

SLICE



BREADS
Bangalore Rural Educational
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- 03 Sports for Change? For Vulnerable Children?
- 04 Response to a Need
- 06 Structured Sporting Excellence
- 08 Peer-led Sports for Change
- 11 What do We hope for?
- 12 News

START >

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



FR GEORGE PS

Executive Director, BREADS

On Children's Day, 14 November 2025, **over 3000** young people from the Community Sports Clubs, Don Bosco Shelter Homes and Don Bosco schools will come together in a walkathon in Ernakulam, Kerala—with an agenda. In the company of positive role models from various walks of life, the children and youth will promote child rights; specifically, their right to enjoy good health and well-being, and freedom from addictions.

The occasion is the official launch of BREADS' *Sports for Change* initiative across seven locations in five districts in Kerala, that will empower young people through sports, integrating life skills and values, grooming them to become healthy, responsible citizens in the process. Together with local Don Bosco partners, BREADS is creating community sports centres that serve as youth recreation cum animation hubs as well as sporting talent identification and training centres. With similar intent, BREADS also supports peer-led sports training for children in Don Bosco institutions in Bangalore, Karnataka.

In this Slice, we present *Sports for Change*, BREADS' latest initiative to promote physical and psychological well-being among vulnerable children and youth of marginalised communities. We invite you to celebrate with us, the joy of childhood, through passion for sports and positive life choices!

Sports for Change? For Vulnerable Children?

Kovilmala, locally known as Kozhimala (the hill of the hen), is a small village near Kattappana in the Idukki district of Kerala, India. It is the only existing tribal kingdom in South India, of the Mannan community, which has preserved its unique traditions and forms of governance. The Mannans adopt a democratic monarchy, where the people elect a king to rule them. Dynastic succession follows a matrilineal system of inheritance.

Agriculture is the primary occupation. While the community has traditionally depended on forest produce and wild resources, many households today combine small-scale farming with gathering produce. Infrastructure challenges remain, especially about access to clean drinking water and electricity, which have been historically difficult for the community. Education is receiving increasing attention in the community. The current King, Raman Raja Mannan, an economics graduate, is encouraging modern education among the children and youth.

Identified as a deserving community for intervention, Don Bosco Kattappana, with the collaboration of the Mannan King, is starting a community sports hub in Kovilmala under the *Sports for Change*



(SFC) initiative. It will offer valuable opportunities for children and youth from the Mannan community to actively engage in structured sports and physical activities, improving their health, fitness, and overall well-being, while also learning teamwork and discipline. These activities will foster mental strength, confidence, social skills and resilience among the tribal youth, equipping them to face life's challenges. By integrating sports into the daily lives of children and adolescents, SFC supports their holistic growth, empowering the tribal community to safely bridge the gap between traditional and modern opportunities without falling prey to substance and device addictions. ■



Response to a Need

Sports for Change was designed to address a need. The gravity of substance abuse and mental health problems among students has become alarming in Kerala. With its experience of addiction prevention through the Drug Rehabilitation Education And Mentoring (DREAM) initiative over 3+ years in Kerala, BREADS was able to generate greater focus and synergy around the issue through advocacy with both the government and civil society. Addiction needs to be addressed systemically, not symptomatically. While awareness is the first step, it is far from sufficient.

Therefore, along with other rehabilitative interventions such as counselling and

deaddiction, BREADS introduced a preventive strategy, using sports as a platform, to promote physical, mental and social well-being among young people. *Sports for Change* is designed to offer young people a chance to channel all their passion and energy into positive pursuits, while also creating opportunities for healthy social interaction and careers in sports.

The Don Bosco Sports hubs are the modern-day Don Bosco oratories, resonating with the positive energy and laughter of children at healthy play. Safe, inclusive centres—for girls, boys and the differently abled—empowering them through values and life skills.

A baseline survey was conducted to capture the socio-demographic background, sports participation levels, psychosocial wellbeing, and behavioural patterns of the young people covered by the intervention.



The findings:

- 80% of the registered children belonged to rural marginalised communities, while 20% were from urban areas. Tribal and economically disadvantaged communities were also included.
- The children were in the age group of 7 to 16 years. Gender representation varies across locations, with higher representation of girls in Aluva, Kottayam, and Vaduthala (advanced sports hub).
- The survey revealed a high level of interest in sports and physical activities among children and youth. Financial constraints were cited as the major impediment to access formal training.
- Societal norms were identified as a challenge, particularly restricting

