

# Change Initiatives

## Annual Report

2021-22



## *Change Initiatives*

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# Introducing *Change Initiatives*



Change Initiatives is a Calcutta-based non-governmental organization working in the areas 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,

Change Initiatives is now into its 20th year. What is it that we look back? What we have achieved in the past two decades or the story of our society of the last two years?



It is fitting that we start from the end. A scrooge had entered our insides and almost knocked us off. The attack came in waves and completely turned our daily lives upside down. We witnessed terrible misery, great loss of lives and grim tales of ignorance and apathy.

Relief remained our priority. Unlike in the previous year, where the attention was on masks and sanitisers, the challenge was bigger this time. We focussed on oxygen concentrators. We distributed it in the affected areas and set up facilities including beds. We hope through our small effort we were able to bring back smiles on the faces of many distressed people.

We started an exciting project this year. A computer coding project for school children. Over a period of three years, we will be training 5,000 students from 10 schools. Our purpose is to empower the school children with 21st Century Skills through coding. We have picked 10 schools in the Garia-Sonarpur region for the project through a rigorous selection process. We have refurbished the classrooms provided to us by the authorities and have started training. We are truly excited by the project.

Our Mission Million trees project is in full swing. We have planted more than 50,000 trees and will be planting more trees in the Sunderbans. We believe this is an important initiative towards fighting climate change as the trees are effective tools to capture carbon from the environment. We have been truly humbled by the efforts of the SHGs who are supporting us in the plantation exercise and their desire to nurture their environment.

We continued with our other projects. The STEM project, Kisholoy our education project and the Digital Literacy project. We made rapid strides in all of them despite the hurdles posed by the pandemic.

I end from where I started. We have crossed nearly two-decades. What began as an ICT project in a remote area of Bengal have expanded into education, environment, digital inclusion and life-skills and into almost all the areas of South Bengal and also into Assam. This would not have been possible without the support of all of you: our volunteers, our donors and our all well-wishers out there. But more than anything, we are about those with whom we work on the field: the little children, the young boys and girls, the women who see beyond themselves and work tirelessly for the well being of their children, their family and their community and all the others in the rural communities that we work who have given their unwavering support and valuable time for our activities.

Thank You. Stay Safe and Stay Well.

**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 & CYCLONE RELIEFS

Location	Target Group	Activity	Funding
Sundarbans	Migrant workers, women, pregnant women and children	Oxygen centers with beds, Community Kitchen, Fetal Doppler Machines	Crowd funding, Toronto Canada India Foundation
Calcutta	Neighbourhood community centres	Oxygen centers with beds, oxygen concentrators	Crowdfunding, Toronto Canada India Foundation
Purulia	Women, pregnant women & children	Oxygen center with beds and accessories	Crowdfunding, Toronto Canada India Foundation

**Covid Relief:** The Delta variant swept across India and West Bengal between April and September, 2021. Like in the last year, we were engaged in extensive relief efforts, but with a difference: the focus was more on medical equipment rather than surgical outfits such as masks and PPE kits.

Change Initiatives set up interim oxygen centres — called OXYZONES — at 11 locations in West Bengal where we treated 2,267 people. The OXYZONES were set up in Calcutta, Howrah and in the remote Sundarban and Purulia regions of the state. Each OXYZONES were equipped with 2-3 oxygen cylinders and had 3-4 beds.

In addition, we provided about 500 people with oxygen cylinders at their homes. We also vaccinated 240 people. We offered 244 Patients with critical support and helped them with their hospitalisation.

Also 43 Patients were supported with medicine and medical support (CTScan, X-Rays, Ambulance).

As with last year, we set up Covid kitchens in 5 locations, where we served over 2,500 meals.

**Cyclone Relief:** In 2020, we had Cyclone Aamphun, in 2021, we had Yaas which ran through South Bengal at the end of May. We undertook sustained relief efforts despite the period being one of strict lockdown because of Covid. We focused on setting up Community Kitchens in the Sunderbans.

The community kitchen was set up at Gosaba, Sunderbans. The kitchen ran for 10 days. Our initial plan was to serve two meals twice a day. But the difficult road conditions would create a hassle for the people to come twice to the kitchen. We changed our plan and gave everyone two meals at one time itself. All of them came and collected both of the meals and headed back to their respective shelters. Our aim was for 1,000 meals in total but every day around 1,500 to 1,700 meals were served.

Baruipur District Police arranged infrastructure such as fuel, utensils and rice. We provided all raw materials (dal, onion, garlic, ginger, mustard oil, salt, chili, coriander powder, jeera powder, chilli powder, Soyabean and Egg). Locally affected men and women took the responsibility for entire process of cooking.

We also supported a community kitchen for 1,000 people at Atapur-Gopalerghat in the Sunderbans from June. A local volunteer informed Change Initiatives that though he had rice and pulses he was facing a shortage of oil, potatoes, onion, garlic, ginger, salt, turmeric, chilies, coriander powder and eggs. The local market was charging very high rates and everything is not available there.

