

ABILITY BHUTAN SOCIETY

"See the Person Not the Disability"

202



ABILITY BHUTAN SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT



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ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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*Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck
The Royal Patron of Ability Bhutan Society*

ABILITY BHUTAN SOCIETY (ABS) PROFILE

The History of ABS

ABS is a Public Benefit Organization which was founded on the recognition that persons with moderate to severe disabilities, primarily children and their families have needs. ABS was registered with the Civil Society Organization Authority of Bhutan (CSOA) under registration No. CSOA/PBO15 on the 10th of November 2011. The concept of ABS was inspired by the vision of a Just and Compassionate Society by His Majesty The Fifth Druk Gyalpo Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck. ABS was inaugurated by Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck, The Royal Patron of ABS, on April 6th, 2012 as a project under the Kidu Foundation which was established by Their Majesties as an endowment for Royal projects.

Beginning in 2007, families of children with disabilities gathered formally to share their concerns of loneliness and helplessness and to explore ways and means to provide better life for their children with moderate to severe disabilities, who often have to be left at home alone or at best with an untrained caregiver. This was a very critical situation for the individuals and their families. It was during that time that the concept of ABS was initially conceived with the objective of helping each other to provide direct early intervention and assistance to their children with disabilities.

The greatest strength of ABS is The Royal Patronage of Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen who takes a deep and active interest in ABS and its activities. Her Majesty is indeed a source of inspiration and aspirations for present and future when in the quality of life of individuals with moderate to severely disabilities would be improved and suffering alleviated.



VISION

Empowering individuals with disabilities to live independently and with dignity.



MISSION

Enhancing the quality of life of individuals with moderate to severe disabilities by:

1. Advocating and creating awareness of the rights of people with diverse disabilities in Bhutanese Society;
2. Developing core groups of dedicated, committed and trained Social Workers and care givers;
3. Enhancing families and care givers skills to empower those with diverse disabilities in their care; and
4. Providing direct interventions to enhance the capabilities of people with disabilities.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF ABS

To,

1. Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck,
The Queen of Bhutan,
The Royal Patron of Ability Bhutan Society,
2. Honourable Members of the Ability Bhutan Society,
3. Stakeholders &
4. Donors

Most humbly, with due sense of reverence and gratitude, as the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of Ability Bhutan Society (ABS), have the honour to present the Annual Report of Ability Bhutan Society for the year 2020 to Her Majesty, The Queen of Bhutan, Board of Trustees, Members of Ability Bhutan Society and stakeholders.

The year 2020 was one of most challenging globally. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that we have to be prepared and be resilient at all times. Amongst all, the education for all children was tested like never before particularly for children with disabilities. There was no shortage of critics of the era of virtual learning pushed in by the pandemic. Online meetings, teaching and learning related fatigue is common. Mental stress is on the rise. With the economic disparity added by digital divide in particular for the disadvantaged backgrounds are at the risk of being left behind.

Nevertheless, ABS with support from development partners such as UNICEF, UNDP, and other generous supporters, we have been able to overcome the challenges of pandemic with timely intervention such as support our children at home with learning materials, home visits to help them engage our children in meaningful ways in such difficult times. Apart from ensuring digital access, ABS tried to align with our core mandates to support children from moderate to severe disabilities, their families and caregivers. The melding of education and technology is here to stay, and its merits are just beginning to be understood and therefore we have to embrace it. It's indeed an uphill task to prepare and to cope with it but we must make it a reality. They are one of us, and together we cannot afford to leave them out or behind.

Last but not the least, I offer my sincere gratitude to Her Majesty, Board of Trustees,

staff of ABS, parents, donors and well-wishers for all your guidance, support, wishes and prayers for making the year 2020 a successful and fulfilling one. As we begin new year, we look forward to receive your continued direction, commitment, support and goodwill for the ABS to further improve the quality of lives of persons with disabilities.

Together, we have the strength and can really drive to leave no stones unturned to answer hopes and prayers of the children with disabilities and their parents today and in the coming years.

Kadinche and Tashi Delek



Karma Tshering
Chairperson



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am honored to present the annual report of Ability Bhutan Society for the year 2020. The year has shown us how to design and roll out our shock-responsive support services for persons with disabilities especially plans and programmes that can respond to unforeseen crises such as COVID-19. The times were exclusively challenging for children and persons with disabilities with limited or no access to early intervention services, rehabilitation services and the risk of being abused. However, these challenges were mitigated through various services programmes for children and persons with disabilities in the country.

Bhutan has a very proactive support system by its constitution that grants free education and health to all. Epitomizing this spirit is His Majesty's *Kidu* programmes that provides social assistance in the form of monthly cash and in-kind support to those who have difficulties sustaining their livelihoods especially persons and families of persons with disabilities. ABS could successfully support families of children with disabilities especially during the two nationwide lockdowns by delivering essential goods and PPEs (Personal Protective Equipments). Amid the pandemic, Ability Bhutan Society (ABS) with the support from our development partners especially UN agencies, HELVETAS, international non-government agencies, national donors, and well-wishers, ABS could mobilize our resources to keep them safe during the crises. Besides, ABS with

support from BMZ/DAHAW carried out various social inclusion programmes to support people with disabilities in Chhukha, Punakha, Dagana, Sarpang, and Trashigang respectively.

ABS has been serving children with disabilities and their families for almost a decade with utmost passion and programme services. To continue to meet our mission, vision, and objectives, we need unwavering support from all walks of life in society.

Therefore, I would like to urge our supporters to make your pledge before the year ends. Your support will help us continue our positive trend and make difference in the lives of children and persons with disabilities and their families.

On behalf of Ability Bhutan Society

Ugyen Wangchuk
Executive Director



INTRODUCTION

The satisfaction of being able to make a difference and the smile that follows with it are the greatest gifts one can achieve. This year's covid-19 pandemic has given us an opportunity to have a different outlook in life and explore on services that never would have been a priority but most importantly it has taught us the value of life. The life that we all live to survive.

For children with disabilities require extra attention to carry out the activities, need constant care and patience. They may need a little support but that doesn't make their life any different than the rest. They live to make friends, to participate and to be content. And just like all, they live to survive!

Not being able to come for daily intervention at the center has been very stressful for parents/caregivers and a concern for ABS. We communicated with the parents/caregivers, reviewed children with disabilities' strengths and weaknesses and developed strategies to support the beneficiaries' during the lock down. The covid-19 pandemic challenged the organization however we grew stronger and more involved which helped us work collaboratively.

Ability Bhutan Society is proud to present the annual report 2020 and share our achievements and services.

CLINICAL INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

Center Based Intervention

Children with disabilities and their family members come to the center to avail the intervention services on a regular basis. Goals are set according to the needs and capacity of a child and reviewed every 6 months accordingly. There are three separate classes that cater to the needs of a child such as live skill development/ socialization, school readiness and one-to-one intervention for children with severe disabilities. To support the children at home, parents/caregivers are equally guided.

