The Tarayana Family would like to take this opportunity to offer Our Beloved King, His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and Her Majesty the Gyaltseu Jetsun Pema Wangchuck, our heartfelt prayers and all good wishes on the occasion of the Royal Wedding. As we join the nation in celebrating the happy occasion, we re-dedicate ourselves to service Your Majesties’, the country and the people to the best of our abilities. We wish Your Majesties long life, good health and much happiness.

The earthquake that affected much of western Bhutan, destroyed many structures and caused huge economic losses, fortunately there was no loss of life. We offer our prayers and condolences to all affected by the earthquake in neighbouring Sikkim, Bihar and Nepal even as we assist our own to recover from the disaster in our project sites in Samtse. Six families in Lotokuchu project sites will need complete reconstruction as their homes were destroyed completely. Many others suffered minor damages. These natural disasters bring to mind the need to be better prepared as service providers and as communities. The need to strengthen our capacities in disaster management also came to the fore. In response, Tarayana will include disaster preparedness in all our training components in addition to assisting local communities to prepare response teams.

Recognising the need to look after the welfare of the staff, the 18th Board instructed the management to look into and propose an improved pay package for discussion at the next Board meeting. While fund raising is still one of the biggest challenges for the organization, the art of making the Ngultrum stretch is visible in the holistic community development initiatives that are being implemented. Efforts are on, to help improve fund raising strategies of the organization and sooner than later, we are bound to get it right!

To our Tarayana Family, supporters, and avid readers of our Newsletter “In Touch” we wish you wonderful celebrations of the Thimphu Tshechu Holidays. May the observation of the Tshechu bring happiness, joy and peace to all our lives.

“Happiness is ...  
......... when I see the smiling faces of my family members”

S.A. Abdullah Al Mamun  
FK Exchange Participant, Bangladesh
Training on Green Technologies and Participatory Technology Developments

Tarayana Foundation conducted a week long training program on Green Technologies and Participatory Technology Developments from 12th-19th Sept 2011. The training program was facilitated by Mr. Mamun, an FK Exchange Participant from Bangladesh. The training was attended by the Tarayana Field Officers and Program Officers at the Tarayana Conference Hall, Tarayana Centre.

The five day training course included presentations on Ecological Sanitation, Design and Construction of Improved Sanitation Options, Vermi Composting, Rain Water Harvesting Systems, Biogas Construction and Eco Toilet and Vermi Composting Field Visits. During the last day of the training program, Mr. Mamun also talked about basic concepts of PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) and use of its tools, which included social mapping, resource mapping and Focused Group Discussion (FGD)/ Group Discussion (GD).

The presentation on an Ecological Approach to Sustainable Sanitation included potentials and challenges in Asian countries, low cost sanitation options and different designs of eco san toilet.

Mr. Sonam Gyeltshen from the Department of Public Health led the field visit to Shaba village in Paro. During the field visit on Eco Toilets, the participants were divided into two (2) groups: one group covered the social aspects and the other looked at the technical aspects. After reaching there, the participants had question and answer sessions regarding both the social and technical aspects.

The social aspect group questioned the community members about their toilet conditions before introduction of the eco toilet. With that, the participants also asked about advantages of having an eco toilet. The community members responded saying that “we didn’t have toilet before, we used to go to the open area”. The Health Assistant’s many awareness talks failed to change the way the community lived. So, the Department of Public Health had implemented the pilot Eco toilet, although it was a great challenge. They have supplied construction materials and made the community members understand about sanitation. The project became successful only after these pilot Eco toilets improved the overall hygiene of the village.

Now the community members feel that there are many advantages in using Eco Toilet including the fact that they can use the waste in their fields and gardens. They also feel that it is easy and simple to construct the toilet as they can use locally available construction materials.

The Tarayana Field Officers mentioned ‘before we traveled to visit the field, we thought the Eco Toilet would not have succeeded in any community. But after reaching there, we found it to be so successful. This has encouraged us to concentrate more and helped us understand more about the Eco Toilet’.
During the training program, the participants also attended a one day hands on training in making vermi compost at the Yusipang Renewable Nature Resources (RNR) Center. It was facilitated by Mr. Rajan Rai of the RNR. It was focused on vermi compost making with local materials. The session was organized with following objectives:

1. To make better use of local materials available
2. To help farmers avoid using chemical fertilizers
3. To improve farm productivity

The participants had an opportunity to learn all the steps in making vermi compost. They found it to be very interesting and mentioned that “from the process we understood that vermi compost is process of decomposing waste materials into the compost with the help of earthworms to increase the farm productivity by enriching the soil”. They have learned how to collect earthworms locally and use them for vermi composting.

