



# Report 2020

Viva Christmas Parties are the highlight of the year for many children and volunteers connected to our partner networks around the world. Children have fun and feel loved, communities are strengthened and churches share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Through the Christmas Parties, Viva partner networks are becoming more widely known and respected, and as their reputations are strengthened, they have better platforms to bring about positive change for children.

This year over 9,100 children received the Christmas message of hope as they took part in 170 Christmas Parties organised through the collective action of over 300 churches and organisations. Children left the parties knowing how valued and loved they are by God, which might just change their lives forever.

The parties brought people together from different backgrounds, beliefs and experiences, for a time of fun and an escape from their usual daily struggles. This year the parties were hugely needed and appreciated as they reached through the darkness of the global Coronavirus pandemic, bringing hope to families by showing them that they have not been forgotten and support is available.



This year 21 networks held at least one Christmas Party, with the parties costing approximately \$7.40USD per child. At least 41% of the children who attended this year's parties were new to Viva partner networks. 1,122 parents and guardians were involved in the Christmas Parties, which were possible thanks to the work of 921 staff members and volunteers.

## What happened at this year's Parties?

The Christmas Parties were full of fun activities to teach and encourage children. Every party was different, as they were each tailored to address the unique challenges facing children in their communities. Having said that, all parties shared the Christmas story, included an element of education and were focused on fun for the children involved. Children learnt to interact well with others and to treat others with respect.



This year children across the globe experienced a variety of activities including crafts, poems, hula hoops, drama, singing, dancing, storytelling, skipping ropes, clowns, action songs, piñatas, videos, prayer, drawing, games, puppets, snacks, performances, Christmas carols, quizzes and worship songs. Children also received gifts, shared meals together and learnt how to stay safe in their communities. These party activities were designed to teach children their worth and how much they are capable of achieving, thanks to God's love.



Tanzania



Shillong, India



Ranchi, India

### Looking more closely at some of the Christmas Parties:

The aim was to strengthen children's self-worth in **Red Viva Norte Potosi, Bolivia**, so that they may know God's message of love shown by Him coming into this world for us. At the party children played games which focused on positive self-image, self-concept and self-worth. The Norte Potosi Youth Network dressed up as clowns.

**Red Viva Trey, Cuba**, and **Red Viva Nicaragua** also had clowns for entertainment at their parties. In Nicaragua they also had piñatas and the children at the party in Cuba shared food together and received gifts.



Nicaragua

**Viva Shine Hyderabad Children Network, India**, held small, personal gatherings in three slums where they reached children of differing faiths. An organisation also came forward to assist the network by distributing 300 wool blankets and 200 jumpers for children and families from the slums.

In **Viva Network Zimbabwe**, children learnt that God loves them and that He sends people to take care of them when they cannot help themselves. They saw Jesus and His parents receiving gifts, and they then received gifts themselves. This brightened the children's faces as they felt love in the story and then in their own lives. The children also played games which taught them patience, endurance and team work – whilst having fun.

At **Children at Risk Action Network (CRANE), Uganda**, the narrative of the wise men being guided by the star to go and see the new-born king gave the children a new perspective on how to be a light and lead others. They learnt to be a light for Jesus in this world by using their God-given gifts and they made stars which they annotated with what they would like to be when they are older and why – their answers included doctors, lawyers, teachers and preachers. Being creative together brought the children so much happiness and there was a spirit of sharing and giving from them all.



Uganda



**CarNet Nepal** held an online virtual event (150 devices participated), an event for children in slums (45 children were split into two different sessions to prevent the spread of Covid-19) and an in-person event for 25 children where it was safe to do so. During the virtual event, children were encouraged to showcase their talents – children joined in with live singing, bible reciting and a dance performance. While these children were showcasing their talents, they were getting appreciation messages and encouragements from other children and adults in the online chat. At the in-person events children received woollen jackets as gifts, and shared food together. [Click here](#) to get a glimpse into a Christmas Party run by **CarNet Nepal**.

Theatrical works were performed alluding to the love of God as Father at Viva partner network **RENACSENV, Venezuela**. A Christmas lunch was then shared which created a feeling of family.

At the Christmas Party run by **Samalani Children at Risk Network (SCAR), Zambia**, children expressed great joy and happiness for being part of the children's celebration. They had the opportunity to share poems and participated in dancing and singing.

In **Pune Viva Network, India**, the Christmas story was used to show God's love – that children are chosen, cherished, protected and cared for always.

