

ANNUAL REPORT

2011-2012



RUCHI

Rural Centre for Human Interests

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From the Executive Director's desk

It gives me immense pleasure to present the annual report of Rural Centre for Human Interests (RUCHI) for the financial year 2011-2012.

My long time deep involvement with the community development work has both enriched and enlightened me to acknowledge the plight of rural people and in the process strengthening my belief that in spite of low on education they can work exceptionally well under given opportunities and proper guidance.

Our endeavor is to constantly help communities in maximizing their standard of living by emphasizing absolute participation in the different programs taken up for their development. It is widely acknowledged now that without community participation no program can succeed. The pace of development leading to sustainability picks up once they feel involved and enabled to take decisions for themselves.

Lastly, I would like to assure you of our commitment to provide unprecedented service to local rural communities and cater to their information, views and service needs. So far we have been consistent in maintaining high standards of performance and I assure all that we shall continue to maintain the same in the times to come.

Needless to say, irrespective of the hardships and multifold challenges, whatever we have achieved today is not because of one person but the entire team of RUCHI. Without their support nothing would have been possible.

With regards,

Dharamvir Singh
Executive Director

Dated: 24th July, 2012

1. About the Organization

1. Background

The Rural Centre for Human Interests (popularly known as RUCHI) has incessantly worked towards uplifting the living conditions of the underprivileged section in selected regions of Himachal Pradesh, India. RUCHI through active grassroots participation and empowerment of the communities in all aspects of their development strives to minimize their dependence on external agencies. RUCHI's focus on promoting **sustainable anthropocentric development through environmentally, socially and economically integrated activities** ensures the improvement and sustainability of rural communities and their environment.

RUCHI began as a non-profit, voluntary organization in October 1980, set up in the Himalayan foothills of the state of Himachal Pradesh. It was registered as a Society on 16 February 1983 under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

The head office was shifted to the small village of Bandh in Dharampur Block of Solan District when the new Technology Resource Centre was founded in 1994. This was achieved through the Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), under the aegis of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. RUCHI is currently working in the southeast part of Himachal Pradesh in the districts of Solan and Sirmour, in the Dharampur and Rajgarh development blocks respectively.



From the onset, RUCHI realized the importance of providing assistance and technical support to facilitate and aid the process of development by encouraging individual and community participation in the process. Accepting and overcoming the various challenges is the key to RUCHI's successful progress which today looks back on its past achievements with pride and at the one ahead with hope.

Thirty two years on, the organization is continuing with its commitment to instill an ambience of improved quality of life, a new scenario of social and economic progress and minimal dependence on others on the part of the communities. RUCHI has remained successful in achieving this only through an integrated, multi-disciplinary and participatory sustainable development.

1.1. Mission Statement

RUCHI's Mission Statement: Integrated rural development through people-centered, environmentally sustainable action.

With this in mind (and a view towards social and economic independence), RUCHI introduces technologies deemed appropriate to the conditions, and uses health and resource management education to socially empower and uplift rural communities.

1.2. Belief System

- People have an inherent capacity to achieve - even in the face of adverse conditions - provided they are given with help and guidance.
- Resources, goods, information and technology should be shared amongst and between communities.
- People should be empowered to demand services by virtue of being human and as a basic human right.
- Women play an important catalytic role in development.
- Both development and management should be participatory.
- Social change can occur through economic stability and independence.
- Economic stability and independence can be achieved through optimal and *sustainable* use of local resources.

1.3 Strategic Objectives

1. Promote and protect the environment and natural resources, through adoption of appropriate resource management techniques, generally focused at the micro-level of watersheds.
2. Promote education and awareness as a tool to improve the plight of the underprivileged rural poor.
3. Ensure that a participatory approach is used in the conservation and promotion of natural resources.
4. Catalyze the transfer of low-cost agricultural and construction technologies which will aid in environmental protection and community development.
5. Empower women and eradicate gender inequality, namely through micro-credit and self-help groups.
6. Extend our services to the vulnerable section of elderly, and promote independence amongst this section.
7. Develop areas of mutual cooperation amongst Government agencies and NGOs.
8. Improve the community health standard, mainly through preventative measures.
9. Foster an understanding of, and focus on, integrated rural development in the young rural workforce, promoted through non-formal education.

