

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



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We are witnessing the impact of COVID 19 on the lives of children in rural or marginalised settings, and it is not beneficial. Increased incidences of child labour, child marriage, and unhealthy behaviours are disturbing trends and can be directly linked to the closure of schools and the lack of engagement in learning processes because of the digital divide. In this edition of Slice, we report on the initiatives of BREADS and its partners towards supporting learning processes for children during the pandemic: school fee subsidies, devices to access online learning and enabling Don Bosco institutions to provision online learning for rural students.



ONLINE CLASSES

A FAR CRY FROM REALITY FOR MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, students the world over have been forced to shift to virtual schooling. While the transition has been quite smooth for privileged students, it is quite the opposite for the underprivileged. The lack of internet access and electronic devices has created new inequalities in education. There is a stark urban-rural digital divide in India: 27% have internet access in urban areas and 5% in rural areas. Only 12.5% of students in India have internet access at home and further, only 47% of those homes have smart devices (NSSO 2014).

"We stayed on because of our children's education. Changing schools to other state will be an issue and it will also mentally impact them," says Jhuma Ghosh (migrant from West Bengal in Kerala)



AUGUST 2020

CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2020

- COVID 19 relief work in Kerala and Karnataka
- COVID 19 relief drive for 7 tribal hamlets in BR Hills, Karnataka
- Inauguration of Savio Home and Salesian residence at Hospet

- COVID 19 relief work in Kerala and Karnataka
- Observation of Teacher's Day
- COVID 19 relief drive for Soliga tribal hamlets in MM Hills, Karnataka
- Induction to the virtual volunteering programme for HSBC employees
- Cross-learning webinars for skill trainers by HSBC



Bapu and Jhuma Ghosh are migrants from West Bengal, living with their 4 children in Vazhamuttam, Thiruvananthapuram for the past 18 years, earning a living as street vendors. The children study in the Vazhamuttam Government School. During the COVID 19 lockdowns, due to the loss of jobs and income, as well as the fear of infection, many migrants panicked and returned to their native states. Some families such as the Ghoshs, had other considerations such as their children's education and their means of livelihood back in West Bengal.

It is estimated that around 10% of the migrants' children enrolled in Kerala schools will find it difficult to continue their education due to the pandemic. Children of migrant workers who return to their native states are at high risk of dropping out of school for various reasons: availability of schools, language issues, documentation, adjustment issues etc.

During the lockdowns and afterwards, Kerala Interstate Migrants Alliance for Transformation (KISMAT) was actively involved in identifying and addressing the various challenges of the interstate migrants in the state. During the distribution of food kits, KISMAT staff came across Bapu Ghosh and his family. They lived in a partly-demolished, leaking house without facilities at a monthly rent of Rs. 3000. Bapu had not paid the rent for four months as he had lost his job, and was therefore asked to vacate. KISMAT helped them find a cheaper house on rent with better facilities. The parents were very concerned about their children's education as it was their ticket to a better state in life.



"My children's schools are closed for now. But people are talking about online classes. We don't have money to buy a computer, mobile phones and we don't even have a television. I am not sure how my children's education is going to be. My children's education is my biggest dream. It will be good if you could provide some online education materials to my children so that they can continue with their studies" said Bapu

The Head Master of Vazhamuttam Government School where the children studied was unable to help them. Similarly, the Janamaitri police and other NGOs could not help because of the volume of requests they were receiving. As the online classes had already commenced, KISMAT with BREADS' support raised funds to provide a smart TV, cable TV connection, notebooks, textbooks and other study materials for three children in the family. Through these interventions, KISMAT and BREADS are supporting the aspirations of these migrant children to a stable, secure life, different from their parents.



Shivakanthamma Deshappa and her three siblings are students of Don Bosco School, Yadgir. Now in the 9th grade, she excels in her studies. However, during the pandemic, she could not attend online classes because her parents Deshappa and Devamma are poor agriculturalists who could not afford the luxury of a smart phone for their children. Her siblings, Sanjay, Nikitha and Rayappa shared the same pain.

