



**BREADS**  
Bangalore Rural Educational  
and Development Society

# SLICE

**NEWSLETTER**

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*Celebrating*  
**the Spirit of Christmas**

**03**

World Children's Day  
Celebrations - 2024

**06**

Christmas Celebrations 2024

**10**

Calendar & News



BREADS Bangalore

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START





## Director's Message

**FR GEORGE PS**  
Executive Director  
BREADS

BREADS' secular approach and interventions reach out to people of every caste, religion and community, without discrimination. All the Indian festivals as well as specific occasions such as Child Rights Days, Girl Child Day etc. are celebrated regularly with the children in our care, offering them occasions of cheer, empowerment and celebration. Children find the various activities and symbols of Christmas very appealing, looking forward to Santa Claus and all the goodies that come along with him. Beyond its religious significance, Christmas carries important secular messages of hope, joy, peace and love, and is especially manifested in activities of sharing, particularly with those in need.

To celebrate this community spirit of caring and sharing for children in need, we bring you glimpses of Christmas and World Children's Day celebrations in various project locations.

Thank you, dear donors, funding agencies and volunteers, for spreading the spirit of Christmas all year round, through your generous support of our work for vulnerable children and communities. May you be greatly blessed with good health, joy and prosperity in the coming year as well.

Wishing you a blessed Christmas and a very happy New Year!

# World Children's Day Celebrations - 2024

The UNICEF theme for this year's celebrations was Listen to the Future, calling for the adults to listen to the children's ideas, opinions and dreams, both for themselves and the world. Like the young Jesus, many children also have hopes and visions that can change the world. We need to listen!



## The Future Begins With Our Children –Let's make it Bright

Children's Day was celebrated with enthusiasm across various districts by BREADS' local Don Bosco partners, focusing on the crucial themes of protecting child rights and raising awareness about harmful practices such as child marriage. Events held between 14-17 November 2024, empowered children to become advocates for their own well-being and that of their peers, highlighting the importance of safeguarding their future.

A notable event took place at Avaragolla Government High School in Davanagere taluk, where a thought-provoking debate was organised around the topic "Child Marriage - A Blessing or a Curse?" Fourteen students actively participated in the debate attended by 150 students and five teachers. The session effectively raised awareness about the ill-effects of child marriage, its long-term consequences, and the importance of taking preventive measures. The debate encouraged students to reflect on their roles in promoting social change.

BOSCO Bengaluru hosted a grand celebration at the BOSCO Life Skill Training centre in Sumanahalli. The event, which welcomed over 900 children, 120 staff members, and 46 volunteers, was themed “Family is Where I Belong.” Former Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt. Umashree, graced the occasion and praised BOSCO’s unwavering commitment to empowering underprivileged children.



In Chitradurga, Makkalotsava 2024, a fun-filled event, engaged children in games, competitions, and cultural performances. In Bidar, various competitions helped emphasise the significance of children’s rights and the importance of education for their holistic growth and development.

These celebrations were not merely events but crucial moments for raising awareness about the challenges that children face today. The activities offered children not only a chance to celebrate, but also to learn and engage with important social issues. Through cultural performances, speeches, and discussions, the events offered children spaces for safe expression. The events emphasised our shared responsibility of protecting children and creating safe spaces where they thrive and achieve their potential.

UNICEF’s 2024 report State of the World’s Children outlines three megatrends that are reshaping the lives of children— climate disasters, demographic shifts, and technological



disparities—something that we observe in our work as well. In his World Children’s Day message, acknowledging the challenges facing the world’s children, UN Secretary António Guterres said, “It is shocking that in the 21st century, any child still goes hungry, uneducated, or without even the most basic healthcare.”

In these contexts, we are reminded of the need to continue to protect children’s rights, something that BREADS does through interventions, advocacy and inspiring communities to act; through initiatives like CSN (Child Safety net), CLEP (Child Labour Elimination project), MINDS (Mental Health Initiative for Nurturing Development and Support), mobile clinics and ECO (Educate to Cultivate Organically), among other initiatives.

