

New PLT Province England



Sr Sheila Brennan

Sr Elizabeth O'Donohoe

Sr Margaret Donovan, Provincial Leader

Sr Ursula Eberhardt

God Bless you!

Life...Vie...Vita....Leben...Vida

Signs of hope

I had a secret desire when I went to Argentina on visitation: to visit the slums where Arch Bishop Bergoglio ministered before coming to Rome. A mistake in my air ticket allowed me to stay back one more day in Argentina. Felix Culpa! We could meet one priest who serves there now. He shared his experience with the Archbishop: he instilled hope in the aged and sick and those confined to their shanties, the youth who had lost hope in life and were addicts; a true brother to the priests, a daring pastor indeed!

He had only a handful of priests to support him. One priest was brutally killed in the early nineties. Today, in his name, a center in the slum area help addicts to return to normal life. A known truth is that the Church in Argentina does not welcome the idea of priests serving in slums or support them. So a paradox, Archbishop Bergoglio had twelve priests who worked with him in the slums, now it has increased to twenty.

It is from his personal experience that Pope Francis exhorts priests and religious 'to go to the periphery', or to 'have the smell of the sheep'.

When we want to redefine our ministries or our presence in the world, no one else can give us a better direction than Bergoglio. During our visit to slum No.31, the priest asked: could a few of your sisters come to work with us? Like Pope Kyrill, the imaginative figure of Morris West, Pope Francis may be roaming around the periphery in Rome disguised!

The call to solidarity is a constant invitation. Slum No 31 exists everywhere, in different forms and shapes with varying needs. While returning from somewhere the taxi driver said how blessed he is because his taxi was called many times by the Arch Bishop Bergoglio to go to Slum No. 31. Another form of solidarity for the taxi driver!

We have been reading about the new ministries of different provinces to respond to the call of the Council of the Congregation. We have to delve deeper into the realities of our society to discern where we are called to or are needed.

Sr Telma

"Go forth to heal our broken world"

In our work and mission we experience solidarity with all our staff, ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist-animators who work in the villages), the leaders of the villages at different levels and with the people whom we serve. Our services are available to the people 24 hours of the day.

There is tremendous feeling of oneness and family spirit. People have learnt that the

essence of life is cooperation and not competition. It was a great struggle for us in the beginning to learn the local language, customs and culture of the people. We visit the families of people in the far away villages with the other staff members, give teaching/training to people. We have to go on foot to 14 villages since there are no roads. We are also called to attend deliveries in their homes when the pregnant woman could not be brought to the health center. The difficulties we endured in the beginning made us strong and contented today in serving the simple people. "You did not choose me but I chose you." (Jn15:16); "Do not fear, for I am with you" (Is 45:2); "my grace is sufficient for you" (2Cor 12:9); these are the words from the

Scripture that anchor us in the service to the people.

We are encouraged to see that the people make use of the health facility for their various needs knowing that staff interested in their welfare are there when they come. We will take the risk to live and work in this situation for the holistic development of people of this area, a great blessing to them in this isolated place.



*Sr Sushma Bhavedi and Sr Rose Thomas
Meghalaya- North India*

An experience of solidarity

"Go forth to heal our broken world"

Primary Health Centre, Gabil, West Garo Hills, Meghalaya State.

(An example of Public Private Partnership: Diocese of Tura (Holy Cross Sisters) and Government of India)

We, Sr. Sushma Bhavedi and Sr Rose Thomas are working in this government centre. The source and centre of our activity and life is the Sacramental Presence of Jesus in our small chapel in our living quarters. We do not have the privilege of celebration of the Holy Eucharist every day in our chapel since we live in the interior village far away from the parish church.

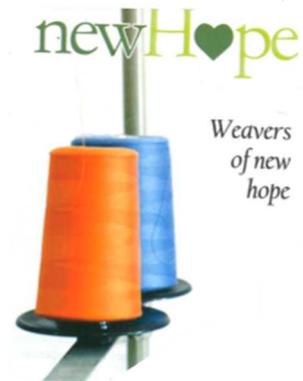
Primary Health Centre in Gabil belongs to the Government of Meghalaya. It consists of a cluster of 21 villages, 42 kilometers. The nearest Holy Cross Community is about 20 km away in Jengjal. The Gabil health center is functioning as a Public Private Partnership a new venture started in 2009. When the government offered such an opportunity 'Bakdil', the social service wing of the Diocese of Tura took up the initiative to make the nonfunctioning Primary Health Centers useful for the people of the interior villages.



