

An Evaluation Study on  
**Citizenship Education Initiatives**

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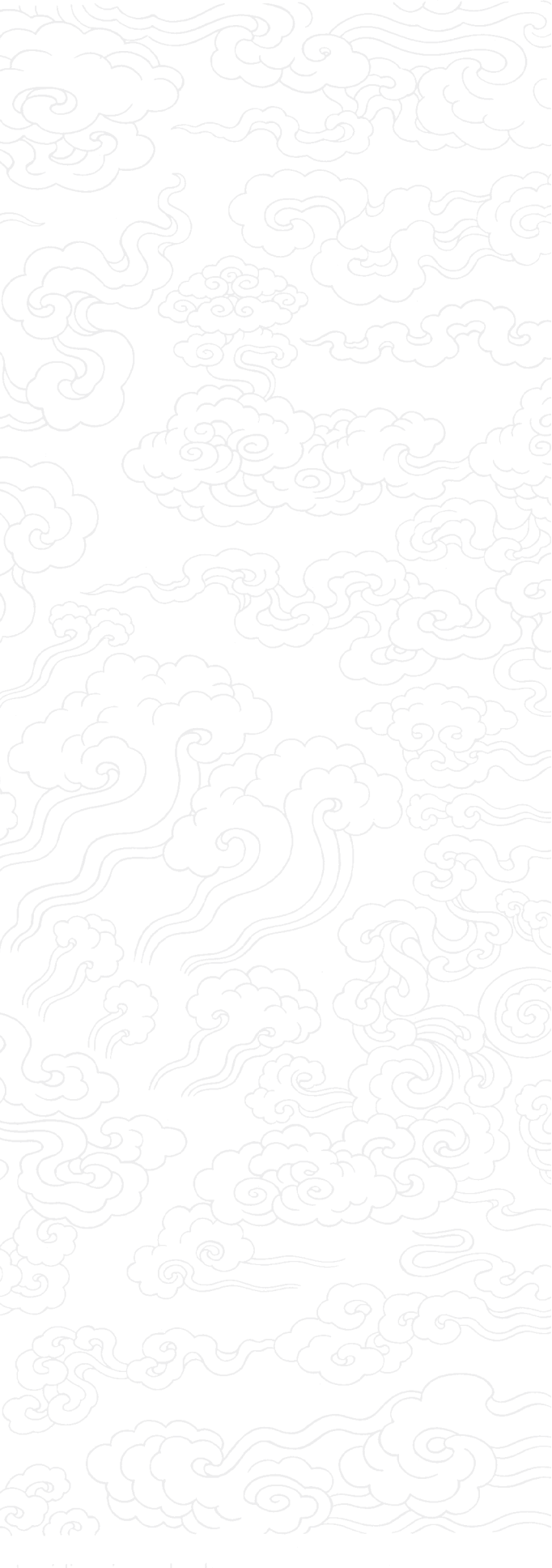
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# Acronyms

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BCMD:	Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy
CEIs:	Citizenship Education Initiatives
COVID-19:	Coronavirus Disease
CSO:	Civil Society Organisation
DYT:	<i>Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogdu</i>
ECB:	Election Commission of Bhutan
GCED:	Global Citizenship Education
GDP:	<i>Gewog</i> Development Plan
GNH:	Gross National Happiness
GYT:	<i>Gewog Yargye Tshogchung</i>
KII:	Key Informant Interview
LAP:	Local Action Plan
LG:	Local Government
MoIC:	Ministry of Information and Communication
NA:	National Assembly
NC:	National Council
OEDC/DAC:	Organization For Economic Co-operation and Development/ Development Assistance Committee
PCE:	Paro College of Education
SAGSP :	South Asia Strategic Grants Programme
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Science
ToT:	Training of Trainers
TV:	Television
UK:	United Kingdom
UNESCO:	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation



# Acknowledgments

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*Dzongkhag* and *Gewog* Officials, Local Leaders, teachers, students, parents, and officials who participated in the Study.

**Bhutan Foundation** and **Civil Society in Development (CISU)** for supporting the study.

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# Executive Summary

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This study evaluates the impact of the Citizenship Education Initiatives (CEIs) undertaken by the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD). The BCMD was established in 2008 to nurture democracy in Bhutan through civic engagement, media literacy and broadening of civic space. Targeting a cross-section of beneficiaries, the BCMD offers a wide range of integrated programmes that seek to empower youth, educators, civil society actors, elected leaders and the marginalised groups with socio-political consciousness and inspire them to be active and engaged citizens. The Centre also organises forums on current topics of national importance to promote a safe and open space for public deliberation and discourse. It contributes to the growth of civic space and the strengthening of media literacy in Bhutan's young democracy.

The Centre organised numerous capacity-building programmes such as Asset-based Community Mapping, Participatory Planning and Decision-making, and Media and Democracy Literacy. These capacity-building programmes were hands-on learning opportunities for the target beneficiaries to practise

newly-acquired knowledge and skills in their communities and share experiences and reflections in forums comprising local authorities and other stakeholders.

This report presents the evaluation of various CEIs undertaken by the Centre. The study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. In total, 146 participants responded to the survey questionnaire, and 29 took part as key informants. The participants consisted of *Dzongkhag* (District Administration) and *Gewog* (Block) officials, elected local leaders such as *Gup*, *Mangmi*, *Tshogpas*, teachers and students from schools and colleges, parents, and others.

### Summary of Key Findings:

- The response rate to the questionnaire was 90% (N=146), and the participation rate of the KII was 85% (n=34).
- Respondents included students (45%), *Gewog* officials (local government officials) and *Dzongkhag* officials (district administrators) (18%), teachers (27%) and others/parents

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(representing community residents) (10%).

### **The Usefulness of the Capacity-building Workshops**

- In total, 119 respondents attended the Asset-based Community Mapping Workshop, 109 took part in the Participatory Planning Workshop, and 113 had attended the Media Literacy Workshop. More than 90% of the respondents agree with the usefulness of the workshops.
- *Gewog* and *Dzongkhag* groups expressed the highest level of agreement on all the three workshops compared to the other three groups.

### **Understanding of Citizens' Role in Democracy**

- The respondents claim that the CEIs helped them understand their rights and responsibilities, develop an interest in communities and current affairs, appreciate the importance of citizen participation in planning at the community level, and hold individuals and authorities to account.

### **Active Citizenship or Voluntary Service in the Community**

- More than 80% of the respondents stated that the BCMD initiatives helped them become more aware of community issues, how to study them, share views and contribute to community services.
- There was evidence of more than ten different projects initiated in the community. Many respondents indicated how they realised the importance of inclusiveness and active citizen participation in planning processes.

### **Promotion of Media Literacy**

- The BCMD's Media Literacy effort was one of a kind that equipped the participants with analytical tools to dissect social media and its contents.
- A large majority of the respondents testified to the importance of media literacy, while about 16% were unsure.
- A significant impact of the BCMD's Media Literacy training was on developing citizens with a critical mind as they engage with media information.



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## Local Action Plans

- The study found 15 Local Action Projects (LAPs) implemented by the project beneficiaries. Seven LAPs were carried out by local leaders/community members using a Participatory Planning Toolkit developed in 2020. Under the guidance of teachers, students implemented eight LAPs.
- Participants reported a high level of satisfaction in their experience of engaging with the communities and acknowledged the importance of participation of a wide section of society in the planning process.
- Simplify some of the contents and tools and translate the resources into Dzongkha as some target groups (elected local leaders) have only functional literacy.
- The BCMD should institute a financial support mechanism to compensate for the time and efforts of the participants, including transportation costs and provide adequate funds to support projects in the field and other related activities.
- Given their usefulness, the BCMD should consider sharing CEIs materials with the general public through mainstream media such as national television programmes.
- Provide feedback to relevant stakeholders more promptly.

## Recommendations

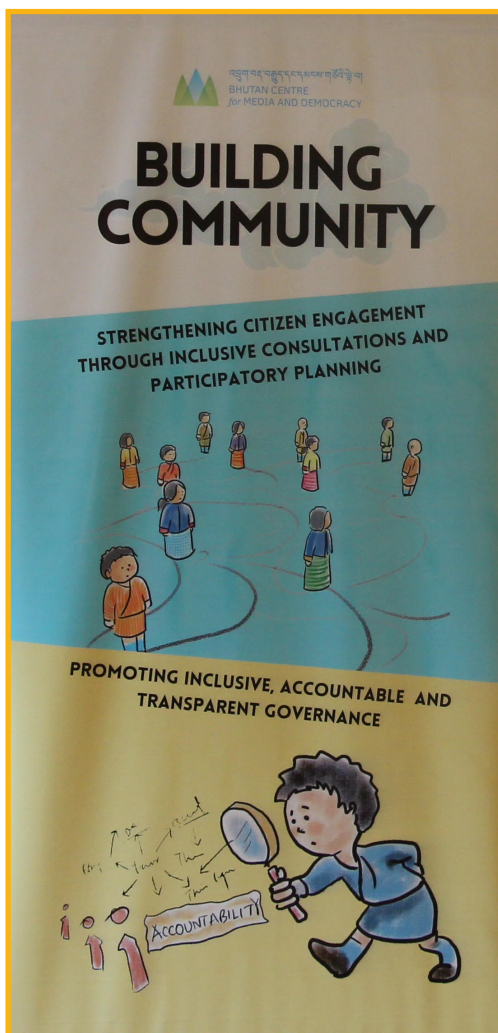
Some of the main recommendations are as follows:

- Provide similar training to local leaders and other critical target groups across 20 *Dzongkhags*, consider group/co-facilitation methods, and involve subject experts in relevant areas.
- The BCMD can collaborate with the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) and the Department of Local Government (DLG) to ensure that the GNH contents and tools are consistent across the agencies.

The Citizenship Education Initiatives have made a significant impact on individual participants. The project provided the participants with hands-on experience in studying community issues, participatory planning, and formulating projects of immense value to the communities. The study found that the participants developed critical thinking skills in several areas, such as analysing media information, prioritising community needs, recognising resources from within the communities, and holding elected leaders accountable.

# O1

## Background



Although a constitutional democratic form of government was formally introduced in 2008, there is ample evidence that democracy existed as early as the 1950s (BCMD, 2020). Bhutan’s successive monarchs had been preparing the country for this transition for many decades. Significant among the institutions introduced for democratisation were the *Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogdu* (DYT) (District Development Committee) in 1981, *Gewog Yargye Tshogchung* (GYT) (Block Development Committee) in 1991, and the dissolution of the erstwhile the Council of Ministers in 1998 and election of Cabinet Ministers (Singye Namgyel, 2011). Since 1998, the National Assembly members have elected the Cabinet Ministers through a secret ballot. These transformative changes resulted in an obvious devolution of decision-making processes and execution of planned developmental activities to multiple levels of actors.