## The Child's Right to a Family

On 6th November, BREADS’ Child Safety Net team in Kalaburagi conducted a significant event to launch its campaign on adoption and other alternative forms of care such as kinship care and foster care. The campaign was inaugurated by the District Commissioner (DC), who highlighted the critical



need to advocate for children’s rights and continued efforts to promote adoption initiatives, and strengthen alternative forms of care ensuring that every child has a right to family with institutionalisation as last resort for a child. “This campaign is not just about one day—it’s about turning every day into a celebration of love, care, and shared responsibility for our children,” the DC remarked.

During the ceremony, Ms Fauzia Tarannum, District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) led the gathering in a meaningful pledge, reinforcing people’s commitment to raising awareness and ensuring every child receives the care, love, and support they deserve in family-based care. This initiative served as a powerful reminder of our collective responsibility to ensure a brighter future for children through alternative forms of care and putting into effect all that is needed for the same.

The YaR National Forum had organised a two-day seminar- ‘Family is Where I Belong’, in Kochi, Kerala, which was attended by BREADS partners from both states. Fr. George PS, Executive Director of BREADS presented a paper on ‘Alternative forms of care’ that BREADS is implementing through its partners. It was also an occasion to share the innovative strategies that BREADS has developed over the years in foster care placements, a rehabilitative option that our country needs to strengthen and make known to the people.

# Christmas Celebrations 2024

“Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind” - Calvin Coolidge

These are glimpses of celebrations with some of the people impacted by BREADS programmes: children in our institutions and our supplementary education centres, families in landslide-affected Wayanad, etc. All of them are reminders of the value of lightness and joy in our lives; especially for children— they do have the right to play!



## Santa Eve 2k24 - Celebrations with Landslide Survivors

Santa Eve 2k24 on 20 December 2024 was an occasion to remember, for the people of Chooralmala and Mundakkai, who survived the landslides that took place in July 2024. It seemed like a team of Santas had descended on the premises of Don Bosco College in Sulthan Bathery, Wayanad, to bring festive cheer to all of them, reminding them that many people cared about them and their welfare, and that there was a reason to live.



Supported by BREADS and organised by Don Bosco College, the evening for the attendees was filled with fun and frolic, joy and laughter, music, games, activities, and prizes. A traditional Margam Kali (Christian dance in Kerala) performance and vibrant Santa dances by the social work students of the college, entertained the 450+ guests, who also participated enthusiastically in singing carols, dancing with Santa, and playing party games with the volunteers. The children were delighted to receive gifts from Santa Claus. Rations and toiletry kits (essential for their daily life while they wait for the promised government aid) were distributed to 150 families on the occasion. Santa Eve concluded with dinner and

plenty of cakes to carry the sweetness into the coming year.

Fr Dr Antony Thekkedath, Rector & Manager, Don Bosco College, welcomed all the guests and emphasised the importance of community support during times of crisis. Fr Dr Jose Koyickal, Provincial-Salesian Province of Bangalore, in his presidential address, assured the gathering that the Don Bosco support for their rehabilitation would continue through BREADS and Don Bosco College. His Christmas message emphasised the resilience of the human spirit and the need for unity as the community rebuilds itself from the tragedy. Fr Dr Shajan Noronha, Principal of the college, offered the vote of thanks.

BREADS and Don Bosco College have been working with these survivors since the tragedy occurred, offering psychological and other kinds of material support. In a scenario where the initial support from other agencies has quickly ceased, this assurance and continued support from BREADS on behalf of the Don Bosco network, was much appreciated by the people. Most of the guests shared that they were struggling financially and in no position to celebrate Christmas. Gabriel, a landslide survivor, was expressed gratitude at being invited to the event, their second one here. He said, "Such initiatives help us heal, reflect, and gradually let go of our painful memories. Thank you for creating a safe space for us to reconnect with friends and neighbours; rebuild and rediscover happiness together."

