Sustainable Organic Sack Farming Project

Basirhat Cluster (North 24 Parganas District)

3-Month Progress Report

(Reporting Period: November 2025 to January 2026)



Supported By:

- Calcutta Rescue: Stitching (Netherland)

Implementing Organisation:

Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre

Project Locations:

- Basirhat

1: Executive Summary

This report presents the progress of the **Sack Farming Project** implemented by **Kolkata Mary Ward Social Centre (KMWSC)** in **Basirhat block of North 24 Parganas district, West Bengal**, during the period **November 2025 to January 2026**. The project aims to enhance **food security, nutrition, and livelihood resilience** among migrant families living and working in brickfields through the promotion of **organic sack farming**.

The initiative is part of an **ongoing intervention that has been successfully implemented in Basirhat over the past three years**. Over this period, the project has received an **overwhelmingly positive response from brickfield families**, who have increasingly recognised the value of sack farming in supplementing their household nutrition. The continued **enthusiasm and active participation of families** reflect the relevance and acceptance of the initiative within the brickfield communities.

During the reporting period, the project was implemented across **7 brickfields** in Basirhat, covering a total of **70 migrant families**, with **10 families selected from each brickfield**. All enrolled families remained actively engaged throughout the reporting period.

Key activities during this phase focused on **beneficiary identification, capacity building, input support, and initiation of cultivation**. Following field-level surveys, beneficiary families were trained in essential sack farming techniques, including sack preparation, soil and vermicompost mixing, crop selection, and planting methods. As cultivable soil is generally not available within brickfield premises, suitable soil was procured along with **sacks, seeds, saplings, and basic farming equipment**, and distributed to the participating families. By the end of the reporting period, a total of **630 cultivation sacks** had been prepared and placed across the brickfields.

Planting activities were carried out in phases, with families cultivating a variety of seasonal vegetables including **brinjal, chilli, tomato, cabbage, cauliflower, spinach, kolmi, barbati, radish, and coriander**. Regular monitoring and handholding support were provided by project staff, and protective measures such as fencing and netting were introduced where required to ensure healthy crop growth.

The project demonstrated **strong early results** in Basirhat during the reporting period. Multiple rounds of harvesting were carried out, benefiting **94 individuals** who gained access to fresh, home-grown vegetables. In addition, **14 community meetings** were conducted with around **300 participants**, strengthening awareness on nutrition and encouraging active community participation.

Overall, the project made a **strong and encouraging start in Basirhat during this reporting period**, building on past successes and successfully transitioning from mobilisation and training to active cultivation and harvesting. The progress achieved provides a solid foundation for sustaining vegetable production and improving household nutrition among migrant families in the coming months.

1.1 Project Snapshot:

Indicator	Basirhat
District	North 24 Parganas
Brickfields Covered	7
Families Enrolled	70

Indicator	Basirhat
Families Active (Nov '25 – Jan '26)	70
Sacks Prepared & Placed	630
Community Meetings	14 Meetings *(~300 Participants)*
Crops Planted	Brinjal, Chilli, Tomato, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Spinach, Kolmi, Barbati, Radish, Coriander
Harvest Initiated	Yes *(Benefiting 94 Individuals)*

2: Project Progress during the Reporting Period

During the reporting period, focused efforts were made to **strengthen and sustain sack farming activities in Basirhat**, building on the foundation established over the past years. To translate the project objectives into action, a series of planned field-level activities were carried out across the selected brickfield sites. The following sub-sections present an overview of the project's coverage and the key actions undertaken.

2.1 Geographic Coverage

During the reporting period from **November 2025 to January 2026**, the Sack Farming Project was implemented across **7 brickfields** located in the **Basirhat block of North 24 Parganas district, West Bengal**.

As an **ongoing intervention in the area**, the project continued to build on existing relationships with brickfield communities while further strengthening the implementation of sack farming practices. The selected brickfields provided a conducive environment for continued engagement with migrant families, enabling the project team to carry forward activities in a structured and consistent manner.

2.2 Beneficiary Coverage

A total of **70 migrant families** were enrolled under the project across the 7 brickfields in Basirhat, with **10 families selected from each brickfield**. All enrolled families remained **actively engaged** throughout the reporting period.

The selection of beneficiaries was based on field-level interactions, assessing factors such as **interest in participation, availability of space for sack placement, and willingness to maintain the cultivation units**. The continued participation of families reflects the sustained interest and acceptance of sack farming as a beneficial activity within the brickfield communities.

