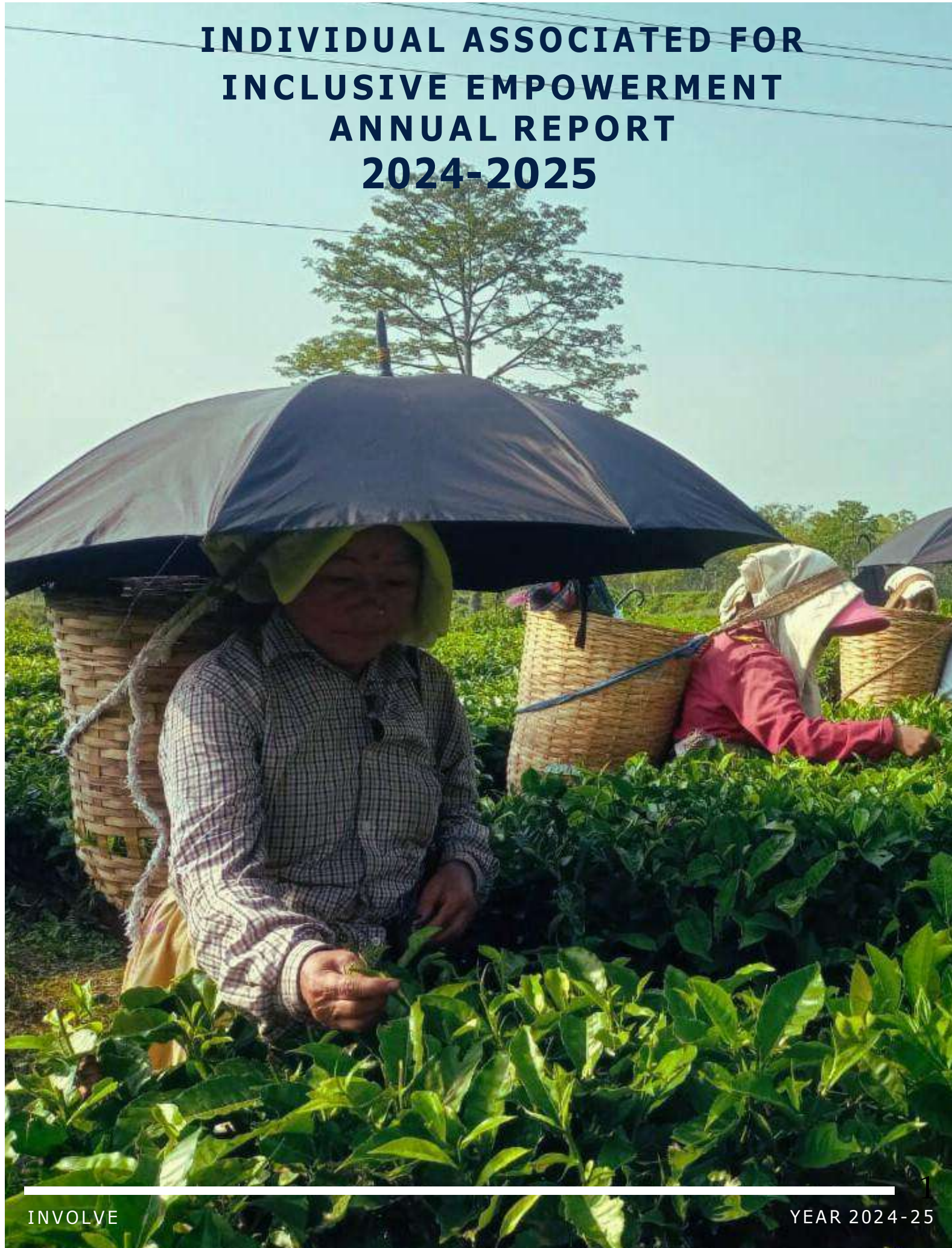
