

Saba Family Foundations' Initiatives to Eradicate Poverty Worldwide

When We Uplift Women, things will Change Drastically: Malini Saba

Saba Industries, a USD 1.5 Billion group of privately-held commodity company founded in Asia by a self-made entrepreneur and a philanthropist Ms. Malini Saba. The Saba Industries Group employs best business and sustainable business practices in South and Southeast Asia, Australia, Africa, and the Middle East.

Saba Family Foundations

Fuelled by her sense of humanitarianism and to honour her father, Ms. Malini Saba laid the foundation of 'The Saba Family Foundations' in 2002. Since then, it has been dedicated to a single mission to give access to under-serve and promoting the well-being of humanity throughout the world.

The foundation is proficient in analysing and addresses the root causes of the emerging socio-economic challenges faced by the developing and the underdeveloped countries. Moreover, their belief in creating unlikely partnerships spans across sectors unmindful of risks involved. This inter-section doctrine acts as a catalyst and helps them to achieve their vision of advancing health, re-valuing ecosystems, securing livelihoods, and transforming schools and communities timely.



Malini Saba

Health is Wealth

Saba Family Foundations is a firm believer of the phrase 'health is wealth' and is an advocate for those who are being marginalized.

Through its initiatives, the foundation seeks to promote the field of creating systematic support systems which benefit women and children who are at risk. The key areas the foundation focuses on are that of healthcare, education and advancement of human rights.

The goal of the foundation is to help at least one billion people around the world to gain access to basic healthcare, education and opportunities that allow them to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy about human rights issues.

Presently, the foundation has undertaken numerous projects, including partnering with Stanford Medical Center to train physicians from developing countries; distributing preventative health information on HIV/AIDS, immunizations, gastric and reproductive health; providing vocational education for women in Togo, West Africa; and supporting human rights issues around the world.

Besides, the organization partners with 'Aman Movement' that invests in Social Values. This non-profit organization works in partnership with the Government of India in improving the social sector developmental programs. With 'Humanity Crew', the partnership aims to promote the refugees' well-being.

UNICEF Australia works towards the improvement of wellbeing and safety of children at school in 'Land Down Under'. It is a comprehensive program which empowers children's knowledge and awareness.

Samskara

With 'Samskara', an education arm of Saba Family Foundations, the

mission is to provide underserved girls with access to education. SFF believes in harnessing the local partners and volunteers' energy for educational and development related efforts. Scholarship programs for school girls and funding for college preparation in developing nations is another initiative towards education.

The foundation regularly donates funds towards building schools in Africa, India and South-East Asia. They also fund scholarships and have previously funded over one million students. Furthermore, the operations of the foundation focus on funding organizations that work with children

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and young adults. The organization also helps in fighting with the bullying. The SFF educates and runs campaigns against cyber bullying, physical bullying, social bullying, verbal bullying and workplace bullying.

Saba Industries is also going to invest \$100 million in the 'Indian Rice' as it plans to export the staple by partnering with local farmers. The

group has an affinity towards the agriculture and trades in the business of rice, exporting 5,00,000 tons worldwide. Along with that, they also deal in the wheat, palm oil, and cashew nuts businesses. The agriculture arm of the group enthusiastically employs internationally approved environmental guidelines in all their ventures for a principled growth. Furthermore, the company operates in ethical iron ore and gold mining. The mined iron ore is used to make steel while its gold is used for jewelry and technology products. They also work in the ship breaking and hospitality sectors.

Malini Saba, Founder, Saba Industries & Saba Family Foundations in an email interaction with SME WORLD:

You are credited with launching Saba Industries Group and making it a successful enterprise. Who is your inspiration and what are the traits/ethics you followed and are following?

I never planned to build this business to where it is today. It evolved step by step efforts. I stay always true to my values and beliefs. My goal was to create a business that had an impact on the world. Not just monetary impact but human development impact. This I have stayed true right through.

Your initiatives in philanthropy are very elaborate and wide-spread; how do you manage such a vast program?

Since we don't raise funds for projects, it allows us to be a wide range. To create the change you can't just do one thing. In social development, there are very many sectors that need to be engaged. With the aim of helping one billion people around the world to gain access to basic healthcare, provide education and opportunities, I laid the foundation of Saba Family Foundations. Thus, we fund several

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platforms that would create a place for better human development.

India continues to have a poverty club of almost 400 million people; how would you explain this state of affairs?

This change is going to be generational because it is cultural as much as it's economical. When we get rid of the caste system we would be able to start rectifying the divide. And this process will definitely take a lot of time as the caste system is a big topic in India. Besides, the availability of basic necessities is still out of reach of the poor. So, we must start by fulfilling the basic requirements and climb the ladder.

Don't you think CSR or philanthropy has to come from within; the government of India has to bring about a law making it mandatory for PSUs to spend 2% of their profits on CSR. Comment!

Yes I do believe it is very important that corporate are held to a higher standard and should be involved in social change. They should incorporate that into the system but before that, we have to have a system that has a proper plan and to know what to do with the funds. These funds cannot go to administrative costs to do well. Instead, they should go directly to the cause in need of the money. I believe more people should volunteer their time to do charitable work and corporate can make it so that their employees help attain the charitable goal the company has set forth for their social change.

Tell us more about your partnership with Stanford Medical Centre to train physicians in various areas. How has been the responses and the results achieved?

This was one of our very early

projects and it was received very well. We had ER doctors from different countries trained at Stanford and took their knowledge back to their countries. We Partnered with Stanford Medical Center for training physicians from developing countries, educating about preventative health information on HIV/AIDS, immunizations, gastric and reproductive health; providing vocational education for women in Togo, West Africa; and supporting human rights issues around the world. They were able to set up good and proper services in their respective countries in their hospitals.

What is the inspiration behind setting up 'UpCara'? How big is the problem of older women facing various health risks?

Elders' care is something that is neglected. Mental health is neglected. Thus UpCara focuses on these factors. Dementia and Alzheimer's are two big issues for a lot of elders and families struggle to handle these owing to lack of knowledge and training in this sector. UpCara focuses on this and highlights these areas.

As the population gets wealthier a lot of people always fall through the cracks and one class is the elderly. They are forgotten and children don't know how to handle their health matters.

How much are you spending annually on various social activities?

Our distribution depends on the cause and what is required to attain the goals over. 5-10 years period. We don't fund for a year but for the long term. We want to impact change. Thus our funding differs from 10,000

to over 1m per year depending on the cause. We fund for 5 years or more.

What is the next level for you?

I love media and feel it's important to use the platform to show the strength of millions of women who have achieved success despite hardships. Also to change the way women are portrayed in the media and movies and creating a safe place for women to transform their lives and portray them in good stead rather than selling their souls.

What challenges are you facing in your philanthropic domain?

Every country is different. Usually, it's purely people that hinder change.

What is your vision for the looming poverty in India?

Housing, education, change of cultural norms are the main factors. Role of women is important as India is a growing economy and both the genders contribute equally. When we uplift women, things will change drastically. There are various opportunities for India to develop.

You were born and brought up in Malaysia. How strong is your bond with India?

Yes I was but India is where my heart is. I have loved the country from the very first time I arrived there. I am connected to the land. India is a place where you can connect with your soul. She holds a mirror to you and reflects back at you who you really are and what you can and should stand for or be. She shows you the extremes life has to offer and baths you in spiritual awakening. I love India, she is my Durga and my Kali - all in one.