

Bhutan Center for Media and Democracy
with
The United Nations Democracy Fund
and
United Nations Development Programme
“Strengthening Media and Civic
Education to Enhance Democracy in
Bhutan”

FINAL EXTERNAL PROJECT
EVALUATION

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Table of Contents

Acronyms	3
Glossary of Terms.....	3
Executive Summary	4
1. Introduction.....	9
1.1 Democratic transition in Bhutan	9
1.2 Importance of CSOs in the democratic transition.....	10
2. The Project and its Developmental Context	11
2.1 Project Initiation	11
2.2 What the project sought to achieve.....	12
2.3 Purpose of the Evaluation Study.....	12
3. Evaluation Methodology.....	13
3.1 Project Monitoring & Evaluation.....	14
3.2 Limitations to the Study.....	15
4. Evaluation Findings.....	16
4.1 Relevance	16
4.2 Effectiveness.....	18
4.3 Efficiency	21
4.4 Project Management and Support.....	22
4.5 Sustainability	24
5. Conclusion	26
6. Recommendations	27
Annexure 1: Activities Conducted	29
Annex 2: Performance Indicators	32
Annex 3 Distribution Lists of BCMD Publications.....	38
Annex 4 Semi-structured Questionnaire for BCMD and UN.....	41
Annex 5: Semi-structured Questionnaire for the beneficiaries.....	43

Acronyms

BBS	Bhutan Broadcasting Service
BCMD	Bhutan Center for Media and Democracy
BMF	Bhutan Media Foundation
BMI	Bhutan Media Impact 2008
CNFW	Creative Non-Fiction Writing
cCPAP	Common Country Programme Action Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organisations (NGO)
DOIM	Department of Information and Media
ECB	Election Commission of Bhutan
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAO	Geog Administration Officer
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
RJ	Radio Jockey
UN	United Nations
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Glossary of Terms

Chathrim	Codified laws
Dzongkha	National Language of Bhutan
Dzongkhag	District
Geog	Community
Geog Tsogdue	Community meeting/gathering
Gup	Village Head
Tshogpa	Village/community groups
Zhabdrung	Founder/Unifier of Bhutan

Executive Summary

In 1998, His Majesty, the Fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck announced that Bhutan was to have democratically elected leaders under a system of democratic constitutional monarchy. After a nationwide awareness campaign initiated by His Majesties, Bhutan went to the polls in 2008 ushering in a new era in Bhutanese politics.

The European Union (EU) report on the 2008 National Assembly Elections¹ states that, even though many people were skeptical, a sound foundation for the peaceful democratic process had been set in place by His Majesty. The report noted that the public viewed the elections as a “gift from the king” and therefore was ready to participate. This led to a keen voter participation turnout of 79.4% of the 318,465 registered voters in the first held elections in 2008.

Bhutan has been able to make significant strides toward promoting a system of responsive and accountable governance through a series of political reforms aimed at decentralization and democratization. The numerous expected challenges in bringing fundamental change in the governance system included the need to strengthen institutions and enhance people’s participation for effective governance. The UNDP and other UN agencies in Bhutan have been providing assistance to support these changes in governance by developing the capacity of constitutional bodies and local governments.

With the introduction of parliamentary democracy and adoption of the Constitution in 2008, the Common Country Programme Action Plan (cCPAP) 2008-2012 which is the operational plan of the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2008-2013) came at a critical period in Bhutan’s history. Through a series of close consultations with the government, development partners and other stakeholders, and from the comparative advantages of the United Nations, “**fostering of good governance as a core value for development**” was identified as a priority area to be supported by the UN in helping to achieve the MDGs in Bhutan.

The United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) was established by the UN Secretary General in 2005 as a United Nations General Trust Fund to support democratization efforts around the world.

Objectives of the Project

In 2010, the Bhutan Center for Media and Democracy (BCMD) received financial support of 203,972 USD from UNDEF towards a project entitled “Strengthening Media and Civic Education to Enhance Democracy in Bhutan”.

BCMD is a Civil Society Organization (CSO) established in 2008 in response to the needs of the changing times as Bhutan made the historic transition from monarchy to a democracy. The project was developed and implemented by BCMD and executed by UNDP Bhutan. The activities of the project were carried out between April 2010 until June 2012, including a project extension of 8 months.

¹ Bhutan: Final Report, National Assembly Elections, 24 March 2008. European Union Election Observation Mission, May 2008.

In order to strengthen the foundation of Bhutanese democracy, media and civil society, the project aimed to educate the media, youth, officialdom and civil society on the concepts of democracy. To achieve these objectives, activities such as conferences, workshops, trainings, seminars, and the production of publications and web portals on democracy were implemented.

Purpose and background of the evaluation study

The purpose of this external evaluation is to assess the outcomes achieved in light of the project's effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, quality of project management and sustainability. Recommendations for projects in the development of media and democratic society in Bhutan in the future have also been included.

This evaluation study was primarily carried over a period of three months, starting in May 2013. The study was carried out over four phases, which included the inception phase, review of reports, collection of primary and secondary data, and compilation of the final report. Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted with a total of thirty-one beneficiaries of the program and also concerned stakeholders. A desk review of relevant documents such as the UN cCPAP, Bhutan Media Impact Study (BMIS) 2008, 2008 EU Election report and project documents was carried out.

There were a number of limitations to the study. First of all, even the final activities had been conducted nearly a year ago before the evaluation took place and so many of the respondents had difficulties in remembering the particular activity that he/she may have been a participant in. There were some negative responses as some of the respondents did not have the time or simply could not remember the programs. However, a major hindrance was the time scheduled to conduct the evaluation study. The consultant had difficulties setting up interviews, as many of the respondents identified during the inception phase were busy with the general elections.²

Evaluation Findings

With support from UNDEF, BCMD has been successful at strengthening the foundation for a democratic culture in Bhutan and introduced some critical ideas central to a democracy to Bhutan's citizenry – public space, role of independent media, citizenship, culture of democracy, public service media, and the need for an open society in an evolving democracy. These issues were deliberated in forums, seminars and explored and shared through media production, training etc., and were critical in enabling Bhutanese to move from being subjects of a monarchy to citizens of a democracy. Today, BCMD's civic education activities have matured and continue to grow in demand, interest and impact.

So, as democracy is still being properly understood and appreciated by a large section of the Bhutanese population, the project activities conducted by BCMD with support from UNDEF were particularly timely and **relevant**.

² The final round of the National Assembly Elections took place on the 13th of July 2013

Although BCMD was a new CSO in 2010, the activities designed were constructive and relevant to Bhutan's context, allowing participants to develop their existing knowledge and understanding of democracy. With support from UNDEF, the project activities have been relevant in identifying and strengthening the capacities of the key institutions that support parliamentary democracy in Bhutan. However, there are other CSOs, Government authorities and training institutes carrying out similar activities, which can lead to attendee fatigue and duplication of activities.

Despite numerous challenges, BCMD was able to complete the project in 2012, following an eight-month extension. Almost all of the planned activities were conducted successfully. The workshops and seminars conducted were **effective** in creating a platform for healthy discussions in a society where people were still trying to get accustomed to open communication. The project encouraged participants to use social media as a tool for networking, sharing information and creating awareness. The effectiveness of the project could have been greater if some of the activities were aired on national television thus reaching a wider audience. However, the costs associated with national broadcasting are high and would have been beyond the project's scope.

From interviews conducted and reports reviewed, the **efficiency** of BCMD in conducting the activities is high. Internal evaluations have been carried out for each activity and funds and activities were closely monitored by UNDP and the steering committee of the project. The project used the resources efficiently to produce a wide range of outputs. The time contributed by volunteers to different aspects of the project added to its efficiency. Experts from within and outside Bhutan were hired to conduct activities in a proficient manner leading to active and healthy participation from both the panelists and the participants.

Considering that BCMD was a newly established CSO, alongside the scarcity of available data on democracy in Bhutan, BCMD was able to **manage the project** with commendable proficiency. **Support** was provided by the implementing partner, UNDP who, along with the steering committee, monitored all of BCMDs activities and use of funds. Results of the evaluations conducted by BCMD show that on an average, participants rated the quality of the activities as "good". Although there are discrepancies in the results of some of the evaluations, BCMD has been able to continually improve on the quality of activities, based on feedback received from the participants.

Most activities that were conducted under UNDEF support are continuing to be pursued by BCMD, except for the Non-Fiction Creative Writing Workshop and the training of journalists. However, as noted above, other institutions are continuing with some similar training activities. The activities initiated by the project therefore have good overall **sustainability**. Sustainability of the project impacts has been somewhat hampered by turnover of participating journalists, as well as challenges in maintaining contact with some project participants.

Democracy is a recent development in Bhutan and the institutions promoting it are seen as the key players in the democratic process. So such projects should be sustained as they can bring greater awareness about democracy at both the rural and urban areas. CSOs play a key role in Bhutan's democratic process, even though Government and private organizations are putting in efforts in their various capacities. CSO

involvement in governance-related projects is important as the experience will strengthen the very presence of civil society, crucial to a new democracy. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen the capacity of these institutions, in particular of CSOs, to help with the development of democracy in Bhutan.

