



Sumon and Ayus painting the wall of Baksara

ANUPRERONA

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"The poor won't come to us, it's up to us to go to them."

DONATE

Letter of Father Laurent

Dear friends,

Still bathed in the beautiful light of Christmas and the Epiphany, I wish you all a holy and happy New Year. May this light warm your hearts and nourish your hope.

It is true that we are currently going through a period of intense cold—not only the cold measured by the thermometer. It seems that a great winter has fallen upon the world. Perhaps this is precisely the time for hope. As all our reference points seem to be collapsing, should we not rediscover the courage to hope? I deeply believe that children are, in this regard, an inexhaustible source of inspiration.

In this issue, you will learn that we have suffered the pain of losing a little girl who was living in our homes, Anu. An illness took her from us. I remember her radiant smile, just a week before her passing, when nothing yet suggested such a sudden end. Despite her suffering, Anu kept a luminous faith and a deep joy until the very end.

Her departure was a violent shock for us, one of those moments when hope must become a “despair overcome.” Yet, in the face of the emptiness left by her absence, we witnessed a miracle of life: after sadness and tears, her close friends and her sister Tanu allowed life to take over again. They found joy and laughter once more. These children teach us that hope is not an illusion. Despite the great hardships of their lives, they possess a surge of life and trust that overflows everything. The light shines brighter in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

As you read her story in the pages that follow, you will see that Anu has not left us; she has become, for our great HSP family—like several children before her—a guiding, radiant star. She reminds us that our mission among the poorest is a daily struggle for life, a victory we win every day thanks to your faithful support.

This year also marks the beginning of a season rich in celebrations as we enter our jubilee year. On January 17, at Ashaneer, we will have the joy of bringing together many of those who have witnessed, supported, or themselves taken part in the great adventure of HSP.

May this new year be for us all a time of renewed hope, as invincible as a child’s smile.

Thank you once again for your prayers and your unwavering support.

Lots of love,

F. Laurent +

Bereavement at HSP

On December 21, 2025, our former President, Mr. S. R. Baydia, passed away at the age of 90. He played a major role in helping to structure HSP, especially in its early years. At that time, while he was a government civil servant, HSP was facing numerous staff-related challenges, particularly regarding the framework of employment. Father Laborde then persuaded Mr. S. R. Baydia to leave his position as a civil servant—a post that is, it should be remembered, extremely sought-after because of the social security and benefits it provides—to join HSP in 1986. Thanks to his legal expertise, he was able to contribute significantly to structuring our organization in matters of salaries and working conditions, thereby greatly facilitating the life and functioning of HSP. He remained a member of the Board of Directors until 2012, when he retired. He stayed very closely connected to HSP until the end of his life, notably through his son, who works at HSP. The day after his passing, his body was brought to Ashaneer, where we were holding our annual Christmas gathering. In this way, all the staff and children of Howrah were able to pay him a final tribute.



Mr. S.R. Baydia with Father Laborde during the ceremony of the awarding of the Legion of Honour in 2019



On October 25, 2025, Anu, a twelve-year-old girl and a resident of our Baksara home, passed away from kidney failure after many long weeks of suffering. At

the beginning of September, her condition worsened, and after three weeks of hospitalization, she died. Anu had been living in our homes for more than five years with her elder sister, Tanu. Before entering our residential care, she had been a student at our non-formal school.

Her family, from the Adivasi community, originally comes from Jharkhand, a state bordering West Bengal. Her mother passed away when Anu was still a child, and her father, struggling with alcohol dependency, was no longer able to take responsibility for the family. It was her brother-in-law, the husband of her elder sister, who became responsible for them. Anu was Catholic and was buried in her home village in Jharkhand on the very day of her death.

The shock was profound within the home and throughout HSP. A feeling of helplessness and deep sadness overwhelmed us. When death strikes suddenly, guilt makes us ask ourselves: could we have done something differently? Sadly, here the mortality rate of children under the age of twelve is seven times higher than in Europe. In many families, the loss of a little boy or a little girl is mourned. In the great HSP family, this bereavement touches us in a very special way, because here the children become our children; they become an integral part of our daily lives and of our hearts.