Moving forward, beginning in 2008, three rounds of national elections to choose the members of the two houses of Parliament, namely the National Assembly

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(NA) and the National Council (NC) have been completed and three political parties have successively formed the Government: (1) Druk Phuensum *Tshogpa* from 2008 to 2013; (2) People's Democratic Party from 2013 to 2018; and (3) Druk Nyamrup *Tshogpa* from 2018 to 2023). Similarly, three rounds of elections for the Local Government, *Dzongkhag/Thromde* and *Gewog* administrations have been completed. While in general the processes of the past parliamentary and local government elections appear to have been successfully conducted, significant glitches surrounding them cannot be ignored. As citizens of a fledgling democracy, Bhutanese are still learning to voice their opinion and to engage meaningfully and constructively in societal issues in a bid to make democracy an everyday exercise. The level of people's political consciousness is limited and there's a strong reliance on the state to fix all issues in society.

The introduction of the Constituency Development Grant (CDG), *Gewog* Development Grant (GDG), and the current *Gewog* Annual Grant (GAG) under successive elected governments suggest a deliberate effort in devolving more authority and responsibility to the Local

Government (LG). However, the LGs lack the necessary capacity to effectively realise the goal of decentralised planning and decision-making and to enable the people of their communities to play a more active part in local governance. According to the Assessment Study on *Dzongkhag Tshogdu & Gewog Tshogde*, 2019, there is a significant gap between expectations as stipulated in policies and regulations and ground realities in respect of decentralised planning and decision-making in Bhutan. A lack of knowledge of the rationale and principles of decentralisation and inadequate capacity in elected LG functionaries to implement decentralised functions were reported as significant bottlenecks. Furthermore, difficulty in prioritising the agenda and a lack of proper working modality between LGs, *Dzongkhag*, and regional offices were observed.

At the local level, the institution of *Zomdue* (Community Meeting) continues to be an important forum. Participation in *Zomdue* has been identified as an indicator of political engagement under the good governance domain. The 2015 Gross National Happiness Survey reported that at 58%, male attendance at *Zomdue* was comparatively



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higher than that of their female counterparts which stands at 45%. Of those who attended, less than one-third (28.2%) reported speaking at the meetings, indicating minimal active participation while 72% were passive spectators. In general, *Zomdues* are characterised by passive citizen attendance (Assessment Study, DT, GT 2019).

The BCMD initiated several activities to address this issue of limited citizen participation in community development and planning at the local level.

# O2

## Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD)



*Communications workshop at the Media Lab, 2020*

**T**he Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD) is one of the first formally registered Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in the country. Established in 2008, the BCMD aims to build a culture of active democracy. The Centre envisions a Gross National Happiness-inspired vibrant democracy that engages all citizens. It strives to nurture democracy in Bhutan through civic engagement, public discourse and media literacy, and to uphold the importance of openness to change, innovation, transparency, integrity and accountability (BCMD, 2018).

The BCMD works closely with a cross-section of the society to explore issues that concern youth, society, governance, education and

the environment. It uses media (and its various genres) as a tool to investigate such issues and has achieved considerable success during the 13 years since its establishment, particularly in the areas of publication, capacity development, and dissemination of media literacy.

The current assignment to evaluate the impact of the BCMD's Citizen Education Initiatives entails assessing the results of various activities implemented during the period from 2019 to 2021.

The overall goal of the Citizen Education Initiative is to strengthen inclusive and participatory planning and decision-making at the local level where elected leaders, district

administrators and the citizens engage in genuine consultations and democratic decision-making processes, and to expand public space for diverse voices to emerge and influence national policies and plans.

In specific terms, the initiatives were intended to

1. Nurture a sense of ownership and responsibility in the citizens for their communities and to enhance their awareness of their community issues and assets;
2. Make citizens understand their

role in a democracy and build their confidence to participate in community affairs and local initiatives;

3. Empower citizens with the knowledge and skills to participate actively in planning and decision-making at the local level; and
4. Be smart consumers of media and use media as a tool for constructive and responsible engagement while ensuring one's safety online.



Stories from Communications Workshop, 2020





*A glimpse of the Youth Summit, 2021*

03

## Pillars of Democracy: Convergence of Perspectives and Practices at Home and Away



*Peer Facilitation Workshop at Sherubtse College, 2021*

### **3.1 Youth, Citizenship, Democracy and Nation-building**

**Y**outh constitute a large portion of the Bhutanese population, and hence form a vital national asset and valuable human resource. The BCMD considers it imperative to engage the youth, both in and out of school, including youths living with disabilities, to impart education on citizenship and democracy. Most of its projects and activities have hitherto been with and in schools, colleges and educational institutions.

A recent study (Winthrop, 2020) shows that there is a declining trend of civic engagement among American citizens and youth in particular. The

study highlights the importance of citizen participation to sustain a democratic form of governance without which the government of the people, by the people, and for the people will not last. Youth power, if collectively and constructively used, can make policy changes at the global level (Stone, 2021). For example, the recent COP26 in Glasgow, United Kingdom, saw youth climate activists pressuring the delegates to make more serious commitments to save the planet. However, youth political disengagement from contemporary democracies, as reported in the European Union countries, continues to be a serious concern (Kitanova, 2020). The scenario in Bhutan is not very different.

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Conventional civic education emphasises the need to learn about patriotism, obedience to rules and laws, and trust in civic institutions. Some societies focus on teaching civic education from the early childhood level with the premise that children as already civic beings with identities and experiences that inform their ideas about what problems matter to them and how they can be solved (Swalwell & Payne, 2019).

Many academics, researchers, and policy-makers are no longer content with localised citizenship education for youth. They see the scheme as being related to educating global citizens. Hence, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), being at the helm of the movement, has been commissioning activities for Global Citizenship Education (GCED). Various approaches and activities are geared toward achieving acceptable standards in the three domains of learning, namely cognitive, social-emotional and behavioural, to prepare global citizens (Banks, 2008; Eshtaeva, 2021; UNESCO, 2021; & Zizek, 2020).

Whether educating for global citizenship, national citizenship or simply for personal development, educationists, academics and policy-

makers agree on the need to engage youth for nation-building and to ensure and maintain democratic culture (Castro & Knowles, 2017; Clarke, 2010; Lenzi, et al, 2014). The programmes offered by the BCMD aimed at engaging youth in building a democratic culture share the spirit of the global movement.

The BCMD's Citizenship Education Initiatives offer a whole-school approach to nurturing a culture of democracy involving students, parents, teachers, staff and community members. Similarly, studies also show that the whole-school approach has been employed to engage relevant stakeholders to nurture a democratic culture whereby they include students, school management, teachers and parents/guardians of the students, local leaders and citizens in the community. For example, Bringle et al (2019) posit that pedagogies and courses on civic learning can nurture students towards sustained democratic culture and must essentially entail "participatory democracy" such as the right to speak, paying attention to students' ideas, freedom of expression and respect, student-teacher relationship, taking part in decision-making processes, and so forth (Dundar, 2014). In the same vein, Ingoglia, et



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al (2021) argue that students need to develop “democratic competencies” that entail values, attitudes, skills and knowledge and critical understanding. Therefore, it is clear “education is crucial for preparing students to take on the role of active democratic citizens and for equipping them with the ability to function as independent and self-determining agents who are able to select and pursue their own goals in life” (p. 49). Schools and communities play a vital role in shaping the younger generation as citizens of a democratic nation and for bigger roles later in their lives.

### 3.2 Local Leadership and Democracy

An important constituent pillar of Bhutan’s democracy is the governance structure of the Local Government which includes the *Dzongkhag* (District), *Thromde* (City), *Gewog* (Block), and *Chiwog* (Village). The *Thrompoen* (Mayor) for *Thromde*, *Gup* (Block Chief) and *Mangmi* (Assistant *Gup*) for *Gewog*, and *Tshogpa* (Village Representative) for *Chiwog* are elected Local Government functionaries (Singye Namgyel, 2011). Their integrity, understanding of democracy and implementation of these principles can have significant implications

on the development of the desired democratic culture at the grassroots level. Therefore, educating them on the essence of democracy is vital. While the relevant government agencies, such as the Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB), are responsible to educate Local Government functionaries, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), too, should play supplementary and complementary roles. Since its inception, the BCMD has been diligently engaging citizens, including local leaders, public servants, teachers, and youths in citizenship initiatives and programmes.

The importance of local leaders in shaping a democratic culture is reported elsewhere too. The comparative study of three countries, namely England, Spain and Slovenia (Kulovic, et al, 2019) can be instanced as a case in point. Although the size, approach, and level of local governments differ, some common threads run across the nations as the study findings suggest

*The institutional effectiveness of local political systems and local political leadership within which forces of discretion, incentives and accountability interact are provided by (1) the internal political organization of the local government..., (2) the manner in which the local executive (mayor) and*

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*councillors are elected, and... (3) the nature of the political party system... (Kulovic, et al, 2019, p. 173).*

To uphold the value and principles of democracy, the Local Government must be the “government of the local people, by the local people and for the local people” (Islam, 2015). Understandably, without a sound system of democracy at the base levels, democracy at the apex will more likely falter. Islam advocates the need for “a strong political will to install an effective and truly decentralised local government system” (p. 37). It is safe to generalise that it is not only for Bangladesh, but the argument is valid for many countries, including Bhutan. In Bhutan, too, the debate on how much and to what degree decentralisation should trickle down to the Local Government continues to engage the public attention. The issue of “stick and carrot”, meaning responsibility versus authority and incentives, between the local and central government machinery, remains valid, too. By December 2021, Bhutanese elected some 1,500 Local Government leaders, including four Thrompoens, 205 *Gups*, 205 *Mangmis*, and at least 1,050 *Tshogpas* (including four Thromde Demkhongs). Considering the sheer number of elected local

leaders compared to the 72 members (47 NA, 25 NC) of the Parliament, the importance of the Local Government is obvious as these elected leaders are closest to the citizens and wield much influence on the communities’ development plans and policies.

### **3.3. The Role of Media in Democracy**

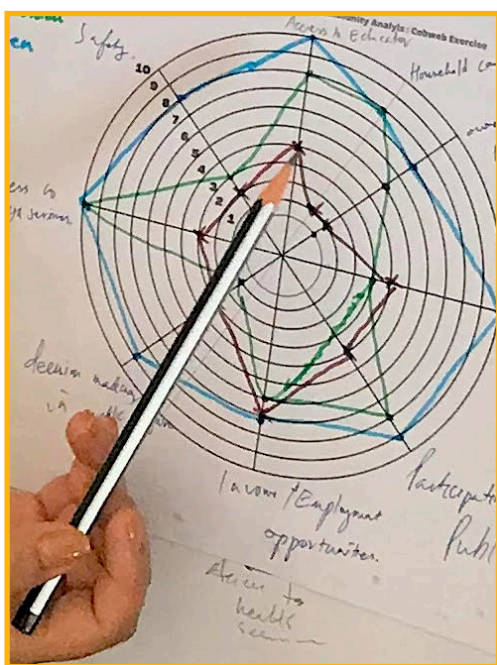
This era is a melting pot of media, both mainstream and social media and their numerous genres (Hallinan, et al, 2021). There are thirteen types of Social Media and fifteen related platforms (Shane, 2021). The inventory is as recent as October 2021 and it is counting. The role of media, in general, is significant because it can greatly affect the lives of people for good or bad. It is even more important in a democracy as it has the potential to influence the process and the outcome of an election, and, therefore, the quality of leaders who manage the affairs of the country and its people.

