



THE CORNERSTONE PROJECT

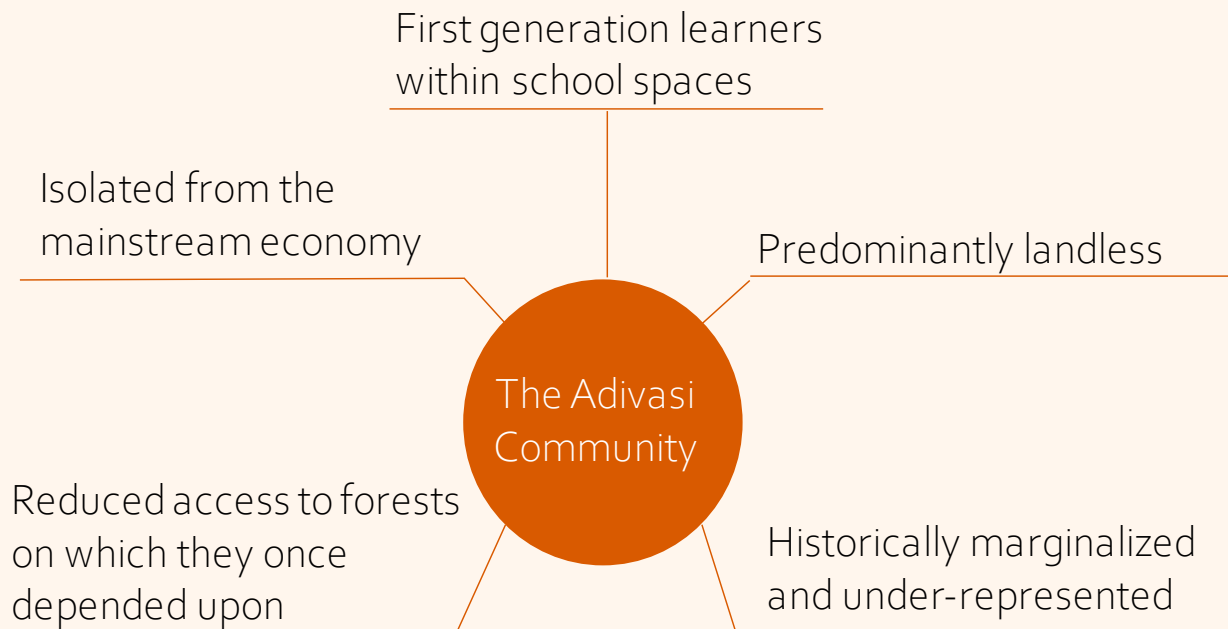
An Adivasi Community-led Education Initiative

Viswa Bharati Vidyodaya Trust & Adivasi Munnetra Sangam

Context of the Adivasi community in Gudalur

20,000 Adivasis (An Indian name for indigenous tribes) belonging to the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), are scattered over 320 hamlets in the Gudalur Valley of the Nilgiris Hills in South India. PVTG is a classification by the Government of India of tribal groups who have extremely low social, educational and economic developmental indicators.

The Cornerstone Project breaks the narrative of low expectations by placing the community at the centre. It creates opportunities for them to take ownership and actively engage as partners.



“So much has changed in our lifetime. The forest is no more ours and our way of life has changed. We have no place to talk to our children, walk with them, share our stories and songs. Fortunately, we have Vidyodaya. Our children must learn to live in this world, but should never forget our culture and language.”

An Adivasi elder. His words serve as our inspiration



The community's vision and hope: A pathway to self reliance

The Cornerstone Project aims to establish a comprehensive education system for the Adivasis of the Gudalur valley, providing contextual education to enable self-reliance.

At the core lies our belief in a community-led model of education. The initiative will be designed and managed with the active participation of the Adivasi community, making learning experiential and culturally relevant.

VBVT's unique approach

Viswa Bharati Vidyodaya Trust (VBVT) has been working in the region since 1993 to provide quality education to the Adivasi community.

Our programs

Community Outreach Program (Since 1993)

- > Covers close to 300+ Adivasi villages.
- > Tracks the educational progress of ~3000 children
- > Seeks to create more support systems at the village level for children.

Vidyodaya Primary School (Since 1996)