Our team visited there and handover ration to them. We were able to provide them with all the requirements and an additional 10 kgs of bleaching powder.

Change Initiatives volunteers also went to East Midnapur to arrange relief. Food kit and dresses were distributed to 200 families of Shankarpur, Lachimpur, Bodhra and Joshipur in the region.





# BASUDHA (Environment)

Project Name	Target Group	Location	Target Number	Number Achieved	Funding Agency
Mission Million Trees	Fighting climate change with Women SHGs	Sundarbans, Hooghly District, Mednipore District, Nadia District, Calcutta	1,00,000	92,000	IAHV India, Schneider Electric

**Mission Million Trees** is a project under our Environment programme Basudha (The Earth). The programme has the two objectives: Bring down Deforestation and fight Climate Change. Under this programme Change Initiatives has planted almost 3 lakh saplings of mangroves and fruit trees in the Sunderbans, Hooghly, Midnapore and in the urban areas of Calcutta and New Town.



In the year gone by, we have planted around 90,000 saplings: 60,000 mangroves and 30,000 fruit trees and wood trees.

The mangroves were planted at Hentalbari and Kalidaspur villages in the Sunderbans. As many as 38 self-help groups were involved in the plantation. The total number of women involved were 500.



We met the local SHGs and spoke to them about the importance of mangrove plantations to protect the local habitat. We held a meeting among the panchayat members, the SHGs and the local BDO. We held the Mangrove Day celebrations on July 26.

Subsequent meetings were held with the stakeholders for choosing the site of plantations and on proper implementation of the programme. Details of the plantation area were collected through GPS. The land was prepared and fenced with nets. Volunteers from our corporate sponsors and planted the saplings. Strict monitoring is going on in the plantation area.

Saplings of about 15,000 fruit trees were planted in Mednipore. We planted 10 varieties, including mangoes, lemon, drumstick.

We also planted 15,000 wood trees such as mahogany and eucalyptus. They were planted in Hooghly district.

**Waste to Wealth (An awareness programme against single-use plastic):** Programme centred around removing plastic refuse from the Sunderbans. In the wake of Cyclone Yaas, citizens undertook a massive relief effort in the Sunderbans. However, tonnes of plastic residues were left behind, mainly in the form of plastic water bottles and aluminium foils for keeping food material. A small incentive was provided to the local SHGs to collect the plastic. They were then sold off to a cement factory and a recycling plant.

Another related activity was the provision of suction pumps to the villagers of the Rangabelia area. They used it to withdraw water from their fields, which could be used for planting, farming and grazing.



# LET'S CODE

Location	Target Group	Impact	Funding
Calcutta	Children from Government schools	5,000 children from 10 government schools in Classes VI to IX learning coding	Capegemini

The Let's Code programme is our flagship learning project, involving 5,000 students from 10 government schools. The project is based on the principal of project-based learning. The children learn basic coding in Scratch and Python, with the learning aligned to building projects that can impact their daily lives. In this way, they learn soft-skills such as teamwork, leadership, empathy as well acquire coding skills.



We are teaching children of 10 government schools from Classes VI to IX computer coding. The schools are located between Garia and Sonarpur to the south of Calcutta. The primary purpose of the project is to make the students aware of coding because without knowing coding it will be very hard to make one's way through life. The students at the government schools will get an exposure to coding at a young age. Besides, through coding students can develop their soft skills as well as positively impact their communities through their projects.



The project started in September. The first step involved the screening of schools. We did a school infrastructure survey and the willingness of the schools to participate. We surveyed 17 schools in Rajarhat and Sonarpur, and shortlisted 10.

The ten schools are: 1. Ghasiara Vidyapith, 2. KalikapurRamkamal Vidyapith, 3. KalikapurBasanti Devi Balika Vidyalaya (H.S), 4. Balia Nafarchandra Balika Vidyalaya, 5. Greenpark Shiksha Sadan High School, 6. Garia Harimati Devi Uchcha Balika Vidyalaya, 7. Rajpur Vidyanidhi High School, 8. Laskarpur Rabindra Vidyapith, 9. Sonarpur Vidyapith H. S, 10. Kamrabad Girls High School.

We set up computer labs in each of the schools. The rooms were painted and furniture provided. We then proceeded to hold orientation sessions with headmasters both online and offline.



We have prepared the Level 1 module. It comprises Basic Computer, Search Engine with Scratch and MIT App Inventor. We have developed course materials, trainers' instruction, and PPT.

We have started the classes with students of Class VI to Class IX at the schools.

# KISHOLOY

Location	Target Group	Number Achieved	Funding
Purulia District	Tribal children under Shabar Community	250	Crowd funding, Ortho Diagnostics (CSR)
Madandanga and Kantabele Village, Nadia District	3 to Youth	900	Local Donation, 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 is our child education programme, which is more than a decade old. The programme has evolved from giving free exercise books, text books and pencils to village children to setting up learning centers and managing schools. We are now operating seven schools in rural regions as well as in a slum area in Calcutta, with an emphasis on foundational literacy and numeracy as well as nutritious food.



