

## GETTING TO KNOW ANITA

ANITA REDDY

Anita Reddy is a Founder Trustee of AVAS (Association for Voluntary Action and Services) and it's Managing Trustee since 1980

She is the Managing Trustee of  
DRRT and its initiatives  
DRIK & DWARAKA Foundations

& of TRANSCEND TRUST

She has been working voluntarily through AVAS and the DRRT, DRIK and DWARAKA Trusts for the upliftment of the indigent communities, especially in the urban slums of Karnataka and in the villages of Andhra Pradesh for the past 40 plus years.

Anita was born on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1954. She did her schooling at Rishi Valley India, her B.A English Literature in Chennai and joined Masters of Social Work, in 1974. She left for America in 1975. There amongst other jobs, she worked in a home for senior citizens, "an experience worth having had" she says. She settled in Bangalore in 1978, and in the October of that year walked into a slum, and has ever since been involved in working voluntarily with the poor.

### Detailed Profile

Anita Reddy, a social worker and a founder member of Association for Voluntary Action and Services (AVAS), is known for her services for the rehabilitation and upliftment of the slum dwellers in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

She is also the managing trustee of DRRT, DWARAKA and DRIK Foundations, working for Kalamkari art revival, women's livelihoods & empowerment and children's education.

***She was awarded the fourth highest civilian award - Padma Shri by the Hon'ble President, Government of India in 2010 (given 2011).***

Apart from serving voluntarily in

AVAS, DRRT, DWARAKA Foundation & DRIK Foundation,

Anita Reddy also established DWARAKA PLUS (DWARAKA Peoples Livelihoods Upliftment Society), a society of women and rural artisans reviving Indian art, craft and culture especially hand painted kalamkari.

She is on the Board serving as its Hon'rary President.

Recognized for her experience, expertise and passion to serve society she has been in various positions on State and National Committees and Boards which have helped bring an impact to State and National Policy for the development of urban poor.

**She was:**

- Board member of Karnataka Slum Clearance Board
- Task Force Member on housing the poor, set up by the Government of Karnataka
- A Member of the National Committee set up by Government of India towards the United Nations Conference on Human Settlement at Istanbul, Turkey
- Member of the Highlevel Task Force Committee on Affordable Housing For All set up by Govt. of India - from Jan 15th 2008 to date
- Member of the ABIDE Committee (Agenda for Bangalore Infrastructure Development) set up by the Govt. of Karnataka and heading sub-committee on urban poor
- Committee Member of the Micro – Housing Finance set up by ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India
- Member, Planning Commission set by Government of India in 2011, sub-group on artisan's welfare and development and working group on urban poverty
- Member of BUPP-Bangalore Urban Poverty Alleviation project steering committee established by Karnataka State Government and the Netherlands Government.
- Member of the National Committee for RAY- Rajeev Awaz Yojana towards formulating National housing policy and contributed in impacting slum "insitu" development.
- Jury Member in Namma Bengaluru Awards selection panel.

- A Trustee of the Sarvodaya International Trust, Karnataka Chapter
- Ex-Board Member of Public Affairs Centre (PAC)
- One of the founding members of Women's Voice-a movement of Urban Poor women in Karnataka
- One of the founding members of KKNSS (Karnataka Kolageri Nivasigala Samyukta Sanghatane) - a movement of urban poor slum dwellers in Karnataka.

### **UN CONFERENCES ATTENDED / REPRESENTED COUNTRY**

- 1987-UN Conference at Nairobi, Kenya, Africa on Shelter for the Shelter less
- 1995-UN Conference on Women at Beijing- Huaru, China.
- Represented country at HABITAT-II - Second UN Human Settlements Conference in 1996 in Istanbul, Turkey.

### **WORK AND ACHIEVEMENTS-AVAS**

AVAS -Anita led the AVAS team as its managing trustee to stop evictions and demolitions in slums of Bengaluru since 1978, and steered communities towards the implementation of participatory, people centric, gender oriented, in-situ housing projects for slum dwellers impacting National Policy on land and shelter for the urban poor.

### **SLUM REHOUSING PROJECTS-AVAS**

Impactful rehousing work in more than 20 slums across various urban poor communities in Bangalore, Karnataka. The ripple effect is reflected in reorienting even the Governments approach to rehousing the poor in certain urban poor settlements of Bangalore.

