Spring Update
2014
At the base of Mt. Jomolhari, a small group of school children gather every day for morning assembly. The mountains reverberate their Buddhist chant invoking peace and happiness for all sentient beings while wishing away all their sufferings. So begins each day for pupils at the Soe Dangochong Community Primary School. As this school lies in an area known as a rare hotbed for endangered snow leopards, we at the Bhutan Foundation fondly call it the “school among snow leopards.”

Sons and daughters of yak herders, these five- to eleven-year-old children are taught in a small, poorly lit room without proper insulation. They have two teachers who take turns teaching them English, math, Dzongkha, and environmental studies in accordance with the national curriculum of Bhutan, hoping to prepare the children for higher education. The school currently only goes up to third grade, and for this reason, slightly older children go to school either in Lingzhi (a full day’s hike across a 5,000 meter pass) or in lower Paro (two days’ hike from the village). At a young age, children who go to these places are separated from their parents. While free primary education is a priority of the government, remote places like Dangochong is not a priority due to its relatively small population. Therefore, such schools do not get the resources needed from the government.

But these children have dreams, just like children in larger communities. The community has requested help to build a better school to accommodate more grades and children. That way, young children can be close to their homes and parents through their formative early years. This would also be an opportunity to construct a school that is warmer and uses passive solar better for lighting and warmth. In addition, support from the Bhutan Foundation will help the school with additional reading and teaching resources. This project will be implemented in partnership with the Mindspring Foundation.

Looking Forward in 2014

- Construction of a new school building.
- Installation of library book resources and bookshelves.
- Digital library and learning resources.
- Involvement of school children at the Jomolhari Mountain Festival on October 8–9, 2014.

Watch our video on how you can help us build our school: www.bhutanfound.org/school
A Window into Bhutan’s Forests

Taking advantage of the dry season before the onset of the monsoons, a team led by biologist Tshering Tempa from the Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environment (UWICE) has been setting up more than 200 cameras in the forests of two national parks: Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park and Royal Manas National Park. The remote cameras have already recorded an unprecedented diversity of wildlife, including numerous predators, such as tigers and clouded leopards, and their prey. The park staff and researchers from UWICE are investigating tiger density in these areas so that a reliable population baseline can be established. Your support through the Bhutan Foundation allows conservation authorities such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Royal Government of Bhutan, to assess population trends, which in turn can better inform conservation efforts.

Photographs of the diverse array of predators and prey species offer a glimpse of the richness of Bhutan’s forests. Intuition tells us that an abundance of predators indicates a corresponding plentitude of prey, but what these camera-trap photos are beginning to tell us is very revealing. For instance, the profusion of middle-bodied prey, such as wild pigs, could be an important factor for the predators. The researchers from UWICE and the parks will soon announce clear details of the surveys.

Environment

Looking Forward in 2014

• Two peer-reviewed journal articles published based on this research.
• Completion of tiger surveys for two national parks to provide tiger population baselines in partnership with the Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environment.
• Baseline population data on other predators and their prey.
Making Education for All Possible

The Bhutan Foundation is taking big steps toward making Bhutan’s intention to provide education for students with mild to moderate disabilities a reality.

The Royal Government of Bhutan is committed to ensuring the healthy functioning of Bhutan’s society by providing equal opportunity to every citizen to develop each gift and ability. In keeping with this commitment, the Ministry of Education was able to draft the country’s first-ever Special Education Policy as a part of the National Education Policy to guide programs and projects to spearhead special education services in the country. But despite positive political will, the lack of expertise in the field of educational services in addressing the needs of all children, in particular those with special needs and varying ranges of disabilities, is challenging. The Bhutan Foundation started the Special Education Program under the guidance of a U.S. Special Education Committee and in partnership with the Ministry of Education in 2008 to build the capacity of the special education teachers in Bhutan by enhancing their educational and training opportunities.

Last summer, we took a team of seven volunteers specialized in special education to develop the capacity of the teachers in two schools, one in the west in the capital city, Thimphu, and one in the eastern region, Mongar. These volunteers made remarkable progress in both schools, focusing on embedded staff development, development of an effective Special Education Needs Team, screening procedures that will identify students with learning difficulties, remediation, development of Individualized Education Plans, classroom management strategies, and classroom accommodation. Additionally, the team provided trainings for general education teachers on instructional strategies and explicit lesson planning. We plan to develop these skills further for teachers in Bhutan in the summer of 2014 with the expertise of more volunteer special education practitioners.

