

# BOSCONET

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## Rebuilding KERALA with YOUTH

Bosc  Net **DON BOSCO INDIA**  
A Friend to Anyone in Need Resource Mobilisation Unit of South Asia





# EMPOWER CHANGE! LIVE THE JOY OF TRUE GIVING

## Message from the Director

**Dear friends,**

The past three months have seen more activity than ever in our small community. In this issue of the Bosconet India newsletter, you will find stories of not just our success, but yours! We bring to you stories of devastation in the flood affected state of Kerala and how Don Bosco reached out to rescue and revive, the thousands of people who have been displaced. It is in moments like these that ordinary people can choose to display their extraordinariness in the way that they respond to a human crisis by showing their solidarity to the people affected and in need. It was ordinary people who came out of their homes to help, by sharing even the little they possessed to lend a helping hand to those facing the loss of their dear ones, their life earnings and their homes. Natural calamities are life-disrupting, but there is a silver lining that follows, as it awakens a deep concern in us for our fellow human beings.

You have shown, through your generosity of funds and time, that you are indeed socially committed to reach out to those in difficult situations. With your support, the Salesians of Don Bosco have been successful in rescuing and rehabilitating many of those in most need

and our efforts will continue till the people of Kerala get back to normal living.

In this edition of the Bosconet India newsletter, we also bring you stories of courage and bravery, where Sujatha takes courage to start her own business and 10 year old Sadavarte Zen uses quick thinking to save lives. You will also get to hear from fellow donors about the changes that one simple donation can kindle in your life.

I take this opportunity to thank you for your solidarity with those affected by floods in Kerala and for extending your support to our mission. I would like to specially appeal to you to continue to support our initiatives to restore and rebuild the lives of our brothers and sisters affected by the floods in Kerala.

With good wishes,

**Fr. Noel Maddhichetty SDB**  
*Director, Bosconet*

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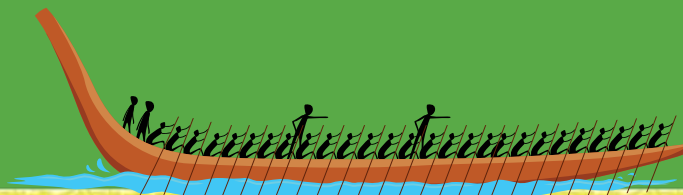
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# Rebuilding Kerala with Youth



## Don Bosco volunteers helping in Chullikara

On August 20th, 2018, the people of God's country, Kerala, experienced tumultuous rainfall that seemed like it would never cease. After a week of continuous, heavy rainfall that had filled up more than 30 dams government authorities saw no other option but to open the dam sluices, resulting in the flooding of more than 40 coastal rivers.

In just over a week, more than 400 people had died in the resulting floods, as overflowing rivers ploughed through residential areas - their owners escaping with little more than their lives. Nearly a million of the 30 million residents of the state were placed in temporary relief camps - that's almost a third of Kerala's entire population!

India's top trade association has estimated the loss caused by the disaster to stand at US\$2.8 billion, much of it being lost in the agricultural sector and in international trade. Yet, apart from the financial loss to individuals, businesses and government, are those that are immeasurable - the homes and lives of locals devastated by the floods. With almost no warning, the people most affected were those in remote areas, especially the tribals.

It is in dire times like these that humanity bands together and comes through with one heart, to the help of each other. In the true spirit of Don Bosco, thousands of volunteers joined early clean-up efforts to protect communities from the risk of diseases and other health issues.

Here are some of the interventions by the Salesians of Don Bosco.

### **#DoForKerala Campaign**

Our **#DoForKerala** campaign in Bangalore has helped mobilize large quantities of packaged foods, medicines, clothes, sleeping items, hygienic items, health drinks, drinking water and protein supplements, which have been transported to various relief camps across Kerala, providing aid to almost 40,000 people at last count.

### **#RebuildKerala Campaign**

In order to help rebuild flood-affected areas in Kerala, we have been working with volunteers from Don Bosco formation houses (seminaries), colleges and high schools to clean up houses and public areas in flood-affected regions. So far, in 38 villages, 408 houses, three government offices/PRI institutions, a church and a retreat centre have been cleaned and restored.

### **Student to Student Campaign**

Students of Don Bosco School, Matunga and Dominic Savio School, Andheri in Mumbai donated notebooks and other education materials for the flood-affected students in Kerala.



### **Vaduthala**

A relief camp was organized at Don Bosco School and Youth Centre for the people affected by floods in Ernakulam 5970 people from 1419 families registered themselves at the camp. Don Bosco, along with the government, local people and NGOs collected water, food, clothes, medicines and emergency articles for distribution to those most in need.

