### Communication Department

**Ananthapuram**  
**Rural Development Trust**  
Bangalore Highway  
Ananthapuram  
Andhra Pradesh 515 001  
Mobile: +91 9849692133  
+91 8554271377  
Email: communications@rdt.co.in

### Resource Mobilisation Offices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Mumbai**      | Anam Ganga, B2  
Opp Jeevan Vikas Hospital  
Off Sahar Road, Andheri (E)  
Mumbai 400069  
Mobile: +91 9022954832  
Email: isupport@rdt.co.in |
| **Vijayawada**  | V. R. Apartment, E Block  
Near Kanaka Drug Varadhi  
1st Floor, Plot No 106  
Tadepalli, Vijayawada  
Andhra Pradesh 522501  
Mobile: +91 9985397402  
Email: krishnareddy.rdt@gmail.com |
Educating today for an Enlightened Tomorrow
**Tribal Welfare**

**Demographic Reach**

2,760 students enrolled under RDT scholarship scheme

**Geographic Reach**

2,806 villages covered under the RDT education programme

**Father Ferrer’s Philosophy**

A perpetual guiding light for all at RDT, Father Vicente Ferrer was loved and admired across the world not only by those who had the privilege to meet him, but also those who got to know about his noble causes.

Following his principles of ‘Work beyond duty’ and ‘Concern for others’, RDT functions on the philosophy of action, and works closely with the needy. He believed that development institutions (NGOs) need to become permanent social organisations that work with poor and needy people at a grassroots level, and cater to their changing needs at all times. He supported long term strategic planning, aimed towards the complete eradication of issues like drought, poverty, discrimination, etc. He considered people as the main actors in their development process, and always aspired to reach out to the poorest of the poor.

His work was dedicated to ensuring that the poor could live with dignity and self-respect and was a strong advocate of equal opportunities for men and women, the able-bodied and Persons with Disabilities, while encouraging all sections of society to live in peace and harmony.

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“If we join hands, we will transform this world.”

Vicente Ferrer
Founder - RDT
ABOUT

Rural Development Trust

The Rural Development Trust (RDT), also known as Fundación Vicente Ferrer (FVF) in Spain, has worked in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana for nearly half a century.

Since its inception in 1969, RDT has endeavoured to improve the quality of life among the rural poor, especially among marginalised and underprivileged communities, small & marginal farmers, children, women, Persons with Disabilities, those affected by HIV/AIDs and orphans. The organisation's programmes today cover various focus sectors in 3,589 villages spread across 111 Revenue Mandals across 6 districts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, including 224 villages inhabited by the Chenchus in the Nallamala forest area of Srisailam district.

RDT has worked for all-round sustainable social transformations, assisted by the government and various agencies in working to ensure that the rural poor receive the same attention and benefits enjoyed by their better-off brethren. Organizationally, RDT works in ten sectors, each involving the efforts of many individuals, from committed villagers, subject-matter experts, field staff, specialised development workers, trainers to RDT’s senior managing team. These sectors, viz. Hospitals, Habitat, Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR), Ecology, Chenchu Tribal Development, Sports, and Culture, look at addressing specific social issues. The purpose of the RDT’s integral development approach is to touch the rural lives through many sectors, simultaneously. For instance, while programmes run by the Community-

3,589 villages spread across 111 Revenue Mandals in 6 districts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Vision

A caring, just and environment-friendly society promoting social harmony and peaceful coexistence and balancing the needs of people and nature.

Mission

To be a value-based professional organization being dynamic and creative in nature, untiring in hard work and motivation, humanistic in approach, strong in its confidence.

To work towards the empowerment of women by helping improve their socioeconomic status and sensitising both men and women to deal with issues such as gender discrimination and violence.

To ensure that Persons with Disabilities have access to equal opportunities and are assisted by the government and various agencies.

To ensure that educated youth from poor families have diversified job opportunities fetching a decent salary and affording an improved status in society.

To work towards implementing eco-efficient agriculture that ensures the sustainability of livelihoods and encourages harmony between human beings and natural resources.

To work towards the eradication of poverty through many sectors, simultaneously.

Today, RDT comprises 1,920 senior management and mid-level managerial staff, and professional and technical staff, assisted by the government and various agencies in working to ensure that the rural poor receive the same attention and benefits enjoyed by their better-off brethren. Organizationally, RDT works in ten sectors, each involving the efforts of many individuals, from committed villagers, subject-matter experts, field staff, specialised development workers, trainers to RDT’s senior managing team. These sectors, viz. Hospitals, Habitat, Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR), Ecology, Chenchu Tribal Development, Sports, and Culture, look at addressing specific social issues. The purpose of the RDT’s integral development approach is to touch the rural lives through many sectors, simultaneously. For instance, while programmes run by the Community-

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based Rehabilitation sector work to ensure that PWDs have improved opportunities to Education, Health and Livelihood, the Sports and Culture sectors' works are essential for the growth, self-esteem and self-confidence.

RDT has stressed upon empowering community-based organisations (CBOs), whose members, irrespective of their social background, can participate in the process of bringing about socio-economic change. Over the years, CBO members have come to play a vital role in planning, execution, monitoring and follow up of programme interventions either carried out by Government or RDT.

Today, RDT comprises 1,920 senior and mid-level managerial staff, professional and technical staff, grassroots and support-level staff who are highly experienced and suitably trained in their respective fields of work. In addition, there are 3,037 volunteers including Community Health Workers (CHWs) and Community-Based Teachers (CBTs) at the village level who are trained by the organization.

