



The Origins of Our Legacy

Rev. Fr John Suresh – A Journey of Faith and Service



Rev. Fr John Suresh

was born in 1970, in a world where opportunities were often determined by one's place in society. Growing up in Chennai, he completed his schooling there, carrying with him both the joys of learning and the scars of caste-based discrimination. These early experiences left a deep impression on him, sowing

the seeds of a lifelong commitment to stand with the marginalised.

After finishing school, he felt a strong call to dedicate his life to God and entered the seminary. Alongside his priestly formation, he pursued higher education at the renowned Loyola College, Chennai, a Jesuit institution known for its commitment to social justice. It was here that his leadership qualities came to light. Elected as the Secretary of the All-India Catholic University Federation (AICUF), young John found himself at the heart of student activism and social involvement. This role shaped his worldview and gave him a platform to engage deeply with issues of humanity and justice.

One of the defining moments of his student years came during a visit to a refugee camp in Rameshwaram, the southernmost tip of Tamil Nadu. The camp was filled with men, women, and children who had fled the horrors of the Sri Lankan civil war. Seeing their pain and hearing their stories shook him profoundly. That encounter awakened in him a burning conviction: his life's mission would be to stand beside those who suffer, especially the forgotten and the oppressed.

This conviction only grew stronger because of his own story. As a Dalit, he had tasted the bitter reality of exclusion and discrimination firsthand. Rather than breaking him, it gave him an unyielding strength. He believed

with all his heart that education was the most powerful weapon to break chains of oppression, and it was this belief that would guide his priestly ministry in the years to come.

On April 22, 2001, Rev. Fr. Dr John Suresh was ordained as a priest. His first appointment was as the Assistant Parish Priest of Porur, Nugumbal, where he worked under the guidance of Rev. Fr K. M. Joseph, a missionary who had dedicated his life to uplifting the marginalised. Fr. John Suresh began his ministry with zeal and compassion, eager to learn and serve. Within a few months, a tragedy struck. Fr. Joseph fell gravely ill and was called to eternal rest on September 8, 2001, leaving behind a legacy and a responsibility that Rev Fr. John Suresh would courageously carry forward.

It was during Rev. Fr. K. M. Joseph's period that the foundation stone for Dr. R. Arulappa Higher Secondary School was laid. With the support of Pappa Dr. Johannes Mispagel, only the basement could be completed at first. Though it was a modest beginning, Rev. Fr John Suresh saw in it the promise of a brighter future. Over time, with the steadfast support of Aktion Indien and the tireless dedication of Dr. Johannes Mispagel and his team, the school blossomed into a full-fledged institution. Equipped with modern facilities, it now educates more than 1,000 students each year, reaching nearly 40 villages and becoming a beacon of hope for countless families.

Yet, Fr. John Suresh knew that education alone was not enough. Many children had no safe place to call home, especially orphans, semi-orphans, those scarred by the devastating tsunami, and children from Dalit and marginalised backgrounds. To them, he wanted to offer not just shelter, but love and dignity. Thus, was born the vision of *St. John's Home for Children in Need* in the year 2005.



In 2004, two students from Gymnasium Josephinum in Hildesheim, Germany, Mr Martin Jensen and Dr Hannes Datta, came to India for their social year. They lived and worked alongside Rev Fr. John Suresh for ten months, sharing in his mission. Their presence, combined with the continued generosity of Aktion Indien, helped to transform the dream into reality. In October 2006, the doors of St. John's Home for Children in Need were opened. Every year, nearly 100 children live here, cared for and nurtured, with the chance to dream of a better tomorrow.

From a young boy who endured discrimination to a priest who became a father to the forgotten, Rev. Fr. John Suresh's journey is one of faith, resilience, and unwavering dedication. His life stands as a testament to the power of compassion, the promise of education, and the unshakeable hope that no child, however marginalised, should ever be left behind.



After completing their schooling, many students would usually return to grazing cattle or take up small, casual jobs to support their families. But Fr. John Suresh refused to let their education end there. With his encouragement and guidance and with the generous support of our German friends, these students were given the opportunity to continue their studies at the university level.

This initiative came to be known as the WE Group. Over the years, more than 2,000 students have been part of this programme. They not only completed their university degrees but also secured good jobs, becoming self-reliant and respected members of society. Today, they live with dignity, standing tall as examples of what education can achieve.

This achievement marks another milestone in our history. In a caste-based society like India, where Dalit students often face systemic barriers, access to higher education is not just an opportunity; it is a powerful tool of liberation. Through this mission, higher education has become a strong pillar of support for Dalit students, empowering them to rise above

discrimination and claim their rightful place in society. Rev. Fr. John Suresh was a man of many dimensions, wearing different faces for the sake of society. He always believed he was called to be the voice of the voiceless. To achieve this, he immersed himself in the study of traditional folklore, theatrical arts, and Tamil traditional musical instruments. For him, culture was not merely an art form; it was a powerful weapon for revolutionary change.



Because he had personally endured discrimination and oppression from his early days, he could deeply connect with the struggles of marginalized communities. These experiences only intensified during his seminary years, when his passion for justice grew even stronger. He began volunteering in refugee camps and started using art as a

medium to highlight social struggles. Through street plays and dramas, he brought the hidden pain of the oppressed into the public eye, awakening awareness and solidarity.

In 1997, he founded a cultural team called NADAVU, which was later renamed Adavu. This group became a living stage to showcase Tamil ethnic art forms and amplify the voices of the marginalized. They performed traditional instruments such as the Parai, a drum historically silenced by caste oppression but reclaimed as a symbol of dignity and resistance. Under his guidance, the team also trained in street theatre, playback theatre, and other expressive art forms.



