Tarayana has been growing in leaps and bounds over the years. As it celebrated its seventh Birthday, the Tarayana family rededicated itself to continue “servicing from the heart” those in need of a helping hand.

Tarayana will be undertaking a consultation and ground truthing visit to remote villages in Samdrupjongkhar and Pemagatshel after the rains. This is in keeping with the approved work plan for 2010 where service provision will be expanded to include support to needy communities in these two Dzongkhas. Moreover, the activities in the 36 villages where comprehensive community development is being implemented has expanded both horizontally as well as vertically with micro finance being the latest component gaining wider acceptance as self help groups mature in their saving schemes.

Capacity development of the Tarayana Staff has also been taken up as per the gap analysis carried out during the annual Review and Planning Retreat. Tarayana is also in the process of getting registered and the papers have all been submitted to the CSOA for their review.

The recently concluded Tarayana Fair with the theme “Celebrating Rural Communities” was hailed as a grand success by one and all inspite of the low fund generation, it more than made up by the awareness created, and true volunteerism promoted. The rural self help groups managed to sell their products directly to the buyers and were able to better understand the taste and range expected by the market.

The Annual Retreat for 2010 was held on the 11 and 12th of May. The Annual Retreat provides the Tarayana team with an important opportunity of reviewing the ongoing activities and taking stock of any implementation issues that are being faced. In addition, it also gave the opportunity for collective decision making in planning new activities and interventions based on the input from the communities.

This year’s Annual Retreat was moderated and facilitated by Mr. Chimmi Dorji, Director, Rural Development Training Institute, Zhemgang. The 2009 Retreat was also facilitated by Mr. Chimmi. This helped as the group went through the review as well as the selection of additional interventions and activities for their respective communities, based on the requests and needs from the target communities.

The Retreat also gave everyone the opportunity to share the implementation challenges and issues. Sufficient time was also spent on analysing strengths and weaknesses of the various projects being implemented viz a viz the capacities of the Programme Officers, Field Officers and Programme Assistants. It was possible for a 360 degree review of the various projects and programmes being currently implemented.

One of the main challenges to implementing our activities in the field proved to be the long distances and the transportation costs involved. Moreover, the distance from the markets also limited the scope of the higher cash income from the sale of agricultural and horticultural produce. The cost of production of cane and bamboo products also was higher in the interior parts of the country due to the long distances resulting in higher transportation costs.

The need to improve communication and coordination between the Thimphu Office and the field units and also among field units came up as one area needing improvement. The Facilitator hoped that the senior management team would take necessary initiatives to ensure proper communication and coordination between and amongst all programmes and activities being undertaken so that the entire Tarayana family is on the same page.

The Peacecomm exchange participants Ms. Myra and Mr. Hkam also attended the Retreat and contributed to the discussions and had the opportunity to witness the inner working mechanisms of the review and planning processes of the organization.

The Retreat concluded with all the participants re-dedicating themselves to goals and objectives of the Foundation, and re-affirmed their commitment to “service from the heart” in bringing about socio-economic transformations in the poor communities.
Performing simple tasks like holding a pen or reading a book is not a burden for so many people. But for a child born with no eye and with severe hand deformities, writing and reading are not major challenges but a dream to be fulfilled.

Tarayana has a long association with Sonam Jamtsho Doya of Sanglung Village in Dorokha, Samtse. He was born blind and has deformed hands and toes which made it impossible for him to learn Braille or move about on his own. He was only six years old when Tarayana placed him at the National Institute for the Blind, in Khaling. His father stayed with him for a while but had to return home to the fields and to the rest of the family where he was the sole bread earner. Sonam was not able to make much progress at school as he was doubly challenged and learning Braille was not happening through his severely webbed fingers.

Over the years, Sonam has benefitted through the Surgical Camps and the surgeons performed frenulum release procedures for his webbed fingers one hand at a time. There was nothing that could be done for his eyes, but he is happy that he'll finally be able to read with the improvement of his sense of touch. Sonam, who is now 11 years old, is going back to school in Khaling soon.

