



THE JOURNEY of BOSCO Foster Care



A Bird's Eye View

Director's Message

Open Your Heart, Open Your Home!

“As foster parents, we are asked to not only care for the basic needs of a child but also sit alongside them as they digest the hurt and damage they have undeservingly experienced,” says American writer, Carrie Dahlin. The decision to foster a child who requires family care is not only an act of love and generosity but also an act divine. It is a choice to bring inner healing to a child that has undergone untold pain at a tender age.

“The Journey of BOSCO Foster Care- A Bird's Eye View,” is an attempt to capture the highlights of BOSCO's tryst with the Foster Care Programme for nearly a decade. Believing firmly that ‘institutionalization is the last resort,’ the organization left no stone unturned in creating awareness about the Foster Care concept among different stakeholders and the public at large. As a result, forty-seven children were able to cherish the care and protection of families, through their foster parents.



I hereby extend my appreciation to all the staff members who toiled for the project, the State level Foster Care team, and the Directors of the projects in the ten districts of Karnataka where Foster Care Programme is being implemented. We are grateful to the department of Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), District Child Protection Units (DCPU), Child Welfare Committees, and Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) for their support and collaboration in providing the required impetus for the Foster Care Programme in the state. We look forward to implementing the project with greater effectiveness and zest across the state so that many more deserving children can grow up in a family environment. Open your heart, open your home!

Fr. Varghese Pallipuram SDB

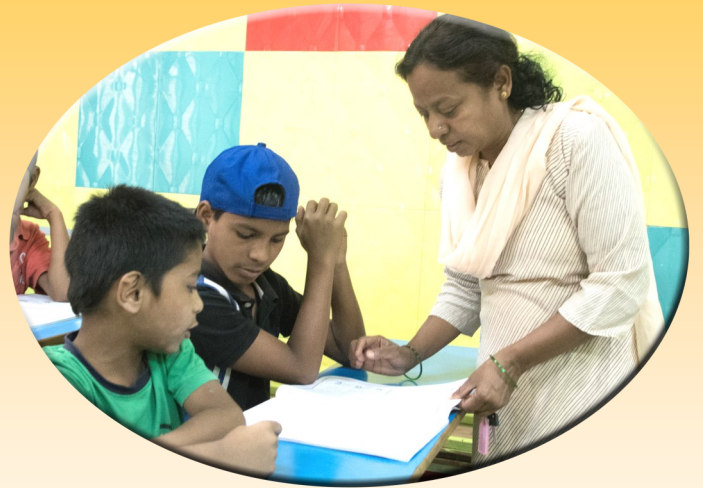


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Bangalore Oniyavara Seva Coota, commonly known as BOSCO, is a registered Non-Profit Charitable Organization under the Society's Registration Act of 1960. It was established in 1980 by the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) and offers service to the Young at Risk like - children living on the streets, child labourers, abandoned/orphaned children, victims of drug abuse, victims of child abuse, begging children, rag pickers, run-aways, trafficked children, out of school children, etc. BOSCO accompanies the young at risk in their struggles and journeys from the margins to the centre of society so that they may become integrated individuals and responsible citizens. BOSCO teams are present in the streets, 7 railway stations, 5 bus stands, markets, and 120 BBMP Wards to serve vulnerable children/youth in Bengaluru.

BOSCO has ten rehabilitation centers and projects like CHILDLINE 1098, Railway CHILDLINE, Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU), Child Safety Net, Child Rights Education and Action Movement (CREAM),



Health Care, Foster Care, etc. that cater to the integral development of children in need of care and protection. BOSCO in Collaboration with the Government has four rescue booths- 2 in bus stands and 2 in railway stations. Every day nearly 15 children are rescued by BOSCO staff from the streets and other dangerous situations and supported to move to safety.

Foster Care: Relevance



Over the last two decades, there has been a perceptible shift globally from institutional care to family-based care for children needing care and protection. The concepts of a child's right to family care are rooted in international conventions such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (UN-CRC), that which India is a signatory to, the UN Guidelines for Alternative Care 2009, and the Indian Constitution.

Millions of children in India have been orphaned, abandoned, or come into conflict with the law because of poverty, disability, parental incapacity, abuse or neglect, and the COVID 19 pandemic. The majority of them grow up in institutional care. A recent national mapping exercise of Child Care Institutions and other Homes reported that there were 3,70,227 children in need of care and protection and 7422 children in conflict with the law in institutional care.

