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BTI

BHUTAN TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE



ACTIVITY REPORT

2019-2020



(Towards Transparency, Accountability and Integrity)



Activity Report

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INTRODUCTION

Bhutan Transparency Initiative (BTI) was established in 2014 with a goal of promoting transparency, accountability and integrity. BTI since its inception, has taken numerous initiatives such as Civic Engagement to end corruption, Research to build evidence for an effective advocacy and policy for good governance, Women and Youth Engagement in Development interventions and Access to Justice for poor and marginalized.

BTI is pleased to present the activity report for the period of Jan 2019-December 2020. This report highlights the key activities and programme in the following areas

1. Networking and Coalition Building
2. Advocacy
3. Youth Engagement and Support
4. Trainings and workshops
5. Publications

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Networking and Coalition Building	Advocacy	Youth Engagement & Support	Accountability and Integrity Programs	Publications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Annual Members Meeting ✓ AM with PM ✓ Strengthening Collaboration with ACC ✓ Institutional linkage with the regional and international partners ✓ Zero waste hour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Advocacy and sensitization on corruption land scape and anti-corruption initiatives in the communities and colleges ✓ Advocacy and Legal Advice Program (ALAP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Instituting clubs in colleges ✓ Capacity building of the club members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Social Accountability Programs and projects ✓ Strengthening Accountability and integrity in the CSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ National Corruption Barometer Report 2020 ✓ Legal Resource Mapping for CSOs in Bhutan ✓ Guideline for CSO-Government Collaboration

1. NETWORKING AND COALITION BUILDING

Corruption cannot be fought alone. The success of the fight against corruption, will depend to a great extent on the existence of a good coalition among various stakeholders. Therefore, BTI since its inception has been working towards building strong network and partnership with the institutions and stakeholders dedicated to the cause of transparency, accountability and integrity. Following are the highlights

1.1. Annual Members Meeting

The reporting year (2019 and 2020) commenced with the Annual Members Meeting (AMM) of BTI. The AMM is one of the key activities of BTI to review the activities and discuss and deliver on the future events of the organization. The following are the highlights of the AMM 2019

- Nomination and Election of new Board Members and Chairperson
- Election of Chairperson - Elected Members
- Handing over of Chairmanship
- Presentation of the progress report
- Endorsement of Annual work plan 2019



With the completion of the term of the former board members, the event witnessed the change in the entire team of the governing body

1.2. Interactive session with students from Nagaland

BTI hosted a team of faculty and staff led by the Dr. Deben, Director of the institute, North East Institute of Social Science and Research (NEISSR) from Nagaland, India for an interactive meeting on how education policy, programs and practices are working with the present generation towards achieving Gross National Happiness and sustainable development goals. The broad topic of GNH brought forth a highly stimulating discussion which concentrated on the subject matter of good governance and how education and awareness to the youth can help uphold one of the important pillar of GNH. The chairperson of BTI Lynpo Kunzang Dorji led the session.



1.3. AM with PM

The Hon'ble Prime Minister (PM) visited the office of BTI as a part of the initiative of the PMO called Am with PM. AM with PM is an hour-long (8:30 am to 9:30 am) interaction with the PM to engage in a dialogue with the employees of different organizations for deliberating on important topics



and exchanging experiences and ideas. During the meeting, BTI presented the different activities and programs of the organization towards promoting accountability, integrity and transparency in the country. The Prime Minister commended the research initiative of BTI and encouraged to strengthen research on governance and corruption parameters.

1.4. Consultative Meeting With the GGC of National Council



Upon the invitation of the Good Governance Committee (GGC) of National Council (NC) of Bhutan, BTI attended the consultative meeting. The meeting was as a part of the series of consultative meetings initiated by the NC towards reviewing the constitutional post holders' appointment guidelines. The consultation discussed on the findings from the BTI's

research report titled 'Anti-Corruption Agency Strengthening initiative Assessment of The Bhutan Anti-Corruption Commission 2015' pertaining to the nomination and criteria for ACC leadership.

