

**Where the mind is without fear and  
The head is held high, Where knowledge is free...  
Where the mind is led forward by Thee  
Into ever-widening thought and action**

Rabindranath Tagore's lines are a poetic description of Article 13 of the UNCRC— every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law. There has been concerted work over the years across the world by various entities- governments, NGOs, and other organisations to make this idea a reality. It has been a struggle and children of different countries are at various stages of expression. What is required is the consistent provision of space for children to learn and express themselves in matters that concern them. It has been BREADS' experience through the Child Rights Education and Action Movement (CREAM) programme that when provided the platform to participate, children intervene meaningfully in their communities and political processes about issues that affect them. In a culture that believes that only elders know best, this has been a paradigm shift indeed. This issue of Slice covers three platforms that have promoted children's participation and expression in their communities during December 2019.



## Director's Note

It is heartening to review the closing notes of 2019--children's active exercise of their freedom of expression, and participation in governance at local and other levels. This freedom has been nurtured and promoted through various activities, Child Rights Clubs (CRCs), and the Makkala Grama Sabhas. At the state-level CRC network meeting, the CRC leaders' voices found full expression with confidence and clarity as they learned, discussed, and questioned existing circumstances for children. This was a great way to lead into 2020 and we look forward to more empowerment of children and adults.

Happy New Year!

*Fr. Joy Nedumparambil SDB  
Executive Director  
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## BREADS Calendar

### December 2019

- Children's special Grama Sabhas in ten districts of Karnataka
- State-level CRC Network Meet on 12-13 December
- BREADS' fund-raising event on 14-15 December
- BREADS' Christmas celebration on 21 December

### January 2020

- Internship of students from St. Joseph's College of Law, Bengaluru
- Arrival of volunteer from Malta
- Inauguration of the new Don Bosco school building in Kalaburagi
- Salesian PDO meet in Mumbai
- Project visit by Ms. Ursula Fischer from Don Bosco Mission Bonn
- Fr. Provincial's annual official visit to BREADS
- St. John Bosco feast celebrations in all Don Bosco houses



Acknowledging that today's children are today's citizens, the Government of Karnataka introduced Makkala Grama Sabhas (MGS) in 2006 in collaboration with the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, providing children a recommendatory role to the Gram Panchayats (GPs). It made the organisation of Makkala Grama Sabhas mandatory in all the GPs of Karnataka, vide its circular on September 30, 2006 (Cir. No. 367, dt: 18.09.2006). In spite of the circular, the needs of children were sidelined, their voices unheard and local governments failed to organise MGSs in their respective villages. BREADS played a vital role in ensuring the organisation of these sabhas in ten districts in Karnataka through the CREAM child rights education – encouraging children to claim their right to be heard.

With this platform, children found a space to express their views, concerns, ideas and solutions, participating in the decision-making process along with civil society, local governments, community leaders and others. Ranging from school infrastructure, mid-day meals, drinking water, toilets, to absentee teachers, dropouts, child labour and child marriage; children prompted the local government to address issues both on the ground and at the policy level. Adults became wary of fixing their minor children's marriages because of the active advocacy of the Child Rights Clubs (CRC) in the schools and community. The CRCs kept track of their peers who dropped out of school, knocked on their doors and demanded that parents not allow their children to become child labourers. Children's participation in these various issues has had a ripple effect in their communities. The impact of the children's advocacy is evident by the increasing number of Makkala Grama Sabhas organised each year.

### Makkala Grama Sabhas organised in 2019

Sl. No.	District	Grama Sabhas	Taluks	Children	Adults	Other Stakeholders
1	Ballari	69	5	9724	390	1153
2	Bangalore	1	1	35	10	12
3	Bidar	20	4	5139	277	155
4	Chitradurga	16	4	1482	365	67
5	Davangere	57	3	4430	440	529
6	Kalaburagi	11	3	1105	372	245
7	Mysuru	7	1	540	144	85
8	Raichur	33	2	1666	932	368
9	Ramanagara	17	4	3663	540	358
10	Yadgir	21	3	3385	305	77
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>252</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31169</b>	<b>3775</b>	<b>3049</b>

(Stakeholders include members of the Panchayat, Labour, Health, Education, Child departments)







Children have the fundamental right to be heard especially when their development, safety and wellbeing are at stake. When children are given the right to participate, they have far more to offer, contribute and the potential to do much more than the adults can realise. Participation helps children develop the critical skills they need to become active citizens, able to contribute positively to their societies. The Don Bosco social development centres provided opportunities for the less-privileged and marginalised children to enjoy their childhood to the maximum. On the occasion of Children's Day on November 14, 2019, across the various districts around 8528 children had the chance to play games, exhibit their aesthetic and cultural skills and simply have fun.

### Children's Day 2019 - Programmes and Activities

(Across the districts around 8528 children participated in the celebrations.)

