



**Project Title: Youth Speak-Deepening Democracy through Citizen Voice and Action.**

**Name of Organization: Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy.**

**Introduction:**

Bhutanese are learning to move from being subjects of a monarch to being citizens of a democracy with inherent rights and duties. The Bhutanese youth, who are largely apathetic at this point of time, need to become more active and concerned about what's happening in their society since they make up more than 60% of the population.

Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy started a youth group called Youth Initiative in 2013. The Youth Initiative is an informal, non-party affiliated association that gives a selected group of youth practical, hands-on experience in deliberating on national issues and taking community based action. Youth Initiative is supported by a steering committee comprising representatives from a cross section of society.

Youth Initiative (YI) deliberates on issues and comes up with action plans to become solutions to these problems. These action plans allow the youth to get acquainted with problem solving and learn about democracy first hand. Youth Initiative has taken up nine local actions and led three panel discussions on Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS).

**Objectives:**

- To give voice to youth from across Bhutan who will discuss topical issues on air and learn to exercise their voice and opinion
- Take them through basic research and evidence finding to support their opinions
- To promote the potential of young people in contributing constructive opinion on national issues.

**Background:**

Young people are an integral part of any country's development. If we can provide them useful skills and knowledge in understanding policies that affect the citizens, involve the communities to take community-based action and create greater awareness through proper research and constructive dialogue, they will one day become mindful and capable leaders of tomorrow.

The youth representatives at the YI belong to various schools, colleges and out-of-school youth within and outside Thimphu. They will bring substantial research skills and diverse opinion on any national issues that are concerning the youth population of Bhutan.

The YI believes in walking the talk. They deliberate on national issues but at the same time they take local actions to bring change. If this notion of taking action rather than just finding problems can be shared across the country, young people across the country will be inspired to take similar initiatives in their communities. In the process they learn to exercise their abilities to be an active citizen of Bhutan.