

SLICE



BREADS
Bangalore Rural Educational
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START

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

FR GEORGE PS
Executive Director, BREADS

“There is nothing like a dream to create the future.” – Victor Hugo

This could also be said of BREADS’ initiative, Drug Rehabilitation Education and Mentoring (DREAM) that has been working its way through the minds of children, youth and adults, in ten districts of Kerala from November 2021 to February 2025; trying to plant dreams of futures, beyond addictions to substances, and mental ill-health.

The need for sustained intervention to create a drug-free Kerala is clear; and to chart a future optimal course of action, BREADS commissioned the Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, to evaluate the implementation and impact of the DREAM initiative through a systematic and scientific study. **The DREAM impact study report was released** on 17 May 2025 by Hon. Dr John Brittas (MP, Rajya Sabha) and received by Dr Arun S Nair (Director, Department of Social Justice, Government of Kerala), in the presence of many dignitaries and the district DREAM teams.

In this edition of Slice, we report on the results and impact of 42 months of DREAMing with our Don Bosco partners and other stakeholders in Kerala, and look forward to a future, in which more young people choose life over addictions. ■

The Context of DREAM



These statistics present the scary situation of young people in the context of substance use and its high correlation with poor mental health.

Substance Use in India - AIIMS-NDDTC 2019 National Survey

Age Group	Substance	Estimated Users (in millions)	Prevalence (%)
18-75 (Adults)	Alcohol	150	17.1%
	Cannabis	31	2.8%
	Opioids	19	2.1%
10-17 (Adolescents)	Alcohol	3	1.3%
	Cannabis	2	0.9%
	Opioids	4	1.8%

- Less than 1% of those in need have access to treatment.

Kerala-Specific Trends: Between January 2023 and June 2024, Kerala recorded 41,531 Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) cases, with districts like Ernakulam (8,567), Malappuram (5,906), and

Kozhikode (5,385) leading. Synthetic drug seizures surged from 88.8 grams in 2021 to 2,432.4 grams in 2022. School-based data indicate that **40% of victims are under 18 years**, with rising female involvement

through covert networks. College-level NDPS cases—24,517 in 2024—reflect a **330% increase** over three years.

According to National Crime Records Bureau, 2021 the rate of suicide in Kerala is 26.9 per 100000 persons, which is much higher than the national average of 12 (20.2 % suicides are among the 15-29 age group). A substantial percentage of suicides are associated with toxic relationships while a major percentage of suicide victims were addicted to alcohol, illegal drugs, narcotic substances and other items.

Over time, the state has seen an increase in the prevalence of mental health issues. One out of every five students in Kerala in the age group of 12-19 suffers from psychological distress, with its severity ranging from mild in 10.5 per cent of students to 5.4 per cent moderate and 5 per cent severe cases. Some contributing factors are lifestyle changes and academic stress; while parental migration, peer pressure, and addictions further exacerbate the issue.

THE DREAM SOLUTION



A UNIFIED DREAM



It is an achievement that BREADS could successfully share the DREAM platform with many other stakeholders, who share the dream of young people enjoying an addiction free life, with health and prosperity.

Those who contributed to realising DREAM include

- Parents
- Teachers
- Educational Institutions
- Social Workers
- NGOs
- Professional Mental and Physical Health Practitioners and Institutions
- Government Departments —Excise, Health, Police, Education, and Local Administrations

BREADS also gratefully acknowledges its funding partners, who made DREAM possible.

DREAM RESULTS & IMPACT



DREAM was implemented between November 2021 to February 2025 across ten districts in Kerala—Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Kottayam, Alappuzha, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur, and Kasaragod—coordinated by BREADS and executed by the Don Bosco network.

DREAM has reached over **421,181** school students and **103,529** college youth through awareness programmes, training **3,055** student leaders as peer influencers.

DREAM trained **3,876** teachers, **300,562** parents and **681** volunteers to prevent addiction in their local spheres of influence as mentors.