1.5. Strengthening Collaborations with the ACC

Towards strengthening the cooperation to prevent corruption, BTI and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) renewed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The ACC and BTI signed the first MoU in April 2015. The renewed MoU came into effect from 13 September 2019 and will be valid for three years. During the event, the Chairperson of the ACC highlighted that the MoU with BTI has been the most effective to prevent corruption since both the institutions share a common interest. The MoU signifies the commitment of two institutions to foster strategic partnership in promoting integrity, transparency and accountability and constructive citizen engagement to fight corruption collectively.



1.6. Zero Waste Hours

“Where we live must be clean, safe, organized, and beautiful, for national integrity, national pride, and for our bright future. This too is nation building.” -His Majesty the 4th Druk Gyalpo.

BTI joined the Nation in observing Zero Waste Hour “My Waste, My Responsibility”, a program which was graciously launched by Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen on June 2, 2019 coinciding with Coronation of His majesty The Fourth Druk Gyalpo. The occasion is used as an opportunity to reflect on managing our own waste. BTI have been actively observing the event every month in collaboration with our neighbor Neptune Travels by cleaning the surrounding of the office premises.



1.7. Institutional linkage with international Partners

To learn from experiences of similar Organizations in the region and across the globe, BTI has been working towards building strong network with the CSOs, NGOs and other Networks at the regional and international level. BTI is partner to TI chapters in Bangladesh, Nepal and Cambodia, VANI (Voluntary Action Network India) and Accountable Now. BTI is an institutional member for a Regional Network called LOGIN Asia (Local Governance Initiative Network) which offers a platform for the capacity building of the secretariat in governance and social accountability. BTI is also a member for Governmental Expert and Focal Point for UNCAC Review Mechanism.

2. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT



Youth comprise of more than half of our total population according to the population and housing census report 2017. BTI believes that every youth can be a leader and so we are committed to ensure that the youth are given equal opportunity to learn about how they can help their community. We have been working with diverse groups of youth in infusing integrity and fundamental human values of trust and honesty. BTI Collaborated with colleges under RUB and instituted 'Youth Practitioner for Accountability Bhutan' (YPAB)

Club in two colleges (College of Natural resources and Gedu College of Business Studies).

Following are the highlights of the project

- Establishment of a vibrant YPAB working together with management and the student body of the college.
- Initiated capacity building programs for the club members.
- Each YPAB has conducted a Community Scorecard (CSC) on selected services provided by the college and submitted the feedback to the management through an interface meeting.



"Through my engagement in a series of programs of the YPAB, it has instilled a great deal of confidence in me to question the governing systems that affect our daily life in the college. As most of the Bhutanese youth come from conservative families, it is something out of the ordinary for them to feel obligation to question people older to them let alone the governing bodies. Therefore, I feel that such programs/workshops should be conducted not only in colleges' or schools but also in many of our communities to empower our citizens."

Ms Kinley Zam Daphel (CNR)

3. ADVOCACY

3.1. Sensitization and Advocacy on Corruption



Public awareness and education is one of the proactive measure and a key anti-corruption strategy. BTI has played a critical role towards creating topical awareness on corruption, making people understand the causes and impact of corruption, legal frameworks and their rights and responsibilities in combating corruption, in particular their basic rights and duties to demand greater transparency and accountability in the delivery of public services. BTI covered three colleges under

RUB between 2019-2020 in conducting mass sensitization and advocacy on corruption, social accountability and other anti-corruption measures.

3.2. Advocacy and Legal Advice Program (ALAP)

Corruption is perceived to be steadily on the rise and there is a high level of acceptance of corruption among Bhutanese and low level of willingness to report corruption (NCBS 2016, BTI). Although people have the desire to contribute to the fight against corruption by reporting cases of corruption



to public anti-corruption institution, they often lose the will power to do so due to their discomfort in dealing with such institutions or lack of easy access to such institutions or in fear of the backlashes that they may have to face. Therefore, to provide complaint redressal mechanisms (provide legal advice and follow-up complaints) for the witnesses and victims of corrupt practices, inform citizens about their legal rights and encourage them to access justice, BTI implemented the Advocacy and Legal Advice Program (ALAP) in Bhutan in 2018.