Tanu and Anu were like twin sisters, inseparable. They did everything together, dressed alike, and encouraged one another. For Tanu, as for her friends in the home, it was a sudden and violent shock. For several weeks they had prayed, hoping for her recovery. All of a sudden, it seemed as if Heaven had closed its doors. A heavy atmosphere settled over Baksara. Father Laurent celebrated a Mass in the Baksara home forty days after her death, as is the tradition here. At the end of the celebration, we listened to the beautiful testimonies of her friends from the home, as well as of her elder sister Tanu.

Yet, after some time, life began to reclaim its place, and smiles returned to the faces of Tanu and the girls in the home. In children, the impulse for life is stronger than death and sorrow. We have much to learn from them. Of course, they are full of deep questions, and this event has undoubtedly caused their hearts to mature all at once. They know that they now have a big sister in Heaven and do not hesitate to pray to her. It is Providence that guides HSP, and Anu's early departure reminds us that God's plans are not our plans, even when they are difficult to understand. Anu already seemed to belong more to Heaven than to earth. Testimonies of her smile, her helpfulness, and her faith abound. Perhaps she will also send us miracles.



Reportage French TV & Film

TF1 aired the report on its 8 p.m. evening news on Thursday, November 22. As a reminder, the journalists had come at the end of September for about a week to film the report. It offers a fairly unique window into the realities of poverty in India, alongside Father Laurent. Here is the link to the report:

[GRAND REPORTAGE - Calcutta : les oubliés du miracle indien | TF1 INFO](#)

On November 5, the film ***Les Baroudeurs du Christ*** was released in cinemas! The film follows five missionary priests sent on mission to India, Madagascar, Cambodia, South Korea, and Taiwan. Among these five priests is Father Laurent, and part of the film was therefore shot at HSP. In particular, several scenes were filmed in Jordighi, where Sanju (a Class X student) and Bidjoy share their respective stories. At the time of writing, the film is continuing its journey through the Benelux countries.

All of this has helped raise awareness of HSP, and we hope it will enable us to reach new donors so that we can continue to help HSP grow. We have also completely redesigned our website, which you can find at the link below:

[Howrah Service to the Poor - Solidarité en Inde](#)

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PÈRE PHILIPPE BLOT (CORÉE DU SUD) IMAGE ET SON YANNICK PURWINS, YORIM BECKER MONTAGE DAVID FABRE ÉTALONNAGE YANNICK PURWINS
MIXAGE JOEL ARENA, YAKALOCO COMMUNICATION, DIRECTION JURIDIQUE ET FINANCIÈRE CHRISTOPHE JOLY, SONIA ROUMÉAS, AGNÈS SCHMOUKER

Fundraising for Jeevan Path

In mid-November, we launched an online fundraising campaign to build a new facility at the Jeevan Path home.

The current building, constructed in 2005, was not designed to accommodate residents with permanent disabilities. Initially intended for day activities, it was converted into a residential home in 2017 due to a lack of alternatives, following directives from the local government. This conversion highlighted several shortcomings, including unsuitable toilets, difficulties in managing the behavioral disorders of some residents, and a lack of privacy for staff.

To address these issues, we plan to construct a new annex building featuring a multisensory room, a staff bedroom, and adapted toilet facilities.

The fundraising, with an initial target of €15,000, was largely exceeded, as nearly €23,000 was raised. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our generous donors. We aim to begin construction work as soon as possible to make daily life easier—and above all, more dignified—for our residents and staff. As construction projects often involve unforeseen expenses, we will wait until the work is completed before deciding how best to use the remaining surplus from the fundraising.