Among the trustees of RDT are members of the Rayalaseema Development Trust (RYDT) and the Women Development Trust (WDT). The former runs a family planning centre and professional school at Ananthapuram along with programmes related to culture and sports, while the latter runs a referral hospital at Kanekal as well as community health programmes. FVF extends support to these sister concerns of RDT to carry out these specific sectoral works.

In its efforts towards mobilizing resources for the cause of the poor, RDT set up its first Resource Mobilization Centre in Mumbai in 2012, and the next in Vijayawada in 2015, to engage with the committed individuals and having them participate in the struggle to ensure that the rural poor come out of poverty and lead a dignified life, on par with other members of society.

To eradicate extreme poverty and human suffering.

To work towards implementing eco-efficient agriculture that ensures the sustainability of livelihoods and encourages harmony between human beings and natural resources.

To ensure that educated youth from poor families have diversified job opportunities fetching a decent salary and affording an improved status in society.

To ensure that Persons with Disabilities have access to equal opportunities and are the main actors in their struggle to lead a life of quality and dignity.

To work towards the empowerment of women by helping improve their socioeconomic status and sensitising both men and women to deal with issues such as gender discrimination and violence.

To be a value-based professional organization being dynamic and creative in nature, untiring in hard work and motivation, humanistic in approach, strong in its commitment to share the aspirations and struggles of the poor and permanent in time but flexible to adapt to the changing needs of people.
message from the
Executive Director

When I look back over the 40+ years, it amazes me how far we’ve come. We made small
achievements at snail’s pace for a long time, and only unwavering determination has seen us through
to where we are today.

For many years our work in the sector was limited really to getting
children to attend, and then stay in school. This was compounded with
overcoming people’s deeply ingrained prejudices and arguments –
’schooling is only for children of privileged sections of society but not
for us’; ‘who will work in the house / farm?’ etc. Our early retention
efforts, through the early 80s and 90s, showed only marginal
increments in primary school completion. A combination of factors
turned this around, government incentives, smaller family sizes and our
restructuring of the supplementary school system. Essentially, there
was all-round development that led to parents’ mind-set opening
up to the need and benefits of schooling and higher education.

Thanks to active support from our donors and sponsors, volunteers,
employees and other associates, RDT has been able to reach out to
thousands of children and ensure that they are educated at all possible
levels, whether primary, intermediate or collegiate and beyond. We
believe that our country cannot progress without the proper
development of people from marginalised backgrounds, such as the
Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and Backward Classes. So
we encourage children from rural, poor backgrounds to make full use
of all educational opportunities and infrastructure available to them
from the government, through RDT, or from private resources. We are
willing to provide the support they need at every step of the way.

From driving enrolments in the early days of our work here, to
supporting all manner of higher learning, we have either created
the infrastructure needed, or partnered the government’s efforts to
ensure that Ananthapuram’s young receive the inputs they need to
access opportunities in equal measure to those available to their
better-off or urban peers. These efforts, along with inclusive
government policies and with the widening of reach of government
schemes, have brought about a change in the mind-set of people which
has ultimately resulted in more children attending and – more crucially
– staying in school.

I continue to hope that, together, we can all bring about this much
needed change in our society and ensure that every citizen of this
country can become not only literate, but enlightened.

Anna Ferrer
MESSAGE FROM THE Education Director

Despite being a fundamental right, education still remains out of reach for many children across India. We have laws and policies to protect the rights of children, and ensure an education at least up to the elementary level. But their implementation is always a challenge.

The challenges have, however, not stopped us from working towards a future where everyone is more educated than present levels. We are therefore glad that our programmes have made sure that 100% of all eligible primary level students are enrolled in government or RDT schools with retention rates as high as 93%, up to the secondary education level, and 75%, up to the intermediate level, with significant improvement in Class X and Intermediate results.

Importantly, these high retention rates also encompass a significant number of girls- who were traditionally held back in comparison to boys from completing their education. Further, a large number of students have also enrolled in professional schools, with many securing well-paying jobs.

Learning has neither age barriers nor cultural boundaries, and therefore people from all walks of life can grow through this gift of education. We also encourage parents and CBOs to access the services offered by the government, and other organisations. The CBOs and education committees are now almost wholly independent and are operating community-managed schools in an efficient manner. Young parents are fully committed to ensuring an education for their children and see it as the only way towards a more prosperous future.

Through examples set by various committed families and students, they have seen how it is possible to overcome the barriers set by caste, poverty, class or gender and go on to study, and get jobs that enable them to stand shoulder to shoulder with the better off, higher caste or urban people. A situation that was unthinkable to them as recently as 15 years ago.

The educational status of orphans has also been turned around through the support of government institutions and RDT programmes. Our India for India ‘hundi’ initiative grows in strength every year enabling us to provide tuition, school supplies and other support to orphan children to ensure that their early set-backs do not hamper their progress through life.

Most of all, I am deeply proud of the work done by our team, the systems we have set in place to ensure that we are all well-updated in our fields of work, and that we review our work to ensure that it is in line with RDT’s Dharma, Mission and Vision because Education should not only be about material progress, but also about becoming compassionate and fair-minded adults – only then will it create an equitable and enlightened society.

Chandra Sekhara Naidu Darisi
**THE EARLY YEARS**

**Education**

RDT’s work in Ananthapuram began with its ‘Food for Work’ programme in 1969. Nutrition and Health were the areas that needed urgent action, and it took a few years before Education was brought into the fold of RDT’s work in Ananthapuram.

