

# Youth Initiative *Guidebook*



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BHUTAN CENTRE  
for MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY



CISU CIVIL SOCIETY IN  
DEVELOPMENT





*Congratulations!*

You are now a member of the Youth Initiative for Debate, Deliberation and Dialogue (YI). We are excited that you have chosen to embark on this journey to create a vibrant democracy that we hope will lead to a GNH society.

## 1 ABOUT YOUTH INITIATIVE



### WHAT IS YI?

YI is an inclusive and non-partisan association that gives youth from different walks of life, hands-on experience in policy research, review, deliberation, and dialogue. YI awakens their socio-political consciousness and ultimately creates a strong base for active and responsible citizenry.

### BACKGROUND

In 2012, YI came into being as a product of concerned youth in response to what was described as combating boredom and more seriously, apathy towards the democratic process of Bhutan.

To this end, YI adopts the vision to create 'an engaged society by the inclusion of youth in policy-making, where youths can realise their roles as stakeholders of national issues and be highly motivated and responsible to strive as citizens to impact positive change.

### AIM

To contribute to the development of a cohort of socio-politically conscious youth with the ability to explore, critically examine and understand the policy landscape as well as the social needs of Bhutan.

## YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT



Policy Review & Analysis



Debate, Dialogue, Consensus and Public Speaking



Personal Leadership Skills and Critical Thinking



Citizenship Values



Media and Democracy Literacy

## YOU WILL DEVELOP

The ability to reflect on one's responsibilities as a citizen and find ways to bring change in the community

A deeper understanding of issues, the ability to critically examine policy landscape to formulate positions on it

Skills to engage in a constructive debate/dialogue on issues, substantiating one's position with evidence, sound arguments and advocating for a cause

Personal skills to be self-driven and work effectively as a member of a team

Critical thinking and be able to evaluate and analyse news and media messages

Knowledge, skills and tools to use social media safely and be constructive and smart by improving one's online behaviour

## STRUCTURE OF YI

The Youth Initiative (YI) is divided into two camps coinciding with school and college breaks:

1. YI Winter Camp
2. YI Summer Camp





*Youth Initiative*  
**Winter Camp**

The Winter Yi introduces members to various socio-economic, political, and policy issues to provide a deeper understanding to prepare the members for policy research and review through dialogue, discourse, and deliberations. This process enables the members to come up with compelling cases with evidence and facts to influence the decision-makers.

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Youth Initiative  
Summer Camp

What we read and how we read, shapes our views, attitude and behaviour; therefore, media literacy is of paramount importance. In a democracy where the media proves to be an effective communication tool for both good and bad intentions, it is of paramount importance to use it wisely for a positive cause. It is with a recognition of this reality that the summer Y! shifts gear to train participants to be media savvy.

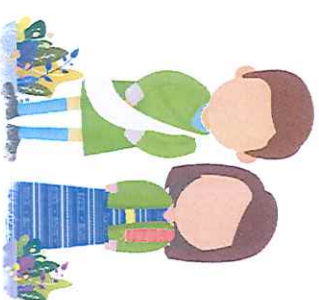


## 2 | YI WEBSITE

The YI Website provides a space for youths to share their views and engage in discussions. It acts as a digital platform and a reservoir of youth voice. The website documents member profiles, initiatives of the members, stories, and their views on social and policy issues through position papers.



## 3 | CODE OF CONDUCT



Members of the Youth Initiative comply with the following expectations of conduct:

- At all times, act in a way that does not damage the reputation of the YI.
- Promote a spirit of cooperation, ethical practice, and fair dealing with other members.
- Respect diversity in ideas, ethnicity, religion, etc. and refrain from making adverse comments about those who are different.
- Remain non-partisan and refrain from representing or promoting any party's political agenda.
- Respect and listen to the views of others, challenge discrimination, and promote equal opportunities.
- Conduct oneself to reflect credibility as a YI member and inspire the confidence, respect and trust of the public.



