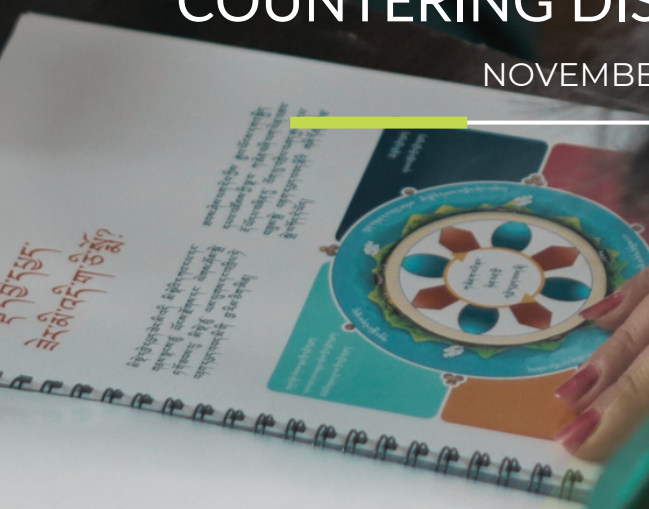


# PARTICIPATORY PLANNING, EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND COUNTERING DISINFORMATION




NOVEMBER 2023



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Kyingkor Consultancy Services

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

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# PARTICIPATORY PLANNING, EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND COUNTERING DISINFORMATION

DZONGKHAG - SAMDRUP JONGKHAR

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## Acronyms

AES	Agriculture Extension Supervisor
BBS	Bhutan Broadcasting Service
BCMD	Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy
BF	Bhutan Foundation
BFL	Bhutan for Life
BES	Bhutan Ecological Society
BIL	Bhutan Insurance Limited
BMF	Bhutan Media Foundation
BOB	Bank of Bhutan
BTO	Bhutan Toilet Organisation
BTP	Bhutan Tendrel Party
CDP	Community Development Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DLGDM	Department of Local Governance and Disaster Management
DPOB	Disabled People’s Organisation of Bhutan
GAO	Gewog Administrative officer
GNH	Gross National Happiness
GT	Gewog Tshogde
FYP	Five Year Plan
JNEC	Jigme Namgyel Engineering College
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
KII	Key Informant Interview
LEP	Loden Entrepreneurship Programme



LG	Local Government
MoAL	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NAB	National Assembly of Bhutan
NC	National Council
NLC	National Land Commission
Nos	Numbers
PDF	Pel Drukdraling Foundation
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PwD	Persons with Disability
RCSC	Royal Civil Service Commission
RENEW	Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women
RGOB	Royal Government of Bhutan
SJI	Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative
SOE	State Owned Enterprise
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

## Bhutanese Terms

Dzongkhag	District
Gewog	Block
Zomdu	Community Meeting
Mangmi	Elected Representative of Gewog
Tshogpa	Representative of a Village
Gup	Head of the Gewog
Thromde	Municipality of a Town or City



## **Executive Summary**

The project titled, "Participatory Planning, Effective Communication, and Countering Disinformation," was implemented from June to August 2023 in all the gewogs and thromde of Samdrup Jongkhar in Eastern Bhutan. The project was aimed at enhancing the capacity of local leaders in formulating Community Development Plans (CDPs) and building media literacy skills to counter disinformation in the communities.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Report aims to assess the progress made by the workshop and training participants in understanding participatory planning and countering disinformation, with the overarching goal of fostering a better community. The participants were surveyed before and after the workshop to assess the baseline and progress of the project using questionnaires and interviews (Annexures), while interviews were also conducted with the identified stakeholders. The report consists of monitoring and evaluation findings using a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methodology. A total of 819 participants, including elected local leaders, civil society representatives, youths, women, and persons with disabilities (PwDs), attended the training/workshops. Key findings indicate increased inclusivity, with 74% of local government officials engaging marginalised groups in their consultations for the first time. In total, 71 Community Development Plans (CDPs) were developed in 10 participating gewogs. Among these, 21 CDPs were inclusive plans co-developed with the community members, and 5 CDPs focused on infrastructure development for marginalised groups in their community.

The GNH-based Participatory Planning workshops for the elected LG leaders were deemed highly relevant, empowering them with effective tools for community engagement. The training emphasised inclusivity, improved decision-making, and active participation, with a notable positive impact on confidence and resolution during community meetings.

The Countering Disinformation Workshop targeted LG officials, stressing the importance of fact-checking and effective communication strategies. Post-survey and interviews indicated a strong commitment among the participants to actively work on the development of comprehensive communication strategies to counter disinformation in their communities.

The project concluded with a Community Development Expo in Thimphu, fostering valuable networking opportunities among LG leaders and stakeholders. Importantly, it made the LG officials aware of the existence of service providers who could support their development plans in the gewog, which they were previously unaware of. CDPs enabled LG leaders and officials to utilise the acquired tools for comprehensive problem-solving and were reported as effective by gewog representatives, although challenges surfaced in communities with low literacy.

Despite the success, challenges include the potential risk of misinterpretation of the tools and their usage by LG officials and concerns about the sustainability of the initiative. The report recommends mitigating literacy challenges through alternative communication strategies, such as involving literate youth in the training process alongside LG members. While LG participants appeared to understand the process and tools, they may have harboured unrealistic expectations. Their anticipation for immediate opportunities and funding through the expo highlighted a potential key lesson for future workshops: the significance of managing participants' expectations and clearly defining their priorities in the process. In addition, the report also highlights the benefit of making community consultations/*zomdu* more practical by providing an inclusive platform for all genders, PwDs and marginalised individuals in the community(ies) to enable them to express their needs and challenges to be adequately reflected in the CDPs.



# 1 Introduction and Background

## 1.1 Project Background

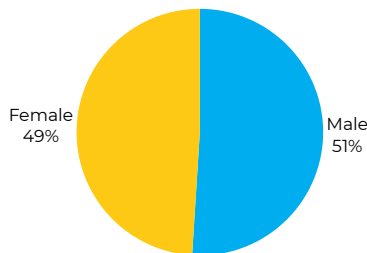
The Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD) has been capacitating other relevant stakeholders and elected local leaders and administrators in Trashigang, Paro, Thimphu (and Samdrup Jongkhar from 2023) in the areas of participatory planning and countering disinformation and strengthening communication skills.

The project builds on BCMD’s foundational work initiated in phase I of the project “Strengthening Culture of Democracy in Bhutan”. Emerging results from Paro and Thimphu showed several changes in attitude, perception, and capacity. The initial change observed was an increased willingness among elected leaders and administrators to consult marginalised groups. They have also demonstrated an enhanced ability to conduct more in-depth analyses of community issues, utilising multiple perspectives to study their communities. Moreover, they are now becoming more consultative and facilitative in including diverse voices in the planning process.

In the second phase of the South Asia Small Grants Program, the project attempted to strengthen the LG’s media literacy to counter disinformation. 2023, being the fourth parliamentary election year, the news media and social media are likely to be filled with misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation aimed at maligning parties and candidates, including instances of mudslinging.

Public notifications and announcements from relevant institutions will inform citizens, but some exploit the situation to disseminate false information to the public.

BCMD proposed to strengthen the Citizen Empowerment workshop with content on democracy-citizen rights and responsibilities, the importance of their participation, and holding authorities accountable. A knowledge-sharing seminar where research findings and recommendations on integrating GNH-based participatory planning will be presented, and project beneficiaries will share their experience and lessons with participants from other dzongkhags.



## 1.2 Dzongkhag Profile

Samdrup Jongkhar dzongkhag has a population of 41,822, of which 51% are male and 49% female. There are a total of 2,377 elderly persons, which is 6% of the population. There are 1,236 youth, which is 3% of the population, 215 PwDs (0.5%), and 121 destitute (0.3%).

## 1.3 Objectives and Purpose of the Project

The main objective is to carry out an evaluation study on Participatory Planning and Effective Media Engagement using appropriate research methodology and analysis, but limited to:

- Strengthened analysis of community needs with genuine and inclusive consultation with citizens and collection of data/evidence.
- Strengthened communications, knowledge, and skills to counter disinformation.
- Transformed the community consultation/*zomdu* to be more inclusive of diverse residents and deliberative.
- Make the LG plans more responsive to emerging social issues (e.g., youth engagement, gender equality, community safety, employment, sustainable use of resources, etc.)
- Nurtured democratic values and dispositions in the LG participants.

The project log frame showing outputs and deliverables are presented in Annexure 1 and the Terms of Reference for this assignment are given in Annexure 6.

## 2. Approach and Methodology

Given the existing evaluation plan (guidelines set out in the project log frame, Annexure 1) the most appropriate approach adopted is the use of a mixed-methods approach; incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools to collect and analyse the data.

The data collected during the evaluation period align with the indicators recommended and/or suggested by the organisation which in turn correlate with the main objectives outlined for the project. The decisions for the different data collected will take into account the time, human resources available, and the nature of the analysis.



The data collection tools for the workshops were identified and designed for the different outputs/activities that will assess the strengths and outputs of the project. The tools used are formal and informal Key Informant Interviews (KII), survey questionnaires, observations, and review of the deliverables/project documents that result from the outputs/activities (including workshop attendance sheets, training/workshop results, recommendations, etc.). These tools were designed to be implemented throughout various stages of the project; namely throughout the workshops themselves, the community empowerment, local government consultations, and the expo.

The data collection took place before and upon completion of the different activities, to assess the baseline and compare it to the progress made in direct correlation with the objectives indicated. The activities included two trainings held in Dewathang with the duration over 12 days, a community empowerment workshop, community development planning consultations, and the final CDP expo. The questionnaires used for the survey are given in Annexure 4 and 5. The attendance of the workshops is given in Annexure 7. The qualitative data was collected upon completion of the activities and through the relevant stakeholders in order to evaluate the developed skills/knowledge of the participants from the activities of the project. This data collection was completed across varying stages; during the community empowerment, the local government consultations and CDP development, and the expo through a two-pronged approach, combining of both quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative data collection involved a number of key stakeholder interviews including the facilitators, trainers, and participants while a survey of all participants was carried out for further disaggregation and comprehension of the lessons learnt.

Upon reviewing the programme documents, quantitative data collection and analysis were conducted to assess the project's outputs. An in-depth analysis was performed to determine whether the objectives that were set originally have been achieved.

## 2.1 Training and Workshops Conducted

In July and August 2023, a total of six trainings, workshops, and meetings were conducted (Table 1). These events were attended by Local Government (LG) officials from both gewogs and thromdes, along with members of the community, youth, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), and stakeholders from various public and private agencies. The venue for these events was Dewathang, Samdrup Jongkhar. It was attended by 819 participants, of which 61% were male and 39% female.





Table 1: Trainings/workshops schedule, venue and participants

Training Topics	Dates	Participants	Venue	Pre/Post Training	No. of Participants		
					Male	Female	Total
1 ToT GNH -based Participatory Planning and Community Analysis Training	June 2023	LG officials, JNEC lecturer, SJI and Lhomon Society	Dewathang	ToT	5	11	16
2 ToT on Communication Strategy and Combating Misinformation/Counter ing Disinformation	June 2023	Officials from armed force, and school teachers	SamdrupJongkhar	ToT	5	11	16
3 Communication Strategy and Combating Misinformation/Counter ing Disinformation Training	12-14 July 2023	LG officials of all gewogs and thromde	Dewathang	Pre and Post	24	7	31

4	GNH -based Participatory Planning and Community Analysis Training	15 -23 July 2023	LG officials of all gewogs and thromde including Youths from the community	Dewathang	Pre and post + youth	41	8	49
5	Community Empowerment Workshop	21 -23 July 2023	Communities, LG officials, Phuntshothang, Orong, Pemathang, Gomdar, Wangphu gewogs	Dewathang	Pre	98	35	133
6	Community Development Plan Consultations	12 -21 August, 2023	Communities (including PwDs in Dewathang, Phuntshothang, Pemathang, Gomdar, Wangphu, Orong	Dewathang	Post	277	229	506
7	Community Development Expo- Participatory Planning in Action (S/Jongkhar dzongkhag)	25 August, 2023	LG officials: Dewathang, Phuntshothang, Pemathang, Gomdar, Wangphu, Serthi, Langchenphu, Samrang, Orong, Martshala	Thimphu	One evaluation	17	4	21
			Officials from RCSC, MoAL, WWF, Cabinet, MoF, NLC, thromde, NC, BoB, BIL, BTO, DLG, RENEW, IDEA, DPOB, SJI, LF, BF, BFL, UNDP, JNEC, SJI, BBS, LHOMON Society, PDP (party), VM, BMF, MO, PFFDO, LEP, PMMS, BTP (party), NAB, NCB, Global Shaper, BFS, PDF					
Total						496	323	819
%						61	39	100

## 2.2 Pre and Post-Training/Workshops Survey for Evaluation

The following pre and post-training surveys were conducted as scheduled in Table 1.

1. Participatory planning (pre and post) - participated by LG members, Communities, and youths conducted in July and August 2023.

2. Effective communication and countering disinformation – final evaluation participated by LG officials during the community development expo held on 25 August 2023.

Tables 2 and 3 present a summary of the survey participants of the 4 events (pre and post) participated by members of the LG, community, youth, and LG officials. A total of 329 participants were covered by the survey, of which 68% were male and 32% were female.

Table 2: Proportion (%) of participants of the Participatory Planning Training, Workshop, and Expo.

Sex	LG Members		Community		Youth		LG Officials- Expo	Total
	Pre- Training	Post Training	Pre- Training	Post Training	Pre- Training	Post Training	Post	Nos
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Male	84	87.5	68	51	80	80	84	68
Female	16	12.5	32	49	20	20	16	32
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 3: Proportion (nos.) of participants of the Participatory Planning Training, Workshop, and Expo.

Sex	LG Members		Community		Youth		LG Officials- Expo	Total
	Pre- Training	Post Training	Pre- Training	Post Training	Pre- Training	Post Training	Post	
	Nos	Nos	Nos	Nos	Nos	Nos	Nos	Nos
Male	32	35	75	57	4	4	16	223
Female	6	5	36	54	1	1	3	106
Total	38	40	111	111	5	5	19	329



### 3. Key Stakeholder’s Interviews

Interviews were conducted with the participants of the ToT who facilitated the participatory planning workshop and were involved in the community development plans and expo. Table 4 below shows the participants interviewed. A total of 14 participants were interviewed, of which 7 were male and 7 female. The participants were *Tshogpa*, *Mangmi*, GAO, Farmers, Students, Teachers/Lecturers, and the Executive Director of BCMD.

The key stakeholder interviews collected information from the participants of the ToT for both workshops. Four trainers/facilitators were selected, two from each workshop, and they were asked a set of questions that assessed changes in their knowledge/capacity, attitude, and implementation including challenges, learnings, and suggestions. The interviews were done online using Google Meets or WhatsApp, considering the timing after the training and implementation phase. In a particular case, the questions were sent through email as the participants were unable to meet virtually. The details of the interviews are presented in Annexures 2 and 3.

Table 4. List of participants/stakeholders interviewed

Sl. No	Name	Gender	Position	Organization	Gewog
1	Devi Maya Sharma	Female	Tshogpa	Gewog Administration	Samrang
2	Ngajay Norbu	Male	Tshogpa	Gewog Administration	Phuntshothang
3	Kinzang Jigme	Male	Mangmi	Gewog Administration	Dewathang
4	Wangmo Tamang	Female	GAO	Gewog Administration	Serthi
5	Karma Chezom	Female	Housewife	Community	Dewathang
6	Participant	Male	Farmer	Community	Dewathang
7	Kelden S. Wangmo	Female	Student (Youth)	Jigme Sherabling Central School	Dewathang
8	Karma Tshering	Male	Student (Youth)	College of Science and Technology	Dewathang
9	Cheki Dorji	Male	Program Director	SJI	Dewathang
10	Dawa	Male	Teacher	Lhomen Education	Dewathang
11	Tshering Wangdi	Male	Teacher	Dewathang Primary School	Dewathang
12	Kencho Wangmo	Female	Lecturer	JNEC	Dewathang
13	Wangmo	Female	Lecturer	JNEC	Dewathang
14	Dr. Chencho Lhamu	Female	Executive Director	BCMD	Dewathang

### 3.1 The Community Development Expo Event

At the conclusion of the training, the local government leaders who took part in the participatory planning workshops in Dewathang returned to their respective gewogs to work on the implementation of the tools. The end goal was to develop community plans and dissemination of findings at a seminar (expo) by each gewog. This would serve to be an opportunity to share their experiences effectively fulfilling both objectives B and D. Each gewog was required to conduct their own consultations/*zomdu* and develop community plans in collaboration with members from their communities that highlighted potential prioritised issues and challenges that they faced in their gewogs. The main issues and problems highlighted as a part of the Community Development Plans are presented in Annexure 8.

The plans were eventually submitted to BCMD to be displayed and presented at the expo, during the gallery walk, along with any additional tools or materials developed during their consultations. During the expo, members from different gewogs were given the opportunity to sit on a panel to discuss what they learnt and to express their opinions on how the overall experiences were: including challenges and successes during the whole process. There was a series of three different panel discussions moderated by a facilitator from the Dewathang training.

It was then followed by a gallery walk where the LG participants presented their CDPs and findings to various relevant stakeholders,

including CSOs, parliamentarians, political parties, members of private and corporate sectors, and a panel of judges who were given specific criteria to determine the most effective plan. Initially, the project proposed to cover 6 gewogs, however, with interest and support from the dzongkhag administration, it was expanded to include all 11 gewogs. The extension granted all participants the opportunity to present their findings to the relevant stakeholders at the expo.





## 4. Findings of the Evaluation on Participatory Planning Training – LG Members

One of the key objectives of the project is to strengthen the capacity of local elected leaders and administrators to be inclusive and participatory in their consultation with citizens. In line with this objective, a 6-day GNH-based participatory planning workshop was conducted for the LG elected leaders, administrators, and civil society members in 11 gewogs and a thromde in Samdrup Jongkhar dzongkhag.

