

# The other India growth story: rising donations

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IT ISN'T only global manufacturers who are enthused about India's impressive growth story. The country's fast growing gross domestic product and the burgeoning middle class, with rising disposable incomes, has an unusual player excited — the global non-government, non-profit organisations, or NGOs, as they are popularly known.

"India's fast economic growth makes it an attractive market for fund-raising," says Samit Aich, Executive Director, Greenpeace India. "We are roping in more and more activists, fundraisers and donors to expand our presence here."

Like Greenpeace, many global NGOs, such as Oxfam, Save The Children, Care and Action Aid, have begun their fund-raising programme in India recently though many of these organisations have been present here for more than four to six decades. Most of these organisations did not even have an India office till recently and operated here as the offshoot of their global parent.

They have begun setting up offices in the past two years because Indian regulations do not allow entities not registered in India to raise funds locally. Save The Chil-

## SAVE THE CHILDREN

**50,000 donors**, adding **6,000** more every month; funds grew **46%** last year

## GREENPEACE

**1 lakh** donors; raises **Rs 1 cr** a month, expects **30% increase**

## OXFAM

**30,000** donors; raised **10%** of its budget in India in 2009-10

dren, a leading global not-for-profit body working for underprivileged children, for instance, has had ties with India since 1920s. It was, however, in 2008 that it set up its India office and only in May this year that India was accorded the status of a "strong" member in its global alliance.

"A pre-requisite for being a strong member is to raise funds of a certain level and have a certain number of dedicated donors," says Thomas Chandy, CEO, Save The Children. Chandy, who has earlier worked with companies such as Coca-Cola, says he currently has 50,000 donors and "we are adding 6,000 more every month".

This, indeed, is getting reflected in the agency's income. While in 2009-10, the funds grew 46 per cent to Rs 60 crore against

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the previous year, this year, Chandy hopes the income to grow 50 per cent to Rs 90 crore. "Everybody wants to tap into the 'happy story' unfolding in India," says Chandy.

Greenpeace, the organisation fighting for the cause of environment and climate change, has more than 100,000 Indian donors, who contributed around Rs 12-13 crore to its funds last year, and Aich hopes the income to rise at least 25-30 per cent this year. "In the past three months or so, we have been generating around Rs 1 crore a month."

Citing another reason for the shift in approach towards India, Nisha Agarwal, CEO, Oxfam India, says: "After the global economic crisis, fund-raising in the developed world has slowed a bit. Organisations are looking for newer avenues. India, with its growing affluence and influence, makes a natural choice." Oxfam has been present in India since the 50s. The India office, however, was set up only in September 2008. It currently has 30,000 donors and had a budget of Rs 90 crore in 2009-10. According to Singh, 10 per cent of this was raised in India and she hopes this kitty to grow further this year.

Humanitarian agency Care, on the other hand, has had a registered office in India since 1950. However, even Care, according to Communications Manager Amelia Andrews Daniels, began "resource mobilisation programme as recently as a week ago". "We will have figures on our India budget to share next year," she said in an email response.

Some industry insiders, however, say Indians still like to donate for traditional causes and do not easily dish out money for efforts they cannot relate with. "Philanthropic giving in India is an old tradition. Indians have traditionally been donating to religious places and causes and to several social causes such as setting up hospitals or dispensaries or giving money to the poor. Even now, more than 95 per cent of philanthropic charities go to programmes focused on these issues. The only difference is raising such funds is becoming more organised now," says Ravi Singh, CEO, World Wildlife Fund India.

Indians, he adds, still do not easily give money for activities such as conservation of animals. "Of the Rs 18 crore budget we had last year, a very small amount was raised in India," Singh says.