

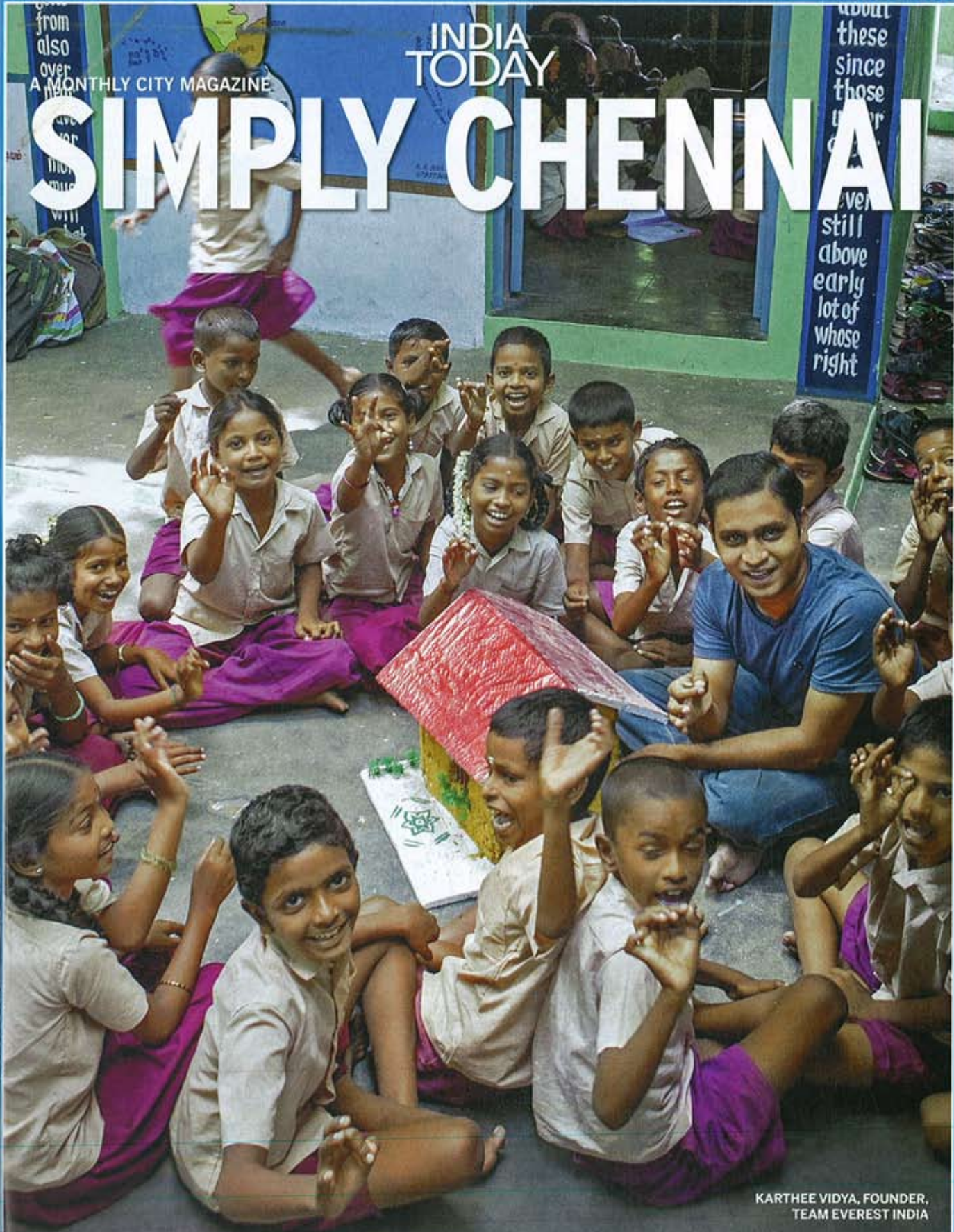
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INDIA TODAY

SIMPLY CHENNAI

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KARTHEE VIDYA, FOUNDER, TEAM EVEREST INDIA

THE TORCHBEARERS

5 PEOPLE WHO ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

LABOUR OF LOVE



WITH POWERFUL VISIONS EMPOWERED BY DYNAMIC PLANS OF ACTION, RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY, THESE YOUNGSTERS ARE REDEFINING NON- PROFITS WITH A STREAK OF AMBITION

By SARANYA CHAKRAPANI

ENABLING THE GRASSROOTS

Karthee Vidya, 30, Team Everest India

POVERTY, EDUCATION AND SURVIVAL HAVE HAVE A vicious interlink and only plunging head-on into the grass-roots can lead you to begin untangling. Originally from Thiruvannamalai, Karthee Vidya's first impetus to make a difference was when his own disparity in exposure as a small-town boy came through in a private Chennai school. "The children here had so much more, their confidence levels were higher. The teachers and the quality of education offered was way better and opened up a new world to me. I decided this gap had to be bridged," says Vidya. Contending that a frightening chunk of children from troubled and underprivileged backgrounds didn't make it to high school, if not addressed early, Vidya founded Team Everest India in 2006, when he was 22 and working in an IT company. Last year, he quit his job to focus on the NGO. The city-based NGO has two verticals—promoting volunteers and providing education for the underprivileged. Their main activities include—Help a Kid Read Programme, a customised curriculum for students of different ages and aptitudes to help them read and provide them with 10-week supplementary education courses in English, digital literacy and other areas. Finally, scholarship programmes for meritorious underprivileged, orphaned and single-parent students; this includes providing end-to-end support, including uniforms and notebooks, for school students. Scheduled funds flow in from corporates and volunteers for their bigger programmes including the setting up of 120 libraries across India, starting study centres with teachers and providing scholarships. Team Everest India has a total of 5,000 volunteers in Chennai alone and about 9,500 volunteers across India. They have set up village community adoption models that are fully functional in Chennai, Coimbatore, Hyderabad and Bangalore.

PHOTO BY JASON G