

NEWS

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Rural Development Institute Receives \$4.3 Million From Omidyar Network

The Omidyar Network has announced a \$4.3 million grant to the Seattle-based Rural Development Institute to help secure land rights for the rural poor in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh.

The grant will be used to expand RDI's collaboration with the state government and other partners working to implement programs that provide land and opportunity for the more than two million rural landless families in the state. One of those partners, the Society for Eradication of Rural Poverty, has partnered with RDI since 2002 to help rural families — and women in particular — gain access to small plots of land through its Indira Kranthi Patham program. The program, which RDI helped design, provides legal aid to poor families that have legitimate claims to public land formally allocated to them in the past.

Last December, India's government endorsed micro-land ownership as a key strategy for poverty alleviation by including it in its new five-year plan. Because landlessness is the best predictor of poverty in India, the plan aims to allot micro-plots the size of one-tenth of an acre.

"Our research shows that a little bit of land goes a long way to alleviating poverty," said Tim Hanstad, CEO of RDI. "Our ongoing work in the India states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal, and Orissa all confirm that even small plots of land can provide a foundation for extremely poor people, especially women, to build a sustainable livelihood and a better economic future."

"Rural Development Institute and Omidyar Network Working to Bring Land Rights to Millions of Rural Poor in India." Omidyar Network Press Release 5/12/08.

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