The Rise of Social Tokens with Lana Dingwall

an interview with **Lana Dingwall - @lanzdingz, co-creator of @astridparknft** and part of the **@blu3dao core-team**.
By @janeadlington

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Tell me about your background?

Lana (LD): My background is in entrepreneurship, and I run a coaching and consulting business. I do real estate investing. I have an off-grid camper motel, which I'm integrating into the Web 3 space by launching an NFT project which does profit sharing. I'm a core contributor in a DAO, and through my coaching business I teach a lot about Web 3. Many moons ago I worked in the charity sector as a fundraiser.

When did you get into Web 3/Blockchain?

LD: Around this time last year, I was seriously learning about it. I had heard about Bitcoin, blockchain, but learnt much more about it, then got into NFTs at the end of 2021 and joined a DAO. And for the last 8 or 9 months, I've been very heavily involved.

Why did you get into it?

LD: The more I learnt from being on the outside, the more tangible everything became for me. The potential for myself and entrepreneurship, but also the potential and possibility for genuinely creating a new world and creating a more just and equitable world that provides people with autonomy and sovereignty...

...I got really excited about that, and the more I learnt about the tech behind crypto, it was very hard for me not to get excited. There are endless use cases and possibilities and ways to correct things I felt needed to be corrected.

What do you think is the most interesting potential for the charity sector in web 3?

LD: Shaking up an industry that is often very slow moving and (in a respectful way) in the dinosaur ages! Integrating technology in a way that hasn't been seen before.

Nonprofits' ability to have impact is a lot larger, as they're able to raise money not just from local jurisdiction. They're able to work easier with grassroots communities, on the ground, outside of your own country. There's a lot of very tangible use cases that cut through a lot of bureaucracy and red tape that exists now.

"Web 3 helps inspire people to be more actively involved in non profit efforts, even if they're not in the industry."

Web 3 helps inspire people to be more actively involved in non profit efforts, even if they're not in the industry. In Web 3, the concept of public goods is, in a way, a variation of the non profits. Ethereum is a nonprofit organisation. It is registered as a nonprofit which is really cool.

Can you talk to us a bit about social tokens and how they could play a crucial part in the way charities raise money?

LD: Crypto is a token. NFT is a token. There's a lot of nuance in the way people define tokens because different tokens have different use cases, so it's not one definition to define them all.

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Social tokens are meant to help communities in varying forms: charities, organisations, could be a company, creators, DAOs use them a lot.

Essentially, social tokens allow you to create your own micro-economy. That could be backed by real term monetary value or FIAT, or it could just be a token to cash in for a prize. A community can reward its participants in whichever fashion they choose, which the community member can then redeem for really cool things and experiences. Or they can be used for voting, monetary purposes. The use cases for social tokens are endless, and it really depends on the use case as to the underlying value of the token.

How could social tokens be used in a membership organisation or not-for-profit?

LD: Ok, so you might have a paid subscription model, where people pay monthly with a credit card. But you could maybe have a token (the JC token, for example), whereby people who engage with your content or people who come to certain workshops, as long as they have a wallet, can be airdropped a certain number of tokens. The social token could be earnt, purchased or given. You need to think of them as creating your own micro-economy. You get to decide how you go about it.
If you're a charity, you could pay your volunteers in social tokens. You could give volunteers social tokens in exchange for their work that could give them perks, allow them to vote on policies, give them access to volunteer dinners. It really is how you choose to ascribe value to your tokens, but it is a really great way to build a sense of community with people and either reward or incentivise your community.

It creates this win-win scenario. A charity could sell a token, like a fundraising effort. You can make more social tokens.
Going back to Ethereum, they raised all their start-up capital to develop Ethereum, from just an idea: through selling ETH, the token, and using that money to develop Ethereum, the blockchain. They promised people, "If you give us 'x' amount of Bitcoin, you'll receive 'x' amount of ETH when we finally launch the token."
If you create a good enough incentive structure, a volunteer or donor can earn and then sell their social tokens and then be rewarded themselves....

