

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023



RUCHI

Rural Centre for Human Interests

Village- Bandh, Bhaguri – 173233
District- Solan, Himachal Pradesh, INDIA
Tel: 91- 7560078500
Email: info@ruchi.org.in

Registered as a society at village Shalana, Rajgarh 173101, Distt. Sirmour, Himachal Pradesh

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1. About the Organization

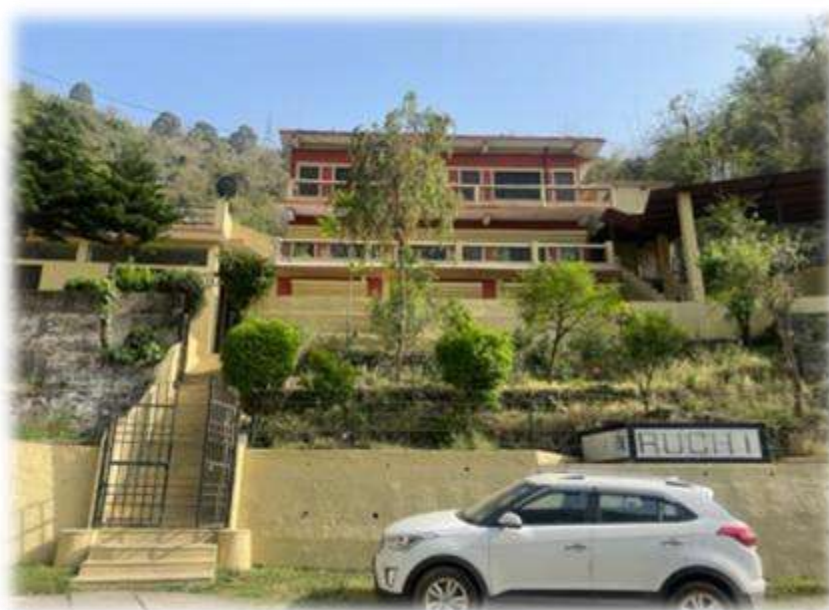
1. Background

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.

A new Technology Resource Centre of RUCHI came up in 1994 in a small village of Bandh in Dharampur Block of Solan District which also houses the headquarters of RUCHI. This great achievement was made possible 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.

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 nine 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. Vision

A society which believes in and practices peace, good governance, equality and respect for each other.

1.3. 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.

1.4. 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 12 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.
- Public contribution/donations
- IVS projects

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

- Rotary Clubs of New Zealand
- New Zealand High Commission, New Delhi
- EU under Erasmus+ programme
- Give Foundation

RUCHI's Indian sources of funding include:

- Shamdasani Foundation
- Corporate funding under CSR programme
- Dabur India Ltd.
- Zomato

3. Projects 2022-2023

3.1: EVOLVE: Frame(V)work – Asian Lab:



The project “Frame[v]work” aims at improving the quality of volunteers exchange within the IVS movement, in order to reinforce the concepts of international voluntarism, active participation and international solidarity in order to tackle the issue of decreasing number of volunteers in a cooperative way. This aim is to be achieved through a participatory review of the volunteer exchange procedure, with a process involving different regional networks like CCIVS, Alliance, NVDA, SCI and several organisations coming from different regions and continents belonging to the IVS movement.

The final outcome of the project will be the creation of new guidelines for voluntary exchange, more updated and comprehensive than the ones already existing.

The partners of the projects are networks and organisations who implement long-term and short-term voluntary projects involving local activists, international volunteers and local communities. The members of the partnership share the same needs.

RUCHI joined this project as one of the co-creator of the new framework for volunteer exchanges. This is a journey that we have pledged to go through together to finally overcome the striking trend of decreasing number of volunteers and to re-think and re-launch our activities and cross-continent exchanges after the Covid pandemic era.

Two representatives of RUCHI participated in the Asian Lab meeting held at Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia from 27th March to 3rd April, 2023.



3.2 Time for Tea Project of EU under Erasmus+ Programme:

Time for Tea is an educational activity which uses tea to give young people a voice. It encourages global learning, creative thinking and social action. It is simple, fun and accessible to people of any age, background or ability, anywhere in the world. *Time for Tea* is an initiative of Momentum World CIC, UK. This was a 2 year project involving 3 Asian and 3 European partners with a coordinating partner in Momentum World of UK. The medium of tea allows young people to initiate dialogue with decision makers in a way that is engaging and non-confrontational. Under this project, several events were organised to empower communities identify local issue and initiate action to address them with the right authority with carefully worded message.

After a long postponement of the project due to Covid pandemic, the first activity of KOM (Kick Of Meeting) was held online during 5-7 April, 2022. The KOM was followed by the Youth Workers Seminar which was held at RUCHI in Bandh village from 06-14 June 2022 and was attended by 26 participants hailing from UK, Italy, Spain, Thailand, Philipines and India.



