For nearly seven years, Tarayana has been working with both private individuals and government agencies to improve the lives of people living in rural communities of Bhutan. In collaboration with our volunteers and supporters, we provide basic skills training, make medical treatment accessible, and in fostering holistic community development. The growing support from our partners and the continuing development of the vulnerable members of our society serve as fuel for us to move forward towards the fulfillment of our vision: A happy and prosperous Bhutan.

The recently concluded Restorative Surgical Camp facilitated by Tarayana in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, some 85 individuals were treated by professionals from Surgicorp International. These treatments would contribute significantly towards helping these individuals regain their confidence. Patients with hare lip, cleft palate, 2nd degree burns and hand or feet distortion cases were able to benefit from the camp and found solace and a sense of belongingness amongst individuals similarly inflicted.

Rural Development is multifaceted and has tremendous challenges in the hinterlands of Bhutan, where access is limited. Our remote rural communities still live in relative seclusion, without motor roads and electricity. Bringing about change in these areas is challenging and time consuming. Tarayana’s holistic approach to bringing rural development and community growth has been welcomed. The rural communities seem to appreciate the efforts taken in bringing about opportunities for improvements in their lives.

We are grateful for to all our volunteers, supporters and donors for giving generously of yourselves to helping us reach the unreached. Much progress has been made till date, but we still have much more to do. We continue to depend on your support and goodwill in our endeavours to help the vulnerable and the disadvantaged help themselves.

“Happiness is .....”

“.....a feeling of wellbeing that gives a positive outlook to our lives & offers joy, gratitude & gratefulness to ourselves & those around us”

Akayah
Coordinator, Surgicorp, USA

Monitoring visit to Mongar

Ms. Pema, Programme Officer and Ms. Sonam Yangden, Finance Officer carried out a monitoring visit to the project sites in Mongar from 17th Feb to 2nd March, 2010. Accompanied by the site Field Officer, Sonam Jamtsho, the team visited Resa, Bungbangla, Chaibi Pam, Gongdue, Nagor, Dak, Silambi and Broksar to monitor project activities as well as to carry out community consultations including discussions on micro-credit potentials.

The team reported that out of the need for building 79 households in Silambi Geog, 13 houses in Silambi and 5 houses in Nagor were completed. One house each in Silambi and in Nagor was inaugurated during the team’s visit. 22 households in Nagor have been provided with CGI sheets. The team noted that the communities were working hard to transport CGI sheets to their villages before the onset of the rainy season. The community members pointed out that as they had to carry CGI sheets from the road head which is three days walk from their villages, they were unable to devote time to cane and bamboo weaving. Community members in Nagor also requested for provision of vegetable seeds.

In Gongdue Geog, the team visited Chaibi Pam, where 22 households have been provided with CGI sheet and Sonam Jamtsho suggested that 12 houses in the community needed improvement. As the community grows a lot of oranges and the road head is two days walk away, the community sought Tarayana’s support in marketing their produce.

The Officers also received a request from Wama Rinpoche to provide 100 CGI sheets for Silambi Pemaling Kadam Lhakhang which currently houses 21 Monks and 12 Tshampas. Community members in Dak asked for the provision of solar lights for all the households (25) in the community. Tarayana was not able to respond to both requests due to financial constraints. Moreover, Dak will be electrified in 2010 according to Rural Energy Division.
“Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

PEACECOMM partnership was established in the year 2006 to develop peace communicators communicating for peace through articulation of information and communication in peace and non-violent conflict transformation, peace building, peace restoration, reconciliation, conflict resolution and prevention through sustaining mechanisms, designed and implemented RICE (research, information, communication and education), proactively working towards integrating and creatively deepening PEACECOMM relationships, recognizing context specific programming for peace and human development and initiating strategies that will foster the institutionalization of PEACECOMM.

Bhutan became part of peacecomm project in the year 2009. Philippines, Indonesia and Myanmar are the other countries involved in this project. Tarayana is the fourth partner in the Exchange project titled PEACECOMM, funded by Fredskorpset (fK) Norway. The project fosters capacity development through an exchange of personnel between partner countries.

On 12th March 2009, Tarayana has sent Mr. Tshering Wangdi, cameraman, to Environmental Broadcast Circle (EBC), the leading partner, for a 10 months hands-on-learning of audio/visual programming. During his time there he learnt radio recording, script writing, video documentation, report writing, basic lay out, book mark designing and swimming.

