

MI-KHUNG

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The Space for Democracy's Growth

■ Siok Sian Pek-Dorji, Director, BCMD

Bhutan has taken on the task of building a system of governance as a democratic constitutional monarchy. The evolving political system is shaping a new space and culture that gives us the opportunity to lay the foundations so that citizens can find the means and the encouragement to shape our future. In the process, we are learning to understand and assume new responsibilities as the citizens of a new democracy.

In a country where the state has been a strong driver, perhaps the only driver, of change, we need to now consider how to get the state to provide more space for citizens to interact, associate and to share their views. We are talking of “public space”, a concept that has been described as a physical or virtual space that facilitates the creation of an enabling environment for democratic discourse. There is a growing consciousness and an increasing will among people to participate and create positive change at the local level. This is seen through volunteerism and other civil society initiatives.

In such a changing environment, Bhutanese citizens are learning to listen to, and to accept diversity in views. The abrasiveness of the campaigns in the 2013 elections are an indication that we need to shape a more robust and healthy public space where people engage in more “civil” conversations by learning to disagree respectfully. At BCMD's Bhutan Media Dialogues held in the past year, members of the news media



BCMD's 'exploring democracy conversations' provide public space for discussions

reflected a sense of helplessness, and even remorse, at how they had simply “reported” the events at the last elections without giving deeper thought to the political negativities and mud-slinging that will have an impact on our democratic culture.

History has shown that societies without a strong public space are more likely to see change through public protests and violence. While the state continues to be a strong presence in Bhutan, the real success of our democracy lies in the ability of the state to provide and possibly even groom a healthy public space. Civil society, the media, the political parties are a part of this-public space and have equal responsibility in fostering its growth and sustaining its presence.

The importance of media is well accepted. “No country that has ever had a

free press has suffered a famine,” said Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen. Sen's analysis is that a free press helps a country to keep tabs on what's going on and to enable decision-makers to respond to felt needs. A society that is open to feedback results in a stronger system.

It prevents the pressure cooker effect that is demonstrated by societies where people take to the streets and protest to make change happen.

In the past Bhutan had a strong sense of community, born out of a pragmatic need for survival. Hence our collaborations in setting up irrigation systems, in building clinics and schools, and the celebration of village festivals.

In modern Bhutan civil society is struggling to emerge.

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Youth do not have to wait to become adults to make a difference to society

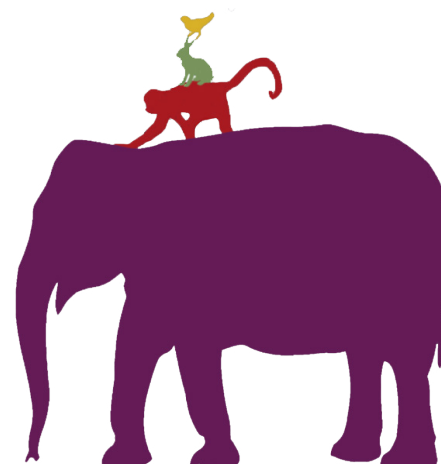
■ Ngawang Gyeltshen, Class XII, Motithang HSS, Thimphu

George Bernard Shaw once wrote, “Youth is wasted on the young.” No, it is not! We may not have the experience or the wisdom that comes with age, but we have the passion. And perhaps in a world that is too afraid to change, passion is all we need to have.

Before the Youth Initiative, I was waiting to grow up because I thought it was only as an adult that I could make a difference. I was wrong. Change – real change – starts young.

And Go Local is my example for it. This idea, which is not entirely mine, stemmed from the many discussions we, the young

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Being the Change, Beyond Complaining

BCMD's Community Mapping workshop inspires a new way to finding solutions to problems

■ Passang 'Passu' Tshering, Teacher, Bajothang HSS, Wangduephodrang

I spent my summer vacation well. I attended a workshop by the day and met friends in the evenings.

I know you don't like reading about workshops. Neither do I, but that workshop was different. It was not about some far-fetched theories and endless handouts that often end up in a dustbin. It was about realising our power to change things. We spent five days inspiring ourselves and the next five going out into the real world to make real changes.

The workshop conducted by the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD) was called Community Mapping. It was about locating issues and assets in a community and getting them on the map. We carried Android phones loaded with Unicef GIS mapping app that helps pin pictures onto the map using GPS. But we went beyond clicking pictures and identifying problems. We innovated solutions to the problems.

The problem in our country is that most of us don't know that a problem is a problem, and the few who see the problem think it's not their problem. The workshop screened inspiring documentaries about individuals and communities that led changes, who became part of the solution.