As a follow up of Youth seminar, a few projects were initiated leading to community actions to resolve local issues and take up plantation at two sites for environmental sanitation. Four people from UK and Poland were supposed to visit us in a study visit but due to administrative issues only one representative from Poland participated in the study visit from 03-08 December, 2022. This was followed up by a Multiplier Workshop and two local Dissemination events held at IT Chandi and Kuthar.



3.3 Recall Project of EU under Erasmus+ Programme:

The project aims to motivate youth to rediscover rural areas as places where they can apply their creativity through innovation and entrepreneurship based on the ideas of sustainable development and circular economy. The project will strengthen the organizational capacity of youth organizations in both Europe and Asia to foster the acquisition of green and entrepreneurial skills of young people gaining inspiration from local culture and identity.

Based on their cultural traditions and identity, young people can find inspiration to use nature and local resources sustainably, to start new entrepreneurial endeavors, which preserve the natural environment, and to contribute to their communities' wellbeing. The project seeks synergies between the four pillars of sustainable development – environment, economy, society and culture to fight youth unemployment in rural areas.

The first activity of KOM was held in Chaing Mai, Thailand from 09-14 May, 2022. 17 participants from 6 countries attended it.



The second activity of study Boot Camp was held in Bulgaria, Romania and North Macedonia from 01-14 September, 2022. 2 participants from RUCHI participated in the Boot Camp.

Another Boot Camp was held in India as organized by RUCHI in which 3 participants from Bulgaria and 2 from North Macedonia participated. A workshop in Green Entrepreneurship was held at RUCHI from 18-20 November, 2022 which was attended by all visitors and 22 youth/students of IIT Kuthar and Patta.

As a part of the project, 6 case studies and 3 short video films were prepared on Good Practices of green entrepreneurship from each country.

3.4 Waste UpCycling :

The main aim of the project is to create a mobility scheme, labelled W_UP Tour, to support young people and non-profit organisations to develop entrepreneurial activities on waste upcycling both in Europe and in Asia. This is a project approved by European Union under its Erasmus+ programme.

W_UP Tour are defined as a mixture of raising awareness tours and change-making actions organised by 3 European and 3 Asian non-profit organisations working on the field.

After holding three online meetings of participating organisations, the first physical meeting to kick start the project (KOM) was held at RUCHI in Bandh village, India from 11-18 November, 2022. Twelve international and 6 Indian participants attended the KOM.



A training on learning and upgrading skills on upcycling was held at Gandia, Spain during 21-30 March, 2023. Two participants from RUCHI including one from Waste Warrior Society attended this training.



3.5 Global Pathways Project under Erasmus+ programme of EU:

The main aim of the project is to contribute at mainstreaming Sustainable Entrepreneurship Education in non-formal sector as to combat youth unemployment and contribute at the sustainable development of our societies.

Keeping in view the urgent need to not only educate young people in creating financially successful enterprises but also sustainable enterprises that utilise the world's natural and human resources responsibly, RUCHI joined Fora Copenhagen as a partner in executing a project GLOBAL PATHWAYS under Erasmus+ programme of European Union. It is essential that this generation of young entrepreneurs put a halt to 'business as usual'.



After holding two online meetings of participants, the first physical meeting to kick start the project (KOM) was held at Hanoi, Vietnam from 03-14 July, 2022.

A training for Trainers under Mobility of Youth Workers was organized at RUCHI from 22 March to 3rd April 2023. The training was attended by altogether 25 youth representing organization from Denmark, Poland, Kazakhstan, Vietnam and India



3.6 Women Power:

Empowerment is the degree of autonomy and self-determination in people and in communities. This enables them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting on their own authority. Empowerment through non-formal education is required for all but keeping in view the plights of women, we have been laying a lot of emphasis on women empowerment. More women than ever hold political decision-making posts worldwide, but gender parity is still far off.

Education, training, awareness raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources, and actions to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality are important tools for empowering women and girls to claim their rights (UNDP). We educate women to gain power and control over their own lives and acquire the ability to make strategic choices.



Believing that empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health status is a highly important end in itself we initiate several need based actions in this direction like strengthening women SHGs; organize personal health & hygiene camps, promotion of green enterprises, etc.



3.7 Corporate Social responsibility (CSR):

Zomato donated us 150 kits of food items comprising of rice, wheat flour, cooking oil, sugar, pulse and spices of a value of INR 500/- each for onward distribution to needy people in our project area. Post Covid1-9 suffering this served as moral boosting tonic for local farmers of this area.



