

TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL REPORT 2007 - 2008



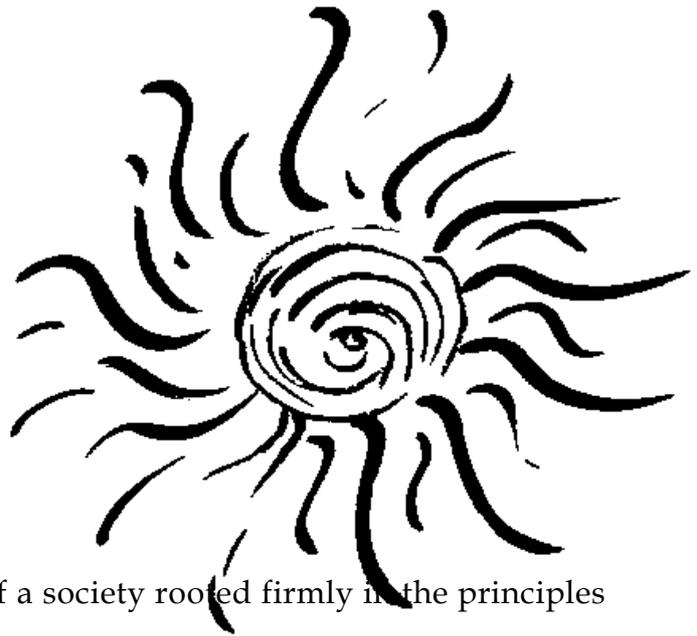
Chirag

Central Himalayan Rural Action Group



Go to the people,
Live among them,
Learn from them,
Love them.
Start with what they know.
Build on what they have.
But of the best leaders,
When their task is accomplished,
Their work is done,
The people all remark,
'We have done it ourselves'.

Chinese proverb



Our vision

To be a catalyst for the creation of a society rooted firmly in the principles of dignity, justice and solidarity.

Our mission

Chirag's mission is to improve the quality of life of rural people – especially the poor and women – in the Central Himalaya. We try to do this through interventions in health, education and natural resource management, and by providing access to diversified livelihood options. We promote the sustainable ownership and management of common resources by the community.



THE YEAR IN RETROSPECT

Twenty one years of work in the region and you would think that we have most things figured out and fine-tuned to perfection. Thankfully, that never seems to be the case. The interplay of new challenges, solutions and learning is cyclical, with no respite in between.

For years now, we have faithfully sought to follow the watershed approach to recharge springs and water sources. In the past year, an exciting collaboration has helped us learn that ground-water flows need not be congruent with flows on the surface. This hitherto unexplored dimension of hydro-geology has infused enormous enthusiasm into our natural resource management team.

The first year of a direct role in the provision of market services to small and marginal farmers has been a positive one. Bruised but not damaged would actually be more appropriate! Farmers have clearly benefitted and the response is encouraging. However, since we are taking the risks and the bruising, we bear the onus of learning fast, not repeating the same errors and yet treading carefully and fearlessly.

The strategic plan for Chirag 2008-13, led to a detailed community-based planning exercise for natural resource management being undertaken during the year. This has provided us with clarity on the direction and the distance to be covered. Amidst all the planning, an evaluation of our initiatives in one area by community members was a remarkable demonstration of the relationship between our team and the community. It demonstrated the security and confidence of both our team and the community members - the ability to be open, without fear, and yet be faithful.

Kumaun Grameen Udyog - a company promoted by Chirag to support livelihood initiatives in the region and to support its health and education initiatives through the profits - finally came of age. A first contribution of Rs 500,000 was made to the Chirag School during the year.

The diversity of our activities is requiring specialised skills and inputs and placing new demands on people within the organisation. The emphasis thus far has been on strengthening the core - the people who work at the village level mobilising families into collective action; the time to find people to provide the requisite support services to this team has probably come.

V K Madhavan
August 2008



OVERVIEW

Our little corner of the world is undergoing a dramatic transformation. We are witness to a construction boom as people from cities are acquiring land. Add the attempts to promote tourism to this equation and the picture is complete. It makes more economic sense to sell land than to try and cultivate it, and prima-facie offers the opportunity of escape from agriculture with its accompanying memories of hardship, uncertainty and vulnerability. If the service sector in the region – or even elsewhere - could absorb all those families who are either selling their lands or desirous of abandoning agriculture, then things may not seem as dismal. Alas! That is not the case. Even alternate employment requires knowledge and skills and families seem woefully ill prepared for life after agriculture. The spurt in construction is also placing a burden on existing resources and threatens to alter the very conditions that made the region attractive.

Two new initiatives that we commenced in the past year are directly linked to these new changes in our region.

Our efforts to provide adolescent boys with knowledge and skills encountered a new challenge. The boys wanted specific skills that could help them gain employment. In partnership with Ajeevika Bureau, an institution with expertise in the provision of skills to migrant labourers, we undertook an assessment of the nature and extent of migration and an assessment of potential employment opportunities within the Kumaun region. Based on the assessment, three trades were selected and we conducted our first camp for 19 youth on basic electrical work and plumbing – two of the skills that are in demand in the region.

Broadly, agriculture in our villages is of two kinds - market-driven agriculture with an emphasis on cash crops and subsistence agriculture contributing to food security. The strategy to improve soil health through organic methods and efforts to bring down the cost of cultivation and improve productivity through sustainable methods based on low external inputs are relevant for both kinds of agriculture. However, poor returns render agriculture unattractive. Chirag commenced the provision of market services – marketing of fresh fruits and vegetables, and pulses and spices; and the supply of seeds during the year. Eighty - five tonnes of fresh fruits and vegetables and five and a half tonnes of pulses and spices were procured and nearly fifteen and a half tonnes of seeds distributed in the first year. If agriculture is to remain a viable option for

farmers, then the scale of our operations has to grow exponentially and the semblance of a strategy to address this is falling into place.

Community forestry and soil and water conservation through physical structures and vegetation have always been a significant proportion of our work. In the past year, our effort to cultivate fodder on common lands expanded and the results are heartening. Given our relative expertise in these aspects of natural resource management, it was but elementary that we should seek to provide technical support to other institutions. Chirag currently provides technical support to two organisations on the protection and regeneration of catchments of water sources, to three on fodder and to nine on the watershed development approach.

Chirag's efforts to improve the quality of education are currently underway in 59 villages and 1,864 children benefit from it. There are 123 girls between 6th and 12th class who receive scholarships to enable them to complete their schooling. The inclusion of a larger proportion of girls in 6th or 7th class in the past year has enabled us to provide them with tutorial support for a longer period thereby leading to an improvement in their academic ability. The Chirag School has completed two years, including one its own building. The School has been successful in creating an open and vibrant environment for children. The pace of learning amongst the older children has picked up - almost imperceptibly - and the demands on the teachers have grown to match this thirst.

The preventive and promotive health programme has been initiated in 39 *Gram Panchayats*. Despite the initial mobilisation at the village level, the prospect of elections to the *Gram Panchayats* has led to several planned activities being delayed. However, this has proved to be a boon since it has enabled the establishment of a rapport with the ASHAs and led to several discussions with women in other institutions at the village level on issues pertaining to health. The clinics have witnessed an increase in the number of patients in the past year. The regular visits of a lady doctor and an additional doctor at the Sitla clinic for several months have contributed to this increase.

Our pilot efforts at Naukuchiyatal and Patal Bhuvaneshwar to link conservation with rural livelihoods continue. In Naukuchiyatal, a relationship has been established with government to transport the waste that is collected out of the area. In Patal Bhuvaneshwar, livelihood and conservation efforts are bearing results while the management of non-biodegradable waste continues to confound us. *Swades ki Khoj*, our initiative to invest in young graduates by providing them with an opportunity to live and work in a rural area for a year was launched with 14 youth. After a foundation course at Chirag, they joined their host organisations (in five different states) and will complete their year in June 2008.

The diversity of our activities and a growing technical support role will necessitate the expansion of our team with people with not just commitment and enthusiasm but with specialised skills. Steps to realise the dream of creating a small documentation and communication unit have been taken and, hopefully in a year, this aspect of our work would have been strengthened.

Where we work

Area Office	District	Block	Villages
Reetha	Nainital	Ramgarh	29
Kasiyalekh	Nainital	Ramgarh, Dhari	21
Naukuchiyatal	Nainital	Bhimtal	22
Suyalbari	Nainital	Ramgarh, Betalghat	61
	Almora	Hawalbagh	3
Dewaldhar	Bageshwar	Bageshwar	55
Dasainthal	Pithoragarh	Berinag	18

There are six area teams, and we have a direct presence in 209 villages in four blocks of Nainital District and in one block each in Bageshwar, Pithoragarh and Almora Districts. There has been a small increase in the number of villages we work in as compared to the previous year. However, there is a need to rationalise operations with several villages with marginal activities requiring a disproportionately large amount of our staff's time.





CHIRAG'S INITIATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Community forestry
- Agriculture and horticulture – experimentation, demonstration and extension on organic methods
- Community-based animal husbandry
- Recharge of springs
- Watershed development
- Fodder development in private and community lands
- Technical support on fodder, forestry and soil and water conservation

OTHER LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT

- Facilitating access to credit and skills especially for the poor through on-farm and off-farm activities
- Agriculture-related market service provision

EDUCATION AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

- Primary School Support Programme including school-based libraries
- Scholarships for girls
- Knowledge and skill building of adolescent youth – girls and boys – through residential camps and community-based efforts
- Specialised skills for employment

HEALTH CARE

- Curative services through two clinics
- Preventive and promotive services in 39 *Gram Panchayats* in the five core geographical areas of operation
- Drinking water

PILOT INITIATIVES

- Community-based conservation of Naukuchiyatal lake
- Conservation and rural livelihoods at Patal Bhuvaneshwar
- *Swades ki Khoj* – Investing in the youth

Community-based institutions, ranging from self-help groups to *Gram Panchayats*, are central to the strategy in all the initiatives except curative health services. We make a special effort to strengthen these institutions by encouraging participation and transparency.



NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

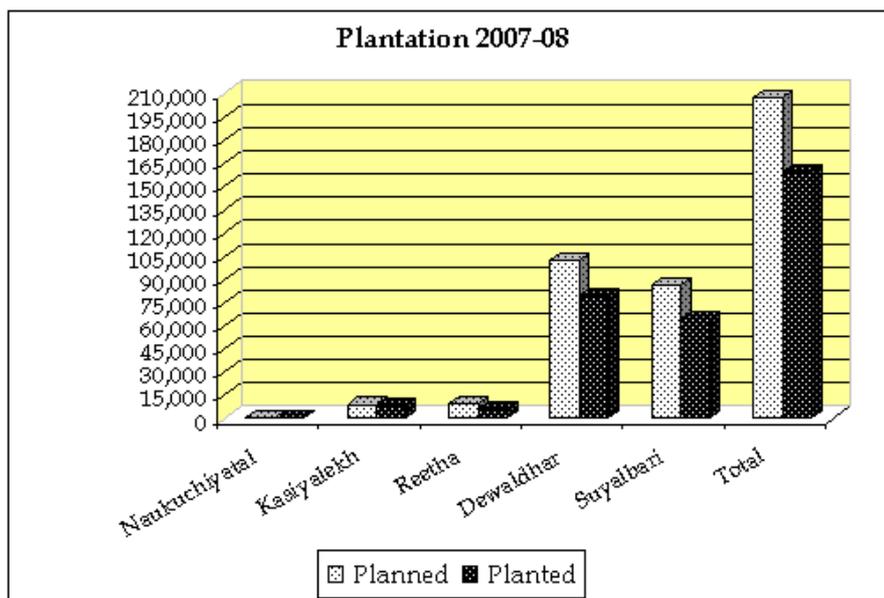
Our initiatives in Natural Resource Management include:

- Community forestry and soil and water conservation including recharge of springs
- Watershed development
- Fodder development
- Community-based animal husbandry
- Agriculture and horticulture
- Strengthening of Village Level Institutions
- Technical support on fodder, forestry and soil and water conservation

Community Forestry, Fodder and Recharge of Springs

Community forestry, the cultivation of fodder on commons, and efforts to recharge springs all require soil and water conservation efforts. In sites where all three (or even two) objectives coincide, our approach has altered. At the outset, emphasis is laid on protection of the sites and on physical measures to conserve soil and water. Fodder, shrubs and grasses are planted along the contour trenches and on terraces to assist in conservation. The possibility of an increase in fodder production within a few months of planting creates a clear incentive for protection. Protection also gives existing root-stock an opportunity to emerge. In the subsequent year, saplings of broad-leaved species, particularly fodder varieties, are planted. The planting of saplings after moisture in the site has been enhanced assists in growth and increases the chances of success. Fewer trees need to be planted because of natural regeneration. This approach has been tested over the past few years and, based on its success, is being replicated on all the sites in which we work - except for those where protection is difficult because of the location of the sites. In such sites, saplings and shrubs that are not foraged by livestock or other animals are planted in the first year along the perimeter and, in subsequent years, other species are planted within the core.