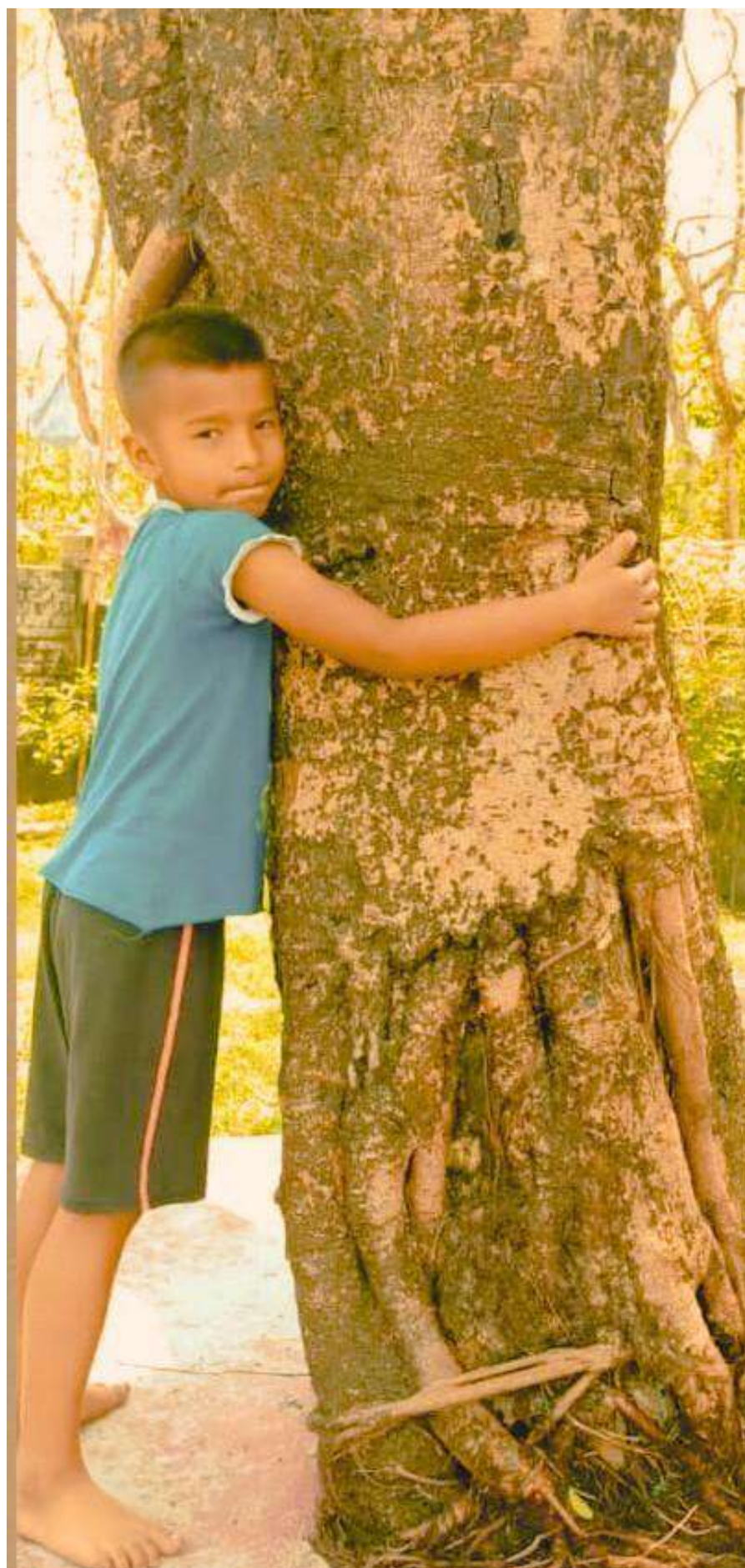