## Changes due to Covid-19

2020 was a very difficult year for people all around the world. The Covid-19 virus has caused worldwide devastation as national lockdowns have been enforced to limit its spread. Although this global pandemic made running Christmas Parties more difficult for our partner networks, they took on the challenge creatively. They knew that children needed the hope and encouragement that these parties bring this year more than ever.



Cuba

As a result, our partner networks had to rework their Christmas Parties so they followed government guidelines and were Covid-19 safe. This resulted in many networks hosting a larger number of smaller parties, each with fewer participants, to ensure the risk of transmission was minimised. For example, **Viva Shillong Network, India**, hosted three smaller events instead of one big event.

During such a time of crisis, **Asha Forum Bangalore, India**, thought it would be nearly impossible to host a Christmas Party as gathering of children required special permission which was very difficult to get. Yet God strengthened the network and provided them with a platform to reach out to children in smaller groups and connect them with local projects. This also connected the network to new projects who they will continue to work with into the future.

On the days of the Christmas Parties children, parents and volunteers received masks to wear as they entered the venues, they also passed through handwashing stations and some had their temperatures checked, including at **Asha Forum Bangalore, India**, and **Red Viva El Alto, Bolivia**. Social distancing was also followed where necessary including at the party run by **Pune Viva Network, India**.

Additional measures were also implemented at a number of events. At **CarNet Nepal** and **Viva Network Zimbabwe**, all planning meetings and activities were carried out virtually through online meetings, to ensure



safety from Covid-19. In **Red Viva Paraguay**, hygiene supplies were given to children as part of the gifts they received. The number of additional parents attending the parties was limited in **Samalani Children at Risk Network (SCAR), Zambia**, and social distancing measures were used to organise their seating arrangements. In **RENACSENIPEM, Peru**, meeting in groups was not allowed, so they delivered party kits to families and shared the Christmas message creatively on their doorsteps. **Red Viva Norte Potosi, Bolivia**'s Christmas Party was held in an open space and activities were carried out at three different times to reduce the number of participants and to respect social distancing.

Through the implementation of these extra safety measures, children and families safely experienced the love of God this Christmas.



Hyderabad, India

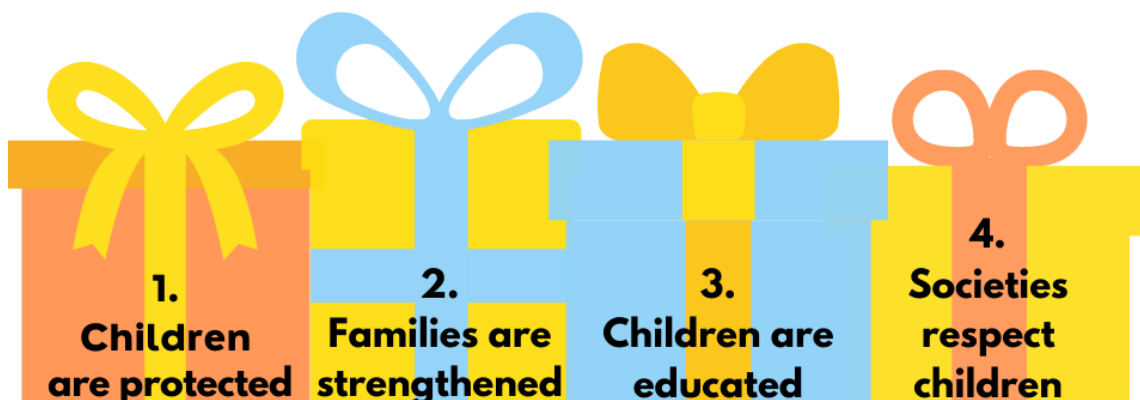


Nepal

## Life Lessons in Safety and Support

The network members running the Christmas Parties used the time to teach children about how to stay safe in their communities. They aimed to achieve impact in each of the following Viva Outcomes, so children would learn the skills they need to grow and thrive into the future. Partner networks were also challenged to consider how their programmes could help unify the Christian response in their communities and demonstrate God's love in action.

### Viva Outcomes:





## 1. Children are protected from abuse and danger, knowing how to keep themselves safe

**8,023 children** benefitted from this theme through **169 parties** run by **20 partner networks**.

Lots of networks included teaching on Covid-19 safety at their Christmas Parties, including **Red Viva Paraguay, Viva Delhi Network, India** and **Viva Shine Hyderabad Children Network, India**. The children from **Red Viva Paraguay** said that Covid-19 made them angry, but that the situation taught them to trust God. The children understood that God and the Church will always be there to help in difficult situations, and the children realised that they could be part of that response in the future too.

