

Got money, reach out

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Times News Network

SUDHA Murty does her thing and Rohini Nilekani does her own.

These days, Rohini reaches out to the less fortunate not through writing, but by donating generously to various causes. She has just taken over as the chairperson of the Akshara

CAUSE CELEBRE

Foundation and is bubbling with ideas.

"We have fostered a movement in Bangalore where whole communities are engaging in the education of their children and working with government schools and officials to improve the quality of education. Yet because not enough of Bangalore knows about our



work, we have not been able to raise the required funds to successfully run the campaign -- 'Every Child in Bangalore in School and Learning by December 2003'. We know we can do it together with other

NGOs, the government and the community. But we need more broad-based financial support from the corporate sector."

Rohini also runs the Arghyam Trust, that focuses on health-related issues. "We have

recently signed an MoU with the Manipal Hospital's Paediatric Intensive Care Unit. About 50 children have benefited from this scheme already," she reveals. "In '92, I started Nagarik which focussed on civic action. It did well for five years and then petered out. Possibly, the movement was ahead of its time and we also lost focus," she says candidly.

Rohini's face lights up when she discusses her association with Sanghamitra, a micro-credit wing of Myrada, one of India's largest NGOs. "I had expressed my interest in doing a meaningful project to help the urban poor with micro-credit. I feel that it is a shame that the urban poor are often dismissed and neglected in government's development initiatives. I have gifted shares from my personal assets worth Rs 1.5 crore to Sanghamitra Urban to reach out to as many of the poor as possible.

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