Tarayana Centre at Chubachu, being consecrated today is the culmination of vision, dedication and generosity at its best. The Centre was envisioned by the Hon’ble President as a place dedicated to serving vulnerable communities. Jai Prakash Associates Limited under the visionary leadership of Mr. J.P. Gaur was most generous in gifting this Centre to Tarayana. We take this generosity as a reflection of their confidence in us in achieving our goals. Jai Prakash Associates Ltd. has a strong sense of giving back to society wherever they work. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. J.P. Gaur and the Jai Prakash Associates Ltd from the depths of our hearts.

Putting our communities first has been our focus in bringing about sensitive socio-economic change. We are mindful of preserving the dignity of our communities when working with them. Thus the theme “Grassroots First” for the consecration ceremonies. Fifty representatives of our communities are here to participate in the Rabney events as are fifty student representatives from the Tarayana School Clubs in Thimphu and their coordinators.

All the furniture for this Centre was purchased with financial support from Mrs. Serena Chopra, a good friend and staunch supporter of Tarayana. We appreciate the time, effort and funds she provides us to help Tarayana keep our commitments to our communities. This Centre has benefited from dedicated efforts of many volunteers and supporters that we are confident that this centre can only grow to be a strong hub of volunteers in action.

On behalf of the rural communities, the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee and all Staff of the Secretariat we thank each and everyone who have helped us in the past, is helping us now and will continue to help us in the future. The many long hours put in by our volunteers are much appreciated. We could not have achieved all that we have without your unstinted support in a myriad forms.

“Thank You”

“Happiness is ...
... being content with who you are and what you have”

Dorji Wangchuk  
Executive Committee Member

Tarayana Activities for the self-help groups in Digala and Langdurbi, Zhemgang

Digala is located in Zhemgang in Bardo Geog. There are 38 households in the community with 11-12 people per household. Vegetables grown are radish, mustard greens, beans, squash and cucumber. Potatoes are not grown due to lack of seeds. A kilo of potato costs Nu.25 in the area. Maize, buckwheat and rice are grown as their main cereals. The main source of income for the community is portage. Oranges are grown but not sold due to transportation issues. Langdurbi village is about 3 days walk from the nearest road head with a cluster of 62 households. These villages have hot summers and mild winters. The Hon’ble President visited these villages in early 1999.

In 2007 the Government supplied the community with proper water channels but landslides and the lack of proper maintenance have led to quick deteriorations. They also produce cane and bamboo crafts such as dzem, basket, butter container and bayku (square shaped container). They grew cotton in the past but not anymore due to the lack of irrigation facilities moreover it was not economical. In the past, the water source was about a hour and half trek away from the village but at present they practice rain water harvesting during the monsoons. The adults also practice traditional weaving such as mathra, aikapo, montha, luntsima, djadima and ruipathara.

Tarayana project consultations in these villages started in October 2008 and the implementation of jointly planned activities started in November 2008. Among the six villages that Tarayana is currently working in, thirteen houses and a community work shed have been completed in Langdurbi, five houses in Digala and two in Rilingbe. In addition five houses are under construction in Langdurbi and three in Digala and the construction of a community work shed in Goling is underway. The activities are progressing well and the community members are engaged in learning construction skills such as carpentry and masonry. Self Help Groups have been formed in both Digala and Langdurbi for activities such as traditional cotton weaving, cotton cultivations, organic farming and handicrafts. A wood turning Self Help Group was formed in Goling and they specialize in creating wood items such as masks, cups and plates.

Organic production is promoted through the project. Distribution of tools and cultivation of vegetables such as cabbage, cauliflower, carrot, turnip, broccoli, pole beans, peas, chilli and tomato were taken up has been completed in all the six communities. Large kitchen gardens were also promoted in the Community Primary Schools of Langdurbi and Digala to supplement the nutritional intake of the students.

