

MI-KHUNG

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Making their presence felt – Youth in Action

■ Dechen Rabgyal

In a young democracy like ours, young people require platforms to engage with the most pressing issues facing our country. While we lack experience, we need opportunities to learn how to actively participate in making decisions that affect us. We need associations that can help us find our voices, to bring about positive change. One such youth association is Youth Initiative for Debate, Deliberation and Development (YIDDD), a pilot project steered by the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD).

YIDDD is an informal and non-partisan association founded by youths to benefit the nation. Members are between the ages of 14 and 30, elected or selected from schools, colleges and institutions. We seek to engage in meaningful and constructive dialogue, to reflect on the state of Bhutanese society, identify important issues, and seek out practical solutions.

This process of reflection, debate, and dialogue was new to most of us. Thankfully, the BCMD team had the foresight to teach us first how to do it. After undergoing a two-week training earlier this year on democratic problem-solving (debate and deliberation), research and advocacy, a 19-member group



Youth Representatives of the YIDDD hike up to Kuensel Phodrang during their two week residential training at the Media Lab.

was divided into three committees - Community Welfare, Social Justice and Education.

The Community Welfare Committee called for promoting the production and consumption of local potato chips, to provide a healthier alternative to the imported chips that burden our balance of trade. The Social Justice Committee proposed a National Policy for Disability, to overcome attitu-

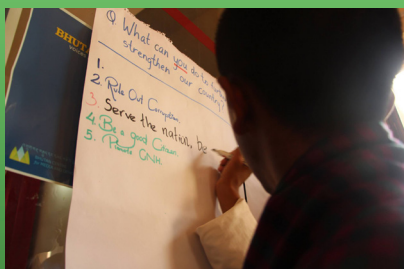
“Attending Youth Initiative for Debate, Deliberation and Development (YIDDD) training at the Media Lab gave me - time to meet new people, space to listen and appreciate diverse views and platform to express my thoughts.

- Dechen Rabgyal”

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Civil society and political parties - guardians of a vibrant democracy

■ Bjørn Førde

The key mandate of the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD) is to support democratic political parties in developing countries, and to strengthen their capacity to be representative and accountable.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are also key partners of DIPD, and important institutions in a vibrant democracy. They are necessary partners of political parties, even though political parties in many countries find it difficult to accept CSOs as “partners”, because many CSOs often position themselves as critical commentators of what those parties and governments do, or do not do.

It is important to understand and accept that political parties and CSOs have different

roles in society. Where democracy is severely challenged, the difference can be less clear-cut, simply because people’s confidence in political parties may be very low, and CSOs are seen as more representative of the people.

Political parties are considered to be indispensable institutions in a democracy because they are seen as the only institutions capable of performing key functions, like representing the citizens’ interests before the State, forming the government, and taking responsibility for governing. Political parties are also important channels for maintaining democratic accountability, as they engage and involve citizens in democratic participation.

Civil society organisations function as an organised expression of public opinion,

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Youth and Politics – A meeting point

■ Siok Sian Pek-Dorji / BCMD

Every Bhutanese youth will reach an age when he or she has the right to pick a person or a party to take the reins of government. And, with six out of ten people in the country under the age of 25, it is natural for youth to be seen as an important source of votes in Bhutan (One fourth of total registered voters in 2013 were youth). A natural question, therefore, is how do we prepare our youth for this important responsibility?

Civic education will be instrumental in strengthening the critical thinking that we need to help build our evolving democracy. Yet, as we work with youth in educational activities, we come across a widely held notion that youth and politics must be kept separate. Potential partners, constitutional agencies, and government officers express concerns about the “politicisation” of youth. The implication here is that politics is an undesirable influence that must be avoided for the young generation.

This shows a lack of alacrity and, perhaps, a misunderstanding of the term politicisation. While meant to be ‘protective’ and well intentioned, such a misunderstanding could pose a very real setback to our evolving system of governance. What is key here is that ‘politicisation’ of youth, as in making them join parties and take part in activities like campaigning, and helping youth learn about politics, are two different issues altogether. Yes, educational institutions should not become campaign grounds, but the youth must study and understand politics. And if youth eventually choose to join political par-

ties, they should have at least learnt the fundamentals of democracy.

Enhancing youth’s interest in politics will improve our ability to create the democratic space or the democratic culture that Bhutan needs to ensure the development of healthy politics for the future. But hesitation abounds and we revert to being protective parents. For example, an attempt to encourage healthy exchange through a model youth parliament concept – practiced in many countries as a mock parliament in school – was discouraged instead of viewing it as a means to educate our young on the responsibilities of Parliament focusing on the non-partisan upper house. We discovered later that the members of the previous National Council have already modeled this in several schools in Bhutan.

Instead of “protecting” our children from politics, can we consider how to help them understand the implications of voting? Through civic education, we will be able to create that open space within which our youth learn to question the very tenets of democracy – What does it mean for us? What is our responsibility? What kind of leaders do youth want? What kind of governance do we envision for our future? How does democracy create a happier, more contented Bhutan?

Instead of nurturing suspicion and fear of politics, here’s our opportunity to build a more confident, literate, thinking and caring generation of voters. The intention to separate youth from politics tell us that politics is not healthy for young people, and that signal in itself is detrimental to the future of our political system.

