

# ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



## RUCHI

### Rural Centre for Human Interests

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Registered as a society at village Shalana, Rajgarh 173101, Distt. Sirmour, Himachal Pradesh

# Contents

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## **1. About the Organisation**

1.1. Background.....	2
1.2. Mission Statement .....	3
1.3. Vision .....	3
1.4. Belief System.....	3
1.5 Strategic Objectives.....	3

## **2. Management and Administration**

2.1. Structure .....	4
2.2. Finance and Accounts .....	4

## **3. Projects**

3.1. Relief Work for disaster victims .....	5
3.2. Time for Tea .....	6
3.3. Waaste UpCycling .....	7
3.4. Global Pathways .....	8
3.5. Women Power .....	9
3.6. CSR Projects .....	9
3.7. Agriculture Extension .....	10

## **4 . International Voluntary Service**

4.1. International Volunteer Workcamps .....	11
4.2. Student Internships/Placements .....	11

## **5. Webinars/Conferences .....**

## **6. Audited statement of accounts .....**

# 1. About the Organization

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## 1. Background

The Rural Centre for Human Interests (popularly known as RUCHI) has incessantly worked towards uplifting the living conditions of the underprivileged section in selected regions of Himachal Pradesh, India. RUCHI through active grassroots participation and empowerment of the communities in all aspects of their development strives to minimize their dependence on external agencies. RUCHI's focus on promoting **sustainable anthropocentric development through environmentally, socially and economically integrated activities** ensures the improvement and sustainability of rural communities and their environment.

RUCHI began as a non-profit, voluntary organization in October 1980, set up in the Himalayan foothills of the state of Himachal Pradesh. It was registered as a Society on 16 February 1983 under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

A new Technology Resource Centre of RUCHI came up in 1994 in a small village of Bandh in Dharampur Block of Solan District which also houses the headquarters of RUCHI. This great achievement was made possible through the Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), under the aegis of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

From the onset, RUCHI realized the importance of providing assistance and technical support to facilitate and aid the process of development by encouraging individual and community participation in the process. Accepting and overcoming the various challenges is the key to RUCHI's successful progress which today looks back on its past achievements with pride and at the one ahead with hope.



Thirty nine years on, the organization is continuing with its commitment to instill an ambience of improved quality of life, a new scenario of social and economic progress and minimal dependence on others on the part of the communities. RUCHI has remained successful in achieving this only through an integrated, multi-disciplinary and participatory sustainable development.

## 1.1. Mission Statement

***RUCHI's Mission Statement: Integrated rural development through people-centered, environmentally sustainable action.***

With this in mind (and a view towards social and economic independence), RUCHI introduces technologies deemed appropriate to the conditions, and uses health and resource management education to socially empower and uplift rural communities.

## 1.2. Vision

**A society which believes in and practices peace, good governance, equality and respect for each other.**

## 1.3. Belief System

- People have an inherent capacity to achieve - even in the face of adverse conditions - provided they are given with help and guidance.
- Resources, goods, information and technology should be shared amongst and between communities.
- People should be empowered to demand services by virtue of being human and as a basic human right.
- Women play an important catalytic role in development.
- Both development and management should be participatory.
- Social change can occur through economic stability and independence.
- Economic stability and independence can be achieved through optimal and *sustainable* use of local resources.

## 1.4. Strategic Objectives

1. Promote and protect the environment and natural resources, through adoption of appropriate resource management techniques, generally focused at the micro-level of watersheds.
2. Promote education and awareness as a tool to improve the plight of the underprivileged rural poor.
3. Ensure that a participatory approach is used in the conservation and promotion of natural resources.
4. Catalyze the transfer of low-cost agricultural and construction technologies which will aid in environmental protection and community development.
5. Empower women and eradicate gender inequality, namely through micro-credit and self-help groups.
6. Extend our services to the vulnerable section of elderly, and promote independence amongst this section.
7. Develop areas of mutual cooperation amongst Government agencies and NGOs.
8. Improve the community health standard, mainly through preventative measures.
9. Foster an understanding of, and focus on, integrated rural development in the young rural workforce, promoted through non-formal education.

# 2. Management and Administration

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## 2.1. Structure

RUCHI's daily activities are administered by an executive director. Over and above this, the management of RUCHI rests with the Governing Body, comprised of six members, each of whom is elected for a two-year term.

RUCHI lays great emphasis on 'people's power'. The consequence can be noticed in the environment of team spirit, collective experience, hard work and commitment in which and on the basis of which the whole organization runs. Very essentially this is manifested through the 12 full-time staff who proficiently strives to achieve the objectives mentioned above. Now, more than ever before, RUCHI has long- and short-term volunteers participating in the project activities injecting fresh ideas and knowledge into the strong RUCHI team.