Vocational Forum

A short explanatory guide to the education system in West Bengal:

- **Primary School:** *Classes I to IV (ages 6 to 10)*
- **Middle School / Secondary School:** *Classes V to X (ages 10 to 16). Students must take the Madhyamik examination at the end of Class X, when they are around 16 years old. Once they have taken this exam, our young people leave the HSP homes. Their paths then vary greatly: some attend high school from their family homes, others join different NGOs to continue their studies, some start working, some get married (especially girls), some follow vocational training for a few months, or pursue other options (this list is not exhaustive). This exam is truly the first major filter, as for those who do not pass it, it most often means the end of their schooling.*
- **High School:** *(ages 16 to 18). If they decide to continue their studies, students enter Classes XI and XII, where they begin to specialize in certain subjects. At the end of high school, they take the Ucha Madhyamik examination (equivalent to the baccaalaureate). During high school, the young people no longer live in our homes, but we offer to fully fund their studies until completion.*
- **University:** *This may take the form of a four-year master's degree or a three-year bachelor's degree.*

For this third edition of the vocational forum, we brought together **more than 150 young people from HSP (from Asansol, Jalpaiguri, and Howrah), as well as from Don Bosco Ashalayam and LP4Y**, to attend several presentations on different professions and training programs. This event serves several purposes: to inspire our young people to pursue further education and learn a trade, to help them understand the importance of studying, and above all to enable them to explore the various opportunities available to them.

While HSP supports these young people through our After 10 program by covering the cost of their studies, these training programs must meet several criteria, particularly geographic ones, since most of the students pursue their education from their family homes. This event is also an opportunity for former residents who are currently studying and living outside our homes to reunite with their HSP friends.



Finally, we try to guide them toward career paths that are actually hiring, as many sectors in India are saturated. The most sought-after sector is the government, which offers unmatched social security (in the broad sense of the term). However, getting a government job is almost a mission impossible due to the completely disproportionate number of candidates compared to the number of available positions.

In 2025, in the state of West Bengal alone, 320,000 candidates applied for just 35,000 teaching positions. This example clearly illustrates the difficulty the Indian economy faces in absorbing the vast number of young people entering the labor market. India remains a very young country, with a median age of 28, and—as in many countries with a very young population—youth unemployment is high. This makes awareness-raising and information work with our young people essential and ongoing, and the vocational forum is very much part of this effort.

New Director of Social Bureau

This department is the “gateway” to HSP. **It is responsible for allocating beneficiaries to the different programs and, above all, for identifying and reaching new beneficiaries.** In keeping with our commitment to serve the poorest, we decided to strengthen this department by appointing a new director. She arrived in October, and many projects have already begun to take shape, thanks in particular to her boundless energy.

It is essential that this outreach to new beneficiaries continues, because India is changing rapidly, in line with its economic growth. Howrah is changing, Jalpaiguri is changing, Asansol is changing—the pockets of poverty are shifting, and we must remain in close contact with the most vulnerable if our mission is to retain its meaning.

As an example illustrating this need to adapt: following the closure of brick kilns along the Ganges, we had to shut down our non-formal school, as there were no longer migrant workers and therefore no children coming to the school.

Rejuvenation

As in the previous year, we organized a day for all our staff from Howrah, Jalpaiguri, and Asansol, who came together at Ashaneer. Several speakers delivered motivational talks, and it was also during this day that **we honored the most deserving staff members of the year.** This award is, above all, a recognition of their dedication to HSP and to all our beneficiaries.

The day concluded with the unveiling of the new sign, specially designed for the 2026 jubilee year.



Excursion of Jalpaiguri in Asansol

To conclude the 2025 outings, it was the turn of the children from Jalpaiguri to travel to Asansol. **Fifty girls and boys spent a full day on the train to enjoy a short stay of about a week at this center,** which remains quite isolated from the others. Surrounded by the greenery of Asansol, the children discovered this small center for the first time, which welcomes underprivileged children from the region.