In encouragement of her academic excellence, Shivakanthamma was assisted on priority with a smart phone which also greatly benefited her siblings. All the siblings now attend online classes regularly. With smiles on their lips, Shivakanthamma and her siblings are even more motivated to excel in their studies and pursue their dreams. All thanks to this timely intervention by Don Bosco School, Yadgir and BREADS.

BENEFICIARIES OF BREADS' EDUCATION SUPPORT

| SN | ACTIVITY | KERALA | KARNATAKA | MIGRANTS (KERALA) | TOTAL |
|--------------|---|-------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Beneficiaries of school fee subsidies/education material | 74 | 374 | 311 | 759 |
| 2 | Beneficiaries of smart phones/televisions for online learning | 63 | 43 | 57 | 163 |
| 3 | DB institutions equipped with audio-visual rooms | 10 | 7 | 0 | 17 |
| 4 | Beneficiaries of online learning in DB institutions | 9300 | 4630 | 0 | 13930 |
| TOTAL | | 9437 | 5047 | 368 | 14852 |

SCHOOL FEES SUPPORT - PASSES TO CONTINUED LEARNING

Abhijitha C Sunil is the second of three daughters of Sunil and Sheejamol K.R of Manganam in Kottayam district, Kerala. Six months ago, the family was shattered when Sunil became bedridden because of a fall. Their sole source of income dried up while he underwent treatment.

The eldest daughter had completed her 12th grade from Don Bosco School, Puthuppally while Abhijitha still studies there. Abhijitha is an intelligent student scoring above 80% in her academics. She was in much distress about her education. She had arrears from the previous year's fees and the family could neither afford the fees nor the cost of textbooks. Appreciating the family's struggle and pain, the teachers and the management of Don Bosco Puthuppally decided to help her and 28 other students in similar situations, with the support of BREADS Bangalore. The school waived Abhijitha's fees and arrears of Rs. 5400 while providing Rs. 3000 to purchase textbooks and notebooks. She is happy and relieved to be back at her studies and regularly attends online classes.



DISTANCE LEARNING - LEARNING TO TEACH DIFFERENTLY

Closure of schools has been very difficult not just for students but also for teachers and parents, as they struggle to keep children productively engaged. Online classes became the mantra. While access to online classes is a problem, even more complex is the creation of content and production of online learning.

Don Bosco School in Devadurga, Karnataka imparts education to 900+ students within a 15-20 km radius. Exploring options for their continuing education, DB Devadurga opted for online classes to avoid the possibilities of infection from assembling children in the villages. DB Devadurga approached BREADS Bangalore for help in setting up the system, and online classes for the 10-12 grades started from 15 April 2020, with 82 students in grade 10 class actively participating.

Following the Guidelines for Digital Education (PRAGYATA) by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, DB Devadurga systematised its online classes. Using Google Meet, kindergarten students receive weekly classes while WhatsApp is used to communicate activities and homework. Grades 1-5 receive 45-minute sessions thrice a week. Zoom meetings are used to provide 45-minute sessions 5/6 days a week for the 6-12 grades.



Teachers conduct live classes using mobiles, laptops, or the blackboard. Animations, videos, and pictures help to improve learning. Recordings of the same and class notes are shared with the students on WhatsApp for revision. Online exams for the grade 10 students are conducted through the Testmoz website. Teachers are available to children for any clarifications through phone and texting from 9 am to 5 pm. They also ensure that students complete all their prescribed activities daily.

It has been a steep learning curve for the teachers, moving away from traditional modes of teaching, adopting appropriate technology, and learning to face cameras

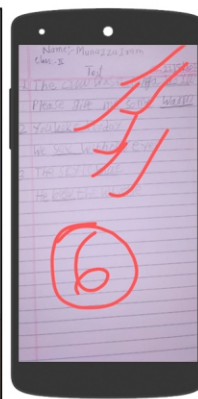
and classes without interactions. Teachers are challenged to make their classes interesting and they must spend more time to get various things done. Aply enough, children also celebrated Teachers' Day (September 5) online this year!

