

Communication Strategy

Women, Children and Youth committee of the National Assembly of Bhutan and the Youth Initiative (YI) of the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD)



Representatives from the WCYC, YI and other youth meet during YI summer training in July, 2015.

Introduction

Upon invitation from the WCYC, the YI presented its objectives and some of the issues they were addressing and advocating in March 4, 2014, at the Parliament Building. Dasho Kesang Wangmo, chairperson of the WCYC, remarked that the invitation was sent in order to better understand YI and to open a connection with the MPs and the youth. The two group informally introduced each other's mandates and shared concern regarding youth-related issues.

On Thursday July 9, 2015, the members from the Women, Children and Youth Committee (WCYC) of the National Assembly of Bhutan met with the members of the Youth Initiative (YI) for a 3-hour long session themed 'Meet the policy makers,' intended to bring together members from the parliament looking into youth-related issues and a group of youth who are interested to bring change.

During the meeting this time, WCYC and the YI discussed the communication strategy plan and unanimously agreed to use the communication plan to informally start a partnership. The Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD) facilitated the session and also took the initiative to draft the communication plan, which would be presented to the WCYC committee for their agreement and feedback.

With the communication plan in place, the BCMD as a parent organisation of the YI, hopes that youth and members from the parliament will collaboratively address and take action on youth-related issues in the country. The communication plan will take effect from January 1, 2016 and will be implemented as a pilot for the year 2016. During this time, both YI and WCYC are expected to address youth issues through various means such as bi-annual meetings, panel discussion on national television, YI local actions and so on.

Aims and Objective of the Communication Plan

- To strengthen and showcase a culture of collaboration and consultation between the youth and the policy makers.
- To represent and take forward well-researched youth voice and youth action to the attention of the members of the parliament.

Mode of Communication

In order for the WCYC and the YI to communicate effectively and timely, the following communication tools will be used.

A. Internal Communication-

A.1. Facebook-

A closed Facebook group named 'YI-WCYC' will be created. Only core representatives from the WCYC, YI and BCMD will be members of the closed Facebook group. This page will be administered solely by a youth representative from the YI. His/her responsibility will be to post the following updates in a timely manner-

- Meeting minutes of the 'Bi-annual' meeting as well as YI monthly meetings between WCYC and YI and the follow up tasks.
- Update on any volunteering activities organised by YI or any group where YI has been invited to join.
- Discussion topics where all the members will share their views on different issues and explore solutions.
- Use the page to agree on meeting date, time, venue and so on.

A.2. Personal contact information-

Representatives from both groups will share their personal contact information such as work number, mobile phone number and email. All of these personal contact information will be collected and shared on the YI-WCYC Facebook group. This will serve as an alternative internal communication in case any person is not responsive or not on Facebook. However, all members must agree to not share the personal contact information of any member without prior approval from the person. In addition, only discussion related to WCYC-YI activities will be discussed.

A.3. Bi-annual meeting-

The members from the WCYC and youth representatives from the YI will meet twice in a year. At the meetings the WCYC and the YI will bring youth-issues that they are concerned about and identify 3 main youth issues they want to collaboratively research, advocate and take action. Both the meetings will be one-day and are expected to be held during the time of the YI training in January and in July each year. The meetings will include discussions, group activities, brainstorming sessions, planning local actions and so on.

- ❖ **January meeting:** During the first training for the new batch of YI in January, a day-long session will be reserved to meet with the WCYC from the Assembly. This will be a formal introduction of the new youth representatives to the WCYC of the National Assembly.. The session will include introductory sessions, brainstorming youth-issues, identifying the issues and preliminary planning of the solution to the problem. Once the issues and the actions are finalised during the meeting, YI will then take the issues forward through research and continued discussions. In between, YI and WCYC will be constantly remain in touch through monthly progress report of the action prepared by the YI.
- ❖ **July meeting:** In the summer training, another half-day session will be reserved to meet the WCYC. Here, the YI will present a final report on the advocacy activities and the local action carried out as a result from the January meeting. WCYC and YI will then plan on strategies to share the results and the impact of the YI activities in collaboration with the WCYC.

B. External Communication-

B.1. Public Sitting-

As a part of YI training, in January and in July, the youth representatives will hold a public sitting to deliberate on the three issues that they have identified and researched during the training. There will be only one public sitting in January. During this, the youth will be grouped into 3, each focussing on different issue.

In addition, 3 members from the WCYC will also deliberate on the issues alongside the youth. The public sitting is a 2-hour long session where members from the parliament, political parties, civil society organisations, schools, colleges and other youth will participate as audience.

B.2. BBS Panel Discussion-

The BCMD will collaborate with the Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) in hosting panel discussion among the youth representatives to highlight the identified issues to a wider audience and discuss about possible solutions that the group would be explore. The panel discussion will enable the YI and WCYC to spread awareness about the identified issues and also explore rooms for gathering public opinion and feedbacks. Members from the WCYC will be encouraged to participate in the panel discussions and provide a wholesome perspective on the issues identified by the youth. There will be a total of 4-6 panel discussion in 2016 in the following months- February, May, July, October, December.

B.3. YI newsletter/online blog-

A bi-annual newsletter and a YI blog will be produced by the YI, where the members will write reflective articles, news articles on the identified issues and report on the YI activities. Here, members of the of WCYC will be encouraged to provide articles alongside the youth articles.

B.4. YI Talks on Facebook-

The Youth Initiative's Facebook page, Youth Initiative- YI, has over 1,100 likes. This gives an opportunity for the members of the YI to involve other youth and members of the society in discussion on important issues. YI will design a poster with a set of guideline and the discussion question on the poster. The template of the poster will remain same, however, each time there will be a different question on the standard poster. Issues for discussions will be brought up for discussion once a month which will be moderated by YI. Members of the WCYC will be encourage to take part in the discussions on Facebook.

