

# Complementing service to **Society**

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**Civil Society Organizations Authority**

**P.O Box 317, Below YHS School**

**Thimphu 11001, Bhutan**

**Phone: +975 2 324954/324873**

**Fax: +975 2 339217**

**Email ID: [admin@csoa.gov.bt](mailto:admin@csoa.gov.bt)**

**[www.csoa.gov.bt](http://www.csoa.gov.bt)**

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**Complementing**  
service to Society



# Contents

Foreword	6
Introduction	7
For the CSOs	9
<b>LIVELIHOODS</b>	
For those at the grassroots	14
Breathing new life into communities	16
<b>CARE-GIVING &amp; REHABILITATION</b>	
Relief for kidney patients	20
For those with cancer	22
Empowering persons with disabilities	24
Skills for persons with disabilities	26
Empowering women	28
Early interventions for early developments	30
<b>YOUTH</b>	
For youth at the cross roads	34
For dignified, self-sufficient, responsible youth	36
<b>GOOD GOVERNANCE</b>	
Promoting women leadership	40
In the interest of media & democracy	42
Strengthening the media	44
Towards an open society	46

## **ARTS, HERITAGE & CULTURE**

Fostering entrepreneurship	48
A record of Bhutanese music	50
Weaving the tradition into future	52
A living cultural heritage	56

## **ENVIRONMENT**

Seeing the nature for its species	60
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## **ANIMAL WELFARE**

Saving animals	66
Animal welfare at the forefront	68
Rescuing and caring for animals	70

## **OTHER PBOS**

Sustainable solutions	76
Change begins in private, in toilet	78
A trust to sustain charitable entities	82
Green, organic, sustainable society	84
A progressive construction sector	86

## **MBOS**

One voice for tour operators	90
Promoting professional journalism	92
Art in the service of people	94
Evaluation for good governance	98

List of registered CSOS (MBOS and PHOS)	100
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# Foreword

**T**he idea of civil society organizations (CSO) is fairly new to the country.

What they do, the purpose of their existence and how they fit into the greater spectrum of governance systems. In fact, these are some of the things many of the very such organizations ought to mull over, every now and then.

Although many organizations existed much before the country's transition to a parliamentary democracy, a majority came about in its wake.

Having begun, what they do, have yet to catch on with the people, including those they were stand to benefit and serve.

So far, save for a few that have touched lives of the people in numerous ways across the country, many have yet to establish their visibility.

For that the CSOs have much to do in terms of advocacy in tandem with the activities they carry out.

Apart from numerous initiatives the authority conducts – developing manuals and guidelines and acting as a conduit between the CSOs and the government – it explores potential support. This magazine, first of the authority's annual, intends to reach potential interest groups within the country and abroad. Besides it will also

inform the public of what each of the CSOs do through write-ups, contributions from the CSOs themselves.

We would like to believe CSOs are an extension of the services where public one fall short, touching lives of people and reaching services on the frills of government attention.

These stories are worth recording and disseminating to a larger audience. Of the more than 50 CSOs registered with the authority, a majority, some thirty plus have contributed to the magazine, encapsulating their 2019 activities and achievements.

Much before the concept of CSOs, numerous such entities played a critical role in the country's pre-democratic era. It continues to play a greater role today and with the country's progress in times to come, changing cultural dynamics and change in Bhutanese lifestyle, CSOs have an ever-greater role to play.

But as always, Bhutan stands to benefit the lessons of other countries besides our guiding philosophy of Gross National Happiness to steer us in the right direction.



**Sonam Dorji**  
**Chairperson, CSO Authority**



# Introduction

**T**his publication highlights some of the key achievements and activities of Bhutanese CSOs in 2019-2020.

Each of the CSOs are presented under nine sections of Livelihood, Caregiving and Rehabilitation, Youth, Good Governance, Arts, Heritage and Culture, Environment, Animal Welfare, PBOs and MBOs.

From the works and key achievements captured in the publication, the impact CSOs made in providing social welfare, creating an awakened citizenry in a democracy and improving quality of life, is commendable.

The CSOs have touched lives of just

about everyone, imparting critical skills to youth, promoting progressive debates and discussions, caring for special children and the elderly. Welfare for victims of domestic violence and children coming in conflict with law receive priority. The pristine environment continue to receive due conservation attention. This is only the tip of the iceberg. CSOs play a crucial role in the overall development of the country and ensures no one is left behind.

While there are over 40 registered CSOs, works of about 30 are presented in the annual publication. Although we expected greater participation in this first one, we hope to draw, if possible, all CSOs in each volume in the coming years.



# **Civil Society Organizations Authority**

## **Vision**

To create a vibrant and trusted civil society that promotes the values of Gross National Happiness.

## **Mission**

To promote and facilitate good governance in the civil society and ensure compliance with the regulatory framework.

## **Core Values**

Independence, Accountable, Transparent, Responsive and Integrity.

# For the CSOs

## About

The Civil Society Organizations Authority (CSOA) was established on March 20, 2009, about two years since the National Assembly passed the CSO Act on June 20, 2007. It became the regulatory body for registered CSOs. In view of existing government policies, CSOs are required to operate in constructive partnership with the government to advance public interest, culturally, environmentally and socio-economically.

## Highlights

As the regulatory authority, the CSO amended, developed and implemented a host of plans, manuals, management guides including rules and regulations for CSOs in the country.

Just so CSOs stayed relevant with time and emerging legislations, the authority amended the CSO Rules and Regulations 2010. Similarly, realising the critical need for financial prudence among CSOs, the authority also published the Accounting and Financial Management Guide.

Given the varying nature of services provided, their types and status, the CSOA also published a Mapping Report that put the different CSO in the country on the radar. The Annual CSO Reports submission was streamlined so the authority was aware of the activities the CSOs were carrying out and how they were faring. For the same reason, the authority also coordinated the first government-CSO meeting to discuss and thrash out issues and challenges facing the CSOs.

For itself, the authority developed a CSOA Gov-

ernance Manual 2020 and the CSOA Strategic Plan 2021-2023, both of which had to do with the authority's functioning and its outlook for the coming years.

All activities and initiatives undertaken so far were in the backdrop of growing number of application from individuals and setups aspiring to register as a CSO, besides emerging concerns of informal groups posing as a CSO. Managing issues of non-compliance to CSO Act and rules and regulation within existing ones are another issue the authority constantly deals with.

To tackle these issues, development of adequate expertise in various fields of civil society is merited. Apparently, lack of budgetary support from the government to enhance human resource development for the authority staff has been one of the major hurdles besides resource constraints to carry out the authority's plans and programs.

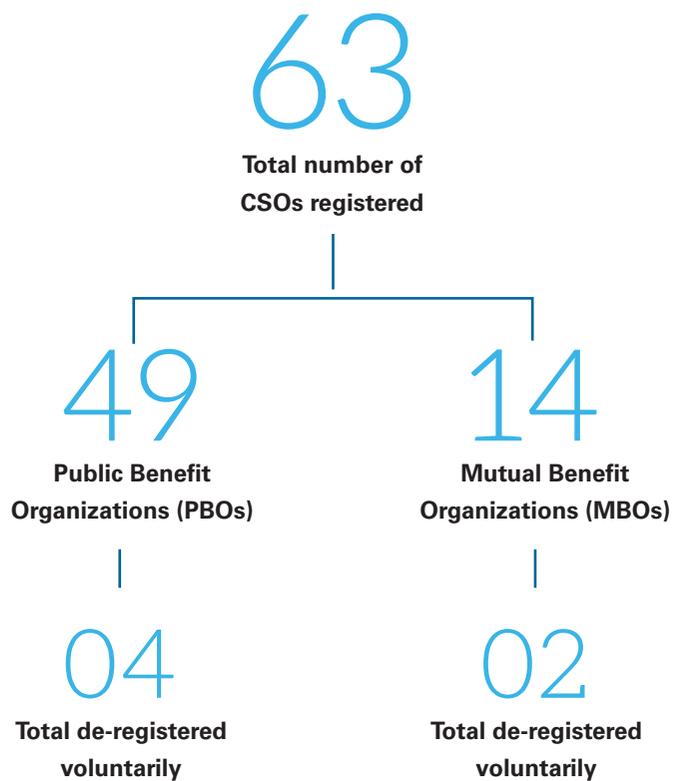
## The types

- Public Benefit Organizations (PBOs), CSOs that benefit a section of, or the whole society
- Mutual Benefit Organizations (MBOs), CSOs that advance the shared interests of their members or supporters
- Accredited Foreign CSOs (FCSOs)

## On the board

- A senior finance ministry official
- An eminent lawyer on the Attorney General's recommendation

## Status of CSOs since 2010 till date



02  
Under statutory inquiry (PBO)

02  
Merged CSOs

53  
Functional CSOs



**The first ever meeting between the government and the CSOs was held at Terma Linca, Thimphu**

- A senior home and cultural affairs ministry official, who is also the member secretary
- Two eminent members elected by registered CSOs
- Respond in writing, reasons for rejecting applications under the Act
- Advise government on the roles and activities of CSOs
- Encourage and facilitate better internal administration of CSOs
- Monitor CSO activities to ensure compliance with the Act, their Articles of Association or Charters, and purposes with which they were established

## **Of functions**

- Facilitate people's registration as a CSO
- Review and approve CSO registration applications within six months for those meeting the requirements of the Act





**LIVELIHOODS**



# For those at the grassroots

## About

His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, then the Crown Prince, launched the foundation on May 4, 2003. Her Majesty Queen Mother Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, founded the charitable body.

The registered Public Benefit Organization works in remote villages to bring about holistic community growth and development, serving the needy communities. By helping community members learn and integrate new skills, the foundation promotes self-empowerment and the importance of serving each other.

## Highlights

The Tarayana foundation, with its focus on empowering rural livelihoods, social mobilization and capacity building at the grassroots, continued to bring about positive changes in the rural communities through housing improvement, food sufficiency and security, micro-finance and skills development.

Housing improvement has had the maximum impact in bringing positive change in rural communities. In 2019-20 the foundation, with support from the American Himalayan Foundation, constructed 542 new

homes in 62 remote villages in 14 districts benefiting 2,439 individuals. The construction of homes is the first step within the larger objective of improving the lives of vulnerable rural populations.

With the outbreak of Covid-19, the foundation prioritized enhancing food and nutrition security by linking with the national Covid-19 response. Rural communities in Dagana, Haa, Lhuentse, Mongar, Pemagatshel, Punakha, Samtse, Thimphu, Trongsa, Tsirang and Zhemgang were provided seeds, saplings and tools to enhance food production. The program was implemented in two phases: self-sufficiency in

consumption, and income generation through sale of food products.

As of September 2020, rural community members under this program earned around Nu 564,000 from sale of

food products. Community members from Bjokha, Goshing, Ngangla and Phangkhar with support from SAARC Development Fund and Zhemgang dzongkhag administration, contributed four metric tonnes of non-wood forest products to the Dessung program. Foundation officials were also engaged in cultivation of various types of vegetables, in a 50 decimal leased plot in Hongtsho, which were also donated to the Dessung program in Thimphu, Old

542  
homes built

Age Home and Kidu patients at the Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital.

In 2019, Tarayana foundation trained 2,354 community members in enterprise development, handicrafts, green technologies, food processing, self-help group management and textile weaving. A total of 31 self-help groups were formed in six dzongkhags.

The foundation launched the Tarayana Micro Finance during His Majesty's 40<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary on February 21, 2020. It is aimed at providing access to micro credit to rural communities.

More than 70 community members from 13 dzongkhags took part in the 16<sup>th</sup> Tarayana fair themed, "Empowering Grassroots – Building Climate Resilient Communities." Members earned Nu 1.7 million in three days from sale of their products.

The foundation supported formation of five new community forests in Dagana and Samtse and also constructed water tanks for irrigation and drinking, and flush toilets to improve sanitation in rural communities.

The 124 Tarayana clubs in schools and colleges across the country assisted in construction of toilets for senior citizens, waste management, organizing cleaning campaigns, fundraising and donation of clothes and rations to the needy.

The foundation's 6<sup>th</sup> and final Restorative Surgical



### **A field officer distributes seeds to community members of Jangbi, Trongsa**

camp screened 35 patients, out of which 25 received cleft treatments. The camp treated more than 252 individuals with facial deformities so far, giving them hope and building their self-confidence. Through the foundation's annual pilgrimage program, eight senior citizens visited the holy sites of Varanasi and Rajgir in India in 2019. The pilgrimage program was initiated in 2008 to commemorate the coronation of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo. The foundation's student scholarship program enrolled 67 students in five different universities, of which 19 graduated in 2019.

The second 'Monpa Day' was jointly organised by the Folk Heritage Museum and the Trongsa Dzongkhag Administration. It was done in collaboration with Yangphel Adventure Travel, supported by the Tourism Council of Bhutan and Tribal Trust Foundation, in Jangbi, Trongsa. It was observed on December 10, 2019 to help promote the age-old tradition and culture of the community.