# **INDIVIDUAL ASSOCIATED FOR INCLUSIVE EMPOWERMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025**



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### *Our Mission*

*To work with communities as co-learners and support growth in education, access to entitlements, environmental initiatives and other emerging themes for their socio-economic development*

### *Our Vision*

*Tea Garden, Forest based and other communities in disadvantage become drivers of their own development, enhance their wellbeing and live in harmony with the natural environments*

### *Our Core Values*

- \*Upholding gender transformative approaches*
- \*Appreciating diversity*
- \*Ensuring inclusion*
- \*Promoting environmental sustainability*
- \*Ensuring transparency and accountability*



## *Journey So Far*

*INVOLVE began as a collective of individuals driven by the desire to support disadvantaged communities, particularly those dependent on tea gardens and forests. Initially working informally, the group engaged in small-scale community initiatives focused on education, awareness, and social welfare. Over time, INVOLVE expanded its outreach, gradually building a network of volunteers and local stakeholders.*

*In 2023, INVOLVE was officially registered as a society, marking a significant milestone in its journey. This formalisation strengthened participatory approaches, enhanced community engagement, and facilitated collaboration with government agencies and NGOs.*

*INVOLVE addresses the challenges faced by tea garden, forest-based, and marginalised communities in North Bengal, focusing on economic hardship, lack of education, limited access to government entitlements, and environmental sustainability.*

*The organisation works to empower communities through education, promote women's leadership, and improve access to welfare programmes. By fostering inclusive participation and awareness, INVOLVE contributes to self-sufficiency, resilience, and long-term socio-economic growth. The organisation also focuses on environmental sustainability within the community by creating awareness of key environmental issues.*

*Today, INVOLVE operates across Darjeeling, Alipurduar, Jalpaiguri, and Kalimpong, with a focus on education, women's empowerment, and environmental sustainability.*



*At INVOLVE, we find fulfillment in creating meaningful change, transforming our otherwise mundane existence into one driven by purpose. Despite our limited resources—both in time and financial assistance—we are proud of the difference we are making in the communities we cater to.*

*2024 was significant year for us, as Mr. Ratan Lama joined as Director of INVOLVE in a full fledged manner from the month of July 2024. Following this development, the programmes and endeavors have found a renewed sense of vigor and purpose.*

*For the last three years, our primary objective has been to establish INVOLVE on a solid foundation, and immense time and effort has been devoted to ensuring that all legalities are addressed and that our financial and social transactions remain transparent and verifiable. Thus, during the 2024-25 period, INVOLVE achieved important registrations and certifications like 80G and 12AB Permanent registration, Professional Tax enrollment and TAN that enhance its credibility, financial transparency, and operational efficiency. These registrations are essential in reinforcing its commitment to responsible governance, accountability, and compliance with regulatory frameworks.*

*With these registrations in place, INVOLVE is now positioned to strengthen partnerships, access more funding opportunities, and expand its outreach while ensuring full transparency in its operations. The organization can now engage with corporate donors, individual benefactors, and institutional grants with enhanced credibility, facilitating sustainable growth and long-term impact within tea garden communities*

*Our journey continues, driven by the unwavering commitment of our team and volunteers. As we look ahead, we remain dedicated to expanding our efforts and deepening our impact on the communities we serve.*

# PROGRAMMES

*Involve works on three Key themes, Education, Empowerment and Environmental sustainability at the community level. The following projects under each theme were curated, keeping in mind the community reflecting their voice.*

## Education:

### **Project Name: Transforming Naxalbari Nepali High School into a Model School (Model School Project)**

#### **Objective:**

To cultivate well-rounded individuals by fostering a holistic learning environment that nurtures academic excellence, physical and mental well-being, and practical skills.

#### **Location:**

Naxalbari Block, Darjeeling District, West Bengal.

#### **Key Development:**

The key development in Naxalbari Nepali High School has been the growing acceptance and sense of ownership shown by the teachers and students in participating in project-related activities. The school actively organized a menstrual health session for students and has also set aside a menstrual corner with kit for emergency purposes for girls. The project supported 200 Girls with Menstrual Kits. Sports Week was conducted in a highly systematic manner, ensuring participation from everyone, including both teachers and students. Progress has been made in the school library, with students now regularly visiting it. The school has welcomed interns for their internship and has designated Saturdays for co-curricular activities.



## **Project Title: Strengthening Women through SHGs for Socio-Economic Empowerment in Mechpara and Raimatang Tea Gardens**

### **Objective:**

To strengthen SHGs in the tea gardens as platforms for women's leadership and socio-economic advancement.

Location: Kalchini block, Alipurduar district, West Bengal.

### **Key Development:**

The establishment of two women's groups in Mechpara and Raimatang Tea Gardens marks a significant step toward empowering local communities. These groups serve as platforms for women to come together, share experiences, and build leadership skills, enabling them to take an active role in shaping their communities. By fostering a sense of unity and purpose, the groups contribute to sustainable growth through initiatives such as financial literacy programs, and awareness sessions on health and education.