### 4.1 Participants of the survey

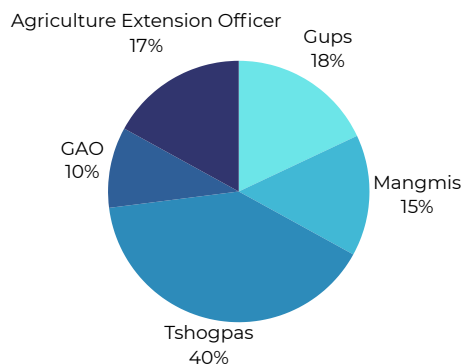
In the pre-training survey, there were 38 participants, of which 84% were male and 16% female, while in the post-training survey, the participants increased to 40, with 88% of them being males. The lower representation of females can be attributed to fewer female leaders.

### 4.2 Designation of participants

The training was attended by *Gups* (18%), *Mangmis* (15%), *Tshogpas* (40%), Gewog Administrative Officer (10%), and the Agriculture Extension Officers (17%) from the gewogs in Samdrup Jongkhar.

### 4.3 Participation by women, youth, and PwD in meetings

In the pre-survey, 30%, 23%, and 20% of the respondents indicated the presence of women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PwDs), respectively, at the meetings. However, the majority, comprising 33% (women), 43% (youth), and 55% (PwD), did not respond to the question. In the post-survey, all participants responded, and the figures changed to 17% for women, 10% for youth, and 38% for PwDs.



#### 4.4 Share of budget allocation for gewog programmes

From pre- to post-surveys, the LG officials share a decrease in the share of budget allocation in infrastructure.

#### 4.5 Frequency of participation by marginalised groups

In the pre-survey, 60% of the respondents stated that women often participate in zomdu discussions related to their needs. While 30% of the respondents stated that youth occasionally participate. However, 40% and 30% of the respondents reported that PwDs and destitute rarely participate.

#### 4.6 Local government plans and needs of marginalised groups

There was an increase in the participants' support on the local government's plans to be inclusive as per the needs of each marginalised group.





#### 4.7 Participation priority is given by the local government to involve communities

In the pre-survey, 83% of the respondents felt that high priority should be given by LG officials to actively involve communities in discussing and making decisions regarding the issues, while in the post-survey, this percentage increased to 90%.

#### 4.8 Frequency of consultations with women, PwDs, youth and destitute

The participants shared that consultations involving marginalised groups are less. For example, in the pre-survey, 30% of the respondents felt that consultations with women happen rarely, 33% stated that consultations with PwDs happen somewhat frequently, and 38% reported that consultations with youth happen frequently. Additionally, 20% of the respondents felt that consultations with the destitute happen frequently, while another 20% felt that consultations with the destitute happen occasionally.

#### 4.9 Confidence in conducting deliberative meetings engaging marginalised people

It was observed that not all Local Government (LG) officials are confident in conducting meetings and interacting with marginalised individuals. However, after the workshop, there has been an improvement in their confidence, particularly in engaging and consulting with marginalised people.

#### 4.10 Main concerns in the community

There was a shift in focus among LG officials from social and infrastructure concerns to social and environmental concerns.

#### 4.11 Criteria applied in developing community activities/plans

There was a significant positive shift (from 53% to 80%) among LG officials regarding the criteria for developing community plans based on community needs.

#### 4.12 Type and source of information to make project/activity proposals

The primary approach used to prepare plans was a top-down method. LG leaders and gewogs conducted a situational analysis (addressing current issues, reviewing LG experiences), and then expressed their views to the community in order to prepare project proposals.



#### 4.13 Value of engaging single women and unemployed youths in consultations

There was a drastic increase in the official views of including PwDs, women, unemployed youth, and destitute in consultations.

#### 4.14 Respectful of different ideas in the consultative process

There was an increase in LG officials respecting different ideas, ranging from 76% to 88%.

#### 4.15 How did you find this workshop?

85% of the respondents stated that the workshop was excellent, while the remaining respondents stated that it was good.

#### 4.16 Would you recommend other officials to attend the workshop?

All respondents expressed that they would recommend other officials to attend the workshop.

#### 4.17 Why would you recommend other officials to attend this workshop?

The reasons provided for recommending others to attend are as follows:

- They considered the workshop valuable and relevant, highlighting its capacity to raise awareness, broaden their knowledge, improve understanding of community issues and development planning, and its practical applicability. The training also emphasises the significance of including youth, persons with disabilities (PwDs), and women in the development planning process.
- The workshop aided in decision-making, fostered engagement, and encouraged active participation. Additionally, it also facilitated communication between the government and the community.



#### 4.18 LG Participants' Testimonial on the Participatory Planning Workshop

The knowledge gained from the participatory planning workshop, as shared by the participants, is presented below.

"Engaging with the youth has numerous advantages, making it important for us to actively interact with them"

Male LG official.

"After completing the training, we gained insights into the importance of considering budget constraints and prioritising issues while framing implementation plans"

Male LG official.

"Since we all live and work in the community, we inevitably encounter various challenges. Through the training, I have acquired the ability to analyse problems and explore potential solutions. Furthermore, it encourages us to question why our current policies are ineffective in addressing these issues."

Male LG official.

"In the future, I wish to have a refresher course, for review and to understand the success

indicators of the training and to continue it."

Male LG official.

"Until now, we lacked similar training, and as a result, we were uncertain about how to meaningfully address the problems. Typically, *Tshogpas* have a clear understanding of issues since it is their responsibility to resolve problems within the *chiwogs*, which consist of 40-50 households. We had not received this kind of training before. Following this training, we have acquired knowledge and experience, enabling us to handle our responsibilities effectively."

Male LG official.



"As a *Tshogpa*, we may not always express ourselves verbally, but our actions speak for us. Understanding our background is crucial.

I had limited knowledge before, but that doesn't mean we were lacking. We have been dedicated to our duties. Previously, during gewog meetings, our interactions were limited to greetings and farewells. While I didn't have the chance to attend a 6-day training, this programme allowed us to discover our capacities, enabling self-reflection."

Female *Tshogpa*.

"In the previous gewog *Tshogde* (GT), we invited our youth and identified various issues. We ensured the inclusion of health-related concerns in the 13th Five-Year Plan (FYP). Failure to incorporate these issues into the plan may lead other participants to focus mostly on construction matters, giving less attention to social concerns."

Female *Gup*.

"Article 22 of the Constitution of Bhutan emphasises the significance of the public asking questions. The public must recognise that when policies are formulated, they should actively engage and not remain passive by saying, "We don't know anything". We must develop policies that benefit everyone. Therefore, the public should speak without hesitation and comprehend the rules. I have gained new knowledge, and upon returning to my gewog, I will share what I have learnt from the meeting."

Male LG official.

"We will make sure to include PwDs and youths in our future consultations."

Male LG official.



## 5. Findings – Participatory Planning – Community

### 5.1 Participants of the survey

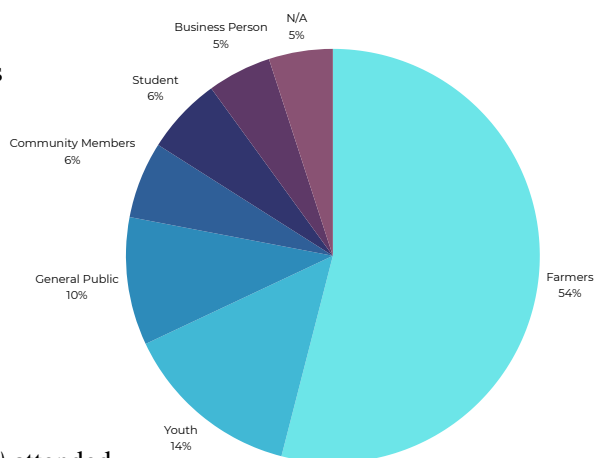
The survey covered 111 participants in the participatory planning meeting (*zomdu*). In the pre-meeting survey, 68% of the participants were male and 32% were female, while in the post-survey 51% were male and 54% were female.

### 5.2 The age group of the participants

In both the pre and post-survey, 52% of the participants belonged to the age group of 18–34 years.

### 5.3 Designation of the participants

The meeting attendees comprised of 54% farmers, 14% youth, 10% from the public, 6% community members, 6% students, and 5% business persons from the gewogs. Additionally, 5% of participants did not provide a response.



### 5.4 Consultation Meeting (*Zomdu*) attended

The pre-meeting survey indicated that 73% of the participants had attended three or more meetings, while 12% had attended two meetings.

### 5.5 Who usually attends *Zomdul* Meetings from the household

The majority of the participants shared that most of the time, the *zomdus* are attended by themselves.

### 5.6 Are marginalised People included in meetings/discussions/*zomdu*

About 40% to 59% of the participants stated that marginalised people are included in meetings and discussions.

### 5.7 Are local government plans based on the expressed needs of the residents

From pre- to post-survey, there was an increase in response indicating the need of local government plans to be as per the needs of the PwDs, youth, women, and destitute.



### 5.8 How respectful are the LG officials to new ideas?

After the workshop, there was a positive change (40 to 68%) in attitude amongst LG officials to new ideas.

### 5.9 How do gewog officials communicate with you about any *zomdu* or any information?

Respondents stated that most gewog officials communicate through social media platforms.

### 5.10 Effectiveness of communication on anything from the gewog

Following the completion of all workshops, there has been a noted improvement in the effectiveness of communication, rising from 70% to 82%.

### 5.11 How timely is the communication from gewog/chiwog to communities?

After the completion of all workshops, there has been an increase from 27% to 48% in early communication from the gewog.

### 5.12 Whether informed regularly on gewog plans, progress and decisions

It has been observed that not all community members are well-informed about gewog plans, progress, and decisions. Only 27% of respondents indicated that they are always informed, while 16% claimed to be never informed.

### 5.13 Clarity of communication from the gewog/chiwog

After the completion of all workshops, there has been enhanced clarity in communication from the gewog, with the percentage increasing from 59% to 73%.

### 5.14 Clarity of communication from the dzongkhag/thromde

According to the pre-survey findings, 34% of respondents noted the communication from the dzongkhag/thromde/gewog as very clear, while 45% indicated it to be somewhat clear. In addition, 13% of participants noted that the communication was not very clear, while 8% reported that the communication from the dzongkhag/thromde was unclear.

### 5.15 Would you recommend other officials to attend?

Based on the post-survey, 97% of the respondents indicated that they (participants) would recommend other officials to attend this type of meeting or *zomdu*.



### 5.16 Reason for recommending others from the community to attend this meeting

Participants would recommend others to attend the meeting based on the reasons that they perceive it as:

- Useful, informative, and important for capacity building.
- Provides new knowledge, experiences, and skills; The meeting facilitates the exchange of ideas and opinions on issues and potential solutions.
- Adopts an inclusive approach to address and resolve challenges faced by youth, PwDs, and women.
- Proves highly effective in fostering learning through active engagement.

Other reasons include;

- Helps formulate need-wise-based planning of activities for gewog development, enhancing comprehension of community development issues, aiding in the preparation of plans, fostering youth capacity building in developmental planning, and providing context for decision-making.

### 5.17 Did you find any difference in the present zomdu?

70% of the participants stated that they found a difference in the project's *zomdu* compared to the standard *zomdu* conducted in the communities.

### 5.18 Differences observed between the current meetings and the meetings conducted post-training

The differences stated are:

- The project meeting provided a better opportunity to share plans and express their views and opinions.
- Participants have acquired knowledge and the ability to access new information, exposing them to a plethora of fresh ideas that enhance their confidence in their work.
- The meeting was relevant and adopted an inclusive approach for planning community development, particularly focusing on marginalised groups.
- There was an opportunity to highlight issues and problems faced by the marginalised groups involved.
- The project adopted a more inclusive approach compared to the standard format. With diverse topics of discussion, the approach aided participants in gaining knowledge and understanding of community problems, prioritising issues, and confidently solving them.





- The project had a significant impact on the perception of developmental challenges and needs.
- It fostered a heightened awareness of problems and challenges, contributing to a better understanding of the development needs of chiwogs/gewogs.
- The project highlighted the importance of understanding gender equality.

#### 5.19 How satisfied are you with the CDPs?

71% of the participants expressed their satisfaction with the community plans developed through the activities carried out throughout the project.



## **6. FINDINGS – PARTICIPATORY PLANNING TRAINING – YOUTH**

### **6.1 Participants of the Training**

Five participants took part in the training, comprising four males and one female. All participants are residents of Dewathang gewog in Samdrup Jongkhar dzongkhag.

### **6.2 Participants' age group**

The participants belonged to two age groups: below 18 years old and 18 to 25 years old.

### **6.3 Designation of the participants**

All participants who attended the workshop were students.

### **6.4 Meetings attended**

About 40% of youth had not attended any meetings in the gewogs.

### **6.5 Who usually attends *Zomdul* Meetings from the household**

The youth participants reported that, within their households, the majority of meetings are attended by their fathers (60%) followed by their mothers (40%).

### **6.6 Are marginalised people included in meetings/discussions/*zomdu***

The majority of youths (80%) expressed uncertainty regarding the inclusion of marginalised individuals in the meetings.

### **6.7 Reason for participation in the discussions/meetings**

After the completion of the workshop, there was a positive change in attitude among youths to participate in similar meetings. The interest in participation increased from 20% in the pre-survey to about 60% in the post where the youth stated that they are interested in participating in similar workshops to learn more about the LG plans.

### **6.8 How respectful are the LG officials to new ideas during consultations?**

Following the conclusion of the workshop, there was a noticeable improvement in the attitude of young individuals towards LG officials, with the level of respect for new ideas during consultations increasing from 40% to 60%.

### **6.9 How do gewog officials communicate about any *zomdu* or any information/meetings?**

Most gewog officials use social media and phones to communicate.



## 6.10 How did you find this workshop?

80% of the youth who attended found this workshop excellent.

## 6.11 Whether you would recommend other officials to attend this type of training/workshop

All youth participants stated they would suggest this workshop to others.

## 6.12 Reasons for recommending other youths to attend the workshop

Participants would recommend others to attend the meeting based on the following reasons:

- The lessons and the information provided during the workshop would be beneficial for community development work, by enhancing the knowledge and skills of the participants, and potentially giving new ideas to the youth, about how they can be involved during the discussions providing their viewpoints on problems in their communities.
- The workshop allows the youth to express their views and thoughts on how they can be involved in the process.
- 20% mentioned that, as youths, they don't frequently have the opportunity to participate in such useful workshops.

## 7. Findings – Countering Disinformation (LG Officials)

### 7.1 Participants of the survey

The survey included 26 participants in the pre-survey and 25 participants in the post-survey. In the pre-survey, 65% of the participants were male, 15% were female, and 20% did not disclose their gender. In the post-survey, 72% were male, 16% were female, and 12% of the participants gender was not disclosed.

### 7.2 The age group of the participants

Most participants fall into the age groups of 35 – 49 years, followed by 26 – 49 years.



### 7.3 Designation of the participants

The LG officials consisted of tshogpas (majority) and Mangmis.

### 7.4 Use of social media by participants for communication

Most participants use Facebook, WhatsApp, and Telegram, while WeChat, TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter (X) were not used as much.



### 7.5 Trainings and workshops attended related to social media and communication

Only 19% of the participants reported attending similar workshops/training related to media and communications. Among those who attended, the majority were *mangmis*. Interestingly, *tshogpa*, a key figure with direct contact with the community, had not attended such training or workshops previously.

### 7.6 Whether their social media account is set to private or public mode

After the workshop, from 15% to about 32% have changed their social media account settings to private. Thus, indicating their awareness and knowledge in keeping their accounts private.

### 7.7 Is there a media/communication focal officer in the offices of the participants?

Most offices do not have a media/ communication focal officer.

### 7.8 Does the office currently have a communications strategy?

In the pre-survey, 85% of the respondents affirmed the presence of a communication strategy in their office, and 15% were unsure. However, in the post-survey, only 44% of respondents said that there is a communication strategy in their office, while 48% of the respondents said that their office does not have a communication strategy and 8% remained unsure of the presence of a communication strategy.

### 7.9 Do you think your office needs a change in the communication strategy?

At the end of the workshop, participants who initially reported having a communication strategy indicated the need to revise or change their existing communication strategy.

### 7.10 What changes do you think are required in the present communication strategy?

In terms of changes in communication strategy, participants stated that there is a need to learn about media, communication and a need for training and capacity building to enhance the overall communication strategy.

### 7.11 Confidence in participants' ability to recognise reliable sources of information

After the workshop, there was a 36% (12% to 48%) increase in confidence of the participants' ability to recognise reliable sources of information.

### 7.12 How comfortable would you say you are in your ability to discern fact from fake news?

There was an increase of 37% (from 31% to 68%) of participants who felt very comfortable discerning facts from fake news by the end of the workshop.

### 7.13 How comfortable are you in your ability to distinguish fact from opinion?

There was an increase of 45% (from 23% to 68%) of participants who felt very comfortable discerning fact from opinion by the end of the workshop.

### 7.14 How confident are you in your ability to identify propaganda?

There was an increase of 49% (from 19% to 68%) of participants who felt confident in identifying propaganda by the end of the workshop.

### 7.15 How confident are you in your ability to identify promotional materials /marketing?

There was an increase of 44% (from 12% to 56%) of the participants who felt confident in identifying promotional materials by the end of the workshop.

### 7.16 How confident are you in your ability to identify media made for entertainment purposes?

By the end of the workshop, there was a 29% increase (from 23% to 52%) in the number of participants who felt confident in identifying media made for entertainment purposes.

### 7.17 How confident are you in your ability to identify raw information from news?

There was an increase of 33% (from 31% to 64%) of participants who felt very confident in identifying raw information from the news by the end of the workshop.

### 7.18 How often do you review more than one news source in order to conclude your understanding?

There was an increase of 25% (from 35% to 60%) of participants who indicated a need to review more than one news source in order to conclude their understanding.

### 7.19 What is your view on assessing news that cites a single source?

There was also an increase in the participants' view that a single source is sufficient as long as the news source is known and reliable.

### 7.20 How often do you check the information source before sharing information online?

In the pre-survey, 50% of the participants revealed that they occasionally check the information source, 19% reported frequent checks, and 15% indicated always checking the information source before sharing online, while 16% were unsure.



