



# Annual Report 2013-14

By

## *Change Initiatives*

GC-79, Salt Lake City  
Sector-III, Kolkata-700106

Phone: 033-23379748

Email: [changeinitiatives@gmail.com](mailto:changeinitiatives@gmail.com)

<http://change-initiatives-india.share4dev.info/>

### Introduction

Change Initiatives, an NGO based in West Bengal, India, does development research and works for sustainable development with communication tools such as ICTs, videos and print.

The aim is to promote sustainable livelihoods by facilitating communication, raising awareness, promoting knowledge and enhancing access to information in communities.

Activities are based on the principles of ethnographic action research, which allows us to reflect on the work during a project.

Development research is for better insights to social, economic and environment problems. Emphasis of research is on evidence-based policy recommendations, the aim being detecting good practices and formalizing experiences.

### Kisholoy

**The year marks four years of our child development programme Kisholoy.** Since its inception in 2009, about 200 boys and girls have been involved with the project. Students have passed Class X and Class XII, gone on to study in colleges and in one case an engineering diploma beckons — very significant achievements when you consider their poverty and the fact that that are all first-time learners in their family. US-based We for Hope has actively supported Change Initiatives in the programme.



The children face numerous other hurdles depriving them of proper education. Their secondary school is 10 kilometres from their villages, a distance too long and travel expenses high to go there and study. Their parents cannot afford books and are themselves often not educated enough to provide after-school learning. Besides, the children often have to do household work, and they cannot go to school.

Not surprisingly, the dropout rate and absenteeism in Kantabele and Madandanga are very high. An ethnographic research study by Change Initiatives and Bhubaneswar's KIIT School of Rural

Management shows the number of dropouts reaching its peak in Class VIII, which means many students do not sit for their class X exams.

Kisholoy started in a small manner with a programme of book distribution. We identified 22 needy students to give books and writing materials. We then selected 8 from the 22, who were in class IX, and decided to give tuitions to them so that they can do well in their Class X public exam.

From this small beginning, we have extended our support to about 200 boys and girls. We provide remedial classes to students from Class V to Class VII and tuitions to Class VIII to Class XII students. For each class, we have an arts and a science teacher. We also involve them in mental enrichment activities such as drawing and dance classes.

In a significant innovation, some of our college-going wards are taking remedial classes from Class V to Class VII.

Our next goal is to set up a community multi-media centre for the women and children. The centre will have a library along with computers which will show multi-media content. The library will have story books, magazines and books of general information. The human development centre will be a "learning-cum-entertainment" centre where the children will learn computers, play computer games, surf the internet, read story books, watch educational CDs, study during after-school hours and indulge in other recreational and learning activities. Women will come to the centre to read books and participate in awareness raising sessions. The centre will also be a meeting place for the women.

**Like we started Kisholoy, work on the human development centre has started in a small manner. The boys and girls have set up a circulating library. Every month the "librarian" among them brings books from a We For Hope-supported library in Ranaghat, which is about 20km from their village. The books are shared among the boys and girls, with the "librarian" responsible for their condition. By the end of the month, all the books have been read and they are returned to Ranaghat; and new books taken again. The programme has been so successful that mothers, too, are reading the books.**

**In the meantime, we have mapped all the students of the two villages. A database with photos has been created of 500 boys and girls that include all primary school students, Anganwadi students plus the Kisholoy students. Very soon we plan to issue photo IDs. This will ensure a better targeting and monitoring of our activities as we grow and bring more students under our fold.**

**Work also started on upgrading a human development centre in Canning, South 24-Parganas.**



Remedial classes began for as many as 40 students. Contacted have been created with the local community hospital from where doctors visit every week for check-ups to the students.

The School in a Bus programme was undertaken at five slums in the Hooghly district of Bengal. A bus was refurbished and turned into a mobile school; it was then taken to the slums to provide entertainment education to about out-of-school 200 children, so that they can rejoin the formal school system.

At our Niharika Primary School in Ranaghat, Nadia district, more books have been added to the school library. Teacher training programmes have been taken up throughout the year, including training in Dutch pedagogical methods by the volunteers of Radboud University, Netherlands.

Funded by We For Hope, Community Foundation, US. Sarva Shiksha Mission Govt of India. Project volunteers: Students of Radboud University, the Netherlands. Students of Calcutta University, Kalyani University.

### Nabanna

Our gender development project is called **Nabanna**. Our mission is to expand the mental horizons of women through interventions in the areas of livelihoods, health, environment and gender rights. We seek to influence attitudes and change behaviour through mentoring, focused information dissemination and link-ups with service providers.



We have incubated a women's ICT enterprise project at Bishnupur Gram Panchayat called Digital Graphics in Bengal's South 24 Parganas. We have trained 1,000 women in computer basics in a Unesco project and worked and another 200 women on setting up micro-enterprises.

We have also worked with 140 self-help groups (SHGs) --- more than 1,000 women --- in Saguna gram panchayat, especially at Kantabele, Madandanga villages. We were involved in maintaining their accounts and organize learning sessions on different government schemes, health and gender issues.



**We have worked with district resource persons, cluster representatives and SHG members of 3 districts - 24 Parganas North, 24 Parganas South and Howrah. We offered training in computer literacy and on using ICT tools for awareness programmes.**

**Digital Graphics has strengthened its operations. Number of trainees has risen while it continues to provide additional services such as photo-copying, photo-ID facilities, website designing, video-making for ceremonies, filling up forms for e-governance services**

**We have also been co-coordinating regular SHG meetings at village levels**

### **Basudha**

Change Initiatives promotes *sustainable environment practices* through activities such as campaigns against plastic bags, noise pollution and air pollution. Intensive awareness campaigns have been run in both urban and rural areas among the general population as well as in some organisations. We are also involved in developing alternatives such as the promotion of paper products and generating livelihood opportunities in paper items. We are now involved in a drive to encourage the use of solar lights in villages, where electricity is not available.

Change Initiatives is part of environment platform *Sabuj Mancha*, comprising as many as 40 NGOs and green activists. A year-long campaign on sound pollution saw us taking the lead role in monitoring sound pollution. During Dipavali, we set up a centre for monitoring sound pollution as well as a helpline. We also participated in other environment causes such as use of lead in paints, Ganga pollution, waste management and closure of wetlands.

### **Content Development**

Digital content on health, livelihood, and environment was developed for World Bank's India Development Gateway portal. Content for localization was provided by Government of India's Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC). Digital Content was also developed for Kisholoy project.



Change Initiatives is the 2003 Gender & ICT Award winner at the World Summit of Information Society and have received Honorary Mention at the Prix Ars Electronica 2004