

'Art of giving' takes shape as India Inc looks beyond CSR

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Aim to be happy? A Chinese proverb offers advice: 'If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody else.'

The 'art of giving' appears to be making inroads in India, with corporates going beyond corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities, and even roping in employees to do good.

Carrying forward Henry Ford's legacy of making lives better for communities, 14,000 Ford India employees are to participate in 47 community service projects this month across Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Gurgaon/NCR.

In keeping with this tune, Future Generali India Insurance, the general insurance arm of the joint venture between retail giant Future



With an upbeat economy, strong corporate earnings and a CSR law, philanthropic activities will continue this year, say experts

Group and global insurer Generali, has adopted 'The Human Safety Net' (THSN), a global initiative that is based on the idea that communities of 'people helping people' can bring about sustainable change, creating a positive ripple effect.

The Alibaba Foundation, a charitable organisation estab-

lished by the Alibaba Group and UCWeb, a business within Alibaba Digital Media and Entertainment Group, which functions in India through its subsidiary UCWeb Mobile, hosted a global forum of Alibaba Group's Xin Philanthropy Conference, in India. Alibaba claims philanthropy is without borders and that is

why the conference has been taken out of China, for the first time, and brought to India.

As charitable giving by corporates surges, experts say philanthropic activities are expected to continue this year, thanks to a "humming economy, strong corporate earnings, and a CSR law" that mandates corporates to allocate 2 per cent of their net profit to CSR activities.

'The power of small'

Speaking at the recent release of the 'Doing Good Index Report' by the Asia Society India Centre and the Centre for Asian Philanthropy and Society, Ajay Piramal, Chairman of Piramal Group, said: "First comes compassion. Impact investing comes later. Philanthropy is about giving money, and even time to a cause."

Concurring, Jamshyd

Godrej, Chairman of Godrej & Boyce and Global Trustee of Asia Society, said: "We have to build a business case for philanthropy and conservation. "Giving," he said, "has to start from a young age, and a small scale—a facet that is probably missing in the corporate sector."

E-commerce giant Alibaba has decided to surmount just that, and feels technology can help lower the barrier for each individual to participate and unleash 'The Power of Small' to drive big change for public welfare.

The Alibaba Group regards India as a key part of its philanthropy roadmap, says an executive, while UC's philanthropic mission in India is to bridge the digital divide.

Discussions at the recent meet centred around how the internet could empower global philanthropic endeav-

ours in a creative and effective manner. At Future Generali India's THSN event, three programmes were established, inspired by ideas put forward by Generali employees. The programmes share a common purpose of unlocking the potential of disadvantaged people, an official said.

Stating that poverty is one of the most widespread and persistent social problems, KG Krishnamoorthy Rao, MD and CEO, Future Generali, said along with a few NGOs, the company aims to help families build healthier, more stable family environments, eventually helping their children break the poverty cycle.

As for Ford, though volunteerism is an integral part of its business, the company encourages its employees to participate, with paid time-off of up to 16 hours annually towards community work.