Conclusion

Many Bhutanese still have a long way to go in understanding the values and principles of democracy. BCMD recognized this as a problem and designed the project to strengthen the capacity of key institutions supporting parliamentary democracy. Being a newly established CSO in an emerging democracy, BCMD faced numerous challenges from the scarcity of data on democracy in Bhutan to lack of skilled manpower within Bhutan. However, activities were conducted in a proficient manner with experts, national and international, hired to conduct workshops and seminars allowing for healthy discussions amongst participants and panelists. The project did not aim to provide an advanced education on democracy. Instead, BCMD hoped to help participants acquire a basic understanding of the different elements of democracy and democratic participation to a cross section of the Bhutanese society.

From the interviews conducted and documents reviewed, the project was successful in achieving its aims: educating the media, youth, officialdom and civil society on the concepts of democracy; introducing democratic concepts like access to information and the elements of democracy; and strengthening media and civil society in Bhutan.

As noted in BCMDs final report, the project introduced “some critical ideas central to a democracy to Bhutan’s citizenry – public space, role of independent media, citizenship, culture of democracy, public service media, and the need for an open society in an evolving democracy” which were “critical in enabling Bhutanese to move from being subjects of a monarchy to citizens of a democracy”.

Through the various activities conducted, the project has been able to create awareness on democracy and media in democracy amongst the beneficiaries (direct and indirect). Respondents have also recognized the importance of CSOs as advocacy agents and an equally important player in the entire democratic process.

Democracy is only a recent development in Bhutan and there is a need to continue supporting similar activities involving the key institutions promoting democracy in Bhutan. From the interviews conducted and documents reviewed, the activities supported by UNDEF and implemented by BCMD was successful in achieving the goals of the project. Through the various activities conducted, the project has been able to create awareness on democracy and media in democracy amongst the beneficiaries (direct and indirect). Respondents have also recognized the importance of CSOs as advocacy agents and an equally important player in the entire democratic process.

Recommendations

The following are the set of recommendations that resulted from the study conducted which should be taken into account when designing future projects in the field of democracy development in Bhutan:

1. **Continued support to civil society.** Currently, BCMD is the only CSO in Bhutan that focuses on building professional capacity in the media and other key institutions toward building a democratic culture. With the support of UNDEF, BCMD was able to strengthen their own capacity in providing specialized knowledge and meeting the objectives of this project. However, as Bhutanese civil society continues to develop, CSOs like BCMD need continuous support in various capacities from UNDEF. Furthermore, the Bhutanese Government and the civil society need to understand the important role that CSOs have in Bhutan's young democracy.
2. **Coordinated programme of training activities.** CSOs, Government agencies and training institutes need to work together to develop a practical and coordinated programme of training programs and activities in the field of media and democracy development. This form of collaboration can at best result in a synergy that can be very effective, efficient and strengthen the impact of future projects, as well as avoiding possible overlaps as the number of actors in the field increases.
3. **Dialogues between public and private institutions.** The Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) and various Government and private organizations could have frequent dialogues to initiate programs that could create awareness and understanding on democracy.
4. **Education on responsibilities.** With democracy, people have become aware of their rights such as the right to speech and expression in the new democratic setting and they assert this right. However, there seems to be a lack of understanding where most do not wholly comprehend that democracy also encapsulates a stronger sense of responsibility for each individual. Future programs should be geared toward creating this sense of responsibility and bringing about greater awareness on the duties of citizens apart from voting.
5. **More training at the local level.** Trainings and workshops in creating awareness of rights should be brought to the level of geog coordinators and tshogpas in all the districts where they will be able to educate rural voters on their duties and rights.
6. **Proper time allocation.** Time allocated for the workshops and seminars should be designed in accordance to the needs and availability of the targeted group.
7. **Needs assessments.** This project was planned at the very inception of democracy in 2009. As the field developed, the project had to re-focus some of its targets during the project period. Subsequently, the next phase of support should make efforts to establish needs of persons and organizations involved in governance or media development so as to ensure these are met.

1. Introduction

Hereditary monarchy was established in 1907 with the crowning of Sir Ugyen Wangchuck as the First King of Bhutan. However, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck announced that Bhutan would adopt a democratic system of governance. The onus of choosing their own leader was foreign to the Bhutanese people and they remained skeptical about whether the new kind of governance would assure the same kind of peace and security they have enjoyed for over a hundred years. After a nationwide awareness campaign initiated by His Majesties, Bhutan went to the polls in 2008, ushering in a new era in Bhutanese politics.

2013 was the year that saw four parties vie for political forte in Bhutan's second round of democratic elections. Although the voter turnout was not as high as expected, the Bhutanese people chose to elect the two more established parties into Parliament.

1.1 Democratic transition in Bhutan

Major achievements in politics in modern Bhutan can be credited to the 4th King, His Majesty, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck. The decentralization process which was started in the early 1980's allowed for "better administrative capabilities and greater and genuine participation for people in the process of policy formulation" (Gallenkemp, 2010, p. 11). Decentralization in Bhutan prompted the modernization and development process in areas beyond the capital city, Thimphu. The public were encouraged to participate in the decision making process in an open manner and matters were settled on the basis of consensus. This opened the prospect for garnering political awareness amongst the Bhutanese people.

However, it was on the 10th of July 1998 that His Majesty, the 4th King of Bhutan surprised the whole nation by announcing his decision to devolve his executive powers and step down as head of the Government. In conjunction with this decision, the Council of Ministers had to step down to allow the election of ministers by the National Assembly. A triennial vote of confidence was also introduced to legitimize the King's rule alongside a proviso of no-confidence from the National Assembly against the King anytime stating that the King would have to step down with a one-third majority vote against him.

Changes started to emerge within the structure of the administration and bureaucracy in an effort to bring it in line with democratic norms. This allowed for more civil liberties eventually leading to the drafting of the first constitution of Bhutan. Television and the internet were introduced in 1999 followed by the Information and Communications Media Act 2006. Consequently, private media firms were established and this gave the public more option of receiving independent information. Then in 2002, Bhutan carried out its first sub-national election and although the turnout was not very high, it was the country's first attempt at making the people familiar with the procedures associated to democratic elections.

The first draft of the new constitution was presented in 2005. The King and members of the Royal Family toured the country creating awareness and presenting the constitution to the people. Suggestions made during the meeting with the people were considered and incorporated into the final drafting of the Constitution. The Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) was inaugurated in 2006 to prepare the public for the general elections in 2008

through voter education, promotion of political awareness and organizing the elections. That same year, the 4th King announced his immediate abdication to allow his son Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck to take over the official functions, but the coronation was postponed till after the elections and the passing of the new constitution.

His Majesty had by now created a ground for grassroots democracy through the process of decentralization alongside an efficient system of administration. The EU's election observation report of 2008 considered that it was this sound foundation that helped the peaceful democratic transition process. Although many people were skeptical, the EU report states that public viewed the elections as a "gift from the king" and therefore was ready to participate. This led to a keen voter participation turnout of 79.4% from 318,465 registered voters in the first held elections in 2008.

1.2 Importance of CSOs in the democratic transition

The CSO Act was ratified in 2007. Prior to that, there were a few Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that were being closely monitored by the Government. The concept of CSOs is not entirely new in Bhutan, having existed informally in the form of village community groups (tshogpas). The tshogpas played a significant role in the community which may range from assisting families during times of calamity to legal advices for households.

Bhutan has recognized the important role that CSOs can play in assisting the Government with development activities and in bringing about the diversity of views and feedback on policies. The majority of Bhutanese CSOs provide some form of service or goods to the under-privileged and vulnerable groups of people through various initiatives and activities, depending on the particular areas of specialization. Most CSOs are in their infant stage and many lack the skilled manpower to manage and carry out works that require certain specialized skills such as networking, communication, verification and investigation.

Apart from developmental activities, the Government and civil society need to understand the important roles that CSOs can play in the democratic process. When given the responsibility, CSOs can take the democratic process to a different level – creating public spaces for discourse and allow communication and discussions to take place between different sectors of the society. CSOs can also push for social, economic and political changes and build on the social capital through the process of civic engagement and social connectedness thereby enhancing the public's feel for collective benefits. However, CSOs focusing on the field of media and democracy still require strong support from the Government, donors and international agencies to continue with their activities.

2. The Project and its Developmental Context

Bhutan made significant strides toward promoting a system of responsive and accountable governance through a series of political reforms aimed at decentralization and democratization since the 1980s. In 2008, Bhutan transitioned to a constitutional democracy with the people electing their own government. This was also the year that the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan was adopted. The numerous challenges expected in bringing fundamental change in the governance system included the need to strengthen institutions and enhance people's participation for effective governance.

The UNDP and other UN agencies in Bhutan have been providing assistance to bringing about these changes in governance by developing the capacity of constitutional bodies and local governments. However, for effective decentralization, support is required for strengthening of community empowerment and participation. To encourage participation in decision making, other stakeholders will need support to strengthen transparency, efficiency, effectiveness and accountability at all levels. To strengthen the foundations of parliamentary democracy, capacity to ensure free and fair elections must be developed further with relevant agencies at both national and local levels. Key agencies need strengthening to underscore accountability and combat corruption. To ensure the rule of law, the capacity of the judiciary must be enhanced. Priority must also be given to improve access to information, improve service delivery, nurture media to foster good governance, and strengthen national capacity to formulate, review and implement legislation in line with ratified international conventions.