During the year, our target for planting was just short of 200,000 saplings and this was enhanced by the inclusion of another 8,350 saplings in Naukuchiyatal and at Binsar in the Dewaldhar area. Out of a planned target of 207,826 saplings, we were able to plant 159,194 with nearly 85% of the planting in the monsoon alone. The remaining saplings - 48,632 will be planted in the next year.



Most of the planting was undertaken in Suyalbari and Dewaldhar areas. No new nurseries were established during the year for planting out during 2008-09. Except for the balance that needs to be planted, because of the emphasis on protection and soil and water conservation efforts in the next year, we do not anticipate a significant need for saplings. If the circumstances require it, there are saplings available in the three central nurseries at Dewaldhar, Simayal and Dhokane. The central nurseries at Dhokane and Simayal also contain seedlings of shrubs and all the nurseries have fodder varieties that can be used to fulfil some of the demand for fodder at the village level.

The onset of forest fires has been much earlier - because of the near absence of precipitation in winter for two successive years. Fire control measures have been attempted in pine dominated forest plots over the past few years. In the first instance, pine needles were collected by women and removed from the plots to reduce the incidence of fire. In 11 villages in Kasiyalekh, Dewaldhar and Reetha areas, 13,350 running metres (rmt) of fire-lines were created in the plots. In Suyalbari, a workshop on fire-control was conducted and 23 representatives of village institutions participated in it.

Soil and Water Conservation and Spring Recharge

In Reetha, Dewaldhar, Kasiyalekh and Suyalbari there was a significant amount of investment in physical measures to assist in the retention of moisture and to check soil erosion. Percolation ponds (209 cubic metres), gully plugs (88 rmt), contour trenches (3,038 rmt) , and check-dams (203 rmt) were constructed and 49



quintals of grass slips and 1,185 shrubs planted. Despite our preference for 'social fencing' i.e. the protection of plots through community action, if the forests are located away from habitation or are more accessible to families from other villages, there is a need to either repair existing traditional walls or to invest in barbed wire fences. Nearly 2 kilometres of traditional walls were repaired during the year and a similar length of barbed wire had to be utilised to protect these sites.

Spring recharge is being facilitated in 17 villages. Depending on the nature of the site, the treatment can vary. For example, in the Reetha area a greater proportion of brush-wood check-dams were utilised and in Kasiyalekh only shrubs and saplings were planted. In Suyalbari, lantana had to be cleared prior to conservation efforts. The discharge of springs is currently being measured in 14 villages in Dewaldhar, Suyalbari, Reetha and Kasiyalekh areas. In Sidhpur, the discharge has been measured each month for two years now. However, no significant impact is visible as yet.

In the winter of 2006, one of our colleagues participated in a fortnight long training programme at the Advanced Center for Water Resources Development and Management (ACWADAM) in Pune. A relationship has been established and, during the past year, there have been several visits by friends from ACWADAM and two of their students have undertaken their field-work in the region. In January 2008, three colleagues from Chirag attended a training programme at ACWADAM. The interaction over the past few years has made us realise that (a) not all the sites that we have been treating with the express objective of recharging springs will lead to the anticipated impact (b) that ground water can move in strange ways and (c) we need to understand the basic geological profile of the area and specifically need to identify the region that contributes to recharge. This is a new and exciting journey. While we are confident about our basic approach and ability to increase the retention of moisture in our soils, this collaboration is helping us to understand how to select sites for recharge.

The desire to improve the quality of documentation and, in particular, to be able to assess impact with some accuracy is compelling. Small measures have been initiated but we are a long way from having in place a reliable and efficient system. Two initiatives have been taken in this regard during the year. The initiative of the Berkeley Reafforestation Trust led to MapAction UK sending two volunteers to teach our team how to create maps of forestry sites using a geographical positioning system (GPS) device. The creation of the map itself without images of the specific area is inadequate. However, the first step has been taken. We can map every plot that we work on and then find images for it at different times to see the change.

In the absence of reliable information about rainfall, temperature and rates of evaporation, the mere discharge of a spring need not tell us whether our efforts are making a difference or not. For example, excess rainfall in a few months will lead to increased discharge. We need to be able to increase the discharge consistently, particularly in the lean months of the year. We have established automatic weather stations in six different villages in the region. This will give us reliable information in the future about rainfall and temperature for these locations.

Fodder Development

Fodder development was initiated in 28 hectares of commons and 10 hectares of private lands in 9 villages during the year. The objectives are to increase the total availability of fodder, green fodder, and fodder with higher nutritional value, particularly during lean months. An additional potential benefit is a reduction in the drudgery of women - who, along with their other chores, must also collect the fodder for the household.



Seventy decentralised nurseries were established and 6,250 kilogrammes of root - stock and seeds were produced in them. The species that were cultivated were Italian Rye, Cocksfoot, Tall Fescue, Brome and Napier. The germination rates varied between 60-95%. Land was cleared in the forest plots, contour trenches and percolation pits were dug, terraces created and gully plugs constructed to reduce erosion. Communities commenced protecting these plots and 261.4 quintals of root-slips and plants, 2,245 shrubs and 22,858 saplings were planted. On private lands, 109.12 quintals of fodder and 550 saplings were planted on the farm bunds.

The effort was preceded by the preparation of micro-plans for each village and a total of 32 days of training on topics that included nursery raising, contour and pit digging, mulching and fodder production and management, planting and terracing. Meetings were held in each of the villages and 811 people (of whom 80% were women) participated in them.

The results are promising and should lead to an increased availability of fodder to 236 households. The survival rate of the saplings - in particular oak and bauhinia species - was 70% after six months.

Elsewhere, prior efforts continue to yield fodder from forestry plots. In Dewaldhar area, 475 households from 24 villages received an average of 3.2 quintals of fodder per family during the year. A further 37 quintals of fodder - largely Napier, *Pangola*, *Auns*, and Brome - were planted in these villages. In

Suyalbari, 340 quintals of grasses were harvested from forestry plots in 7 villages and an additional income of Rs 15,600 was generated for their *Van Panchayats*.

Watershed Development

We are currently implementing the watershed approach at two locations - in the Ghangal Kuluwa watershed in Almora District and the Pirna Watershed in Bageshwar District. In addition to the forestry, fodder and soil and water conservation efforts which have been covered in the earlier sections, some other activities were undertaken in these watersheds during the year.



Ghangal Kuluwa watershed

There are three villages in this watershed. In each village two families have been identified to demonstrate agricultural technologies. Each family is utilising a poly-house, two compost pits and a water harvesting tank to produce seedlings and to cultivate off-season vegetables. 241 seedlings of peach, apricot and plum were made available for cultivation to 55 households. A veterinary camp was held and 78 animals, mostly buffaloes, from 22 households were treated.

In Kumaan, the *naula* is being repaired and a 400 metre long distribution pipeline laid to provide water to 24 households. In Sidhpur, the hand-pump that was installed last year has led to a two-fold increase in per capita water availability. An operation and maintenance account has been created by the families of Sidhpur and they pay a caretaker a stipend to help maintain the system.

In Pataliya an irrigation scheme is being implemented. On completion there will be 3 storage tanks, a 360 metre long pipe-line and 150 metre long irrigation channel. Two tanks, 210 metre of the pipe-line and the irrigation channel have been constructed so far and 2 hectares are receiving irrigation. Eventually, 8 hectares that belong to 29 households will be irrigated.

The location of the villages has led to an erratic supply of electricity. For the best part of the year, the households do not have any electricity. Fourteen solar home lighting systems have been installed in these villages.

There are four self-help groups in these villages with 57 members who save Rs 21.00 each month. There are 7 village level institutions to manage activities related to forestry and water. Their *Gram Kosh* or Village Fund currently has Rs 18,151 that they have contributed towards the maintenance of the assets that are

being created. A total contribution of Rs 234, 521 has been made thus far by families towards investments in forestry, watershed protection, water, agriculture and the solar lights.

Pirna watershed

The Pirna watershed covers an area of 564.3 hectares in 8 revenue villages. In the past year, activities commenced in one village, Binsar, with 44 households (all Scheduled Caste) and covering an area of 84.3 hectares. The objective is to demonstrate the success of efforts in one village prior to embarking on treatment of the whole watershed.

In the forest, 8,000 saplings were planted during the year. Sixty check-dams, 5 percolation ponds and contour trenches were constructed. Eight quintals of fodder were planted during the year.

An irrigation channel 50 rmt long has been constructed and 1.5 acres belonging to 8 households are receiving irrigation. Two families are demonstrating the use of improved agriculture technologies using poly-houses and vermi-compost pits.

Community Based Animal Husbandry



Out of an initial batch of 10 young men who were trained as para-vets by the Uttarakhand Livestock Development Board only six continue to provide veterinary services. The Board encourages them to only provide artificial insemination services and the law prohibits them from providing any first-aid or preventive care to livestock. The expectations from families or the need in the area – not surprisingly - is not limited to breed improvement. Despite these constraints, the para-vets have performed remarkably and earned Rs 51,300 through the provision of services during the year.

Para-vet Services (April 07-March 08)

Area	No. of Villages	Artificial Insemination (Buffalo)	Artificial Insemination (Cow)	Pregnancy Diagnosis (Buffalo)	Pregnancy Diagnosis (Cow)	Total
Reetha	12	123	223	9	34	389
Kasiyalkeh	11	8	26	9	6	49
Dewaldhar	6	18	20	18	20	76
Total	29	149	269	36	60	514

The para-vets provided services to 514 animals in 29 villages during the year. Attempts to secure permission from the state to permit these para-vets to provide first aid and preventive care have been unsuccessful.

Chirag's trained staff in the Dewaldhar area treated 110 animals and provided 9 quintals of cattle feed. 1,383 croiler chicks were distributed to poor families to augment their income.

Camps were held in collaboration with the Animal Husbandry Department of the Government in Dewaldhar and Reetha and with the assistance of the Indian Veterinary Institute in the Kasiyalekh area. A total of 1,156 animals were treated or immunised.

Veterinary Camps

Area	No of Village	No. of Animals Treated/Immunised					Total
		Cow	Buffaloes	Ox	Calf	Goat	
Reetha	22	425	190	55	230	53	953
Kasiyalekh	3	87	26	3	27	33	176
Dewaldhar	1	6	10	6		5	27
Total	26	518	226	64	257	91	1,156

Historically, Chirag's animal husbandry programme has been led by veterinary doctors. The emphasis therefore has been on curative services and fodder and nutrition. However, in the absence of doctors the programme has been run by Chirag's trained staff. Their success led to the programme of community-based para-vets being initiated last year. The inability to receive permission for the para-vets to provide services other than those related to breed improvement significantly inhibited the programme.

For two years now, colleagues have been participating in a rigorous training programme conducted by ANTHRA, Pune – an organisation with expertise in the management of livestock. The programme is split into several modules during the year and provides a holistic approach to livestock management and development. The collaboration with ANTHRA has opened new possibilities for us. Foremost has been the realisation that for our community-based animal husbandry programme to succeed – as, indeed, in our preventive and promotive health programme for humans - 'doctors' are not crucial. Further, ANTHRA's own interest and expertise in the use of home remedies and traditional medicine has a potential for replication. A new strategy for the community-based animal husbandry programme with components of fodder and improved nutrient management, management practices of livestock, preventive care and first aid

based on home remedies, livestock-based enterprises and eventually livestock insurance is being designed and should be operationalised in the coming year.

Agriculture and Horticulture

The strategy seemed clear and simple. Improve soil health through organic methods, promote efforts to reduce cost of cultivation and increase production sustainably with low external inputs, promote no-pesticide management and encourage crop diversification and market access. Half-way through the year, it became apparent that the going was tough and slow. Our best efforts were not imparting any significant scale to our programme. Even practices and technologies which were successful on our farms were not expanding as fast and far and wide as we would have liked. We needed help!



