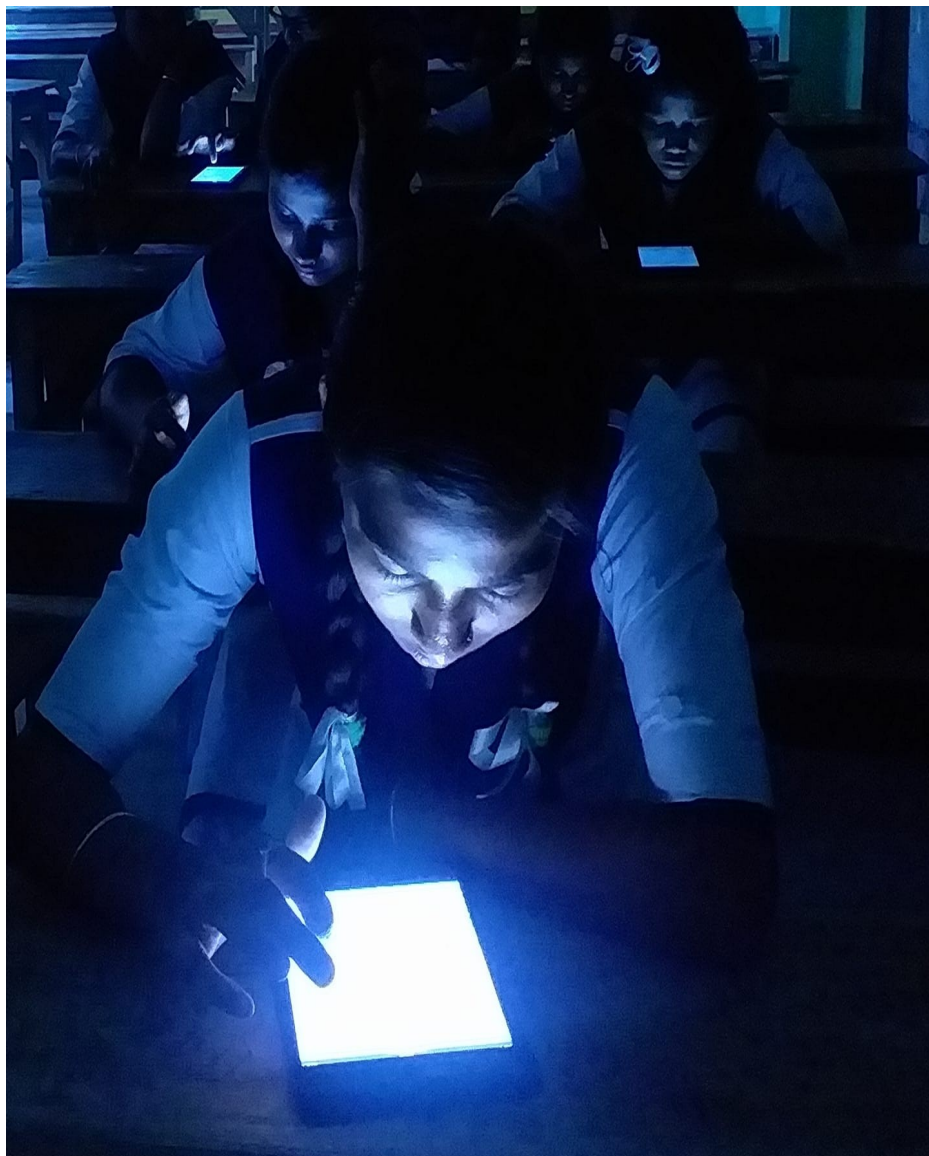


Change Initiatives

Annual Report

2020-21



Change Initiatives

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Content

From the Desk of Secretary	Page 4
About Change Initiatives	Page 5
Relief Programme	Page 6
Mission Million Trees	Page 8
Digital Literacy	Page 12
Project Farm	Page 13
Kisholoy	Page 14
Board Members	Page 16
Advisory Board	Page 17
Financial Briefs	Page 18
Partners	Page 19

Introducing *Change Initiatives*



Change Initiatives is a Kolkata-based non-governmental organization working in the area's education, employment creation and environment. We work mainly among women, children and youth. Our work has a strong focus on ICTs and we work on proven solutions to development problems — both of which help us to quickly achieve the desired results.