After five days, we identified the following issues in the Thimphu community:

1. Management of waste party goers leave behind at Buddha Point
2. Getting the city bus to Changedaphu
3. Campaigning against taking packaged food as *tshog* (offering) to *lhakhangs*



Passang Tshering's (right) team with the Thimphu Thrompon, Kinlay Dorjee

4. Appointing a community caretaker at a labour camp
5. City bus vegetable vendors on stalls.

Any average citizen would say these are none of their business, but the workshop taught us to believe that every little issue within our community is our business.

On the last day of the workshop attended by college and high school students and a few teachers, we presented our project outcome at the Tarayana hall filled with distinguished people who were change makers and policymakers. They all seemed im-

pressed and promised to render their support.

The bottom line is, if a streetlight is kept on during the day, some people will not notice it at all, some will see it and feel nothing about it, some will know it's waste of energy, some will click a picture of it and post it on Facebook or Twitter. In that workshop, we were inspired to take the next step – to call the authorities.

I encourage Media Clubs in schools to get in touch with the BCMD and book your place in the next Community Mapping workshop. It will surely change you into a change maker.

We Empower Ourselves to Empower Others

Reflections on media and democracy training with BCMD in Bhutan

■ Marie Thesbjerg, Teacher, Denmark

"So what did you do in Bhutan?" My Danish friends asked me when I returned to Denmark.

Working with BCMD in training media club members on journalism skills and staff members of CSOs on multimedia seems a bit abstract to some of my friends. Some friends change the topic, perhaps to avoid more talk on democracy which, to us in Denmark, is a commonplace issue. Democracy is everywhere in Danish civil society since it goes back more than 160 years.

Some friends are intrigued by the story of Bhutanese democracy that came from the King and not as a result of bloody struggles. I really enjoy explaining Bhutan's extraordinary path to democracy.

Since I worked with Danida in Bhutan in 2005 and 2006 and wrote my master's thesis on the Bhutanese media, I have kept coming back to Bhutan to learn more. The media in Bhutan have developed greatly in the last 10 years because of digital possibilities, privatisation, and the process of democratisation. Media and democracy are intertwined.

We say the media are the fourth estate. The media are powerful means to shape agendas and public debate. Today, media are so more, and the training of youth on how to handle and use media constructively is timely and important. The media are a great way to get involved. That is why we chose to teach interview and journalistic

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To watch BCMD videos go to:
www.youtube.com/user/Thebcmbd

How to Rise Above Disabilities

■ Pelden Leki, Volunteer, Draktsho Vocational Training Centre for Special Children & Youth

Sitting on a cold, concrete floor, her back gently resting against the wall, Sunita Gurung watches her friends run after a ball. When they miss the ball, they lose their footing and wobble to regain balance. But some fall. Sunita finds joy in something as simple as watching her friends play. Damage to the motor centres of her brain has left her with CP (cerebral palsy). Her legs hold her back, but her mind is always positive about whatever surrounds her.

Sunita, 26, from Samtse was born healthy. But by age 6, when other kids her age went out to play, CP kept her indoors. Her CP was accompanied by nerve damage, loss of sensation, and muscle disorders that caused uncontrollable movements.

Growing up with a physical disability was not easy. Besides her disability, she had to deal with people's perceptions of her and learn to stand up for herself.

“Although attitudes towards persons with disabilities are changing, there still is a lack of understanding about disability.”
- Pelden Leki

Sunita's life was to change for the better, though. When Draktsho Vocational Training Centre for Special Children and Youth started on October 2, 2001, Sunita



Sunita Gurung, 26, during her basket weaving class

Gurung was one of the first few students at the centre. Draktsho was founded by Ms Jigme Wangmo as a CSO in Thimphu.

There are kids and adults all ages at Draktsho. They all love to play within the little compound which they call home. They are a family, sharing their eyes and ears and speech in a small world within our bigger world. Monday through Friday, the school bus picks up Sunita at 8:30 am. At the centre, her day begins with the morning prayer. Like most students at Draktsho, Sunita learns Dzongkha, English, and Maths. Under the guidance of Lopen Dorji Nedup, she has also learned basket weaving.

Within the past few years, Sunita has done well in her studies. She has now become more independent and helps her elder sister Kali at home. She is self-confident, sociable, and always polite and respectful. When asked what her dream is, she stammers, “I want to be independent, and if possible, earn a living out of basket weaving.”

Although attitudes towards persons with disabilities are changing, there still is a lack of understanding about disability. There should be more dedicated centres for people with disabilities that create equal opportunities for them and help them become happy, independent, and contributing members of society.