**RDT’s early work around 1975.**

47 years ago, Ananthapuram’s rural areas were marked by extreme poverty and glaring social inequities. Large families were the norm - owing to the lack of any family planning, and inadequate food intake was common – by women and girls in particular, this therefore resulted in poor nutrition and overall lack of good health. The landscape was dry and arid and work was hard to come by, and caste lines being what they were, the terms of employment were usually unfair. Under such trying circumstances, where everyone was illiterate, and subsistence was so difficult, education was really not a top priority in rural households.

Villagers were completely disinterested in their children’s schooling. Being unlettered themselves, most parents were unaware of education’s effects, and enrolment in existent few government schools, was very low. Many villagers, indebted to landlords, would indenture their children as well to work off their debts - so, many children who were enrolled in government schools, would attend poorly and invariably dropout.

Making villagers aware of education’s benefits was a necessary prerequisite to the betterment of their lives. Education would help their children break out of the cycle of generations of subservience and take charge of their lives. As a foundation stone for the first generation of learners, RDT began by promoting basic primary school attendance in the project areas.

The attendance of girls was a complicated subset of the overall poor attendance record of rural children. Girls were traditionally the first line of support in all household efforts if the elders were occupied or indisposed. They stepped up to take care of siblings, cook, clean and even assist in farming or wage labour.

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Most, therefore were poor in school attendance, dropped out early and went in to early marriages as well.

RDT began its work with speaking to women, asking them to bring their children to informal gatherings where the children were cleaned, their hair combed and oiled, and they were fed a basic, but nutritious meal - which was a major incentive to attend. These occasions were the beginnings of RDT’s Supplementary School programme. The idea was to use these interactions to urge mothers to enrol and send their child continuously to school. Progress was slow, and for over a decade, retention levels only inched along - from 15% in 1985, to 17%, 18%, 20%, till it was around 25% around 1990.

In the early 90s however, things saw a marked upswing, possibly due to a combination of factors. Families had become smaller by then, and parents were more committed to seeing that their 2, 3 or 4 children (as opposed to 6 to 10 numbers earlier) received the best quality inputs. The government also was driving a programme that gave families rations of extra rice for every child that stayed in school, which meant that parents didn’t need to worry about them

**Timeline**

- **1969-75**: Milestones of Education Sector, which contributed to the success of many fine individuals. Over 10% of rural poor and lower caste children were enrolled in Government schools.
- **1975-85**: Awareness meetings with parents about the value of education and enrolments to government schools. RDT starts supplementary schools.
- **1985-90**: Efforts to curb primary school dropout rates. Counselling parents to let children go for higher schools.
their 2, 3 or 4 children (as opposed to 6 to 10 numbers earlier) received the best quality inputs. The government also was driving a programme that gave families rations of extra rice for every child that stayed in school, which meant that parents didn’t need to put little hands to work if the family was well-fed. By then, the emergence of first generation learners who had become parents, improved levels of awareness, government initiatives providing free and compulsory education also added to enrolment numbers.

Overall, the successes the government and RDT achieved in other sectorial initiatives like housing, food security, women’s empowerment, healthcare, etc. meant that the hard struggle for survival eased up and allowed parents to focus on the quality of their children’s care and upbringing. And education was a primary aspect and driver of an improvement in living standards.

### Objectives

- Collective efforts of parents, community based organisations and target families would result in accessing the services and schemes of government and improved infrastructure facilities in government institutions ultimately contributing for improved enrolment and retention of children both at secondary and intermediate (pre-university) level.

- Change in the mind-set of parents and policies and programs of government towards girls’ literacy coupled with the concerted and collective efforts of CBOs and RDT facilitate girls to continue their education at least up to intermediate level without getting dropout in between due to early marriage.

- Students’ access to quality education due to improved infrastructure facilities and human resources in government schools and colleges and support from RDT as well as the key role of both parents and CBOs in accessing the services of both government and RDT/Other Organizations.

- Children from rural poor and marginalised sections make use of opportunities/incentives/adequate infrastructure being provided both by Government and support from RDT for higher education and successfully complete their education.

- Youngsters from marginalised rural communities with higher, professional and technical education background have enhanced employment opportunities due to coaching for admission into government services being provided by Government and Professional School run by RDT.

- Improved leadership and managerial skills among CBOs/Education Committees contribute for better accessing of resources and services not only from Government but also from RDT and other organizations towards their children’s education.

- Both orphan children identified by RDT as well as children belonging to urban poor belonging to marginalised sections have an access to education being provided by RDT as well as initiative of CBOs and other groups to utilize services and resources from RDT, Government and Other Organizations.
Equitable development can only be achieved through equitable education.

Accessible Education

PROGRAMME ONE

of uniforms, books and bicycles. Supplying bicycles to children was a particularly appreciated gesture, traditionally, children had to walk many kilometres to their schools, and bicycles not only eased their load physically, but also helped them look forward to their school commutes – and thereby improve their drive to study.

With these basics in place, families slowly came around to sending their children regularly to local schools, taking their place with children from other communities, something that they were otherwise reluctant to do - since for generations education itself was seen as something that higher caste and better off children indulged in.

Supplementary Schools also ran classes in extra-curricular activities such as song, dance, drama and sports, allowing the rural poor children to stand out among their better-off peers in govt. schools, and boosting their self-esteem and confidence.

Supplementary Schools also ran holiday coaching prior to Class VI and Class X admission exams to ensure their competitiveness with their peers from regular schools.

Supplementary school basically laid the foundation for schooling, generated a feeling of self-reliance and respect, inculcated a reading habit in children and enhanced the
PROGRAMME ONE

Accessible Education

‘Education for all’ can help, in time, to eradicate the deep societal divides of caste, economic strata and gender. Supplementary Schools are the grassroots drivers of this change. They groom and prepare rural children for the competitive atmosphere of schools and ensure an accepting attitude towards education.

