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Promoting Livelihoods
Through Sustainable Development

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018



Environment Conservation Society (Switch ON) started in 2008, is a leading not-for-profit organization in India working towards creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for people living in rural areas. The organization has gathered recognition and multiple awards for their work through advocacy, capacity building, skilling and incubating innovative technology and business models. Switch ON has received the Pacesetter Award from MNRE and US Embassy, Social Impact Awards from SP Jain and Cummins to name a few. Switch ON has successfully incubated and spun off leading social enterprises like ONergy Solar, ONganic Foods and ON Skills, promoted five Farmers Producers Companies (FPC). Switch ON incubates innovative technologies and business models that work towards sustainability and takes it to scale. Since our inception we have impacted a total of 500,000 Lives, enhanced livelihood of 10,000+ Farmers, and provided skill training to over 1000+ rural youth and entrepreneurs.

	Page No.
From Managing Director's Desk	1
ECS at a Glance	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision, Mission, Goal, Core Values • Operational Area 	
Tracing 10 years of Innovation and Impact	3
Highlights of the Year (Each Division's Highlights including impact)	4
Renewable Energy Access	
1. Promotion of Solar Pump	5
Picture Page + Impact	6
2. Model Solar Village	7
Agriculture and Livelihood	
1. Formation of Farmers Producer Organizations	8
Picture Page+ Impact	9
2. Organic Village	10
Skill Development	
1. Suryamitra Skill Development Program & Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra (PMKVY) (govt.program) & Utkarsh Bangla (PBSSD)	11
Picture Page+ Impact	12
2. RPL Training Programme of Safai karmacharis	13
Wellbeing	
1. Kolkata Clean Air	14
Picture Page+ Impact	15
2. After School Project	16
Events and Engagement	
Audited Financials	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auditor's statement • Financial statements 	

Celebrating 10 years

FROM DIRECTOR'S DESK

I am very privileged to have the opportunity to re-join Switch ON team and be part a set of very exciting and diverse projects that have the promise to inspire and bring large scale impact. This year, we are thrilled to complete 10 years of Un-Learning and Service, and take this opportunity to show our deep gratitude for your good wishes and support - without which we would not be here. With our dream to see a Sustainable and Equitable India - we started on our journey in 2008 by creating opportunities for marginalised communities with our work in Solar Energy, Agriculture / Livelihoods and Skilling/Education.

During this time, **Switch ON** has undertaken multiple innovative projects and spun of leading social enterprises like **ONergy Solar**, **ONganic Foods** and **ON Skills**. With a team strength touching 200, we have impacted about 1 Million lives. This year, we empanelled under **OTELP** for introducing innovative Livelihood opportunities among the tribal community.

We are very excited to be working on some very exciting and diverse projects and look forward to your continued support. Thank you once again for everything.



ECS AT A GLANCE

- ❖ **Vision:** A Sustainable and Equitable India
- ❖ **Mission:** Promoting sustainable livelihoods and addressing environment challenges through innovative business models and technologies
- ❖ **Goal:** Create opportunities for 10 million under-served people by 2030
- ❖ **Core Values:** Integrity, Accountability, Equality, Respect, Striving for Excellence

Operational Area



TRACING 10 YEARS OF INNOVATION AND IMPACT

The ON Conglomerate is a group of social ventures setup with a deep commitment to Sustainable and Equitable India. Switch ON has incubated multiple initiatives - working across Solar Energy, Organic agriculture , Skilling and Education.

- 2008 - Switch ON registered and Climate Ride from Kolkata to Delhi undertaken
- 2010 - ONergy Solar's 1st Renewable Energy Centre Established
- 2012 – First batch of RKJ After-School Learning Centre starts in Kolkata
- 2014 – Setup of TapovON Innovation Incubator in Nadia, West Bengal
- 2015 – ONganic Foods established and incubated by IRMA and IIM Cal
- 2017- ON Skills established and empanelled with PMKVY, DDUGKY, PBSSD

Highlights of the Year

Renewable Energy Access

- Awarded a project on “Empowering Lives in East India” to promote Solar Irrigation and Lighting in East India, funded by Good energies
- Successfully developed Surpanagar village as a Solar Model Village
- Created a FLDG Fund for financing of solar irrigation systems with Axis Bank and RBL Bank.
- Arranged 2 Stakeholder Roundtable Conference in West Bengal

Agriculture / Livelihood

- Received a mandate to promote Four Farmer Producer Organizations in West Bengal as a Resource Institute under SFAC,
- Awarded a project on “Promoting Organic Agriculture for small and marginal Farmers in East India” from Lush India