It is individual stories like this and many more that gives Tarayana the reason to continue with the Restorative Surgical Camps. The cost as well as the logistic and organisational challenge in making these camps happen is high, nevertheless, the smiles of those who benefit from these camps make it all worthwhile. Basic health care is available to most people even in far flung villages however, specialized care is not available.

Tarayana organizes these camps with technical support from Surgicorps International, an American group made up of medical and non-medical group mainly to serve the people across the globe, and the Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan. The camps have been held at the Paro General Hospital every year. The team of surgeons, anaesthesiologists, nurses and volunteers was led by Dr. Jack Demos, a plastic surgeon, who founded Surgicorps International.

The restorative surgical camp for the year 2010 was held from 12th till 21st April. 246 patients turned up for screening, 108 patients were scheduled for surgery and 85 patients underwent surgery. An additional twenty one patients with burn cases were referred to the Jigme Dorji Wangchuck Referral Hospital, Thimphu, where a Burns Camp was undertaken around the same time.
**As a Volunteer**

“My two sons who were cleft lipped didn’t have self confidence and couldn’t face public. After the surgery they were very happy because they looked much better and gained self confidence”.

* Rinchen Lhamo (Mother)

I am very fortunate to get this opportunity to volunteer for the surgical camp 2010. I was involved in various activities with different people who came to attend the camp. Most of the people are from remote places and never had this opportunity. The outcome was tremendous and can see the smile in every face of the patients. I have never seen such expressed happiness when they left Paro after the treatment.

I led a group of people from Pema Gatshel who had never been to Paro Taktshang. They were really thankful to me and the Tarayana Foundation for the pilgrimage. They felt privileged to have this double opportunity of receiving surgical treatment and to earn some positive karma by visiting the holy sites like Paro Taktshang and Kichu Lhakhang. This was their first visit to these holy places. I was moved by their eyes filled with happy tears.

This was my first opportunity of giving back to those in need as a volunteer with Tarayana. It made me realize the importance of helping others in order to gain our own happiness. I was deeply humbled that I as a simple volunteer could contribute to other’s happiness and was in turn the recipient of such heartfelt gratitude. Tarayana Foundation has some wonderfully innovative programmes for supporting the poor and the vulnerable patients receive specialized medical care. I am glad to have been a part of this wonderful initiative and wish this noble programme continue to fulfill the expectations of the economically disadvantaged people.

*Rinchen Tshering, Volunteer*

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**Community Radio**

The objective of Peacecomm Exchange Program was to promote mutual exchange of knowledge, skills and experience on peace and communication.

Besides these objectives, learning to produce and manage radio programmes is also one of the targets of the Foundation through the Peacecomm Exchange Program. Purpose of setting up the community radio station is to improve the lives of people in rural communities in Bhutan. One of the methods through which we facilitate holistic rural community development is through community mobilization that promotes socio-economic transformation and empowerment.

In this connection Tarayana Foundation had proposed to set up community radio station in one of its core communities in Rukha as an information sharing and empowerment tool. The groundwork and social mobilization process have been completed; however, the plan to broadcast the pilot program was put on hold due to non-existence of policies on licensure for community radio station.

Currently Tarayana Foundation is in the process of forging a partnership with ‘Kuzoo FM,’ the first private radio station in the country that is broadcast to all 20 Dzongkhags. Tarayana plans to bring the rural voice through Kuzoo station. The radio programs will feature traditional songs, folktales, interviews with resource people, discussions on the socio-economic development process currently taking place in their communities, and their views about it. Programme content is currently being developed together with the Rukha community by Mr. Tshering Wangdi, Assistant Programme Officer.
In Brief

2010 Annual Fair: “Celebrating Rural Communities”

The 4-day Annual Tarayana Fair was held at the Clock Tower Square from the 6th to 9th of May with key government agencies co-hosting the event. This year’s theme “Celebrating Rural Communities” was inaugurated by Her Royal Highness Ashi Kesang Wangmo Wangchuck who was the Chief Guest. It was also attended by HRH Ashi Sonam Dechan Wangchuck, HRH Dasho Jigyel Ugyen Wangchuck and Ashi Deki Choden. Many distinguished guests from the Ministries of the Royal Government and International agencies, Members of Parliament, Tarayana Board of Trustees, members and local business community in addition to the friends and volunteers of Tarayana and representatives of the remote communities were also present.