To achieve its goal where all eligible children enrol into local government schools and complete at least minimum level of education, RDT started supplementary schools in its project villages. The initial Supplementary Schools were informal in nature, and held at available venues, sometimes temples, under large trees, and even in government school premises. Most of the poor settlements at the time did not have a pukka structure, a building to serve as a landmark for itself. So making such a structure followed in a few settlements.

This building was meant to house the supplementary school, and when not in use as a school, serve as a shared community space which could be put to other uses as needed, thereby giving them a chance to learn from shared experience and attend trainings held on health, land-use, women’s development, and so on as a part of the initiatives by RDT’s other sector programmes.

Since basic subsistence was an issue, Supplementary Schools started the day with a nutritious meal, which was a big draw for mothers to bring their children along for. At these schools, RDT staff sat with the mothers to make children presentable for school by oiling and combing their hair etc. and lessons in basic hygiene and neatness would be impressed upon them. In time, the meal was supplemented with a supply of uniforms, books and bicycles. Supplying bicycles to children was a particularly appreciated gesture, traditionally, children had to walk many kilometres to their schools, and bicycles not only eased their load physically, but also helped them look forward to their school commutes – and thereby improve their drive to study.

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Highlights

- 1,310 supplementary schools are managed independently by CDCs
- Due to Children’s Savings Grants, in 2015-16, nearly 80,593 boys and 76,162 girls received grants totalling Rs. 10.43 crore.
- Over 59,371 uniforms were distributed to school-going children in 2015-2016, and over 21,362 school materials were supplied at the primary level and 25,255 materials at the secondary level.
- Financial assistance is given for 19,644 students who are pursuing technical and professional courses at graduate and postgraduate level.

Evolution

1978 This programme started to bring about socio-economic improvements
opportunities for poor community children to join government social welfare residential schools, and other institutions of higher learning if they so desired.

In parallel with promoting school attendance, RDT continued to hold discussions with their mostly uneducated parents about education and taking an interest in their child’s progress. An education was presented as desirable to the parents because it meant that children could live more independently. Also, an engaged parent would be less likely to pull their child out of school to meet interim labour/wage needs. Aside from working on the attitudes and constraints of the community towards education, RDT also paid attention to the infrastructural issues faced by and in government schools. Most government schools provided only minimal facilities, RDT helped these schools meet infrastructure shortfalls and improve quality of their delivery. For example, they supplied science equipment which enabled teachers to engage with children through demonstrative learning methods. Other materials such as books, question banks for students appearing for Class X exam were provided. In addition, RDT assisted schools in setting up drinking water counters, supplying nutritious meals, constructions of separate toilets for girls – a need that impacted girls’ health, and construction of separate classroom blocks and/or verandas.

The retention levels in schools grew slowly, and over time, enthusiastic parents and elders were encouraged to form Community Development Committees (CDCs) to meet formally and discuss school and village affairs. CDCs were empowered to interview and select teachers and kept tabs on the retention levels and attendance regularity at the local level. By 1993, RDT started to hand over the management and financing of Supplementary Schools to the respective CDCs. It proposed a 75:25 sharing arrangement between RDT and CDCs to encourage autonomous functioning of the schools. Met with stiff resistance at first, it took a few difficult years before some functioning CDCs took on 25% funding of the school expenses. Today all Community Based Teachers’ (CBTs) salaries are paid out of CDC funds. For its part, RDT facilitates CDCs in screening candidates aspiring to become CBTs, as well as in periodically upgrading their skills in academics and classroom management.

With enrolment well on its way, and parents’ attitudes also improving, the focus broadened to ensure that children stayed in school. To this end, Children’s Savings Grants were established, where Rs. 700 was credited annually to a savings fund for each child shortlisted by the CDC, from the ages of 5 through 18 while they were in school. The yearly amount served as an encouragement for them to stay enrolled, and served as a savings fund for the child on completing school and attaining adulthood – parents were also encouraged to deposit what they could when possible to their

Staff Speak

“Establishment of CDCs has proved to be beneficial for all... Through awareness programmes, parents have become active promoters of education, and many children have joined residential schools in the district. Community accountability and participation in ensuring a bright future for its young generation.”

N. Ranganayakulu Head Master, ZillaParishad High School, P.C.Kothakota, Best Teacher Award recipient by then President of India, Smt. Pratibha Patil

“Earlier, only higher-caste children enrolled for engineering and medicine. Now, youth from all walks of life and castes compete for seats.”

Mr. Adinarayana Murty
Retired Principal
child’s children’s fund. Additionally, RDT has been providing higher educational grants for all community children with poor socio-economic background who are pursuing their higher, professional/technical courses. It reduces the burden of parents to a certain extent in paying fee or buying books or meeting their other basic needs.

Today, there are 3,377 CDCs, 142 of which are solely composed of women, across 2,806 villages. Due to the involvement of parents in children’s education, regular monitoring of supplementary schools by CDCs, and improved functioning of government schools, the percentage enrolment of eligible children has increased to 100% in primary classes (up to Class V) and 99% in secondary classes (Class VI to X) and retention in primary classes has subsequently risen to 93%.

Starting with counselling sessions with mothers and children in courtyards and temples, the Supplementary School program has grown from strength to strength, to form a support network that today allows meritorious students access to the infrastructure and funds needed to educate themselves to the best of their abilities and lead their communities as role models for the benefits of education.

There are a total of 3,377 CDCs comprising of 25,896 members, 18,729 bicycles were distributed to secondary school boys and girls as of March 2016.