For the past 27 years, this cultural movement has been more than a performance; it has been a campaign. Through music, drama, and traditional arts, Adavu has tirelessly created awareness and inspired action for the liberation and upliftment of the masses at every level of society.



Rev. Fr. John Suresh was not only a priest but also a builder of lives and communities. With the generous support of friends from Belgium and France, he constructed 64 houses for the neediest families, giving them the dignity of a home. But his mission did not stop there. He also became a revolutionary voice within the Church itself. For many

years, Dalits were denied entry into Catholic churches, silenced and oppressed by caste discrimination. Fr. John Suresh courageously broke these barriers, opening the doors of many churches so that Dalits could finally worship freely and with dignity.

His vision for social transformation reached even further. Believing that true empowerment comes through leadership, he began a special program to prepare students for India's highest civil service examinations. His dream was to see Dalit youth become bureaucrats (decision-makers) who could shape the future of the nation. Through this initiative, he successfully guided three students to achieve this remarkable goal, planting seeds of hope that continue to grow.

On May 12, 2021, Rev. Fr. John Suresh breathed his last. Though he fell silent that day, his spirit has never left us. He lives on in the faces of the people he uplifted, in the homes he built, in the students he empowered, and in the churches he opened to the marginalized. His guiding motto, "To be ransom for many", still burns brightly, and it is now our responsibility to carry that light forward.

Heartfelt Tribute to Rev Fr John Suresh



I am Uvanjalini Preetha from Thatchoor. With the support of Rev. Fr. John Suresh and the WE group, I completed my post-graduation in political science and am now preparing for the Union Public Service Examination. My dream is to become a bureaucrat and serve the Government of India, a vision that was also close to the heart of Rev. Fr. John Suresh.

I hold Rev. Fr. John Suresh in the highest regard. He was the guiding force behind the education of more than a hundred boys and girls from my village, enabling them to pursue university and postgraduate degrees. It was through his tireless efforts that we gained the freedom to enter our church and worship with dignity.

To us, he was far more than a priest. He was a true friend, a teacher, a motivator, and a well-wisher. He taught us invaluable lessons, showed us how to face life with courage, and instilled in us the confidence to move forward with a positive spirit. Whenever we lacked knowledge or direction, he was always there to guide us patiently.

The progress of Thatchoor today is his legacy. Before his arrival, our people lived under the oppression of the dominant caste. We were denied education, barred from entering the church, and many of our families were forced into bonded labour. In 2003, he was posted as in charge of my parish; he became the voice of the voiceless. He fought against poverty, championed the cause of education, and led the struggle for equality. With great courage, sacrifice, and persistence, he opened the doors of the church to all, restoring our dignity and rights.

His passing is an immeasurable loss not only to us but also to countless other villages he touched with his work and vision. For us, he was not just a priest but a fatherly figure and a saintly soul who transformed our lives. His dreams live on in us, especially in the hearts of students and marginalized communities, whose future he always carried in his heart.

Jai Bhim, Father. We miss you deeply.

Ms S Uvanjalini Preetha, M A

From WE Group, Preparing UPSC Examination

Man can become Divine..



The priests run the institution in a respectable place within the Catholic Church. The priests here administer the sacrament of faith in Christ and also provide spiritual guidance. But, after Rev. Fr. John Suresh's death, I came to know that Rev. Fr. Suresh went beyond all these and was the voice of the poor and the downtrodden, the object of his life.

Rev. Fr. Suresh is a notable social activist and a great man who fights where justice is denied. Whether it was in the area under the diocese or it was in other parts of Tamil Nadu, he was the protector of the oppressed or marginalized people. Those who were fortunate enough to know him as a man of deep faith, profound worldly wisdom, and compassion are a source of inspiration in his life.

I attended the gathering on his 25th priestly ordination day (April 22, 2025). From the bishop to those in his circle of friends, I was amazed by his connections and his works they shared. At times, I felt like I was re-listening to the stories my parents and sister used to tell me. Their anecdotes painted a vivid picture of his journey, illustrating not just his spiritual growth but also the impact he had on countless individuals. As I listened, I realized that his legacy is not just in the rituals he performed but in the lives he touched and the communities he uplifted through his unwavering dedication. I understood the emotions that were revealed in the evidence of his dedication. His unwavering commitment to service resonated deeply with everyone present, reminding us all of the profound impact one person can have on a community.

As a Catholic priest, he was well-versed in the philosophies of leaders like Ayodhi Dasa Pandidhar, Dr. Ambedkar, Karl Marx, and Grandfather Rettaimalai Srinivasan. In addition, He was well aware of the spiritual principles of the Catholic religion and adhered to Buddhist thought traditions in support of the beliefs of other religions. Even though he is in eternal rest, he is still present in our hearts. No one can deny that he was the root cause of many people's education, political status, and societal status.

I am a member of the "We", and I am currently studying my postgraduation in digital journalism at Loyola College, Chennai. It's an honourable tribute to the man who tirelessly worked for the betterment of the society.

Ms Swati Thirumani

WE Group – Studying M Voc - Digital Journalism

The Light of Life

Dr. Johannes Mispagel and Aktion Indien e.v.,

“The greatest love a person can have for his friend is to give his life for them.” (John 15:13)

We have read this verse many times, but only through a few rare souls we do truly see and experience its meaning. Dr. Johannes Mispagel is one such soul.

For us, he is simply “Pappa”, a name that is not merely a word but an experience. It reflects the strength, comfort, and care we receive from the way he relates to us. He is not our Pappa by blood, but by spirit, and in that bond lies a deeper love.



Birth and Early Life

Dr. Johannes Mispagel was born on 17 April 1940 in Hildesheim, Germany, during the days of World War II. His father worked as a dental technician, and in 1945 his younger brother Josef was born.

