

TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL REPORT 2008 - 2009



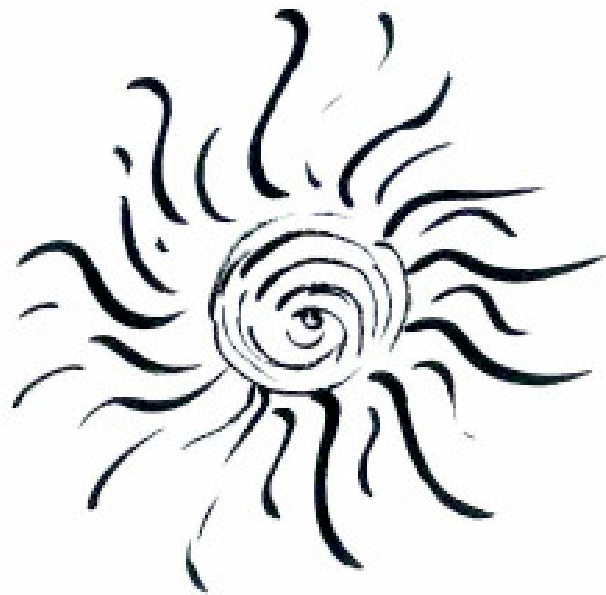
Chirag

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

For nearly seventeen of the twenty-two year years of our existence, we had no substantial infrastructure to call our own. Then the proverbial dam burst, and for the past five years I have wished I had a hard-hat. Training centre cum office, pre-primary and administration block for the school, the Chirag Hospital, primary school, hostels for teachers - it never seemed like it would end. The saying, "the end is nigh", is finally relevant. The Chirag Hospital was inaugurated - finally some would say - on the 19th of January 2009. In a few months the primary school and hostel block will be ready and that will be it.

The past year has been a classical mix of new initiatives, consolidation, expansion and even some frustration! The new agriculture strategy to foster innovation by farmers in their fields was rolled out. A substantial investment of time has been made to put in place systems to document the impact of our forestry work and the spring recharge initiative that is to commence shortly. Our efforts to try and provide off-farm employment opportunities for young people in our region continue. The cultivation of fodder on common and private lands is a full fledged programme, and we have focussed on increasing soil and water conservation in common lands. Facilitating the creation of health plans by statutory committees of *Panchayats* has been relatively easy but efforts to leverage services from the government based on these plans have proved to be frustrating.

The Chirag School is completing three years. It continues to grow in confidence and now has a wide network of well wishers and supporters. The primary school support programme has shown remarkable results in mobilising the support of families during the year. The outreach of the curative services increased dramatically during the year because of the presence of two doctors from the United Kingdom who volunteered at Chirag and because of the confidence that Dr Ruma Mukherjee now inspires amongst women in the area.

From the provision of agricultural services for farmers, now there are discussions regarding micro-enterprises to support animal husbandry and value addition in fruits and vegetables. The federation of self-help groups created in Bageshwar has renewed interest in the Cooperative Act as a possible institutional option for these enterprises. Kumaun Grameen Udyog's sustained growth is inspiring a wave of entrepreneurial interest in the organisation. Suddenly, it doesn't seem that difficult any more.

A minor restructuring was undertaken during the year and coordinators were appointed for several programmes. Not surprisingly, a bulk of these positions were taken up by colleagues who have been with the organisation for several years. There are a few gaps at the Team Leader level which we hope to fill in the near future. Things would seem to be falling into place and the outlooks is bright and positive!

V K Madhavan  
September 2009



## OVERVIEW

The micro-climate in our region has altered significantly. We do not know if this is just a temporary blip. The past few winters have been mild. There has been no winter precipitation. We can have two springs, one in January and another in March and there is a summer season too. Worse, the rainfall is unpredictable. The number of days that it rains has decreased but the total rainfall in the year has not gone down substantially. If the history of human existence is a story of adaptation then we will certainly cope and adapt. But any sudden changes with their accompanying impact on agriculture, vegetation, water availability and temperature are certain to have a differential impact on people. The poor are likely to be more vulnerable now than ever before. In the coming years, our emphasis will have to be to plan and respond to these trends. A multitude of options will need to be explored; diversified cropping, enhanced rain-water harvesting, larger structures to prevent soil erosion and to increase water conservation, efficient water use for irrigation potentially through micro-irrigation, value addition to increase incomes and crop and livestock insurance. The planning has commenced. We are planning for change. If indeed this is not a long term alteration in the micro-climate but a temporary phenomenon, then at least the poor will have a plan B.

In the past year, a new strategy with regard to treatment of common lands has been initiated in 131 hectares. The emphasis at the outset is on soil and water conservation measures and the cultivation of fodder. In the subsequent years, plantation is undertaken. The immediate incentive of fodder availability enhances protection and facilitates natural regeneration. The soil and water conservation efforts improve the health of the site and increase the probability of survival of saplings planted in the subsequent years.

A desire to improve the quality of documentation of our work on common lands has led to two new efforts. Using a hand-held Geographical Positioning

System (GPS) device the perimeters of 23 sites have been mapped and an effort made to capture this on Google maps that are currently available. These will be revisited periodically in the hope that an updated map on Google might reflect the change over time. Further, if we are able to access images for the region from other sources, this may facilitate analysis and comparison. A total of 184 permanent quadrats have been laid including 48 which shall serve as the 'control' for comparison. In each location there are 10m<sup>2</sup> quadrats to monitor the growth of trees, 2m<sup>2</sup> quadrats for shrubs and regeneration and 1m<sup>2</sup> quadrats for grasses and medicinal plants/herbs. Measurements from these have been collected and will be repeated each year for a comparative analysis of growth rates, changes in bio-diversity and fodder production.

Our vision to improve the quality of life of families and in particular the poor and women, and the strategy of doing so through a diverse set of activities, inhibits scale. A strategy to increase our impact without having to do it all on our own has been to provide technical support to other institutions. We currently provide technical support to other organisations in the state on watershed development, treatment and protection of catchments for drinking water schemes and the cultivation of fodder on common and private lands.

Our attempts to invest in young people have grown dramatically in the recent past. The initial effort to create a new generation of young leaders for the region - the residential trainings for adolescent girls - led to the subsequent expansion to include young men. Their concern about their future and in particular about jobs led to our trying to enhance employment opportunities by providing specialised trainings and inputs. During the year, pilots were attempted to provide young people with opportunities to learn about sales and marketing, information technology and house-keeping. *Swades ki Khoj* the programme for graduates between the ages of 21 and 28 is in its second year and a batch of 15 was selected for placement with rural organisations for a variety of reasons, a third will not complete the year in their host organisations. The response of the first batch has been heartening. The nature and extent of transformation was not anticipated and what has been particularly surprising is the high proportion of young people who have elected to continue working in the developmental sector.

The second year of providing small and marginal farmers with marketing services is over and a 15% increase in procurement of fresh fruits and vegetables was recorded. The strategy continues to be fine-tuned as we learn and adapt. Feedback from the market has led to an emphasis on grading and packing and on promoting specific varieties of crops for which there is a demand. This led to the provision of improved seeds including the procurement of 15 tonnes of potato seed from Himachal Pradesh. We anticipate that it will take at least five years for this effort to mature and become viable and in the interim, the fact that the number of farmers who access this service is increasing and the damage not substantial, gives us hope.

The realisation that trials conducted by farmers in their own fields were likely to spread amongst other farmers faster than those conducted on our experimental farms formed the basis of our new agriculture extension strategy. Almost three hundred farmers have commenced trials on their fields with three objectives - to improve soil health, to improve the quality of planting material and to control pests and disease through low cost organic methods.

The primary school support programme of Chirag extends to 49 primary schools of the government and nearly 1,800 children. In 30 of these schools, Chirag's current role is limited to the provision of technical support to the *Bal Shikshaks*. A major accomplishment during the year has been the extent of community contribution that has been mobilised for this programme. 117 girls from disadvantaged backgrounds receive a scholarship to enable them to complete their schooling. The Chirag School has two pre-school groups and grades 1 and 2 and a total of 41 children currently study in the school.

The curative health services witnessed a dramatic increase in the patients accessing the service. Dr Mukherjee's bi-weekly visits have led to women visiting the health facilities regularly. For a better part of the year, the presence of two women General Practitioners from the United Kingdom ensured that Sargakhet and Sitla had a doctor available each day. Health committees have been formed in 38 *Gram Panchayats* and nearly all of them have prioritised the health needs of their residents and created health plans to address these needs. Chirag was entrusted with the responsibility of providing training to Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) from four blocks in Nainital district.

The diversity of activities and growth in programmes led to a cadre of coordinators being created and entrusted with specific individual responsibilities. We require at least three more Team Leaders - for our proposed documentation and communication unit, the programme with young people and to manage our agriculture and enterprises initiative. There are practically no women currently at the senior level in the organisation. Out of a total of 25 senior staff, only four are women - one team leader, two programme coordinators and one area coordinator. In addition to pro-actively trying to recruit women at a senior level in the organisation, we would in the coming year like to create a leadership development programme that helps facilitate the graduation of a larger number of women to positions of responsibility.

### Where we work

We have seven area teams, each with the responsibility for a finite number of villages. The teams are headed by an area coordinator and consist of specialists as well as multi-purpose extension staff with the responsibility of spearheading our efforts in specific villages. Support is provided to the area teams by programme coordinators, team leaders and an administration and finance team at Simayal.

Area	District	Block	Number of villages
Dasainthal	Pithoragarh	Berinag	17
Dewaldhar	Bageshwar	Bageshwar	43
Kathpuriyachina	Bageshwar	Bageshwar	21
Kasiyalekh	Nainital	Dhari, Ramgarh	21
Naukuchiyatal	Nainital	Bhimtal	25
Reetha	Nainital	Ramgarh	28
Suyalbari	Nainital	Ramgarh, Betalghat	42
	Almora	Hawalbagh, Tarikhet	5

We work in 204 villages in eight blocks and four districts of the Kumaun region.



## CHIRAG'S INITIATIVES

### EDUCATION

- Community based primary school support programme including school based libraries
- Scholarships for girls to complete their schooling
- Chirag School - development, demonstration and dissemination

### INVESTING IN YOUNG PEOPLE

- Knowledge and skill building of adolescent girls and boys through residential camps and community based efforts
- *Swades ki Khoj*
- Creating employment opportunities for youth through instruction and training

### HEALTH CARE

- Curative services through the Chirag Hospital, Sitla clinic and outreach efforts
- Preventive and promotive health driven and guided by the health committees of 38 *Gram Panchayats* and their Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs)
- Drinking water - access and quality

### NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Conservation, development and management of common lands - soil and water conservation, forestry and fodder development
- Recharge of springs
- Watershed Development
- Agriculture and horticulture - experimentation, demonstration and promotion of sustainable agriculture including crop diversification



- Community based animal husbandry
- Strengthening Village level Institutions.

### LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT

- Market Access & Services
- Facilitating access to credit and skills especially for the poor
- Partnership with Kumaun Grameen Udyog

### TECHNICAL SUPPORT

- Natural Resource Management - Watershed Development, protection and treatment of catchments of water sources and the cultivation of fodder

### PILOT INITIATIVES

- Conservation and rural livelihoods at Patal Bhuvaneshwar
- Community based conservation of Naukuchiyatal Lake

A wide variety of community based institutions - formal as well as informal - are central to the success of these initiatives.



## EDUCATION

### **Community Based Primary School Support**

The programme seeks to achieve the following:

1. Improve the quality of education in primary schools of the government. This is done by supporting youth - *Bal Shikshaks* who teach grades 1 and 2 and operate libraries in the school.
2. Inculcate the habit of reading amongst children.
3. Mobilise 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 1,793 of which 54% are girls. The *Bal Shikshaks* are appointed by the school education committee and teach grades 1 and 2 during the first half of the day and then manage the libraries in the schools. Each school has a designated library period and on an average 600 titles. During the year nearly 1,200 children borrowed books from their libraries and a total of 17,806 books were issued out to children.

