



Mankind in Action for Rural Growth (MARG)

Annual Report 2008 - 2009

Dear sponsors, well wishers and friends,

Firstly, I, on behalf of all of us at MARG, would like to offer you our heartfelt thanks and gratitude for your continuous support in our endeavor to ignite smiles of the underprivileged in our society. Without your generous contribution we would not have made any progress with our efforts.

The global economic downturn hit us in a way that proved to be a difficult challenge for MARG. Some of our sponsors stopped their contributions towards their children in 2008. It was indeed a big setback. However, through God's grace and prayers from well wishers we were able to pull in some new sponsors thereby continuing the support for the children.

For the period 2008-2009, MARG was able to sponsor 28 new children from the hills of North Bengal (Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong).

For the first time, the board of directors of MARG, met for the general body election on 7th September 2008. Mr. John Borgoyary was re-elected as President, Mr. Nirnay John Chettri as General Secretary and Mr Rajan Takkar as Treasurer.

On 24th November 2008, a vehicle bearing the number WB-79-2119, was driven halfway to Dukka to mark the first anniversary of the villagers' dream road project. MARG has been proactive in helping the villagers in their Herculean endeavor by raising funds and writing to the Ministry of Rural Development, New Delhi to implement NREGA in this area.

We were able to organize, once more, some extra curricular activity for our children. On 14th December 2008, a "greeting card making contest" was held at Shrubbery Park in Darjeeling. The children participated with great interest and vigor and they were encouraged all the way by the guests invited for the event. The greeting cards were later sent to their respective sponsors.

Seven of our children attended the "outreach program", organized by S.T Joseph's School, Darjeeling, during the winter.

Two of our children lost their beloved ones. Mr. Pravesh Chettri lost his father and Ms. Soma Subba lost her elder brother. Despite such loss, both the children passed their exams with flying colors. Out of the 28 children under MARG's sponsorship, only 3 children were unable to pass in their exams.

Ms. Prerna Tamang of Ghoom Girl's Higher Secondary School, appeared for her class 10 board exams in early 2009. She secured 1st Division by getting 62%. It was indeed a very proud moment for all of us at MARG.

It was a happy moment for us when one of our children, Mr. Saruk Chettri informed us that he would no longer need our help as his aunt had taken up the responsibility for his education. In a way, it was also a sad moment for us as Mr. Saruk Chettri was with us since 2007.

Mr. Anuket Gurung of Turnbull Higher Secondary School, Darjeeling, studying in class 7, underwent a surgery for appendicitis. He has recovered well and is now attending school regularly.

Although the economic crisis has been hard on us, MARG has been able to stand up against all adversities and continue to not only survive but make some progress as well. All the credit goes to you, our dear sponsors, who continued your support and stood by us despite the obvious difficulties, needless to say, without which, we would have made no progress. A big thanks to our well wishers and friends who have contributed in their own way.

Yes! We were able to Ignite Smiles of many and we will continue to do so of many more



Founder members of Mankind in Action for Rural Growth meet on 7th September 2008

Minutes of MARG Founder Members Board Meeting
C - 5, Qutab Intuitional Area, IRIA Conference Hall
Date: 7th September 2008

Board members present at the meeting were Mr. John Borgoyary, Mr. Amitava Datta, Mr. Rajan Takkar, Mr. Nirnay John Chettri and guest Mr. Mahipal Singh Rawat (President and CEO, RAIBAR Communications). Other MARG members who were not present were connected through phone. The meeting started with a brief power point presentation by Mr. Nirnay John Chettri, General Secretary who updated members about the various projects and other relief activities undertaken by MARG since its formation in 2006.