After primary school, Johannes attended the Josephinum Hildesheim, a historic Catholic school located near the city’s cathedral. Founded in 815 AD as a cathedral school, the Josephinum is among the oldest in Germany. Over the centuries, it produced prominent leaders—including Emperor Heinrich II and Saint Bernward of Hildesheim.

It was here that young Johannes developed a deep interest in animals, especially birds, and in the wonders of nature.

Education and Career

Johannes began his life of service early, helping in his parish by ringing church bells and serving incense. During school holidays, he worked on road construction sites and assisted in building houses near Hildesheim.

After completing his A-levels, he studied chemistry in Hannover. In 1965, he earned his diploma as a chemical engineer, and in 1970, he received his doctoral degree. Soon after, he began his professional career at Continental AG.

Marriage and Family



At just 17, during a dance class, Johannes met Ms. Barbara Funke, the woman we now affectionately call “Mamma”, a person of immense care, commitment, and love. They met again during a graduation ceremony, and Johannes knew she was the one. In June 1968, they were united in marriage before Christ.

They built a home in Giesen, where Barbara, a loving wife and devoted mother, raised their three sons: Thomas (1971), Jan (1972), and Stephan (1977).

Mrs Barbara, alongside managing her family, worked as a primary school teacher and arranged flowers in church and continues to inspire with her dedication to learning English and computer skills even today.

A Journey to India – The First Spark



In September 1983, Johannes was sent to India as a resident engineer for two years. Every day in Bombay (Mumbai), he saw the suffering of street children and felt deeply moved.

During a family trip to Mahabalipuram, his elder son, Thomas, fell ill. They brought him to a dispensary run by the sisters, where he was quickly healed. The cost of treatment was minimal compared to Germany, so Johannes wished to give more. The sisters directed him to Fr Mattam, SJ, who suggested that the best way to help was to invest in children’s education.

The Birth of Aktion Indien e.V.

Returning to Germany in 1985, Johannes decided to sponsor the education of one Indian child. He organised a small parish bazaar to raise funds. Word spread, friends joined in, and soon this simple act grew into the non-profit organization “Aktion Indien”, dedicated to providing education, food, and shelter to children in need.

Partnership with Fr. K. M. Joseph



Through Fr. Mattam, Johannes met Fr. K. M. Joseph, a humble and dedicated priest serving the rural poor, especially the Dalits. A deep friendship grew between them.

In 1996, Johannes visited India with teachers from his former school, Josephinum Hildesheim. Since then, Josephinum Germany has supported Kilachery by funding boarding facilities and other projects.

Fr. Joseph was later transferred to Porur, where he worked tirelessly to upgrade the local high school into a higher secondary school. With the extraordinary support of Aktion Indien, German friends, and Fr. John Suresh, this dream became a reality.



Carrying the Torch Forward

Fr. K. M. Joseph's passing in 2001 left a great void. His work was continued with dedication by Fr. John Suresh, supported by Ms. Nandhini Krishnan and the steadfast commitment of Dr. Mispagel.

Even today, Aktion Indien continues to support schools, hostels, and vocational training centres, empowering children with education and livelihood skills.

A Life of Simple Service



Despite his professional commitments, Dr. Johannes always found ways to raise funds for the children. One unique effort involved collecting fallen tree branches from the forest near his home, cutting them into one-cubic-foot pieces, and selling them as firewood. Many bought from him, knowing the proceeds went to

Indian children.

Mamma Barbara, his loving partner in all things, kept the family strong and active in church and community life.

A Legacy of Love

Over the decades, Aktion Indien has:

- Built houses and provided livestock for poor families in mission villages.
- Supported six sub-stations under the Porur Mission – Neerpair, Vilangadu, Chunambedu, Chithamoor, Kalpet and Polampakkam.
- Funded the construction of the Higher Secondary School in Neerpair.
- Helped establish St. John Home for Children in Need, Neerpair, and St. Joseph's Industrial School, Ooty.
- Constructed and supported St. Joseph's Hr. Sec. School, Kilachery.
- 'WE' the students Group

All these were possible because of Pappa Dr. Johannes Mispagel's unwavering love and generosity.

Celebrating 40 Years of Service



The WE Student Group, made up of the direct beneficiaries of his work, comes together to celebrate the life of our beloved Pappa. His 40 years of service to the poor stand as a beacon, teaching us the great lesson of living humanely.

Dr. Johannes Mispagel's life is truly a light of life for us all.

HATS OFF TO PAPPA DR JOHANNES MISPAGEL

On 15th April 2013, Dr. Johannes Mispagel was honoured with the Order of Merit by the Federal Republic of Germany in recognition of his unwavering dedication to development aid in India. The award was presented by District Administrator Mr. Reiner Wegner, who adorned Pappa with the prestigious Red Cross medal, bearing the Federal Eagle, on his lapel. This distinguished honour stands as a testament to Pappa's tireless service, deep compassion, and lifelong commitment to uplifting communities in India.



R C Primary School:



R.C. Primary School is the oldest educational institution in this locality, with a proud history that dates back to before India's independence. It has held official recognition from the British Government since 1936. The school currently offers classes from Grade 1 to Grade 5, with a dedicated team of five teachers and one non-teaching staff member. At present, 122 students are enrolled, continuing the school's long-standing tradition of nurturing young minds.

Dr. R. Arulappa Higher Secondary School:

Dr. R. Arulappa Higher Secondary School, Neerpair, one of the largest and most esteemed educational institutions in the Madurantakam Taluk, is located in the serene rural coastal district of Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu. Officially recognised as a Christian minority institution by the appropriate



authorities, it is blessed to be under the leadership of our beloved Bishop, Most Rev. Dr. A. Neethinathan.

