



**From the Bottom Up:  
Empowerment and Protection to  
Strengthen Human Security in Bhutan**

**Civil Society Organization Best Practices  
and Lessons Learned**

December 2010





## Foreword

It is with great pleasure that the UN partner agencies in Bhutan, including UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNV and WFP present this CSO best practices booklet prepared under the first Joint Programme implemented in Bhutan, entitled “Basic Education/Literacy and Income Security for Vulnerable People Including Children and Women in Bhutan”, funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) in May 2007.

Based on the concept of Human Security, the programme provided support to literacy and vocational education, health, and income generation and job creation, through a mutually reinforcing protection and empowerment mechanism, using an integrated, multi-sectoral and community driven approach.

This booklet has been prepared to review activities implemented through CSOs (RENEW, Tarayana Foundation, Youth Development Fund and Handicraft Association of Bhutan) and document success stories and best practices that have contributed to the positive output of the project as it is nearing its completion in December 2010. The booklet provides lessons learned and recommendations on future activities for up-scaling and replication in other parts of the country, as well as sustaining progress achieved through the project.

The CSOs’ engagement was aimed at supporting disadvantaged populations, including women and youth, and promoting gender equality. After two years of implementation, the early benefits of the project and emerging social change have already been witnessed at the individual, community and organizational level. Moreover, although the project primarily targeted the vulnerable segments of the population in the remotest, rural communities of Dagana, Samtse, Mongar, and Zhemgang districts, it served more people than originally intended, reaching 20 districts, with a total estimated 3,279 beneficiaries.

We hope you find this booklet useful and wish that our common efforts in identifying mechanisms and ways of achieving better synergy and capitalizing on the self-set objective of the UN system in Bhutan through joint initiatives, such as the Human Security Fund project, will continue to strengthen and operationalize the vision of “Delivering as One.”

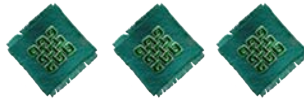


Claire Van der Vaeren

Resident Coordinator

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## **An Introduction: Best Practices Booklet and Intended Aims**

The concept of human security has emerged in today's world based on growing recognition that threats related to the security of both countries and people are increasingly becoming more complex and inter-related than ever before. As such, addressing human security requires a comprehensive approach that builds upon new opportunities and expanded partnerships to reduce threats in an integrated manner while at the same time considering the well-being, livelihood and dignity of all individuals.

In May of 2007, the United Nations Trust Fund (UNTFHS) funded a 30-month project in Bhutan that aimed to tackle poverty in rural areas while at the same time empower vulnerable populations, especially for women and children, through support to literacy and vocational education, health, income generation and job creation. Implemented jointly by UN Participating Organizations and respective government implementing partners, the project also enlisted the engagement of four key civil society partners in order to expand reach and promote targeted interventions tailored to the real needs of disadvantaged people.

From the inception of the project, documentation of best practices, success stories and lessons learned related to non-governmental organization (NGO) involvement has been of key interest as this learning will contribute toward up-scaling and replication of future initiatives and both ensure sustainability and continued progress of the activities funded by the Human Security Fund (HSF).

This booklet provides a collection of stories, perspectives and lessons learned from both partner staff and beneficiaries across Bhutan whose involvement in activities was intended to both empower and protect.

## **Human Security – An Integrated Approach**

As highlighted earlier, addressing threats linked to human security – both newly emerging and more persistent, long term ones - requires a comprehensive and inter-related approach. Such risks or threats can include chronic poverty, ethnic violence, human trafficking, climate change, health pandemics, terrorism and sudden economic or financial downturns. Effective human security response requires a more active engagement of a wide variety of partners and shifts away from an exclusive state-centered focus on national security to one that is expanded to include inter-woven connections and issues manifesting between national security, development and human rights.

In its final report “*Human Security Now*”, the Commission on Human Security (CHS) (2003) defined human security as:

*“...to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build upon people’s strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.”*

Complementing state security, human security strives to protect people against a wider range of risks or threats for both individuals and communities, and furthering protective dimensions, also seeks to empower individuals to act on their own behalf. The approach, thus, works to ensure that each person has opportunities and choices related to fulfilling their own potential.

Because human security weaves together security, rights and development it can be envisioned as an inter-connected web or social safety net that provides opportunities for vulnerable groups while at the same

time, also strengthens linkages between a wide range of institutions and organizations working at multiple levels in support of increasing and improving social capital in response to risks or threats. This includes UN agencies and other international organizations as well as the public and private sectors and also involves community leaders and members themselves. Thus, human security turns its focus from the borders of the country to the lives of the people and communities living within.

Human security as an inter-disciplinary concept includes five core principles:

- ◆ **People-centered:** Places the individual at the center of analysis and takes into consideration a broad range of conditions which threaten and can impact upon livelihood, dignity and survival.
- ◆ **Multi-sector:** Requires a wider understanding of threats in order to address root causes of insecurity. Supports development of an integrated network of stakeholders and encourages partnerships that complement and reinforce comparative advantages contributed by each.
- ◆ **Comprehensive:** Advances the universality and primacy of Freedoms and rights fundamental to human life but makes no distinction between types of rights. Explores threats in a multi-dimensional way, identifies challenges related to specific situations, and ensures institutional or government response in order ensure survival, livelihood and dignity of those involved.
- ◆ **Context specific:** Recognizes insecurities / threats vary across settings and advances solutions based on contexts. Understands that threats can be mutually-reinforcing and explores linkages of both threats and actions when formulating response.
- ◆ **Preventative:** In addressing risks and causes of insecurities is prevention oriented, explores how clusters of threats translate into wider security issues. Also seeks to prevent the occurrence of future threats.