With the introduction of parliamentary democracy and adoption of the Constitution in 2008, the cCPAP, which is the operational plan of UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2008-2013 addressed a critical period in Bhutan's history. Through a series of close consultations with the government, development partners and other stakeholders, and with the comparative advantages of the United Nations, the UNDAF identified “**fostering of good governance as a core value for development**” as one area of national priority to be supported by the UN in helping to achieve the MDGs in Bhutan during the period 2008-2012³.

2.1 Project Initiation

In 2010, the Bhutan Center for Media and Democracy (BCMD) received financial support of 203,972 USD from United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) towards **Strengthening Capacity of Key Institutions to Support Parliamentary Democracy**. The project that was developed and implemented by BCMD was carried out from the second quarter of 2010 till the second quarter of 2012 (including an extension of 8 months). The implementing partner was UNDP, who not only helped monitor the activities but also facilitated with the rescheduling of certain activities.

The BCMD is a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) established in 2008 in response to the needs of the changing times as Bhutan made the historic transition from monarchy to a democracy. BCMD promoted and strengthened the quality of media, fostered critical thinking amongst media

³ The 2008-2012 UNDAF was later extended to cover 2013 so as to align with the Bhutan Government's Five Year Planning Process.

users, educators and the youth and reinforced the discourse, research and education activities on media and democracy. Their mission was to nurture a culture of democracy during Bhutan's transition to this new system of governance and to strengthen media and expand public discourse.

2.2 What the project sought to achieve

In order to strengthen the foundation of Bhutanese democracy, media and civil society, the project was initiated in 2010 and mainly targeted towards media houses, the young Bhutanese, Government officials and the civil society. The aim of the project was to educate them on the concepts of democracy. To achieve these objectives, activities such as conferences, workshops, trainings, seminars, forums and the production of publications and web portals on democracy were implemented. A specialized media and democracy library was also developed for the use of researchers on media and democracy by BCMD.

2.3 Purpose of the Evaluation Study

In the context of the above, the purpose of this evaluation is to assess the outcomes achieved in light of the project's effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, quality of project management and sustainability. Based on the findings of this project evaluation, recommendations for projects in the development of media and democratic society in Bhutan in the future will be included.

3. Evaluation Methodology

This main activities under the final project evaluation study was carried out between May and the first week of July, 2013. However, due to the busy schedule of most of the key stakeholders, the timeline had to be rescheduled to the second week of July. The study was carried over four phases, which included the inception phase, review of reports, collection of primary and secondary data and compilation of the final report. The evaluation was conducted by an external evaluator recruited by UNDP Bhutan through a competitive tender process within Bhutan.

The inception report outlined the detailed work methodology including the name list of possible respondents, work schedule and reports to be reviewed. This study followed the triangulated process of data analysis to come to a particular conclusion. This enhances the validity of the evaluation as it is expected that various data sources and methods will hopefully eliminate biases and typically lead to a single outcome.

All available data on the progress of the project, its performance and the problem areas was collected from associated stakeholders and/or the key person(s)/organization(s) directly involved with the project. The study also included desk review of the relevant project documents, budgets, expenditure reports, project reports, on-site reviews and steering committee meetings, as well as reports and evaluations of individual activities. Review of documents continued throughout the evaluation period.

BCMD provided the Annual Reports (2010 and 2011), activity reports which included the purpose of the activity, targeted beneficiaries, lists of participants and evaluation of the project and books/journals printed and distributed. Other documents collected and reviewed included the Royal Government of Bhutan's Media Impact Study (2008), the European Union's election monitoring report, the Cultural Industries Sector Development (a 2009 baseline report) and the Bhutan Country Action Plan for the UN.

Qualitative interviews were conducted with the beneficiaries of the project. Respondents included people from different stakeholder groups such as media personnel, Government officials, CSOs, teachers, students, program staff of BCMD and the UNDP and parliamentarians. Contacts of project participants were received from BCMD and the final list of interviewees to be contacted was finalized and agreed with BCMD and UNDP with the aim of receiving feedback from as representative group as possible.

Since the field work was carried out during the election period, many of the interviews had to be conducted via telephone. The interviews followed a semi-structured format, guided by a checklist of key issues, to allow discussion to take place. A FGD was conducted with media personnel so as to receive collective feedback.

The table below summarises the background of beneficiaries that and interviewed for this study:

Participants/panelists	Male	Female
Geog Administrative Officers	3	3
Reporters/writers/journalists/editors	10	4
Government officials	3	2
CSO	1	2
Parliamentarians	1	-
UNDP	1	1
TOTAL	19	12

3.1 Project Monitoring & Evaluation

Internal evaluations have been carried out at the end of each activity. Internal evaluations are normally carried out by the implementers of the program (in this case, by BCMD). Although, internal evaluations are cost effective and have clear objectives in continually improving the programme, they do not benefit from the objectivity of an external evaluation. .

BCMD did not have adequate skilled manpower to follow up with the participants of the conducted activities. The attempt to conduct surveys through the Internet (Survey Monkey) was not very successful. Despite constant reminders to the participants, response was very low. Due to the benefit of operating in a small society, however, BCMD was able to get feedback on their activities through direct contact with editors, teachers, institutions and other participants. BCMD also contacted previous participants and key stakeholders to assist with the designing of programme activities. In this way, BCMD were able to monitor and follow up with some of the outcomes of the activities held.

Quarterly project reports were compiled and submitted to the UNDP. Each report comprised of the list of activities carried out in that period including a report of fund utilized.

A key element of project monitoring was the seven-member project steering committee. The steering committee comprised of members from the government, civil society organizations, international civil society organizations, and the executing agency. The steering committee was chaired by the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative. Periodic meetings were held with the Steering Committee to update them on the activities already conducted, inform on the upcoming activities, and to obtain guidance on project development.

3.2 Limitations to the Study

The evaluator faced a number of problems while conducting this study. Firstly, the particular study could have been scheduled at an earlier date. There were several difficulties while trying to contact and conduct interviews with certain beneficiaries of the activities. For instance, most of the parliamentarians and media personnel were busy with the election campaigns and reporting.

Secondly, the project activities were conducted between April 2010 and June 2012 and many of the respondents could not remember the activities carried out by BCMD, especially if the activity they had attended was in 2010 or 2011. Some were even confused with similar activities that may have also been conducted by other media organizations and/or training institutes. So for all the interviews conducted, the consultant had to describe the activity that the respondent had been a participant too and in some cases, even confirm his/her attendance by showing them their name in the participant list.

Thirdly, many of the respondents refused to be interviewed for this evaluation study or were not available. Reasons ranged from “not available” to “cannot remember”. Some respondents even said that they had attended only a part of the workshop/seminar and so were not in the position to participate in the study. Many contact details such as the telephone numbers were no longer operational. There was no response to the survey questionnaires through e-mails.

4. Evaluation Findings

People in Bhutan still need a better understanding of democracy with all its complexities, including that democracy goes beyond an individual's right to vote every five years. Democracy, for many Bhutanese, is an insalubrious idea that emerged from watching the neighboring countries where democracy is usually associated with public demonstrations and even corruption. Some even believe that democracy in Bhutan was still not fully appreciated by the educated people and even by some of the elected leaders. Respondents felt that this was where media, if not abused, played a key role in making democracy vibrant through a culture built around freedom of expression - meaning how people debate and discuss issues and responsible free speech. There is a need for the Bhutanese people to learn and appreciate debating and discussing issues in an open and dignified manner – be it in newspapers, on television, radio, or through social media. Respondents considered that, if there is strong democratic culture in this context, then other norms of democracy will eventually fall into place.

With UNDEF's support, BCMD has been successful in strengthening the foundation of democratic culture in Bhutan and introducing some critical ideas central to a democracy to Bhutan's citizenry – public space, role of independent media, citizenship, culture of democracy, public service media, and the need for an open society in an evolving democracy. These issues were deliberated in forums, seminars and explored and shared through media production, training etc. and were critical in enabling Bhutanese to move from being subjects of a monarchy to citizens of a democracy.

4.1 Relevance

Following the Terms of Reference, this study sought to evaluate the “extent to which the project and its intended outputs or outcomes were consistent with the needs of intended beneficiaries and relevant strategies”.

Creating awareness and breeding a culture of democracy in a country where the people did not initially want democracy and regard it as a “gift” from the throne was a challenge for BCMD during the initial project phase. In addition, with very little information on democracy in Bhutan and no baseline data, BCMD had limited ideas on how to approach the project. Furthermore, CSOs are also a fairly new concept in Bhutan and there is a lack of understanding of what a CSO should and can do. It has been argued that some Government organizations tend to impede on CSO programming by asking that the activities get routed through the Government. This project was initiated at a time when the culture of democratic governance, media and the civil society was still in their infancy and it was deemed highly relevant for the development of democratic values in Bhutan. The main beneficiaries of this program included parliamentarians, students, teachers, journalists, Government officials and staff from BCMD and UNDP.

The Bhutan Media Impact Study (BMIS) 2008 found that media literacy in Bhutan is still low and this called for a comprehensive set of policies and institutions, where media can be nurtured in a healthier manner. The report also states that the Bhutanese society very rarely questioned the authority or the media and in a new emerging democracy like Bhutan's, this needed to change. Media plays a vital role in the democratic transition and also in educating the people with the right to information in order to help them make the right decision. Recognizing the fact that media are now the “critical

players in the political process of an emerging democracy” and that they are not merely “watchdogs of society” (Bhutan Media Impact Study, 2008, p. 88), BCMD developed programs and activities to develop the key institutions that supports parliamentary democracy.