Our vision is to develop the school into a model institution nurturing a disciplined and responsible student community, delivering high-quality education, and instilling strong moral and ethical values to ensure the holistic development of every child. Alongside academic excellence, we place special emphasis on character formation, offering value-based education to shape responsible, compassionate citizens for the future.

History of Our School

It is with great pride and heartfelt gratitude that we recall the remarkable journey of our prestigious institution.

Our humble beginnings date back to 1920, when the school was established as a small primary institution. From 1988 to 1992, under the leadership of Rev. Fr. P. M. Joseph, the school was upgraded to the high school level.



The surrounding hamlets of Neerpair, about ten in number, were among the most underdeveloped in the region. Children from these villages often had to cross lakes and wooded areas, walking miles on foot, to attend classes from Standard VI to X. Public transport was virtually non-existent at that time, and even today, connectivity remains limited.

From 1992 to 1995, Rev. Fr. Philip Manathra served as the correspondent of our school, guiding it with dedication and commitment. In 1995, Rev. Fr. Jayaseelan took over the role and served until 1996, introducing several reformatory schemes that brought significant improvements. Under his leadership, the school achieved an outstanding milestone—100% pass results in the public examinations.

From 1996 to 1998, Rev. Fr. K. S. Kanikairaj assumed the responsibility of Correspondent. During his tenure, he undertook major renovations to the school building, enhancing the learning environment. It was in this period that our school proudly received the “Best School Award” in Tamil Nadu under the Kanchipuram District category.

From 1998 to 2001, Rev. Fr. K. M. Joseph served as the correspondent of our school. One of his first priorities was to resolve the long-standing drinking water problem, ensuring safe and reliable water for all. During his tenure, he also oversaw the repair and construction of new toilet facilities for both girls and boys, greatly improving the school’s hygiene and infrastructure. The golden chapter of our history began under the dynamic leadership of Rev. Fr. Dr. John Suresh, when in 2002, the school was elevated to the rank of a higher secondary school.



Until 2001, our institution operated from a modest building, yet faithfully served nearly 40 surrounding villages, home to many economically disadvantaged and Dalit families. Determined to provide them with better facilities, Rev. Fr. K. M. Joseph approached Dr. Johannes Mispagel of Aktion Indien e.V. for assistance in constructing a proper school building.

Dr. Mispagel graciously agreed, and Fr. Joseph laid the foundation stone. Tragically, Fr. Joseph fell seriously ill and passed away in 2001 before the project could be completed.



Following his passing, Rev. Fr. John Suresh took charge of the project in 2001, dedicating himself wholeheartedly to bringing the dream to life. Through his tireless efforts and with the steadfast support of Dr. Johannes Mispagel, Aktion

Indien, the Arivu Team, friends from Belgium, and numerous German well-wishers, a magnificent new school building was constructed. It featured spacious classrooms, well-equipped Chemistry, Physics, and Computer Laboratories, and, with the later assistance of Mr. Jacques Vellut from Belgium and Aktion Indien, every classroom was furnished with benches and chairs.

The new school building was officially inaugurated on 18th October 2004 by Mr. & Mrs. Urban, Dr. Johannes Mispagel & Mrs. Barbara Mispagel, Mr. Reiner Stark, Mrs. Kathrin Haase, and Rt. Rev. Dr. Neethinathan, Bishop of the Chingleput Diocese, along with other friends from Germany. The grand celebration was meticulously organized by Rev. Fr. John Suresh and the school management.



In addition to the generous support from our German friends, we are blessed to have a well-maintained school bus. In 2024, with the tireless contribution from ASS School, we were able to beautifully construct a



new toilet building for the girls. The previous facility, built more than two decades ago, was in poor condition open to the sky, without a roof, and completely damaged. This new building now provides the girls with a safe, hygienic, and dignified space.

We remain deeply grateful to Mr. Hannes Datta and Mr. Martin Jensen from Germany, who lived among us for ten months during this period, offering invaluable assistance in countless ways.

Today, thousands of students pursue their education here with pride and dignity. Our dedicated faculty consists of 30 teachers, 8 supported by government funding, 12 by the Diocese of Chingleput, and 8 whose salaries are generously borne by Aktion Indien and our friends from Germany. In addition, Aktion Indien and our German well-wishers extend their benevolence to cover the salaries of 10 non-teaching staff, ensuring the smooth and efficient functioning of our school. Currently, Rev.Fr. Charles is serving as the Correspondent of Dr. R. Arulappa Higher Secondary School and Rector of St. John's Home for children in Need. Fr.Charles is wholeheartedly committed for the welfare of school and students in St. John' Home. His guidance for the children is a notable one.

Following the passing of Rev. Fr. John Suresh, who had faithfully served as the Nodal Agent, the responsibility has now been entrusted to Rev. Fr. Backia Regis, Parish Priest of the Immaculate Conception Church and former Vicar General. The role of Nodal Officer of this Project is carried out by Ms. Nandhini Krishnan.



St John's Home for the Children in Need

During the early days, the school building served a dual purpose; the classrooms were used for teaching during the day and to accommodate



children at night. However, soon after the school was upgraded, the management realized that it lacked proper sleeping facilities for the children. This created a vision: every child should at least have a “minimum facility” to stay in comfort and dignity. The phrase “minimum facility” struck a deep chord in everyone’s heart.

After the completion of the school construction, a proposal was drawn up to build a hostel for children with these minimum facilities. But before the project could take shape, in 2004 a major catastrophe struck: “The Tsunami” in the Indian Ocean. This giant wave claimed thousands of lives and destroyed countless homes. As the saying goes, “God has a purpose behind every action,” and in this case, the disaster unexpectedly brought new hope into the lives of these deserving children. It was during this time that Dr. Johannes Mispagel and his friend Mr. Rainer Stark came to India. The devastation of the tsunami deeply touched the children. Instead of their usual grand Pongal celebrations, they decided to stand in solidarity with the affected families. They engaged in relief work, performed cultural programs for those in distress, and offered comfort through their presence. During this period, the school administration organized a “Dream Home” painting competition, asking every child to paint their vision of an ideal home and support their artwork with five key points describing their needs.