In 2019, Tarayana foundation trained 2,354 community members in enterprise development, handicrafts, green technologies, food processing, self-help group management and textile weaving.



# Breathing new life into communities

## About

Menjong Foundation was founded in 2011 as a non-profit organization that provides financial support and guidance to underprivileged population so they manage their own sustenance.

The foundation's work centers around imparting knowledge, supporting single mothers, providing nutritious meals and clean drinking water in schools, and protecting culture and environment.

## Highlights

In 2019, the Foundation provided free lunch to more than 60 students of Chendebji Primary school throughout the year. These students, mostly children of farmers and roadside workers, walk for more than two hours to school and home.

This initiative also benefitted communities as the foundation bought fruits, vegetables, cheese, eggs and butter directly from the community. Through such initiatives, the foundation aims to reduce poverty, prevent stunting among children, improve

academic performance and reduce financial burden on parents.

That same year, the Foundation also sponsored 53 students from economically disadvantaged families, who received school uniforms, stationeries, school bags and a yearly stipend of Nu 2,500 to Nu 3,500 a student. This scholarship program helped children continue their education, who would not be able to do so without such support.

Other activities include teaching and training local communities to store and preserve fruits and vegetables during winter months. The foundation's survey revealed that lack of proper food preserving facilities in the community contributed to poverty and less nutrition, especially in winter. The foundation also provided electric preserving cookers and glass jars to 30 households of Chendebji village to store food during winter. The preserving cookers and jars can store food for more than a year.

Young monks from humble backgrounds, studying in Dobji Dzong, received warm clothing from the foun-

53

**students from economically disadvantaged families received school uniforms, stationeries, school bags and a yearly stipend of Nu 2,500 to Nu 3,500**

ation, including robes and jackets, for the winter.

To improve sanitation, hygiene, health and community vitality, the foundation constructed a public kitchen and toilet near Chendebji Lhakhang in 2016.

Without proper public toilet and a dilapidated kitchen for the monastery, it was inconvenient for many in the community to conduct religious ceremonies and community gatherings near the monastery.



**Students of a remote school receive new uniforms, clothes, shoes and stationeries among others**

[ The foundation also provided electric preserving cookers and glass jars to 30 households of Chendebji village to store food during winter. ]





# **CARE-GIVING & REHABILITATION**



# Relief for kidney patients

## About

Bhutan Kidney Foundation (BKF) is the only civil society organization in the country advocating for services and care for people with chronic kidney disease. Since its inception, it has relentlessly focused on advocacy and awareness, and early detection programs for kidney patients and their families. It has established five networks within the country and one abroad, which compliments the foundation's works.

The foundation is recipient of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo's National Order of Merit (Gold), 2016. It was also recognised for its best world kidney day activities by the International Federation of Kidney Foundations (IFKF) during its 18th conference in 2018 in Chennai, India.

Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen is the patron of the foundation.

## Highlights

### Patient Care and Support

A total of 32 patients successfully underwent kidney

transplant with the foundation's involvement, which includes counseling and financial support among others. More than Nu 6.75M was spent under the care and support program.

### Advocacy and Awareness

To raise awareness about kidney diseases and the foundation, the World Kidney Day was observed in Silambi, Mongar in 2019. Local government officials, teacher and students of Nagor Middle Secondary

School joined the event. The foundation has collaborated with various districts like Punakha, Thimphu, Trashigang and Wangduephodrang to observe World Kidney Day since 2014.

The foundation also carried out advocacy and awareness campaign during the 2019 Royal Highland Festival in Laya. This

was the third time. The earlier involvements were in 2016 and 2017.

In 2019, the foundation also carried out and completed the 'develop community action plan to control kidney related diseases through prevention programme' project in four districts of Mongar, Pemagatshel,

# 32

**patients successfully underwent kidney transplant with the foundation's involvement**

Samts and Sarpang. The project began in 2018.

Besides kidney related diseases, the foundation also focused on other lifestyle diseases and facilitated basic health screening during the 5th Bhutan Royal Flower Exhibition in Samdrupjongkhar. It also observed World Diabetes Day 2019 at Deothang, Samdrupjongkhar.

**Patient care and support is one of foundation's many services to Bhutanese living with kidney diseases**



Besides kidney related diseases, the foundation also focused on other lifestyle diseases and facilitated basic health screening during the 5th Bhutan Royal Flower Exhibition in Samdrupjongkhar.



# For those with cancer

## About

Bhutan Cancer Society (BCS) is a non-profit organization that provides care and support to patients and caregivers, and works to prevent cancer through advocacy and research. Her Royal Highness Princes Kesang Wangmo Wangchuck launched the Public Benefit Organization on February 4, 2015 coinciding with World Cancer Day.

## Highlights

The society supplies B-Protein supplement and hygiene kit to the JDWNRH oncology ward. A majority of the cancer patients come from poor backgrounds. Patients are also given financial support as transport allowance and basic amenities.

The society is working on creating a network of cancer survivors and cancer patients to help create a sense of community. It created a platform for patients to visit the society's office to confide their concerns.

Currently, the society is working on mobilizing

resources to operate and manage a four-room transit home for patients in Thimphu, since patients have to travel to Thimphu for cancer treatment.

On June 23, BCS organised the "Walk the Talk" event with the theme "Racing against cancer" at the Thimphu clock tower. This walk was conducted mainly to promote healthy living, create awareness on cancer screening, particularly promoting Pap smear, and to show solidarity with people living with cancer in Bhutan.

In November and December 2019, the society in collaboration with READ Bhutan and Ministry of Health, organised a breast and cervical cancer health camp in the rural communities of Chukha, Haa and Wangduephodrang.

65

**women underwent colposcopy, 2 women underwent cold coagulation and 22 women were referred to Thimphu for surgical treatment of cervical precancers**

A total of 543 women and girls attended the program funded by Canada Funds for Local Initiatives (CFLI). Of the attendees, 65 women underwent colposcopy, underwent cold coagulation and 22 women were referred to Thimphu for surgical treatment of cervical precancers. A total of 100 males also benefited NCD screening at the same time. For sustainability, six



**More than 500 women and girls avail of the breasts and cervical cancer health camp in remote communities**

READ coordinators were trained on women's health program.

On February 4, 2020, World Cancer Day was ob-

served at Memorial chorten in Thimphu with offering of butter lamps. Health checkups were also made available to the public.

A total of 100 males also benefited NCD screening



# Empowering persons with disabilities

## About

The Disabled People's Organization of Bhutan (DPoB) was founded by group of persons with disabilities with the vision for an inclusive society that recognises, respects and promotes the rights and needs of persons with disabilities in Bhutan. It aspires to promote physical, psychological and socio-economic well being of persons with disabilities through inclusion and empowerment.

It became a registered association in 2010 His Royal Highness Prince Namgyel Wangchuck is the royal patron.

Since its inception, the association's main task was to create awareness and promote the rights of persons with disabilities besides lobbying with the government for support to beneficiaries. The association also promotes inclusion, enhances livelihood and independence and involves in socio-political decision making.

## Highlights

The association adopted and instituted the Disability Equality Training (DET) approach to create awareness about disability issues. Through DET, persons with disabilities take on themselves the responsibility to create awareness among the public, institutions, agencies and corporations.

The association has created awareness about disability among local government leaders of 11 dzongkhags.

Through its skilling program, 92 persons with disabilities have been trained and are now employed in various organizations.

All staff of the association have been trained within and outside the country to handle programs the DET approach.

The association also increased its contributing members to more than 200 from various organizations and established a good network with international organizations and within Bhutan.

# 92

**persons with disabilities have been trained and are now employed in various organizations**

[ ...It aspires to promote physical, psychological and socio-economic well being of persons with disabilities through inclusion and empowerment. ]



# Skills for persons with disabilities

## About

Draktsho Vocational Training Centre for Special Children and Youth was founded with the aspiration to empower and enhance living standard of children and youth with disabilities.

Through vocational training, it also aspires eventual integration of these children and youth into main-stream population. Over the years, Draktsho provided skills for gainful employment, which boosted confidence and independence of the trainees.

Founded by Rigzin Padma Tsogyal, a parent of a boy with learning disabilities, the vocational training centre was established on October 2, 2001.

## Highlights

Four athletes with intellectual disabilities from Draktsho participated at the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Three returned with gold medals. It was the third time athletes from Draktsho participated in the special Olympics.

Pelden, 37, a Draktsho graduate participated in the special Olympics for three consecutive times. including the recent one, he was in Greece in 2011 and Los Angeles in 2015. He brought home three gold

medals, one silver and a bronze in various games like relay race, 200-metres race and shotput.

Leki Lhaden, a student at the tailoring Unit won her first gold medal in the womens 100-metre race.

Chencho, a student of traditional art and painting brought home a silver medal in men's long jump.

Students of Draktsho East in Trashigang received a new building with four classrooms and a multipurpose hall. The infrastructure was built with support from Mr William Mark Haber and his spouse Ms. Heike Margarethe Sommers from Save the Children, US. Draktsho East has more than 100 students.

Another two-storey building was constructed with support from Opening Your Heart to Bhutan. The building houses the principal's office, staff conference room, a library and two guestrooms.

A delegation led by Save the Children Board Chairman Mr Bradley Chapman Irwin, his wife Ms. Catherine Kane Irwin and donors, Mr Haber and Mrs Sommers inaugurated the structure on November 9. Former president of Save the Children US, Mr Charles Frederick Mac Cormack, other board members Ms Katherine Jordan Oppenheimer, Ms Margaret Ann Mc Getrick and Senior Director of Individual Philanthropy from Save the Children US, Ms Jessica

Shoshone were also in the delegation.

Following one of its long term goals, Draktsho finalised its Life and Social Skills Curriculum for Children and Youth with Disabilities.

The standardised curriculum is a first of its kind in the country, focusing on imparting skills to children and

youth with disabilities to enhance their daily life.

Draktsho worked on the curriculum for the past three years. The curriculum was developed by an international consultant with funding from UNICEF Bhutan. The curriculum will be introduced this year and distributed among relevant stakeholders.



**Draktsho opens a new building for its students in the east in Trashigang**



## CARE-GIVING & REHABILITATION

Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women

# Empowering women

## About

RENEW (Respect, Educate, Nurture, and Empower Women) is the only CSO dedicated to empowering and providing relief of disadvantaged women, girls and children with special focus on empowering survivors of sexual and domestic violence, gender based violence and violence against women. Her Majesty Queen Mother Sangay Choden Wangchuck established the organization in 2004. Besides being the President, Her Majesty is also the Goodwill Ambassador for UNFPA.

RENEW program and services is broadly classified under two categories of preventive program, which focuses on advocacy, empowerment and behavioral change and intervention program, which provides direct services to RENEW clients.

## Highlights

### Prevention

RENEW's gender based violence response during COVID-19 was led by Her Majesty Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck, addressing the nation through the national television, BBS. Her Majesty spoke about how women and girls can be drastically affected by sexual and gender based violence during the pandemic and how collective efforts are required to

ensure domestic violence is reduced.

RENEW also produced five animated clips related to gender based violence and SRH response mechanism, which were extensively shared through print media, television, social media and radio.

RENEW successfully established two volunteer network across 20 districts, namely Community Based Support System (CBSS- adult network) and Druk Adolescents' Initiative for Sexual Awareness (DAISAN- youth network). CBSS volunteers act as an interface between RENEW and their respective communities, providing grassroot level assistance. DAISAN members, which was founded in 2011 creates awareness on sexual reproductive health and rights and advocates against gender based violence among peers.

RENEW also observed major international days, campaigns and events such as International Women Day on March 8 and International Day for elimination of violence against women on November 25 among others. The events highlighted the importance of the day and especially, its purpose.

RENEW conducted more than 42 program from 2017-2019 with over 7,190 participants (3,593 male and 3,597 female) benefiting from it. These programs are crucial not only for building network and



**RENEW President Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck during an awareness program with school students**

increasing efficacy but it also helped strengthen the institutional delivery of RENEW.

### **Intervention**

Since its inception in 2004, RENEW provided free counseling services to all RENEW clients. Core services of RENEW intervention program includes counseling, legal, medical, shelter (Gawailing Happy Home), livelihood and scholarship assistance.

RENEW intervention services provided to clients from 2004- 2019 witnessed a sharp increase over the years. From 2017-2019, a total of 13,358 services were provided both in RENEW crisis center and Gawailing Happy Home. In addition, 509 legal services and 8,741 health services were also provided.

As of September 2020, RENEW provided services to more than 548 walk in clients and through helpline.



# Early interventions for early developments

## About

Ability Bhutan Society (ABS) was established as a registered civil society organization in 2011. It was done in recognition of the special needs of persons living with diverse abilities. It drew inspiration from His Majesty the King's vision for a compassionate and just society.

Its activities and programs include capacity building, advocating and creating awareness. Additionally, it also stands for empowering persons living with diverse abilities to live independently. It believes in early interventions to prevent delays in development of children with disabilities.

## Highlights

In 2019, 27 children with disabilities benefitted from the clinical intervention program, which provides early intervention services and trains parents on child improvement. Consequently, six children transitioned to ECCD centers and another six to mainstream schools. Five children received support through home visits that provide necessary support to children and families.

