



# HONEYBEE CAPITAL

*This issue is a very brief micro-issue, since many readers have asked for ideas about how to give gifts “beyond stuff”. I’ve assembled this quick list of ways to support people, communities, and entrepreneurial endeavors of all sorts. This is certainly not a comprehensive list, and is not intended as endorsement of any particular idea or organization, but rather a starting point for your own explorations. Also, please note that the list includes a mix of for-profit and non-profit entities – I leave it to you to distinguish what fits best with your own intentions.*

## **HOW TO GIVE TO A COOL PROJECT: CROWDFUNDING VEHICLES**

### **KICKSTARTER, DONORSCHOOSE, & INDIE GO GO:**

*Do you have a nephew who likes indie rock bands, and want to be the coolest uncle ever? (<http://www.kickstarter.com/discover/categories/music?ref=sidebar>)*

*Do you want to honor your aunt’s concern over the development of her beautiful Tuscan hometown? (<http://www.indiegogo.com/genius>)*

*Would you prefer to buy science lab supplies for a classroom instead of (yet another) iPod for your brother-in-law?  
(<http://www.donorschoose.org/donors/search.html?subject4=-4>)*

*How ‘bout supporting your niece’s favorite vegan cafe?  
([http://www.indiegogo.com/projects?agent\\_desc=project&filter\\_text=vegan&commit=SEARCH](http://www.indiegogo.com/projects?agent_desc=project&filter_text=vegan&commit=SEARCH))*

These three sites offer lots of projects that are looking for funding – from arts to technology to classroom needs to small businesses (Kickstarter has more of an arts focus, and DonorsChoose has classroom requests). All three sites require specific budgets and timelines for the funding, and all require some level of follow-up and follow-through on the part of the fund-ees. Some projects are larger (like classrooms that need MacBooks, or funding professional-level theatrical productions) and others are smaller (like classrooms that just want scissors, or student groups that want to record their first songs). In many cases there is are also perks involved with funding, like

access to the finished product or offers to meet the makers, etc. I've heard about (and had) mainly great experiences with these platforms, though with the huge breadth of projects there are bound to be some that are not your cup of tea, or that are not managed to your liking. But it is way more fun sorting through these sites than sorting through bins of ugly sweaters at the mall! The sheer magnitude of creativity that is on display is stunning.

**KICKSTARTER:** [www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com)

**INDIE GO GO:** [www.indiegogo.com/about/howitworks](http://www.indiegogo.com/about/howitworks)

**DONORSCHOOSE:** [www.donorschoose.org](http://www.donorschoose.org) - see their options for gift cards also, at <http://www.donorschoose.org/donors/giftoptions.html>

#### **KIVA:**

*Do you like some elements of microfinance, but want to feel a more personal connection with the borrowers? Kiva might be for you.*

Kiva is different from the above organizations in that you are sponsoring a loan to a small businessperson. As we know, micro-lending has seen great growth in recent years and is not without significant controversy (a whole separate topic), but there is also a lot of appeal to making a more personal connection to small businesspeople. In this regard, Kiva has become a very successful clearinghouse, connecting through loan-generating intermediaries so that you (the lender) can “see” the borrower in a way that is not possible with bundled-up products. Note that you are making a loan and not a gift, so charitable rules may not apply for tax purposes etc.

You can also now give Kiva gift cards, so that the recipient can pick out their own loans – or you could do it together, a much better family activity than wrestling with the set-up instructions for that new gadget.

<http://www.kiva.org/about/how>

<http://www.kiva.org/gifts/kiva-cards> - /print

## **CITIZEN EFFECT:**

Have you ever found a project or an organization or a cause that you are passionate about, and wanted an easier way to spread the word to your network and amplify your own giving? Well, then, Citizen Effect might be for you!

This group aggregates interesting projects from all over the world, working with local partner organizations. You can either become the champion for a project, leading the charge to garner support for it, or you can contribute to one that's already in the works.