Coverage on rural news and the level of interest amongst many readers on rural issues was very low (BMIS 2008). This could be due to lack of experienced reporters based in rural areas and logistical challenges. Acknowledging this as a problem, BCMD designed one of their activities to enhance the capacity of Geog Administration Officers (GAOs) and sensitize them on the importance of media in democracy and to promote information sharing from the geogs.

GAOs function as assistant Chief Election Officers for the Geogs (village). Some of their key responsibilities include the day-to-day functioning of the Geog office with managerial and technical support rendered to the *Geop* (village headman) and the *Geog Tshogdue* (village meetings). They also coordinate with all the central agencies and are required to monitor and evaluate the activities. For the majority of the GAOs, this is their first job after graduation and with the important responsibilities they hold, BCMD believed that this was a group that needed to be targeted. The Media Sensitization Workshop for GAOs included the fundamentals of writing and ethics in journalism as they also have to report every event in the geogs. The GAOs interviewed for this study said that they were now in a better position to talk to the people at the village level about the importance of democracy in Bhutan and encourage the people to participate in the democratic process. GAOs mainly used the Geog Tsogdues (village meetings) as a platform for information sharing.

Recent years have seen a rapid increase in the number of Bhutanese using social media (SM) and mobile journalism. Due to an obvious lack of understanding and awareness for positive use of SM, the BCMD’s Conference on Empowerment with Accountability in Social Media was conducted and organized at a crucial time when the numbers of Bhutanese users was increasing, without proper understanding of SM proliferation. Since most of the respondents were well versed with parliamentary democracy, they found other ways of knowledge sharing using social media platforms. However, the larger Bhutanese population does not use social media and those social media users only consist of about 12% of the population (according to Bhutan Broadcasting Services report)⁴.

The majority of the reporters who took part in the project and were interviewed, especially those working covering business and economics, did not have a background on business reporting. So the respondents considered the seminar on Covering Economics and Finance highly relevant and appropriate. Reporters were given hands-on training on writing a business report which was checked and edited by the resource person – giving them an insight into constructing business and financial report. Individual mentoring enabled journalists to receive targeted support.

However, there are organizations, such as the Department of Information and Media (DOIM), Bhutan Media Foundation (BMF) and media training institutes conducting trainings, seminars and workshops in similar areas. From the interviews conducted, it was understood that there was little or no

⁴ “Social Media to play vital role in 2013 elections”, BBS, 13th May 2013, <http://www.bbs.bt/news/?p=27337>

collaboration between these organizations which led to some duplication of programs and also attendee fatigue. On the other hand, most such organizations were represented on the steering committee of the project.

BCMD recognized the gap in the capacity of institutional bodies which played a vital role in Bhutan’s democratic transition. This project was therefore initiated and activities designed acknowledging the fact that media and civil society play a key role in the development of democratic culture, yet requires additional strengthening.

4.2 Effectiveness

According to the Terms of Reference for this Evaluation, effectiveness is understood as the extent to which progress toward outputs or outcomes has been made.

BCMD completed the project in June 2012, following a project extension of eight months. There were some changes in the initial proposed plan, as few of the activities replaced those that BCMD considered not relevant or necessary. For instance, the Media sensitization workshop for GAOs replaced some of the awareness programs of curricula books amongst the teachers. Only two of the activities were aired on the Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) for the benefit of the public, as airing of workshops and seminars on BBS is very expensive. However, as may be ascertained from the table below (BCMD Final report), almost all planned activities were conducted successfully. 564 people attended various workshops and events, in addition to online activities and commemoration of international days.

Output	Activities
<p>Strengthened Awareness on Access to Information</p> <p>Intended: 60-70 key persons and community representatives including women sensitized on access to information and other democratic concepts</p> <p>Actual: 108 (24 (16 male, 8 female) journalists and 84 (52 male and 32 female) Geog Administrative Officers) trained and sensitized in three different workshops on access to information and other democratic concepts</p>	<p>Intended: Seminar/Workshop on Online Media</p> <p>Actual: 3 Online Journalism Workshop</p> <p>Intended: Media Sensitization training for GAOs</p> <p>Actual: Media Sensitization Training for GAOs (2 workshops in 2011 and 2012)</p>
<p>Expanded Public Discourse</p> <p>Intended: Two resource books produced on democratic themes (elements of democracy, rule of law etc.) to provide reading and discussion material to deepen understanding of democracy in a new democratic society. Both the books will be produced in two languages -English and Dzongkha (national language).</p> <p>Actual: 7 resource books produced on democratic themes and two printed in English as well as Dzongkha</p> <p>Intended: Educate 40 high school teachers from across the country on concepts of democracy and how to use the resource books produced on</p>	<p>Intended: Civic education training workshop</p> <p>Actual: Two civic education training workshops for teachers/teacher trainees conducted and a Social media and democracy workshop for a cross section of society</p> <p>Intended: Development of two resource books on democracy</p> <p>Actual: A total of seven resource books produced</p> <p>Intended: Development of Web portal</p> <p>Actual: A web portal on media and</p>

<p>democracy in their schools</p> <p>Actual: A total of 85 teacher trainees /teachers (47 male and 38 female) attended the two workshops on media's role in democracy and how media can promote meaningful dialogue</p>	<p>democracy created (www.bcnd.bt)</p> <p>Intended: Development of media and democracy library</p> <p>Actual: A well-stocked media and democracy library with print and video resources is created and it is open to anyone who wishes to use it.</p>
<p>Strengthened Media as the fourth estate</p> <p>Intended: 40 male and female journalists trained to strengthen reporting skills in an emerging democracy</p> <p>Actual: 26(12 female and 14 male) reporters trained on 'Enterprise news reporting' and 'covering economics and finance. Additional reporters and editors attended several news conferences held as part of the training.</p> <p>Intended: Annual media conferences conducted for 60 media professionals and media spokespersons from constitutional agencies on key issues challenging media growth.</p> <p>Actual: 92 participants from media houses, private sector, government, and CSOs participate in the two workshops.</p> <p>Intended: Two writing workshops conducted for 40 -45 aspiring writers, contributors to media and bloggers to enhance skills to express their views on issues of concern and to strengthen civil society voice.</p> <p>Actual: 28 bloggers, writers and aspiring writers trained to write non-fiction to amplify voices in a democracy.</p>	<p>Intended: News reporting training</p> <p>Actual: Two News reporting trainings conducted in 2010 and 2012</p> <p>Intended: Annual Media Conference</p> <p>Actual: Two annual media conference titled 'Bhutan Media Dialogue' was conducted.</p> <p>Intended: Two Annual Non-fiction Writing Workshops</p> <p>Actual: Three annual non-fiction writing workshops conducted</p>
<p>Commemoration of International Events</p> <p>Intended: 3 events observed</p> <p>Actual: The three events observed</p>	<p>Intended: World Press Freedom Day</p> <p>Actual: World Press Freedom Day (3 days observed)</p> <p>Intended: World Democracy Day</p> <p>Actual: Democracy Day (2 days observed)</p> <p>Intended: Youth Festival (on democratic values)</p> <p>Actual: Youth Festival workshop (3 workshops in all)</p>
<p>More people sensitized on democracy and democratic concepts among media, youth, officialdom and civil society</p> <p>Intended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> No. of community representatives, including women, sensitized on access to information and other democratic concepts. No. of male and female teachers trained on democratic and civic education 	

<p>3. No. of resource books and web-resources generated.</p> <p>4. No. of hits on web portals</p> <p>5. No. of users of library on democracy and media</p> <p>Actual:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eighty four (32 female and 52 male) Geog Administrative Officers sensitized on access to information and other democratic concepts 2. Eighty five (47 male and 38 female) teachers/teacher trainees sensitized on the role of media in democracy and how media can promote meaningful dialogue and the importance of public space and gender issues. 3. 1c. Seven resource books produced with two printed in both dzongkha and English. One web portal on media and democracy created and an online forum for public discussion created called 'Bhutan Speaks' (www.bhutanspeaks.bt) 4. 200-300 hits every month on www.bcmt.bt and 100 – 200 visits every month on www.bhutanspeaks.bt 5. The library on democracy and media is being used by youth during their holidays for research purposes. Right now, it has not picked up that well.
<p>Enhanced professionalism and effectiveness of media in a new democratic system</p> <p>Intended: No. of male and female media professionals trained and sensitized on key media issues</p> <p>Actual: 50 journalists (30 male and 20 female) from local media houses trained on how to create blogs, make movies and editing them in the final cut-pro, etc. and reporting financial situations in the economy.</p>
<p>Strengthen the voice of youth and civil society to express their views on media and democracy</p> <p>Intended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No of men and women among media, youth and civil society trained in writing skills 2. No. of men and women engaging in online forums <p>Actual:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Twenty eight (15 female and 13 male)bloggers, writers and aspiring writers trained to write non-fiction to amplify voices in a democracy 2. About 100 registered users of www.bhutanspeaks.bt who engage on the online forum
<p>Strengthen the capacity of BCMD to support educational activities on media and democracy</p> <p>Intended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No of BCMD male and female staff trained in media/democracy education and research 2. No of trainings/forums/activities BCMD has conducted on media, democracy and access to information <p>Actual:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Four female and two male staff of BCMD trained in various fields such as training the trainers, data mining and research, library cataloging etc. 2. The staff of BCMD attended all the forums and workshops conducted by the BCMD.