Another distinctive feature of human security is its inclusion of both protection and empowerment dimensions. Protection implies use of “top-down” approaches implemented in a systematic and comprehensive manner which are also inclusive of preventative efforts. Although states hold this primary responsibility, international, regional and civil society actors (NGOs and the private sector) also have crucial roles to play.

**Protection – From the Top Down**



**From the Bottom Up - Empowerment**

Empowerment relies on the use of “bottom-up” strategies aiming to develop capabilities of individuals and communities in making informed choices and to act on their own behalf. Empowering people not only enables them to develop their full potential but also allows them to participate in the creation of solutions to ensure security for both themselves and others.



## **Promoting Stability, Peace, and Development:** **Human Security in Bhutan**

In May 2007, the UNTFHS provided funds to launch “Basic Education/ Literacy and Income Security for Vulnerable People Including Women and Children in Bhutan”, the country’s first human security project. A joint UN initiative coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) focusing on “Delivering as One”, the project also involved other UN Participating Organizations (UNFPA, UNICEF, UNV and WFP) and was implemented by Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) and civil society partners in alignment with the Tenth Five-Year Plan (2008 – 2013) which places poverty reduction at the heart of its current development framework.

Project activities began in early November 2008 and included a budget of US\$ 2,175,449.10. Aimed to target geographically and socio-economically disadvantaged and vulnerable segments of the Bhutanese society, project components were estimated to benefit, either directly or indirectly, 80,000 people (with activities linked to education, literacy and school sanitation benefiting 60,000 and income and employment, skills training and micro-saving schemes reaching another 30,000). With a focus on improving human security of rural communities in Bhutan, activities carried out by implementing partners (IPs) included provision of support to literacy and vocational education, health, income generation and job creation.

Involvement of key civil society organizations (CSOs) centered on Objectives V and VI (Increased small business, jobs and self-employment to reduce unemployment and Capacity of civil society organizations enhanced in supporting vulnerable populations and promoting gender equity) and US\$ 218,000 was provided to support subsequent interventions carried out by these national organizations. The enlistment of the core NGO partners also helped to ensure long-term project sustainability. The four core CSOs included the following:

**The Tarayana Foundation:** Supported three remote communities in Samtse with improved tools, equipment and training for income generation activities in 2009;

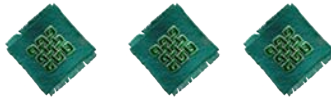
**Respect, Educate, Nurture and Protect Women (RENEW):**

Collaborated with UNFP to support advocacy and awareness raising on gender issues (reproductive health (RH), gender-based violence (GBV) and women's leadership and rights) and completed documentation of women's voices and situations across Bhutan (through both print and film media) in 2008;

**The Handicraft Association of Bhutan (HAB):** Currently working to register as an official CSO, contributed to strengthen the capacity of handicraft training institutions and local artisan groups in order to enhance product quality and marketability during both 2008 and 2009;

**The Bhutan Youth Development Fund (YDF):** Assisted out-of-school children and youth due to poverty or other socio-economic difficulties to either return to the formal education system, develop employment skills through training programs or attend vocational education programs in 2008 and 2009.

Baseline information related to performance indicators for Objectives V and VI indicate that prior to start up there was either no or very limited awareness on gender issues (particularly GBV and women's access to protection/services) and very limited opportunities or programs to build skills for women, poor students, out-of-school children /youth in difficult circumstances to either regain access to education or vocational training through NGO programs in highlighted project areas.



## **CSO Support for Protection and Empowerment: The Handicraft Association of Bhutan (HAB)**

*Promoting the equitable growth and development of the handicrafts sector in Bhutan while safe-guarding Bhutan's unique tradition and cultural heritage.*



### **Specific HSF Activities:**

- ◆ Supported the 2008 Crafts Festival where members participated and provided training opportunities for rural producers;
- ◆ Conducted training programs on quality development and retail and production management designed to enhance linkages between rural producers and urban marketing centers;
- ◆ Helped to introduce new techniques (natural dyes, use new weaving/embroidering techniques and equipment) and diversification of products; and,
- ◆ Assisted with operationalizing the Bhutan Seal of Quality and Excellence which establishes a benchmark for quality associated with Bhutanese products and raising the overall standards of handicrafts production.



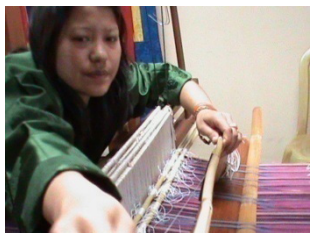
Participants at the machine embroidery workshop.



Rural weavers learn about the use of natural dyes.



Panel of experts judging Bhutan Seal products.



Training in new loom techniques.



Local products for use as natural dyes.



Machine embroidery detail.

## Organization's Comparative Advantage:

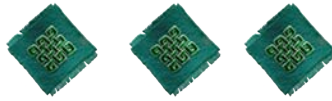
*We provide training and skills development activities across the country especially for rural populations. Through our network, and as an incentive, our members get first preference to participate in such training activities and to participate in trade fairs – both at the national and international levels. Through these opportunities they then become advocates and act as conduits of information for rural community members in sharing information, generating interest and increasing involvement in and promotion of improved quality of handicrafts in the country. We are a new organization but are working to steadily expand and create linkages through our members to national level initiatives and through provision of technical expertise.*