Three members represented the Zhemgang Kheng community at the 2009 Annual Tarayana Fair and marketed their products.
Ms. Sonam Pem, Director of Programs, attended the training course, “From Global to Local,” organized by the International Women’s Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAW Asia Pacific) in New York from 16 - 25 July 2009.

This training program was organized parallel to the 44th CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women) session, which was held from the 20 July to 7 August, 2009, in New York.

The program was designed to fill the gap between human rights monitoring at the international level by CEDAW, and at the grassroots level by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This was done by providing opportunities for local and national NGOs, especially those focusing on women’s rights. Specifically, they engage in and make a positive contribution to the CEDAW review process.

Although IWRAW Asia Pacific has been organizing such training since 1997, this year marks the first time that an NGO from Bhutan has been invited to attend the program. There were 24 participants from NGOs in 14 countries.

The training program was divided into three parts: one prior to the CEDAW session, another concurrent to the CEDAW session, and the final part held after the CEDAW session.

Prior to the CEDAW session:

The participants were trained in writing shadow reports. These reports are distributed to the CEDAW committee members before the CEDAW session, normally a day before the State Party of a country reports. The participants were also trained in lobbying the Committee members to raise awareness on critical issues. Furthermore, the invitees were introduced to the heads of the UN Human Rights System, including the Human Rights Council, the Treaty Bodies and other groups who support Women’s Rights. The training program included an orientation on the CEDAW Session and on how to engage NGOs effectively.

At the CEDAW session:

During the CEDAW session, a daily debriefing was held with training facilitators and the participants at the end of each day. They discussed reports and lunch briefings from each day, and then gave further assistance and input to the next NGO preparing their report. The participants were also assisted by the training facilitators to prepare oral statements for the informal meetings with the CEDAW committee members. After the informal meeting, the participants were then given the opportunity to observe the formal review of the different States Parties by the CEDAW Committee members.

Post CEDAW session:

After observing the formal review of different State Parties, the facilitators met the NGO participants to discuss their follow up plans. The participants were informed that they would have access to the concluding comments a month after the reporting. The participants would be required to help disseminate the CEDAW Committee’s concluding remarks of the State Party’s report. They would also have to encourage the government to implement the recommendations of the convention and the concluding comments. The IWRAW Asia Pacific also mentioned that small funds and technical support would be available to organize training and awareness for the CEDAW in the respective countries.
Working with the Lhops

Lhops are known for their unique culture

The Lhops are one of the indigenous communities in Bhutan. They live in the southwest region of the country. They are Nature worshippers and their culture and tradition are distinct and unique. They have a supportive society and their sense of belonging and loyalty to the community is very strong. In the past, if an outsider wanted to marry a girl from their community, the bridegroom had to get approval from the whole village. If the bridegroom was accepted, then as a show of gratitude and celebration he had to provide a sumptuous feast to the whole village including alcohol and pork dishes.

They are one of the earliest settlers in Bhutan, but for decades they have not taken advantage of the development activities taking place in the country. Lhops are a proud race and enthusiastically protect their ancient culture and tradition which has been handed down for generations without change. During the years they were cut off from the outside world, they lived sustainably and were almost completely self sufficient. Lhop’s main occupation is subsistence farming. The long distance to the nearest market discouraged the cultivation of cash crops. The main food crops grown by the Lhops include maize, foxtail millet, finger millet, buckwheat, wheat, mustard and tapioca. Landholdings are small and only a few farmers have paddy fields but in recent years Lhops have started growing mandarin and cardamom in the lower reaches of their village.

Over the last three years Tarayana has supported five Lhops communities, in the building of eighty houses. CGI sheets were provided by Tarayana while timber was provided with the payment of a token royalty to the Department of Forest with support from the local government. Work has finished in five of the villages where new skills in building are now available for the future. Other skills are being encouraged, too, to develop a more productive and sustainable system of farming. This is already showing results in the increasing yields of oranges & other fruits being taken to market and increased production of food for their own security. Higher yielding seeds are also being distributed to encourage organic production. To help improve income and productivity, agricultural machineries have been introduced for oil extracting, corn flaking and maize grinding.