The success of our program is solely reliant on the success of our partners on the ground. In October 2013, the Ministry of Education’s Early Childhood Care and Development and Special Education Division visited the United States for a 10-day study trip to explore U.S. special education services. The visit included various schools and settings that provided a continuum of services for children with disabilities. Through this visit, the team saw a wide range of services, allowing them to revisit their plans for the Special Education Program in Bhutan: note key observations, identify critical gaps and implications, and develop action plans and next steps for the program.

To further enhance the collaboration and partnership of our partners on the ground and as a follow-up training from summer 2013, we supported a winter conference organized by the Ministry of Education in January 2014 with over 30 participants, including various teachers, principals, and stakeholders, each shared the progress of inclusive education programs, deliberated on issues and challenges in the implementation of special education programs, discussed alternative measures to address their issues and challenges, and developed action plans for the 2014 academic year. Participants included principals, special education coordinators, and teachers from the eight schools teaching children with special needs as well as local partners, such as Draktsho Vocational Centre, Ability Bhutan Society, and the Bhutan Canada Foundation.

The Bhutan Foundation continues to work collaboratively with the Ministry of Education to develop programs to help the growing needs of special education services in the schools in Bhutan.

Looking Forward in 2014

- Begin using “Train the Trainer” module for special education teachers to become trainers for new schools.
- Begin occupational therapy for children with special needs in the schools with the help of an occupational therapist volunteer.
- Begin a transition program at Drukgyel Deaf School and at least three hotels in the Paro Valley through job coaching and employment opportunities for students with hearing impairment.
- Monitor and evaluate special education programs in all eight schools teaching children with special needs in the country.
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, help set up two new schools that will focus on children with special needs in the country.
- Place nine volunteers to provide embedded staff development at Changangkha Middle Secondary School and Drukgyel Lower Secondary School in summer 2014.
Building Capacity, Saving Lives

The Bhutan Foundation is committed to building capacity to improve emergency medical services in Bhutan. Just this year alone, 41 new medical professionals were trained in emergency medicine and trauma care. The Emergency Medicine and Trauma Care training is now a part of Bhutan’s clinical orientation program, which all new doctors and nurses are required to complete prior to starting medical practice. The training was developed to provide guidelines and protocols on emergency care and treatment in Bhutan.

This is the first training conducted at the National Emergency Education Center after its inauguration in November 2013. The Ministry of Health, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital, and the University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan established the Center jointly with support from the Bhutan Foundation. The Center is affiliated with the Hoch Center for Emergency Education, Phelps Memorial Hospital, in the United States.

The Bhutan Foundation also supports out-of-country professional training for health-care providers working in emergency care. The Bhutan Foundation and the Ministry of Health have supported two doctors to pursue a five-year specialization course in Emergency Medicine in Malaysia. In July 2013, Dr. Sona Pradhan graduated and joined the National Hospital as Bhutan’s first ER physician.

Three nurses were also sent for triage training to Tan Tock Seng Hospital in Singapore. They then returned to Bhutan and started the triage system at Bhutan’s National Referral Hospital. The Head of the Emergency Department, Dr. Tashi Tenzin, also participated in a separate training for Emergency Department Leadership in Florence, Italy. Upon his return, he designed a separate patient entrance, which diverts the general public from using the emergency entrance. As a result of these two critical trainings, Dr. Tashi says that “the triage system is fully functioning now and has vastly improved patient flow and patient management.”

The National Hospital Emergency Department has also started registering trauma cases on a paper-based format created with help from Clinical Database Management (CDM) and Tufts University. While the department is waiting for a trauma registry software to be in place, they are recording trauma cases on paper. One Bhutanese nurse from the National Hospital has been trained in trauma registry by CDM and Tufts.

Going forward, the Bhutan Foundation hopes to focus on in-country training of health-care professionals through the newly established Emergency Education Training Center.

Looking Forward in 2014

- Provide a Trauma Man simulator and training workshops, so that doctors and nurses can practice advanced life-support techniques.
- Donate training equipment such as intubation manikins, birthing simulators, IV simulators, and CPR manikins to the Emergency Education Training Center. With the donation, we will also train two nurses in equipment cleaning and maintenance.
- Work with Bhutanese specialists and Harvard Humanitarian Initiative to finalize the National Emergency Medicine and Trauma Care module that will be published for use by all doctors in Bhutan.
- Partner with Phelps Memorial Hospital, New York, to provide CPR instructor training in Bhutan, so that Bhutanese health-care providers become local instructors.
- Conduct additional Advanced Cardiac Life Support and Pediatric Advanced Life Support provider trainings to all doctors and senior nurses in Bhutan.
A Window to the Past and Cultural Identity

