



## Central Himalayan Rural Action Group (CHIRAG)

### Case Studies

#### Case Study 1: Nikku- The boy who did not like school.

**Name of School:** Primary School, Chopda

**Block:** Ramgarh **District:** Nainital

If you had visited Chopda School last year, you would have mostly definitely noticed a quiet child in grade one sitting all by himself. On most days, Nikku Kumar hated coming to school because he did not like writing-something he lacked skill in and also made him extremely under confident. The days he did come to school because he was forced to, the teacher would be frustrated on how to engage Nikku in the classroom. After much deliberation about Nikku's absenteeism with her area coordinator, it was decided that it was necessary to build relationships with not just him, but also his parents. The balshikshak made multiple home visits to understand Nikku's environment at home and to understand the problem better. Nikku's parents were very supportive and spoke about how Nikku is under confident about his writing skills and is also scared to come to school. The balshikshak realised that there was a need to spend more time with Nikku to build that bond of trust between student and teacher, which was so essential to make Nikku feel safe. The balshikshak also realised that she needed to engage Nikku in things he loved doing so that he could associate those things with coming to school. She knew he loved painting and playing sport. So it was decided that Nikku would be painting and playing sport to his heart's content every time he came to school. Today, it has been a year; Nikku is in grade 2 and it heart-warming that he now comes to school regularly. He still loves to paint and play sport, but he has also started participating in academics. His handwriting has also improved



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and he no longer hates to write. More importantly, if you meet Nikku today, you will meet a happier, and a more confident child.

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### **Case Study 2: The SMC That Would Not Give Up!**

**Name of School:** Primary School, Diyari

**Block:** Ramgarh **District:** Nainital

Like any effective School Management Committee (SMC), the Diyari School's SMC also has been meeting every month to discuss and plan for making their school a joyful place of learning for the students. They have been working on various challenges around school like ensuring regular attendance, improving teaching and learning processes, issues related to infrastructure and how to increase community involvement in school. One such problem that they had been grappling with since a long time, was that there was no source of electricity in the school. They needed to ensure a supply of electricity not just so that there would be enough lighting in the classrooms but also to run various technology dependent initiatives in school like the "English Listening and Speaking Program". After a couple of discussions around this problem, they decided to invite the Education Department officials for a school visit. They also submitted a letter of request around the same. However, despite these efforts, electricity continued evading Diyari School. Finally, it was decided in the next meeting that the SMC would approach the District Magistrate to elevate the issue. They also decided to involve Chirag staff in planning their approach. The District Magistrate was approachable and had heard of Chirag's initiatives. He was also impressed by Diyari SMC's initiative and approach. At last, within 3 days of meeting the District Magistrate, the electric pole was set up in Diyari School and lit it up!

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### Case Study 3: From “I can’t!” to an emphatic “I CAN!”- A Teacher’s Journey.

**Name of School:** Primary School Chaukbisod

**Block:** Betalghat **District:** Nainital

Shalini Arya joined Chirag as a Balshikshak in 2015. She had never taught before and this would be her first interaction with children of age 6 and 7 (Grade 1 and 2). But how difficult would it be to teach a motley group of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Graders? Shalini was soon to find out! Within two months into her job, Shalini found herself utterly frustrated and lacking in motivation. The children would not listen to her, were not learning much and their learning levels were at an all-time low. Shalini was at her wits end and was on the verge of quitting her job. Then the first training of the year happened, which was an orientation cum training on language and math pedagogy. Shalini found that useful and also found the courage to tell her area coordinator that she was facing too many challenges in the classroom. The Chirag coordinator ensured that she made extra visits to give Shalini ongoing feedback. The coordinator also took her to a school to observe an effective balshikshak at work. Shalini integrated the feedback and the reflections she had post observation in the classroom into her own classroom. She also got to know her students and their families better through regular home visits. This ensured that the student-teacher relationship improved and this contributed to better learning. Shalini’s students are usually on task these days, they love their teacher and they are always up for learning through Shalini’s activity based teaching. We spoke to Shalini the other day and asked her how she felt about teaching 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders now to which she said, “I love teaching now, even though it still sometimes frustrates me!”

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### Case Study 4: The Diligent Cartographer

**School Name:** Primary School Gadgaon

**Block:** Ramgarh **District:** Nainital

Meenakshi is an enthusiastic student of grade 4 at Gadgaon Primary School. Her father is a taxi driver and her mother is a homemaker. Meenakshi is not only good at academics but also at other extra-curricular activities. Recently, there was a competition of map drawing at the school level. Children participating had to draw the map of Uttarakhand in the shortest possible time. Meenakshi won this competition by a large margin and everyone was amazed by her work. Her teacher and the school principal realised her diligence and decided that they would support her in higher level competitions. She went on to win the State level competition where she drew the map in shortest possible time. When asked how she prepared for a competition at that level, Meenakshi replied, "We did not have a clock at home, and I needed to keep time to practice drawing the map in the shortest possible time. But I really wanted to win this competition. That's when I came up with a plan. Every evening when my mother would make rotis, I would sit to practice in the kitchen. I had previously counted the time she took to make one roti. Initially I completed the map in the time it took to make 8 rotis. Slowly through regular practice, I was able to draw the complete map in the time it took my mother to make 4 rotis. That is how I kept myself on track and practiced hard." We were all truly amazed by the wisdom and innovation of this little cartographer!

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