

RUCHI

Rural Centre for Human Interests



Annual Report 2007-2008

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The Rural Centre for Human Interests, RUCHI as it is otherwise known, is driven by the goal of improving the quality of life for the rural poor and under-privileged in the state of Himachal Pradesh, India. RUCHI works to achieve this goal through active grassroots participation and empowerment of the communities in all aspects of their development. By providing assistance and technical support, as opposed to charity, RUCHI is helping them to minimize their dependence on external agencies by improving their livelihood resilience and natural resource management. 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. Until it was registered as a Society in 1983, RUCHI worked from the isolated village of Chopal in the Shimla District. RUCHI acquired legal entity status on 16 February 1983 under the Societies Registration Act (1860), when it was registered with a head office situated in the village of Shalana in the Rajgarh Block of Sirmour District. The head office was shifted to the small village of Bandh in Dharmampur 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 a committed project team to facilitate and motivate the process of development at the grassroots level, encouraging individual and community participation in the process. RUCHI encountered an initial environment and culture of resistance by local communities who lacked trust in development organizations, posing many challenges and difficulties at the beginning. However, good communication built up the trust of the communities and this culture of resistance was overcome. Systems were slowly developed to overcome environmental and cultural hurdles and RUCHI now enjoys a strong relationship with communities in the area. Twenty-eight years on the organization is continuing its commitment to helping more villages' progress towards integrated, multi-disciplinary and participatory sustainable development.

1.2. Context

The Himalayan foothills are predominantly arid land with approximately 70% of annual rainfall arriving during the Monsoon Season (June-August). As the terrain is very steep, rainfall and nutrient rich topsoil quickly drains away reducing soil fertility and crop production. Finding adequate sources of irrigation is a significant issue with less than 30% of the cultivable area currently covered under irrigation. The continuing threat of deforestation, with native vegetation being cleared to supply a burgeoning population with fuel, fodder and



space for agricultural development, creates problems of its own, not least by accelerating erosion levels of fertile soil.

Resource depletion in the area is compounded by mismanagement of natural resources available to rural communities. Environmental pollution and depletion of the natural resource base have a negative effect both ecologically and socially, with the health of the rural population suffering as a consequence of the environments ill-health. With 92% of the population of Himachal Pradesh deriving their income primarily from agriculture, the negative impact of mismanaging natural resources and prolonged environmental degradation is particularly strong in economic, environmental and social terms.

RUCHI has been careful not to position themselves as providers, but rather as teachers; a source of knowledge for the communities. As technical experts in the field of development the aim is to pass on knowledge and skills that will enable villagers in the project areas to successfully manage their communities and the surrounding environment.

The infrastructure and other projects promoted by RUCHI provide tangible benefits for the villages and are therefore a means for RUCHI to:

- Establish themselves as socio-technological experts in the field of development.
- Gain local confidence.
- Facilitate positive change for improved standard of living and give guidance where necessary.
- Encourage environmentally sustainable practices.

2. Organisation

2.1. 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.

2.2. Belief System

- People have an inherent capacity to achieve - even in the face of adverse conditions - provided they are provided 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.

2.3 Strategic Objectives

Twenty-eight years of observation has allowed a wealth of information to be collected about the socio-economic conditions and mismanagement of local resources that perpetuate poor living conditions in this part of the Himalayan foothills. This collective understanding has helped RUCHI staff to focus their strategic objectives.

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.

3. Management and Administration

3.1. Structure

The management of RUCHI rests with the Governing Body, comprised of seven members, each of whom is elected for a two-year term. RUCHI has authorized an Executive Director for the day-to-day administration requirements. RUCHI employs 23 full-time staff



and firmly believes in team work and 'people power'. Great importance is placed on fostering a team environment with a base of experienced, hardworking and dedicated staff members who combine their skills, knowledge and experience to achieve the objectives outlined above. Now, more than ever before, RUCHI has long- and short-term volunteers participating in the the volunteer programme and project activities, injecting fresh ideas and knowledge into the strong long-term employee base.

3.2. Finance and Accounts

In the current financial year RUCHI received Rs. 77,49,985/- all of which was from foreign funding agencies. RUCHI's expenditure totaled Rs. 75,49,188/- of which 48% was made against foreign contribution. The details are outlined in Annexure 1, the audited statement of accounts.