People are aware of their right and the need to health care and the number of people,

who use this health facility especially the pregnant women for delivering their babies, has increased steadily. The rate of immunization has increased. People have realized the value of education and they send their children to school. Our presence in this place is instrumental in getting continued medical assistance and awareness on many issues like education of children, timely interventions like immunizations and availability of various government schemes for development. The place is highly endemic for Malaria.

Theodosius Florentini and Bernarda Heimgartner



During the last UISG Plenary meeting in Rome, an African group was selling handmade articles in an adjacent hall. To encourage them, I too bought a small article. This trade mark which was printed on the small wrapper, drew my attention. I copied it and left it on my desktop. (I have not asked them permission to use this for a reflection or meditation or re-production, excuse me.)

I began to reflect: 'What is my trade mark?' We have an emblem, we carry a cross at the back of which is written 'INSTITUT MENZINGEN'

We have a charism statement. Then we have been trying to understand and assimilate the meaning of being Women of Hope (GC 2013) through the visitation.

Our Founders had a clear cut idea what and how the members of the new congregation should be. If you read the last issue of LIFE once again, you will see there the dream of Fr Theodosius and Mother Bernarda:

He writes: They will **go** there (**where?**)... they will **live** (**how?**) ... they will **share** (**what?**)...they will **show** (**whom?**)...

Is this my charter? Is this our charter? Have we deviated? It is high time that we assessed our life and mission.

To you my dear Sisters,
Weavers of New Hope,
with much love,

Sr Telma

My impressions of visits

My experiences of Africa reach out to Zimbabwe, South Africa, Zambia and a small part of Lesotho. Before I visited some of the different countries in the southern part of Africa, Africa meant for me Nelson Mandela who indeed was a great inspirational leader for many of us. I too was in a way privileged to visit Robin Island where he was kept in captivity for 27 years which was the climax of my visit. A man who has brought peace, recognition and a great identity to the people of this country, though the scars of this suffering could be seen in many parts.



One such example is the Botshabelo colony in the Free State, where the Holy Cross Sisters have a small community and a clinic in the shipping containers. The vast area with the sea of houses remind the visitors of the 'Apartheid' period. The people living there still suffer from many unmet needs. Many orphan children living with their relatives and grand parents, affected by HIV/AIDS are found in these schools. I was indeed edified by the teachers and the Holy Cross Sisters, the efforts they take so that every child is saved and the quality of life improves.

The elders continue to suffer and one finds in them a great acceptance of the reality and tolerance in their lives. One such incidence was a grand mother living with 16 of her grand children in a small hut whose parents have died.

Our efforts to give hope to the Periphery...

"Go forth to heal our broken world"

Based on this mission we conducted the nine months course: basic nursing program for the early school leavers. The participants were 23 of them between the age of 22-30. Many of them came from rural areas where they are deprived of medical facility in their own villages and a few of them worked as volunteer public health workers without receiving adequate incentives or training for 14 years. Our goal mainly focused on women empowerment and bring change in their own communities and raise the status quo!

They were fortunate during the training period that the Ministry of skill development and Vocation training commission paid each of them a small sum of money for the individual to use for their educational purpose. This gave them immense joy to obtain education with the feasible support from the Government. The collective evaluation and feedback received from the students gave us a sense of satisfaction that we are able to fulfil the legacy and dream of Our Foundress Mother Bernarda.

The students expressed that they were embodied with supportive and nurturing learning environments. They were given many opportunities to use their creative skills to be self-confident. They felt that they have come out of their self-fear and could be courageous women in the society. One of them freely expressed "my desire to study at this Health science school in a relaxed atmosphere gave me the opportunity to learn not only basic facts of a healthy living but also moral values for myself and to my Society from where I come".

The nine months training program for these girls in the periphery of the Society provided along with the Certificate of recognition for their skills, knowledge and attitudes; self-confidence and hope for a better future to perform invaluable service to the community.

*Sr Geraldine Michael
School of Health Science
Sri Lanka*



“Go forth to heal our broken world”

We, the USM community members, try to live a life of 24x7 Eucharist: living the Eucharist throughout the days of a week; by breaking our schedule for others, by making ourselves available for others at any time without counting the cost and by shedding our petty identities to see God in every human being and serving that God is the meaning of 24x7 Eucharist. The special characteristics of USM community are one hour appointment with God and self every day, writing daily personal journal and everyday holding community evaluation.