Through the various workshops, forums and seminars, the beneficiaries of this program have been provided with the platform to deliberate issues in a collective manner. This was effective in creating a healthy environment for the people to come together for dialogues and towards creating sound public opinions. Such discourses were essential for a society where people are not accustomed to the system of open communication. All this has been possible through an alliance with partners - from the growing media, to MPs, academic institutions, teacher trainees, government and civil society, Anti Corruption Commission and the Election Commission.

Due to the nature of their job and responsibilities, there were two different views on the duration of the activities. The GAOs interviewed insisted that the duration for their training should have been longer to cover all the topics

in an effective manner. On the other hand, the media respondents felt the program could have been shorter to be more effective. Private media firms maintain a limited set of staff, which includes reporters and journalists. Allowing them to attend workshops and seminars that continue for several days is a human resource strain on the management, other reporters and on the firm.

Some of the Radio Jockeys (RJs) responsible for the Dzongkha broadcast who had attended the Online Journalism Workshop felt that this workshop had not been effective for them. However, invited organizations were informed that the sessions would be all conducted in English. In Bhutan, there is also a shortage of RJs and this means that the few RJs in the market work with very little flexibility. They manage their own radio sessions which are scheduled on a daily basis. So for many RJs, attending the entire sessions of the workshops was seen as a problem for them, to the other RJs and also to the organization.

The impact of the Creative Non-Fiction Writing (CNFW) workshop, though it did not have any relevance to their understanding of the parliamentary democratic process, made the participants/respondents more conscious of the need to write and record changes in the Bhutanese society. Most responded that the workshop(s) have renewed their interest to write and start blogs, thus helping to amplify voice in the democracy, and to provide role models for other aspiring writers to share their views. Additional sessions were held specifically for editorial and opinion writers from the press during the CNFW workshop, and feedback received showed that they were useful sessions that helped improve opinion and editorial writing.

A GAO account was opened in Facebook after attending the workshop conducted for them by BCMD. The workshop highlighted the importance of social media and how GAOs could use it as a platform, to no cost, to share ideas, to get suggestions, information or create awareness. They said that they used this Facebook page as a podium to interact and hold dialogues with other GAOs. A social media guideline was drafted and endorsed that guides GAO's social media use, along with a template for a GAO/ and geog website.

Open dialogues are essential for a society where people are not accustomed to open communication and activities by BCMD has been effective in creating a platform for healthy discussions to take place in a collective manner. Social media has also been acknowledged as a strong tool for information sharing and generating awareness. Activities could have been more effective in reaching a wider mass if they had been aired on the national television. Overall, despite some changes in the project activities, BCMD was successful in achieving the originally envisaged outcomes and outputs.

4.3 Efficiency

The Terms of Reference includes a question on efficiency in terms of how economically have the resources been converted into results. This study considered the activities implemented in the most efficient way in comparison to other alternatives and whether the activities were cost-efficient.

From the interviews conducted and the reports submitted, BCMD has been comprehensive with their work. As ample training materials were produced and provided and qualified speakers/panelists were recruited. Some of the

respondents were provided with two copies of the training pamphlets and other materials – one for themselves and the other for the management. BCMD made sure that summaries of the workshop or seminar were also emailed to the participants at the end of each activity. Periodic meetings were held with UNDP and the steering committee to update them on the activities completed and to inform them of the upcoming activities. Some of the activities were announced on the radio, newspaper and television to allow a wide range of interested people to participate. In most cases, BCMD had to select from the shortlisted candidates. Quarterly progress reports were submitted to both the UNDP and UNDEF. These efforts helped ensure that the resources were targeted at the best possible participants.

In terms of knowledge sharing, discussions, interactions and materials were more than adequate with participants and panelist from across all sections of the Bhutanese society and also from outside Bhutan. The Forums, seminars and workshops were beneficial allowing healthy discussions between the participants and panelists. These forums encouraged discussions and allowed a discourse on various ideas and perspectives.

BCMD has been able to use available resources in an efficient manner to achieve the project objectives. In areas where they lacked the in-house professional capacity, BCMD was resourceful in engaging the services of experts from within and outside Bhutan. In addition, the engagement of volunteers in the projects contributed to the efficient use of resources. The activities were duly conducted and organized as per the project proposal. During the duration of the project, BCMD has also been able to improve their own in-house capacity in researching, conducting workshops and also networking. BCMD has also benefitted from gaining an insight into the varying and diverse viewpoints of a relatively new democracy. All initiatives were evaluated by the participants with an aim to be gender balanced. Overall, the individual evaluations show appreciative and good feedback. After two years of UNDEF supported activities, BCMD's civic education activities have matured and continue to grow in demand, interest and impact.

4.4 Project Management and Support

In evaluating the quality of project management, in accordance with the requirements of the Terms of Reference, the evaluator reviewed the risk management, result based management, reporting, and financial management of the project.

When the project was initiated in 2010, BCMD was a newly setup CSO with limited skilled manpower. Along with the scarcity of available information on media and democracy in Bhutan, BCMD was aware that they were venturing into a new area of work in Bhutan and could face challenges with the relevant stakeholders. The initial proposal and plans deviated with time as the project took time to get approved and the transfer of funds was delayed.

In addition, UNDP Bhutan, the implementing partner had certain conditions set for this project – for instance the importance of prioritizing gender considerations into BCMD's activities. However, since these activities are about creating a culture of democracy to the public at large and not setting aside programs for women alone, BCMD continued with their proposed plans. Quarterly reports had to be submitted to UNDP and UNDEF and both the organizations had different methods of reporting. This was an added responsibility and cumbersome for BCMD as a newly formed CSO

with a limited number of trained staff. However, BCMD has acknowledged these challenges as developing experience for the staff and the organization.

UNDEF’s support towards the “Strengthening Media and Civic Education to Enhance Democracy in Bhutan” project was amounted to USD 203,972. A part of the initial project fund was used to help set up the BCMD office with purchase of equipment and furniture. The fund was not released in its entirety and instead it was re-appropriated only after prior approval from the steering committee. BCMD had to fill up the required UN standard form, known as the Funding Authorization Certificate of Expenditure, or FACE, every quarter. Along with the FACE form, an itemized form was attached, detailing every activity and the estimated expenditure. After a careful review of both forms, UNDP would release the fund in cheque form. An on-site review team consisting of a team from UNDP Bhutan has audited all BCMD activities. The team visited the BCMD office and verified all the accounts, and this included verification of vouchers, receipts and invoices. The on-site audit is carried out every quarter. An annual audit is also carried out by the Royal Audit Authority (RAA). In this case, BCMD is audited for all its projects and activities (not just for a particular project).

In 2011, based on findings of the onsite review, which highlighted risks from an inadequate financial management system, UNDP requested the RAA to conduct a special audit of BCMD. The audit recommended measures for strengthening the financial management capacity of BCMD, which were later, assessed as satisfactorily implemented. The project ended in 2012 and a surplus amount of Nu. 75,782 (approximately USD 1,400) was returned to UNDEF.

Evaluations have also been carried out at the end of each activity by BCMD. Some of the feedback received from the participants was incorporated into improving future activities. The results of the evaluation demonstrate that on average, the participants rated the quality of the workshops and seminars as “good”. Below is an illustration of the outcomes two of the evaluations carried out by BCMD:

Media Sensitization Workshop for GAOs 2011

Evaluation Questions (n = 39)	2011					
	Excellent	Good	Average	Could do better	Poor	No response
Quality of workshop	3	25	3	1	0	1
Rate workshop in terms of participants	6	22	4	0	0	1

Creative Non Fiction Writing

Evaluation Questions	2010- 2012						No response
	Excellent	Above Average	Good	Average	Could do better	Poor	
Quality of workshop	82%	-	9%	9%	0		

Rate workshop in terms of participants	18	8	5	2	0		
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However, there were some discrepancies in some of the internal evaluations carried out especially with the number of respondents reflected in their evaluations and the number of actual participants. This has been a challenge for the evaluator to establish a conclusive finding. Below is one of the review evaluations conducted in 2012, which shows discrepancies in the total number of participants (n) and the number of respondents. This could have been due to the inexperience of BCMD in conducting evaluations or carrying out a proper analysis of the data.

Review evaluation 2012

Evaluation Questions (n = 45)	2012		
	Excellent	Above Average	Average better
Quality of workshop	9	18	1
Rate workshop in terms of participants	6	4	0

Despite being a new CSO in Bhutan with limited skilled manpower and operating in a different field of development work, BCMD has been able to bring in and also utilize proper resources to allow for proper implementation of the project activities. All funds and activities were closely monitored by the implementing partner, UNDP and the steering committee. An internal evaluation was carried out for all activities to receive feedback from the participants and to develop on BCMD's future activities. The quality of the project management by both implementing and executing partners was therefore high, considering the circumstances.

4.5 Sustainability

Sustainability is defined in the Terms of Reference the extent to which benefits of the project have continued since the project came to an end and the likelihood of continued benefits in the future.

The potential for sustainability of projects such as the one being evaluated is high as they can bring about greater awareness and understanding on democracy in both rural and urban areas. However, the rural populations in many senses have poor understanding as regards the benefits (and also responsibilities) democracy brings to them. This is an important issue that needs focus and attention so as not to be neglected. While it is important to continue activities with all segments of society, a particularly important segment are the young Bhutanese who needs to understand the potential of being productive citizens in democratic Bhutan.

