



**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2024 - 25**

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

As I reflect on the past year at YouthInvest Foundation, I do so with a deep sense of gratitude, pride, and optimism for the future. Each year reaffirms our belief that investing in children and young people is one of the most powerful pathways to building equitable and sustainable societies.

Over the past year, I had the privilege of witnessing how consistent and thoughtful investments in children and youth programmes can transform lives: adolescent girls returning to education, young people emerging as leaders in their communities, and families adopting practices that support healthier beginnings for children. These moments remind us that meaningful change is built step by step, through sustained engagement and collective effort.

Later in 2025, YouthInvest Foundation will mark ten years of its journey — a significant milestone that invites reflection as well as renewed commitment. Over the past decade, YouthInvest has grown from an idea into a trusted partner working across diverse geographies, demonstrating scalable models that strengthen systems while placing children and young people at the centre of change. Looking ahead to the next phase of our journey, we have instituted the YouthInvest Advisory Group, bringing together eminent professionals from diverse sectors to provide strategic guidance and thought leadership. This initiative marks an important step in strengthening our operations, fostering innovation, and ensuring that YouthInvest continues to evolve in response to emerging challenges and opportunities facing young people.

The challenges confronting children and youth today are complex — shaped by social inequalities, rapid technological change, and evolving health and livelihood realities. Yet, what gives us confidence is the resilience, creativity, and leadership demonstrated by young people themselves. Our role is to continue creating enabling environments where their potential can flourish.

I extend my sincere appreciation to our donors and supporters, government partners, and community institutions whose collaboration makes this work possible. I also thank the dedicated YouthInvest team whose commitment and compassion drive our mission every day.

As we approach our second decade, we remain committed to ensuring that every child and young person has the support, opportunities, and confidence to shape their own future.



**Dr. K. Pappu**

Chairperson & Co-Founder

## STATEMENT FROM THE CEO

It gives me great pleasure to present the Annual Report of YouthInvest Foundation (YouthInvest) for the financial year 2024–25.

This past year, our programmes contributed to improved nutrition during the first 1,000 days of life, strengthened adolescent reproductive and sexual health and nutrition, expanded access to education for out-of-school adolescent girls and young women, enhanced frontline health and nutrition services, and advanced digital learning and livelihood opportunities for young people from underserved communities across Assam, West Bengal, and Jharkhand.

Our team in Assam successfully facilitated the cascade training of ICDS functionaries in 8 districts, including 18000 plus Anganwadi Workers, strengthening their capacity to deliver home-based, targeted counselling on nutrition practices during the first 1,000 days across eight districts of the state. Equally encouraging has been the growing leadership of young people themselves as seen in adolescent health and nutrition programmes in West Bengal and Assam. Adolescents emerged as advocates, peer educators, and community change agents, challenging harmful norms, helping prevent child marriage, and promoting healthier and more equitable practices within their communities.

This year also marked an important step forward as we initiated a new programme in Jharkhand focused on empowering adolescent girls by strengthening their social capital and reducing vulnerabilities. Through close collaboration with communities and local institutions, the programme supports girls in building knowledge and skills on reproductive and sexual health and rights, strengthening confidence, expanding opportunities, and navigating safer pathways toward adulthood.

As YouthInvest approaches ten years of its journey, we are entering a phase of consolidation and scale. Our focus ahead is to deepen impact through evidence-led models, expand strategic partnerships, leverage technology for last-mile access, and strengthen youth leadership as a central pillar of our work.

My deepest gratitude to our communities, donors, government officials and other partners, and the dedicated YouthInvest team who make this work possible every day. With your support, we remain committed to supporting and building pathways that enable every child and young person to grow, lead, and thrive.



**Laboni Jana**

CEO & Co-Founder

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# ABOUT YOUTHINVEST FOUNDATION

YouthInvest Foundation (YouthInvest) is an Indian not-for-profit organisation dedicated to empowering children, adolescents, and young people to reach their full potential and lead healthy, productive, and dignified lives. Founded in 2015, YouthInvest works across key life stages—early childhood (0–6 years), adolescence (10–19 years), and youth (20–29 years)—with a focus on health and nutrition, education, gender equality, life skills, and livelihoods.