- HAB Executive Member

## On Protection and Empowerment:

*We take on a catalyst role in both promoting quality and ensuring that marketing is done and producers are not exploited ... so we function to support both protection and empowerment. By increasing skills for producers (both women and men) they are enabled to improve practices and earn more from their efforts. We Bhutanese have been very lucky to inherit these skills from our elders as tradition but we also need to have quality yarn, dyes and product development in order sell what is produced. As our producers continue to learn skills and their income increases, they also gain confidence and begin to function as trainers for other ... while at the same time providing for their families – to send their children to school, buy nutritional food and meet other financial demands.*

- HAB Member



## **CSO Support for Protection and Empowerment: Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women (RENEW)**

*Dedicated to the relief and empowerment of victims of gender- based violence, RENEW promotes gender equality and provides disadvantaged girls and women – particularly survivors of domestic violence and sexual abuse – services and opportunities to transform their lives. It also campaigns to prevent violence and coordinate rehabilitation services for women in need and in doing so, promotes the positive role of women in society.*

### **Specific HSF Activities:**

- ◆ Building from activities in 2006 and 2007 when RENEW staff visited non-formal education (NFE) classes and met with groups of women to discuss on gender related issues, the “Voices” project was born;
- ◆ Five two-day regional workshops included 60 rural women from every district to collect stories /share experiences on the roles and situation of women in Bhutan and to learn about RH, HIV/AIDS and GBV in partnership with UNFPA;
- ◆ Publication “Reflections” (along with a film documenting the process) was then completed and 60 rural women representatives invited to Thimphu to attend launch and participate in a study tour for exposure and education on women’s role in development ; and,
- ◆ Women’s support networks also established through existing NFE classes in remote, rural villages.

### **Organization’s Comparative Advantage:**

*We have a nation-wide network established through NFE classes across the country and into rural areas so are able to reach a wide range of rural citizens. In addition to this, through these networks we have established community-*

*based support systems which promote the responsibility of community members in providing information, support and services (and making referrals) to those who need assistance while at the same time working to continue prevention efforts related to domestic violence and abuse.*

- RENEW Staff



Women's workshop for sharing of experiences.



Strengthening women's stand in Bhutan.

### **On Protection and Empowerment:**

*Human security is very much linked to women's development and participation and also supports Gross National Happiness (GNH). Because we are reaching out to the general population (and not just women) in raising awareness and informing people about rights, laws and changes in the country related to the empowerment and involvement of women – this supports empowerment dimensions. Related to this awareness raising work, this spurred us on to further strengthen and contribute to protection through the creation of a more formalized network of community-based support systems (CBSS) in order to promote local responsibility for prevention, protection and support from within the community itself.*

- RENEW Staff



## **CSO Support for Protection and Empowerment: The Tarayana Foundation**

*Helping the vulnerable and the disadvantaged help themselves, the Tarayana Foundation works to enrich the lives of vulnerable communities in rural Bhutan by helping them to become self-sufficient through small, targeted interventions which support the process of local empowerment. It supports income generating activities, promoting artisan skills through establishment of training centers (and promoting the sales of products), and providing grants for school expenses in order to help bridge local needs of disadvantaged remote communities with larger national initiatives.*

### **Specific HSF Activities:**

- ◆ Consultation done with community members in 3 remote villages in Southern Bhutan to identify and prioritize needs;
- ◆ Procurement and transport of equipment and tools for income generation and food security (and housing improvements) completed and training on use /maintenance provided by Tarayana field officer and dzongkhag extension staff (health and agriculture); and,
- ◆ Information and education also provided on health and nutrition (e.g. organic gardening, use of maize for food source and for children as opposed to alcohol production, nutritional diet and more) and in handicraft production with local materials which are then marketed at 2 Tarayana Rural Handicraft shops (Thimphu and Paro).

### **Organizational Comparative Advantage:**

*Our president, H.M. Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, is a very inspiring leader and knows these remote communities well. Prior to starting any activity, we always consult with the community involved in order to effectively target their needs. Also, because we have a full time Field Officer placed in the community, this helps us to develop a trusting relationship with community members. And although this has taken time, it demonstrates our commitment to*

*the local community and helps to garner their support and acceptance. We also make frequent visits to the project areas and stay with the community in order to continue learning from them.*

- Tarayana Staff

### **On Protection and Empowerment:**

*Human security has to do with basic needs and once these are met, then people can think of trying to address other things. Our focus has always been on empowerment and poverty reduction and here in Bhutan, this has traditionally been a top-down approach. But we try to encourage people to take on a more involved role and be responsible for what is happening in their villages and we take on the role only as “facilitator”. It is actually the community member themselves who are the action takers – in the past, such vulnerable groups were often shy and reluctant to become involved but now they are more open and able to express their views and needs.*

- Tarayana Staff



Paper drying machine for all season production.

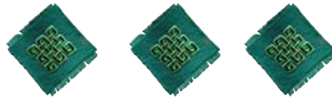


Introducing sustainable agricultural practices.



Learning together strengthens all.





## **CSO Support for Protection and Empowerment: The Bhutan Youth Development Fund (YDF)**

*Committed to making every youth a leader and, as Bhutan's leading youth organization, works to ensure that all youth have equal access to education, meaningful employment, and opportunities to develop their potential. Our programs build leadership skills, encourage teamwork and promote the value of service among youth. Through advocacy work and strategic partnerships, we also work to encourage youth participation, raise awareness on youth issues and promote youth-oriented policy.*

### **Specific HSF Activities:**

- ◆ Provision of scholarships to 12 disadvantaged students in order to continue basic education;
- ◆ Out of country training opportunities for 4 recovering addicts to manage drop-in center (DIC) in Thimphu;
- ◆ One year in-house skills training program on souvenir production and outlet management for 20 girls from across Bhutan;
- ◆ Establishment of a community tailoring unit and one year of training program for 36 participants linked to NFE groups in Bumthang;
- ◆ Review of NFE curriculum for Special Needs Education, training provided to 8 NFE instructors, and the development of a specialized curriculum for vocational training for the disabled;
- ◆ Training course on photography and film making for 30 early school leavers and recovering drug addicts;
- ◆ After school youth-led organization (Y-VIA) established for both in and out-of-school students in six districts; and,
- ◆ Leadership training activities for 10 youth from across the country and national-level Golden Youth Award program supported in 2008.