With private media firms there was and still is a high turnover of media personnel as the capacity to retain reporters is very low. In such cases, the

impact of the activities conducted by BCMD is for a short period as reporters scramble between jobs and media organizations. Although BCMD is confident that as these reporters take with them the knowledge gained to their new job, the sustainability of these activities for media firms is still vital.

Recognizing the fact that there is a lack of resources on media and democracy in context to Bhutan, BCMD published a number of books (attached as Annex 3). These books have been written by local writers and have been widely disseminated and used by teachers, parents, political parties, students and members of civil society. This is expected to supplement the impact of the program as resource materials to students and readers alike by helping them understand responsibility in media and democracy. They also add to the development of a culture of democracy in Bhutan as they provide Bhutan-centric views to deepen knowledge and understanding.

After initiation from BCMD, a number of media clubs were set up in few of the schools. The media clubs enable students and teachers to explore media as a lens to analyze Bhutanese society and community, and as a forum for the expression of opinions and sharing of stories. Both are important and fundamental to the development of a culture of democracy.

Most activities that were conducted under the UNDEF support will continue under other donor assistance except for the Non-Fiction Creative Writing Workshop (NFCW) and the trainings with journalists. The NFCW only focused on creative writing and it did not delve into discourses on parliamentary democracy. Most participants took part in this workshop out of personal interest in writing and not to enhance their knowledge of democracy. However, as noted above, there are other institutions that are continuing with some similar training activities. The activities initiated by the project therefore have good overall sustainability. Sustainability of the project impacts has been somewhat hampered by turnover of participating journalists, as well as challenges in maintaining contact with some project participants.

Democracy is a recent development in Bhutan and the institutions promoting it are seen as the key players in the democratic process. Even though Government and private organizations are putting in efforts in their various capacities, CSOs are seen as an equally important player in the entire democratic process. Therefore, there is a need for the continuation of similar activities to strengthen the capacity of these institutions and to help with the development of democracy in Bhutan.

5. Conclusion

Recognizing a gap in the capacity of institutional bodies which play a vital role in Bhutan's democratic transition, BCMD designed and implemented the project "Strengthening Media and Civic Education to Enhance Democracy in Bhutan" with financial support from UNDEF. Owing to the fact that media and civil society play a key role in the development of democratic culture, the purpose of this program was to strengthen the foundation of Bhutanese democracy, media and the civil society. Activities were mainly targeted towards media houses, the young Bhutanese, Government officials and the civil society.

When the project was initiated in 2010, BCMD was a new CSO with limited skilled manpower. Operating in a new area and with little or no background information of democracy in Bhutan, BCMD was aware of the challenges and problems they could encounter while trying to execute the proposed activities. During the course of the project, minor changes were made to the proposed activities and the project was completed in June 2012. Almost all planned activities were conducted successfully and 564 people attended various workshops and events. Funds and activities were monitored by the UNDP, UNDEF and the project steering committee.

With an aim to educate them on the concepts of democracy, a series of workshops and seminars were held which encouraged active and healthy discussions amongst participants and panelists. Several books were also published and widely disseminated. The in-house capacity of BCMD was also enhanced as the staff participated in all the activities. This has helped them to improve their research skills, conduct seminars, workshops and educational activities. Even though BCMD was successful in implementing all their proposed activities, the potential impact of reaching a larger population could have been a lot higher if more activities were aired on BBS. However, airing programs on the national television was perhaps too costly for the project's scope.

Democracy is only a recent development in Bhutan and there is a need to continue supporting similar activities involving the key institutions promoting democracy in Bhutan. From the interviews conducted and documents reviewed, the activities supported by UNDEF and implemented by BCMD was successful in achieving the goals of the project. Through the various activities conducted, the project has been able to create awareness on democracy and media in democracy amongst the beneficiaries (direct and indirect). Respondents have also recognized the importance of CSOs as advocacy agents and an equally important player in the entire democratic process.

6. Recommendations

Bhutan still has a long way to go in understanding the values and principles of democracy. For that reason, many of the respondents believe that similar workshops and seminars need to continue in order to sensitize people at both the urban and rural areas on the core principles of democracy. Although this project was not about providing an advanced education on democracy, BCMD hoped to provide some basic understanding of the different elements of democracy to a cross section of the Bhutanese society.

To improve future projects, the following are the set of recommendations that resulted from the interviews and FGDs conducted:

1. **Continued support to civil society.** Currently, BCMD is the only CSO in Bhutan that focuses on building professional capacity in the media and other key institutions toward building a democratic culture. With the support of UNDEF, BCMD was able to strengthen their own capacity in providing specialized knowledge and meeting the objectives of this project. However, as Bhutanese civil society continues to develop, CSOs like BCMD need continuous support in various capacities from UNDEF. Furthermore, the Bhutanese Government and the civil society need to understand the important role that CSOs have in Bhutan's young democracy.
2. **Coordinated programme of training activities.** CSOs, Government agencies and training institutes need to work together to develop a practical and coordinated programme of training programs and activities in the field of media and democracy development. This form of collaboration can at best result in a synergy that can be very effective, efficient and strengthen the impact of future projects, as well as avoiding possible overlaps as the number of actors in the field increases.
3. **Dialogues between public and private institutions.** The Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) and various Government and private organizations could have frequent dialogues to initiate programs that could create awareness and understanding on democracy.
4. **Education on responsibilities.** With democracy, people are aware of their rights such as the right to speech and expression in this new democratic setting. However, there seems to be a lack of understanding where most do not wholly comprehend that democracy also encapsulates a stronger sense of responsibility for each individual. So programs need to be designed toward creating this sense of responsibility and bringing about awareness.
5. **More training at the local level.** Trainings and workshops in creating awareness of rights should be brought to the level of geog coordinators and tshogpas in all the districts where they will be able to educate rural voters on their duties and rights. The idea of democracy is inherent in people and it would serve the overall project if this section of the population were educated on their responsibilities in democracy.

6. **Appropriate time allocation for the activities.** Time allocated for the workshops and seminars should be designed in accordance to the needs and availability of the targeted group. For instance GAOs said that the time for their workshop was too short for the amount of activities and information delivered; at least a week would be needed. On the other hand, the management of some of the private media firms felt that man-power constraints meant that relieving even two of their reporters to attend two days of seminar or workshop could hinder with their deadlines.

7. **Needs assessment.** This project was planned at the very inception of democracy in 2009. As the field developed, the project had to re-focus some of its targets during the project period. Subsequently, the next phase of support should make efforts to establish needs of persons and organizations involved in governance or media development so as to ensure these are met. Subsequently, the next phase of support could try to focus more on the actual needs of persons and organizations involved in governance or media development and schedule the programs accordingly.

Annexure 1: Activities Conducted

Media sensitization workshops conducted for GAOs

Geog Administration Officers or GAOs are all recruited directly after graduating with a degree. Their main responsibilities include the day-to-day functioning of the Geog office with managerial and technical support rendered to the *Gup* (village headman) and the *Geog Tshogdue* (village meetings). GAOs coordinate with all the central agencies to plan the geog activities and they also need to monitor and evaluate the activities. GAOs also function as assistant Chief Election Officer for the Geogs.

There were two workshops conducted solely for Geog Administrative Officers (GAO) titled “Understanding Media – Media Sensitization Workshop for GAOs”. The first one was in September 2011 and the other in January 2012. The purpose of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of a GAO, improve information sharing and sensitizing the importance of media in democracy. A session on Social Media and a review of the proposed GAO website were also conducted.

Creative Non-Fiction Writing (CNFW) Workshop

A series of creative non-fiction writing (CNFW) was conducted by the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD). The four workshops conducted by BCMD on creative nonfiction writing were aimed at writers, reporters, and students who are interested in this genre of writing. The theme for the workshop were “Reflecting change in modern Bhutan” and “Tradition and Modernity in Bhutan” while including a section for commentary writing for reporters and editors.

The purpose of these workshops was to introduce the elements of creative non-fiction writing as a writing genre in Bhutan. It focused on improving the creative nonfiction writing of established writers and aspiring authors. It also provided a platform for exchange of ideas for writers and aspiring writers.

Media Nomads 5: Telling the stories that Matter

This was conducted in July 2012 aimed at engaging young people in using media as a way to actively participate in the world around them. The Objectives included:

- To train youth in the basics of documentary video production process resulting in a final film product per group
- To introduce participants to a Civil Society Organization and the issue they advocate for
- To learn how to tell a compelling story with clear, doable advocacy messages that support a cause that they are passionate about.

Documentary Film Workshop

This workshop was carried out in July 2012 and it was open to any young person aged between 16-21 years. A part of the overall media literacy programme that is conducted by BCMD, this workshop aimed at:

- Familiarizing students with documentary production film making including all the different phases such as planning, production and post-production
- Give students practical training and experience in making their own films and to provide the basic tools for effective story-telling
- Teach students the basic film language, teamwork, approaches to documentary production and the role that documentaries can play in forwarding democracy
- To expose the youth to different film genres (documentary, short films) and teach them how to view films critically and analytically.
- To help students express their concerns and interests through a new medium and to participate actively in their society through the potential “voice” of documentary.