Several studies have been carried out globally on the influence of social media on peoples’ lives in general and on elections in particular. For example, the findings of the study of 125 countries show that there is a strong correlation between social media and democracy (Jha & Tedika,



2020). In other words, the stronger the penetration of social media such as Facebook, the better is the understanding of democracy and people's participation in it. Social media has created a collective power to influence every aspect of life, has a vast influence on politics, and it has become a convenient means to advance participatory democracy (Butt, et al, 2021).

In sum, social media (also known as new media) continues to play an instrumental role in the election process and more often than not, it influences the outcome of high-stake elections. A number of studies have been carried out in this area, for example in African countries (Ndela & Mano, 2020, Mutsvairo & Ronning, 2020); Pakistan (Butt, et al, 2021); Bangladesh (Islam, 2015), and others. While the intended benefits of social media are to help gain awareness, build relationships, share expertise, connect with followers or peers, get information, market research, build trust as well as establish itself as an industry leader, the abuse or misuse of it could negatively affect the users, including encountering life-threatening situations. Therefore, one of the core missions of the BCMD is to provide media literacy to citizens, making them "informed and intelligent consumers" of the contents of the media. Media literacy also gives a person confidence to seek verified information and to express their views in a more balanced and civil manner.



*Gender Analysis at Participatory Planning Workshop, 2022*

# O4 The Study



*Bhutan Democracy Forum, 2021*

The literature review presented above provides the theoretical grounding for the current assignment. The assignment is to evaluate the impact of the Citizenship Education Initiatives undertaken by the BCMD so far. Generally, the criteria used in such an evaluation include relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact. The OECD/DAC defines impact as “positive and negative, primary or secondary, long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended”.

#### **4.1. Purpose**

The purpose of the study was to

evaluate the impact of the BCMD’s Citizenship Education Initiatives and provide an analysis of the situation of Bhutan’s democracy to inform the Centre’s strategic direction. The initiative included a wide range of target groups, including school youths, teachers, elected local leaders, district administrators, and community members.

The objective of the initiative was to:

1. Nurture a sense of ownership and responsibility in the citizens for their communities and to enhance their awareness of their community issues and assets;
2. Make citizens understand their



*Influence and Relationship Mapping for Paro Thromde, 2022*

role in a democracy and build their confidence to participate in community affairs and local initiatives;

3. Empower citizens with the knowledge and skills to participate actively in planning and decision-making at the local level; and
4. Be smart consumers of media and use media as a tool for constructive and responsible engagement while ensuring one's safety online.

## 4.2. Methodology

The study used a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches informed by reviews of national

and international literature on citizenship education, including project documents. Data from the field was collected using a survey questionnaire and Key Informant Interviews (KII).

### 4.2.1. Sample

The study involved 146 participants (Dzongkhag and Gewog officials, local leaders, teachers, students, community members, parents, and others) engaged in the projects during the last three years.

### 4.2.2. Data Collection and Compilation

Data collection spanned over two



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weeks through survey questionnaires shared via email and Google form. The compilation of data took place simultaneously in Excel and Word files using standard data entry format. The quantitative data was cleaned thoroughly before conducting statistical analysis.

#### **4.2.3. Data Analysis**

Quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS v16). The analysis considered two independent variables of the questionnaire, namely gender and respondent types. The thirty-two items on the Likert scale were grouped as under

1. items (usefulness of the capacity development workshops)
2. items (active citizenship and citizen participation),
3. items (citizen participation, agency, and ownership of the community),
4. items (inclusiveness), and
5. 10 items (smart media consumers).

#### **4.2.4. Ethical Issues**

A letter of reference from the BCMD was sent to each participant and copies were given to the heads of the relevant agencies. The survey

and interview data are kept strictly confidential with the BCMD. No individual names are used in the report. Consent was sought from all the interviewees.

#### **4.2.5. Limitations of the Study**

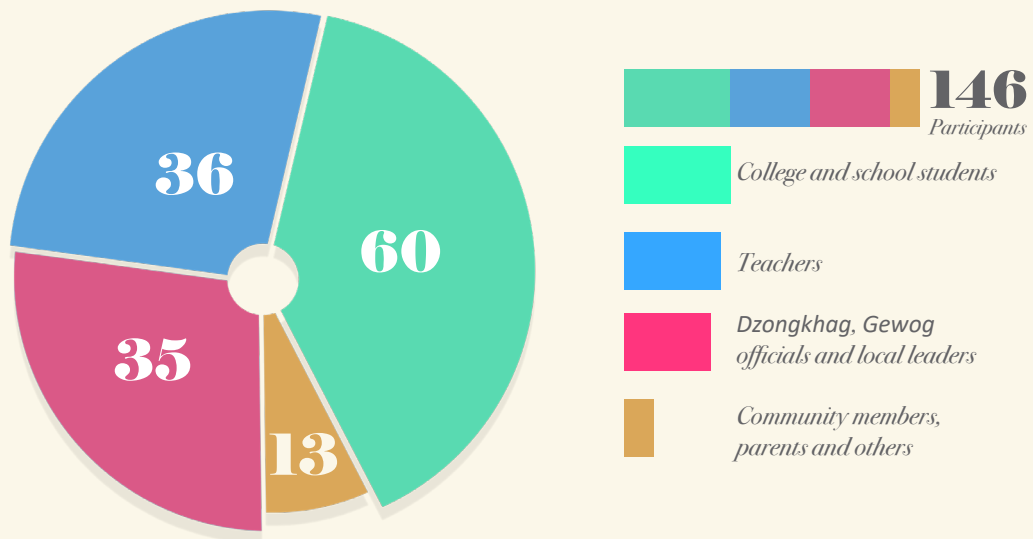
The data collection could not achieve a 100% response rate because of reasons beyond the control of the consultants. Data collection coincided with the local election campaign, and most local leaders were busy preparing to re-contest. Many such candidates could not participate in the survey and interviews. Similarly, some teachers could not participate due to the end-of-year examinations and evaluations in the schools.

# 05

## Data Presentation and Findings of the Study



### Total Respondents



### Response Rates

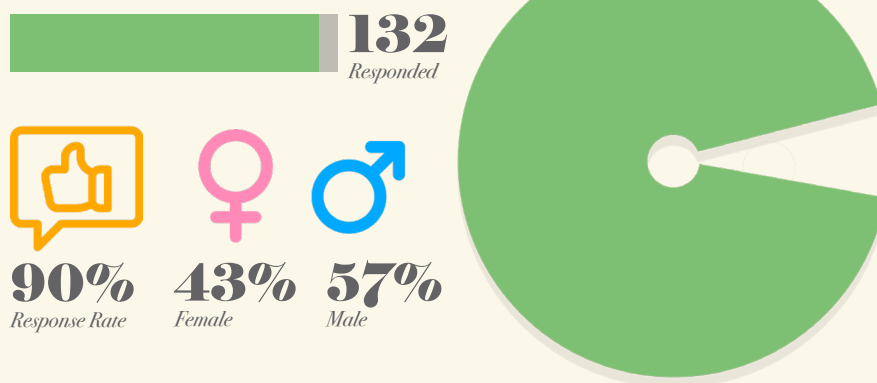


Figure 1 : Details of the survey questionnaire respondents



**Table 1: Questionnaire Respondents (N=146)**

SI No	Questionnaire respondents	Female	Male	Total Respondents
1	<i>Dzongkhag</i> , Gewog Officials, and local leaders	12	12	24
2	Teachers	13	22	35
3	Students	29	31	60
4	Community members/Parents/ Others	3	10	13
		57	75	132
	<b>Response rate</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>90%</b>

This response rate is considered very good for a study of this nature. Such a response rate may in part be attributed to the variety of strategies adopted to administer the questionnaire - such as face-to-face contact, soft copies and Google forms sent through email and social media. It was followed by rigorous follow up through emails and phones.

For the KII, the Study targeted 34 selected participants (*Dzongkhag* officials, local leaders, Gewog Administrative Officers, teachers, college students and others) out of which 29 members participated. The participation rate in the interview was 85% (n=34). **Table 2** below gives the details of the interviewees.

**Table 2: Key Informant Interviewees**

Sl. No.	KI Interviewees	Female	Male	Actual Respondents
1	District Officials	1	2	3
2	Local leaders	1	3	4
3	<i>Gewog</i> Administrative Officers	1	1	2
4	Teachers	3	10	13
5	College Students	2	3	5
6	Others	0	2	2
		8	21	29
	<b>Participation rate</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>85%</b>

### **Finding 1**

The response rate to the questionnaire was 90% (N=146) and participation rate to the KII was 85% (n=34).

### **5.2. Respondent Type**

The 132 respondents were grouped into four types of respondents as shown in **Table 3** below. The student group (45%) included both school and college students. *Gewog* and *Dzongkhag* group (18%) consisted

of *Dzongkhag* officials, *Gewog* Administrative Officers, *Gups*, *Mangmis* and *Tshogpas*. Teachers (27%) included teachers from schools and lecturers from Paro College of Education and Others (10%) included parents, community members, farmers, senior citizens, lab attendants, officials from Helvetas, Nazhoen Lamtoen, Royal Society for Senior Citizens, and interns who were associated with the CEIs.



