

Chintan Newsletter



January 26th 2008 Volume 2 No1

Thought for 2008

“Thoughts have power and if channelled collectively through the vehicle of the mind (manas) can grow in intensity and lead to things that ordinarily seem impossible. Change can be reflected in our own inner lives or consciousness (citta). In turn that can lead to change in the outer world in which we live. A small group of people leading quite different lives can develop a synergy based on nothing but the power of thought and become a force for good ”

Prof Roger Worthington 5th January 2008



On the 26th January 2007, a small start was made of Chintan International, a non-profit, non-religious humanitarian organization

based in the UK with projects in the field of health, education and environment in India. Appropriately, a short presentation was made to the Consul General of India, Mr N P Sharma at Birmingham, who has been a constant source of encouragement.

So what is Chintan all about ? The Indian word ‘chintan’ means reflective thought with purpose. It is a humble attempt by a small group of doctors, scientists, philosophers, and socially concerned people to convert their ‘chintan’ in the fields of health, education and environment to action. Central to this is developing human values and positive thought for the earth around the world.

Mission

The overall goal is to promote health and sustain-

able development among disadvantaged and vulnerable populations in India, while preserving and restoring the environmental heritage of the country.

Some of the Current Projects:

Chintan centre ‘Science Ashram’

Deodar Himalayan project

Chikitsak International Virtual Hospital

Chirag Himalayan Hospital



The focus of the efforts for 2007 was specifically health in the Himalayas. Support was being arranged from doctors for sustaining a rural Himalayan hospital coming up in the Nainital district of northern India. The charity building the hospital is a well known Himalayan NGO called Chirag (Central Himalayan Rural Action Group, www.chirag.org). They have been active in various spheres of social development in the Himalayas over many years. Sustaining a health service in the rural Himalayas remains a major challenge and our efforts were to highlight the efforts of the charity in this. These were through talks arranged at Manchester, London and New Delhi. A short film about the hospital was also produced and put on the website. Journeys and meetings were arranged in Indian foothills and in the Himalayas. **Opportunities for Doctors !**



Mukteshwar to Munsiyari April 2007

April is a wonderful time to travel in the Himalayas, splashes of crimson of the rho-

dodendrons in full bloom are seen all around. New leaves in the oak trees offer a further splash of color in the mixed temperate forests of the middle Himalayas. The journey had mystery and revelation mixed with disappointment at times, but mostly full of excitement and joy of moving forward positive.

This was a journey across the Kumaon and Garhwal regions of the north Indian state of Uttarakhand approximately 2000 km of road travel and nearly 200 km of walking with a mission. In this journey we were specifically looking at healthcare but also making a complete picture of the people and environment in the rural Himalayas. Medical camps were attended, schools were visited, as were agricultural and veterinary institutes. A veterinary camp was also attended and multiple homes and villages were visited. Valuable lessons were learnt for planning our health programs throughout the journey. And these are going to be reflected in our programs for future.

Around Mukteshwar



Mukteshwar, famous for an ancient Shiva temple and a world famous veterinary institution, was the start of the journeys to look at healthcare provision in the surrounding villages.

Not far from here is Sargakhet, where medical camps were held at Chirag's dispensary, just across the road from where the hospital could be seen, nicely coming up.

Journeys were taken in all directions around, visiting villages and homes. All the health facilities in the area were visited. Two had no resident doctors. A remarkable dental facility was visited at Satkol ashram, a doctor and a wonderful operating theatre was visited at Peora (www.aarohi.org). The journeys continue in this region with our 2008 program.

Tand in Champawat



A remarkable doctor working in a remote village which was 20 km walk was visited. Seeing and treating patients walking alongside this doctor was an unforgettable experience.

This started with a visit to the hospital at Ritha Sahib, and a bit of stitching for a little boy. The river had then to be crossed, hopping across a stone 'bridge'. A long 4 hour walk was to follow watching our doctor in action. The sweetness of the water in Tand had an effect of making the people incredibly hospitable. The poorest would also insist on giving, many a sweet cup of tea. Schools were visited with impromptu 'health' talks given. Dhar above Tand had no electricity but had a unique charming way of life of its own.

Munsiyari to Garhwal



The high alpine village of Munsiyari is beautiful beyond imagination. Its folklore and culture is preserved in a people's museum.

Here we were invited to participate in the celebrations of the world earth day at a local school. We met the persons behind a people's movement 'Van Panchayat' that had a scheme helping local people profit from pheasant conservation and 'home' tourism.

There was a chance meeting with a doctor with an 'Arogya Kumaon' health scheme. It was a long journey across to Garhwal till we reached Ranichauri to see the agricultural and social work of 'Himcon' that we are advising with a health scheme. The Ramakrishna hospital at Rishikesh was visited on the drive to Delhi.

A look back at 2007

It was a Himalayan year for us with all our activities focused on the Himalayas. Some of the activities grew from a small idea to a much bigger reality, like the Himalayan conference. Thanks to the wonderful people who took up the challenge !