In the post-survey, 28% of the participants indicated checking the information source occasionally before sharing online, 36% reported frequent checks, and 32% mentioned always verifying the information source, while 4% were unsure.

#### 7.21 How did you find the workshop?

76% of the participants stated that the workshop was excellent.

#### 7.22 Whether the participants would recommend others to attend this workshop?

All participants stated that they would recommend other officials to attend similar workshops in the future.

#### 7.23 Reasons for recommending other officials to attend similar workshop in the future

Participants would recommend other officials to attend a similar workshop based on the following

reasons:

- The workshop was very useful, and relevant, and helped them gain confidence.
- They acquired new knowledge and learnt valuable skills applicable to their future endeavours.
- Emphasising the need to enhance capacity through similar training/workshops.
- They learnt how to identify news, opinions, propaganda, etc., and believe that the content of the workshop is relevant to others.
- The workshop facilitated a better understanding and differentiated news and information.

#### 7.24 Interviews with LG officials (Tshogpa and Mangmi)

Pre- and post-survey interviews with Tshogpa and Mangmi on countering disinformation are presented in Annexure 2 and 3.



## 8. FINDINGS: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EXPO EVENT

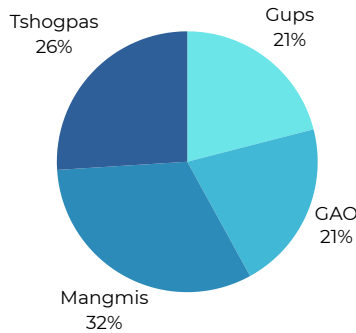
The final community development expo event under the theme Participatory Planning in Action was held in Thimphu on 25 August 2024. The expo was attended by 68 participants, of which there were 21 LG officials and 47 stakeholders from different agencies (central government agencies and development partners). Out of the 21 LG participants, 19 participants were covered by the survey for evaluation.

### 8.1 Participants of the Community Development Expo in Thimphu

19 participants attended the Community Development Expo held in Thimphu on 25 August 2024. 84% of the LG participants were male and 16% were female.

### 8.2 Designation of participants

The participants from Samdrup Jongkhar LG officials who participated in the project training and implemented the toolkit to develop CDPs were: 21% Gups, 21% GAOs, 32% Mangmis, and 26% Tshogpas.



### 8.3 The most useful events of the project

Among all the workshops, the Participatory Planning workshop conducted in July 2023 was considered the most valuable by the majority. Following this, 32% of respondents identified the Community Development workshop as the most useful event. Subsequently, 21% regarded the expo event as the most beneficial, and finally, 11% asserted that all events organized through the project were found to be the most useful. The reasons stated are that they gained planning knowledge from the Participatory Planning workshop, and the Community Development workshop was particularly helpful in comprehending community issues and addressing them effectively.





#### 8.4 Opinion on the importance of using participatory and inclusive processes

All participants considered the utilisation of participatory and inclusive processes, involving marginalised people in the communities, as highly significant.

#### 8.5 Whether the participants were one of the speakers at the expo

63% of the participants were speakers during the expo.

#### 8.6 Whether it was their first time taking part in a panel discussion

The majority of the participants (74%) stated that it was their first time taking part in a panel discussion and speaking about their gewog before an audience that included senior government officials, members of parliament, and other relevant organizations.

#### 8.7 Whether participants feel the need to include marginalised groups in community meetings

After learning and implementing participatory planning, 95% of the respondents felt the need to include marginalised groups, including women, PwDs, destitute, and youth in the community meetings/plans/discussions.

#### 8.8 Reasons to Include marginalised groups in community discussions

The reasons highlighted for including marginalised groups are as follows: 53% of the participants stated that inclusion empowers marginalised groups, offering them the opportunity to engage in planning and community development discussions and 32% stated that inclusion of marginalised groups will enable active participation and address the specific issues affecting women, PwDs, and youth.

#### 8.9 Reasons for inclusive community development plans to include marginalised groups

42% of the respondents attributed their reasons to learning from training and workshops realising the importance of including vulnerable groups in formulating community development plans, 16% stated that they understood the importance of an inclusive approach, and 16% said that they became aware of the importance of participatory planning.



## 8.10 Participation by marginalised women, PwDs, youth, and destitute in community development plan

63% of the respondents stated that marginalised groups were actively participating in community development planning, while 37% perceived their participation as not active. The reasons cited for active participation included meetings that provided a platform for sharing views and opinions, addressing new issues, problems, needs, and the identification of causes, as well as the development of plans that did not occur in the past. On the other hand, reasons for less active participation includes reluctance among PwDs to attend meetings and some members of vulnerable groups attending for the first time with limited understanding of planning processes.

## 8.11 Understanding of participatory and inclusive planning

Participants shared their understanding of participatory and inclusive planning as follows;

- 47% of the participants stated that participatory and inclusive planning is an approach that involves all relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process. It aims to ensure the active involvement of a diverse set of individuals and groups, including community members, civil society organisations, and marginalised populations in the planning and implementation of activities or policies.
- 21% of the participants felt that participatory inclusive planning involves all community members living in the communities (men, women, monks, youth, PWD, destitute) without discrimination and providing equal opportunities to raise their voice/opinion and participate in the planning processes.
- 16% of the participants felt that it is an inclusive planning process that goes beyond participation and ensures that the voices of traditionally marginalised or under represented groups are heard and actively included.
- 16% of the participants stated that the goal of participatory planning is to ensure that the decision-making process is transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the affected people.



### 8.12 Confidence in conducting inclusive and deliberating meetings

After this project workshop, 84% of the participants stated that they were very confident in conducting inclusive and deliberating meetings involving marginalised groups, and the remaining participants were moderately confident in conducting inclusive and deliberating meetings.

### 8.13 Were you able to identify the main concerns in the community not aware of before?

All participants stated that they were able to identify the main concerns in the community that they were not aware of before.

### 8.14 Explanation for the main concerns identified in the community

Participants shared various learnings and understanding after implementing participatory planning through this project. 37% of the participants stated that problem-based needs of the community, including issues of PwDs, senior citizens, women, and youth, were not addressed before, 23% of the participants stated that, in the past, there were no initiatives to empower marginalised groups (women, children, PwDs, and destitute) in the gewog planning process. After this project workshop, they were able to identify marginalised women, PwDs, and youth in the community, understanding their concerns for development. 11% of the participants indicated that they never thought of the importance of marginalised groups' participation in the discussions and planning.

### 8.15 Factors to take into consideration while formulating community development plans

58% of the participants stated that the availability of a budget for the gewog development is the most influential factor for developing community development plans. While 37% of the participants felt that the needs of the community is the most influential factor.

### 8.16 How much time in advance were the community members notified?

58% were notified 3 days in advance, 16% were informed 1 day in advance, 16% were informed a week in advance, and 10% were informed 2 days in advance.



### 8.17 Sharing experience by participants of the BCMD workshop/training

53% of the participants stated that the BCMD workshop was a new experience that helped them gain insights and ideas about participatory inclusive planning. It was a very useful workshop/training for the improvement of their level to prepare community development plans. They got new knowledge and experiences.

11% of the participants stated that this was their first time participating in a BCMD training/workshop and that they learnt to plan activities based on needs and to propose budget requirements. They understood the importance of inclusive participation. 11% of the participants mentioned that this was an opportunity to share and learn skills about community development activities. 5% of the participants stated that it was interesting to identify assets and resources within the community, establish clear goals and objectives for community development, and foster collaboration and partnerships between different stakeholders and the community. While another 5% mentioned that it was their opportunity to share community issues with relevant stakeholders, departments, ministries, and other agencies. And, 5% stated that it was a great experience to learn new things, such as some leaders (bygone) were unaware of the term "inclusive," where elderly people, women, men, youth, and PwDs should be included in the community development planning process.

### 8.18 Whether participants would recommend a similar project to others in the future

All participants stated that they would recommend similar projects to others in the future.

### 8.19 Reasons for recommending similar project to others in the future

Most participants stated the reasons for recommending similar projects to others in the future as:

- It was full of activities, new informations, knowledges, and it was intensive.
- BCMD provides an opportunity to engage with the community, gather new ideas for planning activities, and understand the community's interests to address their problems and needs.

Others stated that they would recommend it;

- For rapid community development and growth through an inclusive participatory approach.



- To prepare a good community development plan.
- Other gewogs and dzongkhags would also benefit from similar training/workshops, providing content and tools that are highly relevant to their needs. The project enabled participants to acquire a wealth of information and new ideas for implementation.

## 8.20 How likely are participants to share information and skills gained from the project?

All participants said that they intended to share the information and skills gained from the project.

## 8.21 Two things learnt from this workshop

32% of the participants stated that they learnt how to make inclusive and participatory community development plans and additionally were able to learn more about the CSOs, NGOs, SOEs and other agencies as development collaborators. 26% of the participants understood the importance of an inclusive and participatory approach to planning (to include elderly people, women, youth, PwDs) and how to frame community development plans. 21% of the participants gained new knowledge, experience, and exposure, especially in planning and problem-solving that they typically are not able to address at the gewog level. 5% of the respondents expressed that they learnt how to approach potential financial supporters and donors and also identify agencies they could approach for assistance. Another 5% of the participants stated that they were able to form linkage for potential collaboration with key stakeholders for the development of their communities. A further 5% expressed that they learnt more about the importance of teamwork and hard work.

## 8.22 Suggestions on how BCMD can improve the implementation of similar projects

21% of the participants stated that they need more capacity development workshops and training from BCMD in the future. 16% of them suggested to conduct similar training workshops in other locations (gewogs and dzongkhags) as it would prove to be very useful. 11% also expressed the need for more awareness programmes focusing on community development, with a further 5% suggesting that it would be very helpful if BCMD could extend the number of days of the expo in order for them to get more time to interact with heads of CSOs and SOEs.



## 9. KEY STAKEHOLDERS' INTERVIEWS

### 9.1 Countering Disinformation



Overall, the trainers/facilitators indicated that the workshop was highly effective and informative. The participants interviewed indicated changes in personal behaviors post-workshop, especially when it came to sharing and consuming media. They specifically mentioned the importance of ensuring that the information shared online in both private and professional settings has to be considered sensitively and accurately and that it was extremely important to assess the reliability of the sources. As a result of the training, the participants have also started to disseminate their learnings in their communities and offices at an interpersonal level. They mentioned that their level of understanding and ability to identify different forms of media is strengthened. As a result, they can make more informed and effective decisions in their classrooms and offices. They indicated having some prior knowledge of media and its importance, but the workshops in particular has provided a stronger foothold and the key strategies on how to go on about navigating it. There is a strong interest in leading more workshops/trainings for the rest of their colleagues and students (stakeholders) to ensure the information from the training is circulated even further.





The participants were also asked what challenges and suggestions they had regarding the training. In particular, there were no glaring challenges aside from recommending the commencement of the similar training sessions for other participants due to the effectiveness and lessons learnt. In terms of suggestions, more follow-up training made available to a wider audience was a key and including students as participants from the local schools would be ideal. Other suggestions were to provide participants with additional time in the training activities and add supplementary content for a more hands-on approach during the actual workshops themselves to give the participants thorough training.



## 9.2 Participatory Planning



Ms. Kencho, a key stakeholder from the training, expressed overall satisfaction with the Dewathang training and the Training of Trainers that she participated in. Some of the key findings indicated include; local government participants emphasising inclusivity and participation during their *Zomdus* carried out post-training, ensuring involvement from all backgrounds and not just the regular participants in the discussions. It was also brought to our attention that certain technical aspects of the training (the mapping and the tools) may confuse members of the community who are illiterate, however local government leaders mentioned to the facilitators that these methods proved to be more effective in gathering data than the previous strategies employed during their discussions.

One challenge mentioned, was that for the Dewathang training, the LG participants seemed to understand the process and tools, but overall may have had unrealistic expectations, citing hope for immediate opportunities and funding from the expo. A post-training and expo support for the LG officials is recommended. Through this workshop, two key lessons appeared for upcoming workshops which were the importance of managing the participants' expectations and clarifying their priorities in the process. Overall, the Training of Trainers and workshops were excellent in the facilitator's opinion, and the understanding of tools and how to use them seemed to have become a common trait among the LG officials.





Other suggestions include; Ensuring the involvement of various sectors in the expo and providing guidance are essential post-training steps to achieve real success in the utilization and operation of the *Zomdus*.

Another recommendation was to have discussions among facilitators before workshops to plan on how they can assist and lead discussions effectively.

### 9.3 Observations on Participatory Planning

Overall, the training was observed to be highly relevant and beneficial. The tools provided were effective in comprehending community issues, and the training/workshops were notably practical, particularly in their applicability within communities.



The participants were able to use the tools to understand the issues. The approach was effective particularly in engaging individuals of various genders and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) within the communities, enabling them to articulate their challenges. In discussions with other Local Government (LG) officials, it was noted that prior to the training, they lacked the know-how to lead such discussions. The training provided them with a structured approach to carry on with these important conversations.

#### 9.4 Some key observations noted during evaluation surveys on Workshops/ Meetings

1. On understanding democracy and strengthening it, participants express that it is important to follow consultative/public participation and transparency. LG officials seem to use buzzwords too often to answer. E.g.: “For the people, by the people”.

2. The participants are using technology, the internet, and applications such as ChatGPT. This indicates an understanding of the use of different tools at their disposal.

3. In discussions particularly in the *zomdus*, the participants were primarily women (majority) and men (not youth, PwDs, or other participants). Regarding PwD participation, the common response was, “They remain at home, how could they attend with their physical challenges?”

4. On data collection, participants are saying this is crucial but at the same time, they are having trouble providing the statistics from their gewogs. It was made clear that there is a need to gather, collect and store data for future use. The accessibility of the data by the community in the future would be crucial in helping them understand what issues and challenges they may face and how to go about dealing with the issues.

5. There exists a confusion regarding gender roles, with men asserting the absence of inequality while the women's group contradicting their perspective. Due to societal stigmas surrounding women, they refrain from actively contributing to meetings. Dewathang Gup emphasises the necessity to change people's mindsets. Notably, there is a divergence in the mindset of the people, encompassing both experiential disparities and differences in perspective.

6. In the early stages of the training, the participants answered and looked for getting approval rather than what the matter at hand was or what the issues really could be. They were looking to answer based on what they thought the trainers/facilitators wanted to hear.



7. Most of the participants at the LG were quite comfortable using English. The initial briefing before day 1 was fine. The idea to have a quick discussion before every day (tool) arose. There was some confusion and worry amongst the facilitators that they were not necessarily on the same page. The daily debrief post activity was crucial. The facilitators were able to assess their practices and lessons they learnt from the day and see how they could improve going forward.

8. The expectations set from the participants might have been high. It was also uncertain how the LG leaders would utilise the tools they learnt back in their gewog and even the possibility of not having the same tools. Furthermore, there was uncertainty about whether the LG leaders would have the capacity to facilitate the discussions on their own. While constant discussions during the workshop should help the participants to enhance their skills in the facilitation.

9. There was a noticeable number of participants who showed interest in the process, they were taking initiative in re-doing some of the tools and staying behind to ask questions on how they could improve their work/participation. The working groups were heavily male-dominated, with participant numbers skewed in that regard. Initially, power dynamics were also observed; however, seniority did not necessarily reflect equal participation in task delegation.

10. A few gewogs did not have enough participants who attended the workshop and were struggling with some of the group activities. The later development of combining two groups (such as Dewathang and Langchenphu) led to more positive results. Both groups, despite being smaller in size, indicated interest in learning and effective usage of the tools.

11. An interesting observation was the inclusion of youths invited by BCMD in the process. The facilitator and evaluators could observe one of the three groups asking questions and hoping to have their suggestions and experiences shared. After the initial activity involving the youths who participated then continued to assist the groups in drafting and completing the rest of the tools and activities of the workshop (primarily due to their literacy skills).



## 9.5 Observations from the Expo

1. Overall, the participants at the expo mentioned the training had been beneficial.
  2. Opportunities were given to the participants and the local community members to take on responsibilities and to focus on taking initiatives. One gewog (Langchenphu) said the most effective tool during implementation for them was the vulnerability matrix. Other gewogs cited other tools, such as mapping. They consider the tools to be effective in promoting development at the grassroots level, rather than working in communities through a top-down approach.
  3. Overall, there is a noticeable change in attitudes and knowledge compared to the initial training process in Dewathang. There was a leveraged confidence among the participants in their discussions, and presentations, and they can back their claims up with the information they obtained from their studies.
- An important lesson mentioned by all groups is the change in inclusivity, such as making efforts to involve people in the process by going to household of those who could not attend, and asking them about their issues.
4. All groups indicated a hope for collaboration and opportunities to look for funding or programmes in their gewogs. They are also hoping to partner with CSOs and other possible organisations.
  5. Some of the issues that were raised in the community development plans were infrastructure based. Although these were developed after evaluating the social issues. When discussing the CDPs, they claimed that they used all the tools during the consultation process. The tools provided the participants with a method to understand the root of the problems before finding solutions.
  6. Participants in the group, who were illiterate, struggled to use the tools. This indicates the need to use other techniques and figure out ways to explain the tools to LG participants who are not literate during the training.
  7. The three-panel discussions despite the long duration, were found effective for providing the LG officials with a platform and an opportunity to learn (capacity building).



## 10. Key Findings by Research Objectives

The findings from the quantitative and qualitative data from the previous sections were combined to assess the research objectives of the project. Table 5 shows the output for each research objective by activity and the final achievement of the set targets for each activity. It was observed that all set targets were well achieved, with 100% achievement rates for most activities. The achievement of each objective is elaborated below:

### 10.1 Strengthen the capacity of local elected leaders and administrators to be inclusive and participatory in their consultation with citizens

The quantitative data strongly shows the developed and improved capacity of the local government leaders and administrators in involving them more and promoting participation in their consultation with the communities and citizens. The finding was supported through interviews, the evaluator's observations throughout the workshop and in the community development plan expo. There was a two-fold positive impact in terms of capacity building for the local government participants of the training. Firstly, the GNH-based participatory planning workshop allowed the participants to learn how to implement the necessary tools for developing plans along with the community. In addition to the activities, using the tools for consulting their community and presenting the co-developed

community plan prior to the expo provided the local government officials with a more experiential learning experience.