Using a lifecycle programming approach, YouthInvest creates and facilitates opportunities that enable young people, especially those from marginalised communities, to access their rights to health, education, and economic participation. Our work integrates community engagement, youth leadership, and systems strengthening to drive sustainable and scalable change.

YouthInvest develops and demonstrates innovative models in partnership with governments, communities, schools, and frontline workers, strengthening service delivery systems while enabling children and young people to actively participate in shaping their futures. Through strategic partnerships, technology-enabled solutions, and youth advocacy, we aim to reach the last mile and improve outcomes at scale.

Currently operating in Assam, West Bengal, and Jharkhand, YouthInvest addresses interconnected challenges such as child malnutrition, school dropout, early marriage, limited livelihood pathways, and unequal access to opportunities.

**At the heart of our work lies a simple belief: investing in children, adolescents and youth strengthens families, communities, and the future of society.**



# YEAR AT A GLANCE

During FY 2024–25, YouthInvest implemented programmes across child and adolescent health and nutrition, education, youth skills development, and adolescent life skills and leadership development, addressing the interconnected challenges faced by children and young people across diverse contexts.



## GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

- 13 districts in 3 states: Assam, West Bengal, Jharkhand
- Rural and tribal communities, peri-urban settlements, and urban slums

## KEY FOCUS AREAS

Health and nutrition of children and adolescents

Education for out-of school adolescents and young married women

Digital literacy, career preparedness and employability skills

Youth leadership and life skills development

## OVERALL REACH (FY 2024-25)

- 1 million+ mothers and children impacted through strengthened health and nutrition systems
- 100,000+ adolescents and youth reached through initiatives on nutrition, education, life skills, digital literacy, and youth leadership
- 19,000+ frontline functionaries strengthened, including Anganwadi Workers, ICDS Supervisors, and ASHA workers
- 90+ schools covered through adolescent health, nutrition and life skills development interventions

# PROGRAMMES

## Sambhavana Learning Centres (SLC): Second Chance Education for Adolescent Girls and Young Women

Sambhavana Learning Centres (SLCs) are community-based learning spaces established by YouthInvest Foundation to support out-of-school adolescent girls and young women in resuming education, building life skills, and accessing future opportunities.

Across Jharkhand and West Bengal, many girls discontinue education due to poverty, early marriage, domestic responsibilities, distance from secondary schools, and restrictive social norms. SLCs address these barriers through flexible learning models that combine academic support, mentoring, life skills education, and strong community engagement.

During FY 2024–25, SLCs enabled 266 adolescent girls and young women — including child brides and young mothers — from rural and tribal communities in Jharkhand and West Bengal to reconnect with education and rebuild confidence in their futures.



Learners at SLC, Ranchi district, Jharkhand

## Geographical Coverage

State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat	SLC Centres	Learners Supported
Jharkhand	Ranchi	Chanho, Mandar, Burmu	11	5	104
West Bengal	Paschim Medinipur	Kharagpur-I	3	3	152
<b>Total</b>				<b>8</b>	<b>266</b>

## Intervention highlights

- ❖ **SLCs offered integrated Learning 6-days a week, covering**
  - Foundational literacy and numeracy
  - Secondary education preparation (NIOS/Open School systems)
  - Digital skills exposure
  - Life skills and gender awareness
  - Health and nutrition education
  - Individual mentoring and counselling

Learners progress through foundational learning, bridge courses, and secondary courses following national and state open school curricula, enabling transition into secondary Board certification, followed by higher studies, vocational training, or employment.

- ❖ **Community Engagement activities**  
Beyond academic learning, SLCs strengthened girls' wellbeing, leadership, and community participation through partnerships with Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI), government departments, block and district officials aimed at improving girls' education and prevention of child marriage.

