

**RUCHI**  
**Rural Centre for Human Interests**



**Annual Report**  
2008-2009

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## Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	3
1.1. Background.....	3
1.2. Context.....	3
<b>2. Organisation</b> .....	4
2.1. Mission Statement.....	4
2.2. Belief System.....	4
2.3 Strategic Objectives .....	5
<b>3. Management and Administration</b> .....	6
3.1. Structure.....	6
3.2. Finance and Accounts .....	6
<b>4. 2008-2009 Projects</b> 7	
4.1. PROJECT: Improved Community Health through Natural Resource Management.....	7
4.2. PROJECT: Sustainable Water Harvest for Food Security and Poverty Alleviation.....	7
4.3. PROJECT: Soil & Water Conservation in Thod Muth Catchment in Rajgarh area of Himachal Pradesh as model Watershed .....	8
4.4. PROJECT: Improved community health education and primary health care in Sandoli Baddi village .....	10
4.5. PROJECT: Model Watershed village, Shyamaghat.....	12
4.6. PROJECT: Sponsor A Grandparent Programme (SAGP) .....	103
<b>5. Membership and Promotion of Other Organisations</b> .....	14
5.1 Reseau International d'ONG la Desertification (RIOD) - India.....	15
5.2 All India Federation of Women in Agriculture (AIFWA) .....	15
5.3 Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS).....	16
<b>6. Volunteers</b> .....	17
6.1. TOTEM Volunteers .....	17
6.2. Student Placements .....	17
<b>7. Media and Documentation</b> .....	17
<b>8. Audited statement of accounts</b> .....	18



## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 . Background

The Rural Centre for Human Interests, RUCHI remaining true to its meaning in Hindi(which means “interests”), 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. 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 Dharmpur 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. In the initial stage of work, RUCHI encountered resistance by local communities which posed major challenges and difficulties. However over time good communication built 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 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.

### 1.2. Context

In order to gain proper knowledge about the organization it is imperative to know about the geographical set up in which the organization is functioning. RUCHI is located at the Himalayan foothills which 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 appropriately carried out the role of educator, providing required knowledge to the communities. RUCHI's commitment not to position themselves as providers but as an useful source of information has made way to a higher level of development. Through passing on knowledge and skills that aims at enabling 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 help to bestow them with needed confidence. RUCHI's efforts to establish themselves as socio-technological experts in the field of development have born fruit. There have been positive changes in peoples' lives and RUCHI has remained constant in providing guidance wherever necessary, encouraging 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 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.

## 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 long term 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

RUCHI's daily activities are administered by an authorized 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 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 23 full-time staff who proficiently strive to achieve the objectives mentioned above. Now, more than ever before, RUCHI has long- and short-term volunteers participating in 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. 10,499,865.00 as grants-in-aid. 88.85% (9,329,923.00) of which was received from foreign sources. Against the received grants an amount of Rs. 9,042,237/- was spent towards project expenditure. 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.
- Charities Aid Foundation, UK.

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.
- Ministry of Women & Child Development



## 4. 2008-2009 Projects

### 4.1. PROJECT: Improved Community Health through Natural Resource Management

#### Project Brief

<i>Beneficiaries:</i>	40 villages, Dharampur Block, District Solan, Himachal Pradesh.
<i>Sponsor:</i>	Oxfam/Water for Survival (New Zealand).
<i>Timeline:</i>	One year Transition Project following the completion of a five-year project - April 2008 to March 2009

#### 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.

This was a special project allocated to follow up activities initiated in a 5-year project to build capacities of people in managing their own natural resources. The project also aimed at capacity building of RUCHI to continue its work on sustainable basis. This also included establishing a centre in Dharamshala and promote its Totem volunteers programme. Before finally withdrawing from this area after almost 15 years of relationship with RUCHI, OXFAM also designed a web site for RUCHI to market its programmes more efficiently.

The copy of the final Participatory Evaluation done by OXFAM New Zealand is available on our website and a hard copy can also be made available on request.