Since 2018, the society's social workers have participated in the Australian Catholic University's (ACU) Feeding Clinic Telehealth sessions. It caters to building capacity and knowledge in providing care and service to children with different types of disabilities. Two parents attended a workshop to develop an Action Plan on National Policy for Persons with Disabilities in 2019. It was a part of the society's efforts to inspire parents and families and build their skills and knowledge on disability.

27

**children with disabilities  
benefitted from the clinical  
intervention program**

A total of 594 participants, of which more than a hundred were persons with disabilities, took part in several workshops, trainings, sensitisation programs and other events organized by ABS with UNICEF's support.

ABS also worked with Helvetas to conduct training, sensitisation, consultation and community awareness to build capacity for families and caregivers for children with and without disabilities. Around 2,000 participants took part in these programs, where real-life experiences, short dramas and video clips, to create awareness on diverse abilities, were shared.

ABS was also able to start 'pick and drop' services



**Persons with disabilities present various ways to support different types of disabilities in the country**

for children and their families for availing services at the center in Thimphu with a Toyota High Roof bus donated by the Rotary club of Taichung Chung Shin, Taiwan.

The 'Social Inclusive Development for People with Disabilities in Bhutan,' was formally launched in 2019. ABS collaborated with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany, and German Leprosy and Relief Association (DAHWA), India, for the project. It aimed at developing an equal and inclusive society in Chhukha, Dagana, Punakha and Trashigang. The project team received an induction training on upcoming programs and activities.

One of ABS's activities includes improving data collection. With support from dzongkhag health sectors, a total of 124 BHU staffs and dzongkhag health officers underwent training to fulfil basic healthcare needs of persons with disabilities. ECCD facilitators were also targeted to create awareness on social inclusion.

A total of 46 children with disabilities below 10 years of age, from five dzongkhags, received life skill development orientation with their parents/caregivers by a Physiotherapist.

The Ability Bhutan Society, in 2019, observed the World Down Syndrome Day, World Autism Awareness Day, World Cerebral Palsy Day and the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Relevant and engaging activities and events were conducted to raise awareness.

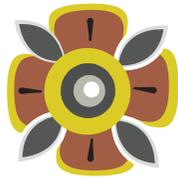
In 2020, ABS continued to provide homebased interventions to children with disabilities. One of the highlights included trainings by persons with disabilities to Covid-19 frontline workers to equip them with the knowledge and skills to provide appropriate services to persons with disabilities.

Other activities include basic training to assist people with disabilities during Covid-19, home visits to help parents with household chores and engage with their children. Psychological first aid training to staff of ABS as well as families and caregivers, and training on early identification and safety referrals on child protection were also conducted.

ABS also distributed essential items, including medicines and vegetables, intervention toys and special movement cards to families of children with disabilities. Other activities during the year includes restructuring and modification of basic infrastructural facilities like toilets, ECCD centers, footpaths and classrooms to suit the needs of persons with disabilities.

ABS also distributed essential items including medicines and vegetables, intervention toys and special movement cards to families of children with disabilities.





**YOUTH**



# For youth at the cross roads

## About

Nazhoen Lamten aims to support children and youth in conflict with law as well as those facing difficult circumstances in life. Registered as a civil society organization in 2016, Nazhoen Lamten’s key activity includes providing immediate shelter to children without parents or guardians and those released from rehabilitation and juvenile centers.

## Highlights

It was observed that most children and youth released from juvenile centers, prisons and rehabilitation centers do not receive proper care and support in the society. As such, most relapse into old habits and end up in prisons.

Nazhoen Lamten serves children in difficult circumstances and in conflict with law by providing timely intervention, empowerment and reintegration into society. It works closely with police, National Commission for Women and Children, Save the children, Office of

Attorney General, Bhutan Narcotic Control Agency, UNICEF, HELVETAS, Opening Your Heart to Bhutan.

Between 2015 and 2018, Nazhoen Lamten provided aftercare services and helped 23 children reintegrate into mainstream society after being released from the Youth Development and Rehabilitation Center (YDRC), Tsimasham. Nazhoen Lamten also helps youth continue their education and in finding jobs. It also provides counselling and skills development training to those released from YDRC.

A total of 220 youths benefitted from the organization’s entrepreneurship for youth and micro businesses that helps children find decent employment and income.

# 220

**youths benefitted from the organization’s entrepreneurship for youth and micro businesses**

businesses that helps children find decent employment and income.

In 2018, the organization constructed a dormitory and classroom for the juvenile center in YDRC, Tsimasham, which benefitted 20 juveniles. A total of 56 children benefitted from

its aftercare shelter services.

Since 2017 Nazhoen Lamten, with support from several other international and local institutions,

engaged in multiple activities and programs covering awareness, parenting, skills development, winter youth engagement, suicide prevention, life skills development and advocacies. The organization also observed the International Youth Day and National

Children Day by celebrating with children and organising youth awards.

So far, Nazhoen Lamten has 780 volunteers providing support and services to children living in difficult circumstances and those in conflict with the law.

[ Nazhoen Lamten serves children in difficult circumstances and in conflict with law by providing timely intervention, empowerment and reintegration into society. ]



## YOUTH

Bhutan Jamchong Thuendrel (BJTF)

# For a dignified, self-sufficient, responsible youth

## About

Bhutan Jamchong Thuendrel (BJTF) arose from the concerns of increasing youth unemployment. Since its establishment in 2018, BJTF channelised its efforts to support Bhutanese youth find meaningful employment to contribute to the society while leading dignified lives. BJTF also serves as the Bhutan Chapter to the South Asia Foundation (SAF), which provides numerous scholarships for Bhutanese students at various universities across South Asia.

## Highlights

Under the Madanjeet SAF Scholarship, 77 Bhutanese students have completed their tertiary education and 16 are currently pursuing Bachelors and Master's Degree across the various SAF Institution of Excellence across the SAARC region.

BJTF, along with Helvetas Bhutan, UN systems in Bhutan and other partners, initiated a project 'Enhancing Youth Employability Through Awareness and

Meaningful Engagement (EYETAME)' in line with the government's aspirations to provide gainful employment to youth.

Considering the skills mismatch between jobseekers and market requirement, the project established small multi-skilled service business in partnership with TTIs. The project highlighted opportunities of skilled jobs as a career choice to high school students through dialogue and presentations. A career counselling platform was also provided to bring about a mindset change of the youths.

# 5,664

**students reached out to through awareness and advocacy programs**

BJTF helps students in developing business plans, obtaining business license and other legal requirements, negotiate favourable loans/grants with financial institutions, marketing of their business, skill enhancement and trainings.

The EYETAME Project is fully funded by the European Union (EU) supported by Helvetas Bhutan, with total amount of Nu 1.679 million.

BJTF successfully conducted awareness and advocacy programs at 12 schools and four TTIs across Bhutan, reaching out to 5,664 youths.

BJTF successfully facilitated its maiden group of

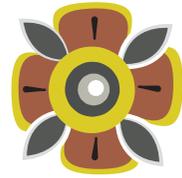
three TTI graduates in establishing a skilled services business called Druk Skill Service (DSS), with support from EU and Helvetas Bhutan. DSS provides various professional door-o-door electrical, plumbing repair and maintenance services.

BJTF helps students in developing business plans, obtaining business license and other legal requirements.



**As part of its advocacy and awareness program, the foundation disseminates information on opportunities in technical jobs**





**GOOD GOVERNANCE**



# Promoting women leadership

## About

Registered as a CSO in 2016 with more than 4,000 members, Bhutan Network for Empowering Women (BNEW) envisions a Bhutanese society, where women leadership is the norm rather than an exception.

The network provides a platform to promote, facilitate and strengthen women's participation in governance, leadership and development. BNEW follows the two-track approach- local and national level- to facilitate women leadership. This approach is steered by a tri-pronged strategy to strengthen the network, build capacity and advocate for gender equality.

## Highlights

Among various activities implemented in 2019-2020, BNEW conducted the second series of women leadership workshops with the 146 elected women representatives from 110 gewogs, nine thromdes and Yenlag Throms and 19 dzongkhags. Three workshops were conducted at the regional level.

These training-workshops aimed at helping them reflect on their experiences as grassroots women

leaders and further sharpen their knowledge and skills to make a difference in the community. While self-assessments and reflections led to constructively reviewing their own performances and challenges, BNEW could also provide them the support needed to enhance their capacities.

Through resource persons from DLG and GNHC, the workshop helped clarify doubts and issues on the LG Act as well as changes in LG Rules & Regulations, policies, programmes, instruments and related changes in the context of the 12th FYP. Bhutan

National Legal Institute was also invited to provide a refresher on dispute settlements and mediation, which is a major responsibility carried out by the mangmis.

# 277

**women participants were familiarised with the Election Act, Election Rules and Regulations, Functional Literacy Test and campaign strategies.**

Representation of women in the 205 LGs is at a dismal 11.6 percent. With the 3rd LG elections coming up in 2021, BNEW initiated another workshop to mobilise, motivate and train potential women to contest in the upcoming elections. Participants were familiarised with the Election Act, Election Rules and Regulations, Functional Literacy Test and campaign strategies. A total of 277 women from 19 Dzongkhags were covered under the program.



**Elected representatives from various communities across the country during a leadership training in Wangduephodrang**

Amidst the COVID19 pandemic, BNEW managed to bring together women leaders serving in LGs along with some potential women for a strategy workshop in August 2020. A total of 27 elected women representatives and seven potential ones attended the workshop, which provided them an opportunity to reflect on their performance, achievements, challenges and exchange their experiences as their tenure nears completion.

The launch of Bhutan Women Parliamentary Caucus (BWPC) in 2019 was a milestone for BNEW. Launched as a Joint initiative of BNEW and NCWC for promoting gender equality in the country, the BWPC aspires to mainstream gender in the workings of the Parliament.

This initiative will contribute towards achieving the

key result area of the 12th Plan - “Gender Equality Promoted, Women and Girls Empowered” and the SDG Goal 5 - “Gender equality and empower all women and girls.”

To operationalise the Caucus, BWPC launch was followed by an Orientation Workshop titled: ‘towards common understanding and strategising for gender equality’. The workshop was convened as a forum for knowledge exchange among members and supporters of the BWPC from 5-8 November 2019.

A total of 41 participants, comprising six female MPs, 10 male MPs, nine women from political parties and those who had contested in the last NC elections attended the workshop. An additional seven representatives from relevant CSOs, three from Election Commission and six journalists also joined.

The launch of Bhutan Women Parliamentary Caucus (BWPC) in 2019 was a milestone for BNEW.



# In the interest of media & democracy

## About

Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy was established in 2008 to nurture and improve the standard of media in the country. As one of the first registered civil society organizations, BCMD aims to promote public discourse and dialogue on issues that concern youth, environment, society, governance and education.

## Highlights

The centre carried out several activities throughout 2019, engaging with youths, teachers, civil servants, local leaders and persons with disabilities, on various programs, dialogues and initiatives.

For the first time, BCMD hosted a Youth Summit in both east and west Bhutan that was attended by 229 youths from 37 different schools across the country to discuss and review issues of public interest. It also gave them the opportunity to learn and become

socially conscious and to value diversity. Overall, The Building Community Initiative was able to reach 1,009 participants in both Paro and Samdrup-jongkhar. The participants crafted missions, visions and strategies for their communities. The initiative implemented and completed 12 projects in the same year.

In 2019, the centre's Youth Initiative program engaged youths to research and review issues such as the ban on use of plastic, Internet use, public perception of LGBTQI and nutrition in government schools. Besides youths, BCMD also interacted with teachers, civil servants and local leaders under its Media and Democracy Literacy (MDL) initiative to promote critical thinking skills and techniques to handle disinformation and fake news. Its purpose was to educate citizens on the importance of verified and balanced information.

That same year, BCMD also hosted a photography

# 229

**youths attended a BCMD hosted  
Youth Summit**

exhibition by the students of Wangsel Institute for the Deaf, who were trained on basic ethics of photography composition and caption writing. This initiative proved that persons with disabilities are not merely recipients but also contributors of ideas and skills.

The Bhutan Democracy Forum 2019 engaged political parties, members of parliament, journalists, academics and local leaders to talk about Bhutan's experience with democracy and elections as well as share their political concerns, experiences and lessons. The youth podcast, 'Da rei na ba' continued

to cover themes of mental health, GNH, gaming addiction, copycat culture and recovering addicts.

The Druk Journal, BCMD's non-partisan publication, creates conversations around national policies and issues relevant to Bhutan. In 2019, two issues were published focusing on education and tourism. The journal's in-depth analysis and conversations about the nation's tourism industry was able to influence major government decisions and policies, particularly on mass tourism. The Druk Journal continues to provide constructive feedback on critical national issues.