From the Desk of Secretary

Dear Partners in Development,

This was a very difficult year for everybody across the world. Covid-19 struck and forced everyone to go into lockdown, while taking away so many lives across the world.



The lockdown in India started in the last week of March and even now there are no signs of normality. We are happy more and more people are getting vaccinated. Hopefully, the situation will normalise very soon.

Covid-19 forced lockdowns and with it the loss of livelihoods. In India, there was distress as many people were engaged in the unorganised sector who live on daily earnings. Change Initiatives was forced to prioritise its activities for the year. Our top task became to protect people from all walks of life from distress.

We started offering food packets, sanitisers and masks in many villages. We spread our relief efforts across Nadia, South 24-Parganas district, including the Sunderbans. The scope of our funding source expanded to crowdfunding and then some institutional support.

It was then that Cyclone Amphan struck in May 2020. The plight of the people worsened. We expanded the scope of our relief manifold. Not only were we offering relief to more people and places, we also set about creating community kitchens in many parts. In this period, we offered support to many groups such as theatre workers.

The coronavirus and the cyclone affected our work in the urban areas. Our digital literacy centre remained closed during this entire period. In rural areas we continued our work. We carried our training. We set up smaller centres for digital literacy where we did the training with appropriate social distancing norms.

The lockdown forced us to go virtual in our Women in STEM project. We did the entire mentoring sessions in the virtual mode. Our one advantage was we could expand our mentor and speaker pool for the project. Also, we could be more flexible on our timings. One project we could start despite the lockdown was the Mission Million Trees programme. Under this programme we have planted around 48,000 saplings in many parts of South Bengal. The programme was a big success and we received queries to do the project in many other parts of the state.

Change Initiatives was able to expand its area of operations with our relief work. We wish things come back to normality as soon as possible.

In the mean times, Stay Safe & Take Care.

Mr Suryatirtha Ray,

Secretary (Honorary)

About Change Initiatives

Change Initiatives mission is to promote learning so that everyone lives a life of dignity, is capable of exercising choices that affect their well-being, contributes to the society and nurtures the environment.

Mission

Promoting learning for poverty reduction, with a thrust on ICTs

Vision

Change Initiatives is an organisation that takes technology to the grassroots and builds to scale solutions for the most pressing problems of our time

Our objectives

a) Providing after-school education to poor children and engaging in their mental development as well as interacting with their parents and community. b) Offering skill-development training to young boys and girls and the youth c) Mentoring the youth for entrepreneurship and d) Empowering communities and the vulnerable through awareness and counseling on social issues, gender and the environment

Strategies:

a) Implementing proven solutions in development that are based on the principles of evidence-based approach to poverty reduction b) Use ICTs and proven ICT- based solutions to development as they accelerate development outcomes and impact c) Set up human development centres as a single place to carry out all community development activities besides being a meeting place for women, children and youth

Principles:

Work among the vulnerable sections of the society — women, youth, children, the aged and the disabled

COVID & AMPHUN CYCLONE RELIEFS

Location	Target Group	Items Distributed	Funding
South 24-Parganas district and Sundarbans	Migrant workers, women pregnant women, sex workers and children	Food items, masks, sanitizers, study materials, special nutrients	Crowd funding, March Together, US
Kolkata	Slums, Hospitals, Theatre workers, LGBTQ	Hot meals, daily kitchen, cash support plus others, PPE kits to hospitals	Crowdfunding, March Together, US
Nadia district (North 24 Parganas)	Farmers, school children and folk artistes	Food items, cash handouts, study materials	Crowdfunding, March Together, US

The coronavirus and the lockdown for almost the whole of the year restricted people's movements and severely affected livelihoods. Schools were closed throughout the year, which severely hurt education. Although the online mode of learning became dominant as the year went by, many children could not participate in the exercise because of limited resources.