Dabur India Ltd. through its Baddi unit donated us 120 boxes, each comprising of 48 tooth pastes of 200gm, for distribution to school children. RUCHI in collaboration with various schools organized sessions on oral health care and with due awareness creation distributed to both public and private schools children of Kuthar, Chandi, Patta, Bhaguri Bandh, Kot-Beja etc and a few SHG groups of women during October-November, 2022.



We were happy to distribute the same among slum dwellers, daily wage workers and needy rural communities in Dharampur block of Solan district.

3.8 Agriculture Extension:

RUCHI's efforts in areas of enhancing farm income through agriculture extension continue with a focus on restoring techniques of natural farming. Natural farming calls for traditional system of farming using only locally available materials. Farmers were made aware on making and using organic pests, fertilisers etc. using indigenous techniques.

To inculcate the habit of natural farming right from young age, the school children, urban youth and women were also involved in non-formal educational process and were invited to farms practicing natural farming for their practical training in the field.



3.9 Clean up India Campaign:

In collaboration with BHUMI NGO, Chennai RUCHI launched a cleanliness drive in the area.



Two schools, 2 villages and RUCHI campus was covered under the drive. Waste including plastic was collected and disposed off appropriately.



4. International Voluntary Service:

4.1. Placement of International Volunteers for Personal Development:

It is worldwide that the number of international volunteers interested in making a change in communities is decreasing. From 2019 to 2021 it was due to Covid-19 pandemic and afterwards it was the rising air fares and long wait for visa application processing which discouraged potential volunteers. Poor economic growth was another factor adding to the problem.

The year 2022 witnessed some international mobility. We got our first Weltwart volunteer from Germany through DIZ, Germany in the second week of March 2022 who stayed with us till first week of September, 2022. The year saw only 27 international volunteers visiting us.



4.2. Student Internship/Placements:

A group of 20 students of Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology (DA-ICT), Gujrat completed their three week internship with RUCHI from 15th December, 2022 to 4th January, 2023. They have been very useful in executing our Waste UpCycling project and found the

rural experience at RUCHI very beneficial to their personal as well as professional development.



Two Indian interns of SPIJMR, Mumbai had joined RUCHI for their one month internship starting from 7th March, 2023 and assisted us promoting sustainable green entrepreneurship. They organized a couple of workshops in IITs and schools.



4.3 Reunion of RUCHI Ex-staff:

On 16th February, 2023, on the occasion of its Annual Day, RUCHI invited their senior ex-staff to have a reunion. It was a fun meeting them all and refreshing memories of old times.



5. Webinars/Conferences

Online meetings have become very popular and economical since Covid pandemic era. RUCHI staff attended several online international meetings under the Erasmus Plus projects.

रुचि संस्था ने दांतों की सफाई के प्रति किया जागरूक

कुटाड़, 15 अक्टूबर (मदन): कृष्णगढ़ तहसील के तहत ग्राम पंचायत भागुड़ी के गांव बांध में 2 दशकों से ग्रामीण जागरूकता व विकास में कार्यरत स्वयंसेवी संस्था रुचि ने डाक्टर इंदिरा कंपनी के सौजन्य से क्षेत्र के स्कूलों में टूथपेस्ट वितरित किए। इस दौरान बच्चों को दांतों की नियमित सफाई व टूथब्रश करने के बारे में जागरूक किया। संस्था के निदेशक धर्मवीर सिंह व परियोजना समन्वयक महीप डगर ने बताया कि संस्थान की ओर से प्रथम चरण में रा.व.मा. विद्यालय पट्टा महलीय, कुटाड़, चामिया, सरस्वती विद्या निकेतन स्कूल शक्तिचंद, हाई स्कूल भागुड़ी, तुहार, प्राथमिक स्कूल चामिया, कुटाड़, एलेच और मिडल स्कूल बनलगी के अलावा महिला स्वयं सहायता समूह तुहार, पीपलता व कंडोल को सदस्यों को टूथपेस्ट वितरित किए गए।

उन्होंने कहा कि संस्था की ओर से अभी तक लगभग 1800 स्कूलों छात्रों सहित स्वयं सहायता समूहों को सदस्यों



कुटाड़ : दांतों की स्वच्छता के बारे में जागरूक करते रुचि संस्था के प्रतिनिधि।

को दांतों की स्वच्छता व सुरक्षा उपायों के बारे में जागरूक किया जा चुका है। संस्था की ओर से कार्यक्रम अधिकारी मदन लाल व अर्जुन सिंह ने चर्चित स्कूलों में जाकर भूमिका निभाई।