In 2020, 37 children with disabilities were enrolled however could not avail center-based intervention owing to the covid-19 pandemic.

A total of 295 children with disabilities have benefited from the ABS program to date.

Accomplishment

» Children transited to mainstream school-6.

Home Based Intervention

Home-based intervention is generally applied for children with severe disabilities who are unable to benefit from the center's regular intervention. However, because the regular intervention services at the center were not feasible this year, social workers with support from volunteers extended the intervention services through home visits to all children with disabilities enrolled at the center. When the severity of the pandemic arose, timely home visits were not possible, so it was virtually updated. Thus, ABS developed communication material as well as acquired intervention toys with support from UNICEF Bhutan and distributed as per the needs of the child in order for children to engage at home.



Toys ready to distribute to children with disabilities



Kinley Sonam communicating through communication book

Professional Development Online Training

Despite the covid-19 pandemic, social workers of ABS have been continuing telehealth sessions organized by Australian Catholic University (ACU) Feeding Clinic to build their capacity in order to provide with an appropriate care/intervention that the child needs. The sessions consist of weekly video conference calls between ACU Occupational Therapist, Speech Pathologist, Social workers and clients

of ABS. They are trained on positioning, standing, movement, behavior management, communication, ADHD, parts of brain and its functions, developmental milestones, sensory skills and visual perception. Furthermore, Mrs. Moira Boyle, Occupational Therapist have also been training the social workers on goal setting and functional assessment.

INTERNATIONAL DISABILITY DAYS

World Down Syndrome Day

ABS staff of Thimphu, Chukha, Dagana, Punakha, Sarpang and Trashigang offered prayers and good wishes for the newly born Prince, for the wellbeing of all during the COVID-19 Pandemic and to observe World Down Syndrome Day on 21st March 2020. The theme was 'We Decide'.

Although mass gatherings were restricted because of the coronavirus pandemic, awareness on down syndrome was raised in social media page (Facebook) and website. Furthermore, in Trashigang, few staff from Draktsho East and representatives from the Opening your Heart to Bhutan also joined to mark the day with the Trashigang staff.



Khenpo, Kanglung Shedra pledging to support persons with disabilities

World Autism Awareness Day

World Autism Awareness Day was observed on 2nd April virtually. Awareness on autism was shared via social media (Facebook) and ABS website. Furthermore, ABS officials at Trashigang had offered refreshments to the monks at Choekortse (shedra), Kanglung who was performing closed ritual for the wellbeing of all during the Covid-19 pandemic coinciding with the autism awareness day. The team had shared about autism to Khenpo Jamyang, Kanglung Shedra and the Khenpo had promised to translate and share it to other monks during their classes. Pledge signing was also conducted. In addition, the team had created awareness by pasting posters in Kanglung market and had joined Draktsho East for head print program to mark Autism Awareness Day.



Pledge signing by the community

World Cerebral Palsy Day

World Cerebral Palsy Day was observed on 6th October by organizing a quiz on cerebral palsy in Facebook page. Pamphlet on cerebral palsy was also developed in English and in Dzongkha and shared via social media.



Pamphlet on cerebral palsy

International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)

International Day of Persons with Disabilities was observed on 3rd December to celebrate the unique talents of persons with disabilities and promote their rights in the society. The panel discussion on the service providers was conducted by inviting relevant civil society organizations (CSOs) that work for persons with disabilities/caregivers in Bhutan. Awareness through bulk SMS, quiz competition via social media and broadcasting short documentary of ABS/BMZ/DAH project on Bhutan Broadcasting Service was some of the activities carried to empower persons with disabilities.

In the morning the staff of ABS, visited a nunnery in Thimphu to offer butter lamp and prayers for the wellbeing of all people with disabilities. ABS interacted with the nuns and shared about the importance of disability day. Furthermore, ABS staff at Sarpang Dzongkhag observed the day in collaboration with Gelephu Lower Secondary School by raising awareness on the disability and the importance of the day. Vocational Training was also launched on that day.



Observance of IDPD at Sarpang



Group photo after the LIVE programme at BBS

In the evening, a Live program on BBS2 was organized by Ministry of Health in collaboration with Ability Bhutan Society and Disabled Persons' Association of Bhutan-DPAB. It started with a tribute to Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck followed by promising words from His Excellency the Prime Minister and His Excellency Resident Coordinator of UN in Bhutan to support persons with disabilities and promote inclusive society. Experience sharing was done by people with diverse disabilities as well as entertainment program. A song on IDPD was composed and presented by the KEVI band (Kuenpel Entertainment of Visually Impaired) and the students of Wangsel Institute for the Deaf performed a dance. Moreover, the challenges and achievements were also portrayed through short videos supported by UNDP. Overall, the programme presented an opportunity for all Persons with Disabilities to come out of their shell and celebrate their talents.

ABS ACTIVITIES

Basic Training to assist people with disabilities amid Covid-19

Ability Bhutan Society organized a basic training to assist and provide right support services to persons with disabilities in case of lock down or if any assistance is required during covid-19, on 4th May 2020 at RSPN hall by inviting relevant expertise and persons with disabilities themselves to share how others can help to people with diverse disabilities. The participants included volunteers from civil service, CSOs and staff and volunteers of ABS.

The training started with a brief awareness on disability, its types, causes, prevention and activity of daily living skills by Mr. Ugyen Wangchuk, Executive Director of ABS followed by Ms. Sushila Gurung, Ms. Dorji Zangmo and Mr. Tenzin Drala from Wangsel Institute for the Deaf presented on assessing people with hearing impairment. Mr. Yonten Jamtsho from Disabled Persons Association of Bhutan (DPAB) presented on assessing people with visual impairment, Mr. Tandin Dorji, wheelchair user talked about assessing people with wheelchair users and Ms. Beda Giri, former physiotherapist, J D W N R H

(Technical Advisor of ABS/BMZ/DAHWP project & Co-founder of ABS) presented on assessing people with multiple disabilities. All the speakers shared about the culture of respective disabilities and ways to support them carry out their daily living skills. Demonstrations were also conducted and provided basic instructions to help the volunteers understand and communicate with people with disabilities.

In continuation to the training, ABS engaged the volunteers during weekends as well as on weekdays when they were free, to familiarize the environment they are expected to support. Mrs. Beda Giri and Mr. Tamiki, Bussi-En, supported during home visits. All the volunteers were divided into teams, each guided



Mr. Yonten Jamtsho, Programme Officer, DPAB raising awareness on Blind/Low vision

by a social worker of ABS. Only one volunteer was being engaged at one client's home for few hours in order to avoid any distractions that may cause to a child and for safety reasons. They got to experience the difficulties, comprehend the situation and built on the enthusiasm to work in this field. They were thrilled to be able to help parents/caregivers with household works and play with the children.



Mrs. Beda Giri, Co-founder of ABS and Mrs. Bishnu Maya Gurung, Social Worker during a home visit

Training on Early Intervention and Safe Referrals

A training on Early Identification and Safety referrals on child protection was coordinated by ABS to further built up the capacity of the staff and interns of ABS to address child protection issues while working with children with disabilities. The training was conducted by officials from National Commission for Women and Children - NCWC, Bhutan with support from UNICEF Bhutan.

