



Project Facilitation

## Frequently Asked Questions



### KarmaCompany works with a variety

of organizations to make amazing projects into a reality. If you're thinking of contacting us to facilitate your project, consider our basic guidelines and review our FAQs first. It'll save a lot of time



**What kind of projects does KarmaCompany take on?** We pride ourselves on the diversity of our partner organizations and the ingenuity of their projects. The main requirement is that the project fits within our six areas of focus: Agriculture, animal welfare, community, education, health, or women's empowerment.

**What kind of help can KarmaCompany offer for my project?** Our organization assists projects in a number of ways, all of which depends on the task at hand. Examples of in-house services offered include consulting, marketing, content creation, monitoring and evaluation, and outreach. KarmaCompany also finds ways to multiply the project's impact. The availability of these services varies depending on the availability of our staff members, volunteers and advisors.

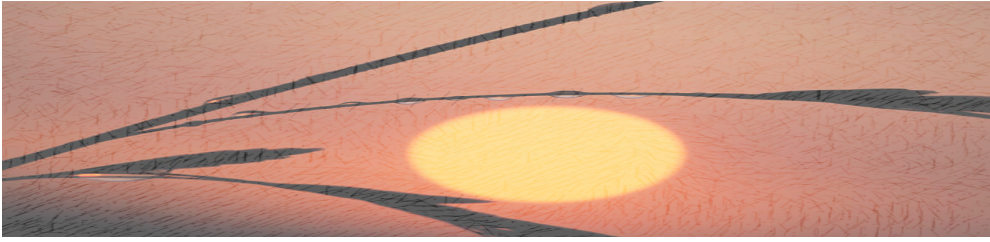
**Do you offer financial support?** The answer is (perhaps frustratingly) "sometimes," and, "it depends." KarmaCompany may fund certain aspects of a project if necessary, if the need is compelling, and the impact resulting from the funding is substantial. In such instances, however, the organization must be able to pull its fair share in the project's implementation by offering its own financial and non-financial resources. Let's provide two scenarios for clarity:

**Example 1:** An organization wants to hold a week-long workshop that gives basic first aid training to women. They have the trainer, venue, 25 interested women in the community, and a presentation. However, they need assistance assembling the content for a manual and with its printing costs. As another item on the wish list, the organization would like materials for first-aid kits. These kits would allow each woman to practice with the instructor one-on-one and to use in their community.

**Example 2:** An organization wants to go door-to-door and drop off first-aid kits with instruction manuals. They hope the women will use the kits accordingly. This organization seeks assistance in assembling the manual, with the printing costs, and with the first aid kits.

From the examples above, KarmaCompany would be willing to support the first initiative with costs and content creation, but not the second. In the first, the organization is providing considerable resources in its community outreach, time from staff members, hiring a trainer, and hosting the event. What they're requesting from KarmaCompany *enhances* their event and *multiplies its impact*, but they do not expect us to do all of the legwork. With example 2, our organization bears all of the cost and content creation, and the receiving organization does quite little (procurement and distribution).

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Our work takes us across sectors, to large organizations and small.

**Do you partner with for-profit organizations or businesses?** Yes, but we only take on projects that are clear examples of social responsibility. For example, we will not work with a bottled water company to distribute its product to areas with no access to clean water... but we might work with that company to establish pumps and wells in these underserved areas. KarmaCompany will not work with a clothing retailer to offer shirts at an affordable rate to students... but we might work with the retailer to host a drive that collects second-hand clothing for distribution in orphanages.

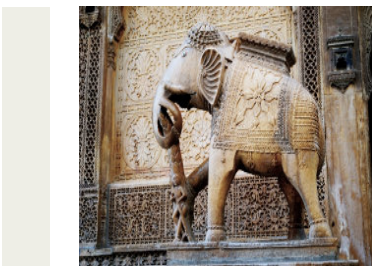
KarmaCompany does, however, support *social businesses*. If the for-profit's mission is built around offering a product or service that clearly serves a social good, KarmaCompany will work on projects that may enhance that business's bottom line. For instance, we may agree to do an outreach and marketing program for an organization whose mission is to provide at-cost, locally grown organic meals to school cafeterias.