### Jharkhand

- **Strengthening Education Tracking and Retention:** SLC teachers participated in training under the PRAYAS initiative organised by the Jharkhand Education Project Council (JEPC), building skills in maintaining Shishu Panji registers and conducting Tola Tagging. These processes strengthened tracking of children's enrolment and attendance, helping prevent dropouts and improve education monitoring.
- **Menstrual Health and Hygiene Awareness:** Sanitary pad distribution and awareness sessions were conducted at Rol and Burmu SLC centres with support from Sahiyaa and Jal Sahiyaa frontline workers. Interactive discussions promoted safe menstrual hygiene practices, reduced stigma, and encouraged girls' regular participation in learning activities.



*Education Tracking and Retention Training by JEPC*

## West Bengal

- 23 SLC learners above 18 years participated in **career counselling sessions** with Tata Strive Skill Development and Livelihood Programme.
- **Tree plantation drives** with the Forest and Agriculture Departments distributed 300+ saplings and engaged 84 adolescents and young women.
- **Sports and cultural events** engaged over 3,000 adolescents and community members.
- **National Youth Day celebrations** brought together 1,150 participants through fairs, competitions, cultural performances, and youth recognition.
- **Rallies and street plays** on child marriage prevention, girls' rights, literacy, plastic pollution, and responsible mobile use with participants from 37 villages.
- **Cybercrime awareness sessions** trained 54 adolescents on safe internet practices.
- **Menstrual waste management** through the introduction of the eco-friendly *Matka Method*, resulting in 74 safe pad-disposal installations across 37 villages.



Career Counselling Session by Tata Strive



Matka installation for eco-friendly sanitary disposal at Paschim Medinipur

## Outcomes (FY 2025-26)

Indicator	Jharkhand	West Bengal	Total
Secondary Examination Passed	40	20	60
Transitioned to Higher Secondary	15	8	23
Transitioned to Employment & Livelihoods	14	15	29

\* Some girls have joined both higher studies as well as livelihood opportunities