Success Story

I am Sravani studying in class V. I came from B.K. Samudram village, and I belong to a Dalit family. I have a younger sister who is studying in Class I, and a younger brother 3 years old. My parents are agricultural labourers. We have no source of other income. My parents are very much interested in our studies and in spite of all our difficulties, they are sending us to school. My teacher tells us about the importance of school and how it can help to become successful. I see them work throughout the day, since me and my sister go to school, my mother has to work on the farm as well as at home to cook food and clean the house.

I am a good student, and I work very hard to make sure in future I will be able to give my parents, brother and sister a comfortable life. With the encouragement of my tuition teacher, I have participated in the Art Festival at our school and bagged a prize for Best Handwriting. RDT makes a deposit for every school going child, so every year I am getting Rs. 700 from RDT, at present I have more than Rs. 3,500 in my account. With 3 children and the other expenses of the house, my parents would not have been able to save specially for me. My RDT money grows in the deposit, and I will make sure I study as much as possible with the help of that amount.

“I will work hard, write my entrance exams, and become a doctor to serve my village people.”

Paradigm Shift

The future prospects of children from the last generation and prior to that, were uniformly limited. They rarely had the confidence to leave their district, and if they did, it was to seek menial employment since they had limited education and skills. Today, rural poor children can access opportunities their parents and elders couldn’t even imagine, and thereby better the entire community’s living standards.
A comprehensive screening and selection program of deserving candidates for sponsored higher studies.
PROGRAMME TWO

Special Education Scholarship Programme

When lower-caste, rural poor villagers did educate themselves, they would, at best, aspire to lower-level jobs like drivers and office attendants. Higher-level jobs traditionally went to better-educated, higher caste candidates. As much as systemic changes were required, people also needed to adjust their attitudes.

The Special Education Sponsorship programme was begun with the aim of giving deserving poor students from marginalised communities the chance to compete and enrol in quality institutions of higher learning, then university and so on, thereby enabling them to apply for higher posts and corporate jobs. Started with 130 students in 2004, the scholarship now benefits up to 300 students each year. In the RDT project areas, all children belonging to the SC/ST/BC/OC communities, having a set minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) are eligible to take the RDT-CET (Common Entrance Test). The selection to the scholarship programme was at first based entirely on a student’s performance in his or her secondary school certificate examinations. However, since 2009 RDT initiated its own exam, the RDT-CET, as a selection criterion.

The results from both exams are combined and ranked and then a field committee assesses the economic status of the candidates to help decide the selected candidates for the Scholarships. Once awarded, the student undergoes a parallel coaching along with their Intermediate Pre-University (P.U.) course which serves as a preparatory course for the entrance examination into the different degree course they’re aiming for. With the backing of the scholarship, most students get into prestigious graduate courses and go on to successful careers in such fields as software and medicine – fields that were out of bounds to them earlier.

The scholarship programme also supports candidates with one or more of the following expenses: tuition/course fees, mess charges, educational materials, travel expenses and pocket money - making it a highly coveted programme to be selected into and hotly competed for. The scholarship programme is highly valued in the eyes of the people. The poor families in the area, have a lot of respect for RDT as it’s working towards creating educational equality and taking initiatives for girl child education.

RDT also monitors the progress of...
Staff Speak

“RDT's sponsorships are an opportunity to the students of under privileged communities to study well and secure jobs at executive and professional level.”

G. Veeranagi Reddy
Principal, Narayana Medical College, Nellore

“I feel very happy to be a part of RDT's educational programmes and contributing my bit towards fulfilling the dreams of our country's children and helping them become successful citizens of tomorrow.

It gives me immense joy and satisfaction to see children reach great heights irrespective of the caste or economic background they belong to. Even more contending is to see their parents having the sense of pride in their eyes seeing their children perform so well.”

Shekanna,
Training Team Member (Education), RDT

students through visits by teams. This keeps a check on the students' attendance, involvement in academic and extracurricular pursuits, and utilization of the facilities arranged for them. Additionally, the teams can tackle any issues the students might be facing locally. The management of the various colleges also report to RDT, besides the parents, about the students through sending report cards and score sheets.

The long-term benefits of a solid higher education and good employment are multi-fold. It lifts the candidate's family and community with not only tangible improvements in standard of living, but also heightened respectability and social-recognition. Today, early beneficiaries of the programme, who are well-employed and successful, are regular contributors to it for the betterment of other deserving children.
Paradigm Shift

In all social interactions, people would be concerned about the caste of the person they were speaking/working with, a higher-caste person would especially not allow a lower caste person to speak or interact naturally or freely with them. Today such barriers are almost gone in public life, i.e., education, healthcare, governance etc.

Between 2004-16

2,760 Students enrolled
(1,475 Boys, 1,285 Girls)

924 Students completed graduation and post-graduation (36%)

310 students were freshly enrolled under special education scholarship programme.
(By June, 2016)

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<th>Course</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
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<td>Dentistry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
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<td>Physiotherapy</td>
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<td>General courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electronics, General graduation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horticulture Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diploma in education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Success Story

I never knew how far I could reach in getting higher education, which was a far cry owing to my rural background and the fact that there is a lot of gender bias in rustic areas which still proves to be a major hindrance for girls. Although my parents were not highly educated, they were ever keen on encouraging us to get exposed to higher standards of education. In this pursuit, I wrote an entrance examination for admission into a residential school in which I stood first and went to A.P. Government Residential School, Gooty, and joined Class VI. Here, for the first time, I heard of RDT from my teachers and seniors.