Training workshop on Enterprise Reporting

Conducted in 2012, this training was targeted at media personals from different media organizations. The sessions that were taught through lectures and exercises was designed to equip journalists with the tools to carry out more analytical, rigorous and original reporting. Furthermore, they also enhanced their ability to research online, incorporate numbers into reports and construct a reporting strategy.

The objectives of the workshop was to enable the participants to originate story ideas and go beyond breaking news, report more analytically and critically and to familiarize themselves with the research and reporting tools needed for in-depth reporting.

Media, Democracy and Civic Engagement Seminar

A total of 49 trainee teachers from both the Samtse College of Education and Paro College of Education took part in this Seminar in June 2012. The aim was to sensitize the teachers to the two concepts of “civic engagement” and “open society” while still introducing them to the lesson plans designed in collaboration with Stony Brook and local teachers. Accordingly, lesson plans and activities that fostered debate and dialogue inside and outside the classroom were structured.

The Goals and objectives of this Seminar were to:

- Have deep discussions about “who young Bhutanese are” as a generation
- Explore the ways in which citizens can make a difference
- Critically examine the importance of an “open society” for a democracy
- Train teachers how to develop S.M.A.R.T lesson plans that integrate the democratic approach into classroom learning

Having learnt the importance of media literacy, the evaluation conducted showed that majority of the participants agreed that the overall quality, in terms of presentation and content was “Excellent”. The teachers believed that they now had improved understanding of the relation between media and democracy and the vital role that young people played in the society.

They said that they would use the knowledge gained at the workshop to create awareness on media, democracy and civic engagement. They would also initiate media clubs in schools and organize debates and literary activities and quizzes. Their other plans included publishing newsletters, creating an open space in classrooms and schools, empowering youth in decision making and inculcating the importance of being responsible to students.

Online Journalism Workshop

Covering areas in on news reporting and writing, ethics of journalism, the basics of taking pictures and videos, video editing and organizing news broadcasting, the Online Journalism Workshop was conducted in November 2010 and aimed at media personals from different organizations. There were 16 males and 8 females who participated in the workshop.

Journalism Seminar on “Covering Economics and Finance”

To improve technical knowledge and professional skills of journalists who cover economics, finance and business, BCMD conducted the Journalism seminar on Covering Economics and Finance. The Seminar was conducted from May 28 to May 31, 2012.

The seminar was aimed at journalists who cover finance, economics and business as the need for technical knowledge and professional skills is much higher. Participants learnt to format, build up stories and writing skills and also segregating

Annex 2: Performance Indicators

Output (Activity conducted)	Input indicators	Output indicators	Assumption(s)
International Events		Observed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Press Freedom Day • World Democracy Day • Youth Festival 	Increased awareness and number of people sensitized on democracy and democratic concepts
Public Space Forum	Head of the Royal Education Council and Professor Mark Mancall set the event in motion with an informative lecture that sketched out the necessary foundations for democracy.	40 persons from media houses, CSOs, the UN, Government organizations and Parliamentarians attended	Increase in the level of understanding on how public spaces have formed the backdrop to public life for social exchange, protest and contemplation throughout history
Documentary Film Workshop – giving voice to the youth	Announcements made on different media platforms. Experts consisted of both national and international people.	15 participants (9 boys and 6 girls) were divided into five groups – with each group producing a film with a theme. The film was screened for family and friends of participants on the final day of the workshop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are more students who now have a better understanding of documentaries being the medium for new voices • Increase in the number of students with keen interest in film making and also working in the media industry in the future • More people now understand and appreciate documentary films and the importance of it in Bhutan where media is still young
Training Workshop on Enterprise reporting	A nominal fee of Nu. 800.00 were asked from participants organizations to show commitment towards the workshop. Although no one was	16 untrained reporters, financial newspapers and economic writers (11 males and 5 females) were taught the effective use of internet as a reporting tool. They learnt the importance of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More reporters with a better understanding that they need to strategize their investigations based on the viability of news source • Increased level of understanding the term ‘hypothesis’ and benefits of getting that right story

	rejected if they were unable to pay the registration fee (as such the registration fees of four participants from CSOs were waived off)	using numbers intelligently and critically and strategizing their investigation based on the viability of news source. They were given hands-on training with resource persons on advanced reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved level of knowledge on using the search engines and Microsoft Excel (for basic calculations) to validate stories • Increase level of understanding on the needs of various media and also reinforcing a sense of being a part of the media fraternity • Improved interview skills especially when tackling difficult interviewees and formulating the right question
Online Journalism Workshop	Resource persons from within and outside Bhutan were invited to conduct some of the sessions on Online Journalism.	24 personnel from newspaper and radio stations, Government offices, constitutional bodies and CSOs attended this program (16 males and 8 females). At the end of the workshop, participants submitted four print stories, three audio stories and six video stories on issues that they found interesting and important which has been posted on the blog created during the workshop www.bhutanonline123.blogspot.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an increase in the number of persons who can write good news stories and now know the basics of photography and how to use a flip camera to make a movie and editing them in final cut-pro. • Creation of a blog with participants contributing stories to that blog • Increase in the number of bloggers in Bhutan.
Bhutan Media Dialogue		41 mixed participants from the Government, constitutional bodies, Media, CSOs (26 males and 15 males). Sections of this media dialogue were published in a few of the newspapers.	Increased level of understanding between the media and various stakeholders on the idea of “freedom of expression”, the associated responsibilities and limitations and the barriers to achieving it in Bhutan.
Social Media and Democracy – A Youth Forum	Panelists comprised of people of different backgrounds bringing with them different experiences	115 students and faculty members from Royal Thimphu College, Royal Institute of Management and Institute of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased level of understanding on the role of media ensuring good governance • More people who now understand the various uses of social

	and knowledge. The Forum was broadcasted on BBS to reach to a wider group of people.	Language and Culture Participants learnt the various used of SM including the advantages and disadvantages.	media and the impact it has <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of social media to the public as the activity was aired on national television
Understanding Media – A Media sensitization Workshop for Geog Administrative officers (2 workshops conducted)	Local experts were invited to conduct some of the sessions with the GAOs.	84 Geog Administrative Officers (49 males and 35 females) were taught the different types and the importance of information sharing. They were informed on the importance of media in democracy and the role they placed as information sharing focal persons. They also learnt the fundamentals of writing news releases and reporting on any issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased level of confidence amongst GAOs on the important roles they play as the key information-sharing person in the geog. GAOs now understand the benefits of an open government and how transparency and information is important to allow people to make informed decisions More GAOs can now produce better reports and are more confident to talk to people on issues pertaining to their rights and responsibilities in a democratic country. Initiation of a GAO page in FB which now act as a portal for interactions and various discussions on pertaining issues amongst GAOs
Media Democracy Literacy Curricula Development	Experts from within and outside Bhutan were invited to conduct some of the sessions.	Teachers and BCMD programme officers were introduced to the Case Study Methodology or lesson plan design. Teachers were encouraged to develop media clubs in their schools.	Increase in the number of teachers who can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop lesson plans using the SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-bound) method design and develop democracy literacy and news literacy module introduce students to different types of debates in order to experience various ‘democratic dialogues’ there are more schools now initiating media clubs

Freedom of Expression and Media: In the Service of Society	Experts were invited from outside and within Bhutan to add various perspectives to the topics being covered.	73 mixed participants from CSOs, constitutional bodies, Government, Media persons. Strengthened understanding between media and various stakeholders on the idea of Freedom of expression, responsibilities and limitations that come with it, and the barriers to achieving it in Bhutan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the level of understanding of journalism in a new democracy and the need for it in an independent and responsible media • More people who are aware of the challenges of journalism and quality journalism matters for Bhutan and the need for journalism to build credibility and accountability • Established the understanding of media as the fourth estate of good governance
Journalism Seminar on “Covering Economics and Finance”	International experts were invited from Columbia University and from the Financial Times, London. Prominent guest speakers also included Government Officials. In-depth reporting, handouts and guidelines on economic reporting was also provided.	18 journalists and reporters (16 males and 2 females). Participants learnt to format and build up stories, segregate various economic issues and to think, analyse and find stories beneath the figures and financial statements. They were also given basic ideas on the Rupee shortfalls and reasons for unemployment problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are more reporters and journalists who are confident in reporting on economic and business terms and simplifying complicated jargons. • Increase confidence in reading and finding stories beneath figures and financial statement. • Increase in the number of reporters who are now able to tell a story better and add value to it. • Increased understanding of the economic and banking crisis and in particular the ‘rupee crisis’ in Bhutan • Improved ability to build up, compose and write stories
Creative Non-Fiction Writing (4 workshops conducted)	Public announcements made in the press and on FB. Shortlisted candidates were selected from applicants.	A total of 57 civil servants, teachers but was aimed at adults interested in writing and could use it productively (39 males and 18 females).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of people who can now review and edit their own stories and share stories for feedback. • More people having basic interview skills • Increase in the number of persons who are able to review other peoples articles

