

# A R Rahman extends support to Faizal and Shabana Foundation



Calicut, Jan 7: The inauguration ceremony of the recently upgraded Government Vocational Higher Secondary School (GVHSS) for Girls in Nadakkavu, Kozhikode was held recently.

Two time Academy award and Grammy Award winning composer, music producer and singer A R Rahman announced his desire to work with the Faizal & Shabana Foundation on the PRISM project during his visit on December 30 to Government Vocational Higher Secondary School (GVHSS) as a guest of the Foundation.

While spending over two hours at the 120 year old school, Rahman addressed the 2400 students in the presence of Faizal Kottikollon, chairman - KEF Holdings and Faizal & Shabana Foundation and Shabana Faizal, vice chairman - KEF Holdings and Faizal & Shabana Foundation, A Pradeep Kumar, MLA (Calicut North) and other dignitaries and the press.

During his address, Rahman appreciated the efforts of the Foundation to upgrade and renew the school campus as part of its philanthropic activities. He said that the dedication of Faizal and Shabana to the PRISM project to make the Nadakkavu school the first Govt. school to be recognized in the Top 10 schools in India in 5 years' time was an extremely commendable one and that he as extremely happy to have visited today despite his schedule and travel.



Rahman also announced that he would find ways to collaborate with the school through the Foundation so that students who are inclined towards music could get the opportunity to be trained by his K M Music Conservatory in Chennai or as a part of the Sunshine Orchestra which aims to nurture leadership and create social bridges by empowering less privileged children through music.

“I have brought my sister, Fathima Rafiq who is the director of the K M Music Conservatory and the Mentor of the Sunshine Orchestra and my chief conductor, Srinivasa Murthy with me today to explore ways in which I can play a role in the development of PRISM and the Govt. Vocational Higher Secondary School in Nadakkavu. Music breaks down all barriers and in a way the Foundation has done the same by providing international standard facilities for the school. We will discuss a collaboration for a music block on the campus with training done by our team.”

In his introduction speech for Rahman, Faizal Kottikollon mentioned that it had been destiny for Rahman to be at the school today since they had only met a few weeks ago in New York.

Kottikollon said “Although there have been many famous personalities who have visited the school over the years, there has been no other person more famous or more loved by every generation than A R Rahman. He is a man that truly deserves the title ‘Living Legend and through his philanthropic work, he has proved that he is a true human being.’”

Shabana Faizal focused on the significance of the presence of Rahman at the school and said that he was a trailblazer in his field and is a role model for all aspiring musicians around the world, not just Indians.

On December 26 the school and foundation facilities were inaugurated by Abdu Rabb, Minister for Education, Govt. of Kerala in the presence of Dr M K Muneer, Minister for Panchayats and Social Welfare, Faizal Kottikollon, Shabana Faizal and MLA Pradeep Kumar along with and other select group of dignitaries and the media.

The Foundation is also the driving force behind PRISM (Promoting Regional Schools to International Standards through Multiple interventions) initiative that was conceptualized by the local MLA in Calicut, Pradeep Kumar and is a partnership with the Government of Kerala to upgrade schools across Kerala, making the school a model for the entire country.

Abdu Rabb in his inaugural speech hoped the PRISM project, by upgrading facilities at the school to world standards, would attract more students to government schools where student strength had been gradually declining.

He pledged complete support by his Ministry to ensure that PRISM reaches as many schools as possible in the State and that the Faizal & Shabana Foundation has shown that a Govt. school can have better facilities than most private schools in the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Faizal Kottikollon said "India has the majority of its students attending Government or Government aided schools, but attendance is dropping by the day. IIM – Kozhikode had done a gap analysis on Government schools in Kerala and had identified a number of challenges faced by these schools, including lack of infrastructure and low morale amongst teachers and students. The lack of basic facilities like toilets in girls' schools also contributes to the decline in attendance and academic output. There has been a glaring case of inequality in education until today. We took up this project because we wanted to make this school a working model that can be replicated across the State and country."

The objective of the Foundation is to make the Nadakkavu school a Top 10 school in India in 5 years' time. No Government school in India has achieved this so far. One of the key areas being focused on is teachers' training. The Foundation has been working closely with IIM-Kozhikode to deliver practical and focused training to the school faculty on motivation and leadership.

The Foundation was initiated by the promoters of UAE based KEF Holdings, Faizal Kottikollon and Shabana Faizal, inspired by their desire to give back, the commitment to sustain and the passion to excel while valuing the potential of each human being. The Foundation actively supports numerous charitable initiatives including an Autism center in Mahe, Kerala, Dr. Rajendra Pachauri's "Light a Billion Lives" campaign which provides clear solar lighting to villages in South India and an endowment to introduce the study and research of Precast Construction Technology in the Civil Engineering Department of Manipal Institute of Technology.

The overall vision of the Faizal and Shabana Foundation is "Giving to Create Impact". The focus areas of the foundation's interventions are specifically women, children and youth. Thematically, the foundation has been working in the sectors of Education, Housing, Health, Humanitarian Assistance, Livelihoods and Sports.