







# Annual Report 2022

BHUTAN CENTRE FOR MEDIA AND  
DEMOCRACY

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Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy  
PO Box 1662, Thimphu Bhutan

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**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2022**



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# Foreword



After over two years of multiple disruptions of the pandemic, 2022 was a year of innovation and creativity. BCMD rose to the challenge of testing an adapted version of the Design Thinking approach to policy deliberation and an intergenerational approach to integrating youth voices in community development.

BCMD initiated a Design Thinking approach to social protection policy for the marginalised groups that saw a big turnout of key stakeholders at the final advocacy event #PeopleCentredPolicy. Putting the marginalised groups at the centre and as an advocate for themselves, the project capacitated 73 members and intensified media and government attention on social protection gaps.

Youth Summit 2022 took on an intergenerational approach whereby local government leaders and officials worked alongside young people to study their communities and ideate development initiatives. Eighty-eight youths, including members of the Youth Initiative, are empowered to engage with issues of national importance.

BCMD continues to strengthen local governments in GNH-based participatory planning and youth engagement at the local level. Close to 70 local government officials and elected leaders received training on GNH-based participatory planning and youth engagement at the community level.

The media and democracy literacy reached a diverse target group ranging from parliamentarians, LG elected leaders, educators, and youth to marginalised groups. In 2022, over 20 schools, around 100 teachers and 1379 students were capacitated on media and democracy literacy. It is also made accessible to people with disabilities through educational videos in sign language and donation of reading assistive devices.

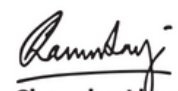
BCMD continues to create safe and open platforms for public deliberation on pertinent issues and deepening discourses. In 2022, we have reached 1077 people through our forums, webinars and conversations and produced 10 Bhutan-centric resources, including two Druk Journal issues.

BCMD continues to support the civil society sector through active participation and substantive contributions to the Bhutan Civil Society Network.

With each passing year, BCMD continues to grow as an organisation, and this is only possible because of the support from its donors and partners.



**Dr Lam Dorji**  
Board Chair



**Chencho Lhamu (Ph.D)**  
Executive Director



## VISION

A vibrant democracy where citizens are engaged and proactive



## MISSION

To nurture democracy in Bhutan through civic engagement, public discourse and media literacy



# Meet BCMD Staff



Chencho Lhamu (PhD)  
Executive Director



Rosy Chettri  
Finance Officer



Manisha Khawas  
Asst. Admin & Finance



Namgyel Wangchuk  
Programme Officer



Sonam Choden  
Programme Officer



Ugyen Samdrup Lhamo  
Asst. Programme Officer



Kencho Tshering  
Asst. Programme Officer

# Highlights of 2022

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Media and Democracy  
Literacy

10



Forums/Seminars/Webinars/  
Conversations

04



Policy Deliberations &  
Advocacy

04



Multimedia Resources  
(Videos)

25



Youth  
Activities

08



Participatory Planning for  
Local Government

11



Publications/  
Resources

09



# Programme Area I

## EMPOWERING ACCOUNTABLE, ACTIVE & RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS

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# 1. Nurturing a Discerning Mind in the Age of Information and Technology



Media literacy has become indispensable in the age of information and technology. With increasing access to the internet and growing social media platforms, it is liberating as citizens can participate in collecting, disseminating and reporting on issues. It is also complicating lives as the line between truth and falsehood has blurred as traditional gatekeepers of truth compete with citizen journalism.

In 2022, BCMD's Media and Democracy literacy benefitted 1,049 diverse beneficiaries ranging from parliamentarians and local elected leaders to teachers, youths and Assistant Research officers. The media literacy program made the participants more critical consumers of media messages and helped develop discerning minds to distinguish real from fake news.



*Session highlighting on how children are susceptible to cyberbullying*



Media Literacy in Numbers
80 Teachers (Tsirang, Trashigang, Thimphu)
Step-down training for 1379 students and 99 teachers.
43 Parliamentarians and Assistant Research officers
92 LG leaders from four districts of Trashigang, Tsirang, Thimphu and Paro
<b>Total - 1693</b>

"I was blindly absorbing everything," shared Sangay Wangmo, a teacher at Trashigang Middle Secondary School. "After today's session on verification, independence and accountability, I am better equipped to assimilate media information with a critical mind."