Advocacy in the ten districts took the campaign against drug abuse to **88,231** people.

DREAM offered mentoring services to **50,334** children and youth, counselling **5,606** children and youth struggling with addictive habits.

DREAM's de-addiction and rehabilitation centre exclusively for boys below 18 years, Don Bosco Sadan in Monvila, Thiruvananthapuram, successfully treated **208** boys for addictions.

Drawing on the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, the external evaluation team's qualitative assessment of DREAM's implementation through various stakeholders, revealed that:



DREAM was **relevant**, prompt, and closely aligned with local needs.

DREAM was **coherent** with existing state and central efforts, complementing rather than duplicating resources.



It **effectively** brought about noticeable shifts in attitudes and behaviours among participating youth.

DREAM **efficiently** used resources to create **impact** in terms of renewed aspirations, restored family relationships and involvement, reduced stigma and greater collective ownership of prevention efforts.



The growing sense of local ownership signals DREAM's ability to **sustain** into the future.



A DREAM FOR VIJAYAN



15-year-old Vijayan (name changed), belongs to a family with an average socioeconomic background. When Vijayan was around seven years old, his father committed suicide, leaving him behind with his younger brother and their mother. When Vijayan's mother later remarried, he and his brother were placed in a boys' home for two years. Following this, their maternal grandparents brought them back home to continue their education. However, due to negative peer relationships and behavioural issues, Vijayan was shifted to various institutional care facilities. In one such Home, Vijayan began using substances, even growing cannabis plants there. He had a history of frequent peer conflicts, significant anger management issues, as

well as absconding from the institution with another child, which led to his transfer to a government children's home under the directive of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC), which later referred him to DB Sadan for rehabilitation.

A comprehensive psychosocial assessment revealed that Vijayan was grappling with unresolved emotional trauma, primarily linked to his father's suicide and his subsequent separation from his family. His behavioral issues were rooted in deep-seated feelings of abandonment, insecurity, and anger. The negative peer influences, coupled with substance use, appeared to be maladaptive coping mechanisms for the emotional pain and instability experienced during his formative years. Vijayan also



had difficulty in forming positive peer relationships, as frequent conflicts and defiance were recurring patterns. Substance use was identified as both a way of fitting in with peer groups and as an escape from his personal struggles.

Vijayan acknowledged that substance use had significantly affected his ability to control his negative behaviours and anger, leading to frequent disruptions in the institution. After treatment at Don Bosco Sadan, he showed significant improvement. Vijayan learned healthier coping strategies for managing anger and emotional trauma, which reduced his substance use. His behavior within the institution improved, with fewer conflicts and better peer

interactions. He became more focused on his studies and daily tasks, showing greater self-discipline and responsibility. Overall, Vijayan developed better emotional regulation and made positive life choices, helping him reintegrate into his prior institution successfully for the completion of his studies.

Though it was not possible to remove the boy from his existing environment, the rehabilitative treatment in DB Sadan offered empathy, professional support and tools to promote self-awareness, healing, and self-improvement, offering Vijayan a new hopeful pathway into a better, healthier future.

DREAMing into the Future



Even as we prepare to continue the work of DREAM in diverse ways in Kerala, BREADS has also begun the work of promoting mental health among children and young people in both Kerala and Karnataka.

In Kerala, BREADS launched **Sports for Change** in five districts, setting up sports hubs in Puttupally in Kottayam district, Aluva and Palluruthy in Ernakulam district, Chullikara in Kasargod district, Mannuthy Bhavan in Thrissur district and Kattapana in Idukki district. In addition, an advanced sports hub in Vaduthala in Ernakulam district will offer professional coaching to selected boys and girls, identified with sporting

talent. This initiative assumes that regular, positive, skill-building activities through sports with educational sessions for children, will develop resilience, discipline, emotional awareness, and decision-making skills, in turn leading to reduced experimentation with substances.