Within a very short span of time MARG was able to bring smiles to many children in the hills. In 2006 MARG was able to sponsor tuition fee and hostel fee of 9 children. Number rose to 24 children in 2007. MARG was quick in responding to the call of villagers who had suffered from massive landslides in the North Bengal region. MARG took no time in reaching to the villages of Dukka and Tandreong even though till date there is no road and electricity. MARG with a team of six volunteers were the first NGO to hear their plea and support them. Going by its mission of Igniting Smiles MARG was able to bring all the MARG children together on 17th November 2007 to celebrate Children's day in Darjeeling. During the presentation short MARG movies on its involvement on development were also shown to the members. The short movie clips did speak of the problems faced by the people of the hills of North Bengal.

Following MARG's By Laws it had set 7th September 2008 as an election date to elect President, General Secretary and Treasurer. All the MARG board members were informed of this through Email and phone one month in advance. Letters accompanied by ballot papers were also sent to all MARG founder members. The secret ballot sealed was then sent to the President. Mr. John Borgoyary brought all the ballot papers in the meeting. Total six ballot papers were received OUT OF eight and this was opened by our guest Mr. Mahipal Singh Rawat (President and CEO, RAIBAR Communications) the election result were as follow,

President	General Secretary	Treasurer
<i>John Borgoyary = 5 votes</i> <i>Amitava Datta = 1 vote</i>	<i>Nirnay John Chettri = 6 votes</i>	<i>Rajan Takkar = 4 votes</i> <i>Amitava Datta = 1 vote</i>

Mr. Nirnay John Chettri also gave a brief report on Carnegie Mellon University's desire to build a small hostel in Maria Basti and Mr. Arul's vision of setting up MARG ASIA office in Singapore to support MARG in its activities in India.

MARG board members decided that it would go ahead with the construction of the hostel even though Carnegie backs out. MARG members present pledged their support in their own capacity in building the hostel. The members present were also very optimist of the idea of having MARG ASIA office in Singapore. The members decided that Mr. Arul could go ahead in using the name of MARG in setting up a office in Singapore provided it follows the by laws of MARG India and follows the requirement of Singapore Government in setting up a Society there. The members present felt that MARG ASIA should also have board members like MARG India and office bearers to be elected amongst the board members every two years. The members thought that MARG ASIA should run independently but decisions to be conveyed to MARG India.

The meeting ended on a positive note on MARG board members supporting MARG and its activities in future in a proactive way. The elected new President, General Secretary and Treasurer were congratulated and the board members who were not present were given a phone call and informed about the election result.



Founder members of Mankind in Action for Rural Growth met in New Delhi on 7th September 2008

The first vehicle in Dukka



29th November 2008 will be fondly remembered by the villagers of Dukka and Tanderbong, as, on this day, for the first time in the history of that area, a vehicle number bearing WB - 79 - 2119 was driven down the road the villagers had been constructing since 29th November 2007 near Dukka.

What a beautiful moment it was for the villagers there. Their joy knew no bounds. Their hard work and unity had not gone to waste. This event has indeed enlightened their spirit and has motivated them more to continue the construction even further.

This motor able road constructed by the villagers is a kucha road and the construction is going on without any help from the government. There are no engineers to guide them. The only support they get is from the villagers themselves and the Forest Department has been kind enough to give them a 'No Objection Certificate'.

I too was pessimistic when I got an opportunity to visit them on 13th April 2008 with ten of our other local MARG volunteers. I noticed that it was such a Herculean task and there were absolutely no resources other than the villagers themselves giving one day of their manual labour and their zeal to make this a motor able road.

Yes indeed their dream did come true on 29th November 2008 when the tyres of a vehicle rolled down the road that they had been constructing. The local panchayat member Mr. Sanchaman Rai was full of praises for Fr. Paul Sitling as he told the crowd that he was the one who was the guiding and motivational force behind the villagers' hard work. 'to work like ants' according to a villager.