**Do you work on political projects?** No. We stay out of politics and lobbying. KarmaCompany also steers clear of strikes and protests. Though some of our advisors and staff members hold strong views about certain politically charged issues (organic agriculture, for example), we choose to take on projects that contribute to what we wish to see in the world, irrespective of who's in power.

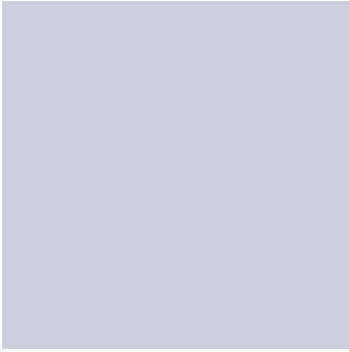
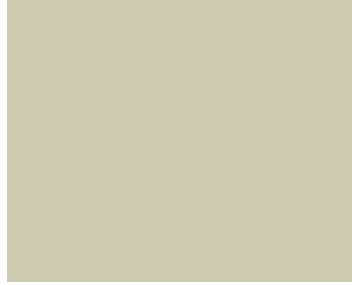
**Do you work with political organizations on non-political projects?** No. We do not work with organizations where its main focus is the advancement of a political belief or ideology. KarmaCompany may, however, work with organizations that have engaged in political or lobbying behavior (case in point: an environmental group that lobbied congress for the passage of a clean air bill).

**Does KarmaCompany take on projects with religious institutions?** No. KarmaCompany does not partner with religious organizations, even if the project has no connection with promoting a religious belief. We will, however, work with organizations irrespective of the religious beliefs of its founders or members. (for instance, KarmaCompany may still work with an agriculture organization whose founder is a devout Hindu, or Muslim, or Sikh, etc).

**Does KarmaCompany work with individuals?** No. KarmaCompany works only with organizations. Individuals with no affiliation to a group may not propose project ideas to us, even if the idea is beneficial to society. If you are an individual wishing to implement a project, we recommend offering the idea to an organization doing related work. The coordinator may then contact KarmaCompany for project facilitation consideration. If wishing to participate, we suggest volunteering with us or with the organization.



**At what stage of my project should I contact you for project facilitation?** We don't mind working on early-stage projects, but the project must already be approved and a sure thing. We **don't** take on projects that "may happen if we receive \_\_\_," or, "are thinking of doing it, but we're still seeing if it's feasible," or, "if KarmaCompany signs on we'll do the project, otherwise we won't." Your organization must be committed to the project, and able to allocate the resources to make it happen. We are merely facilitators; not miracle-workers (though we try!).



## + Considerations

### When pitching your project

As much as we'd love to take on every project that comes our way, we can't. KarmaCompany urges every organization to consider the following when proposing their project. Though we don't ask such questions in the initial application, such considerations will be weighed in the follow-up interviews.

**Does my organization have sufficient resources to complete this project?** Despite the best-laid plans, sometimes not enough volunteers come on board. Input costs may shoot up unexpectedly. Monsoon season stretches the project date by two weeks. The application asks for budget and expenses to assess if the

organization is well prepared for these types of scenarios. Resources also include staff members and volunteers: Are enough people available to work on the project? Do they possess the necessary skills to complete the tasks at hand, or will a contractor have to be hired? These are all questions that should have answers before KarmaCompany takes on the project.

**Are my outcomes known?** The best projects are the ones with clear, quantitative outcomes. If hosting a health clinic, we want to know that 100 members of the community have RSVP'd, or that 200 households have pre-ordered solar lanterns with a 75-rupee down payment.

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KarmaCompany does *not* want to take on projects with numbers based on speculation and hope. We recognize that nobody can know for sure how many people will sign up for events, or how many will order a product, but in such cases, we want to see strong past performance indicators.