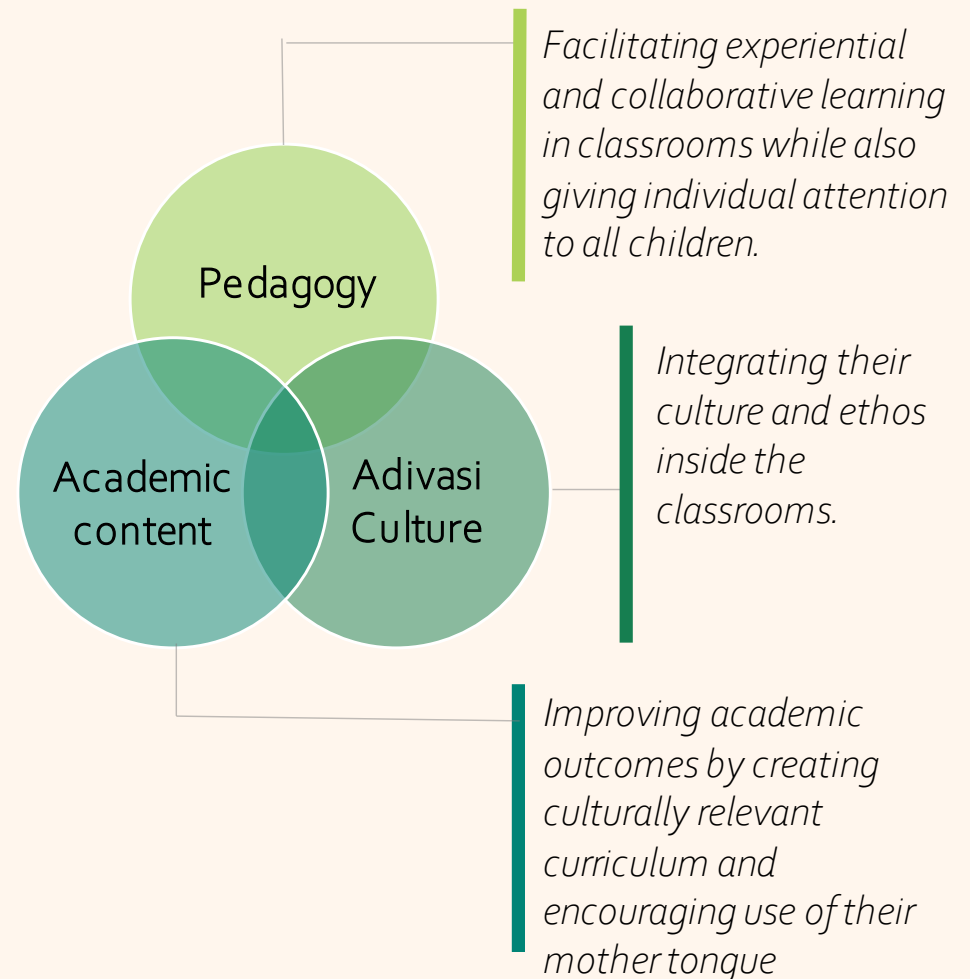
- > Works with 100+ children between KG to 5th grade.
- > Houses a training space focusing on enabling more Adivasi teachers.

Access Residential School (Since 2014)

- > In partnership with the Government, we manage and run a residential school for 100 children for whom access to schools are difficult

The model takes an integrated and equitable approach towards ensuring quality in education.

Our Model



Our work so far with community

Improved enrolment rate in local schools from 737 to 3000~ children between 2000 to 2010

Created the belief within the community That adivasi children can learn as well as any other child

Established inclusive educational practices for adivasi children

Established partnerships with the Government to increase reach

Improved community ownership and participation



The Cornerstone Project: Going Beyond the Threshold

Over the last twenty years, the Adivasi community through their efforts have reached the threshold of educational possibilities. At present the challenge we face is to take them beyond the threshold to:

- Meaningful secondary and higher education
- Improved access to purposeful and contextual skill development
- Educational pedagogies and curriculum which includes their history and culture
- An educational institution which supports the growth of the village and village-based spaces

The Cornerstone Project looks to achieve this in a single campus. It will be built on the basis of a year long research with the adivasi community to understand their needs, vision and ambition for the future. With this we will establish a pathway through which the adivasi communities can negotiate their own space in this world



> Full-fledged School

with classes from KG to grade 12 for ~400 children. With focus on enabling children to learn in a contextual and cultural manner

> Hostel

for 150 children travelling from remote and distant villages. To provide a nourishing environment for students to learn and grow.

> Community College

a comprehensive skill development centre for the youth that prepares them to participate actively in the local economy

We need funding to enhance the impact

We are reaching out to seek your support in realising the vision of the community for the education of their future generations. The Cornerstone project creates an opportunity for the adivasi community to establish a comprehensive and nurturing education system geared towards their needs. The success of this project will set a precedent that could guide other similar communities across the country. However, the costs of the project needs to be met and this requires our collective effort.

The Plan Forward

Phase 1: Land and construction

We have identified the land to be bought. The first phase will involve buying of the land and construction of a school up to grade 8.

Amount to be raised
INR 6,50,00,000
USD 833,333

Phase 2: Hostels

Purchase of land and construction of the hostel and staff living quarters.

Amount to be raised
INR 3,00,00,000
USD 384,615

Phase 3 Consolidation

The final phase of the project will be to expand the school till 12th grade and establish the community college.

