Social Economic Transformation of Our Communities
“Today, GNH has come to mean so many things to so many people but to me it signifies simply Development with Values. Thus for my nation today GNH is the bridge between the fundamental values of kindness, equality and humanity and the necessary pursuit of economic growth. GNH acts as our National Conscience guiding us towards making wise decisions for a better future.”

- His Majesty the King Khesar Jigme Namgyal Wangchuck

From the Editorial Team

As we head into summer, there is much going on at Tarayana Foundation and we are excited to fill you in. April has been an eventful month for Tarayana Foundation. The 11th Annual Restorative Surgical Camp for the correction of cleft lips and cleft palates was held in Paro, led by Dr. Jack Demos and his Surgicorps team in collaboration with Tarayana Foundation and the Ministry of Health, Bhutan. This camp was held from 22nd April to 2nd May. Of the 187 patients who had pre-registered for the camp, 116 came for the screening. Of these 61 cases were shortlisted for surgical procedures. A total of 212 senior patients were given knee injections (Steroids) and 238 pairs of glasses were issued after eye check-ups.

We celebrated our 14th Annual Tarayana Fair with more number of volunteers and community members from our sites joining us in a three day event from 28th April to 30th April. The three-day event was graced by Her Majesty the Queen Mother, Gyalyum Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck and Her Royal Highness Princess Sonam Dechan Wangchuck. Cabinet Ministers, Members of the Parliament, Speaker of the National Assembly and the Hon’ble Chairperson of the National Council also graced the event with their presence.

The Resident Representative of The United Nation Development Program (UNDP) also attended the fair. This year’s theme was “Celebrating Partnerships”, a photo exhibition was organized on the implementation of two projects-REAP II (Rural Economic Advancement Project) partnering with the Gross National Happiness Commission and Funded by the Govt. of India, and NAPA II (National Adaptation Plan of Action) partnering with the National Environment Commission and funded by LDCF (Least Developed Countries Fund).

This exhibition was launched by Resident Representative of UNDP during the inaugural session of the fair. We were gratified by the positive responses and feedback received from those who visited. They were positively surprised by the range of activities covered in our holistic rural development approach.

In this issue we bring you the life changing stories of two patients from the recent surgical camp and experience sharing of one of our community members who attended the annual fair.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue, be inspired to help us in our quest to reach the unreached and transform lives. We hope you will continue to be the ‘wind beneath the sails’ of transformative change.

Tashi Delek!
Our son has a cleft lip and cleft palate!

In May, 2015, my wife gave birth to our second child who was born with both cleft palate and cleft lip. It came as a shock, made worse by the fact that, just a few months earlier we have been excited and anticipating his arrival. Learning that your child has a disability, no matter how mild (as a birth defects go, clefs are mild), is a shock on several levels. There's the selfish impulse to ask: “Why me” (In our case, this was magnified by a further question: “Why my son?”). Equally selfishly, there's the fear of what will entail, the worry and disruption it may cause. You instantly feel as if you are crossing a threshold, being drawn into another, unwelcome kind of existence. How will you cope or in my case, my son will cope, you find yourself asking. With having a child who isn't the flawless being you not only expect but, in some sense, considered your right? And how, no less importantly, will the other people's reactions affect you. Yet at the same time, I felt something more hopeful stir within me that afternoon: an intense stab of sympathy for the child, who I knew would face more obstacles than other children. How might this affect him? Would it blight his life or make him a stronger, better person? This was the first intimations of love, I suppose.

Inevitably our meeting with doctor greatly influenced us, parenthood at the best of times, is a leap into the unknown. When you discover that your child has a defect, the sense of being in dark only intensifies. No matter how much you find about the conditions or learn about the operations, the probable side-effects and so on, the reality of being a parent in such circumstances remains opaque, unimaginable.

A relative of mine told me about how I should get in touch with Tarayana Foundation and since then I have never looked back. A team of Doctors from Surgicorps, USA reassured me that my son should be fine with several corrective surgeries. In 2017, my son is having his first corrective surgery. There's no doubt that he will face insignificant challenges in the future-not the least of coming in terms with the fact that, at least when he was born, he did look different. Yet knowing who he is, seeing the person he is becoming, I don't doubt that he will surmount these and other hurdles, with ease. In time I hope he may even come to look on his cleft with something approaching gratitude, for the schooling it gave him in one of his life's most important decisions, which is that none of us is ever perfect.

Narrated by Tula Ram Badhur Ghalley
Written by Tashi Choden
Asst. Program Officer
I met another 2 years old girl who was then about to receive her first cleft lip surgery. Her father said that until then he had no idea that cleft lip surgery was organized by the foundation. It is sad that the family had to go through this pain so long, but he was so excited about returning to his village with a new smile on his daughter’s face and a brand new start for them. There are innumerable stories of our people, who benefited from the camp over the last years of service but the moral would remain the same—a new smile is a powerful thing. A new smile has given Chimi Kalden Dorji the confidence to feel he is not different and all of the children and adults whose lives were positively transformed. Cleft repair surgery and the new smiles it gives, allows both the children and adult to full lives that they want and deserve.