Students displays their products in at the NPSTC in Punakha.



Y-VIA members and monks strengthening English skills.



Informal counseling at the Drop-in Center , Thimphu.

## **Organization's Comparative Advantage:**

*Because we are a youth focused organization, we promote youth reaching out to other youth. Our active youth network, Y – VIA, helps to reach out and address youth and community well-being issues in a sustainable way. We work in close consultation with both youth and their communities to determine and identify needs and capacity building and skill development for employment is always at the top of our list. We also have a strong relationship with the government and utilize the skills and expertise of volunteers to further build capacity and skills of vulnerable youth.*

- YDF Staff

## **On Empowerment and Protection:**

*Related to human security here in Bhutan, disengagement of youth and how this is increasing is an important issue to us ... along with how many youth are unprepared for jobs and don't have the necessary skills ... this only raises or increases the level of risk and threat. It is very important that organizations such as ours reach out to those who are not supported by existing government programs and fill the gaps for those groups or populations who are left out through the traditional means of service delivery.*

– YDF Staff



## **Best Practices and Lessons Learned – From the Top Down and Bottom Up**

As highlighted earlier, involvement of CSOs in human security work not only strengthens the web of support for vulnerable populations but contributes to both accessing and enhancing their participation and development of skills. Because CSOs work directly with individuals and communities, they are uniquely positioned to develop interventions which are people-centered, able to bring together multiple sectors, highly context specific, more comprehensive in nature and include prevention efforts. Their ability to pilot new approaches and respond to the specific needs of participant groups also allows for innovations and creative approaches to emerge.

*Our approach to working with youth is very effective ... following training or skill building activities for vulnerable youth, they themselves then take up roles as trainers or advocates for their peers while also contributing to the community building process. Taking on this role as a youth leader further strengthens their confidence and motivation to continue learning and contributing to society in a positive and productive way.*

- YDF Staff

*We have a member who is excellent at applying whatever she learns from various training events. Because she participated in a natural dye course, she now uses and applies these new techniques consistently to her own work as well as teaching others. Adopting these new practices has definitely stimulated her income and many tourists who have read about her products or see profiles of her work related to the Seal of Excellence/Quality actually try and seek her out ... they go to her center because they are interested in and want to purchase her products.*

- HAB staff

*Combining life skills with livelihood skill development is very important and so necessary especially because our girls come from rural areas but then end up in more populated, urban locations once they are employed.*



Bumthang Community Tailoring Group.



Students gain hands-on experience at the Aman Hotel.



Learning activities for those with special needs.

*When they leave the training center they should be well prepared to enter the world and overcome their shyness and be fully appreciative of the dignity of labor.*

*We discuss and prepare them because they will have to face all kinds of customers and situations and should be able to cope up with this.*

- NPSTC Instructor

*Our activities includes both in and out-of- school youth and this is very important in terms of inclusion and providing opportunities for these youth who may feel excluded or left out at times. Also, our engagement with the private sector has been very positive ... working together with the Aman Hotel we piloted the first 2 week Basic Hotel Management and Training Course so that 20 youth could learn about and serve as temporary hotel staff. Following this they were awarded certificates and hopefully this will inspire them to take up such careers ... also Aman was very positive about the experience and we are planning to continue this program in the coming years.*

- Richen, Y – VIA Coordinator

*Following our training program, we decided that we wanted to try and continue with our tailoring group and for each product we sell, each person will contribute 5 – 10 Ngultrum into a resource pool which is managed by one of the women that we selected ourselves. From this fund members are able to get short-term loans which they pay back once they are able to sell their cash crops of potatoes or apples which they harvest only one time a year. These additional activities help to provide security for the women and their families and also helps reduce the cost of buying things from tailors in town. Also, we are currently selling our products to the monks of a nearby monastery and as we practice and get better in the quality of work, will also try and sell to visiting tourists as well.*

- Community Tailoring Unit Member, Bumthang

*building relationships with local partners. When working with rural communities in Bhutan, you can't push too hard or too quick ... you need to work at their pace and recognize the benefits ... this has also contributed to our own learning as an organization. It's important to have multiple rounds of consultation meetings because usually during the first ones, the community will only tell you what they think you want to hear ... it is only through repeated and long-term discussions that you can have access to what they are really thinking about ... and this repeated discussion also helps them to work through and investigate what their true needs are.*

- Tarayana staff

*Having our own specialized vocational curriculum is very important because how our instructors work with and train our students is completely different and requires additional skills ... this also increases their effectiveness and the student's ability to learn from them more quickly ... and one of our best practices is combining together both vocational training and life skills for a more comprehensive approach in order to prepare our students to face any situation. And as mentioned earlier, if these children are left alone at home and don't have proper training or skill development, they are at risk for abuse ... I think by giving them opportunities and a chance for education benefits not only the child but their family and wider society as well.*

- Draktsho staff

*The aim of our work was to empower women and to encourage them to come forward in sharing their experiences, perspectives and knowledge ... but also through the process we were able to identify the most effective partners to continue our work with and that turned out to be the NFE. Due to their extensive reach and contact at the grassroots level and through workshops held, we were able to bring women together to identify issues and further strengthen out-reach for both prevention and support.*

- RENEW

*Learning about and getting exposed to use of natural dyes ... as we had no knowledge that we could make natural dyes from vegetables and plants and this contributes to improved product quality and more importantly, it is very economical for producers. These things are available freely in the immediate environment at no cost. When people were taught about these things, they became very interested and especially in Bumthang and Trashigang were very surprised and happy. Also, use of these natural dyes has influenced what is now being made as customers now know about natural colors and dyes and look for this type of quality in our products.*

- Weaver and Advocate of Bhutan Seal program



Using an oil extractor for local self reliance.