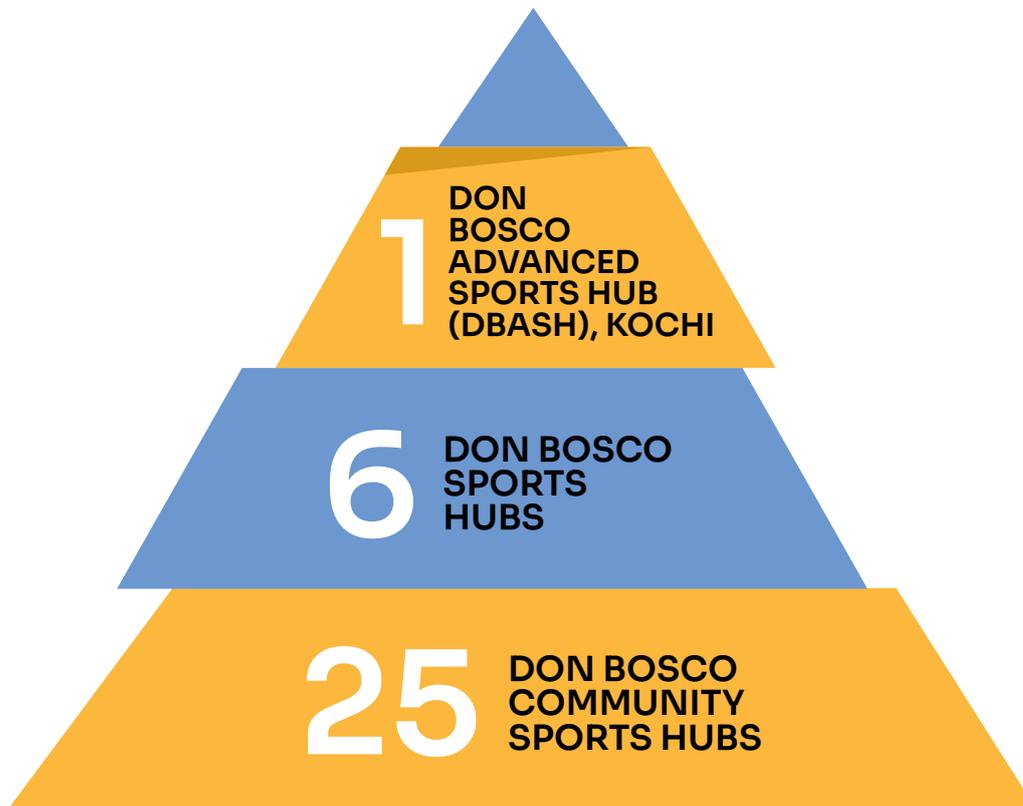
the participation of girls in mixed-gender training held in public grounds. Recognising the value of SFC, local people act as coordinators and facilitators during training sessions to offset this challenge.

- Training sessions are already improving discipline, teamwork, leadership, and time management skills. Awareness classes on the POCSO Act, JJ Act, and life skills are empowering participants to recognise and address social challenges more effectively.
- Trainees are showing higher motivation, confidence, and social connectedness. The team environment positively influences self-esteem and emotional balance.
- The survey identified prevalent risk behaviours in community hubs, such as the use of alcohol and paan masala among some youth. These findings highlight the need for continued awareness and intervention to curb such behaviours, redirecting energy towards positive pursuits and instilling discipline and focus.



Structured Sporting Excellence

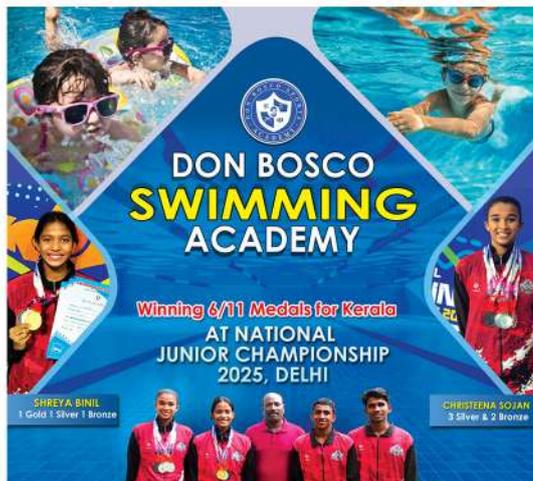
SFC adopts a structured approach to identify and promote sporting excellence.



At the top, the Don Bosco Advanced Sports Hub in Vaduthala, Kochi, promotes 10 sports, currently fostering the talents of 387 children. This centre offers advanced coaching and sports facilities for talented children identified through other sports hubs. **DBASH is already the proud alma mater of two champions, who won 6 out of the 11 medals for Kerala at the Junior National Swimming Championship 2025. Additionally, 9 of the 10 football players from Kerala selected for the 2025 CISCE International championships, were coached by the Academy.**

At the second level, are sports hubs in various Don Bosco institutions, organising youth groups, offering sports coaching and facilities, daily sports activities along with weekly life skill training, value education, and team building programmes. A minimum of 50 youth will be enrolled, of whom, at least 5% would be female, and 3%, differently abled people.

