



Cover Photo  
AppropriateTechnology India

## CONTENTS

CONNECTING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE page 4  
WHERE WE WORK AND OUR REACH page 6  
REACHING OUT TO THE SOCIALLY EXCLUDED  
WOMEN AND CHILDREN page 7  
STRENGTHENING LIVELIHOODS OF THE POOR &  
UNREACHED HOUSEHOLDS page 11  
COVID RESPONSE & OUR COLLABORATORS page 17  
FINANCIAL REPORT page 18

# From Country Director's Desk

## Resilience is the need of the hour

The year passed has been very challenging for all. In the wake of the pandemic, the lives of the vulnerable communities continue to be devastating. The impact on the socio-economic as well as health conditions has been beyond imagination. On the economic front, many people lost their livelihoods and struggling to return to normalcy. Many migrant workers from urban locations returned to their native villages, had to walk miles without food and transport. In spite of the difficulties, SOIR-IM team put their utmost to reach out to communities with food and other emergency supports with the help of local partners. SOIR-IM could reach out to 5254 households with support of food materials, hygiene kit, face masks and inputs for income generation.

SOIR-IM through its partners involved in supporting women and youth to overcome some of their economic and social challenges through enhancement of capacities and income, mobilising them through women self-help groups, women's farmer groups, cooperatives and producer's groups. It was inspiring to observe how these community institutions, particularly women's producer groups found ways to adopt the situation and supported each other and community in the difficult time during pandemic.

Strengthening Civil Society from within has been one of the highlight of SOIR-IM's activities in this year. The situation also called for a self-reflection within the organisation and adopt to new situation and find ways of working. SOIR-IM and partners recognised the need for building internal capacity to adopt and become more resilient organisation. In this direction, SOIR-IM facilitated capacity building of partners on use virtual mode of communication and its infrastructure to adopt the new way of networking. The year marked with many amendments in the regulatory framework pertaining to Civil Society Organisations. A number of events, meetings, training also organised to create awareness about the regulatory changes and



prepare to be compliant within. Further, there were also opportunities for learning reflections, sharing, exchanges within partners to learn and support each other. Besides, the core of civil society organisation's existence is its mandate to bring change in people's life. SOIR-IM organised capacity building events to build capacities within CSOs to monitor the results of the work done, to become more effective in reaching out to communities and document the results for learning.

Due to the difficulties caused by the pandemic, there has been delay in finalising the annual report 2020-2021. However, I am happy to present the Annual Report of SOIR-IM for the year. It highlights some of the organisation's contributions during the year and provides summary of the financial statements.

I take this opportunity to thanks and express our appreciation to the partners extend who are with us in our development journey. I would also like to express gratitude to the members of Board for their valuable inputs and guidance. We also want to thank our supporters and resource providers for their trust and support for realising our dream. At the end I would like to thank my team for their hard work and commitment to continue the work in a very challenging environment.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gena". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

# Connecting for Societal Change



## Vision

*SOIR-IM's vision is a fair and humane world.*



### In Order to achieve our vision

We are working to promote

- **Social Inclusion** : All Individuals should have the right to be an equal member of society, with the same human rights regardless of gender, age, caste and social status.
- **Economic Inclusion** : Everyone deserves to be in control of their own economic life and have the possibility to earn their own income, own land and afford an education.
- **Strengthening Civil Society** : the civil society plays an important part in a society. A strong civil society with enabling operating environment can represent and support marginalized groups while raising awareness and pushing for societal change.

**SOIR-IM works with partners and other ecosystem actors.**

*Swedish Organisation for Individual Relief - IM was established in India in 1970 supporting education, health and overall economic development for the Tibetan refugees. Having served for nearly 50 Years in India, SOIR-IM has reached out to many disadvantaged communities, especially women and Children with Disabilities for the development work through various CSOs partner. SOIR-IM's new strategic plan 2019-23 works on the sustainable way to empower and capacitate the marginalised people.*

## OUR LONG-TERM GOALS

- 1 Marginalised people living in poverty exercise their rights for sustainable livelihood.
- 2 Effective and informed partner ecosystem to empower marginalised communities
- 3 Women and youth empowered to engage in formal & informal decision - making Process

### How we work

When people come together they have greater scope for influence and to bring about change than as individuals.

Our partners range from individuals working to bring about change in their own villages to civil Society organisations. We set up networks, share Knowledge and provide financial support.