Each year since 2004 we have conducted a test in the schools we support, as well as a sample of other schools. The test is based on the competency that a child should possess at the end of grade 3 and is administered to children who are studying in grade 5. For the purposes of this test, children scoring less than 50% in the tests are assumed not to possess the required competency. The results clearly reflect the poor quality of education in the region.

District	Block	Nature of school	Number of schools	Number of students in grade 5	Percentage of children scoring less than 50 in			
					Maths	Social Studies	Hindi	
Nainital	Ramgarh	Chirag supported	15	141	7.8	2.8	3.5	
		Sample schools	7	55	70.9	63.6	61.8	
	Dhari	Chirag supported	6	59	3.3	5.08	3.3	
		Sample schools	5	41	65.8	65.8	51.2	
	Bhimtal	Chirag supported	4	35	14.2	11.4	8.5	
		Sample schools	2	21	61.9	47.6	61.9	
	Bageshwar	Bageshwar	Chirag supported	23	155	5.8	4.5	7.09
			Sample schools	12	117	76	62.3	62.3
Total		Chirag supported	48	390	6.9	4.6	5.3	
		Sample schools	26	234	71.7	61.9	60.2	

Sixty percent of students in 5th grade in schools that Chirag does not work with, do not possess the competency that they should have after grade 3. This is in marked contrast to the schools we support, where only 7% of students did not possess the required competency. Maths is the weakest subject across all schools. The sample schools in Bageshwar are the weakest in Maths and Hindi. Of the schools that Chirag supports, the quality of learning is poorest in Bhimtal block and needs to be addressed.

The exact reasons for this difference are not clear. The *Bal Shikshaks* work only with grades 1 and 2. They are village youth with no specialised academic qualification in education and other than two trainings per annum that we provide and periodic visits by our team do not receive any other substantial

support. What is clear is that the programme does have a positive impact on children.

The effort has been criticised since its inception. (a) For letting the government off scotfree for poor quality education. (b) for creating a parallel system that requires external support and (c) for not being sustainable. While the criticism does have some merit, this response is in our view, a community based one. Families that do not believe they can influence government policy, have found a solution to their needs. 1,800 children is not an insignificant number and merits attention. While the costs of training and support will need to be subsidised through grants, we believe that this is a worthy investment.

Families contribute substantially to support this programme, though it is yet inadequate. During the year, Rs 153,435 were contributed by families to support their *Bal Shikshak*. In 30 schools other than regular school visits and trainings we did not provide any other financial support during the year. Yet the communities retained their *Bal Shikshaks* through their own contributions. In over half the schools the annual contribution was in excess of Rs 2,000 during the year. In Satbunga, Kasnaula and Sitla the contribution exceeded 10,000.

Quite evidently families value the effort. Families who do not have children studying in the school are also significant contributors to the programme. School education committees have been crucial to the success of the programme. During the year representatives of each committee attended a workshop aimed at strengthening and enhancing their role.



### Scholarships for Girls

This programme provides girls who may not have been able to continue their education due to poverty with an opportunity to do so. Girls between 6th and 12th grade are selected and are provided with books and stationery, uniforms, fees, tutorial support, health check-ups, and life skills and vocational training.

118 girls received the scholarship during the year. Twenty of these girls belonged to homes with single parents, six of them did not have parents and were being taken care of by other relatives and eight of them had a parent with a disability. The details of the girls by grade were as follows:

**Girls receiving scholarship - by area and grade**

Area	Grade						Total
	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Dewaldhar	5	5	3	5	1	1	20
Kasiyalekh	5	4	4	10	7	1	31
Naukuchiyatal	5	8		2	2		17
Reetha	9	3	3	12	2	3	32
Suyalbari	4	5	3	3		3	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>118</b>

Of the 78 girls in grades 7,8,9 and 11, only two failed their examination, while 23 passed with a first division. The girls from Bageshwar district performed the best in their examinations. All the girls were provided with tutorial support either in their village or close by during the year. Further, the girls in the 7th and 8th grade attended a week long residential camp where they received academic input. 36 of the older girls - in grades 9 to 12, spent six days in a residential life skills training and 65 of them received academic input in a week long residential programme. Prior to each training an assessment was made of each individual girl's requirements after consulting with her teachers at school and reviewing her performance. Based on this a detailed plan was drawn up for each camp to provide academic input. Based on their interest 57 girls were also provided with additional trainings in candle making, computer literacy, embroidery, tailoring, fruit processing, painting and soft-toy making.



## Chirag School

The Chirag School commenced in 2006 with 15 pre-school students. The School was set up to demonstrate that quality education could be provided in a rural area and that this education could be fun and a consequence of exploration. It was hoped that the learning from the school could then be disseminated to the primary schools that Chirag works with and to other schools in the region.

Today, there are 41 children in the school in two pre-school groups and grades 1 and 2. There are 22 girls in the school and a scholarship is provided to four children from poor households. There are six teachers and an assistant teacher in the school. The infrastructure and materials to support learning have expanded to match the growing needs of the children.

During the year, a module on Kumauni culture was added to the curriculum to give the children a foundation in the local context - language, folk art, song and music, flora and fauna.

The fee structure of the school has been based on the prevalent fee structure in private schools in villages in the region. The expectation is not to be able to cover costs but to emphasise the principle of having to pay. However, it was noticed that the investment in stationery and materials was proving to be substantial since the children were not expected to bring any of their own. An effort has been made to document the average expenditure per child during the course of the year and in the next academic year an annual charge for stationery will be introduced from grade 1 onwards.

Health check-ups are held regularly for children. In addition to a physical examination at least once a year, the haemoglobin count is also measured. The prevalence of anaemia amongst children led to a discussion with parents. They were offered advice on the kind of food that they could provide to the children and the children were administered a course of deworming. This has had a positive impact and there is a noticeable improvement in the appetite of children and their height-weight ratio.

Teachers are the most crucial input in the school and a combination of teacher's training, workshops, exposure visits to other schools and the opportunity to interact with visitors from different backgrounds is utilised to facilitate the development and constant growth of the teachers.

While Hindi is the medium of instruction in the school, a concerted attempt is being made to teach English as a second language. It was clear at the outset that finding someone with the competency to teach English was likely to be as difficult as finding a doctor and a decision was taken to try and invest in improving the skills of the existing teachers. All the teachers have also enrolled in a certificate course to teach mathematics at the primary school level.

To address the special needs of a few children, in addition to periodic inputs from Ms Priyo Lall from Raphael, the teachers visited the Vasant Valley School and Step by Step in Delhi to see the work being undertaken with children in these schools and to interact with the teachers.

Parents in the region have their own views on what constitutes 'quality' education. We recognise that the methods utilised in the school can more often than not seem rather unorthodox and do not fit the dominant expectations of parents. A special effort is therefore made to engage with the parents through periodic workshops, by inviting them to visit the school and through home visits. A healthy exchange of ideas has commenced between parents and the school.

During the year a beginning was made to disseminate experiences, with teachers from the Chirag School conducting sessions with the *Bal Shikshaks*. A more intensive dialogue has commenced with the *Bal Shikshaks* in the Reetha area.

## Challenges

### Community Based Primary School Support

- Amongst the schools we support, the situation varies with regard to the availability of government teachers and the student:teacher ratio. Quite evidently there is a need for us to rationalise our own efforts in schools. There are some which clearly require more than a single *Bal Shikshak* and others where there shouldn't be one.

- Community support for the *Bal Shikshak* continues to increase. However, it is far from adequate for a *Bal Shikshak* - even if he/she spends only half a day in the school. In some schools, given the ability of families to pay, their contribution is poor. There are some villages where families simply cannot completely support their *Bal Shikshak*. The challenge would be to create an incentive structure for communities to contribute to the best of their ability with Chirag contributing the difference.
- The libraries are soon going to require replacement of some of the titles - simply because of the age of the books. Our initial partnership which provided us with the books does not offer a system of replacement or replenishment and we need to plan for this.

#### Scholarships for Girls

- Providing tutorial support to the girls either in their village or close by is proving to be a challenge. The availability of good tutors and the variance across tutors is a matter of concern.
- In an independent review of the programme, gaps in our ability to integrate the girl scholars in their schools emerged as a matter of concern. The other girls viewed the girl scholars with suspicion and felt that they received preferential treatment. Very often teachers were not aware of the circumstances of the girl.

#### Chirag School

- With the basic infrastructure taken care of, the next priority is to create a play space and some basic facilities. Imagine a school with no sport! In addition to sport, ideally we need to create structured if not continuous opportunities for children to be exposed to music, dance and theatre.
- As children are growing older, the needs for English instruction are also growing. While we continue to invest in the ability of our existing teachers to teach English, in the short-run we will need to find people to help with it. Similarly, maths and science are going to require special effort.
- We need to continue to create opportunities for the continual development of our teachers - opportunities that like the school's methods with children are fun and a consequence of exploration.





## INVESTING IN YOUNG PEOPLE

The programme with young people has become an integral part of our work and continues to grow - like the others. The primary objectives of the programme are:

1. To create a new generation of young leaders for our region - specifically women - through residential programmes.
2. To provide young people from Kumaun with the knowledge and skills that could either facilitate their being employed in the region or will enable them to find jobs elsewhere as semi-skilled personnel.
3. To invest in young graduates between the ages of 21 and 28 by providing them with the opportunity to spend a year living in and experiencing rural India.

### **Creating a new generation of leaders**

#### *Kishori Shikshan Kendra*

Sixty nine girls graduated this year from the 11th and 12th batches of the *Kishori Shikshan Kendra*, our residential programme for adolescent girls. The 11th batch comprising of girls who were continuing their education attended its training in May and June 2008 and the 12th batch comprising of girls who had discontinued their education attended the training in January and February 2009. More than 80% of the girls were between the ages of 16 and 19 and a fifth of the girls were from Scheduled Caste families. A third of the girls were from other districts in Kumaun. For the first time, 5 girls from Bageshwar participated in the programme.

The girls spent 35 days in a residential training programme that included 12 days of a specialised course. The content for the course is improved upon with each successive batch. The basic course includes topics such as - village level

institutions and self-help groups, financial management, health and in particular reproductive health, forestry, legal rights, *Panchayati Raj*, water, forestry, agriculture and animal husbandry and vocational skills such as painting , knitting and sewing. At the end of the basic course, presentations on animal husbandry, health and agriculture are made to the girls, based on which they choose one topic that they wish to specialise in for the remainder of the programme. At the commencement of the programme a pre-test is administered and at the end of the training the test is repeated to assess their learning during the programme.

The very fact of living together for 35 days and having access to regular meals makes a difference to the health of the girls. Worms, minor ailments and reproductive tract infections are treated and the girls are provided with access to counselling. Over time, improvements in weight and haemoglobin levels have been seen by the end of the training.

#### *Kishor Shikshan Kendra*

In the first two years of our work with boys, the interaction would commence with a ten-day non-residential camp - mostly games with some formal sessions. Once a rapport was established with the youth, they were taken for a fifteen-day residential camp. In the residential camp an abridged version of the training being provided to the girls was offered. The boys found the information useful but their primary expectations were to receive inputs that could lead to employment.

This year a decision was taken to try and provide the youth who had been part of the process earlier with specialised inputs. Two camps were held in the year in June'08 and January'09 at Dewaldhar and a total 41 boys attended these. Half the boys were between the ages of 16 and 19. In the first camp, 10 boys opted for specialised inputs in cooking and 10 for animal husbandry. In the second camp 10 opted for animal husbandry and 11 for agriculture.

