

## The Mountain Children's Foundation

*Changing the way the world perceives and works with children...*

## The MCF Network Today

- *30 partner organizations*
- *13,000 children*
- *682 village-level groups .*
- *The MCF connects mountain children to one another, partners with other organizations to leverage efforts, and carries the voice of children to the government and other development forums.*
- *Children work together at the grassroots to improve their communities and advocate for their rights.*

## Why Mountains, Why Children?

- Both are marginalized, too often ignored and forgotten
- Children comprise 42% of the population.
- They are the future community and its leaders.
- Children are rebellious and embrace change readily:
  - Teach the children - they will teach the village.
  - Reach the children – they will reach the village.
- Community development takes place when people have the capacity and tools to make use of opportunities.
- The only way to create genuine change in the mountains is through the empowerment and activism of local communities.
- Children are not constrained by fear or greed

## Our Vision

- *Enable children to improve their lives by providing them a platform to address the issues that affect them.*
- *Mobilize children for collective action and social responsibility*
- *Build relationships between the children and their community and government institutions*
- *Change the way the world perceives and works with children*

## The MCF Approach

### *Building networks for strength*

- Village-level children's groups
- Training organizations to support the children
- Capacity building workshops
  - For facilitators from MCF partner NGOs
  - With children's groups
- PABAM – The children's own magazine
  - Links children, NGOs, communities and government functionaries
  - generates awareness through example and shared experience
  - Disseminates knowledge and best practices
- Interface with government institutions

## Our Focus

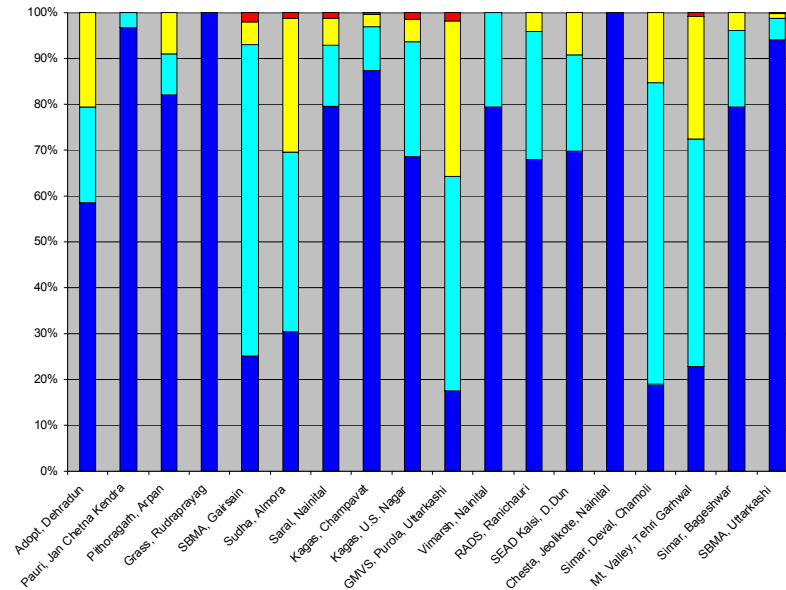
- *Awareness generation*
- *Education*
- *Child rights and advocacy*
- *Right to Information*
- *Gender equity*
- *Health and sanitation*
- *Natural resource management*
- *Disaster preparedness*

## **Right To Information and The Children of Uttarakhand**

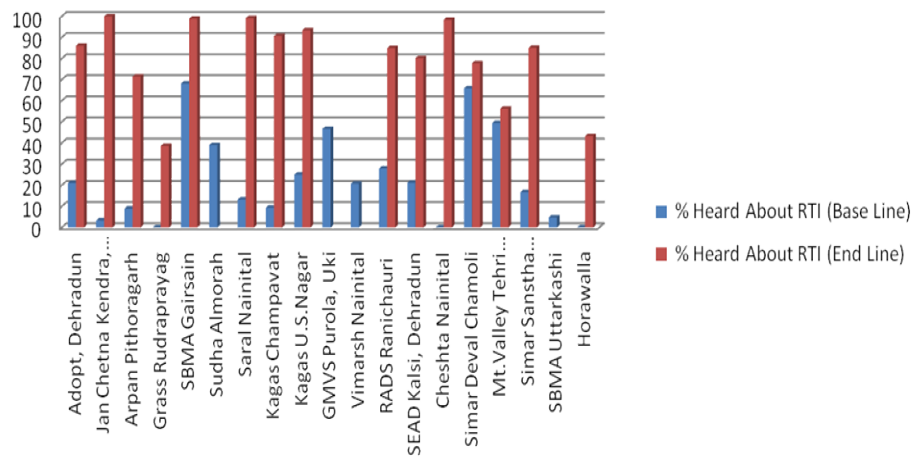
- Material for Awareness Generation
- Children's State Level Workshop 12 and 13 October 2008
- Facilitators Training 24 & 25 November 2008
- 104 Village Level Workshops by Partners
- Follow Up Visits
- Facilitators workshop - 22 & 23 July 2009 supported by the Information Commission
- State Level Children's Workshop 11 and 12 October 2009
- Expanding RTI Awareness World Vision and Purkul Dev Society