The training was very helpful as being aware about early identification of child abuse could really help to minimize the long-term effect of physical, verbal, emotional and sexual abuses. Identifying children in difficult circumstances (CIDC) and children in conflict with the law (CICL) and accordingly learning the guiding principles for responding has thrown light to

the participants. Knowing that children with disabilities are more vulnerable to being a victim of such abuses, it was highlighted that observing their behavior, continuing with home visits and referring them to competent authority was important. Participants were also engaged in a role play to understand the responsibilities and situation of a front liner and a child who is being abused. Mrs. Bishnu, Social Worker of ABS who played the role as a front liner said, "it was very difficult to have the child trust me as he was already having trauma from physical abuse so I feel we need to be very sensitive and gain their trust before we can ask any more questions". Similarly, another role play was played by another group. Mrs. Pema Yuden, Social Worker of ABS played the role of a child who was being abused. As she got into the character, she became emotional and could empathize the child's condition based on the experience she had experienced in reality. It was a fruitful learning for all staff especially for the interns of ABS.



An intern of ABS presenting on the types of abuses



Dr. Sunali Joshi Kashyap, Dental Surgeon providing dental hygiene awareness

Dental Hygiene and Screening Camp

Children with disabilities, their families and caregivers from Ability Bhutan Society (ABS) received Oro-Dental Screening and treatment on December 15 led by medical team from Project Dantak, Dental Surgeon Dr. Sunali Joshi Kashyap, spouse of the Chief Engineer, Brigadier Kabir Kashyap along with Major (Dr.) Kanaram Choudhary, Dental Officer at Dental Clinic of Dantak, Babesa. They were also screened for medical requirements by Lt. Col. (Dr.) Manpreetsingh, Medical Officer of Project Dantak at MI Room, Project Dantak. Moreover, the team provided with dental hygiene and care to the children and will be supporting them with follow up as and when required.



CSOs working in the field of disability including persons with disabilities themselves

Workshop to empower women with disabilities

The workshop on capacity development of women networks to enhance the participation and inclusion of women with disabilities was conducted on 13th and 14th November 2020

organized by Disabled Persons' Association of Bhutan, Ability Bhutan Society, Draktsho Vocational Centre for Special Children and Youth, Bhutan Stroke Foundation and Phensem Support Group supported by United Nations Development Programme.

The participants shared the barriers of different types of disabilities especially women with physical, intellectual, deafness, blindness and stroke patients, identifying domains to which they are most excluded and discussing on way forwards on inclusive services.

It was also discussed on how Civil Society Organization can work collectively towards improved participation and inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, how to institutionalize networks among the participating organizations with OPDs and developing action plan to include women with disabilities to participate in the community.

Disability Equality Training

The Disability Equality Training was organized by three Civil Society Organizations; Ability Bhutan Society (ABS), Draktsho Vocational Training Centre for Special Children & Youth and Disabled Persons' Association of Bhutan (DPAB) in partnership with the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) and United Nation Development Program (UNDP). The training was facilitated by Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) themselves to the frontline workers of Chukha, Bumthang, Paro, Thimphu, Samdrupjongkhar, Samtse, Pemagatshel, Trongsa and Zhemgang. The aim for this training was to ensure that Covid-19 response is inclusive and equip the frontline workers with knowledge and skills to provide appropriate services to PWDs.



Training to the frontliners

Services during national lock down

Ability Bhutan Society supported persons with disabilities and their families by delivering basic essential goods as well as distributing Special Movement Pass for persons with disabilities during lock down in Thimphu.



Unloading of essential items

Fundraising

ABS raised Nu. 742,212 (Seven Hundred Forty-Two Thousand Two Hundred and Twelve) against the target amount of Nu. 700,000 (Seven Hundred Thousand) through Bhutan Crowd Funding- Impact Bhutan, Royal Securities Exchange of Bhutan (RSEB) in 45 days by 106 donors for Jigme Dorji and other children with disabilities at the center. The crowd funding started on February 21, 2020 coinciding with His Majesty's 40th Birth Anniversary and closed on April 6, 2020. The amount received shall cover Jigme's transportation cost to the center and hospital which will remove a huge burden off his mother's shoulder owing to her financial condition. This will allow Jigme to continue to avail the service from ABS as well as continue physiotherapy from the hospital. In addition, other essential items were supported for Jigme.



RSEB presented a cheque to the Chairman and Executive Director of ABS on 8th April, 2020

Story behind:

The coronavirus pandemic has deeply challenged Namgay Zam (Jigme's mother) to make an earning. She hardly earned a minimal amount before by selling vegetables by the road side and had to always live-in hesitations. She has to get by the day without having to starve, save enough for the rent and other utility bills and manage for Jigme's diapers. She can hardly afford to spend even a lavish amount for Jigme to buy his favorite food or toys. Therefore, ABS management has helped purchase the essential food items and has also helped them shift into a new spacious apartment. Gell toy teether and other toys was brought for him in order to avoid biting himself and toys which would help him see since he has cortical visual impairment.



Before: at Namgay Zam's old place. After: at her new place

After settling down at her new home, she was also supported with new gas stove and gas cylinder so that she is able to cook variety of food for Jigme.

ABS also helped bought a black foam and set up a sitting place at the Centenary farmer's market where his mother is currently selling vegetables. It is convenient and much safer for Jigme to play on the floor. ABS also engaged volunteers to help Jigme's mother sell vegetables as well as play with Jigme. It was a good opportunity for Jigme to socialize and have fun.



Volunteers helping Jigme and her mum at the Centenary Farmer's Market, Thimphu

At home, Jigme's mother usually has him sit in the bucket and play while she does her household chores. She said "I feel safe as he will not be able to crawl out while I work."



Jigme playing inside the bucket

ABS helped procure a crib for Jigme to sit in and play. It also functions as a support stand for Jigme to practice his leg balance. Jigme's mother said, "It is very heartwarming to see Jigme smile. We would like to thank ABS for initiating this and all donors who supported in making our life easier. I didn't imagine to have such facility for Jigme."



Jigme well-secured in his new crib

ABS management was able to support Jigme, especially during the pandemic thanks to the donation received from the generous donors who wanted to make a difference in a child's life.



ABS/BMZ/DAHWA PROJECT

Project Title: “Social Inclusive Development for People with Disabilities in Bhutan.”

Project Goal: Contribution to the development of an equal and inclusive society in Chhukha, Dagana, Punakha, Sarpang and Trashigang.

Project period: 37 months (1st of December, 2018 – 31st of December 2021).

