



# Building a future for children affected by leprosy

 Rainbow Children's Home, Andhra Pradesh, India



Every child has potential, but not every child is given an opportunity.

An opportunity to go to school, to build a future, to just experience what it is to have a childhood. This project will provide education, healthcare, nutrition and recreational activities for 55 children who are affected by leprosy. These children are from impoverished leprosy colonies and are vulnerable to abuse as they go out to beg with parents or alone. At best, they have experienced a broken education.

Your grant will provide schooling and care for these children, enabling them to break out of the cycle of poverty and become independent adults. You can equip them with the skills they need to build a bright future.

# Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh

Vizianagaram is a large district in Andhra Pradesh. Poverty means that good nutrition and sanitation are out of reach for many, so disease is widespread. Most people here work in subsistence farming, working long hours for less than £1 a day. This makes it difficult to meet basic needs, and impossible to pay for doctors.

But if you have leprosy, it is even worse. You are thrown out of your home and forced to leave your community. Abandoned and rejected, you are left to beg to survive. No-one will employ you because they are scared of leprosy. You are shunned everywhere you go. You're seen as a curse.

You are only accepted by others who share your disease. But life in a leprosy colony means terrible poverty. You are forced to make difficult choices like whether to provide food or pay school fees for your children. Your hopes for the future are all stolen by this disease.

How would you feel if you could only feed your baby by sending an older child out to beg? Surviving today is the priority. Yet you know that without an education, there isn't much of a tomorrow for your children. They are condemned to the same life of poverty.

You dream that one day things will change. That your children will be able to play rather than work. Read rather than beg. But for now, there is no way you can buy the shoes, books and pens they need for school. Let alone uniforms. Without help, your dream will never come true.

**Vizianagaram,  
Andhra Pradesh**





## Award-winning care

We have been caring for children affected by leprosy for over two decades, winning an award for being the best home in the region. We work closely with families affected by leprosy who cannot afford to send their children to school or meet their basic needs.

We often find the children begging at local temples, or left alone at home all day while parents work in the fields. They stay with us during term time, and return home during the holidays. Phone calls and family visits enable the children to keep in contact with their families during term. This is really important for every member of the family.

These children are in desperate need of regular meals, medicine and schooling. Many have not experienced a real childhood; all they have known is hardship.

Rainbow provides a safe, loving environment for the children to grow and develop. We care for the academic, psychological and medical needs of each child. We love the children and become their second family. This is really important, as many are afraid and untrusting of adults when they arrive. It is wonderful to see them slowly grow in confidence, making friends, playing games, taking up sport and thriving at school. We have seen young children with no previous schooling transform into university students with a wonderful future ahead of them!

# Key Activities

Your grant will provide the following for 55 children:

## Medical Care

The House Mother, Rajeshwari, is a trained nurse. She has cared for the children for twenty years, and has a real heart to see them flourish. Rajeshwari lives on-site and knows each of the children really well. She carries out regular health checks and ensures they understand the importance of self-care. They learn about good hygiene, and how this helps to prevent sickness.

## Balanced nutrition

The children receive three balanced meals a day, as well as after-school snacks. There is a small organic farm nearby where they plant and grow fruit and vegetables. It is also home to cows and chickens. The children learn about the land, climate and growing food. The older children learn how to prepare food and cook. These are all important life skills for the future.





## Key Activities

### Education

All children learn English and are guaranteed places in local schools. They have often had a broken education previously. Some have never attended school at all. We provide after-school tutors for these children to help them catch up with their learning.

The children have computer lessons and access to a digital library. They also take part in debates and give presentations to boost their confidence. It's wonderful to see how much the children want to learn – and their hard work pays off! We have several young people in higher education and many training to be nurses. For those who are not academic, there are opportunities to attend The Leprosy Mission's vocational training center nearby.

### Life skills and fun

Children learn domestic tasks such as how to cook, how to look after a home and how to care for children. They love being invited to help in the office. There are regular forums at which young people are encouraged to share their views and experiences at Rainbow. This helps us to make changes where necessary to ensure we are meeting everyone's needs..

To provide plenty of fun, the youngsters have lots of games and can watch TV in the evenings. When there is enough funding, they also enjoy cinema trips, beach days and park visits. Birthdays are always celebrated with cake and a new outfit!



## Who will you be helping?

Children just like Aman. We first found Aman and his brother when we were carrying out village surveys nearby. They were playing naked in the dirt and were obviously very hungry.

Their father had contracted leprosy, and their mother was so ashamed that she abandoned the family. Can you imagine the rejection these two little boys felt? Their dad worked as a day laborer in the fields, doing his best to support his sons. But understandably, he became depressed, and sadly he turned to drink. He spent what little he earned on feeding his addiction rather than his children.

Despite being confused and alone, the boys often relied on neighbors to feed them. They roamed the streets, taking shelter in cattle sheds. Thank goodness they came to no physical harm.

When we met their dad, he knew he was unable to care for his sons properly and gave permission for them to come to Rainbow. It was important that their relationship continued, and he visits the boys regularly when he hasn't been drinking.

When Aman first arrived with his brother, he hadn't been to school. He hadn't had regular meals, and he didn't really understand what to do with toys. With the love and care of staff and the other children, Aman began to grow in confidence. He began to adapt to his new life.

Today, Aman is thriving! He is excelling at school and is particularly passionate about English. He is incredibly intelligent, and we're confident he'll go to college for further study. Aman and his brother love cricket, and their favorite food is chicken curry. He dreams of one day becoming a pilot. How wonderful to have such a big dream!

Could you help transform the lives of children like Aman?

## Safeguarding

The safety of our children is our highest priority. We have a robust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all staff are trained regularly in safeguarding. The home also has a CCTV system, which is in operation 24/7.

## Monitoring and evaluation

The project is monitored by The Leprosy Mission and by staff on the ground. Reports are produced on a six-monthly basis. These provide an update on the children, and the challenges and successes we build into our learning.

## Sustainability

We hope to establish an alumni group of former Rainbow children who will sow back into the home financially and with their time.



# Budget

Description		Cost (\$)
Staff Salaries	Salaries of after-school tutor, house mother, night wardens and other staff involved in running the home	10,377
Education	School fees, exam fees, educational materials, uniforms and sessions run at the home for all children	2,080
Health	Doctor's fees and medicines	237
Food	Food costs for a year	2,818
Wellbeing	Trips for the children, blankets and clothes	600
Support Costs	Equipment, bills and maintenance necessary for the running of the home	3,100
<b>Total</b>		<b>19,248</b>





**Aman's story is far too common. But you can change this. By contributing to the care of children affected by leprosy, you can give them a second chance. You can give them a childhood and a future. A future filled with hope.**

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