#### Other Supportive Activities

The adolescent resource centre or ARC provides two services:

- Counselling - individual, health and career

- Information and skills - through a newsletter, regular correspondence, access to a library and vocational training

Individual counselling was sought by 13 young girls and 7 boys during the year. 19 girls and 9 boys sought inputs on health - diet, reproductive tract infections, menstrual health and hygiene. 31 youth from the Reetha area visited the centre to find out about the kinds of services that were available.

Contact is maintained with graduates from the earlier batches by corresponding with them. During the year 400 letters and postcards were sent to youth. The Adolescent Resource Centre (ARC) organises a festival for two days in December each year. The *Chail Chailiya Utsav* is led by youth and consists of a mix of competitions - with slow-cycle racing the most popular attraction for girls - and entertainment where the youth display their talent. In December 2008, nearly 1,000 young people participated in the festival.

The newsletter *Yuva Sansar* is another effective way of providing information to young people. The newsletter is written, edited and published by an editorial committee consisting of 5 girls and 7 boys. Four issues were published during the year and a 1,000 copies of each issue were distributed.

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**Issue 10 & 11 (Double Issue)**    Dowry: A Curse - Part I (Reporting on a true incident of a dowry  
December 2007 - May 2008        death in the area)

**Issue 12**

June - August 2008                Dowry: A Curse - Part II (legal rights of women, navigating  
the legal landscape, registering a complaint, etc)

**Issue 13**

September - November 2008    Social Harassment (physical, mental, emotional, financial,  
discrimination, etc)

**Issue 14**

December 2008 - February 2009    Harassment of women (domestic violence, at the workplace,  
in public)

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An attempt has been made to organise the youth at the village level for collective action. The youth decide whether they wish to pursue a specific agenda for example raising awareness, organising competitions, or activities such as

cleaning the village or a water source. The membership of these groups is as follows:

Area	No of groups	Male	Female	Total
Reetha	11	60	89	149
Suyalbari	3	33	14	47
Kasiyalekh	1	10	-	10
Naukuchiyatal	6	-	75	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>281</b>

Often, based on demands from the young people specific inputs are provided in a more decentralised and small-scale manner. Learning how to cycle continues to remain a popular attraction for girls. 12 girls from Kasiyalekh and Naukuchiyatal area learnt how to cycle during the year. During the year, 40 young girls were provided trainings on communication skills, *mehndi* application, embroidery and fruit processing.



### Creating Employment Opportunities for Youth

To begin with, our emphasis was on finding employment opportunities that could retain young people within the region. It soon became apparent that young people seeking employment had different aspirations. These aspirations were influenced by the socio-economic status of their families, the urgency of finding and commencing work, their educational qualifications, and perceptions of their self. The strategy had to be revised since there were young people who had decided to migrate but did not possess the requisite skills to find work as semi-skilled or skilled workers.

Since we commenced this initiative we have been able to provide opportunities for 45 young people.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Training</b>	<b>No. of Participants</b>
March, 2008	Electrical and Plumbing*	19
October, 2008	Marketing and Sales	5
January, 2009	Computer Training (Saral Services, Hyderabad)	1
March, 2009	Waiters and Housekeeping*	12
March, 2009	Computer Training (Saral Services, Hyderabad)	5**
<b>Total</b>		<b>45</b>

\* Residential course conducted by Chirag

\*\* Includes one girl

In addition to a training on electrical work and plumbing that was initiated in the previous year, during the current year, 5 young people went to Delhi to learn marketing and sales by working on the job with Himjoli. However, only 3 completed their three month stint at Delhi. A partnership with a firm in Hyderabad, Saral Services led to a total of six youth commencing a four or six month course in Information Technology after which they would be placed. Saral Services charges a fee for the course but provides a loan at the outset in partnership with Basix. The first young man to undertake this course was subsequently placed in Uttarakhand with another institution. A workshop for waiters and housekeeping was held at Chirag, Sitla Estate and Himalayan Village with the active support of Mr Vikram Maira and Mr Ashish Arora. Immediately after the course 8 of these young men got placements for the summer in hotels and resorts in the region.

There are two important learnings thus far. The first pertains to scale. None of the options attempted provides us with the opportunity to train very large numbers of youth. For the hospitality industry for example we could potentially train and help place 100 young people but the demand beyond this might not exist. Should we proceed with a strategy of providing multiple choices which might all add up to a substantial number, or focus on just a few ? The second pertains to skills that require an entrepreneurial mindset. Electricians or plumbers also need to possess a spirit of enterprise or else they are unlikely to find regular employment.



## Investing in young people for an inclusive India

We believe that a year spent in a rural area is certain to sensitise young people to another reality, and this sensitivity is certain to find reflection at some point of time in their lives. This belief motivated us to commence *Swades ki Khoj* an initiative that provides graduates between the ages of 21 and 28 with the opportunity to spend a year living and working in a rural area.

Initially, we had designed the programme only for urban youth. Soon after we commenced promotion, demand from young people in our region made us reconsider our strategy. We decided to include young people from Uttarakhand even if they were essentially from rural areas. We also decided that a young person who joined the programme would necessarily have to live and work in another state.

In the first year, 14 young people entered the programme. They returned to Chirag after a year in June 2008 for a debriefing. We were struck by the transformation in these people. A majority of them had decided after their experience either to continue their education or to continue to work in the not-for-profit sector. Of the 14, we have information on all but one. Nearly a year later, three are continuing their education, one works for a private company and nine are still working in the not-for-profit sector.

In the second cohort for whom a two-week foundation course was held in July 2008, there were 15 young people including 4 girls. But by March, only 10 had remained in the programme. None of the drop-outs were young women.

In the first two years the youth have been placed with host organisations in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. We have pending requests from host organisations to host youth as part of this programme. This is essentially because of the performance of the young people in the first two years.

## Challenges

- Thus far, we have been unable to provide young girls from the region with employment opportunities. We need to break stereotypes about what girls can do and to provide them equal opportunities.
- With a significant emphasis on creating employment opportunities, we need to review the content of our residential programmes and particularly the programme for young boys.
- We need to find ways of increasing the participation of young people in our work at the village level and in community based institutions as well. The absence of a role within villages further enhances their desire to only look outside their communities for engagement.
- We have not been able to reach out to large enough numbers of young people in the metropolitan cities. It is possible that the tools for communication that we will need to use will have to be different. Further, we have not been able to place any youth in the south simply because of language constraints.
- The programme requires a full time team leader. If we were to take into account the regular stream of interns and volunteers who visit us during the year, we need a full time person to support our initiatives with the young.



## HEALTH CARE

### Curative Health

Wish with all your heart and even a jinx can go. We did, and the construction of the hospital was finally completed during the year. The Chirag Hospital was inaugurated on the 19th of January 2009. We continue to run the clinic at Sitla but have moved the X-Ray machine to the Chirag Hospital. In the coming months the hospital will be equipped and the first phase of upgrading the laboratory will be completed.

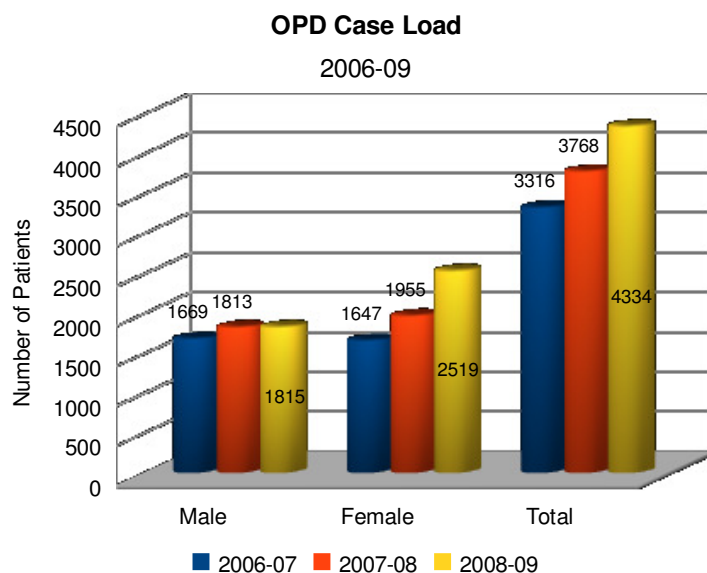
The emphases of Chirag's curative health facilities are to provide emergency care and to focus on the health of women and children. To focus on the health of women without a full-time woman doctor is difficult but the weekly visits of Dr Ruma Mukherjee have lent stability to the effort. For the best part of the year Drs Sonia Chery and Jennifer Laughton from the U.K. volunteered at Chirag. The presence of multiple doctors and that too women meant that both Sargakhet and Sitla had a doctor nearly every day.

The results are visible in the outpatient use of the facilities. In 2008-09 the case load at the clinics was as follows:

Sitla		Sargakhet		Total	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1,155	1,335	660	1,184	1,815	2,519

The overall case load has increased each year. The proportion of women accessing the services increased by almost a third and the overall patients by 15%. There was a decrease in the number of men accessing the Sargakhet clinic during the year, which is not surprising since Sargakhet clinic was largely supported by women doctors during the year. An analysis of the case load reveals that gastro-intestinal disorders, respiratory ailments and orthopaedic cases accounted for half of the patients in the clinic.





The number of patients opting for ayurveda as the line of treatment remains more or less constant at 440. Of the patients opting for Ayurveda 260 had bone or joint disorders. Twelve patients were visited at home during the year because of their inability to visit the clinic, in addition to which 240 patients sought Dr Bishr's advice at his home. The number of patients who had to be admitted for treatment and observation overnight was 15. A bulk of those who were admitted were for dehydration as a consequence of diarrhoea. Five deliveries were conducted at the Sargakhet hospital, 3 were attended to by a doctor at home and 6 were assisted by our trained staff.

There were 9 camps at the clinics and a total of 102 patients were seen. The camps were conducted by Dr Shagufta Yasmin and Dr Salman Haider from Bareilly, Dr Avinash Kulkarni, Dr Kumkum and Dr Mrinalini from Delhi and by Dr Satyendra Singh. General health camps were held in six different villages - Palarichina, Katpuriyachina, Matela, Sidhpur, Gajar and Sunkiya and a total of 365 patients seen and treated. Check-ups were held at the Chirag School and for the adolescent girls and girls receiving scholarships.

A total of 1,954 pathology tests and X-rays were conducted during the year. The number of X-Rays has increased substantially in the past year while overall the number of pathology tests remains more or less constant. Haemoglobin, blood sugar, total leucocyte count, differential leucocyte count and urine examinations were the most common tests conducted during the year.

A hospital advisory committee has been formed and it consists of 15 members from villages in the area. In the first meeting of the committee, the members were briefed about the hospital and its facilities and on our emphasis on rational drug therapy. The members asked for a list of facilities as well as the rates charged by the hospital for registration and the out-patient facility. The members wanted Dr Mukherjee to spend two days at the Sargakhet hospital instead of just one day. Further, they wanted the emergency ambulance service of the government to be linked to the hospital as well.

Now that one wish has been fulfilled we are wishing - earnestly - for another doctor to join the team.



## Preventive and Promotive Health

As part of our preventive and promotive health programme we work with 38 *Gram Panchayats* in the region. The programme seeks to achieve the following: (a) to facilitate creation of health plans by the statutory health committees of *Gram Panchayats* (b) to mobilise communities and the *Gram Panchayat* to use the health plan to leverage health services from the government (c) to help the *Panchayats* create a monitoring system for health and (d) to support the Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA). Conduct of elections to *Gram Panchayats* in September 2008 gave the programme an impetus.