[http://citizeneffect.org/about\\_us](http://citizeneffect.org/about_us)

<http://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-adventure/nature/Dan-Morrison.html>

## **HOW TO GIVE TO SMALL FARMERS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD:**

There are, thankfully, lots of ways to direct a gift to different sorts of local agriculture and community development, and you probably already know many in your own hometown. Here we highlight just a few more – Oxfam, Heifer International, Slow Money, and First Peoples Worldwide. You can sponsor baby chicks, water wells, art supplies, wood stoves... all kinds of great possibilities. One of Oxfam's most popular gifts this year is a toilet, only 50 bucks! Surely there is someone on your list for whom this is the perfect gift.

### **OXFAM:**

[www.oxfamgifts.com](http://www.oxfamgifts.com)

### **HEIFER INTERNATIONAL:**

[www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org)

### **SLOW MONEY:**

<http://www.slowmoney.org>

*Note that Slow Money does not offer the "catalog" style of the others, but this group is focused on financing local food systems, so we highlight it as a philosophical match with the others.*

### **FIRST PEOPLES WORLDWIDE:**

<http://www.firstpeoplesworldwide.org/default.asp>

<http://www.firstpeoplesworldwide.org/granteestories.asp>

*First Peoples' grant programs support grassroots projects of indigenous communities around the world. If you believe in the power of deep local knowledge, this is a wonderful way to support it! Check out the second link for their powerful grantee stories, more eloquent than I could ever explain here.*

### **HOW TO GIVE STUFF THAT'S NOT MADE IN A FACTORY:**

*Okay, giving virtual gifts can be a lot of fun, but what if you really still want to have a **THING** to wrap up for your loved one? Never fear, there are plenty of great options here as well – again, we highlight just a few of the many choices available.*

#### **ETSY:**

*Looking for a cute, handmade set of mittens for your always-cold friend? A personalized necklace for your new-mother neighbor? A hostess gift that does not come in a bottle? Look no further!*

We've highlighted Etsy before, and warn you that this site is addictive. Etsy is full of beautiful, reasonably priced, handmade goods – like a giant craft fair, without the overheated crowds and bad coffee. The products are lovely, and it is refreshing to buy from actual individuals who answer your emails personally, often with lots of exclamation points and emoticons. Etsy is not particularly charitably focused, but in buying here you are supporting small artisans who clearly love what they do!

[www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com)

#### **MADE BY SURVIVORS:**

This is a more focused organization (not a shopping clearinghouse) whose mission is to end slavery through economic empowerment. The group is supported (and led!) by a number of FOH's (Friends of Honeybee), and that is how it came to our attention. Products offered are from participants in MBS's training program, which provides opportunity for personal recovery as well as ongoing economic self-sufficiency. Of course, you could also consider donating directly to the group's nonprofit entity, TEN Charities, as noted on their website.

<http://www.madebysurvivors.com>

## **WORLD OF GOOD:**

This organization within eBay offers thousands of products from all over the world – each has a section describing the product, plus one describing the producer (sometimes an individual and sometimes a group). They've also developed a "goodprint" scorecard that assesses products and organizations' effectiveness on a variety of standards, and the report also shows who's verified the information – a helpful step towards greater transparency and accountability throughout the chain.

<http://www.worldofgood.com>

## **HOW TO GIVE AN OPEN-ENDED CHARITABLE GIFT:**

*Are you tempted to give a charitable donation in someone's honor, but unsure of exactly where their own preferences lie? These options allow you to give a "gift for giving", where the recipient gets to choose the charitable beneficiary.*

## **CHARITY GIFT CERTIFICATES:**

You can order gift cards from this site and the recipient chooses which charity to donate to (there is a long list to choose from, but it's not infinite – so check first if you have particular interests in mind). I discovered this organization when a colleague gave me one of these cards instead of a business card - it was even better than the guy from a (now-defunct) finance company who used to give out dollar bills.

[www.charitygiftcertificates.org](http://www.charitygiftcertificates.org)

## **GIVING TO OTHERS THROUGH A CHARITABLE GIFT FUND:**

This one is specific to readers who happen to have a Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund – did you know that you can give an e-gift to another person, to "spend" from your own account? This allows freedom for the recipient to pick the charity they prefer, and allows you to pass along some of the giving power from the donations you've already made to your fund.

<http://www.fidelitycharitable.org/giving-account/gift4giving/how-it-works.shtml>

***And now we welcome the new year,  
full of things that have never been.***

***- Rainer Maria Rilke***