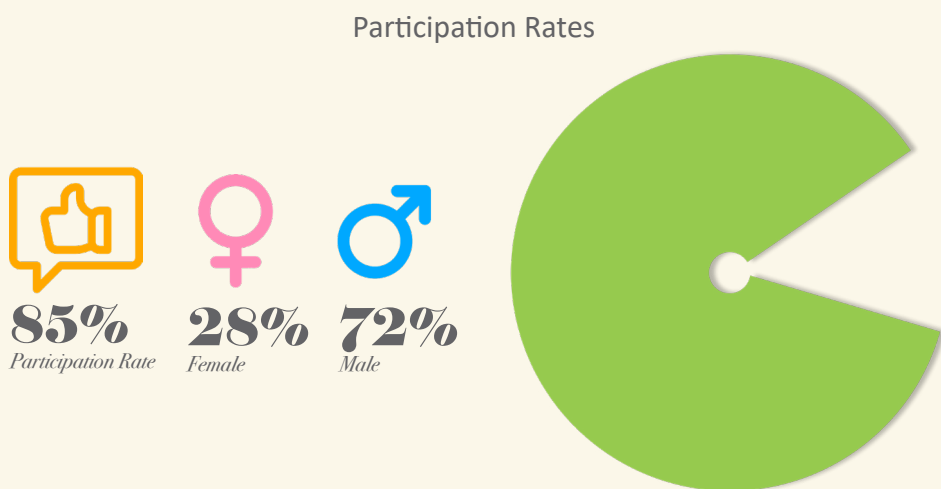
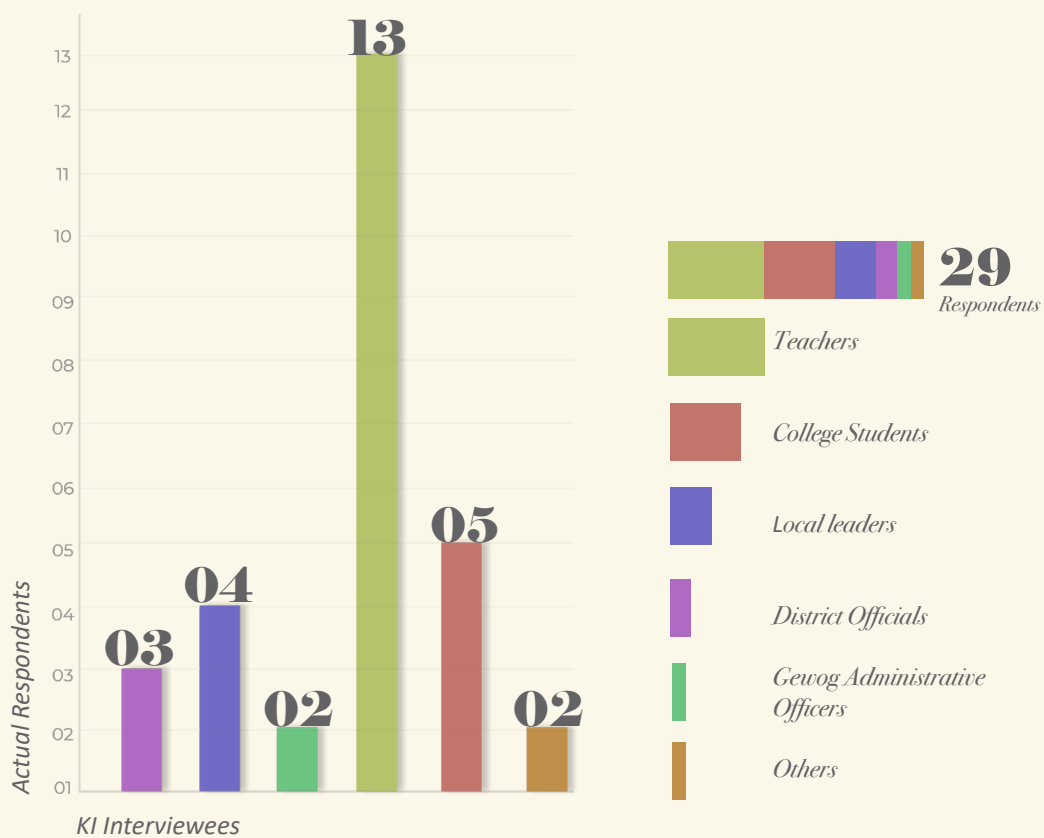


Figure 2: Details of Key Informant Interviewees

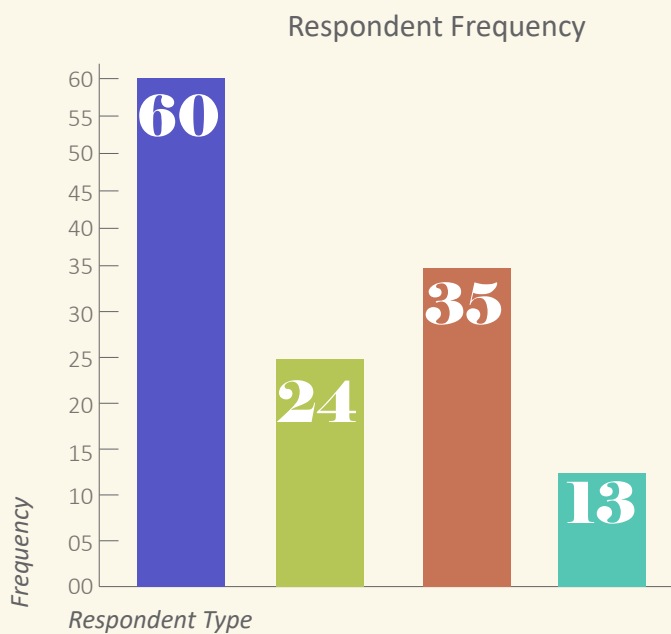
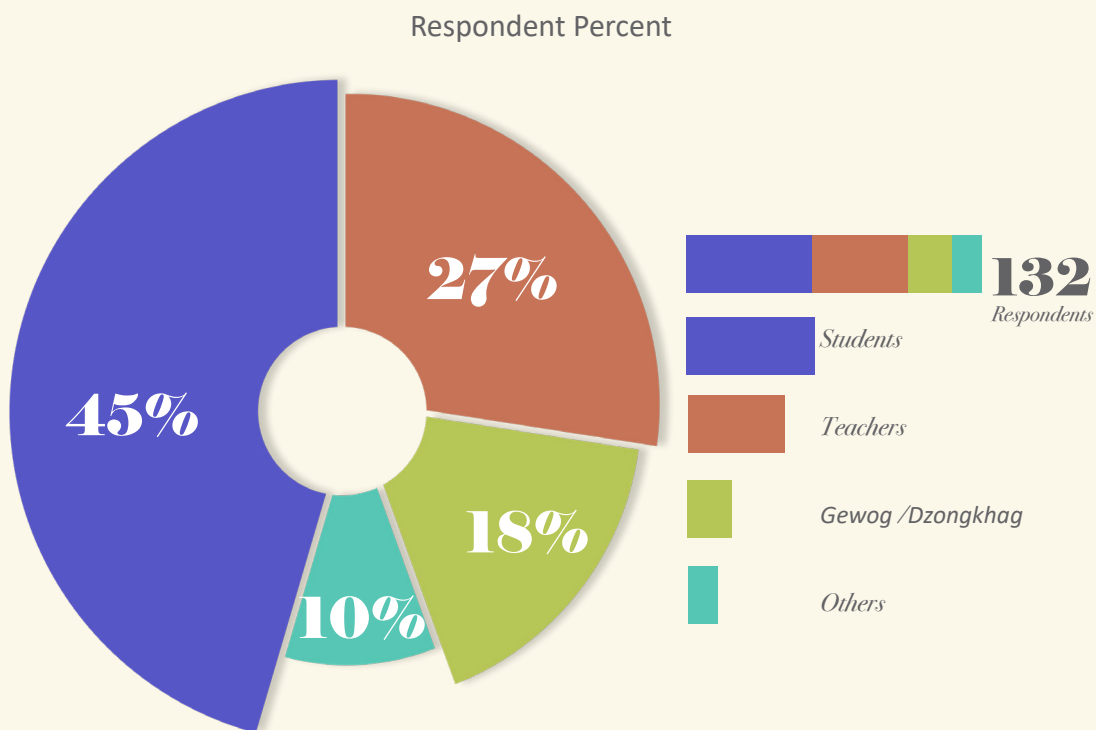


Figure 3: Respondent Type



**Table 3: Respondent Type**

Group	Type	Frequency	Percent
1	Students	60	45
2	<i>Gewog/Dzongkhag</i>	24	18
3	Teachers	35	27
4	Others/Parents	13	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>100</b>

**Finding 2**

Respondent types included students (45%), *Gewog* and *Dzongkhag* (18%), Teachers (27%) and others/parents (10%).

**5.3. Themes**

Data and findings in this section are reported under the following themes:

**5.3.1. Usefulness of the Capacity-building Workshops**

The study assessed the usefulness of the capacity building workshops conducted by the BCMD. Of the total surveyed, 119 respondents had attended the Asset-based Community Mapping Workshop, 109 the Participatory Community Planning Workshop, and 113 the Media Literacy Workshop. **Table 4** below shows that 94% of the respondents agree (Strongly Agree and Agree) with the usefulness of the workshops.

**Table 4: Usefulness of the Capacity-development Workshops**

Item nos.	Indicators/ Statements	SA	A	N	DA	SD	NA	N	Mean	Std Deviation
1	Training/ Workshop on Asset-based Community Mapping was useful	60	34	3	1	0	13	119	4.72	0.99
2	Training/ Workshop on Participatory Community Planning was useful.	58	36	4	1	0	23	109	4.61	0.86
3	Training/ Workshop on Media Literacy was useful	62	32	4	0	0	19	113	4.72	0.90

Aside from learning about rights and responsibilities, the Asset-based Community Mapping Workshop was extremely useful because the participants realised that the communities need not depend on the government for everything, all the time. Through the mapping exercises, the participants discovered that some resources were already available in

the communities. The study found an overwhelmingly positive impression of the BCMD project as the training made them examine their mindset.

*I attended community mapping and Town Hall. In the workshop, we were made to realise and critically look at the resources already available in the community rather than looking at the*



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government or external funding agencies to support (Int.TRS02, Nov. 2021).

*In community mapping, we went to communities and solved the problems. It was about engaging the citizens. Our project was about renovating the chairs around the Chorten (Stupa) below Rinpung Dzong. The community would contribute labour and wood (Int.COS0, Nov. 2021).*

The Participatory Planning Workshop made them realise the importance of people's participation in decision-making at the grassroots level. It enhanced the participants' understanding of making better decisions and reflected on the viability and usefulness of such an approach at the Gewog level planning.

The participants also reported a change of mindset. They thought that planning and development were the prerogatives of the people in authority and elected leaders; they were not aware of their role as citizens until they attended the BCMD workshop. Most of the participants reported that they further disseminated the new information to the community and had a series of sharing sessions with the local community members.

One of the key informants said:

*Till now, we thought it's only from up, the government and leaders should do everything, but now we the citizens in the community are also equally important. There are many things we can do but haven't done (Int.TRS105, Nov 2021).*

Another participant understood that in a democracy, participating in community planning and development is not an exclusive responsibility of the government officials and the elected leaders alone.

*My impression was that there was a shift in paradigm in the planning process. Before the community planning was done by one or two persons, it was fixed for structural development, now it is participatory and actually goes to the grassroots level knowing what the consumers need (Int.TRS04, Nov 2021).*

*Now, I realise it's equally my responsibility to help solve small issues in the school, for example, waste management. Two of us from this school attended the training and we have already prepared plans to implement them in the school" (Int.TRS105, Nov 2021).*

The Media Literacy training helped the participants identify genuine news from fake news; they learnt about the advantages and disadvantages of social media and the important role of media in democracy.

On being able to use the knowledge and skills from workshops, the respondents said, variously:

- I have shared my new knowledge with my colleagues after coming back from the workshop and even with students in regards to social media (205),
- I could impart the importance of media literacy to my colleagues and students in the school (206).
- I became aware of what I post on social media (213),
- I can advise about how to utilise social media (241),

- Conducted a school-based in-service programme in the school on media literacy (PR63),
- One of the most important lessons that I took from this workshop is the importance of people's participation in any planning and decision-making (201),

Overall, **Table 5**, below shows that the *Gewog* and *Dzongkhag* groups expressed their highest agreement on the usefulness of the workshops compared to other three groups.

**Table 5: Comparison of Means among Respondents**

Respondents regrouped		Asset-Based Community Mapping	Participatory Community Planning	Media Literacy
Students	Mean	4.75	4.64	4.58
	N	56	45	45
	Std. Deviation	0.96	1.09	0.89
Respondents regrouped		Asset-Based Community Mapping	Participatory Community Planning	Media Literacy
<i>Gewog/ Dzongkhag</i>	Mean	4.96	4.77	5.00
	N	23	22	23
	Std. Deviation	1.36	0.43	1.35



Teachers	Mean	4.55	4.47	4.79 34
	N	29	32	
	Std. Deviation	0.78	0.80	0.48
Others/ Parents	Mean	4.55	4.60	4.45
	N	11	10	11
	Std. Deviation	0.69	0.52	0.69
Total	Mean	4.72	4.61	4.72
	N	119	109	113
	Std. Deviation	0.99	0.86	0.90

### ***Finding 3***

One hundred and nineteen respondents had attended the Asset-based Community Mapping Workshop, 109 the Participatory Community Planning Workshop, and 113 the Media Literacy Workshop.