Mission Log

■ Sherub Dorji, Thimphu Resident

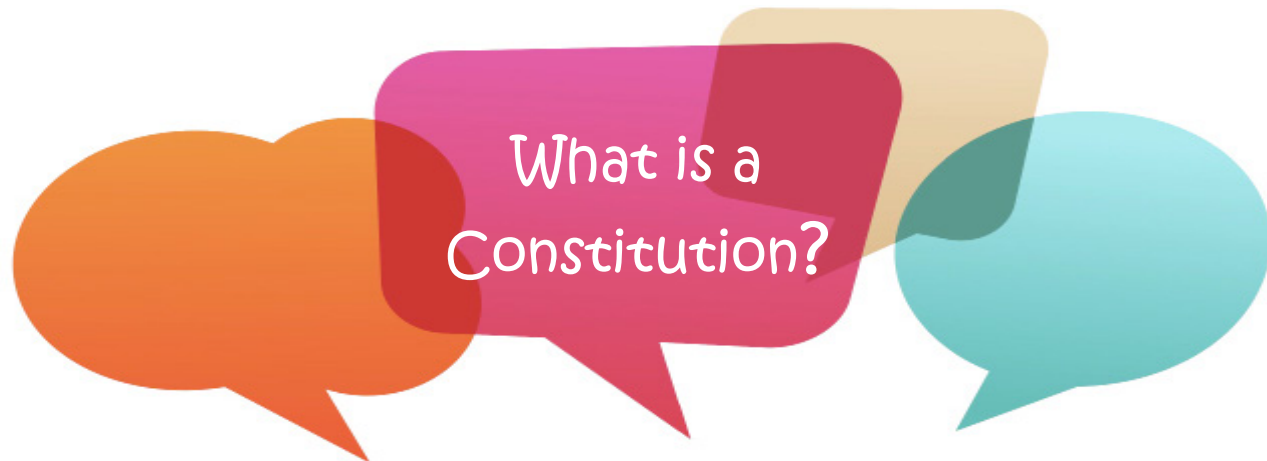
1. A huge log has been blocking the drain behind the City Bus parking area in Thimphu. It is unsightly so I got together with my friends and scanned the possibilities of how we can fix this problem ourselves.



2. After a few minutes, we borrowed a rope and started pulling on the log. Then we realised that it was too difficult on our own.

4

Everyday Democracy



What is a
Constitution?

A Constitution is the highest law, which lays out a set of rules that we live by. A Constitution lists the rights and responsibilities of the citizen, and the responsibilities of the state toward its citizens. Laws and regulations made by governments are usually judged by the principles laid out in the Constitution.

"WE THE PEOPLE OF BHUTAN"

This declaration gives legitimacy to the Constitution; hence, "We the People" reflects the support of the people for the Constitution.



It lists the duties of every individual, which help make a difference to a larger community.



Today, the Constitution protects us and keeps us safe.



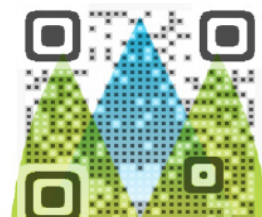
The Constitution gives us rights. Rights are things that all people have just because they are alive.



It creates a political framework that will make democracy effective and vibrant.



It embodies the hopes and aspirations of people.



Use your smartphone. Find us on facebook.

Students find a Platform for Journalism

- Dekee Zangmo, BA Sociology & Political Science, Royal Thimphu College

Students of Royal Thimphu College (RTC) on May 24 and 25 found a new platform to learn journalism. The 15 members of the newly established media club in the college attended a twoday workshop on journalism.

Organised by BCMD in collaboration with the RTC media club, the workshop was conducted to teach the students basics of journalism, including interviewing and news writing techniques.

The participants interviewed people on the first day and developed their own stories on the second day. The first ever training conducted for the RTC media club

was led by Marie Thes jerg, a Danish journalist, and Tshering Eudon, a programme officer with the BCMD.

“We at the BCMD encourage and support members of the new media club. At this workshop, we want to introduce participants to the basics of news writing and interviewing techniques as part of our emphasis on the importance of media and news literacy education,” said BCMD’s representative, Tshering Eudon.

The students attending the workshop found it to be a platform for interaction with people and for learning writing skills. Dorjee Om Dorji, a club member, said she had learned a lot about how to deal with the

people and the kind of language expected to be used. She said, “I can no interact with people more appropriately.”

The students also experienced the work of journalists at the workshop. The workshop highlighted for the students the potential of media use as a platform of responsible expression.

Having started their media club recently, the students aim to create media awareness among their peers and promote membership of the club. The club has recently created a pictorial web page named “Shock Sighted”, and by August, it plans to launch a club newsletter supported by the college and the BCMD.