## I. YI MEMBERSHIP & COMPOSITION



All youth (in college, college-bound, working and out-of-school youth) from 18 - 25 years of age are eligible for YI membership.



Invitation for expression of interest in joining YI is made through any channel that maximizes the reach towards intended participants such as, but not limited to, the BCMID facebook page, BBS/Kuensel ads, word of mouth, Friends of BCMID, etc.



The tenure of a YI member will be one year.



To instill a sense of ownership in their learning and development, a nominal annual membership fee is collected at the commencement of the Winter Camp.



YI members are de facto "Friends of BCMID" and are eligible for the same privileges and perks (See Friends of BCMID on the website for additional details).



YI will be a diverse group with at least 40 per cent of the members constituting females.

## II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Mandatorily attend both winter and summer YI camps.



Be in regular communication with their respective Youth Mentors to discuss, update and receive guidance on their projects.



Plan, propose and set targets to prepare and deliver their position papers/projects on time.



Take opportunities and participate in dialogues, seminars and forums.



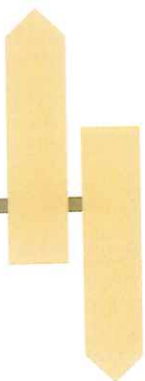
Initiate discussions on current affairs to make necessary recommendations to the concerned authorities.



Uphold financial integrity and settle all bills, where applicable, within two weeks after completion of project activities that entail costs.

# 4 | STEERING COMMITTEE

The YI of Bhutan will be mentored and guided by a steering committee of former YI members. They will oversee the operations of the YI, ensure transparency, accountability and continuity.

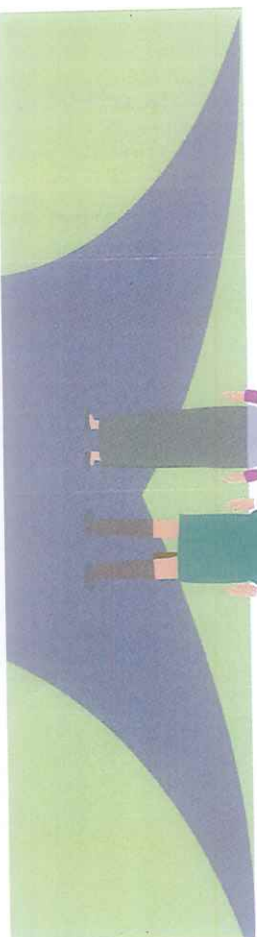


## I. APPOINTMENT AND COMPOSITION

- Invitation to be a member of the Steering Committee shall be extended by BCMd which will be signed upon acceptance
- Membership to the Steering Committee shall be based on socio-political calibre, past association with BCMd's programmes and leadership potential.
- There shall be a minimum of seven members in the Steering Committee
- One-third of the Steering Committee members shall be women
- A Steering Committee Member shall serve a minimum of one year tenure
- Two of the members of the Steering Committee shall be from BCMd one of whom will be the YI Programme Coordinator who shall also be the default Member Secretary of the Steering Committee.
- Nominations of new members to the Steering Committee will be organised at the end of each YI cycle.

## II. MEETINGS AND QUORUM

- Presence of more than half of the Steering Committee members shall constitute a quorum for a Steering Committee meeting.
- The Steering Committee shall meet every quarter to report on the progress, updates and challenges.





### III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The steering committee shall:

1. Provide strategic guidance to maintain the relevance of YI through review meetings at the end of each YI cycle
2. Review activities and outcomes in their mentorship role and provide feedback to BCM.D.
3. Serve as mentors and role models to youth groups and guide them in carrying out projects.
4. Attend quarterly meetings and YI activities as speakers and/or peer-facilitators
5. Become de facto "Friends of BCM.D" and abide by its code of ethics



### IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MEMBER SECRETARY

The BCM.D programme coordinator will be de facto member secretary of the Committee and have the following roles and responsibilities:

**1**  
Call for and coordinate quarterly meetings in consultation with the Executive Director.

**2**  
Prepare agenda, circulate minutes and other necessary information to facilitate a smooth and productive meeting.

**3**  
Record the minutes of the Steering Committee meetings.

**4**  
Maintain the attendance of the Steering Committee members and inform the member if he/she had missed two consecutive meetings.