2. Management and Administration

2.1. Structure

RUCHI's daily activities are administered by an executive director. Over and above this, the management of RUCHI rests with the Governing Body, comprised of six members, each of whom is elected for a two-year term.

RUCHI lays great emphasis on 'people's power'. The consequence can be noticed in the environment of team spirit, collective experience, hard work and commitment in which and on the basis of which the whole organization runs. Very essentially this is manifested through the 16 full-time staff who proficiently strives to achieve the objectives mentioned above. Now, more than ever before, RUCHI has long- and short-term volunteers participating in the project activities injecting fresh ideas and knowledge into the strong RUCHI team.

2.2. Finance and Accounts

The details are outlined in Annexure 1 of the audited statement of accounts.

Besides project based funding in terms of grants-in-aid, RUCHI generates income from the following sources:

- Consultation fees.
- Infrastructure usage charges.
- Agricultural activities.

At present, RUCHI is receiving funds from the following international funding bodies:

- MISEREOR, Germany.
- RNZWCS-NZAID New Zealand
- Rotary Clubs of New Zealand.
- Charities Aid Foundation, UK.
- Johnson & Johnson

RUCHI's Indian sources of funding include:

- Ministry of Women & Child Development
- ORGI (Office of the Registrar General of India)
- Cadbury India Limited

3. Projects 2011-2012

3.1 : PROJECT : Augmenting water conservation in “Model” Rainwater Harvesting Shyamaghat Village.

Project Brief

Beneficiaries : Residents of Shyamaghat village
Sponsor : RNZWCS and NZAID, New Zealand
Time frame : 01.03.2011 to 31.08.2011

OBJECTIVES:

1. *To intercept rainwater runoff occurring during monsoon season to recharge the groundwater and increase the flow of the spring, providing a secure source of water for the villagers of Shyamaghat.*
2. *Increase farm production through extension education and empowering groups.*



The project was undertaken in March 2011 to augment water supply in the Shyamaghat village which has already been developed and recognized as a successful and replicable model of rainwater harvesting in the area. It was observed that in summer the people still feel hardship owing to water shortage. Potentials were explored and it was found that there is a good catchment which could be developed to further stock more rainwater. A series of 4 check dams and gully plugging was developed on the close by stream and at the top of stream an earthen pond was constructed to allow water to percolate down to earth.

Further, to slow down run off and retain soil moisture contour trenching on the slope was taken up along with plantation of 500 trees at the onset of monsoon. The project has been a great success in assuring irrigation to farming land.

The impact of the previous project can be seen in terms of a clean look of village, high levels of personal hygiene, improved health standards, introduction of vegetable crops and rise in income levels of people from agriculture. Other benefits include:

- 15 families have benefited and about 20 lakh liter of water has been stocked by various measures.
- 50% of the soil erosion has been decreased through measures like trenching, gully plugging, plantation, water ponds etc.

- Three cash crops have been reportedly produced by the farmers.
- The increase in income has gone up by 20 – 30% annually.
- The farmer were trained, mobilized, organized and empowered through information dissemination and exposure to physical demonstration with a strategy to encourage them to take over the project in due course for self sustainability

3.2 PROJECT: *To improve the health and earning capacities of the residents of Bhogpur and Dora Villages through integrated management of resources.*

Project Brief

Beneficiaries: Residents of Bhogpur-Dora village

Sponsor: RNZWCS and NZAID, New Zealand

Time frame : 01.11.2009 to 31.08.2011

Objectives:

- 1. *To improve the health and earning capacities of the residents of Bhogpur and Dora Villages through integrated management of resources.***
- 2. *Ensure better quality of life through irrigation of 40% of cultivated land and livelihood activities:***
- 3. *Improve the environmental sanitation of the village by the construction of latrines, wash rooms, compost bins and incinerators.***

The project was enhanced because of some extra funds made available. Under the extended period, one more irrigation tank was constructed and catchment area developed in Dora village, access to village was upgraded through a retention wall and cemented path. The project was started in March 2011 only.