In Karnataka, BREADS started the **Mental Health Initiative for Nurturing Development and Support (MINDS)**, across six districts: Bangalore Urban, Chitradurga, Vijayanagara, Yadagiri, Raichur and Bidar to educate and build capacity for school children, schoolteachers, parents and community members around mental health.

MINDS works to remove stigma attached to mental health issues, create a supportive environment and offer psychological and mentoring support for children through a network of counselling centres in Don Bosco institutions.

Through these initiatives, BREADS is trying to increase protective elements in the environment for children and youth, to promote their physical and mental health, and reduce their risk towards substance abuse or addiction. These protective factors include:

- Facilitating strong bonds between children and caregivers or significant adults

- Supporting caregivers to talk regularly with their child about addictions
- Promoting self-esteem and mental health among children and communities
- Educating young people that using drugs is harmful or risky
- Engaging youth in faith-based organisations, school, athletic, or community activities
- Encouraging children to spend time around positive role models
- Sensitising schools and colleges to have effective substance education programmes and a non-tolerance policy
- Sensitising communities to not tolerate drugs and alcohol in their localities



BREADS NEWS

APRIL 2025



RISE – Reflect to Inspire, Serve and Empower the Community – BREADS’ Capacity Building Workshop for Coordinators

There’s a special kind of energy that fills a room when grassroots leaders come together — not just to share...

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BREADS-BOSCO-Bavaria Partnerships Gain Momentum with Ministerial Visit

On 15 April 2025, Dr. Florian Herrmann, Honourable Minister for Federal Affairs and Head of the State Chancellery of the Free State of Bavaria, Germany,...

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Sports for Change: Building Brighter Futures for Kerala’s Youth

In partnership with SOL Foundation and Jugend Eine Welt (JEW), BREADS and its Don Bosco partners are promoting brighter futures for youth...

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BREADS@TCS World 10k Bengaluru

The streets of central Bengaluru came alive with vibrant energy, early Sunday morning on 27 April 2025, as the 17th edition of the TCS World 10K run kicked off, setting the stage for a...

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MAY 2025



BREADS launches its Sports for Change initiative in Kottayam

The Hon. Governor of Maharashtra, Shri. C P Radhakrishnan graciously launched BREADS’ Sports for Change initiative at...

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DREAM Impact Report Release— an Assessment of Journeying with the Young

BREADS and its Don Bosco partners released the report of the DREAM impact study in a simple, well-represented...

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Empowering Youth through Employment: Don Bosco JPN Job Fairs in Kattanam and Thrissur

BREADS and the Don Bosco Job Placement Network (DB JPN), continue their mission to empower youth across...

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BREADS NEWS

JUNE 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY 2025

- New Vistas in Social Work—YaR Workshop by BREADS
- Sports for Change—Kerala state-level orientation
- BREADS monitoring of projects
- WE LivE—Kerala state-level meeting
- DBCSA monitoring visit by external evaluators
- Agency visit by Don Bosco Ireland



Flashmob and Awareness Programme on International Day Against Drug Abuse

Marking the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, the children of the AWAKE project of BREADS

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Green Guardians: ECO Clubs Inspire 2,000 Children to Act for the Earth

As part of the World Environment Day celebrations 2025, the ECO Clubs supported by BREADS in partnership...

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Together for the Earth: BREADS Leads Statewide Action for World Environment Day 2025

In honour of World Environment Day 2025, BREADS Bangalore, in collaboration with various Don Bosco centres and...

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World Against Child Labour Day Celebration 2025

The World Against Child Labour Day (WACL D) was observed with great enthusiasm and commitment in Huchangipura Jagalur taluk, Davanagere...

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Strengthening Community Support for Child Protection in Davanagere

BREADS Bangalore, through its Child Safety Net initiative, in collaboration with Don Bosco Davanagere, organised two impactful programmes on 25th and 26th June 2025.

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We invite you to partner with us on any aspect of our work: support a child, donate, or volunteer. Welcome!

Share your thoughts with us: info@breadsbangalore.org



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