Overall, the vermi compost was found to be very beneficial to the farmers who wanted to practice organic farming and to increase their farm production. It was noted that vermi composting will help the farmers very much and they can also learn how to utilize the waste to benefit them.

The participants found that Bio Gas and Rain Water Harvesting techniques were also simple enough to put into operation. At the time of construction, the diameter and site selection for bio gas needs to be carefully considered. They mentioned that the training program was very useful which could be implemented fairly easily in their communities to bring about improved living standards.

The last session was on Monday 19th Sept 2011, where Mr. Mamun presented about PRA and use of its tools which was a perfect refresher session and very useful for all the participants. This session also included social mapping, resource mapping and Focused Group Discussion/ Group Discussion.

The Field Officers were very enthusiastic about the new skills and knowledge they gained from the training program. They will be training the community members on the Eco toilet and vermi composting when they get back to their project sites.
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Training on Vermi Composting

Tarayana Foundation conducted a half day training session on vermi composting to the community members of Dechenperi, Gelephu on 06 Aug 2011 at the Brick Production Centre. A total of eleven participants (7 men and 4 women) were present in the training session. The training was facilitated by Ms. Thinley Bidha and S. A. Abdullah Al Mamun, FK participants, under the Skill Exchange Programme. The training was organized under the AGFUND.

Ms. Thinley Bidha also conducted a two day training session on vermi composting at Lotokuchu Jigme on 23rd and 24th of August 2011. A total of 19 members (12 women and 7 men) participated in the training event.

The objective of the training was to educate the community members on the vermi composting process and to promote the same to help improve soil conditions and productivity. Tarayana has initiated this training program in Dechenpelri and Lotokuchu, considering the slope terrain and the unproductivity of land with the top soil being washed away every monsoon season.

Growing any crops for self consumption has been the most difficult task for these communities. Therefore, to help the communities make their land fertile and more productive; Tarayana has put into practice the vermi compost in these rural communities.

The training on vermi composting was new to the community members and they enjoyed the training session. It is not very clear what types of earthworm species are available in the community and its performance with composting. According to the NOP (National Organic Programme), the local earthworm will perform, but slowly. The critical part of vermi composting is proper handling of the worm and creating an enabling environment for them in the compost bed. Continuous follow up and close monitoring support to the community will be required for the promotion of vermi composting.

In Brief

Rai Foundation Scholarship

Tarayana Foundation facilitated the provision of Rai Foundation Scholarship to three more girls from rural communities to pursue their tertiary education this year. Rai Foundation is 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 goal. However, unlike last year, the recipients of the scholarship this year had to bear the boarding fee of Nu 40,000/- of which the organization had offered 50% of the amount. Tarayana could not obtain full scholarship slots in spite of its best efforts because the selection procedure was on merit basis. Since all our candidates come from remotest village their marks were comparatively less.

Pema Lhaden from Zhemgang, Ngawang Choden from Mongar and Pema Choden Doya from Samtse were selected this year. The course duration is for three years. In total there are 11 students supported by Tarayana Foundation for their tertiary education in different universities.

Khengkhar Baseline Survey

Mr. Dhendup Tshering, Program Officer accompanied by Mr. Sonam Jamtsho, Mongar Field Officer visited the villages under Khengkhar Geog, Mongar Dzongkhag to undertake the baseline survey for the new project to be implemented by Tarayana. Khengkhar is one of the 17th Geogs in Mongar Dzongkhag. The Geog consists of six chiwogs and 22 villages and about 90% of their settlements were found on South-West mountain slopes. It was noted during the midterm review that the Khengkhar Geog is one of the poorest Geog in Mongar Dzongkhag and had been selected as a vulnerable area under the Tarayana project.

The main idea was to build up a baseline data for future studies and for documenting changes and short term impacts during project implementation. The new project will be implemented by Tarayana in collaboration with Helvetas, Bhutan.
Training on Organic Farming Techniques

On 10th and 11th July 2011, Farm production training was conducted in the villages of Langdurbi, Digala and Lamthang. The training was facilitated by Mr. Dhendup Tshering, Tarayana Program Officer and Mr. Dawa Tshering, the Assistant Program Officer, with technical support from Mr. Choki Wangdi, Agriculture Extension Officer.

The participants were trained on farm production like Kitchen gardening, vegetable production and maize production. The training also included practical sessions where the participants had an opportunity to learn practically on Kitchen gardening, vegetable production and maize production by applying principle of Organic Farming. The training was attended by 110 women.

Two days mushroom production training was also conducted with the help of technical expertise from the National Mushroom Centre, Department of Agriculture.