As part of the Farmer to Farmer programme of Winrock International, two experts visited us and helped us in designing organic pest and disease control schedules for apple and peach. Neither of them had worked specifically on organic pest and disease control methods but their knowledge of ideal management practices and the timing of pest and disease attacks helped us in designing a schedule.

However, despite the support of two international volunteers, the conundrum of scale remained elusive. Enter a third international expert – this time a friend, who decided to respond to our plaintive cries for assistance. A friend with over four decades of experience in agriculture research and extension. He gently told us the error of our ways and pointed out why things work and why they do not.

Suddenly, things started to fall into place. Our objectives remain the same but in the coming year a new approach to experimentation and scaling up will be attempted.

During the course of the year, there has been an emphasis on trials on farmers' fields, organic trials on our farms and a consolidation of our herb cultivation programme.

Field Based Trials and Extension

The fulcrum of extension in the Dewaldhar area is the Farmers' Information and Resource Centre (FIRC). The FIRC provides inputs, organises training and workshops and facilitates exposure to the experimental farm. During the year, seedlings for 6 vegetables and coriander seeds were made available to farmers in the area. Farmers from 5 villages were trained in organic farming, integrated

pest and nutrient management, value addition and on the System of Rice Intensification (SRI). Trials on SRI were held at the Dewaldhar farm and in Chauna. The SRI method reduces the requirement for seed and water, follows organic practices, and requires wider spacing between seedlings. The results in Chauna were much better than at the farm and will need to be tried again. SRI is largely used under irrigated conditions and the challenge for us is to get the timing and process correct to adapt it to rain-fed conditions.

A trial on wheat was conducted with 25 farmers in 11 villages. A new variety was tried with a nutrient supplement, foliar spray using vermi-wash and vermicompost. The data suggests that the wheat variety VL804 contributed to an average increase of 6 kg/nali and the use of a foliar spray of vermi-wash to a 2 kg/nali increase in production.

In Kasiyalekh and Reetha areas, an organic spray schedule for peach was tried out by a total of 50 farmers on 577 trees. Several of the farmers chose to revert to their conventional methods. The trials will require significant modification if they are to gain acceptance. Firstly, the trials showed better results on new trees. Secondly, they need to take into account the different times of flowering of different varieties. Thirdly, timing is crucial and the inputs have to be available with the farmers in advance for them to use as per their need.

In Kasiyalekh, 13 farmers used compost made with effective micro-organisms (EM) in their potato crop and 1 farmer tried it on the wheat crop. There was a 10% increase in the production of wheat.

In the Naukuchiyatal area, in September and October 2007 some simple techniques were tried out by farmers. 80 farmers attempted different kinds of seed treatment and the use of EM as a foliar spray. They used EM, EM and a Rhizobium culture, the Rhizobium culture and *Panchagavya*. In February this year, 34 farmers in 8 villages used Trichoderma to treat their compost prior to application and 14 farmers treated the seeds of their pea crop with EM. The EM foliar spray was tried out by 37 farmers from 5 villages on crops like garlic, onion, spinach, coriander and potato.

A trial on the organic control of pests and diseases was attempted by 9 farmers on 255 apple trees in the Reetha area. The results seemed more positive than in peach but since no pesticides are used at all in apple, the results have to be seen in the context of the benefits given an additional expenditure. In the Kasiyalekh area, a farmers' exhibition and competition on apples was held in August last year. There were five varieties on display and the competition was judged and the farmers addressed by experts from the Central Institute for Temperate Horticulture, Mukteshwar.

Experimental Farms

The Dewaldhar farm focussed on cultivating produce using techniques that had already been successfully attempted in the past and on the propagation of quality planting material amongst farmers in the area.

The Simayal farm on the other hand attempted several new organic practices during the year. The organic pest and disease control schedule was tried out on 163 apple trees and 47 peach trees. To control the incidence of woolly aphids in apple trees, a turmeric based organic spray prepared on the farm and neem oil were sprayed. Neem oil was found to be a more effective control agent.

Eupatorium, a fast growing weed, was chopped and used in compost pits. It was found to make excellent, black and granular compost in a very short duration. The preparation of compost using EM was found to require less time than the bio-dynamic method though the quality of the compost was comparable.

Seed treatment of capsicum using EM and a foliar spray using *Panchagavya* led to a yield of 126 kgs/nali – twice the yield as compared to the crop using traditional methods. *Panchagavya* was also found to be successful in controlling powdery mildew in the pea crop. A complex trial in the cultivation of beans was attempted with soil treatment, seed treatment, the use of different kinds of compost and foliar sprays. The foliar spray of *Panchagavya* and EM proved to be the most effective with yields of nearly 70 kgs/nali as compared to a yield of 48 kgs/nali using traditional methods.

The Simayal farm also had an important role to play in the preparation and provision of inputs for the trials in Reetha, Kasiyalekh and Naukuchiyatal areas. The farm also produced 15,255 seedlings of herbs for cultivation by farmers.

Crop Diversification

The cultivation of culinary herbs by women has reached a point of consolidation. Clear preferences with regard to herbs have emerged in each of the areas. Parsley and basil are the most popular in Kasiyalekh, whereas parsley and chives are preferred in Reetha. In Suyalbari, basil is the herb of choice and lemongrass in Naukuchiyatal, while rosemary and sage grow easily in Dewaldhar. The programme is slowly expanding, with Kasiyalekh taking the lead in its expansion. In Kasiyalekh there are 86 farmers cultivating herbs on marginal lands or small plots in 15 villages. The drying and processing of herbs is being decentralised to small collectives of women in each area to ensure that the additional value contributed by them can also lead to an economic return.

The effort in partnership with 7 other organisations to promote produce cultivated without pesticides is slowly falling into place. A system has been developed to document agricultural practices of farmers to verify the integrity of the assertion. In all the areas that Chirag works in, farmers have been identified. The documentation will be completed in the coming months. During the course of the coming year, some of this produce could be sold in markets under a new brand and label – with a distinct identity of ‘no pesticides used’.

Strengthening Village Level Institutions

Common property resources are central to most of our natural resource management efforts. These resources are managed by a wide variety of village level institutions that include user groups, self-help groups, *Van Panchayats*, Village Development Committees and *Gram Panchayats*.



Forestry - Village Institutions in Dewaldhar Area

Institution	Number	Membership		
		Women	Men	Total
<i>Van Panchayat</i>	22	62	112	174
Village Development Committee	5	10	21	31
User Group	2	1	4	5
		73	137	210

In the Dewaldhar area alone there are three kinds of institutions involved with management of forests. While the legal responsibility and accountability rests with the *Van Panchayat*, very often other institutions undertake the responsibility for management of a particular plot. The challenge is to ensure coordination and collective action between these institutions.

Convergence and collective action

Compartment No 2 or Budedhar of the Van Panchayat of Buribana was degraded. The cumulative impact of animals and the indiscriminate lopping of oak trees and removal of fuel-wood and leaf litter had taken their toll. Further, multiple paths had been created through the plot and these were leading to an increase in soil erosion.

The Ujala Kisan Club consists of 29 women. The kisan club and the Van Panchayat met and decided to work together to rejuvenate the Budedhar plot by undertaking soil and water conservation efforts and plantation. Five hectares were selected for protection, and the women contributed their labour voluntarily to plant grasses and saplings and to weed and mulch the beds and pits.

Today, soil erosion has reduced, fodder production has increased, indiscriminate use of produce controlled and the success has led to direct seed sowing of oak being undertaken in other parts of the Van Panchayat land.

Collective action between two institutions can work!

Our experience has made it evident that the functioning and ability of village level institutions have to be strengthened for the sustainability of the activities that are undertaken.

This year we focussed specifically on *Van Panchayats*. With the support of the Van Panchayat Sangharsh Morcha, Bhowali, 9 trainings were held during the year for members of existing *Van Panchayats*. A total of 228 members attended, of whom 107 were women. The trainings sought to provide the members with information on the following: the history of *Van Panchayats* and *Van Panchayat* Rules and Regulations – particularly in the context of elections, the duties of members, the role of women and record keeping. Subsequently, activity plans for each of the *Van Panchayats* were created and efforts discussed to enhance the role of women in *Van Panchayats*, coordination of efforts with the government and strategies to deal with encroachment on *Van Panchayat* land. The representation of women in the trainings at Naukuchiyatal and Suyalbari was the best. These trainings also enabled Chirag staff to gain in knowledge about the *Van Panchayat* Act and its rules and procedures.

Van Panchayat Membership

	Total <i>Van Panchayats</i>	Members	Male	Female
Dewaldhar	28	210	137	73
Kasiyalekh	7	53	26	27
Reetha	7	52	43	9
	42	315	206	109

In addition to strengthening institutions, the ability of institutions to maintain assets out of their own financial resources is important. Special attention is given to mobilising resources for these institutions to utilise for management. In Dewaldhar, the operation and maintenance accounts of 10 villages have nearly Rs 20,000 available to maintain irrigation channels and drinking water supply schemes. In Suyalbari, the *Van Panchayats* or user groups of 5 villages have nearly Rs 44,000 to manage their forests. These sums of money are raised through monthly contributions, user fees, charges or levies for extraction of natural resources, fines or through special collection drives.

Community - based evaluation of NRM efforts

In September 2007, the Kasiyalekh team decided to initiate a participatory and community - based evaluation of its efforts between 2005 and 2007 pertaining to natural resource management in 11 villages. Discussions were held with all the community - based institutions and they helped identify individuals from their villages who would participate in this exercise.

A team of 8 evaluators was identified. They were briefed about all the activities undertaken in the villages, the basis for selecting them and the process that was adopted. In February 2008, the evaluators met to set indicators for the evaluation. The villages were divided into five clusters and responsibilities were split amidst the team.

The evaluators met with stakeholders and representatives of all the village level institutions visited the sites and households of select families. In March 2008, this group presented its findings in a public meeting attended by representatives from each of the villages and the Chirag team. The team found the quality of work to be the best in Majhera followed by Parbada and then Buribana.

The Kasiyalekh team felt that they had received objective inputs on their successes and failures. They felt that their relationship with the community representatives had been strengthened. At the village level, there was an increase in awareness about the diversity of interventions, inspiration was drawn from some of the efforts and a sense of competition emerged with regard to other villages.

Technical Support

Chirag currently provides technical support to other organisations in the state on watershed development, catchment area protection and fodder development.



Supporting Integrated Watershed Development in Kumaon

Chirag supports 9 grassroots development organisations (GDOs) in Kumaon to implement the watershed approach in micro-watersheds. These organisations are located in 7 blocks in 4 districts of Kumaon. Chirag's role during the year was to disseminate knowledge and skills and to provide field - based support and monitoring.

A total of 104 participants from these organisations attended the workshops organised during the year. There were workshops on agriculture, animal husbandry, accounts, fodder development and water. One meeting was held with the Chief Functionaries of the organisations. Field - based trainings were

provided on community mobilisation, off-season vegetable cultivation and the strengthening of village level institutions. Trainings for *Van Panchayats* were held at Gangolihaat, Simayal and Dewaldhar in December 2007 and were attended by 84 people.

Field Support and Monitoring

Our field support teams consisting of members with expertise in forestry, engineering, agriculture, accountancy and community mobilisation visited the organisations as per the following schedule. Each organisation was visited four times during the year.

Month	Visits
June '07	All the GDOs
Aug '07	All the GDOs
Nov '07	All the GDOs
Feb '08	All the GDOs

Evaluation

Each of the organisations was evaluated independently between the months of September and October 2007. The annual evaluation provides continuous feedback to the organisations and since the evaluators can vary, new inputs are provided.

Exposure Visit

Representatives from each of the organisations and Chirag visited watersheds in Himachal Pradesh that had been developed by the partners of Peoples' Science Institute, Dehradun. The group was unanimous in its appreciation of a women's cooperative in Kangra that is involved in fruit processing.

Fodder Development

Three organisations, one each in Almora, Pithoragarh and Nainital district - all of them existing partners on watershed development - are being supported by Chirag to promote the cultivation of fodder on a total of 9 hectares of common land and 3 hectares of private land. One organisation - with prior experience of fodder cultivation - was visited four times during the year by our team; the others were visited six times each.



Catchment Area Protection

Chirag is supporting and monitoring the progress of two organisations, one each in Kumaun and Garhwal on catchment area protection. Both the organisations are currently implementing a water and sanitation programme as part of the Himmothan Pariyojna of the Sir Ratan Tata Trust. To ensure that recharge of water sources in addition to distribution of water are being equally addressed, a catchment area protection component has been designed in the programme.



