



**BREADS**  
Bangalore Rural Educational  
and Development Society

# SLICE

**NEWSLETTER**

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BREADS Bangalore

[www.breadsbangalore.org](http://www.breadsbangalore.org)

START 



## Director's Message

**FR GEORGE PS**  
Executive Director  
BREADS

It is impossible to make ourselves fully immune to a natural disaster, even if we are informed of the impending danger, because the intensity of Nature is unpredictable. As BREADS has seen repeatedly in its role of coordinating emergency responses to various types of disasters, people experience loss at various levels. Loss of life is devastating but other kinds of losses are also debilitating—psychological traumas caused by shocking experiences, loss of homes and livelihoods, and loss of the familiar, among other losses. Beyond the immediate relief measures, BREADS continues to reach out to people affected by natural disasters, to help them in their rehabilitation and adjust to their changed realities. In landslide-affected Wayanad, BREADS promotes various initiatives that create positive impact both at micro and macro levels, especially for the affected children; an issue that we highlight in this edition of Slice.

I strongly believe that it is the responsibility of every human being and our golden duty to be at the service of people, especially in moments of crisis or calamity. It can happen to any one of us. BREADS, through its networking partners and with the support of funding agencies and donors, did play an active role in the service of the affected people. A big thank you.

# Natural Disasters and Children

During one of the sessions with school children in Wayanad by the BREADS team, two young boys sang a Malayalam folk song, which was both touching and evocative in its sweet simplicity, especially heard in the aftermath of the landslides.

*Kunjon and I walk hand in hand,  
through the paddy fields  
The crow calls all to a feast  
There's none to attend but us  
Crow, I am always there,  
To keep Kunjon company  
And Kunjon is always there for me.*

[Watch Video](#)



In a perfect world, this is the kind of accompaniment we would like to offer children. However, we can only do what we can.

## The Impact on Children

Information from organisations working with children impacted by natural disasters provides significant data, which are borne out by our observations on the field generally and specifically, in Wayanad.

Research-based data points from the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) and Save the Children help us reflect on the following:

- Natural disasters are getting more frequent and severe. Every year, 175 million children globally are expected to

be affected by natural disasters, including floods, cyclones, droughts, heatwaves, severe storms, and earthquakes.

- Natural disasters are expensive in every way, setting back the development of people and the affected regions. For instance, after the Wayanad landslides in July 2024, the Kerala government in its Post-Disaster Needs Assessment exercise, estimated a need of INR 2,219.033 crores (22,190.33 million INR) for recovery and reconstruction.
- Compared to adults, children suffer more severe physical effects from disasters because they breathe more air per pound of their weight, have thinner skin, are at greater risk in cases of fluid loss, and are more likely to lose body heat.

- Disasters also harm children indirectly. When a disaster affects parents and other adults (such as teachers), children’s care, protection, and support systems are eroded. This is clearly seen in all our work and in Wayanad as well.
- Natural disasters cause long-term physical health, mental health, and learning problems in children. Young children who experienced a natural disaster within the past month showed a 9 to 18% increase in acute illnesses, as well as heightened somatic symptoms (e.g., headaches, nausea, and lethargy).
  - 50% of children report post-traumatic stress symptoms, such as recurring thoughts about the disaster, hypervigilance, or difficulty sleeping or concentrating. Children exposed to natural disasters also often experience depression symptoms, such as feeling sad or losing interest in activities, and symptoms of anxiety, such as fears and worries about safety. Chronic mental health symptoms have been observed among children even four years after a disaster event.
- Children’s learning is often disrupted by natural disasters because many schools close and children’s attendance is interrupted. The destruction of the two local government schools in Chooralmala and Mundakkai in Wayanad, affected 614 children and the loss of 57 students was traumatising to everyone, especially their classmates.
- Trauma exposure can alter brain anatomy and functioning, inhibiting learning and memory processes. For example, children can report trouble concentrating (a common symptom of post-traumatic stress), which can interfere with learning at school.

## Climate Change and Children



Natural disasters are increasingly a result of the climate crisis that is experienced across the globe, which the UNICEF also terms a child's rights crisis. The global statistics are alarming but not unreal, especially seen from an Indian lens.

- 90% of diseases resulting from the climate crisis are likely to affect children under the age of five.
- By 2050, a further 24 million children are projected to be undernourished because of the climate crisis.
- By 2040, it is estimated that one in four children will be living in areas with extreme water shortages.
- Almost 160 million children are exposed to increasingly severe and prolonged droughts.
- The education of around 38 million children is disrupted each year by the climate crisis.
- The climate crisis is forcing families to migrate. By 2050, there could be 143 million more migrants due to the climate crisis.
- Extreme temperatures leave many families living in poverty with less food, less clean water, lower incomes and worsening health.