The training was aimed to increase income generation and to build the capacity of women groups. The communities were trained to grow two types of mushroom (Shiitake mushroom and Oyster mushroom).

In Brief

Mid Term Review Of the FK Project

Tarayana as a lead partner of the project organized a midterm review meeting at Tarayana Centre from 24th to 26th of September, 2011. The meeting was attended by the representatives from the partner organizations from India (Development Alternatives/ TARA), Bangladesh (Practical Action) and Nepal (People, Energy and Environment Development Association). It was also attended by the Regional Representatives- Asia of Fredskorpset, Norway.

During the meeting all participants reported on the progress report of the exchange participants and they were happy to know that the exchange participants are making the best of the opportunity and keen to learn new skills from the partner organizations. During the meeting the partner organizations also discussed and worked on objectives, activities and budget for the next exchange round.

Tarayana Rural Crafts Update

The Tarayana Rural Craft had a stall at the Haa Summer Festival, 2011. This provided an opportunity to display and sell rural crafts produced by rural communities. During the festival, besides selling products it also managed to obtain markets for book sales. The team participated in the International Trade Fair held at Changlimithang from 16th-20th September 2011. The team also had a stall at the Roundtable Meeting at the Royal Banquet Hall and at the International Cultural Festival. The space was provided free of cost by the organizing committees of these various events and we gratefully acknowledge their continued support.

On 16th September 2011, Tarayana opened Rural Craft outlet in Folk Heritage museum in Thimphu. This has been aimed at facilitating a wider market for the rural crafts produced by Self Help Groups in rural communities.
ECCD Facilitators Training at Phobjikha MSS

Early Child Care and Development (ECCD) is regarded as the most cost effective investment in human resource development. Tarayana has been promoting the “Buzip” programme in the remote communities so that basic early child care can be provided to the children as mothers spend some time in taking up economic activities. So we welcomed the invitation for our care providers to attend the 13 days facilitators training programme that was organized by ECCD and SEND, Ministry of Education, starting from the 5th of August, 2011, at the Phobjikha Middle Secondary School. The training was attended by 36 community ECCD facilitators, 11 private ECCD’s, 7 from Tarayana Foundation, 5 from RBP, 2 ADEO’s resourced by eight resource persons. Mr. Karma Gayleg was the main coordinator of the training. The Chief of ECCD & SEND was present as the Chief Guest for the opening and closing of the training.

The participants from Tarayana Foundation were pleasantly surprised to find that the methods they were using at their respective centres were in line with what was being taught. They were even able to relate to the tailor made course they themselves underwent for three months before being posted in their respective “Buzip” centres. The participants were happy to learn more about Child development and learning, and Quality ECCD centers- goals & standards (ELDS familiarization), Facilitators’ relationships, words, and actions with children, Activities at the ECCD centre (Adaptations for different age & developmental levels) and materials for setting up the ECCD centers.

They found the session on how the facilitator should be when the children and parents come to the ECCD centre very interesting. It clarified the doubts and the participants looked forward to adding these features in their work when they got back to their postings. Our participants also enjoyed the sessions on guided practice in special activities, group Make-Believe, Guided practice in special activities, math play, Guided practice in special activities, cultural traditions and guided practice in Implementing a quality afternoon program( P4). They were also able to update themselves on the techniques and tools in assessing young children, keeping children healthy, safe, and well nourished, organizing and managing the ECCD center, record keeping and regulations with the final activity on group planning time for day simulations.

The session on parenting education was new and hence very interesting to our participants. They felt that this would continue to be a challenge to implement in the rural villages where they are posted as all parents are hardworking farmers with very different views as to how to raise their children.
Eco Friendly Construction Training at Tingtibi, Zhemgang

In the month of July, Mr. Sonam Jamtsho, the Tarayana Field Officer, along with two carpenters (Karchung and Karma) from Dak, Mongar, attended a month long training on eco friendly construction in Tingtibi under Zhemgang Dzongkhag. The training program was organized by the Department of Forestry.

Social Forestry coordinated this eco friendly construction as a pilot project in Zhemgang. The Department of Forestry provided training to the local carpenters and the Tarayana Field Officer along with two carpenters from the Dak village under the Mongar Dzongkhag. The houses are being constructed using the maximum numbers of cane and bamboo in order to make it cost effective. The Department of Forestry has begun providing training to the rural communities in Bhutan. They have started the first eco friendly construction in Zhemgang and if it is successful, they are planning to construct three houses in each region.

They have constructed a house of ten meters length and eight meters breadth with five rooms and an attached toilet. The five rooms consist of a kitchen, chosham, sitting room, bed room and guest room. The windows and partitions of the house are made of wood and the poles are made of bamboos. The roofing is done using thatch and plaster is made with soil that is good for hot places to help maintain rooms at a cooler temperature.