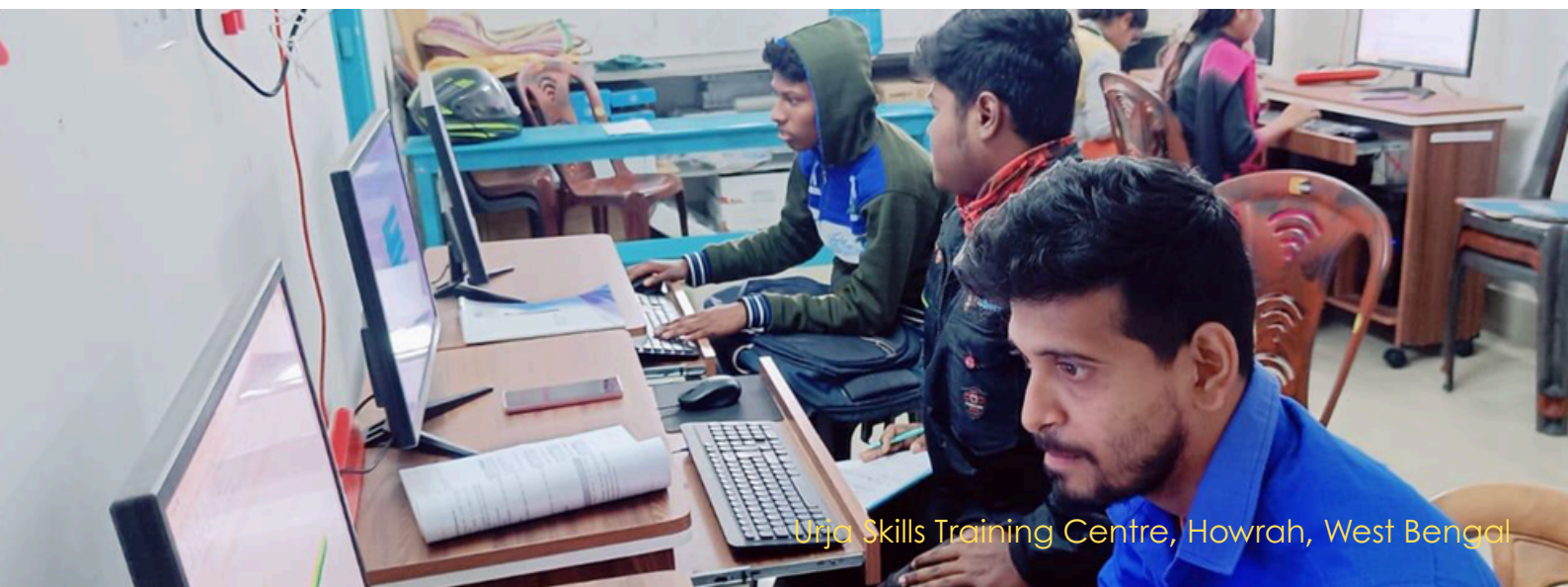
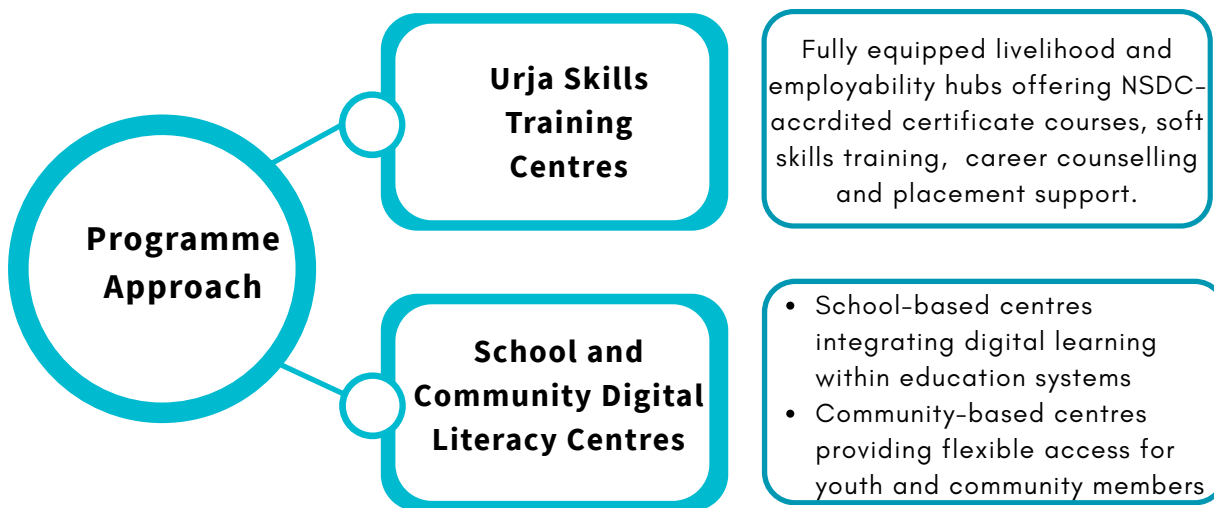
**A proud moment for the WB SLC programme was the recognition of 30 girls who courageously resisted child marriage, including a special public felicitation of three brave girls who successfully prevented their own child marriages by the District Magistrate of Paschim Medinipur and the Block Development Officer of Kharagpur-I Block.**

# URJA Skills Training Centre and Digital Empowerment Initiatives

Access to digital skills and employability opportunities has become essential for education, livelihoods, and meaningful participation in an increasingly technology-driven world. However, young people from migrant, tribal, and low-income communities often remain excluded from these opportunities due to limited access to training, technology, and career guidance.

During FY 2024–25, YouthInvest Foundation strengthened its digital empowerment and skills development initiatives through URJA Skills Training Centres and School and Community Digital Literacy Centres, enabling adolescents and young people to develop practical skills, confidence, and pathways toward employment and self-reliance.

These initiatives focused particularly on first-generation learners — especially young women — supporting their transition from limited digital exposure to workforce readiness and sustainable livelihood opportunities.