We started an exciting chapter of Kisholoy this year. We opened five Sabar schools in Purulia. We are offering primary and pre-primary education to 205 children: the schools are Jahanabaid Sabar School, Beldih Sabar School, Garasagma Sabar School, Jilling Sabar School and Latpada Sabar School. The students are from pre-primary to Class V. The main focus of the Sabar Shiksha Kendras are always



education. The main subjects taught are Mathematics, Bengali, Geography, History and General Science.



We regularly provide tiffin to the Sabar children. The tiffin mainly consists of Muri, gur, Poha, biscuit, ghugni and milk. We engage the students in Yoga and Physical Training and hold cultural day celebrations.

We also run Niharika Primary School in Nadia district, a slum school in Dhakuria, Calcutta. We have learning centers in Canning South 24 Parganas and Madandanga and Kantabele in Nadia. 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 as well scholarship support to students going to colleges. The project has seen active involvement of volunteers both from within the country and abroad.



# DIGITAL LITERACY

Project Name	Target Group	Location	Number achieved	Funding
Capgemini Digital Literacy Mission	14-60 years	Calcutta	6,830	Capgemini

The Digital Literacy programme has entered its sixth year. The purpose of the project is to help people learn to access the internet, learn how to use email and social media, learn how to download examination and government forms, learn how to buy bus and train tickets, learn how to access payment apps along with cybersecurity — thereby empowering themselves in their daily activities. The programme is meant for everybody in the age group of 14-70. Change Initiatives have set up digital literacy centres in four parts of Calcutta. We operate in the hub and spoke model, and we have set up such centres in South Bengal, Pandua and Medinipur.



Training was preceded by creating awareness about digital literacy and what it aims at. Meeting groups, families and individuals to make them understand the need to be digitally independent so that they can adjust to the forever changing modern technology and the relative environment at ease. Asking them to visit the centre and encouraging them to attend the classes according to their suitability.

The activities got disrupted by the second wave of the coronavirus. We focussed on the spoke centres to train people. Basic training was also provided in the schools. During the lockdown we also undertook online classes

for the students. Over a period of three years we trained 2,505 students, while in the last one year we trained 1,332 students.

### **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.





# WOMEN IN STEM

Location	Target Group	Impact	Funding
Calcutta	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 project entered its fourth year. It is part of our learning initiative and is aimed at driving agency among women undergraduate students in eastern India pursuing STEM subjects in colleges. We wanted to ensure the women do not drop off and actually pursue STEM careers, thereby breaking a gender stereotype. Studies have shown the women enrolled in STEM courses at





undergraduate level do not pursue post-graduate studies or take up a career under pressure from society such as marriage and a notion that STEM careers are not meant for women given working hours despite the fact the pay is more compared to careers such as teaching.

The STEM project involves extensive mentoring of selected students from Eastern India, peer-to-peer discussions, interactions with women who have built successful STEM careers along with setting up a network of STEM groups in colleges. Our project has impacted more than 1,000 women students in about 15 colleges in Calcutta and Guwahati, with as many as 60 receive direct mentoring.

We have completed the setting up of the network in Guwahati, the second after Calcutta. We could set up the Guwahati chapter despite the challenges of the pandemic, with as many as 15 sessions done online.

We also set up a website for the project, with the direct involvement of the students. The website has made available all the online sessions, besides giving project details and testimonials.



# 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 created the MVP of yield predictor.

# 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.



# Board Members 2021-2022

Name of the Board Member	Designation	Gender	Age	Profession
Sanghamitra Majumder	President (Honorary)	Female	52	Service. M .Sc Economics. Calcutta University
Sarmistha Banik	Vice -President (Honorary)	Female	49	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	52	Service. M.Com Calcutta University
Soumen Gupta	Members (Honorary)	Male	58	Cost accountant
Sudipto Das	Members (Honorary)	Male	56	Consultant
Mrs Sujata Chatterjee	Member (Honorary)	Female	70	B.Sc. Former Education worker in UK

**Relationship between Board Members: None**

## Financial Brief Report

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

<b>Years (last three years)</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
Total Income	12,956,572	80,29,648	30,50,379
Total Expenditure	86,26,108	58,12,125	23,38,717
Surplus	43,30,463	22,17,523	7,11,662

- **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**

<b>RECEIPTS (for last three Financial Year)</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2019-20</b>
Self Generated (fees/ subscriptions/ interest/ community contributions etc)		25,000	83,655
Donations from Indian individuals	5,62,287	11,76,462	31,000
Donations from foreign individuals (under FCRA)	4,26,939	9,530	
Grants from Indian sources (trusts/ govt/ companies/ foundations)	94,61,397	42,71,584	12,37,500
Grants from International sources (under FCRA)	24,12,640	23,66,612	11,61,477
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>1,28,63,263</b>	<b>78,49,188</b>	<b>25,13,632</b>

## **List of Partners**

**Capgemini, India**

**American, Embassy New Delhi**

**IAHV, India**

**Schneider Electric**

**Toronto Calcutta India Foundation**

**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**

**Radboud 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**

**Calcutta 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.**