### **Vennala**

A relief camp was set up at the Don Bosco, Vennala Cultural Centre, for those affected. Medical checkups were organized at the cultural centre, in collaboration with Ernakulam Medical Centre.

The Don Bosco Vennala team also visited 6 relief camps including worst affected Chenganoor and reached out to more than 500 people with food, water and clothes.

### **Fishermen Community Development Programme Kollam**

The staff of Don Bosco visited the relief camps at Chengannur, Kuttanad, Edathuva, Mariapuzham and Ambalapuzha and distributed water, food, medicine, clothes and bed sheets. In the span of just two days, the team had reached out to more than 4000 affected persons.

### **Thiruvananthapuram**

In Thiruvananthapuram, Manrothuruthu in Kollam district, surrounded by the Ashtamudi backwaters, was selected for relief work as most deserving of aid. 12 flood relief camps were set up in Manrothuruthu and East Kallada, each consisting of more than 350 families. Clothes and sleeping kits were collected/bought and distributed to more than 3000 affected people.

### **Alappuzha**

Don Bosco, Alappuzha concentrated its relief work in Kavalam and Muttar, where a large number of people had been lodged in relief camps - clothes, mats and bedsheets were collected/ bought and distributed to over 3000 people there.

### **Aluva**

Don Bosco, Aluva reached out to two of the thirteen relief camps in Keezhmad Panchayat, frequenting the camps with a doctor and nursing assistant to offer medical assistance.

### **Mannuthy Bhavan**

Don Bosco, Mannuthy Bhavan opened its doors and used the school as a night shelter for 200 families, providing food, toiletries and sleeping kits (bed sheet, mat, blanket and pillows) to people evacuated from Pope Nagar due to fear of landslides.

### **Irinjalakuda**

Don Bosco, Irinjalikuda started a relief camp at the school, accommodating 153 affected families. Medical camps were organized for the people, and clothes and food were distributed.

### **Mampetta**

Don Bosco, Mampetta reached out to more than 1,500 people in relief camps in Kozhikode district and distributed food and clothes. Another 50 families that were severely affected due to the flood and landslides were provided with a week's groceries and provisions.

### **Sulthan Bathery**

The Salesians at Sulthan Bathery, with the help of the students of Don Bosco College, visited families affected by floods and provided counselling. They also collected and distributed food, clothes and other emergency material for more than 100 families.

### **Angadikadavu**

Don Bosco College, along with the students visited the affected families, provided counselling services for those affected by depression, and coordinated relief work in various camps. They have also begun clean-up activities in houses and public places most affected by flood debris.



**Don Bosco volunteers clean up flood debris**



**Sujatha**

## Quick-thinking 10 year old saves lives in Mumbai fire

On the morning of August 22nd, 2018, the residents of a Mumbai high rise building Crystal Tower, were rudely awakened by the smoke and fumes streaming into their homes. A fire had broken out on the 12th floor of the 16-storey building and had already killed four residents. The fire services were on their way, but immediate help came in the form of 10 year old Sadavarte - a student of Don Bosco Inter-national School. The clever young girl first shared her fire-safety knowledge with her parents and then with the other three neighbouring families present. She then tore clothes into smaller pieces, soaking them in water to make an air purifier of sorts to be placed over their noses and faces to keep the carbon away. She then urged them to place pieces of wet cloth over their bodies to keep cool. Her instructions worked and bought those present time to stay safe, while the fire brigade carried out the rescue.

Father Crispino D'Souza, Rector of the school, proud of Sadavarte, and reflecting on this teaching methodology adopted by the institution, which helps students deal with real-life situations, said, "When things like this happen, you feel consoled that there is some fruit achieved with all that you do in the school and the hard work that is put in by the staff. We use International Baccalaureate (IB) methodology and PYP programmes, where we make the children research on different topics, which is very different from the rote method."

Sadavarte's quick-thinking and empirical education helped save lives that day!

## Sujatha: The Illiterate Entrepreneur

After the death of her husband, Sujatha suddenly found herself in a precarious situation - how would she manage to provide food and education for her two children, when she was struggling to make ends meet? As a domestic worker, Sujatha drew a minimum salary. In order to supplement this, the newly widowed woman took to selling vegetables door to door in the village, but earned herself only a minimum profit. At the end of her line, Sujatha attended the entrepreneurship training at Chithra Don Bosco and it was this that motivated her to start a new business.

On securing a loan from the local bank, Sujatha started a small restaurant by the road, alongside her vegetable sales. The business thrived and soon Sujatha had begun a catering service, serving food at parties and events. Business was so good, that Sujatha was able to employ another eight women to help her expand her venture - providing employment to those like herself, in need of the extra money. Of the profits that Sujatha was now able to see - the fruits of her hard work - she bought a facility for her cooking to be carried out.