The 23 Ferro cement tanks and equal number of Toilets, Vermi-compost bins and cattle feeding units, provided to individual

households during the project, not only improved the health and sanitation in the village but also leading to food security with enhanced capacities of people to earn for a living. The three earthen recharge tanks and two concrete irrigation tanks have to a great extent resolved the extreme water crisis for irrigation.

Presently the local health educator and the project advisory committee are performing well and gradually taking over the management of the project in their hands. It will take about 3 to 4 years before the real impact of the project is seen.

3.3. PROJECT: Sustainable Water Harvesting for Food Security and Poverty Alleviation

Project Brief

Beneficiaries: 23 Villages Jadla Panchayat, Solan District, Himachal Pradesh.
Sponsor: Supported by MISEREOR, Germany.
Time Frame: 1st May 2009 to 30th April 2012

Project Objective

- To improve the quality of life of the rural target group through the protection,
- Conservation, regeneration and rational use of natural resources.

The project was designed to empower villagers and give them a sense of ownership for their community's development through:

- Teaching them technical, managerial and decision-making skills.
- Motivating them to participate in activities.
- Improving their knowledge of natural resource management system.

RUCHI have been working in this project area since mid 2005. A 3-year project was successfully concluded in November 2008. As a result of the work undertaken by RUCHI in this project area, approximately 15% of cultivated land has been brought under irrigation. In addition, around 9% of additional non-farm land has been developed and is now under cultivation. The impact of this assured irrigation is noticeable in the introduction of new diversified crops (e.g. fishery and floriculture) and an increase in cash cropping (e.g. garlic, ginger, sweet pepper and onion) by farmers. The resulting benefits of crop diversification are apparent in the villagers' increase in income, greater food and income security, and an overall improved quality of life for farmers and their families. Overall, the project showed people the way towards sustainable development through their own initiatives and ownership of community assets.

As an exit strategy the project was renewed for a period of another 3 years where the entire focus was on capacity building of local community so that they can take over the project management and continue with the process through efficient use of assets created under the project for sustainability and long lasting impact. RUCHI feels confident that the people, women in particular, can now manage the project on their own and are empowered enough to question and demand their dues for their development.



3.4. PROJECT: Improved Community Health Through Education and Primary Health Care In Baddi Sandholi Village.

Project Brief

Beneficiaries: About 400 families of Sandoli village and about 70 school going children.

Sponsor: Cadbury India's Corporate Social Responsibility fund.

Timeframe: December 2008 and further extended up to 30th September, 2012

Objectives:

- *To increase the Standard of education of migrant and poor children, and facilitate their access to formal education.*
- *To increase the Community's over all awareness and skill levels in order to reduce the poverty that currently impedes health improvements in the long run.*
- *To strengthen Village committees and encourage them to play a proactive role & act as a pressure group in the community.*

This project was taken up on behest of Cadbury India Pvt. Ltd as a CSR activity in September 2008. The project was revived and extended for another term of 12 months from 15th September 2011.

This project was executed in Sandholi village and the adjoining slums to address some of the pressing problems of inadequate sanitation facilities, lack of proper awareness of rights, appalling health conditions, water shortage, lack of educational facilities for the children of slum dwellers, etc.

A Non-formal Learning Centre enrolling 40 slum children to provide them functional education was the focus of the project. Over the time it gained popularity and encouraged more than 70 children in enrolling to Government Schools for formal education. Health and nutrition aspects of children were specially taken care of through Mid-day Meals and health check up by a qualified doctor.

The Centre now caters to 70 enrolled children. The mothers of these children were also covered under the ambit of the project through awareness camps and OPD facilities.



9 SHGs were formed under the project and all of them are functioning well for their social and economic empowerment and have also remained central point for community development.

We acknowledge the contribution of Cadbury staff volunteers who spared time to spend on the project and assist RUCHI in executing the project.