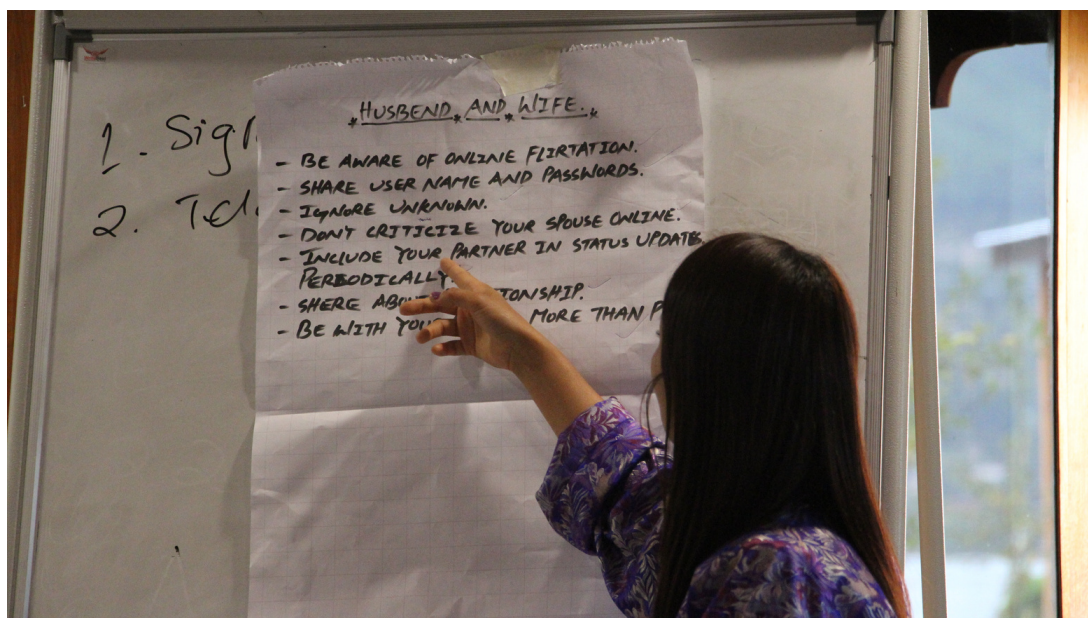
"I am now more mindful of the information I consume and always examine the source of any information thanks to the tips my teachers have given me throughout this training," said Tshering Sonam Tobgyal, a student of Rangjung Central School.

Similarly, Assistant Research officers (ARO) found the MDL training useful and relevant. Researchers play a critical role in ensuring that reliable data is collected, the right information are delivered to the parliamentarians. "Prior to this training, I used multiple social media sites to gather information and occasionally provided that information to my Hon'ble member as well. I was never aware of the difference between news and information, and have been consuming all of it without any second thought.

Now I will be able to deliver precise and correct information to my members as well," stated Chenga Dawa, a member of the National Council.

Additionally, Karma said, "My position as an ARO demands me to write reports and newsletters from our constituents and submit them to my Hon'ble member. I wasn't aware of the values such as the 5 ethics of journalism that should be considered. I feel I'm a little more equipped now that I understand how to write reports considering the core values".

Through this project, BCMD also established media and democracy clubs in 21 schools and more than 600 students and teachers were further trained on media literacy.



*Participants formulated the social media guidelines and presented their social media usage within their residence.*

## 2. Connecting Youths with Issues of National Concern



The 10th cohort of the Youth Initiative (YI) members took on the challenge to deliberate on and provide their perspectives to two interrelated pressing issues of national concern, viz

- a) “What should Bhutan do to tackle climate change?” and
- b) “How to balance economic development and environmental conservation?”.



*2022 YI Cohort engaging in an ice-breaking activity*

In total, 55 youths from diverse backgrounds attended the two camps in 2022 and provided a total of 56 solutions. The suggested solutions were then used to organise a national-wide poll online - on Youth Conversations (<https://youthconversations.org/bt/>) and Tendrel (<https://citizenengagement.bt/>) to crowdsource ideas from the citizens that generated a total engagement of 11,364.



*Nation-wide poll online - on Youth Conversations and Tendrel*

The findings from the two polls, available on [www.bcmbd.bt](http://www.bcmbd.bt), provide insights to decision- and policy makers; it helps them gauge what policy and programmatic solutions for the two issues are popular or divisive amongst the citizens.

The youths attending the camps appreciated the complexities in finding workable solutions to issues that are often interconnected in reality. Sonam Tshogyal, a student of the College of Natural resources said, “Before joining the YI camp, I assumed that solutions to help strike a balance between development and conservation would be easy to find, however over the course of 5 days, I came to realise its complexities and the challenges when formulating holistic plans.”

### 3. Forging Partnerships Between Youths and Local Government

2022 saw the evolution of the Youth Summit. Departing from its earlier practice, high school and out of school youths (32) were brought together with local government (LG) officials and elected leaders (12) to collaboratively analyse community issues through the lens of child rights.

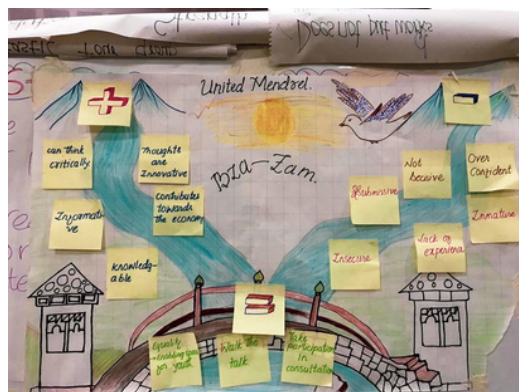
It was organised in Tsirang for the first time and focused on promoting youth and child participation in realising the ideals of Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG).