The outcome was overwhelmingly vivid, colourful paintings filled with heartfelt dreams. When the points were analysed, it was remarkable to find that many children had expressed the same needs, directly reflecting their lived reality. At that time, Mr. Hannes Datta and Mr. Martin Jensen, students from Josephinum, Hildesheim, Germany, were doing their internship at the school. Deeply impressed by the children’s creativity and sincerity, they carefully studied the paintings and points, selecting



five common themes and five outstanding unique points. These ten points were then handed over to a civil engineer, who used them as the foundation to design the hostel.

By the end of January 2005, Dr. Johannes Mispagel and Mr. Rainer Stark visited India to explore ways of supporting the tsunami-affected

communities. When Dr. Mispagel saw the children's vision and the architect's design inspired by their ideas, he was deeply moved.

On 16th October 2006, the Children's Home was inaugurated, a building with many special features, including stone and tiled flooring, tiled walls in the toilets and bathrooms, modern sanitation facilities, a well-equipped kitchen, and more.



We take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to Aktion Indien and all known and unknown friends of Pappa Dr. Johannes Mispagel, Mrs. Urban, Mrs. Kathrin Haase, Mariano Josephinum, Albert Schweitzer Schule, and ARIVU members for their generous support in making this dream a reality for the deserving children of India.

WE – With Education

The WE Student Group was founded by Rev. Fr. John Suresh as part of his educational service mission. Over time, the need for special attention, structured plans, and programs with active participation from the beneficiaries led to the creation of an independent wing called “WE”, which stands for “With Education”.



The name reflects our belief:

We were brought up with Education

We are growing with Education

We want to work with Education

Though our educational activities began right from the start, the WE association formally came into existence in 2004. Most of our members are first-generation learners from rural villages, coming from extremely poor backgrounds.



In 2004, Fr. John Suresh observed that many students, after finishing school, were forced to work as cattle herders, daily wage labourers, and in other low-paying jobs, despite excelling in their 12th standard public examinations. Their parents, both

daily wage earners, could not afford higher education expenses, as their income barely met the family’s basic needs. Recognising this injustice, Fr. John Suresh took the initiative to help these deserving students access university and vocational education. With the generous support of Dr. Johannes Mispagel and his team, tuition fees and related costs were covered, enabling the students to pursue their dreams instead of being trapped in a cycle of poverty.



Today, WE proudly celebrate having empowered more than 2,000 students in fields such as medicine, engineering, teaching, law, music, carpentry, bureaucracy, and more. Over nearly two decades, this educational movement has transformed the lives of countless poor and Dalit youth and has broken barriers and fostered dignity through learning.

Many of our alumni are now giving back, supporting the WE group and serving their communities, thus continuing the cycle of empowerment. WE have paved the way for others to pursue post-school studies, creating a ripple effect of hope and opportunity. We remain ever proud of our journey and deeply grateful.



Jesuit Project – “PARAN”



Aktion Indien has always carried a noble dream for the upliftment of underprivileged communities. This partnership with Rev. Fr. John Suresh and the Josephinum community took root in the year 2006, when a few of our WE Group students began their studies in Ooty, a hill station where the Jesuits were running St. Joseph's Industrial Training Institute. The school provided vocational training in carpentry, motor mechanics, and plumbing—

particularly for students who found formal academics difficult to pursue. With great foresight, Rev. Fr. John Suresh guided such students towards skill-based education, enabling them to build a secure future.

During this period, Aktion Indien in collaboration with the Josephinum, extended invaluable support by contributing to the construction of a hostel for the students of St. Joseph's Industrial School. This marked the beginning of a fruitful partnership that soon extended beyond Ooty. The focus gradually moved to the southern parts of Tamil Nadu, especially to Makkampalayam and the nearby villages, where the majority of the population belongs to tribal communities. The Jesuit mission has been tirelessly serving these communities through various initiatives, addressing both educational and social needs.

Aktion Indien has continued to play a vital role in this mission by sponsoring the education of numerous tribal students, offering them opportunities that would otherwise have been beyond their reach. Over the years, many young people from these communities have successfully graduated and secured meaningful employment in reputed organizations, transforming not only their own lives but also those of their families.



This remarkable journey of empowerment stands as a testament to the enduring friendship and solidarity of our German friends. Through their constant support, channelled especially via “PARAN” in Kadambur near Makkampalayam, they have helped uplift entire communities, enabling tribal youth

to dream, aspire, and achieve a brighter future.

Our Partner School

Gymnasium Mariano Josephinum School – A Legacy of Over Twelve Centuries



The Josephinum is a distinguished Catholic school located in the historic city of Hildesheim, in northern Germany, just a short distance from Hannover and about 200 km from Hamburg. Nestled beside the majestic Hildesheim Cathedral, the school's buildings stand on the very site where it was founded in the year 815 as a Cathedral School. This remarkable heritage makes the Josephinum one of the

oldest educational institutions in Germany.

In its earliest centuries, the school was exclusively for boys, many of whom went on to become influential figures among them Emperor Heinrich II and Saint Bernward of Hildesheim, a revered bishop and patron of the arts. From 1595 to 1773, the Jesuits took charge of the institution, infusing it with their rigorous academic and spiritual traditions. After their departure, the Bishop of Hildesheim assumed leadership.





