

# ENGAGEMENT FOR A SOCIALLY JUST FUTURE



“Responsibility towards society and appreciation in the form of happy faces motivate me.”

Vinod Desai, Head Design and Engineering Services, PackSys Global India



**VINOD DESAI**

**Lives in:** Mumbai

**Brückner Group employee:** since 2005

**Loves:** watching news channels, music, social engagement

“My mother always said: if you have something extra, give it back to society. There are so many who need it,” says Vinod Desai. In 2004, the development engineer and his brothers presented the by then retired teacher with a special gift to mark her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday: they took on the costs for educating an entire class of 60 pupils. This was the beginning of his extensive social commitment for Vinod Desai: “I have since adopted six foster daughters from tribal areas. Three of them still live with me, the oldest works as a teacher and the other two married after completing their schooling,” explains the proud foster father.

From 2012 to 2018 he also worked on a voluntary basis for the Father Ray Foundation in Pattaya (Thailand). “We never turned away a child in need. That was a charity that took in underprivileged school pupils with disabilities, educated them and collected donations and rice for them.” In 2018, Vinod Desai cooperated with engineering friends from his student days to found the Start Giving Foundation, which has set itself the goal of introducing e-learning in remote schools, providing the children with a good start to life. And his cousin, the transgender activist Gauri Sawant, helped him to build a home for the forsaken children of sex workers.

The healthcare sector is also important to the big-hearted engineer: “Many upper middle-class parents in India do not want to have their children vaccinated against measles and rubella, even though this would be free of charge.” As an honorary representative of the Thane district health authority, Vinod Desai travels from school to school, explaining the importance of protective vaccinations and observance of hygiene measures to mothers and fathers. “We have achieved a vaccination rate of 86 percent in my region.” Where does he find all the strength and energy for this social work? “Responsibility for society and appreciation in the form of happy faces motivate me.”



**SIX FOSTER DAUGHTERS** have been adopted by Vinod Desai: Renuka (\*1999), Nikita (\*2001), Neha (\*2003), Raj (\*2004), Poonam (\*2005) and Shubhangi (\*2011).

An estimated **19 MILLION** street children live in India – from a total population of 1,33 billion people.

**73 PERCENT** of these children come from rural areas. At some schools in these areas, up to 30 percent of the girls and boys are never or hardly ever present.

More than **22.000 INDIANS** die of measles every year – this represents 30 percent of all measles deaths worldwide.\*

\*Source: www.de.statista.com