I took the Class X exam in 2007 and scored 94%, securing the first rank in my batch. I could join Sri Chaithanya Mahila Kalasala, Vijayawada, where RDT not only paid my tuition fees, hostel fees, and cost of books but also provided me with pocket money for other expenses. Coming from a Telugu language background, initially I struggled a lot to cope with the education due to the English teaching medium. But with hard work and consistency, I could overcome all those hurdles and by the second year I was confident enough to appear in all entrance examinations. Ultimately, I got into the Electronics and Communications Engineering programme at Jawaharial Nehru Technological University, Ananthapuram, where I was awarded the gold medal for being ranked first in my batch.

B. Venkatalakshmi,
Special Education Scholarship Batch, 2012

“My Engineering Gold Medal was a fitting way to repay my parents and RDT for their trust in me.”
Foreign language studies help poor students gain confidence and an edge in employability.
The Professional School

While education is necessary to alleviate poverty in the discriminating rural society, the job market is skewed towards students from advantaged backgrounds. Added office-skills like computer-knowledge, foreign languages, and proficiency in Spoken-English and basic accounting can help them fairly compete.

In April 2012, RDT set up the Professional School to enable the rural poor to realise a better, more purposeful future, get employed in metros, or other Indian cities, and help their families climb out of poverty. The school was started to address the issue of underemployment in villages located in and around Ananthapuram and Kurnool districts. It was observed that students, despite completing even college education, lacked employment opportunities due to low competency levels in communication, language and inter-personal skills. The school targets youth aged 21-25 years and takes in a batch of 40 students at a time - most of whom have never been outside of Ananthapuram district – and equips them with office-ready skills outside of the purview of main-stream courses.

The school is equipped with a canteen, air-conditioned computer lab with 24-hour net connectivity and 16 terminals, 3 classrooms with presentation facilities, a photocopying centre and stationery store and a reference library with audio-video facilities and a newspaper reading room. Students are housed in a well-appointed 45-bed dormitory with a common room having recreational facilities such as a TV, computers, projectors and speakers.

This batch undergoes a 1-year residential training in English communication, computer skills, basic accountancy skills, and an additional foreign language - French, Spanish or German. The school also takes learning out of the classroom with games, seminars, and interactive discussions with well-employed alumni and visitors (Indian and International) from various fields to help round-off their speaking and interaction skills. The idea is not only to make them office-ready, but also to expose them to a wider range of people than they have been used to interacting with and develop their personalities. Students are also sensitised to the importance of compassion, gender-neutrality and fair-play through the course, since these are values that go beyond the workplace.

The teaching and administrative staff meet regularly to assess and

**Highlights**

- 176 students completed their course through the Profession School in 2015-16, of which 80 were men and 96 women
- Senior managerial heads from T.C.S., a leading Indian IT company, addressed the students through lectures and discussions about corporate life.
- Visitors were also received from other organisations and institutions like Apollo Health Insurance, Delhi College and Tata Institute of Social Sciences.
- In 2014-15, the school calendar was designed according to, and conducted term examinations following the syllabus based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and its different levels (from A1 to B1).
- The school has started a regular programme focusing on Life or Soft Skills with the help of two psychologists and an actor as volunteers.
- The Alliance Française koche institute by IFCAC in Bangalore has given a special concession fee for RDT Professional School’s French, German, Spanish language students for A2 level exams and B1 level exams.

**Evolution**

2012

The Professional School was started to give its students an added advantage in employability.
**Staff Speak**

“When I came to Ananthapuram to first start teaching on a part-time basis at The Professional School, I had no idea what to expect. Each of them comes from a background different to ours, from the western world. It may seem unimaginably hard and harsh to get acquainted with each other. Now I know better, these children value the chances they are given and work harder than any students I have ever met. The curriculum is designed in a manner that enables them to develop self-confidence and execute their learning, conduct self-analysis, and understand deadlines. I am so glad that what we do here improves their prospects for a better future”

*Patricia Verdugo, Course Co-ordinator, Professional School, RDT*

**Discuss each student's progress.**

Today the school is aligned with other recognised institutes like Goethe Institute, Alliance Française and Institute of Foreign Language and Culture (IFLAC) and in its few years of existence, has already opened doors to many students that they could not have opened on their own.

**Summary of batch performance**

All-boys first batch of 27 opted for Spanish, and 13 for French. They were made to interact with volunteers and professionals from different fields who supplemented their classroom studies with cultural exchange interactions.

All-girls second batch was given additional German and Basic Accounting to its course offerings based on student feedback, and most were absorbed into corporate jobs with reputed MNCs.

After another all-boys’ batch, the school presently completed its 4th batch of 56 girls finished their course. of these 56 girls, it is heartening to know that 20 of them are Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

At present 5th batch started with 100 students. 55 boys accommodated at Professional school at 2nd campus, 45 girls on undergoing training in Professional school, B.K.Samudram. 19th of them are (PWDs)

**RDT and DKV Integralia**

A significant partnership forged in 14-15 has been the one with DKV Integralia, a Spanish non-profit organization to facilitate employment and social integration of PWDs. In the beginning, the main focus was to train PWDs to work in BPOs or call centres + and to find them related job placements. But the relationship has now expanded to include interview skills for students and the development of synergies with multinational companies which may eventually recruit from The Professional School.
Paradigm Shift

In all social interactions, people would be concerned about the caste of the person they were speaking/working with, a higher-caste person would especially not allow a lower caste person to speak or interact naturally or freely with them. Today such barriers are almost gone in public life, i.e. education, healthcare, governance etc.

Success Story

“I belong to BC (Dudekula) community, and was brought up in poor living conditions. My father worked very hard to support our family and had to do extra labour work in Uravakonda town. I studied in Government schools and college, achieving a degree in B. Com., where my education was conducted free of cost and language medium was Telugu. In my village many would oppose to my education and advise my father to stop my education and get me married. But my parents provided their support and never stopped me from continuing my education.