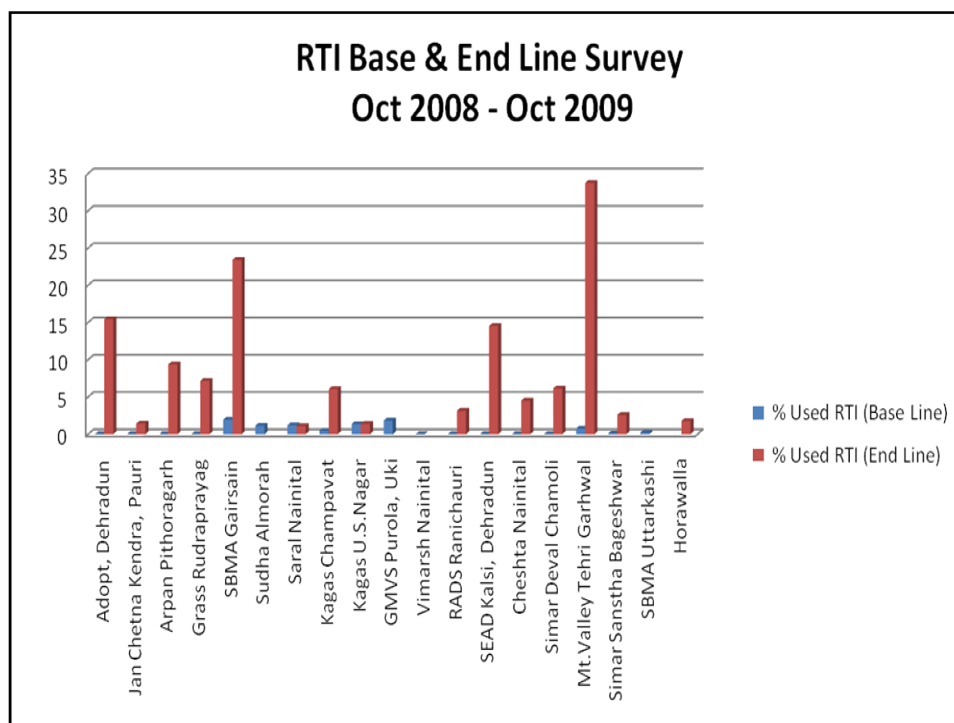


## Base Line Survey December 2008



## RTI Base & End Line Survey Oct 2008 - Oct 2009





### RTI Issues filed by the children

• Education	84
• Playground	13
• Electricity	35
• Water	60
• Road	53
• Health	25
• UBR	23
• Ration Cards	23
• Sanitation	17
• Panchayat	40

### RTI Issues filed by the children

• BPL Cards	13
• Pension	17
• Forest	12
• Gender	09
• Irrigation	07
• Anganwadi	11
• Child Rights	06
• Others	31
<b>Total issues filed</b>	<b>479</b>

### Problems and Issues

- ❖ Intimidation of Children
- ❖ Information not given in format requested
- ❖ Told to purchase books for information
- ❖ Demand for extra postage
- ❖ Post office does not give the application amount
- ❖ Applicants were told to go to specific departments to get their own information

- ❖ No information as to who is the PIO officer
- ❖ Return of applications because the department says there is no PIO officer
- ❖ Confusion as to whether the Gram Pradhan is the PIO officer or not
- ❖ Confusion/ lack of information on how to collect samples
- ❖ Government officers do not have information on the RTI and their roles.

### Problems faced *vis a vis* the program

- Follow up of individual RTI applications
- First Appeal was weak – time lag
- Second appeal was weak – time lag
- Complaints
- Some partners were less motivated to work on RTI because of conflicts of interest

To have a paid facilitator with the partnering organisation would enable a better follow up strategy.



## **Some Success Stories**

- ❖ Kamal Bhandari – Champawat – School wall
- ❖ Devvrat from Horrawalla - Pipes
- ❖ Vimla Basera from Askote - Electricity
- ❖ Mahavir from Thati – Teacher/Scholarship
- ❖ Ganesh from Nainital –Change Transformer
- ❖ Manish from Belwakhan – School
- ❖Jyoti from Almora – Water in Village
- ❖Poonam from Gairsain – Birth Registration
- ❖Dehradun – Street lights, dustbins and clean toilets in school

## **Achievements**

Partners	19 +2
Villages	104
Children	3682
RTI Filed	479

- Involvement of the Information Commission
- One training for facilitators supported by the commission.
- Mementoes supported by the commission
- Skill support from the commission

## Way Forward

- Work with the children this year's campaign to take RTI information further to their community
- Reach out to children in 5 new villages per partner.
- Mobilize children to monitor local government offices and ensure they are meeting RTI obligations.