At the third level, community sports hubs such as the Kovilmala sports hub mentioned earlier, are created by the Don Bosco institutions in collaboration with



local organisations (panchayats, parishes, local youth clubs, etc.) to encourage at least 50 local youth to play sports and empower them through various activities.

Another example is the Model Residential School in Keezhmad, Aluva, for economically disadvantaged children without access to quality education, and nutritious food. Many are first-generation learners, whose families depend on daily-wage labour for survival. Coming from communities that face systemic exclusion and limited opportunities, the children need holistic support to realise their potential. The Don Bosco Community Sports Hub supplements the school's educational mission by offering professional coaching, inter-community competitions, and access to a larger network of youth development activities.

We're happy to report that regular coaching sessions are conducted twice a week in each centre, facilitated by a head coach and assistant coach. Infrastructure is adequate and well-maintained, and children participate in good numbers, expressing high satisfaction with the activities. The primary sport promoted across the hubs is football, while Kattappana uniquely focuses on both volleyball and football.

Positive trends:

- Strong school and panchayat partnerships
- Peer-led coaching at Odayamchal-Kasaragod
- Strong inclusion of girls in Plachikkara (Kasaragod), Erinchery (Thrissur), and Puthupally (Kottayam)
- Advanced sports exposure at DBASH, Kochi

Peer-led Sports for Change



of Sports for Change, these alumni are now effectively coaching children based on individual interest and capacity. They are more effective in reaching the children because of their

own experience and empathy as having been one of them.

BOSCO Bangalore (BREADS' partner) has been at the forefront of rescuing and rehabilitating children in distress over the past 40 years. Many of these children end up in institutional care because of their home situations. BOSCO tries to offer as much input (sports/art training) towards the holistic development of the children, but it is not always financially feasible. Over the years, many children from BOSCO's childcare institutions (CCIs) have excelled in various sports:

- The BOSCO Football Club won five league matches and secured one draw in the Karnataka State Football Association tournament (2022)
- Two children were selected for the Karnataka state volleyball team
- Children won one gold and 3 silver medals in Taekwondo competitions

A few of these alumni of BOSCO homes have even become certified coaches and are eager to pass on their skills to the children currently living in BOSCO institutions. With BREADS' support, in a peer-to-peer model

Inaugurated on 15th August 2025, currently, 82 girls and 109 boys of BOSCO homes in Bangalore are being coached thrice a week in badminton, volleyball and football.

They are beginning to show the impact of an active lifestyle with improved dietary habits, hygiene, and overall health. Sports is also helping them handle frustration, disappointment, anger, stress, and peer pressure in more constructive ways, promoting leadership skills and positive social relationships.



From a Lost Child to a Guiding Star



One of the main coaches, Murugaraj (Shiva), was a runaway child who overcame hardships to become a football coach and the founder of the Indian Young Sporting Alliance (IYSA).

Born into a family of nine in Hyderabad, Murugaraj faced a turbulent childhood due to his alcoholic father's abuse. His two elder brothers had already run away, and at the age of six, unable to endure the violence, he too made a daring escape. During a family trip to Tirupati, he seized an opportunity, boarded a train alone, and ended up in Pune. Rescued by Don Bosco staff, he was given shelter and care. Attempts to reunite him with his family were unsuccessful, and after several transfers between Don Bosco centres, he was placed at Don Bosco

Ajjanahalli, on the outskirts of Bangalore, where he started school.

In Grade 5, he discovered a passion for sports, excelling in multiple disciplines, including athletics, shotput, kho kho, kabaddi, and football. Recognising his talent, BOSCO moved him to St. Joseph's School, Bangalore, where he continued his sporting journey. He won several state-level competitions and ran his first marathon in Grade 8.

In 2013, he was selected for football training in France, but circumstances prevented him from going. Undeterred, he pursued professional football coaching while earning his bachelor's degree in Commerce. Between 2014-2015, he was trained by the Sports Authority of India and played for BUFC U-19 and the Karnataka state team. By 2019, he reached the BUFC Super Division but was forced to quit due to low blood pressure during an important match.

Although his top-level competitive football career ended early, Murugaraj turned his setback into an opportunity to uplift underprivileged children. He pursued his AIFF D-License Coaching Certification, and in 2019, founded Don Bosco Football Club, offering free football training. His trainees advanced to A-Division and Super Division leagues.

In 2022, he established Indian Young Sporting Alliance (IYSA), a movement of young people from various childcare institutions, who similarly excelled in sports, to provide sports training to underprivileged children in communities, government schools, and childcare homes. IYSA's staff are also rescued children like him, ensuring the cycle of empowerment continues. Murugaraj is also a volunteer with BREADS.