[ The Druk Journal, BCMD's non-partisan publication, creates conversations around national policies and issues relevant to Bhutan. ]



# Strengthening the media

Almost a decade since its establishment, Bhutan Media Foundation (BMF) has emerged as platform for capacity building among media professionals. In keeping with its mandate, BMF supported media development through trainings, scholarships and media literacy. That in turn contributed to sustainability and growth of newspapers, broadcast stations and journalists.

For BMF, 2019 was a year to reckon with, especially in view of two news stories resulting in immediate action from the government. The story on lack of an education policy prompted the education ministry to immediately work on one. Another story on loopholes in procurement rules prompted the health ministry to revise rules.

The two stories were done by two journalists trained through a first of kind project themed 'Strengthening Investigative Journalism to Ensure Public Access to Information,' supported by UNESCO.

The project trained 35 journalists on investigative reporting, of which 10 journalists received reporting grants to pursue their stories. During the entire course, BMF involved two female and one male

mentor to guide the reporters. The project not only saw immediate impact but also drew more women participation.

In another one of kind projects supported by EU/Helvetas, media literacy was provided to diverse communities across the country. BMF developed three media literacy training modules: basic media literacy for illiterate and semi-literate people, intermediate media literacy for youth and advanced media literacy for working professionals.

# 35

**journalists were trained on  
investigative reporting of which  
10 journalists received reporting  
grants to pursue their stories**

For the basic media literacy, BMF trained 81 community members from Kazhi gewog in Wangdiphodrang and 56 community members from Sakteng gewog in Trashigang from August to September.

A total of 856 students of CLCS, Taktse, 200 students of Gyalpozhing College of Information Technology and 160 students of

Samtse College of Education made up the Intermediate Media Literacy trainees.

Sixty participants from government agencies, corporations, CSOs, media houses, teachers, lecturers and MPs attended BMF's Advanced Media Literacy

training for working professionals on December 18, 2019.

BMF conducted a media literacy survey with training participants to evaluate the efficacy of media literacy programs and media literacy level among diverse communities.

The survey findings show that the social media apps such as WeChat and Facebook are widely used by all age groups for social networking and entertainment. WeChat is mostly used by the illiterate and semi-illiterate people, whereas, Facebook is popular among the youth and working professionals.

The year 2019 began with a day-long training on Wikipedia for Dzongkha editors and reporters on January 24. The training was conducted with the support from Wikimedia Foundation with the intent to enhance the quality of Dzongkha newspapers and broadcast stations.

BMF also compiled an analysis and synopses of RENEW's 12-episode talk-show in Dzongkha called Moghi Mikhar. The talk show on gender and woman empowerment was aired on BBS 2 from March 8 to April 30, 2019.



**Bhutanese journalists from various media houses following completion of training on investigative journalism**

In 2020, BMF replicated the investigative reporting, training and mentorship model to produce well-researched stories on climate change and environment. The project themed, 'Linking Climate Change Reporting with Public Policy' was supported by Internews Earth Journalism Network and trained 30 journalists, including freelancers from July 13 to 15, 2020.



**As part of its media literacy program, the foundation educates people in remote communities of the different media platforms**

Nine reporters who attended the training were awarded the first round of the climate change-reporting grant. Each reporter is attached to a mentor, who will guide him or her throughout his or her story writing process.

In the second year of the project, the same reporters were given second grant, where they will follow up on their climate change stories.

BMF also initiated a project titled, 'Enhancing the Interface between the Media and Parliament' to sensitise journalists on the processes and proceedings of Parliament and to sensitise parliamentarians on the processes and workings of the media. This is expected to help the parliamentarians engage with the media effectively.

BMF also conducted a one-day workshop on 'Understanding the Processes and Proceedings of Parliament' for journalists in Paro on August 10, 2020. A total of 40 journalists attended.

On June 24, 2020, BMF signed an MoU with Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD) and Journalists Association of Bhutan (JAB) on the project titled 'Building the Capacity of Civil Society Organizations to be Strategic Users of Media'.

This project is expected to strengthen the civil society organizations in improving their visibility, widening their reach and strategising their engagement with the media.

Under this project, BMF and JAB have jointly developed and designed a training module on media engagement.

# Towards an open society

## About

Established in 2014, the Bhutan Transparency Initiative (BTI) believes in creating public awareness and education to fight corruption. BTI's activities and programs include civic engagement to end corruption, research to build evidence for effective advocacy and policy for good governance. Women and youth engagement in development interventions and access to justice for the poor and marginalised are its other initiatives.

## Highlights

In 2019, BTI collaborated with various colleges under the Royal University of Bhutan and instituted the 'Youth Practitioner for Accountability Bhutan' (YPAB) club in colleges of Natural Resources and the Gedu College of Business studies. BTI initiated capacity building programs for club members and each YPAB member conducted a community scorecard (CSC) on selected services provided by the colleges.

Since 2015, BTI implemented the social account-

ability program with local governments to engage citizens and build anti-corruption consciousness. Between 2019 and 2020, BTI institutionalised social accountability programs in Gelephu thromde and Phangkhar gewog in Zhemgang. These initiatives have been effective in curbing corruption and improving service delivery in local communities.

BTI implemented the Advocacy and Legal Advice Program (ALAP) in Bhutan in 2018 to improve complaint redressal mechanisms and systems for victims of corruption and to educate citizens on their legal rights to access justice.

A core BTI activity is research and studies to build knowledge and database on corruption. Between 2019 and 2020, BTI conducted the National Corruption Barometer Survey (NBS) in collaboration with Anti-Corruption Commission to determine levels and trend of corruption in Bhutan. The first NCBS was conducted in 2016 and the findings provide reference not only to Bhutan but also at a global level. BTI also organised various forums to share the findings of the research studies to initiate dialogue and push for

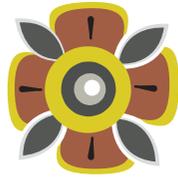
policy interventions in the fight against corruption.

In future, BTI will continue to contribute to the fight against corruption by building a database on corruption and strengthening coalition among institutions and individuals. BTI will also focus on research and studies at both local and national levels to understand the dynamics of corruption, identify the existing gaps and deficits in good governance.

The organization identified studying the role of local governments to fight corruption at the local level and developing fact sheets on citizen's rights and legitimate service entitlements from public service providers. BTI will also conduct national level diagnostic studies for the Bhutan Power Corporation, Drug Regulatory Authority, Bank of Bhutan and Druk Air Corporation.

Between 2019 and 2020, BTI institutionalised social accountability programs in Gelephu thromde and Phangkhar gewog in Zhemgang. These initiatives have been effective in curbing corruption and improving service delivery in the local communities.





# **ARTS, HERITAGE & CULTURE**



# Fostering entrepreneurship

## About

As a registered Civil Society Organization, the Loden Foundation is dedicated to fostering an enlightened and happy society through promotion of education, social entrepreneurship and Bhutan's culture and tradition across Bhutanese society.

## Highlights

In 2020, Loden supported eight students to pursue medical studies. Bhutan has only 0.4 physicians per 1,000 people. The COVID-19 pandemic was a stark reminder of the dire need for more medical professionals in the country. In total, Loden supported 29 students pursuing medical studies.

Keeping in mind that in May this year over 11,000 Bhutanese returned from overseas and 30,000 employees were laid off in the country, Loden pushed forward its SEED (Student Empowerment through Entrepreneurship Development) trainings in partnership with UNICEF Bhutan and the Department of Youth and Sports under the

Ministry of Education. Four trainings were conducted for out-of-school youth at Youth Friendly Integrated Service Centers (YFISCs) in Gelephu, Phuentsholing and Thimphu.

In Thimphu, Loden had to limit to two trainings due to overwhelming number of online applications. Of the 88 young people who attended the trainings, 33 business ideas were received from the four trainings. The top 14 shortlisted business ideas will all compete for the chance to win up to Nu 1.5 million in interest and collateral-free loan through the Loden-

UNICEF Bhutan Funding Window.

To enhance local entrepreneurship, Loden also pooled its financial and human resources with UNDP Bhutan to support 10 business ideas through the Loden-UNDP Bhutan Covid-19 Response

Fund in spring. To ensure that the intervention was not only impactful but also efficient and timely, Loden fast-tracked its selection process and used technology to complete the selection process within a month.

# 5,000

**aspiring entrepreneurs trained**



**Entrepreneurship development among Bhutanese youth is one of the foundation's main focus areas**

Preference was given to business ideas that would ease difficulties caused by the pandemic and sustain after it passes. Of the 95 business proposals received in a month, six agriculture businesses, one face mask production, one vegetable logistics company, one quarantine waste collection and one online education portal for school students were selected. In a span of four months, these businesses created a total of 56 jobs.

Realising the need to support more startups and existing businesses at such a crucial time, Loden held another round of business proposal selection in August. A total of six businesses were supported

again in areas of food, technology, traditional arts and in manufacturing.

Usually, Loden calls for business proposals twice a year. However, realising the need to revitalise the economy, three calls were made for business proposals under five different funding windows in partnership with UNDP Bhutan, UNICEF Bhutan, Society Switzerland Bhutan and Mountain Hazelnuts.

As of November 23, 2020, Loden Foundation trained more than 5,000 aspiring entrepreneurs, supported 205 business projects, funded 58 scholarships and sponsored 189 children.

To enhance local entrepreneurship, Loden also pooled its financial and human resources with UNDP Bhutan to support 10 business ideas ...



# A record of Bhutanese music

## About

The Music of Bhutan Research Centre (MBRC) was established in 2008 to document, preserve and promote the vast intangible heritage of Bhutan's music, dance and drama forms.

Registered in 2012 as a Public Benefit Organization the centre seeks to research, record and archive the many musical traditions and oral masterpieces of the country's diverse regional, linguistic and ethnic groups.

## Highlights

The centre carried out extensive research and interviewed more than 200 elderly masters, including surviving artists from the court of the Third King (1952-1972). It also archived audio-visual field records, interviews, field notes, photographs, musical instruments and dance costumes.

In a deliberate effort to widen artistic opportuni-

ties, the centre also partnered with several groups ranging from celebrated musicians, public schools, government entities, media outlets, performing troops and dance companies.

A priority and a challenge for the centre is to digitise, back up and generate searchable metadata for thousand mini DV tapes, including photographs and audio, or word files generated by MBRC expeditions from 2008-2019. The aim is to have at least two sets of back ups, stored in two different locations. However the centre is constrained by lack of funds and technical know how.

In 2019, the centre did five projects that archived and documented the Tsamangpai Alo, Mongar Drubi Dungjue, Thrun Thrun Karmo, Annual Folk Music Festival, Wangduephodrang, and Bjoka Choedpa, Zhemgang.

In 2020, the centre produced an MTV about COVID-19 to create awareness on the pandemic.



The foundation carried out extensive research and interviewed more than 200 elderly masters, including surviving artists from the court of the Third Druk Gyalpo

# Weaving a tradition into future

## About

The Royal Textile Academy (RTA) was established as a nonprofit organization in 2005 to preserve and promote the nation's living art of weaving. It was registered as a Civil Society Organization on June 13, 2011.

The academy is managed by a Board of Trustees under the leadership of Her Majesty Queen Mother Sangay Choden Wangchuck, who is the Chairperson.

## Highlights

The Academy continued to carry out several programs in 2019-20 to promote weaving through education, exhibitions, trainings and support programs for local textile designers.

A total of 113 girl-students from different schools across the country attended a weaving training program at its centre in RTA Thimphu. Students learned the basics of weaving, like rolling the yarn and preparing the warp. Participants, who were given stipends, wove plain mufflers on back strap loom.

This program, conducted twice a year, allows students to learn and develop skills and remain engaged during school breaks. Begun in 2011, 350 trainees attended the weaving program so far.

The Academy also hosted more than 1,200 visitors in its museum from schools and educational institutions all over the country. The guided tour fascinated and captivated many students. In the words of a student, the tour was a story of who we are and where we come from, told through display of textiles.

Between 2019 and 2020, the RTA hosted five exhibitions, including Beaded Thangka Exhibition and

Timeless Creations Exhibition from Nepal. It also hosted the display of products from Product Development and Design Training Workshop and an audio-visual exhibition on Wangchuck Dynasty during the 112th National Day celebrations. An annual exhibition called 'Royal Robes: Wangchuck Dynasty' was inaugurated on February

2020 by Her Majesty Gyalyum Ashi Sangay Choden Wangchuck.

The Product Development and Design Training Work-

# 1,200

**visitors visited the museum from schools and educational institutions all over the country**

shop, the first of its kind in the country, was initiated with support from the Smithsonian Institution, United States. The Workshop aimed at producing a collection of textile products that reflected Bhutanese culture. Six local textile designers attended the workshop.

Two workshops, including a Workshop on Yarns and Equipment, supported by the International Trade Center and Agency for Promotion of Indigenous Crafts, and Natural Dyeing training workshop were held to enhance the capacity of RTA weavers.

Trainings were also provided for local textile and fashion designers in Bangkok and Delhi. The foundation also supported rural weavers by providing a market for their textile products in Thimphu. This began in 2019 and will be an annual feature.

