

Inspiring Community-based Change



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BHUTAN CENTRE
for MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY

An Engaged Society • A Vibrant Democracy



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Building Community Initiative

The Community Building Initiative of Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD) engages youth and members of community to tackle issues in their community tapping into local resources, expertise, and knowledge. The programme brings youth and residents in conversation with planners and policymakers in a neutral and safe space through town hall meetings and local action projects to instill civic consciousness, agency, and to promote democratic participatory approaches to addressing community issues.

Goals

Inspire youth as community based change agents

Deepen youths' sense of belongingness and responsibility towards their community

Empower youth with skills of inquiry, research, and critical thinking

Active Citizen Checklist

Talk: Talks about issues important to reflect on one's positions and to understand others views.

Stays Informed: Follows news to understand issues, plans, and policies of the government.

Questions: Inquisitive to know more about what's happening to find key facts.

Write: Likes to share one's opinions by writing letters to the editors and op-eds.

Act Responsibly: Exercises one's rights and duties responsibly and respects others views.

Volunteer: Has time to help others.

Vote: Always votes.

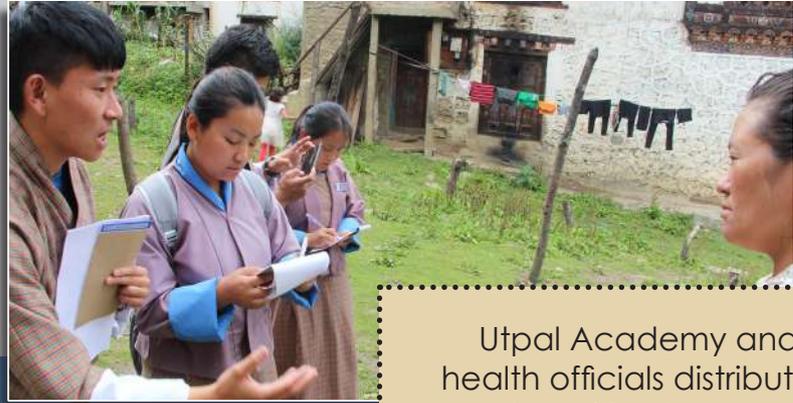






Today 12 households of Kesa village in Shaba, Paro enjoy safe and clean drinking water after the students of Shaba Higher Secondary School conserved the water pond, the only drinking water source in the community. Students built an enclosure with wire mesh and roofed the area as part of their Local Action Plan project in 2017.





Utpal Academy and health officials distributed and sensitised on waste management, which is a mounting problem in many communities because of rise in consumerism.

A class 11 Arts student of Utpal Academy Tandin Tshering attending the training for the first time was nervous to interview people. But as he spoke to more people, he learned to open up. "I felt my confidence growing and I was able to talk to them more effectively. I was engrossed listening to them," said Tandin Tshering.



Students of Karma Academy provided reusable sanitary pads to Shaba Primary School students to sensitise on women health and hygiene and to resolve the mounting issue of sanitary pad disposal.

“If condoms are distributed freely even sanitary pads should be because menstruation is natural,” said Dechen a teacher coordinator.

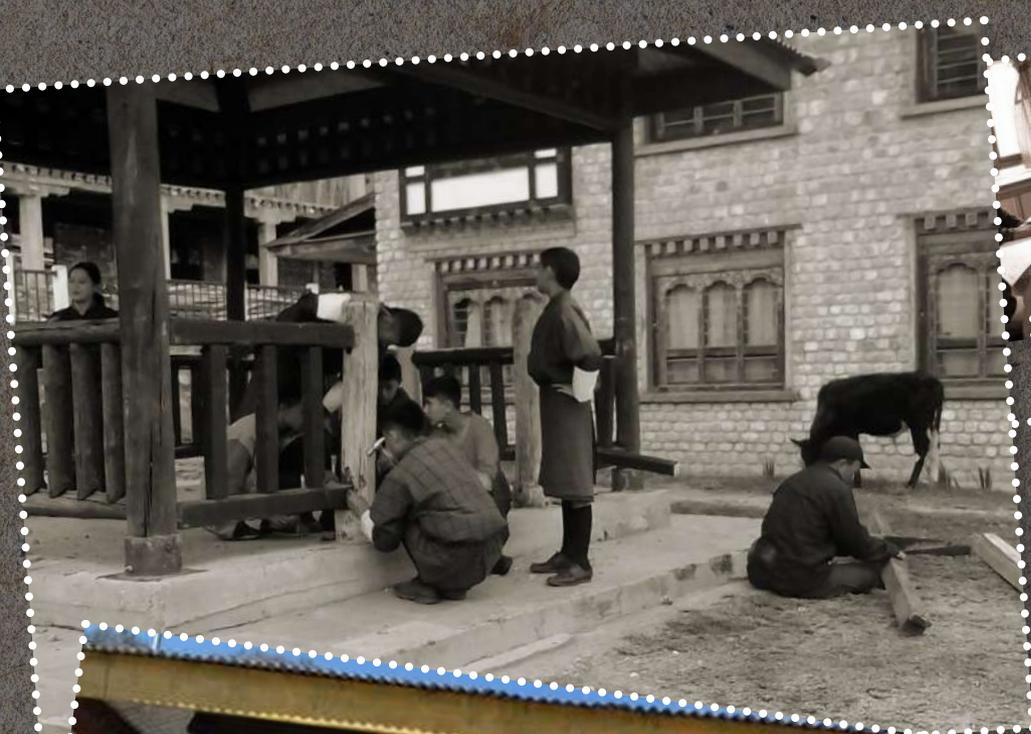




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Student mappers of Khangku Middle Secondary School repaired a canopy in their school as part of the Local Action Plan to enhance conducive learning environment.