In order to bring about lasting change our work takes place on three levels :

- Individual level (people)
- Organisational level (groups)
- Institutional level (laws and norms)

This approach to societal change is what we apply to all our activities.

### Focus of work Women, Girls and Young People

We are focusing our efforts on woman, girls and young people. This is due to the fact that :

- empowering women and girls helps to strengthen the community as a whole.
- empowering young people empowers those responsible for building the future.

### SOIR-IM and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Chosen to focus on the five Global goals that we feel we are best placed to contribute to :





## Our Reach

**4540** Households

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**28000**

Individuals (direct and indirect)

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**EIGHT** Projects supported

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**SOIR-IM COLLABORATES WITH EIGHT CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS**

## Reaching out to the socially excluded women and children

SOIR-IM along with other CSOs has been working with the socially excluded communities with a special focus on women from tribal, dalits, scheduled caste, differently abled artisan's communities to negotiate and assert their space in the community and establish access to various community based institutions. Although the change of social perception and practice takes longer time, however, partners' effort to enable women to raise question on various socially discriminatory practice has been a great effort in Bageshwar, Chamoli and Tehri-Garhwal districts of Uttarakhand.

During this year, our partner Appropriate Technology India (ATI) had worked with women from Scheduled Caste community to have access to dairy for their livelihood option. Partner could address the social exclusion practice of untouchability within community and connect these women to the dairy collection center where they are able to sell their milk and earned better income. Our fair trade partners, Sarba Shanti Ayog (SSA) and Maximising Employment to Serve the Handicapped (MESH) has reached out to seven producer groups of youth and women artisans particularly those with disability, affected by leprosy and from marginalised communities to have continued income during the period of extreme challenges during lockdown. Our partner SSA is promoting skill diversification among women artisans and capacitating them for a wide range of enterprising activities thus, helping to break the gender bias and stereotypes.

SOIR-IM along with partner KIRAN has been working with Children with disabilities (CwDA) for inclusive education. through interventions like adoption of disability appropriate teaching learning materials and home-based education. Integration of

*Although the change of social perception and practice takes longer time, however, partners' effort to enable women to raise question on various socially discriminatory practice has been a great effort in Bageshwar, Chamoli and Tehri-Garhwal districts of Uttarakhand.*

CwDAs in mainstream education helps them with increased life skills and enhanced confidence and self-esteem. Besides, KIRAN sensitized other regular students to CwDA's needs thereby enhancing adaptability, acceptance, compassion, life-long skills within them and preparing them for a healthy inclusive society.

With SOIR-IM's support, KIRAN have developed model schools, which boosts up advocacy on scaling up inclusive education to address structural barriers challenging inclusion of CwDAs. KIRAN designed digital training module for teachers emphasizing inclusive education of children with disabilities. The module have been instrumental in reaching out to the children who have been the worst sufferers due to the schools being closed besides, supporting caretakers of CwDAs in addressing their needs thereby providing a supportive environment within the home.

## Achievements in 2020-21

761 women accessed varied schemes and inputs from government agencies .

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172 differently abled children continued educational activities and enhanced their literacy skills.

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142 School Management Committee members equipped with provisions related to Rights to Education Act

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10 children groups influenced community actions on inclusion of marginalised children in main stream education .

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The partners are focusing on the community based institutions to become aware of the discriminatory practices and adopt various processes of inclusion of excluded communities. Increased deliberations on exclusion issues on the collective platforms and in community meetings with the facilitation support of MVDA, ATI and THT resulted in sharing of public facilities like wells and common meeting platforms with the socially excluded, Self Help Groups were encouraged for collective eating during community events, this is triggering sensitivity towards the socially excluded like Dalit women and promoting inclusive group governance as well.

Due to social taboos women and community members generally hesitate to discuss openly on the issue. The Self Help Groups are gradually encouraging women to share their menstrual hygiene health problems. A change is gradually taking place with these deliberations happening on SHG platforms which are helping women and community members to change their mind-set around these issues.

Strengthening children groups as a strategy for advocacy on children rights and their inclusion in the mainstream education has been one of

Three Model Inclusive Schools promoted addressing structural barriers challenging inclusion of CwDAs

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Child Protection Manual that highlights facilitating a safe and enabling environment for the children developed

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15 schools adopted disability appropriate teaching learning materials encouraging CwDA's attend their classes

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19 Scheduled Caste women supported by their group to leverage farm machineries at subsidised price.