The distress among the population was apparent very soon. The situation turned worse when Cyclone Amphun ravaged South Bengal in May. Villages, crops and embankments were swept away by the Cyclone, leading to loss of property and livelihoods. We decided to give priority to Covid-19 relief. When the Cyclone broke, it became a combined relief programme.



We started distribution of relief materials from our own resources and then we resorted to crowdfunding and some institutional support.

We distributed food items, PPE kits, face masks, face shields and hand sanitisers. We also distributed sanitary napkins, mosquito nets and study materials. In food items, we distributed packets comprising 5kg rice, 1 kg pulses, 1 kg salt, 1 liter of cooking oil and 2 soaps.

Overall, we provided relief in around 20 regions of West Bengal to about 5,000 individuals. Some highlights of our work:

- We have provided nutrients to 250 expectant mothers in five development blocks in South 24 Parganas district. The women were given items such as nutrela, chirey, gramme, eggs and calcium tablets.
- Support to 30 LGBTQ community members.: We provided cooking items to their Rainbow Kitchen programme
- Support to 200 theatre personalities and folk artists in terms of items such as mosquito net and torch and cash handouts in Kolkata, South 24 Parganas and Nadia district
- We supported 50 sex workers of Sason, South 24 Parganas with food rations
- Help to 235 school students in two regions of South 24-Parganas district
- Providing seed fund to rebuild school in Hingalgunge. As many as 60 students from KG-1 to Class V are in the school.
- Feeding 1,500 in two places in Kolkata under Apni Roti programme
- Distributing PPE kits, face shields and hand sanitisers to 2 hospitals



MISSION MILLION TREES

Project Name	Target Group	Location	Target Number	Number Achieved	Funding Agency
Mission Million Trees	Fighting climate change with Women SHGs	Sundarbans, Hooghly District, Jhargram District, Nadia District, Kolkata	50,000	50,000	IAHV India

Under the Mission Million Trees programme, we have planted 48,000 saplings across West Bengal. We are planting saplings to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the environment which will contribute to a green planet. The saplings will grow into trees in 3-5 years. The trees are geo-tagged so that we can track their progress. We had a small window in August and September to plant the trees.

The trees were planted across seven regions: North & South 24-Parganas, Hooghly, Jhargram, Nadia and Bidhannagar-Rajarhat and Newtown. We planted 31 varieties including mahagony, eucalyptus, mango, guava and segun

Planting of Karam trees: The karam tree — *adina cordofolia* — has the ability to assimilate nitrogen of the atmosphere (nitrogen fixing) and make the land fertile. Around this chemical property of the tree, legends have swirled around karam for hundreds of ascribing the tree with properties such as the harbinger of harvest and youthfulness.



The Karam festival or the harvest festival is usually celebrated in the full moon in August-September. It is a festival for the tribals in India including West Bengal.

Change Initiatives obtained 90 karam saplings from Purulia and planted them in Nadia district during the karam festival. It was ceremonial planted in Chandpur, Majdia and Shantipur regions of Nadia. The tree will thus now be seen in the Nadia district.



Urban Landscape: As many as 6,000 saplings were planted in New Town, Kolkata. The New Town Forum & News in collaboration with us planted 5,000 saplings, while the St Xaviers University planted 1,000 saplings inside its campus.



WOMEN IN STEM

Location	Target Group	Impact	Funding
Kolkata	Women students studying STEM subjects in colleges	365 students from 10 colleges involved. 30 students involved in direct mentoring	American Embassy, New Delhi
Guwahati	Women students studying STEM and IT in colleges	300 students from 7 colleges were involved. 20 students involved in mentoring	American Embassy, New Delhi

The Women In STEM programme went to Guwahati this year. Widening the Support Circle: Women in STEM went virtual. We held almost 12 sessions on the virtual mode. The sessions focussed on leadership development, personality development and gender awareness which covered issues such as power and patriarchy, self-identity and human rights and understanding gender.

We hosted three sessions with guest speakers. The speakers belonged to Guwahati and Dibrugarh Universities. We had four corporate speakers from Capgemini. There were two speakers from the American Embassy including Consul General of Kolkata Patricia Hoffman.