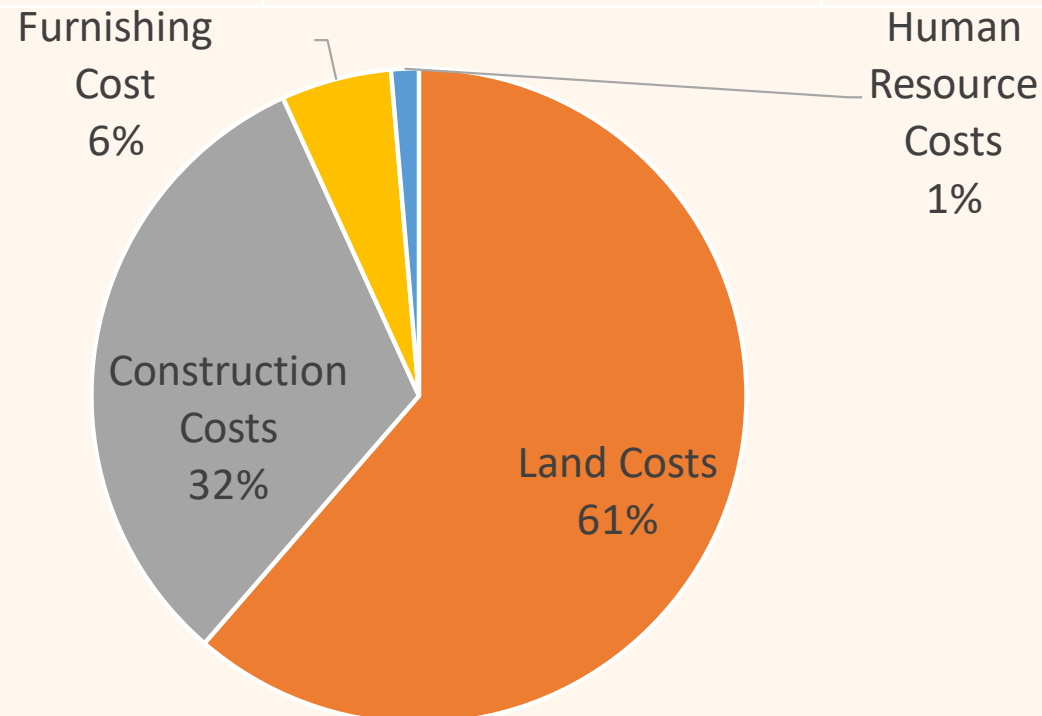
Amount to be raised
INR 1,50,00,000
USD 192,307

***We have already raised 40% (INR 4.75 Crores/\$608K)
of the total budget (INR 11 Crores/\$ 1.4 million)***

We need funding to enhance the impact

Cornerstone Project Budget Breakdown

Land Costs (3 Acres/130,680 Sq Ft)	INR 67,500,000	USD 865,385
Construction Costs (INR 1500/sq feet)	INR 35,000,000	USD 448,718
Furnishing Cost	INR 6,000,000	USD 76,923
Human Resource Costs	INR 1,500,000	USD 19,231
Total	INR 110,000,000	USD 1,410,256



Timeline for Phase 1: Land and Construction

Phase	Stage	Timeline	Status
Phase 1 : Land and Construction	Identification and Vetting of Land for School purposes	Apr- May 2022	Completed
	Advance Agreement with current owners	July - 2022	Completed
	Buying 2 acres of land for the school	Oct 2022	Completed
	Building design	Nov - 2022	In progress
	Regulatory process for building permissions	Nov 22 - July 2023	
	Construction period	August 23 - May 25	
	Opening of school in new campus	June 2025	

Our Track record with Funding Partners

India: The Tata Trusts (2000-2019) - USD 380,000

Over a span of twenty years, this partnership enabled us to consolidate Vidyodaya as an adivasi model school, launch our Educational Awareness drives thereby increasing enrolment rates of tribal children going to schools from 10% to close to 100%. Youth from the tribal communities were trained to teach and manage the education programme. Today these people form the core of our operations as teachers, field staff and leaders.

USA: ASHA Colorado and AID India Bay Chapter (Ongoing Partnership) – USD 75,000

ASHA, for over a decade, and AID-India for last few years, have been supporting VBVT to enhance access to education for Tribal children who live in remote villages. Their support has enabled us to increase the capacity of the model school from 65 to 110.

UK – Hilton International Development Trust / JKF & Others(Ongoing Partnership) – GBP 30,500

The HIDT helped us kick start the Vidyodaya Resource Centre, which developed Science and Maths videos to reach teachers and students who wanted experiential learning. Launching a [Youtube Channel](#), the Centre was able, during the pandemic, to reach teachers not just in India but many other countries too. Another crucial area was to provide over 100 scholarships to students for higher education.

Germany - Adivasi Kooperation Project, (ATP) (Ongoing Partnership) - EU 50,000

ATP has been supporting VBVT for over the last two decades. Through their support we have been able to provide nutritional supplements for children and also for teacher salaries and materials for the Vidyodaya school

VBVT's finances are audited annually by an external auditor. Our [Audit reports](#) and [Annual reports](#) are available on our website. We ensure that our finances are transparent not only to our donors but also to the communities we work with.



REACH OUT TO US

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Viswa Bharati Vidyodaya Trust is registered under the Indian Trust Act with 80G tax exemption status and FCRA approval status.