The Himalayan Institute Hospital Trust is working in 17 villages across a block each of Dehradun and Tehri districts. A population of 5,281 is to benefit from the protection and treatment of 135.2 hectares. The Himalayan Gram Vikas Samiti is being supported in 5 villages in two blocks of Pithoragarh district. A population of 1,365 is to benefit from the treatment and protection of 10.4 hectares.

The organisations were visited twice during the year in April and November and are expected to complete their work by November 2008.

Challenges

Water

There is a possibility of recharge and discharge zones of a water source falling in two different villages. This is certain to pose a challenge in terms of mobilisation as well as protection and treatment of the sources. It is also going to necessitate a potential geographical expansion of our area of work.

Animal Husbandry

With efforts to increase the production of fodder underway, there is an urgency to finalise and implement the strategy for supporting other elements of a comprehensive animal husbandry programme.

Agriculture

Quite clearly, in order to have an impact on the region our challenge is to demonstrate our ability to improve incomes from agriculture on a large scale. Our efforts to promote herb cultivation need to be consolidated and in each area a few herbs selected and focussed on for large scale cultivation. The future of apples in our region continues to be in jeopardy and it will take special efforts to retain the interests of farmers.

Village Level Institutions

Despite the obvious importance and centrality of good governance for sustainability, it is easier and more attractive to focus on the technical aspects of

natural resource management. We will need to ensure that the aspect of governance receives the attention it deserves.

Technical Support

Chirag is involved in the direct implementation of programmes and its support role is growing. The same team with the expertise and experience is thus burdened with two responsibilities that compete for time and attention. A structural solution to this is required to prevent burn-out and to retain a healthy mix of direct action and support.

Measuring Impact

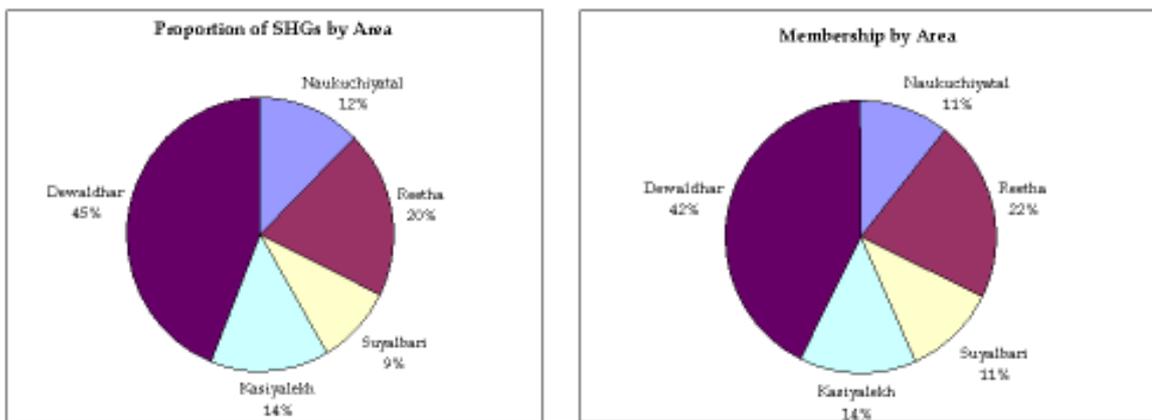
Our experience suggests that an integrated approach to development in general and natural resource management specifically has the greatest possibility of impact – but not necessarily scale. Our efforts to measure outcomes are improving but measurement of impact remains elusive. In keeping with our approach, our impact measurement must also reflect the unity of interventions.





OTHER LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT

Finally, the utilisation of savings and credit for productive purposes has increased. There are currently 201 self-help groups (SHGs) with a membership of 2,344 of whom nearly 90% are women. In Dewaldhar the partnership with Ajeevika, a Government of Uttarakhand initiative, has led to a burgeoning of SHGs in the past two years with the poorest families being organised into groups with the objective of providing them with access to diverse livelihood options. Almost half the SHGs and two-fifths of the total members are currently in the Dewaldhar area.



The average attendance of members in meetings has improved, and ranges between 70% in Suyalbari and 92% in the Reetha area. The SHGs have a cumulative saving of Rs 4,592,405 and a Cash Credit Limit (CCL) with their banks for a total of Rs 1,796,000. In the past year 698 members have taken loans from their savings and 329 against the CCL. The interest rates were a matter of concern in the past, since they tended to be high. Discussions in the groups have led to a revision of interest rates in several areas. SHGs in Naukuchiyatal and Reetha areas charge the lowest rates of interest (12-13.5%) for loans from their savings. The interest rates for loans from savings are the highest in Dewaldhar and Kasiyalekh areas with an average of 21% per annum.

An analysis of the loans given out by the SHGs from their savings revealed some interesting facts:

- The maximum loans were taken for animal husbandry and miscellaneous reasons, followed by agriculture.

- A bulk of the loans for animal husbandry or horticulture were taken in the Reetha area. Similarly, a majority of the loans for agriculture were taken in Kasiyalekh area.
- Dewaldhar area, with a significant membership of the poorest in the SHGs, not surprisingly witnessed the highest number of loans for health, education and miscellaneous reasons.

The Ajeevika initiative is being implemented in 41 villages of the Dewaldhar area and seeks to reach out to 2,660 households. A wealth ranking exercise was undertaken and the families were classified into five categories with the 5th the wealthiest. The first three (ie poorest) categories account for 65% of total households. Scheduled Caste families account for 45% of the total population - a high proportion for the region as a whole.

	Villages	Households	Population	SC population	Poorest HH
Dewaldhar	21	1,167	6,260	3,107	657
Katpuriyachina	20	1,493	9,179	3,886	1,062
	41	2,660	15,439	6,993	1,719

In addition to the organisation of families into SHGs, the commencement of savings, and linkages with banks, broadly three major efforts are being made. The first is to reduce the drudgery of women. Vermi-compost pits, an increase in fodder production, improved tools such as chaff-cutters and light pitchers to carry water are being promoted in the area. The second major activity pertains to the promotion of livelihoods. Thus far, croiler hens, improved seeds of wheat and peas, poly-tunnels and collective farming have been attempted. Finally, a convergence approach is being promoted to create a synergy between the activities of different agencies of the government as well as other rural development organisations. In Dewaldhar in the past two years, 12 people with disabilities, 33 widows and 1 aged person have received benefits from the Social Welfare Department.

Sunday Haat

Women from 11 SHGs of 7 villages have started a weekly haat called the "Mallika Ravi Bazaar" at Kafligair. 16-22 women sell their produce in this market every Sunday. Vegetables, fruits, pulses, rice and madua flour, eggs, spices, pickles, milk and curd are brought by the women for sale. 16 women have sold their produce in three months this year. The total sale has been Rs 12,268. Of the women who have participated regularly, the highest earning by a woman has been Rs 3,377 and the lowest Rs 156.

Despite the obvious focus of the initiative on livelihoods, the SHGs have also provided a platform for women to express their solidarity. The solidarity amongst the women finds reflection in other ways as well.

Solidarity

There are 37 families in Bhanartoli and two SHGs with a total membership of 27. The post for a worker in a mini-Anganwadi in the village was advertised for. Not surprisingly every family with means wanted a member of their family to get a government job. The women of the two SHGs got together and decided that one of their members Munni Devi – a poor widow - should get the job. They wrote a joint application and submitted it at the local office of the Integrated Child Development Scheme. Sure enough, Munni Devi got the post of a worker in the mini-Anganwadi.

Vikas Volunteer Vahini or Farmers' Club

The expectations from the 60 Vikas Volunteer Vahinis or Farmers Clubs are gradually being met. Some of their successes during the year are as follows:



- 13 women from 2 villages have received Kisan Credit Cards
- 48 farmers have insured their apple and peach crops with the Agriculture Insurance Company
- 3 Jersey cows have been purchased by members to sell milk
- Veterinary camps were organised in 16 villages and 910 animals were vaccinated
- 15 rain-water harvesting tanks have been constructed in one village
- 5 women have commenced making juice and 6 are cultivating parsley
- 14 families have started bee-keeping

Diversifying Market Access

Chirag commenced providing of market related agriculture services to small and marginal farmers. This year three major activities were attempted: the marketing of fresh fruits and vegetables to provide farmers with a better value for their produce, the procurement and sale of pulses and spices and the provision of improved seeds.



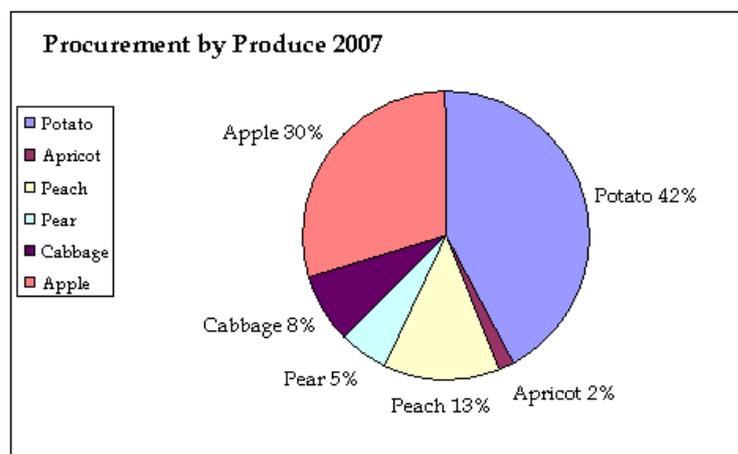
Nearly five and a half tonnes of products such as soya bean, *bhatt*, *madua*, maize, red chillies, *rajma* and *urad dal* were procured from the Kharahi Krishak Mandal in Dewaldhar and farmers in Suyalbari and Kasiyalekh areas. In the first

instance, we wanted to understand the process of value addition. The produce was subsequently sold to Kumaun Grameen Udyog. In future, Chirag shall seek to create groups at the area level who will undertake the value addition on their own, prior to selling the produce to Kumaun Grameen Udyog or elsewhere.

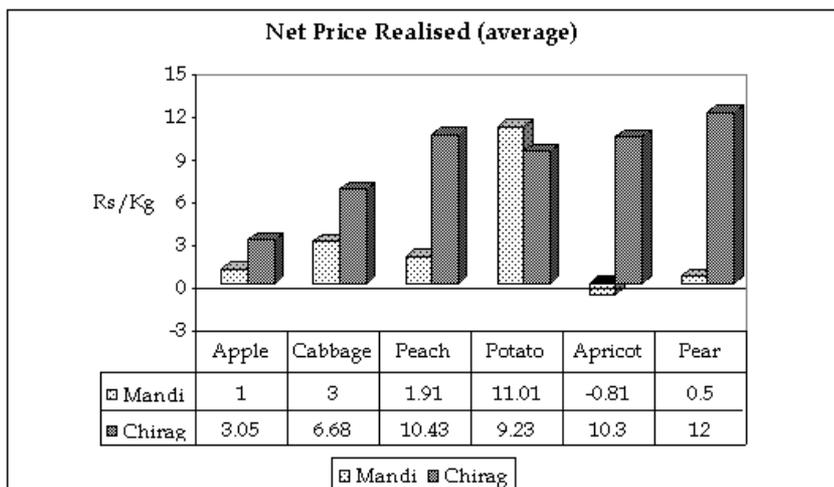
We procured 85.83 tonnes of fresh fruits and vegetables from 166 farmers at a price of Rs 625,912. The gross sale was of Rs 672,873.

The procurement pattern by produce in 2007 was as follows:

Potato, apple and peach have been the three major crops in terms of volumes. These three products accounted for 85% of total procurement. Potato, an important crop because of the large volumes available and its long shelf-life, was more expensive in Haldwani as compared to the Delhi



market for the best part of the season. We could therefore not offer farmers an advantage in this crop. Pear and apple did very badly in terms of their overall economic contribution. In 2007, a bulk of the produce was sold to retailers in Delhi, to Mother Dairy and to processors of fruit. There have been some obvious advantages to farmers. They find our system of procurement transparent and the payments convenient. Competition has led to Mother Dairy offering a better price in the area as well. Finally, the net gain (average) realised by farmers has been substantial.



Based on the experience of selling fruits and vegetables we were able to learn about some customer preferences. Further, farmers wanted us to assist them by providing them access to quality seed. We purchased 15.2 tonnes of potato from Manali, 209 packets of peas and 2.5 kg of cabbage. Farmers paid outright for the peas and paid half the price of the potatoes and cabbage and will return the remainder from the sale of their harvest.