There were also three peer interacting sessions from the Kolkata Alumni of STEM and Guwahati University. The peers spoke about career options and how to navigate one's professional career.

The sessions helped the students to understand clearly their career pathways. They developed leadership capabilities and understood the values of resilience. It was important to break

free from a linear mindset and change careers if required, but always to have a learning mindset. Never stop learning.

The project aims to build a support system for young women in East India studying STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) subjects in colleges — so that they can pursue their career ambitions and not drop out of their studies because of family and social pressures.

In support of women STEM students, Public Affairs Section of U.S. Consulate Kolkata (PAS Kolkata) and Change Initiatives organised a series of weekly workshops for the Kolkata-based female college and

university students in STEM fields between November 2018 and April 2019 as part of the Women for Women: Supporting Each Other to Build Sustainable Careers pilot project.

The workshops focused on leadership training, the exchange of ideas and created cross-cultural awareness on the stereotypes associated with women in STEM. Two key takeaways from the pilot project were the importance of female role models for women in STEM fields and peer-to-peer knowledge transfer. Building on the success of the pilot project, a second chapter reached out to new audiences in Northeast India. Widening the Support Circle: Women in STEM built the support network among women college students of Guwahati.



The project ensured more young women studying in STEM fields are aware of female role models in STEM and understand the power of peer network groups as a sustainable and effective support system for professional growth. Because of the pandemic, the workshops with the Guwahati students were held in the virtual mode, offering scope for flexibility in the timings of the sessions and making it possible to arrange sessions in diverse online formats.

In both Kolkata and Guwahati, the workshops were preceded by a rigorous selection process. In the first round, the students took an aptitude test in their colleges. Selected students took part in group discussions that were followed by a one-on-one interview.

The project reached out to women STEM students of 10 colleges of Kolkata. Around 375 students took the aptitude tests held in September-October 2018. About 75 students were selected for the group discussions and interviews. Finally, 30 made the grade. They participated in the Kolkata workshops.

In Guwahati, the aptitude tests followed by the group discussions and the interviews were organised among 7 colleges in January-February 2020. Around 289 students participated in the aptitude tests, with 48 selected for the group discussions and interviews. At the end, 30 women students were selected for the workshops.



DIGITAL LITERACY

Project Name	Target Group	Location	Number achieved	Funding
Capgemini Digital Literacy Mission	14-60 years	Kolkata	5500	Capgemini

The lockdown forced us to close down our Digital Literacy Centre at Beliaghata for the better part of the year. We, therefore, decided to concentrate on our smaller rural centres.

We set up two centres at Kultoli Block in South 24-Parganas, one centre at Kalugachi in Canning and



once centre at Pandua in Hooghly district. At all these centres, we conducted training by maintaining social distancing rules. We enrolled 386 students in the three centres, while 334 gave the exams. The syllabus was upgraded.

We introduced modules in cybersecurity and financial transactions such as how to use Paytm, Google Pay and PhonePe.

The main goal of the programme is to make the population capable in doing day-to-day activities

through the internet and mobile phone. Using the mobile and the internet for any transaction is not only cheaper but also takes very little time, meaning one can do more things in a day.

Objectives of NDLM

- To empower communities with capacity building & training programs and make them digitally literate using ICT as an outreach platform
- To create an opportunity for collaboration of industry bodies to enhance digital literacy in the country
- To facilitate deployment of rural citizen services through digital means thus reducing frictional losses suffered by under-served communities in trying to meet their basic human needs Target group

The NDLM centers aim primarily to engage citizens in diverse age groups in diverse communities across India to significantly impact human development indices. Women, youth and children in urban, semi urban & rural communities will be the primary target groups. Each NDLM center will be housed in a unique community, and the idea is to extend the outreach to the whole community to bridge the digital divide.

PROJECT FARM

Project Name	Target Group	Location	Number Achieved	Funding Agency
Financial & Agricultural Recommendation Models (FARM)	Farmers Minimum Viable Product	Hooghly, Jhargram districts	600	Capgemini

We are working on a yield predictor for Indian farmers. Farmers input data on nutrients and the desired yield is obtained using artificial intelligence (AI) and a satellite imagery of their land that are in a database.

