KOLKATA MARY WARD SOCIAL CENTRE

CLOSURE REPORT

PROJECT: CLIMATE ACTION AND BIODIVERSITY

Project Partner Name	Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre
Address	1,Convent lane, P.O- Tangra, kolkata-700015
Location	(Office- Kolkata) Project Location-Gosaba, Sundarban, North 24 PGS
Reporting period	July- June'2026
Report compiled by	Sanjay Baxla
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Executive Summary

The Climate Action and Biodiversity project implemented in the **Gosaba Block of the Sundarbans region, West Bengal**, focuses on strengthening ecological resilience and enhancing community participation in sustainable environmental practices. During the reporting period, the project placed significant emphasis on **mangrove forestation along riverbanks**, recognising mangroves as critical natural barriers against soil erosion, cyclones, tidal surges, and the impacts of climate change that frequently affect the Sundarbans.

Alongside plantation activities, the project actively promoted **community mobilisation and environmental awareness**. A series of awareness campaigns, group meetings, and special day celebrations related to the environment and climate action were organised to sensitise community members on biodiversity conservation, climate risks, and the relevance of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. These engagements aimed to build long-term environmental stewardship within the community.

The project also integrated **livelihood-oriented interventions linked to environmental sustainability**, encouraging income generation through eco-friendly practices such as sustainable farming and nature-based activities. These efforts supported both environmental protection and economic resilience, particularly for vulnerable households dependent on natural resources.

Overall, the project has contributed to improved community awareness, increased participation in conservation efforts, and the promotion of sustainable practices that align environmental protection with local livelihoods. The initiative demonstrates a holistic approach to climate action by combining ecosystem restoration with social mobilisation and sustainable development.

Our presence

Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre (KMWSC) is duly registered in June 2014 under West Bengal Societies Registration Act 1961, KMWSC has completed more than 10 years of functioning, bringing smiles to our less privileged brothers and sisters in the society.

Our vision "To ensure that the values of love, freedom, sincerity and justice are experienced and lived out by all". It is a beautiful world. Unfortunately, the vast majority of its human inhabitants cannot fully enjoy its wonders, shackled by lack of opportunity, grinding poverty, illiteracy or modern-day slavery. KMWSC is dedicated to the service of these marginalized sisters and brothers, reaching out to them through our projects and services in the state of West Bengal, India, and seeking to empower them through education, creation of opportunity, support systems and justice.

Our Mission- To empower every person who is touched by our work through the values of Love, freedom sincerity and justice. To have a rights based and participatory approach and within this to cherish a special love for, and commitment to the poor, especially women and children. We will show this love through our attitudes, structures and work".

The projects which is been implemented by KMWSC is mentioned below:

Thematic Area 1- Women and Child Protection and Development			
Sl. No.	Name of the Project	Area of intervention	Beneficiary type
01	SCAR– Sensitization of Communities and Adolescents at Risk to combating Human Trafficking and child abuse	Basirhat North 24 Parganas (Near Indo- Bangladesh Boarder)	Trafficking prone vulnerable community and survivors of-Trafficking , rape , sexual abuse, domestic abuse, missing
02	LES - Leadership and Empowerment for Survivors program	Basirhat North 24 Parganas (Near Indo Bangladesh Boarder)	Trafficking survivors, rape survivors, sexual abuse survivors, domestic abuse survivors, missing case survivors
03	MIST-Empowering Mothers in the Sex Trade	Sonagachi Kolkata and Matia North 24 Parganas	Sex workers
04	PEPVC-Providing Education and Protection to vulnerable children	Sonagachi Kolkata	At risk youth at red-light and children of sex workers
05	Silver Lining Project	Baruipur South 24 Parganas	Vulnerable community and disable people/children prone to rights violation
06	Sohochori Project	Sonagachi Kolkata and Matia North 24 parganas	At risk adolescent at redlight
07	IDENTITY - Involvement development and empowerment of in need individuals through you	at Kolkata slums	Child labour, economically backwards families from slum
08	Kolkata Slums Project	at Kolkata slums	Child labour, economically backwards families from slum