Y-VIA community clean-up campaign activities.



Machine embroidery trainees fine tune their skills.

*I myself being an addict is probably the best asset or skill that I bring when working with others on facing the same problem because I truly understand the situation they are experiencing and I know their pain ... and this is really the best and most effective way to address the issue and gain their interest.*

- Nima, - DIC staff/Trainee

*The introduction of new techniques and diversification of practices has helped to both preserve and protect our unique culture while contributing to the creation of new job opportunities. Traditional embroidery requires time and thus, finished products are very expensive but now by training Bhutanese on machine-based techniques, they can reduce time and expand the range of products. In the past much of this work was going to more skilled workers who weren't from Bhutan - but now we can reduce our dependence on outside workers and let Bhutanese take this up instead ... and also including women and girls who are interested and very quick to learn.*

- Tenzin, Handicraft Trainee

*Through the media training program, we also became trainers and are continuing to learn and develop our skills. We talk together and support one another and have many ideas on what we'd like to do. When YDF or organizations hold special events, they hire us to take photos and we get to travel to other locations in Bhutan and continue to learn from the professionals while gaining short-term employment.*

- Media Club member

*We are also starting to explore opportunities to work with the media in order to expand our reach because maybe we can't include everyone in the activities but at least if they hear about our actions, will also learn and become interested. We have been discussing the possibility of working with local cable stations.*

- Y-VIA Coordinator

## **Nurturing Emerging Social Change: Identifying Early Benefits**

Although HSF project activities covered only a two-year period, many interventions implemented by partner CSOs were based on and grew from earlier efforts and long-term programs. And although genuine impact associated with social change - especially in terms of sustained community development - requires a more long-term horizon, both project staff and community partners were able to recognize positive results and emerging trends related to change.

### **At the Community Level**

*Community empowerment is the greatest benefit from our work because when equipment is provided (along with training), the community can work as a group and discover that they have their own abilities and skills but just hadn't thought of doing things in this way before and with marketing activities comes increased exposure which reinforces the value of education and making sure their children go to school.*

- Tarayana Foundation

*These training activities were requested by us the producers and by introducing machine embroidery, this has definitely helped to support people in increasing their opportunities and for jobs and earnings along with skill development in using a new technique ... this has led to more ideas for products too.*

- Namgay, Handicraft Producer and Trainee

*As an NFE instructor, I have learned so much through this program and it was us NFE learners that came up with the idea that we wanted to form a group and learn a skills which would help increase our earnings and provide another option to the usual once a year earnings we get from our cash crops.*

- Sonam Lhamo, Community Tailoring member/trainee Bumthang

*In terms of the disabled as a group ... we have helped to build a lot of self esteem, eradicate stigma and build confidence of both the child and their families. Parents are so proud and often say they never expected so much from their child ... never thought they could develop a skill for employment ... they are so proud and happy. Also I think these efforts contribute to changing attitudes of wider society ... initially when we started working in this area many people doubted us and also doubted the children's abilities but now they recognize what these kids can do and are much more appreciative and supportive.*

- Drakstsho Vocational Education Center

*The biggest change I see is that the student's thinking has totally changed. They get ideas and skills and after completing the training program realize that they have the ability to live on their own power and stand on their own feet without support from the government or their families or others. They can be completely self reliant and the parents also feel proud and are relieved that these daughters can become productive citizens and even provide help or support to other family members.*

– Ugen, Instructor, Nazhoen Pelri Skills Training Center in Punakha

### **Within the Organizational Level**

*For us the establishment of the Y – VIA networks and the activities they engage with has also helped us to fine-tune our skills and allow for more hands-on experience in working on both protection and empowerment dimensions and to generate greater levels of contact at the grassroots level responding to issues and needs through enlistment of youth and in efforts related to increasing our involvement with various communities.*

– YDF

*Capacity building has taken place both for community members and our staff. It has really helped us learn from the women and through our experience of working together with them we have been exposed and gotten a much more realistic picture of their situation. This contributes to us being better informed and having a deeper understanding of their situations, the challenges, and the diversity that this includes so that we can work more effectively to address these problems or issues.*

– RENEW

*We realized that the machines and equipment we provided needed to be environmentally friendly and how the issue of climate change impacts the communities we work with and practices that are used. We felt the need to introduce and explore these ideas together with them and that our staff needed more skill development and capacity in this area before we could move forward with our community partners. Because this is new area for us – it has also encouraged us to grow and learn.*

– Tarayana Foundation

*We have identified the need for more systematic training activities and the need to promote increased community involvement while ensuring organizational sustainability. We plan to re-launch the HAB and want to aim for 10,000 members as this will generate funds, enable us to include more staff and expand out-reach.*

– Handicraft Association of Bhutan



## At the Individual Level – Improved Quality of Life

*Before we didn't understand how much quality affects our products and people would just make the same thing again and again. After being trained we got a better perspective on this. And through Seal program we get recognition and this stimulates people's motivation and inspires them to also try for the award. When you are rewarded for your hard work and quality, even I, too, feel motivated and want to share my experiences and encourage others.*