As well as bilateral support, RUCHI receives income from the following sources:

- Membership fees and annual subscriptions.
- Consultation fees.
- Infrastructure usage charges.
- Agricultural activities.

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

- OXFAM/Water for Survival, New Zealand.
- MISEREOR, Germany.
- HelpAge International, UK.
- Rotary Clubs of New Zealand.

RUCHI's Indian sources of funding include:

- Ministry of Science, Technology & Environment, GOI.
- Council for People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), Ministry of Rural Development, GOI.
- Ministry of Environment & Forests, GOI.



4. 2007-2008 Projects

4.1. PROJECT: Improved Community Health through Natural Resource Management

Project Brief

<i>Beneficiaries:</i>	30 villages, Dharampur Block, District Solan, Himachal Pradesh.
<i>Sponsor:</i>	Oxfam/Water for Survival (New Zealand).
<i>Timeline:</i>	A five-year project initiated in April 2003, concluded March 2008

Project Objectives

1. To improve community health through education and primary health care.
2. To provide clean drinking water through household rainwater tanks and community spring protection.
3. To improve sanitation in each village by encouraging the construction of latrines, soak pits, compost bins and kitchen gardens.
4. To improve the environment and health status through encouraging indigenous soil and water conservation practices.

Villagers in the RUCHI project area work closely with the land, relying heavily on its natural resources for agricultural practices and domestic needs. Since the commencement of the project a number of initiatives have been introduced to encourage environmentally responsible behaviour. RUCHI has chosen practical applications designed to reduce the environmental impact of humans which require strong community participation either in the construction process, or through their ongoing interaction with the environment. RUCHI has sought to create a sense of ownership amongst the beneficiaries by making a community contribution towards construction activities a requirement, as well as efforts aimed at increasing the responsibility and empowerment of the community as whole.

In a society where females have traditionally been grossly marginalised, positive change must start with breaking down social injustices and elevating the status of women. RUCHI has sought to achieve women's empowerment through the creation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) as a mechanism for delivering education, in particular health messages, and uniting the community for village development. Community Health Motivators (CHMs), selected from the targeted villages, have been responsible for disseminating knowledge gained through RUCHI's training programme and served as a valuable link between RUCHI project staff and communities.

March 2008 brought about the conclusion of funding for this project, with a 1-year transition period commencing April 2008. The Participatory Final Evaluation (PFE) undertaken by Oxfam at the conclusion of the project found the positive impact of SHGs to have been significant; the project resulted in a considerable increase in respect for women in the household and wider community. During the project's fifth year SHGs began the process of forming an SHG Federation. Guided by RUCHI in this process, it is envisioned that the



Federation will increase their collective power, provide long-term support for the advocacy work undertaken by the SHGs on issues such as Female Foeticide, and enhance their ability to demand government services.

RUCHI found the progress and impact of project interventions over the past 5 years very satisfying. As is evident from the positive impacts reported by villagers, and the PFE, this demand driven approach has been successfully maintained throughout the course of the project, resulting in well-maintained infrastructure, low dependency on RUCHI, and communities increasingly active in village development activities. With the additional time available as a result of the adoption of new technology, empowered women are now able to meet and discuss village development and engage in additional income generating activities. A further benefit has been greater awareness of government processes which increases the capacity of communities to demand government services.

The past year has seen this project progressing with speed towards achieving its objectives. The physical targets achieved are shown in table below.

S. N.	Particulars/Activity per annum	Proposed Targets (5 th year)	Completed (5 th Year)	Cumulative Total (5 Year Period)
1.	Safe Drinking Water Provision: a. Ferro-cement water storage Tank b. Development & Protection of Springs	15 4	15 4	55 44
2.	Environment and Sanitation: a. 10000 fruits plants b. Sanitary latrines c. Soak Pit d. Compost Pit e. Trash Bin f. Irrigation Tanks (50000Ltr) g. Check Dam h. Percolation tanks i. Irrigation Tanks (25000Ltr.) j. Cattle troughs near water sources k. Gully Plugging (Cum) l. Construction of an Irrigation tank in Bandh village. m. Development of a water storage tank near RUCHI to support demonstrations n. Floriculture demonstration in RUCHI and extension with 10 selected farmers	10000 10 0 0 0 3 0 5 2 10 200 Cum. 1 1 10	10056 10 0 0 0 3 0 5 2 10 200 Cum. 1 1 11	40120 130 170 40 172 15 1 60 5 20 500 Cum. 1 1 11
3.	Health Care Education and Empowerment a. 3 Day training to 10 CHMs and three educators. b. CHM meetings c. Medicinal plants and vegetable saplings for kitchen gardens d. PAC Meeting	2 36 50 4	2 36 56 4	10 180 200 20
4.	Capacity Building			



