FIELD NOTES

A MONTHLY UPDATE BY ANTARANG

Edition 1
April 2026

The year has begun with momentum. Several long-planned initiatives have moved from strategy to execution across states and sectors. In 2026, our focus is centred on the structural resilience of career education ecosystems, converting foundational groundwork into large-scale implementation alongside our government and industry stakeholders.

Here are BIG UPDATES from January and February to reflect this data-driven momentum, showcasing a strengthened resolve to engineer inclusive, evidence-based pathways for India's youth.

Antarang's strategy is to **SHOW** implementation methodology and success in 24 model districts across 5 states in India; **BUILD** the career readiness ecosystem along with state resources and then **EMBED** the model within the state high school ecosystem.

Visit our website www.antarangfoundation.org to know more about our Model.

Our Model Districts show strong evidence for the need for Career Education

1. We Track and Report Post School Transitions: Student/ School-level / District level

We track how scholarly transition post class 10 and 12 to understand the efficacy of career education on student future choices.

The year 2024-25 showed us that post grade 10:

**Average across 17 district*

Nagaland
18.7%
highest NEET post grade 10*

Yamunanagar
0.6%
least NEET post grade 10*

Post Grade 12:

It was very encouraging to see that out of all the students who were in grade 12 in 2024-25,

- **74.3%** enrolled in higher education
- **85.6%** EEET
- **11%** NEET
- **2.6%** were re-attempting the grade 12 examinations
- **7.9%** were re-attempting the grade 10 examinations
- **3.3%** NA*

Embed

Build

Show

- **4.3%** were re-attempting the grade 10 examinations
- **8%** NA NEET*

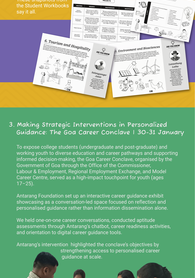
85.7%
transitioned to Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship or Technical Training (EEET)

For detailed data, write in to tanuashree@antarangfoundation.org

2. Contextualizing the Career Education Curriculum: Nagaland uses On-ground Change post Interactive Rapid Testing

Personalisation, with a deep understanding of socio-cultural markers, is key to effective career education across geographies. The Curriculum for Nagaland schools saw refreshed customisation with increased visual ease, highlighting local contexts and examples, and including more local stakeholders, such as parents, artisan cluster heads, and an inclusive of trusters and parent material following intensive rapid testing.

These snapshots from the Student Workbooks say it all.



3. Making Strategic Interventions in Personalized Guidance: The Goa Career Conclave | 30-31 January

To expose college students (undergraduate and post-graduate) and working youth to diverse education and career pathways and supporting institutions delivering Goa's High Quality Career Services, organized by the Government of Goa through the Office of the Commissioner, Labour & Employment, Regional Employment Exchange, and Model Career Centre, served as a high-impact touchpoint for youth (ages 17-25).

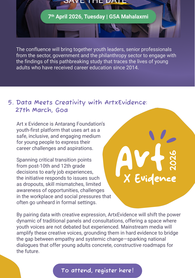
Antarang Foundation set up an interactive career guidance exhibit showcasing a 5 dimensional learning space focused on reflection and personalized guidance rather than information dissemination alone.

We held one-on-one career conversations, conducted aptitude assessments through Antarang Pulse, and ran sensitisation activities and orientation to digital career guidance tools.

Antarang's intervention highlighted the conclave's objectives by strengthening access to personalised career guidance at scale.

4. Conference of Pathways to Mobility: with SAMAGAM on 7th April, Mumbai.

We are excited to unveil Year 1 insights from the nation's first longitudinal study on student journeys from classroom to careers at SAMAGAM 2026.



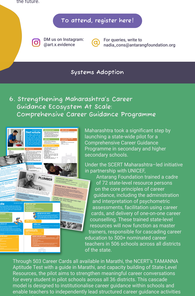
The confluence will bring together youth leaders, senior professionals from the industry, academia, and the philanthropic space to engage with the findings and to collaborate on actionable frameworks for young adults who have received career education since 2014.

5. Data Meets Creativity with ArtxEvidence: 27th March, Goa

Art x Evidence is Antarang Foundation's youth-first platform that uses art as a safe, inclusive, and engaging medium for young people to express their career challenges and aspirations.

Spanning vivid drawings from post-10th and 12th grade decisions to early career experiences, the initiative responds to issues such as dropouts, skill mismatches, limited awareness of opportunities, challenges in the workplace and social pressures that often go unheard in formal settings.

By pairing data with creative expression, ArtxEvidence will shift the power dynamic of traditional panels and consultations, offering a space where youth voices are not debated but amplified. Mainstream media will amplify these creative voices, grounding them in hard evidence to bridge the gap between empathy and systemic change—sparking national dialogues that offer young adults concrete, constructive roadmaps for the future.