*Youths & Local Government identifying safe and unsafe places in Damphu community with youth*

The Summit saw the budding of a trusting relationship between the leaders and the young participants as the Summit created an open space for the two generations to interact.

The LG leaders also realised the need to reach out actively to young people – both in and out-of-school – to hear their concerns and aspirations.



*Bza-Zam (bridge) for Citizen Engagement*

The adult participants realised that the LG has never allocated any budget for the youth because they have never consulted them. Both the adults and the young participants appreciated the importance of consulting and engaging with each other for them to build a child-friendly community.

## 4. Putting GNH Philosophy into Practise



*Local Government functionaries of Trashigang District*

BCMD is making headway in demonstrating the implementation of the development philosophy of Gross National Happiness. Building our network of trainers, we trained 27 participants (15 Male and 13 Female) in Thimphu, Paro and Trashigang from government agencies, and civil society organisations including a member each from the blind and the queer community on GNH-based Participatory Planning.

A district planning officer observed that the use of the GNH planning tools would help gather the “actual needs” of the citizens and shift plans from infrastructure development to include social issues that are often missing from the current practices of local government planning.

To realise the constitutional goal to facilitate the direct participation of the people in the development and management of their own social,



*Participants analysing public service delivery through emoticon*

economic and environmental well-being, BCMD trained 127 LG leaders and officials, community members and college youths, (58 male and 69 female ) of Thimphu, Paro, Trashigang and Trongsa.

The participants found the training timely as almost 50% of the local leaders in Thimphu and Paro were newly elected; it broadened their understanding of inclusivity in consultation and planning. The participants organised consultative planning meetings in 10 gewogs in the three districts, taking the **zomdue** participation beyond the regular **gho-shey nyen-shey** to discuss and co-develop community development plans.

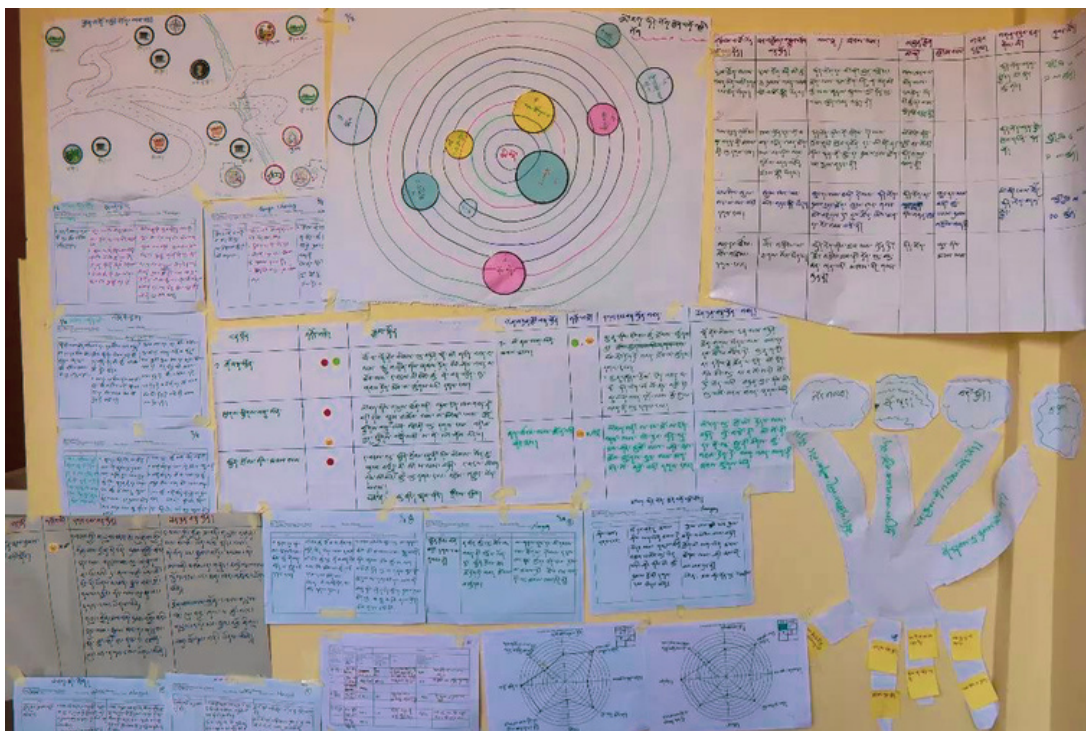
The community development plans were presented to various stakeholders at a Gallery Walk in Thimphu and Trashigang where the participants were quizzed on the new processes of planning.