Murugaraj's Achievements:

- Certified D License Coach by the All India Football Federation (AIFF)
- Selected for the Karnataka state football team U-19
- Selected for the Bangalore Football Club (BFC) U-19 team
- Participated in state-level football for the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and BUFC Super Division (2019)
- College champion in Chess and Carroms
- Represented the college in a state-level floorball competition
- Played professional football for Navrathna Football Club and Red United Football Club
- Competed at the Karnataka state level in multiple sports—track events, shot put, kho-kho, and kabaddi—during his school years



What do We hope for?



Many more stars like Murugaraj, who can power themselves out of disadvantaged mindsets and circumstances using sports as leverage.

We hope that through Sports for Change, we can nurture:

- Healthy, productive children and youth strengthened by sporting values and practice
- Improved social and emotional well-being of children and youth
- Increased opportunities for academic and professional success through sports
- Platforms such as football academies, clubs and sporting events, that sustainably promote sports among children and youth of vulnerable communities

- A network of Don Bosco football clubs creating social and economic opportunities for local communities

Many, many more empowered youth, who channel their energy and talents into creative pursuits and careers, able to choose healthy, focussed life paths; able to withstand the attractions and pressures of addictions, antisocial activities, and extremist ideologies threatening them today.

Isn't that a beautiful hope? We need you to help realise this hope. Thank you for your support.



JULY 2025



New Vistas in Social Work

The two-day workshop titled New Vistas in Social Work, brought together 17 Directors of the partner-organisations of BREADS from Karnataka and Kerala

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Don Bosco School Rajanahalli – Academic Year Inauguration 2025-26

Don Bosco School, Rajanahalli, Hassan, marked the beginning of

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Sports for Change – BREADS' Initiative to Empower Youth and Combat Substance Abuse in Kerala

BREADS marked the launch of its new initiative Sports for Change with a state-level orientation held on 3 July 2025.

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Aumund Foundation Representative Visits BREADS-supported Community Initiatives

On 18 July 2025, BREADS Bangalore welcomed Mr. A.D. Prasad Rao, the

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State-Level Staff Orientation for WE-LivE

On 4 July, a state-level meeting was conducted at Don Bosco Vaduthala, Kochi, to orient the staff about the WE-LivE project

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Looking back on BREADS' Landslide Relief Work in Wayanad

On 30 July 2025, the serene hillsides of Mundakkai and Churaimala in

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Extending Solidarity: BREADS Distributes 5,000 Relief Kits to Flood Affected Families in Kerala

Responding to the pressing needs of flood-affected communities, BREADS Bangalore, in collaboration with Bosconet and with the support of Nestlé India's CSR initiative

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AUGUST 2025



Misean Cara Representative Visits BREADS Projects

BREADS was happy to welcome Fr. Sudhakar SDB, representative of Misean Cara (Ireland), on a monitoring and evaluation visit of MC-supported projects—Child Safety Net (CSN) and

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Kerala Revenue Minister Kicks Off 'Sports for Change' in Thrissur

The Sports for Change initiative was officially launched at Don Bosco Higher Secondary School, Mannuthy in Thrissur on 10 August 2025, with

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DB PyaR in the Kalaburagi Child Labour Rescue Team

As part of the nationwide rescue and rehabilitation campaign under the Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, a coordinated inspection and

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BREADS NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2025



Promoting Mental Health among 3000 Students through Creative Expression Workshops

BREADS, in collaboration with its Don Bosco partners, successfully organised a

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Celebrating True Freedom: Independence Day at Don Bosco Veedu

Trivandrum, August 14, 2025 – Don Bosco Veedu commemorated the 79th

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Don Bosco Sports Hub Inaugurated in Aluva: Towards Sports and Positive Change

BREADS, in collaboration with Don Bosco Aluva, inaugurated the Don Bosco Sports

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400 Children of the SSG Education Centres Celebrate

The Social Service Guild (SSG) of Kristu Jyoti College and BREADS organised a Patriotic Dance and Song Festival on

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BREADS' Mobile Primary Health Care rolls out in Yadagiri

On 1 September 2025, BREADS in collaboration with the Don Bosco Centre

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The Don Bosco Mobile Clinic takes Healthcare to Rural Children in Bidar

The Don Bosco Mobile Clinic supported

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Job Fair Opens Employment Opportunities for Youth in KGF

BREADS, through the Don Bosco Job Placement Network (DB JPN),

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Jyothi Nagara Learning Centre gets a New Look

In their continued commitment to ensure education and holistic

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National Nutrition Week in Kortagere thanda, Davanagere

India observes National Nutrition Week every year between 1 – 7 September to

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Strengthening the Child Safety Net in Kalaburagi

BREADS and Don Bosco Gulbarga, in collaboration with the District Child

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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:
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