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the key strategy of our partner Mountain Children's Foundation (MCF) for inclusive education. These children groups could influence community collective around various issues during the period shows their demonstrated collective ability. Besides MCF also build capacities of CBOs such as School Management Committees and Mother Committees who advocated for ensuring government services to the marginalized children and submitted petitions for allotment of adequate teachers and infrastructures to maintain sanitation in the schools. There have been instances of CBOs joining the partners in Covid-19 humanitarian assistance which indicates their mobilized strength. However, pursuing inclusive education agenda through CBO's collective action during the year has been limited.

*A change is gradually taking place with these deliberations happening on SHG platforms which are helping women and community members to change their mind- set around these issues.*



# A Push For All-girls Sanitary Shop in Uttarakhand village

What rescued the adolescent girls of Garuna village, located 24 kilometers away from the main town Chamoli (Uttarakhand), during the COVID lockdown was a small shop run by all-girls group. Accessibility is the biggest challenge for this village community considering the geographical location and the difficulty in getting a sanitary napkin when needed the most. And the current COVID-19 crisis has presented even more difficulties for menstruating women in accessing menstrual hygiene products.

*"Complete lockdown in India since March 2020 left us ladies hopeless. One has to walk a few kilometers down to river and up again to reach the village. Market was already far away and with everything closed, personal health and hygiene became a challenge for us," says Sulochna Devi. Urgent need of resources led the group think about alternatives and they came up with an idea of their own adolescent-run Sanitary Pad Shop in the village.*

Back in January 2019 when SOIR-IM initiated its economic and social development intervention with its local implementation partner Appropriate Technology India (ATI), 36-year-old Sulochna Devi became a tour-de-force for sensitizing and involving adolescent girls on menstrual hygiene through collective action. She is an active ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) worker, a resident of the same village and quite aware of the stigmas around basic women hygiene.

Most shops selling sanitary pads have male seller and girls tend to feel uncomfortable purchasing personal items. There are cases of eve-teasing and sexist remarks experienced by girls. This shop gives purchasing freedom to the women and girls.

During the lockdown, Sulochna along with the girls group approached ATI to provide

*A young member of the adolescent group 19-year-old Shobha says that "in the seventeen months of existence, we have been able to save around Rs 5,000 and the shop also made a profit of Rs 1,000/- roughly in just one month. We open our shop only for two hours in a day and every woman in the village knows about our timing and buys things they need.*

initial support to set up the shop, and a stock of sanitary pads, soaps, sanitizers, cosmetics, among other paraphernalia was provided to the group. A young member of the adolescent group 19-year-old Shobha says that "in the seventeen months of existence, we have been able to save around Rs 5,000 and the shop also made a profit of Rs 1,000/- roughly in just one month. We open our shop only for two hours in a day and every lady in the village knows about our timing and buys things they need. I am happy to see that more ladies are now buying sanitary pads and are aware of menstruation cycle and personal hygiene. Openly talking about menses and condoms was not culturally accepted among us. Now the way of thinking is changing among us."

Sulochna feels ecstatic that after all her efforts, the nearby communities are seeking guidance from her for forming a similar adolescent girls groups in their villages.



# Strengthening livelihoods of the poor and unreached households

SOIR-IM's economic inclusion program focuses on the capacity building of women and Youth on different aspects of livelihood, linkage with government schemes/ programs and protection of forest and water sources for better preparedness at community level towards the impacts of climate change. During the reporting period, with the support of the partners the focus continued along with strengthening the community based institutions. These community institutions as collective platforms support women and youth to acquire knowledge and skills on different aspects of livelihood as well as to have increased accessibility to finance and market.

SOIR-IM along with Partners MESH, MVDA, THT and ATI promoted and contributed to the process of strengthening different type of interest groups such as Self-help groups (SHG), Women farmer's groups, Cooperatives, producer's groups, etc community level institution for economic inclusion in all operational states. SHGs assumed leadership in leveraging development works from government agencies and implementing directly. With the support of partner THT, youth collectives coordinated with forest committees for forest protection activities. During this year Farmers groups received training on improved agriculture practices, organic manure production and its application, improved technology and government schemes and programs.