RTA's fashion shows are popular and brings together designers from the region and across the world. In 2019, the foundation hosted two fashion presentations: 'Threading Bhutanese – Thai' to commemorate 30th diplomatic ties with Thailand and 'Khadi – Thagzo,' jointly organised by Indian Embassy in Thimphu

and the Royal Textile Academy. The mega fashion show was a part of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and featured 48 ensembles by leading designers from India and Bhutan.

The national design and art competition is an annual event to promote arts and crafts of Bhutan by providing a platform and recognition to artisans. The 2020 competition held in March received 158 entries. Top three winners in each category took home cash prizes of Nu 120,000, Nu 65,000 and Nu 32,000. The categories include weaving (gho and kira), embroidery, traditional painting, contemporary art, wood carving and sculpture. Close to 4,000 artisans participated in the national competition so far.

Between 2019 and 2020, the foundation carried out conservation treatments on 12 Kuthangs, Thrikheb, saddle cover and jacket, which belonged to the first king of Bhutan.

Their Imperial Highnesses the Crown Prince and Crown Princess Akishino, and Prince Hisahito of Japan, visited the Academy in August 2019.



**The academy trained more than 100 girl-students from different schools across the country on weaving**



# A living cultural heritage

## About

The Ogyen Choling Foundation strives to contribute to the preservation and promotion of Bhutan's cultural and traditional heritage. In so doing, it also supports the social and economic well being of the local community.

The foundation's objective is to preserve and maintain the original buildings, temples and structures of the Ogyen Choling complex. It facilitates and supports performance of traditional religious rituals and including cultural events of the local community. In maintaining and managing a museum about Bhutan's religious, cultural and architectural heritage, it creates employment for local people and provides grants to disadvantaged families and individuals within the community.

## Highlights

The main achievements for 2019 include continuous preservation, maintenance and remodeling works on the historical structures, besides reviving and supporting religious rituals. The foundation plays an important role as local employer and promotor of local handicrafts.

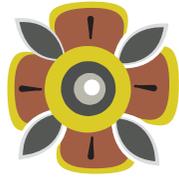
The foundation continued to run the ECCD successfully for 12 pre-school children from the village. It provided grants for students and academic prizes to achievers in both the primary school and the Tang Central School.

The museum saw more than 2,000 local visitors, mainly students and pilgrims, and 2,531 international visitors in 2019. It made substantial contributions to tourism, especially for Bumthang, and to tourism linked economic activities in the region.



**The museum saw more than 2,000 local visitors, mainly students and pilgrims and 2,531 tourists**





**ENVIRONMENT**



## ENVIRONMENT

Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN)

# Seeing the nature for its species

## About

The Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN) was established as a citizen-based NGO in 1987, devoted to conservation of Bhutan's environment.

Between 1999 and 2012, RSPN was under the Royal Patronage of His Majesty The King. Today, Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen is the Patron of the organization. RSPN strives to empower local communities and build a sense of ownership in sustainably managing environment through engagement of communities in planning, decision-making and project implementation.

RSPN was honored with the Energy Globe Award 2020 for successfully implementing the Strengthening of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) project supported by the SAARC Development Fund.

## The 11 flagship programs

- black-necked crane conservation
- white-bellied heron conservation
- waste management for human health and environment

- climate change adaptation and mitigation
- agro-ecological farming
- rivers for life
- water for livelihoods
- wetland conservation
- community-based sustainable eco-tourism
- eco-restoration
- environmental education for change

## Highlights

### White-bellied heron (WBH) recovery plan

To increase and maintain ecologically viable population of WBH through in-situ and ex-situ conservation measure, real time smart monitoring of white-bellied heron population was carried out. It used Epicollect5 digital platform adopted across the range in Bhutan. About 100 individuals, including local conservation support groups (LCSG) were trained in using the Epicollect5 application.

An inventory research of potential habitats was conducted along Dagachhu, Deurichhu, Rangaekhola, Galeychhu, Reteychhu, Mouchhu and Chamkharchhu.

# 10

**acre restoration plantation was completed in Tsirang**



### **The annual white-bellied heron population survey conducted nationwide saw 27 individuals in 2020**

The annual WBH population survey conducted nationwide counted 27 individuals in 2020. Three active nests were located from which five juveniles fledged. A new nest located at Balwani at 265 metres above sea level was identified as the lowest nesting ground for Bhutan.

White-bellied herons were also sighted in two new locations of Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary and Rangakhola. Two of the highly active habitats at Phochhu and Pirchen were maintained and restored.

Research on feeding and breeding behavior was conducted at Wakletar and Mithuntar nest. A first observation of sexual conflict, parental infanticide, hatching failure and nest failure in the Tsidang nest were documented.

#### **WBH conservation in Punatsangchhu basin**

To support and partake in the community WBH conservation and management actions, capacity of local communities and Local Conservation Support Groups

(LCSG) were strengthened.

A 10-acre restoration plantation was also completed in Tsirang in collaboration with the Territorial Forest Division.

A consultation meeting with the government officials of Tsirang and Dagana, falling within the territory of WBH habitats was conducted, including selection of project site. As part of the project, 44 households in three gewogs under Tsirang and Dagana were supported with livelihood opportunities like fishery, piggery, poultry and goat farming, organic vegetable production and making horticulture saplings accessible.

#### **Community participation in Chamkharchhu basin**

Socio-economic assessment of communities living along the Chamkharchhu basin WBH habitat was conducted. The intention was to involve rural and under privileged communities and students in conservation of the critically endangered bird.

Awareness and advocacy programs with students and local communities were also conducted, resulting into establishment of four Local Conservation Support Groups (LCSG). Six WBH information boards and posters were installed at strategic locations along Chamkharchhu basin. Another six information charts for educational purpose were also developed. Awareness posters were distributed to about 300 households in Bardo and Shingkar gewogs. The project funded by Alice C Tyler Perpetual Trust began in 2019. It ends in 2021.

### **Climate smart agriculture approaches**

Climate smart agriculture trainings were provided to empower small scale farmers, increase crop yields and create awareness on sustainable livelihood, waste and water management and climate change.

Climate smart agriculture trainings focused on improved vegetable farming techniques, organic agriculture approach, seed production and nursery raising. Soil fertility and pest management, bio fertilizer and liquid manure preparation techniques and natural resource management were other trainings it provided.

Awareness and education programs on Reducing Emission from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+), a sustainable forest management initiative, were also conducted.

RSPN supported beneficiaries with basic agriculture materials such as agricultural tools, vegetable seeds, polyhouse and green net mulching plastics among others.

### **Black-necked crane (BNC) Conservation**

The endangered black-necked crane continued receiving priority with several activities carried out to increase awareness among communities and ensuring that the habitats were suitable and safe.

In Bumdeling, foraging grounds were increased through restoration of degraded paddy fields. To enhance communities' knowledge on wintering BNC ecology and crane conducive livelihood activities were promoted. More than 200 acres of paddy fields in Bumdeling, Trashiyangtse were electric-fenced to benefit 120 households.

About 20 acres of flood affected paddy fields in Maidung, Bumdeling were restored for cultivation. Apart from that about 300 stray dogs were sterilised in Bumdeling, Phobjikha and Chumey to reduce threats.

To minimise mid-flight collision with overhead powerlines, flight diverters were installed along the powerlines in Chumey and Tang. The annual crane roost maintenance was also carried out in Chumey.

A BNC dietary composition study was carried out in Bumdeling and Trashiyangtse.

[ 44 households... under Tsirang and Dagana were supported with livelihood opportunities like fishery, piggery, poultry and goat farming... ]

A community exchange program to Phobjikha, Wangduephodrang conservation area was conducted for locals of Uruk village under Chumey gewog.

The Department of Forests and Park Services developed and endorsed a black-necked crane Conservation Action Plan.

### **Research and Conservation of BNC**

To improve knowledge on migratory routes of black-necked cranes wintering in Bhutan and identification of potential threats during migration, three adult cranes were tagged with GSM/GPRS transmitters.

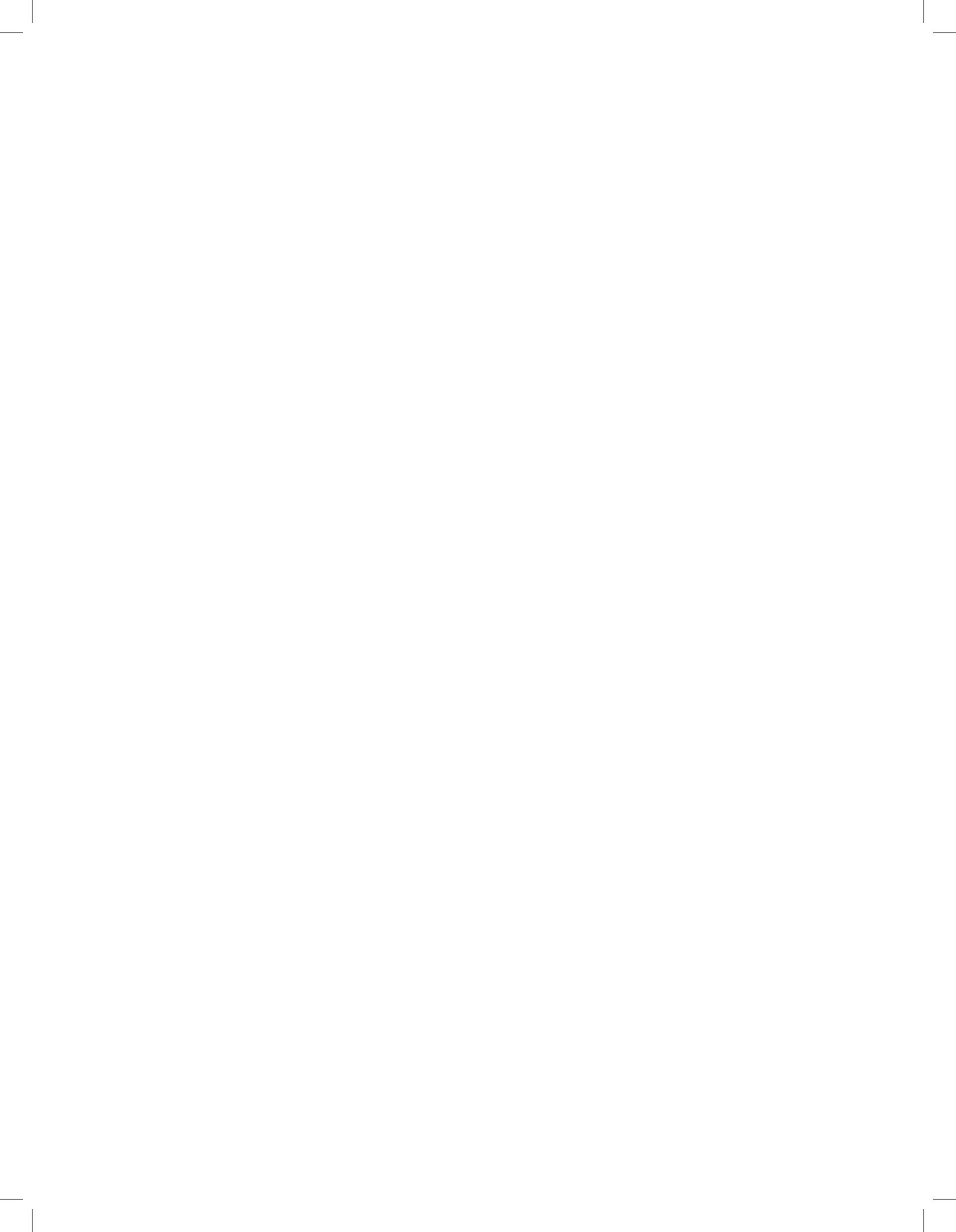
Two adults in Phobjikha were also colour ringed in

winter of 2019-2020.

Under research and conservation, analysis of habitat use of black-necked cranes in wintering sites were carried out. Identification of important feeding and roosting sites during wintering were also studied to create action and management plans.

Local capacities in crane monitoring and development of material for the public to enhance awareness for black-necked cranes were also strengthened.

Transboundary cooperation in crane conservation and communication linkage among the range countries for conservation of black-necked cranes saw support.





# **ANIMAL WELFARE**



# Saving animals

## About

The Jangsa Animal Saving Trust was established in 2000 by Lama Kunzang Dorjee to promote the culture of Bodhichitta. Its mission is to establish, maintain and advocate the spiritual practice of 'tsethar,' or saving lives of animals.

Today, the Trust maintains 600 bulls, 300 goats, 200 yaks, 137 pigs, 23 sheep and nine ducks in 10 dzongkhags.

The Jangsa Gonpa in Kalimpong takes care of nine bulls, two large tanks of fish and hundreds of stray dogs at the Serbithang dog shelter in Thimphu.

## Highlights

In 2019, the Trust carried out numerous activities to save animal lives.

It opened a well-stocked veterinary clinic in Serbithang, Thimphu, with a veterinarian and a rescue

ambulance reaching out to 596 sick and injured animals. Almost 70 dogs, mostly puppies, were given for adoption from the shelter in Serbithang and a new fence was erected around the shelter to prevent dogs from wandering out.