The voting age is 18 and it is imperative that we prepare our youth to acquire these skills through the years of growing up at home, in school, in the media.

Democracy is a daily exercise; an exercise of questioning, analysis, decision-making and action. Today, nearly 238 years after the US adopted democracy and 67 years after India won independence, the schools in both these nations continue to teach and model democratic decision-making in schools.

In Bhutan, we need initiatives that assure youth that their decisions matter. Introducing civic education through formal classes and clubs lay a solid ground for good governance. Civics lessons in schools can be supplemented by efforts from civil society organisations (CSOs).

BCMD activities encourage youth to share their voice, to learn to identify community needs and share solutions, to learn to engage and act – precursors to as well as inherent qualities of being a citizen. As our youth learn about politics and the system of governance they will be better able to contribute to the overall good of society, and to take action to improve their own lives.

Can we tell our youth that politics is not all “fearful” or bad? Can we create a positive arena for good people to get into politics and the system we want for Bhutan? Can we avoid the blind notion that politics is risky and bad?

We have every opportunity to work together and co-create educational processes that prepare our children for the responsibility of being a citizen.

Making their presence felt – Youth in Action

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dinal and environmental barriers that people with disabilities face, so that they too can engage in mainstream development. The Education Committee, in their quest to raise the status and quality of teaching in Bhutan, proposed a National Teaching Council of Bhutan (NTCB), an autonomous accreditation body for teachers in Bhutan.

As a pilot project, YIDDD is based in Thimphu for this year, and is expected to spread across all 20 Districts in coming years. Meanwhile, members are undertaking advocacy on issues that they have raised, speaking to their peers, and talking with relevant stakeholders.

We may be overly idealistic with our big dreams, but in our hearts, we hope that we can work with our leaders to bring about a better Bhutan and to realise the vision of our Kings. Youths are not just the future; we are also the present.

Dechen Rabgyal is a PGDPA Trainee at Royal Institute of Management. He is also the President of YIDDD.



Youth representatives meet on a weekend to further discuss about their advocacy campaigns.

Youth Voice

■ Arpana Pradhan,
Yangchenphug High School

Youth voice is, collectively, the perspectives, ideas, experiences, knowledge and actions of young people. Youth voice does not mean talking loudly or shouting to be heard, and it is not about drowning out other people's voices, including adults.

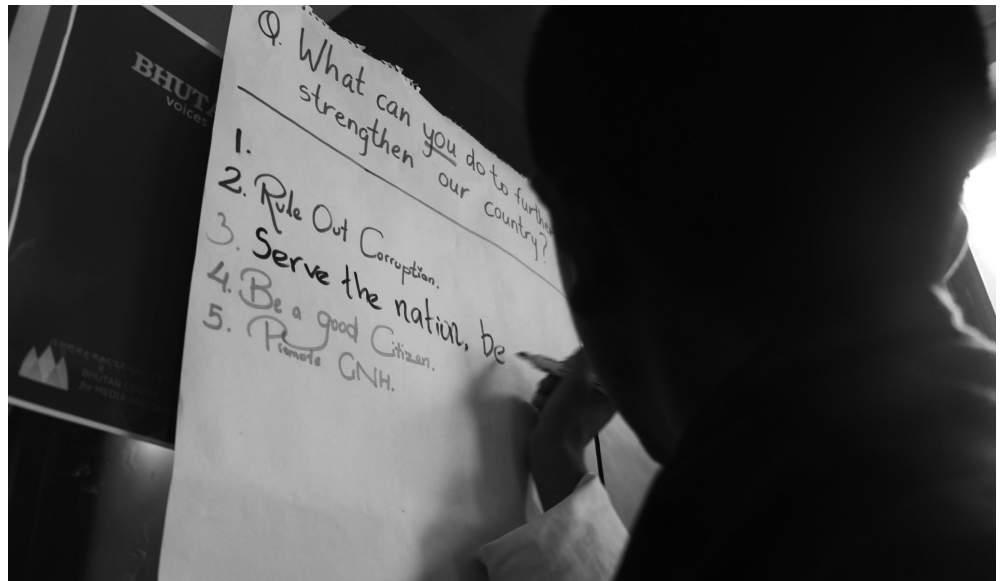
There is no one single youth voice. The voices of young people are infinite, like the universe, with an infinite amount of stars, each burning in a different way.

Young people have many different identities, each representing their different communities, their cultures and their heritage. It is the responsibility of adult allies to hear their voices, in all of their diversity. When many people say "Youth Voice", they are attempting to put all young people into the same boat. It is the responsibility of adults to acknowledge that every youth is a unique individual.

A young person's experiences and ideas can be complex and not so simple to articulate. They have a great deal to teach us about their communities and experiences and their needs. Listening to the youth can be very powerful.

We want even a young child to feel like his voice is being heard. We need to ensure that the youth we work with have a voice. This would mean not only giving them opportunities to speak out but, more importantly, making sure that they are being listened to and truly heard. I am talking about real, active listening.

Youth, like all of us, also need to see that their words have an impact. This cannot be just about creating advisory committees and youth engagement projects. This type of listening requires service providers, caregivers, and policy makers, day in and day out, to be engaged with, and to be open to learning from the children they serve. It needs to be an integral part of service delivery for all young people.