The work experience abroad taken care to expand Tshering’s understanding of many issues, their working style as well as some amount of cultural immersion. He was also given some language course (Tagalog). The posting with the Environmental Broadcast Circle (EBC) an NGO of Environmental journalist and media network, brought him in contact with several local and national champions of environmental causes. He attended several high level dialogues as observer. Tshering visited several areas that show cased some environment issue. He was shown how various media articles and production undertake and provided community radio and documentary training.

This exchange programme gave him an opportunity to understand why it is important to live mindfully in the environment. He mentioned that he understood better why some burning issues like climate change was being brushed aside as short term political gain could not be sacrificed. As the exchange programme was on peace communication, he met with (MPC) Mindanao Peoples Caucus, (IID) Initiatives for International dialogue, Peace Builder Community and interacted with several NGOs who were into peace promotion, people to people programme, conflict early detections, he also understood the need to communicate clearly in promoting peace. In this connection he even had the opportunity to meet with MILF Muslim rebel group in the southern island of Mindanao.

This project has also given the insights of why peace needs to be advocated, which could also learn from the recognition of potential conflict areas like that of unemployment of youth and the rise in petty crimes, environmental and developmental conflicts and many more both in the changing public as well as private spheres.

Tshering Wangdi returned to Thimphu on 13th February after a ten months exchange program in the Philippines. As a component of the PeaceComm project Tarayana has sent Mr. Dawa Tshering, Trongsa field officer, to the Philippines for a 10 months hands-on-learning of audio/visual programming for the PeaceComm5 (for the final year of the project) and received two participants, Mr. Maran Hkam Awng from Myanmar and Ms. Myra-Flor Sioco from the Philippines on the 12th of April 2010. They will be in the country for ten months.
Community Radio

“The community radio should have an independent character. It must be run by the people themselves”

-Ato Pena, Radio Partido

Tarayana is in the process of piloting a community radio program in Rukha to facilitate better and efficient mode of disseminating information and knowledge among the members. Tshering Wangdi, community radio focal person accompanied by Leki Dawa, field officer visited the community from 24th – 27th February 2010 to hold consultations with the members so as to decide upon the implementation modalities. Representatives from all the 19 households participated in the consultation process and their response was very enthusiastic and encouraging. The community members are very excited about the new venture taking place in their community and are committed to the imp implementation, operation and management of this pilot community radio.

A committee comprising of six members was formed to oversee the functioning and operation of the community radio. Ap Wangdi was selected as the Chairperson and Aum Namsey, Dorji Dema, and Ap Chador were put in charge of coordination and management. Yeshi and Chimi Om who have completed Non Formal Education and Tshering who has completed primary level education, were chosen to handle the technical aspects of the radio program.

Tshering suggested that the committee members could be brought to Thimphu and taken to radio stations like Kuzoo, Radio Valley and Centennial to give them a firsthand exposure and to show them the workings of a radio station.

In consultation with the community members, it was decided that the radio programs would be aired as per the convenience of the community members and the timings agreed on are 6 am – 7 am in the mornings and 5 pm - 7 pm in the evenings. The community members will support the Committee by contributing and participating in the programs to be aired in the evenings and any visitor to the community will also be invited to participate.
Utilizing Natural Resources in the Communities through Ecotourism

Mr. Pema Gyalpo, Administrative Officer, attended the training course on “Developing Ecotourism by Utilizing Natural Resources in Asian Countries” organized by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) from 2nd -26th February 2010. Fifteen participants comprising of researchers, NGO/community leaders and tour agents attended the training. The month long training was held in Japan.

The training aimed to bring all the relevant stakeholders together to work towards ecotourism as an alternative way of development with due consideration for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. The training was first of its kind funded by JICA. The training program highlighted that eco tourism allow the visitor to not only enjoy the scenic beauty of the country but also to experience other nuances of the country such as it agricultural practices, local industry and life in rural communities. He learnt that the communities are instrumental in operation, management and sustainability of eco tourism. The essential keywords in Ecotourism are Nature Conservation, Community Development and Tourism Development.

With this basic training and better understanding of what is involved in improving community based tourism, Pema Gyalpo will be able to provide support in community mobilization during the implementation of the new project being implemented in Samtse and Zhemgang with funds from Helvetas and EU. Moreover, he will also be able to assist in improving the understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the community members in the Monpa villages through which the Nabji-Korphu Winter trail falls. This should help the community gain access to a larger share of the tourist dollar, while the tourists can benefit from improved service provision in the villages.

Training for six Early Child Care Givers

Right nutrition, care and guidance are crucial for proper physical, mental and emotional development of children. Our experiences in rural communities have shown that most often children are often left to fend for themselves for long stretches during the day as the parents are engaged in their daily chores. Children start eating from the family pot at a very early even as their needs vary. These children have no access to daycare and related facilities wherein social skills and preparation for formal schooling can take place. During several rounds of consultation with the community members, most mothers expressed their difficulties in tending to their toddlers and pre-schoolers.