It is important to ensure the involvement of the people in new ways in which they themselves can work together to improve their future. This is showing exciting results as the Lhops discover their own potential. Very recently Tarayana facilitated the establishment of a Cooperative shop in Lotokuchu. In the three villages of Lotokochu efforts are being made to involve all the relevant agencies to bring about synergies in development. Collaborative work is also underway to improve land management practices.

The Lhops are now more open and primed to take part in larger developmental schemes of the government. The sense of confidence and achievement mirrored in the faces of most Lhops indicate a gradual embracing of socioeconomic transformation that they are comfortable with. Understanding the need to respect their dignity in all activities has helped bring about this change, for they are still a very proud people.
Project Cycle Management Training at the Institute for Management Studies (IMS), Olakha

Ms. Pema, Programme Officer and Mr. Pema Gyalpo, Administrative Officer attended a week long training course held at the Institute for Management Studies (IMS) in Olakha from 31 August to 4 September 2009. This course was conducted jointly by the Enterprise and Development Consultants, Laos PDR and the IMS.

Project and programme management has assumed ever greater complexity with the need to align resources and interest of a myriad stakeholder groups. These complexities call for systematic and innovative methods of managing projects. Incorporating the latest methods available, this course aims to build confidence and competence of project managers.

The sessions were very interactive and the participants found them very informative and educational. For many of the younger participants this was the first training in Project Cycle Management and they found it both interesting and relevant to the work they were doing. There were several group exercises in team building, work plan preparation, budget planning, monitoring and evaluation, leadership skills and time management. The session on project proposal writing was of particular interest to the two participants from Tarayana as they would be involved in grant proposal writing as part of their job.

Helvetas Office in Thimphu sponsored the participation of the two candidates from Tarayana. This training has given them more confidence in proposal writing and in managing the various activities that are on going in the field. Ms. Pema is currently responsible for documentation, annual report compilation, assisting project management, monitoring and evaluation of field programmes, and coordinating and managing events. While Mr. Pema Gyalpo is currently the focal person for the Environment related activities including climate change and disaster management.

In Brief

Vegetable Production Training

Three boys and three girls from the Monpa Community were sent for a month long vegetable production training at the Rural Development Training Centre, Zhemgang. They had all dropped out from school at the primary level. The training provided them basic organic farming skills, with emphasis on vegetable production. They will now put into practise the skills they have learnt in addition to teaching other community members. They will also work at the Organic dyeing facility at Tongtongphey supported by FAO.

South Asia Consultation in Kathmandu

Ms. Pema, Programme Officer, attended the South Asia Consultation on Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health held in Kathmandu from 18-20 September 2009. The Consultation was organized by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health.

The objectives were: a) to identify the main areas of concern, gaps and progress in the realization of the “Right to Health” in the SAARC region; b) to document the concerns, gaps and progress; c) to inform Civil Society Organizations in the region of the mandate, scope and opportunities.
**Fund-raising Workshop**

On October 1, 2009, Mr. Stefan Stolle of Helvetas led a fund-raising workshop for the Tarayana staff. The Head of Communications and Fund-raising at Helvetas, a Swiss association committed to international development in 18 countries across the globe, Mr. Stolle shared techniques and ideas to diversify Tarayana’s database of donor sources and to ensure the long-term sustainability of Tarayana. By critically examining both Tarayana’s strengths and areas in need of improvement, the staff developed a three-year fundraising strategy that they anticipate will lead to new donors and the improved loyalty of current ones. Over the next few years, Tarayana plans to do more intensive grant writing to international aid agencies and foundations, as well as build new partnerships. After a day of instruction, presentations, and planning sessions, Tarayana looks forward to realizing the new fundraising goals established during the workshop in order to expand the projects and to continue positively enhancing the lives of Bhutan’s most vulnerable communities.