For this evaluation, the groups identified as "marginalised" involve women, women in difficult circumstances, youth, the elderly, the destitute, and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). In terms of inclusiveness and participation during the consultations, there were marginalised participants (who do not usually attend meetings) who were invited to the discussions and encouraged to participate. 74% of the elected leaders mentioned that it was their first time consulting with marginalised groups. The local elected leaders shared that they understood the importance of involving marginalised people in the discussions, instead of only inviting able-bodied and educated individuals.



This was also accompanied by an increase in their awareness and acceptance of including marginalised people as evidenced by the change in attendees involved during the consultation process. During the consultation process for the development of Community plans, a total of 506 people attended the CDP workshops in 6 gewogs. Out of which, 80 were youth, and 70 were elderly members of the community. The overall percentages were further broken down by having 45% female attendance.

This influence came through the participatory planning workshop where the LG officials were prompted to understand inclusivity through the involvement of youth during the workshop itself.

This was also the first time, that the youths in the community were able to participate in a workshop with an elected leader to discuss community plans, learn, and share their perspective(s) on many issues. The youth's interest in learning about the local government's plans increased after attending the workshop, going from an initial indication of 20% to 60%. The youth, when interviewed, confirmed they would make the recommendation to their peers to attend similar workshops or opportunities primarily due to it being informative, useful for community development work, enhancing knowledge and skills, and allowing them to be part of the political process in their own communities. The inclusive design of the project, with the involvement of youths, not only enhances youth's confidence in engaging with the elected leaders, but the elected leaders saw the value of involving demographics that do not typically attend these events, providing a different perspective and allowing for a more holistic conversation and development of plans. Likewise, this was the first time elected leaders saw the value in the youth in the meetings as a member of the community and the contributions they could make to the discussions.

The elected leaders' responses showed an increase in their perceptions of the value of including PwDs and women in the discussions, with increase in percentage from 29% to 60% and 42% to 70%, respectively. Along with this, they reported increased confidence in engaging with marginalised people, with the numbers from 48% to 53%.

All of these align with the drastic increase in realising the importance of basing the planning process on the assessment of community needs (as indicated by the changes in the pre-and post-surveys increasing from 53% to 80% instead of starting with prioritisation driven by budget).



All elected leaders (100%) who participated in the training workshops stated that the community assessment tools helped them identify the main issues in their respective communities that were not aware previously. The community analysis tools prompted the participants to be mindful and intentional about inclusivity and providing opportunities to everyone in the community, allowing for more transparent decision-making. Overall, this indicates positive learning from the workshop. Amongst all research objectives, this is most prominent, as we noticed a direct improvement in the capacity of the local elected leaders and administrators.

10.2 Empower community residents and vulnerable groups to take active participation in public consultation and meetings to influence community level planning and decision making.

The quantitative data collected post-workshop showed an increased awareness amongst the community members in terms of their participation in public consultations or meetings and in influencing community-level planning and decision-making. Alongside this, people classified as “marginalised” reported feeling more included in the project meetings compared to previous official meetings, as indicated by an increase in their responses in surveys on inclusion surging by 19% (from 40% to 59%). It also reflected the increase in inclusiveness of different categories of marginalised people.

Furthermore, we interviewed the community residents on the inclusivity and timeliness of communication for LG officers to assess the effectiveness of their communications for the consultations. It will allow us to evaluate whether there were discrepancies in who was invited and whether there were delays in the communications from the gewog. The evaluation found that 63% of the elected leaders stated that marginalised people in their communities actively participated in the community development planning process. In the pre-survey, 76% of the community people stated that elected leaders are typically respectful of ideas during the consultative (or consultation) process. While in the post-survey, 88% stated the same indicating a change in attitudes. There was also an expressed change in whether gewogs informed the participants about their meeting times and venue in a timely manner. In the pre-survey, the responses were as follows: early- 27%, on-time- 41%, late- 14%, never reaching them- 18%.





In the post-survey, the responses were as follows: early- 48%, and on-time- 47%. As part of the evaluation process, it was necessary to assess the extent to which local government officials prioritised consulting with community members, considering the perspective of the community members themselves. It helped indicate how “heard” the people in the community felt, and also allowed for an indication of how impactful these consultations were in the planning process.

In the pre-survey, 68% of community members indicated that they felt the LG officials gave high priority to public consultations, and 28% felt that a moderate priority was given. In the post-survey, 78% stated high priority and 18% said moderate priority.

71% of the community indicated that they were satisfied with the CDP developed. Post workshop, 97% of the community stated that they would recommend this project to their peers because they find it useful in terms of promoting interaction with local government officials, informative in understanding different aspects of the planning process, and important for capacity building across the board. They also mentioned that the training provided them with new knowledge, experiences, and skills that would be extremely beneficial for future ventures. Other people shared that this approach helps to disseminate ideas and opinions on issues and solutions in the community. Being an inclusive approach that promotes engagement between both LG officials and marginalised populations (i.e., youth, PwDs, and women), it proved to be a valuable learning experience as it allowed them to involve and assess challenges faced by all the members of society.

70% of the community members stated there is a difference between the present consultation meeting and other meetings they had attended before. This form of consultation meetings provides a better opportunity to share plans and new ideas, express views and opinions, learn and access new information, and build confidence.

Other participants stated that this form of consultation is relevant and provides an inclusive approach (youth, women, marginalised groups) for planning community development. The approach of including all the people in the community provided tools and opportunities to highlight issues and challenges along with various prospects of solutions.





Table 5: Achievement status by activities, output/deliverables as per main project objectives

Objective	Activity	Tool	Output/Deliverables	Activity Implementation Status
A. Strengthen the capacity of local elected leaders and administrators to be inclusive and participatory in their consultation with citizens	A.1. 8-day Training of Trainers on GNH-based participatory planning for DLG and Dzongkhag Administrators and civil society members	KII with 2 participants after CDP workshop	1.1. 12 government officials and civil society members trained as trainers on GNH-based participatory community analysis	Activity completed. 16 participants (11 F, 5 M) were trained (10 LG officials, 4 CSOs, and 2 JNEC faculty) against the target of 12 (133% achievement)
	A.2. 8-day workshop for the LG elected leaders and administrators and civil society members on GNH-based participatory planning in six gewogs in Samdrup Jongkhar dzongkhag	Questionnaire survey, observation in the workshop. KII with 2 participants before and after this workshop	1.2. 30 local government elected leaders and administrators in Samdrup Jongkhar dzongkhag trained on GNH-based participatory planning	Activity completed. A total of 41 participants (4 F, 37 M) from 11 gewogs attended the training workshop against the target of 30 (136% achievement)
B. Empower community residents and vulnerable groups to take active participation in public consultation and meetings to influence community level planning and decision making	B.1. Citizen Empowerment workshops in six gewogs in Samdrup Jongkhar dzongkhag	Questionnaire survey, KII before the empowerment workshop, observation in one workshop	2.1. 120 community residents (from 6 gewogs, 20 from each gewog) participate in citizen empowerment workshops	Activity completed. A total of 119 participants (33 F, 86 M) from 6 gewogs attended the citizen empowerment workshop, 99% achievement against the target of 120
	B.2. Consultation and co-development of six community development plans by LGs and community residents	Questionnaire survey with the participant, KII with the ToT facilitators	2.2. Six community plans co-developed by the LGs and the community residents	Activity completed. 10 Community Development Plans completed by LGs against the target of 6 (183% achievement)
	B.3. One peer-learning session with LGs of other gewogs and government officials in the dzongkhag	Observation	2.3. One peer-learning session is organized with 50 participants from other gewogs in the dzongkhag	Activity completed

<p>C. Build the capacity of Local Government elected leaders and administrators in media literacy to counter disinformation .</p>	<p>C.1. A 3-day Countering Disinformation Workshop of Trainer for DLG and dzongkhag Administrators and civil society members.</p>	<p>KII with 2 participants after CDP workshop</p>	<p>3.1. 12 government officials and civil society members trained as trainers on Countering Disinformation.</p>	<p>Activity completed. A total of 13 participants (4 F, 9 M) from civil servants (4), armed forces (1), CSO (2), and academic institutions (4) trained as trainers on countering disinformation. 108% achievement against the target of 12.</p>
	<p>C.2. A 3-day workshop on Countering Disinformation for six gewogs in Samdrup Jongkhar.</p>	<p>Questionnaire survey, KII, observation with the participants</p>	<p>3.2. 30 local government elected leaders and administrators and civil society members in Samdrup Jongkhar dzongkhag trained on Countering Disinformation.</p>	<p>Activity completed. A total of 31 participants from 6 gewogs of S/Jongkhar attended the training workshop on Countering Disinformation. 103% achievement.</p>
<p>D. Inspire the integration of participatory planning in other dzongkhags through a knowledge-sharing session.</p>	<p>D.1. Evaluation study on Participatory Planning and countering disinformation.</p>	<p>Questionnaire survey, KII, observation</p>	<p>4.1. One evaluation study was conducted.</p>	<p>Activity completed.</p>
	<p>D.2. Organize a seminar for relevant government agencies and the LGs to disseminate the findings from the evaluation study and to share experiences of the participating gewogs.</p>	<p>Questionnaire survey, observation</p>	<p>4.2. Around 40 participants from the government, agencies and other dzongkhag participated in the seminar.</p>	<p>Activity completed. A total of 70 participants attended the seminar against the planned target of 40 (175% achievement).</p>



### 10.3 Build the capacity of Local Government elected leaders and administrators in media literacy to counter disinformation

The quantitative data shows the progress in capacity development of the local government leaders and administrators in media literacy to counter disinformation. It is noted that most of the participants who attended the workshop were *Mangmis* and *Tshogpas* from the gewogs, while *Gups* and other levels of officials attended the participatory planning workshops. The progress in understanding media literacy and countering disinformation was supported through interviews and evaluators' observations from the countering disinformation workshop. Among the participants, only 19% attended any form of social media and communication workshops prior to the workshop, such as, "Human Leadership" and "Cable Operations" organised by RENEW and BICMA respectively. A key observation from the workshop was that all participants were actively engaged in the activities, demonstrating an interest in increasing their knowledge and understanding of the subject material.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, and WeChat were commonly used to disseminate information and communicate. While other social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter were rarely used.

One of the key takeaway lessons from the workshop was on privacy settings and posting and sharing of reels. Upon completion of the workshop, the participants indicated that they are better informed and aware of countering disinformation, and in securing their privacy settings. In the pre-survey, 69% stated their social media account privacy setting was public while in the post-survey, only 56% stated that they left it public, validating the material discussed during the workshop to be effective with 13% of participants changing their settings eventually after the workshop.

Most gewog officials stated that there is no media/communication focal officer in the gewog along with a 48% response mentioning that there is no social media policy/guideline in their office. Likewise, most officials stated they do not have a communication strategy in their office. While expressing the need to have a proper communication strategy in their gewogs. It was validated through the post-survey where 56% of them indicated a need for a proper communications strategy, which was a significant increase from 15% in the pre-survey. Among them, majority of the participants stated that there is a need for training and capacity building in communication strategies as they need to learn about media and communications and improve networks.



In the ability to distinguish fact from opinion after the workshop, there was an increase from 23% in the pre-survey to 68% in the post-survey demonstrating further development in knowledge and understanding of the materials from the workshop. There is also a significant increase (from 19% to 68%) of being confident in their ability to identify propaganda.

The participants also indicated an increase in confidence from 12% to 56% in being able to identify promotional materials/marketing and an increase in responses (from 23% to 52%) of being very confident in identifying media made for entertainment purposes. Other changes in knowledge include an increase in responses from 13% to 64% of being highly confident in identifying raw information from news and an increase in responses (from 35% to 60%) to review more than one news source to conclude their understanding of the news. The data indicates that the project was successful in enhancing the ability of the LG participants to distinguish different kinds of media messages, for instance, raw information from news and their ability to verify news by examining multiple sources.

76% of the participants stated that the workshop was excellent, and the remaining participants described it as good. All participants expressed their intention to recommend a similar workshop. The primary reasons cited were that the workshop was highly beneficial, and relevant, helped build confidence, gain knowledge on how to identify news, information, opinions, and propaganda, and served in effective capacity building offering insights for future use.

#### 10.4 Inspire the integration of participatory planning in other dzongkhags through a knowledge-sharing session

The knowledge-sharing session is one of the main activities of the project. After the expo, the elected leaders were surveyed to assess their thoughts and lessons learnt through the experience. 74% of the elected leaders stated that it was their first time speaking as a part of a panel representing their respective gewogs, and it was also their first experience presenting a Community Development Plan to a forum with diverse, relevant stakeholders. This gave them exposure and built their confidence in being able to present the CDPs in a larger national forum to a diverse group of stakeholders and senior officials if possible and necessary.



After this expo, 74% of elected leaders stated that through this project, they initiated their first-ever consultation involving all marginalised people in the community. Along with this, 84% said their CDPs are now fully inclusive and that they are more confident in participating in an inclusive consultative process.

Henceforth, 95% of the elected leaders indicated a willingness to include marginalised people for consultation. There are 71 CDPs developed in the 10 gewogs out of which 21 CDPs (29.5%) are inclusive plans in 8 gewogs. Out of the 71 CDPs, 5 CDPs are from 4 gewogs that are for infrastructure development for the marginalised groups.

Overall, the elected leaders had positive words about participating in the project. They reflected their learnings as follows:

- They understood the need for inclusive and participatory community development plans and the importance of including all marginalised people.
- The potential of having CSOs, NGOs, SOEs, and other agencies as development collaborators.
- learnt to frame community development plans.
- Gained new knowledge, experiences, and exposure in planning and the strategies to solve problems that can not be solved at the gewog level.
- They are also aware of where and how to obtain financial and technical support.
- Recognised the importance of teamwork and hard work.

They also shared that, additionally, they developed linkages and collaboration with key stakeholders. Importantly, the existence of service providers of which the LG officials were not aware was highlighted. This was also evident when reviewing their draft CDPs, that did not mention the possible organisation likely to aid and support them.

Following the expo, the LG officials approached organisations such as WWF, the Pema Secretariat, and other offices. The Pema Secretariat guided a gewog on where to take a family member with mental health support. A diverse group of participants at the expo highlighted positive learning and knowledge sharing. The Chief Guest, the NC Chairperson, acknowledged the capacities demonstrated by the elected leaders at the expo.



## 10.5 Other Findings

Awareness of the LG Act and the Five-Year Plan: During the GNH participatory planning workshop, elected leaders were asked whether they had read the LG Act. Only 14 out of 40 elected leaders raised their hands, accounting for 35%. When questioned about the 13th FYP, only 10 out of 40 elected leaders raised their hands.

Development of toolkit and capacity development of local CSO - The Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative (SJI), as one of the implementing partners of the project, felt that the project helped build in-house capacities. Using the GNH-based participatory planning toolkit, SJI conducted an inclusive and participatory consultation in the GNH pilot village (Menchari) in Samdrup Jongkhar. SJI shared that the toolkit helped them engage with communities and allowed people to share their issues. After implementing them they were able to understand community issues and suggest possible resolutions. Moreover, there was a positive feedback from the community about the toolkit.

Capacity building for *tshogpas* - The workshop was a novel experience for the majority of *tshogpas*.

It is often only the Gup, GAO, or *Mangmi* who gets the opportunity to attend such workshops or training. However, the inclusion of *tshogpas* is essential and adds value to the project, as well as awareness for their communities. The *tshogpas* have contributed to their capacity development, enabling them to create detailed CDPs.





## 11. PROJECT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

The performance of the project is assessed using the six criteria: relevance, efficiency, coherence, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability.

### 11.1 Relevancy

*(Were the Project objectives and design appropriate to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries of the Project, its partners, and the overall development context of Bhutan? How aligned were the interventions regarding local and national requirements and priorities for development?)*

In terms of relevance, all project objectives and activities were designed appropriately to the needs and priorities of the gewogs and the overall Bhutanese development context. This is especially significant as gewogs and thromdes are currently discussing the 13th Five Year Plan (FYP), which plans to emphasise prioritising participatory and inclusive planning. The elected leaders typically prepare their plans based on the needs and priorities of their community.

### 11.2 Efficiency

*(Have the activities been implemented within the intended timeframe, or a timeframe adjusted to the demands of the evolving context, and has been monitored adequately? Have the Project resources (funds, expertise, time, etc.) been utilise in the most cost-effective way as compared to feasible alternatives?)*

The project activities were efficient in terms of budget utilisation and expertise. Due to national elections nearing, all project activities implementation had to be expedited and completed earlier than the planned dates. Despite this challenge, the activities carried out were done efficiently, as indicated by the lessons learnt, and the comments made through the interview and data collection process. The participants expressed their satisfaction and appreciation for the opportunity to learn new knowledge and gain new skills in the process.

### 11.3 Coherence

*(To what extent are the interventions through the Project synergised and interlinked with other interventions carried out by BCMD and its overall mandates and vision/mission? To what extent has the Project considered complementarity and coordination with other similar interventions? (Added value while avoiding duplication)*

The interventions are synergised and interlinked with the BCMD mandate and vision. The project activities are complementary to the gewog and thromde development plans.



## 11.4 Effectiveness

*(To what extent has the Project achieved or contributed to increasing the advocacy capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Bhutan to promote issues pertaining to their mission and interest?)*

The project objectives were all achieved as it assisted in strengthening the capacities of the local government's elected leaders and administrators to be more inclusive and promote participation in their consultations. This includes involving rural communities, citizens, and other marginalised groups to not only take active roles in participation during public consultation and meetings but also empowering them to understand their roles in influencing community-level planning and decision-making.

There was also a capacity development of local government's elected leaders and administrators in media literacy to counter disinformation and in fulfilling the goal of inspiring the integration of participatory planning in other districts through a knowledge-sharing session. With the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the elected leaders, we conclude the project has made a positive .

