



Vicente Ferrer

Empowering rural communities



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## Scholarship Program: Access to Quality Education

### Project Rationale

Education is a fundamental right of all children. It helps eradicate the cycle of poverty, paving the way for sustainable development. We work together with RDT, our local partner in India, in its commitment to ensure that as many children and youth as possible have access to quality education - from elementary and secondary school to technical college and university, with the aim of further increasing literacy and gender equality in education.

The overall literacy rate in Anantapur district according to the 2011 census was 63.57%. Literacy rates among both male (73.02%) and female (53.97%) were lower than the Andhra Pradesh State and national average. It is important to remember that gender equality is not just a women's issue but also a developmental issue. Educating girls is critical to socio-economic development and in addition, the best way to reduce early forced marriages.

Currently, almost 100% of the children belonging to vulnerable groups in the 3,775 villages where RDT operates are enrolled in elementary school. However, many children finish education early, because there is no higher education available in their home village and their families don't have resources to support their education in the nearest town. In particular, girls who live in remote villages without suitable infrastructure find it difficult to continue their education after secondary

school, as families give priority to boys' education. However, a college degree is essential to find a better-paid job and start the cycle of women's empowerment.

## **Program Goal**

RDT launched its scholarship program in 2004, to give the opportunity to rural students with excellent academic achievements to attend 11th and 12th grades and then to study at university. In this way, they can create new perspectives for themselves and their families.

The program aims to provide a financial boost to the young people from impoverished communities in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, with a focus on girls to help them graduate and find employment in a technical field.

The overall goal is to improve the socio-economic status of rural communities through better and more diversified job opportunities for new generations.

## **How it works**

The program will provide scholarships to students who have successfully completed their 10th grade and qualified via RDT's selection test. The scholarship program will support the students for five to six years, from the 11<sup>th</sup> grade through university.

The students will attend residential corporate colleges which are better equipped in terms of infrastructure and qualified teaching staff than government colleges. Corporate colleges provide quality education and better prepare students seeking admission into technical studies such as engineering, architecture, medicine, pharmacy, nursing, agriculture, veterinary, and biotechnology.

The scholarship includes:

- Tuition fees
- Accommodation and meals
- Exam fee
- Study materials
- Pocket money
- Reimbursement for home trips
- Health care

The beneficiaries of the program are selected according to the following criteria:

- belong to families with very low economic resources, who work in the fields or in daily jobs and that barely meet their basic family needs.
- have scored more than 8.7 out of 10 in 10<sup>th</sup> Class Common Public Examination

In addition, RDT performs an entrance examination for the applicants to the scholarship program and meritorious students with higher marks are selected each year.

The beneficiaries of this project are 35 meritorious students -- 18 boys and 17 girls. Students pursue second year of engineering (B.Tech) at Sri Chaithanya college located at Vijayawada,

Andhra Pradesh. They are pursuing different branches of engineering such as CSC, Mechanical, ECE, Chemical, Civil, EEE, etc.

### **Your Impact**

A maximum of 360 meritorious students joins the scholarship program every year. A total of 4,577 students (comprised of 2,327 boys and 2,250 girls) have been enrolled under this program since 2004. Currently, 2,253 students (1,056 boys and 1,197 girls) are continuing their education under RDT scholarship program.

Some of the students were selected into nation-wide prestigious institutions such as IIT (Indian Institute of Technology), NIT (National Institute of Technology), and India Institute of Medical Sciences.

1,223 students (748 boys and 475 girls) received jobs both in government and in various reputable companies with good salaries.

Navya Sree's dream is to be an electrical engineer so that electricity reaches all the villages in her district. "If a guy comes up to me and tells me that my career is not for women, I'll tell him: come, study with me and I'll show you that I get better grades than you!"

**Would you like to help?** You can support our project directly on the web [www.vffusa.org](http://www.vffusa.org) or contact us for more information at: [info@vffusa.org](mailto:info@vffusa.org) or at (202) 798-5269.

**Thank you for your generosity and kindness!**



*Navya Sree ©RDT*



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