- Children's immune systems are still developing, leaving their rapidly growing bodies more sensitive to disease and pollution.
- Extreme events can destroy homes, schools, childcare centres, and infrastructure critical to children's well-being.
- Droughts and flooding can destroy crops and cut access to clean water.

The UNICEF's Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI) is a comprehensive view of children's exposure and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. It ranks countries based on children's exposure to climate and environmental shocks, such as cyclones and heatwaves, as well as their vulnerability to those shocks, based on their access to essential services.

**India ranks 26<sup>th</sup> in the world with an extremely high CCRI of 7.4, where climate and environmental shocks are extremely high (9.0) and child vulnerability is medium (4.6).**

This context of vulnerability and risk, which is especially higher among the populations that we work with, is not one that BREADS can ignore as it strives to ensure the rights of children in all its settings.



# BREADS' Continuing Interventions in Wayanad

BREADS continues its interventions in Wayanad at the micro level, impacting individual children and their families according to their specific needs. Overall, since the disaster happened, BREADS has offered **255 children** material support of various types, and it has reached out to **1000+ children** through disaster preparedness classes in the schools surrounding Meppadi, Chooralmala and Moondakai. BREADS is also reaching out to the adults through post disaster relief material distribution, psychosocial support, supporting them with livelihood options and also facilitating paperwork required for government entitlements.

## Interventions with Individuals

After the landslide survivors were relocated from the relief camps, and most other aid agencies had stopped their interventions with them, the BREADS team made house visits to nearly 300 individual families, building rapport and trust, and understanding their specific needs. They identified individual needs: psychosocial and medical support, help with education and livelihood, important household items, which they could not afford to buy in their current circumstances.



*These are sketches of the life situations of a few of the displaced people and families in Wayanad, whom BREADS is trying to accompany on their journeys to rehabilitation.*



**Manu** (22 years) lost much in the landslides. His mother died and his house was completely destroyed. He and his younger brother now live in another area with their father, who struggles with an alcohol problem. Manu is also a cancer survivor requiring ongoing medical treatment. BREADS stepped in with professional psychological support to help the family cope with its losses and challenges. BREADS also provided them with a television, refrigerator and kitchen utensils to help bring back a sense of normalcy to the traumatised family.



**Archana** (21 years) is now pursuing her post graduation in Social Work (MSW) at Don Bosco College, Sulthan Bathery. Her brother studies in Bangalore. The disaster made the family's house uninhabitable, forcing them to relocate. The family's current living situation is precarious as her father used to work on an estate and her mother was an Anganwadi teacher, and these jobs were affected by the disaster. Don Bosco College Sulthan Bathery (BREADS' partner) offered her free admission as well as fee allowances for their MSW course, which is a golden opportunity for her as well as a big relief for her family. Counsellors are working closely with the family to help them in their difficult situation.

**Sujitha** (38 years) was hit by a log on her back during the landslides in Chooralmala. She suffers from back pain and has been diagnosed with a disk bulge. Her family relocated to Meppadi where she is undergoing treatment that they struggle to afford (INR 4000 per month). Her husband is an auto driver, and she has two children who are still studying. She planned to start a thattukada (small food stall). BREADS initially contributed INR 25000 towards the setting up of the shop and intends to further help with the stocking of the shop. The BREADS team will also offer technical assistance in terms of entrepreneurial training.

**Meena** (19 years) pursues a paramedic course in Vinayaka Bathery. She had been staying with her father and stepmother in Mundakkai when the landslides hit them, killing them both. Meena's father had been the primary breadwinner, supporting the entire family. She now lives in Kalpetta with her unemployed mother and two brothers, who came over from Tamil Nadu. BREADS is supporting Meena's educational-related and hostel expenses, while counsellors help her with her emotional trauma. The BREADS Job Placement Network is helping Meena's mother and elder brother to find employment opportunities.





**Shantha**, a middle-aged woman, was severely impacted by the landslide and was forced to relocate from Chooralmala to Padijarathra, where she currently resides with her parents. She decided to start a clothing store to generate an income. Shantha said, “the best and the most apt gift I could ever receive was a brand-new sewing machine, and that’s what Don Bosco BREADS gave me in time for Christmas.” Recovery began for the family through arduous hours of labour on the sewing machine, and they were able to open a clothing store.

**Sumithra** (36 years) is unemployed with two teenaged children. She was forced to relocate because of the landslides. The family was already traumatised by the sudden death of the breadwinner of the family a month before the landslides. The landslide exacerbated the emotional and financial distress of the family. BREADS is helping Sumithra to come to terms with her situation, supporting her with household items, the education costs/ supplies of the children, and identifying a sustainable source of income.