	a. Workshop on new Right to Information Law and on consumer Awareness	2	2	2
	b. Training of farmers on natural resource management/SHG	300 Farmers	330 Farmers	730
	c. Empowering SHGs/CBOs on management		Continuing	-

4.2. PROJECT: Sustainable Water Harvest for Food Security and Poverty Alleviation

Project Brief

Beneficiaries: 23 Villages Jadla Panchayat, Solan District, Himachal Pradesh.

Sponsor: Supported by MISEREOR, Germany.

Time Frame: Three-Year Project initiated in November, 2005.

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 is 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.

From the beginning RUCHI recognised that enlisting the help of key individuals within the villages was a means to empowering the community and gaining their trust. Through the provision of basic facilities RUCHI sought to tackle health and economic issues whilst instilling confidence in their practices and inspiring participation which would be paramount to the success of the project. It is not RUCHI's aim to establish themselves as a long-term financial provider and this point was therefore stressed to the beneficiaries throughout the duration of the project.

As a result of the work undertaken by RUCHI in this project area, approximately 12% of cultivated land has been brought under irrigation. In addition, around 7% 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.



With greater access to safe water, the prevalence of water-borne diseases substantially reduced. RUCHI's work on natural spring development, along with ferro-cement collection tanks for harvesting rain water in the project area, ensures greater security and supply of clean water for villagers without overexploiting the natural resource base. Increasing soil moisture is essential to recharging natural springs, preventing soil erosion and improving the overall environment. Organic farming techniques promoted by RUCHI, such as organic composting and worm farms, enhance crop production, increase soil fertility and do not negatively affect human health as do chemical fertilizers. Improvement in health impacts positively on the ability of family members to work, crop production and quality of life.

Details of physical targets achieved:

S. N.	Particulars/Activity per annum	Proposed Targets (3 rd year)	Completed (3 rd Year)
1.	Soil and Water Conservation		
	Irrigation Tank (48000 Lt. Capacity)	3	3
	Spring Development with Cattle Trough	3	3
	Demonstration of Thread Technique for Tomato	15	15
	Community Garbage Collection Bins	5	5
	Channel for Water Collection (Meters)	100m.	100m.
	Organic Composting	5	5
	Percolation Tank	5	5
	Bench Terracing (Meters)	300	300
	Gully Plugging (Cubic Meters)	200	300
	Stone Bunding (Cubic Meters)	500	500
	Silt Trap Tanks	5	5
	Trenching (Cubic Meters)	200	200
	Check Dam	1	2
	F C Tank 2500 Lt.	10	10
	F C Tank 10000 Lt.	2	2
	HDPE Pipe 1' & 2' Die (Meters)	600	600
	Pipe Layering (Meters)	600	600
	G.I Pipe (Meters)	150	150
	Fuel, Fodder Plants	5000	3537
	Fruit Plantation	1000	710
	Grass Roots	10000	9000
2.	Capacity Building		
	3 Day Exposure Tour (No. of Farmers)	70	70
	Orientation for users groups (2 times per year)	40	40
	Staff Development through onsite orientation, and out-station exposures.	2	2



4.3. PROJECT: Soil & Water Conservation in Thod Muth Catchment in Rajgarh area of Himachal Pradesh as a Model Watershed'

Project Brief

<i>Beneficiaries:</i>	2 villages, Rajgarh Block, District Sirmour, Himachal Pradesh
<i>Sponsor:</i>	Department of Science & Technology, Ministry of Science, Technology & Environment, GOI
<i>Timeframe:</i>	A three-year project initiated in August 2006.

Project Objectives

1. To improve on the environment and ecology of the area leading to a better quality of life for the rural people.
2. To regenerate, conserve and protect natural resources and promote their rational use.