The fair showcased not only the arts and crafts of rural communities but also the partner government agencies that implement development projects in the rural communities. The Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Education, took part in this successful event providing greater understanding of the process of effecting holistic development in the communities. The rural folks were able to market their products and generate income during this yearly affair. It is an activity that seeks to enhance their economic security.

In a public event, entertainment is one aspect that will keep the crowd coming. So even with rain showers, groups of professional performers have kept the crowd lively with various song and dance presentations. These groups have offered to entertain the people from all parts of Bhutan without a professional fee. Community people have also performed traditional songs and dances that brought delight to townspeople and foreigners visiting Thimphu.

A dinner was hosted by Her Majesty Queen Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck after the awarding of the Certificates of Appreciation at the Terma Linca Resort. It was a night of celebration and expression of gratitude to all the staff and volunteers who have worked hard for the success of the Annual Fair.

Donations for Holistic Development Initiatives

Tarayana would like to acknowledge all the generous donors who made it possible to reach out to our rural communities in bringing about improvement in their lives through strategic interventions.

Tarayana received two million Yen from His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo to expand holistic development initiatives and social services in rural Bhutan.

Rev. Seiyu Kiriyama, the Founder of Agon Shu, a Buddhist sect in Japan, donated two million Yen to Tarayana Foundation, on behalf of his organisation to be used to expand Tarayana’s services to the vulnerable individuals and communities.

Dasho Ugyen Dorji, Lhaki Group of Companies donated Nu. 300,000 (three hundred thousand Ngultrums) on the 24th of May, 2010. Her Majesty Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, President of Tarayana accepted the cheque on behalf of the Foundation.

Her Royal Highness Ashi Kesang Wangmo Wangchuck also donated Nu.100,000 (one hundred thousand Ngultrum) earlier during the Tarayana Annual Fair. Aum Sangay Zam, Rinchen Group of Companies (Executive Committee Member of Tarayana) donated Nu.100,000 (One hundred thousand Ngultrum) in March 2010.

On behalf of the Army Wives’ Welfare Association, Mrs. Bharati Singh, the President of the Army Wives’ Welfare Association (AWWA), India, donated Nu.100,000 to Tarayana to be used in community development activities in rural Bhutan.
Tarayana Fair was organized basically for the rural communities to exhibit and market their products and to provide opportunity to interact with the people from all over the country.

This year’s Annual Fair, people gathered again to witness and experience the goodness that sharing brings. The inner joy that comes from helping other people has affected even people from neighbouring countries. Mrs. Serena Chopra of Delhi, India is one of the loyal supporters of Tarayana since it was established in 2003. She was honored by Her Majesty Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, Queen of the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, who on behalf of His Majesty the King awarded her the Coronation Gold medal for her great contribution to the development of rural communities in Bhutan. Another Friend of Tarayana, Dr. Ernest T. Nagamatsu and his son Mr. Erik Nagamatsu donated the proceeds of their book, “Food of the Kingdom of Bhutan” to Bhutan Foundation and Tarayana.

During the fair, every person had something to share. Some people gave cash, some gave prizes for the raffle, some gave their time, some shared their talents, and some shared their strength. Whatever form it may be, helping has been a tradition strengthened through Tarayana activities.

We take this opportunity to thank all the donors who donated for the jumble sale, for the Silent Auction, and prizes for the daily raffle. We also thank all the sponsors for lunches, blankets and mattresses.

This Tarayana Annual Fair was a big success and we thank all the Volunteer of Post Graduate Diploma in Public Administration at the Royal Institute of Management, other volunteers including the talented face painters, entertainment groups and young professionals who had volunteered in the past years too for making it possible.

We say a special “Thank You” to the community members for letting us be an active part of their lives and the “Thimphu crowd” without whose support and goodwill the Fair would not have been so successful. We enjoyed bringing our rural communities to the Capital City and in contact with the “Market”.

Tarayana Rural Craft is novel a concept in poverty alleviation, whereby poor artisans are the owners of their own company. It acts as a bridge between the market and the artisans to facilitate their access to the global market.