Objectives

- i. Promote Early Intervention and Improve the Quality of Life
- ii. Efforts for Capacity Building of Grass Root Stake Holders
- iii. Improving the Self-esteem of Person with Disabilities, Families and Caregivers, Reduce Stigma and Discrimination.
- iv. Look for ways for the sustainability of the Project economically, ecologically, socially and structurally

Ability Bhutan Society (ABS) in collaboration with Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) Germany and German Leprosy and TB Relief Association (DAHWA) has started a pilot project on “Social Inclusive Development for People with Disabilities in Bhutan” to identify the situation and number of people with disabilities especially women & children which will promote social inclusion at all levels namely Health, Education, Livelihood and Empowerment.

The following activities were conducted in 2020.

Activities

Disability Camp

2nd phase Disability camp was organized with support from Dzongkhag Administration, Hospital and Physiotherapists to assess persons with disabilities at Chukha, Dagana, Punakha and Trashigang. Audiologist from Jigme Dorji Wangchuck Referral Hospital and ENT from the respective Dzongkhags supported in carrying out the assessment as well. The camp was conducted for people who have hard of hearing and other disability and accordingly they were screened for the assistive devices. A total of 633 people with disabilities were assessed during the disability camp in Chukha, Dagana, Punakha and Trashigang out of which 225 people with disabilities were screened for assistive devices depending on their severity and need. Further 116 people with disabilities were referred to ENT. The assistive devices will be procured and distributed next year.

The 2nd phase disability camp will be carried out in Sarpang in 2021.



Persons with disabilities during the disability assessment camp

Distribution of assistive devices

92 people with disabilities were screened during the 1st phase of disability camp in 2019 from the five project Dzongkhags. The assistive devices were procured based on the list assessed by Physiotherapist and other health officials of the respective Dzongkhags. Accordingly, this year, the assistive devices are being distributed to the beneficiaries.



Beneficiaries receiving assistive devices

ECCD adaptation

There are around 84 ECCD centres in Chukha, Dagana, Punakha, Sarpang and Trashigang, out of which 5 centres (1 centre per Dzongkhag) were selected to be a model ECCD center. Through the inception of the ECCD centres, the government is expected to duplicate the idea to other Dzongkhags and build up the capacity to provide intervention services. Thus, the center is expected to be equipped with basic facilities so that children with and without disabilities can avail the services.

In all the selected ECCD centres in 5 Dzongkhags, ramp/footpath construction has been carried out including installation of railing, accessible toilet, modification of existing doors and sensitization to the ECCD Principals on the importance of inclusive adaptation to the existing model.



Accessible ramp and railing construction at Tsimalakha ECCD centre, Chukha



Accessible ramp and railing construction and toilet retrofitting at Norbuzingkha ECCD centre, Dagana



Accessible ramp, footpath and railing construction and toilet retrofitting at Lobesa ECCD centre, Punakha



Accessible ramp and railing construction and toilet retrofitting at Samteling ECCD centre, Sarpang

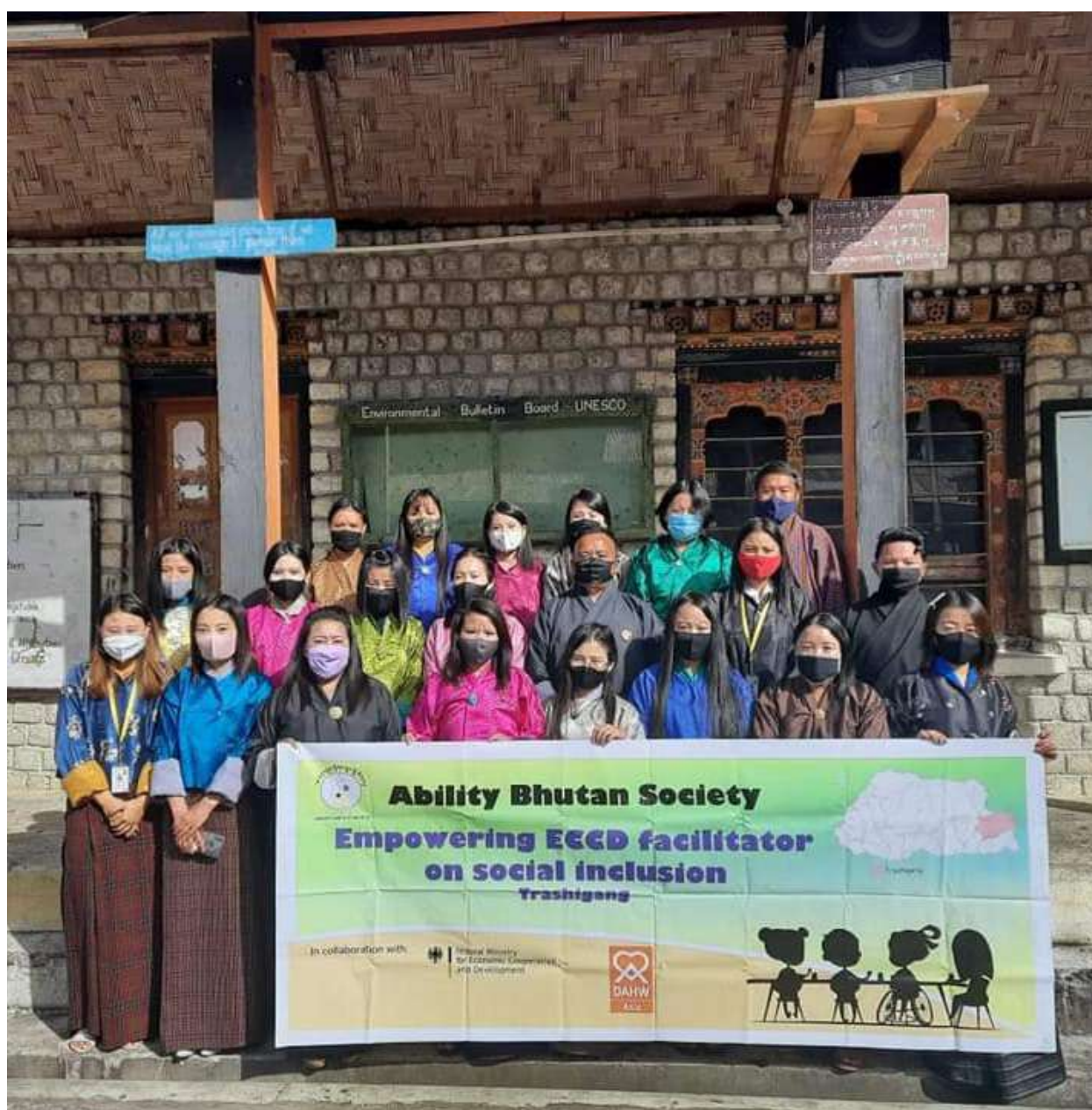


Accessible ramp, railing and toilet construction at Wamrong ECCD centre, Trashigang

2nd phase Early Childhood and Care Development (ECCD) training

The second phase ECCD facilitators training on “Inclusion in ECCD Centres and Bhutan Child Development Screening Tool” completed at Dagana, Punakha and Trashigang reaching out to 62 ECCD facilitators. The ECCD & Special Education Division, Ministry of Education supported in arranging the Resource Person for the training. The participants were familiarized on the questionnaires of Bhutan Child Development Screening Tool (BCDST). The training package included the usage of screening tools, methods to calculate chronological age of the child, barriers of inclusion, solution for community inclusion and inclusive Education. It was an interactive session whereby the facilitators addressed the challenges at the center and together discussed on solutions.