Area	Gram Panchayats	Villages	Population	Health Committee Members	Proportion of women members (%)
Reetha	10	17	5,983	92	70%
Dewaldhar	6	8	3,110	44	84%
Naukuchiyatal	6	11	6,023	65	65%
Suyalbari	8	8	5,605	94	68%
Kasiyalekh	8	8	9,240	84	83%
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>29,961</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>73%</b>

We work with a population of nearly 30,000 people in 52 villages of 38 *Gram Panchayats*. In each of these *Panchayats* a health committee was formed after discussions with all the members of existing village level institutions and other families. The health committee members were provided with inputs through workshops on health issues and were then encouraged to prioritise the problems of their *Gram Panchayats*. Similar efforts were also made in most of the village level institutions to identify the health needs of families. Based on the varied responses, the health committees collated the information, used the prioritised health needs as a base and formulated health plans for their *Gram Panchayats*. The plans mention the expectations and responsibilities of the health committee itself, the government health care facilities, the ASHA and Chirag. There are 379 members in these health committees and 73% of the members are women. The representation of women in these committees is highest in Dewaldhar and Kasiyalekh areas and lowest in Naukuchiyatal area.

The three priorities identified by the health committees were revealing. It was interesting to note that women's health - leucorrhoea, ante-natal care and anaemia - was one of the priorities in nearly all the *Panchayats*. Further, that water-borne diseases - including jaundice and diarrhoea - are also a major concern .

### **Building on small successes**

- Efforts of the health committees of Kimore, Simayal, Baret and Kherda have led to Iron Folic Acid tablets and vitamin A tablets being made available in the district.
- In Bhiyalgaon, Kimore, Simayal and Gargaon the registration of births has increased dramatically.
- School teachers in Chopra are conducting monthly health sessions in the middle-school
- Members of the health committee of Janoti Paldi organised a waste-disposal and cleanliness drive in their village.
- Members of the health committee of Kamoli visited the Primary-Health Care Centre at Suyalbari to present their plan
- Members of the health committee in Khairaula have written to their PHC to request regular visits by the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM)

- Members of health committees of Buribana, Satbunga and Parbada cleaned water-sources in their village

The efforts thus far have been supported by a diverse set of activities to generate awareness and disseminate information. In each area, there have been workshops on the roles of the ASHA, the National Rural Health Mission, the need for safe deliveries, water-borne diseases and their prevention, functions and roles of the health committees and ante and post-natal care. Rallies have been held, street plays organised and sanitation drives held with the voluntary contribution of labour.

In March 2009, Chirag was entrusted with the responsibility to provide a training to all the ASHAs in four blocks of Nainital district - Betalghat, Bhimtal, Dhari and Ramgadh. In all 109 ASHAs were provided a five day training in the month of March and the remainder were to be trained in April 2009. The training covered the roles and responsibilities of health committees, communication skills for ASHAs, health rights and access to health facilities.



### **Drinking Water**

Water quality has become an area of concern. During the year, water quality was tested in different sources that people use. In Reetha area 41 sources were tested, in Naukuchiyatal area 5 and in Suyalbari area 17. 78% of sources tested in Reetha contained Faecal Coliform. In Naukuchiyatal 60% were contaminated and Suyalbari had the safest water with only 12% of the sources affected.

In Reetha area, given the severity of contamination, stool tests were taken in villages to establish a link between contamination and health. Of twelve tests that were conducted, hookworms, roundworms and amoeba were found in ten.

Ways to prevent water-borne diseases through the cleaning of water tanks, adding chlorine, and boiling water are being shared with community members. We realise that behavioural change is a slow process but hope that establishing the link will spur change.

As part of the Ghangal Kuluwa watershed, a drinking water supply scheme 888 running metres long was constructed and 30 households have benefited from it. In the Dewaldhar area, four new community tanks were constructed, one repaired, three *naulas* repaired and 24 rain-water harvesting tanks constructed - which have led to a total of 424 households benefiting.

## Challenges

Curative Health - Another doctor is essential for us to commence provision of in-patient facilities. Dental hygiene is a major problem in the region and even if a regular system of camps is established in the hospital, it will help.

Preventive and Promotive Health - No clear role for *Panchayats* has been visualised in health care. ASHAs have to be selected by them but report to government functionaries and are paid on their recommendation. There is a need to encourage decentralised management. The ASHAs currently have no organised method of seeking redressal of problems that they encounter. The government has decided to promote institutional deliveries to reduce maternal mortality. Families continue to opt for home-deliveries. With no capacity building of traditional birth attendants, home deliveries are not going to get any safer. We need to create effective communication strategies to generate demand amongst families and to influence behaviour. In particular, we need to work on water quality, safe deliveries and anaemia.

Drinking water - With communities not willing to adopt simple measures to treat their drinking water, we may need to explore low-cost community based solutions to treat the water prior to use.



## NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Our initiatives in Natural Resource Management include:

- Conservation, development and management of common lands - soil and water conservation, forestry and fodder development
- Recharge of springs
- Watershed Development
- Agriculture and Horticulture - experimentation, demonstration and promotion of sustainable agriculture including crop diversification
- Community based animal husbandry
- Strengthening existing village level institutions to ensure sustainable management of the efforts

In effect, we seek to address the complex relationship between people, livestock, forests, water and agriculture with a view to ensuring conservation, sustainable development and use, and community based management.

### **Conservation, development and management of common lands**

Common lands are the primary source of fuel-wood, leaf-litter and fodder for families. We work with community based institutions to (a) protect and manage their common lands, (b) enhance soil and water conservation in these lands, (c) aid natural regeneration and reforest them and (d) cultivate fodder.

Given the fact that community forestry is one of Chirag's oldest initiatives, the year 2008-09 is historically speaking an aberration. The extent of planting undertaken during the year was minimal. The emphasis was on soil and water conservation, fodder development, nursery raising and on establishing systems for improved documentation and analysis of our efforts.

## Soil and Water Conservation

Site preparation activities were completed in 33 hectares of common lands during the course of the year. They included the clearing of sites, construction of contour trenches, contour terraces, *khals* or percolation ponds, a wide variety of check dams, percolation pits and compost pits.

Activity	Achievement
Site clearing (hectares)	33
Contour Trench (Running Metres or RMT)	4,012
Contour Terrace (RMT)	29,749
<i>Khals</i> (cubic metres)	195
Loose boulder check-dam (RMT)	233
Gabion check-dam (RMT)	88
Gully plug (RMT)	180
Percolation pit (number)	2,245
Compost Pit (number)	194

Our experience of the past few years suggests that these preparatory activities significantly improve the conditions in sites and improve the quality of growth and regeneration.



## Community Forestry

Community forestry activities are ongoing in six of the areas that we work in. Two of these areas fall essentially in a temperate region and the other four areas fall either within a sub-tropical zone or a buffer zone between the sub-tropical and temperate regions. The strategy currently adopted for both of these varies.

In the two areas that fall in a temperate zone, our previous experiences have revealed that protection can lead to a significant regeneration of oak. Further that existing root-stock is likely to grow faster than new saplings. In these areas, the strategy is to protect these plots and to plant saplings in the gaps - in effect a low

plantation density. In the areas in the sub-tropical and buffer zone, the extent of degradation and prevalence of pine are noticeable. The plantation density is therefore greater than in the temperate zone.

The year 2008-09 was in effect a 'gap-year' with regard to our plantation efforts. Despite the strategy to plant on sites after there has been an improvement in their condition, symbolic planting motivates families and serves as a reminder that the plot requires protection and is being treated. We commenced protection and work on 131 hectares of land. During the year, 31,667 saplings were planted, with two-thirds being planted in the Suyalbari area alone. Since a bulk of the plantation was undertaken in Suyalbari, the *Bauhinia* species accounted for a significant proportion of the saplings that were planted. Based on our planning of the requirements per site, 105,124 saplings will have to be planted in these plots in the coming year. The size of nurseries where saplings are being raised for the subsequent years is substantial.

#### Community Forestry - Nurseries in 2008-09

Area	Area (Ha)	Nursery Stacking 2008-2009	No. of Nurseries*	Nursery persons		
				Women	Men	Total
Reetha	18	20,700	22	13	7	20
Kasiyalekh	23	11,900	17	10	6	16
Suyalbari	26	43,300	96	90	5	95
Dewaldhar	12	8,800	9	4	4	8
Kathpuriyachina	16	20,600	36	33	3	36
Naukuchiyatal	36	39,600	46	35	11	46
<b>Total</b>		<b>144,900</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>221</b>

\* Includes nurseries in Reetha and Kasiyalekh area offices and central nurseries at Simayal, Dewaldhar and Dhokane

Despite our distaste for wire fencing, 935 metres of new wire fences were erected and 1,230 metres of existing fences repaired. 5,591 metres of stone-walls were either repaired or constructed. The outbreak of forest fires in January and in early March have increased the emphasis on fire-lines and 1,914 running metres of fire-lines were created. An attempt was made to document the survival rate of saplings and fodder species. The best average survival rate of saplings and



grasses was found in the Suyalbari area and the lowest survival rate in Kasiyalekh. The noticeable changes in the micro-climate have led to maintenance and inter-cultural operations such as hoeing and mulching increasing. Compost pits have now been dug in most forestry and fodder plots and during the year 432 quintals of compost was provided to the grasses and saplings being cultivated in the plots.

Permanent quadrats have been laid in forestry plots in 19 villages to document the growth and survival rates, crown density, production of fodder and changes in biodiversity. For trees quadrats of 10m<sup>2</sup> have been laid, for shrubs 2m<sup>2</sup> and grasses 1m<sup>2</sup>. 184 quadrats each for trees, shrubs and grasses have been laid. 136 of these are in plots that we are working in and the rest serve the purposes of control plots to be compared with. Data has been collected from all the quadrats and will be collected each year to facilitate analysis and comparison.



### **Fodder Development**

In the mid-90's Chirag had promoted the cultivation of temperate grasses in the region but on private lands. A few years ago, when it had become apparent that fodder shortages as well as the quality of fodder inhibited the growth of animal husbandry in the region, we commenced working on this issue again. This time though, we made two significant changes. Firstly, we did not limit ourselves to merely temperate varieties of grasses and commenced work on species that could be cultivated in sub-tropical and buffer zones. More importantly, we focussed on the cultivation of fodder on common lands and not merely private lands. In addition to increasing the total availability of fodder, it is also hoped that increased cultivation will reduce seasonal variability and reduce the burden on women. In the short-run an important benefit is the fact that the harvest of fodder can commence within six months. This leads to immediate incentives to protect the site.

Nurseries for grasses were established in four areas and Cocksfoot, Tall Fescue, Brome, Perennial Rye and Napier grown. A total of 243 nurseries were established to provide root-stock for cultivation in common lands and in private lands. During the year 461 quintals of fodder were planted in common lands.

Fodder yields from three different sources are now available to families from their common lands. During the year, 24.20 quintals were harvested from cultivated species of fodder and 1,452.42 quintals of natural grasses were harvested. 465 households benefited from this. In addition to this, lopping in the plots provided 175.90 quintals to 154 households.

#### **Income of Van Panchayats in Suyalbari from sale of grass**

*The van panchayats earned Rs.13,295 by selling grass from their plots. This income will be used for the maintenance and protection of the van panchayats.*

<b>Village</b>	<b>Households Benefiting</b>	<b>Amount Collected in Rs.</b>	<b>Total savings as on 31st March 09 (Rs)</b>
Sidhpur	28	280	–
Gangarkot	05	250	–
Bhadyun	10	500	8,455
Lohali	24	2,400	7,280
Deena	09	9,340	27,514
Walni	0	–	3,448
Patilya	21	525	–
Kuman	5	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>13,295</b>	<b>46697</b>

#### **Spring Recharge**

The spring recharge initiative - an effort to recharge specific springs using hydrogeology as the basis to identify their recharge and discharge zones - is finally to be rolled out in the coming year. Preparatory work included trainings of staff in the natural resource management team on the principles of geology, and groundwater. Documentation of discharge of springs and streams was

commenced on a monthly basis in 31 different locations. This will help us understand discharge and in the coming years will serve as a basis for comparison. An evaporimeter has been established at Simayal to help calculate the rate of evaporation. The six automatic weather stations that were established last year have now commenced contributing decentralised information about rainfall and temperature that can be utilised in the future to correlate discharge with rainfall.