...Or earn and cash-in for something valuable to them, even if that isn't cash in their bank account (experiences, voting rights etc.).

What do you wish people understood about Web 3?

LD: It's about so much more than money. Web 3 is a technology, and there's a token attached to that technology. I hope people can grasp that it's something to be used, and not necessarily owned, but it can be both.

It's a tool of liberation. There are so many unbanked people in this world. For example, not that long ago if you had family in Iraq, and you lived in Canada, you couldn't send money to Iraq. That's a use case for blockchain technology. You still can't easily send money to Iraq, even though there isn't a war there. From a non profit standpoint, Web3 allows you to work with unbanked communities. It allows you to work with communities that don't trust their Government or their financial institutions. That's one example.

It's all super traceable. It's really easy for donors to see who is donating what, where the money is going. Because it's a technology with smart contracts, you can automate a lot of things. A lot of nonprofits spend a lot of money on administration costs. You could cut down a lot of those fees by utilising smart contracts.

How would you encourage charities to explore Web 3?

LD: Read the articles on Philanthrop3!

Explore a DAO. DAOs are essentially cooperatives, and cooperatives aren't that far away from a not-for-profit. Alcoholics Anonymous actually is a DAO. It's a fully decentralised organisation that has shared treasuries and shared rules and policies, but everyone with a position of power is voted in. Those positions are temporary, and it's really run by the community itself.
Everyone who runs AA is a part of AA, and so that's kind of how a DAO works.

It's a community that has a shared bank account, that has policies and votes on things and is for the community run by the community. And so I wouldn't be surprised if a lot of nonprofits become DAOs in the future. It's a way to utilise blockchain tech, do the work you want to do, but do it in a way that's really conscious and "for the people by the people." So, definitely research various DAOs to get an idea on how that could work.
If you're very sceptical, I would read more about Vitalik Buterin, the creator of Ethereum. Read about his history. When Ethereum was created, the people around him wanted it to be like a Google or a Facebook, a private company, and he was adamantly against it. He wanted it to be a public good like the internet, like no one actually runs the internet. His values are actually fundamentally in alignment with community-based values over privatisation. A lot of what he does is for community and sharing of resources. He donates a lot of money. He could be a billionaire, but he's not. The reasons why he believes in Ethereum can help you have more trust in it.
We live in a world where we are sceptical about tech, and rightly so, but it helps me and gives me hope.

"There will be no industry that is untouched by blockchain technology in 15 years, just as there is virtually no industry today that hasn't been touched by the internet in some way."

What is the future of this intersection in your opinion?

LD: There will be no industry that is untouched by blockchain technology in 15 years, just as there is virtually no industry today that hasn't been touched by the internet in some way. There will be countries where the people are unbanked, but they have cell phones, so we must recognise that this technology is actually very accessible to the average person.

My hope for it is it gives us a micro way to experiment which will better influence macro things such as government and voting. We can vote in real time, we don't have to wait for these 4 year cycles.

It will help with banking, with credit lending, and things like that. Why do I have to give my age, gender, my marital status and my sexual orientation when I apply for credit? I should just be able to give the information that is required (ie. my credit history). It should have nothing to do with demographics. Statistics show that if you're from any minority group, it harms your credit. There are many ways it can make the world more just and equitable, but it could also go the reverse.

We can't write it off. People wrote off the internet! We can't stop it, so we want to make sure we cultivate it in a way that enriches the world in ways that you desire.

So much of why nonprofits can't do what they want is a lack of sustainability. Blockchain and Defi and staking in Ethereum offer a way to create more sustainability and treasury management. 10-15 years from now, we could have organisations that are financially sustainable forever. All the money you raise can go 100% to impact - that's pretty cool. That's a theory at the moment, but worth learning more about.

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Twitter - @lanzdingz

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Podcast: Spotify

https://open.spotify.com/show/5Mylz97MMY5otElqyz6QPp