The 2nd phase ECCD training at Chukha and Sarpang will be conducted in 2021 owing to the circumstances of covid-19.



Group photo with the ECCD facilitators of Trashigang Dzongkhag

Income Generation Programme

ABS/BMZ/DAHWP Project supported an entrepreneurship programme (IGP- Income Generation Programme) on organic farming by providing seed money to 20 people with disabilities from 5 Dzongkhags. The aim for this support is mainly to empower people with disabilities in becoming self-reliant and to have a sustainable future. For person with severe disabilities, the seed money was given to their family member to support them.

Chukha

Tenzin Tshogyal is an 8-year-old girl with acute malnutrition and paralysis. Tenzin and her mother have recently moved to their apartment after being divorced from her step father. Currently, Tenzin's mother, Kencho Wangmo, has no job at all.

Since all entertainment companies are prohibited from engaging in the current pandemic, Kencho is not in a position to seek other employment as her daughter with



Tenzin Tshogyal, a child with acute malnutrition and paralysis

a disability needs to be taken care of 24/7. Kencho struggles financially to make the rent and make simple expenses that include mainly diapers for Tenzin. Both maternal and paternal relatives declined to support, and thus Tenzin's duty rests solely with her mother, Kencho.

Kencho is eager to start a micro-enterprise and help her daughter. As a result, she was selected for the Income Generation Program under Gedu, ABS co-partnering with Nazhoen Lamtoen under Chhukha Dzongkhag. The goal is to empower them to become self-reliant. The start-up of the micro company for Kencho will begin in early 2021.

Dagana

Nima Gyeltshen, 16 years old is from Tsanglaykha village, Tseza Gewog, Dagana. Because of his socio-psycho illness and speech and communication disorder, it has been very difficult for his parents to support him. They survive from little earning from the construction sites and self-consumption through farming. Thus, they are not able to prioritize Nima's needs because of financial constraints.



Nima Gyeltshen and his mother

ABS officials at Dagana has supported by giving the seed money to the mother. They have encouraged her in farming and selling at the market in order to support Nima and her family. She has sold some vegetables and is inspired to sell more.



Vegetable garden

Punakha

Dorji Wangchuk a 12 year old boy with down syndrome from Punakha is currently studying in class 2 at Lakhu primary school, Kabji Gewog. He had to repeat classes due to his condition however he hasn't given up in learning. His parents encourage him to study despite their unsteady fiancé and strives to provide educational support hoping that he will be able to become independent in future.

They live in a small hut and survive from the father's pension and vegetables from their kitchen garden. Dorji's father is a retired army and has 8 children. The little pension that he receives, he has to spend it for the family. He does everything within his means, and more for a happy and secure life of his children. As it is with all the parents, his only prayers for

his children is to grow up towards a brighter future. But it pains him that he is not able to provide special care for his son by buying him the required educational toys.

ABS, Punakha supported by giving a seed money under income generation programme to his parents for agricultural work in order to support Dorji and the family. His parents have now expanded their vegetable garden and are generating income by selling the vegetables. They are also teaching Dorji the skills for farming in case he decides to pursue farming as his career in future.

Dorji's father is pleased that he can finally provide nutritious food and save up for Dorji.



Dorji Wangchuk at their vegetable garden

Sarpang

Lobzang, a fifteen-year-old boy is from Gongtsekha under Jigmechoeling Gewog in Sarpang Dzongkhag. Gongtsekha (Gari Goan) is one of the farthest chiwog. Lobzang at his early age got enrolled in a primary school nearby but he could not fulfill his education due to his communication and learning difficulties. Thus, he remained at home with his parents and five other siblings. At the age of nine he started helping his parents with few farming activities and developed some skills. They mostly depend on cardamom cultivation which they get as an annual harvest.

This year, Lobzang with the support from his family, Chiwog Tshogpa and health assistant, he decided to take farming as his main source of income, growing on a path to being independent. He decided to take this opportunity to earn for his livelihood as well as help his family members. Ability Bhutan Society, Sarpang supported with the seed money under income generation program. He wishes to grow varieties of vegetables at larger scale if the school reopens. He also wishes to extend his farming project along with cardamom and wishes to take farming and vegetable product as his career.



Lobzang harvesting from his garden

Trashigang

Dawa Zangmo, a 49-year-old woman, is divorced and lives with her 70-year-old mother, Tshomo. Dawa has a mild physical disability and also has a speech and communication disability. She has a daughter, but her daughter left her behind. The siblings of Dawa have also tuned away to take the responsibility of taking

care of their mother. Dawa is, thus, the sole bread earner.

During cultivation, Dawa would assist her neighbors with labor work and in exchange she would receive labor fees in cash or rice. However, they are left with no source of income during the off season. Therefore, Dawa seeks to store enough rations throughout the cultivation season to support her and her mother in the off season.

ABS, Trashigang, helped Dawa with the seed money in consultation with the Kangpar Gewog Administration. She started growing maize, chili, cabbage, slag, radish and saved some cash for the next cultivation season to buy required items.



Dawa Zangmo working in the field

Life Skill Development Orientation

Parents/caregivers of children with disabilities tend to have low self-esteem and often ponder on their child's abilities. Having a notion that a child cannot do anything at all or trying to make them perfect are some of the causes that results in delay in progress or deteriorating of one's health. It is important to have parent's

acceptance of their child's disability in order to assist them. Thus, second phase life skill development orientation was organized by the Dzongkhag Coordinators and Assistant Dzongkhag Coordinators of Chukha, Punakha, Sarpang and Trashigang with support from ABS/BMZ/DAHW project. A total of 53 children with disabilities participated in the orientation.

The physiotherapists with support from health assistants, oriented parents and children with disabilities on the activity of daily living skills, home based exercises, creating routine, positive parenting, motor development and child management especially the risks and preventive measures during COVID-19. In addition, they went on home visits at the beneficiaries' place, oriented them on the use of assistive devices and advised them on adapting the accessible surrounding especially using the toilet.

The 2nd phase life skill orientation programme at Dagana will be carried out in 2021.



Physiotherapists orienting persons with disabilities on daily life skills

Self-care self-esteem training for parents/caregivers of children with disabilities

The second phase self-care self-esteem training for parents/caregivers of children with disabilities was conducted in the gewogs which was not covered last year at Trashigang. The training aimed to ensure that both people with disabilities and the caregivers are safe during covid-19 pandemic, ensure in building self-esteem and confidence of PWDs and their parents and care givers, understand the challenges faced by PWDs through different activities and the extra attention needed to PWDs during COVID- 19 pandemic.

A total of 106 parents/caregivers attended the training.

The training at Chukha, Punakha, Dagana and Sarpang is postponed to next year since it was not feasible due to the covid-19 pandemic in 2020.