Bhutan is at the threshold of an exciting new era. But with development, globalization, and the extensive reach of the Internet, the country is experiencing rapid social changes, and the continuity of Bhutan’s cultural traditions and inherent values lies in danger of diminishing. With a population of more than 50 percent below the age of 25, the challenges are daunting, and there is an urgency to counterbalance the effects modernization brings. Also, an increasing number of young people have been leaving their communities for the cities, often losing their understanding of local customs and traditions. In response, the Bhutan Foundation sees a strong need to preserve Bhutan’s cultural values through restoration of important cultural heritage sites such as the Wangduechhoeling Palace, the birthplace of Bhutan’s unity.

We are nearing the end of the documentation phase of the restoration and adaptive re-use of the Wangduechhoeling Palace. Situated at the geographic and historic heart of the country, the Wangduechhoeling Palace is an architectural masterpiece that represents the essential roots of Bhutanese history and culture. The palace will serve as a bridge to the past, connecting and educating people on Bhutan’s history and culture and serving as a place where people can envision and imagine important stories from the past.

Buddhism, of course, is a huge part of Bhutan’s history and culture to this day. And it is primarily through Bhutan’s cultural traditions and daily customs that the values and philosophies of Buddhism have been instilled and passed on. With diminishing traditions, there is a vital need and opportunity here in this unique Palace to explain Buddhist philosophies and values that are such an essential part of Bhutanese culture and society.

Further, activities that will celebrate and nurture important traditions that are still alive in Bhutanese culture as well as ones that have been lost will be revived. A grand annual fair that the Second King started on the Palace grounds, which is said to have drawn people from all over the country and Tibet, will be reinstated. The Palace will offer an opportunity to ensure the continuity of traditional Bhutanese architecture, painting, and craftsmanship. Additionally, the Wangduechhoeling Palace is ideally situated to serve as a gateway into the Bumthang Valley and into Eastern Bhutan.

We are working in partnership with the Division of Conservation of Heritage Sites, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, with technical support from Tsao and McKown Architects. Intervention and consolidation plans for restoration are currently underway.

Looking Forward in 2014

- Preserve this unique bridge to the past, maintaining its unaltered original state as much as possible.
- Develop fire mitigation strategies to prevent the Palace from being prone to fire disasters during restoration. Eventually, the plan is to create the Palace to serve as a model for fire-protected buildings in Bhutan.
- Explore the historical context and significance of the wall mural paintings in the Palace.
- Build capacity of the architects and engineers at the Ministry of Home and Culture, Division of Conservation of Heritage Sites, Royal Government of Bhutan.
Building Partnerships to Strengthen Democracy in Bhutan

In our efforts to strengthen Bhutan's young and evolving democracy, the Bhutan Foundation established a partnership with the International Republican Institute (IRI). Partnerships like this will work toward enhancing high-quality journalism and media freedom, strengthening citizen participation, and developing the capacity of the political parties, media, and civil society organizations to promote a culture of democracy, citizen participation, and accountability in the political process. With support from USAID and IRI, we are partnering with the Bhutan Media Foundation, the Bhutan Center for Media and Democracy, QED Consulting Group and political parties in consultation with the Election Commission of Bhutan to carry out the programs in Bhutan.

In September 2013, IRI conducted a series of strategic planning consultations with each of the five political parties in Bhutan, including the People’s Democratic Party, Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa, Bhutan Kuensel Nyam Party, Druk Chirwang Tshogpa, and Druk Phuensum Tshogpa. This was followed up by a number of consultations in December 2013 to help the parties with electorate outreach efforts, establishing continuity between elections and assisting parties to define their roles in a functioning democratic society. IRI focused on topics such as internal party organization, platform development, the role of political parties between election cycles, and the use of public opinion research in identifying voters’ priorities.

In addition, in December 2013, IRI conducted a Women’s Leadership School in Thimphu to enhance the leadership capacity of female members of all five political parties. IRI’s expert trainer and author of the Women’s Democracy Network’s women’s leadership training manual conducted the training, which covered topics such as leadership skills including motivation to lead, gaining trust and building influence, team building, conflict management, and delegating to others. At the end of the training, we worked with the women leaders to develop a work plan for future activities building on skills they had acquired during the training.