The Minimum Viable Product (MVP) has been developed with 596 farmers in West Bengal's Jhargram, Hooghly and East Midnapore districts.

Data collectors were trained to gather data on nutrients used in a plot for years from 2017 to 2020. The location of the plot was taken along with photographs of soil in each plot. We covered two distinct agro-climatic zones Jhargram & East Midnapore, and Hooghly. We held sensitisation meetings at all the field sites.

Cleaned data of 510 plots were handed to the Capgemini who then then created the MVP of yield predictor.



KISHOLOY

Location	Target Group	Number Achieved	Funding
Purulia District	Tribal children under Shabar Community	180	Crowd funding, Ortho Diagnostics (CSR)
Madandanga and Kantabele Village, Nadia	3 to Youth	630	Local Donation, Sumita Basu Community Foundation, US Change Initiatives own funding
Ranaghat, Nadia	4 to Youth	45	Community Foundation, US
Canning, South 24 PGS	4 to Youth	105	Community Foundation, US

Kisholoy has reached Purulia District. We have adopted 5 Adibashi Shabor Siksha Kendras running under Barabazar Police Station.

We adopted the first two Adibashi Shabor Siksha Kendras , namely, Jahanabaid and Gyarasangma with the funds that were raised through crowd funding efforts. Later we adopted three more Shabor Siksha Kendras, namely, Beldihi, Latpada and Jhiling, with the support of Ortho clinical diagnostics under their CSR.

We are taking care of the education and overall development of around 180 students through these centres. These children belong to Shabor community and are all first-generation learners.

They come from extremely impoverished families and have never dreamt of being educated and doing a job. Their families have mainly worked as agricultural or domestic labours.

Our aim is to mainstream these children into government run schools and thereafter help them with their studies. Change Initiatives will not only focus on the education of the children but also help the centres become self-sufficient in the long run.



As a step towards that direction, we have already planned vegetable gardens in each of these centres as all of them have available patches of land in their premises.

Kisholoy — the child development project — is into its 12th year. What started as a small event to distribute books and exercise copies in two villages in West Bengal has now grown over the years.

We now have four learning centres in West Bengal. We now engage with the students in multiple ways: remedial classes, extra-curricular activities, including stage acts, pre-primary school support, early childhood development, libraries and modern learning techniques. The project has seen active involvement of volunteers both from within the country and abroad.

Our learning centres are located at the Canning in South 24-Parganas, Ranaghat in North 24-Parganas and at Madandanga and Kantabele villages. And now in Purulia.

At Madandanga and Kantabele, it was the fourth-year of the classes being held at a community-run place. Parveen Bibi, a commerce graduate, holds the classes twice a day, six days a week. The children are in the three-plus to the 10-12 age group. The remedial classes have gained strong acceptance in the community, with more children joining the classes. We also continue to support our wards who are studying in colleges with tuition support and mentoring.

We continue to hold remedial classes in Canning in the Sunderbans. The hostel for students has also been functional.

At the Niharika Primary School, Ranaghat, we focused on the evaluation of the learning process and the maintenance of the infrastructure. The school is running in an orderly fashion. This school has benefited from the Dutch learning methods that were brought by the volunteers from the Netherlands sometime back.



Shikha Ghosh as our project co-ordinator works tirelessly in Madandanga and Kantabele. She monitors the classes and progress of the children. She visits the homes of the children regularly, discusses their progress with the parents, highlights their achievements, points to their shortcomings. She organizes all the major events in the community such as Republic Day, Independence Day, Teacher's Day and Children's Day.

Over the last decade volunteers from the Radboud University, Netherlands, and Cupertino School, California, have come to our Kisholoy project sites.