Artisans and Producer Groups were imparted trainings to enhance skills on product designing, diversification, promotion and marketing as well as capacitated on fair trade principles and compliances. SHGs received trainings on leadership and bargaining skills, livelihood diversification, collective marketing, and networking and leveraging. MVDA helped women farmers to obtain crop wise recommendations for nutrients and fertilizers use from the government agriculture technical agency.

*Self - Help Groups, Cooperatives and producer's Groups-are promoted and strengthened for economic inclusion. SHG's assumed leadership in leveraging development works from government agencies and implementing directly. With the support of partner THT, youth collectives coordinated with forest committees for forest protection activities.*

Of course, the year witnessed a new crisis, Covid-19, which along with increasing vulnerability of people on health front also adversely impacted the livelihoods of vulnerable community. Partners especially tried to handle this challenge by imparting information and new knowledge to CBOs through online videos, WhatsApp app and phones.

There are some positive increased opportunities for producer groups seen in the year due to their adoptability and increased ability to access market as collectives. Producer groups with the help of MESH by adopting skill diversification and adding new products to the ranges have enhanced their capacity and mobilized orders from national and international customers thereby creating employment for the artisans.

Networking among the groups have increased collective abilities thereby creating work for artisans and repeat orders from international customers. With acquisition of capacities to handle digital communication tools producer groups could maintain interaction with the buyers and get orders.

## Achievements in 2020-21

1. 830 women and youth from marginalised communities had enhanced household incomes by adopting improved agriculture practices, accessing subsidized agricultural inputs and diversifying handicraft products

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2. Accessibility of 65 poor women to social security schemes achieved through increased interaction with service providers

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3. 11 producer organizations engaged in direct sales as well as adopted new marketing strategies to tap domestic and international markets

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4. 77 Self-help Groups formed and capacitated on group governance and functional aspects and 15 SHGs linked to National Rural Livelihood Mission

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5. 25 community based organizations promoted to support women and youth from marginalized communities to acquire knowledge and skills on livelihood options, and critical inputs such as, finance and market.

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6. 141 artisans created work for themselves and generated incomes through diversification of their skill sets and product ranges.

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7. 181 artisans equipped with enhanced understanding on fair trade principles and compliances

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8. Women capacitated as Village level Service Providers extending timely follow-up and mentoring support to women farmer groups.

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9. Artisans capacitated on skill and product diversification generated and incomes during the covid crises.

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10. Producer groups equipped with digital skills facilitated interaction with intertion at buyers during covid restriction.

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## A Story of Success in Adversity

Khadim Handicrafts Welfare Society is one of the producer groups, that work with bone, hornor resin, for home décor items or jewellery.

At the start of 2020 the producer group did not have much work and by the time the lockdown was called by The Government of India in March, they were out of work and looking at a fairly bleak period ahead. They noticed that there was a demand for face masks by their local chemist shop and considered if they could diversify away from hard materials to sewing, so that they could make masks for the local market. MESH secured funding to keep several groups of artisans employed from home during the lockdown sewing masks so as to keep incomes flowing into homes.

The Khadim team discussed the opportunity together with their artisans and took up the challenge and using hand operated sewing machines they made their first batch of face masks for MESH. They have subsequently bought electric motors and have three sewing machines and have worked with MESH to expand the range of products they sew for MESH. Men who earlier operated light machinery for polishing and cutting horn, bone and resin now all have some tasks in the production of stitched products. They may cut, sew, finish or add ties or quality check and pack. Being willing and able to completely diversify has ensured work during this pandemic season when demand for their jewellery and home décor items had fallen.

Wasim from Khadim says that without reskilling and diversification they would not have had any work for most of the year. The role that MESH has played has been to repeatedly share the need to keep supplying new products or diversifying skill sets. MESH has provided online design and sewing guidance to Khadim and MESH Designer has evaluated the quality of their work and

*The Khadim team discussed the opportunity together with their artisans and took up the challenge and using hand operated sewing machines they made their first batch of face masks for MESH. They have subsequently bought electric motors and have three sewing machines and have worked with MESH to expand the range of products they sew for MESH.*

advised changes and improvements where necessary. Fair Trade trainings have highlighted the need to provide steady incomes for artisans which has in-turn motivated the leaders to encourage the artisans to learn new skills to stay employed. MESH has also linked them to larger networks of MESH's own suppliers but also to other NGO's working in the same field, from which business and marketing opportunities have arisen.

