

## **A Tea Grower's Shift to Sustainable Practices in Karbi Anglong**

In Nilip block of Karbi Anglong district in Assam, Rural Woman Entrepreneur **Merijen Singnarpi** shifted to bio-pesticides after training under Transform Trade's program supported by technical partner Grassroot Tea Corporation. She prepared mixtures using cow dung, neem leaves, jaggery and other local materials and applied them to her tea garden. Pest attacks reduced, and her expenditure on chemical pesticides fell significantly. The change improved her soil health and lowered her input costs, encouraging her to share the method with other women in her community.

Her quiet shift in the tea garden reflects the kind of steady, practical progress that shaped the Udyamini programme through October across Assam and West Bengal.



## **Editorial Note**

October moved across Assam and West Bengal with the familiar mix of sharp showers, festival days and paddy-field commitments, yet the work under the Udyamini programme remained steady. Field teams travelled between clusters, women continued attending trainings, livestock services stayed regular and design and digital sessions moved forward in both Assam and West Bengal. This month was driven by continuity of steady engagement across communication, capacity building, market linkages, ecosystem partnerships, and field events reinforced the programme's stability and extended its reach.



## **Capacity Building and Market Linkage - Training, Production Skills and Market Movement Across Clusters**



The Goat Trust worked through thirty Video Shows and Behavioural Practice Programmes in Chamaria and Balijana, covering preventive goat healthcare and feeding practices. Rural Women Entrepreneur group meetings discussed microfinance and operational updates, although participation varied due to agricultural work and festivals. Goat health camps formed a vital part of the month's work. Chamaria recorded one hundred and seventy-six deworming cases and fifty-nine treatments, while Balijana recorded one hundred and ninety-six dewormings and fifty-eight treatments. Local Business Correspondents collectively recorded more than two lakh rupees in turnover from livestock feed, veterinary inputs, and value chain activities involving eggs, birds, and goats.

In the handloom clusters of Assam, Grameen Sahara continued its Product Development Programme across villages in the Chhaygaon block of Kamrup Rural district and in the Rangjuli and Dudhnoi blocks of Goalpara district. Sixty-two Rural Women Entrepreneurs worked with trainers to strengthen design interpretation, graph reading, draw-boy fitting and prototype development. Alongside this, an Entrepreneurship Development Programme in Kukurmara introduced twenty women to costing, labour calculation and basic financial practices. A major infrastructure addition came with the inauguration of the Yarn Bank at Chhaygaon on 31 October, helping stabilise yarn availability for weavers.



In West Bengal, SwitchON Foundation continued strengthening enterprise foundations across textile and agriculture clusters. The three-day 'Fast Track Business' training conducted with Skill Green brought together women from Nadia, Bankura and Purulia districts to work on business goals, customer understanding and business model planning. A separate hands-on design and catalogue workshop conducted with 'Women On Wings' helped handloom-based Rural Women Entrepreneurs from Shantipur and Patrasayer understand thread quality, colour selection and visual presentation. A Trichoderma multiplication training by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Nadia district supported women engaged in agriculture to explore biological inputs. Market linkages stayed strong in West Bengal, with significant jute sales in Haringhata block and thread-input sales in Santipur block.



## **Ecosystem Engagement - Partnerships, Institutional Support and Programme Strengthening**

The Digital Empowerment Foundation collaborated with the District Industries Centre, District Rural Development Cell, Assistant Director of Agriculture offices and Visva-Bharati University in Birbhum district to assist Artisan Card registration and connect women with scheme-linked infrastructure. Formalisation drives in Nagaon, Dhubri and Nalbari districts helped women enrol for Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts and Udyam Registration.



In Karbi Anglong district, Assam, technical partner Grassroot Tea Corporation submitted Trade License applications for all clusters to the Karbi Anglong Autonomous District Council, reducing costs for women by avoiding intermediaries.

Grameen Sahara strengthened its design and training capacities by adding a full-time designer to its team. The Digital Empowerment Foundation also continued exploring exhibition and market opportunities through the Weavers' Service Centre in Khanapara and the North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation.



## **Events- Field Visits, Workshops and On-Ground Engagements Through October**

The Digital Empowerment Foundation organised the state-level workshop “Udyamini Sangbad: Catalysing Rural Women Entrepreneurship in Bengal” in Birbhum district. The workshop brought together Rural Women Entrepreneurs, State Block Mobilisers, faculty from Visva-Bharati University in Santiniketan, district officials and partner teams to discuss communication, enterprise identity and rural-urban market connections.



