

COMPANY OVERVIEW: Taara Projects (TP) is a fashion social enterprise committed to economically empowering artisans at risk for poverty and upholding a supply chain that is environmentally conscious from start to finish. Our clothing is handmade by artisans in Chennai, India, and sold to consumers in the US on our e-commerce platform

CHALLENGE: The fashion industry's socially and environmentally exploitative practices have created a drastic problem that necessitate holistic solutions. Thus far, the industry has not done enough to reverse the severe damage it has caused by the norms it's upheld in its production and employment practices. TP is committed to sustainability, ethicality, and transparency throughout its business model to set an example of the viability of adopting such traits into one's business from the start.

SOLUTION: Our solution is an e-commerce platform that sells products made by artisans at risk for poverty, made using upcycled deadstock material and eco-conscious practices, thus reducing our brand's environmental harm. These artisans are from Chennai, India, and are employed by our partner, Zy-lk, a young fashion brand with the same core values as TP. Our profits are reinvested back into our business model, which enables us to continue our social mission.

MARKET: A 3-year forecast indicates that the market for the ethical and sustainable fashion industry will expand, with an expected CAGR of 10.33% till 2023 and 9.1% in 2030. Our target market is primarily made up of Gen-Zers and Millennials on the younger side of the age-range, particularly between the ages of 18-24. This age range has been selected through our social media analytics as well as global statistics indicating that over 57% of respondents in this age range are willing to pay more for products with less negative environmental impact (McKinsey), and 49% of respondents aged 18-24 were very supportive of the sustainable clothing industry (HSBC and KPMG). This year, according to McKinsey's State of Fashion report, COVID has accelerated industry trends, with shoppers shifting to digital channels and championing fairness and social justice in their spending and consumption habits. Thus, TP has the necessary attributes for growth in the emerging, but promising, fashion e-commerce market.

MILESTONES: Since February 2019, Taara Projects has grown to be a team of 7. We established a partnership with Zy-lk, in charge of the production of our pants in Chennai. We launched our website and social media page on Instagram, participated in the Fast Forward U Spark and Social Innovation Lab accelerator programs, and have been featured in writeups on their websites, as well as in NoKill Magazine and the JHU Newsletter. In January 2021, we received over \$2000 in funding from the JHU Alumni Association and Ignite Fund.

REVENUE MODEL: We will generate our revenue through direct sales on Shopify. All profits will be reinvested back into our business model to continue product development, economically empowering artisans by providing them with a living wage and upholding a supply chain that minimizes negative environmental impact. Our price point reflects our commitment to affordability—as it is considerably lower than the minimum prices of our competitors. Our marketing strategy is centered on our social media and website. Word of mouth marketing amongst our family, friends, mutual networks, and the Hopkins community is also crucial for our first launch. Thus far, our funding has been from non-dilutive grants, and we are not looking for equity investment at this stage, as we are focused on reinvesting 100% of our profits back into our model and social mission.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE: A crucial factor differentiating Taara from our competitors is our price point, which is significantly lower than other ethical and sustainable brands like Patagonia and Pact, where the lowest prices for a pair of women's pants are in the \$60-80 price range. Our price point of \$45.99 is more affordable, while still allowing us to uphold sustainable and ethical practices. Our holistic model also differentiates us from other brands, as many have started branding themselves as eco-friendly for marketing purposes, even though in actuality, they are not. Our brand's commitment to transparency ensures our customers know where and to whom the cost of their purchase is going, thus giving Taara greater credibility than many of our competitors and maximizing consumer confidence.

COMPANY NEEDS: We are looking to sell our first batch of 105 pants and 150 masks within the first ten weeks of launch—by the beginning of July. Once they are sold, we will begin prototyping and producing a second batch of products. This will enable us to continue providing economic opportunity and employment to artisans in need while reducing waste throughout our process. To purchase or learn more, visit www.taaraprojects.com. To support this process further, we are looking for sources of non-dilutive funding. We are also looking to grow our audience on Instagram and community in general and are always eager to explore partnership, collaboration, or mentorship opportunities.

COMPANY NAME:

Taara Projects

Address:

Baltimore, MD

Email:

taara@taaraprojects.com

Website URL:

www.taaraprojects.com

Social Media Accounts:

[@taaraprojects](https://www.instagram.com/taaraprojects)

■ **KEY PERSONNEL**

-**Shanthi Ramakrishna: Founder & CEO** (JHU'23)

-**Keerti Soundappan, Director of Communications and Outreach** (JHU'23)

-**Michelle Tu, Director of PR and Marketing** (JHU'23)

-**Castalia Vidaurri, Website Designer** (JHU'23)

-**Saisri Gussenhoven, Director of Finance** (JHU'22)

-**Fatima Elzamzami, Content Creator** (JHU'23)

-**Avnika Dubey, Assistant to the Director of Finance** (JHU'24)

Total # Employees/Team Members: 7

Total # Advisors: 2

■ **COMPANY STATUS**

Founded: 2018

Industry: Fashion, E-commerce

Company Registration Status: For-profit LLC

Total Funds raised to date: \$4089 (non-dilutive)

■ **RECOGNITION**

[NoKill Magazine Feature](#)

[Participation in Social Innovation Lab 2021 Accelerator](#)

[Participation in FFU Spark \(Winter 2020\)](#)

[JHU Newsletter Feature](#)

[Social Innovation Lab Feature](#)

[NoKill Magazine Feature #2](#)