Although the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015 has provisions enabling a shift from institutional care to family-based options like adoption, foster care, and sponsorship for children in need of care and protection, it has so far remained only in print for majority of our children. The Model Foster Care Guidelines were notified in 2016, but foster care implementation is still in its infancy. Yet there have been few state governments and NGOs who have created models of non-institutionalized alternative care.



Foster Care, a temporary family-based care for children bereft of parental care, was launched in BOSCO Bengaluru on January 31, 2012, by Ms. Sasikala Shetty, Project Director, ICPS, Bengaluru. The project aimed to shift the focus of interventions from dependence on the institutionalization of children toward family and community-based alternatives for care. The Foster Care program of BOSCO reflects the values of the

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [UNCRC], which states that 'all children have the right to grow up in a family environment', and also goes a long way in creating awareness among the people and communities, and in changing mindsets, thereby making institutional care the last resort for children who do not have biological parents or are not under any custodial care. BOSCO initiated the Foster Care program in 2012 to deinstitutionalize children in BOSCO homes.

Through this report, BOSCO would like to share its 8 years of experience in running the Foster Care Programme in Bengaluru and other districts of Karnataka. Currently, BOSCO is implementing the programme in 10 districts of Karnataka, namely, Bengaluru, Ramnagar, Mysore, Chitradurga, Davangere, Bidar, Bellary, Kalaburgi, Yadagiri, and Raichur.



Capacity Building and Awareness Creation Among Stakeholders

Awareness and training programs play a very significant role in making the general public and the various stakeholders understand the foster care program. There is a lot of misconception and false belief in society about the concept of Foster Care. Hence, BOSCO made all efforts in making the people understand the concept of Foster Care in transforming the lives of children without parental care. Besides, many stakeholders are not always familiar with the changing trends in Foster Care.

BOSCO was able to reach out to **183233** stakeholders – the general public, Panchayat Raj Institution members, Anganwadi Mothers, Anganwadi workers, SHG members, ASHA workers, Religious leaders, and Primary School Teachers through **2537** awareness programmes in the ten districts of Karnataka.

BOSCO printed 1, 90,000 IEC Materials, 12 Banners, and 100 posters to be distributed. Through these



awareness materials, the team was able to reach out to **1,84,559** people and they were made aware of the Foster care concept.

Advocacy actions and convergent actions



Advocacy level Programs are intended to promote the foster care concept among the various stake-

holders and publicize the Foster care concept in the 10 districts of Karnataka. In these 10 districts, BOSCO with the support of partner organizations conducted the Foster Care advocacy programs and assisted the respective departments in the identification of prospective parents and children, in carrying out the home study, case study, counseling services, documentation, and departmental follow-ups.

Posters that are prepared to promote the program and the digital video developed helped people to grasp the idea of Foster care, better. Photographs of major events in Foster Care programs have been documented.

BOSCO was able to take up **1326** advocacy initiatives with the DCPUs, CWCs, Education Department, Police Department, NGOs, Prospective Parents, etc. in the ten districts of Karnataka during the second phase of the project.

Identification and Preparation.

BOSCO has identified deserving children and parents from all the strata of society. During the current project cycle, we have largely focused on the general public across the 10 districts.

Awareness and training programmes were conducted for various stakeholders and the data bank of potential parents and children was maintained, visited various government departments, and submitted application forms of those parents who have expressed their interest in fostering children.



A total of 260 potential parents were identified with the help of PRI members, SHG Members, Anganwadi workers, mothers, ASHA workers, School teachers, and the Public in 10 districts, among which, 105 parents submitted their applications to DCPO. After the identification, the team met the potential parents to make them understand the sole motive of the Foster Care Program. Conducted seven 'Prospective Parents' Meetings and 107 Parents attended the meeting from Bengaluru, Mysuru, Yadgiri, and Bellary. The team conducted Home Study Report for 19 Prospective Parents in seven Districts.

Placements and follow-up

The team placed 19 Children in 8 Districts and conducted 47 Home Visits, 29 School Visits, and 20 Phone follow up for 19 Children.

To select the prospective children and parents, there are several procedures and reports to be submitted and some of them are home inquiry, references from neighbours, relatives, friends, etc., collecting related documents like ID proof, birth certificate, marriage certificate, educational qualification, property document, economic status, medical certificate, police clearance certificate, child case history, family background / social investigation report and document that gives child's best interest. After the legal placement, follow-up of the child and parent was done once a month through home visits, school visits, and visits to the neighbours and child's friends. Updated reports of the child were given to CWC after each visit and follow-up.