However, our family and financial situation was getting worse as we were in debt and despite having education, I was dependent on them. I could not get job due to lack of communication skills and lack of fluency in English. One day, I met one of the staff at RDT who told me about the Professional Language School. That was my turning point. I studied Spanish for one year at RDT Professional School of Foreign Languages and I applied and got selected as a Customer Service Translator for a multinational company in Pune, and working for Genpact company in Hyderabad. Thanks to RDT for their huge support in helping me achieve this success, my parents are immensely proud of me and I have the confidence to take on any challenge and rise to any level through my own hard work and competence.”

D. Jubeda Begum,
Raketta village, Uravakonda Mandal.

“Today relatives and other villagers realize the importance of girls’ education, and that girls can go anywhere in the country to work as equals to men.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys from first batch</th>
<th>Girls from second batch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys from third batch</th>
<th>Girls from fourth batch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 65 boys & 51 girls are working in MNC’s of metropolitan cities like Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai, Pune and Pandicherry.
Gathering small contributions to set orphaned children off to a better start in life.

Among the many lasting messages left behind by Father Vicente Ferrer is that “Good action for the poor and needy will always yield good results.”

Taking cue from his philosophy, and seeking to raise local support for RDT’s programmes, the Seva Hundi programme started in 2012.

The idea behind the Seva Hundi was simple, yet traditional. All over India, it is a custom for people, no matter what their economic background to deposit small amounts on a regular basis to a “HUNDI” or a collection box, usually as an offering to a favoured God. RDT took this concept to pool together savings, however meagre, into a significant, if not large, amount.

Most of the poor villagers RDT encountered were willing to help those needier than themselves. Using the simple slogan of “Spandinchu Sayam Andinchu” (Let your heart respond and hands help), the initiative began in a few project villages.

Even the poorest of the rural poor, inspired by the idea, started putting together whatever they could. It was decided that annually, on April 9 – Father Ferrer’s birthday – all the Seva Hundis would be opened and the amounts deposited in a specially designated account, and a fresh Seva Hundi would be started the following day.

So significant was the amount collected that RDT asked the donors what it should do with the funds gathered. It was unanimously agreed upon that the amount be spent on educating orphaned children.

Children born into poor, homes already have a tough life ahead of them, but without anyone to look out for them, orphaned children are the most vulnerable members of an already impoverished community. Parentless village children live with their grandparents or relatives, and all resources being tight, these children receive less care than most and educating them is not a priority for their strained caretakers.

Thus, RDT began the task of admitting selected orphan children.
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Rural Development Trust

Gathering small contributions to set orphaned children off to a better start in life.

Education for Orphaned Children

The Seva Hundi concept was introduced in 2012 to exhort as many people as possible, to donate very little amounts locally, with the intention of pooling them annually and making a sizeable contribution to worthy causes such as the education of orphans and nutrition for malnourished Chenchu tribals.

Evolution

2012

RDT instituted Seva Hundis across a few test villages in Ananthapuram

Highlights

• In 2015-16, donations totalled 4.03 crores with 1,17,566 SevaHundis in operation
• 583 orphaned children are currently benefitting from the scheme.
• The Smt. Sita Devi Foundation, Vijayawada, awarded RDT the Rural Development Prize for the programme
• The programme is now the core for the India for India initiative.

Education Report
to schools, colleges, and even professional degree courses, providing them with their tuition (via direct disbursements to the institutes), books and supplies and some pocket money. The selection of children is a concerted effort by grassroots RDT workers across various sectors that bring attention to the various cases in their areas of orphaned children losing out on their education owing to difficult circumstances. They refer the cases to the area’s CDC – who verify and certify the case further. Then after the approval from the programme director, the child’s name is included into the Seva Hundi ‘India for India’ recipient list. Once enrolled, a child’s progress is tracked through monthly audits by the Area Team Leader and even the child’s health is kept tabs on through periodic visits to the Health Officer.

About 478 children, both boys and girls are studying at schools/colleges from class one to graduation. The help of small donations from ordinary people have paved the way for these children to a bright future. Now it has become a popular ritual in Ananthapuram to maintain a Hundi. Through his initiative, many children have completed their education and are successful in their career as engineers, teachers, doctors, nurse and other professionals. Today, owing to mentions in dailies and in other media, and the efforts of RDT’s other outreach staff in Hyderabad and Mumbai, the Seva Hindi programme has ranged well beyond Ananthapuram and attracts contributions from other parts of the state and country also.

“We are delighted by the efforts taken for orphans, not just for their education, but also other aspects of their living.”

V. Jayachandra Naidu,
Varadhi International School,
Puttaparthi, Ananthapuram

Staff Speak

“It is the compassion and courage of the people who are contributing to Seva Hundi, which gives me immense hope for the children whose lives are incomplete without their parents, yet they are receiving love and care from the society through their financial contributions. As this special program of supporting orphan children is running in the third year, we look forward with surging hope that many more children can pursue their dreams. With this initiative, RDT hopes to give the country progressive leaders for tomorrow.”

Govindappa,
Area Team Leader, Uravakonda

Success Story

Vijay hails from Adiganipalli of Kanekal Mandal studying at class 7 in Sri Vidyanikethan. He lost his father as a young boy. During that time, his mother was expecting his sister. Unfortunately, he lost his mother soon after his sister’s birth. Thereafter, his grandmother took them into her care, despite of her old age and frail health. They didn’t have any property of their own and had to stay at other people’s mercy. Soon the situation worsened as his grandmother was finding it difficult to feed both of them.

