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Dear Friends of Tarayana,

Over the past month, the Foundation has been abuzz with a flurry of activities, both in the field and at our head office. It has been a month filled with relentless dedication and tireless efforts as we continue our mission to make a positive impact in our communities. Amidst our regular activities and commitments, we also took the time to celebrate a momentous occasion, the 20th anniversary of our Foundation Day on 4th May, 2003. Recognizing the collective efforts of our incredible team, we marked a special occasion with an in-house celebration. It was a time for reflection, appreciation and gratitude for the accomplishments we have achieved together.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of our monthly newsletter.

NEWS IN BRIEF

- **Nine power tillers were supplied through Tarayana Micro Finance Private Limited (TMF) at Lhuentse district.**
- **An awareness workshop on End Violence Against Children (EVAC) and Personal Advancement and Career Enhancement (PACE) programme was conducted by the respective Field Officers at the targeted villages of Gakiling block in Haa, Tsirangtoe & Phuntenchu in Tsirang, Thasa & Thachey in Dagana, Logchina in Chhukha, Langthil in Trongsa, and Bardo & Nangkhor in Zhemgang.**
- **On 4th May, Tarayana had an in-house celebration of the 20th Foundation Day at the Tarayana Centre.**
- **The training on Springshed Management in four blocks of three targeted districts of Dagana, Trashigang, and Trashiyangtse was conducted by respective field officers accompanied by the interns from the head office last month.**

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Bhutan and the Foundation led by Executive Director, visited Tsaluna village under Mewangang block in Thimphu to monitor the International Climate Initiative (IKI) project's progress.

- **Consultations on value chain analysis were conducted for 10 self-help groups in the targeted sites of Haa, Tsirang, Trongsa, Mongar, Trashigang and Lhuentse, under the project titled "Food Security in Bhutan Professionalized Self-Help Groups (Pilot)" funded by Bhutan Foundation.**
 - **The final consultation workshops were conducted with relevant stakeholders to disseminate findings, lessons learned, recommendations, and the way forward, under World Food Programme funded Project: Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture (Nutrition & health advocacy to help rural and vulnerable population groups eat & stay healthy during COVID-19 pandemic & beyond).**
 - **Ms. Heidi J. Blum, daughter of late Mr. Richard C. Blum, along with her sons visited the country to observe project activities supported by her late father through the American Himalayan Foundation.**
 - **The Foundation hosted a dialogue on "Food and Nutrition Security in the Context of Climate Change, Traditional Knowledge and Gender" on 26th May as part of the 20th anniversary celebrations.**
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Awareness Workshop on End Violence Against Children (EVAC) and Personal Advancement and Career Enhancement (PACE) Programme

The "Rangi Buzhi Rangi Norbu- Our Children, Our Wealth, a multi-sectoral Social Behavior Change campaign to end Violence Against Children," was conducted in Gakiling block in Haa, Tsirangtoe & Phuntenchu in Tsirang, Thasa & Thachey in Dagana, Logchina in Chhukha, Langthil in Trongsa, and Bardo & Nangkhor in Zhemgang, with support from UNICEF.

The objectives of the campaign are: to increase awareness on violence against children and its harmful consequences on their well-being; to educate community members on the various causes and potential sources of child abuse; to promote understanding of different forms of abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect; to educate children and adults about the concept of good and bad touch; and to provide healing phrases that could be used with children who have experienced violence, offering support and comfort to those affected.

The various topics and activities covered during the campaign included:

Defining a Child: The campaign started by establishing the concept of a child and highlighting the need to protect and nurture children within the community.

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neglect, online abuse, and peer violence.

Causes of Violence: The campaign explored the underlying causes of violence against children, including social, cultural, and economic factors. It aimed to create awareness and encourage community members to address these root causes.

Potential Causes of Child Abuse: Participants were informed about potential sources of child abuse, such as family stress, substance abuse, intergenerational violence, and inadequate parenting skills.

Good Touch and Bad Touch: Both children and adults were educated about the concept of appropriate and inappropriate touch, enabling them to identify and report any abuse or inappropriate behavior.

Different Forms of Abuse: Detailed information was provided on physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect.

Healing Phrases: Participants were given appropriate and supportive phrases to use when interacting with children who have experienced abuse—these phrases aimed to help children cope with their experiences and promote healing.

Laws on Child Protection: Information on existing laws and regulations related to child protection was shared, empowering participants to take action and advocate for children's rights.

Training on personal advancement and career enhancement (PACE) was also conducted, which covered topics on self-management, leadership, communication, problem-solving, decision-making, time and stress management, and financial literacy. The importance of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) practices for the well-being of children and the community was emphasized. Participants learned about proper hygiene habits, access to clean water sources, and safe sanitation practices. The campaign aimed to educate and empower participants to create a safe and nurturing environment for children, address the root causes of violence, and promote their overall well-being and development.



In-house Celebration of 20th Foundation Day

On 4th May, Tarayana celebrated its 20th Founding Day. The occasion was graced by the esteemed presence of the Hon'ble Founding President, Her Majesty the Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, whose unwavering leadership and dedication has been instrumental in shaping the Foundation's journey towards touching countless lives. During the celebration, Her Majesty's inspiring words resonated deeply within the hearts of all those present, motivating them to re-dedicate themselves to the noble cause at the core of the Foundation's existence.