Income Generation for Sustainability of Development Interventions

It has been an exciting and challenging year for Kumaun Grameen Udyog (KGU). Sales rose by 44% over the preceding year to nearly Rs 5.9 million. The increase was largely a consequence of a 300% increase in orders for hand-woven products. The



production capacity was increased from 8 to 12 looms to meet the demand. This increase in order however had other impacts. Export sales increased but sales to other buyers and through exhibitions went down by half. The challenge quite clearly is for marketing channels to be diversified.

The products produced by KGU have been branded as Kilmora and investments were made in design and packaging. The Sitla and Kasiyalekh shops have been renovated and the impact on sales has been positive. Sales in the region primarily through these stores, currently account for a healthy 26% of total sales. A partnership with Mumbai based Women Weaves commenced on a project called Synergy - 101 Looms, which brings together 10 producer groups with different skills and traditions. The partnership provides KGU the opportunity to work with designers and textile specialists with exposure to national and international markets and promises to be a great learning experience.

The governance structure of KGU underwent a change with two Directors stepping down. The current Directors of KGU are Ms Ann Mukherjee, Mr. Ashish Arora and Mr. Bipin Kabdwal. KGU made its first financial donation of Rs 500,000 to the Chirag School.

As of March 2008, KGU has seven full-time staff and one consultant. There are 19 people associated with the weaving unit and 40 women knitters. Apricot kernel and herbs are sourced from around 350 farmers in the region. Based on the performance of the previous year, KGU was able to distribute an ex-gratia amount of Rs 62,000 amongst the producers and its staff.

In addition to improving marketing and diversifying the product range, there is a need to improve inventory management. Unlike the macro-economic outlook, KGU's own future seems optimistic.

Challenges

Livelihood Options

The creation of livelihood options particularly for the poorest families in the Dewaldhar area will need to be addressed by us. Irrespective of whether the Ajeevika programme can assist us in finding solutions, we will need to do so. In other areas, SHGs that require assistance to undertake other livelihood activities should be supported pro-actively.

Strengthening SHGs

Record - keeping by many of our SHGs is weak and requires strengthening. Many of the groups are unable to efficiently utilise the capital that they have access to.

Market Access

The procurement of cereals, pulses and spices will need to be increased next year. Post-harvest management and value addition are crucial and to the extent possible should be undertaken by small collective enterprises at the village level.





EDUCATION AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

Primary School Support Programme

The Primary School Support Programme seeks to achieve the following:

1. Improve the quality of education in government schools. This is done by supporting youth – *Bal Shikshaks* - who teach children in classes 1 and 2 and operate libraries in the school.
2. Running libraries in government schools to encourage the habit of reading amongst children.
3. Mobilising the support of parents and other concerned citizens to participate in the management of the school.

Chirag currently supports 49 government schools in Nainital and Bageshwar districts. The total enrolment in these schools is 1,776 (939 girls and 837 boys).

	Schools	Girls	Boys	Total Enrollment
Dewaldhar	24	356	289	645
Reetha	11	217	189	406
Suyalbari	1	13	12	25
Naukuchiyatal	4	80	105	185
Reetha	9	273	242	515
	49	939	837	1,776

The libraries have slowly become a habit for children – our desired objective. An analysis of the lending of books by the libraries revealed that 1,981 students borrowed books during the year. On an average a child in class 5 borrowed 15 books each month. In the words of Kamal Kishore a student from Simsiyari who has joined a Navoday Vidyalaya, “ *The school library not just increased my interest in education, it developed my understanding. This is probably why I managed to pass the entrance examination to the Navoday Vidyalaya*”.

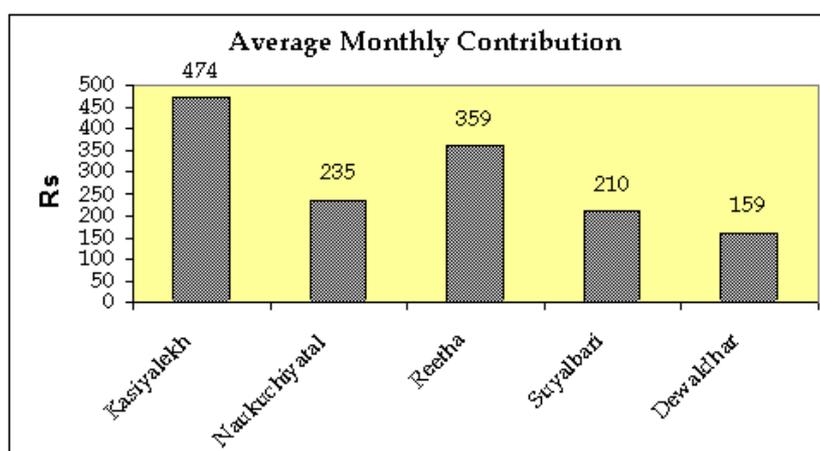
Since September 2004, assessments of children in class 5 have been conducted annually based on the levels of learning that they should have achieved in class 3. For two years now, we have also been assessing children in class 2 to assess their competency against the levels to be achieved in class 1.

457 students in class 5 were assessed during the year. In control schools, where Chirag has no intervention, the proportion of students scoring less than 50% in Maths, Social Studies and Hindi was 31-38% higher than in schools with Chirag

involvement. The test for students in class 2 revealed that the proportion of children scoring less than 50% was 45% higher than in schools that Chirag worked in. These tests ought to make us feel better about the relative success of our efforts - but they leave us with a sense of unfinished business.

Summer camps are held in the month of June to provide children with an opportunity to sing, dance, enact plays, make stories or write poems, to play or to dabble in arts and crafts. The children enjoy the freedom to do what they like and this provides them with a remarkable contrast from their usually regimented visits to the school. Camps were held in 13 clusters for 4 or 5 days each and 784 children participated in them.

The participation and contribution of parents and others in the village to support the initiatives in the school is essential for its well - being and sustainability. The monthly financial contribution has shown a sustained increase over the past three years - though the increase could be much more. In the coming year, Chirag is likely to withdraw its financial support to 30 schools. The school education committees are aware of this. If the role played by the *Bal Shikshak* in the school and its impact on children is appreciated and evident to the parents, then a majority of the libraries and *Bal Shikshaks* should continue.



Scholarships for Girls

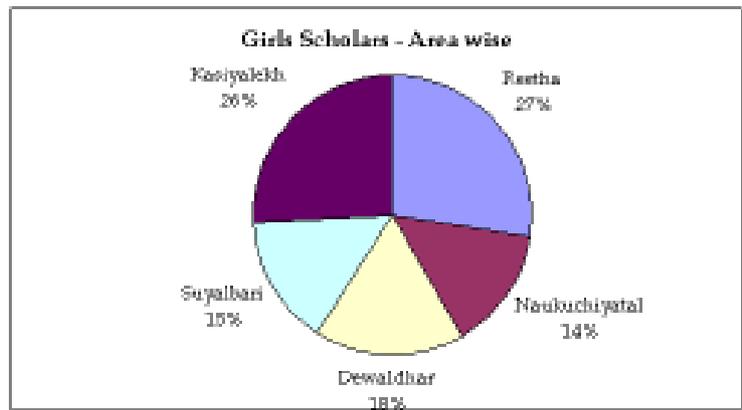
This is a programme that has sensitised everyone in Chirag to issues of poverty and discrimination. The process of selection of the girls is competitive and yet dependent entirely on socio-economic criteria and academic ability. The transparency of the process and the participation of school teachers, *Gram Panchayats* and others at the village level in the nomination of students, have led to deserving girls benefiting.



Chirag currently supports 123 girls between classes 6 and 12. The girls are provided with practically everything that can facilitate their going to school.

Meenakshi lives in Khankhar. She is in class 9. Her family consists of her mother, a brother and five sisters. The family depends on her mother's ability to earn as a labourer. Prior to receiving the scholarship, Meenakshi would go to school on alternate days so that she could help at home or go with her mother to work. The pressures of having to look after her siblings and the lack of uniform and stationery led to her irregularity at school. The scholarship made it possible for Meenakshi to continue in school. She became regular and her interest grew. Meenakshi came first in the final exams in the 8th class. The teachers gave her a prize. Her mother does not burden her with household chores any more. Her mother visits the school and keeps track of Meenakshi's progress.

Tutorial camps are held twice a year. Tests are conducted prior to the camp and the specific needs of each girl are identified. Based on their needs they receive support during the camps. An attempt to take a greater proportion of girls in the 6th or 7th class has made it possible for us to devote more time to focus on their academic abilities. In addition to these week-long residential camps, girls have access to tutorial support either in their village or close by on a daily or weekly basis. Currently 71 girls are receiving supplementary tuition.



The residential camps are not just for academic inputs. The girls are provided with practical skills and information. This year 13 girls also learnt candle making.

"My name is Pushpa and I am in class 10. My family is very poor. We have very little land. My parents have to work as labourers to support the family. I would have stopped attending school 3 years ago if I had not received a scholarship. When I was a child I fractured my left arm. I was taken to the hospital at Haldwani but the elbow was fixed incorrectly. I could not use my left hand any more. We could not afford to get the arm fixed. I had given up hope of using my left hand again. Suddenly, the scholarship opened new possibilities for me. Chirag staff started worrying about my hand. In March this year, my arm was operated upon in Haldwani. A month later my hand was fine."

Chirag School

The School relocated from the library room in the office to its own building in June. We dreaded the move, because of the silence that would engulf our office. The children had no difficulty in adapting to the new environs.



There are 33 children in the school – 17 girls and 16 boys, and five teachers and an assistant teacher. The children are in three groups with the oldest children in Class 1.

The growth of the school reflects the increasing community involvement and commitment to the child-focused curriculum and pedagogy. A greater utilisation of Montessori methods has led to noticeable differences in the children. They have grown in confidence; they are more articulate and comfortable socially; and tend to ask questions. This increase in confidence is accompanied by an increasing thirst to learn, and this has placed a demand on the teachers to be imaginative and versatile. The teachers have responded to the pressures with enthusiasm and an openness to try out new and innovative approaches.

To support the teachers in their effort to meet the needs of children, opportunities for their learning were created during the year. During the course of the year, the school benefitted from interactions with the following:

- Priyo Lall – Diagnosing learning disabilities and understanding the special needs of children
- Minoti Bahri – Roles and routines of teachers and a discussion on education
- Hema – Communicating with children
- Ravi Gulati – Integrating theatre, music and art into the curriculum
- Amukta Mahapatra – A four day workshop on the Montessori method with specific reference to maths and language
- Heritage School – Art and specifically block printing and the pressing of leaves
- National Geographic Channel – Three movies on wildlife
- Chitra – Art and the intuitive nature of children
- Rina D'Souza, a participant in Swades ki Khoj - was able to maintain the continuity of Amukta's contribution by designing sensory materials and teaching maths.

One particular challenge in the past year has been to identify children with special needs in a sensitive manner and to adapt to their requirements. This will require continued skill - building of the teachers.

Outreach through home visits helps the teachers in understanding the child outside the classroom and creates a rapport with parents. The support of parents in recognising the health and developmental needs of children is solicited through personal contact.

While there is a consensus amongst parents that children love the school and have grown in confidence, their own experiences with education and their expectations of a traditional education system are often in conflict with the approach of the school. As children grow older, the demands on the school from parents to either conform to their expectations or meet some traditional yardsticks of success are going to creep in.

Capacity-building of adolescents

The programme with youth has become an integral part of our activities. It consists of:

- The *Kishori Shikshan Kendra* – residential camps for girls
- The *Kishor Shikshan Kendra* -day camps and residential camps for boys
- The Adolescent Resource Centre (ARC) – to provide counselling and information to youth



This year, a new component was added to provide youth with employment opportunities.

Staff involved with the programme need to upgrade their skills constantly. Two workshops on counselling were held. One of these workshops was led by a trained counsellor – Dr Maya Narayan. A workshop on legal rights was conducted by the Multiple Action Research Group, New Delhi and two workshops on curriculum were led by colleagues from within the organisation. The team visited Ajeevika Bureau, Udaipur to gain an understanding of their efforts to provide migrant labourers with skills and to help plan our own strategy to provide youth with employment opportunities.