The project encourages the harvesting of rain water from all possible sources – including roof tops and surface water – to recharge ground water, increase soil moisture and store surface water for household and irrigational needs. Through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) suitable location/sites were identified for the construction of ferro-cement tanks and water storage for individual households. As part of the science & technology component of the project, water channels are being developed in addition to the construction of silt traps and water filters in strategic places allowing water to pass through them before storage. Additional components of the project are the Bamboo plantation and fish cultivation. Bamboo is considered the most efficient soil binder; the most successful means of degraded land reclamation as it stabilises soil and minimises erosion more effectively than other vegetative means. The bamboo plantation has been planted in the silt collected in the gully plugs, near the contour trenches and in the streams immediately above the check dams/ponds. Fish cultivation is currently underway as part of the project's long-term goal of promoting the diversification of land use such as fisheries, floriculture, and medicinal plant cultivation to ensure greater health and income generation opportunities.

In a short time the project has successfully completed the recharging of a natural spring immediately under the earthen percolation tank in Thod Kolan hamlet (Beria), improving irrigation for 5 hectares of land. The development of the Kolan village farm pond has brought an additional bigha under cultivation, bringing the total to 4 bighas of wasteland brought under cultivation by the pond. Farmers are now developing the land close to the developed check dam and cultivating vegetable crops as a result of the assured irrigation provided by the dam. Following training provided by RUCHI farmers have become more accepting of the need to change their existing cropping pattern; moving away from traditional crops to cash crops including tomato, ginger, capsicum, beans and garlic. Now that farmers are getting three crops per year from their irrigated land, their crop production has increased from 15% to 20%.



Details of physical targets achieved:

S. N.	Particulars/Activity per annum	Proposed Targets (2 nd year)	Completed (2 nd Year)
1. Rain Water Harvesting			
	Check Dam	2	2
	Earthern Dam	1	1
	Ferro-Cement Tank (2500 Lt.)	5	5
	Farm Pond & Fish Seeds	3	3
	Earthern Percolation Tank	2	2
	Silt Trap	4	4
	Filter Chamber	7	7
	Channel for rain water collection	170	170
	Pipe	1300	1300
2. Soil and Water Conservation			
	Gully Plugging	160	160
	Trenching	170	170
	Vegetative Barrier	300	300
	Bamboo Plantation	5000	5000
	Fuel and Fodder Plant	1200	1200

4.4. PROJECT: Sustainable Development through Promotion of Floriculture in Hilly Areas**Project Brief**

Beneficiaries: 5 villages, Rajgarh Block, District Sirmour, Himachal Pradesh

Sponsor: DFID through GIF

Timeframe: An 18 month project initiated March 2006

Project Objectives

1. Promotion and extension of floriculture techniques to farmers.
2. To introduce low cost Green House Floriculture Technologies as the basis to involving the small growers in modern commercial floriculture product.

This project aimed to introduce diversified activities for farmers as a means to increase their income level and check the outward migration of farmers. The project area is well suited to floriculture due to the availability of irrigation facilities. In addition, the project area lies in the North-West slope of the Churdhar mountain range, experiencing fewer hours of direct sunlight and therefore retaining moisture in the land required for off-seasonal flower crops. Flowers cultivated included Chrysanthemum, Marigold, Aster, Gladiolus and Carnation. Flower seedlings and cuttings were initially grown under controlled conditions in a greenhouse with a mist chamber and then distributed to farmers. Over the course of the project



approximately 20,000 flower saplings and bulbs were distributed to 30 farmers to promote floriculture in the area.

While all 5 villages have benefited from the additional income generated by their cultivation of flower crops, the villages of Ritab (30 bigha) and Maloh Masog (25 bigha), a total of 26 families, enjoyed the most significant increase in their income. Each family in the 2 villages now receives in excess of Rs. 100,000 per year from floriculture. The 14 families of the remaining 3 villages now receive between Rs. 15,000 to 20,000 annually per family from floriculture.

4.5. PROJECT: Sponsor A Grandparent Programme (SAGP)

Project Brief

<i>Beneficiaries:</i>	128 60+ year olds from 50 villages (10 Panchayats), Dharampur Block, Solan District, Himachal Pradesh.
<i>Sponsor:</i>	HelpAge International.
<i>Timeframe:</i>	Initiated in 1992, this project continues to the present day.