## Watershed Development

Two micro-watersheds - Ghangal Kuluwa in Almora district and Pirna in Bageshwar district are being developed currently. We had commenced work in the Chiori watershed in Nainital district prior to these two, but work was stopped since the partner institution had not released funds for three years. Miraculously, in the last week of March 2009, funds were released and in the coming year, work will commence again in the Chiori watershed.

### Ghangal Kuluwa Watershed

The Ghangal Kuluwa watershed covers an area of about 500 ha. A population of 583 persons reside in the area of whom a quarter belong to the scheduled caste. Developmental works in the watershed will end in another six months. The activities during the year included a mix of soil and water conservation measures - both vegetative and engineering, drinking water provision, enhancement of irrigation potential and the capacity building of families. Thus far, the community has contributed Rs 366,399 towards watershed development activities. A substantial proportion of the contribution has been towards drinking water provision and individual latrines.

### Pirna Watershed

Development of the Pirna Watershed in Bageshwar district has been split into two phases - a capacity building phase which is to be followed by a full

implementation phase. One village, Binsar was chosen for the capacity building phase which ended in June 2008. This led to the creation of a detailed plan for the full implementation phase which will commence in the coming year.

The activities that have been completed include soil and water conservation, forestry, the enhancement of irrigation potential by constructing new irrigation channels and repairing existing ones, demonstration of improved agricultural practices and biogas, individual activities such as improved sanitation, soak pits and vermi compost pits, and capacity building of existing village level institutions. Community contribution for these activities amounted to Rs 56,797.

The preparatory work for the full implementation phase that will cover 8 other villages in the watershed was completed during the year. It involved village level meetings, a base-line survey, exercises based on participatory rural appraisal and focus group discussions. After the needs of different stakeholders were collected and prioritised, a technical survey was undertaken to establish the feasibility of some of the proposed activities. Detailed plans were created and then presented in meetings of community members in different villages. Based on their inputs and feedback, a final plan was created. A detailed survey was undertaken in two villages to develop a base-line and benchmark against which the success of the programme could be reviewed in future.



## **Agriculture and Horticulture**

To provide sustainable livelihood options to rural families that can lead to an improvement in the quality of life, it is imperative that agriculture and horticulture become viable and remunerative. One of the many reasons why young people are dissatisfied with agriculture is the association of poverty and hardship with agriculture. It is our belief that for rainfed agriculture in the mountains, sustainable agriculture based on organic and low external input based methods of cultivation are the only long term hope.

Chirag's strategy for agriculture and horticulture seeks to achieve the following:

- a. To improve soil health and the quality of planting material and to promote sustainable methods of prevention and control of pest and disease
- b. To use farmers as the fulcrum for trials and large scale adoption of improved practices
- c. To use the experimental farms to propagate planting material and to undertake trials that are potentially risky or those that can inform farmer led trials in the future
- d. To encourage crop diversification to reduce risk

#### Farmer led trials

In the first year of our Agriculture Innovation Programme, wherein farmers became the fulcrum of innovation and change, we commenced by holding workshops in six areas with farmers with a desire to innovate. 182 farmers participated in these workshops.

In each workshop, farmers were encouraged to share their experiences. Subsequently, the Chirag team shared its own experiences and invited farmers to carry out innovations on small plots of their own lands on essentially three different issues:

- a. Improving soil health through better composting techniques
- b. Improving the quality of planting material through improved nurseries and seed and root treatment
- c. Adoption of a complete organic package of practice in select crops

Within our area, two strategies were adopted. In Naukuchiyatal area, a decision was taken to work with large numbers of farmers in each village attempting similar trials. In all other areas, in each hamlet, only a single farmer attempted a particular trial. In other words in these areas, the diversity of innovations being attempted by farmers was much greater. The objective was to try and identify which strategy proved more successful in encouraging large scale adoption by farmers.

Area	Number of farmers	Farmers who dropped out
Reetha	16	1
Kasiyalekh	31	0
Suyalbari	28	0
Devaldhar	20	0
Kathpuriyachina	13	0
Naukuchiyatal	200	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>6</b>

To reduce the number of variables, the use of different seed varieties was discouraged. Farmers would undertake the trial on a small plot of land and on the rest would follow their traditional practice to facilitate comparison. Chirag's support would be limited only to external inputs. The inputs that were provided by Chirag included Phosphorus Solubilising Bacteria, Effective Micro-organisms, *Beauveria Bassiana*, *Trichoderma*, black polythene sheets and neem oil. Farmers undertook trials on the preparation of improved compost, seed treatment, solarisation, root treatment, improved nursery practices, system of rice intensification, pest and disease management in apple and peach using organic methods and adoption of a complete package of practice in several vegetables, spices and cereals.

The System of Rice Intensification (SRI) has grown in popularity in several parts of the country. It requires less seed and water, is transplanted earlier and is planted with a fixed spacing between plants. For the second consecutive year, trials were attempted on farmers' fields. In the first year, there were far too many variables and the success limited. However, the potential that it had demonstrated, led to a larger effort this year by 64 farmers in Pithoragarh district and 11 farmers in Bageshwar district. Across all the trials, higher yields were observed. The yields recorded in Pithoragarh for example, were at least 20% higher than the traditional attempt. The potential of this growing next year is enormous.

The success of this effort will lie in the extension to all their lands by farmers who have undertaken these innovations, and by other farmers in their villages and hamlets.

## Experimental farms

There are two experimental farms, at Simayal and Dewaldhar. The Simayal farm is in its second year of conversion to a certified organic farm. Both farms have been designed to serve as live demonstrations of different technologies and practices. During the year 307 people visited the Simayal farm and 103 the Dewaldhar farm. The farms propagate planting material for herbs, seedlings for vegetables and fruit trees. There are centralised nurseries for forestry species and fodder in these farms. The land in the farm is largely utilised for trials or for cultivation of produce that can be consumed by the training centres at Simayal and Dewaldhar. Livestock is kept on both farms and the bulls on the Chirag farms provide services to cows in the region.

Seedlings and seed of capsicum, brinjal, tomato, brocolli, cauliflower, cabbage, cucumber, bitter gourd, bottle gourd, marrow, peas, garlic, onion, okra, coriander, radish, soyabean and french bean were provided to farmers by the experimental farms. Apple, peach and pear trees were also sold to farmers. The central nurseries on these farms provided saplings to villages for plantation if they did not have adequate saplings, and fodder from these nurseries was also used for plantation on common lands. The Simayal farm sold nearly 25 quintals of fruit in the local markets and 3.6 quintals of vegetables to the Chirag Canteen and Training Centre. Nearly 10,000 cuttings of culinary herbs and aromatic plants were sold by the experimental farms.

Trials at the Simayal farm have focussed on pest and disease control in 42 peach trees and 151 apple trees. The results are positive. In peach, leaf curl and leaf spot have been controlled and the impact of green aphids reduced. In apple the challenge has been to control wooly aphids and the results have been mixed. Improved nutrient supply to these plants and foliar sprays have however led to an improvement in the health of the fruit trees.

## Crop Diversification

As part of the strategy of encouraging innovation by farmers, crop diversification is being promoted. We believe that diversification of risk is an important coping strategy for rain-fed agriculture. The cultivation of culinary herbs on marginal lands was commenced as part of the overall strategy of crop diversification.

Chirag's role has been to facilitate access to planting material, to provide training to women and to facilitate procurement of these herbs by Kumaun Grameen Udyog. During the year, 11.84 quintals of herbs were cultivated by 230 women in 67 villages and sold to Kumaun Grameen Udyog. The production is increasing slowly and today women sell green herbage as well as dry herbs and in several villages are expanding the area under cultivation.

<b>Herb</b>	<b>Procurement (kg)</b>	<b>Payment (Rs)</b>
Mint	33.41	3,174
Basil	27.99	4,478
Chives	9.58	1,533
Lemonbalm	12.90	2,064
Lemongrass	95.30	8,576
Oregano	536.48	85,836
Thyme	249.40	23,692
Peppermint	47.18	7,549
Sage	5.15	772
Parsley	64.01	7,680
Marjoram	.45	72
Rosemary	100.19	12,022
Stevia	1.62	129
<b>Total</b>	<b>1183.66</b>	<b>157,577</b>



### **Community Based Animal Husbandry**

With increased fodder availability becoming a reality in the region, the community based animal husbandry practices that were initiated in the past few years have become relevant. The programme seeks to provide families with access to community based para-vets, access to preventive care, curative care



based on traditional home based remedies, improved cattle feed and promotion of better management practices. In the coming years we hope to foster micro-enterprises linked to animal husbandry and cattle insurance.

Veterinary camps were held during the year and 589 cows, 305 oxen, 474 buffaloes and 646 goats were treated. Liver fluke, tick infestation, foot and mouth disease, and infertility were the common ailments that were seen. 20 farmers were provided with an animal husbandry package consisting of a cattle trough, a chaff cutter, inputs on improved hay stacking and assistance in renovating the cattle shed. Five silo towers were constructed. As a pilot, 24 livestock were also insured to promote livestock insurance.

### Animal Husbandry Programme

Area	Artificial insemination		No. of Animals Treated/ Vaccinated				Livestock insurance		
	Cow	Buffalos	Cow	Ox	Buffalo	Goat/ sheep	Cow	Buffalos	Others
Reetha	38	17	138	0	38	10	5	1	0
Kasiyalekh	0	0	166	31	79	65	3	3	0
Suyalbari	1	1	133	158	123	131	1	5	0
Dewaldhar	0	0	102	84	151	239	2	1	0
Kathpuriyachina	0	0	50	32	83	201	1	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>

There are currently only four para-vets who continue to provide services to families in the region. The best two para-vets earned between 11,000 Rs and 35,000 Rs during the year. There is a need to expand the programme based on the learning of the past few years.

Fodder cultivation was undertaken on 12.2 hectares of private land during the year. Nearly 76 quintals of grass were planted and the yield of 2,245 kgs benefited 135 households. 225 farmers expressed an interest in cultivating forage crops such as maize, *barseem* and oats.

A trial to make cattle feed using local ingredients is being attempted. If successful, there is a possibility of not just a small enterprise emerging, but the cultivation of traditional crops will receive an impetus as well. Farmers were also taught how to make a fodder mix using dry grass, urea, jaggery and salt. These are mixed and are set aside for a month in a black polythene bag. Livestock are then fed 2kg of this mix each day with their usual diet.



## Strengthening Village Level Institutions

The sustainable management of efforts on common lands requires strong community based institutions. We work with a wide variety of institutions - user groups, self-help groups, *Van Panchayats*, Village Development Committees, Watershed Committees and *Gram Panchayats*.

During the year, in addition to the watershed committees in Pirna and Ghangal Kuluwa, the efforts with regard to community forestry alone led to our working with 33 *Van Panchayats*, 9 *Van Suraksha Samitis* (forest protection committees), 6 self-help groups and 3 *Gram Panchayats*. These institutions had a total membership of 472 of whom 252 were women. All the community based institutions are encouraged to contribute to their programmes. In the fodder programme for example, community contribution during the year amounted to Rs 161, 390. Contributions encourage a sense of ownership. Further, in many cases, funds are created by the community for operation and maintenance of systems in the future.

In Bageshwar district, a convergence with the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) was established to promote the cultivation of fodder on common lands. During the year, nearly Rs 240,000 worth of investments through the NREGS were raised to promote the cultivation of fodder on common lands.