Mapping exercise inspired Shari Higher Secondary School students to see an opportunity to repair the damaged drain in their campus as part of their Local Action Plan.







Community Mapping instilled civic consciousness in the minds of youth and town residents of Samdrup Jongkhar to be more responsible towards their communities.



Dewathang Primary School improved road safety by painting zebra crossing on the road below their school.







Mappers of Garpawoong Middle Secondary School were trying to figure out how to mitigate the flashflood risks from downpour in rainy season. After much probing, they found out that the flooding was caused by a clogged drain, which they cleared to divert the water to its proper drainage reducing the flood risks.

On their mapping exercise, the students of Jigme Namgyel Engineering College discovered open defecation at Dujom House, a pilgrimage and weekend picnic hotspot in Samdrup Jongkhar. Construction of toilets at Dujom House by students has ensured improved hygiene and sanitation.





Farm road repair by the youth mappers from Menchhari enabled villagers to transport their farm produce and dairy products to Samdrup Jongkhar without having to carry on their backs. The villagers are also happy they no longer have to carry the sick to the hospital.





Menchari under Gomdar Gewog is one of the underserved villages in Samdrup Jongkhar Building Community Initiative has supported.



What initially started as an initiative to improve the wasteland buried under automobile scraps went on to prevent residents of Samdrup Jongkhar from consuming the contaminated water following a fests prompted by the Local Action Plan project youths started.



Community members led by Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative built the vegetable shed using pet-bottles promoting recycle of non-degradable waste to reduce its impact on the environment.



Coming up of proper shelter to put farm produce on sale has benefited more than 68 households of Rikhay. With people from Dewathang driving to Rikhay every Saturday for shopping, villagers are able to save more since they no longer have to hire cabs to transport their produce to Samdrup Jongkhar.



Community Mapping on National Television

Some of the villagers said, recent construction of seven-unit toilets at Dudjom Dharma House in Rekhay of Dewathang Gewog will be helpful during big religious events. "In the past, during religious events, many people used to gather here and with one toilet, it was difficult to cater to large crowd. But now, the seven-unit toilets take of these problems," said one of the lay monks, Dawa Zangpo.

"They have done the works which the government cannot. Like construction of toilets is not supported by the government due to some rules. We are happy such activities are supported by BCMD," said the Chairperson of Dzongkhag Tshogdu, Leki Wangchuk.

Through community mapping project, community members have constructed road safety signboards and zebra lines from Dewathang town till Dewathang Primary School. Other activities included building drains alongside 3.5-Kilometre road leading to Garpawoong Middle Secondary School and carrying out widespread educational awareness on sustainable waste management in Samdrup Jongkhar town.

Community mapping project benefits people in Samdrup Jongkhar

Kinley Wangchuk, Samdrup Jongkhar
Jan 30, 2018



A project called 'Community Mapping' has benefited the communities of Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag. Community mapping is an asset-based approach to community development.

Community Mapping Vision Mission

During a Community Mapping Vision Mission workshop, a local artist and a resident of Paro town Penjor said that Buddhist principle *Umai Lam* (Middle Path) can be a GNH approach to urban development. Town development need not be stalled because of paddy fields and the paddy fields need not give way to concrete buildings. "Town can grow along the river banks connected by *bha-zams* (Traditional Bridge) and the heart of the town can be a social space, free from traffic, for residents and pedestrians to hang out with families and friends."



The Paro Visioning Workshop became the space to think and imagine collaboratively how residents, local leaders, and Dzongkhag wanted Paro to grow in the future as an urban centre. The visioning exercise led to Paro Community Mapping Vision Mission, a guiding philosophy towards a sustainable town development.



For the Community By the Community

Vision

A safe, green, clean, and culturally vibrant town

Mission

To nurture a healthy, peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable community living in harmony

Strategy

- **Strengthening collaboration and coordination amongst stakeholder for stronger implementation of laws.**
- **A GNH approach to sustainable town development - balancing urbanisation with tradition, culture, and environmental preservation.**
- **Investing in community well-being with recreational facilities that meaningfully engage all, promoting a physically, psychologically, and spiritually healthy community.**
- **Enhancing community vitality by making citizen participation and engagement a common practice in urban planning and development process and capitalising on the creativity and ingenuity of diverse minds.**