Mankind in Action for Rural Growth (MARG) has been helping the villagers there in its own simple way. After organizing a signature campaign among the villagers MARG placed an appeal on behalf of the villagers to the Rural Development Minister, Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh. The carbon copy was also sent to Ms. Amita Sharma (Joint Secretary, NREGA). Dr. Nilay Ranjan from UNDP, New Delhi, but presently working under Ministry of Rural Development, WHO confirmed receipt of this letter. Request was also sent from the NREGA site of which Dr. Ranjan has confirmed receipt and informed me that he has forwarded it for further actions. To support the appeal a video CD containing a short 9 minutes film showing the villagers constructing the road, photographs and a short write-up on that area was given.

On 8th December 2008 I once again went to Dukka to update the villagers on our recent move and to hand them a cheque of Rs 5000/- which MARG had been collecting through its friends and well wishers. I was amazed to see how fast these villagers had constructed the road. This time we could take our vehicle approximately one and a half kilometers further down the hill than earlier. Given the circumstances, it was very difficult to believe the motivation of these people. It cannot be expressed in words...one has to visit this place to experience it. The locals informed me that, lately, government officials have been visiting the village. It is really surprising to see that the officials are not aware of what is happening in their own areas and they come to know only after a year. Anyway, it is never too late. Dukka and the surrounding villages need urgent attention. I am sure, the government officials having seen it themselves, will now have the heart to set the official machinery rolling and put in some real development work in these areas. But will the officials be motivated? Only time will tell. All we can do is hope and pray.

MARG would like to thank specially Mr. Yam Kumar Shrestha (New Delhi), Mr. Swaroop Kumar Charmling (UK), Ms. Rebecca Chettri (New Delhi), Ms. Renuka Pradhan (Darjeeling) for their kind contribution which has been handed over to the villagers,

The villagers there still need your help and support. It's a long way to go. If you are around Darjeeling then try to visit them and motivate them. If you need information about their next meet do write to us at inform.marg@gmail.com They would be most happy to meet you.

Drawing competition

Children of Mankind in Action for Rural Growth (MARG) got an opportunity to meet each other on 14th December 2008 at the Nightingale Park (Shrubbery) Darjeeling.

A drawing competition was organized for the children. Unlike the earlier year, this year the children were advised to make greetings cards for their sponsors. MARG children from Ghoom Boys' Higher Secondary School, Ghoom Girls' Higher Secondary School, Turnbull High School, Municipal High School and St. George's Higher Secondary School participated in this event.



Dr. Sanjay Gurung handing prizes to MARG children

Though the breeze was cold we were lucky to have a bright sunny day. Special guests like Dr. Sanjay Gurung (Dy. Director Mercy Corp Darjeeling) Sankar Daju and Didi from Sankar Foundation Darjeeling, Mr. R B Gurung (Retd. DYSP) Mr. Subash Chettri from (DGHC Tourism), Mr. Reza Pradhan from ETV and Mr. Arun Pradhan from Newar Samaj Darjeeling graced the occasion.



MARG children with guests

The event started with a brief note on MARG and its work by MARG's General Secretary. During the competition children showed interest and made beautiful greeting cards for their sponsors. Miss. Perna Tamang from Ghooms Girls' Higher Secondary School bagged the first prize (Rs 300/- voucher), Miss. Bhagwati Chettri from Ghoom Girls' Higher Secondary School bagged the second prize (Rs 200/- voucher) and Mr. Siraj Kharia from St. George's Higher Secondary School, Pedong got the third prize (Rs 100/- voucher). A geometry box was given to all MARG children.

MARG children were happy to have two special guests from US (Ms. Perna Basnet and Mr. Basnet) We would like to thank you for coming and interacting with our children. We would not have been able to see these beautiful pictures if you had not taken it. Thank you once again.

MARG would like to especially thank Mr. John Borgoyay (President MARG), Mr. Amitava Datta (Founder Member), Mr. Rajan Takkar (Treasurer MARG), Mr. Subash Chettri (DGHC Tourism) Mrs. Sharon Gyamtsho, Mr. Albert John Chettri, Mrs. Prem Lata Pradhan and Abu and Subu for your kind contribution and support. Yes truly together we can Ignite Smiles.