The Trust conducted education awareness programs on stray dogs in 11 government schools, reaching out to 12,000 people. A total of 2,016 stray dogs were sterilised, mostly in Thimphu.

A shelter for large animals was built to provide protection from rain in summer and cold in winter and more than 30,000 animals were saved through tsethar.

The year also saw the appointment of the Trust's first executive director and more than 300 people becoming paying members. More than 200 youth were engaged as volunteers in various activities of Jangsa and four field staff attended an animal medical camp in Bodhgaya, India.

# 30,000

animals saved through tsethar



**A student visitor feeds dogs at the Serbithang shelter in Thimphu**



## ANIMAL WELFARE

Royal Society for Protection and Care of Animals

# Animal welfare at the forefront

## About

Royal Society for Protection and Care of animals (RSPCA) was established in 1999 to foster a sense of moral responsibility among the people to ensure animal welfare and provide humanely treatment to animals, particularly to stop the culling of stray dogs.

RSPCA operates an Animal Welfare Treatment Centre, rescues and treats animals and conducts advocacy programs across all sections of the society.

It has been actively involved in creating awareness on animal welfare, responsible pet ownership, prevention of dog bites and rabies. It has also carried out dog population management and adoption programs.

## Activities

In 2019, RSPCA conducted awareness programs in 87 schools and institutions, reaching out to 26,586 students, teachers and the general public. In the process, 2,315 dogs and cats were sterilised, while

another 2,624 dogs were vaccinated for rabies. In the same year, 135 dogs, two bulls, a cow and a donkey were rehabilitated at the rehabilitation centre in Ngabiphu and two puppies were adopted.

In 2020, 87 puppies and 164 dogs were adopted, six bulls from the slaughterhouse in Tsirang were rescued and rehabilitated, 92 dogs were treated and rehabilitated and 537 dogs vaccinated and sterilised.

# 2,624

**dogs were vaccinated for rabies in 2019**

The RSPCA team, in collaboration with the department of livestock, carried out door-to-door awareness in the four gewogs of Haa, reaching 635 households in 2020.

A month before the national lockdown, 1,614 dogs and cats were sterilised and 3,236 dogs were vaccinated against rabies in Thimphu.

During the national lockdown, RSPCA and its supporters raised Nu 600,000 for His Majesty's Secretariat's Fund to "Feed the strays". RSPCA also purchased medicines worth Nu 38,627 to treat animals in Thimphu.

The RSPCA team, in collaboration with the department of livestock, carried out door-to-door awareness in four gewogs in Haa, reaching 635 households in 2020.



## ANIMAL WELFARE

Bhutan Animal Rescue and Care

# Rescuing and caring for animals

## About

The vision of BARC (Bhutan Animal Rescue and Care) is to promote Gross Animal Happiness, where a healthy and happy coexistence of animals and humans is the norm. It does so by treating animals with care and respect, kindness and compassion.

## Highlights

### PATIENTS

In 2019, BARC Thimphu saw more than 326 in-patient animals, of which, 245 were dogs, 25 cats, 37 macaque monkeys and 19 other animals including birds, rodents and large animals.

BARC Thimphu also rescued two baby and two adult macaque orphans that needed intense nursing and care, bringing the total group size of macaques to 37 by 2019 end.

Bhutan is facing an ever-longer distemper epidemic every year, with thousands of dogs dying in the streets. BARC promotes DHPPi vaccinations and provides shelter and supportive care to those in need, but most distemper patients have slim chances of survival and palliative care is all we can provide.

On an average, about 40 dogs under our care are under Intensive Care treatment; 65 have chronic diseases such as epilepsy, diabetes or kidney disease; 30 are handicapped (paraplegic/blind); 35 are abandoned or orphaned puppies; and 30 are geriatrics. The remaining are recovered, now healthy dogs. In 2019, 10 were adopted. Adoption rates are low in Bhutan, as most compassionate people already care for free dogs around their homes.

# 1,010

animals provided out-patient care

In 2019, out-patient care was provided to 1,010 animals of which 319 were pets, 211 were rescued animals brought by people to our rescue centre, and 480 were rescued by BARC. Out-patients are mostly dogs (1,956) and cats

(37) and other animals (27) comprising birds, cows, bulls, mules and horses.

### PATIENT TREATMENTS

#### Surgery

BARC conducted a variety of surgeries, of which, 250 were OVH on female dogs (removal of uterus and both ovaries); 40 testiclectomy on male dogs; 45 orthopaedic surgeries; 30 mastectomy (tumour



**More than 200 of some 326 animals rescued and brought for treatment and care were dogs**

removal) and 15 eye surgeries.

Numerous other less invasive surgeries (cysts, abscesses, bite wounds, burn management, fistulas, hernias,) as well as general health check-ups were carried out.

Medical treatment was provided to many patients, from skin infections to heart related diseases. Treatments were done for Pyoderma (120) ; Scabies and Mange (500) ; Fungal infections of skin or ear (32); Gastro-Enteritis (150); Deworming (500); Tick-Borne diseases (110); Glaucoma and Cataract (45); Arthritis (40); Heart related diseases 20; and Burns (2).

Two baby macaque monkeys, 23 orphaned puppies and seven kittens were given nursing care in 2019.

## **Dogs caught in illegal wildlife traps**

A sad occurrence is dogs being caught in illegal wildlife traps meant to catch deer and wild boar. Dogs are regularly trapped in these snares and the lucky ones manage to escape. BARC aims to conduct an awareness campaign to prevent illegal traps and

avoid such cases of dog injuries.

## **THE FUTURE: LEAVING NO ANIMAL BEHIND! Sterilisation programs**

BARC will develop a pilot program for stray dog sterilisation and care in one or two selected dzongkhags, jointly with international animal welfare organizations. The program will assess how to create meaningful community engagement and capacity for a sustainable program with annual budgets for decentralised responsibilities.

## **STRENGTHENING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

BARC will establish collaboration with the College of Natural Resources (CNR) in Lobeysha under the Royal University of Bhutan. It will develop a multi-year program to strengthen the present curriculum of the CNR BSc in animal sciences, especially veterinary medicine curriculum and practical skill development. CNR students and graduates will also work within the dzongkhag-based programs and the BARC hospitals.

## **New centre for Animal Happiness**

BARC hopes to finalise all preparations to begin construction of the new Centre for Animal Happiness by early 2021. The centre will have an integrated 24/7 animal hospital for in and out-patient treatment and training. It will also have an animal rescue and care facility and a sanctuary for animals that will not survive without support.

## **Outreach programs for Compassion in Action**

BARC will also develop outreach programs to nurture a healthy and happy coexistence of animals and humans.

This will include awareness programs and events for youth, citizens and hotels/restaurants.

It will introduce educational programs and events for schools; programs in collaboration with other CSOs,



**The welfare treated and cared for 25 felines**

for an integrated approach to caring for people with social challenges through interaction with dogs.

Tourist visit and meditation programs and more in-depth discussions on Gross Animal Happiness will be encouraged, including opportunities for volunteer work, training pet owners and behavioural adjustment programs for dogs.

[ BARC hopes to finalise all preparations to begin construction of the new Centre for Animal Happiness by early 2021. ]







# **OTHER PBOS**



## OTHER PBOS

Gross National Happiness Centre of Bhutan

# Sustainable solutions

## About

The GNH Centre Bhutan (GNHCB) was established as a civil society organization on October 18, 2012 to carry forward the vision and philosophy of Gross National Happiness. The centre works towards offering sustainable solutions for people and the planet.

## Highlights

In 2019, the centre was officially linked with the GNH centre of Spain on March 20, establishing a strong alliance with Europe. The centre also renewed its Memorandum of Understanding with B. Grimm Joint Venture Holding Limited, Thailand, where the GNH Centre, Thailand is established.

Various activities were conducted on leadership and advocacy based on GNH principles. The centre hosted the Young Presidents' Organization (YPO) on "Ultimate Adventure in Happiness" organised in collaboration with Bhutan Philanthropic Ventures (BPV). The 4-day customised YPO event featured a dive into GNH values and leadership.

A workshop on Leadership for the New Economy was conducted in collaboration with Small Giants, Australia. The 8-day event witnessed debates and discussions on the current economic system, sustainability, leadership models, Buddhist economics and striking a balance between spiritual and material development. A group of 25 international participants attended the workshop.

Another 5-day program brought together 35 students from various colleges in the country to unravel the concept of Youth Leadership based on principles of GNH. The program (GYLP) was themed "Bringing forward the leader in you."

Recognising the vital role tour guides play in explaining the concept of GNH to visitors, the centre, in collaboration with Guides Association of Bhutan, conducted a daylong GNH orientation program. Close to 70 tour guides attended the program to understand the history, concept and application of GNH.

GNHCB also conducted the fourth GNH Advocacy

# 140

**international visitors hosted to attend presentation on GNH**



**In 2019, GNHC launched its centre in Madrid, Spain on March 20**

Program in Chukha, covering 11 schools and institutions. A major outcome of the advocacy was the establishment of GNH activities, youth leadership workshops and creation of GNH clubs in respective institutions.

In 2019, the centre hosted 140 visitors, including a high-level delegation from Thailand, Mayors from Japan, and university students to attend presentations on GNH followed by networking and interactive sessions.



**The centre organised numerous events and workshops on the nation's guiding philosophy of GNH**



# Change begins in private, in toilet

## About

The Bhutan Toilet Organization (BTO) was established in 2014 with a mission to make clean and safe toilet accessible for all and inspire behavioral change through public awareness and volunteerism.

BTO also advocates for adequate facilities in urban areas and highways, manages toilets during events, supports implementation of sanitation policies and related social entrepreneurship.

## Highlights

### Portable toilets

BTO's portable toilet service began with wooden ones in 2015 and moved to world-class imported toilets in 2018.

Government agencies, businesses, private individuals and communities in 15 dzongkhags have used the service. In 2019, 104 toilets were used in 34 events.

### Bedside toilet

In 2019, 42 families used BTO's beside toilet service that allows some level of convenience to people living with disability, illness, or old age.

Under this program, BTO lends bedside toilets to beneficiaries after training them and their caregivers on its use. A minimal fee is collected to sustain and enhance the program.

### Chabto giveaway

Chabto is a personal portable toilet unit that is user-friendly, safe, odor-free, water efficient and easy to manage and dispose.

# 104

**portable toilets used in  
34 events in 2019**

Manufactured at Pasakha, the unit can be kept next to the bed, enabling users to manage their toilet independently or with minimal support.

Under Chabto Giveaway program, donors sponsor Chabto units for the vulnerable.

### Event management

BTO has been managing toilets during public events since 2016. Initially, volunteers helped clean existing toilets. Later, temporary toilets were built, and sawdust was used to conceal the smell in conventional pit latrines and trench toilets. By 2017, the SATO pan led to another effective temporary toilet for the masses. In 2019, BTO managed toilets for 29 events.



**The organization upgraded 528 toilets in 50 schools in four dzongkhags so far**

## Construction and management

BTO built three small toilet facilities at pilgrimage sites and along the highway.

### Drakarpo

Drakarpo, in Paro, draws pilgrims from across the country. Open defecation, in the absence of a toilet facility, was an issue.

Based on the request for support from several visitors, BTO raised a fund of Nu 50,000 from a private donor to build a two-unit eco-friendly toilet. Since the area has no water, the toilet uses saw dust. However, without a dedicated caretaker, the toilet is in disuse.

### Chelela

BTO built a two-unit sawdust-based toilet at Chelela Pass, a popular tourist site, with funding from

Tourism Council of Bhutan. The toilet was designed to blend with the mountain environment and cater to tourists. The facility is managed by Ap Phub Dolay, who visits the pass regularly to sell fast food.

### Wangsisina

BTO received funds from Bank of Bhutan to construct a two-unit toilet at Wangsisina. Construction was outsourced to a contractor and has been handed over to the five vegetable vendors in the area. The construction took eight months instead of two because of numerous bureaucratic challenges. The gewog administration wants the toilet removed, while vegetable vendors who benefit from it the most, want them.

### Tamchog

Tourism Council of Bhutan constructed an exemplary toilet facility at Tamchog in 2018 and needed a smart

management solution to ensure that it does not fall into misuse.

BTO has taken over the management and recommended a home for the caretaker with a small canteen.

## **Strengthening Bhutan toilet network**

BTO network has 20 dzongkhag ambassadors, two dungkhag ambassadors and eight college ambassadors. Each of the ambassadors have 10-40 members volunteering for toilet cleaning campaigns, toilet managements during events, creating awareness on sanitation and hygiene and helping the underprivileged to build toilets.

The network was built using social media communications and over the phone. The EU Helvetas provided Nu 2.28 million for an 18-month project to strengthen the network.

## **Zhemgang school WASH assessment**

BTO upgraded 99 pit latrines and aqua-privy toilets to pour flush toilet in six schools in Zhemgang benefiting more than 3,168 students.

The WASH interventions were carried out as part of Save the Children disaster mitigation project in partnership with Zhemgang dzongkhag administration, Ministry of Education and Department of Disaster Management.