Project Objectives

1. To foster a sense of independence and self-confidence among the elderly.
2. To educate elderly people on issues relating to their health and well-being.

The SAGP is community based and driven by the aim of empowering the elderly and strengthening family as well as community support mechanisms. The project is intergenerational in approach as the elderly often report facing problems with their families due to the generation gap. The elderly and family members are now acknowledging the presence of this issue and working together to minimize the negative effects caused by it to improve conditions.

As well as allowing dissemination of information on RUCHI's behalf, monthly Self-Help Group (SHG) meetings provide a forum for elderly members of the community to voice their problems and concerns, and search for possible solutions. In addition, the SHG meetings provide the elderly with information on their rights, especially in terms of health facilities and services available to them. This is achieved with the support of RUCHI staff. Many elderly are bed-ridden or immobile and thus cannot make it to the meetings, RUCHI staff visit the houses of these scheme members, ensuring they have all they need and are as comfortable and happy as possible.

On the 1st and 2nd of each month, RUCHI staff visit each of the 128 elderly at a distribution point very close to their homes, taking with them food, clothes and a small amount of money. This gives the elderly a great deal more independence, empowering them as they no longer feel so indebted to or reliant on their nearest relatives. Indirectly it also reduces the strain on poorer families who are struggling to support older relatives. The SAGP thus fosters better community and family relations.



If a scheme-member requires a specific item, a bed sheet or a gas cooker for example, they can apply to a committee consisting of five scheme-member elected elderly and one RUCHI representative. This committee meets before the distribution each month, considering each request, and where it is granted the item in question is delivered along with the normal aid package. Such special aid packages are distributed every 3-months. In order to foster a sense of community amongst the elderly of the area, allow them to meet new people and introduce entertainment into what can be fairly mundane lives, RUCHI organises six-monthly social outings.

4.6. Rotary-Sponsored Projects

Rotary Club Palmerston North kindly donated a motorbike for RUCHI staff to use in the project field. This has proved invaluable to project staff in gaining greater access to communities in project areas.

The Bandh Village Water Project initiated with the support of Rotary International District 9940 in New Zealand has continued to progress despite the damage caused to project infrastructure during the monsoon in July/August. The project involves the construction of a check dam, gully plugging, development of two natural springs, installation of one filter chamber, cattle troughs and one percolation tank. The project has been a great success as it has recharged the natural springs and is making available drinking water to the villagers as well as RUCHI. The reconstruction process repaired damaged infrastructure and constructed protection walls and additional gully plugging to reduce soil erosion caused by the high velocity water-flow. Funding for the reconstruction process was kindly donated by Rotary International District 9940, in addition to the initial project funds donated.

5. Membership and Promotion of Other Organisations

RUCHI and RUCHI staff members are members of various other voluntary organisations. As well as establishing a network and a forum for discussion of ideas and circulation of new information and technologies, RUCHI works to promote the vision of these projects through its own projects.

5.1 Reseau International d'ONG la Desertification (RIOD) - India

Membership Brief

Organisation:

RIOD-India established 1995.

Programme Mission Statement:

Promote and enhance the participation of civil society in the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) at all levels, especially NAPs.



Programme Objectives

1. To initiate the efforts related to awareness generation in the country to minimize the effects of drought and desertification
2. To promote South-South and South-North cooperation among people, NGOs, national and international institutions for learning and sharing the experiences.
3. To lobby/advocate for the needs and priorities of dry land farmers, particularly dry land farm women.
4. To encourage/facilitate communication, exchange of information, training for all the stakeholders in the country.
5. To initiate appropriate technologies/committees, monitoring the implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in the country; and to mobilize technology and financial resources for implementation of the convention.

Mr. Dharmvir Singh, RUCHI's Director, had continued in his role as contact person (Vice-President, RIOD Northern India) for RIOD in Himachal Pradesh.

RUCHI continues to promote RIOD's objectives through its general community work. The organization is of the strong belief that the future could see Himachal Pradesh becoming increasingly water-scarce, and without proper water management the threat of desertification here is great.