## Challenges

Conservation, Development and Management of Common Lands - The pressure on our community forestry programme in the next two years is likely to be enormous since the number of saplings to be planted each year will exceed the annual average of the past decade.

Recharge of Springs - One of the challenges that we are likely to encounter pertains to the possibility of recharge zones lying in private lands. The probability of families agreeing to traditional soil and water conservation efforts on their private land is very low. We will need to find other appropriate solutions to increasing recharge.

Agriculture and horticulture - Documentation and dissemination of the results of the trials within the village will be crucial for the large scale adoption of improved practices.

Community Based Animal Husbandry - The impact of increased availability of improved varieties of fodder will need to be assessed. Further, the assumption has been that the fodder programme will lead to a reduction in drudgery amongst women as well as on increase in off-season availability. These will need to be verified.

Strengthening Village Level Institutions - It is clear that the success of all efforts with natural resources requires strong institutions. The investment in these institutions per se has remained very low and needs to be increased in the future. In particular the role of women in these institutions needs to be strengthened.



## LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT

For several years, our livelihood support remained limited to facilitating savings and credit. For a variety of reasons including the visible success of Kumaun Grameen Udyog, desire to support and foster micro-enterprises is growing within the organisation and amongst families that we work with. Today, our livelihood support to families in the area includes facilitating access to micro-credit and livelihood opportunities, improved access to markets and related services and our partnership with Kumaun Grameen Udyog.

### **Micro-credit and Livelihood opportunities**

We work with 196 self-help groups with a total membership of 2,249. 90% of the members are women and their cumulative saving is nearly Rs 4,500,000. Animal husbandry continues to be the primary reason for taking credit.

In Bageshwar district, in Dewaldhar and Katpuriyachina we work in partnership with the Uttaranchal Livelihood Improvement Project of the Himalayas - a Government of Uttarakhand initiative to support an improvement in the quality of life of the poorest. In Katpuriyachina we work with 1,493 households and in Dewaldhar with 1,167 households. In addition to formation of self-help groups the past year witnessed a flurry of activity, as members of the groups were encouraged to use their credit for livelihood enhancement activities. Support was provided to cultivate grass on common lands, to establish vermi-compost pits, improved seeds were made available and chicks provided for poultry rearing. Trainings were provided on a wide range of issues that included organic farming, fruit preservation, mushroom cultivation, floriculture, *masala* production and vegetable cultivation.

An interesting innovation was the convergence that was established with other schemes of the government to provide benefits to the poorest. In Dewaldhar and

Katpuriyachina areas, pension was commenced for 89 widows, 45 aged persons and 22 people with disability.

The formation of Sri Mahadev Svayath Sahakaritha - our first formal federation of women was the most significant event of the year. With a membership of 180 women, the federation has been registered under the Self Reliant Cooperative Act of the state. The federation established a stall at the Uttarayani Mela in Bageshwar and has been running a weekly *haat* in Kafligair. The federation has commenced providing inputs to its members such as seeds, agricultural tools and even improved containers to carry water. The federation has established a relationship with Kumaun Grameen Udyog and Chirag and supplies produce from its members for sale in other markets.

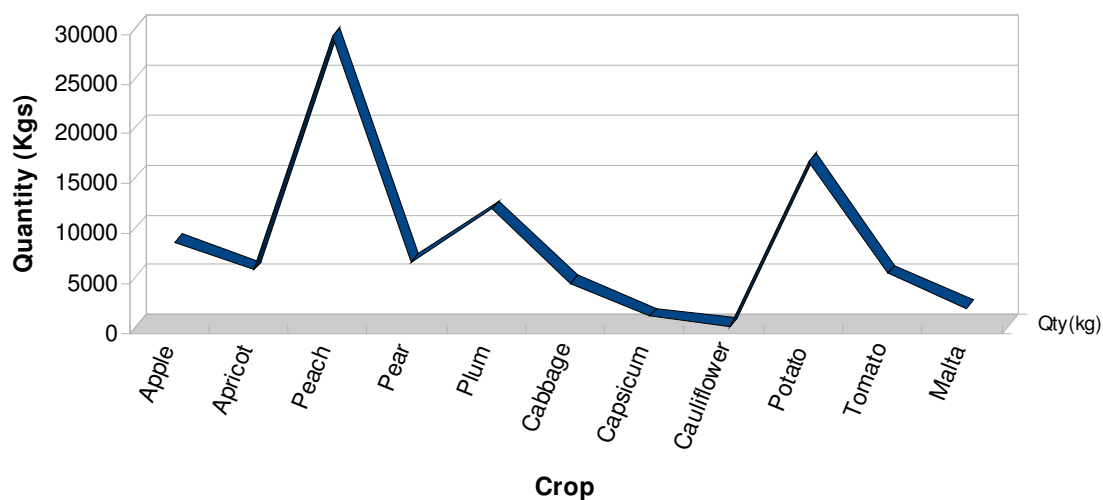
The support to the 60 farmers clubs has come to an end this year. With a membership of 1,263 and the objective of leveraging assistance from other government programmes, the success of the clubs has varied. A significant development during the year was the enrollment of 118 farmers in a crop insurance scheme and 26 in a cattle insurance scheme. Clubs have been successful in conducting veterinary camps in partnership with the animal husbandry department of government and in gaining access to improved planting material.

## **Market Access and Services**

Chirag supports small and marginal farmers by providing them access to inputs and markets for their agricultural produce. An analysis of existing costs incurred by farmers in selling to the *mandi* was undertaken. The lowest overheads were incurred on the sale of peas at 10% and the highest on pear at 24%. The arrangement with the farmers seeks to reduce these costs to increase the earning of farmers. Transparency in price and weights and timely payment have become the most important incentives for farmers to avail of this service.

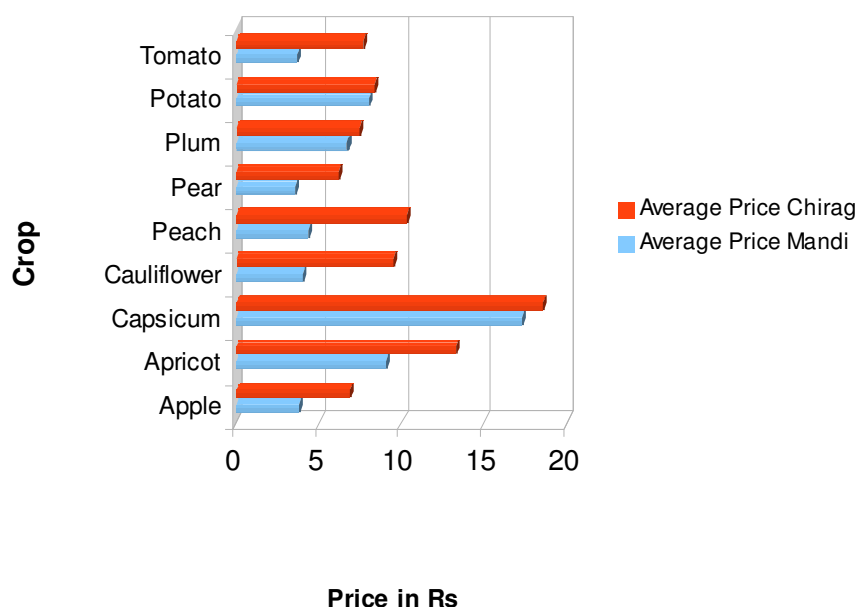
The initiative expanded to cover 16 villages and 361 farmers during the year but procurement was not possible from all of them. 92 metric tonnes of produce were bought from farmers during the year and Rs 807,705 was paid to them. In terms of quantities purchased peach and potato were the two largest products that were procured.

## Procurement 2008



Produce	Qty(kg)	Amount Paid (Rs)
Apple	8,616.00	59,550.50
Apricot	5,919.00	78,969.00
Peach	29,238.00	302,388.90
Pear	6,643.00	41,028.68
Plum	11,902.50	88,558.00
Cabbage	4,539.00	19,426.20
Capsicum	1,174.00	21,774.75
Cauliflower	224.00	2,145.00
Potato	16,724.00	140,452.50
Tomato	5,495.00	42,472.18
Malta	1,989.00	10,939.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>92,463.50</b>	<b>807,705.21</b>

At the end of the season, based on statements that the farmers received from their commission agents in the *mandi* a comparative analysis of the average price provided to farmers was arrived at.



Across all crops, the net price received from Chirag was in excess of the price received from the *mandi*. This was despite Chirag basing its prices on the daily prices declared by the *mandi*.

Demand from farmers led to 15 tonnes of potato seed being sourced from Manali.



### Partnership with Kumaun Grameen Udyog

The relationship with Kumaun Grameen Udyog, the section 25 company promoted by Chirag over a decade ago, has been transformed into a partnership between two established institutions. Kumaun Grameen Udyog (KGU) continues to focus on enhancing the incomes of families in the region and supports the Chirag School and Hospital. Chirag facilitates linkages between producers and Kumaun Grameen Udyog and relishes the success of KGU.

KGU's sales during the year were just short of Rs 57 lakhs, two lakhs lower than the preceding year. However, this was by diversifying its market and reducing its dependence on its largest buyer. Garments, apricot products and herbs recorded a growth with regard to sales during the year. In the future, there is a possibility that agricultural produce will also become a significant part of the product range. The two Kilmora shops in the region now account for nearly a quarter of KGU's sales.

There are 20 people engaged in the weaving programme, 70 women with the knitting programme and 300 farmers from whom culinary herbs and apricot seed are sourced. KGU's team has expanded to include an assistant in the weaving operation and a consultant for marketing. During the year, an ex-gratia payment of Rs 1.5 lakhs was made to the producers engaged in weaving and knitting and a donation of Rs 7 lakhs was made to Chirag's School and Hospital.

KGU's new website - [www.kilmora.in](http://www.kilmora.in) reflects its confidence and growing potential.

## **Challenges**

Micro-Credit and Livelihood Options - There is a need to invest in the leadership and systems of self-help groups. There is significant potential to expand the livelihood activities being undertaken by self-help groups but we will need to specifically focus on creating choices and by then providing the members with the skills and information to avail of these choices.

Market Access and Services - The scale of the operation will have to expand considerably if economies of scale are to accrue. Either an independent institution to support this should be set up or Kumaun Grameen Udyog be requested to establish an agricultural services division.





## TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The provision of technical support to other institutions is a small but growing area of Chirag's work. As a strategy, we believe that this provides us with the opportunity to enhance our impact without having to do it all on our own. We currently provide technical support to other organisations in the state on watershed development, catchment area protection and fodder development.

### **Watershed Development - Support to Grassroot Development Organisations**

Chirag undertook the responsibility of supporting ten grassroot development organisations (GDO's) in Kumaon. The organisations were added over a three year period. In each phase, there was one year of capacity building and training which was to culminate in the preparation of a watershed development plan, followed by field-based monitoring and support during a three-year implementation phase. Mid-way, Chirag undertook the responsibility to implement a watershed and there were 9 organisations left. In all, these 10 watersheds have covered a geographical area of 5,584 hectares in Kumaun, 37 villages and 1,658 households.

The first five organisations completed implementation in 2008 and the remaining five including Chirag will complete implementation in 2009. The targets of the first five organisations were all achieved and an independent evaluation recognised the quality of their work and effort. With six months left for the last batch, the progress is as per schedule. These organisations have been supported by an inter-disciplinary team from Chirag consisting of an engineer, forester, agriculturist, accountant and community mobiliser.

Chirag's technical support team went on an 8 day exposure visit during the year to Samaj Pragati Sahyog, Dewas. The team spent time observing their watershed development and support programme as well as their use of hydrogeology in watershed development. The members were also provided with training on

engineering measures and information about the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme during their visit.