**Volunteerism**

To volunteer is to make a positive difference and to have the willingness and the commitment to do something wholeheartedly for others. Volunteerism speaks to the good will and selfless deeds towards the people who need a helping hand to pull them out of the difficulties they face. Volunteers make a difference by contributing their time, energy and talents to improve the lives of the deprived while expecting nothing in return. Volunteering is the practice of people working on behalf of others without being motivated by financial or material gain.

Tarayana encourages volunteerism for all, especially among the youth. Currently, Tarayana has 84 school clubs all over the country with a volunteer population of 4500 who carry out voluntary activities to help the old people in their villages. During the weekends they help them to build toilets, wash clothes, fetch water, collect firewood and help with the farm work. They help the children from disadvantaged and poor families to pursue their education. They do fundraising activities like concerts and fetes; they also make hand-woven items that are sold to help the children. Tarayana also has institutional volunteer arrangements with the Royal Institute of Management (RIM) and the Royal Institute of Health Sciences (RIHS). During the Annual Tarayana Fair, PGDPA (Post Graduate Diploma in Public Administration) candidates from RIM come to help with the Fair. We also have volunteer trainee nurses from RIHS to help during the Annual Corrective Surgical Camp.

We take this opportunity to thank our volunteers and RIM and RIHS for contributing their time and energy in the service of those in need. We consider volunteerism to be the biggest contribution to help the most vulnerable members of our society.

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**Tarayana Rural Craft**

Tarayana Rural Craft had a stall at the venue of the International Congress on Asian Traditional Medicine held from 7th - 11th September, 2009. This provided an opportunity to display and sell rural crafts produced by rural community self help group members. This Congress was attended by over 200 participants from 32 countries and the participants found the crafts unique. The rural craft shop was able to do brisk business during the five day Congress.

The Rural Craft team participated in the 9th SAARC Trade Fair held at Changlimithang from 12th -14th September, 2009.

The team also joined the other artisans from different dzongkhags in the Folk Festival coordinated by Norling at the Clock Tower Square from 24th - 30th September, 2009.

**South Asia Rural Innovation Capacity**

Ms. Roseleen Gurung, a programme officer attended the South Asia Rural Innovation Capacity Benchmarking workshop in Delhi on 19th and 20th August 2009. She presented a case study on Tarayana’s model of Holistic Community Development. There were participants from Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Peru and India.
A Cooperative Shop in Jangbi

Community Cooperative Shops Improving Access to Food in Rural Communities

Right to Food is guaranteed to every citizen but in remote rural communities, it is easier said than done. Access to food is an issue due to the long distances required to be covered on foot to get to shops. Salt, sugar, tea leaves and cooking oil are some of the commodities that need to be imported into the villages as these are not available locally. To help improve access to food supply, Tarayana is working with local communities in setting up small community owned and managed basic provision shops.

A cooperative shop was set up in Jangbi, the most centrally located among the three villages (Wangling, Jangbi and Phumzur) of the Monpas. This cooperative shop functions along fair price principles with the aim of benefitting the local community. It was started on 2nd June 2009 coinciding with the Social Forestry Day. The community appointed Mr. Phurba to manage the shop. He is paid a stipend of one thousand five hundred Ngultrums every month for his service.

The cooperative shop was established with a seed capital from Tarayana as part of the holistic community development initiative, through the micro-enterprise programme. Tarayana also facilitated community mobilisation and helped with the initial process of setting up this shop. The main objective of setting up the shop is to provide a market for the local agricultural produce and handicraft products of the communities so that they earn additional income.

Currently, the cooperative shop is stocked with basic essentials like rice, cooking oil, salt, sugar, tea leaves and soaps. The shop will continue to stock up on these basic essential that are required by the community. The nearest market at Langthel, on the other side of the river is at least a good two to three hours walk away. It was noticed that the community members spent long hours walking to and from Langthel many times a month as they were not able to buy large enough quantities. Tarayana also came across people walking this distance for the purchase of just one kilogram of salt.