If you see Sujatha now, you wouldn't recognise her - she is a happy, content, smart businesswoman who can maintain accounts and even do bank transfers! Her team of empowered women is happy with their new lease for life given to them by Sujatha, the illiterate entrepreneur.



**Zen Sadavarte**



## Ten Women and a Story of Haldi

About seven years ago, ten women united to form the Krishnon Self Help Group (SHG) of Balasari village, Lemakona region, Assam, in order to help each other survive and thrive. Somewhere in March, this year, the group decided to attend a Don Bosco Reach Out training programme on turmeric cultivation and were encouraged to begin their own cultivation.

Pooling their resources, the small band of women bought 160 kgs of turmeric rhizome for Rs. 3,200/- and planted it themselves over a bigha of land. In February, the women were pleasantly surprised with their harvest of 10 quintals (1000 kg) of turmeric! Instead of selling this, however, they decided to process it for a higher profit margin. Applying these and other entrepreneurial and cultivation tips they had picked up from their training, the women of the Krishnon Self Help Group were left with 123 kgs of processed haldi powder. Through the sales of this final product, the group earned Rs. 19,600!



"I am very happy that the harvest was so good!", says one of the member from Krishnon Self Help Group. "I never expected that with an initial investment of only Rs. 3,200/-, we would earn this much. The Don Bosco training session was a real gift to us,"

This year, the Krishnon Self Help Group has set aside two bighas of land to cultivate 320 kgs of turmeric. We wish them all the very best in this and other endeavours in the future!

## DONORS SPEAK



**Mr. Vikas D Pandey**

*"The Don Bosco team has been working towards such a good cause all these years. I believe it's our responsibility to support causes like these in the best way possible. I feel extremely happy to be a part of this social initiative and I look forward to continuing my support towards it."*



**Dr. Eliza Joseph**

*"I started my donation to Bosconet a few years back. I feel happier when I help somebody rather than going for a holiday or spending on expensive clothes. I feel more fulfilled in my life and I will continue to feel this way till my last breath"*



**Sudikshit Roy Barma**

*"I learnt of Bosconet through a newsletter in 2011 and thereafter I have been contributing yearly as Bosconet is doing great work in India towards uplifting the less fortunate. My association with Bosconet dates to 2011, but I have been a part of Don Bosco school since 1978."*

## 100% LITERACY IN A FEW CLICKS: ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMME IN COLLABORATION WITH TCS



A B C



India is home to the largest population of illiterate adults in the world – a shocking figure of 287 million, amounting to 37% of the global total, according to the last census! Being illiterate is not just an individual problem affecting their lives and futures, but has a resonating impact on society in general, both socially and economically. Studies reveal that slower term GDP growth of a nation is directly tied to a higher population of adults with lower literacy proficiency levels.

In a bid towards bringing down the count of illiterate adults in India, Bosconet, in collaboration with TATA Consultancy Services launched its software-aided literacy program, Computer Based Functional Literacy (CBFL) for Adults, in 8 states across India in June 2018. The aim of the program is to enable 24,500 illiterate rural adults to read and write in their native tongue, within a year. The program is currently being implemented in six languages - Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Kannada, Telugu and Bengali - in over 60 CBFL centres across the target states. This program uses a unique, language-specific software developed by TCS to help beneficiaries learn faster - over a period of just 50 hours!

A+

The program has been successful this far, having achieved the first phase of reaching out to over 4,000 illiterate adults across the eight states. The status of being 'literate' would be attributed to successful students after an evaluation of their basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills. We are hopeful that by the conclusion of the program in June 2019, it will have benefitted about 95% of its proposed 24,500 beneficiaries!



## YOUNG DONORS SPEAK



I wanted to help out the children, but I didn't know how to. When the Bosconet representative came to our school one day and shared with us their work on educating these children and youth, it touched me deeply.

I immediately thought that this was a great opportunity for me to do my bit too. I am happy to support Bosconet in the future too, so more children can be seen in schools, not on the streets!

**Ryan Mathew, Class VIII, Sec-A  
St. Augustine's School, Kalimpong**



"When we were shown a video on how some kids don't have the same facilities as us, I felt really sad. I wanted to help them. I want to grow up and become someone in the future.

I am sure that these kids too would want to, but they don't have the money. That's why I wanted to support them through Bosconet."

**Syntiya Mena, Class VII,  
Divine Word School, Roing,  
Arunachal Pradesh**

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!

## Our heartfelt thanks to our top donors of this quarter (April - June 2018)

1. Mr. K C George	-	Rs. 25000
2. Dr. Biju Mathew	-	Rs. 19,000
3. K C James	-	Rs. 18000
4. Amit Singh	-	Rs. 15000
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7. Shirley Fernandes	-	Rs. 10000
8. Thankamma Thomas	-	Rs. 10000
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