Mrs. Tshering Yangden, CBID Coordinator, Trashigang ABS sensitizing on self-care especially during covid-19 pandemic

Sensitization to the school teachers

In Phuentsholing, Chukha, 26 teachers from various schools including Chief Dzongkhag Education Officer were sensitized on inclusive education. The workshop provided a forum to address development strategies for children with disabilities in schools highlighting inclusive education. The session was led by Kamji Central School's Special Education Needs Coordinator, who is a specialist in the area. The advantages of inclusion in schools were highlighted in describing the various forms of disabilities and the prevalence of children with disabilities (CWDs) in their respective schools. In order to be carefully applied in the everyday lives of CWDs/PWDs, the importance of inclusive language was briefed. Considering the barriers to cope up with CWDs, different strategies were explained through pictures, task analysis and assistive devices were introduced.

The sensitization to the teachers at Dagana, Punakha, Sarpang and Trashigang will be conducted in 2021.



Group photo during the sensitization of teachers on importance of inclusiveness in schools, Chukha

Sensitization to the religious leaders

Sensitization to religious leaders/monastery leaders was arranged with the support from Dzongkhag Culture Officer and SENCo Thinley of Kamji Central School, Chukha. The program was attended by 39 religious leaders and monks, including Rabdey Dratshang's Lam Neten. Alignment of religious values and medical research was the key subject of the sensitization. It has been found that most religious leaders are conscious of the prevalence of disability in a community but believe this to be inevitable as a consequence of the major factor of past behavior, namely karma, following

discussions on causes of disability on religious perspectives.

During the session, religious leaders became more aware on the disability preventive measures and were asked to refer the person with disabilities as to their condition. The social model was also briefed with a view to providing accessibility to PWDs in terms of formal accommodation and environmental viability. The value of medical studies, along with their religious views, has been similarly centered. It was an immersive program that brought together the entire faith, medical and social model and ways to help people with disabilities as society as a whole.

The sensitization to the religious leaders at Dagana, Punakha, Sarpang and Trashigang will be conducted in 2021.



Sensitization to the religious leaders on disability at Chukha

Tailoring Training

According to the need-based data collection conducted by ABS, it was found out that majority (47percent) are either engaged in primary sector such as farming/fishing, a characteristic common across the region. 8.5 percent stayed at home while less than 1 percent were either working in Government service or self-employed. Given the fact that majority had little means of earning a livelihood

depending most of the time on their families, around 79 percent fall under category of no income. 9 percent earned less than Nu.1000 per month. Classifying under different income groups, besides those without income, at least 14 percent earned up to Nu.3000 per month while only 1 percent were financially stable. Considering these issues, a total of 23 people with disabilities or their families have been selected for tailoring training based on their needs from the five project Dzongkhags and 1 for painting/crafting. Currently 13 beneficiaries are being trained in tailoring at Chukha and Sarpang for the period of 3 months. The beneficiaries are also provided with the tailoring machines to take home after the training. The training is mainly to provide skills to improve the livelihood of the people with disabilities so as to become independent, build their self-esteem and boost their potentials. It is also to ensure that both youth and adults with disabilities have access to training and work opportunities at community level. Moreover, it is an opportunity for social and economic participation, which greatly enhances personal fulfilment and a sense of self-worth. The tailoring training at Dagana, Punakha and Trashigang will be conducted in 2021.



Beneficiaries receiving training in tailoring

Support during Covid-19 pandemic

District Coordinators and Assistant District Coordinators in collaboration with the District Administration initiated the delivery of essentials to the identified beneficiaries in the 5 Dzongkhags with the intention to minimize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 257 beneficiaries from 5 Dzongkhags were supported with the basic essentials.



Chukha



Dagana



Punakha



Sarpang



Trashigang



AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The audited account of ABS for the fiscal year 1st July 2019 to 30th June 2020.

It has an income of Nu. 14,554,828.11 (Ngultrum Fourteen Million Five Hundred Fifty Four Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty Eight and Ch. Eleven) and expenditure of Nu. 14,896,442.42 (Ngultrum Fourteen Million Eight Hundred Ninety Six Thousand Four Hundred Forty Two and Ch. Forty Two) with the fund balance in the Bank 4,191,788.07.

The income was in the form of aids/donations by individual donors and organization both within and outside the country in the form of pledge, membership, donation, projects and fundraising events in support of various programme.



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ROYAL AUDIT AUTHORITY
Bhutan Integrity House
Reporting on Economy, Efficiency & Effectiveness in the use of Public Resources



RAA/ (OSA-13)/ AR-ABS/2021/ 147

Dated: 19 February, 2021

The Executive Director
Ability Bhutan Society
Thimphu

Subject: Financial Audit Report of Ability Bhutan Society (ABS), Thimphu for the period 01 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

Sir,

Enclosed herewith, please find the audited **Financial Statements and auditor's report** thereon in respect of the Ability Bhutan Society, Thimphu for the period 01 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 along with the **audit findings & recommendations**. The audit was conducted as required under the Audit Act of Bhutan 2018, and in accordance with International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAIs).

Auditor's Report on the Financial Statement

As may be noted from the auditors' report, the financial statements are prepared by the Ability Bhutan Society, in all material respects, in accordance with Financial Rules and Regulations 2016. Accordingly, the auditors have issued unmodified (unqualified) opinion on the financial statements.

Audit Findings and Recommendations

The deficiencies and lapses observed in the accounting records, internal controls and operations of the Ability Bhutan Society, are reported herewith as audit findings along with recommendations, which also form part of the audited financial statement for the period ended 01 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.

The RAA has reviewed the replies furnished by the Ability Bhutan Society and incorporated in the report. Out of four (4) audit findings, three (3) audit findings were settled in view of related supporting documents and evidences furnished subsequently, which are transmitted separately to the Ability Bhutan Society management in the form of **Management Appraisal Report (MAR)** for future reference and compliance.

'Every individual must strive to be principled. And individuals in positions of responsibility must even strive harder'
- His Majesty the King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

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Website: www.bhutanaudit.gov.bt | Email: info@bhutanaudit.gov.bt and auditorgeneral@bhutanaudit.gov.bt

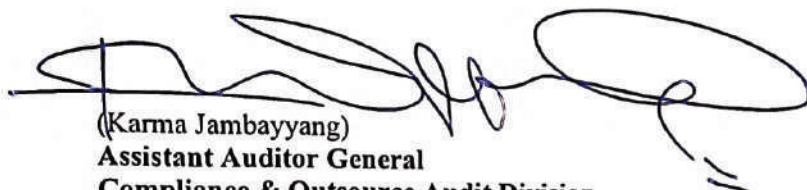
The Ability Bhutan Society management is requested to review the deficiencies and lapses pointed out and institute appropriate check and balance systems to curb such lapses in future. The Royal Audit Authority would appreciate receiving an Action Taken Report (ATR) within 90 days from the date of issuance of this report.