- ◆ BOSCO organized a National Consultation and Workshop on “Foster Care and Alternative Forms of Care” on September 28 and 29, 2012 at Bengaluru. The main objective of the consultation was to build awareness and bring more clarity to the concept of Foster care as an alternative to institutional care for children.
- ◆ The Second National Level Consultation on Foster Care was organized on October 14 and 15, 2019 to create an opportunity to learn, discuss and deliberate upon the emerging trends in the conceptualization and practice of foster care as an alternative form of care for children and its challenges within the purview of the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) of the Government of India.
- ◆ Two Foster Care State Level Stakeholders Meetings were organized at Don Bosco Centre, Yadagiri District on February 12, 2022, and Bosco Yuvodaya, Bengaluru, on February 26, 2022. Dr. Hanumanthaiah Karadi, Chairperson, CWC, Yadagiri Ms. Nagaratna, Chairperson, Child Welfare Committee 3, Bengaluru Urban, outreach workers, social workers, and counsellors of Bellary, Bengaluru, Chitradurga and Ramanagara, Mysuru, Fr. Praveen KJ, Director, Don Bosco, Yadagiri and Fr. Kuriakose, Rector, Don Bosco, Deodurga, Raichur attended the meeting. One hundred and twenty-seven stakeholders from Bengaluru, Bellary, Chitradurga, Davanagere, Mysuru, and Ramanagara, participated in the meeting.





- ◆ Meeting with Ms. Bharathi, District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) at BOSCO Mane on November 23, 2021. DCPO felt that it is necessary to select the parents who are genuinely interested in fostering a child. She said that it is important to highlight the age limit of parents in the SOP and Guidelines of the Foster Care Programme.
- ◆ Three State Level Planning and Monitoring Meetings for the Social Mobilizers of ten districts of Karnataka at BOSCO Yuvodaya during 2021. Fr. Varghese Pallipuram, Executive Director, BOSCO Bengaluru presented a summary of the draft SOP for Foster Care. Social Mobilizers from ten districts presented the two-month statistical data, challenges, and achievements. Sixteen participants from ten districts of Karnataka along with BOSCO staff were present at the meeting.
- ◆ Panel discussion on Foster Care Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) was organized by ICPS Director via Google meet for the District DCPOs and CWC members on July 28, 2021, in the presence of Ms. Pallavi, Director, ICPS, Ms. Sindhu Naik, Adoption Scrutiny, Karnataka State Council for Child Welfare, Bengaluru, Ms. Usha Kiran KT, Psychiatric Social Worker, Member of Foster Care State Guidelines, and Fr. Varghese Pallipuram, Executive Director, BOSCO Bengaluru. Over 100 members attended the meet-



Achievements

- ◇ Research on the existing practices on foster care – ‘A Study on the practice of Foster Care – Foster Family Renewed Hope and a New Life,’ is published.
- ◇ Two National Consultations on foster care, and publication of the deliberations- ‘Foster Care- An Alternative Family Care for Children without Families.’
- ◇ BOSCO was chosen as the Member of the Committee for Foster Care Guidelines for Karnataka and a Member of the National Foster Care Guidelines drafting committee.
- ◇ Presented foster care practices of BOSCO to the Department of Women and Child Development, State of Goa.

Achievements



- ◇ BOSCO's intervention model of Foster Care is included as part of the Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) for Foster Care in Karnataka as there is no model guideline in the State. The Director of the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), Karnataka asked the other stakeholders to follow this SOP for Placing Foster Care children into families.
- ◇
- ◇ The Foster Care programmes conducted in various districts were published in different newspapers and Local News Channel in the districts of Karnataka. Advertisement about the Foster Care program was relayed on FM Radio. As part of creating awareness about the Foster Care concept in Karnataka, one Foster Care parent shared his experience on All India Radio, an initiative taken by the department of the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS). This enabled the dissemination of Foster Care information to a large population.
- ◇ Identified 260 prospective parents and among them, 105 prospective parents applied to District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) to undergo assessment for becoming Potential Foster Care Parents. The programme also identified 162 prospective children for foster care placement from the 10 districts of Karnataka. BOSCO has further started to process their applications further for placement.
- ◇ A letter of appreciation was sent from the DCPO of Bellary to the Director of ICPS regarding the placement of three children through Don Bosco.



Experiences...