Urja Skills Training Centre, Howrah, West Bengal

## Geographical Coverage

	District	No. of centre	Learners Supported
Urja Skills Training Centre	Howrah, Paschim Medinipur	2	92
School Digital learning Centre	Paschim Medinipur, Kolkata	3	152
Community Digital Literacy Centre	Paschim Medinipur	1	266

## Key Outcomes and Highlights (FY 2024–25)

- ◆ **Access to Skills and Certification**
  - 430 adolescents and youth trained in digital literacy in Paschim Medinipur through school and community Digital Literacy Centres
  - 48 youth from Kolkata slums trained in digital literacy and basic IT skills
  - 92 youth enrolled across three URJA Skills Training Centres (62 in Data Entry Operator; 30 in Banking & Financial Services)
  - 100% certification among exam participants through NIIT Foundation (NSDC-accredited)
  - Over 90% of learners scored above 80% in the Cyber Security module
- ◆ **Improved Confidence and Digital Readiness**
  - Enhanced communication, confidence, and workplace readiness through spoken English, life skills, and personality development sessions
  - Youth demonstrated improved digital proficiency and independent use of online and financial platforms
  - Digital centres increasingly functioned as community resources supporting access to e-services
- ◆ **Enhanced Employability Support**
  - Mock interviews, career counselling, and mentoring support provided
  - Industry exposure visits across logistics, automobile, food processing, and service sectors
  - Youth placed in data entry, back-office, hospital front desk, warehouse, and service-sector roles
  - Learners also started self-employment and small enterprise activities
  - First-generation learners successfully transitioned into formal and semi-formal livelihoods

# Maternal and Child Health & Nutrition

In the year 2024-25, YouthInvest Foundation continued to advance maternal, newborn, child, adolescent health and nutrition (RMNCAH+N) outcomes through a systems-strengthening approach that builds the capacities of frontline workers, promotes community behaviour change, and strengthens convergence across government departments.

## Strengthening Community Practices and Frontline Service Delivery for Improved Health and Nutrition Outcomes in Assam and West Bengal

The programme focused on accelerating improvement of preventive care, nutrition practices, and service delivery through the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), health systems, schools, and community platforms across 3 districts in West Bengal and 2 districts of Assam.

### Programme Goal

To improve maternal, child, and adolescent health and nutrition outcomes through strengthened frontline systems, community engagement, and multi-sectoral convergence.

### Key Strategies

Across both states, the programme adopted three interconnected strategies:

#### 1. System Strengthening

- Capacity building of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs), ASHAs, and ANMs
- Strengthening counselling on maternal care, infant feeding, and anaemia prevention
- Training community volunteers and adolescent groups as local health champions

#### 2. Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC)

- Nutrition demonstrations and community awareness events
- Promotion of breastfeeding and complementary feeding through culturally relevant platforms
- Observance of national health and nutrition days

#### 3. Convergent Action

- Collaboration with Health, ICDS, and Education departments
- Inclusion of health and nutrition priorities in Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs)
- Partnerships with NGOs and local institutions for coordinated service delivery



Anganwadi Centre, Kamrup, Assam

## West Bengal: Programme Coverage

District	GPs / Municipal Wards	AWCs / Slums	Schools	Mothers, children and adolescent
Howrah	15	450	25	66,137
Hooghly	10	303	25	40,667
Kolkata	8	30	25	8,243
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 GPs &amp; 8 Wards</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>115,047</b>

## Major Programme Highlights



### Capacity Building of Frontline Workers

- 35 orientation sessions conducted for 719 Anganwadi Workers on weaning practices and anaemia prevention
- 401 ASHA workers trained on the healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy (HTSP) and maternal health counselling



ANM and ASHA orientation programme on HTSP, Hooghly, West Bengal



### Community Nutrition Campaigns

- Nutrition Month (Supushti Maas) celebrations across districts
- 167 community events conducted with participation of:
  - 4,544 community members
  - 402 frontline workers



Nutrition Month Celebration at Howrah, West Bengal



### Anaemia Prevention among pregnant & lactating mothers, children and adolescents, eligible couples

- 468 awareness and screening camps organised in schools, villages, and slums
- 24,185 individuals reached
- 23,611 beneficiaries screened using invasive and non-invasive haemoglobin devices
- Strengthened Kanyashree Clubs across 75 schools
- 11,897 adolescent girls reached with anaemia prevention awareness



Awareness Session with Adolescent Girls in School, Hooghly, West Bengal

## Assam: Programme Coverage

District	Population	Blocks	GPs/Wards	No of villages	AWCs/Slums
Kamrup <sup>®</sup>	81245	2	9	79	255
Darrang	137672	2	13	70	335
2 Districts	218,917	4	22	149	590