Participants write down what they can do to further strengthen our country on International Democracy Day, September 19, 2013.

“Youth voice is about considering the perspectives and ideas of young people, respecting what everyone has to say, taking risks, listening, sharing and working together.”

-Arpana Pradhan

Often, we ignore the power of listening. It has been suggested that 90% of behavioural “problems” originate in young people because adults would not listen to them. A study reported that the number one request from suicidal teenagers was for adults to listen to them. The power of listening has been proven by various studies. We feel better when we feel heard.

When youth voice is engaged in communities, schools and organizations, young people

grow more capable, effective and powerful. They enhance their academic skills with “real world” experience, learn leadership and citizenship skills and the importance of helping and working with others.

In our community, our young people must be viewed as problem solvers rather than problem makers. When young people help make decisions, programmes are more likely to meet their needs. And when young people are part of the process, they feel a sense of ownership, they mobilise others, and have the potential to become effective role models. Most importantly, youth voice unites people to work for improved communities and schools.

Adults, too, grow more energised, creative and insightful. Their work becomes more responsive, and their hearts become more engaged. Sharing responsibility for community building lifts the weight of working alone.

Community: A lost sense

■ Sherub Dorji, Sherubtse College.

Community is defined by everyone who is a part of it, but how and why are we losing a sense of belonging to one? It was a question that occupied the minds of 36 media itinerants gathered at the Media Lab one cold overcast morning recently.

A damaged sense of community is often blamed on over-development, or the growing sense of being overwhelmed by the struggle for survival in a harsh world. Today, we hard-

ly care who our neighbours are, or whose responsibility it is to clean up surrounding garbage. Today, people only have time for themselves. This was a problem that participants at the 8th Media Nomads workshop hoped to address.

Nesting inside the urban infrastructure, people of Thimphu seem to have lost a sense of responsibility concerning the health of their city. Through various methods, partici-

“It was an enriching experience for all the participants. Going around meeting and talking with communities made us understand our own communities better and it has inspired us to try to make a difference.”

-Sherab Dorji

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Everyday Democracy

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The Democratic Approach to Problem-Solving

1 Explore conditions in your community:

Start with an inventory survey of your local area to get a basic overview of what residents have to say about their communities. Create a list of living and working conditions that influence the quality of life for people in that community and ask them to choose a number between 1 to 5.

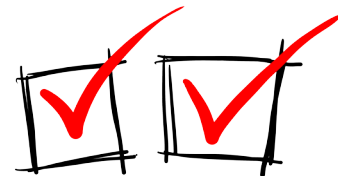


2 Analyze your data:

Look for patterns based on the themes you pick up from the inventory. Choose what assets - the strengths in your community - or the problems that you want to focus on. Eg: Sanitary conditions, youth engagement, individuals doing good work, safety, spiritual facilities, etc.

3 Identify and recruit allies:

Find like-minded individuals who feel the same way as you do about an issue. Form a group committed to bringing change on the issue.



4 Understand the nature of the problem you select:

What are the causes? Who are the individuals and organizations involved? What resources are required? Use interviews and photography to collect data and document your findings. Audio and video recordings can also help you to collect information.



5 Come up with solutions:

Now that you understand the problems, try to come up with effective solutions. Remember: not all solutions require money. Be creative, and think about how you can create people-based solutions. Perhaps the solution is a matter of increasing awareness, forming effective partnerships, or getting volunteers to fix something. If it's a policy issue, propose public policy to your leaders and representatives.

"So you think you have done it all?"

Well, not quite yet! A very important aspect of what you have done or achieved, sometimes relies on where and how you share it. Tell your stories using different channels to reach a wide of range of audience. Let them appreciate the things that you feel need to be appreciated,

more importantly let others know that bringing change in a community is something we are all capable of. In this day and age there are so many platforms like social media where you can easily share your story. Get people's feedback and get them on board! Don't just complain, find the solutions and share them with the people or the agencies that matter."

Sherubtse Media Society helps spread media literacy

■ Jigme Tshewang,
B.A Media Studies, Sherubtse.

“Consume media and don't let media consume you,” said one of the speakers at the World Democracy Day celebrations at Sherub Reldri Higher Secondary School in Mongar. The speaker was part of a team of four student representatives from the Sherubtse Media Society (SMS), the Sherubtse College media club, who had travelled to the high school to give a presentation on “Media and Democracy”, celebrated on the 15th of September, 2013.

The team talked to the students about how media plays a vital role in a vibrant and effective democracy, and touched on many topics, such as:

- What is a democracy?
- The role of media in a democracy
- History and the present status of media in Bhutan
- The impact of social media in the 2008 and 2013 general elections

- Social media (Internet) Vs. Traditional media (Print)

The discussion, which was also joined by the newly-established Sherub Reldri Media Club members, not only made students aware about the role of media, but also reminded them that as citizens, they should also take responsibility in making our democracy healthier. According to Tenzin Namgay, the club coordinator of the Sherub Reldri Media Society, “the information and knowledge shared by SMS was very informative and knowledgeable”.

As part of its various activities, SMS travels to schools within the Trashigang dzongkhag, and to neighbouring districts, to give presentations on media literacy. The goal is to increase media awareness amongst students, teachers, and the greater communities in remote areas, and to encourage them to become better-informed media consumers. When interest is sparked, schools even go on to start new media clubs.