The 'Good Touch Bad Touch' child protection initiative was also taught at lots of the parties, including at **Viva Delhi Network, India** and **Asha Forum Bangalore, India**. The network in Bangalore also had children share what they had learnt in the Phone Mentoring programme from each of the 6 themes, and how the programme had helped them. The children learnt about the support system they can go to for help concerning abuse, so they don't have to suffer in silence. Beyond reporting abuse, they were also taught how to protect themselves, as the network strongly believes that prevention is better than cure and they want to see children growing up in a safe environment.

**Red Viva El Alto, Bolivia**, strengthened children in their self-protection skills using a playful presentation and puppet theatre on themes such as 'my value', 'mistreatment' and 'good treatment'. They also used puppets to teach children about how to stay safe in **Viva Children @Risk network Patna, India**. They then did a quiz to make sure the children understood what they had been taught. They also learnt how best to include special needs children.

**Viva Shine Hyderabad Children Network, India**, showed children a video about child protection and gave children versions of the New Testament to keep, so they could continue learning about the love of Jesus after the event.

**Viva Network Zimbabwe** was able to offer counselling to four teenagers at the party who had previously been identified as young people who would benefit from it.



## 2. Children grow up in a safe and nurturing environment, ideally within a strong family

**3,347 children** benefitted from this theme through **127 parties** run by **11 partner networks**.

14 caregivers/parents were taught about safe environments for children and the importance of controlling their anger to reduce abuse and exploitation at the party run by **Mwanza Children Action Network (MCAN), Tanzania**. 155 children were also shown how to report bullying, violence and exploitation.

17 adults learnt how to nurture their family and keep children safe at the party run by **Viva Shillong Network, India**. They also taught 105 children how and why they need to keep themselves safe.



At the Christmas Party run by **Peace Team Cambodia** many children were very excited about the commitment made by parents and other adults that they would love, care for and support children.

The parties run by **Children at Risk Action Network (CRANE), Uganda**, were held in people's homes this year. The fact that families were willing to open up their homes to the network is really encouraging as it shows cohesion between the network and parents. The exposure that it gave the churches will also help to improve activity implementation in their communities.

**Pune Viva Network, India**, showed a Child Protection video at their event to help children understand that they have the right to feel safe at all times, within their home and outside.



Cambodia



### 3. Children are educated for life, with the skills and experience needed to develop socially, emotionally and spiritually

**4,194 children** benefitted from this theme through **133 parties** run by **12 partner networks**.

At **Children at Risk Action Network (CRANE), Uganda**, approximately 800 children were able to say what they would like to be in the future and for those who weren't, the idea was planted and they can start to think about it, helping fuel their education for life.

To follow up with children who attended their party from the slum area, **CarNet Nepal** has given a church which is located close to the slum human trafficking and Good Touch Bad Touch awareness flipcharts to use with the children.

The youth who attended the party run by **Viva Shillong Network, India**, were touched by the stories of children who were part of the slum programme – the youth learnt about the hard experiences other children face, which they had previously been unaware of.

Children who attended **Mwanza Children Action Network (MCAN), Tanzania** parties were given school materials so they could attend school and continue investing in their education.