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

#### Project Brief

<i>Beneficiaries:</i>	23 Villages Jadla Panchayat, Solan District, Himachal Pradesh.
<i>Sponsor:</i>	Supported by MISEREOR, Germany.
<i>Time Frame:</i>	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 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.

The 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.

### 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 final year of this project is definitely witnessing a sea change in the areas where intervention has been and is continued to be carried out. 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 carried out in the silt collected in the gully plugs, near the contour trenches and in the streams immediately above the check dams/ponds. Bamboo plantation has been used as one of the most important methodologies. 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.

The project, through the hard work put in by the RUCHI staff is bearing witness to the manner in which the objectives are gradually being accomplished. With regard to the goal of bringing 25% cultivable land under irrigation the project has been able to bring 18% of land under irrigation. Besides this, 3.5% more land is brought under additional cultivation. RUCHI has been gearing up on introducing new conservation practices as well as passing on knowledge of floriculture and agriculture extension to the farmers. In a short span of time the project has created 20 lakh water storage capacity for irrigation. These steps have invariably added on to the projects' effort to increase agricultural production through soil and water conservation measures. Since RUCHI firmly believes in educating the community as a whole, exposure and training camps were being organized to increase the capacity building of the farmers. Active participation of SHGs and User groups were involved to spread proper knowledge and to encourage more participation. Demonstration of floriculture was also conducted at Kolan village as a means of spreading villager's awareness. Despite facing obstacle like the unprecedented rains which caused a lot of harm to the structures, the project was carried forward with benefit to the people.

A very important piece of work done by the project is the formation of a Watershed committee which is not only strengthening the work of the project but at the same time smoothing its functioning. Invoking willing community participation by involving them in decision making process at all levels has resulted in a higher level of participation in harvesting rainfall from all possible sources. The final year of the project also saw the production of booklets on soil and water conservation, on SHG management as well as on water management. Demonstration of floriculture was also achieved.

The likely impact of the project has definitely been incredibly satisfying leading to more technology packed development. Low-cost ferro cement tanks for roof water harvesting, storm water harvesting for irrigation, control of soil erosion through bamboo plantation form an indispensable part of this development.



#### 4.4. PROJECT: Improved Community Health Through Education And Primary Health Care In Baddi Sandholi Village.

##### **Project Brief**

<i>Beneficiaries:</i>	About 400 families of Sandoli village and about 40 school going children.
<i>Sponsor:</i>	Charities Aid Foundation(CAF) India and Cadbury India's Corporate Social Responsibility fund.
<i>Timeframe:</i>	An 18 month project initiated December 2008.

##### **Project Objectives**

1. To increase community health standards through health education and primary health care along with solutions surrounding health and sanitation.
2. To increase the standard of education of migrant poor children, and facilitate their access to formal education.
3. To increase the villagers' overall awareness and skill levels in order to reduce poverty that currently impedes health improvement in the long run.
4. To strengthen village committees and to encourage them to play a proactive role in monitoring health systems.

This project aims to introduce positive changes in the field of education; health and sanitation; empowerment and capacity building among the people of the area. The project also focuses on awareness building as an integral part of mobilizing community and also to bring the entire community to participate so that key health issues are identified and worked together in addressing them.

The project is well suited to the area since Baddi has turned out to be a complete industrial hub. Consequently, large number of people has migrated to this area with the hope of employment. Lack of accommodation has compelled this migrated labor population to live in small bamboo and polythene houses called "jhuggis". Inadequate sanitation facilities, illiteracy, lack of proper awareness of rights, appalling health conditions characterize these jhuggis and the surrounding villages of Sandholi.

The project also aims at bringing the people together to solve their own problems. Since the project emphasizes a lot on organizing women's groups, RUCHI has formed four SHG (Self Help groups) in Sandoli village. RUCHI sought SHGs as a means to empower women and become economically independent and self reliant by having access to monetary funds in order to meet their immediate credit needs which otherwise becomes difficult during emergencies.



Moreover, the formation of SHGs have also made it possible for womenfolk to save a negotiable amount of money over which they have control separate from the men folk from the community.