After its establishment in 2011, SMS has

“The whole experience was really enthralling, because it was more peer-to-peer-based learning and the support from the school, and the interest of the students were really inspiring and encouraging.”
- Kinley Wangmo, SMS

covered 10 schools and 1 Shedra under the Trashigang dzongkhag; it has travelled to these institutions and worked to create and increase awareness on the effects of media in Bhutanese society.

The trip to Sherub Reldri Higher Secondary School was supported by BCMD. About 50 students participated in the presentation.

Community: A lost sense

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Participants were educated on the principles of living in a community. To understand communities better, surveys were carried out, after participants were taught how to do research. The communities to be surveyed were mapped out: Changzamtog, Norzin Lam, Olakha, Sabji Bazar and Taba. Participants were divided into five groups, and headed into their respective communities for fieldwork, tackling the considerable challenge of getting people to talk frankly.

On the first day of field work, participants gathered inventories of their communities. The list included public spaces like recreational parks and spiritual sites, and community assets like government offices, schools, hospitals, shopping stores, etc. The inventories also listed various problems associated with these communities. Some common problems were health and sanitation, waste management, road conditions, stray dogs and water shortages.

Over the rest of the field visit days, participants looked closely at some of these underlying issues. The problems in the communities were similar. The participants did



On the last day of the workshop participants present their findings and solutions to policy makers, CSOs, students, government agencies and youth groups.

all that they could in five days to bring these issues to the notice of concerned authorities. They also tried to look at helping to solve some of these problems themselves.

Participants were also able to find people who were making a difference in their

communities. Most of these inspiring individuals had devised their own initiatives to walk the first step of the long road to better communities. Most of them were elderly citizens, but we also met inspiring young people.

A letter to myself

■ Kinley Rinzin, Yangchenphug High School

Dear me,

It is really inspiring how I have learned so much in the past two days. It was quite a memorable experience, and I think it would be unfair if I did not reflect on it further.

Firstly, it is quite impossible to imagine living a life with no one by our side. We all crave attention and have a pathological fear of being left alone. I think that we should allow ourselves to learn and understand and appreciate the value of otherness. I feel I have come so far, all thanks to this helpful activity that has taught me so much.

Most of us are made to believe that the world is a rather cruel place, but it is in fact a wonderful place for all of us easily-deceived earthlings. We human beings tend to be very judgmental, and this bad habit gives rise to all the negativity in our lives, and makes it seem like our existence on this planet is our curse, where we are suffering endless pain and misery.

I have also learned that challenges and struggles are necessary in life because, by overcoming such difficulties, we learn so much through our experiences.

I am so grateful to be a part of this forum, because it made me realize that I do matter, and I can make a difference if I wish.

Though I do not know much about Nelson Mandela, I do know that he lived his whole life to bring peace into this disas-



Youth write a letter to themselves at the two day youth forum committing to be active citizens and to be aware of issues that relate to them.

trous world. People like him have inspired a burning desire in me to raise my voice, and stand for what I believe is morally right.

I strongly believe that we are the architects of our own happiness. We should make effective use of our

powers and our rights, to give back to our community and our country, that has given us a place we can call home and provided us with the chance to live a peaceful and happy life.

Love,
Kinley Rinzin

Civil society and political parties - guardians of a vibrant democracy

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or the opinion and preferences of sections of the public. They perform socialising and mobilising functions as institutionalised representatives of civil society.

A critical distinction commonly made is that political parties seek to control State power whereas civil society organisations do not.

But political parties and civil society organisations are constituent parts of a broader political system, each contributing to the survival and development of a country's political system. These contributions are distinct and complementary and vary across and within countries, and overtime.

Therefore, it makes good sense to strengthen the interplay between political parties and civil society in advancing accountability and representation.

It is often argued that new trends place new challenges on political parties, and also influence the relationship between civil society and political society. Parties are based on principles of collective representation of interests, but significant cultural, technological and political trends are challenging this, and in particular, a growing individualism across cultures. Levels of identification with

political parties are declining in established democracies, and many citizens turn to civil society and single-issue organisations to have their voices heard and to exert political pressure.

Civil society organisations often have a far larger number of members, and demonstrate a higher level of voluntarism, compared to political parties. Citizens also appreciate that they are directly active in various projects in their own communities, whereas political parties tend to work through government programmes and institutions to reach their goals.

New social media technologies are narrowing this gap between individual and collective representation, allowing citizens to be more directly in contact with MPs and party leaders. This also strengthens local party branches. Technological advancements allow for new interaction between political parties and civil society organisations, as social media platforms entertain dialogue in a cross-party and cross-sectorial manner.

Experience shows that civil society can make an important contribution to political parties in terms of developing policy positions and programmes, in accessing knowledge and research on various themes and groups of citizens, in acting as loud speakers

on key reform issues, putting an ear to the ground and understanding the electorate, innovating on voter articulation and representation, and calling for accountability of political leaders.

Democratic values and cultures are embedded within civil society, and this strongly influences political parties. Civil society organisations present many alternative avenues for political participation, helping to build leadership for trusted positions, and thus an atmosphere of political plurality that benefit democratisation and political parties.