– Deki, Handicraft Producer and Recipient of the Seal of Quality

*We took beautiful pictures and displayed our photos in order to inspire other youth to get involved and also so show that you can earn money by doing this. In other places you have to pay for such training but because of YDF's efforts, here it is free. Even parents take interest and try to get their children involved.*

– Yeshi, Media Training participant and founding member of the follow-up Media Club

*I worked at a rehab center for two priors to receiving my formal training outside of Bhutan. I think it was the combination of my past exposure and then being able to participate in the four month training course that really helped me to develop my skills. Because we give hope and provide another chance for these youth and, in going through rehab, they have the chance to look forward to life again ... there is nothing bigger or more important than this.*

– Nima, Thimphu DIC Peer Counselor

*In most weaver's homes you can definitely see progress ... they now have TVs, rice cookers, gas stoves and on so ... where in the past you didn't find these things so definitely there has been impact on the quality of their lives. Often in the past, families or women told us they didn't have enough funds to send their children to school but now, following the start up of all these training activities (starting back in 2005), you can see all these things and they feel there has been an improvement.*

– Handicraft Association of Bhutan

*I think it's a combination of time saving, self reliance, food security and health issues (e.g. improved nutrition including the increased consumption of vegetables and decrease in conversion of grains into alcohol products) for the communities we work in. Now you can see kitchen garden in each household and food that's grown is used for family consumption instead of converting it all into alcohol and then have to scout around the forest for something to eat.*

– Tarayana Foundation

*I don't think they consider themselves "disadvantaged" anymore because now there are more new opportunities for them to get work and earn money and they can become productive citizens.*

– Ugen, Instructor, Nazhoen Pelri Skills Training Center, Punakha.

## **Gaps, Challenges and Constraints Identified**

The following summaries represent clustered perspectives and comments associated with gaps, constraints and challenges identified by CSO staff, organizational partners and community participants specifically related to HSF project activities.

**Geographical Location and Access:** Related to the remoteness of reaching some groups, transporting equipment, organizing meetings and training groups. However most all informants also felt that there was additional need for continued focus and expansion into these rural areas.

**Sensitivity of Topics and Issues Addressed:** Discussion around more sensitive issues (such as GBV, HIV/AIDS and other topics) was difficult and that levels of participation and openness – especially for women – was at times constrained due to social norms.

**Involvement of Key Target Groups:** Important to increase interest and involvement of girls /young women in training activities but at times there is also competition from other income generating programs (IGPs). Reaching out of school youth – especially girls – was also cited as a challenge and limited numbers of training slots (due to lack of resources) for some groups was also restrictive.

**Need for Additional Awareness Raising, Dissemination of Information and Change in Attitudes:** There is need for improved communication and awareness-raising on both the importance of activities and long-term, collective benefits. Often many participants were more interested in daily per diem rates or would expect payment for participating as opposed to recognizing the value of skill building taking place. In some circumstances, attitudes were more focused on competition as opposed to recognition of mutual benefits. Others struggled to promote new techniques to those who weren't interested or didn't recognize benefits. And the need for increased understanding and awareness on HS at multiple levels is also present.

**Sustainability Concerns:** Standardization and maintenance of equipment, inadequate duration of training time, and the need for continued capacity building support to promote continued learning, support diversification of products and raise levels of quality were highlighted. The need for both permanently established, rurally placed staff was also raised due to turn-over



Natural dye training for rural women.



New embroidery products on display in Thimphu.



Bumthang Community Tailoring Group's products on display.

of project participants and government partners and the need for additional funds to support and continue activities was also mentioned.

**Replication and Expansion:** Additional funds required to expand program activities and delivery of services (through expansion of offices and training centers to new locations) as there remain many underserved areas and populations. Others highlighted the need to consider inclusion of other vulnerable groups (adding boys in or focusing exclusively on certain age ranges).

