt!
- Nexleaf Analytics
- Quill
- stellar
- talkingpoints
- Wall Time
- COMMON
t
- Democracy Earth
- Hack Club
- Intelehealth
- JustFix.nyc
- LEARN Fres
- OPEN Media Project

2017
- think of us
- WE THE PROTESTERS
- ISSUE
- Voter
- MindRight
- ONLINE SOS
- Onward
- Raheem

2018
- real talk
- Dost
- DREAMers Roadmap
- Empowerwork
- OBJECTIVE ZERO
- Peerlift
- tarjimly
- Upchieve
- Upsolve
- We Vote
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Bridging the tech & nonprofit sectors

Thanks to the support of our partners, we connect tech nonprofits to the capital, community, and connections they need to scale.
We Couldn't Do This Work Without You

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Lance Gonzalez
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Laura Gómez
Lauren Patterson
Laurence Dunn
Leah Laxamana
Leanne Pittsford
Leora Sherman
Leslie Garvin
Leslie Payne
Lindsay Dillon
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We started Fast Forward five years ago because we believe the biggest social problems deserve our best technology. Thanks to you, we’ve proven that tech can scale positive social impact. What excites us most is that this is just the first chapter.

With impatience optimism,
Kevin Barenblat & Shannon Farley
Co-Founders of Fast Forward