



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-26

APRIL 2023  
karuna.org



# Purpose

## OUR PURPOSE

Karuna works alongside the most excluded people in South Asia, overcoming discrimination with locally-led education, gender equality and sustainable livelihood projects.



# change

## HOW WE CREATE CHANGE

When an individual's life changes, they can change their community. When a community changes, they can change society.



### SKILLS & SUPPORT

By providing people with tools, support and skills, they become champions of their communities and support others.

### SUSTAINABILITY

Working with local organisations within the affected communities themselves, we encourage self-reliance and sustainability.



### TRANSFORMATION

We bring these organisations together, forming networks which can spread their benefit to more individuals, restarting the cycle of transformation for others.



# Compassion



## Our Roots

Karuna has been working with excluded communities in South Asia for more than 40 years.

We specialise in partnering with local organisations, many of whom are from the communities they are seeking to support. This means our interventions are locally-led and not imposed from outside.

At Karuna, 'how' we do things is as important as 'what' we do. Karuna has always been a Buddhist Team-Based Right Livelihood, aimed at creating a culture of compassion. Specifically, a Team-Based Right Livelihood has four characteristics: an ethical purpose, providing sufficient financial support for those involved, cultivating an environment for spiritual practice and financial viability. We therefore view our work as an opportunity to express our Buddhist principles.

We believe our ethical outlook and unique approach to fundraising based on Buddhist principles creates a strong sense of connection with our supporters and our partners.



# WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN OUR LAST PLAN 2020-23



# impact

**WE REACHED MORE THAN 200,000 VULNERABLE PEOPLE WITH LIFE-SAVING COVID-19 EMERGENCY AID**



**WE REACHED UP TO 350,000 PEOPLE PER YEAR**



**KARUNA AND ITS SISTER CHARITIES COMMITTED £6,473,471 IN PROGRAMME FUNDING**



**WE ESTABLISHED A NEW PROGRAMME IN BANGLADESH AND EXPANDED OUR WORK IN NEPAL**



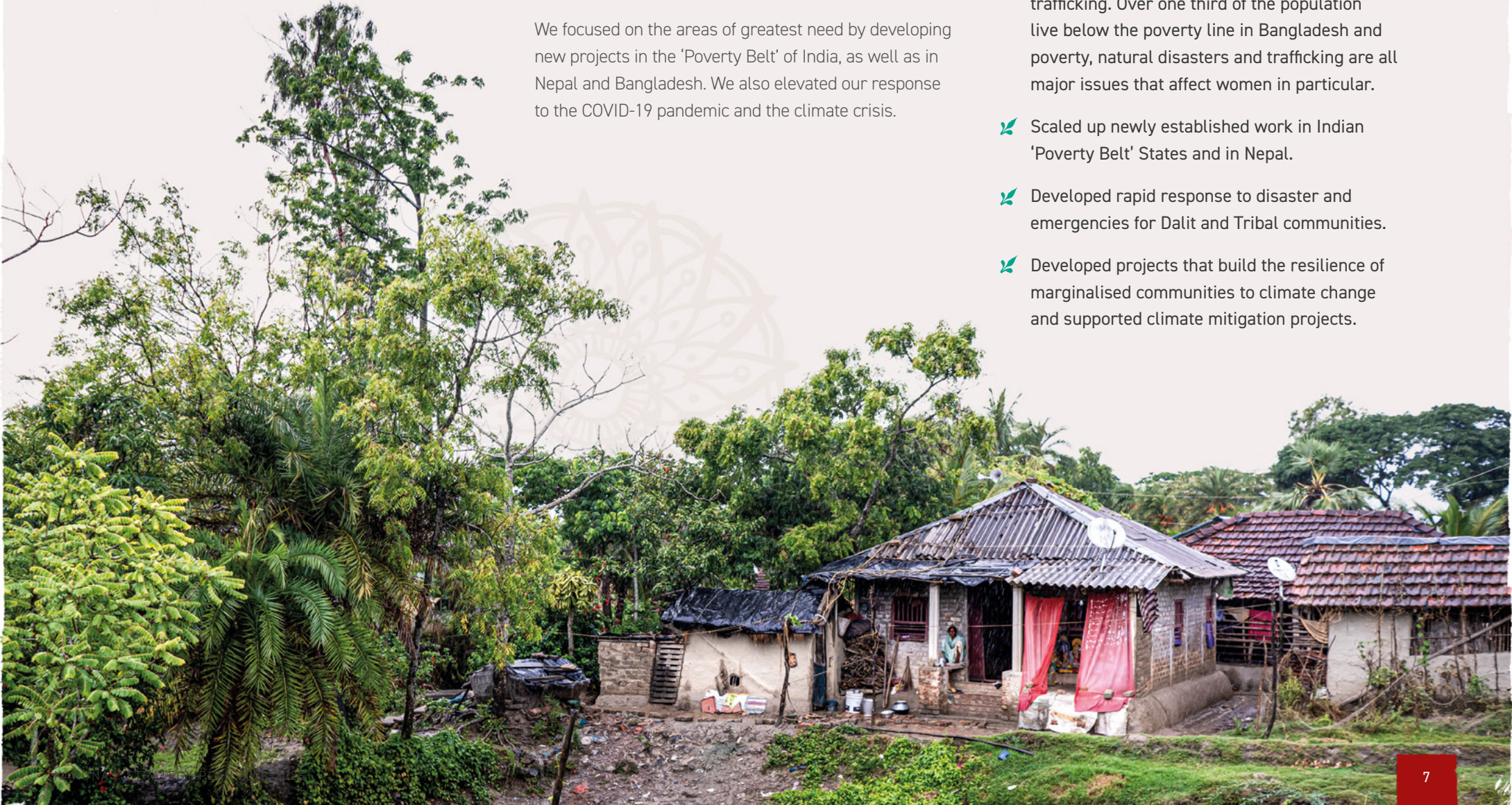
# resilience

## We Targeted Areas of Greatest Need

We focused on the areas of greatest need by developing new projects in the 'Poverty Belt' of India, as well as in Nepal and Bangladesh. We also elevated our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis.

### Most notably, we:

- ✔ Researched and developed a pilot project in Bangladesh focusing on climate resilience and trafficking. Over one third of the population live below the poverty line in Bangladesh and poverty, natural disasters and trafficking are all major issues that affect women in particular.
- ✔ Scaled up newly established work in Indian 'Poverty Belt' States and in Nepal.
- ✔ Developed rapid response to disaster and emergencies for Dalit and Tribal communities.
- ✔ Developed projects that build the resilience of marginalised communities to climate change and supported climate mitigation projects.



# Transformation



## We Strengthened Our Three Core Areas

We strengthened the three core areas of our work, Education, Gender Equality and Sustainable Livelihoods, and delivered deeper, more lasting impact to the most marginalised communities in South Asia.

### We also:

- ✔ Increased our reach from 99,000 people in 2019 to 247,000 in 2022.
- ✔ Increased our combined project spend from £1,295,604 in 2019 to £2,114,463 in 2022.
- ✔ Strengthened our in-country capacity, including safeguarding training and provision.

# collaboration

## We Created Innovative Partnerships for Funding and Advocacy

We increased opportunities for innovative project funding by collaborating with other organisations and experts to attract institutional funding and implement exciting new projects.

### This meant we:

- ✔ Implemented a new funding model to ensure that core commitments are more sustainable.
- ✔ Reduced our risk and increased our flexibility for funding new projects and initiatives.
- ✔ Developed a digital income stream and presence.



# community

## We Committed to Our Unique Approach

We wanted to deepen and strengthen relationships with supporters and attract more people to Karuna through connection, community, transparency and authenticity.