## Major Programme Highlights

### Capacity Building of Frontline Workers and Officials

- 596 Anganwadi Workers trained on anaemia prevention and weaning practices
- Training for 220 ASHAs and ANMs on screening, nutrition counselling, and maternal health practices
- Orientation of CDPOs, Supervisors, and Block officials on sector strengthening and hotspot-based interventions



ASHA orientation programme in Kamrup, Assam

### Orientation of SHG Group & Kitchen Garden:

- Capacity-building sessions were conducted for 34 SHG Groups on feeding frequency, food consistency, hygiene, and responsive feeding during the first 2 years.
- They were also oriented on setting up kitchen gardens in their household premises with the support of the World Food Programme (WFP) and Rashtriya Gramin Vikas Nidhi (RGVN).



SHG Group Orientation on Child Nutrition, Assam

### Anaemia Prevention among pregnant & lactating mothers, children and adolescents, eligible couples

- A total of 24,199 beneficiaries were screened.
- Strengthened Child Cabinets across 15 schools
- 160 participants participated in awareness session on safe menstrual practices and dignity in managing menstruation.



ANAemia Screening Camp in collaboration with Department of Health, Assam

# Prevention of Child Malnutrition through Changing Feeding Practices at Home through Strengthening ICDS System in 8 districts of Assam

Public–Private Partnership with Directorate of Women & Child Development, Government of Assam under ITC Mission Sunehra Kal

Implemented across eight districts—Kamrup and 7 aspirational districts: Darrang, Barpeta, Hailakandi, Udalguri, Baksa, Dhubri and Goalpara—the programme focused on preventing child malnutrition during the first 1,000 days through ICDS systems strengthening and behaviour change at the household level, focused on changing child feeding practices.



State level launch of the 1000 Day Playbook and CDPO training in Guwahati, Assam in collaboration with Directorate of Woman and Child Development, Government of Assam

## Major activities

- ◆ **Conducted sector and block review meetings** to enhance supportive supervision and performance monitoring. **Facilitated introduction of structured processes:**
  - Anganwadi Centre (AWC) ranking systems
  - Data-based sector reviews
  - Need-based capacity building
  - Reward and recognition mechanisms for frontline workers.
- ◆ **Capacity Building and Leadership Strengthening through the Cascade Approach**
  - Training of CDPOs, Supervisors, and Anganwadi Workers on the 1,000 Days Playbook across 8 districts, focusing on implementation of targeted counselling and joint home visits for families with children aged 0–2 years.
  - Implementation of a hub-and-spoke model to replicate successful practices across ICDS blocks.
  - Strengthened supervisory leadership for improved monitoring of priority home visits.



## Community Awareness and Behaviour Change Activities

- Organised large-scale awareness activities during Nutrition Month and World Breastfeeding Week, focusing on child feeding practices, anaemia prevention, and maternal health across communities.



*Celebration of "World Breastfeeding Week" in Kamrup, Assam*

## FINDINGS FROM THE ENDLINE EVALUATION STUDY, INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (IIT), GUWAHATI

- **Exclusive Breastfeeding (0–6 months) improved** significantly from 59.1% at baseline to 98.4% in intervention areas, compared to 85% in control areas.
- **Timely initiation of complementary feeding increased** from 35% at baseline to 97% in intervention areas, while control areas recorded 87.5%.
- **Dietary diversity and adequate feeding practices, including provision of three major meals per day, improved substantially**, with 91% of children in intervention areas achieving minimum dietary diversity (MDD) compared to 27% at baseline and 56% in control areas.

# Youth-Led Initiatives to Improve Adolescent Reproductive & Sexual Health & Nutrition

The Youth-Led Initiatives to Improve Health & Nutrition programme aims to strengthen adolescent wellbeing through a comprehensive approach integrating adolescent reproductive and sexual health (ARSH), nutrition, gender equality, and life skills education. The initiative places young people at the centre of change by building their leadership capacities while simultaneously engaging families, schools, and local governance institutions to create an enabling ecosystem.