Tarayana is currently training six young ladies recruited from the rural communities as early childhood caregivers. These six school leavers from Zhemgang and Samtse were selected by their communities to undergo a month long training in Thimphu with the understanding that they will return to their villages after the training. These ladies will then go back to their villages and help set up and run the early child care facilities there.

Solar Monitoring Visit

Ms. Thinley Bidha, Solar Focal person completed a monitoring visit to Satakha, Sibichang and Thanglung from 6th – 21st February 2010. At the same time the next steps in rain water harvesting at Sengdhen Community Primary School were discussed with the School authorities and the local communities.
Gender Mainstreaming

Gender Mainstreaming is basically a strategy to address inequality and social justice at all levels. It is a process to access the implications for women and men in any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes at all levels. It is a strategy for making women as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral part of design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes in the political, economic and social spheres so that both men and women benefit equally.

Tarayana works with more women and children in the villages. A collaborative project proposal titled “Enhancing employability, productivity and income-generating capacity among women and youth engaged in the informal economy in Bhutan” is being submitted for EU funding jointly by Tarayana, Youth Development Fund, RENEW and Save the Children. Should this project be accepted, skills training will be provided for Out of school youth and rural disadvantaged women to increase their employability.

Pema, Programme Officer, attended a three-week training program on “Gender Mainstreaming” held in Copenhagen, Denmark 8-26 March, 2010. The training was organized and financed by Danida Fellowship Programme and hosted by COWI. Fifteen participants from various agencies within the country attended the Gender Mainstreaming Course.

The main objective was to train and sensitize all relevant officials from different agencies on gender concepts and issues including the basic concepts on gender, gender tools, challenges and issues faced in promoting gender mainstreaming in the Bhutanese as well as the international context.

In Brief

Seminar/debriefing meeting for PeaceComm4

On 20th and 21st March 2010, Aum Chime P. Wangdi, Secretary General and Mr. Tshering Wangdi, focal person for community radio program attended the seminar/debriefing meeting for PeaceComm4. The meeting was hosted by FK at the S.D. Avenue Hotel, Bangkok. On the first day all partners and participants of four FK funded exchange projects briefly presented their experiences during the implementation of their respective exchange projects.

The second day was spent in reviewing the partnership. The internal session consisted of two parts, the first part was experience sharing between partners and participants. The second part was briefing and experience sharing of the old participants to the new participants.

PeaceComm5

The prep-course for PeaceComm5 started on the March 22nd 2010 and ended on the 10th of April 2010. The three weeks course was held at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) and was attended by the participants of PeaceComm5 along with the other FK exchange participants. Mr. Dawa Tshering, Tarayana Field Officer, is the second exchange participant from Bhutan and is currently attached to the Environmental Broadcast Circle Ltd., the Philippines. He will be there for 10 months. In turn Tarayana has received Ms. Myra-Flor Sioco (Philippines) and Mr. Maran Hkam Awng (Myanmar) who will be with us for the next 10 months. Ms Myra will help strengthen the documentation and publication unit while Mr. Hkam will assist the Director of Programmes.
Microfinance stands as one of the most promising and cost-effective tools in the fight against global poverty

Sometimes called “banking for the poor,” microfinance is an amazingly simple approach that has been proven to empower very poor people around the world to pull themselves out of poverty. Relying on their traditional skills and entrepreneurial instincts, very poor people, use small loans to support to start, establish, sustain, or expand very small, self-supporting businesses and to support their family.

Tarayana having worked with the grassroots for the past six and a half years learned that breaking the poverty trap included engaging the communities in micro-enterprises. This can be done by facilitating and educating the local communities to improve their lives by using microfinance. Opportunities are identified and input requirements listed that will help bring about skills that can quickly start generating income. The small fund is used to purchase the tools needed to start or expand microbusinesses that range from weaving, growing and selling vegetables, raising chickens to sell eggs, breeding livestock and wood craving.

Micro-credit has been started as a pilot phase in communities that Tarayana works with in rural areas. The Wood Craving Group in Goling, Zhemgang, Ap Tshering Dorji from Lamgang in Atang Geog, the Lhop community in Dorokha Dungkhag are some of the participants in the microfinance pilot project.