### **FACILITATING HOUSING FOR POOR-DRRT**

Work primarily done in Chiittor, Andhra Pradesh by DRRT includes Housing in Shankarayya Gunta, Kattladoddi community in Chittoor and housing upgradation in Nakkal Colony Tirupathi etc.

### **FINANCING HOUSING IN SLUMS-AVAS**

DRRT & AVAS have successfully raised funds through self-help groups savings proving the credit worthiness of the poor, especially women. These savings have been used as collaterals with HUDCO AND HDFC. AVAS evolved a way by which a risk guarantee fund at a fraction of the cost of the loan stimulated the Housing Finance agencies to give bigger loans to the poor towards housing.

### **SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES-AVAS**

AVAS has supported the development of pre-schools, creativity centers, infrastructure and community centers. It has promoted self employment schemes and vocational skill development programs. It has organized Mahila Sanghas (womens groups) and networked adolescent girls and youth into becoming the change makers.

### **DRIK Foundation**

Founded by DRRT, DRIK is involved in promoting and empowering education, through pro-poor, rights oriented, and evolving curriculum. Developing in children empowered and value-based leadership, courage to pursue one's own convictions and thinking and discerning attitudes

#### **DRIK – DRISHYA (2002)**

Learning Centers (open school) for children living in Bangalore slums – 6 slums in Bangalore were covered under this program.(Evolved into Drishya Foundation)

#### **DRIK-JEEVANOTSAVA (2002)**

A cultural empowerment network for children in 13 slums of Bangalore, 12 villages and 21 government schools across Karnataka and 13 rural communities in Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh (including DWARAKA), and 12 government schools too.

#### **DRIK-VIVEKA (2002)**

A 40 acre residential campus at Chikkaballapur, developed with dormitories for children living in the slums and activity centers, and for the village children to take “education beyond schooling”.

**DRIK-PATASHALA**

(2006)

An open school with a difference for children living in Chittoor slum communities.

**DRIK-NACOLDEV**

(2008)

Innovative educational program for the tribal children of Nakkala colony, Tiruchanur, Chittoor district in co-ordination with government of Andhra Pradesh.

**DRIK-CEF (Children’s Education Fund)**

An unique and extremely creative approach to ensuring children continue studies, and higher education, without families being driven into debt. DRIK-CEF is a terrific tool towards empowerment and leadership development by the self-managed youth and children’s teams.

**DWARAKA Foundation**

DWARAKA Foundation and DWARAKA PLUS (Development of Women and Rural Artisans for Knowledge and Action-Regd.) are working towards gender empowerment and livelihoods for women. The work is Established in villages around the temple town of Srikalahasti and Chittoor district, in Andhra Pradesh. DWARAKA since 1999 has impacted the livelihoods of hundreds of kalamkari artists and weavers families.

**SWECHA**

(2004)

Satsang Women's Empowerment Collective for holistic advancement and livelihood generation for the indigenous ‘Sugali’ families in Madanapalli village, Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh.

**NACOLDEV**

(2005)

Established livelihoods generation for the nomadic community of indigenous families who trade in costume, jewelry, beads and trinkets

**RATNA CENTRE  
(2006)**

Ranjini Amma Training and Networking for Action Centre at Chittoor. Deserted and destitute women from the slums and villages are provided opportunities towards skill development and income generation to help them become economically independent.

**INDIRA AND SURU CENTRES  
(2010)**

These two initiatives provide rural women around Pulicherla village, self-employment and skill development opportunities. Youth are provided technical trainings and training to improve communication skills.

**TRUSTEE-TRANSCEND TRUST**

Anita's vision to create a model education institution is stimulating the formation of the TRANSCEND School at the DRIK Viveka campus, to empower children from indigent communities in and around the villages near Chikkaballapur, Karnataka.

**AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

- 1. PADMA SHRI AWARD-Conferred by the Honorable President of India - 2010 (Received 2011-April 1<sup>st</sup>).**
- 2. Kempegowda Award from Bangalore city Corporation -1997.**
- 3. PRSI-Public Relations Society of India Award for service in poor communities-1994.**
- 4. Bengalurean Citizen of the year, honored by Namma**

**Bengaluru Foundation for work in urban poor communities, education and rural women livelihoods-2010.**

5. **Chittoor Dt. Centenary celebrations award by Government of Andhra Pradesh in 2010.**
6. **MahilaSadhaki Award of the Guild of Women Achievers in 1997.**
7. **Award for Yeoman Service to Society Honored by CanaraBank on the occasion of 64th Republic Day-Jan 2013**
8. **Professional Excellence Award given by Rotary Club of Bangalore-1989 to 1990.**
9. **TBD Award Of Honor Given by Altrusa of Bangalore.**
10. **The Jean Harris Award from Rotary International.**
11. **Women Achiever Award by Ladies Circle India - 2002.**
12. **Air Force Welfare Association Award - 2001.**
13. **Uttama Vanitha Award presented by Bharathamuni Academy -2012.**
14. **Achievement Award presented by Telugu Vignana Samithi - 2010.**
15. **Lifetime Achievement Award from the TANA Chittoor District NRIs, awarded in DETROIT in July 2015.**
16. **Dr. B.R Ambedkar Award in 1999 from V.K.M Kalavidaru, Bangalore.**
17. **WCC alumnae award from Women's Christian College-2014.**

18. **HUDCO Hari Om Ashram recognition award for outstanding performance amongst NGO's in housing urban poor in 1995 (to AVAS).**
19. **HUDCO Hari Om Ashram recognition award for outstanding performance in low cost housing for urban poor in 2001-2002 (to AVAS).**
20. **ART MANTRAM Achievement Award for Women - lifetime achievement in reviving the Heritage Arts – 2014.**
21. **Life Time Achievement Award from Crafts Council of Telangana's -Sanmaan Awards –2018.**
22. **Padma Legends award from ART MANTRAM– 2019.**
23. **IFAM- International Folk Art Market at Santa Fe, USA- Community Impact award–2019.**

### **Anita Reddy – how her life was touched.**

Every day, there is a harvest of love. As Kannamma, 73 years old, and Vellachiamma, 80 years old, clapped their hands in joy and pranced up the stairs of their new homes, being constructed in Sanyasikunte slum, I knew that over 16 years of struggles for a secure shelter for these families was worth all the challenges faced by me and my team. For the first time in many years, Nabeesa, an aged woman at CSI slum, saw the world, not as a blur of moving images but sharp and clear as could be. DRRT had helped her to regain her vision after an eye operation. As Nabeesa, hugged me, overcome with emotion, her happiness and gratitude, love and blessings, could all be felt at the same time. It is these intense experiences day after day, month after month, year after year that have been the greatest awards of working with poorer communities and families. For, every day, I meet a Nabeesa. At times she is by the water taps that we put in thirsty and dry communities, at other times she is the child whose life was saved after being afflicted by a life threatening disease. At times, she can be found sleeping under the comfort of a secure roof, owned by her, her mind no longer traumatized with fear of impending demolitions. DRRT has tried to be there whenever it has heard cries for help and support. Cries of communities that had been mercilessly demolished and shabbily rehabilitated; and cries of families who had no access even to drinking water.



Anita has strived to eradicate the suffering of so many that each such project implemented became a self motivating desire to do more. This desire took shape in many ways. It also gave rise to many more challenges, one's vision had to be redefined in a larger perspective and yet I could not lose sight of how it was as important to comfort a single family in need. Striking the balance between these needs, gradually, and one step at a time, foundations were laid for institutions one after another, bringing linkages between urban slums and villages, linkages between states, between communities and between families. At times, I know the journey has just begun. A journey that sees new foundations being laid, new milestones being crossed, replacing despair with hope and desolation with courage. Helping me make this journey even more special are my co-travellers, journeying with me, in spirit and thought and action. Some began the journey with me, others have joined me midway. A family that stoically stood by me, friends who believe in me and share my dreams, and associates who give those dreams a shape. The journey over 28 years to touch the lives of those who had not been as privileged was not a path of rose petals. But then it were the thorns that reminded me of the beauty of the rose. Accepting brickbats and bouquets with equal grace was my humble offering to the feet of Bhagavan, and to the love of my father, my guiding light. And above all, to those beautiful people from whom I drew my inspiration, DRRT, DWARAKA and DRIK exist for the Nabeesas and Ramyas of India.