3.5. PROJECT: Bagh Village, “Model” Rainwater Harvesting and Community Development Project.

Project Brief

Beneficiaries: Residents of Bagh village

Sponsor: RNZWCS and NZAID, New Zealand

Time frame : 01.12.2010 to 31.03.2012

Objectives:

- 1. Improve community health and “well-being” of the Bagh village residents through the extension of health education, and the provision of clean and safe drinking water.**
- 2. Improve the livelihoods and improve the standards of living by improving farm production through the introduction of cash crops and bringing a further 10% of the cultivated land under irrigation.**
- 3. Improve the environmental sanitation of the village through the construction of latrines, washrooms, compost bins and incinerators.**
- 4. Empower the community through people centred development.**

This project looked to develop a rainwater harvesting “model” to follow on from the successes of the recently completed “model” village at Shyamaghat (31.08.2011). The aim was to use this small village as a prospective inspiration and make valuable improvements to the lives of the people of Bagh village.

The village of Bagh, with its 13 families, has a reliance on smallholdings (less than 1.2 acres per family) for its economic activities. All families within the village are classified as either “scheduled caste” or BPL (Below the Poverty Line, as outlined by the Indian government’s assessment criteria). With few alternative economic income sources, we set about trying to maximise the villagers agricultural incomes.

The big issue in the village was water availability, with reliable sources only available during the monsoon season and a dependency upon a natural spring. We wanted to improve availability and accessibility of irrigation water, to provide greater opportunities to grow cash crops and improve agricultural productivity. Thus, Agricultural output is key to improving the economic position of the villagers. The construction of three irrigation tanks helped improving the livelihoods and prosperity of the village population.

Clean drinking water was an issue prior to this project. Provision of clean water through natural spring development and private ferro-cement tanks improved the health standards of the local population, and reduced the instances of water-borne diseases, such as gastroenteritis, dysentery and diarrhoea, that occurred as a result of unsafe water, improper toilet and washing facilities.

Private toilets with wash rooms, compost pits, soak pits, animal feeding stalls, community trash



bins etc. were provided to villagers as a part of sanitation drive and improving their health standards.

A sense of ownership and responsibility of the village infrastructure was developed through the use of free labour from the villages themselves. While financial contributions and the need to maintain and monitor these structures for their long-term use after construction helped to ensure their sustainable benefit. Training and advice on structure maintenance was provided by RUCHI's technical staff.

A SHG (Self-Help Group) was established to ensure the future management of the project, providing empowerment, particularly of the local women, to encourage management decisions and problem solving from the villagers themselves. The SHG also provides credit and thrift schemes to support farm and non-farm agricultural activities through micro-financing. The SHG is key to ensuring effective future management of the project and to instill a sustainable project future.

Farmers were also trained and given educational exposure through visits to RUCHI's technological complex and with visits to the nearby "model" village at Shyamaghat. This provided awareness of the potential benefits and gave them an opportunity to see how real tangible achievements can be made. This fostered cooperation between staff and farmers, and provided the farmers with up-to-date technologies and advice.

An important aspect of the project was the construction of 200 sq. metres of path, linking the village to the link road above. Previously the steep and treacherous slope made the transportation of materials difficult. This path has dramatically improved access to the village, aiding the transportation to and from markets and reducing the previous drudgery associated with transporting materials.

With the project now complete, Bagh will be used as "model" to inspire and show the benefits that can be achieved through these approaches to other prospective villagers, just like Shyamaghat before it. But the most important aspect to give the villagers of Bagh is a sustainable future with an improved standard of living.

3.6. PROJECT: Improving living standards of Baddi Slum dwellers through Health Education and Innovative Education for their children.

Project Brief

Beneficiaries: Slums in Baddi and about 40 school going children.

Sponsor: Johnson & Johnson Asia Pacific Contributions Fund

Time frame : 01.06.2011 to 30.09.2012

Objectives:

- 1: To increase community health standards through health education and primary health care and find solutions surrounding health and sanitation.**
- 2: To increase the standard of education of migrant and poor children, and facilitate their access to formal education.**
- 3: To increase the villagers' overall awareness and skill levels in order to reduce the poverty, that currently impedes health improvements in the long run.**

An NFE centre was established in a rented accommodation in Sandholi village. 40 children belonging to migrant labourers living in the surrounding slums were enrolled and classes started for them from 1st October 2011. All children are provided with educational materials and tools; such as books, school bags, uniforms and other required stationery. Mid-day meals are provided on a daily basis to supplement their nutritional intake.