The Josephinum's resilience is woven into its story. Just before the end of World War II, the school suffered near-total destruction in a bomb attack, yet it rose again from the rubble through dedicated rebuilding efforts. In 1975, history turned a new page when girls were welcomed into its classrooms, creating a balanced and diverse student body.

Today, the Josephinum educates over 1,000 students, boys and girls aged 10 to 19, in a rich curriculum that includes German, English, Latin or French, Spanish, Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, History, Religion, Arts, Music, and Sports. Beyond regular classes, a vibrant selection of extracurricular activities awaits: soccer, track and field, handball, judo, theatre, musicals, orchestra, astronomy, electronics, computing, and additional foreign languages. All are rooted in the Christian principle of "Helping one's fellow human", which remains at the heart of the school's mission.



More than a school, the Josephinum is a living monument to education, faith, and perseverance shaping young minds for over twelve centuries and carrying its legacy confidently into the future.

Indian Club – Kanavu Team

The Josephinum has been an active supporter of the humanitarian campaign Aktion Indien e.V., founded by Dr. Johannes Mispagel – a connection that began when Dr. Mispagel's sons studied at the school. Over the years, this partnership has grown into a heartfelt mission.

The Mariano-Josephinum in Hildesheim remains deeply committed to educational and social projects in India, with a special focus on the Dr. R. Arulappa Higher Secondary School in Tamil Nadu. Through this initiative, the school community not only fosters academic exchange but also lives out the values of compassion, solidarity, and global responsibility.



The Indian Club “Kanavu Team” at Mariano-Josephinum serves as the student forum dedicated to fundraising for these projects. Kanavu means “dream” in Tamil, and their noble wish is to help fulfill the dreams of students in India. Established nearly twenty years ago, the club has become a strong pillar of support. Teachers and staff have worked with great dedication, with special mention to Mrs. Eve Tiecke, whose immense contributions, even after her retirement, remain invaluable. Today, the team continues its mission with the guidance of Mrs. Cordula Witte. Dear friends, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for your unconditional support of our projects.

History of Albert-Schweitzer School in Nienburg/Weser

The origins of the Albert-Schweitzer School trace back to the Reformation movement in Europe. In 1525, the council of Nienburg established the first Christian school, which began its classes in a small house located beside the Church of St. Martin.



At the start of the 20th century, the Higher Boys' School underwent two relocations. In 1906, the inauguration of a new building on Friedrichstraße marked a significant milestone, as the "Higher Secondary School for Boys" moved from the Schlossplatz to its present location.

500 Years Celebration



This year, the Albert Schweitzer Schule celebrates 500 years, an extraordinary milestone and a powerful testament to the rich legacy, enduring traditions, and unwavering spirit that have shaped your community for half a millennium.

It is an honour to witness the lasting impact of your institution, a true beacon of excellence, compassion, and lifelong learning that continues to inspire hearts and minds far beyond its campus. The values you uphold serve as a guiding light, offering hope and encouragement across generations and borders.

As you mark this landmark 5th centenary, we feel profound pride and gratitude for the invaluable support your school has extended to our community over the years. The Albert Schweitzer Schule has been more than a centre of academic distinction; it has been a pillar of social responsibility, reaching out with empathy and solidarity to uplift the marginalized.

For nearly two decades, your generous and steadfast support for our initiatives in India, especially for Dalit and other underprivileged communities, has been truly transformative. Your dedication to promoting education and equality has empowered countless individuals to rise from poverty and embrace lives of dignity and hope.





My heartfelt thanks go to all the educators, especially the ARIVU team members, for their tireless commitment and compassion. A special note of gratitude is extended to Mr. OStD Dr. Wegener, and we fondly remember the former director Dr Ralf Weghoft, whose legacy continues to inspire.

ARIVU – Future Through Education

The “India” working group, active for several years, deserves special mention. It collaborates closely with the association Arivu – Future through Education and is dedicated to supporting educational projects in Neerpair, Tamil Nadu.

In 2006, a group of teachers, students, and parents from Albert-Schweitzer School, Nienburg, visited India. Inspired by their experiences, some of them returned home and founded ARIVU – Zukunft durch Bildung (Arivu – Future through Education). Their mission was clear: to promote education by raising funds and awareness.



At the Albert-Schweitzer School, the so-called “India Project” was already well known, and Arivu maintained close contact with the school. The aim was to introduce the group’s work to a wider audience. To achieve this, they printed information leaflets, launched the website www.arivu.de, and began participating in annual events in the city of Nienburg.

These activities became signature features of Arivu’s calendar:

- Selling items at the flea market during Nienburg’s yearly Altstadtfest (Old Town Festival)
- Creating and selling Christmas decorations and Advent wreaths at the farmers’ market
- Participating in the Christmas market for non-profit and self-help groups

Over time, these events became not just fundraisers but also opportunities to connect with the public and share their vision.

Arivu's mission is twofold:

To support the education of students at St. John's Home on the Neerpair campus. To raise public awareness of development issues, such as global interdependence, cultural diversity, and the interactions between countries of the Global North and South.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the members of ARIVU, especially Mrs. Kathrin Haase, Ms. Andrea Schulte in den Baumen, Mrs. Hilde Munk and family, Dr. Michael Krug and family, Mrs. Edda, Mr. Sebastian and family, Mr. Kai and family, along with all other members. We are deeply grateful for your unwavering commitment and invaluable contributions to our project. Through ARIVU (knowledge), you are opening doors of education for our marginalized Dalit students, empowering more young minds every year to pursue their dreams and build a brighter future.

Mr and Mrs Willers and the Primary school of Swisttal – Buschhoven.



This is a primary school. Most of the children here live in the village of Buschhoven and walk to school each day. Every year, the school organises special events to support their partner school in India.