धवार WEDNESDAY 18 मई 2022

बीफ न्यूज

लोगों को प्रदान की खाद्य सामग्री

कुटाड़, 17 मई (मदन): विकास खंड धर्मपुर के तहत ग्राम पंचायत भागुड़ी के गांव बांध में स्वैच्छिक संस्था रुचि की ओर से क्षेत्र की 5 पंचायतों के लोगों को निःशुल्क खाद्य पदार्थ वितरित किए। संस्था के निदेशक धर्मवीर सिंह व मुख्य समन्वयक महीप डगर ने बताया कि जोमेटो फोडिंग इंडिया के सौजन्य से उपलब्ध करवाई गई भोजन सामग्री की किटें कोविड रिलीफ के तहत ग्रामीणों को वितरित की गई हैं। क्षेत्र की पंचायत कंडोल, पट्टा नाली, भागुड़ी, कोटवेजा व पट्टा बाड़ियां के ग्रामीणों को यह किट दी गई। लाभार्थियों का चयन संस्था की संस्तुति से संबंधित पंचायत प्रधानों की सिफारिश के आधार पर किया गया। जोमेटो फोडिंग इंडिया के ऑडिटर साहिल बहुगुना ने कहा कि यह खाद्य सामग्री कोविड रिलीफ का एक हिस्सा है।

खाद्य पदार्थों की किटें की वितरित भावगुड़ी के गांव बांध में रुचि संस्था ने फ्री बांटी सामग्री

हिमाचल टाइम्स ■ बटौरी

कमौली जमनाल के तहत ग्राम पंचायत भावगुड़ी के गांव बांध में ग्रामीण जागरूकता व विकास के लिए प्रचलित स्वैच्छिक संस्था रुचि की ओर से क्षेत्र की पांच पंचायतों के लोगों को निःशुल्क खाद्य पदार्थों की किटें वितरित की गईं।

रुचि संस्थान के निदेशक धर्मवीर सिंह व मुख्य समन्वयक महीप डगर ने बताया कि ये किटें जोमेटो फोडिंग इंडिया के सौजन्य से उपलब्ध करवाई गई हैं। यह भोजन सामग्री की किटें कोविड रिलीफ के तहत ग्रामीणों को वितरित की गई हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि ग्रामीण परिवार में रहने वाले लोगों को सहायता करने संस्थान का उद्देश्य है। इसके अलावा के तहत क्षेत्र की पंचायत कंडोल, पट्टा



इन्होंने जताया आभार

कम पंचायत के तहत ग्राम पंचायत भावगुड़ी के गांव बांध में ग्रामीण जागरूकता व विकास के लिए प्रचलित स्वैच्छिक संस्था रुचि की ओर से क्षेत्र की पांच पंचायतों के लोगों को निःशुल्क खाद्य पदार्थों की किटें वितरित की गईं।

आई.टी.आई. प्रशिक्षुओं को स्थायी उद्यमशीलता बारे किया जागरूक

कुटाड़, 4 अप्रैल (मदन): विकास खंड धर्मपुर के तहत ग्राम पंचायत भागुड़ी के गांव बांध में स्वयंसेवी संस्थान रुचि ने आई.टी.आई. कृष्णगढ़ के प्रशिक्षुओं के लिए एकदिवसीय स्थायी उद्यमशीलता पर आधारित कार्यशाला का आयोजन किया। इस दौरान प्रशिक्षुओं को स्थायी व टिकाऊ उद्यमशीलता की दक्षताएं, रचनात्मकता, व्यवसाय योजना की परिकल्पना, व्यवसाय के मुख्य जोखिमों को इशला, चुनौतियों का सामना करना, व्यवसाय की क्रियाओं का प्रबंधन, उद्यम शुरू करने के लिए पहल करने की भावना, समस्या समाधान, नेटवर्किंग, संचार कौशल, निर्णय लेने की क्षमता के अलावा रिड्यूस्, ग्रीन, री साइकिल व टिकाऊ

व्यवसाय के मुख्य उद्देश्य सहित अन्य क्रियाओं का आयोजन किया गया। कार्यशाला में उपस्थित प्रशिक्षुओं को उद्यम शुरू करने की दक्षताओं को जल्दबारी प्रदान की गई। कार्यशाला में कजाकिस्तान, वियतनाम, डेनमार्क, जर्मनी, बेल्जियम के अलावा एन.पी.जे.आई.एम.आर. कॉलेज मुंबई के छात्रों ने प्रशिक्षुओं को विभिन्न समूहों में विभाजित कर स्थायी उद्यमशीलता से जुड़ी अनेक क्रियाएं करवाईं।

इस मौके पर आई.टी.आई. के प्रधानाचार्य मुनी लाल, रुचि संस्थान के निदेशक धर्मवीर सिंह, महीप डगर, गिरधारी लाल कश्यप, अक्षर पाल कौशल, प्रतीक देसाई व यश के अलावा प्रशिक्षक व प्रशिक्षु मौजूद थे।