Kishori Shikshan Kendra

The 9th and 10th batches of the Kishori Shikshan Kendra, a total of 63 girls, graduated this year. Each batch was for 35 days and included a 12 day optional module that was introduced this year. At the end of the core module, girls chose one topic out of the following: Health, Animal Husbandry and Agriculture for in-depth study during the remainder of the camp. Girls who are continuing their education attended the camp from the 15th of May to the 18th of June while girls

who have opted out of mainstream education attended the camp between the 25th of January and the 28th of February. More than half the girls were between the ages of 16 and 19. A fourth of the girls were from Scheduled Caste families and 10 girls had been nominated by other organisations in Kumaun. A test is administered at the beginning of the camp and again at the end. This year the girls were found to retain more information about reproductive health and forestry than any other topic.

As part of the follow-up, the team responds to specific needs that emerge from adolescents. 23 girls from Naukuchiyatal and Kasiyalekh learnt how to cycle. 20 girls from Naukuchiyatal attended a tailoring course in our office. A workshop to teach people how to make greeting cards was held and 19 boys and 5 girls participated in it.

Kishor Shikshan Kendra

The interaction with boys commences with a ten-day non-residential camp where youth come for the day and spend the best part of it playing and some of it in formal sessions. By the end of the camp a rapport is established with the youth who then embark on a 15 day residential camp where topics such as health, goal setting and leadership development are covered. 61 boys attended camps this year.

Sundar Singh of Kafuda has just appeared for his 10th class examination. Sundar was always a sickly child and keeps poor health even now, particularly in the winters. He was shy, low on self-esteem and careless, with no regard either for his own health or his studies. Another young boy just drifting along aimlessly.

Sundar attended the camp and during it started to recognise his own ability. He is a gifted artist. The camp transformed him. He is an active member of the Yuva Sansar editorial committee and has formed a theatre group with his friends. He has tried budding and grafting at home – a skill he was taught in the camp. He has commenced taking an interest in his studies. His parents are very pleased with the transformation in Sundar.

Creating Employment Opportunities for Youth

The Kishor Shikshan Kendra was useful, but the boys wanted skills that could lead to jobs. A persistent pressure had built up and we were forced to respond to it. We were clear that our primary objective would be to try and find employment opportunities that could keep these youth within the region.

At the outset, it was felt that we did not possess the skills or ability to move ahead without assistance. A collaboration was established with Ajeevika Bureau

in Udaipur. Our team visited them to understand the possibilities and implications of this venture and Ajeevika then assisted us in planning the move forward. A survey form was designed to assess the nature and extent of migration and was administered in a sample of 8 villages. Ajeevika Bureau helped our team in understanding the trends. It was felt that we need to assess the existing demand for skilled workers in the area. This assessment was undertaken in all the major towns in the region and covered a wide cross-section of trades.

The demand for skilled labour was highest in three trades – electrical work, plumbing and the hospitality industry. We held workshops with youth where the pros and cons of each option were discussed and they were given the opportunity to prioritise these. Electrical work and plumbing emerged as the two most favoured options. Ajeevika Bureau lent us their existing modules and also helped us plan modules specific to our needs. Nineteen youth joined the training following a selection process which included an aptitude test. Resource persons were identified from the region – people not only with theoretical knowledge but also the practical skills and expertise. Eight boys opted for the course on plumbing and 11 for electrical work.

This is an entirely new challenge and opportunity. We hope to track the progress of the first batch and to assess the response of employers to these youth. Based on the feedback we get, we will either repeat the course or possibly run one on the hospitality industry.

Adolescent Resource Centre

The adolescent resource centre or ARC provides two services:

- a. Counselling – individual, health and career
- b. Information and skills – through a newsletter, regular correspondence, access to a library and vocational training

Girls who attend the Kishori Shikshan Kendra avail of the counselling options during their camp. During the year an additional 52 youth sought career counselling and two came for individual counselling. Graduates from earlier batches and youth who have come in contact with our team write seeking information and 184 such letters were responded to. This year, English classes were provided sporadically for 384 youth. The ARC also facilitated training in candle-making for girls from the scholarship programme.

The newsletter of the ARC – Yuva Sansar - is a quarterly. Three issues were published this year. The editorial committee consists entirely of adolescents. Each issue focuses on a particular theme. The topics covered this year were the

importance of friendship, de-addiction and the impact of addiction.

Youth groups were formed at the village level during previous years and 8 of these groups, with a membership of 46 girls and 57 boys, continue to meet regularly to identify areas for collective learning and action.

Other Initiatives

Pre-School Programme

Ten pre-school education centres are operational with nominal support from Chirag but with a lot of enthusiasm from the facilitators and the support of parents.

Balwadi Enrollment (2007-2008)

Area	No of Villages	Male	Female	Total
Reetha	5	13	24	37
Kasiyalekh	4	17	28	45
Naukuchiyatal	1	6	4	10
Total	10	36	56	92

Challenges

Primary School Support

Support to 30 schools will end soon. While we believe that there is a need for some support the community needs to assume greater ownership over the process. The nature of our engagement with these schools will be decided in the coming months. This is crucial since our approach in the future will be determined by our actions now.

Chirag School

With class 2 due to commence in a few months, issues such as text-books, work-books, homework and levels of learning will emerge again. It is possible that the expectations of parents may grow as their children get older. We need to plan ahead and strike a balance between protecting the core values of the school and pragmatic choices. The special needs of children have been recognised but we need to learn to be able to respond to them sensitively.

Capacity Building of Adolescents

There is a demand for skills that can lead to employment. We need to respond to this need. Eventually, youth will be employed only if employers believe that the quality of training imparted by us is of a high standard. The assumption thus far has been that only boys would seek these options. We need to provide opportunities for girls to exercise choices.



HEALTH CARE

Preventive and Promotive Health

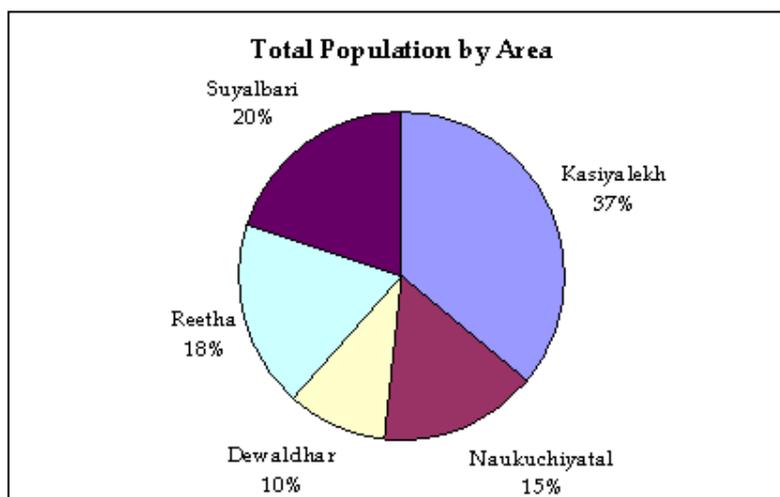
Our new approach to preventive and promotive health was rolled out in all the areas during the year. The approach consists of the following components: (a) to work actively with the statutory health committee of the *Gram Panchayat* (b) to support the Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) and provide her with skills and knowledge (c) to help each *Gram Panchayat* create health plans that will serve as the basis on which to demand services from the government and (d) to help the *Panchayats* in creating a monitoring system. The programme progressed slowly since *Panchayat* elections were scheduled to be held in early 2008, to be followed by the formation of new health committees. It did not make sense for health plans to be created if elections were imminent. Unfortunately, elections have been postponed to later in 2008 and valuable time and momentum has been lost.

The Reetha and Kasiyalekh team had commenced work in April 2007 and from October 2007 intensified their efforts. Work commenced in Suyalbari, Dewaldhar and Naukuchiyatal in January 2008.

We currently work in 36 *Gram Panchayats*. There are 4,814 households with a total population of 27,732. Scheduled Caste families comprise a third of the total population in Dewaldhar – the highest amongst all the areas.

Preventive and Promotive Health

	Villages	Households	Men	Women	Total
Kasiyalekh	9	1,670	5,186	4,898	10,084
Naukuchiyatal	6	834	2,249	2,065	4,314
Dewaldhar	5	496	1,321	1,333	2,654
Reetha	8	942	2,589	2,546	5,135
Suyalbari	8	872	2,747	2,798	5,545
Total	36	4,814	14,092	13,640	27,732



Since infrastructure and socio-economic conditions vary across the areas, the teams are allowed relative flexibility in prioritising their activities.

The activities that have been undertaken thus far across the areas include the following:

- Meetings with *Gram Panchayats*
- Meetings with health committees
- Assistance in the formation of health committees where they did not exist
- Provision of information to members of existing village institutions and mobilisation of support
- Rapport building and need-based provision of information and support to the ASHAs
- Efforts to establish a synergy in the efforts of the ASHA and the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM)
- Participatory Rural Appraisal
- Prioritisation of health issues
- Creation of a seasonal calendar of illnesses
- Health campaigns and cleanliness drives particularly around water sources
- Health Camps

An attempt has been made to disseminate information about the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), existing government programmes, the roles and responsibilities of the health committees, and the role of the ASHAs.

Information on specific topics pertaining to public health have been shared in all the public meetings. The topics include maternal and child health, ante-natal care, safe deliveries, family planning, immunisation, seasonal diseases, water-borne diseases and tuberculosis.

Basanti is from Supi-Kirod and was selected as the ASHA. Supi-Kirod and Kafli are 7 kilometres from the nearest ANM centre at Satbunga. The path to Satbunga is through a dense forest, and children and women are unable to access the health facility. Following her initial training and with additional inputs from the Chirag team, Basanti commenced working in the village. Immunisation of children and ante-natal care for pregnant women was the first problem that she encountered. No immunisations were conducted in her village and pregnant women received no attention at all. Basanti took the support of her health committee and visited the Primary Health Care centre at Ramgarh and requested them for help. She met the ANM and pleaded her case and asked her to visit her village. The ANM commenced visiting Supi-Kirod every month. Nearly all the children under five have been immunised, the pregnant women have regular check-ups and some women have also received benefits from the Janani Suraksha Yojna for their deliveries. Basanti has now turned her attention to health education.

The current plan is to continue the contact with the ASHAs and the ANMs and to keep health on the agenda for existing village level institutions, in particular the SHGs. New health committees will be formed after the elections are conducted later in 2008 and the creation of health plans will be encouraged.

Curative Health

The jinx must go – some time! Construction of the hospital was delayed yet again. In the interim, a general physician from the UK with a specialisation in obstetrics and gynaecology has consented to join the Chirag Hospital in September 2008. The incentives to get the hospital operational have increased.



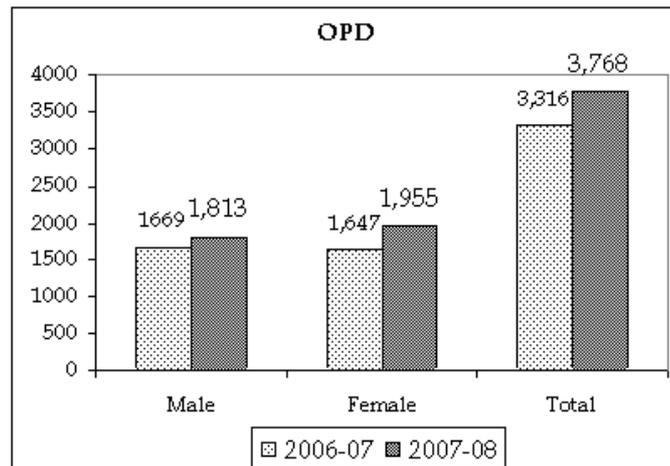
Our clinics at Sargakhet and Sitla catered to 3,768 outpatients last year. There has been an overall increase in the number of patients and particularly of women. Strangely, the number of children under five declined significantly whereas there were many more patients between the ages of six and twelve. During the year, Dr. Bisht saw 328 patients at home. 475 patients received *Ayurvedic* treatment for chronic ailments. This seems to be the preferred treatment particularly for conditions of the skin and osteoarthritis.

OPD Patient Profile

	Male	Female	Total
Sargakhet	700	960	1,660
Sitla	1,113	995	2,108
Total	1,813	1,955	3,768

	Under 5	6 -12	Total
Sargakhet	96	108	204
Sitla	85	390	475
Total	181	498	679

Dr Ruma Mukherjee's regular visits are the major reason for an increase in female attendance. During the year, Dr Mukherjee treated 156 patients. Dr Asha Upadhyaya, a surgeon from Ajmer returned to Sitla and saw 119 patients in the few months she spent at our clinics. Dr Subhojit Das spent six months with us and was a delightful presence at the Sitla



clinic – cheerful, enthusiastic and uncomplaining. He saw 145 patients at Sitla and visited camps at Binsar and Sidhpur where he treated 88 patients. Two doctors volunteered their services during the year, Dr Kusum Sood and Dr Satyendra Singh, who saw 32 patients.