Khadim has come through the last pandemic year stronger for skills and adaptability, something MESH sees as a success and example to other groups especially those who believe that they cannot reskill and succeed.



Photo Credit : Maximising Employment to Serve the Handicapped



Photo Credit : Mount Valley Development Association



## Strengthening CSO Capacity

SOIR-IM focused on a number of activities for the internal capacity building of other CSOs. One of the major focus has been on enhancing understanding on results of development work and result harvesting. Two workshops were organized to enhance understanding on the changes in the regulations related to FCRA CSR laws to help civil society to understand and be compliant with requirements.

Supported Social and Resource Development Fund to undertake five-year strategic planning in order to help build a strong team and improve efficiencies in operations. Mount Valley Development Association was supported to carry out organizational capacity assessment and development planning which is essential for improving efficiencies and effectiveness.

## Covid Response

- # Sensitized 10000 persons on covid appropriate behaviours
- # Distributed 3500 face masks in the community
- # Distributed dignity kit to 1666 households
- # Supported 278 households with dry food materials and sanitation kit

## Our Collaborators

Appropriate Technology India, Uttarakhand  
Mount Valley Development Association, Uttarakhand  
The Himalaya Trust, Uttarakhand  
Mountain Children's Foundation, Uttarakhand  
Kiran Society, Uttar Pradesh  
Social and Resource Development Fund, Himachal Pradesh  
Maximising Employment to Serve the Handicapped, Delhi  
Sarba Shanti Ayog, West Bengal

# ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT 2020-21

## GUPTA SAWHNEY & ASSOCIATES

Chartered Accountants


Swedish Organisation for Individual Relief (SOIR-IM)  
16-A, Mussoorie Road, Po-Rajpur, Uttarakhand, Dehradun-248009

Income & Expenditure Account for the year ending 31ST MARCH 2021

INCOME	Annx No	FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2021		FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2020	
		Rs.	P.	Rs.	P.
<b>DONATION FROM IM-SWEDEN:</b>					
Maintenance Grant Received: (including difference of exchange )			15,432,151.00		15,014,093.00
<b>Other Projects:</b>					
Provision for Gratuity Written Back					1,021,471.00
Designated Funds Paid/Utilised DTY	1		7,946,832.00		28,275,872.85
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>	<b>6</b>		258,053.84		517,645.24
<b>TOTAL RS...</b>			<b>23,637,036.84</b>		<b>44,829,082.09</b>

NOTE: Annexure '1' to '7' forming integral part  
of the accounts.

  
President


Secretary 

Treasurer

Chief Functionary 

As per our separate report of even date.

For Gupta Sawhney & Associates  
Firm Registration Number 015283C  
Chartered Accountants

  
[Varun Thakur Das Sawhney]  
Membership Number 408361  
Partner

10-Convent Road, Dehra Dun  
Dated: 22-12-2021  
UDIN : 21408361AAAABP3743

# ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT 2020-21

## GUPTA SAWHNEY & ASSOCIATES

Chartered Accountants

**Swedish Organisation for Individual Relief (SOIR-IM)**  
16-A, Mussoorie Road, Po-Rajpur, Uttarakhand, Dehradun-248009

**Income & Expenditure Account for the year ending 31ST MARCH 2021**

EXPENDITURE	Annx No	FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2021		FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2020	
		Rs.	P.	Rs.	P.
<b>ASSISTANCE AID WORK:</b>					
SPONSOR SHIP PROJECTS					
EDUCATION				6,139,164.00	
HEALTH					
CIVIL SOCIETY					
FAIR TRADE		2,560,332.00		10,434,424.85	
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT		5,386,500.00		11,702,284.00	
		7,946,832.00		28,275,872.85	
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; PROPERTY UPKE</b>	5		12,087,356.91		14,627,667.59
<b>DEPRECIATION :</b>	2		430,455.17		472,684.49
<b>PROVISION FOR GRATUITY</b>					
<b>SURPLUS/( DEFICIT ):</b>			3,172,392.76		1,452,857.16
(being excess of income/expenditure over expenditure/income )					
<b>TOTAL RS...</b>			<b>23,637,036.84</b>		<b>44,829,082.09</b>

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**THE SWEDISH ORGANISATION  
FOR INDIVIDUAL RELIEF - IM**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21**

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**SOIR-IM**

**The Swedish Organisation  
for Individual Relief**