Tarayana Rural Craft is temporarily relocated at the Tarayana Centre on 8th June 2010. It will be moved back to old space after the completion of renovation work. The renovation is initiated to widen the space & make it presentable. At present the products are exhibited at the Alaya gallery.

Four Tarayana staff attended the National Awareness Workshop On Global Environment Facility And Persistent Organic Pollutants which was held on 3rd and 4th June, 2010, at Hotel Taj Tashi, Thimphu. It was jointly organized by Gross National Happiness Commission and UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme.

Tarayana is aware of the harmful effects of chemicals that most farmers use in rural areas. With this in mind, Tarayana initiated organic farming after sending five field officers for training in India. Two-day workshop enhanced our knowledge on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP) and sensitized all the participants on POPs.
Solar Light Electrification in Six Villages in Wangdue

Solar electrification in Wangdue has increased the rural people’s productivity at home since it started. The benefits they get from having solar light far exceeded the community’s expectations that it has driven them to take ownership of this facility. In a successful two week visit by the Barefoot Solar team led by focal person Thinley Bidha, representatives from six villages met to discuss how they can preserve and prolong the solar lights. The meeting resulted in an agreement of shared responsibilities. Chairman and Tshogpas were nominated among the village representatives to ensure proper maintenance and stability of their solar kits. It was jointly agreed that a monthly contribution of Nu.50 will be collected to save up for battery replacement in the future. The collected money will be deposited by the Chairman and Tshogpas to the community bank every six months. Each household will give another contribution of Nu. 20 to cover the transportation cost every time they travel down to the bank. The villagers also agreed to pay solar engineers Nu. 200 as installation charge and remuneration for the repair and maintenance of their solar light based on the number of hours spent. They have also agreed to buy solar spare parts from their Rural Electronic Workshop, which they have built at Migtana School. The sale record will be maintained by the principal and the chairman.

Chador, 27 yr old villager from Samthang believes that the project will provide greater opportunities for the advancement of their community. He is a farmer and mostly occupied tending to his land before the solar electrification. After being elected as chairman, he will now take on a new responsibility of safeguarding the community’s money and ensuring the proper utilization of solar lights.

More than 50 families in Lawa, Lamga, Migtana, Samthang, Taksha and Harachu villages are now living in a more comfortable and secure life after the installation of solar light in their homes. Housewives and children can now do their tasks without worrying about the risk of fire and harmful fumes to their health when they use kerosene lamps at night. The five-member Barefoot Solar team completed the installation despite occasional downpours. They have also trained the nominated members of each community on repair and maintenance of the solar sets. Tarayana has been working towards the upliftment of the lives of the people in the rural community through several development projects. The solar light electrification is one initiative that has brought about empowerment to the community by directly placing technology in the hands of the community themselves.

PeaceComm Exchange Participant From Myanmar Joins the Barefoot Solar Team

Trekking for hours is not new to Hkam Awng, the exchange participant from Myanmar who will be helping Tarayana in community development activities for the next seven months. He joined the Barefoot Solar team for a two-week visit in Wangdue which is about 3-hour drive from Thimphu and 3 to 4 hours walk going into the villages. Since his work as a facilitator in Shalom Foundation requires him to travel every month on foot for more than 2 hours to reach his community, going to the villages in Wangdue was not difficult for him.

Learning Dzongkha language was on his priority list when he came to Bhutan. He’s aware that the best way to interact with the community people is to use their local language because English is not commonly used in rural villages. But he still finds communicating with them a big challenge. Although the people are very friendly and hospitable, he could not carry a conversation with them because he can only speak and understand few Dzongkha words. His stay in Wangdue for more than two weeks enabled him to learn and practice the Dzongkha language more.

He enjoyed dining with families in the community the most. Local food did not pose any problem for Hkam as he loves eating vegetables with chilies. But having tea with butter is yet to become his favorite drink. He finds butter tea too salty. But he came to like the taste of it after being served for three consecutive days by every household they visited.