## 11.5 Impact

*(To what extent the project has contributed to the overall aim of contributing in the promotion of democracy, citizenship, and democratic understanding among youth and civil society in Bhutan?)*

Overall, the project has a positive impact through its activities. In the final community development plan expo, there was an overall positive change in the attitudes and confidence of the elected leaders and their plans. It was observed that their explanations and discussions of the community plans were extensive and well-thought-out. They also implied a significant level of inclusivity towards marginalized populations, along with other community members, in the development of community plans. The final event of the project allowed LG officials and organisations to network and discuss collaborations for the way forward. Given the brief timeframe of the assessment within the project period, evaluating long-term impacts, especially concerning plans and measures against disinformation was difficult, and may require further follow-up and evaluation in the future. It is suggested to be conducted by BCMD.





## 11.6 Sustainability

(To what extent has the Project considered sustainability aspects in its project cycle? What measures could be taken to build on the results achieved and ensure that the benefits of Project interventions are not lost?)

The project provided knowledge through a series of activities, so there is sustainability as long as the trained elected leaders continue in their positions and continue to use the knowledge gained through this process and interventions.

However, with the changing trends in the country with resignations from government service and transfers, and also the changing of officials in local governance, the sustainability question arises. There is a need to institutionalise and mainstream the participatory planning approach to maintaining the continuity of the interventions initiated by the project. This is suggested to be institutionalised through the current governing structure such as DLG, which can develop a self-assessment guide that can be used by the LG. As part of sustainability, BCMD has provided Training of Trainers to lecturers, and other officials in the community on GNH Participatory Planning and Countering Disinformation. For GNH participatory planning, some of these trainers participated in all the workshops and visited respective gewogs to witness the implementation of this toolkit.

## 11.7 Key Challenges

Participants encountered challenges in comprehending the tools provided. There is a possibility that they may have misinterpreted the tools and their usage. One potential challenge is ensuring the sustainability of the initiative after the project. With leadership changes occurring every five years, the question arises: can this be carried out effectively and sustainably? While the administrative officers and other gewog officials are equipped with the planning strategies, the issue is that the trained officials may not continue in their positions as there is a strong trend of looking for better opportunities abroad.

The consulted and trained officials were young, and some of them even indicated their desire to resign and move on. However, community empowerment is considered extremely important. There is also a misconception that discontinuing the planning strategies by the forthcoming LG leaders will confuse the community members.



The commotion among the participants was, “How come we have to tell them our problems and challenges while also having to provide solutions?”

Many community members are highly reliant and expect government officials to provide all the solutions. Challenges with LG participants noted the blend of lack of understanding and confidence. When serving as an observer in the communities, the LG leaders mentioned and tried to bring in the facilitators who were there to observe to take over and lead the discussions.

In addition, diverse participant backgrounds during the consultation created communication barriers for LG leaders, ranging from individuals with no educational background to graduates. The extensive participant pool revealed that some struggled to grasp the content, although this challenge was effectively addressed by the adept facilitator(s). As the LG leaders presented the Community Development Plans (CDPs), there were elevated expectations, with some anticipating immediate implementation of the plans.

One key challenge was the sustainability of the project activity. While, resource constraints would impede BCMD’s capacity to continue post-follow-up or monitor the activities.





## **12. Key Recommendation**

### **12.1 Strengthen the capacity of local elected leaders and administrators to be inclusive and participatory in their consultation with citizens**

Acknowledged for sustainability, the provision of Training of Trainers (ToT) to select participants from local CSOs, a college, and a school within Samdrup Jongkhar is significant. These individuals were trained to facilitate and will continue assisting officials when necessary. Other than capacity development among the elected leaders and administrators, the local CSO and implementing partners, SJI and Lhomon Education, also participated in the capacity-building workshop for ToT. It was recommended to foster collaboration and strengthen partnership in the communities for sustainability.

### **12.2 Empower community residents and vulnerable groups to take active participation in public consultation and meetings to influence community-level planning and decision-making**

The marginalised people indicated that they felt empowered. Notably, the youth group emphasised the significance of attending workshops like these. As a suggestion, marginalised individuals from various sections of the society in other dzongkhags should be encouraged to participate in such workshops, and their input should be supported, as it has proven valuable for both LG officials and the youth in Samdrup Jongkhar. LG officials gain a clearer understanding of why and how various groups can contribute value to the process.

### **12.3 Build the capacity of LG elected leaders and administrators in media literacy to counter disinformation**

Providing ToT to participants within Samdrup Jongkhar has proven to be very useful. A ToT participant, who is a lecturer, shared that he provides sessions on media literacy to counter disinformation to his fellow teachers and students. Thus, the project is recommended to be implemented in other dzongkhags.



#### 12.4 Inspire the integration of participatory planning in other districts through a knowledge-sharing session

The community development expo helped in knowledge sharing and provided opportunity to identify further collaborations among the gewogs and various stakeholders. The sessions were essential for the implementation of CDPs, as they allowed the identification of effective lessons/practices from different gewogs. These lessons/practices could then be applied appropriately in similar contexts and programmes. It provided participants with the opportunity to evaluate their colleagues' work and understand the challenges they may have encountered in their respective communities. Moreover, hailing from the same dzongkhag, there are opportunities for collaboration and conversations to address challenges and develop effective solutions for their communities.

#### 12.5 Inclusion of an External evaluation expert from the beginning

The initial phase of the project, the ToT, was done without the external evaluation team and as a result, developing a baseline to set the targets for the objectives was done in the second phase of the activities. It is suggested to include an External Evaluator from the initial commencement of the project, specifically during the Training of Trainers, for the participants. Alongside this, the collection of baseline data would have been more effective since it would have offer an opportunity to evaluate and assess the various impacts of the activities right from the initial phase. The trainers from the first phase were interviewed at a later date, but assessing the actual impact of the workshop was not possible due to the absence of baseline data.

#### 12.6 Implementation of the CDPs

The project offers training and workshops, allowing elected leaders to collaborate with their communities in developing plans. Once these plans are formulated, reviewed, and presented, it would be beneficial to observe at least one inclusive plan from each gewog being implemented. This achievement could be facilitated by providing minimal funding or exploring additional opportunities to share their plans, engaging relevant stakeholders or potential partners or funders beyond the Community Development Plan (CDP) expo. However, it is crucial to note that enabling such an approach may result in the establishment of dependencies.



## 12.7 Monitoring the status of the GNH participatory toolkit implemented in other dzongkhags

BCMD implemented the toolkit in other dzongkhags per se, Thimphu, Paro, and Trashigang. It is recommended that BCMD explore funds to follow up on the status of the completed projects and assess whether the plans were further developed and implemented after the project completion. With the current trend of staff transfers or resignations, it would be beneficial to know how the dzongkhags are sustaining and whether the knowledge and capacities developed by BCMD have remained in-house or have developed further.

As BCMD implemented the project in other dzongkhags, it is suggested that other gewogs update and maintain information online including CDPs and the contact details of the gewog officials. This would enable collaboration between organisations and gewog in implementing their CDPs. However, for long-term sustainability, it is essential to transfer this responsibility to the relevant government agency.

## 12.8 Knowledge sharing with the other dzongkhags

A knowledge-sharing workshop should be carried out involving participants from all the training sessions. The peer-learning sessions would be crucial in understanding the impact and lessons that needs adoption, especially with members from different groups being involved. The session would be a good platform to learn and share ways to improve and develop their plans further.

It is important to examine the lessons that can be learned and identify successful practices in various locations. This examination enables further discussions and potential recommendations, facilitating efficient and effective implementations or adaptations of the project in other areas.

## 12.9 Debrief as a part of the workshop

A daily debrief is suggested for every workshop/training. This would allow the facilitators to build their capacities as well as further improve the efficiency of the workshops. Sometimes with that many participants, the insights may prove to be invaluable sources of knowledge for developing further strategies and increasing the value of the tools.





### 12.10 Adoption of GNH toolkit in the 13th FYP

To ensure the sustainability of formulated and implemented inclusive plans, it is advised that LG leaders utilise the toolkit. Additionally, fostering partnerships with relevant agencies such as the DLGDM, and actively involving LG officials is recommended. In maintaining the ethos of inclusivity and participation in consultations, the adoption and application of the BCMD-developed toolkit were suggested for the effective formulation and implementation of plans.

### 12.11 Other suggestions

The main suggestion, echoed by both facilitators and participants, was to continue the programme. There was a need for continuity and sustainability of the programmes, as emphasised. In addition, the possible inclusion of more hands-on instructions (hands-on activities) would instill confidence in using the tools and leading discussions. The deliberation of issues and the fact that the conversations are taking place are viewed as achievements. One participant stated, “The eye-opening training that involves and trains all sectors of society is beneficial, as it is something we have never done before.” Addressing other challenges and finding a way to build on the experience was his main suggestion.

In conjunction with the expo, it is recommended to organise a day for connecting and networking for LG officials in Thimphu, considering all offices have their headquarters in the capital. It would provide a platform and opportunity for LG officials to familiarise themselves with various offices, meet officials, and even present their CDPs.





## Annexure 1: Project Log Frame

Table 2: Activities and output/deliverables as per main project objectives

Objective	Activity	Tool	Output/Deliverable	Progress
A. Strengthen the capacity of local elected leaders and administrators to be inclusive and participatory in their consultation with citizens.	A.1. 8-day training of trainers on GNH-based participatory planning for DLG and District Administrators and civil society members.	Questionnaire	1.1. 12 government officials and civil society members trained as trainers on GNH-based participatory community analysis.	Completed, a total of 16 participants. (133%)
	A.2. 8-day workshop for the LG elected leaders and administrators and civil society members on GNH-based participatory planning in six gewogs in Samdrup Jongkhar district.	Questionnaire	1.2. 30 local government elected leaders and administrators in Samdrup Jongkhar district were trained on GNH-based participatory planning.	Completed, a total of 49 participants. (163%)
B. Empower community residents and vulnerable groups to take active participation in public consultation and meetings to influence community level planning and decision making.	B.1. Citizen Empowerment workshops in six gewogs in Samdrup Jongkhar district.	Questionnaire, KII, observation in one gewog	2.1. 120 (20 participants from 6 gewogs) community residents participate in citizen empowerment workshops.	Completed, a total of 133 participants. (111%)
	B.2. Consultation and co-development of six community development plans by LGs and community residents.	Questionnaire, KII, observation in one gewog	2.2. Six community plans co-developed by the LGs and the community residents.	Completed, 11 CDPs developed. (183%)
	B.3. One peer-learning session with LGs of other gewogs and government officials in the district.	Questionnaire, KII	2.3. One peer-learning session is organised with 50 participants from other gewogs in the district.	Completed.



C. Build the capacity of Local Government elected leaders and administrators in media literacy to counter disinformation.	C.1. A 3-day Countering Disinformation Workshop of Trainer for DLG and District Administrators and civil society members.	Questionnaire, KII, observation	3.1. 12 government officials and civil society members trained as trainers on Countering Disinformation.	Completed, unsure of final numbers
	C.2. A 3-day workshop on Countering Disinformation for six gewogs in Samdrup Jongkhar.	Questionnaire, KII, observation	3.2. 30 local government elected leaders and administrators and civil society members in Samdrup Jongkhar district trained on Countering Disinformation.	Completed, total of 31 participants
D. Inspire the integration of participatory planning in other districts through a knowledge-sharing session.	D.1. Evaluation study on Participatory Planning and countering disinformation.	Questionnaire, KII, observation	4.1. One evaluation study was conducted.	Completed.
	D.2. Organise a seminar for relevant government agencies and the LGs to disseminate the findings from the evaluation study and to share experiences of the participating gewogs.	Questionnaire, KII, observation	4.2. Around 50 participants from the government, agencies and other districts participated in the seminar.	Completed.

## Annexure 2: Pre-survey interviews-Countering Disinformation (*Tshogpa and Mangmi*)

### Pre-survey - Countering Disinformation (Tshogpa/Female)

My name is Devi Maya Sharma, and I am from Samrang gewog. I have been serving as a *tshogpa* for over a year. I am 62 years old.

Q: Are you on social media such as WeChat, Facebook, Telegram, and so on?

I use Telegram and I am not active on any other social media platforms.

Q: How do you utilise Telegram?

The gewog typically shares any/all information on Telegram. We have a group with the gewog office on Telegram, and I pass that information to the people in my chiwog.

Q: Do you share news from other people on Telegram with your friends?

No, I don't share any other news with friends on Telegram, I only share the information I receive from the gewog administration.

Q: For example, during COVID, we shared information with others; do you also share such information with others?

Yes, I share important information and have shared urgent updates with the community when necessary.

Q: Before sharing information, do you ensure that it is accurate and not fake?

I share information only if it is verified as authentic. I rely on my village friends to confirm the authenticity of the information; if they have personally witnessed it and can verify its accuracy, then I share it with others as well.

Q: What does news mean in your view?

News refers to the information provided by Kuensel and others. I have children in Thimphu, and they also share updates about current events.



Q: What kinds of news have you come across?

I have encountered news concerning roadblocks, deceased people, and houses on fire. I obtained this information from Facebook, the gewog, and my children residing in Thimphu.

Q: Do you watch BBS?

Being one of the farthest and remote gewogs in Samdrup Jongkhar, Samrang lacks access to essential utilities.

Q: Do you have access to internet and TV in the gewog?

While we have good internet connectivity, some residents have Dish TV, but we, as new residents here, do not have a TV.

Q: When we talk about news, how do you know the news is real or fake?

If my children say they have witnessed the event themselves, then I know the news is real.

Q: How do you share information in Samrang?

There are 53 households in Samrang gewog, and I typically make a phone call to share information.

Q: Now that we have smartphones, what are the benefits of these devices?

Smartphones are a source of information and offer numerous benefits. We can access news during the occurrence of events, which was impossible in the past. Moreover, it would take a month or two to receive news about a deceased relative, but now we get it instantly.

Q: What is the benefit of using telegram?

Telegram is also the same as I mentioned before; we can share information promptly and make urgent calls if needed.

Q: What are the disadvantages of using telegram?

Nowadays, children are often given access to phones at an early age. My concern is that using mobile phones at such a young age may potentially harm their brain and eyesight. Children tend to use phones while eating and before going to sleep, which could have negative effects on their eyesight and overall brain development. As for adults, while some have enhanced their livelihoods through mobile technology, others have experienced detrimental effects leading to a negative impact on their lives.



Q: How did you come here today?

A gewog vehicle dropped me at Samdrup Jongkhar gate and I came by taxi from then.

Q: Do you have any guidelines on what to do and what not to do on social media?

As an illiterate person, I don't know, and the gewog didn't share any information on this with us.

Q: Do you encounter any problems while sharing information?

Since I have only six households, I do not face such problems.

Q: Do you believe that the news or information shared by gewog or dzongkhag is genuine?

Yes, because I believe they won't provide incorrect information.

Q: As you mentioned, there are 53 households in the gewog, and six households in your chiwog. How is information passed on in the event of someone's demise?

Some make phone calls, while others go to the houses if they reside nearby. If there is a meeting in the gewog, I either call them or personally visit their homes to inform them.

Q: If you need to share something with the gewog, how do you go about sharing it?

Either I will call them or reach out to them via Telegram, as we share a common group for the office.

Q: Do you have any idea about the plan of gewog?

No, I am not aware of the plans of the gewog.

Q: Did you get any kind of training from other organisations?

No

Q: Did you have a 13-FYP consultation meeting?

No, but they will have one soon.



Pre-survey Interview “Countering Disinformation workshop” (Mangmi/Male)

My name is Kinzang Jigme, and I am from Monggar. I have been serving as a *Mangmi* in Dewathang gewog for one and a half years.

Q: Do you know about social media, and do you have an account on any social media platforms?

Yes, I have accounts on Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger, WeChat and Telegram.

Q: What do you use these social media for?

Primarily, I use it for obtaining gewog information and engaging in development activities. Additionally, during leisure time, I share information on how to participate, and I also use it to provide updates on the commencement and completion of the works.

Q: Do you also share news?

I usually share information and news, such as updates on roadblocks in the areas close to us and within our vicinity.

Q: Do you receive news from others, whether it be from Thimphu or Monggar?

Yes, they share news related to health and business. Even though we may not be aware of it, they share information with us, and I, in turn, share it with others.

Q: When others share news or information, do you verify whether the information is real or fake?

Yes, I analyse the news whether it is real or fake.

Q: What do you mean by news?

News refers to events occurring in all 20 dzongkhags. For instance, if a roadblock occurs, we inform fellow travellers about it and provide updates on the roadblock and its clearance.

Q: How can you determine whether the news is real or fake?

It is common to observe that people often share fake news without proper examination and analysis. It is crucial to scrutinise information before sharing it, and if it is found to be inaccurate, it should not be shared.



Q: As Mangmi, how do you share information with the people of your gewog?

Since most of the villagers use WeChat as a common medium for communication, we also share important information via WeChat, for instance, gewog officials on leave and visits to villages are deemed necessary for them to know. Since I look after matters concerning land, people, and rules, it is important to notify people of my absence, however, I make sure that the gup or GAO is responsible in my absence. I notify gewog officials and chiwog *tshogpas* of such instances. While we have a common group for information sharing and important notice with the sector heads of dzongkhag, however, important decisions are made only during the dzongkhag tshogdu.

Q: How do you communicate with villagers and dzongkhag staff?

We communicate via WeChat with *tshogpas* and they share it with people. The dzongkhag administration mail us (gewog administration) which we then share with the *tshogpas*, who share in their respective social media groups for wider outreach. While we have a WeChat group with chiwog *tshogpas*, we have Telegram and Whatsapp groups with the dzongkhag officials.

Q: What are the advantages of using social media such as WeChat, Telegram, and others?

Using social media has various advantages, for instance, we know the condition of the road before travelling, and incidences of road accidents are also known instantly. Moreover, we also share information regarding gewog meetings and other important matters.

Q: What are the disadvantages of social media?

While social media has its advantages, it is not without disadvantages. Fake news is a prevalent issue, as people often create fake accounts to spread rumours (propaganda). There is a risk of individuals creating fake accounts in our name and disseminate misinformation.

Q: Do you have social media guidelines?

We don't have social media guidelines but we discuss what we should do and should not do.

Q: Is the information you share with people and dzongkhag effective?

Yes, we have effective communication amongst ourselves. The dzongkhag contacts the gewog, who then goes on to deal with the chiwog *tshogpas*.