One of the most touching traditions is the Carols of the Bushkids. During Advent, these children sing Christmas carols near the village bakeries, collecting donations for a noble cause. The money they raise is sent to Aktion Indien to help the R.C. Primary School, Neerpair.

Behind this beautiful gesture stand two remarkable individuals – Adelheid and Benno Willers. With the support of their dedicated staff and enthusiastic children, they have mobilised funds through various activities, bringing hope and assistance to those in need.

In July 2025, Mrs. Adelheid passed away. Her kindness, generosity, and commitment will always be remembered. We continue to pray for her soul to rest in peace.

Gymnasium Oesede,



Gymnasium Oesede is another valued partner school of ours.

Mrs. Kathrin Haase, one of our board members of Aktion Indien e.V., serves there as a teacher and coordinator.

In 2023, we had the privilege of being warmly welcomed by the school's principal, Mr. Thomas Rohm, along with students from the India Working Group, Mrs. Haase, and Dr. Buse. During our visit, we shared about our Indian projects, and the students listened with great interest and enthusiasm.

The principal, staff, and especially the students of the Working Group extended to us a truly heartfelt and warm welcome, making us feel at home. We are deeply grateful to Gymnasium Oesede for becoming a new partner in our Indian project.

Our special thanks goes to Mrs. Kathrin Haase for her unwavering support and invaluable assistance.



Mr Hannes Datta & Mr Martin Jensen



Mr. Hannes Datta and Mr. Martin Jensen from Hildesheim visited in 2004 as part of their social year, during which they stayed for ten months. Their contribution to our initiatives has been invaluable. During their stay, they established the computer lab at Dr. R. Arulappa School and provided extensive support during the challenging period of the tsunami. They were instrumental in the establishment of St. John's Home and, since 2004, have remained integral members of the Aktion Indien family, actively coordinating and contributing to the growth of our projects.

Dr. Hannes Datta now serves as an Associate Professor of Marketing at Tilburg University, Netherlands, while continuing his longstanding commitment to our mission. He frequently visits our projects and actively supports us in many ways. He regularly engages with our WE professional group students, guiding them in their career paths with great dedication. In 2024, he visited our project with two of his daughters and stayed at St. John's Home. His wife, Mrs. Laura, along with their entire family, continues to extend their wholehearted support to us.

Mr Martin Jensen, our long-time friend and well-wisher, is a valued member of the Aktion Indien e.V. team. During his social year of study, he stayed with us in Neerpair and played a vital role, particularly during the Tsunami, when he extended remarkable support. Along with Mr. Hannes Datta, he was instrumental in the construction of our St. John's Home. Even after more than two decades, both of them continue to remain steadfast supporters of our projects in India. Today, Martin is serving as a Senior Product Manager at Siemens in Germany, carrying forward the same spirit of dedication and excellence in his professional journey.



Mrs. Kathrin Haase



In 1996, as a student of Josephinum Hildesheim, Kathrin Haase came along with Dr. Johannes and his team, who visited Kilachery projects for supporting boarding facilities and other projects. Mrs. Kathrin Haase was fond of the project activities and rendered her willingness to support herself after her graduation. She pursued her studies in Chemistry and became a teacher in Albert-Schweitzer School. Mrs. Kathrin Haase along with her teacher friends – Ms. Andrea, Mrs. Hilde Munk, Mrs. Edda, Mr & Mrs. Krug family founded ARIVU team. Later after her marriage, she went to Gymnasium Oesede. With her initiative, she brought together her fellow colleagues and students of that school and formed an Indian Club. The newly formed Indian club is also raising funds for the Indian projects. With her continuous support and dedication, she has transformed into the executive authority of Aktion Indien e.V.

Belgian Collaborations and Support

Rev. Fr. John Suresh, during his tenure as Parish Priest of the Porur and Neerpair Mission, built meaningful relationships that gradually developed into long-standing partnerships for the mission's social and educational initiatives.

The association began with Dr. Claire Marie Jeanne Vellut (1926–2013), a Belgian-born naturalised Indian leprologist, humanist, and founder of the Damien Foundation India Trust. As a parishioner of the mission, she shared a close friendship with Rev. Fr. John Suresh. He frequently visited the Damien Foundation's leprosy clinic, where he celebrated Holy Mass for the patients. These visits laid the foundation for a deep bond of collaboration.





Through Dr. Vellut, Fr. John Suresh was later introduced to her nephew, Mr. Jacques Vellut, who manages the “Mercy Home” Trust in Belgium. His initial support came in the form of contributions during Christmas celebrations and later expanded to include assistance with classroom furniture, such as tables, benches and chairs.

Following this, Mr. Jean Pierre Vallence, a volunteer from Knokke associated with the Damien Foundation, also began extending his support to the Mercy Home. This connection further strengthened the partnership between Belgium and the mission.

Around the same period, Mr. Dirk Portier and his family from Wetteren developed a close friendship with Rev. Fr. John Suresh. Each Christmas, they actively supported his mission by selling homemade jam and other items at the Dominican Church, with the proceeds directed toward his social initiatives. Their steadfast commitment continues to this day, providing invaluable support and encouragement to our project.



We also recall with deep respect Rev. Fr. Stef, a Dominican priest from Belgium, who unconditionally supported and stood beside Rev. Fr. John Suresh in his mission. His contribution remains an integral part of this collaborative journey.



In 2004, during the Tsunami crisis, further solidarity was shown when Mrs. Ann Michelle (†2020) and Mrs. Ann Jacob from Christ Roi School, together with a group

of students, stayed with the mission and extended immeasurable help in various ways. Their timely assistance was of great significance during one of the most challenging moments in our history.