Systems Adoption

6. Strengthening Maharashtra's Career Guidance Ecosystem At Scale: Comprehensive Career Guidance Programme

Maharashtra took a significant step by launching a state-wide pilot for a Comprehensive Career Guidance Programme in secondary and higher secondary schools.

Under the SCERT Maharashtra–led initiative in partnership with DHET, Antarang Foundation trained a cadre of 100 Master Trainers who will lead the core principles of career guidance, including the administration and interpretation of psychometric assessments, facilitation using career cards, and delivery of one-on-one career counselling. These trained state-level resources will roll out the pilot as master trainers to district and block level career education to 100+ nominated career teachers in 500 schools across all districts of the state.

Through 503 Career Cards all available in Marathi, the NCERT's TAMANNA Assessment, the 360 Career Wheel, and a capacity building roadmap, Antarang's efforts aim to provide a structured, evidence-based pathway for every student in pilot schools across all 36 districts. This cascade model is designed to institutionalise career guidance within schools and enable teachers to independently lead structured career guidance activities with students.

7. Architecting a 3-Year Roadmap for Comprehensive Career Guidance: The Rajasthan State Consultation Workshop

Organised by the Rajasthan School Education Council and the Rajasthan State Council of Educational Research and Training, with technical support from UNICEF Rajasthan and Antarang Foundation, 30 January 2026 was a milestone with a one-day State-Level Consultation Workshop on Comprehensive Career Guidance in Jaipur.

Focused on embedding career guidance as a core component of the education system, the workshop adopted a multi-stakeholder participatory approach, with participants recording perspectives of students, career counsellors, teachers, parents, peer mentors, civil society organisations, and representatives from key government departments beyond school education, including higher education, social justice, women and child development, and skill development.

Preeti Venkataramanan, Sector Expert (Curriculum & Training) moderated the workshop, and David Mehan, Joint Education Director, Antarang Foundation consolidated the outcomes into an actionable three-year roadmap aligned with National Education Policy 2020, aimed at strengthening structures, building capacity, and ensuring equitable access to high-quality, data-driven, informed, aspirational career decisions.

8. Aligning Systems for Student Transitions: A High-level Joint Consultation at the Directorate of School Education, Nagaland

Antarang's focus across states has been to consolidate synergies and priorities of all state bodies that work with the secondary age population. Bringing together key stakeholders from the Directorate of School Education, Nagaland, Nagaland State Council of Educational Research and Training, Nagaland, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the Nagaland Board of School Education, and the Nagaland Secretariat, alongside Antarang Foundation and Vidyalaya, a high-level joint consultation was convened at the Directorate of School Education on 11th February.

Antarang presented critical implementation data and progress indicators from its ongoing career guidance interventions, thus facilitating a reflective session on inter-departmental convergence. The discussion focused on synchronizing system-wide alignment towards a strategic roadmap, specifically addressing student aspirations and the institutionalization of transition tracking.

Key outcomes emphasized strengthening parental engagement through Parent Teacher Meetings and developing robust industry linkages to ensure sustainable career pathways for youth across the state.

9. Advancing Career Guidance on a National Level: Vikas Bhawan Young Leaders Dialogue 2026 with UNICEF, Karnataka

In an impactful multi-stakeholder collaboration, UNICEF YuWaah, in partnership with Antarang Foundation, set up a Career Guidance and Counselling stall at the Vikas Bhawan Young Leaders Dialogue held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on 27-28 January, under the leadership of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

Over four days, the stall engaged 250+ youth (ages 15–25+) from 54 states across India. Through a graduated engagement model—including aspiration mapping, case-based career exploration, aptitude assessments, and ~130 instances of 1:1 counselling—the stall provided a safe, inclusive space for youth to reflect on aspirations, explore career pathways, and seek personalized guidance on post-school transitions. The national education budget reflects the government's commitment to personalized career education as a tool to accelerate education to employment pathways.

10. Scaling Vocational Integration and the National Education Policy 2020: Rajasthan Budget Unlock

In a significant move toward institutionalizing the National Education Policy 2020, the Rajasthan State Government announced a ₹1,000 crore pooled budget dedicated to vocational education and career guidance. A key component of this fiscal commitment includes an approved outlay of ₹51.10 crore to expand vocational education from the existing 4,019 schools to an additional 500 institutions in the upcoming academic session.

By unlocking these specific resources, the state is strengthening the structural alignment between secondary education and workforce readiness. These provisions represent a data-backed shift toward cross-departmental integration, ensuring that school-to-work pathways are both scalable and sustainably funded to meet the evolving aspirations of Rajasthan's youth.