In the first two weeks of training, Social Forestry Division, provided training on how to treat bamboo, manage bamboos for construction, remove nodes, and to keep the bamboos for construction. Bamboo is an available material in rural areas and is fast growing and very strong and can be used in many ways. In early times, people used bamboo for making crafts, construction, and for fencing their fields. For that reason, during the training program, it was noted that the community members find it easy to work with bamboo and they know how to use bamboo as construction materials.

Bamboo treatments that were taught were of three kinds: seasonal harvesting treatment, smoking treatment and a treatment by using Boric Acid.

Seasonal Harvesting Treatment

Bamboo should be harvested in at the correct season (September, October, November and December) as insects will not attack the bamboo so harvested and it will also last for about forty five years. If the bamboo is not harvested at the correct season, it will be attacked by insects within a year. Therefore, harvesting at the correct season is considered as the best treatment option for rural communities.

Chemical Treatment

Chemical Treatment is done with Boric Acid and, with the help of a machine, the acid can enter into the bamboo. The bamboo will need to be stored for one week after the treatment is finished. During the transportation, bamboos should be loaded very carefully without any scratch in order to have strong and good quality after the chemical treatment. It was also noted that chemical treatment is expensive as acid needs be imported from India. This is also neither organic nor eco friendly.

The training course also included how to harvest, cure, store and arrange the bamboos before construction and to make joineries of bamboo and wood for construction.

Eco friendly housing can be constructed by using fallen trees and bamboos that have been damaged by heavy rainfall or wind and trees that have been cut down during development activities such as road construction or making a mule trek. Local carpenters were sensitized on the benefits of using trees that are already damaged instead of cutting down new trees.

The month long training also included housing construction with local available materials like soil, wood, bamboo and stone that is considered to be eco friendly. The participants received hands-on training in constructing houses and learned different methods by using bamboo in the middle of stones and wood and by making bamboo windows and bamboo partitions inside which is believed to be disaster resistant. They were also taught how to make roofing using thatch grass.

The participants found the training course to be very helpful for them and very interactive. The participants shared different thoughts on eco friendly housing construction. The course also helped the participants enhance their knowledge and ideas on how to construct eco friendly and disaster resistant houses. The participants returned with great enthusiasm and passion to put their learning into practice after learning valuable skills that will contribute towards the enhancement of rural development.
Upcoming Events

October, November & December 2011

Oct : Tarayana Rural Crafts stall in “Made in Bhutan Crafts Bazaar”, Thimphu

Oct : Community Immersion Trip to Zhemgang with Wheaton Students

Oct: Initiation of the project titled “Advancing Economic Opportunities of Women and Girls” in Samtse and Pema Gatshel

November: Senior Citizens Bodhgaya Pilgrimage

November: Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

December: Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

December : Tarayana Retreat

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

With full support from the school administration, teachers and the parents, I was able to start the “Tarayana Club” at Lango Middle Secondary School in 2005. I and my teacher members could collect around Nu 11,000 from the donation box kept during the teachers-parents meeting in the same year, and with that amount we were able to support nine needy children.

The year after, we thought of the sustainability of the club, and staged a cultural show as a fundraising activity. From that, we were able to collect Nu 15,000 excluding the expenditure. In the same year, we were very grateful to the Foundation that we received Nu 10,000 as seed money. Adding up all those together, we could support the needy children of the school till now.

At the beginning of every academic year, we identify the needy children and provide them with the set of uniforms, school bags, stationeries and even lunch boxes. We re-look into their problems again after the mid-term break.

After providing the necessary items for the needy children, we have a system of loaning out the left over budget within our staff. The interest rate is 2% monthly that also help the club to generate a little amount.

Supporting them for the last six years, we were worried about the amount of budget we have. So, in the beginning of this year, when we were preparing the “Action Plan” for the club, we decided to stage a cultural show again to raise funds for the club. Principal Sir was very glad with our idea and we staged the show on 7th and 8th of May 2011.

Organized by Tarayana Club, every class/section was involved in the show, since we requested them to come up with an item each. The show was very successful with full support from the school administration all the staff and all our energetic students. With their support and the prayer of Her Majesty, the club was able to collect Nu 33,044, excluding the expenditure.

With this, we the teacher members in the club were happy that now, we can continue providing the basic necessities for the needy children for few more years.

Every Wednesday, after the class every club member has to gather in their respective classes to carry on with the club activities, as per the action plan.

Tshering Choden
Club Coordinator

In Touch Tarayana Newsletter