5  
Liaise between Steering Committee and BCMMD management.

6  
Maintain record of all activities and funds mobilised and expended for Youth Initiative

7  
The Member Secretary will report on the year's activities with the financial expenditures and future budget during the last quarterly Steering Committee Meeting of the calendar year.

8  
The annual report of the YI highlighting the activities of the year with the steering committee report will be prepared and submitted to BCMMD.

## 5 | YOUR RIGHTS AS A YOUTH



“It's not just old people who have rights - young people do too!”

### THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (1989)

In 1989 world leaders felt the need for special rights for children under 18, after discovering that the Human Rights do not protect children fully. They signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Bhutan was among the first countries to recognise and agree to it.

The Convention spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere have: the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.

The four core principles of the Convention are non-discrimination; devotion to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child. Every right spell out in the Convention is inherent to the human dignity and harmonious development of every child. The Convention protects children's rights by setting standards in health care, education, and legal civil and social services (UNICEF).

Built on varied legal systems and cultural traditions, the Convention is a universally agreed set of non-negotiable standards and obligations to be respected by every country signatory to it.

## THE NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY (2011)

Drafted by the Department of Youth and Sports in consultation with a number of different stakeholders, the National Youth Policy was developed to provide a broad framework for youth engagement. It seeks to ensure that all young men and women are provided with support and meaningful opportunities to enjoy their youth and reach their full potential.

The policy addresses major concerns and issues critical for young Bhutanese and gives direction to youth programmes and services provided by governmental and non-governmental organisations.

As a YI member, strategic objectives 23 and 24 might be of relevance to you.

**Strategic Objective 23:** To promote an environment that encourages young peoples' participation in decision making.

**Strategic Objective 24:** To provide platforms for young people of all ages to contribute their views through the development of youth leadership and civic duties and involvement in programmes and activities on national development.



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## 6 ACTIVE CITIZEN

An active citizen is one who cares about his/her community and the country. An active citizen stays engaged with issues in society by reading newspapers and volunteering in activities that benefit the community. S/he also holds concerned authorities or agencies accountable and exercises the right to voice to influence a decision by questioning government decisions. This takes various forms such as sharing of views and concerns in public forums, writing to the editor, maintaining a blog, etc.

*critically examining*

One way to exercise your voice and influence decision is through studying issues in society and developing your position on it. Youth Initiative is one such programme that will prepare you with the knowledge and skills to review and research issues/policy of your interest. It provides an opportunity for your voices and views to be heard by individuals and agencies as you will present your position paper to decision-makers.



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## Be an Engaged Citizen: Make a Difference



**Talk:** Discussions and debates about important issues with different people can help you reflect on your position and understand the bigger picture.



**Be Informed:** Always follow news on newspapers/TV/online to make better informed decisions.



**Ask Questions:** If you do not understand a decision, ask your teacher, relevant authority, or even MPs.



**Write:** If you have any ideas/opinions to share about anything, write to newspapers or engage in online forums.



**Be an Everyday Engaged Citizen:** Act responsibly, adopt sustainable living practices like offering fruits for tshog to reduce use of plastics.



**Volunteer:** Give your time to assist in activities to benefit communities.



**Know Your Rights & Duties:** Democracy isn't just about rights, it's more about people taking responsibilities as citizens to govern themselves.