### **Integrated Fodder and Livestock Development**

Chirag is providing support to three partner organisations as part of the Integrated Fodder-Livestock Development Project (IFLDP) of the Himmatthan Pariyojna. Two organisations are based in Pithoragarh district and one in Almora district. During the year 17 visits were made to these organisations to provide them with support and to monitor the progress.

The nature of support varied from organisation to organisation and included site surveys, trainings on contour terracing and plantation, micro-planning, inter-cultural operations and the formation of federations of producers.

### **Protection and treatment of catchments**

Chirag currently provides support to four organisations in the state which are involved in implementing a water and sanitation programme. The catchments of the drinking water schemes are to be treated as part of the plan and Chirag's role is limited to providing technical support for this treatment.

<b>Name of organisation</b>	<b>Number of Blocks</b>	<b>Districts</b>	<b>Number of villages</b>	<b>Area to be treated (ha)</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>Total population</b>	<b>Visits in 08-09</b>
Himalayan Gram Vikas Samiti	2	1	5	10.4	249	1,365	2
Himalayan Institute Hospital Trust - I	2	2	8	80.25	319	2,627	3
Himalayan Institute Hospital Trust - II	1	1	9	94.95	361	2,654	3
INHERE	5	2	9	24.7	292	2,367	3
Sri Bhuvaneshwari Mahila Ashram	2	2	10	12.2	592	3,831	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>222.5</b>	<b>1,813</b>	<b>12,844</b>	<b>14</b>

The activities that have been implemented thus far include structures to enhance water recharge, engineering measures and vegetative treatment to increase soil and water conservation.

## **Challenges**

- We have not found a way as yet of reconciling the pressures of direct implementation and the desire to provide technical support without increasing our personnel.
- With the first phase of our technical support to nine organisations coming to an end, we need to evaluate our own effort before we enlarge our support functions.



## PILOT INITIATIVES

Our pilot initiatives with regard to tourism are coming to an end. The initiative in Naukuchiyatal has ended and in six months so will the effort at Patal Bhuvaneshwar. We will need to review our experiences and then formulate a strategy on whether we wish to link rural communities to tourism - one of the fastest growing industries in the region - and if so, how.

### **Community Based Conservation of Naukuchiyatal Lake**

The investment in the preceding years on organising stakeholders around the Lake and in setting up an advisory group consisting of representatives of government finally paid dividends during the year.

In winters, it was noticed that the fish would rise to the surface at the edge of the lake because of inadequate oxygen and would be pounced upon by hordes of people. Ten ducks were introduced into the lake to increase the aeration and to try and reduce the incidence of people fishing with their hands. 5,762 saplings were planted in the catchment of the lake and 39 check dams constructed to reduce the flow of silt. There are currently 21 bins and wheelbarrows to aggregate waste around the lake. A leaflet describing the cultural significance and environmental importance of the lake was prepared and distributed to tourists.

The support of the government has led to a weekly collection of waste from the area. Further, two toilets were constructed at Chanoti and Siloti for tourists. A new site for shops was identified and 16 new shops are being constructed. The existing shops on the corners around the lake and to be relocated to the new location.

### **Patal Bhuvaneshwar**

It has taken several years of effort for the management of the cave temple at Patal Bhuvaneshwar to realise the relationship between the importance of vegetation

above the cave temple and water that is crucial to the formations inside the temple. This realisation and the growing confidence of the shopkeepers' association are some of the successes of this initiative to link sacred values, conservation and rural livelihoods.

Some of the notable achievements during the year were as follows:

- Two local youth were trained as guides to take tourists on half-day or day-long hikes. 20 tourists availed of this service during the year.
- A souvenir shop and information booth has been established in partnership with a local organisation - VOICE. Local juice, pulses and information about Patal Bhuvaneshwar are the items that are demanded the most. Visitors seeking information have largely made inquiries about taxis and hotel bookings.
- The shopkeepers' association has held five meetings in the past year and 84% of the members attended these meetings. A monthly contribution of Rs 30/- is made by each shopkeeper towards collection of garbage. The association got together twice to voluntarily clean the area. The association has created a fund of its own for collective action in the future through monthly contributions and their current saving is Rs 5,212.
- 9 Self-help groups consisting of 140 members have total savings of Rs 114,585. These groups serve as the fulcrum for collective action and for livelihood initiatives. Members of the groups got together four times during the year to clean the paths leading up to their villages, to maintain the saplings that were planted in the past and to undertake direct seeding of trees.
- 100 litres of Rhododendron juice were produced and sold, leading to a net profit of Rs 2,000. 25 litres of *malta* juice were also sold.
- In the past, few toilets existed in the area and open defecation was the norm. An attempt to promote sanitation has led to families constructing toilets each year, with Chirag's contribution being limited to Rs 1200/- per latrine. 17 new latrines were constructed during the year.

- To support animal husbandry, fodder has been cultivated on private lands. 3 cattle troughs have been established as demonstration units and 4 chaff cutters have been provided to the women's groups. Fodder is being cultivated by 9 farmers on 1.25 acres of land.
- During the year 4,509 saplings were planted. The survival rates of saplings planted over the past few years were measured this year. The survival rates were the best in the Chitgal Van Panchayat (62%) and in the Van Panchayat area above the Patal Bhuvaneshwar temple (55%). In two other portions of the Van Panchayat of Patal Bhuvaneshwar the survival rates were only 55 and 41% respectively.
- During the year 1,516 chicks were distributed. Poultry has become a successful livelihood option for three families while several others are rearing hens for their own private consumption. For the three families which have adopted poultry raising as a livelihood option, their net profit thus far through the sale of eggs and chicken has been Rs 52,000.

## **Challenges**

Community Based Conservation of Naukuchiyatal Lake - The local institutions that have been established will need to continue their efforts despite the withdrawal of Chirag's active support. If the institutions remain active, then the efforts of the past three years would not have been in vain.



## CHIRAG AND ITS PARTNERS

Chirag's General Body comprises of 26 life members from which 8 members form the Governing Body.

### Chirag Governing Body

Mr Kanai Lall	Chairperson and Founder Geologist and retired corporate executive
Dr Madan Lal Dewan	Vice-chairperson Chairperson of 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 of Kumaun University
Dr Rajesh Thadani	Member Founder and Chief Executive of CEDAR, formerly Executive Director of Chirag, independent consultant
Prof Malavika Karlekar	Member Ethnographer, formerly of Centre for Women's Development Studies
Mr Radhesh Lall	Member Engineer and entrepreneur

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

## Staff

In March 2009, there were 134 people working full-time for Chirag. This included seven who were on secondment to Kumaun Grameen Udyog. Of the total, 116 work on programmes, 8 are support staff and 10 are in the finance and administration team. The proportion of women has remained constant at 34%, however the proportion of women in senior positions remains low and a matter of concern. A leadership development programme specifically to assist women in the organisation assume greater leadership is being developed and will be initiated in the coming year.

## Our Partners

A diverse set of institutions - Indian and international - as well as individuals, make our efforts possible.

### Institutions

#### Indian

ACWADAM

Council for Advancement of Peoples Action and Rural Technology (CAPART)

GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology

Government of Uttarakhand through Gramin Utthan Samiti

Himmothan Society

Kumaun Grameen Udyog

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)

Peoples' Commission on Environment and Development

Peoples' Science Institute

Rajeshwar & Susheela Dayal Charitable Trust

Saral Services

Sir Dorabji Tata Trust

Sir Ratan Tata Trust

Uttaranchal Livelihood Improvement Project for the Himalayas

#### International

Annapurna Indian Women's Association - South Korea

Berkeley Reafforestation Trust - United Kingdom (UK)

Canada India Village Aid - Canada

Give2Asia.org - United States of America (USA)

Paul Hamlyn Foundation - UK

Room to Read - USA

Rural Education and Literacy - USA

The Ford Foundation - USA

University of Washington at Seattle - USA



## Individuals

**From India**

Ashish Arora - Satoli  
Indrani Barua - Shantiniketan  
Radhika Ghose - Bengaluru  
Nalini Jairam- Bengaluru  
Vishal Joshi - Mumbai  
Kanai Lall - Sitla  
Lakshmi Lall - Sitla  
Radhesh Lall - Dehradun  
Hema Shroff Patel - Mumbai  
Amukta Mahapatra - Chennai  
Vikram Maira - Sitla  
Siddhartha Menon- Madanapalle  
Ann Mukerjee - Satkhol  
Dr Ruma Mukherjee - Ramgarh  
Ruth and Dinesh Rastogi - Bhimtal  
Shalini Sinha - Dehradun  
Prashant Upadhyaya- Dehradun  
Pankaj Wadhwa - Delhi/Kumaun

**From Abroad**

Shauna Singh Baldwin - USA  
Dr Sonia Chery - UK  
Matt Deisen - USA  
Sunil Garg - USA  
Keith Goyden - USA  
Angela Hottinger - USA  
Karna Humphrey - USA  
Ranjan Lall - USA  
Edward Laughton - UK  
Dr Jennifer Pond - UK  
Evan Murphy - USA  
Anisha Peplinski - UK  
Dr Sireesha Raju - UK  
Rene & Louise Schwarz - Germany  
Dr Satyendra Singh - UK  
Students from the United World  
College of the Atlantic - Wales  
Frau Rosemarie Dubs-Weiss -  
Switzerland  
Ranganathan Yogeshwar -  
Luxembourg

## Interns and Volunteers

The days when interns and volunteers would seek to flock to the mountains during the summers are of the past. Now committed young people from all over the world spend time at Chirag during all the seasons of the year. Partnerships with academic institutions and organisations dedicated to promoting voluntarism contribute to a substantial portion of the interns and volunteers. In particular, in the past year we hosted students and volunteers from I-Volunteer - Delhi, CAMVOL - UK, Tata Institute of Social Sciences - Mumbai, Nirmala Niketan - Mumbai, Institute of Rural Management - Anand, Delhi School of Social Work - Delhi, SP Jain Institute Management and Research - Mumbai and Indicorps - USA/India.

The interns and volunteers spent from as little as a week to six months at Chirag. Amongst those who spent a substantial period of time during the year at Chirag were Gaurav, Kathleen and Pulkit - USA, Olivia - UK/Honduras, Sam - Germany, Marion and Raphaelle - France and Radhika Ghose - Bengaluru. Students from the United World College of the Atlantic - Wales spent time during the summer of 2008 volunteering on their own accord. Amongst the structured visits was the annual visit by students from the Mahindra United World College - Pune.

During the spring semester of 2008, Chirag hosted the Study Abroad programme of the University of Washington at Seattle. Courses were led by Dr Rajesh Thadani, Dr Puja Batra and Dr Shekhar Pathak. Chirag facilitated opportunities for experiential learning during the semester. Later in the year, Cameron and Ailey from the Evans School at the University of Washington helped create a business plan for Chirag's agriculture services provision effort.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The women, men and children of Kumaun with whom we work, are the reason we exist. Our constant evolution is a consequence of our interactions with them. The Governing Body of Chirag ensures that we are honest to our vision and purpose. We are grateful for the support of the institutions and individuals that we partner with. In particular, we would like to thank Dr Satyendra Kumar Srivastava for permitting us to use some of his photographs, Dr Ruma Mukherjee for her unstinting support and to Puja Jawahar for 'being there' for us.

## ANNEXURE I: TRAINING

The training centres at Simayal and Dewaldhar and the office at Dhokane were utilised for 328 days this year by 2,575 participants. While the utilisation of these facilities has gone down marginally, the number of participants has increased. The residential programmes for young people account for nearly half the days that these facilities were used. In terms of the number of participants, exposure visits and the educational initiatives accounted for nearly half the total. Concerns about the cost of maintenance of these facilities have reduced given the regular utilisation.

