

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



## RUCHI

### Rural Centre for Human Interests

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

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# 1. About the Organization

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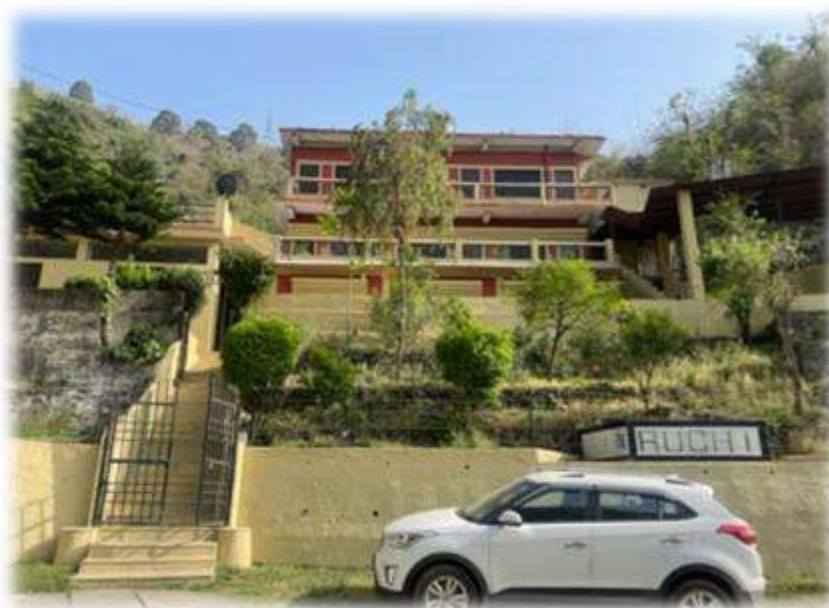
## 1. Background

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

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### 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:**

- EU under Erasmus+ programme
- Give Foundation
- Prof. Mahavir Singh

**RUCHI's Indian sources of funding include:**

- Shamdasani Foundation
- Dabur India Ltd.
- Abhay Dan Trust

## 3. Projects 2024-2025

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### 3.1 Go Green: Tapping Solar Energy

In an attempt to Go Green and reduce carbon footprint, RUCHI is, with its limited resources, making all efforts to tap Solar energy. Solar energy is renewable, eco-friendly and helps decrease global warming and ozone holes. Solar energy is crucial for a sustainable future

With a financial aid from Prof (Dr) Mahavir Singh, CEO of Lionex in Germany, we have been able to install solar panels on two of our building blocks to produce solar energy which has considerably reduced our electricity costs and allow us to lead a sustainable lifestyle.



### 3.2 Empowering RUCHI for Sustainable Development:

Abhay Dan Trust, New Delhi has been supporting and empowering RUCHI for over 18 months to be able to deliver need based support to rural communities for environmental actions and livelihood improvement. With this financial support, RUCHI has managed to undertake following activities:



**Environment & Global Warming:** Planted 200 native species of trees with assistance from visiting students and in collaboration with Panchayat and forest department. This winter has been abnormally warm with no rains so we decided to restart plantation activities in upcoming monsoon. In addition to plantation we have developed green spaces within our campus where we are utilizing waste material and demonstrating with self watering pots.

Hats off to both Indian and International interns who were instrumental in sourcing and plantation of trees.



### Water Conservation for livelihood, health and hygiene:



**Open Space for community meeting:** The open roof area of main office building was developed as a shed for community meetings and exchange of ideas. Bamboos were used for privacy and GI pipes were used to make sitting benches.

The path to guest residential area had also no safety railings. They were also put up at required places.





**Capacity building of Youth:** Introducing rural youth/young students to community and environmental issues and low cost solutions, natural farming and other entrepreneurial activities:



**Safe water to RUCHI campus:** Over the years, there has been a severe shortage of water, despite our rain water harvesting from roof tops, at RUCHI especially during harsh summer. Finally we could install a bore well to meet the crying need of water as there was no other option



### 3.3 Women Power:

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.

The adolescent girls in five high and senior secondary schools were educated on menstrual hygiene as well as laws against sexual harassment. Communities were also educated on WASH component of health.



The SHGs organized through RUCHI have been doing commendable work. RUCHI keeps in touch with them through regular meetings. Some of them have taken wonderful initiatives for economic empowerment. One such group is of Dhar village where women make cloth bags as an enterprise. The Indian and international volunteers have been trying to assist them in marketing their products. One such American volunteer purchased about 50 bags from them to explore a market in USA. She successfully sold them off and remitted the income to the group. This has further boosted their morale.



Another member of Dhanyon SHG is engaged in cultivating flowers and dry them in natural sunlight. The dry flowers are used to make bunches as per market needs. We are trying to explore potential for online marketing of their products.



### 3.4 Corporate Social responsibility (CSR):

**Dabur India Ltd.** has continued to help the formal and informal communities by its generous donation of “Real” Juices of various variants, coconut water, candies and other items. Before the consumable items were distributed, we organized talks on personal hygiene, nutrition and balanced diet in schools and communities.



In the second lot they provided us 390 boxes of 200 ml bottles of pomegranate juice. We were happy to distribute the same during October among slum dwellers, daily wage workers and needy rural communities in Dharampur block of Solan district.

**3.5 Local Governance:** RUCHI was able to liaise with local administration and got the following helps for the needy community:

- a. Facilitated donation of manual Wheel Chairs for 2 persons suffering from physical disability through Rotary Club of Baddi
- b. MNREGA cards were generated for 20 families

## 4. International Voluntary Service:

### 4.1. Placement of International Volunteers for Personal Development:

The number of international volunteers/interns are stagnating at a minimum for a couple of years now. High costs of travelling, stringent visa regulations and reduced financial affordability are some of the reasons responsible for reduced interest of youth for volunteering.



Volunteers get engaged in activities of their interest keeping in view the requirement for their academic pursuits as well as their personal development. There are many who are interested in environmental concerns and education whereas others are interested in education communities through educational and art materials. The number of volunteers who are attracted to experiencing and learning from Buddhist culture is on the rise.

#### **4.2. Student Internship/Placement:**

The Indian university students keep coming to RUCHI for their internship. This year, 13 students from DSSW Delhi, TISS Guwahati, SPJMR Mumbai, Central University of Jammu, St. Joseph's College, Christ Nagar College of Kerala and Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, Coimbatore did their internship at RUCHI for a month.



## **5. Webinars/Conferences**

Mr. Mahip Dagar, RUCHI Coordinator for IVS programme attended an international seminar on AVS in Japan during November, 2025. This is an important platform to share IVS projects with all members.