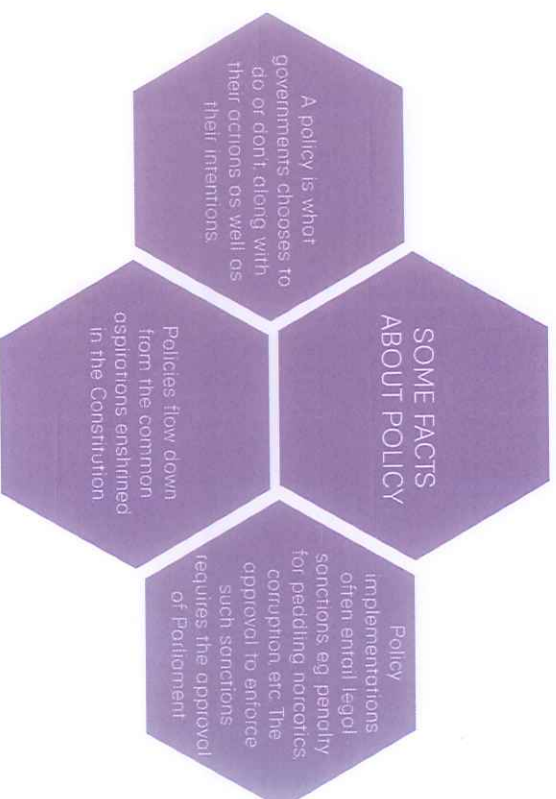
**Vote:** Voting is a responsibility to make a difference.

## 7 POLICY REVIEW

A policy is a statement of principles or rules that guide our actions.

Policy review is to find out what the policy states, its intended purpose, whether that purpose is being met, or a revision is required, and to provide recommendations.

“ Policy analysis is finding out what governments do, why they do it, and the difference it makes. ”



## POLICY FORMULATION AND REVISION PROCESS IN BHUTAN

- A proposal to formulate or review a public policy can originate from the cabinet, the GNHC (Gross National Happiness Commission) or any sector (private, civil society etc)
- Policy review or formulation begins with approval from the Cabinet.
- Upon revision of the proposed policies incorporating changes from proponents and the GNHC, it is subjected to the GNH screening tool.
- The revised policy endorsed by the GNHC is submitted to the Cabinet by the proponent
- The Cabinet may approve or recommend changes (re-application, review by relevant agencies, re-screening through the GNH tools etc).
- Finally, the approved policy will be implemented by the agency mentioned in the policy with an action plan endorsed by the GNHC.

*have cabinet?*



## HERE ARE A FEW WAYS YOU CAN INFLUENCE POLICIES

- Periodic elections are opportunities for you to make informed choices of the political parties based on their manifestos and pledges. Engage with political candidates, ask how they plan to realise the pledges.
- Constituency visits by Members of the Parliament (MP) or meetings are also opportunities to share your views or give feedback on issues or policies.
- Gewog, Dzongkhag and Thromde Zomdres (meetings) and consultative meetings are other spaces for feedback and comments. Participate in discussions and deliberations in such forums.
- You can also write to your MPs or the Editor of a newspaper about community issues and concerns.
- A compelling way to influence policies, decisions and priorities of the government is through the sharing of well-researched position papers with elected leaders.

### POSITION PAPER



A position paper is a compilation of diverse views on a policy that presents arguments based on research, review and dialogue with relevant stakeholders of the concerned policy. The purpose of a position paper is to generate support on an issue. It describes a position on policy and the rationale for that position. A position paper based on sound research and review can help you present convincing arguments on an issue. Writing a position paper on an issue or a policy will help you gain deeper insights into the policy with a rich pool of data (facts, figures, pictures, videos, testimonies, experiences, articles, and research, etc).



## HOW WILL YOU START?

- Pick a policy statement that you are interested in.
- Read existing reports or literature of differing views expressed by different people.
- Study the major arguments or incidents that gave birth to the policy. These information form your background information (context) to the position paper.
- Is the policy consistent with core values and principles, national goals and strategic plans of the country, such as the Constitution and the Five Year Plans?



- Is the policy realistic and relevant to the current scenario?
- Are there unclear statements, concepts or contradictions in the policy?
- Does the policy comply with collective agreements among stakeholders?
- What are the positive and negative consequences of the policy?
- Are there any loopholes within the policy?

For example, Bhutan's policy on Narcotics bans the cultivation, manufacture, sale, supply and distribution of tobacco products' under chapter 3 of the Tobacco Control Act, 2010. But, do you see people smoking or selling?

