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IIM B alumni to educate poor kids The 1997 batch, comprising 180 students, has joined hands with Parikrma, an NGO, to educate and support 29 children for the next 12 years

Thirteen long years have failed to diminish the enthusiasm of the 1997 IIM-Bangalore batch to give back to society. The 180 former students have raised Rs. 9 lakh with the objective of educating 29 underprivileged kids whom they plan to support for the next 12 years.

Speaking to Bangalore Mirror, Ravi Venkatesam, one of the ex-students, said, "The entire batch always kept in touch. We had been discussing the need to do something for quite sometime, and then, we hit upon the idea of imparting education to the underprivileged."

After initial discussions, a mail was sent around in February in which the details of the plan were worked out. "Our next job was to raise the required funds for at least the children's first academic year. Luckily, we have an excellent online discussion group. Within two months, we raised about 150 per cent of what we wanted. Batchmates from all over the world contributed generously and made the fundraising a success. We collected funds through the IIM-B alumni fund. After accomplishing this major task, we decided to follow in the footsteps of our seniors. We decided to join hands with Parikrama Humanity Foundation, a non-profit organisation that believes in educating underserved children in urban India, so that they can have equal access to the best opportunities. Parikrama manages the entire education cycle from kindergarten to college for each child," said 40-year-old Venkatesam, CEO, OnTrak Solutions, a consultancy firm.

But before jumping headlong into the project, the IIMbians made sure they did their homework. "We conducted a small survey to see how much the alumni were willing to contribute. According to our calculations, we needed a minimum of Rs. 6 lakh, but we have now managed to raise Rs. 9 lakh," said Venkatesam.

"Our seniors from IIM-B had already worked with Parikrama. They had adopted an entire class and sent out a progress report. That report motivated our batch to join hands with Parikrama. Some of us visited the organisation's office and its schools. We were very impressed with their work. Parikrama then invited us to visit the children we would be supporting. It was a great experience to mingle with the little ones," said Venkatesam.

"There are 29 kids in the Sun class or kindergarten, in the age group of three to four, who will be financed by us. We will be giving them all that they require, right from uniforms to books, for the next 12 years," said a beaming Venkatesam.