It was a beautiful moment of communion among children who have been part of HSP for many years but had never met before. During those few days, the home was completely full, reminding us of the time when it accommodated up to 70 children before its closure during the COVID period. **Today, we are forced to limit the number of children in this home because the boys' dormitory is in need of renovation, but we are still actively seeking new donors to support this center.**



Bakuabari and Asansol girls in the river next to the home

Portrait

PALAK SHARMA, young girl of 12 years old from Lalkuthi Home

She was admitted to the Ashaneer home on September 14, 2019, and was later transferred to the Lalkuthi home in 2024. She has a disability affecting both legs and cannot stand without support. Although she is able to walk, it is very difficult and only possible with the help of crutches. When she arrived at the age of six, she could only sit and crawl. Thanks to the physiotherapy she has received at the Lalkuthi home, along with the use of an orthosis and crutches, she is now able to go to school on her own.

After the birth of their second child, her father separated from her mother. Her mother now lives with another man, a tailor, who takes care of her and her two daughters. They live in a small roadside room near the drains. Palak is currently in Class 6 (equivalent to sixth grade). She is very talkative, but above all very gentle in the way she expresses herself. She is a bright student who is always eager to learn new things. Whenever a volunteer comes to Lalkuthi, she always asks for English lessons so that she can improve. One can hardly imagine the daily difficulties she faces because of her disability, yet this does not prevent her from being remarkably kind—and above all, from wearing a smile that never leaves her face.



Celebration in HSP

To complement the previous Anuprerona article on festivals in West Bengal, here is an overview of the celebrations we observed at HSP during the past quarter:

- **Gandhi Jayanti (Birthday of Mahatma Gandhi)**

To honor one of India's most well-known figures, Gandhi Jayanti is celebrated on October 2, the date of his birth, and is a public holiday in India.

- **Lakshmi Puja**

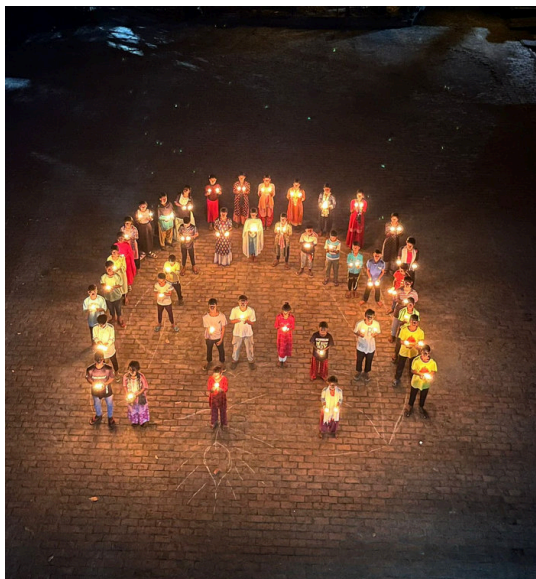
We celebrated Lakshmi Puja on October 6. Lakshmi is the Hindu goddess of wealth, prosperity, and family well-being. For this festival, Bengali families open their homes so that the spirit of Lakshmi may enter. It is also a neighborhood celebration, during which everyone is invited into one another's homes to pray and enjoy many sweet delicacies.

- **Kali Puja**

This is one of the most important festivals in West Bengal, as it honors the goddess Kali. Kali is one of the most striking forms of the goddess Shakti. She destroys the forces of evil, protects her devotees, and embodies absolute feminine power. To celebrate her, Bengalis set off an extraordinary number of firecrackers, making the night echo with the constant sound of fireworks. The name of the city of Kolkata is derived from Kalikata, which itself comes from Kalikkhetrô, meaning "the land (or field) of Kali" in Bengali.

- **Diwali**

Diwali is a Hindu festival symbolizing the victory of light over darkness and good over evil. It is one of the most important festivals in India, along with Holi. It is a particularly joyful time for our children, who beautifully decorate each home with lights for the occasion.