*A local leader presents his analysis of the Lumang community at the gallery walk*

The Director of the Department of Local Governance and Disaster Management (DLGDM) at a closing event remarked that civic engagement and people's participation in planning are crucial to reducing the authority of the bureaucracy and decentralising planning where communities take ownership of their plans and community development.

Additionally, UNDP official, Mr Kaiser Rana observed that the Gallery walk showcased a "classic example of a good participatory approach".



*Lumang gewog's consolidated community's data and analysis including community development plan presented during the gallery walk*

## 5. Empowering Marginalised Groups in Participatory Policy



BCMD pioneered the idea of facilitating participatory policy through an adapted version of Design Thinking with a heterogeneous group of government officials and marginalised groups (people with disabilities, youth and women in difficult circumstances). 18 trainers trained on Design Thinking co-facilitated a workshop with 73 members of the marginalised group to reflect on their lived experiences, review policies to identify gaps, ideate policy options and make recommendations.



*The participants understanding the dynamics of a community*

The workshops made the participants more empathetic with a deeper understanding of how to advocate for their cause. A blind person from Disabled People's Organisation remarked, "Meeting participants from diverse backgrounds, the workshop made me more aware of other people's issues. This workshop demonstrated a bottom-up approach to policy discussion".



*Participants analysing accessibility to services and infrastructure using cobweb*

The project resulted in 30 advocacy recommendations. The social media advocacy of the recommendations titled #peoplecentredpolicy reached 419,415 views and continues to increase.



*#Peoplecentredpolicy*

At the advocacy event attended by over 100 stakeholders including parliamentarians, senior government officials and executives, the representatives of the marginalised groups exercised their voice and agency to engage with the policy and law makers.

The discussion brought two issues to light - the need for relevant government agencies to create awareness about their policies in formats that are simple and accessible to the target groups; and the second issue was the gap between policy and practice.

## 6. Creative Nonfiction Writing workshop

In October 2022, a workshop was held to promote creative nonfiction writing and encourage individuals to share their personal stories. The workshop was led by Eric Weiner, a New York Times bestselling author, in collaboration with The Druk Journal, a publication dedicated to promoting Bhutanese perspectives on various issues.

The four-day workshop attracted 15 participants, including aspiring writers, writing teachers, and others, and aimed to enhance their writing skills and ability to contribute to discussions on national matters.

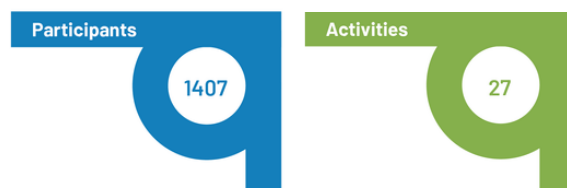


*Creative Nonfiction workshop led by Eric Weiner*

The participants learnt useful techniques in refining their writing and were able to draft personal essays to continue working on. The workshop also helped experienced writers overcome writer's block and emphasised the importance of accepting criticism to improve one's work.

The BCMD acknowledges the support of Eric Weiner and Yin Wah from the Khyentse Foundation.

## Programme Area 1



## Programme Area II

# CREATING KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES FOR CITIZENS

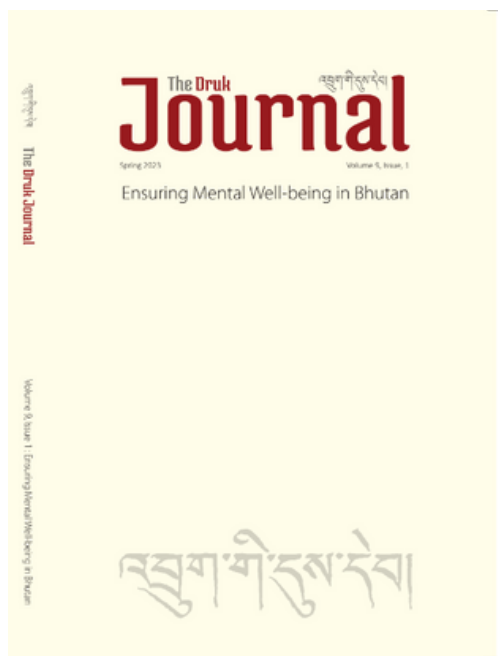
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In addition to the two issues of the Druk Journal, BCMD produced nine Bhutan-centric resources this year. Resource production is central to our role in contributing to Bhutan's development as a knowledge society and in contextualising ideas and best practices that suit our cultural contexts. Bhutan-centric resource production in multiple formats and languages help reach the unreached and build a reservoir of knowledge.

# The Druk Journal

As the third local government election is scheduled for 2022, the spring issue of the Journal looked at Bhutan's political parties and the clarity or absence of ideologies and elements of democratic governance and the autumn issue delved into the interesting space of "local governance" straddling a triangle of politicians, civil servants, and community.