P.S. It was heartening to see the recent national education budget carve out a sizable investment for the education-to-employability vertical. With India's demographic dividend and rising need for work with dignity and mobility, we welcome this focus from the central government.

Our Enablers

11. Integrating Strategic Talent: Because no work on the ground gets done without a robust backbone of support!

To support our expanding operational footprint, Antarang has integrated six new team members since January across decentralized state units and central support functions.

By embedding talent within state teams, we are driving local autonomy and on-ground responsiveness, while simultaneously strengthening our Research & Learning and Fundraising verticals.

12. Building Leadership: Antarang's Manager Accelerator Program sees a Second Round of Building Purposeful Leaders

February marked the second iteration of our Manager Accelerator Program (MAP), a specialized three-day residency for the Training & Quality team focused on purposeful leadership and strategic partnerships. As the primary support system for our frontline facilitators, the professional development of this cohort is a critical lever for institutional success.

By enhancing their capacity to lead with precision and empathy, Antarang is directly optimizing classroom delivery standards, ensuring that high-quality career education translates into improved well being and long-term outcomes for every student.

13. Building Institutional Capacity as a Catalyst for Impact: @The India Fundraising Conference 2026, 5-6 February, New Delhi

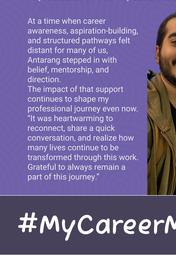
In a panel discussion bringing together nonprofit leaders and funders to explore a powerful idea: strong organisations make great programs possible, Archana Chandra, Board Member and Amit Chandra, Co-Founder, A.T.E. Chandra Foundation, Bikkrama Daulet Singh, Operating Partner, The Convergence Foundation, Priya Agrawal, Founder, Antarang Foundation and Viren Rasquinha, CEO, OGG examined the critical nexus between organizational resilience and programmatic excellence at the 2026 India Fundraising Conference.

The panel shifted the focus from traditional project-based funding toward the necessity of intentional investment in "backbone" infrastructure—specifically talent, fundraising, and operational systems. By analyzing growth-stage specific investments, the discussion underscored that institutional strength is not an administrative overhead but a primary driver of sustainable scale.

For Antarang, this dialogue reinforces our commitment to building a robust, data-informed internal architecture that can reliably support complex school-to-work transitions at a national level- towards collective Capacity, Capital and Courage.

14. Inclusivity is an everyday practice. Not a one-time initiative: The Antarang Session at HerKey

In an engaging virtual Session by HerKey on 13th January, attended by 70 women from across sectors and careers, our Director – Talent, Culture and Administration, Rapti Mukherjee, and Lead – Model Districts Implementation, Akshay Jha, shared real-world insights on building environments where young women feel safe, supported, and empowered to grow.

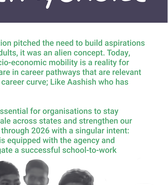


HerKey is one of India's largest platforms to unlock women's work-life aspirations. The session aptly captioned 'Creating Inclusive Spaces for Young Women and Girls – Fostering environments where every voice is valued' saw a high level of engagement from the 70+ attendees, underscoring the need for authentic conversations, as these help all understand what inclusion in practice really looks like in the spaces we are part of.

15. When an Unexpected Airport Reunion became a Reminder of Why Career Education in High School Matters!

Aashish Pandey, Antarang Alumni, Head of Agent Partnerships & Customer Success, Houzeo says: "Meeting Priya ma'am was one of those moments that quietly remind you where it all began. As an alumnus and former team member of Antarang Foundation, I can say with deep gratitude that this organization didn't just guide me—it helped build the very foundation on which my career stands today.

At a time when career awareness, aspiration-building, and structured pathways felt distant for many of us, Antarang stepped in with belief, mentorship, and direction.
The impact of that support continues to shape my professional journey even now. "It was heartwarming to reconnect, share a quick conversation, and realize how many lives continue to be transformed through this work. Grateful to always remain a part of this journey."



#MyCareerMyChoice

In 2013, when Antarang Foundation pitched the need to build aspirations and career readiness in young adults, it was an alien concept. Today, that conviction has paid off - socio-economic mobility is a reality for thousands of young adults who are in career pathways that are relevant and help them stay ahead of the career curve; Like Aashish who has forged a career of choice.

Having strong, young voices is essential for organisations to stay relevant and focussed. As we scale across states and strengthen our strategic partnerships, we move through 2026 with a singular intent: ensuring that every young adult is equipped with the agency and evidence-based support to navigate a successful school-to-work transition.

We look forward to an impactful academic year that will see us back in classrooms, ready to...

Aspire. Act. Achieve.