Achievements

Notwithstanding the deficiencies and lapses, the RAA has also noted achievements made by the Ability Bhutan Society, during the period under audit, which are detailed in Annexure –B of this report.

The Royal Audit Authority acknowledges the kind co-operation and assistance extended to the audit team by the officials of the Ability Bhutan Society, which facilitated the completion of the audit.

Yours sincerely,




(Karma Jambayyang)
Assistant Auditor General
Compliance & Outsource Audit Division
Copy to:

1. The Member Secretary, Civil Society Organization Authority, Thimphu for kind information.
2. The AAG, Follow-up & Clearance Division, RAA, Thimphu
3. The AAG, Policy, Planning & Annual Audit Report Division, RAA, Thimphu soft copy only
4. Office Copy (** Compliance & Outsource Division*)
5. Guard File

Ability Bhutan Society				
Receipt & Payment Statement				
(For the end of 30th June 2020)				
SL#	Group/Broad Head of Accounts	Schedules	Receipts(Nu)	Payments(Nu)
1	Opening Balance	1	1,533,402.38	
	a Cash		-	
	b Bank		1,533,402.38	
	T Bank Ltd		970,484.16	
	BOBL		425,009.33	
	BNBL		97,283.89	
	DPNBL		40,625.00	
2	Revenue	2	3,643,032.44	
	a Operating Revenue		643,032.44	
	b Non Operating revenue		3,000,000.00	
3	Grants:	3	-	
	a Cash		-	
	b In-Kind		-	
4	Donation	4	2,633,189.09	
	a. Cash		2,633,189.09	
	b. In-Kind		-	
5	Program and Project supports	5	11,278,606.58	
	a. Cash		11,278,606.58	
	b. In-Kind		-	
6	Expenditure	6		14,896,442.42
	a. Operating			2,379,973.75
	b. Non-Operating			2,934,248.09
	c. Program and Project			9,582,220.58
	Excess of income collected over expense disbursed			-
7	Other Cash transaction	7	1,266,059.85	1,266,059.85
	Principal Payments of Loan		-	
	Restricted Fund		-	
	Bank Loan Received		-	
	Asset Acquisition		-	
	Statutory Recoveries /Remittances		286,059.85	286,059.85
	Advance Adjustments		980,000.00	980,000.00
	Net Others cash transaction		-	
	Excess of cash receipts over (Under) disbursement for the year		-	
8	Closing Balance:	8		4,191,788.07
	a. Cash			-
	b. Bank			4,191,788.07
	T Bank Ltd.			1,889,045.85
	BOBL			245,506.33
	BNBL			16,310.89
	DPNBL			40,925.00
	Fixed Deposit			2,000,000.00
	Total		20,354,290.34	20,354,290.34

Prepared by



Sangay Rinchen
Accounts Officer
Ability Bhutan Society, Thimphu

Accounts Officer
Ability Bhutan Society



Approved by



Ugyen Wangchuk
Executive Director
Ability Bhutan Society, Thimphu

Executive Director
Ability Bhutan Society
Thimphu : Bhutan

ABS INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

International Partners

- » Bhutan Foundation;
- » Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany;
- » German Leprosy and Relief Association;
- » (DAHW), India;
- » HELVETAS Bhutan
- » Save The Children Bhutan;
- » Shama Foundation;
- » SNV Bhutan;
- » Shuchona Foundation;
- » UNDP Bhutan;
- » UNICEF Bhutan;
- » World Health Organization;

National Partners

- » Bhutan Cancer Society;
- » Bhutan Media and Communications Institute;
- » Bhutan Stroke Foundation;
- » Bhutan Toilet Organization;
- » Civil Society Organization Authority of Bhutan;
- » Disabled Persons Association of Bhutan;
- » Draktsho Vocational Training Center for Special Children and Youth;
- » Gross National Happiness Commission;
- » Kidu Foundation;
- » Ministry of Health;
- » Ministry of Education;
- » National Commission for Women and Children;
- » Nazhoen Lamtoen;
- » Phensem-Parents Support Group;
- » Respect, Educate, Nurture, and Empower Women;
- » Royal Bhutan Police;
- » The Blurred Normals, Sherubtse College;
- » Thimphu Thromde;
- » Youth Initiative for PWD, Sherubtse College;



WAY FORWARD

We hope to strengthen by extending our services to other Dzongkhags as well as reinforcing the existing facilities and have more support programme.

- i. Continue to work on ABS/BMZ/DAHW project targeting various stakeholders.
- ii. Build capacity of parents/caregivers of children with and without disabilities
- iii. Network and collaborate with relevant stakeholders including government agencies, international development organizations, private/corporate sectors and civil society organizations

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABS would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the individual donors both international and national, Civil Society Organization Authority, stakeholders, partners, volunteers, Standing Instruction members and all our supporters for the support that we have received. This will go a long way to achieve our vision to have children with disabilities to live independently with dignity

ABS NEEDS YOUR LOVE AND SUPPORT

ABS sustain its efforts in providing much needed services to children with disabilities and their families by the invaluable support of the community and individuals. This assistance is vital in empowering children with disabilities to reach their highest potential. Your support and generosity can help us achieve our mission.

National Donors

Cash/Cheque may be handed over directly at the ABS office in Thimphu (or) Cash/Cheque may be wired into the ABS bank account.

T Bank Ltd. Acc. No.: 77777005865003

Bank of Bhutan Acc. No.: 100921109

Bhutan National Bank: 0000067934014

Druk PNB Acc. No.: 110210009621

International Donors

Convenient online transfer option is available for International Donors

Intermediary Bank: State Bank of India,
460 Park Avenue, New York, USA.