Draft Guideline:

- No anonymous post. If the post is anonymous, it will be deleted.
- No defamatory comments. No personal attacks. The comments will be deleted.
- Individuals must always respect each other's comments.
- Comments containing improper use of language and slangs will be deleted.

Monitoring and Evaluation

To measure the impact of the collaboration between the WCYC and the YI, BCMD will act as an external evaluator to both the association through focus group discussion and evaluation forms. A total of 2 focus group discussion will be lead towards the beginning of of July training and at the end of the year in December-January. Following this, BCMD will also send online survey forms to both the groups. There will be a compilation of all the feedbacks into a final report in December-January.

Draft Terms of Reference for WCYC and YI representatives:

Keeping in mind the communication plan for WCYC and YI, here are the terms of reference for the members from both parties-

Women, Children and Youth Committee of the National Assembly of Bhutan-

- The chairperson or a designated focal person of the committee will be the focal person of this informal partnership. He/she will represent WCYC at the Youth Initiative.
- The chairperson will coordinate and encourage other committee members to-
 - Actively participate on WCYC-YI closed group on Facebook.
 - Be present during the bi-annual meeting in January and July.
 - Participate as speakers during the YI public sitting in January.
 - Participate as panelist on BBS panel discussion.
 - Identify and nominate committee members to contribute articles for the YI bi-annual newsletter.

Youth Initiative (YI)-

- The president of the Youth Initiative will be the focal person of this informal partnership. He/she will represent the YI at the WCYC.
- The president will inform the chairperson of the WCYC to-
 - Inform the chairperson of the WCYC for any responses required at the WCYC-YI closed Facebook group.
 - Inform the chairperson of the WCYC about the bi-annual meetings and provide agenda.
 - Inform the chairperson of the WCYC about the public sitting and provide agenda.
 - Inform the chairperson of the WCYC about the BBS panel discussion and provide agenda.
 - Inform the chairperson of the WCYC about the YI newsletter and collect articles.

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Chairperson
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About Women, Children and Youth committee (WCYC)

The National Assembly (NA) of Bhutan consists of 10 standing committees which were established since 2003 and all of these committees are governed by the National Assembly Act of 2008 and the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly of Bhutan 2014. The committees are mainly established to perform the functions of the National Assembly in a more effective manner.

The purpose of committees includes taking submission, hearing witnesses, discussing matters in detail and formulating reasoned conclusions. Committees encourage and enable the National Assembly members to develop special interest and expertise in particular aspects of policy and legislative matters. They investigate, legislate, review and draw attention to any important matter that are referred to them and give advice.

Out of the 10 committees, the Women, Children and Youth committee (WCYC) focuses on youth-related issues with the following members-

- Kesang Wangmo, chairperson.
- Karma Dorji, Vice chairperson.
- Novin Darlami, member.
- Jigme Wangchuk, member.
- Nidup Zangpo, member.
- Committee Secretary- Ugyen Wangdi, 17436940, ugyenwangdi@nab.gov.bt

As of July, 2015, the WCYC has four main youth issues that they are concerned with. These issues are- Youth unemployment, Youth in conflict with the law, Lack of recreational facilities and Role model crisis.

About the Youth Initiative (YI)

YI is an informal, non-party affiliated association that gives a select group of youth practical, hands-on experience in deliberating on national issues and taking community-based action. The YI was first piloted by the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD) in 2013.

The winter and summer trainings of the YI are an educational training workshops whereby selected youth (youth representatives) learn about public policy, research, debate, deliberation, dialogue, taking community-based action, media literacy and youth representation.

YI in the pilot year- 2014

In 2014, 21 youth representative from different schools and institution attended two-weeks winter residential training and a week-long summer training. They learned how to research, debating and deliberating skills, how to engage in a dialogue, taking community-based action (local action), public speaking skills and communication skills.

The YI in 2014 consisted of three committees, namely, the Community Welfare committee, the Social Justice committee and the Education committee. The committees researched and deliberated on three different issues such as-

- Community Welfare: Bhutan should reduce the imports of junk food in order to promote local industry and lower non-biodegradable waste production.
- Social Justice: The public and private sectors need to take collaborative measures to improve the employment opportunities for differently-abled persons.
- Education: The National Teaching Council of Bhutan should be formed to improve the quality of education in Bhutan.

The community welfare committee and the education committee lead advocacy campaigns and led activities to promote local produce in schools and reading campaign respectively. The social justice committee intended to create ramps at the Memorial Chorten in Thimphu but the action remained incomplete.

Two public sittings were held after each training where the youth deliberated on their committee issues and proposed their local action in front of representatives from the government, parliament, civil society organisations, media agencies, political parties and individuals.

YI in the second year- 2015

In 2015, there are 28 youth representatives from schools and colleges within Thimphu and outside of Thimphu. The winter training continued to train the youth representative on research, debate and deliberative communication skills, dialogue, public speaking, media literacy and representation.

The YI in 2015 consist of three committees, namely, the Education committee, the Sustainable Development and the Social Media committee. The committees researched and deliberated on three different issues in line with their committees during the public sitting. The issues were-

- Education committee: Is it a good idea to have central schooling system in Bhutan?
- Sustainable Development committee: To promote resource efficiency among local communities, institutions like schools, and individuals.
- Social Media committee: The need for a social media guidelines in schools.

The three local action proposed this year are to promote reading habit in Bhutan celebrating the National Reading year, planting tree saplings in a Thromde designated area and social media conversations and developing social media guidelines in schools in Thimphu.