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## In aid of HIV orphans

**CAUSE** Meet Albina du Boisrouvray, who started World AIDS Orphans Day

**F**launting a blood red salwar-kameez, Countess Albina du Boisrouvray, in the lobby of a New Delhi hotel, can pass off for an eager foreign tourist satisfying her impulse to wear something Indian. But first impressions can be deceptive. Albina discovered India many moons ago. In fact, she has travelled to almost all corners of India, on work of course. Her area of work is with the HIV/AIDS orphans worldwide. Speaking of the disease's wide-ranging impact including in India, her humanitarian work through her NGO, FXB, her voice is warm as she says, "It is heart-warming to see that my work has been able to rescue people."

Albina, who started World AIDS Orphans Day on May 7 to attract world attention towards over 15 million children orphaned by the disease so far, named FXB after her son Francois-Xavier Bagnoud, a pilot who died at 24 during a helicopter-borne rescue mission in West Africa.

"I formed FXB to carry on what he would have loved to do if he had been alive," she says. Since 1989, FXB has gone to 35 countries. It came to India in 1991, though it registered itself as an NGO in 2007 with the suffix Suraksha. "Today, FXB Suraksha is working in all the Indian States," she says with a beaming smile. The issue of HIV/AIDS orphans "is the next biggest epidemic," she underlines. "Every minute, four children are orphaned by AIDS worldwide." Her target base is those infected by HIV/AIDS and too poor to tend to their health needs and support their families economically. Albina reasons, "Poverty is a double scourge. They are the most vulnerable lot." FXB Suraksha works directly with the affected families to better



**THE BENEFACTOR** Albina du Boisrouvray

their income. It places the orphans in a caring, stable home ensuring access to healthcare and education. This, it achieves through its FXB villages.

#### FXB villages

She explains, "What we do at FXB villages has now been validated by experts from UNICEF and UNAIDS. Each village provides 80 to 100 families with a basic package of health, education, psychosocial support and opportunities to earn income. We provide resources and training for it." Currently, the villages are in Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh), Aizawl (Mizoram), Imphal (Manipur) and Dhapa-Tangra and Medinapur (West Bengal). FXB supports these families for three years

during which it encourages the community's participation for their own welfare.

Albina though notes from her experience, "In India, people wait for the Government to better their lives rather than looking at themselves as partners of the process. Indians are so creative, so inventive, I am sure they can do a lot if they really think about it." Creating awareness is definitely an effective way of fighting it. "To achieve it, we regularly create role models in the local communities, it helps people to come forward."

Albina wants to take the FXB village concept to other States but points out, "Funds are an issue".

(Those willing to contribute can log on to [www.fxbsuraksha.org](http://www.fxbsuraksha.org))

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