Diarrhoea, worms, acute bronchitis and hypertension are the most common ailments that we are encountering. Twelve patients had to be kept overnight at the clinic for observation and treatment. A total of 1,925 pathology tests were performed and 99 patients x-rayed. Urine examination, blood sugar and haemoglobin are the most common tests. Fifteen deliveries were conducted at Sargakhet.

The health team conducted health checkups of the girl scholars thrice and children in the school once during the year. All Chirag staff undergo one check-up each year.

Drinking Water

Each area team has been provided with a water-testing kit and received training in the use of the kit. We will start monitoring water quality in the villages where we work on the issue of water and plan eventually to cover all the villages in which we work.



In the Dewaldhar area, 7 private rain-water harvesting tanks and 1 community tank were constructed. In Kasiyalekh, 1 community tank was constructed at

Letibunga and 11 families are benefitting from it. *Naulas* at Chaukhuta and Supi Talla were repaired.

Twelve households in Jhiroli, hitherto without access to water, benefitted from a pipeline that was laid by Chirag. The families, each contributing Rs 15 a month, maintain the pipeline with technical assistance from us. The availability of water has risen from 15 to 40 litres per capita per day (lpcd) and the time taken to collect water is down by two-thirds.

Parameters	Prior to intervention	Now
Water availability/person (lpcd)	15	40
Water stored (litres)	0	2,000
Households benefitting	0	12
Population benefitting	0	85
Time spent collecting water	30-45 min	10-15 min

Challenges

Preventive and Promotive Health

With *Gram Panchayat* elections due, the fate of the ASHAs is not known. Would the new representatives wish to change the ASHAs? New health committees will need to be formed. The advantage is that we can assist in their formation early on during the term of the *Panchayat*. We will need to initiate the process of planning immediately after conducting an orientation of the representatives on the NRHM and its potential

Curative Health

Without a doubt, the priority is to get the hospital running. We should move into the hospital with our existing equipment and acquire equipment for the out-patient facility and the wards to begin with.

Drinking water

Each year, we are witnessing an increase in water-borne diseases. We need to address the issue of water quality. Thus far the assumption has been that open defaecation leads to contamination. With the seed of hydrogeology sown in our mind, what if water seeps through the soak pits of latrines in recharge zones? We will probably need to alter the design of latrines at least for all future construction.



PILOT INITIATIVES

The growing importance of tourism in the region makes our existing initiatives at Patal Bhuvaneshwar and Naukuchiyatal as well as the new effort to develop a Nature Trail at Simayal assume greater significance. Another programme commenced during the year - an initiative with no direct relevance to development in our region but a reflection of our desire to contribute to the voluntary sector at large.

Patal Bhuvaneshwar

If only tourists who flocked to religious places sought to keep their external world as clean their inner selves! The challenge of linking sacred values, rural livelihoods and conservation at Patal Bhuvaneshwar has led to our working in 6 *Gram Panchayats* and 18 villages around the cave temple. In the past three and a half years while the mobilisation of stakeholders such as shop-keepers, and efforts to improve rural livelihoods have shown promise, the relationship with tourists and the facilities in the immediate vicinity of the temple still require greater attention.

In the past year some of the achievements have been as follows:

- Children in villages in the area have been mobilised. The emphasis has been on developing an interest and sensitivity amongst children with regard to the environment and specifically with regard to waste management.
- Women members of SHGs have added to their list of products and in addition to rhododenron, *aonla* and malta juice are also selling pear jam.
- The poultry programme has been a success and in the past year the income from the programme has reached Rs 60,000
- The tradition of *shramdaan* is alive and the shopkeepers as well as villagers in the area periodically get together to clean the area
- A souvenir shop has been set up in the village
- Waste collection continues, although disposal of non-biodegradable waste remains a persistent challenge
- Saplings have been planted around the cave temple and in forest lands in the area
- A drain has been constructed to carry away water that was flowing on to the road leading to Bhuvaneshwar, and the area is looking cleaner

- A film on the cave temple is available in Hindi and English for those wishing to carry memories of the temple with them, or for those fearful of descending into the temple yet desirous of viewing its splendour

Community Action for the Conservation of Naukuchiyatal Lake

If we had to pick one major issue that hinders conservation of the Naukuchiyatal Lake it would be garbage and waste management. This would probably be true of every tourist destination in Kumaun. However, unplanned development around the lake is adding to the woes.



The dominant approach at Naukuchiyatal has been to mobilise local residents, stakeholders such as shop-keepers and boat owners, and institutions such as the *Gram Panchayat* and the *Van Panchayat*. Waste collection around the lake is supported by local informal institutions and self-help groups that have been created to facilitate collective action. Garbage bins to collect the waste and wheelbarrows to transport it to collection points sound like simple ways to keep the place clean - if only we could get people to use the bins. Earlier, the challenge was to dispose of the waste that was collected. During the year, the intervention of the Lake Development Authority has led to a truck arriving weekly to Naukuchiyatal to take the waste away.

To reduce the inflow of silt into the lake, check - dams and other soil conservation measures have been undertaken in the catchment of the lake. Further, saplings have been planted by Chirag and by the Forest Department in the catchment and the immediate vicinity of the lake. In the past year, organic methods of cultivation have been promoted in villages in the catchment to reduce the incidence of pesticide and fertiliser residues polluting the water.

Children have shown interest and initiative and have given an impetus to waste management. Given a significant resident population - and not just tourists - the challenge is to reduce the amount of waste generated. Communities are slowly expressing their concern about the cultural significance of the lake being hindered by encroachment and the pollution of water sources.

Nature Trail

A two kilometre long section of the erstwhile Kathgodam-Almora trail that connects Simayal to Orakhan is being developed as a 'nature trail'. The objective is to provide tourists with the opportunity to walk through a beautiful forest on an established trail, and for local youth - trained as nature guides - to provide them with information about the flora, fauna and culture of the area. The trail

falls within the jurisdiction of three *Van Panchayats*. We hope to facilitate the generation of income for the *Van Panchayats* through tourism which can be used to conserve as well as develop the forest to make it representative of a diverse temperate forest. The nature guides have been trained, the trail has been repaired and protection of a buffer zone on either side of the trail has been initiated.

Swades Ki Khoj

This programme was designed to provide graduates between the ages of 21 and 26 with the opportunity to spend a year living and working in a rural area - with no strings attached. In other words, at the end of the year if they wanted to explore another path or renew their earlier interests, then that would be fine. This desire to invest in the youth emerged from a conviction that while there were idealistic youth with a desire to change the world, organisations particularly in rural areas were unable to compete for their attention.

In the first year, 14 youth were selected. After a fortnight-long foundation course on issues confronting people in rural India they were placed with organisations in the states of Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand. The youth will return to Chirag for a week in June before the end of the course. The preliminary feedback from the host organisations is positive and it would seem that organisations could also benefit from the presence of youth for a year.

Challenges

Waste Management

We have had no success in establishing a reliable solid waste management system. The need grows but we have been able to make no headway besides the collection of waste and some amount of segregation.

The Youth

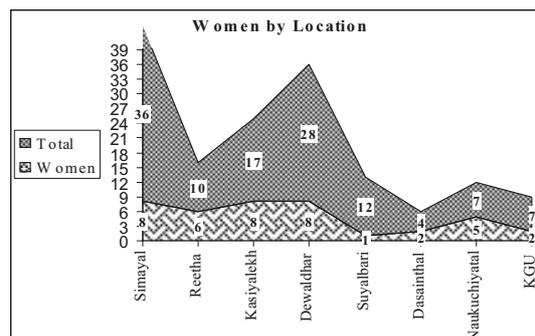
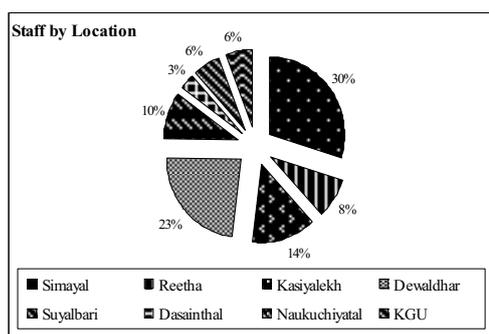
Our promotion efforts in cities needs improvement and we need to find ways of attracting many more urban youth. In the first year, three - fifths of the youth who had been accepted to the programme dropped out. We need to address this.



CHIRAG AND ITS PARTNERS

At the end of March 2008, there were 121 people working full-time for Chirag a 6% increase over the previous year. Seven of them were on secondment to Kumaun Grameen Udyog, a company promoted by Chirag. Of the total, 102 are programme staff, 8 support staff and there are 11 in finance and administration.

Responsibility	Men	Women	Total
Programmes	64	38	102
Support	8	0	08
Administration and Finance	9	2	11
Total	81	40	121



The largest teams are at Simayal and Dewaldhar and account for more than half the staff. The team at Simayal includes staff in the Chirag School and the experimental farm. Women comprise half or more of the teams at Naukuchiyatal, Reetha and Dasainthal. The representation of women in the Suyalbari and Simayal teams are low and a matter of concern.

Chirag's General Body has 26 life members, of which the Governing Body comprises of 8 members.

CHIRAG GOVERNING BODY



Mr Kanai Lall	Chairperson and Founder Geologist and retired corporate executive
Dr Madan Lal Dewan	Vice-Chairperson Chairperson, Himalayan Consortium for Himalaya Conservation (HIMCON), formerly chief of FAO's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
Mr Morad Chowdhury	Member Architect and partner, Kanvinde Rai and Chowdhury, Architects and Engineers
Ms Kamla Bhasin	Member Gender specialist, activist, founder-member of Jagori
Prof Bhushan K Joshi	Member Political scientist, formerly Vice-Chancellor Kumaon University
Mr Radhesh Lall	Member Engineer and entrepreneur
Dr Rajesh Thadani	Member Formerly Executive Director of Chirag Founder and Chief Executive of CEDAR
Prof Malavika Karlekar	Member Ethnographer, formerly of Centre for Women's Development Studies

Mr Radhesh Lall is the son of Mr Kanai Lall. None of the other members are related to each other.

OUR PARTNERS

The support of a large number of individuals and institutions makes our work possible.

Individuals

Mr Kalpesh Amin *New Delhi*
 Ms Minoti Bahri *New Delhi*
 Dr ASC Calder and Mrs P Calder *UK*
 Ms A Cole *UK*
 Frau Rosemarie Dubs -Weiss *Switzerland*
 Dr Elon Gilbert and Ms Susie Miller *USA*
 Ms Priyo Lall *Dehra Dun*

Mr Anshu Arya
 Ms Emma Bestall *South Africa*
 Mr B B Chaudhuri *New Delhi*
 Mr Prashant Dogra *New Delhi*
 Ms Amita Joshi
 Mr Warwick Hendry *South Africa*
 Ms Ann Mukherjee *Satoli*

Mr Siddhartha Menon *Madanapalle*
 Dr Ruma Mukherjee *Ramgarh*
 Dr Prashant Upadhyaya *-Dehra Dun*
 M Ranganathan Yogeshwar *Luxembourg*

Mr Evan Murphy *USA*
 Ms Maya Narayan *Sidhbari*
 Mr K R Subramanian *Bengaluru*
 Ms Bridgett Wilkinson *UK*

Institutions

ACWADAM - Pune
 Annapurna Indian Women's Association - South Korea
 ANTHRA - Pune
 Berkeley Reafforestation Trust - UK
 Canada India Village Aid - Canada
 Kumaun Grameen Udyog - Kasiyalekh
 National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) - Dehra Dun
 Paul Hamlyn Foundation - UK
 People's Commission on Environment & Development India - New Delhi
 Peoples' Science Institute (Himmothan Cell) - Dehra Dun
 Room to Read - USA
 Sir Ratan Tata Trust - Mumbai
 Sir Dorabji Tata Trust - Mumbai
 Tehelka Foundation - New Delhi
 The Ford Foundation - USA
 University of Washington at Seattle - USA
 Uttaranchal Livelihood Improvement Project for the Himalayas - Dehra Dun
 Welham Girls School - Dehra Dun

Interns and Volunteers

During the year, we hosted 21 young people who were engaged in diverse sets of projects and activities ranging from teaching our team how to create maps using a GPS device or teaching our teachers English to the planting of fodder and the construction of bird-houses from waste material. Despite the number being slightly lower than in the previous year, there were several brave volunteers who chose to spend the best part of the winter with us.