Political parties can make an important contribution to the work of civil society organisations, by providing a political channel for advocacy on key reform issues, by navigating political dynamics and processes, by providing key information on policy processes and proposals, by providing access to the party constituency, and facilitating a conducive regulatory and legal environment for civil society organisations.

So yes, parties and CSOs are competitors in some respects, but they should also see themselves as guardians of a vibrant democracy.

Bjørn Førde is Director at Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD)

International Human Rights Day 2013

■ BCMD Staff Reporter

For the first time, International Human Rights Day was observed in Bhutan on the 10th of December, 2013. A short forum was organised to create general awareness of human rights and its relevance to modern Bhutan.

Guest speakers at the three-hour event included representatives from the Secretariat of the New Development Paradigm (SNDP), the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), and the Bhutan National Legal Institute (BNLI). They reflected on various fundamental human rights, the historical context of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

Participants gained insights into how many fundamental human rights are enshrined in the Bhutanese Constitution. They expressed particular interest in the freedom of speech, expression, and the right to have legal counsel and equality before the law. It was evident that the issue of human rights was not only topical but an important issue that warrants more discussion in an evolving democracy. The open discussion helped to promote the understanding of the notion of rights as well as duties.

As part of the event, a poster on Bhutan's Constitutional Rights and Duties (see pg 12) was produced for distribution to government agencies, civil society, and every school institution in the country to promote the understanding of rights and duties as enshrined in Bhutan's Constitution.

About 60 participants attended the forum, rep-



Participants listen to a presentation by the National Commission of Women and Children (NCWC) highlighting the role of NCWC on women and children rights.

resenting government agencies, Parliament, civil society organisations, and entrepreneurs. The event saw a considerable number of youth, graduates and student participation.

The forum was organised by BCMD, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It was held at the Media Lab in YDF, Nazhoen Pelri, Thimphu.

“ Besides knowing some of the fundamental rights as an individual, I learned that every right comes with a corresponding duty. - Galey Jamtsho ”

JURWA II - Changing Times



While not as rife with drama as elections and post-election periods, the story of Bhutan's democratic journey is colorful as it is challenging. In the second season of our radio soap JURWA - Changing Times we seek to cover a side of Bhutan's democracy that is reflective and that projects opportunities for positive change.

Our ultimate goal for the series is to

use the widespread reach of radio to educate Bhutanese about democracy through the entertaining medium of a soap opera. Soap operas have been used throughout different regions of the developing world to bring social change in the areas of public health and personal finance. Our first season focused on the intensity that elections can bring in a small town.

We have been working on developing storylines with radio soap guru John Butt, along with veteran Bhutanese voice actors and with their help, we've created more characters the audience can relate to, story arcs that capture the humour and tension of a society undergoing change.

A Brief Teaser:

The story begins with a lavish wedding in Gakithang village. There is traditional music

playing and everyone is dancing and singing. The children are playing and the women are chatting. All of those who were once divided by politics now seem to have come together. Everything seems to have returned back to normal in Gakithang. However, just when the residents of Gakithang are getting used to peace and tranquility, they now face wolves that are on the prowl, wolves that are silently waiting to seize the first chance of opportunity to sabotage everything. The aftermath of the wedding witnesses a series of new challenges and clashes as Gakithang continually struggles to adapt to new changes. Will Gakithang embrace change as one village or will it submit itself to the wolves? Stay tuned!

The radio soap series will be aired on BBS radio in March, tentatively, and it will also be available on BCMD website and CDs.

The series is funded by Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD).

Youth Forum- Discovering Possibilities



Palden, a recent graduate from Gedu college, shares his experience of a time where he along with his friends raised funds for Draktsho, a Civil Society Organisation, cycling from Gedu, Phuntsholing, Thimphu and Paro.

When: December 12-13, 2013

Where: Hotel Phuntsho Pelri, Thimphu

Participants: Over 50 youths from schools and out-of-school groups attended the forum to engage in the process of deep listening and sharing.

Outcome: The BCMD team led a 2-day youth discussion forum to reflect on society and the opportunities for young people to bring change. The theme for the forum was Igniting the Next Generation of Active Citizens. Using a combination of the Appreciative Inquiry approach (a process that looks at problems from the standpoint of strengths and positive solutions), and Parker J. Palmer's 5 habits of the Heart - the forum gave young people a platform to set a collective vision and design projects that would enable them to achieve that vision.

The forum was funded by Open Society Foundations (OSF).

"...I discovered my strength and capabilities of bringing change in one self as well as others' lives...I realised that contributing in a small way can also bring differences in many lives."
- Tshering Peldon, Member of Go Youth Go

Media Nomads VIII: Community Mapping

When: December 18-28, 2013

Where: BCMD Media Lab, YDF Nazhoen Pelri, Thimphu

Participants: 36 youth from high schools and colleges from Paro, Trongsa, Samtse, Mongar, Trashigang, Chukha, and Thimphu, came together to map 5 communities in the capital.