Apart from learning new Dzongkha words and experiencing the local food, he also gained knowledge on setting up solar light. Working with the team in six villages enabled him to learn the step-by-step process of assembly and installation of solar light under the guidance of focal person Thinley Bidha and Barefoot Solar Engineer Aum Dawa Dem. A skill he hopes to share in his country when he gets back home. There are still many remote communities in Myanmar without electricity and he wants to bring this knowledge to his country and help in the advancement of their lives.
Tarayana Staff took Advantage of Free Photography Session to Enhance their Photography Skills

A two-hour basic photography session was given to all staff during the Annual Tarayana Retreat on the 12th of May 2010. Secretary General Chime P. Wangdi stressed the importance of capturing good relevant photos for documentation on the first day of the annual review. Although the digital camera is a simple gadget that anyone can operate, not everyone can capture a good photo.

On the second day of the retreat, essential photography tips were given by Markus Wilde, a Swiss professional photographer who also teaches visual arts, photography and new media in Switzerland and Bhutan. He has conducted several Photography workshops in Thimphu and is currently working for Helvetas Bhutan on a project on “Preserving and Leveraging Bhutan’s Unique Cultural Diversity.

One of the practical information he has given the staff is to get to know the camera and its features. More often people just read the manual if something goes wrong, which he said should be the other way around. He encouraged everyone to read the manual first before getting started. He also emphasized the need to take lots of photos at different angles. Presenting the subject in different perspective will show several aspects of reality.

Good documentation requires not only a comprehensive report but also appropriate photos that communicate. In newsletters and annual reports, the use of photos aims to create an impact to the readers while presenting facts and information on a project’s progress.

Rai Foundation Grants Full Scholarship To Four Girls

Four underprivileged girls get full scholarship to study in India through Rai Foundation, a non-government organization that aims to provide equal opportunities for education to all. Its principal goal is to facilitate accessibility of education to the students to pursue their career goals.

ChildCare-Rai Foundation is one of the philanthropic endeavour of Rai Foundation that brings the underprivileged under a caring umbrella. It works with a clear-cut and global mission for caring and concern for girl Childs’ education and their right to a decent living in the subcontinent and across the world.

The Foundation, in association with Tarayana, has stretched its philanthropic support in Bhutan for the first time. Four needy girls from the remote corners of Bhutan have been given this opportunity to complete their tertiary education in respective fields.

Nima Zangmo and Sonam Zangmo from Mongar, Tshewang Zangmo from Tashigang and Yangchen Dema from Zhemgang were selected from amongst other applicants considering their academic performance and family background. The girls have been awarded 100 percent scholarship to study in Rai Foundation, Behror Campus in Rajasthan.
Upcoming Events

July, August & September 2010

July 5&6 : Workshop on QuickBooks
July 12&13 : Disaster Management training workshop, Conference Hall, Tarayana Centre
July 19-31 : Basic Hair cutting Training for Ten Rural Candidates
August 9&13 : Photography Workshop
September : Project Evaluation and Reporting
September 10-19 : Folk Ways Exhibition

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.

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From the Tarayana School Clubs

The Tarayana club of Monger Higher Secondary School has been actively taking part in carrying out the activities according to the action plan. The club started the activity of the year with the mass cleaning campaign in the school campus followed by presentation on the Tarayana Foundation by the club coordinator. The Members were familiarized on the Vision, Mission, Motto and Core Values of the Foundation.

On Sunday 4th April, 2010, the club members helped an old woman, Aum Sangay, in re-constructing her house which was damaged by the wind. Aum Sangay is our beneficiary and the club supports her by providing monthly stipend of Nu. 500/- since 2007.

Initially, Aum Sangay lives in a small hut with little ventilation and could see the stars during clear night from her congested room. She sometimes could only wish for her last breath because there was no one to look after her.

One night the roof of the hut was blown away by the storm. When I visited her place I saw her in a saddening situation on the that day. We wasted no time that I along with the club members started the reconstruction of the hut which took one and half days to complete. She was very happy and thankful to the club members when we handed over the house to her.

On 22nd May, the club members went to the Tarayana Project site at Kalapang and did the grass cutting. All members were tired but satisfied for the work they have done. Dechen chimi of XI commerce says, “I am happy because I could contribute my service to Tarayana Foundation in my own little way”.

Namgay Tshering, Club Coordinator,
Mongar Higher Secondary School

“It was great opportunity to work for the Tarayana Foundation and we are willing to volunteer anytime, anywhere”.

Club Members