Skill Development

- 60 Students trained in Solar trade - 77% placement achieved
- Setup 3 Skill Training Centres in across West Bengal

Wellbeing

- Kolkata Clean Air a citizen
- Set up a after school learning centre in Bankura

RENEWABLE ENERGY ACCESS

1. Promoting Solar Irrigation and Solar Home Light- “Empowering Lives in East India”

Partner: Pacesetter Fund, MNRE, GIZ IGEN access and Good Energies

ECS has taken an initiative to Empower Lives in East India through promotion of solar pump and solar light. Under this initiative, we are creating an ecosystem for the uptake of Solar irrigation and solar lighting with a key focus on access to finance with innovation in financial engineering. With the support of our funding partners we have created another First Loss Default Agreement (FLDG) Fund with Axis bank along with RBL bank and partnered with two MFI's in creating a revolving corpus for scale up of solar lighting solutions. In addition we started to demonstrate solar powered drip irrigation systems that were installed to demonstrate water conservation.

Achievement and Innovation

- FLDG setup with RBL Bank and Axis Bank to promote Solar irrigation
- Setup a revolving corpus with Adhikar and Gram Uthan MFIs for solar home light financing
- Created an entire ecosystem to facilitate financing, and adoption of modern technology through Awareness and Capacity Building
- Mobilized and surveyed over 2128 farmers , submitted 45 nos Bank application for financing of solar irrigation pump and have another 149 farmers in the pipeline
- Submitted over 1430 nos applications to MFIs for home lighting systems
- Conducted Six Farmers Exposure visit across Bengal and Odisha
- Arranged three stakeholder consultations with Key Government officials, Bankers etc to build awareness and capacity

Impact

- 39 no solar irrigation systems sanctioned by bank and EPC undertaken
- 1233 nos solar Home light systems financed and installed
- Positively impacting over 224 farmers directly with solar irrigation systems installed
- Positively impacting over 6165 lives directly with solar lighting systems installed

Stories of Change

“Coming together of Solar and Drip - What LED did to Solar Lighting, Drip will do to Solar Irrigation”

Mr. Dhruvprasad Latua, Farmer, Sut Chhara Village, Paschim Medinipur district, West Bengal

Impact: Mr Latua installed a solar powered irrigation pump and coupled it with a Drip irrigation system. Not only does he irrigate his 1 Acre land, he also supplies water to 10 other farmers, totalling the net irrigated area to around 10 bighas. Dhruvprasad made savings

even after submitting the EMI of Solar pump, was about of Rs. 59227 in the year and additional earning was nearly Rs. 18500 from selling to neighbour farmers. He has become a role model for the surrounding farmers.

Beneficiary Speak : “When Switch ON told us about the drip-irrigation project, I wasn’t sure it would really work. Plus I knew these types of systems are expensive so I didn’t think I would have the capacity to pay for one. But now we’re happy to see how much progress we’ve made. We are now able to cultivate more varieties of crops and make profit by selling water to others farmers. Not only am I producing more, but there are also fewer costs both economically and environmentally”.

2. Solar Model Village: “A Community Approach to Sustainable Development”

Partner: GE (under their CSR)

Switch ON identified Surpanagar village which is located in Onda Tehsil of Bankura district in West Bengal, a power starved Village next to GE factory and developed it as a Smart Model Solar Village. The Smart solar village serves as an integrated platform for sustainable development, encompassing solar energy for electricity via a smart micro grid, Solar powered ICT (Education and Skill Development Centres), solar powered clean drinking water, solar outdoor street lighting and indoor lanterns.

Achievement and Innovation

- Integrated clean energy within the community benefitting education, health, livelihoods
- Setup a pre-paid micro grid for access to 24 hours electricity with a daily energy budget.
- Created village energy committee and energy entrepreneurs for project sustainability.
- Directly impacting improvement of standards of living (with more energy saving options)
- Proprietary Technology developed – Pre-paid meters, Smart dimming of lighting, Remote monitoring

Model Solar village pic

Impact

- 675 people’s lives directly benefitted from the smart solar village.
- The interventions make a positive impact on the lives of households and community - especially children, women and youth
- 100 households are benefited from ICT centre
- Access to clean and safe drinking water to 150 people, Improved Safety and quality of life of 249 women and Improved Skills of over 174 Children and youth

Stories of Change

Bhanumoti Chatterjee, Surpanagore, Bankura District, West Bengal,

Impact: Ms. Bhanumoti Chatterjee is a homemaker and she receives a miniscule old age pension which is the only source of her income. With no access to safe drinking water, she used to go to a nearby well which is a seldom remained contaminated. In collaboration with GE, SwitchON has been able to provide safe drinking water. It gives her a very good impact on her daily lives. Also provide her electricity to her. Now she has been able to save some money every month which was spent on kerosene lamps.

