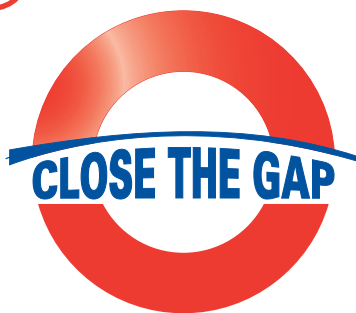


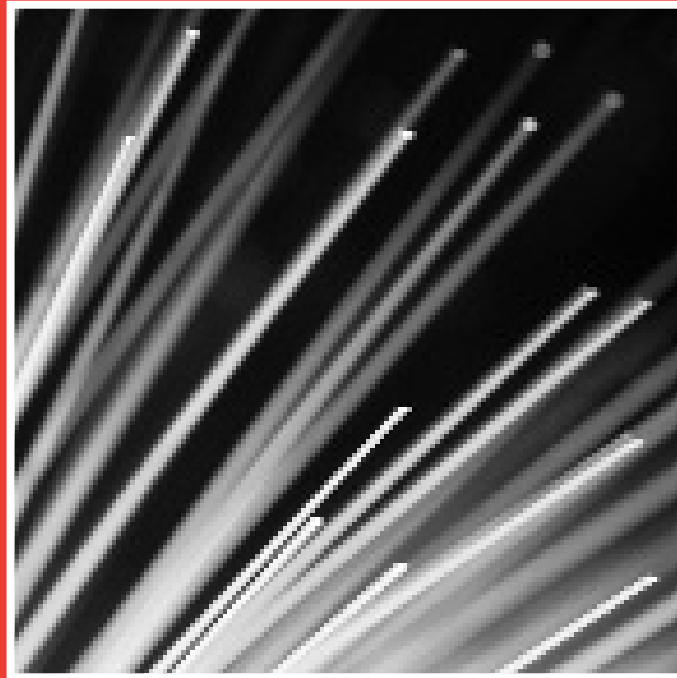
DISCOVER OUR NET



# Next Generation Broadband: From Dream to Reality



GENESIS 9:12: ESTA SERA  
LA SEÑAL DEL PACTO Y LA  
ALIANZA QUE YO  
ESTABLEZCO ENTRE MI  
Y VOSOTROS Y TODA  
ALMA VIVIENTE QUE  
ESTA CON VOSOTROS.



### **The Next Generation Dilemma**

Bringing fibre to the home and enabling very high speed, true broadband services is the dream of many – offering services unconstrained by the bandwidth of the connection. Yet it is not easy for many to roll out fibre connections to the home. Why is this?

There is of course a genuine dilemma facing industry, government and local communities. On the one hand many fear that our competitive position as a country will be eroded unless we speed up investment in next generation networks. On the other operators are wary of committing investment unless a clear commercial return can be anticipated. It is a classic chicken and egg situation. Everybody wants to move forward, but nobody seems able to take the first step. This is the Next Generation Dilemma.

### **Close the Gap**

Close the Gap has found a unique way of overcoming the Next Generation Dilemma. Our methodology is based on an old model, updated for a new setting. And it works. We have successfully connected every home in a small Dutch market town (the sort of town that would struggle to appear on an operator's radar). We are now rolling out our system in a major city, with others lining up to follow on.

Founded in the Netherlands in 2001, Close the Gap is expanding internationally with our first overseas office in the UK.

Our aim is simple to realise the dream of high-speed next generation networks available to everyone at home, at work, at school, benefiting their whole community.



*"A classic chicken and egg situation."*

Kees Rovers, Close the Gap



We have developed the know-how and the methods to connect thousands of homes to a reliable high-speed broadband network in just a few months. This takes more than professional expertise. It takes unbridled energy and passion. At Close the Gap that passion is shared by all of our employees and our partners. We are on a common journey, sharing a commitment to broadband and the positive changes to society that it can bring. We can close that last gap – the one between customers and suppliers.

#### **The Close the Gap Model**

The small Dutch town of Nuenen lies on the outskirts of Eindhoven. Until recently its one claim to fame was that Vincent van Gogh lived there from 1883 to 1885. Today it has become famous for something else. It is a town in which every household, all 7,500, are connected to a high-speed fibre network. The network installation was achieved in six months – and if you look around the town you will struggle to find any evidence of dug up roads and pavements. The network is called ‘Ons Net’ – Our Net in English. It belongs to the people organised through a co-operative association. And that is one of the keys to our success. When the fibre had been laid, and the Ons Net office opened for business, people literally queued round the block to sign up.

We have now extended the model into the city of Eindhoven where it has been met with similar enthusiasm.

Co-operative forms of organisation can be found around the world. The foundations of the global co-operative movement were laid in Rochdale, Lancashire, UK in 1844. Today over 600 million people throughout the world belong to co-operatives to meet their common needs – as consumers,



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farmers, healthcare professionals, in housing and many other areas. Close the Gap has taken this model and applied it to the problem of Next Generation broadband. The model works because the aim of the co-operative is to meet the needs of its community, rather than maximising the return on investment.

### **The Close the Gap Methodology**

The know-how of Close the Gap lies in being able to bring together the many different parties involved in the installation and exploitation of a fibre to the home network, so that each party can realise their goals and interests. This process needs leadership - the role that Close the Gap plays.

Our model is based on seven key elements: the funding package and business model; community engagement; the right mix of services; the development of local content and services; marketing and communications; first class, locally delivered customer care; managing the network of installers and operators. We take responsibility for overall planning and implementation, guaranteeing technical and operational quality. Our aim is to construct a network that becomes invisible once the fibre has been laid.

### **The Result**

Nuenen and now Eindhoven are becoming great test beds for the delivery of new types of service over very high-speed networks.

### **The results are startling.**

- 80% of the local population belong to Ons Net, paying for their phone, TV and Internet services.
- Nuenen has a high population of older people who are helping to define new ways of delivering healthcare and security over Ons Net. As a result Close the Gap have created the Ons Welzijn (Our Wellbeing) network.
- Local churches, schools and community associations are creating their own TV programmes through Ons Net.
- Local businesses are finding new ways to reach and serve their customers.

In short it is a fantastic success story. A story that can be repeated in your town!

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### **Contact details**

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