In a world, and in a Church that is divided on the basis of caste, class and hierarchy the USM community tries to set a new trend by following the ‘Way of Jesus’ and by practicing his values. It is the conviction of USM members that spirituality consists in practicing the values of justice, peace, fraternity, sensitivity and honesty and not in merely worshipping God.

**Sr Lima Madathikandam,
Province North India.**

Our efforts to give hope to the Periphery ...



Holy Cross school of health science was founded on an agenda of social responsibility to provide educational access to underserved populations. Our aim is to prepare students to apply knowledge and religious values in the understanding and fostering of health, wholeness, and human potential in a changing world.

This agenda has served the school and its students well, and it becomes an integral part of the culture at the school of health science.

My impressions of visits



The African people have a great culture of hospitality which makes even a stranger very welcoming. They have spontaneous expressions of their emotions and rhythmic movements of their bodies. Their liturgies are lively, musical, meaningful and long.

The highlight of our visit was the moment we visited the victoria falls. The Zambian sisters took great efforts to take us inspite of many hazards they were facing to get the entrance tickets. One can easily spend many hours meditating on the fall. The beauty and the great tolerance of the people could be expericenced by the visitor. Zimbabwe and Zambia both share the borders with this great water fall.



Sr Immaculate Joseph

Bread for a Perspective

My first big trip took me to Asia, where I was staying with our Sisters in Jaffna (Sri Lanka) at the beginning. I visited Eluthumadduval several times. The implementation of a project of the EWB (Engineers without Borders) in collaboration with the province of Sri Lanka had just been started there. A papadam factory was to be built there under the title “Bread for a Perspective”, in order to help war widows to get into work and income.

In Eluthumadduval, I met a group of 35 students from the University of Karlsruhe, who are involved with “Engineers without Borders”. During months of very hard project work they had developed the project ‘Papadam factory’ at home, at the University of Karlsruhe. They had drawn blueprints for the manufacturing building, the drinking water supply and the dry toilets; had looked into the issue of electrification, looked for sponsors, organized materials and everything under the supervision of their professors.

During the semester holidays, these young women and men came to Sri Lanka and put this project that they had developed, step by step into practice and this in temperatures of up to 40 Degrees Celsius. At first, they had to clear the construction site and eliminate any mines.



Spirituality and Solidarity

“Go forth to heal our broken world”

I am a community member of Universal Solidarity Movement: A way of life. The USM tries to build a community on the pattern of the early Christian community, an inclusive and pluralistic community. Every person is honored as he/she is an



‘image of God’. The belief that God dwells in human beings is the underlying principle of this community. The members of the community live together, work together and eat together without any discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, religion and language. There is no hierarchy; all are equal. There is no employer and employee; but all are partners in God’s mission. That is spirituality lived in solidarity. Any time of the day or night when guests come, the community members are ready to welcome them.

The partners of USM are present at the railway station or bus stand to receive them and to bring them to USM community. And we, the community members,



would be at the gate to receive them with warmth and affection and to offer them a hot drink or a meal, as it requires. The same warmth is expressed when the guest leaves USM. For USM family this is part and parcel of spirituality. We follow the maxim of ‘Adhidhi Deo Bhava’: when guest comes God comes.

Shelter Home and Counselling

We make a difference in the lives of the destitute women and children in Care homes, Shelter homes and orphanages under the Social Justice Department, Quilon. These homes are the Government initiatives to accommodate women and children who have suffered abuse, or been neglected or abandoned. We play a significant role through counselling and accompanying and coordinating the programmes. The Government officials have great regards for our opinion concerning the functioning of these homes. As a government employee in government institutions, work is not easy. We have to fight for justice, dignity and fairness to those whom we serve.



Sr. Abhaya Sr. Chaithanya and Sr. Sangeetha

Eco friendly unit



We dream a Green world, Green India, Green society and Green South Indian Province. The Province has taken a new step in caring for the mother earth, protecting her and caring for her. There is a green movement in the Province to grow vegetables at home, to make use of the natural resources, to care for the environment through reusing and recycling and to save the environment from burning plastics and adding greenhouse gases. Sr. Delecta and her collaborators in the Holy Cross Eco-

friendly unit and Parumala make paper bags to join the campaign of a plastic free world.

Sr Juliet.

