

## Uttarakhand Floods Disaster 2013

### PSI Second Progress Report August 14, 2013

#### Introduction

The recent disaster in Uttarakhand created havoc in many river valleys leading to the devastation of countless homes and the destruction of lands and livelihoods.

Peoples Science Institute's first phase of relief work included the distribution of basic supplies to around 260 families in four districts. Based on the initial assessments carried out in the first month and information received from partner organizations in the field, a list of 300 proposed temporary shelters was compiled for Phase II of the response.

#### PSI's Phase II Response

1. **Design of temporary shelters:** PSI has been constructing temporary shelters for survivors of calamities since the 1991 Uttarkashi Earthquake. Based on previous experiences, new innovations and the specific conditions of Uttarakhand's environment, we redesigned the original structure.
2. **Procurement of material:** Bhushan Steel supplied the corrugated GI sheets while wooden poles and other materials were procured from local markets in Dehradun.
3. **Transportation of materials:** Our transport focal points are Rishikesh in Garhwal Region and Haldwani in Kumaon region. Transport was a major logistical challenge as most of the roads have been destroyed.
4. **Verification of land and selection of beneficiaries:** This is an important step as many people have lost their lands as well as houses. So the construction of their shelter is done only after proper verification of the beneficiary and the land available with them or leased/borrowed. A proper agreement is done for the land, a copy of which is maintained by PSI.

The Mandakini River overflow caused widespread destruction downstream of Kedarnath, completely cutting off areas like Chandrapuri, Siyalsod and Tilwara from the district headquarters at Rudraprayag. Since we had done an initial assessment in the Chandrapuri Village, Rudraprayag district on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2013, the construction of the first set of shelters was planned in this area. Selection of beneficiaries and the verification of land was done on 14<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> July 2013. Construction of the temporary shelters started on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2013.



## Training of Masons and Volunteers

Since many local people have lost their livelihoods, an important aspect of Phase-II is training of local masons for the construction of temporary shelters. Masons are then encouraged to prepare the temporary shelters. A training programme for the Garhwal region was organized on 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> July 2013 at Chandrapuri, Rudraprayag and was attended by 15 masons and 5 volunteers.

The training programme was divided into two parts:

- Part-I: Classroom session for half day which included detailed discussion on design and the construction of a shelter using plans drawn by PSI's engineers Rajesh Kumar and Rajesh Sharma.
- Part-II: Hands-on building a shelter under the supervision of PSI's engineering team.

During the two day training programme, the masons, volunteers and the PSI's engineering team stayed together to facilitate further exchange of ideas and team building among the masons and volunteers.



## Construction of Shelters in Chandrapuri, Rudraprayag

After the training programme, construction of 17 shelters started in Chandrapuri. This included two schools and 5 shelters in two villages of Bhatwari and Gabni Gaon. The shelters should be finished by 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013.

### ***Temporary shelter for Shanti Devi: Bhatwari Village.***

*Shanti Devi (38) lost her husband Sant Lal and their son Vijaypal in the Uttarakhand disaster. The father-son team used to ferry pilgrims to the Kedarnath shrine on their pony. The family also lost their house, cattle shed and agricultural land in the floods.*

*The remaining family members were forced to make do in an abandoned cow shed and it was here that PSI's team found them. After verification of their land, we constructed a temporary shelter for them at Bhatwari Village, where they will shift until their permanent new home is constructed. The Mahila Mandal helped them by shifting the construction material to the site.*



### ***Saraswati Shishumandir School Constructed in Chandrapuri Market.***

*Saraswati Shishumandir is one of Chandrapuri's most important schools. It educates 186 students from class I to VIII and when the entire structure was swept away in the floods, it was a major blow to the community. When PSI arrived on the scene, the school, in a moving display of resilience, was already back in action, holding classes – very crowded! - In an old 2 room inter-college in the town.*

*With labor from the local community, PSI is constructing an 8 room temporary school with one large hall and a two set toilet. Classes are set to begin in the new structure after Independence Day and both teachers and children are eager to make a fresh start in their spacious new building.*



***Temporary shelter for Inder Lal and family: Gabni Gaon Village.***

*Inder Lal of Gabni Gaon, Augustmuni Block lost both his home and agricultural land in the floods. One small piece of land remained – enough to construct a temporary shelter on. His new space was completed on 10<sup>th</sup> August and he was involved in the entire process – he laid the cement floor himself and told the PSI team when all was complete: “This is like a permanent home for me. Thank you for your support and help”.*



Verification of land and selection of beneficiaries was done in the following areas till 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013:

<b>S No</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Number of shelters after verification</b>
1	Chandrapuri	Rudraprayag	17 (2 schools)
2	Kapkot	Bageshwar	19
3	Almora	Almora	7
4	Thatyud	Tehri	13 (1 school)
5	Dharchula	Pithoragarh	30
<b>Total</b>			<b>86</b>

The next training for the Kumaon region is planned on 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> August, after which the construction of temporary shelters in Almora and Bageshwar will start.

*Relief Distribution in Toli village, Pitthoragarh*



*Relief Distribution in Chukhutiya, Almora District*



*Construction of Shishumandir School, Chandrapuri Market, Rudraprayag*