09	Surokhit Shaishav program- Promoting Safe Childhood	Near Indo Bangladesh Boarder in Basirhat North 24 Parganas	At risk community
Thematic Area 2- Education and Health			
10	Brickfield School Project	Source area - Nawada District Bihar / Destination area- WB	Seasonal Migrant Labourer and their families
11	Barefoot Teachers Training program	Pan- India	Underprivileged grass root teachers, economically backward youths
12	Lotus Child project	Sundarbans South 24 Parganas	Economically backward families and community
13	Aarogya Project	Sonagachi and Matia North 24 parganas	Sex workers, children of sex workers and at risk youth at redlight
Thematic Area 3- Community and Skill Development			
14	Cafe and Bakery	Kolkata	
15	Food ATM	Kolkata	Economically backward families
16	My Days- Sanitary Pad Unit	Kolkata	For all the women and adolescent from economically backward community
17	Skill Development projects	Kolkata	Vulnerable underprivileged youth
18	Tribal community development and empowerment project	Ganga Sagar South 24 parganas	Vulnerable tribal community
19	Nari Sakthi – empowering women	Sundarbans South 24 Parganas	At risk vulnerable community
20	Naya Disha – empowering survivors	Hasnabad North 24 Parganas	Survivours of various crimes/social injustices.
Thematic Area 4- Environment and sustainability			
21	Climate Action and Bio diversity	Gosaba, Sundarbans South 24 Parganas	Economically backward villagers
22	SAC Farming- Sustainable Low Cost Seasonal Organic Farming Project	Basirhat North 24 Parganas	Migrant community at brick kilns

23	Kiran Project	Kamarhati Municipality Kolkata	Economically backwards families from slum
24	Food ATM nutrition	Kolkata	Economically backward families
25	Adolescent Empowerment project	Kolkata, South 24 Parganas	At risk adolescent from vulnerable community
Thematic Area 5- Disaster and Pandemic Management			
	KMWSCares - Awareness and Relief Distribution	West Bengal	At risk economically backward communities

Project Overview

Objective: The Climate Action and Biodiversity project is being implemented in the **Gosaba Block of the Sundarbans region, West Bengal, India**, an ecologically sensitive and climate-vulnerable area characterised by frequent cyclones, tidal flooding, riverbank erosion, and biodiversity loss. The project is designed to address these challenges through an integrated approach that combines **ecosystem restoration, community engagement, and sustainable livelihood promotion**.

A core component of the project is **mangrove forestation along riverbanks**, aimed at strengthening natural coastal defences, reducing erosion, and enhancing local biodiversity. Mangroves play a crucial role in protecting communities from climate-induced hazards while supporting aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems essential to the Sundarbans.

In parallel, the project prioritises **community mobilisation and awareness building** to foster environmentally responsible behaviour and collective ownership of conservation efforts. Through awareness campaigns, special day observances, and participatory discussions, community members are sensitised to key environmental issues, climate change impacts, and the relevance of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** in their daily lives.

The project also promotes **environment-friendly income generation and sustainable farming practices** to reduce dependency on environmentally harmful livelihoods. By linking climate action with economic resilience, the initiative supports communities in adopting sustainable practices that contribute to long-term environmental protection and improved socio-economic conditions.

Overall, the project adopts a participatory and sustainability-focused model to strengthen climate resilience, conserve biodiversity, and empower local communities to become active agents of environmental stewardship in the Sundarbans.

Target Beneficiaries:

Of an estimated **22,500** population in an approx. 4,600 households, **Direct Beneficiaries include small and marginal farmers** dependent on land and water resources, who benefit from mangrove protection, sustainable farming practices, and climate-resilient livelihood options. **Fishing and river-dependent households**, whose livelihoods and safety are strengthened through improved riverbank stability and biodiversity conservation. **Women and women's groups**, engaged in awareness activities and environment-friendly income generation initiatives, enhancing both economic participation and decision-making roles. **Adolescents**, sensitised through awareness campaigns and special day observances to build long-term environmental responsibility and leadership.

Indirect Beneficiaries are **e**ntire village communities located near mangrove plantation sites, benefiting from reduced disaster risk, improved ecological balance, and increased awareness of sustainable development practices. Local ecosystems and biodiversity, including mangrove habitats, aquatic life, and associated flora and fauna, which gain from restoration and conservation efforts.

Geographical Coverage: Manmathanagar (Populatoin – 7971), Bipradaspur (Population – 3799), Chandipur (Population – 5456), Shambhunagar (Population – 2886).

Key Activities: Kitchen gardening, nursery, plantation inside village and Mangrove plantation at river banks, training programs, awareness programs, income generation initiatives, community celebrations/observations.