Diwali's celebration in Baksara

- **Guru Nanak Gurpurab**

This public holiday honors Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. Sikhism is a religion that emerged from Hinduism and was founded in the 15th century in Punjab. Sikhism is the fourth most widely practiced religion in India, after Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity.

- **World Day of the Poor**

On this day, we welcomed around thirty underprivileged adults and offered them a hot meal, as well as warm clothing or blankets to help them cope with the winter—which, although short, is particularly harsh for those living on the streets.

- **Children's Day**

Children's Day was celebrated on November 14. It was established on the anniversary of Jawaharlal Nehru's birth in tribute to his dedication to children. He was affectionately known as "Chacha Nehru." Many celebrations take place in schools across India on this occasion. This day also serves as a reminder that millions of children in India are forced to work to support their families. There is still a long road ahead before childhood is truly protected.

- **International Day of Persons with Disabilities**

As every year, on the occasion of this day, children with disabilities, along with their trainers and caregivers, took to the streets in Howrah and in Rajganj, Jalpaiguri. The aim is to make visible what many would prefer to ignore, to highlight the daily challenges they face, and to affirm their dignity as human beings. In India, disability is very poorly addressed, and disability linked to poverty represents an even greater challenge.

- **Christmas**

We gathered on December 22nd in Howrah to celebrate Christmas. It was a wonderful celebration with beautiful dances and skits performed by the children. A very warm and magical moment where the children were excited about the end of the calendar and school year.

Visit at HSP

A former MEP volunteer, **Violaine**, who served at Maria Basti in 2012, came to HSP for a month with her fiancé, Jan. We were very happy to see her again—but no one was happier than the residents of Maria Basti, who rarely receive visitors. During her stay at Maria Basti, they were able to enjoy many activities together, including an outing to the safari park. These were moments of great excitement and joy for these women with disabilities who are also orphans.



At Bakuabari, we welcomed a physiotherapist named **Juliette** for a one-month stay. Being involved with the association Terre des Hommes Alsace, which has supported HSP for many decades, there was a strong desire to show her the projects they support. She was able to meet Pascale, who had come to Bakuabari for a week to follow up with the children who underwent surgery last September. Juliette got to see the full scope of the physiotherapy work we do in Jalpaiguri and was able to give advice to our didis.



Finally, as every year since 2009, we welcomed **Giuliano** for two and a half months—a person for whom HSP holds no secrets. His presence with us is always greatly appreciated, especially since his technical advice gives us a helpful boost for the various ongoing renovation projects.

News in Brief

Décathlon Fondation's Anniversary

Our young people from Howrah were invited to a sports tournament to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Décathlon Foundation in India. The event was held on Children's Day and brought together over 150 young people from four NGOs in total: LP4Y, Don Bosco, Ashan Bhavan Center (an NGO founded by Brother Gaston), and HSP.

Drawing Competition

On the same Children's Day, all of our young people with disabilities were invited by the Government's Department of Post and Telegraph to participate in a drawing competition at Science City, which brought together several hundred children. We are very proud, as a boy from Baksara, Suman Oraon, managed to win third place against this fierce competition.

Visits

Six French volunteers from the Missionaries of Charity (Mother Teresa's Order) came to learn about HSP during a lunch visit. These volunteers, who are often only in India for short periods (rarely more than a month), were able to get to know our organization over the course of a lunch with our MEP volunteers.

Cancelled meeting

In December, a doctor from German Doctors was scheduled to come to Tamil Nadu, and we had planned to send four children from Jalpaiguri with severe disabilities for potential surgeries. This could not take place, as the doctor's visa was simply refused. It is becoming increasingly difficult for foreign medical professionals to practice medicine in India. As a reminder, an MEP volunteer physiotherapist who was supposed to come in 2025 also had her visa refused because of her profession. These government decisions are very detrimental to our beneficiaries.

Nice Catch

And to conclude this Anuprerona, the farmers at Bakuabari made a notable catch in the fields. The animal was handed over to the forest rangers, who later released it elsewhere.



