



**BREADS**

Bangalore Rural Educational  
and Development Society



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**Slice**

## Director's Message

Women's Entrepreneurship Day is observed on 19 November across 144 countries. It is a day that could easily go by unnoticed among other days. However, it is a day that matters. Along with a rights-based approach towards children's best interests, BREADS has been dedicatedly working through various programmes, to handhold women from economically-weak sections of society, to make them financially independent and empowered entrepreneurs in today's world. We at BREADS, are fully convinced that women are vital differentiators in lifting their families out of poverty and illiteracy, while setting up a peaceful atmosphere within the family.

In this Slice, we present how the promotion of entrepreneurship matters for the women of marginalised communities. Let us strive together to empower more women for a better tomorrow— for them, their families and society at large.



**Fr George PS**  
Executive Director, BREADS

## What makes an Entrepreneur?



Let's begin on a [musical note](#).

The ladies in the featured video are sisters Sinimol and Mini Joseph, who perform with their brother and father in their family band, called Punthope Assisi Sisters based in Alappuzha, Kerala. In Sinimol's words:

*With the support received from WELivE, I was able to travel to Ernakulam to buy the drum I needed. WELivE*

*included women from all religious backgrounds which is highly inspiring and appreciated. I am thankful for the classes, which motivated women like us to move from the kitchen to public spots. We have performed at every church in town. We get opportunities to perform at rallies, funerals, and various celebrations as a band, earning a daily living. Sincere thanks to WELivE and the team for helping us pursue this traditional profession of ours.*

Sinimol and Mini are entrepreneurs, supported through BREADS' Women Empowerment through Livelihood and Entrepreneurship (WELivE) programme to pursue a business opportunity that they identify, and are passionate about; not necessarily only what the programme promotes. Sinimol and Mini used their seed capital to buy a drum and trumpet and started performing in the band. They now earn INR 1500 per programme.

WELivE intends to promote 2000 such women entrepreneurs over two years in four districts in Kerala: Kannur, Kasargod, Kollam and Alappuzha. Passionate and interested women from self-help groups are selected and trained in entrepreneurship (including group management, finance, credit linkage and access to finance), as well as production management. They are facilitated to start their own income generation projects (IGP) or micro enterprises (ME), as individuals or in groups.



In 2023-24, **500** women were trained for entrepreneurship development and **250** women for organic farming (seed selection, land preparation, vegetable cultivation, weed culture, organic pesticides, organic manure production, etc.). Of all the trainees, **217** women like Sinimol and Mini have launched their enterprises and **240** women have started their organic kitchen gardens.

Microenterprises	Entrepreneurs
Organic kitchen gardens	250
Honeybee farming	60
Retail sales (garments, stationery, groceries etc.)	46
Poultry farming	42
Mushroom cultivation	32
Production and sale of food products	18
Tailoring	9
Production and sale of cleaning products	6
Musical band	2
Paper bag production	1
Beauty care	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>467</b>



### Why promote Entrepreneurship among Women?

Around the world, it has been seen that women’s participation in the economy, their ownership and control of productive assets speeds up development, helps overcome poverty, reduces inequalities and improves children’s nutrition, health, and school attendance. This is because women usually invest a higher proportion of their earnings in their families and communities than men.



For BREADS, it translates into women becoming empowered stakeholders in protecting and promoting the rights of children and youth, the prevention of violations, encouraging education, better economic and inclusive growth in a marginalised community, thereby helping to accomplish the BREADS mission of transforming the poor into resources and agents of change.

As in the case of Shiny (the e-auto driver featured in the video), entrepreneurship was a great way to become empowered in the face of many challenges. Shiny had to face up to a very abusive husband who had destroyed her documents and belongings, learn a strange skill like auto driving and other associated skills—functioning appropriately in society with clients and others. With lots of patient support from the organisation, Shiny learned life skills to manage herself, her finances, her household, and the education of her two sons on her own. From a timid, unskilled, incompetent person, Shiny developed into a courageous woman who had the presence of mind to save a man’s life through her prompt action in rushing him to a hospital in her auto.

Often, we see that women entrepreneurs become less permissive of violations of human rights, becoming role models in their communities and providing employment to other women.





## Prerequisites for Entrepreneurship

One need not be born an entrepreneur. The skills of entrepreneurship can be learned if the person is sufficiently motivated. This has been the experience of BREADS as it works with local Don Bosco partners to



promote entrepreneurship through the skilling of women and youth. When women are provided the opportunity to learn a skill, it opens up possibilities that previously did not exist in their worlds.

For example, 40 women in the WELivE programme in Angadikadavu, Kerala did not realise that they could grow mushrooms at home and earn a living from it. After they learned how to go about it, 32 women were ready to take the leap. Their first crops of mushrooms were sent to the local market. They are making labels, exploring possibilities of expansion. WELivE facilitated the possibility of a government scheme linkage for large-scale mushroom cultivation as a self help group, which some members are actively exploring. Each entrepreneur is free to decide the scale of her enterprise and is supported accordingly. Food-based ventures and handicrafts are also popular among the women groups as they seem more familiar and the women experience greater confidence in their skills.

## Budding Entrepreneurs

Shravanti, married, with two children, faces a lot of stress and financial constraints because her elder son has autism and requires special care. Her younger son is 2 years old. In these circumstances, Shravanti could not go out to work, putting much pressure on the single-income family.