Tanzania



### 4. Society is changing such that children are respected, valued and have better opportunities for the future

**1,891 children** benefitted from this theme through **28 parties** run by **9 partner networks**.

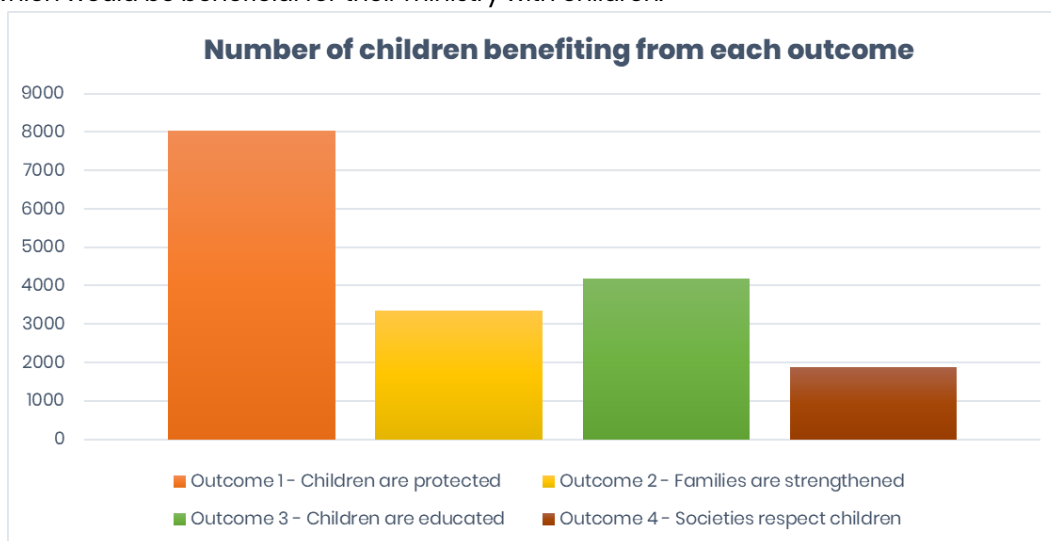
At the party run by **Viva Shillong Network, India**, many of the adult volunteers and parents were not aware of the safety issues which affect children in their community. Their interaction with vulnerable and marginalised children at the parties helped the volunteers to connect with the risks that children face.



**RENACSENIV, Venezuela**'s Christmas Party helped strengthen the community as lots of people came together to provide labour, money and in-kind gifts. Everyone was very grateful for the opportunity to contribute towards this event for local children.

Government representatives at **Peace Team Cambodia**'s party were very excited by the prospect of the party and they hugely valued the Christian work. They said that previously they thought Christian work was just spiritual, but they discovered that Christians in the city work very hard to respond to society's needs.

The churches and organisations who joined the **Asha Forum Bangalore, India**, Christmas Party also learnt about the issues that children face in their community, including sexual abuse. They learnt about child protection practices, and that they are responsible for safeguarding the children in their care. They were introduced to the phone mentoring programme, the World Weekend of Prayer, the Good Treatment Campaign and QIS, which would be beneficial for their ministry with children.



## Children Take the Lead

Many partner networks encourage children to help lead the Christmas Parties as it helps them build confidence and communication skills. It is also powerful for children to learn directly from other young people, and for younger children it can be inspiring to have older young people to look up to. Giving children this platform also gives partner networks the opportunity to learn directly from children, and it helps the children grow into confident leaders who will go out into their communities to achieve positive change.

A 7-year-old girl from a poor family in Tanzania was asked to preach at the party run by **Mwanza Children Action Network (MCAN), Tanzania**. She stood up confidently and shared the love of Jesus for orphans and vulnerable children, and with boldness she encouraged her fellow children to depend on God. She encouraged them to pray for their parents and to work hard in their education while continuing to serve God. A 10-year-old boy also preached at the party. He shared the story of Jesus's birth and he encouraged the other children that Jesus the King was raised in a poor family. The story changed the mind-sets of children and parents about situations of poverty.

A group of children from **Viva Shillong Network, India**, led an awareness session about Covid-19. By doing this, children became ambassadors for safety among their peers. Three children also advocated towards a society where all humans, including children, are valued, respected and celebrated.



Older children told the Christmas Story to the younger ones who were attending **Johar Children @ Risk Network, Ranchi, India**'s Christmas Party for the first time, and at **Children at Risk Action Network (CRANE), Uganda**, children shared bible verses.

One child who received online mentoring went to the **Viva Network Zimbabwe** Christmas Party. He had been very stressed by the lockdown, so the online counselling came as a relief to him, and he was encouraged to practise the guitar with his brother and with help from their father. At the Christmas Party, the two brothers shared their story and played the guitar for the other children. They were an inspiration to the young boys and girls who were also receiving the same counselling support. The family's mentor was also greatly inspired and said this party was an opportunity to celebrate success.



Mindanao, Philippines

## Stories of Change:

### In the lives of Children:

Thousands of children were encouraged and supported through this year's Christmas parties. There have been so many wonderful stories showing the impact these parties have had in children's lives.

A 14-year-old boy who has been blind from birth attended his first Christmas Party run by **Viva Children @ Risk Network, Patna, India**. He said "I am very excited to be here. I could feel the respect and love for me from everyone. I was always wondering why God sent me to be on this Earth, but today's messages changed my thoughts. I realised today how important I am to my parents - my family loves me and they care for me. I also heard about Jesus Christ for the first time".