Accompanying Her Majesty were Her Royal Highness Ashi Sonam Dechan Wangchuck, a beacon of support and encouragement, as well as the respected members of the board and executive committee, who have played pivotal roles in the Foundation's growth and success. The presence of Mr. Pankaj Gaur and Ms. Semi Gaur, representatives from the WWF, further exemplified the collaborative efforts and partnerships that have helped Tarayana extend its reach and impact.

The event itself was a testament to the remarkable achievements of the Tarayana Foundation over the past two decades. As the attendees gathered, a shared sense of purpose and accomplishment was palpable. The occasion served as a reminder of the Foundation's unyielding commitment to its mission, inspiring hope and fostering positive change within the communities it serves.



Final Consultation Meeting on Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture (Nutrition & health advocacy to help rural and vulnerable population groups eat & stay healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic & beyond)" Project

Final consultation meetings on the project "Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture (Nutrition & health advocacy to help rural and vulnerable population groups eat & stay healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic & beyond)" were conducted in four districts of Lhuentse, Trongsa, Tsirang, and Zhemgang. The objectives of the consultation meetings were to disseminate the project's findings, lessons learned & recommendations, and discuss the way forward with relevant stakeholders. The participants included the district heads, district sector heads, block officials, health assistants, extension officers, district hospital nutritionists, and community members from targeted blocks.

a. Project Activities: The team provided an overview of the activities implemented during the project duration. This included nutrition awareness campaigns, training programmes, provision of agricultural inputs, and promotion of sustainable farming practices.

b. Findings and Lessons Learned: The findings from the project's monitoring and evaluation exercises were shared. These findings highlighted the positive impact of nutrition-sensitive agriculture on the health and well-being of the targeted population. Additionally, lessons learned throughout the project were discussed, emphasizing best practices and strategies for effective implementation.

c. Recommendations: Based on the project's findings and experiences, the team recommended further enhancement of the nutrition-sensitive agriculture initiatives. These recommendations focused on strengthening community participation, improving access to quality healthcare services, promoting diversified food production, and advocating for policy support.

d. Stakeholder Presentations: The consultation provided an opportunity for the stakeholders to present their current and planned activities related to nutrition. District heads, sector heads, and other officials shared their ongoing efforts to address nutrition challenges in their respective areas. This exchange of information fostered collaboration and coordination among stakeholders and facilitated a holistic approach toward achieving improved nutrition outcomes.

e. Discussion on Issues and Challenges: One of the key components of the consultation meeting was the open discussion on issues and challenges faced by the community concerning nutrition. The stakeholders actively participated in this discussion and shared their insights. The identified challenges included limited access to nutritious food, lack of awareness about balanced diets, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security.

f. Way Forward: The meeting concluded with a deliberation on the way forward. The stakeholders collectively emphasized the need for continued collaboration and sustained efforts to address the identified challenges. They acknowledged the importance of incorporating nutrition-sensitive approaches into agricultural practices and advocated for long-term support from relevant government agencies and development partners.

g. Conclusion: The final consultation meeting successfully disseminated the findings, lessons learned, and recommendations of the project. The active participation of the stakeholders ensured a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact and fostered a collaborative approach to addressing nutrition challenges in the targeted districts. The meeting provided a platform for stakeholders to share their ongoing initiatives and collectively chart a way forward to ensure sustainable and improved nutrition outcomes for rural and vulnerable populations.



The Enduring Legacy of Richard C. Blum's Philanthropy in Bhutan

Ms. Heidi J. Blum, daughter of the late Mr. Richard C. Blum, and her sons visited the country to view project activities supported by her late father. During her visit, Ms. Blum and her family had the opportunity to witness the tangible results of the "Integrated Community Development for Poverty Reduction" project, generously funded by Mr. Blum through the American Himalayan Foundation.

Ms. Blum and her family were hosted by the Hon'ble Founding President, Her Majesty the Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, who presented the Tarayana President's Award posthumously to Mr. Richard C. Blum. This prestigious award honored Mr. Blum's exceptional contributions to Bhutan by improving housing conditions and uplifting the lives of thousands of individuals across the country. The award is a testament to Mr. Blum's commitment to creating positive change and his lasting legacy.

One of the villages that significantly benefited from the project was Wangkha in the Toedwang block under the Punakha district. The Blum family had the opportunity to visit this village and witness the remarkable changes the project brought about. The project, initiated in 2018 and successfully completed in November 2020, profoundly impacted the lives of over 500 households across 13 districts in Bhutan.

During their visit, Ms. Blum and her family interacted with the beneficiaries, who shared their personal experiences and stories of transformation. One such testimony came from the Tshogpa (local leader) Penjore of Wangkha village, who expressed how having a stable house provided through the Tarayana Foundation significantly uplifted his life. Previously unable to participate in community activities due to the lack of a stable house, he now actively engages in meetings and holds the esteemed position of Tshogpa, contributing to the betterment of his community.

The "Integrated Community Development for Poverty Reduction" project, generously funded by Mr. Richard C. Blum, has brought hope, uplifted lives, and created opportunities for those in need throughout Bhutan. Its successful completion in November 2020 is a testament to the dedication and commitment of all stakeholders involved. The project has positively impacted thousands of individuals and their communities by improving housing conditions and implementing comprehensive socio-economic upliftment measures.

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