So we go forward with hope believing in what St. Paul said: "Being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ" Phil 1:6

Sr Eileen Vettikzihakunnel
Provincial Leader

Bread for a Perspective

Then the pit for the foundations had to be dug out. In strenuous manual labor and with very simple tools, they built the manufacturing building, the water treatment plant and the toilets after that. They had to overcome many challenges and unforeseen obstacles, until the official opening in October 2015 could take place. They were supported as much as possible by our sisters and their local experts.

The students lived in two simple houses and slept on mattresses. In the community room, they had a "switchboard" with all blueprints and with internet access (although many times without connection!). At my first visit there already, I was impressed with the good atmosphere at the construction site - even though the working conditions were anything but comfortable...in talking to the young prospective architects, engineers, electrical specialists, draftsmen, water specialists...I was amazed again and again at the high motivation of these women and men. Even though almost all of them told me that they had "no interest whatsoever" in the church - but getting active for the disadvantaged, in collaboration with our sisters who know well the situation on site yes, they found that to be very important. They were also prepared to give up their entire holidays for this purpose.



Bread for a Perspective



In addition, the young experts were very impressed with the lives and work of the sisters and their commitment for disadvantaged people and for a country, which is ravaged by years of civil war. Many told me that this experience in Sri Lanka was a much more important school of life for them, as any knowledge that they could be taught at the University.



One focal point of the message of the general chapter in 2013 was “encouraging and improving cooperation”. This sentence came to my mind every time I came to the construction site for me, Eluthumadduval is a good example of a successful cooperation!

Sr Ursula Wyss

Deepashikha (Torch): Home Mission

This is an innovative diocesan ministry with which we collaborate together with Sisters of other congregations. We experience God’s powerful intervention in this ministry to bring healing, to mend the broken relationships, to bring back people to the Church, to support the youth to be freed from various kinds of addiction. We visit families and spend time with them to listen to their problems and pray together with them. Daily Evaluation of the experience by the larger team, helps to improve the methodology or approach.



Sr. Dona Kodavarakaran

A new way in Cecilia Music School



The new and innovative venture is to teach differently gifted (mentally challenged) children with Music. We find that the immature brain is not an impediment to enter into a world of music. This endeavour brings out tremendous result. Specially challenged children started playing music instruments which reduces their dullness and hyperactive tendencies. They enter into a harmonious coordination of their

feelings and thoughts which increases their capacity to concentrate and perform better in their academic studies. Parents of the students also receive direction through counselling. We are involved in music therapy for other categories of people as well.

Sr Sangeetha, Sr Divya, Sr Rachel

The South Indian Province

"Go forth to heal our broken world"

The Sisters of the South Indian Province narrate their passion for healing broken lives. In the beginning it was physical healing, now:-

Marriage Tribunals with a new window (not Microsoft window!) Two diocesan Tribunals opened up a new window to help the broken marriage relationships. We help the Tribunal to process the request for divorce. While the Tribunal work with documents



and witnesses, we work with real traumatic people. A few sessions with these couples, separate and together, help them to undo the knots or weave together the broken threads.

Sr Leena Mary Malatt, Sr Philomina Attipetti



Jwala (fire) is a ministry among youth, children and families at Ottaplamoodu.

The place was known for evening gatherings of men to gamble, play cards, drug and alcohol consumption. While women work hard to look after the children and family, men squander the money they earn. A few

of us took up the challenge to motivate them, to lead a life with dignity and meaning. We organize programs in collaboration with an NGO called, ATLAS to make them better citizens through Non-formal education, Awareness program, Counselling, Peace movement, Medical care, and Self-help-program for livelihood. A football team is newly formed with a coach which created a shift in their life pattern. The old ways of the youth gave in to the new with discipline and vision for life.

Sr Jeena, Sr. Asha, Sr Medona and Sr Mercy Anchalayil

Joyful witnesses

Firstly, I have experienced something that really touched me in every continent where our sisters are. So I chose one experience...

In 2016 I was able to visit the community of Musina in South Africa.

I really admired the sisters in their ministries: Sr. Francis is doing a lot for the migrants with a huge commitment.



Sr Gladys is travelling thousands of kilometres across the diocese of Tzaneen where she works with 5 lay people to train the trainers of the catechists from the parishes. They focus on what is catechesis? (Mt 28:16-20), and who is the catechist, (the call or vocation of a catechist, that means his/her spirituality) the role and characteristics of a catechist, responsibilities. The catechists get to know that they are called to join in the long line of being called by God to have a relationship with him and to serve.

So, Sr Gladys and her team are busy with the selection, formation, and ongoing training of catechists.