2.3 Activities Undertaken During the Reporting Period

Building on the experience of previous implementation cycles, a range of activities were carried out during the reporting period to support and strengthen sack farming practices among beneficiary families. The key interventions are presented in the following sub-sections.

2.3.1 Beneficiary Identification, Training and Capacity Building

At the beginning of the reporting period, **field-level interactions and assessments** were conducted to confirm the participation of beneficiary families and ensure their readiness for the next cycle of cultivation. As the project has been ongoing in Basirhat, many families were already familiar with sack farming practices.



Capacity building during this phase was primarily carried out through **on-site guidance and refresher support provided by project staff**, rather than formal training sessions. Families were supported in revisiting key practices such as sack preparation, soil and compost mixing, crop selection, and planting techniques. This approach helped reinforce existing knowledge while addressing practical challenges faced by participants.

2.3.2 Preparation and Setup of Sack Farming Units

The project focused on the preparation and strengthening of sack farming units across the brickfields. As cultivable soil is generally not available within brickfield premises, **suitable soil was procured externally** to facilitate cultivation. Essential inputs including **sacks, seeds, saplings, vermicompost, and basic farming equipment** were also provided to the participating families.



Beneficiaries, with guidance from project staff, prepared the cultivation sacks by mixing soil with organic manure and filling them as per recommended practices. The sacks were placed in appropriate locations ensuring sufficient sunlight and accessibility for regular maintenance.



A total of **630 sacks** were prepared and placed across the 7 brickfields. Where required, **fencing and netting** were installed to protect the crops, and additional support structures were provided for certain plants.

2.3.3 Planting and Initiation of Cultivation

Following the preparation of sacks, planting activities were carried out across the brickfields in a

phased manner. Beneficiary families cultivated a variety of **seasonal vegetables**, including brinjal, chilli, tomato, cabbage, cauliflower, spinach, kolmi, barbati, radish, and coriander.



Given the prior exposure of many families to sack farming, planting activities were undertaken with **greater confidence and efficiency**, with participants applying techniques learned in previous cycles. Project staff provided regular support to ensure proper planting, spacing, and early-stage crop care. In several instances, families also undertook **successive planting**, ensuring continued utilisation of the sacks and maintaining active cultivation throughout the reporting period.

2.3.4 Harvesting and Early Utilisation

The project demonstrated strong progress in Basirhat with **multiple rounds of harvesting** carried out during the reporting period. Families were able to harvest fresh vegetables from their sacks, contributing directly to their household consumption.



These early harvests benefited **94 individuals**, who gained access to nutritious, home-grown vegetables. The availability of fresh produce within the brickfield environment highlighted the practical value of the initiative and reinforced continued participation among families.

2.3.5 Community Engagement and Meetings

Community engagement remained an integral part of the project, with regular **community meetings conducted across the brickfields** to support and sustain participation.



During the reporting period, a total of **14 meetings** were organised in Basirhat, with approximately **300 participants**. These meetings provided a platform for sharing experiences, discussing challenges, and reinforcing key messages related to nutrition and crop care.

The interactions also strengthened **community ownership of the initiative**, encouraging families to remain actively involved in maintaining their sack farming units.

Section 3: Early Results and Field Observations

During the reporting period, the Sack Farming Project in Basirhat demonstrated **clear and encouraging results**, reflecting the growing familiarity and confidence of beneficiary families with sack farming practices. As an ongoing intervention in the area, the project has moved beyond initial adoption to a stage where families are able to **actively manage cultivation and derive tangible benefits**.

One of the most significant outcomes observed was the **regular availability of fresh vegetables for household consumption**. Multiple rounds of harvesting were carried out across the brickfields, benefiting **94 individuals**. Families were able to consume vegetables such as leafy greens and other

seasonal crops grown in their own sacks, contributing to improved dietary diversity within the constraints of brickfield living conditions.

Field observations indicated a **high level of engagement and ownership among beneficiary families**. Participants were consistently involved in watering, maintaining, and monitoring their crops, often applying knowledge gained from previous cycles of the project. Many families demonstrated confidence in managing successive planting and adapting practices based on their experience, indicating a gradual strengthening of skills.

Another important outcome was the **sustained awareness of the nutritional value of home-grown vegetables**. Community interactions and the visible benefits of early harvests reinforced the importance of including fresh vegetables in daily meals. The continued enthusiasm among families, built over successive years of implementation, contributed to the smooth functioning of activities during the reporting period.