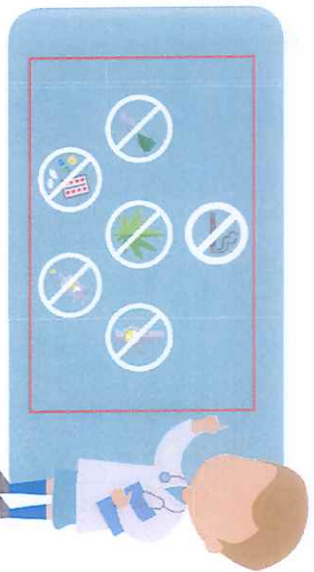
Are there reports or claims from the health sector on the number of Bhutanese dying due to smoking? If so, this is clearly a "gap" between policy and practice, and you might want to explore why this gap exists.



- Next question to ask is, who should you talk to who can help you with useful information on the gap you want to study?

Following the above example, you might identify trade officials as they monitor the imports, police as they enforce the policy and shopkeepers as they might import and sell. **And** youth and others who (may or may not smoke) as potential clients

- You can then approach the identified groups of people with questions that will help you understand the "gap" and assist you in formulating a position.



An assumption you might have that contribute to this "gap" between policy and practice could be attributed to lack of awareness, or weak enforcement, or a rampant black market, or leniency in the penalty. You could interview the informants with questions framed around those potential issues.

- Ask follow-up questions to probe for deeper insights. Sometimes the informant might give you a very different perspective that is worthy of probing. Feel free to probe, but don't lose focus of your interview.
- After collecting data from all the identified informants, review your data and look for common arguments or positions and differing perspectives or counter-arguments. It is very important to ensure that you are addressing all sides of the issue and present varying positions.
- Using comments, remarks and evidence from the data, to **support** your claims, start drafting your position paper in an easy and understandable manner.
- Ultimately your job is to take up one position and persuade your audience that you have well-founded knowledge of the topic being presented.

## HOW TO WRITE YOUR POSITION PAPER?

Here is a sample outline

**INTRODUCTION** (Provide background on your topic/policy, briefly explain its importance, and state your position on it)

**COUNTER ARGUMENTS** (Begin with counterclaims by speculating what someone who disagrees with your position might say about each of your points and refute the counterclaims with evidence and sound argument)

**YOUR ARGUMENTS** (State each of your claim one at a time, make sound arguments and provide evidence to support)

**CONCLUSION** (Summarise and restate your claims and make recommendations)

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## SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Social Media is a powerful tool. The following measures are not compulsory but offer directions on the best ways to use social media now that you're part of the YI. Social media is a great tool for building and maintaining your relationships with the professionals, the young people you represent and the people you work with.

### Social Media Guide



**Think before you post:** Ask yourself, is what you are about to post/share/text true, helpful, and necessary?



**Respect others' rights and privacy:** Refrain from sharing inappropriate materials concerning others for it could get you into trouble.



**Do not film/record/photograph without permission:** Always ask permission before you film/record/photograph someone or their children.



