



CAPACITY BUILDING & MARKET LINKAGES | FROM SKILLS TO SALES

Across value chains, March showed a stronger link between capacity building and actual market participation.

In the Handloom Value Chain (Assam), implemented by Grameen Sahara, **Product Development Programmes engaged 52 RWEs in Goalpara**, focusing on creating market-oriented products such as stoles, cushion covers, and table runners. Alongside design innovation, technical improvements like draw-boy mechanisms and graph-based pattern reading enhanced production quality and efficiency.

Five new product prototypes are currently under development, indicating a move towards diversification. With participation in upcoming Bihu exhibitions planned, these efforts are beginning to align with seasonal market opportunities.



In West Bengal, SwitchON Foundation's work across the Handloom and Agri & Allied Value Chains connected training directly to income generation. **Quality enhancement training enabled producer groups to meet institutional standards, including delivering hand-pounded rice to Biswa Bangla.**

The results are visible in market figures. **RWEs collectively generated ₹68.55 lakh in sales, with ₹38.88 lakh from agriculture and ₹29.67 lakh from handloom products.**

In the Livestock Value Chain, led by **The Goat Trust**, **capacity building remained closely tied to enterprise strengthening. A total of 38 video-based learning sessions and business planning processes were conducted**, focusing on scientific goat rearing, disease prevention, and enterprise management.

These efforts translated into measurable economic activity. **In March alone, livestock-related inputs, services, and value chain transactions generated a turnover of ₹3.53 lakh, contributing to a cumulative turnover of over ₹58 lakh.**



ECOSYSTEM ENGAGEMENT | BUILDING CONVERGENCE FOR ENTERPRISE GROWTH

In West Bengal, **SwitchON Foundation engaged with government officials, including the Block Development Officer in Haringhata and MSME representatives, to explore support for initiatives like the Udyamini Store and artisan card applications.**



Under the Digital Value Chain, **Digital Empowerment Foundation's work went beyond training to service delivery. In districts like Nadia, bootcamps facilitated Udyam registrations, trade licences, and access to services such as PAN correction and banking support.**

These digital centres are increasingly functioning as last-mile service hubs, linking RWEs and communities with essential government and financial systems.

In Assam, convergence between The Goat Trust, Grameen Sahara and Digital Empowerment Foundation focused on mapping and establishing SBM centres within livestock clusters.

This integration aims to bring digital and financial services closer to livestock-based enterprises, reducing access barriers.



FROM LOCAL TO LARGER PLATFORMS: EVENTS THAT OPEN MARKETS



International Women's Day was observed across seven blocks in West Bengal, bringing together over 100 participants, including government officials and community stakeholders.

These events doubled as local marketplaces, showcasing products such as spices, handloom items, handicrafts, and processed food products.

A key milestone was the inauguration of the **Udyamini Store in Santipur, West Bengal**. More than a one-time event, the store represents a shared retail space where RWEs can collectively showcase and sell their products, building a consistent market presence and a unified identity.



Exposure visits, training sessions, and field meetings across locations further reinforced peer learning and community-level engagement, as reflected in field documentation and photographs from partner reports.



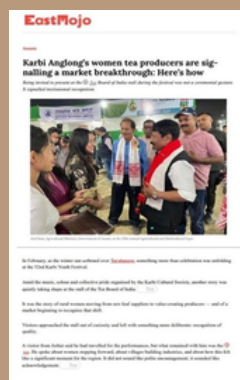
TAKING STORIES TO THE GROUND: COMMUNICATION THAT BUILDS VISIBILITY

A noticeable shift this month was how grassroots enterprise journeys are beginning to find space beyond programme boundaries. In the Tea Value Chain, led by Transform Trade with technical partner Grassroots Tea Corporation, stories of women small tea growers in Karbi Anglong were featured in The Assam Tribune and EastMojo.

The articles described how, during the Karbi Youth Festival held at Taralangso in February, RWEs showcased their products at the Tea Board of India stall. Their participation reflected strong institutional recognition. The presence of Atul Bora, Agricultural Minister, Government of Assam, at the 25th Annual Agricultural and Horticultural Expo further reinforced this recognition.

In March, International Women's Day became a key moment for Udyamini to bring the journeys of RWEs into public view. Through a series of digital stories shared across platforms, women from different value chains, livestock, tea, handloom, agri, and digital enterprises were highlighted for their work, growth, and leadership.

From Gitanjali Kalita mentoring livestock entrepreneurs in Assam, to Jonaki Terangpi entering value-added tea production, Masuma Khatun expanding her handicraft business through digital platforms, Asima Sardar building community-based agri services, and Kalpana Das strengthening handloom practices, the campaign captured diverse pathways of enterprise. Together, these stories presented a grounded picture of how women are building livelihoods, supporting others, and contributing to local economies, while also strengthening the visibility of their work beyond their immediate communities.



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