On recognizing the dire situation, RDT took the children under its shelter and explained to them the importance of education as well as RDT’s goals and purpose to support them. The organization soon got Vijay admitted to a good school and also promised to sponsor his sister’s education.

Giving hope to many young children who have lost their families under various misfortunate circumstances, RDT helps them live their life with dignity and pride. Instilling in them the confidence that they can stand up for themselves, and transform their life with education. Through the success of its Seva Hundi initiative, RDT has introduced various other education programmes for orphan children and expanded its reach to as many children as possible, while also addressing all education-related issues in their upbringing.

“I am so grateful towards the organization for its humble gesture to provide me education and giving hope to have a good life ahead.”

Vijay,
Adiganipalli village, Kanekal Mandal
Paradigm Shift

In already impoverished communities, the plight of orphan children used to be particularly dire. They would grow without an education or positive influencers, most turned to petty crime and drugs. The India for India programme’s popularity and success stories mean that their caretakers now know where to turn for support in raising these children.

As of March 2016, 583 orphan were getting educated -
377 across 34 schools & 206 across 79 colleges

Success Story

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Vijay, Adiganipalli village, KanekalMandal

“I am so grateful towards the organization for its humble gesture to provide me education and giving hope to have a good life ahead.”
WAY FORWARD
Ensuring Education for All

With the support of children, their parents, volunteers, and the government, RDT is working towards creating a society which is just towards children’s educational rights. We are trying to harness the power of education to eradicate poverty and inequality from the society.

Education has long been RDT’s primary intervention in many project villages. This has made it imperative to ensure we measure the impact of the programmes and fine-tune or amplify our efforts as necessary. With the sector’s widespread reach, a primary difficulty has been maintaining statistics which accurately reflect the outcome of our interventions. This has received much attention of late, and continues to be a focus area.

We continue to hope that we will ensure 100% retention of eligible students, at least up to the intermediate level, within the next 5-6 years, with a recent study of 75 sample villages revealing highly encouraging results. We are also striving to work with parents and community-based organizations in ensuring access to government services and facilities as this is sure to impact enrolment and retention.

Another of RDT’s long-term goals has been to change the mindset of the people as well as governments as regards the education of girls. Specifically, the objective has been to ensure that girls at least study up to the intermediate level without dropping out and getting married early. RDT is also working to see if policy interventions can help improve the educational standards of girls.

We are also supporting governmental initiatives to ensure that students’ access to quality education is not impeded by infrastructure or human resource issues. This too sees the cooperation of multiple agencies, including the government as well as parents and communities, and spans all levels of school and college education.

The success of our Professional School has brought home the message that enhancing employability is also a critical success factor for youth from underprivileged backgrounds. We hope to continue providing the coaching required, either for languages and communication or for government examinations.

The strength of RDT today lies in its Community-based Organizations, and thus strengthening these and ensuring their continued capability in tackling local issues or communicating them to those who can provide solutions, remains the most crucial objective for RDT.
**Small change brings significant change.**

To contribute, setup a SEVA HUNDI and register details with the Foundation. Add amounts daily, if possible, and deposit annual savings into the designated account, on the birth anniversary of Father Ferrer, 9th April.

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**India for India**

India for India Initiative aims to encourage Indians, both people and institutions, to strengthen the hands of the Rural Development Trust in its mission against rural poverty and neglect in India.

India for India is an innovative concept initiated by RDT. It is based on the insight that an individual or community does not have to be affluent to hold concern for the underprivileged. In fact, empathy for the deprived is more likely among those who have known poverty first-hand. RDT also believes that this example by deed from within the marginalised communities will be acknowledged and receive whole-hearted support from donors across the country. Here we’d like to tell you about generosity of the poor, for it is among them that RDT launched its Hundis.

It all began in Ananthapuram district, where RDT has had its base since the 1970s, and among the populace it has worked with for over four decades. It follows the common custom of depositing small amounts on a regular basis to a Hundi, a collection box, usually for offerings to God. RDT adapted the practice to pool together small donations from project areas to support the common cause. RDT has established the tradition of collating all the proceeds from these Hundis on April 9, Father Ferrer’s birth anniversary. In 2014, there were over 85,000 of these Hundis. By the next year, this number had increased to 1,41,200. Likewise, from Rs 1.86 crores in 2014, the collected amount also grew to Rs 4.08 crores in 2016. This beginning evolved into the ‘India for India’ initiative, as many more villages lent momentum and the initiative spread across the boundaries of its project area.

The unique bottom-up approach of the initiative has inspired all sections of society especially students/youth and the poor people. It is they who are motivating their friends, colleagues, relatives, and neighbours to maintain Hundis.

Several of its slogans have caught on, and its message is carried forward simply and effectively. As for the sum collected, in accordance with people’s wishes, it is being utilized to fund the education of more than 700 orphan children in and near Ananthapuram district. Also, about 5,550 were provided with nutrition supplement. The vitality of the ‘India for India’ movement comes from the fact that thousands of poor families and various sections of people, including educational institutions and private business enterprises, within and outside project area have reached out with their support by maintaining such Hundis. In addition, RDT receives support for various projects and programs from banking, insurance and other corporate institutions in India.

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**Other means to help**

You can write a cheque in the name of “Rural Development Trust” and send it to our Registered Office or Resource Mobilisation Center. You can also donate online or via wire transfer to the following account details:

- **Bank Name:** IDBI
- **Account Name:** Rural Development Trust
- **Account Number:** 0208104000122993
- **IFS Code:** IBKL0000208
- **Branch Name:** Ananthapuram, Andhra Pradesh.

All donations to RDT are eligible for tax exemption under section 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961.