SHGs formed by RUCHI also serve as an open forum whereby women collect together and discuss the problems in their daily lives and find plausible solutions. This also gives them an opportunity to get different perspectives for a problem and they decide together the best possible solution. All these collective actions help to bring the community closer and also help in bringing about a participatory community development whereby each women stakeholder from the community gets a chance to voice their opinion on different social issues. This in turn also helps in increasing their self confidence.

RUCHI also organizes different awareness camps and training camps on different issues related to health and sanitation, which prove to be useful for the needs of the community.

A baseline survey was done at the commencement of this program. On the basis of this and a thrust on imparting education on sanitation and environment so that people could live a healthier life, the need for a Non-Formal Education school was identified. Therefore, to give action to this endeavor, RUCHI established a non formal education center for children of migrant laborers and poor villagers in March, 2009. This definitely has made primary education accessible on their part. The children who currently do not receive any formal or non formal education are enrolled in this school. They are provided with the study material and stationery. They are also provided with nutritious food in order to improve their nutritional intake. Two permanent teachers have been appointed to provide instructions and take care of all the activities in the school. Two classrooms and a toilet constitute the school premises. The children also gain access to supply of safe drinking water. Though there is still a large turnover of children in this Centre the average attendance is about 40.

RUCHI also facilitates the student's enrolment in formal schools once they complete their non formal education satisfactorily. However being migrant students they do not possess the required documents for gaining access to government run schools. RUCHI is currently tackling this issue by lobbying with the concerned government departments.

The community mobilizers from RUCHI are also working closely with the community people on creating awareness and encouraging parents to send their children to schools. Besides this, a village health centre has been set up to cater to the medical needs of the local population. A doctor visits the centre thrice a week.

RUCHI, in collaboration with TCE, an organization working on the issue of AIDS/HIV, also conducted awareness campaigns on HIV AIDS owing to its high prevalence in the slum area. Moreover, keeping intact the need to achieve the goal of primary health care, RUCHI is working on setting up a dispensary adjacent to the Non-Formal Education centre. Despite the initial phase of obstacles posed by the neo-rich people of the village and the opaque lives led by the slum dwellers RUCHI, abiding by the objectives of the ongoing project has remained incredible in overcoming them.



#### 4.5. PROJECT: Model Watershed village, Shyamaghat.

**Project Brief**

<i>Beneficiaries:</i>	Shyamaghat village.
<i>Sponsor:</i>	Supported by. RNZWCS Ltd., New Zealand
<i>Time Frame:</i>	12 months, beginning November 2008

**Project Objective**

1. To imbibe micro-watershed management that would also address the development and conservation of natural resources.
2. To improve sanitation in each village by encouraging the construction of latrines, soak pits, compost bins and kitchen gardens.
3. To improve the environment and health status through encouraging indigenous soil and water conservation practices.

Since the time of its inception, RUCHI has firmly believed in the empowerment of community people, mobilizing village communities towards a better future by utilizing various techniques of natural resource management and methods of social advocacy, pursuing a participatory approach involving people from the community itself. Abiding by the objectives of the project RUCHI has worked on raising awareness about the environment and social issues, thus working towards building informed citizens with constructive knowledge of a better environment.

The project is designed to empower the villagers and give them a sense of ownership for their community's development. Since the inception of the project RUCHI has focused on teaching the villagers technical, managerial and decision making skills thus motivating them to participate in activities aimed at enriching their lives in a positive manner. Since the village is small RUCHI has successfully carried out intensive affirmative interventions within a short span of time. This is evident through the fact that today all the households of Shyamaghat are proud owners of ferro-cement tanks. Though the problem of water shortage in the summer season still exists, the villagers do undoubtedly benefit from this method of natural resource management.

In order to transform the village RUCHI has, very aptly involved women in the process of development, because they are the most powerful catalyst for socio-economic change in their communities. Keeping in mind women's acute need of money for various purposes RUCHI has had formed a Self-Help Group, which is not only functioning well but has also remained successful in solving their own financial problems. Because of some of the group members' participation in the women's federation meetings, the members have acquired the knowledge of vermi-composting and its benefits. Very soon the women are going to start working on it.



