

PC's background  
2016

## A Brief overview of the Youth Initiative (YI) from 2013 till 2016

With the summer training for the second batch of youth representatives at the Youth Initiative (YI) successfully held from July 6 to 10, 2015, the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD) has now led two winter residential trainings and two summer trainings in 2014 and in 2015. The trainings held so far has largely focused to strengthen skills in different areas such as debate, deliberation, dialogue and research on national issues, communication and advocacy, policy making and representation, media literacy and also allowed the youth to interact with a great deal of speakers from various organisation.

As of the last training in July this year, the YI has engaged about 21 (5 female, 16 male) youth in 2014 and 28 (10 female, 18 male) youth in 2015, which brings to a total number of 15 female and 34 male youth representatives out of a total of 49 in two years. The 49 youth representatives, who serve a term of at least one year comprised of high school students, high school graduates, college students, college graduates, employed youth, a differently-abled youth and out-of-school youth. Further, the YI also saw number of young people at YI activities as volunteers both in 2014 and 2015, which are not accounted as 'youth representatives.'

In terms of the issues covered by the youth, the YI trainings are designed in such a way that the youth representatives are trained to collectively identify the issues that they want to advocate during their time as youth representatives. So far, there have been six committees covering a wide range of issues that the youth felt important to them. (*Further details about the committees are available in the previous YI reports compiled by BCMD*) In order to showcase a youthful perspective on the identified issues, three public sittings were also held where the youth representatives deliberated on their committee issues in front of a diverse group of people comprising of members of parliament, heads of organisations from the government, civil society and private sector, teachers and other youth.

Towards the mid of the YI's first year, it was unanimously agreed that the YI should go beyond identifying national issues and deliberating on the issues through public sitting, awareness campaigns, advocacy materials (print and audio-visual). The unanimous decision made among the founders of YI, the youth representatives and BCMD decided to take community-based action rather than deliberating on the issues. As of 2015, YI has successfully completed six local actions with few more on going.

Therefore, in 2014 and 2015, YI engaged 49 youth, two winter residential trainings, two summer trainings, led three public sittings and one panel discussion on BBS, six community-based actions, three advocacy videos produced, three podcast produced, two YI presentations made in Sherubtse and Samtse on International Democracy Day in 2014 and 2015 and one BCMD open Mic organised.

In 2016, Youth Initiative has 35 youth reps comprised of high schools, out of school youths and college students connecting three college in Bhutan i.e Paro college of Education, Samtse College of Education and Royal Thimphu College. This year Youth representatives are divided into three communities according to the places they stay. There are Samtse Community, Paro Community and Thimphu Community. Paro community took up an action on waste management at Tshongdue Town, Samtse