

ALOODA: a decision loop for compassion that holds up to evidence

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Abstract. ALOODA is a six-step decision loop, Attention, Listening, Observe, Orient, Decide and Act, with a 95% confidence gate before anything is acted on or published. It adapts John Boyd's OODA loop by adding attention and listening at the start, shaped by Ubuntu, and a fixed standard of evidence before action. This paper sets out the steps, the gate, the evidence rules that support it, and the evidence layer now in development as ALOODA 2.

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The problem: good intentions, weak evidence

In social, environmental and educational work, claims often travel faster than evidence. A number appears in a proposal, is repeated in a report, and becomes a fact nobody checked. When it fails, the people the work was meant to serve lose most: trust erodes, funding moves elsewhere, and good work is discredited along with the bad.

ALOODA exists to stop that. It is a decision loop for people who want to act with compassion and still be right: it slows the start, so that what follows can move with confidence.

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Where it comes from

ALOODA builds on the OODA loop of the military strategist John Boyd, whose four steps, Observe, Orient, Decide and Act, describe how people and organisations make sense of a changing situation and respond to it. ALOODA keeps those four steps, in that order, and credits them to Boyd.

It adds two steps before them. Attention comes from the practice, which the philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti returned to throughout his work, of looking fully before judging. Listening comes from Ubuntu: *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, a person is a person through other people. In ALOODA, the people affected by a decision are part of how it is seen, not an audience told about it afterwards.

The last addition is a gate: a fixed standard of evidence that sits between deciding and acting.

The six steps

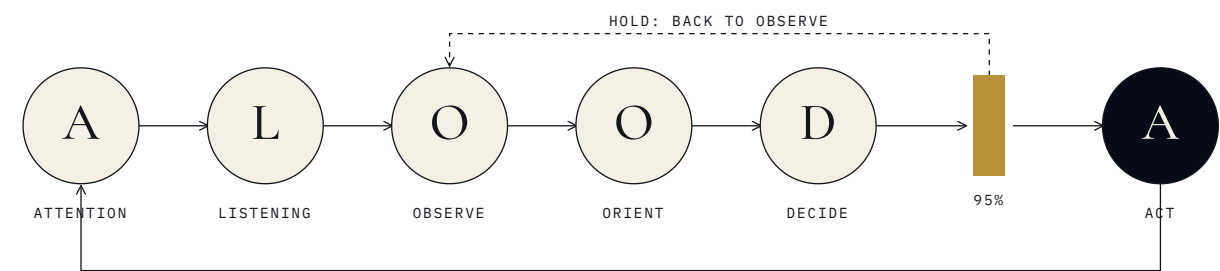


Fig. 1 · The ALOODA loop. Nothing passes to Act below 95% confidence; what fails the gate returns to Observe.

A	Attention	What is actually happening, and what are we not yet seeing? Output: A problem statement in plain words.
L	Listening	Who is affected, and what do they say they need? Output: A record of who was heard, how and when.
O	Observe	What does the evidence show, and where did each piece come from? Output: An evidence log with sources and provenance.
O	Orient	Which principles, laws and constraints should guide us here? Output: The guiding principle, with the legal and ethical checks that apply.
D	Decide	What will we do, and what will we deliberately not do? Output: A decision with its reasons.
95	The gate	Is the evidence strong enough to act on or to publish? Output: Pass, or HOLD with what is missing.
A	Act	Do it, and record what happened. Output: The delivery, and results that feed the next loop.

The 95% confidence gate

Before Uthando acts on a claim, publishes it or advises on it, the evidence must be strong enough that we would expect it to hold at least nineteen times in twenty. Where it is not, the claim is held and returned to Observe, or it is removed.

It is never softened. A claim that cannot be evidenced does not become a vaguer claim that still implies the same thing. The rule is short: a claim we cannot evidence is removed, not

softened.

The gate is a standard of judgement made explicit. Where data allow, it is backed by formal measures; where they do not, it is applied through the evidence rules below, and the reasoning is recorded so that someone else can check it.

"A claim we cannot evidence is removed, not softened."

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Evidence rules

- ◇ Every number has a source, and the source is named where the number appears.
 - ◇ Every observation is labelled by how it was gathered: measured, estimated or reconstructed.
 - ◇ A combined figure is only as reliable as its weakest input.
 - ◇ Anything not yet verified is labelled as such, and is not counted toward a conclusion.
 - ◇ Corrections are visible: a claim is shown as verified, corrected or flagged, never silently changed.
 - ◇ Nothing is published about a person without their consent, and nothing about a child without a parent or guardian's consent.
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ALOODA 2: the evidence layer (in development)

ALOODA 2 applies the same loop to data itself. Each observation carries a record of how it was gathered and how far it can be trusted, so that a dashboard, a model or a report can show not only a result but how much weight that result deserves.

Its first field tests are in image-based screening, where a photograph only counts as evidence once a person has checked it. The detailed method is not published while it is being tested and protected.

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Where ALOODA is used

Every case study on this site shows its ALOODA path. Impact News adds nothing to the public page without a person's approval. Evidence Audits mark each claim in a report as verified, corrected or flagged, with its source. Research programmes use ALOODA as their impact standard operating procedure. Proposals, fundraising packages and the Uthando Safety Protocol are written to the same gate.

It has been in use since March 2026, when it first appeared by name in a dated research proposal.

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What ALOODA is not

It is not a guarantee of outcomes, a certification, or a substitute for professional, legal, medical or ethical review. Where those are needed, ALOODA's job is to make sure they happen before anything is acted on.

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Citing this paper

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Version history

VERSION	DATE	CHANGE
1.0	7 October 2026	First public version.