Don Bosco Kolar Gold Fields (KGF) in partnership with BREADS, offers a short term beautician training, for which Shravanti signed up. She learned the various beauty procedures—threading, facials, manicure, pedicure, head massage, bridal make-up etc., increasing her interest in becoming a professional beautician. Shravanti found that she enjoyed the beautician course and that it increased her creativity and talent. Trainers found her a fast learner, with the talent and knack of

BREADS' WELivE programme facilitated 200 women to learn about goat-rearing, through which, a woman like Shamshad, in an interior village of Vijayanagara district in Karnataka, could improve the food security and health of her family, while also earning a decent income especially in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic. Shamshad's husband was a tailor with a meagre income and she laboured in the fields as a casual worker to support her three young sons. The children had to be hospitalised and Shamshad was forced to stop working, further increasing their problems.

With the seed capital to purchase 3 goats, Shamshad was delighted to have a chance at creating a more stable future for her family, especially her vulnerable children.



In 2022-23, BREADS provided skilling for employment and/or entrepreneurship for **6880** youth and women, through its Don Bosco partners and programmes in Karnataka and Kerala.

doing things very professionally. She was able to manage multiple things simultaneously. Shravanti displayed initiative and hard work by investing extra effort and time to learn and practice new things from social media.

Shravanti's goal is to start a beauty parlour in the future. In preparation, she is starting her practice from home, using the make-up kit that was provided as seed capital on successful completion of the training. Shravanti sees this as a viable plan to gain confidence, build expertise and manage the time to look after her son at home. Very often, even a small-scale enterprise creates hope and opportunity for growth, fostering new perspectives and empowerment in the process.

BREADS partners with the Fishermen Community Development Programme (FCDP) in Kollam, Kerala to empower women from the fishing community. FCDP has facilitated a Women's Cooperative which facilitates the procurement of raw materials, licensing, marketing, sales and distribution of the various types of products that the women entrepreneurs make, creating a vital support system for them.

Among the enterprises taken up with FCDP, the electric auto initiative is unique. Women from the fishing community learn to drive the auto, get a license and buy their own autos over a period of time. BREADS through FCDP and in a tie-up with Mahindra's Treo electric autos, provides forward and backward support systems, facilitating micro-finance for the women to buy the autos. During the initial payback period, women can access support for any technical or financial snags they face regarding the running of their vehicles. This ensures that the women gain confidence to handle their vehicles and ownership in a much smoother manner, preventing them from giving up because of initial difficulties.



So far, **22** women have successfully driven change into their lives and their communities through promoting entrepreneurship and clean transport, while disbanding gender stereotypes. They display courage and a pioneering spirit, opening up new avenues for their children and peers in an otherwise conservative community.

## Women Entrepreneurship in India

India ranks 70 among 77 countries on the Female Entrepreneurship Index. Women's economic contribution in India accounts for 17% of the GDP (less than half the global average).

About 6.36 million enterprises of the total 8.05 million are in livestock, manufacturing, and retail trade. Studies suggest that 10-30% of enterprises registered as women-owned are often not run by women. So, there's a lot of work to be done about the situation.



According to a report by *MicroSave Consulting* for the NITI Aayog in 2022, India's female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) declined from 32% in 2005 to 19% in 2021. Women usually operate in the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector in India and constitute only 20% of the total entrepreneurs. 82% of these women-led enterprises are micro units, run as sole proprietorships, most are concentrated in the informal sector.

BREADS and its partners have found that the women do face challenges on this unknown path of entrepreneurship. Some of which, are the unwillingness and fear of changing gender roles, social taboos, apprehension of going alone for trainings or getting licenses, lack of family support and family problems, financial liabilities, lack of funds etc. Naturally then, they require the support of an ecosystem that provides both material and moral support to encourage them not to give up in the face of difficulties. Once they find their balance, they are ready and willing to soar!

Let's do our bit towards creating that empowering ecosystem for women to become entrepreneurs. Would you like to partner with BREADS in this process? You're most welcome! Let's see how we can expand the world for women beyond the four walls of their houses.

## Journeys of Entrepreneurship

- [Watch Shiny's journey of transformation through entrepreneurship.](#)
- [Watch the impact of the WELive programme on women](#)





# Calendar

## October 2023

- Observation of International Girl Child Day
- Volunteers arrive from the Czech Republic
- Observation of World Mental Health Day
- Orientation visits to BREADS by students of Social Work
- Daan Utsav celebrations with CSR partners
- Employee engagement with CSR partners

## November 2023

- Children's Day and World Child Rights Day celebrations
- Visit of Fr. Rafael Bejarano Revira SDB, Youth Dept. Rome, In-charge of Social Works in the Salesian Congregation
- Project visits by funding and CSR partners
- Visit to DB Hassan Green Acres by JEW Austria
- Participation in an International Conference on 'Back to Nature'
- Inauguration of new skill training batch in DB KGF
- Release of BREADS Annual Report 2022-23

## BREADS NEWS



### Mental health is a Universal Human Right

World Mental Health Day annually observed on 10 October, was an occasion for the Drug Rehabilitation Education and Mentoring (DREAM) teams across Kerala, to emphasise the importance of mental health [...more...](#)



### Invest in Girls Rights: Our Leadership Our Well-being

BREADS agrees completely.

Experience teaches us that the empowerment of women needs to start when they are girls. For that matter, empowerment of women needs to start when men are boys too. [...more...](#)



### Corporate Staff Share the Joy of Giving

Every year, a variety of people in India celebrate a 'festival of giving' called Daan Utsav, which begins on Gandhi Jayanthi. It is usually celebrated between 2-8 October, and often extends across the entire month of October. [...more...](#)

[Click here for more news about BREADS.](#)

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