Q: Did you know we were coming for a meeting in your gewog?

Yes, we received an email from BCMD regarding the meeting and they informed us about the venue. Well, initially it was to be held in Samdrup Jongkhar but with due changes in plan, it was to be conducted in Dewathang.

Q: Is there any change in venue from the Dzongkhag Administration?

So far, there has been no change in the venue from the dzongkhag.

However, if there is a meeting from the headquarters, there will be a change in venue. There will be no change in venue if the meetings are from the gewog and dzongkhag since it is within our jurisdiction. We primarily hold meetings in the gewog. For individuals residing in distant chiwogs such as Marthang, Domphe, and Rekhi, we personally visit them since they lack access to vehicles to attend meetings at our location.

Q: Do you share any information with the dzongkhag or people through a group?

chiwog *tshogpas* share information with people, and if there is any misunderstanding, we address their doubts through the gewog administration group. Therefore, social media serves as the medium for communication.

Q: Will the information you share with *tshogpas* reach all the people, considering that not everyone has a mobile phone?

As far as I know, most people have smartphones. For those who don't, people with smartphones are requested to share the information with them, or *tshogpas* will inform them directly.

Q: What is the reliable source for information from the dzongkhag to the gewog? Does the information provided by the dzongkhag align accordingly?

We receive mail from dzongkhag, which we then share with the gewog administration group. The group includes staff from various departments such as livestock, agriculture, forestry and gewog. Additionally, we share information in the chiwog *tshogpa* group. We also communicate with them in case of internet disturbances by utilising phone calls when necessary.



Q: How do you communicate with the gewog staffs? Is it through social media?

We have a group called "Internal Staff" on WeChat, where communication takes place. Tshogpas are not part of the Internal Staff group, instead, they are included in the gewog administration group.

Q: In some pieces of information, there are positive aspects about certain individuals and negative aspects about others. How do you infer such information?

We are not usually aware of that, but sometimes we need to consider their perspectives. However, in most cases, we do not acknowledge such situation.

Q: Do you have any communication strategy for social media?

No, we do not have a concrete communication strategy for social media; however, the gewog administration has budget preparation plans that we execute in response to the problems and issues in communities. The gewog administration conducts meetings and plans accordingly.

Q: Have you heard the term "advocacy"?

Yes, we have heard about the term and worked to support and promote the well-being of individuals. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, we advocated for people and emphasised the importance of individual responsibility.

Q: Did you advocate for the million-fruit plantation?

Yes, since the gewog *Mangmi* often has to remain at the office, the Gup, Agriculture and Forestry Officers, as well as the GAO, go for such advocacy.

Q: When engaging in development activities, do you provide advocacy, and how do you plan for them?

We have allocated a budget for chain-link fencing. Firstly, we disseminate the information within the gewog administration group, involving *tshogpa* and sector heads. If some individuals are not informed due to internet issues, we reach out to them individually by phone call.

Q: When you need to disseminate information, do you inform everyone?

No, as I mentioned earlier, we have groups and the *tshogpa* share it within their groups. Whether it's for the construction of roads or any other purpose, the Gup, *Mangmi*, and GAO personally visit the chiwog to oversee the process.



### Annexure 3 – Post survey Interviews Countering Disinformation (*Tshogpa and Mangmi*)

#### Post-survey interview on Countering Disinformation (*Tshogpa*)

My name is Devi Maya Sharma and it has been three days since the workshop started. I learnt more about social media as I was not well versed in its usage before. I use telegram to share information with the people.

Q. Previously, you may have shared the information sent by gewog without verifying it. What precautions do you take now when sharing information?

Now whatever information we get in telegram, we have to confirm whether the news is real or fake, only then should we share it with others.

Q: What do you mean by news now?

News is the result of reporters and journalists collecting information and sharing it.

Q: How do you differentiate between real and fake news?

If we have seen the event ourselves, that can be considered real news, but if we haven't witnessed it firsthand, it cannot be considered genuine news.

Q: We may not witness all the things ourselves, so if there is news in Gasa, how will we know whether that is real or fake news?

We can verify it by referring to Kuensel and BBS.

Q: Whatever information you share in your chiwog, do they take it as real?

We have only six households and so whatever I have shared till now, they took it as real news.

Q: What are the advantages and disadvantages of social media?

While, using social media platforms help to share news and information, people however are not genuine in perception. In the past, accessing news was challenging, however social media platforms such as Facebook, telegram, etc. are useful in accessing information and news instantly.



They have become the primary source of information and news for the people. However, there are people who misuse social media platforms to share rumours and fake information. Moreover, social media have a detrimental impact on children, concurrently serving as a platform for illicit relationships that can lead to rape cases and divorces in marriages.

Q: The meeting materials were sent by the gewog, but the people did not read them thoroughly. Consequently, during the meeting, some individuals claimed to have only received the information the previous night, while others arrived early, and some faced delays due to obstacles such as a roadblock. How should we address these issues?

Those are the issues for people who are either skimming or are not serious about the event. It's critical to read the material and make appropriate plans. We didn't experience this kind of issue because our gewog had disseminated the information ahead of time, but other gewogs reported that they were unable to attend because the information was not provided.

Q: Do you know about Verification, Independence and Accountability (VIA)?

Yes, verification involves confirming or checking the authenticity of news; independence implies firsthand observation; and accountability denotes responsibility. Therefore, when we receive any information, it is crucial to verify its accuracy.

Q: Did you see the content for a local juice brand promoted by a Bhutanese football player? Is that news?

That was just an advertisement to sell their products, which is not news. If I share this with our gewog and chiwog, that would be information to them, not news.

Q: What were your experiences during the three days of training?

It was my first time attending such training; it was beneficial, and I could learn more from the training which I could share with the people of our chiwog and gewog.

Q: If women are given the chance, how will they make use of it?

I believe that since they are more experienced at home and have a greater understanding of issues, women will do better.

Q: Which language medium would you recommend for training, considering that Dzongkha was the language medium we used for the training here?

It would be preferable to attend the meetings and workshops if it is conducted in Sharchop-kha in the east as it is the common language spoken here. I do not fully grasp Lhotsam-kha, but I can comprehend Dzongkha. However, my friends are educated, so they can understand it.



### Post-survey Countering Disinformation (*Mangmi/Male*)

My name is Kinzang Jigme, *Mangmi* of Dewathang gewog. As I previously mentioned, when we are a part of a group that includes gewog, *tshogpas*, and dzongkhag authorities. We need to confirm the veracity of the information before disseminating it within the group. Prior to receiving office directives from the dzongkhag, we include everyone in the group and disseminate information. Our gewog's newsgroup ought to be called an information-sharing group, in my opinion.

Q: If you receive information or news from others, do you verify whether it is real or fake?

Firstly, we should confirm that the information is accurate. Secondly, there are three essential qualities to take into account: accountability, independence and verification. We can comprehend these characteristics better by examining them.

Q: What do you mean by news now?

News is information that fulfills the three traits of Verification, Independence, and Accountability. However, if one has a preconception of the information, it is not considered news.

Q: How can you differentiate between real and fake news?

In order for something to be considered authentic news, it must be independently confirmed, briefed, and held accountable. However, news on social media is rarely vetted.

Q: What are the advantages and disadvantages of using social media?

We need to comprehend how people use social media since it depends on how they use it. Considering the stories of today and the difficulties people encounter, we must admit that there is a chance that not everyone is decent at heart. There are numerous benefits. Before, when I used to regularly read *Kuensel*, I was unable to tell whether the news was true or false, but now I am capable comprehending it.

Q: Previously you stated that the communication is effective, what more do you need to do to improve it after attending the 3-day training?

All communication channels are useful, but there are security risks. Therefore, we should determine which channel has the highest level of security before using it to exchange information.



Q: Did your gewog receive the information beforehand, as some of the other gewogs did about the meeting last night?

We got the information a week ago.

Q: Gewog has shared the information with tshogpas but did not inform the people, did it happen in your gewog too?

I don't know about other gewogs but in our gewog, as soon as we received the mail from dzongkhag, we read and shared it with the tshogpas in the group.

Q: Do you have to conduct a meeting again with the tshogpas and the people?

No, we don't want to waste time; instead, we communicate to the group where tshogpa will disseminate the information to the people as majority of them are employed.

Q: Did you attend any meetings in the thromde?

No, I attended the gewog and dzongkhag meetings only.



## Annexure 4: Interviews with Community/Tshogpa/GAO/Youth/SJI – Participatory Planning (Pre/Post)

### Interviews with Community (Female) Post-workshop

My name is Karma Chezom, I am 29 years old, and I studied till class 10. I am a housewife, and I am from Khesangter, Dewathang gewog.

Q: What do you understand by active citizen participation in *zomdu*?

Although I'm not clear what active citizen engagement means, I believe it entails talking about every significant topic raised throughout the *zomdu*.

Q: What is the role of citizens during planning in development activities?

I am not aware of it.

Q: Did you attend a meeting in the gewog? Who was invited to the meeting?

Indeed, I was there during the meeting; moreover, there was also a gathering about the election previously. The meeting was attended by men, women, and a few young people. Mostly, the candidates running for office made presentations to win over supporters to their parties. That was a half-day meeting. I have also participated in one-day meetings, and occasionally we leave feeling drowsy.

Q: Did you speak in the meeting?

They asked me questions, so I answered them once or twice. Even though everyone in meetings is from our gewog alone, I needed more confidence to speak. Since, males are required to go for menial contract works, the majority of participants were women.

Q: You mentioned that you lacked confidence previously; did this meeting give you the confidence you needed to speak up during planning?

Even after this meeting, I don't think I'm confident; perhaps this is because I'm unaware of the gewog's planning.

Q: Did you attend any meetings regarding planning in gewog?

No.





Q: Being a citizen, what is your responsibility in gewog planning?

It is my responsibility as a citizen to respond to the invitations received to attend meetings and to pay attention to what they have to say.

### Interview with Community (Male) Pre-workshop

I am from Bangtsho, Dewathang gewog, I am 55 years old, and I am a farmer.

Q: Did you attend any meetings, and if so, who invited you? Additionally, do you understand the contents discussed?

Yes, upon *tshogpa's* announcement, I am the one who attends the meetings usually but my wife attends in my absence. Though I understand the contents discussed, I still lack some important agenda information from the meeting.

Q: When people from Thimphu attend a meeting, do they give presentations?

Indeed, they explain their purpose for visiting; occasionally, it's for PwDs, livestock, and agricultural land.

Q: Did you speak during the meeting?

No, I did not, as I didn't have anything to say during the meeting.

Q: Do you participate in the gewog planning process?

Yes, I do. When they inquired about the village's problems, information was gathered and sent to them. The issues identified included problems with the roads and the provision of drinking water. During our meeting with others, they mentioned facing issues with electricity, fast-moving trucks, and a lack of recreational parks for young people.

Q: Do you also experience similar problems?

Indeed, we encounter similar issues. We have a small park along the thromde, and we have warned the drivers of Dungsam lorry trucks for their reckless speeding.

Q: Did everyone attend the meeting?

Despite a few individuals being unable to participate due to personal reasons, everyone else was present at the meeting.



Q: Do males, females, youths, and persons with disabilities (PwDs) attend meetings?

While women constitute the majority of attendees at the meeting, only a few individuals raise their voices. Additionally, young people participate in meetings during vacations. However, PwDs are currently not attending the meetings; nevertheless, the gewog plans to include PwDs from Khaling School in future meetings.

Q: What did you understand from the meeting held?

I have understood what is outlined in Article 22 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan. There are rules and regulations addressing various aspects, including provisions for youths and PwDs.

Q: Is it acceptable to hold such a meeting again?

Yes.

### Interview with Tshogpa/Male (Post workshop)

My name is Ngajay Norbu and I serve as the *tshogpa* of Balam Saram chiwog under Phuntshothang gewog. Before this gathering, we had a meeting for the public and young people. I learnt a few things and acquired some experience from attending the three-day meeting. By the fourth day, I was also able to comprehend the planning process. We had no plans, but we were clear about our needs. We required a trail through the paddy field, a reliable supply of drinking water, and access to a motorable road. Even if we encountered issues in the house, we wouldn't know how to solve them. However, I learned a lot from the discussion and now understand much more than I did before. It has also made it easier for me to participate in the 13 FYP. Making plans enables us to organise things in a manner that will yield results.

Q: As a *tshogpa*, who will you invite for the planning process?

We must first determine what our problems are. Before, we used to plan without directions or proper guidelines, ignoring the problems, and concentrating on motorised roads and agriculture. I now understand that to make plans that work, we must first determine what the true problems are. All chiwog members must be included in the planning process, and attending meetings is crucial. Additionally, we need to comprehend PwDs who want to be involved in the planning process. From the meeting, I have also learnt about the equality of men and women. I will use it to help me plan for 13 FYP.



Q: What other plan do you intend to submit?

I think it is important that we identify the problems, conduct consultation/ meetings with the public and address the issues accordingly.

Q: Does PwDs not attend meetings?

We have only one person with a disability (PwDs) in our chiwog, who does not attend the meeting.

Q: How do you plan to promote greater participation by women during meetings?

During my second term as *tshogpa*, I participated in numerous meetings. While we have ensured equal opportunities for both men and women, it's observed that many women attend meetings without engagement or participation. Currently, the meeting is being addressed by a lone female member. Consequently, we aim to organise one to two-day training sessions and gatherings for women to foster increased interaction among them.

Q: Is social economics crucial when planning?

Planning for development activities solely relied on the government's involvement, but nowadays, collaboration between the people and the government is essential. Even when the government offers financial assistance, it requires concerted effort and unity among us to collectively determine what is best for the community.

Q: Do you have any suggestions for improving future meetings?

The sessions were generally conducted in English and Dzongkha. Despite my best efforts, I was illiterate and couldn't fully comprehend everything. Therefore, it would be advantageous if future meetings were held in the local language to ensure better understanding. This would aid us in organising, identifying, and addressing concerns, especially benefiting development activities through meticulous planning for excellent results.

Before the meeting, we were unfamiliar with problem identification and planning. Looking ahead, it is crucial to note that attending meetings is equally important.



### Interview with GAO /Female (Pre-workshop)

My name is Wangmo Tamang, I have been serving as a GAO in Serthi gewog for the past four months and I am 25 years old.

Q: Since it has been four months, have you conducted any meetings in your gewog?

I have attended GT; we have weekly meetings in the gewog to address persisting issues, manage the budget with finance, and participate in disaster management training.

Q: How active is the participation of people during meetings in your gewog?

If we inform them that participation is mandatory, they attend; otherwise, due to the scattered settlements caused by the valleys, it is difficult for participants to respond. It takes 3-4 hours to get to the meeting and a few hours to return. Therefore, most participants are unable to attend the meetings. When other organisations come for meetings, they provide incentives like taxi fare, moreover, it is expensive and time-consuming to travel. Therefore, the gewog officials travel to chiwogs for meetings. In chiwog, some households are scattered. Due to the smaller population in our gewog, the number of youth and adult citizens is lower. Therefore, most of the participants in the meetings are elderly citizens.

Q: How do you interpret the term "Participation"?

Participation means inclusivity. This includes all males and females, disabled people, youth and individuals of all age groups, fostering an inclusive environment. For instance, it also means that the trainers during meetings and workshops are equally involved.

Q: How did you learn about "participation"?

I studied BSC Social Development at College of Natural Resources, so the curriculum primarily focuses on participatory planning.

Q: Who else is invited to the gewog meeting?

The gewog invites all the gewog officials and *tshogpas* with whom some of the literate members of the society (go-shed-nyen-shed) also attend the meetings occasionally.



Q: Do you invite the participants specifically?

Yes, we do invite them but due to their old age and inability to understand, they cannot attend the meetings. So I suggest that those who are literate attend the meetings.

Q: Is it compulsory to attend the meetings?

It is not compulsory if it is an election campaign. However, we encourage people to join meetings as far as possible but for most cases, we are summoned to meetings in *chiwogs*. In case we are joined by different officials, we conduct the meetings in *Lhakhangs*, *tshogpa's* office, or in a temporary shed.

Q: Do you have rules that require meeting absentees to pay a certain amount?

While there are no specific rules for *gewog* staff to adhere to, we have recently decided to contribute an amount of Nu. 500/- if they are unable to attend the meetings. The collected funds are intended for providing refreshments to those who are present.

Q: As per your experience, how are the people's participation, are they actively participating, or do people just attend and leave?

It differs, people's participation is active when the meeting is impactful, but if the meeting is not impactful, the participation is less active. For instance, if the meeting is on construction of roads at areas not beneficial to the community, people participate less. Female participants are more active during meetings. There was no participation from the side of youths and PwDs.

Q: Who makes decisions at the household level?

As a new recruit myself, I have no idea about decision-making at the household level.

Q: What are the priorities in your *gewog* for the 13th Five Year Plan (FYP)?

The *gewog* will prioritise disaster management and road safety primarily because of the flash flood.

Q: Who was the one who decided that disaster would be the priority?

*Tshogpas* were informed about the disaster by the people upon discussing what agenda should be a priority. We had a finance committee meeting, and therefore it was decided by *gewog* staff, finance, and engineers. Furthermore, we had GT, where we further discussed the agendas and made disaster the first priority.



Q: How do villagers raise their concerns and issues to the gewog?

People usually share their issues with the tshogpa and they raise the issues at the gewog meeting on behalf of the people.

Q: How do they discuss the issues? Do they conduct meetings?

Yes, the tshogpa holds meetings with his/her community when deemed necessary. Since tshogpas come to the gewog twice a week, they are engaged in the community or render their service from home.

Q: When gewog decisions are submitted, does the dzongkhag consider the gewogs decisions? In this case, we face difficulty, the reason being, firstly the tshogpa attends to the problems of the people, Which is then discussed in the GT. However, the problems are not prioritised and instead, other issues which are of less importance to the people are given focus.

Q: As a Gewog Administrative Officer (GAO), How do you consider matters concerning development in the gewog?

GAO plays an essential role for gewog development and creating awareness would help them resolve and raise issues and concerns.

Q: When chiwog submit their issues to gewog, does the gewog have any set criteria to select the issues and prioritise on that?