Key highlights of the activities:

- Total 10 handholding trainings were conducted during this period reaching approximately 240 community members.
- Six school awareness program was conducted with an approx. 450 student participants in Five schools.
- Four Plantation drives in the community was done reaching a total number of 320 trees including Mango, Jackfruit, Guava, Mahogany, Sal, Java Apple (Jamrul) to enhance green cover and promote long-term environmental sustainability.
- Five Mangrove plantation drives were conducted during this period. With that we were able to secure 20000 seedlings which were planted in the nursery at first and then they were replanted in the previously designated river banks. During the early monsoons in May and June, 2026; 10000 more seedlings have been planted in the nursery as of now. They will be planted in the riverbanks after four months of nurturing.
- Distribution of seeds to beneficiaries for kitchen gardening was done. We reached approximately 352 beneficiaries through this drive.
- For Income generation Program, we distributed chicks and poultry feed to selected beneficiaries who showed interest to start poultry farming. We reached 75 families through chick distribution during the project cycle.
- Two handicrafts making workshops of 13 and 15 days each were conducted with 15 participants of making household products from water hyacinth procured from local water bodies and

processed by the beneficiaries. Through this two workshops the trainees were able to learn processing of the water hyacinth straws for making handicrafts. Weaving and stitching of the straws and making commodities such as table mats, coasters, bowls, lampshades etc. future workshops will have items such as bags and folders and how to market these products too.

- We started collecting data on the beneficiary owned land type to better allocate the suitable types of seeds and crops to each of them to better the productivity of their kitchen gardens.
- Seventeen community awareness programs were conducted throughout the year in the four intervention villages reaching an approximate 800 direct and indirect beneficiaries.
- The project actively engaged **four mothers' groups** and **eight community volunteers**, fostering local ownership and strengthening community participation in environmental stewardship.
- **Six special observance days** related to environmental conservation and sustainable development were celebrated, creating additional opportunities for public awareness and community engagement reaching around 950 community member and school students this year

Outcome Level Changes

The Climate Action & Biodiversity Project contributed to positive environmental, knowledge-based, and behavioural changes among community members in the intervention villages. Through awareness campaigns, plantation activities, practical workshops, and community engagement, the project strengthened local participation in environmental conservation and sustainable resource management.

Environmental Outcomes

1. **Increased community participation** – Community members demonstrated increased ownership of environmental initiatives by actively participating in plantation drives and supporting the protection of newly established plantation sites. Mothers' groups and community volunteers played a key role in encouraging collective responsibility for environmental conservation.
2. **Improved protection of plantation Sites** – Community led monitoring in the target villages to oversee the protection of mangrove plantation and village plantation sites led to increase in retention of saplings and seedlings more than the average.
3. **Reduction in Improper waste disposal** – Project staff reported a noticeable reduction in open dumping of waste materials in the community after the repeated awareness programs. Especially the sorting of biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste. Community members now adopted cleaner waste disposal practices and recognize the environmental impact of plastic pollution.

Knowledge Outcomes

1. Project monitoring indicated that a very small percentage of participants have demonstrated improved understanding of biodiversity conservation, including importance of protecting local ecosystems, plant species and natural habitats
2. Water conservation knowledge has also increased in a small percentage of beneficiaries. Approximately 40 to 50 households have started the practice of conserving water and manually harvesting rain water.
3. Approximately 15% of beneficiaries have reportedly started the practices of sustainable agriculture. Using only organic manure, vermicomposting and organic pesticides after the handholding trainings.

4. Adoption of Improved Waste Management Practices - Women participating in awareness sessions reported greater attention to household waste management practices, particularly regarding the disposal of plastic and non-biodegradable materials.

Overall Outcome

The project successfully fostered greater community awareness and participation in environmental protection activities. While long-term ecological impacts will continue to emerge over time, the project established a strong foundation for community-led conservation, sustainable farming practices, responsible resource use, and collective environmental stewardship within the intervention villages.