In September the Government of India conducted a workshop to prepare a National Action Plan to Combat Desertification in Ahmedabad, Gujrat. As Vice-President of RIOD, Dharamvir Singh was invited to attend and engage in the policy dialogue.

5.2 All India Federation of Women in Agriculture (AIFWA)

Membership Brief

Organisation:

AIFWA establishment initiated in 2002.

Federation mission statement:

To initiate activities, projects and programmes such as relevant policy actions, advocacy, network, livelihood action, information dissemination, training and grass-root level action to achieve the vision (*Institutionalize, organize and empower Indian women in agriculture - politically, socially and economically*).

Federation Objectives

1. To create awareness in rural women in general and farm women in particular about their role, responsibilities and rights.
2. To organize farm women into self-help groups and promote economical activities for their employment and income generation.



3. Building technical capacity in farm women to improve their effectiveness and efficiency in farming and reducing their drudgery (material labor).
4. To organize farm women cooperatives for the accessibility of farm inputs to them and to promote marketing of the products.
5. To bring about policy issues for the government and for NGOs and to develop advocacy programmes.
6. To educate, motivate and encourage farm women in their active participation in the activities of the Federation and in other developmental programmes.
7. To promote a participatory mode of working and decision making in the Federation and their families.
8. To promote culture, moral and spiritual values in the members and undertake community service in the interest of the public.
9. To promote national and international linkages and relationships with various government and NGOs to support the activities of the Federation.

Ms. Neelam Anand, a RUCHI staff member, has continued in her role as one of four team members of the AIFWA Coordination Committee. In the Solan District of Himachal Pradesh alone, this year has seen the addition of 1500 members to AIFWA. About 150 of those (from an estimated 40 villages) have been facilitated through RUCHI's work in the Dharampur Block. Members are organized into SHGs, and a RUCHI staff member visits each of these once a month. This year four AIFWA members received support from RUCHI to construct four worm-compost pits. RUCHI also distributed 500 fruit tree saplings to 50 women from 12 villages to generate additional income for the women.

5.3 Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS)

RUCHI was accepted by CCIVS as a full member in October 2006. CCIVS is predominantly occupied with international voluntary service. Membership of CCIVS brings an organisation into a worldwide network which is itself linked to other regional and international structures including those of the United Nations system.

This membership enables an organisation to:

- develop relations and joint activities with new foreign partners;
- develop new bilateral or multilateral exchanges;
- exchange ideas with international agencies; and
- receive information and practical advice on international organisation's programmes.

In 2007 RUCHI was selected by CCIVS to nominate a staff member to attend the Asia-Europe Youth Volunteer Team-Building Partnerships programme from July-August 2007 in France. Two of RUCHI's volunteers, Mr. Anuj Pal Kapoor and Miss Anupa Malhotra participated in the programme and visited France, Italy and The Netherlands. Suneel Gupta, RUCHI's project coordinator, was selected to represent RUCHI as a Special Volunteer for the programme's



environmental theme, participating in work camps in Italy and Greece. Suneel assessed the impact of international volunteering on local communities, local NGOs, as well as the impact at the national and international level. The skills acquired by Suneel during the course of this programme are now being put to use implementing RUCHI's Volunteer Work Camp Programme.

6. 2007 - 2008 Additional Staff

6.1. TOTEM Volunteers

The TOTEM International Volunteer Programme allows foreigners with an interest in RUCHI and sustainable development to come and visit the organization on either a short- or long-term basis. As well as generating additional income for RUCHI (useful in its bid to become more independent of agency funding), the scheme provides an opportunity to exchange ideas and perspectives, not only between RUCHI staff and programme participants, but also between participants and the local population. This year RUCHI hosted 11 volunteers, 8 of whom participated in the programme through Oxfam/Water for Survival. Volunteers included five New Zealanders, one American, one Australian, one German, two British, and one Dutch.

6.2. Rotarian Volunteers

This year five Rotarians, including a civil engineer, an automobile engineer, and a water engineer, volunteered their time and skills with RUCHI. All five Rotarians were from New Zealand.