The basis of this all is the Word and Jesus Who is the Word.

This training of the catechists is accompanied by visiting all the parishes of the diocese.



The main purpose of the visits is to help the catechists find how to teach catechism to different age groups, to help them with the curriculum, to help them with the Parish Catechetical Committees and to help them with RCIA programme. (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults).

One day Sisters Gladys, Anastasia and I set off to visit the Mapungubwe National Park not far from the town Musina. This is a historical and ancient site where the early tribes of this area used to live. Mapungubwe is also home to an immensely rich flora and fauna, including over 1000 years old Baobab trees and a big variety of animal life, including elephant, giraffe, white rhino, antelopes and 400 bird species. All the wild animal are freely roaming about. Being there one cannot cease praising the creator.



On this particular day the three of us from two generations and from three nationalities (South African, Namibian and German) were so happy and excited to be there and to have this outing. Now at the Mapungubwe Interpretation Centre in the park we laughed a lot and enjoyed all the information. In course of our going around there, we noticed that a lady was watching and observing us all along. She was smiling as she was watching us. She then approached Sr. Gladys and asked who we were and what church we belonged to. She had a positive surprise when she heard from us that we were sisters.

It took time for her to click that we were religious sisters and that we were also sisters of each other. As Sr. Gladys communicated with her in her own language and at the same time translating for us two other sisters, she realised that what actually struck the lady deeply, was that we were so free and happy together. Later on I learnt:

This part of South Africa is different from the rest of the country. It is beautiful and the people are lovely and yet exchange between peoples is taking so long. Christianity came very late in this part of the world and everything else is taking its slow time to follow from behind.

Sr. Gladys explained to me: 'This is why for her she could not believe that you, Sister Franziska, was so one with us and us, we were as free with you.'

Additional Service;

- ◆ There is much economic progress in the lives of these women. They are encouraged to save money and it is a pleasure to notice that they have learned the habit of saving. This centre is also a platform to identify their personal skills and a field to develop them.



- ◆ This area is a place of good resource of Palmira products and training is going on in making Palmira products.

- ◆ Further in order to upgrade the moral activities of these women, seminar workshops on moral values are arranged once in every three months as a feature of this institution.

- ◆ It could be observed that these women have developed self-confidence, understanding, sharing, fraternity and responsibility among themselves.

- ◆ Women who have to bear the burden of their day to day living are guided by counselling.

Vision:

“To develop the self- determination of women living under disadvantaged situations in the society by way of a viable enterprise that contributes to a higher standard of living for themselves and their families, thereby enriching the society in which they live”.

**Sr Lucia & Sr Virginia
Province Sri Lanka**

Thaangum Karangal' ("Sustaining Hands") Women's life support and economic empowerment .

Aim: The purpose of running this factory is to empower the women's life support and this is under the supervision of sisters of the Holy Cross community.

There are about 15 women of different categories, who are working in this factory. They are widows, women deserted by husbands, women whose husbands are invalids and unable to earn their living, and women who lost their fathers and took the responsibility of looking after their families (women headed families). These are the effects of the 30 years old civil war in our country.

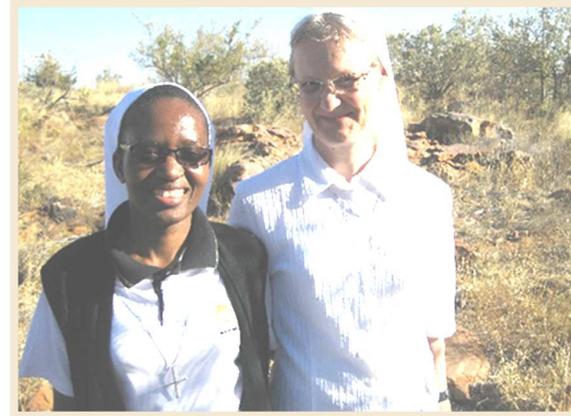


Food stuff made in the factory



Different kinds of healthy food stuff such as 'Pappadam', rice flour, nourishing energy-giving food, herbal pappadam, butter milk chilies, Vadagam, dried vegetables and dried fruits are produced here. These are prepared very hygienically of high quality. These products have high demand locally and abroad.