**Santhosh** (45 years) lost his home during the landslides and his job as a driving instructor. He was forced to relocate with his wife and two daughters who were in college. Santhosh remained unemployed for several months and recently got a similar job again. The family was under economic and mental strain, as the educations of the girls were in danger. Santhosh’s wife, Indira, was willing to take up tailoring to support the family and therefore, BREADS provided her with a new sewing machine to augment the family income. BREADS is also supporting the educations of the two daughters.



**Arifa** (36 years) did not own a home. Her rented house was destroyed in the landslides and so she had to relocate with her family: husband and three young children. Currently, the family continues to live in a shelter home and her husband continues to be unemployed. The eldest daughter is required to undergo corneal transplantation surgery. The family is struggling on many fronts: housing, employment, medical, educational, and financial, some of which are being addressed by BREADS to help bring stability.



# Community Interventions

In the context of the landslides in Wayanad, the BREADS team is currently focussed on special populations—children, youth, women and other marginalised people—providing post-disaster relief materials, psychosocial care for trauma and stress management, capacity building to rebuild lives as well as to prepare for disaster responses in eco-sensitive regions.



## 1. #We4You Post-Disaster Relief Material Distribution



Fr. George PS, Executive Director of BREADS, who was part of the *We4You Post-Disaster Relief Material Distribution* in November 2024, said, “It was affecting to see the life condition of the people; on one hand, they are still coping with the trauma of the disaster and on the other, they are struggling to make ends meet. They are in a crucial situation where they do not have money to buy some basic things. I could see the joy of the people when they received items such as refrigerators, televisions, mobile phones, mixer grinders etc. It was a big surprise for them. Tears rolled down many faces as they received the items.”

Fr. George reiterated that *We4You Post-Disaster Relief Material Distribution* would continue to help survivors rehabilitate themselves and meet the challenges ahead of them. We remain committed to supporting affected communities and fostering resilience.



[Read the report here](#)

## 2. Onam and Christmas Community Celebrations

BREADS and Don Bosco College, Sultan Bathery have been working with the survivors since the tragedy occurred, offering psychological and other kinds of material support. Community celebrations for Onam in September, and Christmas in December 2024, created opportunities for the displaced landslide survivors to come together from their current residences to commiserate with their old neighbours and friends, offering them the chance to refresh themselves.

In a scenario where the initial support from other agencies has quickly ceased, the assurance of continued support from BREADS on behalf of the Don Bosco network, was much appreciated by the people. Most of the guests at the Christmas celebration shared that they were struggling financially and in no position to



celebrate. Suresh, a 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.”

[Read the report here](#)

## 3. Facilitating Conversations about Disaster Responses in Eco-sensitive Wayanad



BREADS was pleased to support a *National Conference on Innovations in Interventions for Indigenous Populations and Disaster Management* jointly organised by the Tribal Mental Health Project (TMHP) of IMHANS Kozhikode; NIMHANS, Bengaluru; and Don Bosco College, Sulthan Bathery. Scheduled from

9-11 January 2025, at the Don Bosco College Campus in Wayanad, Kerala, the conference explored interventions for the indigenous populations of our country, with sub-themes focusing on integration, mental well-being and mental health promotion, the right to health, the right to education, the rights of children, women, persons with disabilities, and senior citizens belonging to the tribal population, and the prevention of substance abuse, prevention and the management of disaster situations and livelihood.

Fr George PS, Executive Director of BREADS, as part of the panel on *Disaster Management: Experiences with the Tribal Community*, brought to the discussion, the varied and valuable experiences of BREADS in disaster relief and rehabilitation over the years.

[Read the report here](#)



# CALENDAR

## DECEMBER 2024

- Joint meeting of Economers, PDOs and Mission Offices in Dimapur
- Christmas celebrations across various 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

## JANUARY 2025

- BREADS-supported National Conference in Wayanad
- State-level DREAM review meeting
- Republic Day celebrations across centres
- Inauguration of Social Work Centre- Thiruvananthapuram
- TCS marathon fundraising
- Project monitoring visits by BREADS
- Celebration of the feast of Don Bosco

## BREADS NEWS



### Santa Eve 2k24 – Special Christmas for Landslide Survivors of Wayanad

Santa Eve 2k24 was an occasion to remember, for the people of Chooralmala

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### HR Summit at DB BEST Academy

BREADS – Career Guidance and Job Placement Services, Bangalore, in collaboration with Equitas Foundation, organised an HR Summit on 18...

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### Beat those exam blues – Beyond Books!!!

On 15 December 2024, Don Bosco PU College, in partnership with BREADS Bangalore, hosted the Don Bosco ...

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### Crossing Hurdles – A Call for Action on World AIDS Day 2024

Every year, World AIDS Day serves as a poignant reminder of the ongoing global effort to end the HIV/AIDS...

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### Sowing the Seeds of Sustainability – A Green Revolution in the Classroom

BREADS initiative—Educate to Cultivate Organically (ECO)—was inaugurated in...

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