Additionally, it is difficult to convince parents that their children actually learn anything from sitting with a mobile the whole day. Besides poor network coverage, villages experience electricity outages almost the entire day, so most students cannot attend live classes but instead access recorded videos of the classes later. Also, students cannot attend classes when phones are with their parents who are out for work. An average of 550 of 900 students (65%) attends the online classes regularly.



For the institutions, the challenge has been to set up infrastructure and technology, support all stakeholders through a very difficult period amid the complete unfamiliarity of the situation. Various options need to be assessed for suitability to a local context. For example, Don Bosco Puthuppally in Kerala decided to use Educational Campus Management System (ECMS) to monitor their online classes and the Learning Management System (LMS). ECMS helps them regulate and monitor student attendance, watched history, notes, homework submission, marks and remarks. The experience reported there has been positive in terms of learning and behaviour and the results of the online exam are awaited to measure effectiveness of the medium.

BREADS and its partners have financially supported the infrastructure and technology required for these schools to set up distance learning for its students.



COVID 19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE BY BREADS

AS OF 1 SEPTEMBER 2020

| SN | ACTIVITY | KERALA | KARNATAKA | MIGRANTS (KERALA) | TOTAL |
|----|---|--------|-----------|-------------------|--------|
| 1 | Don Bosco houses engaged in COVID 19 relief | 20 | 20 | 0 | 40 |
| 2 | Face masks produced from all Don Bosco centres | 54300 | 195370 | 0 | 249670 |
| 3 | Beneficiaries of school fee subsidies/education material | 74 | 374 | 311 | 759 |
| 4 | DB institutions equipped with audio-visual rooms | 10 | 7 | 0 | 17 |
| 5 | Beneficiaries of smart phones/televisions for online learning | 63 | 43 | 57 | 163 |
| 6 | Food kits distributed | 3246 | 16592 | 2430 | 22268 |
| 7 | Ready-to-eat food distributed | 10238 | 190096 | 0 | 200334 |
| 8 | Beneficiaries of food kits | 16368 | 70321 | 10242 | 96931 |
| 9 | Beneficiaries of cooked food | 940 | 50016 | 59400 | 110356 |
| 10 | Total beneficiaries of cooked food/ food kits | 17308 | 120337 | 69642 | 207287 |

NEWS

Children and NGOs appeal to the Chitradurga District Administration

The educational institutions across India are hit very badly by the COVID 19 lockdown. The government schools in Karnataka are still shut and children are unable to attend online classes due to poor connectivity, lack of gadgets, or the absence of online classes itself. There were also a large number of economically-backward children depending on the mid-day meals provided in the schools; with the closure of schools, the nutrition needs of the children remain a concern... [more](#)



Partnerships for COVID-19 humanitarian assistance in Bagalkot

BREADS Bangalore in partnership with Centre for Social Action (CSA) – CHRIST (Deemed to be University) and ResponseNet, reached out to the scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and Devadasi families in Jamakhandi, Bagalkot district of Karnataka on 14 August 2020 with essential food materials. BREADS provided food supplies to 330 people such as single mothers, widows, senior citizens, the differently abled and orphans in 11 villages from 7 panchayats in Jamakhandi, namely Sanal, Algur, ... [more](#)



Supporting migrants in Chitradurga

The COVID 19 pandemic undoubtedly affected the lives of migrants in different parts of the country. The shutdown of factories and construction industries left the migrant labour force with no income or livelihood, and an uncertain future. Due to the lack of transportation during the lockdown, migrant families were stranded and the loss of income and jobs caused a shortage of food, increase in school dropouts, child marriage, child labour, begging etc... [more](#)



Reaching out to the tribal hamlets in BR Hills

BREADS Bangalore in partnership with ResponseNet, AIFO, the Good Quest Foundation, Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) and Project Vision undertook another drive on 22 – 23 August 2020 to reach out to the tribal hamlets in BR Hills, Kollegal range, Chamarajanagara district, Karnataka. Support was provided for 531 families in Nallikattri, Gombegallu, Keredimba, Kadakalahandi, Haavinamoo... [more](#)