Challenges & Mitigation Measures

Challenge	Impact	Action Taken / Mitigation
Severe lack of awareness on environmental factors affecting daily life.	Improper waste management leading to unhygienic living conditions and spread of preventable diseases during monsoon.	Through awareness campaign our staff were able to make them realize the effect of improper waste management to some extent. Which led to some families initiate proper waste management method.
Irregular supply of quality inputs due to monsoon and transport constraints for kitchen gardening material.	Delay in timely distribution to community households; staggered uptake of kitchen gardening	Phased procurement planning was done with local vendor engagement. We ensured beneficiaries who were late to receive support were supported by getting seeds in accordance with cropping season.
Limited survival of saplings due to salinity and grazing	Reduced initial survival rate in certain locations	Distribution of climate-resilient varieties were focused upon. Awareness on aftercare; follow-up monitoring and gap replantation is ongoing.
Irregular attendance due to livelihood migration and household responsibilities	Partial participation, especially among working-age women	We have decided to approach this challenge through flexible timing of training and planning the trainings thorough participatory discussion.
Delayed responses due to administrative processes	Slower convergence with government schemes	Regular follow-ups; documentation sharing; participation in panchayat level meetings. We have yet to see any definitive results in this regard
Behavioral resistance to changing traditional practices for community people.	Change in their behavior is gradual and slow. The changes are often stopped due to their old habits.	Repeated home visits were done to observe their progresses and also our staff used examples of successful models used by some of the households in the community.

School awareness programs were paused due to the constraints of academic calendar.	Only one session could be done.	Staff have been coordinating with the schools and have acquired dates for the awareness in the following quarter.

Photo Documentation


GOSABA SUNDARBAN



















IMPACT STORIES FROM FIELD

From Vulnerability to Self-Reliance: The Journey of Prabhati Maity

When Prabhati Maity first participated in a community awareness programme in August 2025, she was facing significant economic hardship. With limited access to land and virtually no support from her sons. She and her husband struggled to meet their daily needs. Her husband's poor health further increased the family's vulnerability, leaving them with few opportunities to improve their situation. At that time, the family's monthly income ranged between INR 3,000 to 3,500, making it difficult to cover household expenses and medical costs.

Through the project's awareness sessions, Prabhati learned about opportunities for home-based income generation and became interested in developing sustainable livelihood options. She actively participated in capacity-building programmes and received training on duck and poultry rearing. In addition to formal training, she regularly attended handholding and follow-up sessions, demonstrating a strong commitment to learning and improving her family's economic condition.

As an initial livelihood support intervention, the project provided her with ten ducklings. After successfully rearing and selling the ducks six months later, Prabhati reinvested the profits into expanding

her livestock activities. Today, she manages approximately 40 ducks and 30 chickens, creating a reliable source of income for her household.

The project also facilitated access to government social protection schemes, including the Lakshmir Bhandar and Old-Age Pension scheme benefits for her husband. These additional sources of support helped stabilize the family's income and reduce financial uncertainty.

As a result of her efforts, Prabhati's monthly income has increased significantly from INR 3,000–3,500 to approximately INR 6,500–7,000. The income generated from poultry and duck farming now contributes to household expenses, supports her husband's medical treatment, and enables the family to meet their daily needs without seeking work outside the village. Importantly, she sustains her enterprise by reinvesting profits from livestock sales into feed and other production costs.

Looking forward, Prabhati has ambitious plans for expansion. She is gradually saving money to construct a dedicated poultry shed and aims to increase her stock to 200 chickens and 50 ducks. Her vision reflects not only financial confidence but also a long-term commitment to building a sustainable livelihood from home.

Beyond the economic benefits, Prabhati's success has had a wider impact on her community. Observing her progress, several women in the surrounding villages—many of whom were previously unemployed—have expressed interest in poultry farming and have started small-scale rearing activities themselves. Prabhati willingly shares her experiences and practical knowledge with other women, encouraging them to pursue similar livelihood opportunities.

In addition to livestock rearing, she has embraced organic vegetable cultivation after participating in project training sessions. Using organic manure instead of chemical fertilizers, she now grows vegetables around her home. The produce first meets her family's nutritional needs, while surplus vegetables are sold in nearby local markets, generating an additional source of income.

Prabhati's story demonstrates how targeted livelihood support, skill development, access to social protection schemes, and continuous mentoring can transform the lives of vulnerable rural women. Her journey from economic insecurity to self-reliance stands as a powerful example of sustainable community development and women's empowerment.