Overall, the observations from Basirhat indicate that the project has **successfully established a sustainable and community-accepted model of sack farming**, with families not only participating actively but also benefiting directly from improved access to fresh and nutritious food.

Section 4: Challenges and Mitigation Measures

During the reporting period, the implementation of the Sack Farming Project in Basirhat remained largely stable, owing to the **experience gained over previous cycles**. However, a few operational challenges were encountered, primarily related to the working conditions within brickfield environments. These were addressed through timely coordination and support from the project team.

One of the recurring challenges was the **procurement of suitable materials**, including sacks, saplings, bamboo, and protective netting. In some instances, local vendors were unable to provide proper documentation required for procurement processes. This was addressed by identifying alternative suppliers and ensuring that required materials were sourced in a timely manner.

The **availability of cultivable soil** also required careful planning, as brickfield premises do not naturally support farming activities. Suitable soil was procured externally, and necessary arrangements were made in coordination with local stakeholders to ensure that the preparation of sacks could proceed without interruption.

Additionally, **weather conditions**, particularly during the winter months, occasionally affected routine maintenance activities such as watering schedules. The field team worked closely with beneficiary families to adjust practices accordingly and ensure that crop care was maintained.

Overall, the challenges encountered were **manageable in nature** and were effectively addressed through proactive planning and regular field-level support. The prior experience of both the project team and beneficiary families contributed significantly to the smooth continuation of activities during the reporting period.

Section 5: Monitoring and Supervision

Regular monitoring and supervision played a crucial role in sustaining the quality and effectiveness of the Sack Farming Project in Basirhat during the reporting period. Given the ongoing nature of the intervention, monitoring efforts focused on **strengthening existing practices, ensuring consistency in crop care, and supporting families in managing successive cultivation cycles**.



Project staff conducted **regular field visits** across all participating brickfields to review the progress of cultivation activities. During these visits, the condition of sacks, plant health, watering practices, and overall maintenance were closely observed. Beneficiary families were provided with on-site guidance to address practical issues related to crop care, including spacing, pest management, and the use of protective measures such as fencing and netting.

In addition to routine monitoring, **periodic supervisory visits** were undertaken by senior project leadership, including the **Project Coordinator and the Associate Director**. These visits enabled a broader review of implementation progress, helped ensure adherence to project objectives, and provided strategic guidance to the field team.

Monitoring interactions also served as an opportunity for **direct engagement with beneficiary families**, allowing the project team to gather feedback, understand emerging needs, and reinforce key practices. The sustained presence of the project team contributed to maintaining high levels of participation and ensured that the project continued to function effectively across all brickfields.

Section 6: Way Forward

Building on the progress achieved during the reporting period, the next phase of the Sack Farming Project in Basirhat will focus on **sustaining cultivation practices, improving productivity, and enhancing the nutritional benefits for participating families**.

Efforts will be directed towards ensuring **regular maintenance and care of the existing sack farming units**, including timely watering, soil enrichment, and pest management. Project staff will continue to provide technical guidance to support families in maintaining healthy crops and addressing any emerging challenges.

A key focus area will be to **promote successive planting and staggered cultivation cycles**, enabling families to maintain a more consistent supply of vegetables over time. This approach will help maximise the utilisation of available sacks and ensure continuity in vegetable production.

The project will also continue to strengthen **community engagement and knowledge-sharing**, encouraging families to learn from each other's experiences and adopt improved practices. Regular interactions will reinforce awareness around the importance of nutrition and the role of home-grown vegetables in enhancing dietary diversity.

Overall, the way forward will emphasise **consolidating the gains achieved so far and strengthening the sustainability of sack farming practices**, enabling migrant families in Basirhat to continue benefiting from improved access to fresh and nutritious food.

Conclusion

The reporting period from **November 2025 to January 2026** marked a significant phase in the continued implementation of the Sack Farming Project in Basirhat. Building on the experience of previous years, the project successfully sustained and strengthened sack farming practices across the selected brickfields through focused support, regular monitoring, and active participation of beneficiary families.

The successful initiation of cultivation activities and multiple rounds of harvesting during this period highlight the **practical viability and effectiveness of sack farming within brickfield environments**. The availability of fresh vegetables for household consumption and the continued engagement of families reflect the growing acceptance of the initiative and its relevance in improving dietary practices.

Overall, the progress achieved during this period reinforces the project's role in **enhancing access to nutritious food and promoting sustainable cultivation practices among migrant families**. The strong foundation established in Basirhat is expected to support continued growth and sustained benefits in the coming months.

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