The Man who Inspired Me to Bring Change

An ordinary person with an extraordinary vision can be a real inspiration

- Choki Dawa, Teacher, Sherub Reldri HSS, Mongar



Ata Sonam spends his free time planting saplings and nurturing young trees at Buddha Point

It was only when I was asked to become the teacher coordinator of Sheldri Media Society that I came to know the importance of the club. I did not know that after becoming the teacher coordinator club, I would have the honour of being invited by BCMD for the community mapping workshop during this summer vacation.

During the 11-day training, I learned to become more responsible and sensible in bringing change to the communities. I found myself inspired by values the training instilled in me despite the fact that I was not a big advocate of the idea of bringing change.

The world is increasingly becoming competitive and everything around us is overstretched to meet the demands of competition. As a result, many of us become numb and talk with a sense of helplessness. However, somewhere in the corners of our hearts, the instinct to think positive throbs. BCMD’s community mapping workshop helped me to be myself, a real individual.

During the workshop, meeting Sonam Phuntsho, an ordinary man with profound faith in making our future better, inspired me with values that make our lives so much better. Sonam Phuntsho is a government servant and happily earning his monthly salary. But his service to the nation and to the earth is exemplary in today’s world.

Most people in today’s generation

are self-centric, but Sonam Phuntsho, popularly known as Ata Sonam, does not entertain the notion of being happy and laid-back with what he owns. He spends all his leisure time taking care of young trees and planting saplings in and around Buddha Point.

“It is not necessary for us to be seen by people doing something for the community. We can do something in a small way but from the heart.”
- Choki Dawa

It was amazing to know that he will finish planting around 30,000 saplings this year. One mesmerising thing about this inspiring man is that he knows every individual plant of that area. After spending several hours with him, I found myself planning how to narrate his story to my colleagues and students back in my school because I really wanted his story to inspire them as it did me.

It is not necessary for us to be seen by people doing something for the community. We can do something in a small way but from the heart. With this kind of determination and effort, we can make a difference to society. The future will, thus, be safe for generations to come. I want to show my students how, as individuals, we can make a difference to the place we live in.

Exploring the Truth through Journalism

Truth is higher than god and everyone loves to see it

■ Khenpo Phuntsok Tashi, Director of the National Museum of Bhutan, Paro

Many Bhutanese journalists gathered at the Zhiwaling Hotel in Paro for a three day dialogue aimed at exploring the truth and learning mind training under the guidance of four international and two local resource persons.

Journalists are passionate about discovering the truth. They are also excited about receiving a *'spiritual package'* for use, especially when they encounter challenges while reporting.

I was asked to share my reflections on the dialogue after each session. I posed the following questions to the group: Why did you choose to become journalists? Was your decision based on the desire to become famous, wealthy, or to gain power and influence? What is the role of journalists in society, particularly in a new democratic country like Bhutan?

I think journalists should be good listeners, patient, and compassionate. Journalists do not speak for themselves. They reflect the voice of the people and speak on their behalf. But in order to speak for them accurately, it is important to first listen to them.

Journalists must be patient in order to get to the bottom of a story and find the truth. Journalists can serve as a medicine for so-

ciety in that they can heal wounds inflicted by injustice, harmful actions, inequality, corruption, or biased stories by exploring possible solutions or actions.

Journalists should always be mindful and, as much as possible, strive to follow the middle path in order to be unbiased. They should always remember that they embody the wise and compassionate who aim to bring harmony and peace to society by revealing important issues, telling the truth, and seeking and promoting workable solutions.

News stories make things real for others. Therefore, it is important to reflect on the kind of reality journalists are creating when they publish or broadcast news.

I think that the nature of journalists' work is much like that of bodhisattvas who work tirelessly for the benefit of others. Journalists should strive to develop both right wisdom and unconditional compassion in order to enable their audience to see the things as they truly are.

Journalists can earn positive reputation and respect and, at the same time, generate much positive karma by telling the truth. Truth is higher

“...they (journalists) can heal wounds inflicted by injustice, harmful actions, inequality, corruption, or biased stories by exploring possible solutions or actions.”

- Khenpo Phuntsok Tashi

than god and everyone loves to see it.

Every journalist should have three qualities of a successful or effective leader, namely knowledge, compassion, and strength or *khen tse nue suem*.

Journalists should also have faith and trust in the government, provide support to what the government does even as they judge what it does.

We Empower Ourselves to Empower Others!

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skills to the college students in the media clubs. BCMD staff teach tools to engage, take part, raise unheard voices, to investigate, and to engage in civil society.

We teach and train students to empower people through correct information and unbiased stories. I believe it is also the job of journalists to not only point to the failures, but also show possibilities and solutions. We criticise when criticism is due. It is a freedom. But democracy and freedom come with obligations.