**Be courteous:** If you wouldn't say it in person, never say it online.



**Give and get credit:** If what you are posting or sharing isn't your work, then always credit.



**Make social media a better world:** Engage constructively and be inclusive, respect opposing/differing views.



**Seeing isn't believing:** Be smart and critical, not everything on the Internet is true.

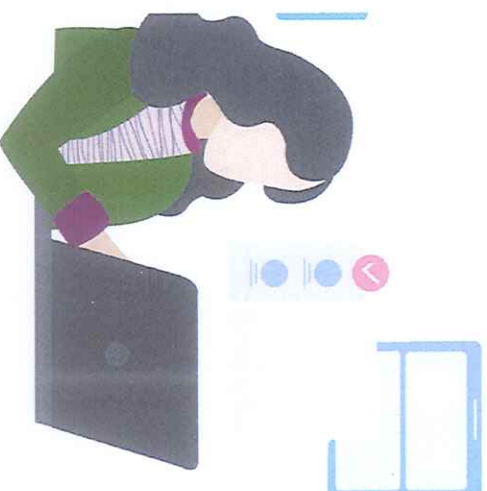


**Fact check:** When in doubt about something, fact check it.

**Be information smart and stay safe!**

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## TAKING ACTION



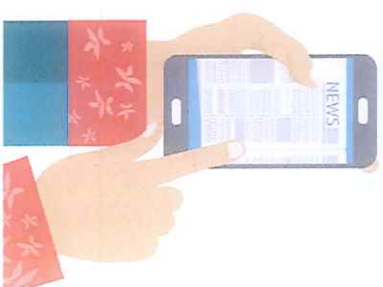
### DO SOMETHING PROACTIVE

**Start Conversations Online:** Get your friends involved in discussions about the YI campaigns by posting articles, videos and links. Take the debate to them. Make sure you follow us on Facebook and you can spread the word to your followers too.

### DO SOMETHING LOCAL

**Write to Your Local Press:** Positive media coverage is the key to winning any campaign. You can make a big impact by getting in touch with your local press to tell them about YI projects, by writing a letter to the editor or sending a press release.

**Involve Your Local Community or Your School:** Community groups acting on a local level play an important role in making communities a better place to live for its residents. They are groups of people who already live and work together and could be a great source of support for your campaign.



## DO SOMETHING BIG

Contact Your Member of Parliament (MP) about Yi campaigns.

Contacting your MP about an issue you care about is your right as one of his or her constituents. It's a representative's job to listen to its people. Simply write a letter, or ask them to meet with you to discuss the things you're concerned about.

Run a Panel Debate: Panel debates allow decision-makers and young people to get together to discuss issues which affect them. A good panel debate can engage an audience and give them a chance to have their say. You could hold your debate at your local youth council meeting in your school assembly and invite local politicians to be on the panel.

Yi members will find it helpful to meet people from the relevant agencies. Meet these people whether it is just to tell them about the work they are doing or whether it is to meet, plan campaigns together or even try to influence their way of thinking. You might want to start with local decision-makers and young people first. When you have experience and gathered some momentum with your project, then it is time to talk to national decision-makers!

## MEETING SOME OF THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE AND GROUPS MIGHT HELP.

Have you met with:

Bhutan Youth Development Fund | [www.bhutyouth.org](http://www.bhutyouth.org)

Chief of Police, PYPP | [www.pypp.gov.bt](http://www.pypp.gov.bt)

Department of Youth and Sports, MoE | [www.education.gov.bt](http://www.education.gov.bt)

Ministry of Labor and Human Resources | [www.mol.gov.bt](http://www.mol.gov.bt)

National Council members | [www.nationalcouncil.gov.bt](http://www.nationalcouncil.gov.bt)

The National Commission for Women and Children | [www.nwc.gov.bt](http://www.nwc.gov.bt)

Save the Children | [www.savethechildren.org](http://www.savethechildren.org)

Thoripoen Thimphu Thamdre | [www.citizenservices.gov.bt/tt/](http://www.citizenservices.gov.bt/tt/)

UNICEF | [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

Members of the Steering Committee of the Yi



## YOUR YI CHECKLIST

Here's a list of things that you can do as a member of the Youth Initiative. You don't necessarily have to do all of them, but it can help you think about what you can achieve in your one year tenure in the YI. You can also add to the list!

Have You...	Complete?	Comments
Read this handbook?		
Had your picture taken to be included in the YI website?		
Got a diary to schedule meetings and plan what you are doing when?		
Planned what you want to achieve in your term of one year?		
Read the handouts/required reading materials for the YI?		
Collected the contact details of other YI members in your group?		
Accumulated information about the people you are representing?		
Held regular meetings/ consultations with your group members/relevant stakeholders?		
Attended and participated in community events?		



Questions? Comments? Feedback?  
Feel free to contact us

bcmd@bcmdbt  
www.bcmdbt | +02-327903



Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy





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www.bcmnd.bt  
+02-327903  
PO BOX 1662, Thimphu, Bhutan



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