Suresh, another survivor, stated, "We're still recovering from the devastating landslide that occurred a few months back. The emotional toll was immense, and it's taken time to come to terms with our new reality. However, we're now focusing on healing and moving forward. This Christmas programme is a beacon of hope for us, providing a platform to share our experiences, joys, and sorrows. It's a wonderful opportunity to bond and find collective strength."

An apt expression of the true meaning of Christmas!



## First Christmas at Centre for Social Action, Bangalore

BREADS inaugurated the Centre for Social Action this year to reach out to the toddlers and the school-going children in Lingarajapuram (a low-income area), offering creche, evening supplementary education and nutrition services for them. The centre has fast become a part of the children's and their parents' lives in the slum. The Christmas celebrations offered a happy occasion for them to come together and have fun.

Separate Christmas celebrations were conducted for the groups of children and their parents. On 22 December, twenty-five toddlers enjoyed games and fun interactions, snacks and gifts, while their parents watched on. It was indeed a pleasure to see the joy on the faces of the little ones.

Similarly, on 23 December, around fifty regulars of the evening supplementary centre celebrated Christmas with drama, singing, dances, games and activities. The children enjoyed snacks and their new T-shirts.

The staff thoughtfully coordinated everything to ensure that the children had a blast, and Fr George PS, BREADS' Executive Director engaged both the children and parents with ease. Cakes were cut and Santa did the rounds as well, adding to the festivity and fun!





## Christmas Celebrations with the SSG Children

The Social Service Guild (SSG), supported by BREADS, is the outreach programme of Kristu Jyoti College (KJC), working in the villages and low-income areas of K R Puram, Bangalore. SSG organised Christmas celebrations for 450 children from its ten supplementary education centres at the KJC campus on 15th December. Extensive planning and coordination by several committees ensured the event's success.



On the day of the celebration, the children were transported to KJC by buses loaned by a local school. On arrival, the children enjoyed a breakfast snack at KJC and then headed to the registration counter, where Santa Claus welcomed them with a refreshing drink and entertained them during the process.

The celebrations began with a prayer dance invoking God's blessing, followed by the lighting of the lamp by the dignitaries and student representatives. Fr. Sunil Jose, Secretary - SSG, cordially welcomed the gathering, following which, Fr. P. I. Thomas (Professor - KJC) gave a short and meaningful Christmas message. Fr. Bosco (Rector - KJC) greeted the children in his Christmas message. The children then took part in various competitions — dance, mime, shadow play and skits—for which, the winners were awarded medals and certificates. All the children and teachers received Christmas presents. The Christmas celebrations concluded with carols by the KJC students, and a delightful lunch prepared by the SSG Coordinator and her team of KJC volunteers. Needless to say, the children absolutely enjoyed their day out!





# CALENDAR

## NOVEMBER 2024

- Celebration of 25 skilled batches in DB BEST Academy
- Extra Ordinary visitation from the Salesian Generalate, Rome
- Release of The BEST Story – impact assessment of DB BEST
- Release of 'Navigating the Future'- impact assessment of the YaR mission of Bangalore Province
- DREAM Staff State Level Review Meeting
- St Joseph's College, Irinjalakuda MSW students' orientation
- National meet of PDOs, Economers and Mission Procurators in Dimapur
- Project monitoring visits by BREADS

## DECEMBER 2024

- Christmas celebrations with survivors of Wayanad landslide, and other locations
- HR Summit with DB Job Placement Network
- Accenture employees' engagement with BREADS
- BREADS' Christmas celebrations
- Project monitoring visits by BREADS
- Christmas drive with Bangalore schools

## BREADS NEWS



### We are with you

Over 70 survivors of the landslides that hit Mundakkai and Chooralmala in Wayanad district, Kerala, were...

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### Celebrating 25 Batches of Empowered Youth

On 22 November 2024, in Lingarajapuram in Bengaluru

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### Nurturing a Love for Knowledge

On 5 November 2024, the leadership team from KPMG Global Services, led by Mr. Goutam Sadh, along with...

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### Daan Utsav 2024 at Volvo Group India

BREADS was honoured to be invited for the second time by Volvo Group India to participate in Daan Utsav...

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