### ***Finding 4***

More than 90% of the respondents agree with the usefulness of the workshops.

### ***Finding 5***

Through the Asset-based Community Mapping Workshop, participants acquired the skills to explore and critically look at the resources available in the community and made them realise the role of the community to care for and maintain their resources and assets.

### ***Finding 6***

The Participatory Planning Workshop

made them realise the importance of people's participation in decision-making at the grassroots level and developed reflective skills to analyse community approaches to development.

### **Finding 7**

The Media Literacy sessions helped them identify real news from fake news; they learnt about the advantages and disadvantages of social media and the importance of media in democracy.

### **Finding 8**

Gewog and Dzongkhag groups expressed the highest agreement on

all the three workshops compared to the other three groups.

### **5.3.2. Understanding of Citizens' Role in Democracy**

A majority of the participants (see **Table 6**) agree that the projects contributed to a better understanding of their rights and responsibilities, developed interests in community issues, current affairs and pegging accountability and how to participate in local planning.

On the understanding of active citizenships and citizen participation, the agreement (Strongly Agree and Agree) on the statements was over 84% (**Table 6**).

**Table 6: Active Citizenship and Citizen Participation**

Item nos.	Indicators/ Statements BCMD's project helped me:	SA	A	N	DA	SD	N	Mean	Std Dev
6	Understand my rights and responsibilities as a citizen.	61	35	3	1	1	132	4.55	0.67
7	Develop interest in my community issues and development.	42	47	10	1	0	131	4.31	0.68
8	Develop interest in current affairs.	36	49	13	2	0	132	4.18	0.74



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9	Understand that citizens can and should ask questions and hold their elected representatives accountable.	54	40	6	0	0	132	4.48	0.61
10	Understand the importance of citizen participation in community planning and sustainable development.	64	30	5	2	0	132	4.57	0.66
11	Understand that communities can come together to solve some of their issues.	63	30	7	0	0	132	4.56	0.62

The study also gathered qualitative data on how far the participants understood the meaning of “active citizen” and what constituted it and investigated if they engaged in any voluntary services in their community.

The basic tenets of active citizenship involved:

- Taking up the sacred duty of voting during elections;
- Raising voices for the cause of the general population and of the weaker sections in particular; and
- Taking actions in small ways to address urgent issues and solve problems in the community.

The study participants also reported engaging in various community-related activities such as waste management, water resource management, irrigation projects, maintenance of stupas, footpaths, public flower gardens, book drives, etc. One of the respondents vividly describes some of the projects undertaken:

*In 2017, we did a water source protection project at Tili Gesa Chiwog. Some students belonged to that area. BCMD provided some budget and people from the community also contributed some money to construct a wire mesh water protection system with proper roofing. Another project was the construction*

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of a volleyball court at Wangchang Gewog as a recreational facility for youth there. Due to the pandemic, it is not functioning. In Dengkha, Shaba, we have given big dustbins to shopkeepers to manage their waste and keep the surroundings clean. The fourth project was Traffic awareness for the safety of primary students there. Safety awareness and traffic rules were given to taxi drivers and pedestrians involving traffic police. Four projects in the last four years. The school has to take initiative to educate the community. The main intention of BCMD is to educate the community and change their mindset (Int.TRS04, Nov. 2021).

The respondents primarily understand citizens' role in a democracy as that of voting. Some participants highlighted the importance of staying informed and engaged even after exercising the formal responsibility of voting as a citizen. They maintain that the elected leaders should be questioned and held accountable if things do not go right (Int.OTH101; Int.TRS103; Int.LEL01, Nov. 2021).

One of the participants commented on the rights and duties of citizens in a democracy thus:

*In fundamental rights, we should raise our voice for the community by participating in the decision-making process. We should also exercise fundamental duties, not only demand*

*rights. For example, we have the duty to vote. One of the duties is to stand united, as there is a saying, "united we stand, divided we fall." It is the responsibility of every citizen to be united for the nation, under one umbrella (Int.CoS102).*

Across all participants, the study found that in addition to voting, their understanding of the citizen's role in a democracy included the importance of continuous participation in the community and national affairs and keeping themselves informed about current affairs.

Some of the participants commented:

*I always tell people to make their own decision to cast votes for the right candidate" (Int.LEL01, Nov. 2021).*

*My understanding was that the people in the community must take part in several activities and initiate projects and understand their role in democracy (Int.TRS03, Nov. 2021).*

Respondents Int.TRS05, Nov. 2021 and Int.DzO02, Nov. 2021 further stressed that in a democracy, citizens have both rights and responsibilities in strengthening the democratic system.

### **Finding 9**

The respondents stated that the BCMD projects helped them



better understand their rights and responsibilities, develop an interest in community issues and current affairs, make leaders accountable, and in understanding the importance of a participatory approach in planning and solving issues in the community level.

#### ***Finding 10***

The study found that respondents understand active citizenship as “taking up the sacred duty of voting during elections”; “raising voices for the cause of the general population

and for the weaker sections in particular”; and “taking actions in small ways to address urgent issues and solve problems” in the community.

#### ***5.3.3. Active Citizenship or Voluntary Service in the Community***

The overall agreement of the respondents on the statements that evaluated citizen participation, agency and ownership of the community was more than 86% (**Table 7**).

***Table 7: Citizen Participation, Agency and Ownership of the Community***

Item nos.	Indicators/ Statements BCMD's project helped me:	SA	A	N	DA	SD	N	Mean	Std Dev
12	Become more aware of the issues of the community I live in.	50	45	5	0	0	132	4.45	0.60
13	Realise that certain issues can be resolved by the communities themselves.	54	39	7	0	0	131	4.47	0.62

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14	Share my views, provide feedback, and participate in public forums and meetings with confidence.	47	40	10	2	0	132	4.33	0.75
15	Take an active part in community service and voluntary work.	52	35	14	1	0	132	4.36	0.74
16	Make donations, contribute ideas and expertise for a social cause.	42	45	2	2	1	132	4.27	0.77
17	Enhance my knowledge and skills to study community issues.	40	51	8	0	0	131	4.32	0.62
18	Initiate activities to bring about changes in the school/ community.	41	47	11	0	0	131	4.30	0.66
19	Discover how I can contribute to my community.	43	47	10	0	0	131	4.33	0.65

The respondents shared several examples of the initiatives undertaken as part of the project. The following were some of the specific examples initiated in the community and schools by the participants:

- Cleaning campaigns and waste management in the community and town
- Advocacy for better water supply management
- Book donation drive to set up a library in a remote school
- Construction of sports facility to keep youth engaged
- Awareness campaign on traffic safety to make the community safe from vehicle accidents
- Maintenance of Chortens (Stupas) to preserve and protect



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<p>culture and heritage sites in the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flower plantation to beautify the environment</li> <li>• School-based in-service programmes on Media Literacy by teachers</li> </ul> <p>The above initiatives have been completed and the communities have greatly benefited from them.</p> <p>Similar examples reported below show the participants gaining rich experiences from the training and being encouraged to continue engaging in voluntary services:</p> <p><i>I also work in one of the CSOs solely based on volunteerism. After attending the workshops organized by BCMD, I have initiated and organised a number of volunteer activities and programmes in Paro town. The initiatives for improving Paro Town include waste management, a park for children and senior citizens, and maintaining and constant tidying up of flower gardens. An example of an active citizen can start at home, "... to be an active citizen, we need not do big things (Int.OTH101, Nov. 2021).</i></p> <p><i>We initiated activities such as waste and water management through community involvement Int.LEL01, Nov. 2021).</i></p> <p><i>I participated in a cleaning campaign. Every month we have cleaning to ensure our environment is clean (Int.TRS01, Nov. 2021).</i></p>	<p><i>I have initiated a weekly cleaning activity in Paro town" (Int. DzO, Nov. 2021).</i></p> <p><i>Waste management project at Nakha village under Wangchang Gewog (Int. TRS02, Nov. 2021).</i></p> <p><i>The main project was on waste management and it was presented in the town hall (Int.TRS05, Nov. 2021)</i></p> <p><i>We initiated activities such as waste and water management through community involvement (Int.LEL01, Nov. 2021).</i></p> <p><i>By availing of personal loans, I constructed a Jangchub Chorten (Stupa) in the school for the benefit of the community and school (205).</i></p> <p><i>As a desuup, I did night duty for two consecutive days for the welfare of the community, telling them not to breach Covid- protocols (208).</i></p> <p><i>Awareness of spring water preservation and shortage of drinking water: we divided into groups and went around to create awareness on how to overcome such a situation which was successful in the community (209).</i></p> <p>On inclusiveness, though the overall agreement was over 86%, about 10% of the respondents reported being 'unsure'. The respondents greatly appreciated the participation of people from all walks of life in the Participatory Planning Workshop.</p>
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**Table 8: Inclusiveness**

Item nos.	Indicators/ Statements the BCMD's project helped me:	SA	A	N	DA	SD	N	Mean	Std Dev
20	Become more respectful of diversity in perspectives and individuals.	40	48	11	1	0	132	4.27	0.69
21	Be more inclusive in my interactions with public/ colleagues/ friends/ community.	48	40	10	2	0	132	4.36	0.72
22	Pay more attention to the needs of vulnerable sections of the population (e.g. people with disabilities, elderly, women, and young people, etc.)	52	35	10	2	1	132	4.35	0.82
23	Be more open to critical feedback and comments.	44	45	10	2	0	131	4.31	0.71
24	Initiate changes in my school/ community to develop a culture of inclusiveness and respect for diversity.	46	44	10	0	0	130	4.36	0.66



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The participants asserted that their involvement with diverse members of the community in analysing issues, ascertaining assets, and planning drives home the need to share the responsibility and sense of ownership of the communities (Int.GAO107, Nov 2021; Int.TRS108, Nov 2021; Int.DzO109, Nov 2021; Int.TRS03, Nov. 2021; Int.DzO01, Nov.2021; Int. OTH01 & Int.TRS04, Nov 2021).

One of the participants underscores the importance of inclusiveness thus: “While planning, we should know how to prioritise, and also consider inclusiveness such as gender, people with disability, etc.” (IntTRS104). Similarly, a local elected leader reflected on the lapses in the current planning processes in his constituency and the lesson he took from the BCMD capacity building thus:

*We found there are many literate and educated youths -- undergraduates, high school graduates, and so forth. All are important and their participation is essential in the planning process. Opportunity is provided to all, that has been said, but actual support has been missed in the system. For example, we must support women to get the opportunity. We need bridges for them to cross as equal to men -- gender equality. We realised where our weaknesses and strengths lie and make optimum use of*

*them. The training gave us sufficient tools to prepare authentic planning in our community through inclusiveness (Int.LEL111, Nov. 2021).*

Participants believe that including people of diverse backgrounds in the community planning processes enables them to share their views and address concerns. The study indicated that the BCMD’s project emphasised the need to make the planning and development process more inclusive and address the existing gaps in the planning process at the *Gewog* level. A study by the Department of Local Governance also found a similar situation. The recommendation for the local government and administration was to be more inclusive in their approaches to planning and consultation (HELVETAS n.d., p. 64).