SwitchON Foundation facilitated an exposure visit to Salsa Mari Camp in Sidhanuru in Karnataka, where Rural Women Entrepreneurs observed solar-powered livelihood units including dal milling, oil extraction and spice grinding. They also visited the Chowdeshwari Farmer Producer Organisation and interacted with its members to understand community-based enterprise models.

In Assam, The Goat Trust carried out regular deworming and treatment camps and held its scheduled review meetings. A joint field visit and digital literacy session by the Digital Empowerment Foundation and The Goat Trust in Chamaria and Balijana helped strengthen frontline digital readiness. Team Vrutti conducted its longitudinal study across Chamaria and Balijana between 8 and 10 October. Grameen Sahara marked an important moment with the inauguration of the Yarn Bank at Chhaygaon on 31 October. In West Bengal, Central Silk Board officials from Malda district conducted tasar reeling demonstrations and distributed certificates at Patrasayer in Bankura district. Rural Women Entrepreneurs also visited jute and business centres in Rajapur and Nagarukhra-2.



### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) - Evidence, Performance Tracking and Insights for Course Correction**

Vrutti's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning work in October focused on strengthening evidence and sharpening programme direction. The team completed a consortium-wide analysis of dashboard data for the July to September quarter, reviewing key performance indicators across all five partners and value chains. Using partner submissions, verification documents and consultations with MEL focal persons, the analysis identified trends in progress, operational bottlenecks and areas that require closer attention.

A major milestone was the completion of the first phase of the two-year Longitudinal Study on 8 October. This study follows Rural Women Entrepreneurs across multiple value chains to understand how Udyamini influences enterprise growth, women's agency, gender norms and systemic change. The first round now provides a strong evidence base for real-time adjustments.

Vrutti also began analysing the qualitative findings from the Longitudinal Study across five domains: business performance, empowerment and agency, ecosystem support, social and gender norms and inclusiveness. This analysis is helping clarify how change is unfolding on the ground and what factors most strongly shape progress.

In the coming weeks, Vrutti will integrate the qualitative insights with dashboard trends to build a consolidated performance narrative. This will lead into a structured reflection process with all consortium partners to validate findings, identify priority areas for improvement and align strategies for stronger enterprise growth and deeper women's empowerment in the next quarter



## **Communications**

### **Building Digital Voices and Strengthening Field Coordination**

The communication systems that support Udyamini strengthened visibly in October. In West Bengal, the Digital Empowerment Foundation ran a series of digital literacy and communication sessions across Nadia, Purulia, Birbhum and Bankura districts. More than twenty trainings helped Rural Women Entrepreneurs understand how to use their phones not just for calls, but for presenting their products, creating simple digital content and communicating with customers. Women who previously depended entirely on haat bazaars learnt to photograph products clearly, record short explanation videos, structure catalogue-style images, and use social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram in a basic but purposeful way. These sessions also familiarised them with the Mera App and the Mera Bill platform, giving them an introduction to digital transactions and basic enterprise documentation.



In both States, communication efforts also aligned with preparations for the Rural Udyamita event scheduled for 12 December 2025. Field teams and communication leads began planning social media outreach to build awareness around the event, focusing on introductions to partner organisations, stories of Rural Women Entrepreneurs and updates from different value chains. Early posts and short promotional clips were designed to familiarise audiences with the programme's work ahead of the event, ensuring that December's engagement reaches a wider and better-informed audience.

October did not bring major programme shifts, but it brought steady fieldwork, regular training, consistent livestock support, exposure visits, market engagement and strengthened communication practices. Across Assam and West Bengal, the month added depth to the programme's pillars of communication, capacity building, market linkage, ecosystem engagement, events and lived experience, preparing Rural Women Entrepreneurs for the coming months of enterprise growth.

As November approaches, the foundation laid by these women and their partners promises continued growth, with RWEs leading the way in reshaping rural economies and challenging systemic barriers. For more updates, please visit: [www.udyamini.org](http://www.udyamini.org) | [www.facebook.com/udyamini](https://www.facebook.com/udyamini) | [www.instagram.com/udyamini](https://www.instagram.com/udyamini) | [www.instagram.com/udyamini](https://www.instagram.com/udyamini)