Beneficiary Speak: “SwitchON has been a divine intervention to us and to our village. From the solar energy lamp posts to drinking water facility, the ngo has been able to bring a lot of happiness and money saving opportunities for us”.

AGRICULTURE / LIVELIHOOD

1. PROMOTING FARMER PRODUCER COMPANY – “Empowering Small and Marginal Farmers”

Partner: SFAC, Govt. Of India, Govt. Of West Bengal, NABARD

Switch ON is a **Resource Institute with SFAC and received a mandate to promote four Farmer Producer Organization in West Bengal**, reaching out to over 4000 small farmers. This program is supported by the Dept. of Horticulture, Govt. of West Bengal. In the last couple of months, Switch ON is strengthening farmer capacity through agricultural best practices for enhanced productivity; facilitate access to fair & remunerative markets including **linking producer groups to marketing opportunities by market aggregators**. Additionally, with the help of NABARD Switch ON is promoting FPO-ON Farm Fresh Innovations Producers Company Ltd in Hanskhali, Nadia in West Bengal, and supported them with supply chain, organic farming, food processing.

Achievement and Innovation

- 2,232 nos farmers were mobilized
- Introduced Better crop management practices
- Trained more than 350 farmers in Commercial and Modern Technology for sustainable crop cultivation specially Cashew Nut and Flowers
- Participated in Fairs - Focused on Market Linkage and Input Linkage
- Conducted 4 nos Training of trainers programme at FPO level
- Arranged Exposure visit at Regional Research Centres and Other FPOs
- Collected soil samples from 25 villages for Soil testing in the project location
- Introduced Convergence with various Govt. Agencies and Schemes
- Introduction of Climate smart agriculture and High Value Organic Agriculture

Impact:

- More than 40 Farmers Interest Groups (FIG) formed
- 2000+ farmers, 35000 lives and over 40 villages directly impacted
- ON Farm FPO reaches out to over 5000 farmers and has 2 vehicles with which they trade in horticulture produce and also grow Grains and Oilseeds organically

Stories of Change

Niranjan Mandal, CEO - ON Farm, Gopalpur, Nadia, West Bengal

Impact : Nira and other members of ON Farm farmer Producer Company fall under the Below Poverty Line. Nira and other farmers from the area were struggling, as marginal farmers - before joined ONFarm. Through the producer company they are thriving business with over 4 tonnes of vegetables traded every week and able to get access to many government schemes. They encouraged farmers to grow organically and introduce high value produce like medicinal plants.

Beneficiary Speak: "Switch ON's intervention of starting a farmer producer company has been able to connect thousands of farmers like us to market, and setup enterprise, which has changed our lives drastically. It has brought back pride in farming for us. Initially we were at mercy of middlemen to market our produce but now we run and manage our own business.

2. Promotion of Organic Farming in East India – “ Doubling Farmer’s Income”

Partner: LUSH Foundation

Switch ON was awarded a project on “Promotion of Organic Farming in East India”. Switch ON works with a community of small farmers in Nadia District of West Bengal. 200 hundred farmers have been converted to organic farming. In the project we supported them to become self-reliant in preparing their inputs and getting access to indigenous seeds and facilitated training programmes on Multi-Cropping and Organic farming using indigenous seeds to develop Local Community Resource Persons (CRPs).

Achievement and Innovation

- Development of community experts to support the organic farming community on a regular basis and scale up the work
- Access to organic Markets ensuring over all sustainability
- Handholding support to Farmers to stay organic
- Development of 1 seed bank of indigenous seeds is ongoing
- Construction of 100 nos Vermicompost pit are ongoing

Impact

- Increased in farmers income and reduction in cost of cultivation
- 2 Community resource person developed

Stories of Change

Govinda Biswas, Organic Farmer, Nadia District, West Bengal

Impact: Govinda has more than 8 years' experience on growing rice and Moong over an area of 7 bighas. He was involved in current methods of cultivation on using chemical fertilizer and has been struggling for profit because of improper and irregular market linkage. After being associated with Switch ON, he got introduced to growing organically native variety of high value produce like Govind Bhog Rice, Black Rice, varieties of I i.e. black, white and red, fenugreek seeds, (methi) kaala jeera, moong, flax seeds. Organic farming has resulted in more profit and hence his neighbour farmers also joined him to work collectively. With proper market linkage through ONganic, they have been able to earn Rs 7300/- per month – doubling their income.