Outreach programme of St Joseph's School Darjeeling

Winters in Darjeeling begins from the month of December and lasts till the end of February, all the schools/colleges remains closed during this period. Most of the local people migrate down to Siliguri and other warmer places.

For the past few years St. Joseph's School, Darjeeling remains open even during winter season. The school opens not for the regular students but for the underprivileged children of Darjeeling who are not able to move down to warmer places.

St. Joseph's School, Darjeeling has been able to reach out to the local community in many ways but the Outreach Programme during winters has given opportunity to the underprivileged children of Darjeeling to study in a school where once Kings and other famous personalities did without having to pay a single penny.

Eight to nine hundred children are taught English, Mathematics from Monday to Friday. Games like football and cricket are also organized to motivate the children. After the classes are over hot lunch is also served to them.

Mankind in Action for Rural Growth (MARG) would like to thank Fr. Kinley, his staff members and the students for this noble cause. This winter season seven of our MARG children are also attending this Outreach programme.

We all wish them all the very best.



St Joseph's School Darjeeling

MEDIA TRAINING WORKSHOP ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

North East Region of India consists of eight states Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura and Sikkim. It has a long international border with Bangladesh on the west, Myanmar (Burma) in the east and China and Bhutan on the north.

It is connected with rest of the country through a narrow passage. Assam serves as a gateway for the other six states to reach out to other parts of India. Nagaland and Manipur forms a major drug route from the "Golden Triangle" (Burma) with high prevalence of needle sharing habit among the injecting drug user (IDUs). Moreover the rise in drug smuggling and trafficking makes people vulnerable to various social problems.



NEDAN FOUNDATION a registered Public Charitable Trust from Kokrajhar, Bodoland has been working in this issue since 2004 and till date has rescued and repatriated many from this region. Seeing the on going problem. NEDAN organized a Media Training Workshop on 20th and 21st of March 09 in Kokrajhar, Bodoland, Assam. The objectives of the Media Training Workshop were

- Promote more frequent and through media coverage of areas of human trafficking in the North East Region.
- Assist stakeholders in understanding and working with the media and effectively engage the media as part of broader advocacy strategy.
- Enable reporters and journalists to familiarize themselves with the technique of covering socially sensitive issues; and indicate ways of effective networking.

To highlight the deep concern on growing scenario of human trafficking, their vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS in the North Eastern Region and to address the trans-border trafficking issue with our immediate neighboring South East Asian Countries, it was for the first time in this region all the eight states of North East Region's concern Media, CSOs, Govt. officials and individuals came into one platform to strengthen mutual collaboration within the region and to build strong network in countering human trafficking in North East and with our neighboring countries.

On the second day there was interaction with the parents of the missing girls living in the relief camps for the greater evidence based advocacy through media fraternity. There were parents who had come and had not seen their children since 2000 and some survivors who had been repatriated by NEDAN spoke about their tales.

North Bengal Region has also been a victim of human trafficking. In the past few years we have witnessed many girls and boys disappearing from the North Bengal Region. Unless and until we have a better networking with NGOs, CBOs and other organizations working in this area our hard work will go in vain. Mankind in Action for Rural Growth (MARG) a non for profit organization working in the hill of North Bengal has taken up the responsibility of being a watchdog in the North Bengal Region and proactively work for this cause.

AN EVENING WITH MARG CHILDREN On 29th April 2009...

MARG children once again got an opportunity to shop and dine in one of Darjeeling's most happening place, "The Rink Mall."

It was Sushri Bhumika Garg's 4th birthday and her parents Mr. Rajesh Garg and Mrs. Garg wanted to celebrate their daughter's birthday with MARG Children. MARG children had witnessed their gratefulness last year only when they were invited to celebrate her 3rd birthday and after a high tea at Café Coffee Day they were all taken to the Big Bazar and a gift voucher of Rs 500/- was given to all the children.