Stakeholders prioritised WASH related interventions to be carried out in the identified schools. Save the Children contacted BTO to conduct a detailed

assessment in identified schools and provide actionable recommendations.

## **Upgrading school toilets**

BTO is engaged in a project to upgrade pit toilets in schools across the country to flush toilets. The intention is to improve hygiene, sanitation and good toilet etiquette.

Since signing the MoU in July 2019, BTO upgraded 528 toilets in 50 schools in four dzongkhags benefiting 16,896 students.

About Nu 1.58 million was spent on the project so far, with fund from UNICEF and education ministry.

The JCI APDC assisted BTO to receive 1000 SATO pans from Lixil as donation. The SATO is a simple and robust toilet pot that can effectively convert a pit toilet to a flush one at a significantly low cost, without changing superstructures.

If the same number of toilets were to be renovated or reconstructed in the conventional way, it would cost the government Nu 79.2 million.

SATO technology is also highly water efficient and could potentially save thousands of liters of water each day. As part of the project, some 90 units of toilets in 50 schools were converted to accessible toilets using SATO 204, which is a stool type toilet that enables children to sit on it.

The project also imparted skill through trainings to health coordinator and a caretaker from each school. They were practically engaged in the SATO installation and were tasked with carrying out the project in their schools. They were also trained in maintenance.

**[ BTO ambassador in Laya, Thinley Rabgay, a teacher in Laya Central School, initiated upgrading 70 pit latrines in the village to SATO toilets. ]**

## Upgrading monastic toilet

Following the effectiveness of school toilet upgradation project, the Zhung Dratshang sought BTO's support through UNICEF to carry out a similar project for monastic institutions.

The first phase of the project covering Paro, Thimphu and Punakha upgraded 99 units of toilets in 26 monastic institutions.

## Way forward to rural toilets

Ahead of the 2019 Royal Highland Festival, BTO ambassador in Laya, Thinley Rabgay, a teacher in Laya Central School, initiated upgradation of 70 pit latrines in the village to SATO toilets.

SATO is a perfect solution for Laya since it is light, making it easy to carry and is resilient against freezing temperature. It was first piloted with eight toilets in Yangthang, Haa, in 2018.



In 2019, BTO managed toilets for 29 events



# A trust to sustain charitable entities

## About

The Gyalyum Charitable Trust was established in January 2016 as an umbrella organization for charitable organizations that enjoy the royal patronage of Her Majesty Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck. It stands to ensure the long-term sustainability and continuity, besides expanding their scope across all sections of society.

## Highlights

The Gyalyum Scholarship Program provides merit-based or need-based scholarships to underprivileged and disadvantaged students and individuals so they have access to quality education. Scholarship beneficiaries grew from 10 students in 2018 to 20 in 2019. Beneficiaries receive support at national, international and vocational training institutes offering degree and undergraduate programs. Partial scholarship (tuition fees and/or stipend) was awarded to two candidates to pursue MBBS, a five-year course, at the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Full Scholarships were awarded to five students to pursue the Chinese Language Course at

the Capital Normal University in Beijing, China.

The Gyalyum Dharma Initiative provides support to religious institutions and individuals for the well being of all sentient beings. A daily subsistence allowance and support to education of monks and nuns are provided under this scheme. In addition, pilgrimage trips are organised for underprivileged Buddhist practitioners.

The Craft Gallery is another invention of the trust. It is a showroom and sales outlet that showcases all forms of traditional arts and crafts produced using lo-

cally sourced materials often applying traditional methods. It is also aimed at encouraging female designers and entrepreneurs to showcase their talent. In 2019, a Kimono was made using eco-print natural dye, extracted from fresh and the first bloom of the marigold flower. Her Royal Highness Princess Eeuphelma Choden

Wangchuck, later presented the Kimono as a gift to Princess Mako of Japan.

The trust also published a pictorial book titled "Druk Gyalpo - The King of Bhutan" in collaboration with the Royal Office for Media to commemorate the 40th Birth Anniversary of His Majesty King Jigme

20  
Scholarship  
beneficiaries in 2019

Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck. The official virtual launch of the book took place on September 24, 2020.

Other activities of the trust includes a USD 60,000 water rehabilitation project for RENEW Gawailing

Happy home and a shelter for displaced and needy people. The project was supported by WHO Bhutan. The trust also supported a Nu 25 million project, which ended in June 2020, to construct a girls' hostel for RENEW Gawailing Happy home.

The trust also published a pictorial book titled "Druk Gyalpo-The King of Bhutan" in collaboration with the Royal Office for Media



**The trust provides scholarships, educational allowances and promotes Bhutanese arts and crafts**



# Green, organic, sustainable society

## About

The Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative (SJI) is a community-based organization that operates under the auspices of the Lhomon Society, a registered Civil Society Organization (CSO) in Bhutan.

SJI works to promote organic agriculture, waste management, build GNH villages and GNH based education and youth engagement.

## Highlights

The aspiration to make Rikhay village in Dewathang, Samdrupjongkhar, the first System Rice Intensification (SRI) model village in Bhutan is inching closer to fruition.

Today, 49 households in the village have adopted SRI method, up from one in 2015, boosting rice yield by a record 60 percent. Farmers saved more than 88 percent of saplings through SRI, using only 4kg against 24kg in conventional rice cultivation. SRI farmers do not use any chemical fertilisers and pesticides.

A handbook on 'Dru-Na-Gu', which means nine kinds of cereal, was launched to document the status of local agro-biodiversity in Dewathang and Orong

gewogs.

More than 100 farmers in 11 gewogs of Samdrupjongkhar were trained on best organic agriculture practices through the Lead Farmer and Farmer-to-Farmer Extension Program.

Stopping use of plastic plates, cutlery, cups, while promoting biodegradable plates, cups, and spoons from the SJI outlet was recognised a key indicator of its success. SJI has conducted six trainings on zero

waste craft skills to more than 60 women and youth in rural and urban communities of Samdrupjongkhar. More than 90 women participants from Samdrupjongkhar, Mongar and Trashiyangtse were also trained on zero waste craft making along with zero waste advocacy.

A pottery and bamboo craft

group was formed in the Menchari pilot village, where making and selling of locally handmade pots and bamboo craft is generating some nominal income and every household has started using earthen pots and bamboo cups.

A "Centre for Joy of Learning" has been established at the Dewathang Local Craft Centre, which offers

# 100

**farmers in 11 gewogs of Samdrupjongkhar were trained on best organic agriculture practices**



### **The Seed Keepers' and Growers' Group (SKGG) preserve and promote native seeds for sustainability**

local youth the opportunity to learn, teach, connect with nature, music, dance, language, building community and mindfulness sessions.

More than 60 local youth have been trained on community mappings skills and six local action plans have been implemented as community building initiatives, such as advocacy on zero waste.

Seeds have been a part of Bhutan's cultural heritage for generations and are an integral part of many rituals, ceremonies and festivals celebrating the cycle of birth, life and death. Thus, the tradition of seed storage and preservation has been invaluable for Bhutanese farming. However, the import of new and high-yield seeds over time has also pushed some of the native seeds to the brink of extinction.

SJI has formed the Seed Keepers' and Growers'

Group (SKGG) covering eight villages of Samdrup-jongkhar in keeping with the wish of farmers of Orong, Gomdar, and Dewathang to revive, preserve and promote the native seeds for sustainability.

Compost from the biogas slurry and farmyard manure has become a new source of cash income for farmers of Dewathang and Orong. Composts sell for Nu 10 a kilogram in the local market. SJI trained a few farmers and supported them with the materials to construct the compost shed.

Educators, trainees, youth leaders, civil servants, a counselor, a forester, lecturers, a facilitator, a program coordinator, a farmer and municipal representatives from 11 of Bhutan's 20 dzongkhags took part in the intensive 10-day sixth annual winter LME Mindfulness retreat. It was held at the Chokyi Gyatso Institute in Dewathang in December 2019.

【 A "Centre for Joy of Learning".. offers local youth the opportunity to learn, teach, connect with nature, music, dance, language, building community and mindfulness sessions 】



## OTHER PBOS

Construction Association of Bhutan

# A progressive construction sector

## About

As an umbrella organization for all Bhutanese contractors, Construction Association of Bhutan (CAB) was institutionalised in 2000 to support, promote and develop the construction industry. In 2012, the association was officially registered as a Public Benefit Organization.

## Highlights

The association devoted much of 2019 to enhance mechanisation and building skill levels for contractors to take up bigger projects.

Consequently, in the same year, CAB organised the largest construction fair in the capital, which brought together industry partners and players to share ideas on the tools and technology needed for comprehensive mechanisation of the sector.

For the first time, local Bhutanese contractors will be engaged in the construction of major civil works for

the 600-Megawatt Kholongchhu hydropower project. This is a major breakthrough for local contractors and will enable large class contractors to venture into hydropower projects, thereby, reducing cut-throat competition in other areas of construction. By participating in the construction of hydropower projects, local contractors are expected to build capacity from technology and skills transfer.

To create employment opportunities in the construction sector, the association endeavored to attract Technical and Vocational Education and Training

(TVET) graduates by offering better income and benefits. TVET trainees will also be placed under six months mandatory apprenticeship program with reputed construction firms to equip them with necessary skills and experience.

The association also revised the induction course content

for both aspiring and existing contractors to keep pace with modernisation, mechanisation and technological advancements. Last year, the workshop

# 34

**delegates from Bhutan attended the IFAWPCA convention in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**

discussed the need for multi-dimensional training pedagogy with more emphasis on hands-on training and learning.

The association is also involved in the government's Dual Training Program (DPT) that seeks to engage training institutes and private construction firms to provide masonry and carpentry related skills to trainees.

Another workshop was conducted during the same year to safeguard the fairness and integrity of the competitive bidding process. The workshop discussed the need to finalise the rules and regulations to augment the Alternative Dispute Resolution Act of 2013, which is intended to help resolve all construction related disputes.

The association is a member of the International Federation of Asian and Western Pacific Construction Association (IFAWPCA). In 2018, around 34 dele-

gates from Bhutan attended the IFAWPCA convention in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The IFAWPCA plays a crucial role in promoting international fellowship and cooperation and developing beneficial relationships between governments and contractors. Last year, the convention addressed the growing challenges faced by the construction industry such as building resilience from global economic fluctuations and price changes.

Throughout the year, CAB continued to keep the construction sector well informed on policies, rules and regulations that govern the sector. A first of its kind seminar was held in collaboration with IFAWPCA and relevant government agencies on dispute resolution and arbitration in the construction sector. Through such advocacy trainings and awareness programs, CAB intends to impart in local contractors the socially responsible, sense of ownership and accountability in projects they are engaged in.

Throughout the year, CAB continued to keep the construction sector well informed on policies, rules and regulations that govern the sector.



**Mechanisation and getting into hydropower constructions are two of the opportunities local contractors see in the coming years**





**MBOS**



**MBOS**

Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators

# One voice for tour operators

## About

The Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators (ABTO) is the official voice of the nation's travel companies. It was founded in 2000 as a not-for-profit organization to represent and protect the interests of Bhutan's tourism industry. Since its founding, the association focused on maintaining a strong working relationship with the government, while consistently engaging with its members.

## Highlights

ABTO continued to grow and perform well throughout 2019. Its objective for the year was to achieve steady growth, ensure stability and long-term sustainability of the organization by maintaining sound financial position and strong membership base.

It was a tough year for the tourism industry. Bhutan's brand image as an exclusive travel destination and the noble vision of 'high value-low impact' tourism policy was being tested by undesirable short-term political gains.

ABTO felt that the functional, operational and regulatory framework of the industry needed an overhaul as some of our established members had been severely affected.

To resolve this issue, ABTO lobbied and negotiated through a consultative approach with the government to formulate a written tourism policy that encompassed both the international and regional tourists.

ABTO also convinced the government to restructure the Tourism Council, Bhutan's apex decision-making body on tourism, by instituting a Technical Advisory Committee. As a result, faster and effective decisions are being made at different levels leading to better facilitation and faster

service delivery.

ABTO's major achievement for the year also includes influencing the government towards resolving bilateral issues to allow tourists to enter and exit the country from Samdrupjongkhar and Gelephu. This was expected to promote tourism in eastern and central Bhutan. The association also increased allow-

# 10.6M

**ABTO's revenue in 2019**

able marketing expense as tax deductible from two percent to five percent of their net profit. That way tour operators could allocate a bigger share of their budget for marketing.

ABTO ended 2019 in a healthy financial position with a net asset of Nu 19.69 million. ABTO achieved a net positive surplus of 137.20 percent from membership subscriptions, its main source of funding.

In revenues, ABTO collected Nu 10.61 million with an operating surplus of Nu 3.03 million by the end of 2019.

Membership subscription comprised 89.99 percent of its total revenue followed by interest earned from fixed deposit (8.82 percent). That same year, ABTO's membership base increased with 43 new members joining. They contributed Nu 64,500 as registration fee.