A week long workshop on “Saving and Credit Groups in Rural Areas” was held at the Rural Development Training Centre in Zhemgang organised by Helvetas-Bhutan. It was attended by Asst. Program Officers and Program Officers of Tarayana along with field officers from relevant organisations. The participants gained more knowledge about the Saving & Credit groups in rural communities. Access to credit is important if poor communities are to have an opportunity to move ahead, the lack of assets for collaterals is the single biggest barrier to getting loans from commercial banks. Hence alternate arrangements through micro-finance are increasingly becoming the need of the hour.
The 16th Tarayana Board Meeting

“The upcoming Tarayana Fair involving various ministries will highlight the rural communities’ issues, their hopes and views about the development process taking place in the communities”

The 16th Tarayana Board meeting was held on 13th March 2010 at the Tarayana Centre, Chubachu. The meeting commenced at 10am with the Hon’ble President welcoming all the Board and Executive Committee members to the meeting and thanking them for their presence and support.

There were several issues discussed during the meeting. The agenda focused on Tarayana’s fund raising possibilities and its annual fair. The Secretary General, reported briefly on Tarayana’s broad based support program. She thanked all the executive committee members for their support in expanding the support base. She also mentioned that bank accounts at the Bank of Bhutan and Bhutan National Bank were opened for this program. It was suggested that bank accounts be opened at the Druk-Punjab National Bank and Tashi Bank Ltd. as well.

During the meeting Dasho Ugyen Rinzin made a presentation on professional fundraising possibilities and various options were discussed. The Board recommended the establishment of Alaya, Tarayana’s Social Enterprise. A separate unit would look after this Social Enterprise and the funds thus generated would be used towards financing rural development activities of Tarayana. Suggestions of various entrepreneurial possibilities were tabled for discussion.

The Board instructed that the Tarayana Fair 2010 be done differently. It was also decided that it be held at the Changlimithang Archery Grounds from the 6-9th of May, keeping in mind the restrictions in place for vehicle movements during the forthcoming SAARC summit. The theme selected was “Celebrating Rural Communities” and Dasho Karma Ura suggested that relevant Government agencies be invited to co-host the Fair as the theme was relevant to many other sectors providing rural development initiatives.

The meeting ended with concluding remarks from the Hon’ble President with Her Majesty expressing appreciation of the commitment of the Board and Executive Members. The Hon’ble President also extended an invitation in advance to all the members for the Druk Wangyal Tshechu on the 15th of December 2010.

The Hon’ble President with the Tarayana Board & Executive Members
**Upcoming Events**

**May & June 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Venue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr 19-30</td>
<td>SAARC Art Camp</td>
<td>Tarayana Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 6-9</td>
<td>Tarayana Annual Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11-12</td>
<td>Tarayana Staff Retreat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 12-21</td>
<td>Annual Audit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 17-20</td>
<td>MOUNTAIN ECHOES- A Literary Festival</td>
<td>Tarayana Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 7-14</td>
<td>Project Evaluation and Reporting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Support Tarayana**

We invite you to be a part of reaching out to the most vulnerable members of our society through your support to Tarayana. We operate with financial support of individuals and organizations, without which we would not have the opportunity of helping so many families help themselves. Tarayana complements and supplements the initiatives of the Government in empowering rural communities towards sustainable livelihoods.

The Foundation maintains its accounts in accordance with accepted financial norms and is audited annually by the Royal Audit Authority of Bhutan. An audited financial report and an annual progress report are published every year and is available for all interested individuals and organizations.

Please contact us for more information.

---

**VOLUNTEER, I AM**

Twenty four hours a day
Where can I go to give some away?
For my time is gift
All I desire….
A hand to hold.

A tear to wipe, a child to soothe
A lonely patient to comfort when blue
A harried worker to lend a hand to.

There’s no need for you to strike up a band
For I really seek out the fanfare of man
I simply have time to give away
To help those in need and brighten their lives

For my time is my own
I will give it for free
A volunteer I am
A volunteer I will be

Chimi Dema,
Class 8 C
Jigme Namgyal LSS

---

**NATURE**

I am by nature
Soft hearted and selfless
I am by nature
I help each and everyone
I am by nature
I try my best to fulfill others wish
And I am by the nature.
I am like one sun
But shines like million stars.

Sangay
Class 7 D

---

**In Touch**

Tarayana Newsletter

**From the Tarayana School Clubs**

---

**Upcoming Events**

**May & June 2010**

---

**Support Tarayana**

---

**Tarayana Foundation, P.O. Box 2003, Tarayana Centre, Chubachu, Thimphu, Bhutan**

**Phone:** 975-2-329-333  **Fax:** 975-2-331-433  **tarayana@druknet.bt**

**www.tarayanafoundation.org**

---

**Chimi Dema, Class 8 C**

**Jigme Namgyal LSS**

---

**Sangay, Class 7 D**