We prioritise what is required the most, therefore in our gewog, disaster was prioritised. If we focus on disaster then it will benefit agriculture and business. In case of roadblocks, it will be difficult to travel to the hospital. Therefore, our priorities are set more on disaster. Roadblocks are mainly caused due to shallow streams.

Q: How do people participate in the Dzongkhag Tsogdu (DT)?

GAO has a role to observe the DT; he/she makes sure the DT is fair and just. Gups are the ones who raise the problems and issues of their communities. Participation is equal for Gups despite their gender, however in our dzongkhag there is only one female Gup, rest of them being male.



**Interview with Youth/Female (Participatory Planning)**

I'm Kelden S. Wangmo, 17 years old, studying in Jigme Sherubling Central School in Class 12 (Science). I reside in Dewathang Gewog within the Royal Bhutan Army (RBA) colony.

Q: What do you understand about active citizen participation in meetings?

Previously, I believed that meetings were exclusively attended by older individuals and political officials like Prime Ministers and Ministers. However, now that I have been exposed to such gatherings and actively participated in the programme, I realise that students like us also have the opportunity to engage in politics. For example, I can contribute to our country by promoting culture and local initiatives during vacation. My understanding of active citizen participation in meetings has significantly expanded, and I am now more informed about these events.

Q: What is your role in planning and decision-making on any developmental activities?

To bring positive changes, for example, if I am a Gup and the road of the gewog is not maintained for years, it will be my responsibility to work for the well-being of the people and the community by solving the issue. In order to leave a positive impression on people, as the Gup, I will have to be held accountable for such initiatives.

Q: Did you attend any meetings in your gewog?

I haven't attended gewog meetings previously, however in school, as the school captain, I attended meetings similar to it, in order to discuss school development and changes. It was my first time in a meeting with the local leaders, Gups and Mangmis.

Q: Is the reason for not attending the meetings in the past due to the absence of invitations to youth?

In the past, youths were never invited to participate in such meetings. I believe it is the first time that youths have been invited to attend such meetings.

Q: After attending the workshop, do you feel like you are more confident in expressing your views for future gewog meetings?



I feel I am more confident because the experience of discussing matters for making changes is similar to what I have learnt in school. I studied Economics in classes 9 and 10 and I could understand issues related to budgeting and documentation during the consultation which was helpful in identifying issues and prioritising them accordingly.

Q: Are you confident to ask questions regarding the gewog plan, budget, and the process of the meeting?

Yes, I am confident, but there are a few people who may get offended, as they might assume I am passing judgment on the low budget. Therefore, I am hesitant to ask questions. However, my confidence has certainly been boosted.

Q: Do you have any relatives or siblings who attended such a meeting?

No.

Q: Do you know who all are invited to such a meeting?

My father often attends the meetings and my mother attends the meeting in his absence.

Q: How important do you think your voice is as a youth in developmental activities or gewog developmental meetings?

It is important because it is related to the youth as much as to the local leaders and adults. Any developmental activities must not solely be beneficial to the local government but also beneficial to the community as a whole. Though the local government and the adult attendees state that the plans are formulated for the people, they nevertheless neglect the developmental benefits of youths and persons with disabilities (PwDs). They only focus on adults and normal citizens. Therefore, youth need to raise their voices. In school, when people initiate awareness programmes, I suggest the inclusion of youth. As one of the attendee at Khaling School during the awareness programme, I raised a question about the inclusivity of youth.

Q: What did you learn from the workshop?

The workshop taught us to be cooperative, have team building quality that will enhance productivity and to become reliable. Additionally, participating in the meetings was also deemed important for community development.

Q: Do you have any suggestions for improving future meetings?

While attending the meeting was enjoyable and interesting, I observed that some participants did not take it seriously. Therefore, I would encourage the trainers to address these issues.



Interview with Youth/Male (Participatory Planning)

My name is Karma Tshering, I am 23 years old, and I study at the College of Science and Technology (CST). I am from Dewathang, Samdrup Jongkhar.

Q: Given that you have been attending this workshop for 3 days, what is the difference you see before and after you attended the workshop, how do you understand active citizen participation in *zomdu*?

What I understand about active citizen participation in *zomdu* is, I attended a *zomdu* with my father last year, during which I did not raise my voice, however, I was aware of the problems of the people within my community.

Q: What is the role of citizens in planning and decision-making?

As a responsible citizen, it is imperative to actively participate in community development meetings to raise concerns and issues and look for potential partners such as the CSOs to address the issues.

Q: You said that you attended one *thromde* meeting, what was the topic you discussed?

The *thromde* meeting was attended by all the *Gups* to discuss issues within the *dzongkhag*. The *thromde* took in account of all the issues raised by the *gewog*.

Q: Do you have to pay a fine if you do not attend meetings?

While it is a requirement for every household to participate in a meeting, the imposition of fines is not common.

Q: How confident do you feel to express your views on meetings after attending this training?

I would say I feel a little confident but since I have not experienced what it is like in actual meetings, it is difficult to say. However, I am sure I will understand the agenda better during actual meetings.

Q: Were there any youth participants when you attended meetings before?

I was the sole youth participant in the previous meeting. Typically, our parents represent the family in meetings, and youths rarely participate in such gatherings.



Q: Do you feel you are confident to ask questions regarding gewog or thromde planning and budgeting?

I am inexperienced regarding this, however, I have a colleague who has a background in commerce, though he may be young, he has ideas to share in such meetings but he could not attend the meeting. In the past I did not have the confidence to raise my opinions regarding youth, now I have.

Q: Who makes the decisions during the thromde meeting?

While the thromde consults people for concerns and issues, the final decision and conclusions on the matter are typically made by the thromde office.

Q: What recommendation will be made a priority by thromde?

There is a possibility of prioritising education if suggested. For youths, there is a need for a new basketball court.

Q: Did you see any PwDs attending a meeting before?

No.

Q: Do you know who the poorest household in thromde is?

No.

Q: Are they not invited, or do they not attend the meeting?

They may have received the invitation, but the people may have felt this meeting to be of the least importance. In the case of youths, they are not encouraged by their parents to attend, However, in my case, I was encouraged to attend the meeting by my father.

Q: What are the important development activities in thromde?

Lately, the thromde office has been constructing underground cable lines and pedestrian sidewalks.

Q: What are some prominent social issues related to youth?

It is apparent that youths are immersed in drug abuse. If the local government could establish a youth center in the area, it would be beneficial to prevent youths from engaging in substance abuse.



Q: How important do you believe youth voices are in developmental activities?

The voices of youth matter in community development because they provide valuable perspectives and ideas to address issues of the community. As youth are considered the future of the country, it is crucial to prevent them from migrating to other countries in search of better opportunities.

Q: Any suggestions on how to improve such workshops?

If the youths are given the opportunity to attend such workshops frequently, there would be more participation, as youths would be well-informed about the problems to be addressed.

Q: Since this is your first time working with the local government, how was your experience sharing ideas with the officials?

The officials agree with my ideas considering my educational background and being a college student. When I suggest ideas, they analyse my issue before accepting it. This meeting has made it possible for youth to be a part of decision-making along with the local government. This meeting also helps in eliminating the social stigma of youths always abusing drugs.

### **Interview with Programme Director, SJI Participatory Planning**

Yeshey Wangchuk looks after the Organic Agriculture program and the GNH pilot village in Orong gewog. Samdrup Jonkhar Initiatives (SJI) has been conducting consultation meetings and is more efficient than the gewogs because of the use of community mapping. He said, “After attending the workshop, we plan to improve the staff capacity within SJI and the gewogs. We went to Menchari, a GNH pilot village to implement the tools we learnt from the workshop. We had a consultation meeting with the community there and developed a road map along with a work plan for the community that would benefit the people for 3 years. We submitted a logical framework to the Orong gewog administration. Though the community could work on community mapping and resolve the issues themselves, it is imperative to allocate resources and work collaboratively with the gewog administration. We asked the community about the consultation carried out in the past, to which they responded having called *chipoen* to conduct the consultations as they did not have *tshogpa* at the time. The community said that for the first time, they could have a proper, in-person discussion regarding the problems.”



The community felt included; their opinions and voices mattered during the consultation because, in the past, they experienced a lack of support from the gewog. The community members felt included as the consultation utilised tools from the workshop to understand issues at grassroots level.

Q. What is the difference between the current 3-year roadmap and the past plans for the gewog?

The earlier plans included the provision of road maintenance and Lhakhang renovations neglecting other critical issues such as matters concerning youth and the local economy. Moreover, the public consultations were not inclusive of PwDs, women, and youth. However, the current plan is inclusive of all which primarily focuses on retaining and engaging youth through entrepreneurship programmes. For instance, the popular Orongpa Chilli would have better business prospects if it was sold as a pickle. The programmes are aimed at retaining youth in the village to contribute to the growth of the local economy.

The community mapping assisted the local people in understanding pertinent issues such as youth migrating to urban areas. Additionally, people also started questioning the policies hindering their business venture. For instance, the people of Menchari have to inform or get approval from the gewog Agriculture Extension Officer to sell local produce in Samdrup Jongkhar.

Q. What are the benefits of partnering with local organisations like the Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative (SJI)?

SJI is reconsidering community mapping and GNH-based consultations. While we have the vision, we lack the necessary tools to bring that vision to fruition. Therefore, the current project has provided us with the right tools, particularly in capacity development for our organisation. For instance, the Venn diagram assisted us in prioritising the main issues and other tools helped us set up goals and objectives for the organisation such as, during the development of project proposals.

In the past, the consultations were carried out through phone calls, but now by using these tools, we feel confident and assured to consult with the right asset. The tools would help SJI consult and leverage our outreach and work in the area.



## Annexure 5 - Community

### Pre-Participatory Planning Questionnaire and Effective Communication

#### Consent

This survey is being conducted by BCMD. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you withdraw from participating at any time, you will not be penalised. Your responses will be confidential, and we do not collect identifying information such as your name or email address. All data is stored in a password-protected electronic format.

Y/N

Questions:

1. Sex: 1. Female 2. Male 3. Other 4. Prefer not to say

2. Age:

1. 18–25 years old
2. 26–34 years old
3. 35–49 years old
4. 50 and above

3. Present location (dzongkhag): \_\_\_\_\_ gewog/thromde: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Designation: Organisation (if applicable):

5. How many discussions/meetings (*zomdus*) have you attended?

- a. 3 or more
- b. 2
- c. 1
- d. None

6. Who usually attends the meetings from your household? Why?

- |           |             |                     |
|-----------|-------------|---------------------|
| a. Self   | d. brother  | g. Others (specify) |
| b. Father | e. sister   |                     |
| c. Mother | f. children |                     |



7. In your experiences, are marginalised people (e.g. PwDs, youths, destitute, single mothers and others) in the community included in the meetings/discussions/*zomdus* organised by the LG?

- a. Yes
- b. Not sure.
- c. No

8. To what extent do you think that the local government plans are based on the expressed needs of the residents?

Groups	Select percentage (0 – 25%, 26 – 50%, 51 – 75%, 76 – 100%)
People with Disabilities	
Youth	
Destitute	
Women	

9. How much of a priority do you feel it is for the LG officials to involve youth actively during conversations regarding issues you face?

- a. High priority
- b. Moderate priority
- c. Slight priority
- d. Not a priority

10. How actively do you participate in the discussions/meetings?

- a. Very active
- b. Active
- c. Moderate
- d. Low
- e. Do not participate

11. Why do you participate in the discussions/meetings?

- a. It is compulsory
- b. Interested in learning about the plans of the LG
- c. To provide suggestions/ideas that will impact my life
- d. Other: \_\_\_\_\_





12. How respectful are the LG officials to different/new ideas in the consultative process?

- a. Very respectful
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

13. How do gewog officials (including *tshogpas*) communicate with you about *zomdus* or any information/meetings? Rank (1- most, 5- least)

- a. Social media (WhatsApp, WeChat, Telegram, Facebook): .....
- b. Phone Call: .....
- c. Letters: .....
- d. In person: .....
- e. Others (please specify): .....

14. How effective is the communication on anything from the gewog?

- a. Very effective
- b. Somewhat effective
- c. Not very effective
- d. Not effective at all

15. Are you informed regularly on gewog plans, progress and decisions?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

16. How clear is the communication from the gewog/chiwog?

- a. Very clear
- b. Somewhat clear
- c. Not so clear
- d. Unclear

17. How clear is the communication from the dzongkhag/thromde?

- a. Very clear
- b. Somewhat clear
- c. Not so clear
- d. Unclear



## LG- Pre- Participatory Planning and Effective Communication

### Consent

This survey is being conducted by BCMD. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you withdraw from participating at any time, you will not be penalised. Your responses will be confidential, and we do not collect identifying information such as your name or email address. All data is stored in a password-protected electronic format.

Y/N

Questions:

1. Sex: 1. Female 2. Male 3. Other 4. Prefer not to say
  
2. Age:
  1. 18–25 years old
  2. 26–34 years old
  3. 35–49 years old
  4. 50 and above
  
3. Present location (dzongkhag): \_\_\_\_\_ gewog/thromde: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Designation: Organisation (if applicable):
  
5. How many *zomdus*/discussions have you attended or led?
  - a. 3 or more c. 1
  - b. 2 d. None
  
6. What is the average attendance of the consultations/meetings?
  - a. 5-10
  - b. 11-15
  - c. 16-20
  - d. 21-25
  - e. 26-30
  - f. 30+



7. From these participants, on an average how many are women, youth, PwDs (please rank from 1 to 4 (1 as most participants, 4 as least participants)?)

- a. Women- \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Youth- \_\_\_\_\_
- c. PwD- \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Other (specify)- \_\_\_\_\_

8. If you categorize your gewog/dzongkhag plans, what percent of budget are allocated in the following areas? (0 – 25%, 26 -50%, 51 – 75%, 76- 100%)

- a. Infrastructure (construction/renovation of farm roads, irrigation, drinking water, lhakhangs/chortens): .....
- b. Economy (market access, agriculture/livestock products, and other business): .....
- c. Cultural (tshechu, tshokor/rimdo): .....
- d. Social (educational, health and empowerment of youths, women and PwDs): .....
- e. Others: .....

9. If you categorise your gewog/dzongkhag plans what percent is for the following groups? (0 – 25%, 26 -50%, 51 – 75%, 76- 100%)

- a. People with Disabilities: .....
- b. Youth: .....
- c. Women: .....
- d. Others (please specify and write percentage): .....

10. How frequently do women, PwDs, youths and destitute participate (meaning express their views and contribute to decision-making) in zomdus/discussions related to their needs?

Group	Frequency (select- frequently, somewhat frequently, occasionally, rarely, never)
Women	
People with Disabilities	
Youths	
Destitute	



11. To what extent do you think that the local government plans are based on the expressed needs of the residents?

Groups	Percentage (select percentage range: 0 – 25%, 26 – 50%, 51 – 75%, 76 – 100%)
People with Disabilities	
Youth	
Destitutes	
Women	

12. How much of a priority do you feel it is for you as the local government officials to involve communities in actively discussing and making decisions regarding issues they face?

- a. High priority
- b. Moderate priority
- c. Slight priority
- d. Not a priority

13. How frequently have you consulted with the following groups (please select frequency: frequently, occasionally, rarely, never)?

- a. PwDs: .....
- b. Women: .....
- c. Unemployed youths: .....
- d. Destitute: .....

14. How confident are you in conducting inclusive and deliberative meetings and engaging vulnerable people as part of the zomdu?

- a. Very confident
- b. Moderately confident
- c. Somewhat confident
- d. Slightly confident
- e. Not confident at all



15. What are the main concerns in the community?

Ans: .....

16. When you develop community activities/plans, what criteria do you apply? (please rank- 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest based on the requirement)

- a. Need of the most community members: .....
- b. Budget: .....
- c. Dzongkhags plans: .....
- d. Others (please specify): .....

17. What information do you use to create project or activity proposals?

Ans: .....

18. Where do you get the information from?

Ans: .....

19. How do you obtain the information?

Ans: .....

20. Have you attended any training/workshop - to develop plans or lead community discussions before?

- a. Yes
- b. No

21. If yes, what kind (please specify)?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

22. How many training and workshops have you attended so far?

- a. 3 or more
- b. 2.
- c. 1

23. List the training/workshops that have been most helpful for your work.

- a. ....
- b. ....
- c. ....
- d. None have been helpful



24. How useful is it for People with Disabilities (PwDs), single women, and unemployed youths to be involved in consultations? Please rank from 1 to 5 (1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest).

- a. PwDs: .....
- b. Women: .....
- c. Unemployed youth: .....
- d. Destitute: .....
- e. Others (please specify and rank): .....

25. On a scale of 1-5, how respectful are you of different ideas in the consultative process? (1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest)

Ans: .....

26. How effective is the communication on anything from the gewog?

- a. Very effective
- b. Moderately effective
- c. Somewhat effective
- d. Not effective at all

27. How timely is the communication on anything from the gewog/chiwog to the communities?

- a. Early
- b. On-time
- c. Late
- d. Never

28. How do you communicate with the community members about any *zomdus* or any information/meetings? Rank (1- most, 5- least)

- a. Social media (WhatsApp, WeChat, Telegram, Facebook): .....
- b. Phone Call: .....
- c. Letters: .....
- d. In person: .....
- e. Others (please specify): .....

29. How effective is the communication from the gewog on any topic?

- a. Very effective
- b. Somewhat effective
- c. Not very effective
- d. Not effective at all



30. Do you regularly inform the people on gewog plans, progress, and decisions to the communities?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

31. How clear is the communication from the gewog/chiwog?

- a. Very clear
- b. Somewhat clear
- c. Not so clear
- d. Unclear

32. How clear is the communication from the dzongkhag/thromde?

- a. Very clear
- b. Somewhat clear
- c. Not so clear
- d. Unclear

33. How regular is the communication from the gewog on plans, progress, and decisions to the communities? (Rank- 1 is low frequency, 10 is high).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10





## Annexure 6 - Community

### Post-Participatory Planning Questionnaire and Effective Communication

#### Consent

This survey is being conducted by BCMD. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you withdraw from participating at any time, you will not be penalised. Your responses will be confidential, and we do not collect identifying information such as your name or email address. All data is stored in a password-protected electronic format.