Who said it was uncomplicated to live in a democracy? Sometimes, it is difficult to consider others' views. Other times, it is fun. If we are skilful, democracy is a way in which to take part, take care, and stay aware. We can rejoice in the possibilities of making people heard, bringing changes, and empowering ourselves to empower others.

Real Change Starts Small

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“We have grown accustomed to expecting changes at the national level, changes that are huge and swift. But quite to the contrary, change can start small.”

- Ngawang Gyeltshen

and the bold, had among ourselves.

And it is nothing complicated for economists or legislators to ponder over. It is simple. The Go Local initiative is about making the right choice in the way in which we want to feed our people, treat our environment, and appreciate our farmers. We have grown accustomed to expecting changes at the national level, changes that are huge and swift. But quite to the contrary, change can start small.

We have hundreds of schools in our country and thousands of students in each of them.

We have in our classrooms the pulse of our nation beating. And as a president in one of these schools, I decided to introduce a healthier food habit for my friends.

Go local is all about making sure that the organic farm produce reaches the students. The canteen in my school agreed to sell organic farm produce despite the loss they may incur. Why? Because change means looking beyond individual greed.

Today, our farmers face stiff competition from giant corporations and our people confront the growing epidemic of consuming poison in packaged foods. We are, as a nation, up against this challenge together. The solution demands unity in every decision we make even if it is something as small as going local because change, real change, starts local. Starts young. Starts small.

The Space for Democracy's Growth

>> From pg. 1

An example is a BCMD proposal in 2013 to pilot a mock youth parliament. We met with resistance from those in the seats of governance. An educator told us that a youth parliament was not needed as it was not common in Asia. Others said that we were "politicising" youth and raised the concern that youth may go off to join political parties.

The youth were surprised and disappointed by this initial reaction but were convinced that we had to gain the trust of those in decision-making. So it was back to the drawing board where we modified the programme and renamed it as the Youth Initiative (YI), an educational activity. Today we see evidence in the Youth Initiative that young people can be guided and groomed to become more active citizens.

Going back to the initial idea of a youth parliament, it is heartening to know that the National Assembly is now considering organising a mock youth parliament. We hope that such initiatives continue to grow.

There have also been instances where government agencies and civil society organisations have worked together for common aspirations. "We need both hands to clap, and it's important that we work with civil society just as much as civil society needs us," says Phintsho Choden, Director General of the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC). In 2013, RENEW (Respect, Educate, Nurture and

Empower Women) worked with NCWC on a domestic violence bill, and lobbied for its enactment. Other examples can be found in work related to the environment and to children. But sadly, some international organisations and UN agencies continue to route support to civil society through officialdom, thus requiring that we get their endorsement.

While the state may have a vital role in shaping our thinking through the school system, it is equally important for us to include civil society members in the promotion of that consciousness. This is not a new concept as the government has spent decades trying to promote decentralisation that placed people at the centre of development. Our challenge today is to figure out how to truly empower people and to promote a sense of ownership of our collective future through more open discussions and democratic processes.

Democracy requires that we promote the active and meaningful engagement of citizens in daily concerns and in matters of governance. This can be as simple as promoting Bhutanese produce in a school canteen currently piloted by the YI.

The spirit of organised volunteerism is growing stronger and we see notable initiatives in urban towns like Thimphu with residents cleaning the clock tower space, volunteering in the hospital, civil society groups creating parks. All of them are commendable and deserve support.

Such examples of civic life need to be strengthened, especially in the rapidly growing urban towns, where 50% of the population is expected to live by the year 2020.

Public space is a mental space or construct. And here we need to shake ourselves out of a recipient mentality where "funds" seem to be the very determinant of change. "If we have funds we will..." says a college student earnestly when suggesting that she and her friends will initiate action to segregate waste in their college vicinity. "It's too premature for our rural residents to carry out activities to mark events like Constitution Day because they have no funds," was a reply from a civil society representative at a seminar to discuss what political parties have learnt from a study trip to observe Denmark's democracy.

Comments like these indicate how entrenched our view is as a recipient of development aid. It also places us in a receptive mode rather than in the pro-active frame of mind –where people believe that they can engage without needing approval, directives or guidance from those who represent authority. A question to consider is if we need continued announcements from municipal authorities reminding shops and offices to fly the national flag during national day.

The state is well defined and the private sector is growing. It's now time to enable the third space – civil society – to grow.

Mission Log

>> From pg. 3



3. Our team has to back off because this force was far greater than ours. So we sat and thought about it. We decided to approach the Thimphu Thromde for help.