In its 8th volume, an impact assessment of the Druk Journal shows that the journal has nurtured a public space for a cohort of people interested in the way Bhutanese politics, society and nation is developing.

Azusa Kubota, UNDP Resident Representative, who has written for the Druk Journal and participated in several conversations expressed "I think the Druk Journal is the only one in its category – promoting independent thinking, thought-provoking, and wide-ranging in terms of the topics it covers."

## The Druk Journal Volume 8 Issue 1

## The Druk Journal Volume 8 Issue 2



# The Druk Journal: Making Difference in Numbers (Cumulative)



**Issues**

**16**

**276**

**Articles**



**Writers**

**274**

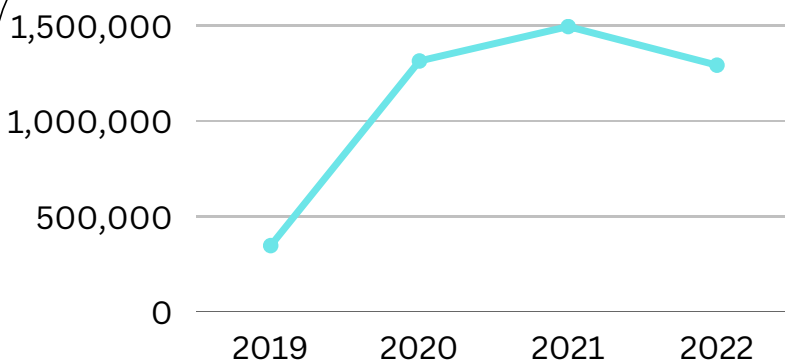
**262**

**Institutes Covered**



**Print Copies Run**

**21,802**



*The Druk Journal Cumulative Website Hits  
(2019-2022)*

# Bringing our Resources to the Unreached



## Media and Democracy Literacy videos

In keeping with the national agenda of not leaving anyone behind, BCMD has pioneered the development of resources on Media and Democracy Literacy (MDL) in the form of nine videos for the deaf and provided 50 assistive reading devices (Evo E10) for people with low vision or blindness.

The MDL videos are available for viewing on [BCMD's official YouTube channel](#).



*BCMD Youtube Channel*  
*BCMD Youtube Channel*

## Building Resources for Civic-competent Youths

### 1. Promoting Child Participation in Community Development

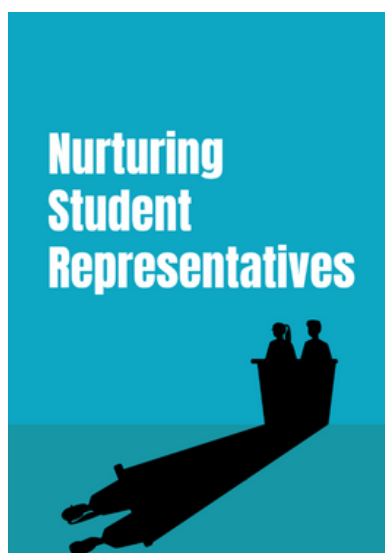
This toolkit aims to help the Local Government to create safe, inclusive child responsive communities/cities

that mainstream child rights and wellbeing into local government planning through budget processes and developmental initiatives.

### 2. Nurturing Student Representatives Workbook

This workbook challenges the traditional conception of student leaders as representatives of school authorities to representatives of the student body. It introduces teachers to how democratic roles and values can be inculcated in student leaders and the school culture.

This resource fills in the resource gap in the school to orient students leaders to their roles and responsibilities as representatives of fellow students.





## 2. Cultivating Civic Action and Civic Mindset

This proceedings serves as a civic education resource for teachers. A total of 1,018 printed copies of the webinar were published and are being distributed to academic institutions and schools.



*Cultivating Civic Action and Civic Mindset*

## 3. Findings from Youth Conversations Platform

The two reports on “How Bhutan can address climate change?” and another on “How to balance economic development and conservation?” is a compilation of the findings from the online poll on the two questions. It provides a sense of popular policy and programmatic recommendations from the citizens, useful for parliamentarians and policy-makers.



*Findings from Youth Conversations Platform*

## 4. Evaluation Study on Citizenship Education Initiatives

The Evaluation Study on Citizenship Education Initiative documents BCMD’s impacts in developing critical thinking, discerning mind in consuming media messages, nurturing a sense of volunteerism and community, and inspiring active citizen participation in the communities.