The programme reached 6,800 adolescents and young people (10–24 years) along with parents, teachers, Panchayat representatives, and community stakeholders across rural areas of Kharagpur-I CD Block, Paschim Medinipur district, West Bengal.

Implemented across Kalaikunda, Barkola, and Arjuni Gram Panchayats, the intervention covered 37 villages and 11 government secondary and higher secondary schools, combining school-based learning with sustained community engagement.

## Programme Strategies

### Youth-led advocacy

Adolescents were trained as peer educators (Yuba Sathi) to facilitate discussions, address myths, and mobilise young people and communities around health, nutrition, and gender equality.

### School-based Life Skills Education

Structured sessions in government schools built adolescents' knowledge on puberty, menstruation, nutrition, mental well-being, gender norms, and violence prevention.

### Community Advocacy by Mother Leaders

Mother leaders supported community awareness activities promoting girls' education, delayed marriage, and healthy practices within families.

### Newly married Couple Counselling

Newly married couples received counselling from ASHAs to encourage informed reproductive choices and healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies.

### Creation of Enabling Environment

Teachers, Panchayat members, and service providers were oriented to support adolescent wellbeing and sustain programme outcomes.

## Programme Coverage

### **School-Based Life Skills Education Programme**

- 11 schools covered
- 45 adolescent health and life skills sessions conducted
- 6,189 adolescents reached
  - Boys: 3,076
  - Girls: 3,113
  -

### **Mother and Community Engagement**


- 64 mothers' meetings conducted
- 838 mothers participated
- 59 Mother Leaders trained as community change agents


### **Community Awareness Campaigns**


Awareness campaigns among 10,325 adolescents and community members through celebration of:


- National Youth Day
- Menstrual Hygiene Day
- Nutrition and Handwashing Month
- International Youth Day
- Literacy and Girl Child Day

## Key Outcomes

 **Improved Adolescent Knowledge and Agency:** Adolescents demonstrated increased understanding of gender equality, health, nutrition, and violence prevention, supported by 119 trained Yuba Sathis who emerged as active peer leaders.

 **Positive Shifts in Community Norms:** Increased advocacy by mothers for girls' education and delayed marriage, with open discussions on reproductive health reported across intervention villages.

 **Stronger Community Support Systems:** A more enabling environment created through engagement of 20 trained teachers and strengthened coordination with frontline workers and local institutions.

 **Reduced Early Marriage Risks and Healthier Choices:** Community action contributed to preventing approximately 8 early marriages, while 25 newly married couples adopted informed contraceptive and birth-spacing practices.

## STORIES OF CHANGE

## Tina's Second Chance: Reclaiming Education and Independence

Tiya Dolai, a 26-year-old from Paschim Amba, Paschim Medinipur district, was married at 16 and became a mother at 17, putting her education on hold. With her husband working as a daily labourer, financial struggles made learning seem impossible.

A mothers' meeting by the Sambhavna Learning Centre (SLC) rekindled her desire to study. Initially hesitant, her family supported her after counselling by a Learning Facilitator (LF). She joined Gokulpur SLC in 2021, overcoming challenges in Math and English through group studies and life skills training.

In 2024, she passed her secondary exams with 56% and now earns ₹8,000 per month in a local company. Grateful to Tata Steel Foundation and YouthInvest Foundation, Tiya's story proves that education can transform lives, inspiring others to break barriers and pursue their dreams.



## Prabha Kumari: From School Dropout to Aspiring Nurse

Prabha Kumari grew up in a rural tribal community in Chanho block, Ranchi district, where continuing education beyond adolescence was uncommon for girls. Financial hardship and limited access to secondary schooling led her to drop out early, leaving her uncertain about her future.

During a community outreach visit, YouthInvest facilitators identified Prabha as a potential learner and encouraged her to join the Sambhavna Learning Centre. Initially, she lacked confidence in her academic abilities after years away from school. Through personalised mentoring, structured learning support, and a nurturing peer environment, she gradually rebuilt her learning foundation.

The SLC provided more than academic coaching — it created a safe space where Prabha could rediscover her aspirations. With consistent guidance, she prepared independently for secondary examinations and successfully completed both secondary and higher secondary education.