A boy who had previously been drawn into a human trafficking situation because he was searching for care and attention from adults as his parents were too busy and preoccupied, attended the party run by **Asha Forum Bangalore, India**. He said that he experienced such kindness, love and care from the network programme and he felt absolutely safe and comfortable. He shared that if he had been connected with the kind people from the network earlier, he would never have got caught up in the dangerous trap of trafficking.

**CarNet Nepal** had a 10-year-old girl attend their party who lives in a slum in Kathmandu with her Hindu family. It was her first Christmas party, so she felt nervous about being around new people. By the end of the party she was happy, excited and very eager to open her gifts and wear them. She received a green wool jacket and hat - she said that it was her first ever gift. She was happy to learn that God loves her, and she has now been encouraged to come to the fellowship group regularly.



Nepal

A girl at **RENACSENIPEM VIVA JUNTOS POR LA NIÑEZ, Peru**'s Christmas Party was so excited to receive her gift, as it was what she had always wanted for Christmas. The girl instantly thanked God for her gift. The leaders said that they know it is something simple, but the girl was marked by the





event and they know God will continue to surprise her. This happened multiple times, with children receiving exactly the gift they wanted. The organisers recognise that it was God's plan to impact the hearts of these children through their gifts.

A girl heard children dancing at the **Shine Hyderabad Children Network, India's** Christmas Party which was happening nearby. She followed the music and was given a facemask so she could join in. She listened to the Covid-19 awareness session and heard the Christmas story. She was so grateful to receive a gift and a copy of the New Testament.

A child at the Christmas Party run by **Johar Children @ Risk Network, Ranchi, India**, said he learnt about God's love and how He came down to Earth as a human being. He liked the story of Jesus Christ and he learnt that every child is valued. He said "I enjoyed the programme, thanks a lot!"



Cuba

### **In the work of Partner Networks and Churches:**

Many of our partner networks have had new churches and volunteers joining their networks following the success of their Christmas Parties. Generous communities were strengthened and were able to come together to support children through the networks. Some networks also managed to reach more children than they expected, and their powerful collective action was showcased even through the difficulties of the global pandemic.

**Peace Team Cambodia** planned to run the event with only 10 network member churches and 150 participants, but in the end 22 members and 220 participants were involved. A number of government representatives also attended.

Two new organisations joined **Viva Network Zimbabwe's** Christmas Party and were inspired and challenged to join the network so they could help meet the needs of children. They were surprised to hear that the network's interventions in the lives of children were directly impacting their lives, which was clear through life-changing testimonies. In the midst of Covid-19's effects and challenges, the two new members were impressed to hear of the success of the Phone Mentoring Programme that was being run by the network, and how it was changing people's lives.

**Red Viva Norte Potosi, Bolivia**, were surprised and happy on the day of their Christmas Party when children from 3 churches arrived with their Sunday School teachers and asked to join the celebration, when they had previously not wanted to become network members. The event paved the way for new churches to be involved in the network. A nationwide campaign was also held on social media asking for supplies for the Christmas Parties. Bibles, school supplies and safety materials were received that not only reached El Alto and Norte Potosi, but they also allowed Cochabamba and Oruro to hold Christmas Parties too. Other organisations such as the Cochabamba Food Bank donated sweets, chocolates and panettones for the families. In the end the party that was programmed for just two networks was extended to a further two cities, benefitting 1,470 children in total.

For a team of **RENACSENVIV, Venezuela**, network members, it was their first time helping at a Viva Christmas Party. They were very happy to put into practice what they had learnt about humanitarian assistance and their Child Protection Policy.



For the adults who volunteered for **RENACSENIPEM VIVA JUNTOS POR LA NIÑEZ, Peru**, for the first time, it was powerful to see the team working together for the same purpose, regardless of denomination or place of worship.

**Mwanza Children Action Network (MCAN), Tanzania**, had media coverage of their Christmas Party, which helped connect many people who would not otherwise have known about the network.

Churches who attended the Christmas Party run by **Viva Children @ Risk Network, Patna, India**, received training on having a Child Protection Code of Conduct and received support on how to run activities including dance performances and the nativity story. These churches will now implement Child Protection Policies and will organise child protection training for children.