Swift Code: SBINUS33XXX

Routing No.026009140

Account of T Bank Limited: 77608355520001

Beneficiary Bank: T Bank Limited

Swift Code: TBBTBTBTXXX

Ultimate Beneficiary Name: Ability Bhutan Society

Ultimate Beneficiary's Account No. 77777005865003

Ultimate Beneficiary Address: Thimphu, Bhutan

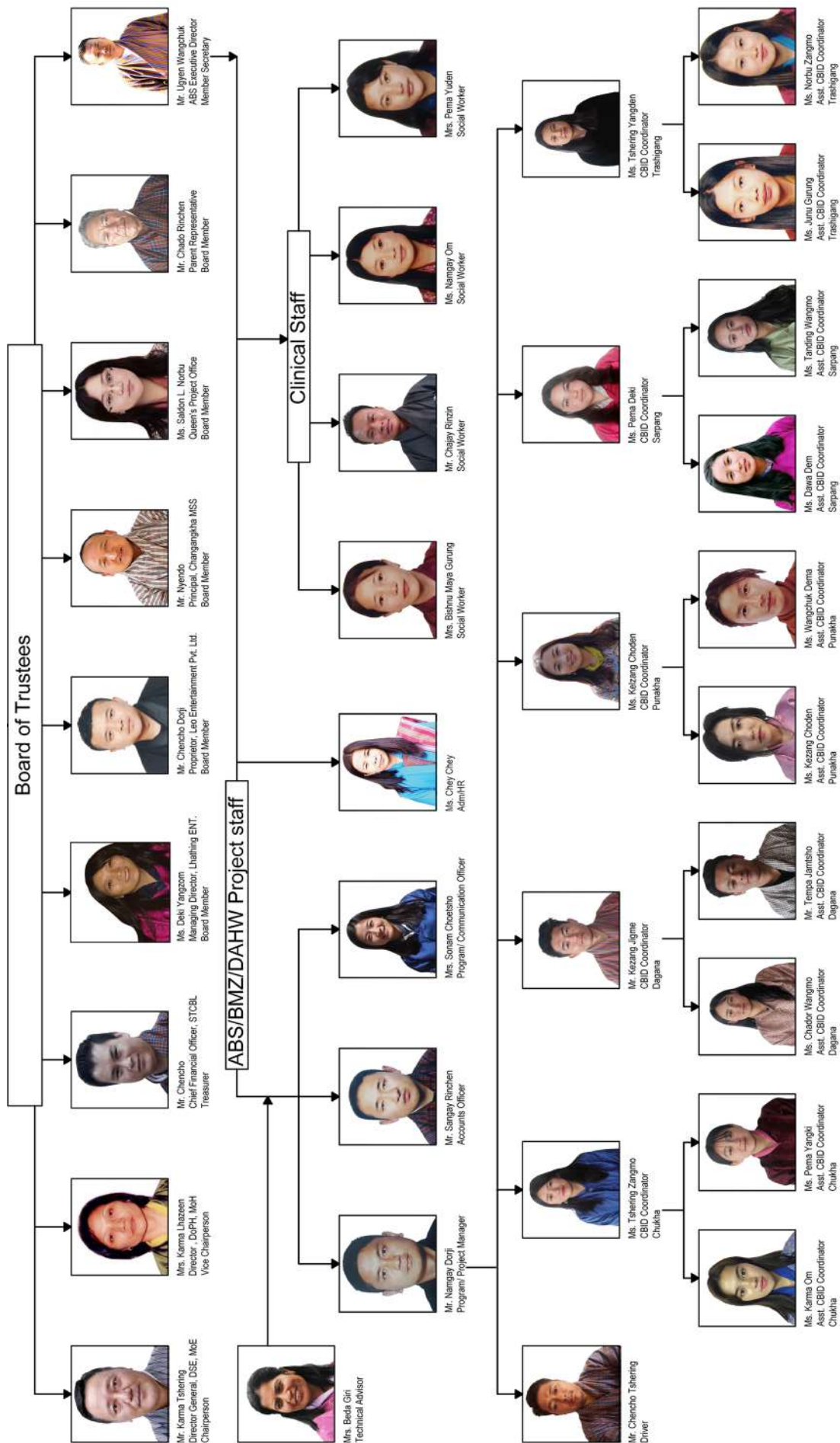
Volunteers

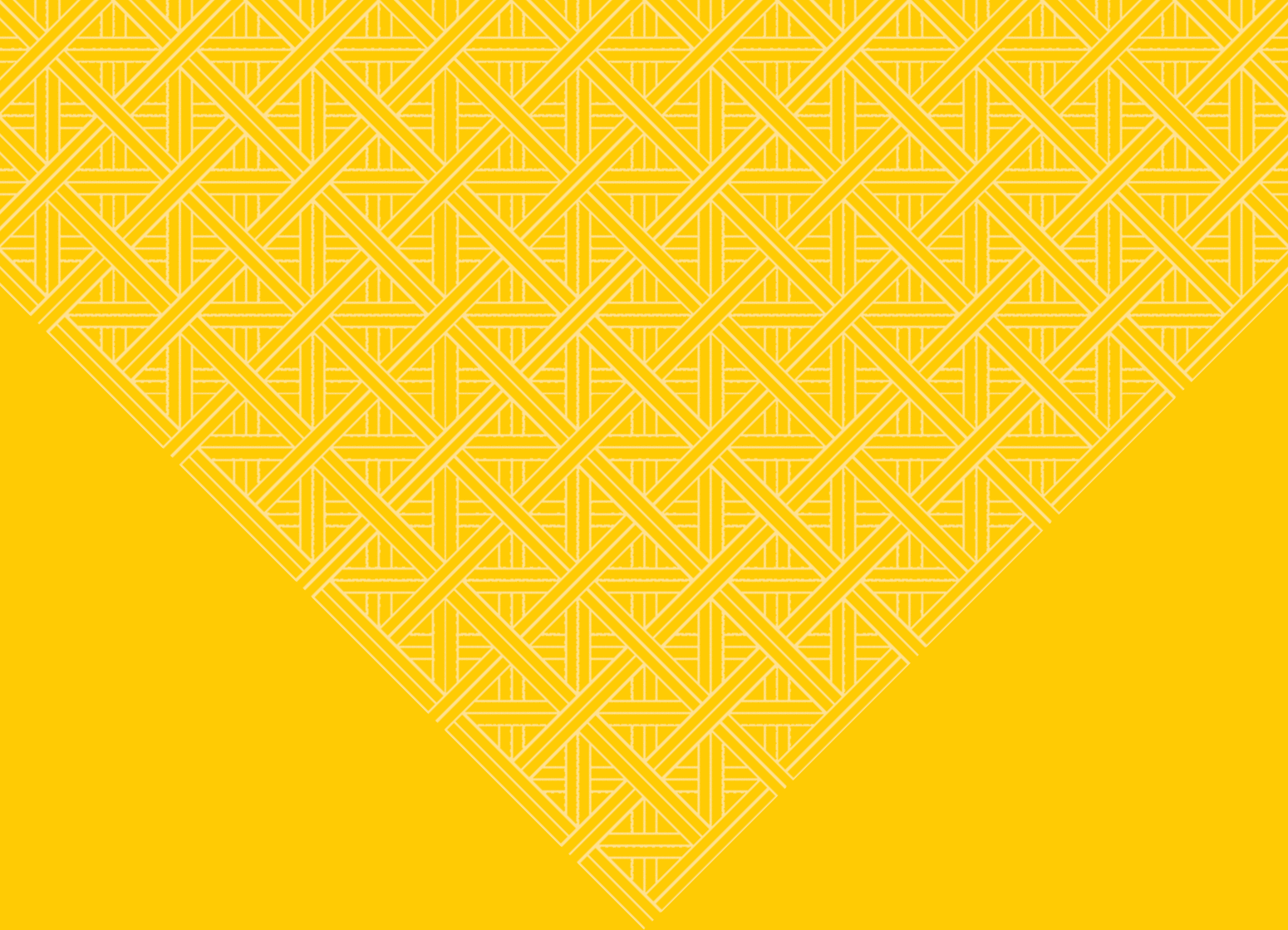
Anyone interested to volunteer can intern for a minimum of 3 months.

Contact at +975 2340747 during office hours

Email: info@absbhutan.org

ABS GOVERNANCE





ABILITY BHUTAN SOCIETY

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