The children are taught numbers, the alphabet, calculations etc. The main focus, however, is on functional aspects and topics like basic health and sanitation awareness, personal hygiene, the importance of water, the environment, and learning good habits. For their personal development exposure of children to good practices and places of educational interest were arranged. Meeting with parents are done regular basis to sustain their interest and apprise them of their children's progress.



Six Health

Check-up and Educational Camps were held in Baddi area. The health camps involved individual checkups and dealt with specific advice from the issues from HIV/AIDS, to minor issues such as coughs and colds. World Aids Day was celebrated with a rally. Many school children participated in the rally. Awareness about Health & Hygiene was raised through our monthly Health camps. This was achieved through one-to-one counselling and informed health professional to the

patient. The aim is to seek the prevention of illnesses and disease, to improve the longer term health prospects within the slums.

Because of this project, a significant change in the children's perceptions, behaviour and mannerisms is noticed. While increased confidence and a positive and enthusiastic approach was also noted by teachers within the NFE. These children can now pursue their realistic dreams; for example, these children could become teachers, doctors, etc. They are now more educated and aware so that they can communicate more efficiently, and are better suited to comprehend the complexities of life. They now have a good awareness of health and sanitation, improved thinking capacity and the ability to distinguish between good and bad.

The health camps have been a good vehicle to spread awareness in personal hygiene, health and sanitation. These concept would have been basic or non-existence prior to this education and awareness.

3.7: PROJECT: Census India 2011

After participating in the Census India 2011, RUCHIU was again involved as a Nodal agency for Himachal Pradesh in Caste bases census with a role to facilitate smooth operation, monitor and guide data operation and in capacity building of staff involved.

In the first two phases house listing, schedules and national population register and enumeration of household population was successfully completed. RUCHI's team comprised of one National Trainer and 3 MTFs. This was a living example of government and NGO collaboration and the partnership was so effective and fruitful that the outcome in the state was appreciated by all concerned including the Government of India and UNICEF.

3.8: PROJECT: Village Resource Centre (VRC)

Two Village Resource Centres set up through the Department of Space, Govt. of India during 2009. at the offices of RUCHI, one each at village Bandh and Rajgarh, are operational but with limited accessibility.

HPVHA, based in Shimla, is the coordinating agency for VRCs established in Himachal Pradesh. Some of the interactive sessions were interesting and helpful to NGOs and the rural communities. More such programmes are planned to be introduced in future.

However, this further needs to be streamlined and strengthened by the Ministry and nodal agency to operate to its optimal capacity.

3.9: PROJECT: Gender Disparity and Development Issues- A Micro Study in Upper Himachal Pradesh.

Poverty, ignorance and ill-health along with work at home and outside are some of the factors causing hardship to women in the remote far flung mountain areas. Child-marriage, dowry system, superstition and low social status etc are also known to contribute to the plight of women.

Keeping in view the disadvantages the women face and disabilities they suffer from, RUCHI, had undertaken a study (1) to assess the magnitude of the growing socio-economic disparities in hills of Himachal Pradesh and also (2) to study impact of development programmes in sustaining the lives of deprived/disadvantaged groups of women.

The study is complete and has been published by the Ministry of Women & Child Development.

4. Volunteers

4.1. International Voluntary Services (IVS)

International volunteers visit the organization for a short or a long term basis to learn, exchange ideas & perspectives between RUCHI's staff and other participants and the communities they work with. It is also a means of generating a little income to cover its administrative expenses and become independent of agency funding. Depending on funds generated small projects are also taken up with this fund.

RUCHI has been supporting both national and international students for internships as this promotes sharing available information and resources. RUCHI has already joined hands with international networks like CCIVS, NVDA and European alliance and their sub-networks. The volunteers placed through the network members help initiate inter cultural exchange, exposures/experience in community development at grass root level besides academic pursuits.



The programme provides a unique opportunity to both national and international students for inter-cultural learning and their personal development.

4.2. Student Placements

RUCHI had been encouraging Indian students to join its projects during their vacations or internships in order for giving them an insight in the practical problems of the rural communities. This broadens their horizons and develops a positive attitude for initiating more innovative humanitarian projects for communities' sustainable development.