Tanzania

## Life Beyond the Christmas Party

Christmas Parties provide a fantastic opportunity for children and their families to receive ongoing support from Viva partner networks. Children who attend the parties are often from vulnerable backgrounds, so the programmes run by the networks can be really beneficial for them and give them a source of stable, long-term encouragement. This year at least 41% of the children who attended the Christmas Parties were previously unreached by Viva partner networks. This means that the Christmas Parties are about more than just one day of fun - they pave the way for children's lives to be changed forever.

Here are some example of how Viva's partner networks have been following up with children who attended their Christmas Parties:

Children are receiving long-term benefits from **RENACSENIPEM VIVA JUNTOS POR LA NIÑEZ, Peru**, as children and their families are taking part in a weekly programme of values using WhatsApp following the Christmas Parties. Every three months they will also receive donations including food, cleaning products and school equipment. The churches have reported that despite the challenges of serving children virtually due to Covid-19, they have found the programme to be a great blessing as it has given parents and families the chance to participate with their children. Since the Christmas Parties, four new organisations who work with Venezuelan migrants have joined the network.

Children from **RENACSENIPEM, Venezuela**'s Christmas Parties will have the chance to join the network's sports programme. Through their football team, children from 8 to 16 years of age receive a fun sense of community, technical sports training and spiritual assistance based on the Word of God. Parents and relatives who attend the practices also listen to the teaching which is given to the children, so they too can benefit from it. Three new families have come to the church thanks to this work. On Sundays when they attend church they proudly carry their (donated) Bibles and memorize the Bible verses that the Pastor (who is also their football coach) teaches them.



**Viva Children @ Risk Network, Patna, India**, is planning to connect 23 new children with the Viva Phone Mentoring programme. They will also conduct sessions on self-esteem training for orphans and special needs children. Two churches have also signed up for Sunday school teacher training following the Christmas Parties.

Two new churches joined **Shine Hyderabad Children Network, India**, after seeing the work they did with children from slums during their Christmas Parties. 30 new children also started attending Sunday school following **Johar Children @ Risk Network, Ranchi, India's** Christmas Party. Two more churches are also becoming Ranchi network members following the parties.

Children's ministers from several churches are getting in contact with children who are new to **Mwanza Children Action Network (MCAN), Tanzania**, after the Christmas Parties. New churches will also continue working with MCAN to improve the learning situation for children. MCAN will be training the children's leaders at church and the network plans to conduct capacity building training sessions for teachers and pastors on child protection and positive discipline. Over 50 children have started attending Sunday school sessions following the Christmas Party.



Hyderabad, India

**Red Viva Paraguay** has worked with the city's Pastors' Coalition which has strengthened networking and raised the network's reputation.

**Samalani Children at Risk Network (SCAR), Zambia**, will invite new children to Touch Talk sessions to teach them how to stay safe from abuse. They will also be invited to be involved in the Good Treatment Campaign and all regular SCAR children's programmes.

A discipleship programme has been set up by **Red Viva El Alto, Bolivia**, from February with 130 children from the Christmas Party receiving invitations to join in.

Pastors from **Red Viva Norte Potosi, Bolivia**, have visited the families of children who attended the Christmas Parties and have invited them to be part of their congregations and invited the children to join their Sunday School activities.

## Words of Encouragement from the Networks:

We will leave you with the words of Viva partner networks who have battled through the challenges of a global pandemic to support children through their Christmas Parties:

God provides everything and even more than we imagine. We just have to trust Him and do His work with courage and enthusiasm - **RENACSENIPEM VIVA JUNTOS POR LA NIÑEZ, Peru**

The joy that children receive in this type of event is so special that it has a positive impact on their lives, paving the way for them to continue working with our programmes - **Red Viva Paraguay**

Holding end of year children's Christmas parties is a sustainable way of involving children in their own child protection programmes. It promotes collaboration among network members, supports network development



and provides an opportunity for children to be celebrated, who might otherwise lack such a privilege -

**Samalani Children at Risk Network (SCAR), Zambia**

Every church should hold a Christmas Party for children as the Christmas season is the time to share God's love with everyone - **Johar Children @ Risk Network, Ranchi, India**

Christmas Parties bring churches together to focus on child development and family strengthening. The Christmas Party helps communities to get better connected - **Viva Delhi Network, India**

The seeds of God's love fall and germinate in children's hearts because they are given a space of protection and good treatment, with refreshments, gifts and comprehensive care that we are sure they treasure in their hearts. This has a very positive impact on the lives of children, in the churches and in the network. For this and more, we encourage churches to join the 2021 Christmas Parties - **RENACSENI, Venezuela**



Venezuela



Shillong, India