Beneficiary speaks: "After switching to organic farming, there are more varieties of food items we are producing, lessening our risk of loss which was the state earlier. We are also gaining 25% extra over the prevailing market price, which is adding to our benefit."

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

1. Suryamitra Skill Development Program & Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra (PMKVY) (govt.program) & Utkarsh Bangla (PBSSD)- "Empowering employment of underserved rural youths"

Partner: National Institute of Solar Energy and Department of Skill Development , Govt of West Bengal

Switch ON runs market linked employment training programs aimed to empower a large number of young Indians to take up industry- relevant & market associated skill training which will make a secure livelihood for them. Switch ON runs the Suryamitra skill development program focussing on training youth in skill improvement with renewable energy. In Bankura & Nadia we have our skill training center.

Achievement and Innovation

- Setup of 3 Skill Training Centres in 3 districts of West Bengal.
- Tie up with over 38 companies for employment generation.
- Use of innovative IT based learning content.
- Focus on work place readiness and soft skill development.

Impact:

- 60 Students trained in Solar trade - 77% placement achieved.
- 300 students enrolled for training in Retail, Hospitality, Security and IT trades.

Stories of Change - Solar Entrepreneur

Pradip Kumar Gayen, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal

Impact: Pradip Kumar Gayon was part of the fourth batch of the training program. Coming from a background of electrical and electronic trade, he joined the course with an intention to be a solar entrepreneur.

Beneficiary Speak: "This course will open up a lot of opportunities for entrepreneurs who want to start a solar venture. Solar is going to be profitable business prospect in the coming days and hence I took the course. I aim to form a cooperative with budding entrepreneurs like me so that we can play a much larger role under the umbrella of Switch ON – ON Skills."

2. RPL Training program of Safai karmacharis- "Market Linked Employment Training"

Partners: Skill Council for Green Jobs & NSKFDC.

Switch ON has trained more than 300 safai karmacharis and upgraded their skills at Bansberia Municipality. A skill development training for Safai Karmachari with modernized tools and focus on health and safety.

Achievement and Innovation

- Initiate a step for recognition prior learning for Safai Karmacharis.
- On job training with modernized tools to reduce manual labour.
- Sensitisation and awareness on health and safety.

WELLBEING

1. KOLKATA CLEAN AIR- "community and citizen awareness initiative"

Partner: RKJ trust

KOLKATA CLEAN AIR was an initiative spun off in collaboration with other like-minded organisations and citizens. This a community and citizen awareness initiative has a vision to make Kolkata the most liveable and climate friendly city in the world. Air pollution affects the health, economy and is the major contributor of climate change since it subsidizes to all the greenhouse gases. The city's air has become toxic year round, by extensive lifestyle changes and bold policy reforms.

Achievement and Innovation

- A Press conference was organized with the doctors for awareness about the crisis.
- Awareness campaign built through street theatres by College students and leadership workshops to create the future torch bearer.
- A cycle ride and march for head to spread awareness.
- Workshops conducted on schools with solutions for waste, air monitoring, urban gardening.

Impact

- The campaign has directly interacted with 25,000 people and created awareness through signature the campaigns, street theaters and awareness walks.
- Partnered with 12 schools and colleges as volunteers to organize 8 workshops.
- Health camp conducted with pulmonary function tests done on over 800 traffic guards and auto rickshaw drivers.

2. After School Learning centre- “Empowering the future”

Partner: RKJ trust

Two after school learning centres are being run where Children coming from absolute bottom of the pyramid households . Our aim is to have the children gain leadership and social skills through participating in organized activities – so that they become independent and responsible citizens.

Achievement and Innovation

- Operating two learning centers in Nadia and in Bankura
- Activity based learning activities on school curriculum, basic computer knowledge & spoken English
- After-school learning programs have led to better test scores, improved homework completion, and higher grades in school curriculum and board Exams.
- After-school learning programs improving children outcomes such as externalizing behavior and school attendance.
- Started a adult learning center with 20 learners.

Impact:

- 89 children come to the two learning centres
- 90% children have a progressive report card & a better behavioral attitude. This improvement is most notably in the transition from middle to high school.

Stories of Change: “Future of the Country”

Subhadip goes to class 1 & also a student of our center. He faced some learning difficulties in math, reading story and comprehension, rhymes. Last six months continuously he attend his classes here. His father is a labor and mother is a housewife.

Impact: After taking classes now he is able to understand and solve simple math, his reading problems is also solved by our trainer.

Beneficiary speaks: His mother said “Thanks to Switch ON, our life is looking positive. I want my son to learn computers, have the basic knowledge of computer and also have the ability to operate a computer. I want him to acquire some quality education.”

