



Enable Education with a Bicycle: Send a Child to School

Project Rationale

Education is a fundamental right of all children. It helps eradicate the cycle of poverty, paving the way for sustainable development. We support Rural Development Trust (RDT), our local partner in India, in its commitment to ensuring 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 the Anantapur district as per the 2011 census was 63.57%. Literacy rates among both males (73.02%) and females (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 3,662 villages where RDT operates are enrolled in elementary school. However, many children finish their education early, because there is no high school education available in their home village and the distance to school is too long. This creates a major challenge for successful enrollment and continuity of education of rural students, especially girls living in remote villages.



Students walking to Settur's Gov. High School. ©RDT

- 41% of young people in the rural regions of Southeast India live between four and five miles from school.
- There is often a lack of school buses or public transportation in the villages, so students have to walk long distances.
- This is a great danger for many children, especially girls. In the Anantapur district, around 100 assaults are reported every day and more than 70% of them affect minors.
- Most of the parents work in the fields and they don't have resources to provide a safer way of transportation.
- Many families fear for their children's safety, especially girls, and they prefer to leave them at home.

Project Goal

The aim of this project is to ensure school attendance and continuing of education, especially for girls, and thus to provide them with chances for a hopeful future.

There are many remote villages in the area which lack access to school buses, making it difficult for children to reach their schools on time. Due to this challenging situation, many children attend schools irregularly or completely drop out.

Project Description

To address this problem, Vicente Ferrer Foundation USA (VFF USA) is providing bicycles to rural children from economically disadvantaged and remote villages to get to their high schools, which are located up to 5 miles from their native villages.

This Bicycle project will be executed in the Settur area of the Kalyandurg region in Andhra Pradesh. The beneficiaries are **64 students**, 47 boys and 17 girls, who are studying at the Government High School of Settur. The school is located 2 to 4 miles from the beneficiaries' native villages. There is no proper transportation to the school from these villages. Most of these children go to school on foot.

The RDT team from the area along with School Director and teachers created the list of the students in need. The parent's financial situation is taken into account when deciding which children will receive a bicycle for attending school.

Awareness workshops are performed with the families on the importance on regular school attendance and higher education. In addition, the families are responsible for maintaining the bicycle.

Impact

Our Bicycle Program has a positive impact on enrollment and improves attendance rates and academic performance. This is very important, especially for girls, who still have a higher percentage of illiteracy than boys in the region.

To date, RDT has provided a total of 26,709 bicycles to rural students to safely commute to school. They have witnessed through the years how the simple act of providing a bicycle to rural children leads to increased rates of high school attendance and completion and plants the seed for a better future.

“Our parents, who are agricultural laborers, have difficulties affording our transport cost, which represents from Rs 250 to Rs 300 a month (\$3.5 to \$4.20), depending on the distance from the village to the high school. Riding a bicycle relieves their financial burden and also it would be good for our health” - Says a female student

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

Thank you for your generosity and kindness!



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Vicente Ferrer

Empowering rural communities

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