ALAP is ongoing in Thimphu and Gelephu Thromde and serving as a very important platform for people to put forward corruption complaints without any fear of backlashes/repercussions and provides them with a trusted medium to promptly respond or solicit responds on their behalf. The project facilitated in forwarding numerous corruption complains to the ACC and other concerned agencies.

4. PUBLICATIONS

4.1. National Corruption barometer Report 2020



The National Corruption Barometer Survey (NCBS) has become one of BTI's key initiatives because of the importance that the survey plays in helping us understand the state of corruption in Bhutan. Due to the result of the NCBS, we have been able to paint a picture of what the citizens of Bhutan think about corruption and who they believe to be behind corruption. Between 2019 and 2020, BTI conducted the National Corruption Barometer Survey (NCBS) in collaboration with the ACC. The NCBS is

a longitudinal study to determine the level and trend of corruption in Bhutan. Numerous research studies were conducted on different themes such as on corruption, integrity, governance and public service delivery. The 1st NCBS was conducted in 2016 followed by the same study NCBS 2020. The findings from the NCBS provides necessary reference not only to Bhutan but also on global level.

4.2. Legal Resource Mapping

BTI in collaboration with the South Asia Hub conducted a qualitative survey on the Legal resource mapping for the CSOs in Bhutan. The study covered all the CSOs and some of the private legal practitioners in the country to identify some of the needs as follows

- The legal provisions that affects the CSOs
- Build database and
- Facilitate the mapping of legal CSOs with the Legal aid providers.



4.3. Guideline on CSO-Government Collaboration

During the CSO retreat of 2019, CSOs expressed the need for a modality for CSOs and Government to collaborate in order to facilitate productive engagement by Civil Societies in Five- year development plan and thereby contribute meaningfully in the achievement of the National Key Results. This discussion and decision from the CSO retreat 2019 was submitted by the CSO Core Coordinating Committee (CCC) to the Cabinet during the Densa Meeting (Ministers' Enclave) held on 17 January 2020. The Hon'ble Prime Minister instructed the CSO representatives to initiate a draft guideline for CSOs and Government Collaboration.



BTI was identified by the CCC to lead the drafting of the guideline. As part of the consultative processes, several groups of stakeholders were consulted through Focus Group Discussions (FGD). FGDs were conducted with the Executive Directors and the Programme Officers of CSOs. FGDs were also conducted with a group of senior Government officials representing Government ministries as well as from autonomous agencies such as the Royal Audit Authority (RAA) and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). The final draft of the guideline was submitted to the CCC for the presentation to the Cabinet for the endorsement.



5. ACCOUNTABILITY AND INTEGRITY PROGRAMS

Informing and empowering public and institutions with education, access to information and skill acquisition is one of the priority area of BTI. BTI implemented the following capacity building programs towards promoting Accountability, Transparency and Integrity.

5.1. Social Accountability

BTI has been engaged in implementing Social Accountability (SA) programs in the Local Governments in engaging citizens and building anti-corruption consciousness since 2015. In 2019, BTI embarked on a new project to develop the capacity of rural women in planning, implementation and monitoring of the developmental activities in their respective communities through a project called 'Amplifying the Voice of Rural Women for Inclusive Development.

Through the project, BTI engaged around 150 women from Gelephu and Zhemgang and formed a committee called Committee of Community Members (CCM). The committee was instituted as a Social Accountability Practitioner Groups and the members of the committee along with the local government leaders were trained on Community Score Card. After the training, a joint action plan was developed in consultation with both the members of CCM and the LG leaders for the CCM engagement in the developmental activities prioritized under the 12th five year plan in their respective communities. To foster collaboration and cooperation between the LG leaders and the CCM members, an MOU have been instituted as per the action plan.