Building Financial Stability through Poultry Farming: The Story of Satyabati

Satyabati comes from an extremely poor household with limited resources and livelihood opportunities. The family owns only a small piece of land on which their house stands and has no cultivable land for farming. Her husband is physically weak and suffers from chronic health issues, making him unable to earn a regular income. As a result, the responsibility of sustaining the household largely fell on Satyabati, who struggled to provide for her family. Before joining the project, the family survived primarily on subsidized food grains received through the public distribution system and often relied on loans to meet essential household expenses.

In July 2025, Satyabati joined the Mothers' Group under the project and began participating in various awareness and capacity-building programmes. During these interactions, she expressed a keen interest in

poultry farming as a potential livelihood option. Recognizing her motivation, the project provided her with ten chicks and two kilograms of poultry feed as an initial livelihood support package.

With determination and regular guidance from project staff, Satyabati successfully expanded her poultry-rearing activity. Starting with just ten chicks, she gradually increased her stock and now manages approximately 70 chickens. The income generated from poultry farming has become the primary source of livelihood for her family, enabling her to meet household expenses with greater confidence and stability.

Alongside poultry farming, Satyabati adopted organic vegetable cultivation using seeds and training provided through the project. By cultivating vegetables with organic manure, she has significantly reduced her dependence on market purchases. The vegetables produced at home now meet a substantial portion of her family's nutritional needs, helping her save money and improve household food security.

The economic improvements in the household have been significant. Previously, the family's monthly income ranged between INR 2,000 and 2,500. Today, Satyabati earns approximately INR 5,500 to 6,000 per month. This increase in income has enabled her to cover educational expenses for her children, including school admissions, tuition fees, and other learning-related costs. She has also been able to repay a considerable portion of the debts that once burdened the family.

Before participating in the project, Satyabati frequently worked as a domestic labourer in other households to supplement the family income. Today, she depends far less on such work and chooses to undertake it only occasionally, depending on her availability and needs. The poultry enterprise has provided her with a more stable and dignified source of income closer to home.

Looking to the future, Satyabati is determined to expand her enterprise further. She is gradually saving money to construct a larger thatched poultry shed and plans to increase her stock to 200 chickens. Her vision reflects growing confidence, financial planning, and a commitment to building a sustainable livelihood for her family.

Satyabati's journey demonstrates how targeted livelihood support, practical training, and continuous mentoring can help vulnerable women move from dependence and debt towards self-reliance and economic resilience. Her progress stands as a testament to the transformative impact of community-based livelihood interventions on the lives of marginalized rural families.

Growing Hope at Home: The Story of Vanumati Mandal

Vanumati Mandal, a 47-year-old woman from Chandipur village, lives with her husband and children in a family of five. Life was very difficult for the family when they first came into contact with Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre in December 2025.

During a home visit, the project team found that the family was facing serious financial hardship. Vanumati's husband, Dinesh Mandal, is visually impaired and unable to work. Her children were still studying and had no source of income. To support the family, Vanumati worked in other people's homes, but her earnings were not enough to meet household expenses and cover her husband's medical costs.

To help improve the family's livelihood, the project provided Vanumati with ten ducklings and practical training on duck rearing. She carefully raised the ducks and later sold them for a profit. Using the earnings, she purchased 34 more ducklings and gradually expanded the activity.

Today, duck rearing has become an important source of income for the family. Her children actively support the work by caring for the ducks during their free time after school. The family has also benefited

from seeds and training provided by the project on organic vegetable cultivation. Using organic manure, they now grow vegetables around their home, which helps reduce household expenses and improves the family's nutrition.

As a result of these interventions, Vanumati has been able to ease some of the financial pressures that once affected the family. She is now better able to support her children's education and meet daily household needs. Although challenges remain, the family has become more stable and optimistic about the future.

Vanumati regularly participates in project meetings, awareness programmes, and handholding training sessions. Inspired by her own progress, she has expressed a strong desire to help other women in her village learn similar livelihood skills so that they too can improve their family's economic condition.

Her success has also attracted the attention of neighbouring families. Many community members visit her home to learn about organic vegetable cultivation, and she willingly shares her knowledge and experiences with them.

Looking ahead, Vanumati plans to expand her livelihood activities further by combining duck and poultry farming. She is also interested in learning fish farming techniques. The family owns a small pond, and she hopes to receive training so that she can start fish cultivation in the future. In addition, she wants her children to continue their education while learning practical skills that will help them become self-reliant.

Vanumati's story demonstrates how timely support, practical training, and continuous guidance can help vulnerable families build confidence, strengthen their livelihoods, and create new opportunities for a better future.