		Participants learnt to review and edit their own stories, basic interview skills, write their own non-fiction stories and share it for feedback	
A Seminar on Media, Democracy and Civic Engagement Seminar	<p>The Workshop in 2011 marked the “World Democracy Day” and the Deputy Speaker, Dasho Yangku Sherpa was invited.</p> <p>The second workshop conducted in 2012 was carried out in collaboration with Stony Brook and local teachers.</p>	85 teachers from NIE Samtse and PCE, Paro. Teachers said that they would use the information received in the workshop to create awareness on their roles, rights and responsibilities. They will persuade principals to support the society by setting up media clubs. They said they would initiate newsletters in their schools and make documentaries for awareness on civic participation and also create a face book page “Civic responsibilities”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers sensitized on some key concepts of democracy – ‘civic engagement’ and ‘open society’ • Teachers are now trained to prepare lesson plans and activities that would foster openness, debate and dialogues in and outside the classrooms • Trained teachers have a better understanding on the importance of youth and their role in democracy
Media Nomads 5: Telling the stories that Matter	Partnered with St. Michael’s College to host the inaugural Nomads Workshop in 2011. Letters were issued to different schools to nominate two students for this program. Miss Bhutan 2008, Ms. Tsokey Tshomo was also invited as the Chief Guest for the first Media Nomads closing ceremony where the young participants presented their media projects	14 students participated in this program and they revealed new or enhanced ambition to use media in the service of social change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of youth who know the basics of documentary video production and tell a compelling story with a clear, doable advocacy message • Increase in the number of basic video editing software (VideoPad and Moviemaker) for video production • More youth have now improved on their interview skills • Increase awareness among the public as sections of this workshop was covered by the news (on the national paper and television)

Publication of Books	BCMD focuses on producing contents that are written by local writers	Some of them have copies in Dzongkha and English and can be used by teachers, parents, politicians and the civil society	Distributed to Government organizations, CSOs, Media firms, Board Members, Religious institutions, Parliamentarians, UN, contributors and NFE Centers.

Annex 3 Distribution Lists of BCMD Publications

National Assembly	Members: 47	47 copies
	Secretary General	3
National Council	Members	25 copies
	Secretary General	3
Cabinet Secretariat	Cabinet Secretary	2 copies
Ministries and Secretaries	10 Ministries	20 copies
PMO	PM	1
	Director General	1
	Samdu Chetri	1
MEDIA	Kuensel	2
	Bhutan Today	2
	Bhutan Observer	2
	Business Bhutan	2
	Bhutan Times	2
	The Journalist	2
	The Bhutanese	2
	Bhutan Youth	2
	Druk Yoeser	2
	Druk Nyeltshul	2
	Kuzoo fm	2
	Radio Valley	2
	BBS Radio & TV	6
UNDP	RR, DRR, Maarjte, Kunzang Norbu	3
Bhutan Foundation	Ugyen Choden and Denka	5
CSOA	Kinchho Norbu	2

CSOs	30	30 copies
CSOFF	2	2
DYS	Director & Programme officers	3
BICMA	Director, chief media officer, programme officer	3
BMF	Lilly Wangchuk	3
ROM	-	3
DLG	Director and Karma Galey	2
ACC	Chair person, Director	3
ECB	Chief Election Commissioner, election commissioners.	3
NCWC	Director	3
RAA	Auditor General, Director	
OAG	Attorney General	
Board members		8
Media Clubs (5)	SMS Taktse PCE Samtse Jigme Sherubling YHS LMSS Kuzhugchen Loselling	
Schools, colleges and Institutes	Royal Thimphu College	4
	Sherubtse College	4
	Paro College of Education	4
	Samtse College of Education	4
	Gaeddu Business College	4

	College of Natural Resources	4
	YHS	4
	LMSS	4
RUB	5 copies	4
JDW Public Library	4 copies	4
Centre for Bhutan Studies	4 copies	4
National Library	4 copies	4
Legal Institutes and others	Supreme Court	2 x 6= 12
	Bhutan National Legal Institute	5 copies
	Office of the Attorney General	5 copies
	High Court	

Annex 4 Semi-structured Questionnaire for BCMD and UN

Relevance of the project objectives

- a) Within the limitations of information available at the time of planning, how strong was the situation and needs analysis undertaken for the project, and how clear and realistic were the project objectives?
- i. Considering that there were very generic information and also a lot of awareness carried out by ECB and His Majesty, what other limitations did you feel was still there during the planning stage?
 - ii. Why do you feel that this project needed to be carried out?
 - iii. When the UN initially formulated this project, was there a set of objectives already outlined and defined by them? Was it based on International standards? And how realistic did you think (at that time) the objectives were?
 - iv. To what extent were the intended outputs consistent with the needs of intended beneficiaries and the priorities for the development of a democratic society in Bhutan? Consider any relevant organizational or national strategies.
 - i. How did BCMD identify the target beneficiaries of the project activities?
 - ii. Was any strategy document such as the 10th FYP or any other project being carried out by other CSO's reviewed or consulted while developing the project to ensure that the project complemented ongoing efforts to strengthen democratic culture in Bhutan?
 - iii. Was there a baseline to measure the existing capacity of the key institutions before the development of the materials of this project?
 - iv. Considering the importance of access to information, why wasn't an activity focused on media-spokesperson of all Government organisations conducted?
 - v. How well did the project activities and design respond to the stated objectives?
 - i. Project activities and design – you seem to have used different methods of dissemination – what was the rationale behind the choice of different activity design (why some needed workshops while some needed training) and again how did you identify the beneficiaries of each activity?
 - vi. How contextually appropriate was the method of implementation?
 - i. Was each activity planned in consultation with the donor agency and/or the Government? Were the activities carried out in accordance to the Work plan? If not, what were the reasons for the changes?
 - vii. How well did the project complement the activities of other actors?

Efficiency

- a) How effectively were resources used to produce the intended outputs?
- i. Were there any limitations set by the any agency (Government and Non-Government) with respect to activities, implementing strategies and the beneficiaries?
 - ii. Do you feel the budget was adequate considering the capacities and resource available to BCMD?

- iii. In your opinion, do you think that this project could have been implemented differently and delivered in a different manner?
 - iv. Do you feel that this project should have been implemented before 2008 and would it have had any impact on the outcomes of the 2008 results?
- b) How could resources have been used more efficiently to achieve the intended results?
- i. Now that the project is over, are there any lessons learnt that you would like to share to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of similar projects in the future.

Effectiveness

- a) To what extent has the project contributed to progress against the stated outputs and outcomes?
- b) What have been the most significant overall results of the project? To what degree have the objectives been achieved?
- c) How well was the project able to adapt to a changing external environment and democratic context in Bhutan while pursuing the stated objectives?

Project management and support (pertaining to implementing and executing partner as appropriate).

- a) To what extent were the management structures of the project adequate and effective?
- b) How strong was the risk management of the project?
- c) Assess the quality of financial implementation against the planned budgets and progress.
- d) How high was the quality of project monitoring and reporting?
 - i. Was there an evaluation of each activity conducted? And who was responsible for the evaluation of each activity?

Sustainability

- a) To what degree have the benefits of the project continued since the end of activities, and what is the likelihood of continued benefits in the future?
 - i. Do you feel that the participants are making use of the knowledge and skills acquired during the course of the training/workshop/seminar at their workplace?
 - ii. How effective was the sustainability strategy and how well was it implemented?

Annex 5: Semi-structured Questionnaire for the beneficiaries

Kuzuzangbo, my name is Chimmi Dolkar and I am working with the UN to evaluate the UNDEF funded project **‘Strengthening Capacity of Key Institutions to Support Parliamentary Democracy’** that was carried out by the Bhutan Center for Media and Democracy (BCMD). The project started in 2010 and ended in 2012. Before I start, I would like to seek your permission to continue with the interview. You have the right to refuse the interview or stop me any time during the interview. However, I would like to request the project activities and also result in more productive findings, conclusion and recommendations.

A major part of the questionnaire is semi-structured which will give room for changes and more discussions. Since most of the activities were carried more than 12 months ago, I will start with a brief summary of the activity you had attended under the UNDEF program.

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Qualification:

Organisation:

Type of Organisation:

Private Government International Agency CSO Others

Job description/responsibilities:

Training attended, location and date (year) under the UNDEF Project:

1. How did you learn about the training/workshop/seminar that BCMD had conducted (in which you were a participant)?
2. Do you feel that the training, workshop or seminar was relevant for you? And relevance for the work you do in your organization? What was your expectation and did the project activity meet your expectation?
3. Did the activity bring clarity to your knowledge, attitude and perception towards the whole concept of democracy in Bhutan?
4. Do you think the course materials were adequate and relevant to the activity carried out?
5. In your opinion, how could the activity that you attended been delivered in a more effective manner?
6. Have you attended any similar training/seminar or workshop? If so, who was the organizer and funding agency?
7. Do you feel that if this program or activities had been carried out before the elections in 2008, there would have been a difference in the results of the first elections (such as voter turn-out)?
8. Are you using the skill and the knowledge you may have gained at the training or workshop for your work? Please expand a bit on how you may be using the knowledge or skill gained at your workplace?
9. Do you feel that the Bhutanese still lack the full understanding of Democracy and the importance of it? If yes, should more similar activities be carried out in all other dzongkhags and geogs too?
10. Which according to you serves the best media base for dissemination in Bhutan – radio, TV or paper?

11. In your opinion, are the Bhutanese now more ready to go to the polls this year? Do you feel they are more educated and aware of the democratic process as they go to the polls?
12. According to you, what activities did you feel was important to broaden the sense of democratic culture in Bhutan?
13. Is there anything you would like to add on so that there could be changes made to future programs/activities which could be relevant and even important to achieve the desired goals.