Reported by
Yeshi Dema
Documentation and Communication Officer

New Smile

I know that posting a photo on social media isn’t the same as seeing the joy in a mother’s eyes’ firsthand. Reading and sharing patient’s stories pales in comparison to actually holding a child in your arms whose entire life has been changed, thanks to a cleft surgery. My journey started with Tarayana Foundation as Documentation and Communication Officer, ever since I have interviewed the patients and their family, I have always been inspired to associate myself with surgical camps, meet patients and hear their stories. I met several families who traveled from all over the region for cleft corrections. One of the patients I met was three years and three months old boy named Chimi Kalden Dorji. He was born with the cleft lip and cleft palate, but fortunately his family found us in time to receive surgery. The day I visited Paro hospital, seeing Chimi Kalden Dorji awake and sitting on his mother’s lap made me instantly feel more at ease. His mother was ever more confident about him. His mother later told me that he underwent surgery three times. You can now barely tell that he had cleft problem. Importantly, will the other people’s reactions affect you.

Surgical Statistics

Cases

Figure 1: Surgical Diagnosis: Illustrates the no. of patients who underwent surgery & the types of surgery
Figure 2: Gender: illustrates the gender of the patient that underwent surgery.

Figure 3: Age: illustrates the age group who underwent surgery.

Figure 4: Dzongkhags: illustrates the dzongkhag of the patients who underwent surgery.
Brief introduction about the 14th Tarayana Annual Fair day 28th April-30th April, 2017

The 14th Tarayana Annual Fair was held from 28th April-30th April, 2017 at the Tarayana Park, Chubachu. The theme of this year's fair was "Celebrating Partnerships", which acknowledged the various partnerships that enabled Tarayana to be effective on the ground.

A total number of 72 members from the Tarayana sites in sixteen Dzongkhags came to take part in the three-day event. The community members displayed their products ranging from textiles to farm produce. This fair also helps rural artisans from our sites to engage directly with the Thimphu market. For many of the community members, this was the first visit to the national capital.

Her Majesty the Queen Mother, Gyalyum Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck graced the inauguration of the 14th Annual Tarayana Fair on 28th April, 2017. Her majesty the Queen Mother was accompanied by Her Royal Highness the Princess, Sonam Dechan Wangchuck, the Honorable speaker of the both the houses of the parliament, cabinet ministers, member of the parliament, representations of both Government agencies as well as the donor country, and friends and supporters of the foundation.
Rinchen Penjor, a 35 years old craftsman from Kengkhar community, Monggar looks forward to a greater sale at the 15th Tarayana Annual Fair. The three-day event has given him and his other friends to study the market traits and the types of customers. This has made them more careful and wiser in making their products that would suit the customers.

On being asked what new knowledge he has learned from the fair, he gladly told us that he is now at the advantage side since the market facilitation and collaborating with the customers have enabled him to focus more on the quality and design of the products. He also wants to add bookshelves, dressers and try making new products that would suit with buyers.

“Some of the customers have provided me and my friends with feedbacks on our products. As a artisan, it feels better when someone cares to comment on the products you make because you progress when your work gets attention, be it from good or bad comments”, said the 35 years old craftsman from Monggar.

He was able to sell about sixty items, ranging from pots to incense burners and traditional wine containers during the 14th Annual Fair. He’s earned a total of Nu. 60,000. He has also been able to provide jobs to his fellow mates in his village. He has attended the fair last year and said that the sales get better by the year. Rinchen now wishes to get back to his village and start working on improving the quality of the products. He wants to share his new knowledge with the others and inspire them to work harder to improve both the quality and design of the products. The more Rinchen earns the more people he can recruit and pass the knowledge of making such products to keep the tradition of the woodwork alive, as desired and envisioned by the foundation.

Reported by
Yeshi Dema
Documentation and Communication Officer
Support Tarayana Rural Crafts

Tarayana Rural Crafts is an initiative of the Tarayana Foundation in its efforts to improve the income earning capabilities of the rural artisans. More than thirty self help groups from different villages across the country are involved in the production of the products.

Each product is painstakingly handmade by the artisans, whose families have been involved in the craft for many generations, using locally available natural materials.

More than 65% of sale proceeds go directly to the artisans.

Our new range of products at Tarayana's Rural Crafts Outlet produced by our rural artisans. If you are interested in any of the products kindly contact us at +9752339510 or leave us an email at tarayana2003@gmail.com. We also take in orders.

The true Bhutan resides in its villages. Help us to encourage and promote our rural artisans by buying our rural products.