Outcome: As in the first Community Mapping workshop which took place in July 2013, this workshop also focused on giving participants an understanding of the context of the social and environmental threats we face today on the global scale. Together, the 8th batch of Media Nomads mapped Changzamtog, the Norzin Lam stretch, the Sabji Bazaar area, Olakha, and Taba. The 5 groups worked very hard in their field work to make various discoveries about the communities and to come up with positive and creative solutions to social problems like pollution and violence. Throughout their research, participants urged their community members to engage in active citizenship, and to ask themselves about what they could do to better their



Asha karma from Voluntarily Artists' Studio, Thimphu (VAST) talks to community mappers about some of the work they do. The students went for a field trip to VAST to learn more about volunteerism.

communities rather than wait for the local government to solve every single problem that their community faced. The 11-day workshop was also supported by Open Society Foundation (OSF).

"I was reminded of the reality of where we stand. The workshop has inspired and given me insight into what I as an individual can do to make a difference and I shall strive for that." - Sherub Dorji, Sherubtse College

Introduction to Podcasting:

A tool to tell stories, share views and opinions regarding issues that affect you and your community



Sangay from Sherubtse Media Society (SMS) logs her interview audio clips for editing. Her group worked on a project 'Facebook an obsession?'

When: January 11-16, 2014

Where: World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Conference Hall, Thimphu

Participants: 19 students from Sherubtse, Paro and Samtse Teacher Training Colleges, the Institute of Language and Culture, Royal Thimphu College, and Kuzoo FM Radio-

came together to develop skills in the journalistic style of storytelling as a means of expression.

Outcome: Over the course of the workshop, participants focused on how to script/write for listeners. The sessions included the elements that make a podcast. To train their ears, the participants listened to different kinds of podcasts. By the end of the workshop, they produced 7-10 minute podcasts on topics such as The Changing Music of Bhutan, Dzongkha - Is it Deteriorating?, Facebook - An Obsession Amongst Urban Bhutanese, Garbage - The Civic Sense, and Youth Issues in Thimphu. The final stories are currently being edited by the participants and will soon be uploaded onto the BCMD Soundcloud page (<https://soundcloud.com/bcmd>). The 5-day workshop was funded by the Canada Fund.

"Podcasting is a unique way of expressing an idea through sounds and voices, this workshop further taught me how I can show things through sounds and audio which can be consumed by people from all walks of life." -Kinley Wangmo, Sherubtse College

Newspaper Design Workshop-Improving the design of college newspaper

What: Newspaper Design Workshop

When: January 7-8, 2014

Where: SCAN Bhutan, Motithang.

Participants: 17 Students from BCMD supported media clubs across the country and 2 BCMD staff participated in the workshop..

Outcome: As a part of BCMD's strategic plan to strengthen the existing media clubs that it supports, BCMD conducted a two day newspaper design workshop funded by the Open Society Foundation (OSF). The participants learned about two main aspects of newspaper design; the content that fills up the paper and the technical part of designing the paper. Participants also learned basics of how to use Adobe InDesign, a software application to create works such as posters, flyers, brochures, magazines, newspapers and books. In addition, participants also engaged and learned about newspaper pagination, a process of dividing the content into different pages. The participants designed the 3 front covers of a newspaper in groups. SCAN Bhutan will be designing a template for 1 college



Participants engage in a group exercise to design a front cover of a newspaper using Adobe InDesign software. The group designs a newspaper title 'Shercol Eyes'.

newsletters. BCMD thanks, Chenchu Tshering and his team at SCAN Bhutan, Tashi Dorji- former editor of Business Observer and Bishal Rai- a former reporter for sharing their professional experience with the participants.

"I had a great experience as I learnt so much about designing a newspaper. I got some ideas about adding colors and liveliness into the paper. I know about features such as teaser, logo, headline, text, image and other aspects of designing a newspaper." - Phuntsho Choden, Royal Thimphu College.

10

What people say

At the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy, one of our core partners are the youth of our nation. We believe that the young people today have so much potential to get involved in discussions on issues that are related to their communities and the country as a whole. We encourage the youth to share their opinions respon-

sibly and to value other's views and opinions. At our Community Mapping workshop, BCMD asked youths from high schools and colleges about what kind of change they wish to see in the country and why people should listen to youth voice. Here is what a few of them shared with us.

I really want to see the change in people's attitude towards today's youth, the younger generation, about everything they do. I feel that people should listen to the youth because ultimately the youth are the future leaders of our country... If we underestimate the youth right from the time when they are brought up and even when they are growing up ... *(they will not have the confidence when they become adults.)* They will have certain feeling that what if I do is not right, what if this has more negative impact than positive impacts. Instead of taking action they may end up thinking a lot about the pros and cons of taking action.



Arpana Pradhan, YHS

I want to see the notion of the people to change; particularly how people always think that it is important to study hard and to excel in your studies only. I personally feel that every person have their own talents and they can excel in that. Later it is the fact that at the end of the day they want to enjoy their job and they want to give full commitment to what they are doing. Voice is really important because it is not about agreeing or disagreeing but it is about the right of the person to say what they think and most importantly should be about positive change. People should listen to young people because young people have new ideas and new thoughts where as older generation has experience. If experiences are blended with new ideas to bring new innovative and productive things, it is always good to have new changes.