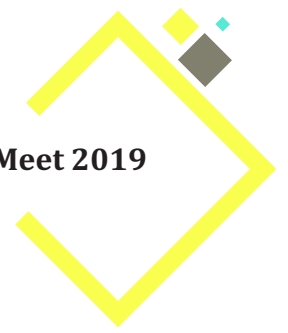
Sl. No.	Districts	Activities
1	Ballari	Cultural programme, games, Champion of Child Rights awards
2	Chitradurga	Champion of Child Rights, cultural activities, games
3	Davangere	Awareness rally, candlelight march, indigenous games
4	Thiruvananthapuram	Street theatre, exhibitions, distribution of leaflets, formation of student protection groups
5	Kollam	Games, integral development activities, sessions on generic knowledge
6	Ernakulam	Thematic celebrations on My childhood: My responsibility; public function, cultural events, games for children
7	Ramanagara	Planting saplings, public gathering
8	Raichur	Awareness on Child Rights for community leaders
9	Mysuru	Games, public meeting, picnic
10	Bidar	Quiz, mime, cultural events, motivational speeches
11	Kalaburagi	Rangoli competition, cultural events
12	Yadgir	Theme-based cultural programmes, games
13	Bangalore	Street play, public gathering, rally, Prathibha Puraskara awards, inauguration of tuition centre







## State-level CRC Network Meet 2019



The Child Rights Clubs (CRCs) at the school/village level are the basic structure for child rights education and advocacy for the children under the CREAM programme. Their advocacy in collaboration with civil society groups, youth, government departments and local self-governments has contributed greatly towards creating a paradigm shift in their communities since the CREAM intervention began in 2012. Forty child leaders of the CRCs from 10 districts of Karnataka met for a two-day State-level CRC Network meeting in Bangalore on 12 & 13 December 2019. On the first day at DB BEST Academy, Bangalore, the children were trained on the recent changes and amendments in Child Rights by Mr. Nagasimha G. Rao, Convenor, Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL-K), Bangalore. The forenoon session was led by Fr. Regi, Director, BOSCO Nilaya.

On the second day, at the KSCPCR board room, Krishi Bhavan, Bengaluru, the child leaders of the Child Rights Clubs met with the State Tribunal Judge, Mr. Krishna Bhatt, and the officials of the Education department to put forth their problems with the education system, as well as raise concerns about other issues in their home districts. The children were fearless and articulate in their expression of child rights as they saw it. The venue resounded with the sound of clear, frank young voices as they bowled over the judge and the officials with their questions and opinions. They also submitted a memorandum to the officials to include the Child Rights module developed by CREAM/ BREADS in the Social Sciences curriculum of the schools.



### A Workshop on Effective Leadership in Kollam, Kerala

The Fishermen Community Development Programme (FCDP) Kollam and Theeradesha Mahila Society (TMS) have always initiated innovative programmes and events for the upliftment of women, children and youth from the coastal areas of Kollam district. Contributing to the same mission, it organised a workshop on Effective Leadership for the Don Bosco Youth Forum on 30 November 2019. The programme was led by Mr. Edwin Joseph- Managing Director, Winser Exports, Cochin. The workshop focused on improving... [more](#)



### State-level Child Rights Clubs Network Meeting on 13 December 2019 at KSCPCR Office, Bangalore

Forty child leaders of the Child Rights Clubs (CRC) from 10 districts of Karnataka met with the State Tribunal Judge and the officials of the Education department on 13 December 2019 to put forth their problems with the education system, as well as raise concerns about other issues in their home districts. Fostered and facilitated by the CREAM programme of the Bangalore Rural Educational And Development Society (BREADS), the children were fearless and articulate in their expression of Child Rights as they see it. KSCPCR... [more](#)



### Capacity Building for Gender Equality in Development, Peace and Security

Don Bosco Hospet organized capacity building on gender equality for the women leaders of various self-help groups in Hospet, Ballari district of Karnataka. The programme was inaugurated by Mr. Suresh- District Coordinator, Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT), Ballari. Ms. Savithri- Project Coordinator, Women Empowerment Programme (WEP) and Ms. Hanumanthamma- Coordinator, TARUNI (SHG Federation) were also present. Fr. Siju – Director- DB Hospet, in his inaugural address endorsed the impact... [more](#)



### Children's Gram Sabha at Raichur district, Karnataka

A special children's grama sabha was organised at the Government Higher Primary School, Dondambli, Devadurga taluk, Raichur district on 24 December 2019. The gram sabha was organised by the Raichur zilla panchayat, and Devadurga taluk panchayat in association with the Don Bosco Social Service Society, Devadurga. Master Mukthasaba from the Government Higher Primary School (GHPS), Joladhadi, Devadurga and Miss Ayyamma from GHPS Dondambli, Devadurga, represented the 300 children present.... [more](#)