*Evaluation Study on Citizenship Education Initiatives*

# Bhutan Centric Resources in Numbers



Name of Publications	No. of Copies	Funder
An Evaluation Study on Citizen Education Initiatives	250	Bhutan Foundation / CISU
Bhutan Democracy Forum 2022	1048	Helvetas
Bhutan Democracy Forum proceeding 2018-2022	238	Helvetas
Cultivating Civic Mindset and Civic Action	1018	Bhutan Foundation
Druk Journal VOI 8 issue 1	700	United Nations Democracy Fund
Druk Journal VOI 8 issue 2	600	The Asia Foundation
Findings from Youth Conversations Platform	203	United Nations Development Programme, Bhutan
GNH-Based Toolkit - Dzongkha	245	The Asia foundation / Bhutan Foundation
Nurturing Student Representatives	265	Bhutan Foundation
<b>Total</b>	<b>4567</b>	

## Programme Area III

# ENABLING CITIZEN VOICE

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# 1. The Druk Journal Conversation



*The Druk Journal Conversation on Democracy Today*

In total, 147 participants (62 females and 85 male) joined the Conversations, including parliamentary researchers, key stakeholders from the Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB), Bhutan Infocomm and Media Authority (BICMA), Royal Audit Authority, Department of Local Governance and Disaster Management, National Council of Bhutan, National Assembly of Bhutan, representatives from political parties, academia and the media, and the youth.

The Druk Journal Conversations continue to create spaces for public deliberation on topics that are not commonly discussed within the civil service and the academic institutions.

It creates a community of learners and independent thought-leaders to deepen and share differing perspectives on issues.



*The Druk Journal Conversation on Local Government*

## 2. Bhutan Democracy Forum

As the country is recovering from the pandemic, the Forum created a space for experts from different fields to deliberate on the issue of inclusive and equitable growth. 130 participants from government agencies, political parties, civil society organisations, the media, academic institutions and schools attended the Forum.

The Forum generated numerous recommendations to build an inclusive economy:

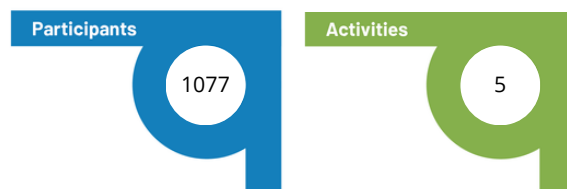
- Stabilising Bhutan's volatile economy critical for inclusive growth.
- Hydropower is vulnerable to climate change; there is an urgent need to diversify the economy.
- State investment in Research & Development to forecast economic opportunities and shocks to guide entrepreneurs and the private sector.
- Financial and business literacy critical to contributing to inclusive growth.
- Citizens need to shift from a "welfare" to a "workfare" mindset.

### 3.Cultivating Civic Mindset and Civic Action

The webinar on Cultivating Civic Mindset and Civic Action was organised to equip and empower citizens with the agency to influence and shape society and to be active in democratic processes. shed light on the status of civic education in Bhutan and how it can be harnessed to address societal needs.

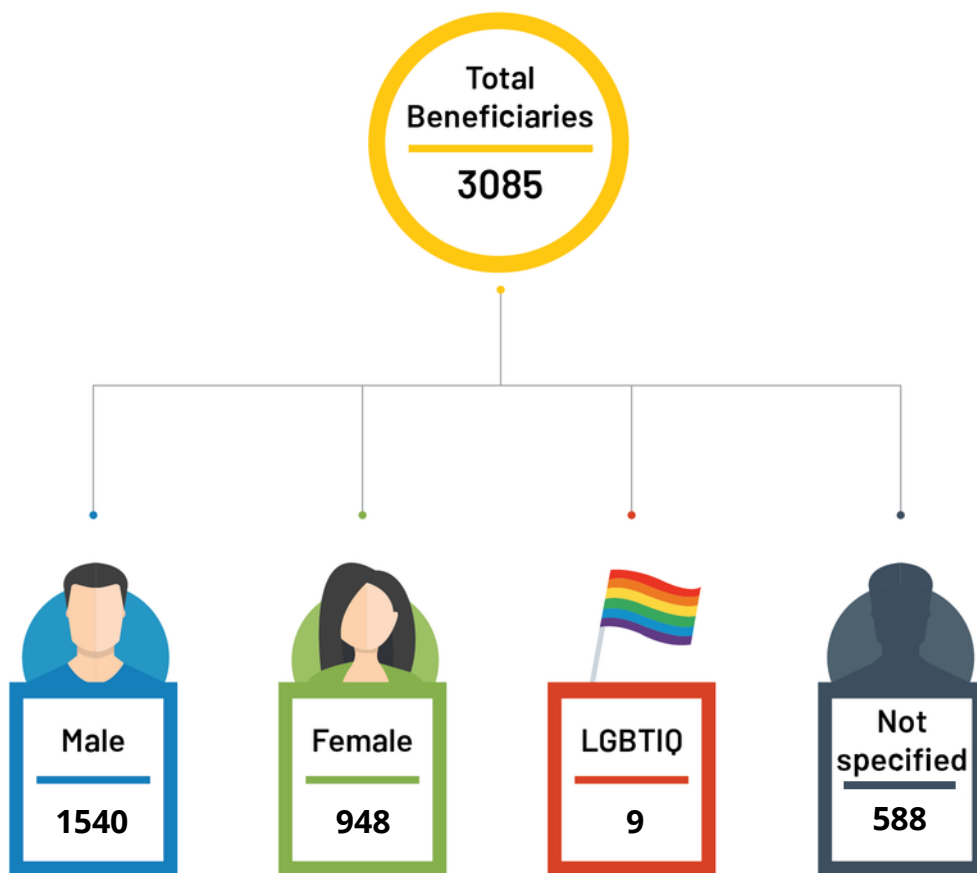
The webinar was well received as over 800 people from diverse backgrounds - secondary and tertiary educators, students, policymakers, and district administrators, local and international NGOs along with engineers & planners, police officers and doctors - from all over Bhutan attended it. Through questions and interactions with the audience, the webinar also called attention to the role of parents in developing a civic mindset and how it is related to one's spiritual practices.