4. The next day, by the time we reached the site, the log was removed by Thromde workers. This helped to clear the blockage in that drain that could easily lead to floods in the rainy season. Thank you Thimphu Thromde for responding so quickly.



Youth Forum for Sherubtseans



A student contributes to a poster filled with ideas about youth in Bhutan at the Sherubtse Youth Forum

and improvement of the college's newspaper. Ideas were shared at the end of a two day youth forum with the theme, Igniting the Next Generation of Active Citizens.

"After attending the programme the commitment I am making is to be an active citizen, to be interactive, participate, and contribute in a small manner and ultimately to help our country to achieve GNH. It is not that we have to look for the government to do everything, but it is up to us to help the government to achieve any kind of goal that we have."

– Sherab Dorji, Dzo/Eng, 3rd Year.

"I learned that all of us have voices, big and small, and what we need is a platform. If youth are given a platform there are so many wonderful things that they can actually come up with; wonderful and innovative ideas."

– Neelam Rai, Media Studies, 2nd Year.

The forum was funded by USAID through the International Republican Institute (IRI) in partnership with Bhutan Foundation.

When: April 24-25, 2014

Participants: 70 members of Sherubtse Media Society (SMS)

Where: Sherubtse College, Trashigang

Outcome: The workshop inspired proposals for youth action ranging from environmental projects, promoting media literacy

Media Literacy in Mongar

When: April 25-27, 2014

Where: Sherub Reldri and Mongar Higher Secondary Schools, Yakgang, Mongar

Participants: Principals, Teachers, Media Club members.

Outcome: The heads of two schools expressed that the meetings were very useful for understanding what the benefits of a media club are and addressed the importance of administrative support for such school clubs which have the potential for making many positive contributions to any educational institution. The schools agreed to be more involved with the media club activities in supporting them. Both parties agreed to communicate with each other regarding activities of their clubs.

After the meeting at Sherub Reldri school, BCMD presented the five core concepts of media literacy for the members of the Sherub Reldri and Mongar high school media clubs. Some of the issues discussed were:



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

- How to deconstruct media messages;
- Stereotyping in the media and the values it promotes;
- How media has the power to shape our beliefs;

- How to consume media in creative, intelligent and productive ways.

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

Press Freedom Day 2014 Forums



Students from RTC and PCE participate in the Press Freedom Day activities held at the individual institutions

When: May 5 & 7, 2014

Where: Royal Thimphu College (RTC) and Paro College of Education (PCE)

Participants: Approximately 160 students from the two college media clubs and college

lecturers participated in the two separate forums held at the respective colleges.

Outcome: The theme for the forums was Free Media Contributes to Good Govern-

ance, Empowerment and Development.

At PCE's forum, students questioned the role of the media in Bhutan and suggested types of stories that they would like to see reported. Some suggested stories were:

- Citizenship Identity Card (CID) issues for youth
- Stories from rural areas
- The changing climate and environment in Bhutan
- Updates on issues like Education City.

Overall, students wanted to hear more positive stories about youth and to have a larger platform in media for youth and youth issues.

"Good governance links government to the notion of responsibility for the citizens, so if media is free and independent to play the role of watchdog, an official place for debate can be initiated and give opportunities to citizens to hold their government accountable"

-Tashi Dema, Journalist, Kuensel

The events were organised with the support from Open Society Foundations.

Talking Journalism at three Colleges

When: May, 2014

Where: Paro College of Education (PCE), Institute of Language and Cultural Studies (ILCS) and Royal Thimphu College (RTC)

Participants: Media club members

Outcome: At these workshops, students explored the following objectives:

- Exploring Ways in which participants can engage in community problem-solving through basic news writing and interviewing skills;
- Educating participants about democratic culture and importance of journalism;
- Teaching participants how to address local issues through writing and making tangible suggestions to solve or improve them;
- Improving participants' abilities to effectively cover stories from their colleges and other stories of interest for their surrounding communities.



Participants at ILCS getting feedback on their headline and lead writing from Jorgen

Stories written during the workshops will be later published in various newsletters.

These workshops were supported by the Friendship Association of Denmark and Bhutan (FADB).

At the recent Press Freedom Day workshop at Paro College of Education, students raised concerns surrounding media's portrayal of youth in Bhutanese society. Participants felt that only negative news was reported about youth and that accomplishments by youth were never celebrated or discussed. We asked three youth

leaders from across the country about their perception of youth in Bhutanese media, what needs to be changed - if anything - and how it can be accomplished. Here are their answers:

"I think that youth are misrepresented throughout the media in Bhutan because the media reports news to gossip about, and a lot of negative news. If a youth is involved in a gang fight and another is doing volunteer work, then the media will cover the negative news while ignoring the good part. From my point of view, youth can be better represented by looking at the upcoming youth initiative activities and encouraging youth by providing a new platform to showcase ideas."