6.3. Student Placements

Students from Indian Universities are invited to work on a voluntary basis as part of their placement programme. They are required to study areas related to the development sector in general, and the organisation's activities in particular. While the students gain practical experience, RUCHI benefits from their newly acquired ideas and skills. This year RUCHI hosted four students. Three of the students came from Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi, and one student from G B Pant Institute of Social Sciences, Allahabad. They have come from far and wide – two came from Xavier Institute of Social Science in Ranchi and one from the G.B. Pant Social Science Institute in Allahabad.

6.4. Work Experience Camp

This year RUCHI introduced a Work Camp programme targeted at Indian and foreign University students. The duration of the programme is 2 weeks, during which time volunteers provide assistance in the form of labour to villages in the construction and maintenance of physical infrastructure in the project area. The aim of the programme is to provide volunteers with a hands-on grassroots experience of rural development in India and encourage exchange of ideas and information sharing between volunteers, project staff and villages. The volunteers also have the opportunity to engage with other volunteers from around the world volunteering with RUCHI.



7. Media and Documentation

RUCHI's publication material, predominantly handouts, reaches a wide audience and is appreciated in every quarter. This year RUCHI produced a handbook on SHGs and Women's empowerment. The manual provided information on setting up and running an SHG, the benefits of forming an SHG, along with information concerning the *Right to Information Act*. The handbook was distributed to women attending training at RUCHI's campus, SHG meetings, as well as CHMs distributing the information to women in the villages they assist.



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

BALANCE SHEET AS AT MARCH 31, 2008

Previous year	Liabilities		Rs.	Previous year	Assets		Rs.
2,724,632	CAPITAL FUND			3,140,132	FIXED ASSETS		
	As per last account	2,724,632			As per schedule attached		2,652,313
	Additions to fixed assets	(31,500)					
	Repayment of vehicle loan	300,000					
	Depreciaton of fixed assets	(456,319)	2,536,813				
				2,105,656	INVESTMENTS		
860,897	CORPUS FUND				Fixed deposits		2,439,444
	As per last account		860,897				
				531,657	GRANTS RECEIVABLE		
					As per statement attached	-	-
							368,683
3,660	RESERVES & SURPLUS						
	As per last account	3,660					
	Surplus for the year	3,797	7,457				
				14,723	CURRENT ASSETS		
					Cash in hand	28,280	
				920,085	Cash at bank	678,944	707,224



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425,000	SECURED LOANS						
	ICICI Bank for vehicle		125,000				
				109,609	LOANS & ADVANCES		
					Loans to beneficiaries	11,787	
1,322,996	GRANTS UNUTILISED				TDS recoverable	10,651	
	As per statement attached		1,137,907		Advance/imprest	119,026	141,464
1,481,645	REVOLVING FUND						
	As per detail attached.		1,641,054				
3,032	CURRENT LIABILITIES						
	TDS payable		-				
6,821,862			6,309,128	6,821,862			6,309,128

AUDITORS' REPORT

As per our report of even date attached.

For R. Ahuja & Associates
Chartered Accountants

-sd-

Rajiv Ahuja, Proprietor.

Parwanoo, June 28,
2008

For RUCHI

Director



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

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2008

Previous year	Expenditure		Rs.	Previous year	Income		Rs.
7,104,835	Expenditure met from grants		7,273,538	7,570,483	Grant-in-Aid		
				876,543	Received during the year	7,251,423	
				(550,852)	Unutilised as on 1.4.2007	1,322,996	
				531,657	Receivable as on 1.4.2007	(531,657)	
482,529	Expenditure met from other sources			(1,322,996)	Receivable as on 31.3.08	368,683	
	Excess expenditure on projects over and above the sanctioned grant	8,577			Unutilised as on 31.3.08	(1,137,907)	7,273,538
	Miscellaneous	3,698		458,814	Income from other sources		
	Office rent	128,000			Sale of fixed assets	58,000	
	Bank charges	1,463			Project income	62,892	
	Insurance	30,912			Public contribution	110,909	
	Repayment of vehicle loan	300,000	472,650		Bank interest	158,356	
					Ruchi publications	86,290	476,447



(23,715)	Surplus for the year		3,797		
7,563,649			7,749,985	7,563,649	7,749,985

For RUCHI

Director

AUDITORS' REPORT

As per our report of even date attached.

For R. Ahuja & Associates
Chartered Accountants

-sd-
Rajiv Ahuja, Proprietor.

Parwanoo, June 28,
2008