### Programme Area 3





# BCMD in Numbers





# Looking Ahead 2023





**IF you like our work, you may donate here:**

Global Giving: <https://bit.ly/3j9YhX5>

Bhutan Foundation: <http://bit.ly/2WkRjmw>

Give2Asia: <https://give2asia.org/bcmd/>

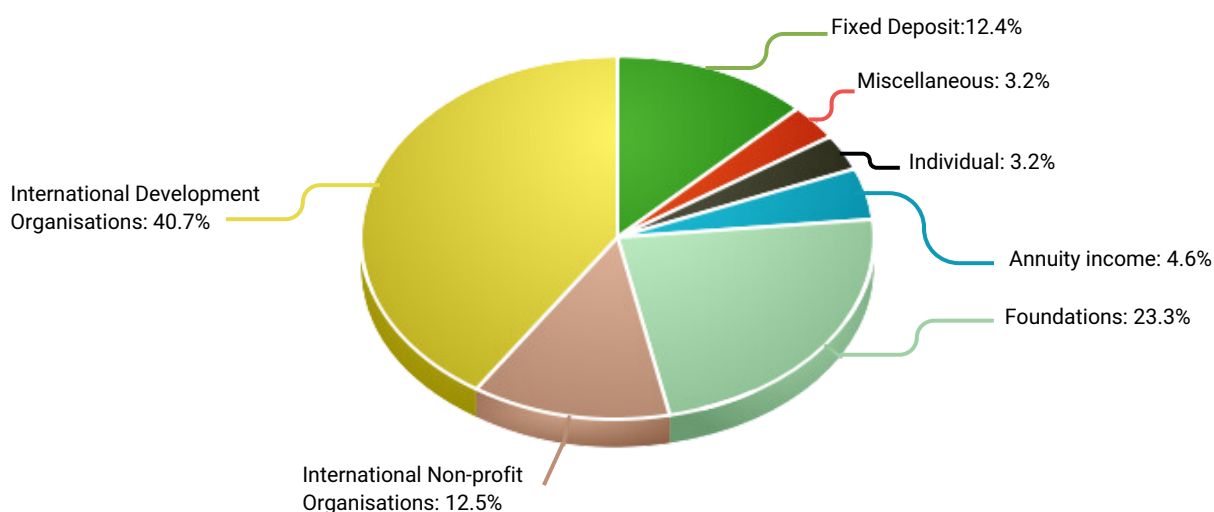


# Fiscal Year 2022

BCMD income and expenditure statement  
as of 31st December 2022

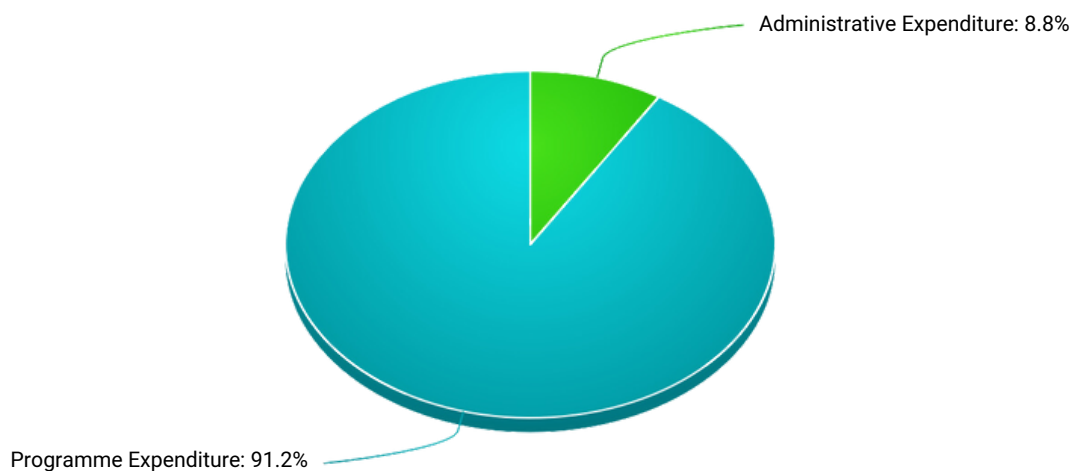
## Income Received During the Year 2022 (Ngultrums)