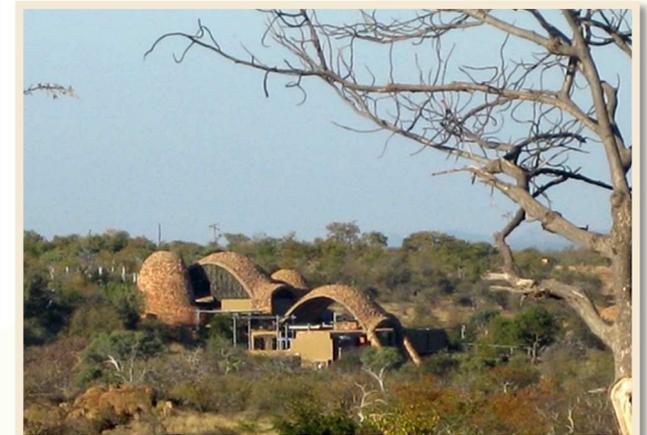
I realized that the lady asked for a symbol with which to remember us and something that will keep encouraging her to come and join our Church. She said she wanted this Church which was so happy and free with all people. We looked at our bags for a symbol, and naturally the obvious symbol in our bags was a rosary. We spontaneously wanted to give and at the end one of us gave her the rosary. The joy and excitement that was in this person was amazing. We were so touched that again and again we shared this experience while continuing our trip across the park.



Sr Anastasia & Sr Franziska during the outing in the park

All the socio-pastoral ministry of the sisters is very much needed. At the same time there is a need to give witness for the gospel by being joyful as Pope Francis always stresses – this we experienced in Mapungubwe.

Mapungubwe interpretation centre



Sr Franziska Mitterer

...Solidarity in action ...

“Go forth to heal our broken world”

We, the Sisters of the Central Indian Province, Bangalore, journey in solidarity with the daily life of struggling people, by empowering their lives.

The Sisters working at Odisha, Chikmagalur, Belagavi, Madivala (Makkala Jeevodaya), Gulberga and Hanur, address the crucial issues of today by:

1. Comprehensive Rural Community Health Programmes (CRHP).
2. Promoting Human Rights to the trafficked Victims.
3. Giving physical, psychological, spiritual and intellectual care and formation for the young girls.
4. Engaging towards ‘building peoples’ movement against violations of health and human rights.
5. Working for the people, who live in the hill side and the migrated people in the Villages.

Sisters and the staff are fully committed to promote health, through comprehensive rural Health programmes in the remotest places. They work in solidarity with the people who are powerless and deprived of their right to health. The new initiatives are addressing the health issues by conducting mass screening for malaria and giving the treatment. ‘TULSI’ is an empowerment programme for the adolescent tribal girls, ensuring them for a better, healthy and empowered life. We are involved in Tribal leadership programme for the tribal youth. We also tried to reach out to the maximum number of people through Mobile clinic, free eye camps and Village programmes.



Our service is extended through POCSO (protection of children from sexual offenses) Act 2012 in order to create awareness to the public as well as to the girl children and women. They rescue the victims from child Marriage, imprisonment and re-integrate them to the family and finally to the Society as normal people.



“Go forth to heal our broken world”

The life journey of Anjali - the trafficked victim: Anjali joined Makkal Jeevodaya, on July 10th, 2013. She lived with her parents on the street of M.G Road, Bangalore. Her father abandoned her in the Majestic bus station, Bangalore, due to financial constraints. The staff from the ‘CHILD HELP LINE’ saw the abandoned little girl in public place, roaming around very sad and begging in the bus station. They brought her to the Child Welfare Committee (CWC). The CWC authorities handed over Anjali to ‘Makkala Jeevodaya’. The centre creates developmental mile stones for every growing child by bringing ‘Dawn of life.... to all the abandoned children.



Our Sisters and staff encourage the village farmers to cultivate their own land, through Dry land development (DLD) programme. This programme has encouraged the farmers and their children to remain in their own land to do the cultivation rather than migrating to other states in search of daily work.



Our Sisters and the staff have initiated a new programme, called “Child focused community Development Programme” in order to empower the communities. Most of these villages are very interior, over the hills and mountains and deep dense valleys. These villages belong to reserved forest areas where wild animals especially elephants are very much on the move. There are no good roads and so people don’t have transport facilities. Their modern vehicle is not cars or any type of automobiles but an Ass. Some of the villages have schools. But the teachers are not encouraged to come regularly to school due to long distance and the unsafe roads. All children are registered in the schools. But they are mainly engaged in begging to the pilgrims and selling the pooja materials in the temple areas.

Sr Valsa Kumblankal
Provincial Leader