Over the years, these connections with Belgium have grown into a strong network of friendship and cooperation. Today, we gratefully acknowledge the invaluable contributions of all our Belgian friends, whose generosity, solidarity, and commitment continue to strengthen and sustain the mission.



Dear Friends,



I am Ambrose Balusamy, Headmaster of Dr. R. Arulappa Higher Secondary School, Neerpair. It gives me immense joy to share my life journey and how it was profoundly transformed through the support of our European friends and the inspiring vision of two remarkable personalities Rev. Dr. Fr. John Suresh and Dr. Johannes Mispagel.

I come from Thatchoor, a small village about 100 km from Chennai, near the town of Maduranthagam. My family, like many others in our village, lived in great poverty. For generations, our people were bound in servitude to the wealthy landlords of Thatchoor, struggling without hope of change. When Rev. Fr. John Suresh came to serve our parish, a new era began. He stood courageously against injustice, led protests and struggles for our rights, and above all, dedicated himself to the education of the children in our community. Today, we proudly say that more than 150 graduates have emerged from the WE (With Education) group. Because of this, many of us now live with dignity, confidence, and renewed hope.

I am blessed to be one among them. With the support of the WE group, I was able to pursue and complete my higher education. I began my career as a management staff member at Dr. R. Arulappa Higher Secondary School, and later, by God's grace, I successfully cleared the government examination to become a government teacher in the same institution. Last year, following the retirement of Mr. Arokia Dass, I was deeply honoured to be appointed as Headmaster of our school. I also continue to serve as one of the Secretaries of the WE group, carrying forward its vision.

This transformation in my life and in the lives of countless others has been possible only because of your unwavering support and the tireless efforts of Rev. Dr. Fr. John Suresh. For this, I offer my deepest gratitude to each one of you.

With sincere thanks and prayers,

Ambrose Balusamy

Headmaster

Dr. R. Arulappa Higher Secondary School

Greetings from Tamilmani,



I am one of the senior members of the WE Group and a proud alumnus of Dr. R. Arulappa Higher Secondary School and St. John's Home. I completed my schooling at Dr. R. Arulappa Higher Secondary School in 2004.

At that time, my family was living in one of the slum areas of North Chennai. Although our native place is in the eastern coastal region of Tamil Nadu near Pondicherry, due to poverty my father moved to Chennai to work as a daily wage labourer to support our family. In our home, it was just myself and my younger sister. While my sister stayed with my parents, I stayed at St. John's Home, where I successfully completed my schooling.

A turning point in my life came through the support of Mr. Prabhu Ramachandran, nephew of Ms. Nandhini Krishnan, who was then working as a manager at Zoho Corp, a leading IT company in Chennai. With his initiative, Zoho recruited some of us students from our school, provided IT training, and even offered a monthly stipend. After two years of training, nearly 15 of us from Dr. R. Arulappa Higher Secondary School most of us hailing from remote villages near Neerpair were absorbed as full-time employees at Zoho, earning a good salary. During this time, we also pursued and completed our graduation, which further strengthened our careers. Today, all of us are well-placed and leading dignified professional lives. For more than ten years, I have the honour of serving as the President of the WE Group. Each year, with the generous support of our German friends Aktion Indien and the Arivu team we have been able to provide scholarships to around 100 students. This noble initiative began in 2004 under the visionary leadership of Rev. Dr. John Suresh. After his passing, Ms. Nandhini Krishnan has continued to guide us with dedication, ensuring that this mission continues with the same strength and spirit.

Every year, we select 100 deserving students, giving first preference to those from St. John's Home and Dr. R. Arulappa Higher Secondary School. We then extend support to other students, mostly Dalits and those from economically underprivileged families in and around our region. During the time of college admissions, our WE Group leadership including the President, Secretary, and Core Committee personally visit universities, guide the students in their choices, and support them until they complete their graduation. Even after graduation, we continue to mentor them until they secure employment. On behalf of the WE Group, I express my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you. I offer my special prayers and deepest respect to Pappa Dr. Johannes Mispagel and Rev. Dr. Fr. John Suresh, whose vision and sacrifice have been life-changing in the most tremendous ways. Without your dedication, countless young lives including mine would not have found the path of education, dignity, and hope.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Tamilmani
President - WE Group

Dear Friends,

At this moment, I wish to express my deepest and most heartfelt gratitude to all our friends from Germany and Belgium. Your generous contributions to our Indian project are truly beyond measure. Through your kindness, the light of education has reached thousands of Dalit families uplifting one of the most deprived communities, empowering them step by step, and helping them to stand with dignity, confidence, and hope for a brighter future.

We gratefully remember the vision and mission of Rev. Fr. John Suresh, whose tireless dedication continues to guide and inspire us. This noble mission lives on today through the unwavering support of Hans Otto Dr. Johannes Mispagel, Aktion Indien e.V., and our esteemed collaborators – Mrs. Kathrin Haase, Dr. Hannes Datta, Gymnasium Mariano-Josephinum, Albert-Schweitzer-Schule, the ARIVU Team, Buschhoven School, and Gymnasium Oesede. Your partnership ensures that his dream continues to flourish in service of the marginalized.

From the depths of our hearts, thank you for your enduring solidarity, encouragement, and compassion. Your generosity is not only transforming lives but also keeping alive the legacy and mission of Rev. Fr. John Suresh and Dr Johannes Mispagel.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the members of our editorial team – Mr. Keliyappan, Macro Press, Mrs. Vijaya Krishnan, Ms. Shravanti Thirumani, and Ms. Neviditha Kathiresan – for their meticulous efforts and valuable contributions.

With profound gratitude and warm regards,

Nandhini Krishnan
Nodal Officer

For Contact:

Aktion Indien eV - www.aktion-indien.de

hannes@datta-online.com

kathrin.pistorius@gmx.de

www.arivu.de