[ ABTO... influenced the government towards resolving bilateral issues to allow tourists to enter and exit the country from Samdrupjongkhar and Gelephu ]



# Promoting professional journalism

## About

The Journalists' Association of Bhutan (JAB) is a non-political and non-profit organization that was formally launched in February 2012. It registered as a Mutual Benefit Civil Society Organization on November 10, 2014.

JAB was formed to promote freedom of expression, right to information and professional development of journalists in the country.

## Highlights

It was an encouraging year for JAB with membership increasing to 163 from 137 and its social media followers more than doubling to 10,000 from 4,000 in 2018. This demonstrates the level of trust public places on the country's journalists and media.

In 2019, JAB successfully completed a Community Media Workshop for 233 participants and formed four Community Media Forums with five members each in Soe, Thimphu, Dungkhar in Lhuntse, Dhur in Zhemgang and Gesarling in Gelephu. The only com-

munity school in Soe, with eight students and two teachers, also participated in the workshop.

The workshop was the first of its kind and connected the news media with remote communities for the first time in Bhutan.

JAB also organised a Community/Campus Radio RJ training for 15 young and new community/campus radio RJs. Community Radio Stations in Bhutan are fairly new and few.

JAB also hosted the Annual Journalism Award, which was telecast live on the Bhutan Broadcasting

Service. Some 34 Bhutanese journalists were recognised for their exceptional contributions to journalism.

To promote rural journalism, 15 journalists were trained on long-form narrative and story writing, covering compelling

stories from rural communities.

JAB's Annual Rural Reporting Grant and preparatory training on long-form narrative and story-telling training was able to draw media attention to rural areas, which is often underreported. Nine journalists were

# 233

**participants successfully completed a  
Community Media Workshop**



**Some 34 Bhutanese journalists were recognised for their contributions to journalism**

awarded the Rural Reporting Grant. All grantees produced and published two stories each.

JAB also successfully brought out its third edition of Bhutan Press Mirror: JAB Occasional Journal on May 3. The 67-page journal contains 14 articles, including five stories supported by Rural Reporting Grant. The journal is the only publication in Bhutan dedicated to and discussing media and journalism issues.

JAB also built a network with international media organizations such as Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Ltd (KAS) based in Singapore and International Federation of Journalists. Besides the project activities with the support of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Ltd (KAS), JAB also organised the multimedia training for Bhuta-

nese journalists.

JAB continued its Monthly Dialogue to provide a platform for engagement between media professionals and important government dignitaries. In 2019, JAB conducted a discourse on Tourism supported by Tourism Council of Bhutan. The Ministry of Health also supported a consultative workshop on mental health.

JAB was also tasked by the BICMA to review the journalists' code of conduct and ethics and to organise the Editorial Writing training. JAB is also collaborating with BCMD and BMF to build capacity of CSOs in Bhutan.

[ Nine journalists were awarded the Rural Reporting Grant. All grantees produced and published two stories each. ]



**MBOS**  
VAST

# Art in the service of people

## About

Based on the four pillars of art education, philanthropic art, art services and financial sustainability, prescribed in its ten-year strategic plan, VAST Bhutan experienced substantial growth in the past two years.

Besides various art and philanthropic activities organised to nurture creativity among the young, the art endowment fund raising initiative was launched, coinciding with VAST Bhutan foundation day on April 7, 2019.

The spirit of volunteerism, one of VAST's core values, was exhibited in the activities it carried out and the patronage of His Majesty The King.

## Highlights

### Art Education

Using art to enhance creative and innovative abilities of Bhutanese for a knowledge-based society.

#### Young hearts art classes

The annual art course program is designed for children between 6-12 years. It teaches basics such as line drawings, colour introduction, colour theory, arts and crafts. About 90 students from schools in Thimphu attended 23 classes mentored by senior artists

in 2019. The fees for 59 financially challenged students were covered by the European Union Grant.

### Interaction art camp, excursion

This art camp and excursion is an effective way for urban children to interact with and learn from children in some of the most remote villages in the country. Some 50 students from Dagana, one of the remotest dzongkhag in the country, completed the art camp and 30 students, volunteer members of VAST, participated in the camp. The volunteers managed several activities like talent show, cooking, local excursion and movie talks. They also assisted mentors in specialised programs of plien air, sugar art and art therapy. The 10 best art students from Dagana were selected for a weeklong art excursion to the capital and Paro. The youth interaction art camp and excursion was supported by European Union Grant.

### Friday BhutanArt club

To come together for knowledge sharing, for discourse, and embracing diversity that makes up a society, the Friday BhutanArt club was initiated.

The event is hosted at the Bhutan Art Gallery and was initiated by its manager, Karzin Choden. As of August 2020, the club hosted over 50 sessions with 34 speakers, seven of whom were international guests. A majority were Bhutanese writers, filmmak-



**About 90 students between six and 12 years complete the annual art course program that teaches line drawings, colour introduction, colour theory and arts and crafts**

ers, painters, dancers, musicians, models, poets, designers and bloggers.

## Philanthropic Art

Using art as a medium to promote social values and social responsibilities.

### Colours beyond the walls

An art program was conducted at the Youth Development and Rehabilitation centre (YDRC) in support of Nazhoen Lamtoen, an NGO assisting youth coming

into conflict with law.

Volunteer art tutor Wang Rana Gurung mentored the classes in July 2019. The artworks created by the youth in YDRC was exhibited at the Bhutan Art Gallery to raise fund for Nazhoen Lamten.

### The Rice Bank Project

It is a holistic and inclusive project that engages VAST's young volunteers with a community, with the aim to break the vicious cycle of debt of farmers in villages for the most basic commodity in life.

The harvest of some farmers are not enough to feed their family, even for six months, since 50 percent is given to the landowner and another 10 to 20 percent is damaged by wild animals. The rice is premium quality and deposited in the community rice bank, for which they get normal staple rice to last for a year. The premium rice is packaged and sold in Thimphu and the proceeds go back to the Rice Bank, which is run by the farmers and presided by the Gup.

Young volunteers experience hands on plantation and life in the village. It builds a sense of gratitude, appreciation for food and empathy for rural life.

In 2019- 2020, VAST Bhutan was able to make an impact for 23 families in Rangrika Village, Punakha and engaged 35 volunteers.

## CoBeat art

For engagement during the pandemic and to help generate local contents, the CoBeat art program was conceptualised, created and broadcast through BBS TV.

Various arts, crafts and do-it-yourself (DIY) like paper mache masks, quilling, flower and sugar art and origami programs were demonstrated by 32 artists. The program, with funding from BBS, also helped young artists affected by the pandemic.

## Haa mural garden

VAST Bhutan's 23 artists volunteered and completed

the Haa Mural Garden on the 200 plus meter wall, just one day before the nationwide lock down. The Haa Mural Garden is part of this year's (2020) Royal Bhutan Flower Exhibition. The Haa Mural Garden is the longest wall mural in the country.

It took 35 days to complete and exhibits Haa's flora and fauna and its culture. It is also dedicated to His Majesty The King for his care and exemplary leadership.

## Art Services

Enhancing the reach and appreciation for contemporary art to develop a reflective and introspective society.

## Paro airport beautification and art gallery project

The Paro airport beautification and art gallery project is His Majesty The King's profound vision of touching peoples' lives with art.

It received one of the most prominent places, the kingdom's premier gateway. The airport showcases art installations like the Royal Portrait, floating mandalas, the #D murals and a model of dzongs at the baggage area.

VAST Bhutan feels truly blessed to be given the opportunity to be of service and grateful to the immense support provided by the Department of Air Transport (DAT). In 2019, VAST Bhutan suc-

cessfully completed and submitted the artworks & installations of the Phase I of the project to DAT. Conceptualisation of Phase II was presented to DAT in June 2020. The works on Phase II awaits given the uncertainties of the pandemic year.

## Art exhibitions

VAST Bhutan provided curatorial, production and promotional services for several exhibitions. Notable mentions are ; “Karma’s Karma” by young 19-year-old Karma from Tashiyangtse , “Her Expression Volume V”- exhibiting works of 60 Women artists, “Ribong” – a solo exhibition by Gyempo Wangchuk, which till date, holds a record in number of visitors, about 40 a day for over a month.

## Financial Sustainability

Explore art as a means to raise funds for promotion of art, artists and sustenance of the operations.

## Art Endowment Fund

VAST Bhutan’s foundation day marked the launch of the Art Endowment Fund. The seed money for the fund constituted all proceeds from the “Happy Brush Exhibition” by eminent Thai artist Dr Suchart Vongthong, his wife Khun Phunsee, VAST founder Asha Kama and artist Karma Wangchuk. It also included proceeds from sale of art works and artifacts, donated by artists and well-wishers to the annual Art of Giving silent auction.



# Evaluation for good governance

## About

Evaluation Association of Bhutan (EAB) was established in 2013 to provide a platform to promote evaluation culture in the country. A small group of committed evaluation enthusiasts started the CSO as an informal virtual network to develop capacity and generate demand for evaluation in the country. The association was registered as a Mutual Benefit Organization in December 2017.

## Highlights

For a country with limited resources, the monitoring and evaluation system must be strengthened not only to save cost and time but to also ensure effectiveness and quality of work, commodities and policies.

The evaluation culture in the country still remains weak and thus the demand for evaluation is also marginal.

Developing evaluative thinking requires working at a broader societal level. Despite these challenges, the association conducted three evaluation capacity building trainings in 2019 and 2020.

One such training was on development evaluation, conducted with support from UNICEF in collaboration with GHNC.

The second training was aimed at building the capacity of EAB members. Members of the Civil Society Organizations were also trained on development evaluation to give a broader understanding on evaluation.

Trainings were mainly for national evaluators and to raise awareness of the association and its cause. Although the activities were minimal, it was a valuable experience for the governance team of the association.

The association also got an opportunity to attend a three-day EVAL-Fest 2020 organised by Evaluation Community of India (ECOL) in New Delhi. This offered an opportunity for the association to interact and network with different specialists in the field of evaluation. The association could also showcase its works in the international forum.

Currently the association is working to conduct a situational analysis on the association to put itself on the right footing. The association is also working on

short video clips to share information on the association and the findings on the situational analysis on the association.

UNICEF and GHNC supported the association with resources persons, facilitators and financial support

for workshops and trainings.

Looking ahead, the association and its governance team will continue to focus on advocacy to raise awareness on evaluation, capacity building, seminars and workshops to engage people at various levels.

[ ... the association conducted three evaluation capacity building trainings in 2019 and 2020. ]

# LIST OF REGISTERED CSOs

## **Public Benefit Organizations (PBOs)**

1. BCMD (Bhutan Centre for Media & Democracy)
2. The Loden Foundation
3. RENEW (Respect, Educate, Nurture & Empower Women)
4. BAOWE (Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurs)
5. Bhutan Youth Development Fund
6. Royal Society for Protection of Nature
7. Draktsho Vocational Training Center for Special Children & Youth
8. Tarayana Foundation
9. Disabled Peoples' Organization of Bhutan
10. Lhak-Sam
11. Royal Society for Senior Citizens
12. Royal Textile Academy
13. Phuentsholing Sports Association
14. Menjong Foundation
15. Ability Bhutan Society Association
16. Chithuen Phendhey Association
17. Lho Mon Society
18. SAARC Business Association for Home Based Workers (SABAH)
19. Music of Bhutan Research Centre
20. Construction Association of Bhutan
21. Bhutan Kidney Foundation
22. GNH Centre Bhutan
23. Bhutan Animal Rescue and Care
24. Jangsa Animal Saving Trust
25. Ogyen Choling Foundation
26. Royal Society for Protection and Care of Animals

27. Bhutan Transparency Initiative
28. Clean Bhutan
29. Bhutan Media Foundation
30. Bhutan Cancer Society
31. Bhutan Network for Empowering Women (BNEW)
32. Bhutan Ecological Society
33. Nazhoen Lamtoen
34. Bhutan Toilet Organization
35. Bumthang Health Association
36. Gyalyum Charitable Trust
37. Pel Drukdraling Foundation
38. Bhutan Jamchong Thuendel Foundation
39. Phensem Parents Support Group
40. Duedroi Rangwang Zhidey Tshogchung
41. Bhutan Stroke Foundation
42. Barnyard Bhutan Animal Rescue and Sanctuary.

## **Mutual Benefit Organizations (MBOs)**

1. Guide Association of Bhutan
2. Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators
3. Association of Bhutanese Industries
4. Handicrafts Association of Bhutan
5. VAST-Bhutan (Voluntary Artists' Studio of Thimphu)
6. Hotel & Restaurant Association of Bhutan
7. Journalists Association of Bhutan
8. Film Association of Bhutan
9. Evaluation Association of Bhutan
10. Bhutan Taxi Association
11. Centre for Research on Bhutanese Society





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**Civil Society Organizations Authority**

P.O Box 317, Below YHS School

Thimphu 11001, Bhutan

Phone: +975 2 324954/324873

Fax: +975 2 339217

Email ID: [admin@csoa.gov.bt](mailto:admin@csoa.gov.bt)

[www.csoa.gov.bt](http://www.csoa.gov.bt)