1	International Development Organisations	12,937,136
2	International Non-profit Organisations	3,987,648
3	Foundations	7,400,312
4	Annuity Income	1,472,607
5	Individual Contributions	1,025,688
6	Miscellaneous Income	1,022,966
7	Fixed Deposit (Matured)	3,931,721



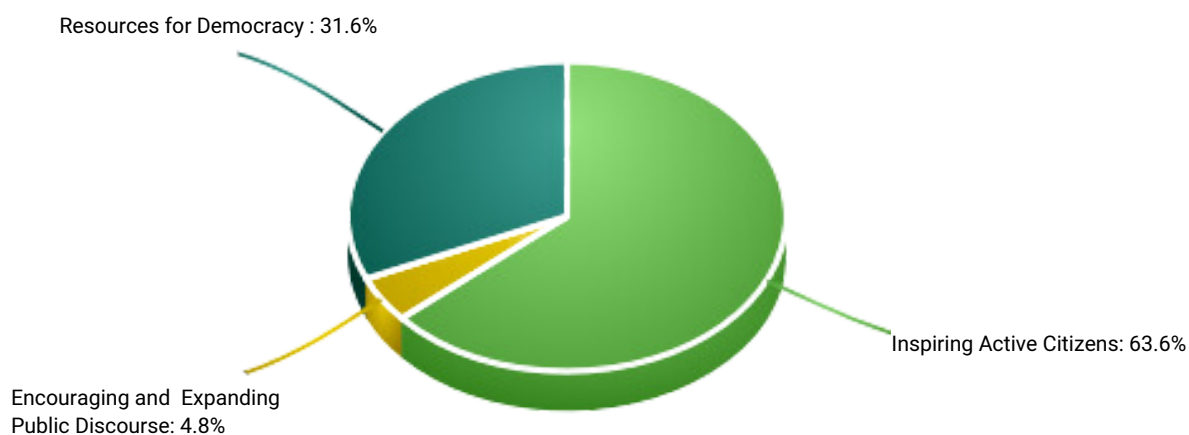
## Expenditure Made During the Year 2022 (Ngultrum)

1	Administrative Expenditure	1,732,131
2	Programme Expenditure	17,991,709



## Expenditure by Programme Areas

1	Inspiring Active Citizens	11,450,514
2	Encouraging and Expanding Public Discourse	854,917
3	Resources for Democracy	5,686,278

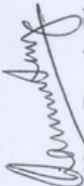



# Receipts and Payment Statement

## Bhutan Centre for Media & Democracy RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS STATEMENT for the year ended 31st December, 2022

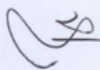
Receipts	Sch	31/12/2022	31/12/2021	Payments	Sch	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
<b>Opening Balances:</b>				<b>Expenditures:</b>			
Cash-in-Hand				Administration	2(a)	1,732,131.49	1,688,647.99
Cash at Bank	1(g)	8,281,570.77	12,672,918.55	Programme Expenses	2(b)	17,991,709.35	14,130,433.09
				Refund to Donor		-	249,000.00
<b>Fund Received during the Year:</b>				Purchase of Assets	3	216,737.00	19,899.00
International Development Organizations	1(a)	12,937,135.96	6,803,894.81	Fixed Deposit	4	-	3,500,000.00
Foundations	1(b)	3,987,648.07	1,078,727.19	Advance to staff	5	-	-
Interest Earned	1(c)	7,400,312.03	3,531,283.83				
Individual Contribution	1(d)	1,472,606.56	1,675,599.53				
Local Support/CSR	1(e)	1,025,688.00	1,043,851.50				
Miscellaneous Income	1(f)	1,022,965.93	291,456.93	<b>Closing Balances:</b>			
Fixed Deposit (Matured)	4	3,931,720.64	771,818.51	Cash-in-Hand			
<b>Total</b>		<b>40,059,647.96</b>	<b>27,869,550.85</b>	Cash at Bank		<b>20,119,070.12</b>	<b>8,281,570.77</b>
						<b>40,059,647.96</b>	<b>27,869,550.85</b>

Bhutan Centre for Media & Democracy

  
Chencho Lhamu, Executive Director




Rosy Chhetri, Finance Officer



Dechok & Associates

  
Yechi Jamtsho, Managing Partner







## Board of Directors

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Former Country Director of READ Bhutan

Dechen Dema  
Director of Strategy and Technology  
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Executive Director, BCMD

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Consultant

Sujeev Shakya  
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འབྲུག་ལམ་ རྒྱུན་དང་དཔལ་ཁུ་ཅོའི་ལྟེ་ལ།  
BHUTAN CENTRE  
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