From the very beginning, RUCHI has strived, through various means, not only to make the people aware of their own rights but also learn how to achieve them, in other words, empowerment of the people in the truest sense. With the progress of the ongoing project in Shyamaghat, RUCHI has observed a noticeable change in the attitudes of the people.

**Voices raised by beneficiaries:**

The villagers of Shyamaghat along with three RUCHI volunteers had raised their voice against the local authorities when repeated plea to the government to remove a mixer-plant (causing incessant pollution and health hazards) bore no fruits. All the villagers (mostly women and the elderly) made a peaceful march to the higher authorities and submitted a memorandum.

*“RUCHI has shown us a way to fight for our rights and now it is our responsibility to follow it up”..Khema Devi. Ramesh Kumar remarked “today we are heard by administration for the first time and this was possible when we united. Thanks to RUCHI for their untiring efforts”.*

Irrespective of whatever the outcome might be there has come about a perceptible change among the villagers, in terms of the manner in which they are currently tackling issues and aiming at achieving solutions of problems.

**4.6. PROJECT: Sponsor-A-Grandparent Programme (SAGP)**

**Project Brief**

*Beneficiaries:* 128 senior citizens (60+) from 50 villages (10 Panchayats), Dharampur Block, Solan District, Himachal Pradesh.

*Sponsor:* HelpAge International.

*Timeframe:* 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.

SAGP was started with the goal of empowering the elderly and escalating family as well as community support mechanisms. The project identifies old age people living below poverty line or abandoned by their own children. The project has an intergenerational approach as the elderly often report facing problems with their families due to the generation gap. Both the beneficiaries as well as their family members have gradually come to acknowledge the need to pay heed to this issue and are working towards mitigating the negative effects that this gap is causing.

RUCHI has aptly formed Self-Help Groups (SHG) to foster a feeling of financial well-being and a sense of security among these old people. The SHG meetings also invariably acts as a much sought after forum for the elderly members of the community to voice their



problems and concerns, and search for possible solutions. In order to keep the elderly updated with various information on their rights SHG meetings are carried out putting great emphasis on health facilities and other facilities available to them. In order to make sure that the elderly who are bed-ridden or immobile and cannot make it to the meetings are kept informed, RUCHI staff visit the houses of these scheme members. This is done to ensure that these beneficiaries receive all that they need and remain as comfortable and happy as possible.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 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.

#### **VOICES OF BENEFICIARIES:**

*“RUCHI let us enjoy small pleasures of life. We feel very good when we get together and fun filled activities...especially the trips are something we look forward to. Once we were taken to the Haripur mandir and it was a pleasant experience” .... Rati Ram*

*“With the help of RUCHI’s micro-credit scheme I was able to set up my own business- a tea shop. This has helped me in earning a living and with our own self-help group it has become easy to borrow money which was otherwise difficult because nobody lends us money easily”... Mast Ram*

## **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. Dharamvir 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.*

## 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 450 members to AIFWA raising it to a total of 1950. The group represents the larger interests of farmers in the state and is instrumental in raising their concerns to national level.

### **5.3 Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIIVS)**

RUCHI has been a full member of CCIIVS since October 2006. CCIIVS is predominantly occupied with international voluntary service. Membership of CCIIVS 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.



Since 2007, 4 of RUCHI staff have represented RUCHI at various international platforms made available through CCIVS.

This year RUCHI also joined the European Alliance of NGOs to promote and strengthen voluntary action.

## 6. VOLUNTEERS

### 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 25 volunteers hailing from countries like New Zealand, Australia, America, one Australian, Netherlands, Germany and Japan.

### 6.2. 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 Delhi School of Social Work, Delhi University and one student from Institute of Rural Management, Anand.

## 7. Media and Documentation

RUCHI's publication material, predominantly handouts, reaches a wide audience and is appreciated in every quarter. RUCHI keeps updating its data base from time to time and ensures that the information percolates down to the grassroots level.