### To achieve this, we:

- ✔ Mobilised supporters to fundraise in their communities and participate in campaigns, such as our Coronavirus Crisis Campaign which raised over £500,000.
- ✔ Accessed new leadership gifts funding from trusts and major donors.
- ✔ Engaged staff in Team-Based Right Livelihood activities such as meditation mornings and retreats which emphasise work as a spiritual practice.



# THE IMPACT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE TOGETHER IN 2023-26



# vision

We will support excluded communities most impacted by the long-lasting effects of the pandemic and the ongoing climate crisis.

Karuna has identified the key areas for our work in South Asia: girls' education, protection of migrant workers and their livelihoods, prevention of violence against women and climate resilience. Developing these areas is a strategic priority.

By 2026 we aim:

## TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

To support **50,000 families** per year to access improved livelihood security and protection from exploitation.



## TO KEEP MORE GIRLS IN EDUCATION

To keep **12,000 girls** per year in school and out of child marriage.

## TO PROTECT MORE WOMEN

To protect **20,000 women** per year from violence and trafficking.



## TO EMPOWER COMMUNITIES

To enable **20,000 people** per year who are living on the frontline of climate disasters to create resilient communities and mitigate the impacts of climate change.



## TO EXTEND OUR REACH

To have researched options for extending the reach of our work beyond India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

# Context



## The context of this focus:

- ◆ The livelihoods crisis and disruption of services post-COVID, which are deepening poverty and inequality.

The COVID-19 pandemic has left a profound lasting impact on the communities we work alongside, particularly in terms of job insecurity and increased conditions for poverty. The number of internal migrants and daily-wage earners has increased, with many facing uncertainty about their future.

- ◆ The increase in climate disasters and their consequences, such as mass displacement, affecting the communities we serve.

Many of the areas we work are climate hotspots, with flooding, drought and other disasters on the increase. As the poorest communities are often forced to live in the most high-risk areas, they subsequently become the most vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change.

- ◆ The threats and increased restrictions faced by our partners and funders in India.

Greater restrictions in India mean that our partners and funders are potentially under threat and of losing financial support, making it more challenging to address the needs of affected communities.



