From the Editor

Since 2003, the foundation has focused towards the effort of poverty elimination, despite the great challenges we faced. Our potentials have been realized beyond our expectations through the support of donors, volunteers, funding agencies and the communities. We aspire for the same spirit from our supporters and well-wishers to help make 2014 a success—together we can make a difference. Now the pace of change is so great that it seems to propel us into the future with much thought. But the future cannot be what it brings to us; it must be how we want it to be.

On 13th January 2014, led by Aum Secretary General, Tarayana staff members greeted as the opening session of the annual retreat began at Tarayana Centre, Thimphu. The field officers presented the progress report and the major challenges like repayment of loans, quality of foods processed by the Self-Help-Groups, marketing of products, mismatch of product pricing and delay in delivery of goods.

The issues were also discussed on the need of strengthening the financial capacity, marketing, development of human resources policy and planning, and also the total expected budget for the five proposed projects; biogas, eco-toilet, improved housing, improved cooking stoves, gravity ropeway and solar dryer. Construction of the houses was the first priority among the five proposed projects. However, a financial constraint was the major issue in overall implementation of projects and activities.

Her Majesty Queen Mother, Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuk granted an audience to all the staff and the field officers, and also had a good opportunity to interact and present the final review of the annual retreat.

Completion of Gravity Ropeway, Samtse District

By the end of this month, the Changju village under Changju Tshachhu Chiwog in Bara gewog, Samtse will have connected to the gravity ropeway. The pilot project is an environmentally-friendly, sustainable and inexpensive means of achieving rural transportation installed at the cost of USD 49891.30 with technical support from Practical Action, Nepal. The community members and Tarayana staff visited a similar gravity ropeway in Nepal as a part of an effort to create awareness and understanding about ropeway operations and maintenance. The participants also saw the implementation of the gravity ropeway by Practical Action.

The rationale behind installing gravity ropeway was to enhance the livelihood of the community members by improving access to markets for their agriculture products. The travel time in the ropeway is less than 3 minutes; hence once in operation, the ropeway will reduce the heavy burden of carrying the goods and travel time to reach the nearest road point of Chungkha and Kongkha villages. The ropeway will benefit more than 150 households with a total population of more than 1500 people. There are also other villages in close proximity to Changju which can be served by the Gravity Ropeway.

According to the project coordinator, Dhendup Tshering, the major challenges he faced during the process of installation were; lack of technical and engineering experts in the field; outsourcing of the instruments like Abney level, GPS, Altimeter, Digital Theodolite; and communication problems among different working groups. Despite the challenges he faced, he expresses both satisfaction and relief at the ropeway’s completion.

Aum Kinga Yuden and her husband are farmers with three school-aged children. They were overwhelmed to received their new home in the New Year. Aum Kinga Yuden expressed her gratitude for the support rendered. It is a blessing for her family to live comfortably in a new house, and to be able to generate income by renting out some of the rooms. She says that the rental earnings will supplement her family income and hence help pay for her children’s education.

Happiness...

“I believe compassion to be one of the few things we can practice that will bring immediate and long-term happiness to ourselves.”

Dalai Lama
**In Touch**

**Tarayana Newsletter**

**February, 2014**

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**Blessing in Disguise**

Life in some of the rural areas of Bhutan was without hope until Tarayana’s intervention. The houses were mostly dilapidated with thatched bamboo roofs, poor ventilation and limited space. The people were deprived of basic shelter. Her Majesty Queen Mother, Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuk having visited Bhutan’s remotest villages and assured the people that they will have proper and safe shelter, undertook construction of the new houses with the support and supervision of Tarayana. The beneficiaries are thrilled with their new homes. A total of 563 new houses were constructed till the end of 2013.

One of the beneficiaries from Kengkhar, Monggar, Aap Rinchen Phuntsho, said that before she used to live in one communal house with 30 families and had a very hard time coping with her situation. However, after Tarayana’s intervention, she is very happy to get a new house. She has developed a kitchen garden, undertaken carpentry skills and constructed three houses in Murung. His carpenter wages have enabled him to buy electrical equipment for the new house, food items, and clothes; he is also able to send his son to Kengkhar Lower Secondary School. He expresses his gratitude to Tarayana and Helvetas for keeping them safe and comfortably housed.

Aum Pema Deki, a 46-year-old woman with four children from Shajula village, said that before she used to live in one communal house with 30 families and had a very hard time coping with her situation. However, after Tarayana’s intervention, she is very happy to get a new house. She has developed a kitchen garden, undertaken agricultural farming and experienced improved health and sanitation. Now she is able to send her children to school.

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**A Success Story**

46-year-old Pema Deki is from Nanaric, Kengkhar gewog, Monggar. She actively participated in trainings on financial literacy and financial model, food processing and value addition, basic carpentry and masonry, vermin composting and Nateco farming etc. She manages all the activities related to the community services and group management. Her management capabilities have earned respect from the saving groups and the community members. She visits the neighboring villages to promote saving schemes and credit activity along with the Tarayana focal person. Currently she is a member of the village committees formed to encourage saving groups, handicrafts, housing, agriculture and the construction of a community farm road. She also promotes women volunteerism with Tarayana Foundation.

She has been kind enough to share her success story:

“The to be successful, we must love what we do and have to be practical with our words. What we have achieved must be shared and work collectively to face challenges. The success story about this self help group is that I have gone through the difficulties and had accepted the challenges positively with hope. You have to be cooperative with your members and must listen to each other to bring productive conclusion. We must make sure to value our job and yourself. I am grateful to those who understood my difficulties, and had listened to my success story. Now the community is following some of my experience and the application has proved effective. This gave me enough aspiration and strength in my life.”

She also tells us that she is now a respected woman in her family, her saving groups and her community. “This is all due to the staff members of Tarayana Foundation, who have changed my life. Therefore, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the entire Tarayana Family and to our Queen Mother, Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuk.”

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**Upcoming Events**

**February, 2014**

6th-10th: BUSSI-EN President, Ryosei Oya, Megumi Shimizu visit to Tarayana Centre, Thimphu
8th-13th: Her Majesty Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuk’s visit to Samtse Dzongkhag
10th-13th: Training on food processing at Pemagatshel
10th-20th: Training on food processing at Samtse
15th: Reopening of all Buzip Centres
16th-18th: Book keeping training at Pemagatshel
22nd-23rd: Sowing wild seeds-Dongshing, Sisishing and Kholing shing at Nanaric, Murung and Yudric, Monggar
24th-28th: Food processing training at Pemagatshel

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**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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