### ***Finding 11***

More than 80% of the respondents stated that the BCMD projects helped them become more aware of community issues, share views, participate in community services, study community issues and contribute to social causes.

### ***Finding 12***

There was evidence of more than ten different projects implemented in the

communities. The respondents stated that they realised the importance of inclusiveness and active citizen participation in the planning process.

### **Finding 13**

90% of the respondents agreed that the programmes made them more respectful of diverse views, pay attention to the needs of the vulnerable population and be more open to criticisms

### **5.3.4. Promotion of Media Literacy**

Approximately 94% of the respondents expressed their agreement (Strongly Agree and Agree) on the survey items related to Media Literacy, while 3% to 16% were neutral. This section of the survey inquired about the participants' practices of safe and civil use of social media, ability to distinguish between different kinds of information and the use of media as a platform to stay engaged or be aware of issues

**Table 9: Smart Media Consumers**

Item nos.	Indicators/ Statements BCMD's project helped me in as much as	SA	A	N	DA	SD	N	Mean	Std Dev
25	I am now more wary of privacy settings on social media than before.	51	39	8	1	1	124	4.38	0.75
26	I now monitor my children/family members or my own screen time/contents viewed.	46	39	13	2	0	122	4.27	0.78
27	I now engage in more constructive discussions on social media than before.	33	50	14	2	1	122	4.11	0.79



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28	I now use social media as a platform to raise awareness on certain issues.	37	44	16	2	2	123	4.12	0.85
29	I am now more aware of online scammers and cyber crimes than before.	52	39	9	0	1	122	4.40	0.72
30	I can now evaluate if a news article is credible or not.	42	47	10	1	0	123	4.31	0.68
31	I now verify the source and authenticity of the news before I believe them.	53	43	3	1	0	124	4.48	0.60
32	I now analyse the repercussions of sharing images and content on social media more than before.	55	34	11	2	0	122	4.40	0.75
33	I now weigh the pros and cons of sharing photos and other information and content on social media.	55	34	10	1	0	122	4.43	0.70
34	I now follow current affairs to understand my community issues.	45	49	6	0	0	119	4.39	0.60

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A significant impact of the Media Literacy training on the participants was the acquisition of skills to verify information, distinguish real from fake news, protect oneself, and think critically before sharing anything on social media (Int.OTH101, Nov. 2021; Int.LEL01, Nov. 2021; Int.CoS102, Nov 2021; Int, GAO01, Nov. 2021).

Comments made by some respondents are as follows:

*I now consider myself media literate, (Int. OTH101, Nov. 2021).*

*In media literacy, we learnt to identify the real news from the fake news. In KUENSEL also some information is the news and some opinions. We understood that all the news on social media is not correct. People should respect laws. I shared the information with the community. I could not share much about media literacy with the community. But I understood the importance of cross-checking the authenticity of any information before believing and one should not share news, graphics etc. with others (Int.LEL01, Nov. 2021).*

*We learnt the importance of identifying true and fake news on social media. We should not straight away believe and share whatever we find in the media, rather authenticate the sources, for example, BBS, KUENSEL, (Int.CoS102, Nov.2021).*

*We were made aware of the consequences of sharing images, and content. I used this knowledge and skills in my family including restricting certain platforms of social media” Int.TRS103, Nov.2021).*

*We realised information and content are created by people only, we do not know the intention and the propaganda behind it. We must be aware of the consequences of posting and sharing information in the media. I am now careful and conscious of what should be posted and should not be posted on social media. I did not know these possible aftermaths before the training (Int.TRS105, Nov. 2021).*

For many participants, the BCMD’s Media Literacy training was the first of its kind to educate them on the skills and tools to deconstruct social media content as shared here:

*Frankly, I came to know the true essence of media literacy through the BCMD project. I heard about it but not in-depth, its importance, it’s very useful (Int. GAO107, Nov. 2021).*

*The workshop gave me knowledge and skills to use media information wisely. I could take media literacy to classrooms which will benefit the students (Int. TRS05, Nov. 2021).*

The respondents made the following comments on the status of Media Literacy among the citizens in the community.



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*But now the awareness is improving (Int. LEL02, Nov. 2021).*

*People should be careful about how to use the media... nowadays people use social media to pass and share information (Int.TRS01, Nov. 2021).*

*If the awareness about media literacy is given in person by going to the community, it will be far more effective (Int.TRS03, Nov.2021).*

*People use media to portray any issue to the public (Int.DzO01, Nov. 2021).*

*Currently, there is a lack of mass awareness of media literacy (Int.TRS05, Nov. 2021).*

*I have advocated the correct usage of social media in my community and tried to make the people in my community more aware of social media (201).*

On the benefits of media literacy, some of the comments were as follows:

- Media literacy was very beneficial; we learned about time management and usage of social media,
- Able to differentiate the fake and real news,
- Can now verify the source of the news more than before,
- Aware of the impact of social media,

- Benefited me in verifying scams and cyber-crimes,
- How to be open and be respectful about using media,
- Helped me understand the pros and cons of media,
- Media literacy means it is an act of identifying different information and news through reliable sources,
- Media literacy made me aware of the need to be critical and reflective in viewing any information.

More than 50% of the respondents indicated that they initiated the following activities to share their knowledge and skills with their family, friends, and colleagues:

- made my family members minimise the number of hours using social media
- made a habit of not taking their mobile phone while going to bed,
- conducted a two-day workshop on media literacy and cyber-bullying in the school on Saturday and Sunday,
- shared information on how to post information on social media with students,
- oriented my family about privacy settings on social media platforms

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In addition to school teachers, all local elected leaders interviewed attested to having shared their newly acquired knowledge and information on media literacy in the community; others committed themselves to continue carrying out awareness activities in their respective communities.

***Finding 14***

Approximately 94% of the respondents expressed their agreement on the media items, while 3 to 16 % were neutral.

***Finding 15***

A significant impact of the Media Literacy training on the participants has been their enhanced ability and skills to use media information wisely.

***Finding 16***

The BCMD's initiative on media literacy was a maiden learning venture into the essence of media in general and the use of relevant tools to deconstruct social media content in particular.

***Finding 17***

Currently, there is a lack of public awareness of media literacy.

***Finding 18***

Media literacy benefited the respondents by making them aware of its impact and being critical and reflective in consuming information.

***Finding 19***

The activities initiated included monitoring the use of social media at home, school-based in-service programmes and educating colleagues on the correct use of media.

***5.3.5. Local Action Plans***

The Local Actions Plans (LAPs) were the outputs of the Community Mapping and Participatory Planning Workshops. After the workshops, the participants tried out the newly learned knowledge, skills and tools in the community, mapping issues and assets, consulting community residents and developing LAPs to address some problems in the community.

As per the information obtained from the Key Informants interviewed and the records maintained by the BCMD, the following LAPs have been carried out so far (**Table 10** below). The study found that not all participants trained were equally involved in carrying



out the LAPs. Some participants fully engaged themselves in preparing LAPs with the community, while others helped in facilitating workshops. However, almost all those

who participated in BCMD's training engaged in further disseminating the information and creating awareness in their respective communities.

**Table 10: Status of Some Local Action Plans by Participants**

SI #	Name of Local Action Plan	Location, Address	Participants
<b>LAPs Using Participatory Planning Tools (Participants were local leaders &amp; teachers)</b>			
1	<b>Shortage of Land- Chamgang Maed Community Development Plan,</b> Consultation for participatory planning and community analysis- 2 days, Sept. 9-10, 2021	Chamgang Maed <i>Chiwog,</i> Dagala <i>Gewog,</i> Thimphu <i>Dzongkhag.</i>	30 participants - 15 male and 15 female, including elderly, youth and local ex- leaders.
2	<b>Dazhi-Zhosuel Community Development Plan</b> Consultation for participatory planning and community analysis workshop, Sept. 5-6, 2021	Dazhi-Zhosuel <i>Chiwog,</i> Kawang <i>Gewog,</i> Thimphu <i>Dzongkhag</i>	30 participants - 15 male and 15 female, including men, women, senior citizens, PWD, youth, civil servant and ex elected local leaders.
3	<b>Inadequate Irrigation, and Drinking Water, Gangju-Kiychu Community Development Plan</b> Community consultation workshop, 3rd Sept. 2021	Gangju-Kiychu <i>Chiwog,</i> Lamgong <i>Gewog,</i> Paro <i>Dzongkhag.</i>	22 participants - including males, females, elderly, youth, unemployed individuals, business, religious practitioners, PWD,

4	<b>Rinchending Community Development Plan</b> Community consultation workshop Sept. 12-13, 2021	Rinchending <i>Chiwog</i> , Shari <i>Gewog</i> , Paro <i>Dzongkhag</i> .	25 participants, 15 female, youths, Desuups ,
5	<b>Tshaluna Community Development Plan</b> Community consultation workshop Aug. 10 - 11, 2021	Tshaluna <i>Chiwog</i> , Medwang <i>Gewog</i> , Thimphu <i>Dzongkhag</i> .	22 participants, 7 females and 15 males, including farmers and three students.
6	<b>Shortage of Drinking and Irrigation Water Sustained Livelihood</b> Tshiphu- Tenchukha Community Development Project	Tshiphu-Tenchukha <i>Chiwog</i> , Dogar <i>Gewog</i> , Paro <i>Dzongkhag</i> .	12 participants, 6 male and 6 female
7	<b>Hongtsho and Yoedselpang Communities Development Plan</b> Oct. 1 - 2, 2021	Hongtsho and Yoedselpang <i>Chiwogs</i> , Chang <i>Gewog</i> , Thimphu <i>Dzongkhag</i> .	Total of 15 participants, 10 females and 5 males, including retired civil servants, army personnel, youth and farmers.
<b>LAPs Using Asset-based Community Mapping (Participants are teachers and youths)</b>			
8	<b>Awareness Campaign on Traffic Safety</b> (2019, Shaba HSS group)	Denkha, Shaba <i>Gewog</i> , Paro <i>Dzongkhag</i> .	Local residents
9	<b>Improvement and Maintenance of the Public Menchu</b> (2019, Drukgyel CS group)	Tsento <i>Gewog</i> , Paro <i>Dzongkhag</i> .	Local residents



10	<b>Advocacy for Better Water Supply Management</b> (2019, Drukgyel CS group)	Tsento, Tsento Gewog, Paro Dzongkhag.	Local residents, GYT members, and construction companies
11	<b>Installation of Street Lights for Public Safety</b> (2019, Drukgyel CS group)	Drukgyel, Tsento Gewog, Paro Dzongkhag.	Unemployed youth, community police, shopkeepers, and local residents
12	<b>Construction of Sports Facility to Keep Youth Engaged</b> (2019, Shaba HSS Group)	Bonday, Shaba Gewog, Paro Dzongkhag.	School children of Wochu, Khangkhu, Shaba and local residents
13	<b>Waste Management, Nakha Community Development Plan</b> (Sept, 2021, PCE students group)	Nakha Chiwog, Wangchang Gewog, Paro Dzongkhag.	Local residents and community leaders
14	<b>Caring for Senior Citizens – Installing Benches Around Chorten</b> (Sept 2021, PCE student group)	Paro Town, Wangchang Gewog, Paro Dzongkhag.	Local residents
15	<b>Accommodation Issue of PCE Day-Students</b> (Sept, 2021, PCE students group)	PCE Campus, Paro Town, Wangchang Gewog, Paro Dzongkhag.	Affected students and local residents.