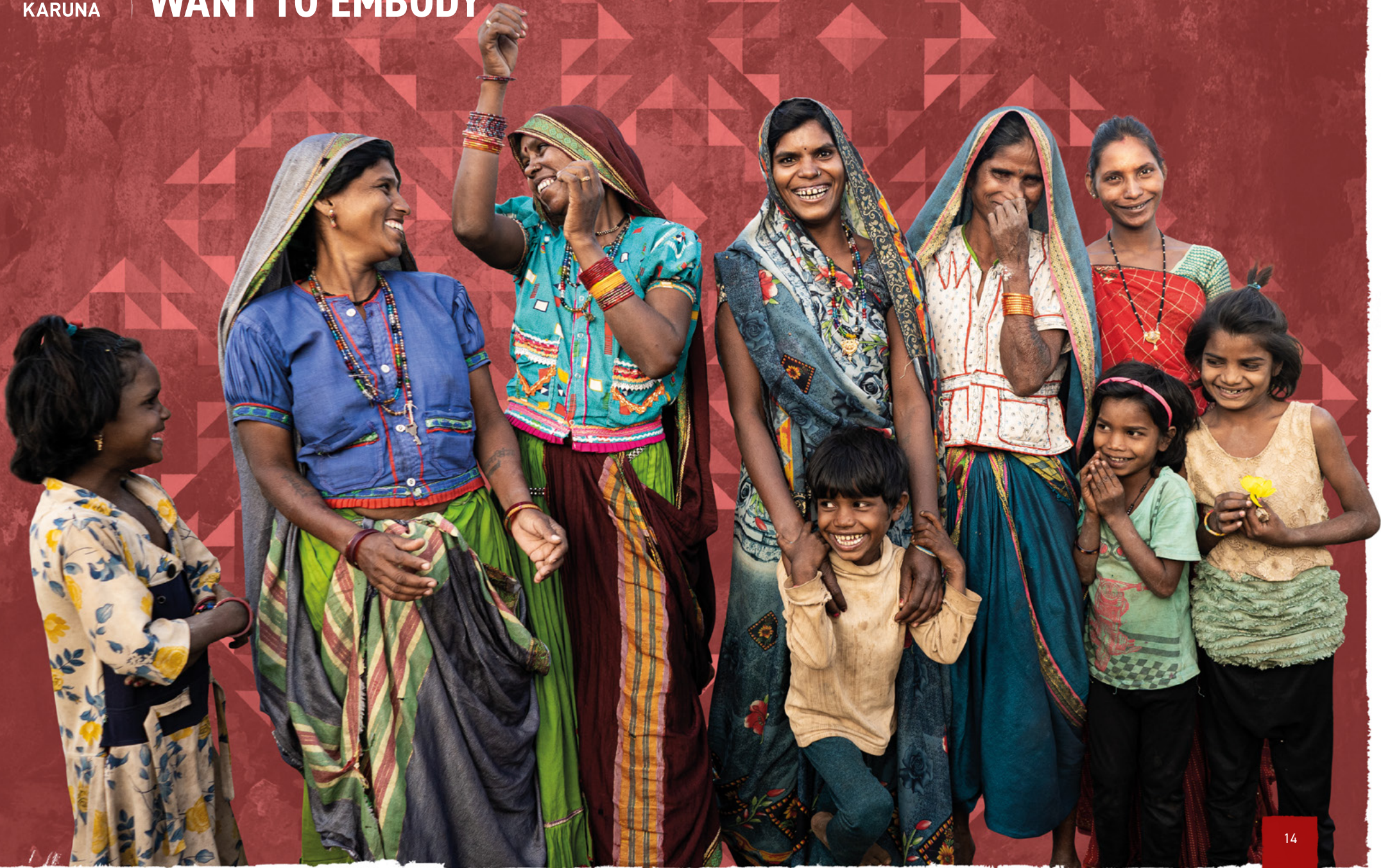
- ◆ The opportunities in Nepal from the new constitution and decentralisation of Nepalese Government.

The new constitution and government decentralisation creates opportunities for us to work together with local communities and officials to promote sustainable and inclusive growth in Nepal.

In order to engage these issues collectively, there is a need for a multi-faceted approach that addresses the root causes of poverty and inequality in a changing ecological and political landscape. This requires action on the part of governments, international organisations and the private sector, as well as support from the international community. By working together, it is possible to create a more equitable and sustainable future for all people, regardless of their background or circumstances.



# THE VALUES WE WANT TO EMBODY



# connection

We will demonstrate that we are a creative and ethical organisation that exemplifies the Buddhist concept of Team-Based Right Livelihood.

Our approach is grounded in ethical principles, ensuring that we operate in a transparent and responsible manner. We believe that our commitment to Team-Based Right Livelihood sets us apart from other organisations and gives us a unique perspective on how to address the challenges facing the communities we work alongside. Our focus on collaboration and building human connection allows us to tackle complex problems in a creative and effective way, making a meaningful impact in the lives of those we serve.

At Karuna, we are proud of our ethical vision and are committed to living it out in everything we do.



**By 2026 we aim to have:**

- ① Clearly expressed the vision of Karuna as Team-Based Right Livelihood – the forefront of our organisational values.
- ① Supported the development of an intentional framework for hybrid working as a Team-Based Right Livelihood organisation.
- ① Continued to develop conditions for the personal and spiritual growth of individuals.
- ① Developed Karuna as an opportunity for sangha (community) for those working and volunteering in the organisation but also for those we partner with and our supporters.
- ① Engaged the wider Buddhist community who experience Karuna as an exemplar of 'engaged Buddhism,' meaning Buddhist practice that is actively engaged in the world working for social change.