In partnership with QED Consulting Group, we conducted a panel discussion on the Right to Information Bill as part of the Bhutan Development Forum on January 17, 2014. The forum was a platform for all the stakeholders to discuss issues and exchange views and opinions on the development agenda of Bhutan that are of national importance.

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Partnerships and Looking Forward in 2014

- Journalism skills training in partnership with Bhutan Media Foundation on investigative journalism, television and radio reporting, social media, citizen journalism, and photojournalism for journalists, lecturers, and students of journalism.
- Two Bhutan Development Forums in partnership with QED Consulting Group to provide a platform for all the stakeholders to discuss issues and exchange views and opinions on the development agenda of Bhutan that are of national importance.
- Media and communications trainings in partnership with the Bhutan Center for Media and Democracy (BCMD) to deepen youth participants’ capacity and desire to engage in Bhutan’s democracy.
- Community-building activities, whereby BCMD will host Open Mic Nights as a platform for free expression and a Citizen’s Tea every Saturday to engage participants in civil debates and discussions with other citizens, which is critical for the flourishing of a democracy.
- Eight focus group discussions in partnership with QED Consulting Group, IRI, Patton Boggs LLP, and Penn Schoen and Berland Associates among registered Bhutanese voters to gain a qualitative read on initial attitudes and perceptions about the current situation in Bhutan from the voters themselves.
Enabling and Engaging Civil Society Participation

Recognizing the importance of a strong nonprofit community in the success of Bhutan’s young democracy, the Bhutan Foundation continuously strives to support our local civil society organization (CSO) partners in Bhutan. We believe that civil society development engages people, organizations, and the government to work together to improve lives in their communities and foster good governance.

In 2013, the Bhutan Foundation in collaboration with the Loden Foundation supported a two-day training workshop on Accounting and Quickbooks for all our local CSO partners. Each organization that participated in this training received a free copy of Quickbooks for Non-Profits. As a follow-up to the training, the trainers started an online self-help group for all CSOs that allowed participants to address additional questions for the trainers.

In collaboration with the Civil Society Organization Authority of Bhutan, the Bhutan Foundation is also currently conducting a survey among all the registered CSOs in Bhutan to identify their most crucial training needs. We have identified several potential topics, including CSO management, project management, leadership, CSO finance and sustainability, fundraising and marketing, and story-telling through photography. We hope to conduct these trainings in the coming year.

Additionally, the Bhutan Foundation aims to support our local partner organizations through a Small Grants Program. All our local CSO partners were invited to apply for a small grant through our Bhutan Foundation’s office in Thimphu, and a total of seven grants were awarded to various organizations.

Grants Awarded and Looking Forward in 2014

• Continued support for the Accounting and Quickbooks Workshop in partnership with Loden Foundation.
• The Bhutan Ecological Society for an “Energy, Economy, and Environment Conference” in partnership with QED Consulting Group, a local think-tank.
• Voluntary Artists’ Studio, Thimphu, for the “Chubachu Art Park,” a youth initiative to adopt and preserve a landscape along the Thimphu River in the capital city, Thimphu, which continues to grow with urbanization.
• Clean Bhutan, an initiative by a group of volunteers who aim toward “Advocating Behavioral Changes to Save Bhutan from Waste by Committing Bhutan as Zero Waste by 2030.”
• Association of Bhutan Tour Operators for working with local communities, tour operators, and other relevant stakeholders toward sustainable eco-tourism in protected areas and national parks.
• Taryana Foundation to work in Wama, a remote community in eastern Bhutan (Mongar), helping the community with sustainable housing.
Developing Friendships and Partnerships

The Bhutan Foundation promotes broader understanding and knowledge of Bhutan in the United States and abroad. Our broad network and deep connections provide opportunities for knowledge exchange and high-impact collaborations. Through these networks, we develop opportunities for partnerships for our local partners in Bhutan. To do so, we plan events to increase the knowledge and awareness of Bhutan, its people, rich culture, and pristine environment, and we talk about the work we are doing with our local partners in Bhutan.

In November 2013, the Bhutan Foundation participated in a panel discussion hosted by the Yale Himalaya Initiative called, “Environment, Livelihood and Culture: A Round Table Discussion on Collaborative Research Partnerships in Bhutan.” During this event at Yale University, we discussed the 20-year ongoing partnership between Yale and Bhutan in the areas of environmental conservation, public health collaboration, and cultural preservation.