Phuntsho Chhoden Gyeltshen,
Royal Thimphu College

"I think in the recent past, youth were sometimes portrayed very badly in Bhutanese media. Normally, media focused on youth stories associated with gang fights, robberies, drug abuse, etc. Now, we are at a time where there are many youth organisations that are doing a lot of positive work. For youth to be represented in a better manner, our voices should be heard in parliamentary sessions and we should be involved in productive holiday activities. These things are already happening in Bhutan. The media should make more of an effort to reach out to youth, after all, we are the target audience for radio and TV shows and many areas of the internet like blogs show youth in positive light. Media has the core power to change the image of youth in Bhutan."



Tshering Yangzom,
Paro College of Education

"I saw only the youths who have good oral or communication skills either in English or Dzongkha get involved in the field of media. Yes, those youth are more eligible but how about involving other youths who may lack these skills but who can do it in their mother tongue. For that matter, I personally feel that if we avoid narrowing the opportunity for youths to participate in media by making English and Dzongkha as the primary language, it will have great impact on the number of youth participating in media. So in order to widen the scope of media for Bhutanese youth, means of communication is the most important factor."



Dorji Wangdi,
Sherubtse College

JURWA "CHANGING TIMES"

A Radio Drama

Listen to the stories from Gakithang. Apart from the suspense, romance, comedy and the rumours, the radio drama (in Dzongkha) highlights some of the challenges of creating a new democracy and prompts thinking

TUNE INTO THE TWO RADIO STATIONS TO FIND OUT WHAT THE RESIDENTS OF GAKITHNAG HAVE BEEN UP TO.

Season 1 & 2: Everyday starting 11th August till 22nd September from 11:30am-11:45am

Season 2: Five episodes every Sunday starting 17th August till 14th September from 09:30pm-11:30pm



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 run about 300-500 words. We welcome submissions relevant to BCMD's mission of developing a culture of democracy.

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

BCMD Events Calendar: Upcoming Activities

Event: Open Mic Night

Tentative Date: September, 2014

Focus: BCMD is looking forward to screening multimedia pieces created at a Multimedia training workshop that was held in early June this year. With participants representing the Youth Development Fund (YDF), Draktsho, Bhutan Foundation, Bhutan Kidney Foundation and BCMD as well, four multimedia presentations were created to help advocate the work of these organisations in fun and creative ways.

For: These pieces and a few other videos will be screened at a casual get-together for the participants, their family and friends, and other members of their organisations.

Event: Civil Society (CSO) Seminar

Tentative Date: August/September, 2014

Focus: Civil Society is an emerging sector in Bhutan's urban centres and with democracy evolving, we recognise the importance of such a space that will represent the people's ability to organise themselves, to associate and assist one another, and to co-create the kind of Bhutan we envision. For the first time, BCMD will coordinate the CSO seminar which will aim to help participants truly understand the meaning of civil society, why it matters and to share the experiences of CSOs from Bhutan and neighbouring countries.

For: Members of Civil Society

Event: 2 Youth Forums

Tentative Dates: End of August/
Early September, 2014

Focus: With the same theme of 'Igniting the Next Generation of Active Citizens', BCMD will be replicating its fourth youth forum in the coming months for two groups of youth.

For: One forum will be organised for students of Gaeddu College of Business Studies (GCBS) and the College of Science and Technology (CST), two colleges that BCMD is yet to collaborate with and looks forward to doing so. The second forum is for members of the Police Youth Partnership Programme (PYPP) which we will look to organise with the support of the Royal Bhutan Police.

Youth Initiative (YI) Gets into Action

An association of Bhutanese youth goes beyond mere talk and takes local action

■ Phuntsho Namgay, BCMD YI Programme Coordinator

Although only seven months old, the Youth Initiative (YI) has caught the attention of the youth with debates, creative advocacy short films, and dedication to walk the talk. Many people, who have followed YI debates, have noted that the initiative has brought out the potential of the Bhutanese youth.

The youth think policymakers do not consult them enough. Dechen Rabgyal, the president of the YI, says, "Some youth feel they are not consulted on decisions that directly or indirectly affect them. On the other hand, policymakers feel that the youth are rather apathetic towards the country's development." It is against this backdrop that the YI has evolved.

Dechen adds there is a need for a platform for youth to discuss issues and see what they can contribute to society. That pretty much sums up what the YI (formerly known as Model Youth Parliament) is. The YI is an association of young Bhutanese started by the youth aimed at bringing positive changes.