Unlike last year this year too Mr. Garg has booked the whole of Rainbow Restaurant for this event. MARG children assembled before the gate of the Rink Mall at 4:00pm and were later ushered by Mr. Vikash, Mr Vikram (Rink Mall) and Mr. Sagar Pradhan (MARG Volunteer) The hall was beautifully decorated. MARG children walked in with great confidence as they had experienced this kind of ambiance before. Staffs members of Rainbow Restaurant were so hospitable that they made every one present there feel at home.

After Bhumika cut the cake MARG children offered Khadas to her and her parents. Garg Family also felicitated children who excelled in studied in the year 2008. Mr. Birju Garg thanked all the children for attending this event and assured MARG their full support in future.

After the high tea, gifts were distributed to the children and their joys knew no bound. A gift voucher of Big Bazar worth Rs 250/- were distributed to the children. One of MARG's child Ms. Soma Subba through her few words not only thanked all but made every one's eyes wet as she spoke from her heart. At the end MARG General Secretary on behalf of all the children and colleagues thanked every one from the Garg Family for IGNITING SMILES of the underprivileged children.



MARG children with Bhumika Garg and family members
at Rink Mall, Darjeeling

Earth Hour 2009

What is Earth Hour ?

Earth Hour is symbolic event where people around the world are encouraged to turn off their lights for one hour to show support for action on climate change. Millions of people around the globe turning off our lights together demonstrates that individual efforts, when taken together, add up make a big difference and can be as easy as a flick of a switch.

Earth Hour is a WWF event and it began in Sydney, Australia in 2007. It was such a huge success that in 2008, WWF decided to make Earth Hour a global event and its been growing ever since.

In 2008, millions of people in hundreds of cities in more than 30 countries turned off their lights for Earth Hour. In 2009, more than 4,000 cities in 88 countries participated!

Why Participate?

Climate change is the most urgent environmental issue facing our planet and every one of us has a role to play to help stop it. Earth Hour is an easy and powerful way to send a message that you care about your planet and want to be part of the climate solution. More importantly, it sends a very powerful message to government and world leaders that people want the right policies and regulations put in place that can achieve the meaningful emission reductions necessary to help fight climate change.

Source: <http://wwf.ca/earthhour/>

Mankind in Action for Rural Growth (MARG) participated in this event in a simple yet in an effective way. MARG sent hundreds of sms to its well wishers and sponsors generating awareness and making each individual realize his/her responsibility to earth hour.

All the lights in MARG Project Office in Darjeeling was switched Off for an hour.



A dream that came true

Their long awaited dream came true on 29th May 2009 when the wheels of more than eight vehicles rolled down the cobblestone path constructed by the villagers themselves without any help from the government.

The weather gods also seemed happy with the villagers of Dukka as we were blessed with a bright sunny day on the 29th of May 2009. The villagers had dressed themselves in their traditional attire and were standing on the sides of the road built by them to greet guests. How happy and proud they were as they had accomplished a great job which the government had not been able to do. Their joys could be easily seen on their faces. Tiny colourful paper flags on the road sides fluttered as if to convey that they too were proud of this place.

For the first time in the history of Dukka, villagers saw vehicles parked at one corner of the primary school ground where the programme for that day was organized. A 90 year old blind lady heard the sound of the vehicles passing her hut and could not stop herself and asked her neighbors to carry her to the Dukka primary school ground.