Board Members 2020-2021

Name of the Board Member	Designation	Gender	Age	Profession
Sanghamitra Majumder	President (Honorary)	Female	51	Service. M.Sc. Economics. Calcutta University
Sarmistha Banik	Vice -President (Honorary)	Female	48	Associate Professor Physics. BITS Pilani
Suryatirtha Ray	Secretary (Honorary)	Male	56	Journalist. MA in Economics from Delhi School of Economics.
Sumita Mondal	Treasurer (Honorary)	Female	51	Service. M.Com Calcutta University
Soumen Gupta	Members (Honorary)	Male	57	Cost accountant
Sudipto Das	Members (Honorary)	Male	55	Consultant
Mrs Sujata Chatterjee	Member (Honorary)	Female	69	B.Sc. Former Education worker in UK

Relationship between Board Members: None

ADVISORY BOARD



Bisakha Ghosh

Born and raised in Kolkata as the oldest of two siblings, Bishakha Ghosh learnt Economics from great teachers at

Presidency College and Calcutta University. Now she is a teacher at Kalyani University. She is irresistibly drawn to the power of words and the lure of distant places.

Indira Kanjilal

Sr Manager, Editorial, ICRA Ltd, Indira Kanjilal is an editor, writer, translator. She works for women and children's education and healthcare.

She is working to make a slum school into a Happy School at Panchanantala, Dhakuria. She has also been working on domestic violence and gender discrimination in an individual capacity.



Rupak Goswami

Rupak Goswami is currently a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at University of California, Davis.

Rupak teaches agriculture and rural development at the Integrated Rural Development and Management Faculty Centre of Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute, Kolkata. He is a PhD from Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya, Kalyani.

Financial Brief Report

- **Total income & expenditure of the Change Initiatives in last three years (as per audited accounts).**

Years (last three years)	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Total Income	80,29,648	30,50,379	20,31,654
Total Expenditure	58,12,125	23,38,717	19,04,077
Deficit			
Surplus	22,17,523	7,11,662	1,27,577

- **Annual Receipts of the organization: (receipts are the total money received by a Change Initiatives in a year) for the above 3 years**

1. On the basis of source

RECEIPTS (for last three Financial Year)	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Self Generated (fees/ subscriptions/ interest/ community contributions etc)	25,000	83,655	36,455
Donations from Indian individuals	11,76,462	31,000	28,000
Donations from foreign individuals (under FCRA)	9,530		
Grants from Indian sources (trusts/ govt/ companies/ foundations)	42,71,584	12,37,500	9,90,143
Grants from International sources (under FCRA)	23,66,612	11,61,477	4,31,322
TOTAL RECEIPTS	78,49,188	25,13,632	25,75,400

List of Partners

Capgemini, India

American, Embassy New Delhi

IAHV, India

UNESCO, Social & Human Science Sector, Paris

UNESCO, Communications & Information Sector, New Delhi

Department for International Development (DFID)

European Union

Nasscom Foundation

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

IDPM, University of Manchester, United Kingdom

Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, UK

InfoBridge Foundation, the Netherlands

Radbound University, the Netherlands

WeForHope, USA

Community Foundation, USA

DIT, India

IT Dept, West Bengal

WEBEL

Centre for Advancement of Sustainable Agriculture, New Delhi, India

Deccan Development Society, Hyderabad, India

Rural Agency for Social and Technological Advancement, Kerala, India

National Dairy Resource Institute, India

West Bengal Renewable Energy Development Authority

Sarva Sikha Mission, Hoogly

Sarva Sikha Mission, North 24 Parganas

Panchayat & Rural Development Dept , West Bengal

Directorate of Animal Resource and Animal health, West Bengal

Pollution Control Board, West Bengal

Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalay

Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalay

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Nadia

University of Burdwan

Kolkata Municipal Corporation

Howrah Municipal Corporation

Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation

IL&FS Education

Jeevika Development Society

Extension Training Center, Rajarhat

About 50 Gram panchayats of Nadia, 24 Parganas (North) and 24 Parganas (South)

Above 500 schools

Farmers' club, SHG, CBO

And

Many more.....

Awards: Change Initiatives is a winner of the Gender and ICT Awards for 2003 presented by APC Women's Networking Support Programme and Global Knowledge Partnership in the category of Community/Individuals Advocacy and Networking.

(<http://www.genderawards.net/winners/2003/winners.htm>).

Nabanna has also received an Honorary Mention at Prixars Electronica 2004.