**Does my project have a clear, realistic timeline?** Even one-day events should have a timeline of activities needing completion in the weeks or months leading up to it. Such timelines should include planning sessions, outreach activities, payment calendars, etc. Timelines are a great way to walk through the project requirements, and also, identify unexpected costs.

**Do I as a project leader have sufficient experience and the skills necessary to execute this project?** It's amazing, the broad range of skills required to pull off a single mission. Orchestrating a book drive, for instance, requires extensive networking, phone solicitations, social media skills, supply chain and transportation know-how, and event management expertise. Even with volunteers and talented staff, leaders have their hands in several pots. Every project coordinator should carefully assess their strengths and weaknesses, weighing them carefully against the requirements at hand. It's okay not to be a people-person, or to be terrible at writing... but recognizing this also means that hosting an event or creating manuals may not be the best project for you. A project's success truly depends on the people implementing it.

**Where does my project need the greatest**

**boost of help?** No organization is perfect at everything, and we recognize this. It's why KarmaCompany exists—to fill in the gaps and offer help where it's needed the most. When reviewing the project requirements, circle the ones that pose the greatest challenges: maybe it's finding the right venue, or getting a list of contractors capable of building a shelter in a new city, or figuring out if you're getting the best possible price on printing. Identifying these weaknesses allows us to know where to help you. We use our expertise or find people in networks that excel in your areas of weakness.

**What other projects have been done like this one?** Every project has lessons—many of them. If another organization has undergone a similar endeavor as the one you wish to do, *get in touch with them*. Learn what went right, what went wrong, and what they'd change if given a second chance. Learn about the vendors they used, the amounts they paid, and the headaches they incurred. In essence... learn from their mistakes. Unlike businesses, nonprofits are usually happy to share such information.

**How do I measure the success of this project?** We're talking concrete numbers: students enrolled, strays adopted, mosquito nets installed, books collected, etc. These figures help us assess a greater picture: the cost per "unit" of impact. For example, let's say it costs approximately \$15 to enroll one village student in a summer course. By contributing an additional \$200, it would be possible to enroll an additional 30 students and lower the overall cost to \$10 per

student. KarmaCompany loves finding ways to maximize the impact with a small contribution, but this can only be done with clear metrics at the project's outset.



## Managing the project...

Requires clear outcomes, organizational resources, a strong leader, and sometimes a bit of help. That's what we're here for.

### What is the project's opportunity cost?

The opportunity cost is simply what your organization's giving up in order to pursue this project. So, let's say a project costs 1 lakh to implement, and a month's worth of time from 10 staff members. Are there better ways to spend this time and money? Also recognize that the opportunity cost is higher if your organization is taking on a new, untested project. In such cases, organizations spend more money and time than they would if they had experience. Though we don't negatively judge groups for taking on new projects, they should be weighed carefully against alternative pursuits. While it sounds like common sense, organizations should make the most of their limited time and money.

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Almost done!



Wrapping this up, review the checklist to ensure your organization's ready to take the next step by submitting an application:

- My project fits with one of KarmaCompany's six areas of focus: Agriculture, animal welfare, community, education, health, and women's empowerment.
- I understand that project facilitation does not necessarily include financial support, nor does my project need funds from KarmaCompany in order to succeed.
- I'm seeking support on behalf of my organization, which is not political or religious in nature.
- The project's aim is to benefit society, and does not directly boost my organization's financial wellbeing.
- My organization has already signed off on the project, and it has been allocated sufficient resources for its completion.
- The project has well-defined qualitative and quantitative objectives.
- The project has a clear, realistic timeline.
- The project leader has all of the skills and expertise necessary to execute the tasks at hand.
- The organization has identified the project's weak spots and possible points of involvement for KarmaCompany.
- I have researched similarly completed projects, and may use these organizations as references for assistance on my organization's project (optional but highly recommended).
- I can clearly measure the project's success.
- I have weighed the opportunity costs of undertaking this project over others.

We look forward to receiving your application, and best of luck on your organization's success!

--Catherine Capozzi,

Co-founder of KarmaCompany