Moreover, the women in these groups are encouraged to take part in decision-making processes within their tea gardens, advocating for fair wages, better working conditions, and access to essential services. Through mentorship and collaboration, they develop skills that not only benefit their personal lives but also strengthen the overall economic and social fabric of their communities. These efforts lay the foundation for long-term progress, ensuring that future generations inherit a more equitable and empowered society. The initiative is the organisation's own initiative.



**Project Title: Menstrual Health and Hygiene Awareness in Tea Gardens of Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, Darjeeling and Kalimpong.**

**Objective:**

To promote menstrual health awareness and accessibility in tea garden communities by providing education, resources, and Menstrual kit, ensuring that women and girls have the awareness and means to manage their menstrual health with dignity and confidence.

**Location:**

9 Tea Gardens in Alipurduar,  
2 in Darjeeling,  
2 in Jalpaiguri,  
2 in Kalimpong

**Key Development:**

The initiative successfully engaged with over 5,100 women and adolescents, fostering a deeper understanding of menstrual health, hygiene, and its socio-economic impact within tea garden communities. By conducting interactive sessions, distributing essential menstrual hygiene kits, and facilitating open discussions, the project empowered individuals with knowledge and practical solutions to manage menstrual health with dignity.

Beyond education, the program addressed long-standing challenges such as limited access to sanitary products, inadequate sanitation facilities, and prevalent stigma surrounding menstruation.

The initiative was supported by Project Baala.



**Project Title: Consumer Awareness on Consumer Protection Act 2019**

**Objective:** To enhance consumer awareness by educating individuals about their rights especially Consumer Protection Act 2019, responsibilities, and available resources, enabling them to make informed decisions, avoid fraudulent practices, and advocate for fair trade and ethical business practices.

**Location:** Kurseong Block, Mirik Block, Bijanbari Block, Rangli Rangliot Block in Darjeeling District. Goubathan Block, Kalimpong I block in Kalimpong District

**Key Development:**

The programme was successfully organized in tea garden areas, schools, and colleges, ensuring that a diverse range of participants could benefit from the initiative. In addition to students, tea garden workers also gained valuable knowledge about consumer rights, financial literacy, and ethical business practices, empowering them to make informed decisions in their daily lives.

A total of 172 programmes were conducted, reaching over 5,000 people across various locations. These sessions facilitated engaging discussions, interactive workshops, and practical demonstrations, making consumer awareness more accessible and actionable for the participants. The widespread participation reflects the growing recognition of the importance of informed consumer choices within these communities. The programme is supported by Dept. of Consumer Affairs, FB&P, Darjeeling Regional Office.



## Environment

### **Project Title: Children as Catalysts for Climate Action and Environmental Conservation in Mechpara Tea Garden (Pilot Initiative).**

**Objective:** Educate and raise awareness among children and the community about climate change and environmental issues.

**Location:** Mechpara Tea Garden, Kalchini block, Alipurduar District, West Bengal



### **Key Development:**

As part of the project, a group of children has been formed to lead awareness campaigns on environmental issues. This initiative serves as a pilot program, allowing children to gradually develop their understanding and leadership skills in sustainability. Through interactive sessions and discussions, they are learning about climate change, waste management, and conservation efforts, enabling them to become environmental advocates within their communities.



## Significant Developments:

Throughout the 2024-25 period, INVOLVE has launched a series of innovative and impactful programs in tea garden communities, focusing on empowerment, awareness, and social development. The organization has prioritized initiatives that address critical issues, ensuring meaningful engagement with local workers, students, and community members.

## Key Programmes & Collaborations:

**Menstrual Hygiene Awareness for Tea Garden Workers –** This programme, supported by Project Baala, was designed to educate and equip tea garden workers with essential knowledge and resources for better menstrual health management. It has helped break taboos, promote hygienic practices, and ensure access to necessary menstrual products.



## Consumer Awareness Programme-

With the support of the Department of Consumer Affairs, FB&P, Darjeeling R.O, this initiative aimed to empower individuals with knowledge about consumer rights, ethical trade, and financial literacy. Tea garden workers, students, and local residents participated, gaining insights into fair practices, fraud prevention, and informed purchasing decisions.