Y/N

#### Questions:

1. Sex: 1. Female 2. Male 3. Other 4. Prefer not to say

2. Age:

1. 18–25 years old

2. 26–34 years old

3. 35–49 years old

4. 50 and above

3. Present location (dzongkhag): \_\_\_\_\_ gewog/thromde: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Designation: Organisation (if applicable):

5. How many discussions/meetings (*zomdus*) have you attended?

a. 3 or more

b. 2

c. 1

d. None



6. Who usually attends the meetings from your household? Why?

- a. Self
- b. Father
- c. Mother
- d. Brother
- e. Sister
- f. Children
- g. Others (please specify).....

7. In your experiences, are marginalised people (e.g. PwDs, youths, destitute, single mothers and others) in the community included in the meetings/discussions/*zomdus* organised by the LG?

- a. Yes
- b. Not sure
- c. No

8. To what extent do you think that the local government plans are based on the expressed needs of the residents?

Groups	Select percentage (0 – 25%, 26 – 50%, 51 – 75%, 76 – 100%)
People with Disabilities	
Youth	
Destitute	
Women	

9. How much of a priority do you feel it is for the local government officials to involve you actively during conversations regarding issues you face?

- a. High priority
- b. Moderate priority
- c. Slight priority
- d. Not a priority



10. How actively do you participate in these discussions/meetings?

- a. Very active
- b. Active
- c. Moderate
- d. Low
- e. Do not participate

11. Why do you participate in the discussions/meetings?

- a. It is compulsory
- b. Interested in learning about the plans of the LG.
- c. To provide suggestions/ideas that will impact my life
- d. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

12. How respectful are the LG officials to different/new ideas in the consultative process?

- a. Very
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

3. How do you communicate with your community members about any *zomdus* or any information/meetings? Rank (1- most, 5- least)

- a. Social media (WhatsApp, WeChat, Telegram, Facebook): .....
- b. Phone Call: .....
- c. Letters: .....
- d. In person: .....
- e. Others (please specify): .....

14. How effective is the communication on anything from the gewog?

- a. Very effective
- b. Somewhat effective
- c. Not very effective
- d. Not effective at all

15. How timely is the communication on anything from the gewog/chiwog to the communities?

- a. Early
- b. On-time
- c. Late
- d. Never



16. Are you informed regularly on gewog plans, progress and decisions?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

17. How clear is the communication from the gewog/chiwog?

- a. Very clear
- b. Somewhat clear
- c. Not so clear
- d. Unclear

18. How clear is the communication from the dzongkhag/thromde?

- a. Very clear
- b. Somewhat clear
- c. Not so clear
- d. Unclear

19. How did you find the workshop?

- a. Excellent
- b. Good
- c. Average
- d. Poor

20. Would you recommend others from the community to attend similar workshops in the future?

- a. Yes
- b. No

21. If yes, why?

Ans.



## LG- Post-Participatory Planning and Effective Communication

### Consent

This survey is being conducted by BCMD. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you withdraw from participating at any time, you will not be penalised. Your responses will be confidential, and we do not collect identifying information such as your name or email address. All data is stored in a password-protected electronic format.

Y/N

### Questions:

1. Sex: 1. Female 2. Male 3. Other 4. Prefer not to say

2. Age:

1. 18–25 years old

2. 26–34 years old

3. 35–49 years old

4. 50 and above

3. Present location (dzongkhag): \_\_\_\_\_ gewog/thromde: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Designation: Organisation (if applicable):

5. How many *zomdu*/discussions have you attended or led?

a. 3 or more

c. 1

b. 2

d. None

6. What is the average attendance of the consultations/meetings?

a. 5-10

c. 16-20

e. 26-30

b. 11-15

d. 21-25

f. 30+



7. From these participants, on an average how many are women, youth, and PwDs? Please rank from 1 to 4 (1 as most participants, 4 as least participants).

- a. Women- \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Youth- \_\_\_\_\_
- c. PwDs- \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Other (specify)- \_\_\_\_\_

8. If you categorise your gewog/dzongkhag plans, what percent financially are in the following areas?

(0 – 25%, 26 -50%, 51 – 75%, 76- 100%)

- a. Infrastructure (construction/renovation of farm roads, irrigation, drinking water, lhakhangs/chortens): .....
- b. Economy (market access, agriculture/livestock products, and other business): .....
- c. Cultural (tshechu, tshokor/rimdo): .....
- d. Social (educational, health and empowerment of youths, women and PwDs): .....
- e. Others: .....

9. If you categorise your gewog/dzongkhag plans, what percent is for the following groups?

(0 – 25%, 26 -50%, 51 – 75%, 76- 100%)

- a. PwDs: .....
- b. Youth: .....
- c. Women: .....
- d. Others (please specify and write percentage): .....

10. How frequently do women, People with Disabilities, youths, and destitute participate (meaning express their views and contribute to decision-making) in *zomdu*/discussions related to their needs)?

Group	Frequency (select- frequently, somewhat frequently, occasionally, rarely, never)
Women	
People with Disabilities	
Youths	
Destitute	



11. To what extent do you think that the local government plans are based on the expressed needs of the residents?

Groups	Percentage (select percentage range: 0 – 25%, 26 – 50%, 51 – 75%, 76 – 100%)
People with Disabilities	
Youth	
Destitutes	
Women	

12. How much of a priority do you feel it is for you as the local government officials to involve communities in actively discussing and making decisions regarding issues they face?

- a. High priority
- b. Moderate priority
- c. Slight priority
- d. Not a priority

13. How frequently have you consulted with the following groups (please select frequency, somewhat frequently, occasionally, rarely, never)?

- a. PwDs: .....
- b. Women: .....
- c. Unemployed youths: .....
- d. Destitute: .....

14. How confident are you in conducting inclusive and deliberative meetings and engaging with

vulnerable people as part of the *zomdu*?

- a. Very confident
- b. Moderately confident
- c. Somewhat confident
- d. Slightly confident
- e. Not confident at all





15. What are the main concerns in the community?

Ans: .....

16. When you develop community activities/plans, what criteria do you apply? (please rank- 1 is the least applied and 5 is the highest)

a. Need of the most community members: .....

b. Budget: .....

c. Dzongkhags plans: .....

d. Others (please specify): .....

17. What information do you use to make project/activity proposals?

Ans: .....

18. Where do you get this information from?

Ans: .....

19. How do you obtain this information?

Ans: .....

20. Have you attended any training/workshop- to develop plans or lead community discussions before?

a. Yes

b. No

21. If yes, what kind (please specify)?

Ans: \_\_\_\_\_

22. How many of these training/workshops did you attend?

a. 3 or more

b. 2

c. 1

23. Please list the training/workshops that have been most helpful for your work.

a. ....

c. ....

b. ....

d. None have been helpful



24. How useful is it for PwDs, single women, and unemployed youths to be involved in consultations? Please rank from 1 - 5 (1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest).

- a. PwDs: .....
- b. Women: .....
- c. Unemployed youth: .....
- d. Destitute: .....
- e. Others (please specify and rank): .....

25. On a scale of 1-5, how respectful are you of different ideas in the consultative process? Rank (1 is low, 5 is high).

Ans: .....

26. How effective is the communication on anything from the gewog?

- a. Very effective.
- b. Moderately effective.
- c. Somewhat effective
- d. Not effective at all

27. How timely is the communication on anything from the gewog/chiwog to the communities?

- a. Early
- b. On-time
- c. Late
- d. Never

28. Are you informed regularly on gewog plans, progress, and decisions?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Whenever necessary
- d. Never

29. How do you communicate with your community members about any *zomdus* or any information/ meetings? Rank (1- most, 5- least)

- a. Social media (WhatsApp, WeChat, Telegram, Facebook): .....
- b. Phone Call: .....
- c. Letters: .....
- d. In person: .....
- e. Others (please specify): .....



30. How effective is the communication from gewog on any topic?

- a. Very effective
- b. Somewhat effective
- c. Not very effective
- d. Not effective at all

31. How timely is the communication on anything from the gewog/chiwog to the communities?

- a. Early
- b. On-time
- c. Late
- d. Never

32. Do you regularly inform the people on gewog plans, progress, and decisions to the communities?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

33. Are you informed regularly on gewog plans, progress, and decisions?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

34. How clear is the communication from the gewog/chiwog?

- a. Very clear
- b. Somewhat clear
- c. Not so clear
- d. Unclear

35. How clear is the communication from the dzongkhag/thromde?

- a. Very clear
- b. Somewhat clear
- c. Not so clear
- d. Unclear



36. How regular is the communication from the gewog on plans, progress, and decisions to the

communities? Rank- (1 is low frequency, 10 is high frequency).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

37. How did you find this workshop?

- a. Excellent
- b. Good
- c. Average
- d. Poor

38. Would you recommend other officials to attend similar workshops in the future?

- a. Yes
- b. No

39. If yes, why?

Ans.



## Annexure 7. 1st Workshop: Countering Disinformation, 12th -14th July, 2023, Jigme Namgyel Engineering College, Dewathang, Samdrup Jongkhar

List of people met (gewog-wise)

Sl.no	Gewog	Male	Female	Total
1	Samrang	0	4	4
2	Serthi	3	0	3
3	Dewathang	3	0	3
4	Lauri	4	0	4
5	Wangphu	4	0	4
6	Langchenphu	2	2	4
7	Martshala	4	0	4
8	SJI	1	0	1
9	BCMD	2	0	2
10	KCS	1	1	2
Total		24	7	31

Attendance (2nd Workshop, GNH-Based Participatory Planning and Community Analysis,  
15th-23rd July 2023)

List of people met (gewog-wise)

Sl.no	Gewog	Male	Female	Total
1	Langchenphu	2	0	2
2	Gomdar	5	0	5
3	Serthi	1	1	2
4	Pemathang	8	1	9
5	Lauri	2	0	2
6	Orong	4	2	6
7	Wangphu	4	0	4
8	Martshala	2	0	2
9	Samrang	2	0	2
10	Dewathang	4	1	5
11	SJ thromde	2	1	3
12	Yarphu	1	0	1
13	Kawang	1	0	1
14	BCMD	1	0	1
15	KCS	1	1	2
16	Lhamon	1	0	1
17	JNEC	0	1	1
Total		41	8	49



### Community Empowerment Workshop

Sl.no	Gewog	Total			Youth (15-24 years)			Children (0-14 years)		
		M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
1	Dewathang	10	11	21	0	5	5	0	0	0
2	Phuntshothang	16	8	24	2	5	7	2	0	2
3	Orong	18	2	20						
4	Gomdar	17	4	21						
5	Wangphu	14	6	20						
7	Pemathang	16	2	18						
8	Debrief	7	2	9						
Total		98	35	133	2	10	12	2	0	2



## Annexure 8. Community Development Plan for Samdrup Jongkhar (Workshop Output)

(List of main issues and problems by gewogs)

Sl.no	Plans	Gewogs
<b>Infrastructure</b>		
1	Increasing damage to road and drainage system by heavy rainfall.	Martshala
2	High risk for school children at Userna due to the lack of railings along paths that are slippery and situated on steep slopes.	Pemathang
3	Lack of separate toilet facilities for women at meeting halls.	Pemathang
4	Poor road conditions are affecting travel time and making the area accident-prone.	Serthi
5	Lack of recreational facilities.	Phuntshothang
6	Absence of Gender/PwD friendly facilities in PHC.	Phuntshothang
7	Need for motorable bridge to enhance transportation modes for the respective villages.	Phuntshothang
8	Lack of proper toilet sanitation in Orong Primary School affects the student's health.	Orong
9	Land degradation due to the construction of new farm roads.	Orong
10	Lack of outdoor facility for the annual festival at Wooling chiwog (Samtoen Cholling Lhakhang lacks Tshechu ground) Relocation of Menchari chokhang.	Orong
11	Poor road conditions.	Langchenphu
<b>Human Wildlife Conflict</b>		
12	Increase in human wildlife conflict affecting human settlement.	Martshala
13	Increasing human-wildlife conflict.	Serthi
14	The increasing number of human-wildlife conflicts is affecting the livelihoods of farmers, causing damage to crops and leading to the loss of domestic animals.	Orong
15	Human wildlife conflict.	Gomdar
16	Increasing Human wildlife conflicts threatening crop production.	Wangphu
<b>Waste management</b>		
17	Inadequate waste management plans leading to waste issues in the community.	Martshala
18	Poor waste management practices.	Serthi
19	Poor waste management programmes due to lack of waste collection and disposal truck.	Phuntshothang
20	Increasing waste management issues due to the absence of designated waste disposal site.	Gomdar
21	Waste management issue: Overflowing waste in chiwogs in the allocated waste site affects waste management. Need of capacity building training to recycle waste.	Wangphu



<b>Agriculture</b>		
22	Decreased agricultural farming.	Martshala
23	To enhance the suitability of Pemathang's wetlands for tractors, there is a need to modify the natural topography.	Pemathang
24	Poor irrigation channels are leading to an increase in fallow land and encouraging human-wildlife conflict (HWC) around the area.	Samrang
25	Increasing issues of water shortages (for consumption, irrigation, agriculture etc).	Serthi
26	Inaccessibility to fruit saplings.	Orong
27	Shortage of man-power in farming.	Orong
28	Increasing number of fallow lands because of poor irrigation.	Langchenphu
29	Poor irrigation during the winter season affecting crop production for 69 households.	Wangphu
30	The lack of resources are affecting innovative approaches to diversify agricultural products such as ginger and cooking oil.	Wangphu
<b>Women - social</b>		
31	Lack of women empowerment initiatives affecting participation in LG leadership positions.	Pemathang
32	Lack of weaving facilities for the women - Facility to dye thread and keep utensils for women weaving group (Samtenchoeling Tharay Tshogpa, Wooling)	Orong
<b>Youth - social</b>		
33	Increasing number of alcohol/drug addiction cases among youth in Pemathang.	Pemathang
34	Increasing number of youths indulging in substance abuse.	Phuntshothang
35	Increasing number of unemployed youth.	Gomdar
36	Increasing unskilled youth in the community.	Langchenphu
37	Increased youth violence in Dewathang, including gang fights involving JNEC students, GMSS students, Dungsam residents, children of RBA personnel, drivers, and local youth.	Dewathang
<b>Economic - social</b>		
38	Economic difficulties have increased in accessing nearby crematory grounds.	Pemathang
39	Lack of financial support for orphan students.	Orong
40	Lack of diverse economic opportunities (e.g. cultivation of cooking oil) limits the business potential to invest and seek other forms of livelihood.	Orong
41	Lack of earning opportunities causes rural-urban migration.	Dewathang
<b>Risk/disaster</b>		
42	Increasing threat or risk to human settlement for those who are residing near the river.	Samrang
43	Increasing risk of flood disaster to the community living nearby or downstream particularly during summer season.	Serthi
44	Increasing risk to human settlement due to monsoon swelling of <i>Nyera Ama Chhu</i> .	Phuntshothang
45	The swelling of the <i>Nyera Ama</i> River poses a significant risk to the community.	Gomdar
46	Threat of flash flood due to river swelling.	Langchenphu
47	Martang Village lacks a safe and secure settlement (relocation of Martang Village).	Dewathang
48	Land instability within the gewog (Martang Village falls in the catchment area while Dewathang is prone to landslides during the monsoon season).	Dewathang
49	Lack of bridge increased the risk of chiwogs (on the other side of the river) being cut off during monsoon from the different institutions providing services (schools, hospitals. business).	Wangphu





<b>Employment - social</b>		
50	Lack of employment opportunity leading to rise in migration to urban areas.	Samrang
51	Lack of comprehensive capacity building programme for youth seeking jobs resulting in disengaged youth.	Orong
52	Absence of weaving centre for skilled youth and women to engage in employment opportunities.	Gomdar
<b>Religious</b>		
53	Poor sanitation around religious sites, lacking proper toilet facilities.	Serthi
<b>Schools/Education - social</b>		
54	Lack of school bus service for students coming from far-flung villages.	Phuntshothang
55	Poor learning environment in classrooms.	Phuntshothang
56	Excessive use of firewood by the schools - Wooling Primary School (Annually around 5 trips of truckloads which cost around Nu.195,000/- of wood being chopped for cooking purpose).	Orong
<b>Skills- social</b>		
57	Need for rural entrepreneurship skilling programme.	Phuntshothang
58	Inadequate skills in large-scale dairy production and preservation affecting both the production and sale of dairy products.	Wangphu
<b>Social</b>		
59	Lack of comprehensive health services for People with Disabilities(PwDs).	Orong
60	Lack of livelihood and shelter support for the PwDs	Orong
61	Lack of road connectivity hampering PwDs and elderly to avail services in hospitals and temples.	Dewathang
<b>Hospital/Heath</b>		
62	Inadequate hospital facilities coupled with rising temperatures pose health risks for patients.	Gomdar
63	Lack of disabled-friendly facilities in the hospital challenges PwDs in availing medical services.	Gomdar
<b>Network Connectivity - social</b>		
64	Poor network connectivity hampering administrative work and students' learning.	Gomdar
<b>Drinking water - social</b>		
65	Insufficient drinking water in Chenary and Bangtsho chiwogs (Single source for JNEC, thromde, RBA, gewog, and Military Hospital).	Dewathang
66	Increasing health hazard in schools due to use of firewood and absence of safe drinking water.	Wangphu
<b>Market - social</b>		
67	Absence of a well-designed vegetable market.	Langchenphu
68	Limited products and markets for Dompchu Weaving Centre.	Dewathang
69	Challenges in marketing agricultural products.	Dewathang
<b>Others</b>		
70	Frequent power outage at Gomdar.	Gomdar
71	Underutilisation of softwoods in community forest and reliance on orange packing boxes from India.	Wangphu



Number of plans for the gewogs:

Sl.no	Gewog	No. of plans
1	Martshala	4
2	Orong	13
3	Pemathnag	6
4	Phuntshothang	9
5	Gomdar	9
6	Wangphu	8
7	Serthi	6
8	Samrang	3
9	Langchenphu	5
10	Dewathnag	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>71</b>





Democracy?  
is a form of government in which the people have the authority to deliberate

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