From overseas - Michel and Marcus (Luxembourg); KatherineT, Kathrin R and Anna (UK); Emma and Warwick (South Africa); Paul, Cyril, Vincent and Julie (France) and Supallav, Mary and Jamie (USA).

From India - Yavnika and Shruti (Delhi); Shaukat and Jehangir (Srinagar); Tara and Nikita (Bengaluru) and Shruti (Mumbai).

Students from Mahindra United World College Pune, Welham Girls School Dehra Dun and St Mary's School New Delhi also visited Chirag during the year on exposure visits.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The tribe of Chirag's supporters and well-wishers grows each year. Amongst this large and burgeoning group of supporters Warwick, who spent three months teaching English to our staff at the Chirag School, Elon, who nudged us gently into looking at agriculture extension differently and Dr Ruma Mukherjee, who has been visiting our clinics once each week, deserve special mention.

This report reflects the collective efforts of the Chirag team and the families amidst whom we live and work. Our efforts are enriched by the faith that our partners have in us, and by the support and guidance of our Governing Body.



ANNEXURE 1: TRAINING



The Simayal, Dewaldhar and Dhokane training facilities were utilized for 356 days by 2,281 participants. The use of the facility has increased over the preceding year by 17% and the number of participants by 18%. Trainings and exposure visits for community members account for three - fourths of the utilisation. The adolescent and education programmes account for three - fifths of the training centre use. The costs of maintenance and improvements in facilities are met out of the income. The Simayal training centre invested in two solar-powered street lights and in four solar water heaters during the year.

Training Centre Utilisation 07-08
Simayal, Devaldhar and Dhokane

Topic	Community Members		Other Institutions		Chirag Staff		Total Participants	
	Days	Participants	Days	Participants	Days	Participants	Days	
Adolescents	106	140			14	56	120	196
Agriculture/ Horticulture	7	134	5	48	6	50	18	232
Bee-keeping			2	11			2	11
Education	93	641			2	14	95	655
Exposure Visits	12	235	43	347			55	582
Fodder				40	6	55	6	95
Forestry	10	158	3	27	1	9	14	194
Gram Panchyat	2	29					2	29
Health	2	27			5	12	7	39
Micro-credit	1	20					1	20
Planning & Review	1	14			2	52	3	66
Staff Welfare					2	18	2	18
Water					1	10	1	10
Watershed	1	11			4	27	5	38
Youth	23	52			2	44	25	96
	258	1,461	53	473	45	347	356	2,281

ANNEXURE II

Voluntary compliance with norms of the Credibility Alliance



The Credibility Alliance has evolved minimum as well as desirable norms to promote better governance within the voluntary sector. Chirag, though not a member of the Alliance, declares the following information voluntarily to promote accountability and transparency.

Governance

- At least two-thirds of the members of the Governing Body are unrelated to each other by blood or marriage.
- The Executive Director is not related to any member of the Governing Body by blood or marriage.
- No rotation policy is practised for Governing Body members.
- No members of the Governing Body currently receive any remuneration from Chirag.
- The Governing Body has met more than twice in the last year with the requisite quorum.
- Minutes of the meetings are documented. The General Body of the Society approves the Annual Report and the audited financial statements.
- No reimbursements were made to members of the Governing Body during the course of the year to cover travel costs incurred in attending meetings.

Accountability and Transparency

Gross Staff Salary and Benefits

Gross Salary and Benefits (Rupees per month)	Men	Women	Total
Less than 5,000	41	34	75
5,000 - 10,000	32	05	37
10,000 - 15,000	03	01	04
15,000 - 25,000	04	-	04
more then 25,000	01	-	01
	81	40	121

Note: Gross salary includes all benefits payable by the organisation.

Total monthly cost to the organisation of the three highest-paid members of staff*

Rs 27,176

Rs 18,965

Rs 16,304

Total monthly cost to the organisation of the lowest-paid member of staff*

Rs 2,482

* Includes Basic Salary and all applicable allowances- one or more of House Rent Allowance, Family Allowance and Cost of Living Allowance, Provident Fund (including the organisation's contribution), Medical Benefits and Scholarship Allowance. All figures were correct as on 31 March 2008.

Cost of Travel

- | | | |
|-------|--|-----------|
| (i) | International travel, cost incurred by the organisation: | Nil |
| (ii) | National travel, air, cost incurred by the organisation: | Rs 16,045 |
| (iii) | The maximum cost of any rail ticket purchased was: | Rs 1,455 |

Our Statutory Auditor

R Balasubramanian
Partner S Ramanand Aiyar
and Co.
708 Surya Kiran Building19
Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New
Delhi 110001

Our Bankers

- State Bank of India
- Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation of India Limited
- Nainital Almora Kshetriya Grameen Bank
- Almora District Cooperative Bank Ltd.
- Nainital District Cooperative Bank Ltd.

Registration Details

- The Central Himalayan Rural Action Group (CHIRAG) is a society registered under the Indian Societies Registration Act of 1860. Registration No. 16928, dated 29th July 1986
- The Central Himalayan Rural Action Group (CHIRAG) is authorised to receive foreign contributions as per the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 1976. Registration No. 231650446, dated the 5th July 1987
- Chirag is registered under Sections 12A and 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961.
Section 12 A - No. CIT-VI/TE (276)/86/1292
Section 80 G - No. DIT (E) 2004-2005/C-245/86/2084

ANNEXURE III : ACCOUNTS



Central Himalayan Rural Action Group
Balance Sheet as on 31st March 2008

	CURRENT YEAR (Rs)	PREVIOUS YEAR (Rs)
LIABILITIES		
Corpus Fund	15,617,312	15,617,312
Fixed Assets Utilisation Fund	21,328,110	19,143,181
Reserve Fund	2,489,823	195,500
Transport Fund	447,644	821,602
CHIRAG Hospital Project Fund	1,128,819	1,463,932
Reafforestation Fund	1,006,307	907,400
CHIRAG Education Fund	5,437,817	3,894,127
Current Liabilities	12,152,194	6,758,311
	59,608,026	48,801,365
ASSETS		
Fixed Assets	21,328,110	19,143,181
Investments	18,261,228	18,261,228
<u>Current Assets, Loans and Advances</u>		
Cash, Bank Balance and Term Deposit	19,267,029	11,068,177
Loans and Advances	747,659	325,779
Security Deposit (endorsed in favour of Government Authorities)	4,000	3,000
	59,608,026	48,801,365

Signed on behalf of CHIRAG

Chairman: Kanai Lall

Member: Malvika Karlekar

Member: Radhesh Lall

Executive Director: V.K. Madhavan

Manager Account and Administration: B K Kabdwal

In terms of our report of even date annexed

For S Ramanand Aiyar and Co.

Chartered Accountant

R Balasubramanian
Partner

Central Himalayan Rural Action Group
Receipts and Payments Accounts for the year Ended as on 31st March 2008

	CURRENT YEAR (Rs)	PREVIOUS YEAR (Rs)
<u>RECEIPTS:</u>		
Balance as on 01st April 2007	10,906,219	22,773,522
<u>PROJECT FUNDING</u>		
Foreign Contribution	22,793,109	5,942,665
Local Contribution	7,023,847	2,179,638
Rural Health Services	324,855	304,250
Donations	1,508,400	1,023,400
Interest	776,267	929,804
Others	3,040,827	2,493,258
	46,373,524	35,646,537
<u>PAYMENTS</u>		
Canada India Village Aid (CIVA)	1,196,461	1,975,688
Other Payments (FCRA)	388,946	228,479
CAPART (WS)	-	15,320
Berkeley Reafforestation Trust	704,535	1,175,326
Ford Foundation	1,314,842	833,877
Ford Foundation (NRM)	3,448,676	2,350,964
Ford Foundation (Young Leaders)	1,679,285	-
Ford Foundation (NPM)	2,753,900	-
Room to Read	2,196,191	1,370,304
Charities Aid Foundation (CAF)	-	74,045
People's Commission on Environment and Development India (PCED)	194,864	639,437
DANIDA	421	-
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	194,991	-
Annapurna Indian Women's Association	36,937	39,865
Sir Ratan Tata Trust	1,649,530	2,177,375
Sir Ratan Tata Trust (GDO Strengthening)	1,481,765	842,453
Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SGP)	41,355	198,934
Sir Ratan Tata Trust (CEDAR)	78,000	227,116
Sir Ratan Tata Trust (Ghangal Kuluwa)	811,900	297,558
NABARD	257,998	458,517
Uttaranchal Livelihood Improvement Project for Himalayas	883,116	579,882
Peoples' Science Institute (Himmothan Cell)	397,927	-
Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT)	4,164,774	2,675,233
CHIRAG Hospital Project	700,756	1,501,841
Rural Health Services	138,417	174,011
Investment	-	3,727,000
CHIRAG Campus	-	1,362,291
Other Payments	2,504,158	1,814,802
Balance on 31st March 2008	19,153,779	10,906,219
	46,373,524	35,646,537

Adeel Rizvi	Ishan Agarwal	Naveen Bhatt
Ajay Singh Bisht	Jagdish Mishra	Neema Devi
Anand Ram	Jagdish Singh	Neomi Pal Singh
Anand Singh Bisht	Jaswant Singh Bisht	Om Prakash Pandey
Anil Chandra Binwal	Jayanti Janoti	Pan Singh Bisht
Arjun Singh	Kamla Bisht	Pan Singh Mehta
Bachi Singh Bisht	Kamla Chauhan	Pankaj Sahi
Bahadur Singh Mehra	Kamlesh Sharma	Pawan Kumar Dhaila
Basanti Bisht	Kanchan Arya	Pooran Singh Raikwal
Bhagat Singh	Keshav Dutt Joshi	Prakash Chandra
Bhim Singh Negi	Khasti Rawat	Pramod Kandpal
Bhupal Singh Bisht	Khushal Singh	Pratima Singh
Bhupal Singh Jeena	Kishore Singh Negi	Prema Janoti
Bhuwan Singh Negi	Krishan Kumar Nayal	Prema Tiwari
Binod Kumar Pandey	Kuldeep Kumar Thapliyal	Pritam Singh Rautela
Bipin Kumar Kabdwal	Kunti Bisht	Pushpa Mishra
Bipin Kumar Negi	Kusum Rawat	Radha Bisht
Champa Pandey	Kusum Tiwari	Rajani Bisht
Chandan Singh Bisht	Lakhan Singh Rautela	Rajendra Singh Bisht
Chandan Singh Chamiyal	Lal Singh Dangwal	Rajendra Singh Dangwal
Chandan Singh Mehta	Lalit Mohan Tiwari	Rajendra Singh Jeena
Chandra Shekhar Mishra	Lalit Tiwari	Rajendra Singh Negi
Chandrakala	Lata Harbola	Rajesh Singh Nayal
Deepa Bhagat	Laxman Singh Mer	Ram Singh Bisht
Deepa Joshi	Laxmi Kumari	Ramesh Chandra Gutholia
Deepa Mishra	Leela Joshi	Ramesh Chandra Joshi
Dharmendra Singh	Madhavi Dangwal	Rekha Rani
Dharmendra Singh Raikwal	Mahender Singh Bisht (Dr)	Sandeep Dutt Bhatt
Dinesh Chandra Pandey	Mahendra Singh Bisht	Satish Kumar
Diwan Chandra	Mahendra Singh Raikwal	Shailesh Kumar Pant
Diwan Ram	Manish Kumar	Shankar Singh
Diwan Singh	Manish Kumar Tamta	Sita Gorkha
Diwan Singh Mehta	Manju Rautela	Suman Das
Durga Bisht	Manoj Mishra	Sundar Singh Nayal
Ganesh Singh	Manoj Pandey	Sunita Arya
Ganesh Singh Aswal	Mariam Bhatt	Surendra Singh Negi
Ganga Joshi	Maya Joshi	Suresh Kumar
Ganga Sizwali	Maya Mehra	Tej Singh Adhikari
Geeta Bisht	Meera Bisht	Trilok Singh
Geeta Bisht (Rautela)	Meghana Joshi	Umakant Sharma
Girish Chandra Budhani	Mohan Singh Bisht	Uttam Singh Jeena
Govind Singh Bisht	Mohan Singh Bisht	V Rajeev
Harish Chandra	Munni Bisht	V K Madhavan
Hema Bisht	Murlidhar Bhatt	



Chirag

Central Himalayan Rural Action
Group

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