Source: BCMD, KII, 2021

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The main objective of the formulation of the LAPs was to provide hands-on experience to the participants to try out the skills in mapping communities, facilitating participatory planning and formulating a local action plan or a community development plan. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions and the local government leaders' elections from October 2021 onwards, the Study could not follow up on all the LAPs. Moreover, the youths involved in the LAPs had either moved schools or were taking their examinations.

However, many of the participants from the Local government indicated their plans to use the skills and approaches as they develop the 13th Five year Plan (SN249, Int. LEL114, Int.OTH101, Int.TRS115). Some participants also indicated their plans to present the co-developed Community Development Plans to the *Gewog* Administration (Int. LEL111, PR 75, Int.TRS108).

The majority of the participants acknowledged the importance of inclusiveness in the planning processes and consulting a cross-section of community residents. Following testimonials support this finding:

*I understood the importance of participation by wider sections of the community, including persons with disability and youth representatives (Int. tOTH101, Nov. 2021).*

*If I may report on the actual Local Action Plan that my group carried out, there is a village called Nakha with 16 households above Bondey town, Paro. We followed the step by step process that we learnt in the training: (1) problem identifying: we identified three major problems - lack of proper drainage system, waste management issue, lack of proper footpath. Of these, we chose waste management as the most problematic issue. (2) identified the cause of the problem, (3) identified possible solutions that are sustainable. We prepared a detailed report and presented it to the Town Hall Meeting. We are waiting for advice and endorsement from the meeting for the actual implementation of the plan... We gained numerous experiences from identifying issues to implementation of the plan and realised the importance of involving assets of the community (Int.CoS102, Nov. 2021).*

As stated by some LG participants they could not participate in the LAPs as they were involved in LG elections that coincided with the study period (Nov-Dec, 2021):

However, some participants reported having carried out some kind of



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mini action plans that are being implemented at the personal level.

*Although a separate and formal “Local Action Project” is not yet executed, I have started in small ways at my own home, for example, waste segregation at home and where to dispose of them (Int. TRS105, Nov. 2021).*

From the reports of the participants, it is clear that firstly, the pandemic has limited their ability to carry out their planned local initiatives. Secondly, the local government elections began soon after the training and many participants were engaged either as candidates or in organising the elections which limited their active participation in the LAPs being carried out in groups.

### **Finding 20**

In 2021, 10 LAPs were presented at the Town Hall: 7 LAPs by local leaders/community members based on the GNH Toolkit and three by Paro College of Education students following the Asset-based Community Mapping model.<sup>51</sup>

### **Finding 21**

Participants reported a high level of satisfaction with their experiences in engaging with the grassroots-level beneficiaries and overwhelmingly

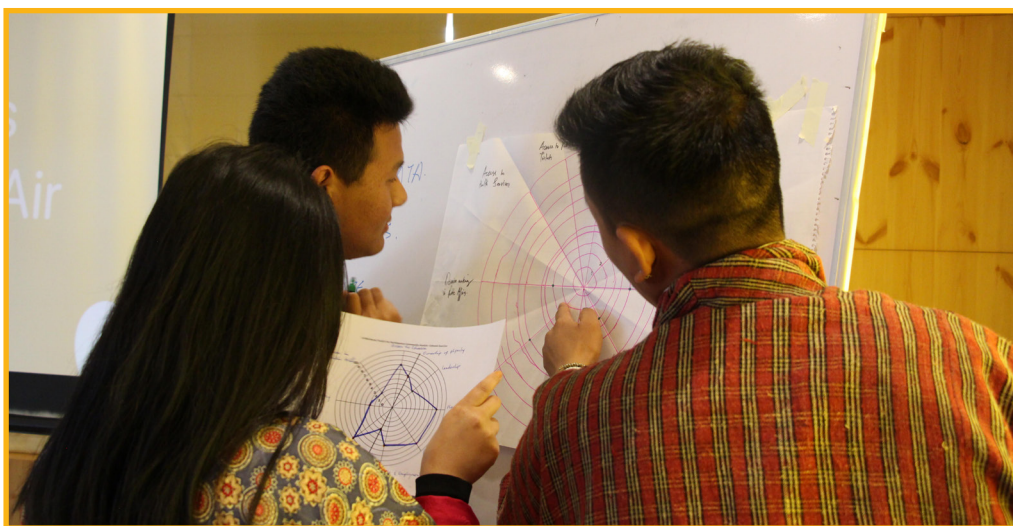
acknowledged the importance of the participation of a cross-section of the society in the planning process.

### **Finding 22**

The Covid-19 pandemic and the coincidence of local leaders’ elections with the study hindered the full participation of all participants in the LAPs conducted in groups.

06

Discussion of Findings



*Gender Analysis at Participatory Planning Workshop, 2022*

This section presents a discussion of the key findings of the Study. These findings are based on a significant collection of insightful data that attest to the commendable efforts made by the BCMD toward strengthening democracy by nurturing citizen participation in understanding important issues, planning, and development.

Since its establishment, the BCMD has been regularly engaged in promoting active citizenship with a cross-section of the target groups including the youth. Aside from voting, active citizenship means being aware of community, national and international issues, taking part in public consultations and expressing their voice, holding

elected representatives accountable and contributing to one's community development. It also means being media-literate and using it appropriately to promote social causes.

The Citizen Education Initiatives of the BCMD include three major capacity-building programmes, namely i) Asset-based Community Mapping, ii) Participatory Planning and iii) Democracy and Media Literacy workshops in addition to the development of citizen education resources and forums (conference and seminars). The findings of this study attest to the usefulness of the programmes.

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### **6.1. Active Citizens - Critical to Community Development**

The BCMD initiatives have deepened the participants' understanding of their rights and their role in democracy. The participants felt that through the Asset-based Community Mapping Workshop, they acquired the skills to critically analyse community issues, map resources, and realise the importance of citizens' role in community development. The workshops inspired the participants to be active and engaged in their communities, promoting the value of inclusiveness, volunteerism and ownership of their community.

With the introduction of democracy in the country and with politics often bordering on populism with promises of freebies and short-term gains, citizens tend to expect the government to fulfil all their needs. The Asset-based Community Mapping project was a timely reminder to the citizens that the sustainable growth of the country is possible only if communities act on their issues instead of waiting for hand-outs. The traditional approach to development has always asked citizens "what do you need?" and "what needs to be fixed in your community?". The Asset-based Community Mapping

helped the participants realise that communities have resources that can be mobilised for development. They learned to look at both issues as well as recognise the assets in their communities.

Several participants commented that the opportunity to be a part of the project sharpened their critical-thinking skills and that they gained the confidence to express their voice for common good. As well, some participants observed that active citizenship or voluntary services are very minimal in society and that it is high time to expand voluntary services in the community and the nation at large. The current school curriculum should include elements of citizenship education in its offering.

### **6.2. Sowing the Seeds of Inclusive and Responsive Community Development**

The Participatory Planning Workshop aimed at strengthening citizen engagement through inclusive consultations and participatory planning approaches. The training was based on a toolkit that was designed on the four pillars of Gross National Happiness as a framework.



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The Participatory Planning Workshop made the participants realise the importance of citizens' participation in decision-making at the grassroots level. The local leaders indicated that so far, participatory approaches to planning have not happened at the community level. It was a revelation to the participants that until now, youth, the elderly, and people living with disabilities, among others, were not involved in community meetings and planning. They viewed planning as the prerogative of the government officials and did not see a role for themselves in the process.

Traditionally, invitations to public consultations have been extended to the head of the families only. This practice has created a situation at the local level where the *zomdue* (Public Meeting) agenda is dominated by the vocal few from affluent backgrounds thereby silencing the voices of the marginalised groups. *Zomdue* was viewed more as a formality ensuring household representation rather than for participation as households tended to send people to "listen" and to convey messages rather than to share and take part in making decisions.

The BCMD initiatives demonstrated how planning and public consultation can and needs to be inclusive to

develop plans and programmes that are responsive to the diverse needs of the community. The Participatory Planning training educated the participants about how public consultation and planning can be made more inclusive and participatory using the GNH-based community analysis and planning toolkit.

The *Gewog* level respondents expressed the view that such training was highly beneficial to them and recommended the same to be offered to as many *Gewogs* as possible. Several participants interviewed indicated how they plan to use the approach for the upcoming 13th Five-Year planning process and their intention to share the community development plans with higher authorities after the local government elections.

### **6.3. Nurturing Media-literate Citizens**

The BCMD's Media and Democracy Literacy training aimed to educate the citizens about the role of media in democracy and to nurture critical thinking in consuming and disseminating media information as the growing social media channels allow anybody to be both consumer and producer of media content.

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Free and independent media is vital for good governance and the nurturing of a vibrant democracy. As the watchdog of the government, the media play a critical role in ensuring transparency and accountability in the governance system. But the media is a double-edged sword. While it claims to serve an important cause, it is not without bias nor is it immune to a variety of influences and loopholes. As the media wields huge influence in shaping public perception, media literate citizens are critical to the growth of a healthy democracy and a well-informed society.

The study revealed that the participants found the workshop deeply insightful and suggested reaching out to all the community members to benefit from such training. A majority of the participants reported enhancing their ability to evaluate the sources and to examine the veracity of news instead of believing everything they read. As a result of the workshop, the participants are now more aware of how to protect themselves through privacy settings and they are now more careful about sharing messages or photos on social media.

The impact of the Media and Democracy Literacy Workshop extended beyond the participants to their family members, students and colleagues as more than 50% of the Study participants reported sharing the newly acquired knowledge and skills in their families and institutions.

#### **6.4. Hands-on Learning Experiences**

Through the BCMD's project, the participants gained practical experience in developing Local Action Plans based on the actual needs of the community. Through this valuable experience, the participants learnt about the importance of inclusiveness, citizen participation in community analysis and planning and the need to recognise both the strengths and weaknesses of the community and how to solve community issues.

The Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) has developed a Local Development Planning Manual (LDPM) to assist the Local Government facilitated by *Dzongkhag* Planning Officers, Sector Officials and the *Gewog* Administrative Officers to undertake participatory planning, implement development projects, and monitor and evaluate them at the community level. The objective



of decentralised planning is to ensure that development plans accurately reflect the actual ground realities and the genuine needs and aspirations of the people (GNHC, 2014, p. 1). The BCMD's capacity building programmes on community mapping and participatory planning are in line with the national agenda. As the 12th Five-Year Plan (FYP) is rapidly drawing to a close, there is an opportunity for collaboration with the local governments to make the 13th FYP truly inclusive and participatory.