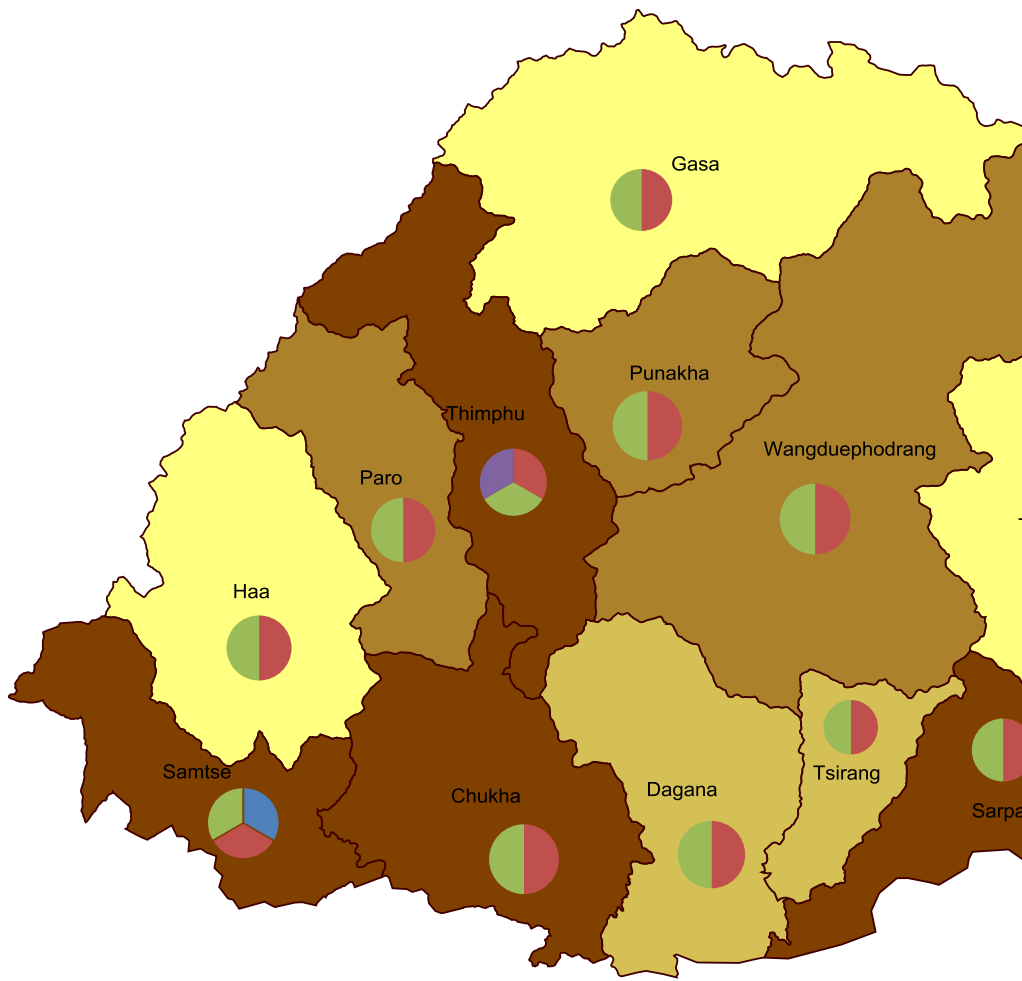
**Provision of Employment Opportunities:** Challenges and limited resources available for actual placement of trainees into jobs following completion of training courses. In most cases, placements done were achieved through personal contacts/networks. Continued emphasis on the need to link training opportunities to concrete opportunities for employment or apprenticeships so that continued skill development and practical experience could be obtained was voiced. Also obstacles associated with reluctance and attitudes from the wider community to provide employment opportunities for certain groups was also highlighted.

## **Strengthening the Web: Recommendations for Consideration in Moving Ahead**

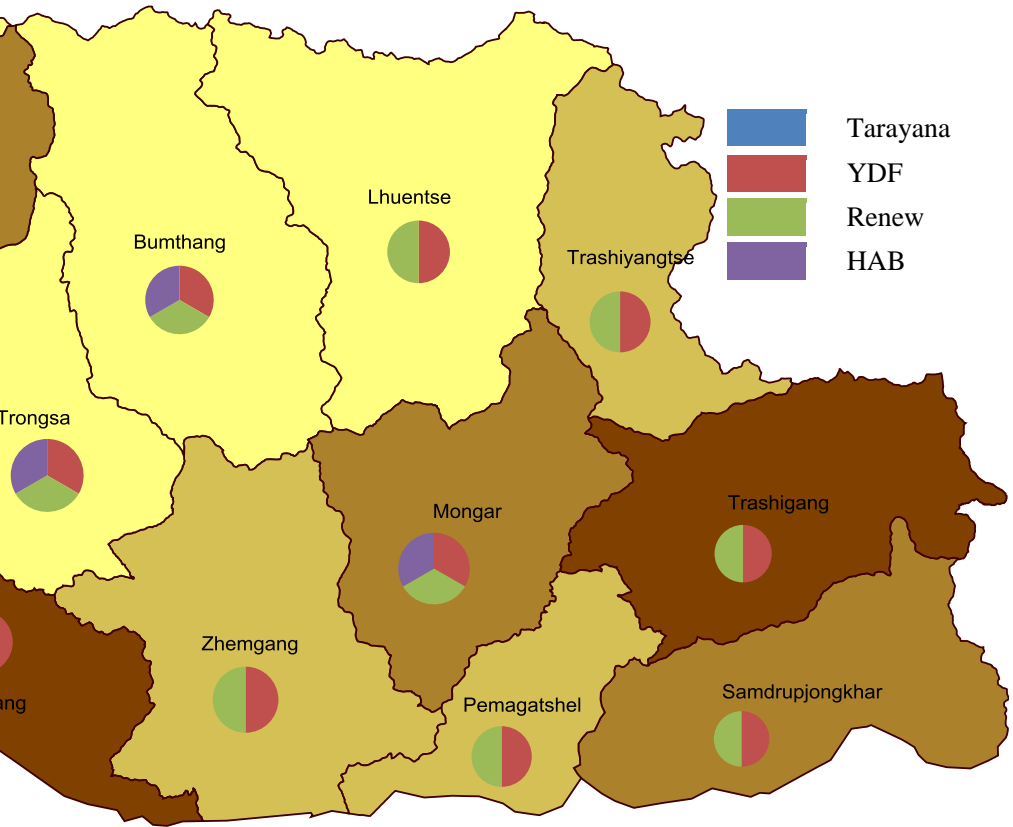
Through the voices and perspectives shared on best practices, it is easy to recognize the value and strengths that CSO involvement brings to human security in Bhutan. This includes their ability to activate both empowerment and protection dimensions as well as the natural tendency to employ people-centered, context specific approaches while also focusing on prevention. Because they often weave together activities from various sectors, they also are able to contribute a more comprehensive and multi-sector response. However, further steps and ideas could be explored in order to further enhance integration and strengthen both comprehensive and multi-sector dimensions as well as further expanding reach to most vulnerable groups.