## Training Centre Utilisation – Simayal, Dewaldhar and Dhokane

Topic	Community Members		Other Institutions		Chirag Staff		Total	
	Days	Participants	Days	Participants	Days	Participants	Days	Participants
Young People	144	207	0	0	5	67	149	274
Agriculture/Horticulture	5	138	5	25	3	43	13	206
Education	60	370	0	7	4	73	64	450
Exposure Visits	14	209	24	321	0	9	38	549
Fodder and Forestry	3	128	1	5	4	52	8	185
Water	0	0	4	14	2	34	6	48
Village Level Institutions	9	208	0	0	0	7	9	215
Health	15	255	0	0	7	51	22	306
Micro-credit	2	40	0	0	1	42	3	82
Chirag-Staff-Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0	4	69	4	69
Watershed Development	4	58	1	19	1	35	6	112
Planning and Review	0	39	2	13	4	37	6	89
	<b>256</b>	<b>1,652</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>2,575</b>

## ANNEXURE II

### Voluntary Disclosure

Chirag seeks to voluntarily disclose the following information in the spirit of 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. However, elections are held as per the rules governing the Society.
- No members of the Governing Body received any remuneration or reimbursement from Chirag during the year.
- The Governing Body met more than twice in the last year with the requisite quorum.
- Minutes of the meetings are documented but were not circulated in advance.
- The General Body of the Society approved the Annual Report and audited financial statements.

#### Benefits to Staff

<b>Gross Salary and Benefits</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Total</b>
(Rupees per month)			
Less than 5,000	46	35	81
5,000 - 10,000	30	8	38
10,000 - 15,000	7	2	9
15,000 - 25,000	5	0	5
more than 25,000	1	0	1

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

Total monthly cost to Chirag of the three highest paid members of staff	Total monthly cost to Chirag of the lowest paid member of staff
Rs 28,901	Rs 3,178
Rs 19,745	
Rs 19,736	

Note: This includes basic salary, cost of living allowance, provident fund (including Chirag's contribution), medical benefits, insurance and scholarship. All figures are correct as on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009.

#### Cost of Travel

(i) International Travel, cost incurred by Chirag	NIL
(ii) National travel, by air, cost incurred by Chirag	Rs 12,361
(iii) The maximum cost of a rail ticket purchased	Rs 1,490

#### Out Statutory Auditor

R Balasubramanian  
Partner  
S Ramanand Aiyar and Co.  
708 Surya Kiran Building,  
19 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 29<sup>th</sup> July 1986.
- The Central Himalayan Himalayan Rural Action Group (Chirag) is authorised to receive foreign contributions as per the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 1976. Registration No. 231650446, dated the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1987.
- Chirag is registered under Sections 12A and 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961.
  - Section 12A - No. CIT-VI/TE (276)/86/1292 dated 9/1/1987
  - Section 80G-No. DIT (E) 2007-2008/C245/1918 dated 21/09/2007

## ANNEXURE III : ACCOUNTS

Central Himalayan Rural Action Group  
Balance Sheet as on 31st March 2009

	Current Year (Rs)	Previous Year (Rs)
<b><u>LIABILITIES</u></b>		
Corpus Fund	15,617,312	15,617,312
Fixed Assets Utilisation Fund	26,472,300	21,328,110
Reserve Fund	3,496,851	2,489,823
Transport Fund	517,644	447,644
Chirag Hospital Project Fund	505,178	1,128,819
Reafforestation Fund	1,020,703	1,006,307
Chirag Education Fund	3,798,957	5,437,817
Current Liabilities	11,922,772	12,152,194
	<b>63,351,717</b>	<b>59,608,026</b>
<b><u>ASSETS</u></b>		
Fixed Assets	26,472,300	21,328,110
Investments	18,157,221	18,261,228
<u>Current Assets, Loans and Advances</u>		
Cash, Bank Balance and Term Deposit	17,985,296	19,267,029
Loans and Advances	732,900	747,659
Security Deposit (endorsed in favour of Government Authorities)	4,000	4,000
	<b>63,351,717</b>	<b>59,608,026</b>

Signed on behalf of Chirag

Chairperson: Kanai Lall

Member: Kamla Bhasin

Member: Rajesh Thadani

Executive Director: V K Madhavan

Manager Accounts 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 2009

<b><u>RECEIPTS:</u></b>	<b>Current Year (Rs)</b>	<b>Previous Year (Rs)</b>
Balance as on 1st April 2008	19,153,779	10,906,219
<b><u>Project Funding</u></b>		
Foreign Contribution	14,126,557	22,793,109
Local Contribution	13,206,715	7,023,847
Rural Health Services	333,086	324,855
Donations	1,237,600	1,508,400
Interest	797,061	776,267
Others	4,280,620	3,147,826
	<b>53,135,418</b>	<b>46,480,523</b>
<b><u>PAYMENTS</u></b>		
Canada India Village Aid (CIVA)	1,256,375	1,196,461
Berkeley Reafforestation Trust	713,870	704,535
Ford Foundation	8,627,163	9,196,703
Room to Read	2,193,538	2,196,191
People's Commission on Environment and Development India (PCED)	621,535	194,864
DANIDA	—	421
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	908,823	194,991
Annapurna Indian Women's Association	20,186	36,937
Give2Asia	1,425,051	—
Other Payments (FCRA)	2,536,057	388,946
CAPART (WS)	25	—
Sir Ratan Tata Trust	2,834,331	4,062,550
NABARD	1,108,053	257,998
Uttaranchal Livelihood Improvement Project for Himalayas	1,086,889	883,116
Peoples' Science Institute (Himmothan Cell)	76,505	410,467
Himmothan Society	1,261,832	—
Sir Dorabji Tata Trust	4,121,951	4,164,774
Rajeshwar & Susheela Dayal Charitable Trust	522,392	—
Chirag Hospital Project	1,328,089	700,756
Rural Health Services	378,074	138,417
Other Payments	4,238,627	2,598,617
Balance on 31st March 2009	17,876,052	19,153,779
	<b>53,135,418</b>	<b>46,480,523</b>



Central Himalayan Rural Action Group  
Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended as on 31st March 2009

<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	<b>Current Year (Rs)</b>	<b>Previous Year (Rs)</b>
<b><u>Project Funding</u></b>		
Foreign Contribution	12,887,588	22,793,109
Local Contribution	13,206,715	7,023,847
Rural Health Services	333,086	324,855
Donations	37,600	8,400
Interest	742,861	717,580
Others	4,185,774	2,787,272
Projects in Progress	12,152,194	6,758,311
	<b>43,545,818</b>	<b>40,413,374</b>
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		
Canada India Village Aid (CIVA)	1,256,375	1,196,461
Berkeley Reafforestation Trust	713,870	704,535
Ford Foundation	8,362,429	9,033,619
Room to Read	2,193,538	2,196,191
People's Commission on Environment and Development India (PCED)	621,535	194,864
DANIDA	—	421
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	908,823	194,991
Annapurna Indian Women's Association	20,186	36,937
Give2Asia	5,159	—
Other Payments (FCRA)	124,483	388,946
CAPART (WS)	25	—
Sir Ratan Tata Trust	2,850,663	3,996,350
NABARD	1,108,053	257,998
Uttaranchal Livelihood Improvement Project for Himalayas	1,086,889	883,116
Peoples' Science Institute (Himmothan Cell)	79,229	407,743
Himmothan Society	1,261,832	—
Sir Dorabji Tata Trust	2,123,403	1,832,480
Rajeshwar & Susheela Dayal Charitable Trust	503,100	—
CHIRAG Hospital Project	1,759	2,934
Rural Health Services	382,080	187,125
Other Payments	5,315,098	3,098,285
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>28,918,529</b>	<b>24,612,996</b>
Available Funds	14,627,289	15,800,378
	<b>43,545,818</b>	<b>40,413,374</b>



Ajay Singh Bisht  
Alka Mer  
Aloka J. Hiremath  
Anand Singh Bisht  
Anil Chandra Binwal  
Anoop Singh  
Arjun Singh  
Asha Sah  
Bahadur Singh Mehra  
Basanti Bisht  
Bhagat Singh Thapaliyal  
Bhim Singh Negi  
Bhupal Singh Bisht  
Bhupal Singh Jeena  
Bhuwan Chandra Pant  
Bhuwan Negi  
Binod Kumar Pandey  
Bipin Kumar Kabdwal  
Bipin Kumar Negi  
Champa Pandey  
Chandan Singh Bisht  
Chandan Singh Chamiyal  
Chandan Singh Mehta  
Chandrakala  
Deepa Bhagat  
Deepa Joshi  
Deepa Mishra  
Dharmendra Singh  
Dinesh Chandra Pandey  
Diwan Arya  
Diwan Chandra  
Diwan Singh Bisht  
Diwan Singh Mehta  
Dungar Singh Negi  
Durga Bisht  
Ganesh Singh Karayat  
Ganesh Singh Aswal  
Ganga Joshi  
Ganga Sizwali  
Geeta Bisht  
Geeta Bisht Rautela  
Girish Chandra Budhani  
Govind Singh Bisht  
Harendra Singh Nayal  
Harish Arya  
Hema Bisht  
Jagdish Chandra Mishra

Jagdish Singh Karayat  
Jaswant Singh Bisht  
Jitendra Singh  
Kamla Bisht  
Kamlesh Sharma  
Kanchan Arya  
Keshav Dutt Joshi  
Khasti Mer  
Khushal Singh Bisht  
Kishor Singh Negi  
Krishan Chandra Bhandari  
Krishan Kumar Nayal  
Kuldeep Kumar Thapliyal  
Kundan Singh Latwal  
Kunti Bisht  
Kusum Rawat  
Kusum Tiwari  
Lakhan Singh Rautela  
Lal Singh Dangwal  
Lalit Mohan Tiwari  
Lalit Mohan Tiwari (J.E.)  
Lata Harbola  
Leela Joshi  
Leela Raikwal  
Madhavi Dangwal  
Mahendra Singh Bisht  
Mahendra Singh Bisht (Dr)  
Mahendra Singh Raikwal  
Mamta Mer  
Manish Kumar  
Manju Rautela  
Manoj Mishra  
Manoj Kumar Pandey  
Mariam Bhatt  
Maya Bisht Mehra  
Maya Pandey  
Meera Bisht  
Mohan Singh Bisht (J.E.)  
Mohan Singh Bisht  
Munni Bisht  
Munni Tamta  
Murlidhar Bhatt  
Nandan Singh Bisht  
Naveen Chandra Bhatt  
Neema Arya  
Neetu Mehra  
Neomi Pal Singh

Nirmala Mehra  
Om Prakash Pandey  
Pan Singh Bisht  
Pan Singh Mehta  
Pankaj Singh Shahi  
Pawan Kumar Dhaila  
Pooran Singh Raikwal  
Prakash Chandra  
Pramod Kandpal  
Pratima Singh  
Preetam Singh Rautela  
Prema Janoti  
Prema Tiwari  
Pushpa Mishra  
Rajendra Singh Bisht  
Rajendra Singh Dangwal  
Rajendra Singh Jeena  
Rajendra Singh Negi  
Rajesh Nayal  
Rajani Bisht  
Ram Singh Bisht  
Ramesh Chandra Gutholia  
Ramesh Chandra Joshi  
Rekha Rani  
Sangeeta Rani  
Satish Kumar  
Shailesh Kumar Pant  
Shamsher Singh Mehra  
Shankar Singh  
Sita Gorkha  
Suman Dass  
Sundar Singh Nayal  
Sundeep Dutt Bhatt  
Sunder Lal  
Sunita Arya  
Surendra Singh Negi  
Suresh Kumar  
Tej Singh Adhikari  
Thakur Singh  
Trilok Singh  
Tulsi Negi  
Umakant Sharma  
Uttam Singh Jeena  
V.K. Madhavan  
V.Rajiv  
Vijay Bhatt  
Vikram Kaushal



Chirag

Central Himalayan Rural Action Group

Village Simayal

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