*Community residents of Kawang Gewog attend public consultation and participatory planning, 2021*

# O7

## Recommendations



*Lesson plan design on psychological impacts of social media, 2021*

Based on the findings and discussions, the Study makes the following recommendations under four broad areas as under.

### 7.1. Future Target-participants and Coverage

- Provide similar training to local leaders and other critical target groups across all the 20 Dzongkhags, and consider group/co-facilitation methods, particularly in certain areas.
- People in executive positions (Dzongkhags and Ministries) should be made aware of the importance of Participatory Planning at the grassroots level.

### 7.2. Training and Facilitation Modality

- Consider including subject experts in relevant areas, GNH contents in particular, in future training/workshops.
- Facilitation skills for the trainers trained by BCMD can be further strengthened with teaching skills, and strategies, encompassing voice modulation, interaction, gesture variations, and time management.
- Coordination with the Gross National Happiness Commission and the Department of Local Government (DLG) can ensure that GNH-content and tools are consistent across the agencies.



*Students explore video editing tools at the Media Lab, 2021*

- The training content can be further simplified, including having a Dzongkha version bearing in mind the educational background of participants.

### **7.3. Compensation for Time and Efforts, Core Responsibilities, Accountability**

- The participants and Training of Trainers (TOTs) who have their core responsibilities find it challenging to take time out to participate in training and related activities. The agencies concerned should properly plan the timing and identify the type of participants to ensure maximum participation.
- The training should include the need to fix responsibility and accountability to service beneficiaries to ensure that participants do not become complacent.



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#### 7.4. Information Dissemination, Sharing of Resources, and Responsiveness

Given their usefulness, the BCMD should consider sharing CEIs materials with the general public through mainstream media such as national television (TV) programmes. The BCMD should consider engaging the Ministry of Education Secretariat, *Dzongkhag* Education Officers and principals to disseminate the CEI materials (soft and hard forms) among students.



*Participants accessing the GNH-based toolkit for Participatory Community Analysis, 2022*



*A recent graduate reading the Autumn issue of The Druk Journal: Bhutanese Youth - Their Aspirations, Concerns, and Mandate, 2021*

08

Conclusion



*Participants engaged in an ice-breaking session, 2021*

It can be reasonably concluded that the BCMD is breaking new grounds in citizenship education with the introduction of new concepts and skills such as Asset-based Community Mapping that broadens the scope of studying community issues. Instead of looking at issues per se, the Asset-based Community Mapping instrument helped participants look for and appreciate the assets in their own communities. The Media Literacy training was the first intervention of its kind that introduced the project-beneficiaries to a deeper understanding of media through its practical sessions on analysing news-sources and reports.

Similarly, the Participatory Planning Workshop opened the participants' eyes to using the GNH-based Toolkit to include vulnerable community members in consultation and planning. An aspect of the BCMD project that was much appreciated was the hands-on practical experience.

While some of the recommendations are largely of an administrative and logistical nature, aside from acknowledging the benefits of the project, many participants expressed the need to expand the reach of the workshops to other communities and for the BCMD to make its resources available to the schools and institutions for wider benefit.



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# Annexures

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Code No: \_\_\_\_\_

## Annexure-I Survey Questionnaire

### *Impact of Citizen Education Initiatives*

**OBJECTIVE:** The Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD) is evaluating the impact of citizen engagement initiatives launched during the last three years. This survey is conducted to gather your views on the impact of the initiative. The BCMD would like to request you spend some time responding to this questionnaire. Your honest responses will contribute to the BCMD's strategic direction in future. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

**PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME**

### *Section A (Biographical Information)*

**DIRECTION:** Please tick boxes as appropriate to you.

- **Gender**

(1) Female ☐                      (2) Male ☐                      (3) Other ☐ (Please specify).....

- **Respondent type**

(1) School student ☐                      (2) College student ☐                      (3) Local leader ☐  
(4) District official ☐                      (5) Teacher ☐                      (6) Community  
member/parent ☐                      (7) Other ☐ (Please specify).....

### *Section B: Usefulness of the Capacity Development Workshops*

**B1.** State your level of agreement on the following items with regards to the “workshops conducted” (items #1-3). Put a tick (v) in the box of your choice below. Tick **NA** if you have not attended the training/workshop.

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Item No	Indicators/ Statements	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1	NA
1	Training/ Workshop on Asset-Based Community Mapping was useful.						
2	Training/ Workshop on Participatory Community Planning was useful.						
3	Training/ Workshop on Media Literacy was useful.						

## Open Question

**B2.** In what ways were the workshops useful to you? Please explain briefly.

**B3.** In what ways have you been able to use some of the knowledge and skills gained from the workshops? It could be a small change at your personal or organisational level. Share some examples.

## *Section C: Active Citizenship and Citizen Participation*

**C1.** State your level of agreement on the following items with regards to “citizens’ roles in democracy” (items # 4-9). Put a tick (v) in the box of your choice below.



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Items No	Indicators/Statement. BCMD's project helped me:	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
4	Understand my rights and responsibilities as a citizen.					
5	Develop interest in my community issues and development.					
6	Develop an interest in current affairs.					
7	Understand that citizens can and should ask questions and hold their elected representatives accountable.					
8	Understand the importance of citizen participation in community planning and sustainable development.					
9	Understand that communities can come together to solve some of their issues.					

### Open Question:

**C2.** Name an issue or a social cause that you have been advocating for inspired by your engagement with the BCMD. What has been its impact or result? Please explain briefly.

**C3.** State your level of agreement on the following items with regards to the **“citizen participation, agency and ownership of the community”** (items #10-17). Put a tick (✓) in the box of your choice below.

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Items No	Indicators/Statements BCMD's project helped me:	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
10	Become more aware of the issues of the community I live in.					
11	Realize that certain issues can be resolved by communities themselves.					
12	Share my views, provide feedback, and participate in public forums and meetings with confidence.					
13	Take active participation in community service and voluntary work.					
14	Make donations, and contribute ideas and expertise for a social cause.					
15	Enhance my knowledge and skills to study community issues.					
16	Initiate activities to bring about changes in the school/community.					
17	Discover how I can contribute to my community.					



**C4.** State your degree of agreement with regards to the “**inclusiveness**” (items # 18-22). Put a tick (✓) in the box of your choice below.

Items No	Indicators/ Statements BCMD’s project helped me:	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
18	Become more respectful of diversity in perspectives and individuals.					
19	Be more inclusive in my interactions with public/ colleagues/ friends/ community.					
20	Pay more attention to the needs of vulnerable sections of the population (e.g. people with disabilities, elderly, women, and young people, etc.)					
21	Be more open to critical feedback and comments.					
22	Initiate changes in my school/ community to develop a culture of inclusiveness and respect for diversity.					

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## Open Question:

**C5.** Describe any initiative that you took in the last two years (e.g. participation in zomdues, public forums or public consultations, organising awareness or advocacy campaigns, making labour contributions, donations, etc.) What has been its impact or result? Please explain briefly.

### ***Section D: Smart Media Consumers***

**D1.** Having attended the “**media literacy**” workshop state your level of agreement on the following item (# 23-32). Put a tick (✓) in the box of your choice below. If you have not attended the media literacy workshop, skip this section.

Items No	Indicators/ Statements	Strongly Agree 5	Agree 4	Neutral 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
23	I am now more wary of privacy settings on social media than before.					
24	I now monitor my children/family members or my own screen time/contents viewed.					
25	I now engage in more constructive discussions on social media than before.					
26	I now use social media as a platform to raise awareness on certain issues.					
27	I am now more aware of online scammers and cyber crimes than before.					



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28	I can now evaluate if a news article is credible or not.					
29	I now verify the source and authenticity of the news before I believe them.					
30	I now analyze the repercussion of sharing images and contents of social media more than before					
31	I now weigh the pros and cons of sharing photos and other information and contents on social media.					
32	I now follow current affairs to understand my community issues.					

### Open Question

D2. How did media literacy training benefit you?

D3. Explain if you have initiated any activity to share this knowledge and skills further with family/friends/colleagues, etc.

### Section E: General

E1. In what ways have your knowledge and skills learned from the workshop/ training organised by the BCMD inspired you to bring changes in you and your community (School, Gewog, Village, or Dzongkhag)?

*Thank you for your participation.*

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## Annexure-II Key Informant Interview Guide

### Impact of Citizen Education Initiatives

*Teachers, students, parents, Dzongkhag Administration, Gewog*

#### *Administration, Others*

- Interview Code No.: .....
- Date of interview: .....
- Time of interview: From:..... to:.....
- Location of interview: (Thimphu or Paro).....
- Name of Interviewee: .....
- Respondent type: Teacher/ Student/ Parent/*Dzongkhag Admin/Gewog Admin/Others*
- Gender: Male..... Female: .....
- Name of the Interviewer.....

Kuzu Zangpo, La,

We are here to collect the information for the evaluation of the projects related to citizenship engagement. In that respect, the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD) has organised a series of workshops and training in democracy, media, community planning etc, in the past 2-3 years, and you have attended some of them. Today, we would like to have a short discussion with you on some of those topics. Please feel free to express in any language you prefer. You may ask me to stop the conversation if you feel uncomfortable in some areas. *(You may skip questions if they are not applicable to you).*

**Question 1:** What is your general impression of the citizen engagement project of the BCMD? Please explain with specific examples.

**Question 2:** How, in your view, has the project helped people's understanding of citizens' role in democracy?

**Question 3:** How, in your view, has the project promoted media literacy in the participants/community?



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**Question 4:** How, in your view, has the project inspired more active citizenship or voluntary service in the community/school? Please explain what initiatives or projects were inspired by this project in your community.

**Question 5:** Have you been involved in any Local Action Projects as a result of this project of the BCMD? Please explain your project; how it has benefited the community and what you gained from it.

**Question 6:** What do you think are the strengths of the project? Do you have any comments/ feedback on how this project can be improved?

**Question 7:** Is there anything you want to share? Please do so.

*Thank you for your responses and time!!!*

## Annexure-III Profile of the KII participants

Respondent types	Code by respondent type		Male	Female	Total
Teachers (School Teachers and College Faculty)	Singye's group Int.TRS103 Int.TRS104 Int.TRS105 Int.TRS108 Int.TRS110 Int.TRS112 Int.TRS115	Phup's group Int.TRS01 Int.TRS02 Int.TRS03 Int.TRS04 Int.TRS05 Int.TRS06	10	3	13
Students (College Students)	Students (College Students)	Int.COS01 Int.COS02	3	2	5
<i>Dzongkhag</i> Administration Officials ( <i>Dzongdag</i> , <i>Dzongrab</i> , Other Officials) Administration Officials ( <i>Dzongdag</i> , <i>Dzongrab</i> , Other Officials)	Int.DzO109	Int. DzO01 Int.DzO02	2	1	3
<i>Gewog</i> Administration Officials	Int.GAO107	Int.GAO01	1	1	2
Local Elected Leaders ( <i>Gup</i> , <i>Mangmi</i> , <i>Tshogpa</i> )	Int.LEL111 Int.LEL114	Int.LEL01 Int.LEL02	3	1	4
Others (Other agencies - NGO, CSO, International, etc)	Int.OTH101	Int.OTH01	2		2
<b>Total</b>			<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>29</b>