Following are the highlights of our Social Accountability Programs

- Instituted social accountability practitioner groups in Gelephu Thromde and Phangkhar Gewogs
- Conducted capacity buildings programs on SA to the representatives of the LGs and the communities
- Built strong foundation of partnership between the citizen's groups and the LG administrations with a clear framework of engagement through an MOU
- The groups are actively engaged with the Local Governments in conducting timely Community Scorecard to towards access quality if service delivery

“At the initial stage of the project, I had a reservation on how people will react to the project because it’s empowering them and they may think that they have the power which would also disturb the functioning of the LG administration if they don’t use it with responsibility. There is every chance that the committee members could corner the developmental activities in the LG and also target the LG leaders based on personal interest. However, as the project gets rooted in the community and with a proper framework of engagement between the community members and LG administration in place based on MOU, TOR, and code of conduct, the project is very encouraging as it makes our works much easier with full cooperation from the people led by the CCM.”

- Tashi, the Gup, Phamgkhar Gewog, Zhemgang.

5.2. Global Standard for CSO Accountability

During the last decade, the CSOs have witnessed major transformation globally specially with increasing shrinking spaces and Bhutan is no different. There is an increasing pressure on civil societies for ethical and transparent governance standards. With the amendment of the CSO Rules and Regulations (2010) there is more stringent requirements for more transparent, ethical and accountable conduct of the CSOs. Questions are also being asked about the accountability and transparency within the fraternity. There is an ever increasing need for more precise verifiable indicators of transparency and accountability and code of conduct.

Therefore, towards strengthening Accountability practices in CSO fraternity in the country, Bhutan Transparency Initiative (BTI) conducted a training workshop on the Global Standard for CSO Accountability.



The goal of the workshop was to introduce the Global Standards for Accountability and promote the adoption of the Dynamic Accountability approach through the Global Standards. The event was organized with the technical support from Voluntary Action Network India (VANI) and Accountable Now. Representatives from 20 CSOs took part in the three day workshop. The outcome of the workshop was being able to develop a common framework for accountability for the CSOs in the country based on the global standards.

5.3. Workshop on Ethics and Integrity for CSOs

Towards enhancing the ethical conduct of the CSOs, BTI collaborated with the ACC to conduct a training workshop on Ethics and Integrity for the CSOs in the country. It was a part of BTI's support to the CSOs to identify the systems and mechanisms to promote integrity, potential corruption risks in confronting the CSOs and formulate comprehensive and realistic integrity plan in the CSOs. The event was also in line with the 2nd objective of the National Integrity and Anti-Corruption Strategy (NIACS 2019-2023), on inculcating ethical behavior through education and awareness programs. Representatives from 17 CSOs and two CBO participated in the three days event.



The workshop was able to identify the gaps and the potential corruption risks confronting the CSOs and frame a draft Organizational Integrity plan (OIP) for the CSOs. The draft OIP was presented during the CSO quarterly meeting and it was endorsed by the CSOs.

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- b. Civil Society Organization Authority (CSOA)
- c. Department of Local Government 9DLG)
- d. Gelephu Thromde
- e. Helvetas Bhutan
- f. European Union
- g. Phangkhar Gewog Administration
- h. CSO partners
- i. Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)
- j. Accountable Now
- k. Gedu College of Business Studies (GCBS)
- l. College of Natural Resources (CNR)
- m. College of Science and Technology (CST)

2. BTI Board Members:

- a. Lynpo Kinzang Dorji
- b. Mr. Kunga Jurmi
- c. Dr. Samdrup Rigial
- d. Aum Kesang Choden
- e. Dasho Dorji Wangchuk
- f. Mr. Pema Tshering
- g. Aum Sonan Yangdon

BTI would also like to thank all our members, friends and individuals who continue to support our work as resource persons, facilitators, volunteers, interns and enumerators. We appreciate your involvement with BTI.

TASHI DELEK

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