BOSCO is making tireless efforts in the district of Bellary to publicize the concept of Foster care. I am so glad that the BOSCO organization has expanded the Bangalore model of the Foster Care program to other districts. With the help of the Social Mobilizer appointed by the organization, we have identified 12 potential parents and 8 children from the district to place in Foster Care. I would strongly recommend BOSCO as a Facilitation Organization for Foster Care in the district so that with their support we can reach out to more homeless children and like-minded parents for foster care.

Mr. Syed Chand Basha, District Child Protection Officer, Bellary, Karnataka.



BOSCO has conducted various programs to promote the Foster Care programme to all the strata of the society. As an impact, more families are coming forward to foster children. The team was able to place three children in Foster Care with the support of integrated child protection departments of the district. I would be recommending BOSCO as the Foster Care Facility Organization (FCFO) to act as a nodal office in the Ramanagara district for Foster Care services.

Mr. Shanmugam Sundaram, CWC, Ramanagara, Karnataka.

Experiences...



ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ಭಾಗವಾಗಿ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ಮುಕುಟವಾಗಿ ಕಂಗೊಳಿಸುವ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸುಮಾರು 2 ವರ್ಷಗಳ ಹಿಂದೆ ಪೋಷಕತ್ವ ಯೋಜನೆಯು ಆರಂಭವಾಗಿದ್ದು. ಪೋಷಕತ್ವ ಯೋಜನೆಯನ್ನು ಬೀದರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಡಾನ್ ಬೋಸ್ಕೊ ಸಮಾಜ ಸೇವಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ವತಿಯಿಂದ ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಬಂದಿದೆ. 3 ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಪೋಷಕತ್ವ ಅಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ತಾತ್ಕಾಲಿಕ ಸಹಾಯ ನೀಡುತ್ತಾ ಪೋಷಕರ ಕನಸು ನನಸು ಮಾಡುತ್ತಾ ಬಂದಿದೆ. ಈ ಯೋಜನೆ ಸಫಲವಾಗಲಿ, ಇನ್ನು ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಪೋಷಕರು ಇದರ ಪ್ರಯೋಜನ ಪಡೆಯಲೆಂದು ಹಾರೈಸುತ್ತೇನೆ. ಡಾನ್ ಬೋಸ್ಕೊ ಸಮಾಜ ಸೇವಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು ಕೈಗೊಂಡಿರುವ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಮತ್ತು ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿ ವರ್ಗವನ್ನು ಅಭಿನಂದಿಸುತ್ತೇನೆ. **ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ರಕ್ಷಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು, ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ರಕ್ಷಣಾ ಘಟಕ, ಬೀದರ.**

Creating Future...

**SUCCESS
STORY!**



Losing both his parents at a young age, Pradeep, a resident of Kolagi Village, Shikaripura Taluk, Shivamogga District, found himself at the mercy of heartless relatives and overwhelming circumstances early in life. Pradeep had lost his father in an accident and his mother to health problems, leaving him in the care and control of his grandmother and maternal uncle. Though surrounded by family members, Pradeep never felt like he really belonged there, and though a 7th-standard student, he was never fully allowed to live the life of a child. His family would send him to work in the fields, and on most days, he would come home to the scolding and beatings of his aunt. One day, after a fight with his aunt, Pradeep decided to leave the family for good and ran away from home to Bengaluru.

Pradeep was rescued by BOSCO staff from the Bengaluru Railway Station, and on further inquiry, understood that he had come to the city in search of work as he had no one to take care of him at home. He was counselled by the staff, and then taken to Shivamogga where they did the HSR. After the Yuvodaya staff spoke to his relatives, the child was handed over to his maternal uncle. But Pradeep was just not ready to go back to the constricting environment he had left behind, and he left home once again and came back

to BOSCO Yuvodaya; this time with the request that he wanted to continue his education. Respecting his desire and his decision, Pradeep was placed in BOSCO Vikas with the permission of the Child Welfare Committee.

Pradeep was enrolled in the 8th standard in St. Joseph's School and was then later placed with a foster family after being counselled and prepared for the change. He was transferred to the Sri Rama Mandira School in the 9th standard and finished his SSLC with a score of 55.20%. He went on to complete his PUC in the Government PU College in Chamarajpet, Bengaluru, and successfully passed with a second class. He is presently doing his BA 1st year in the Government College in Yediyuru, Bengaluru while working part-time with Swiggy. Pradeep and his foster parents were presented to the Child Welfare Committee every six months.

Pradeep is 20 years old now, and with every passing day, he is slowly moving towards the life that was only a dream when he had left home, and one step at a time, he is creating the future that he had once seen in his past.

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