## 2.2. Finance and Accounts

The details are outlined in Annexure 1 of the audited statement of accounts.

**Besides project based funding in terms of grants-in-aid, RUCHI generates income from the following sources:**

- Consultation fees.
- Infrastructure usage charges.
- Agricultural activities.
- Public contribution/donations
- IVS projects

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

- EU under Erasmus+ programme
- Give Foundation
- Prof. Mahavir Singh

**RUCHI's Indian sources of funding include:**

- Shamdasani Foundation
- Dabur India Ltd.
- Abhay Dan Trust
- Americares
- Give India
- HelpYourNGo

# 3. Projects 2023-2024

## 3.1 Relief work for Disaster Victims:

India saw unprecedented rains in July and August 2023. The official record called it disastrous which took place breaking 48 years record. This year, the most damage was done in districts of Solan, Mandi, Kullu and Shimla. More than 100 lives were lost altogether and equal number of houses were flooded in rain water. Many of the highways and bridges were washed away affecting the mobility severely for a few days. The damage to infrastructure was unprecedented.

**GIVE**, a renowned Indian fund raising platform, donated us funds to help people who suffered from Natural Disaster in Solan district. Blankets and other items were distributed to families whose houses were completely damaged in Salga and adjoining villages of Dharampur development block.



Give India extended their support to help Solan disaster sufferers in terms of precautionary measures to check future floods, repair of water pipelines and construction of retaining walls in Bandh village and financial assistance of 50,000/- each to 5 families whose houses had collapsed during August-September, 2023.



The staff and children of **Shantiniketan International School**, Telangaana donated hygiene kits to extend their support to the children of Solan district whose families were displaced due to natural disaster in the month of August, 2023. The kits comprised of tooth brush and paste, soaps, sanitary pads, combs, detergents, hand towels etc.

**Americares** of USA through its Mumbai office distributed 3,136 sets of four type of kits having hygienic and other household survival items to people suffering from heavy rains and flooding of areas in Solan District during August-September 2023. The items were worth 20 lakh rupees.



The distribution of these kits was made to needy families during 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> week of January 2024 and then in early March in the presence of Americares staff at various focal points in communities.



### 3.2 Time for Tea Project of EU under Erasmus+ Programme:

*Time for Tea* is an educational activity which uses tea to give young people a voice. It encourages global learning, creative thinking and social action. It is simple, fun and accessible to people of any age, background or ability, anywhere in the world. *Time for Tea* is an initiative of Momentum World CIC, UK. This was a 2 year project involving 3 Asian and 3 European partners with a coordinating partner in Momentum World of UK. The medium of tea allows young people to initiate dialogue with decision makers in a way that is engaging and non-confrontational. Under this project, several events were organised to empower communities identify local issue and initiate action to address them with the right authority with carefully worded message.



It is sad to know that the project had to be abruptly stopped because of some technicality. Our coordinating organisation, Momentum World, ran into problems and declared bankruptcy.

Anyway, the proposed activities under the project are almost completed except the Youth Exchange Seminar in London and the final evaluation meeting in Poland.



### 3.3 Waste UpCycling :

The main aim of the project is to create a mobility scheme, labeled W\_UP Tour, to support young people and non-profit organisations to develop entrepreneurial activities on waste upcycling both in Europe and in Asia. This is a project approved by European Union under its Erasmus+ programme.

W\_UP Tour are defined as a mixture of raising awareness tours and change-making actions organised by 3 European and 3 Asian NPOs working on the field. Its execution was delayed because of Covid epidemic and is finally completed in October, 2023.

A few online meetings were held with project partners to streamline the ongoing activities. A Waste-Up Study Tour was conducted in Italy which was attended by 2 staff of RUCHI in Milan from 3-17 September, 2023. A workcamp-cum-Study Tour was also held in India at RUCHI from 09-23 September, 2023. The first week of the camp was done in Bandh village where experts shared and oriented participants on upcycling of waste materials besides practically demonstrating the upcycling of waste materials like discarded tyres and clothes. A dissemination event was also organized in Patta during the camp. The second week was more touristic and cultural sharing which was organized in McLeodganj, Dharamshala.



Towards the end of the project, a workshop for orientation of rural youth on the upcycling techniques was held at RUCHI for 30 rural youth in October immediately preceding a final evaluation meeting in Cambodia from 20-27 October, 2023.





### 3.4 Global Pathways Project under Erasmus+ programme of EU:

The main aim of the project is to contribute at mainstreaming Sustainable Entrepreneurship Education in non-formal sector as to combat youth unemployment and contribute at the sustainable development of our societies.