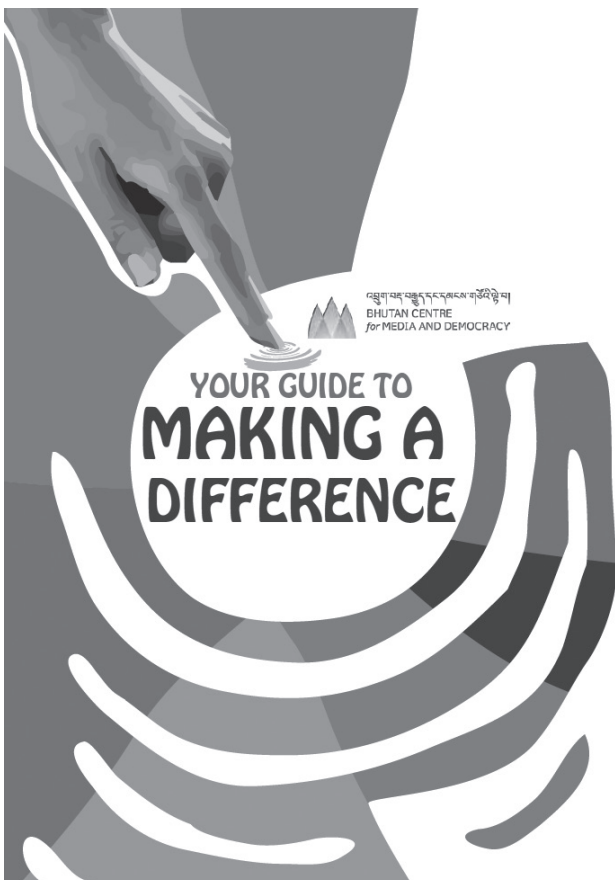


Pema Norbu, Sherubtse

I would like the community to change; I would like them to work together as one and to trust each other so that they change for the better. If youth are the future of Bhutan then their voice is very important because their voice is what shall shape the future of Bhutan. Youth voice is important to change our community, to help interaction between them, to build trust and to shape the future of our country.



Rinchen Jigsum Dorji, YHS



Citizen Action Guide

We are very excited to announce the upcoming launch of our Citizen's Action Guide, entitled Your Guide to Making a Difference. It is a handbook that people of all ages can carry around, with many sections teaching democratic values using simple language and colourful infographics.

The book shares ideas on how one can become a more responsible and active community member, and will be very useful for all Bhutanese.



Voice & Views of Citizens

Let people know who you are

www.bhutanspeaks.bt

Share your feedback on Mi-Khung. We encourage readers to contribute articles, most articles runs about 300-500 words. We welcome submissions relevant to BCMD's mission of developing a culture of democracy.

Please send in your contribution to phunthshonamgay@bcmbd.bt. For more information, please call 327903 or visit www.bcmbd.bt

BCMD Events Calendar: Upcoming Activities

Event: Jurwa- Changing times Part 2

Tentative Months: March 2014

Focus: The second series of Jurwa-Changing times focuses on issues and tensions that rise from the post election time in Bhutan. The radio soap is based on real time experiences that we see today in the country. It provides an opportunity for the listeners to reflect back on some of tensions and changes that they came across as we transit further into democracy with new elected members and the government. Ultimately the series aims to entertain and educate the general populace about democracy.

For: Targeted towards every citizen of the country, especially radio listening rural population.

Event: Press Freedom Day

Dates: May 3rd, 2014.

Focus: To commemorate World Press Freedom Day and to further strengthen the role and understanding of media, BCMD will conduct a short forum on this day. The forum will comprise of panelists from media professional background. The forum will observe a panel discussion and Q&A session with the audience. This year's theme will focus on three inter-related topics; media's importance in development; safety of journalists and the rule of law; and the sustainability and integrity of journalism.

For: High school and college students, CSOs, government, media sector and the public.

Event: Follow up trips to College Media Clubs

Tentative Months: May 2014

Focus: BCMD will travel to the media clubs across the country to follow up on some of the activities that have been initiated during the earlier trips. This time we will focus on workshops and trainings on interviewing and writing feature stories.

For: Sherubtse Media Society (SMS), Paro College of Education (PCE), Samtse College of Education (SCE), Institute of Language and Cultural Studies (ILCS), Jigme Sherubling HS, Tashigang, Sherub Reldri HS, Mongar, Chukha HSS, Yoezlering HSS, Gaupel LSS, Kuzhugchen MSS.

Youth Initiatives for Debate, Deliberation and Discussion (YIDDD)

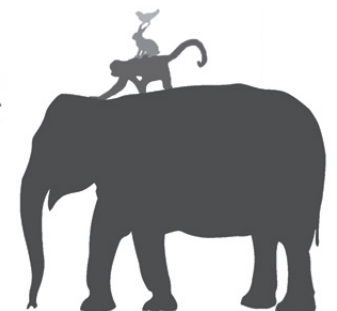
■ Mansoor Fassihi / BCMD

To deepen the democratic development in Bhutan, we at BCMD see the need to create a favourable environment for the long-term inclusion of young people in community affairs. Central to achieving this is the creation of structures that both teach youth about democracy and enable them to participate in it. Democracy, in all its messiness and complexity, cannot be restricted to an academic exercise or be biased towards action; it requires a balance of both.

And so, this year, we have spearheaded the Youth Initiative for Debate, Deliberation and Development (YIDDD). The YIDDD is an informal, non-party affiliated association that intends to give a select group of youth practical, hands-on experience in deliberating on national issues and taking community-based action. Unique in its design, the idea emerged from an inspired group of youth keen on changing the story that is often told in Bhutan - that youth are apathetic, disengaged, and 'not experienced enough' to bring change.