- ◆ Additional coordination /linkages between HSF project partner activities would serve to strengthen integration and address access, sustainability, communication and project replication / expansion related concerns;
- ◆ It may be helpful to review and respond to competition around various IGP activities, ensure that technical resources are shared and linked across programs, and make use of locally available training resources for on-going support;
- ◆ Improved integration could also include the establishment of formal ties or linkages to the private sector (such as the BCCI, Hotel Association of Bhutan and the Tourism Authority of Bhutan) and other civil society partners (Save the Children, SNV, JICA , NWAB, NCWC) in order to increase opportunities for job placement, additional funding, and in expanding reach to most vulnerable populations;
- ◆ Bolster awareness / attitude change through the design of an integrated HS communication strategy to increase understanding on HS, intended or long-term benefits of activities, profile positive role models / best practices, and generate interest / support from a variety of target participant groups;

- ◆ Consider specific targeting of younger trainees for handicraft training based on levels of interest, openness to learn new techniques, and ability to put skills to practice – in some instances, may also consider inclusion of boys as well;
- ◆ Promote and build upon best practices which combine provision of both livelihood skills AND life skills for vulnerable groups and link to those organizations with expertise in this area (RENEW, UNFPA, NFE programs and more) in support of a more comprehensive approach;
- ◆ Ensure that training activities are sustained over a longer period of time but feature alternative schedule options (e.g. during agricultural off seasons, in shorter rounds, and rotate trainers / topics through various locations) also allowing for periods of practice in order to improve quality, continued learning and ensure skill development;
- ◆ Following in Tarayana’s footsteps, explore / promote more environmentally friendly opportunities for “green” skill development related to work in recycling, sustainable agriculture and other products – widen partners to include WWF, RSPN, more from Ministry of Agriculture and environmentally focused businesses such as Bio Bhutan;
- ◆ Continue to develop / evolve best practices associated with making small loans easily available for youth, women and other vulnerable groups who complete skill development programs and who desire to establish small businesses through that provided by the Ministry of Labor and Human Resources (MoLHR) and other possible partners (Bhutan Development Finance Corporation (BDFC), other foundations); and,
- ◆ Explore possible enlistment of the Dratshang Lhengtsok in support of human security activities by promoting purchase of religious items, materials and clothing specifically produced by project groups AND through socially engaged Buddhist practices for more vulnerable populations or groups.



Prepared by Kinlay Penjor, UNICEF



## Snapshot Beneficiary Matrix

<b>National Coverage</b>			
RENEW	Gender Advocacy Campaign Work nation-wide and REFLECTIONS Activities		1,500 post literacy learners
YDF	Golden Youth Award activities (4 students from each district x 20 for 2009 – half boys and half girls)		80
<b>District</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Project Activity</b>	
Samtse	Tarayana Foundation, YDF, RENEW	Tarayana – Com Dev project, YDF – NP, Scholarship and Special Ed RENEW – NFE Network	849
Bumthang	YDF, HAB, RENEW	YDF – Y VIA, DIC, Disabled HAB – dye training, NFE Weaving Center RENEW – Women’s Regional. Workshop	218
Thimphu	YDF, HAB, RENEW	YDF – Media Project, Disabled students and instructors, DIC, Y VIA and Scholarship HAB – Emb, Seal, Sg Training, RENEW – Reflections Activities	185
Paro	YDF, RENEW	YDF – NFE and Special Ed RENEW: Women’s Regional Workshop	62
Trashiyantse	RENEW, YDF	RENEW – Women’s Regional Workshop YDF – NP	61
Sarpang	RENEW	RENEW – Women’s Regional Workshop	60
Trashigang	YDF	YDF – Y VIA, NP and Special Ed	55
Mongar	HAB, YDF, RENEW	HAB – Seal and Dye Training, YDF – NP RENEW – NFE Network	21
Dagana	YDF, RENEW	YDF - NP and Scholarship RENEW – NFE Network	7
Chukka	YDF	YDF – Y VIA, Scholarship and Special Ed	4
Pemagatshel	YDF	YDF – Y VIA, NP	4
Lhuentse	YDF	YDF – NP	2
Punakha	YDF	YDF – NP	2
Tsirong	YDF	YDF – Y VIA	2



Samdrup Jongkhar	YDF	YDF – NP and Scholarship	1
Zhemgang	YDF, RENEW	YDF Scholarship RENEW – NFE Network	1
Trongsa	HAB	HAB – Seal Advocacy Event – mass reach	No count
<b>Additional Activities</b>			
2008 Crafts Festival (organized by Textile Museum but with HAB participation and trainers)			40
HAB Training in systems management and costing activities (rural and urban handicraft producers)			65
RENEW “Reflections” book launch with study tour and learning activities for rural women participants			60
<b>Total of Estimated Beneficiaries based on CSO Activities and Engagement:</b>			<b>3,279</b>

## **List of Abbreviations**

BDFC	Bhutan Development Finance Corporation
BCCI	Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry
CHS	Commission on Human Security
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DIC	Drop-In Center
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GNH	Gross National Happiness
HAB	Handicraft Association of Bhutan
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno Virus/ Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
HS	Human Security
HSF	Human Security Fund
IPs	Implementing Partners
IGPs	Income Generation Programs
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
NCWC	National Commission for Women and Children
NFE	Non-formal Education
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPSTC	Nazhoen Pelri Skills Training Center
NWAB	National Women’s Association of Bhutan
RENEW	Respect, Educate and Nurture Women
RGOB	Royal Government of Bhutan
RH	Reproductive Health
RSPN	Royal Society for the Protection of Nature
TAB	Tourism Authority of Bhutan
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNTFHS	United Nations Trust for Human Security
UNV	United National Volunteer Programme
WFP	World Food Programme
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
YDF	Bhutan Youth Development Fund
Y – VIA	Young Volunteers in Action

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RENEW: Page 15

Bhutan Youth Development Fund: Pages 20, 23, 24

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