After a Training for Trainers conducted at RUCHI during Mrach 2023, a final event of dissemination workshop on sustainable entrepreneurship was conducted by us at Kanya Maha Vidyaalay, Jalandhar on 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2023. This was attended by about 70 fashion designing undergraduate girls, staff and teachers. To mark the successful completeion of the project the final evaluation of the project was done in ALmaty, Kazakhstan during 30 June to 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2023.



## जागरूकता

# रुचि संस्था ने पंजाब के जालंधर में फैशन एंड डिजाइनर कोर्स की छात्राओं को दी उद्यमशीलता की जानकारी

**जागरूकता**  
संस्कृतिक संस्कार संस्थान

विकास और समृद्धि के महत रास पञ्जाब प्रदेश के बीच रास में जागरूक रास सेवे संस्कार संस्थान के पञ्जाब में स्थित कन्या महाविद्यालय में सवाई उद्यमशीलता पर आयोजित एक दिवसीय प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम का आयोजन किया। संस्कार संस्थान के प्रिंसिपल प्रिंसिपल ने बताया कि इस प्रशिक्षण के दौरान फैशन एंड डिजाइन में डिजाइन करने वाली छात्राओं को सही ज्ञान और रास, एडि, को प्रशिक्षणों के द्वारा सवाई उद्यमशीलता प्रशिक्षण का महत्व इसकी परिचय, उद्यमशीलता में योग्य, योग्य व प्रशिक्षण। दिन रास को उद्यमशीलता को विचार के द्वारा रास प्रशिक्षण द्वारा सवाई व डिजाइन उद्यमशीलता के विचार संस्कार के विचार प्रिंसिपल, प्रिंसिपल व प्रिंसिपल; प्रिंसिपल; की व्यवस्था व विचार करवाई गई। छात्राओं को एक उद्यम उद्यम करने के विचार सेवे प्रशिक्षण की भी विचार करवाई गई। प्रिंसिपल उद्यम उद्यम से पूर्ण अर्थी

प्रिंसिपल प्रिंसिपल के द्वारा जाने सवाई को प्रशिक्षण व व्यवस्था के को में रास

रास प्रशिक्षण में प्रशिक्षण के दौरान सवाई सवाई विचारों का प्रशिक्षण भी विचार प्रिंसिपल को प्रिंसिपल का, सवाई कोर में सवाई इस प्रशिक्षण से छात्राओं को प्रशिक्षण व ज्ञान उद्यम का उद्यम सवाई करने में सवाई प्रिंसिपल व उनके प्रशिक्षण में प्रिंसिपल प्रिंसिपल में सवाई सेवे सवाई सवाई




### 3.5 Women Power:

Education, training, awareness raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources, and actions to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality are important tools for empowering women and girls to claim their rights (UNDP). We educate women to gain power and control over their own lives and acquire the ability to make strategic choices.



The adolescent girls in five high and senior secondary schools were educated on menstrual hygiene as well as laws against sexual harassment. Communities were also educated on WASH component of health.

### 3.6 Corporate Social responsibility (CSR):

**Dabur India Ltd.** Generously donated us Mango juices and coconut water of their brand 'REAL' in the first lot for distribution among rural communities and school children.



We organized talks on personal hygiene and balanced diet before distributing items to both rural communities and public and private schools children of Kuthar, Chandi, Patta, Bhaguri Bandh, Auda, Kot-Beja etc and a few SHG groups of women during September, 2023



In the second lot they provided us 390 boxes of 200 ml bottles of pomegranate juice. We were happy to distribute the same during October among slum dwellers, daily wage workers and needy rural communities in Dharampur block of Solan district.

### 3.7 Agriculture Extension:

RUCHI's efforts in areas of enhancing farm income through agriculture and horticulture continue with a focus on restoring techniques of natural farming. Natural farming calls for traditional system of farming using only locally available materials. Farmers were made aware on making and using organic pests, fertilisers etc. using indigenous techniques.

Along with plantation of local species of forest trees in forest area, RUCHI sourced 25 fruit trees from the Agriculture University at Palampur and planted them in its campus.



## 4. International Voluntary Service:

### 4.1. Placement of International Volunteers for Personal Development:

Since the decline in number of international volunteers owing to Covid pandemic, this year 42 international volunteers visiting us.

We also got two Weltwart volunteer from Germany through DIZ, Germany who stayed with us for 11 months



### 4.2. Student Internship/Placements:

The Indian university students keep coming to RUCHI for their internship. This year, 13 students from DSSW Delhi, TISS Guwahati, SPJMR Mumbai, Central University of Jammu, St. Joseph's College, Christ Nagar College of Kerala and Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, Coimbatore did their internship at RUCHI for a month.

## 5. Webinars/Conferences

The Executive Director of RUCHI attended the Technical Meeting of European Alliance in Barcelona, Spain during 20-27 of February, 2024. This is an important platform to share IVS projects with all members.