## Women's Empowerment Project –

As a flagship initiative of INVOLVE, this program fosters leadership and socio-economic growth among women in tea garden communities. It enables women to advocate for better working conditions, financial independence, and equal opportunities while strengthening community networks.



## BUILDING ON LEARNING

The thoughtful initiatives have laid a strong foundation for awareness, empowerment, and sustainable change in tea garden communities. Each program has contributed to improving lives by addressing essential needs and fostering education, advocacy, and leadership among participants. Moving forward, INVOLVE aims to build on these experiences by strengthening engagement, expanding outreach, and introducing new innovations.

### Key Takeaways & Learning:

#### Menstrual Hygiene Awareness –

The programme successfully initiated conversations about breaking social taboos, ensuring access to resources and promoting hygienic practices. Future efforts can focus on scaling awareness campaigns, improving availability of sustainable menstrual products, and encouraging community-driven initiatives for long-term impact.

#### Consumer Awareness Programme –

The sessions highlighted the importance of consumer rights, ethical trade, and financial literacy among tea garden workers and students. Moving forward, deeper engagement through interactive workshops, digital literacy programs, and localized consumer advisory groups can enhance the effectiveness of this initiative.

#### Women's Empowerment Project –

The programme has fostered leadership and socio-economic growth, enabling women to advocate for fair wages, financial independence, and better working conditions. Building on this, mentorship programs, entrepreneurship training, and policy advocacy can further empower women, strengthening their roles in community development.



# WAY AHEAD



## **Expansion of Consumer Awareness Project –**

The planned initiative for Alipurduar District, focusing on Kalchini and Madarihat tea garden areas from April 2025, will ensure targeted support for tea garden workers by addressing region-specific challenges.

## **Strengthening Collaborations with Schools –**

The association with Naxalbari Nepali High School has provided valuable insights, and in 2025 -26, efforts will be made to introduce more structured programmes, facilitate teacher training, and integrate co-curricular activities that enhance student engagement.

## **Scaling Up Impact Initiatives –**

Leveraging learning from past programmes, INVOLVE plans to develop sustainable models, strengthen partnerships with stakeholders, and ensure continuous capacity-building to drive long-term progress. Our focus will be to work more with the children group on Environment for the 2025-2026 period.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

*We sincerely thank each and every government executive, agency and individual for their invaluable support and their willingness to walk an extra mile for us to help in making these initiatives a success. Your revered guidance, collaboration, and commitment have empowered communities and driven impactful change.*

*We also appreciate the local administration, education, health, environmental, and legal authorities for their expertise in strengthening our programmes.*

*We acknowledge the tea garden management and local leaders for fostering engagement and sustainability.*

*Last but not the least, to all our friends, benefactors and well-wishers, educators, healthcare professionals, and volunteers—your dedication has been instrumental. Together, we continue to build a brighter future.*

1. District Panchayat and Rural Development Officer (DPRDO) Kalimpong.
2. Assistant Director, Dept of Consumer Affairs and Fair Business Practice, Darjeeling, Regional Office.
3. Panchayat Pradhan (Sukna GP, St. Mary's III GP, Chenga-Panighata GP, Darjeeling District)
4. Panchayat Pradhan (Paten Godak, Ahalay GP, Goubathan I and II, Dalim GP, Kalimpong District)
5. Teacher In charge, Naxalbari, Nepali High School
6. Teacher In charge, Teesta Valley High School
7. Teacher In Charge, Bijanbari Degree College
8. Teacher In charge, Panighata High School
9. Principal, Rainbow High School, Panighata
10. Manager, Mechpara Tea Garden, Alipurduar
11. Gomden Teas, Salbari
12. Ms. Ronita Chattopadhyay, Kolkata
13. Ms. Freya Marshal, England
14. Ms. Hasina Kharbhiih, Impulse NGO Network, Shillong
15. Mr. Sonam G. Bhutia, Gangtok
16. Fr Julius Kujur, Director Jesu Ashram, Matigara
17. Mr. Ashis Agarwal, CA, Kolkata
18. Project Baala
19. Mr Bhusan Sherpa, Sonada

**CONTACT@INVOLVEINDIA.ORG**

<https://involveindia.org>

**+91 94763 08968**  
**WHATSAPP**

**+91 94763 08968**  
**MOBILE**

**Methibari,**  
**Salbari,**