During the year, an IRMA, Anand (Gujrat), graduate stayed at RUCHI for more than 3 months to collect data for his Ph.D. He had selected RUCHI as a case study to study its operations and management.

5. Seminars/Conferences

Two of RUCHI staff attended the Technical Meeting of European Alliance, a European network of NGOs involved in international voluntary services, held in Parent, France during March 2012.

This year, TNW and GA of NVDA network was held at RUCHI during 1-10 February 2012. 42 participants from 17 countries participated in the programme. NVDA is an Asian network of NGOs supporting international voluntary services worldwide. It was a privilege for RUCHI to have its Executive Director, Mr. Dharamvir Singh, elected to the position of Vice-President (Quality monitoring) of this network .



6. Media and Documentation

RUCHI endeavors to update itself with latest information on programme and policies related to community development. This year also RUCHI reviewed its programmes and approaches and also conducted Participatory Impact Assessment Study for two of its projects involving various stakeholders. These reports are available on its website www.ruchin.org

RURAL CENTRE FOR HUMAN INTERESTS (RUCHI), BANDH (H.P.)

BALANCE SHEET AS AT MARCH 31, 2012

Prev. year 2010-11	Liabilities		₹	Prev. year 2010-11	Assets		₹
3,523,779	CAPITAL FUND As per last account Additions to fixed assets Depreciation of fixed assets	3,523,779 74,495 (470,364)	3,127,910	3,514,279	FIXED ASSETS As per schedule attached		3,118,410
860,897	CORPUS FUND As per last account		860,897	4,358,434	INVESTMENTS Fixed deposits		5,683,780
1,061,330	RESERVES & SURPLUS As per last account Surplus for the year	1,061,330 1,027	1,062,357	440,535	GRANTS RECEIVABLE As per statement attached		817,637
1,436,857	GRANTS UNUTILISED As per statement attached		3,333,472	22,910 646,289	CURRENT ASSETS Cash in hand Cash at bank	48,001 741,570	789,571
2,077,648	REVOLVING FUND As per detail attached.		2,077,648	32,983	LOANS & ADVANCES TDS recoverable Advance / Imprest	70,461 24,766	95,227
52,919	CURRENT LIABILITIES Road tax payable		42,341				
9,015,430			10,504,625	9,015,430			10,504,625

AUDITORS' REPORT

As per our report of even date attached.

For R. Ahuja & Associates
Chartered Accountants

Rajiv Ahuja
Rajiv Ahuja, Proprietor.
Panwahoo, August 04, 2012



For RUCHI

Director



RURAL CENTRE FOR HUMAN INTERESTS (RUCHI), BANDH (H.P.)

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2012

Prev. year 2010-11	Expenditure		₹	Prev. year 2010-11	Income		₹
5,902,340	Expenditure met from grants		7,905,206	3,916,416	Grant-in-Aid	9,422,719	
				3,538,795	Received during the year	1,438,857	
				(554,549)	Unutilised as on 1.4.2011	(440,535)	
				440,535	Receivable as on 1.4.2011	817,637	
				(1,438,857)	Receivable as on 31.3.12	(3,333,472)	7,905,206
274,764	Expenditure met from other sources				Unutilised as on 31.3.12		
	Excess expenditure on projects over and above the sanctioned grant	34,187		791,126	Income from other sources		
	Insurance	11,212			Interest income	194,193	
	Bank charges	779			Publications	27,500	
	Floriculture	74,349			Co-ordination	77,308	
	Office rent	24,000			Consultancy fee	19,500	
	Totem project	153,082			Sale of motor cycle	25,000	
	Travelling	54,893	352,502		Vehicle running income	6,128	
					Miscellaneous	3,900	353,529
516,362	Surplus for the year		1,027				
6,693,466			8,258,735	6,693,466			8,258,735

AUDITORS' REPORT

As per our report of even date attached.

For R. Ahuja & Associates
Chartered Accountants

Rajiv Ahuja, Proprietor.
Parwanoo, August 04, 2012

For RUCHI

Director