The first vehicles in the history of Dukka



Ninety years old partially blind Lepcha lady insisted to be brought to the primary school ground after hearing the sounds of vehicles passing her hut

Bishop Steven Lepcha, Bishop of Darjeeling, Mr. A. Tshering, Sub Divisional Officer, Kalimpong, Mr. Mathais Lepcha, Joint BDO Raiganj, Dr. Kalyan Dewan, President Gorkha Janmukti Morcha, Kalimpong Branch, Mr. Samuel Gurung (General Secretary, GJMM Kalimpong Branch), Mr. Nirnay John Chettri, General Secretary, Mankind in Action for Rural Growth (MARG) were some of the guests present . Dr. Navin Jyoti Pradhan and his team who had also come down in an ambulance conducted a health camp for the villagers on that day.

Fr. Paul Sitling, (Parish Priest, Maria Basti) the brain child behind this initiative welcomed all the guests and addressed the crowd saying how dreams can really come true if we all work with dedication and with love. Guests present for the programme were welcomed by traditional dances performed by old and young of the village of Dukka and its surrounding area.

The government officials and the political leaders present there assured that they would now surely look into this matter. Finally a photo exhibition and a documentary film on the road construction prepared by MARG was shown to all. Before the guests left a typical village lunch was served to all who were around six to seven hundred in number. Finally the ambience was so endearing that most of the people present there felt that they will contribute something in their own capacity to make the dream of the villagers of Dukka and its surrounding area of joining this road with Sikkim one day come true.





Miss Prerna Tamang is a student of Ghoom Girls' Higher Secondary School; she lost her father when she was young. It was difficult for Ms. Munna Tamang mother of Prerna to support her three children for their education and to run the house. It was then MARG stepped in to support Prerna Tamang. Since then she has been religiously participating in all the events conducted by MARG.

This year she appeared for her class 10 board exams and passed with flying colours. MARG would like to congratulate her for her hard work and wish her the very best in future.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED ON 31st MARCH, 2009

31-3-2008 AMOUNT (RS)	PARTICULARS	31-3-2009 AMOUNT (RS)	31-3-2008 AMOUNT (RS)	PARTICULARS	31-3-09 AMOUNT (RS)
35320.00	To Scholarships	40465.00	76940.00	By Donation Received	51400.00
116.00	To Bank charges	166.00	0.00	By Excess of Exp. Over income	8172.17
900.00	To Publicity expenses	0.00			
1752.00	To Conveyance expenses	880.00			
2250.00	To Printing & stationary	2387.00			
5783.00	To Telephone expenses	9274.00			
5500.00	To Programme implementation exp	500.00			
433.00	To Misc. expenses	1494.00			
2809.00	To Auditors' remuneration	2758.00			
4121.00	To Depreciation	1648.00			
17956.00	To Excess of income over exp.	0.00			
76940.00		59572.17	76940.00		59572.17

BALANCE SHEET AS ON 31st MARCH 2009

31-3-2008 AMOUNT (RS)	LIBALITIES	31-3-2009 AMOUNT (RS)	31-3-2008 AMOUNT (RS)	ASSETS	31-3-09 AMOUNT (RS)
22886.00	<u>CAPITAL FUND</u> Opening Balance	40842.00	4368.00	<u>FIXED ASSETS</u> Computer	1747.00
	Add:		2621.00	(+) Additions	1924.00
17956.00	Excess of income over exp.	0.00	1747.00	Less: Depreciation	1048.00
40842.00	Less: Excess of Exp over income	40842.00			
		32669.83	2500.00	Printer	1000.00
	<u>UN SECURED LOAN</u>		1500.00	Less: Depreciation	600.00
10000.00	Mr. Rajan Takkar (Treasurer)	10000.00	1000.00		
	<u>CURRENT LIBALITIES</u>		0.00	CURRENT ASSETS, LOANS & ADVANCES	
5618.00	Expenses Payable	8376.00		Amount Receivable	3200.00
0.00	Mr. Nirnay John Chettri	11022.00	51128.00	Balances with Schedule	
	Imprest A/c		9200.00	Central Bank of India	55844.83
			4304.00	Cheque in Hand	0.00
56460.00		62067.00	67380.00	Cash in Hand	0.00
					62067.83

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