Since January, the YI has researched policies, debated them and has come up with resolutions to change the way things are. For five months, they advocated for change through their schools, colleges, and the media.

But it is not just about talking. Ngawang Gyeltshen, a youth representative, says, "We thought we would bring change at the national level. But we realised that we do not have good implementation of policies. Our sole aim now is to put our words into action."

In July, the youth representatives attended a week-long training where the YI formed three local actions committees. Local actions were subsequently proposed during the YI summer sitting. And as part of its local actions plans, the YI will create a safe path and ramps at the Memorial Choeten for differentlyabled persons and patients at the Thimphu hospital, promote local products in Thimphu schools, and promote a reading culture among students through campaigns.

As the youth continue to work, they welcome recommendations and feedback to make their local actions sustainable.



Youth representatives listen intently during the public speaking training session.

“Some youth feel they are not consulted on decisions that directly or indirectly affect them. On the other hand, policymakers feel that the youth are rather apathetic towards the country's development.”

-Dechen Rabgyal

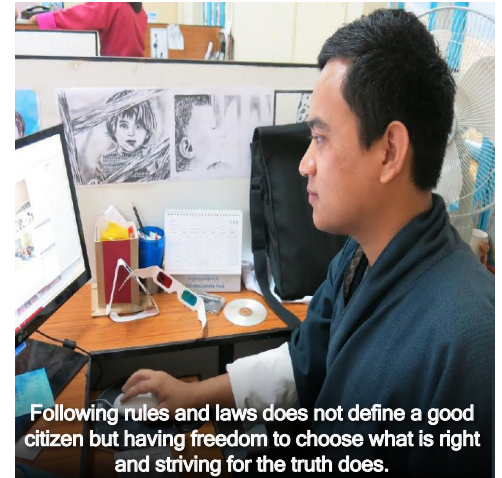
What does it mean to be a citizen?



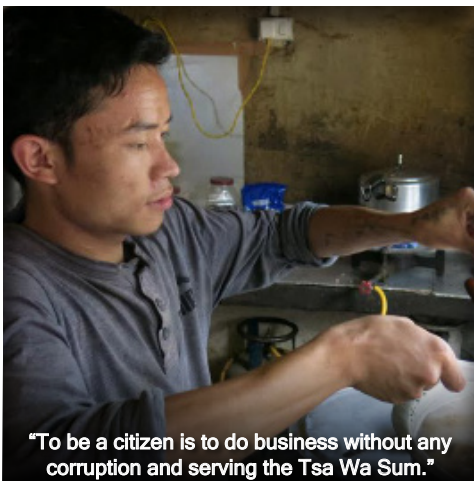
Apsha Dorji, 31, Businessman, Wangduephodrang



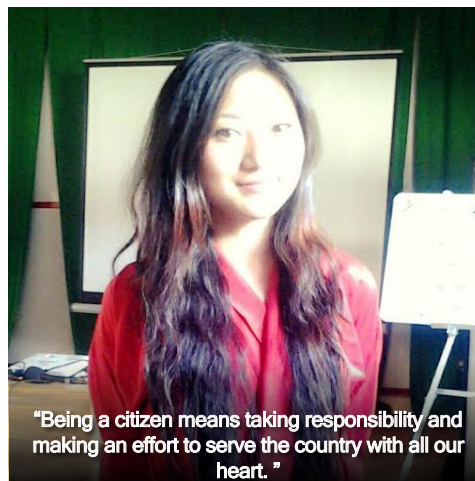
Karma Drupchu, 43, Photographer, Trashiyangtse



Ugyen Dorji, 25, Graphic Designer, Trashigang



Harka Tamang, 26, Cook, Tsirang



Deki Wangmo, 24, Graduate, Chukha



Tshering Palden, 32, Reporter, Punakha

5 Attributes of Passing Bills in the Parliament – Article 13

1. A Bill passed by Parliament shall come into force upon Assent of the Druk Gyalpo.
2. Money Bills and financial Bills shall originate only in the National Assembly whereas any other legislative Bill may originate in either House.
3. A Bill pending in either House shall not lapse by reason of the prorogation of either House.
4. A Bill shall be passed by a simple majority of the total number of members of the respective Houses or by not less than two-thirds of the total number of members of both Houses present and voting, in the case of a joint sitting.
5. Where a Bill has been introduced and passed by one House, it shall present the Bill to the other House within thirty days from the date of passing and that Bill may be passed during the next session of Parliament. In the case of Budget and Urgent Bills, they shall be passed in the same session of Parliament.

Want to know more? Learn about all 11 sections of Article 13: The Passing of Bills under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan. Read, know and understand your Constitution and keep your representatives accountable. Stay informed, be an active citizen.