After identifying and selecting a diverse group of 19 youth representatives in the winter of 2013 - a lengthy process that involved obtaining buy-in from several school heads

THE YOUTH INITIATIVE FOR DEBATE, DELIBERATION & DEVELOPMENT



and officials - we began the initiative with a 2-week residential training at the Media Lab. The training focused on three core areas: (1) developing a selfless motivation for service through reflective and contemplative practices; (2) introducing participants to deliberative communication skills through practice debates and discussions; (3) employing the democratic approach to problem-solving through research and advocacy. Sessions were led by a number of guest speakers in key leadership positions, including MPs, policymakers, activists, and educators.

Youth representatives displayed their growth and competency during YIDDD's first public sitting on January 17th. Following a parliamentary procedure, the youth representatives deliberated on three proposals for initiatives that they had come up with in their action committees. The proposals called for (1) the ban of junk food imports; (2) a national policy for people with disabilities; and (3) the establishment of an auton-

ous council for teachers. After measured and civil discussion, they voted on whether the proposals were ready to be pushed forward.

To sustain this momentum, we have been meeting with the Youth Reps on a weekly basis to help them realize their visions for change. We even made a visit to the National Council to give them a taste of how policymaking happens at the national level. In February, we have been working on building their cases for their proposals and teaching them how to use creative methods for advocacy, including the use of video. Results matter and we want to show youth that they can affect and influence public debate on some of these oft-neglected issues.

With the help and support of UNICEF, we will continue to facilitate the activities of YIDDD in Thimphu for a year to assess whether it can be scaled up or introduced into other Dzongkhags.

What does it mean to be a citizen?



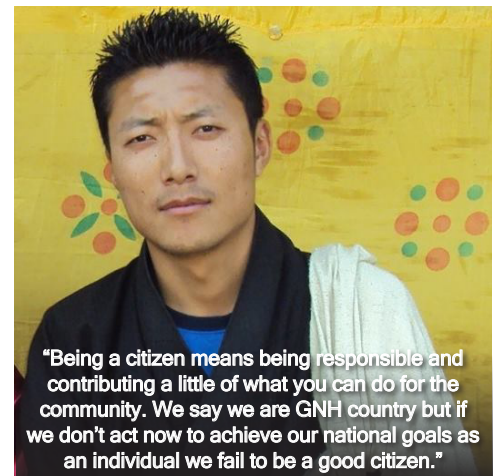
"For me being a citizen means being a responsible person, being responsible to your community and serving the Tsa-Wa-Sum together."

Tashi Galey, 20, Royal institute of Health and Sciences, Thimphu



"Being a citizen of a country means someone who is patriotic and have not acted against the country and the people."

Dema, 82, Sabji Bazar, Thimphu



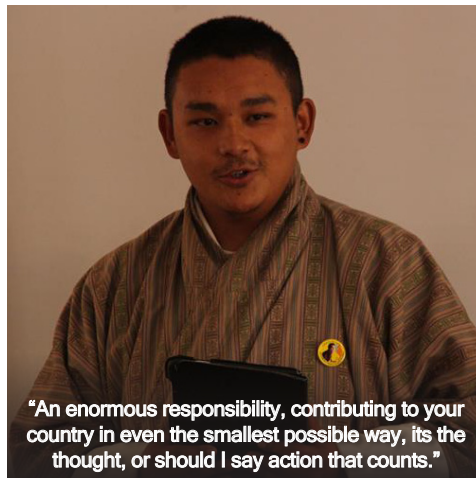
"Being a citizen means being responsible and contributing a little of what you can do for the community. We say we are GNH country but if we don't act now to achieve our national goals as an individual we fail to be a good citizen."

Kencho Tshering, Gewog Administrative Officer, Bumthang



"For me, being a good citizen is raising my three children well and giving them quality education so that they can grow up to be productive citizens serving the country."

Rinchen Lhamo, 34, Shopkeeper



"An enormous responsibility, contributing to your country in even the smallest possible way, its the thought, or should I say action that counts."

Tenzin Rabgye, BBS



"A citizen does not only mean who is residing in the country but also someone who has a good knowledge of culture, customs, traditions and history of the country."

Nima Dolma, 28, business, from Phuntsholing

The 5 Fundamental Principles of the National Assembly – Article 12

1. The National Assembly shall have a maximum of fifty-five members, elected from each Dzongkhag in proportion to its population, provided that no Dzongkhag shall have less than two members or more than seven members, for which purpose Parliament shall, by law, provide for each Dzongkhag to be divided into constituencies through appropriate delimitation, and for the voters in each constituency directly electing one member to the National Assembly.
2. The number of elected members from each Dzongkhag shall reapportioned to reflect the changing registered voter population after every ten years, subject to the limitation of a minimum of two and a maximum of seven members from each Dzongkhag.
3. At the first sitting after any general election, or when necessary to fill a vacancy, the National Assembly shall elect a Speaker and a Deputy Speaker from among its members.
4. The Druk Gyalpo shall, by warrant under His hand and seal, confer Dakyen to the Speaker.
5. The National Assembly shall assemble at least twice a year.