Himalayan Conference

‘Conventional and biotechnological approaches to sustainable development in the Himalayas’. This was an international seminar organized by Dr R K Singh at Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI), Mukteswar in the Kumaon Himalayas 28-29th July 2007. The conference brought together eminent veterinary and agricultural scientists, biologists, and medical doctors from India, UK and USA. Also attending were local farmers, most of them women. Dr SPS Ahlawat, the director and vice chancellor of the institute, highlighted the indigenous Indian animal breeds and the need to preserve the diversity in his keynote address. We contributed with plant biodiversity conservation, forest report, & practical human health initiatives.



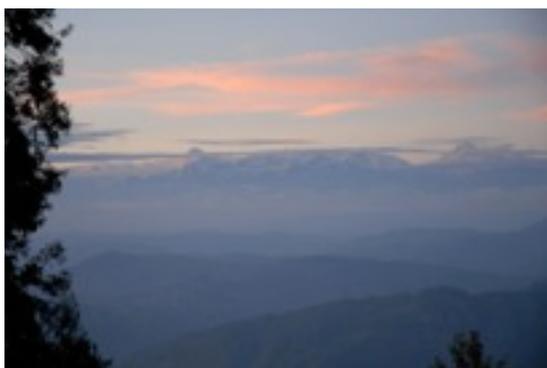
Medical Camps and Schools

We participated and got together medical teams for medical ‘camps’ organized by Chirag in April and July 2007. This was at Sargakhet in April and also at Sitla in July. This provided specialist medical advice to the local people and also gave us a better understanding of the problems that need to be addressed in future health programs. Appreciation of the local needs and thinking of priorities in healthcare delivery in context. We delivered talks in local himalayan schools in Champawat and Pitthoragarh districts broadly on health issues and environment. In Mukteswar with the support of the local school, we organized a half day program for the senior school students as a fun workshop on environment followed by a quiz show with prizes.



‘Himalayan Thoughts’

This was an evening of music, poetry, dance with a Himalayan theme on 27th October 2007 at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan auditorium at London. Transporting the audience to the Himalayas to witness the spectacle of sunrise over snow covered mountains. This was followed by a bamboo flute performance by Clive Bell. The stage was set alight by the exuberant performance of Dr Annapoorna in an Indian classical dance paying homage to Shiva, resident God of the Himalayas. This theme continued with a thrilling duet performance on tabla, the Indian drums by two very young musicians, a guitar solo ‘Tibet’ and vocals by a medical student. Developmental work was highlighted. A talk on philosophy from an ancient Himalayan text was given by Prof Worthington. A reflective theme on the Himalayas with the sunset on Trishul and Nanda Devi mountain peaks ended the show, renewing the effort.

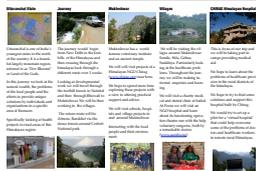


Looking ahead to 2008



Himalayan Journey 2008

A journey through the Uttarakhand state in north India by a group of doctors, filmmakers, social activists and Himalaya lovers, helping developmental work, particularly in health education and the environment. Healthcare would be a focus and this team would seek to address health education issues as well. April 2008



We are working towards our new formal structure with plans to register it as a charity. Himalayas continue to be on the agenda, a Himalayan journey is planned to support the Chirag hospital with Health camps in the area of the hospital. We plan to pilot the virtual hospital project connecting to UK. Himalayan events are planned in Staffordshire, London and Bellingham, USA. A Science and Spirituality Symposium is planned in New Delhi which would mark the conceptual start of the 'Science Ashram' project. A 'freedom from plastic rubbish' campaign is planned for Mukteshwar in the Himalayas. We will be working on funding for our virtual hospital project and the 2009 journey across from UK to the Himalayas driving a mobile clinic in support of our health program. It promises to be a busy year !

How could you help ?

Health Education Environment

CALENDAR OF PLANNED EVENTS		
PLACE	DATE	EVENT
KUMAON HIMALAYAS INDIA	MARCH/APRIL 2008	MEDICAL CAMPS, VIRTUAL LINK
STAFFORDSHIRE UK	MAY 2008	HIMALAYAN FESTIVAL
LONDON UK	JUNE 2008	HIMALAYAN PHOTO EXHIBITION
NEW DELHI INDIA	JULY 2008	SCIENCE & SPIRITUALITY SYMPOSIUM
MUKTESHWAR INDIA	AUGUST 2008	FREEDOM FROM PLASTIC RUBBISH
LONDON UK	OCTOBER 2008	MUSICAL EVENING
BELLINGHAM USA	DECEMBER 2008	HIMALAYAN ART SHOW

Volunteers are required to help in all our programs. You could choose to help in the UK, USA or India and offer your skills and services in your country or across borders.

We are trying to generate a bank of health professionals in the first instance. These would be experts and advisors who would join the 'virtual hospital' but we also need advisors in all the fields - from economics to education and environmental sciences. This 'skills bank' would be drawn upon to develop specific programs.

You could help with the organization and running of the group by joining us and becoming actively involved in all the programs and projects. You would enjoy feeling a part of a group that values good thought and has a fun way of working. You could choose a project that you want to contribute to and help grow and sustain it.

'Highlands to the Himalayas' 2009

This is a journey that involves driving a mobile clinic from the UK to the Himalayas, studying health service provision in remote and mountainous regions on the way. To help develop a new model for the Himalayas.

Contact: satyendra.singh@ntlworld.com Ph.0044(0)7804357297 Post 6, Beresford Dr London IG80JH