This spring, the Bhutan Foundation celebrated the Bhutanese New Year in San Francisco, California, reconnecting with partners on the West Coast as well as Bhutanese friends living in the area. This gathering brought together friends from across the Bay Area to continue to learn more about Bhutan and the work that the Foundation is doing. Additionally, in collaboration with the Environmental Film Festival in Washington, DC—one of the world’s largest and most influential showcases of environmental films—the Bhutan Foundation is featuring Happiness, a film about Bhutan and the journey of what development brings into the country.

This year also marks 100 years since the first coverage of Bhutan by National Geographic in 1914. To kick-start this celebration, in collaboration with National Geographic, Ms. Kuenga Wangmo, the first and only trained archeologist of Bhutan, presented her work on exploring Ancient Rock Art, Cliff Settlements, and Burials in the High Mountains of Bhutan in Washington, DC. Ms. Wangmo is the co-founder and technical advisor for the newly created Center for Archaeology at Sherubtse College, Royal University of Bhutan. Her work is supported by the Bhutan Foundation and National Geographic.

Our partnerships in the United States provide opportunities for us to explore further partnerships, and the Foundation looks forward to more events in new cities throughout the United States and abroad.

Looking Forward in 2014

- Screening of Made in Bhutan in New York and Boston, Massachusetts, a documentary film portraying the recent emergence of entrepreneurship in Bhutan, which was made possible by our local partner, the Loden Foundation.
- Screening of the Yak Herder’s Son, a Bhutan Foundation production, about a ranger from the capital city of Bhutan who returns to the mountains to capture the beauty of the Himalayas and runs into a young yak herder’s son; both are somehow affected by the rare snow leopard, but in different ways. Screenings will be held in Fort Worth, Texas, Seattle, Washington, and Chicago, Illinois.
- A series of events in celebration of 100 years since the first coverage of Bhutan by National Geographic in 1914, to be held in Washington, DC, and in Bhutan.
Stay Connected

Ways to Give

With your support, the Bhutan Foundation and its Bhutanese nonprofit partners can make a bigger impact to save more lives, better protect the Bhutanese environment, give hope to children with disabilities, help local nonprofits thrive, develop the role of a media in a new democracy, preserve Bhutan’s unique culture, and much more. Here are some ways to be involved...

Donate Online
www.bhutanfound.org/MakeAGift

Mail a check
Bhutan Foundation
3121 South Street NW
Washington, DC 20007

Make a Wire Transfer
To make a wire transfer please contact the Bhutan Foundation at +1 (202) 609-7363 or email: info@bhutanfound.org

Make a Stock Gift
The best method of transferring donated securities into the Bhutan Foundation account is via a DTC Transfer. You will need to initiate the transfer with your broker.

For further inquiries, please contact Ms. Dawa Sherpa at +1 (202) 609-7363 or email: dawa.sherpa@bhutanfound.org

Please contact the Bhutan Foundation office by telephone or email once the transfer has been arranged.

The Bhutan Foundation is a tax-exempt organization in the US under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code Federal. ID #13-3376290.

Stay Connected

Our Local Partners
Ability Bhutan Society
Bhutan Canada Foundation
Bhutan Center for Media and Democracy
Bhutan Ecological Society
Bhutan Health Trust Fund
Bhutan Media Foundation
Bhutan Nuns Foundation
Bhutan Youth Development Fund
Janga Animal Saving Trust
Lhomon Society
Loden Foundation
QED Consulting Group
Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women
Royal Government of Bhutan
Royal Institute of Health Sciences, Royal University of Bhutan
Royal Society for Protection of Nature
Tarayana Foundation
Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environment
VAST (Voluntary Artists’ Studio, Thimphu)
WWF (World Wildlife Fund), Bhutan

Our International Partners
Asia Society
Clinical Data Management
DBA Trauma Program Services LLC
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Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO)
Humane Society International (HSI)
Karuna Foundation
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Snow Leopard Conservancy
The International Republican Institute
The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation
The University of Montana
The Wildlife Conservation Society
Tsoa & McKown Architects
U.S. Aid for International Development
World Monuments Fund
World Wildlife Fund
Yale University

Our Mission

The Bhutan Foundation serves the people of Bhutan in living and sharing the principle of Gross National Happiness. We cherish the values of the Bhutanese intention: measuring “happiness” as the highest attribute of all decision-making. We contribute to strategies of conservation of the environment, equitable and sustainable development, good governance, and preservation of culture in Bhutan. The Bhutan Foundation serves as an American not-for-profit organization that is wholly focused on the benefit of the country and people of Bhutan, bridging understanding between our two countries and beyond.

For more information on our programs and activities, please visit
www.bhutanfound.org

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