It is hoped that with the steady success of the organic farming activities, the community members will be able to meet most of their basic needs from within the community itself. The Tarayana Field Officer is working with the community to estimate the basic food requirements of the community. Food production will be planned together with technical support from the Agricultural Extension Officer and the production implemented in consultation with the community. The Community Cooperative Shop will continue to help save time and money for the community.

Once confidence in the cooperative shop builds up, the shop will also buy excess local agricultural produce and handmade craft products to be sold outside the community. A small team elected by the community will be responsible for the marketing needs of the community in the long run.

This shop has benefited not just the community members but also all the governmental staff who are posted in the area. They welcome the service provided and mention that the price is reasonable. They are happy to buy from the cooperative shop rather than walk all the way to Langthel. The Community Cooperative shop is not allowed to sell any liquor. The account is checked by the committee members and they deposit the cash every month in their saving account maintained with BDFC, Trongsa. This service is a relief especially for the community women who say that they now can purchase what is needed right in the village itself and do not need to risk sending their husbands to Langthel where the temptation to drink and while away the time is very high according to Aum Singye Wangmo of Jangbi.
Karma Dorji is a 30-year-old earthen pot maker from Wangling village in Langthel geog, Trongsa Dzongkhag. He is married to Nagtomo, a 23-year-old from the same village. They have two sons aged five and two. Karma has four sisters who work on the farm and his only brother is a Gomchen in Langthel.

Initially, Karma worked with his family on the farm. He knew nothing about the craft of making earthen pots and he never thought he would make them for a living. In 2004, Tarayana nominated him for traditional pottery training in Thimphu, where he trained for a year. He currently works at the Pottery Centre in Tongtongphey, Trongsa. Karma makes at least ten traditional pots on a sunny day. He charges Nu.100 to Nu.150 for small pots and Nu. 200 to Nu. 250 for big ones. He says, “My income depends on the number of customers.” On average he earns five to six thousand Ngultrums a month.

He noted that, for him, it is much easier to make pots to earn a living than to work on the farm the whole day. He deposits his money in his savings account maintained with the Bank of Bhutan in Trongsa. He is illiterate but hopes to give his children the best education possible. He also plans on putting a little aside for his own old age when he can no longer make pots. He hopes to see his sons do well in the future and contribute to the development of the Monpas. Karma hopes his sons will learn his skills of making traditional earthen pots in addition to succeeding in their studies.

Other community members also showed interest in making pots, but most of them did not see it as suitable full time work. Karma recalled one man who showed keen interest in working with him but his interest waned after a week. Most people found it difficult to keep turning around the pot while making pots in the traditional way, unlike while using the potters wheel where the pot turn around. Turning around the pots the whole day caused the potter to be giddy. In trying to improve efficiency and reduce giddiness, Tarayana introduced the potters wheel. However, Karma preferred to make pots in the traditional way in spite of the giddiness!!

Karma is grateful to Tarayana for training him and providing the opportunities needed for a sustainable livelihood option in the craft of pottery making.
Tarayana is a non-government organization that helps the needy people all across the Kingdom of Bhutan. Tarayana provides livelihood and moral support for the sections of society most in need. It was founded by and currently functions under the patronage of Her Majesty the Queen Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck.

In our school, the Tarayana Club was introduced in the year 2007. The club was introduced in order to help the needy by making their lives more comfortable and joyful. This club was initiated by Sir Chencho Dorji and followed by some other teachers from our school. We held lots of activities to uplift and enhance the lives of the disadvantaged. Last year, we did a Green House Project which entailed making gardens at the newly established Youth Development Fund Centre. We made several dust bins that were painted green, added messages on them, and hung them all around the corners of the school. Every year during the concert and annual sports day, we sell various items to raise funds. We even provide money to a number of students who are studying in various schools to help them to achieve their dreams and continue their studies.

We are really proud to be part of the Tarayana family as student volunteer members and we would like to continue working hard in our Club. We are grateful to Her Majesty the Queen Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck for establishing this Foundation.

Kinley Gyem
Class 9 B