# inclusion



We will express our values of diversity, equity and inclusion at every level of our work.

At Karuna, we believe that diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is at the core of bringing about the change we aspire to make in the world. Over the next three years, we will strive to exemplify an anti-racist, local community-led approach to social change, and to reflect values of DEI across every area of our work.

## BY 2026 WE AIM TO HAVE:

### THE BOARD:

- Continued to increase the diversity of our trustees and added those with DEI experience and/or expertise.
- Exemplified, in our ways of working, best DEI practice and learning from our mistakes.
- Listened to and ensured decisions are informed by voices from the communities we support by creating more opportunities for members of our target communities to input into Karuna's work and decision-making.

### AS A TEAM:

- Provided innovative training in: anti-racism, decolonisation awareness, caste-based discrimination and gender-based discrimination.
- Strengthened groups such as the Karuna Black and Minority Ethnic Group.
- Ensured all HR policies are updated in line with DEI, known and practiced.

### IN OUR PROGRAMMES:

- Developed our locally-led approach by creating new opportunities for feedback and participation by members of our target communities.
- Ensured locally-led partnerships for participatory project design and evaluation are effective.
- Reviewed representation of in-country versus UK-based leadership and expertise.



# HOW WE WILL SUPPORT THIS CHANGE



# Support



We will ensure the sustainability of our impact by diversifying our funding opportunities and amplifying our voice.

For over 40 years, Karuna has mobilised resources to transform the lives of people in South Asia.

We have grown and now have two sister charities — Karuna Germany and Karuna USA. Together we want to build a network of organisations working together and sharing resources with the common aim of supporting excluded communities to overcome discrimination.

To deliver our aims and be a thriving organisation without significantly increasing costs we need to continually improve how we work.

**By 2026 we aim to have:**

- 🎯 Developed and strengthened the relationships within Karuna's sister charities (Karuna USA, Karuna Germany and The Karuna Trust).
- 🎯 Increased our income by reaching new audiences and deepening our connection with our existing supporters, increasing support and inviting people to fundraise for us.
- 🎯 Developed fundraising expertise by protecting, deepening and sharing our unique approach and connecting with the wider fundraising world to draw on best practice.
- 🎯 Engaged the wider Buddhist community to help champion our work.



# commitment

# £8.8 Million

## Our Financial Goal

Collectively, Karuna (The Karuna Trust, Karuna Germany and Karuna USA) is starting the new strategy period in a strong financial position.

This solid financial foundation provides the organisation with the resources needed to continue its work and make a positive impact on the lives of those it serves. To ensure its continued success and growth, we have set an ambitious goal to increase our income by 20% over the next 3 years. This will require a focused effort to expand the organisation's reach, deepen its impact and secure new resources.

In all, we aim to invest £8.8 million towards achieving our programme objectives in the next 3 years.

This growth of income will enable Karuna to expand its programmes and reach more people. It will also provide the organisation with the resources needed to address the challenges facing communities in South Asia and beyond. The commitment to £8.8 million will help ensure that Karuna can deliver on its purpose to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those it serves.





The Karuna Trust  
72 Holloway Road  
London  
N7 8JG  
UK

**T** 0207 700 3434  
**E** info@karuna.org  
**f** facebook.com/karuna.org  
**t** @karuna\_trust\_uk  
**@** @karunatrust

CEO  
**Ciaran Maguire**

Patrons  
**Dame Judi Dench DBE**  
**Prof. Sir David Spiegelhalter OBE**

**Karuna Trustees** (all members of the Triratna Buddhist Order):  
Vajramudita Armstrong (Chair), SuYen Tan, Lena Milosevic MBE,  
Peter White, Sundeep Grewal, Ms Savita

Design & Illustration by If Destroyed Still True

**[www.karuna.org](http://www.karuna.org)**

The Karuna Trust is a registered charity No 327461