Inspired by her experiences and a desire to serve her community, Prabha decided to pursue nursing training. Today, she is enrolled in a nursing course, working toward a professional career in healthcare — an achievement that once seemed unimaginable.



## Srimanta Santra: Learning with Purpose, Supporting His Family

Coming from a financially vulnerable household, Srimanta enrolled in the Data Entry Operator course at the Chandipur URJA Centre to support his education and family income. With no prior computer experience, he developed digital and communication skills through structured training and successfully cleared the certification examination.

Soon after completing the course, he secured employment as a Data Entry Operator at Amazon Warehouse. He now contributes financially to his household while planning further professional training.



## Payal Bag: From Learner to Employee



Payal Bag, a 20-year-old youth from a tribal family, completed her Higher Secondary education but couldn't pursue computer training due to financial constraints. Her father, a daily labourer, could not support her further education. Identified by the IT instructor, Payal enrolled in the DEO (Data Entry Operator) course at the Sankoa URJA Centre to improve her employability. Though she came from a non-technical background and initially struggled with MS Excel and presentations, she steadily gained confidence and skills through practice and support.

Payal passed the NIIT DEO exam with an impressive 83% score. She also developed her personality through soft skills training. After completing the course, she secured a job at a nearby petrol pump as a data entry and stock manager.

## Bikram Maity and Jeet Sekhar: Entrepreneurship through Digital Skills

Bikram Maity, 29, and Jeet Sekhar, 20, are both residents of Sankoa village in Kharagpur Block II. Their fathers work as daily wage labourers. After completing their Higher Secondary education, both dropped out of studies and were unsure how to support their families financially. At that time, an IT instructor advised them to join the Data Entry Operator (DEO) course at the Sankoa URJA Centre. They both successfully completed the course—Bikram scored 91% and Jeet 83% in the NIIT Foundation-certified examination.

Through the course, they not only developed their digital skills but also became good friends and decided to start a furniture business together. The training encouraged them to handle various tasks such as online buying and selling, and money transfers, which are now helping them take their business in a new and promising direction.

## Sheikh Arman: Journey from severe low birth weight to normal weight

Born prematurely with a birth weight of 1.6 kg in Uluberia block, Howrah district, Sheikh Arman received continuous home-based counselling through the village Anganwadi Worker, who was oriented on home-based counselling by YouthInvest Foundation. She regularly visited Arman's home and guided the mother and the family on breastfeeding, hygiene, and nutrition practices.

After completion of one month of age, Arman gained weight to 3 kg and graduated to moderately underweight. The AWW continued home visits and counselling and emphasised the importance of Exclusive Breastfeeding to the mother as well as other family members. Arman gained weight steadily and gradually. After completion of 6 months, Arman weighed 6.5 kg, as Normal Weight-for-age. Her mother started complementary feeding, and Arman continued his journey on a normal growth path.



## Era Das: Anganwadi Worker Nurturing the Future

Mrs. Era Das, an Anganwadi Worker in Amtola Kaibartapara Village, Kamrup, Assam, has demonstrated outstanding commitment to improving child nutrition. Guided by her principle "Nurturing the future," she strengthened early childhood nutrition through consistent home visits and community-based interventions.

Amtola Kaibartapara, home to 1,023 people, faced high malnutrition rates due to poor hygiene and low awareness. In August 2023, Mrs. Das identified 3 Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and 11 Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) cases among 43 children under five. The challenge was most acute among children under two, linked to poor feeding practices during the critical 1,000-day window.



Trained under ICDS and by YouthInvest under ITC MSK, Mrs. Das counseled mothers on balanced diets, promoted fish, meat, and eggs, and conducted seven structured home visits with practical demonstrations. By January 2024, all SAM and MAM cases were eliminated, making her initiative a model for community-driven nutrition solutions.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our sincere gratitude to our donors, partners, government departments, community institutions, and the young people and their families who make our work possible.

We thank the YouthInvest team for their dedication and commitment, and our Board and advisors for their continued guidance.

Together, we move forward with a shared commitment to creating equitable opportunities and enabling every young person to thrive.

Thank you for walking this journey with us.



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