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Director's Message

Concerned organisations working for children across India have uniformly reported an increase in child labour and child marriage since the pandemic began in 2020. BOSCO, in collaboration with the government agencies in Bangalore, rescued 127 child labourers through raids between July 2021 – Jan 2022. In this Slice, we report on these rescues and other critical interventions being made through the BREADS-supported Child Safety Net (CSN) in Bangalore.

Enforcing the Law, Defending Child Rights

Spearheaded by the CSN team of BOSCO, 127 children were rescued from child labour across 12 locations in Bangalore over a seven-month period July 2021- January 2022. All the children rescued were minors, aged between 11 to 18 years. These children were engaged in bag and cap stitching, garages, saree dying, glass cutting, printing, paper making, steel chair production, kulfi/ice candy production, scrap, and construction work. All the rescue operations were conducted with the Police and Labour departments, following the necessary government COVID protocols.

CSN found out that the children were brought to Bangalore by contractors, who made advance payments to their parents. The children were forced to work from 8am till late at night in small, gloomy, and suffocating conditions, with little or no medical care. They were not even provided face masks, exposing them to the COVID-19 virus. They were not permitted to talk to their parents back home without the consent of the employers. On average, the children were paid monthly wages of INR 4000 - 8000.

After the rescue, the 127 children were tested for COVID, provided with necessary medical care, and produced before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC).

Of them, 22 were below the age of fourteen. Criminal charges were filed against the employers of these 22 children under the *Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act*.

Read the story of the rescue here on the Bangalore Mirror.

<https://bangaloremirror.indiatimes.com/bangalore/crime/the-great-escape/articleshow/89355458.cms>



Weaving a Safety Net for Children

The UNICEF identifies children on the street and working children as children in difficult circumstances, whose lives remain a serious concern to national and international bodies. Their situation becomes riskier as they continue to stay on the streets. An assessment survey conducted in 2012 by BOSCO, revealed more than 7000 vulnerable children on the streets then. At the time, BREADS initiated Child Safety Net (CSN) with its partner BOSCO, with high-level community involvement to prevent children from coming to the streets and to safeguard the rights of all the children at risk in Bangalore district.

CSN's major objective is to facilitate the creation of a child-focused ecosystem with various stake holders—the community, government and non-governmental agencies—to protect the most vulnerable children on the streets of Bangalore. Through this ecosystem, children in need of care and protection are individually attended and accompanied into mainstream society.

Currently in its 3rd phase of operation, CSN, ably implemented by BOSCO, supported by BREADS and government policies, played a major role in bringing down atrocities against children, reducing the numbers of children on the street through close monitoring at the grassroots level.



Major Outcomes of CSN Phases I and II

- **27933** children rescued; 85.4% were boys and 14.6% were girls.
- **3500** awareness programmes in schools, public places, government departments, etc., reached more than **430,000** people.
- **1020** bonded and child labourers were rescued with the Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU), and FIRs filed.
- **192** caring communities were formed, strengthened, and federated to enhance the child safety net in communities.
- Policy-level advocacy initiatives with state and central governments, railways, and transport corporations were made.
- Networking with other NGOs to organize mass rescues; especially International Justice Mission (IJM) along with AHTU.
- **20979** children were successfully reintegrated with their families after counselling.
- Children in vulnerable communities were identified and supported by enrolling them to school and following up through supplementary education.

Safely Caught! From Sweatshop to School

Yousaf Khan and Muzamil Khan, siblings aged 13 and 14 years respectively, were rescued from child labour by the CSN team in Gangodanahalli, Bangalore. Both worked in a garment unit to support their impoverished parents. The children's father was partially blind and had suffered a huge loss in his business. Their mother was a homemaker. The CSN team got to know the children and shared the information with the local Labour Inspector and police unit, and together they raided the garment unit and rescued the children. The duo was first taken to the local police station to provide an initial report and to lodge a complaint against the employer. They were then taken for medical examination and to the Employers State Insurance Corporation for physical examination and age verification. Per the directives of the Child Welfare Committee, the children were initially sheltered in the BOSCO Open Shelter Home where they underwent multiple counselling sessions while the parents were summoned by the CWC to decide the course of action. BOSCO provided a detailed report about the situation of the children to the CWC, which decided to return the children to parental custody as they had agreed to send the children to a hostel to continue their education. The CSN team remained in touch with the family and verified that the children are admitted to a hostel in Bangalore and are continuing their education.

Calendar

February 2022

- Monitoring and evaluation of BREADS' projects

March 2022

- Canonical visitation by the Provincial, Salesian Province of Bangalore
- Monitoring and evaluation of BREADS' projects
- International Women's Day celebrations
- Inauguration of the 17th skill training batch—DB BEST Academy

BREADS NEWS



Training programme-WELivE

A three-day training on detergent making, poultry farming, jewellery making, and finance management for Kudumbashree members was organised by WELivE Kan-
nur at Don Bosco Arts and Science College...[more...](#)



WECAN Staff Training

Bangalore Rural Educational and Development Society (BREADS) organised a three-
day staff training cum meeting for the programme staff of its Women Empowerment
Through Collective Action and Networks (WECAN) programme on...[more...](#)



Promotion of Menstrual Hygiene & Distribution of Biodegradable Sanitary Pads

BREADS Bangalore in association with PadSquad and Karnataka Interstate Migrants
Alliance for Transformation (KISMAT- a project of BREADS), distributed biodegrada-
ble sanitary pads in Gandhinagar, Bangalore on...[more...](#)



Distribution of Sleeping bags by KISMAT, Karnataka

The Karnataka Interstate Migrants Alliance for Transformation (KISMAT— a
BREADS' project) extended its support to 50 migrant families, living in tents under
very poor circumstances, in Horamavu, Bangalore; by distributing...[more...](#)