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ANNUAL REPORT
2025
Building Bridges



“

GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS (GNH)
IS THE BRIDGE BETWEEN THE
FUNDAMENTAL VALUES OF KINDNESS,
EQUALITY AND HUMANITY AND THE
NECESSARY PURSUIT OF ECONOMIC
GROWTH.

HIS MAJESTY KING JIGME KHESAR NAMGYEL WANGCHUCK

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MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP



I have always believed in the power of connections, especially given that we live in such an interdependent world. And the function of an organization like the Bhutan Foundation is to strengthen such ties through our work. It is through these connections we build that we can convert goodwill into service that positively impacts our beneficiaries in Bhutan.

In the *Bhutan Foundation Annual Report 2025: Building Bridges*, you will read inspiring stories from our projects, where tradition meets innovation, and where resilience grows when we walk together. Farmers breathe life into abandoned land, turning hardship into bountiful harvests. In the highlands, herders and wildlife find ways to thrive side by side. In our hospitals, researchers have access to upgraded facilities, their knowledge protecting the nation's health. At the same time, we are also strengthening ancient healing systems such as Bhutanese Traditional Medicine so that we can provide access to both modern and ancient healthcare methods.

Above all, we are also an organization that is supported by your generosity of time, guidance, and resources. Your support is the bridge – linking hearts, communities, and generations. And together, we are nurturing a Bhutan that is both rooted and rising, a gift to the world and to the future.

As we look ahead, we carry with us the certainty that these connections will not only endure but grow stronger. With your partnership, Bhutan's story will continue to shine – a story of courage, compassion, and possibility, lighting the way for generations yet to come.

Her Majesty
Gyalyum Tseyring Pem Wangchuck
Co-Chair

BUILDING BRIDGES

This year, we have witnessed what is possible when bridges are built – between people and policy, tradition and innovation, communities and opportunities, Bhutan and the world. Together with you, our partners, we are weaving connections that honor Bhutan's heritage while preparing for a resilient future.

In the fields of Samdrup Jongkhar, farmers are transforming challenges into opportunities. With training in climate-smart agriculture, they are not only feeding their families but reviving abandoned land, mentoring neighbors, and creating market linkages that sustain entire communities. These farmer-leaders, many of them women, are proof that resilience grows stronger when knowledge is shared.

Our partnership with Moderna has equipped Bhutanese hospitals and research centers with cutting-edge technology, trained more than 200 lab professionals, and enabled Bhutan to contain a leptospirosis outbreak in real time. The collaboration empowers Bhutanese researchers, ensuring the nation's public health system is prepared for tomorrow's challenges.

We are also bridging tradition and innovation through Bhutanese Traditional Medicine. Together with the Ministry of Health, we launched a ten-year strategy to safeguard natural medicinal resources, expand access to holistic care, and position Bhutan as a global wellness destination. This work honors ancient wisdom while creating new pathways for health and prosperity.

For children with diverse abilities, bridges mean access and inclusion. Through early childhood programs, assistive technology, and vocational training, more students are learning, growing, and gaining independence.

In the highlands, solar-powered fences, eco-tourism, and improved schools in snow leopard landscapes are helping herders, students, and wildlife thrive together. In Bhutan's southern foothills, we supported the country's first dedicated pangolin study, building knowledge to protect one of the world's most endangered species.

The Wangduechoeling Palace Museum welcomed thousands of visitors, reconnecting Bhutanese youth to their history through immersive exhibits. Monks, once custodians of sacred artifacts, now use digital tools to preserve over 5,000 relics and objects, bringing Bhutan's heritage into the future.

In San Francisco and at the University of Texas at El Paso, Bhutanese culture and community sparked dialogue, learning, and partnership – reminding us that Bhutan's story resonates far beyond its borders.

Each of these stories reflects a single truth: bridges endure when built together. Your generosity makes this possible – linking Bhutanese farmers, students, scientists, herders, and leaders with opportunities that will carry them forward.

Thank you for your unwavering support. With your continued partnership, we look ahead to another year of building connections that will strengthen Bhutan.

With gratitude,

Mrs. Lucy Goelet
Co-Chair

Tshewang Wangchuk
Executive Director

IMPACT MAP

FY2025

Sustainable Development

- Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative (Samdrup Jongkhar)
- Tarayana Foundation (Samdrup Jongkhar)
- River Guides of Panbang (Zhemgang)
- Special Education
 - Tendruk Central School (Samtse)
 - Tang Central School (Bumthang)
 - Changangkha Middle Secondary School (Thimphu)
 - Mongar Middle Secondary School (Mongar)

Cultural Preservation

- Conservation of Ancient and Historic Buddhist Ethnographic Objects (Chukha, Thimphu, Punakha, Wangdue Phodrang, Bumthang and Lhuntse)
- Wangduechoeling Palace Museum and Cultural Centre (Bumthang)

Environmental Conservation

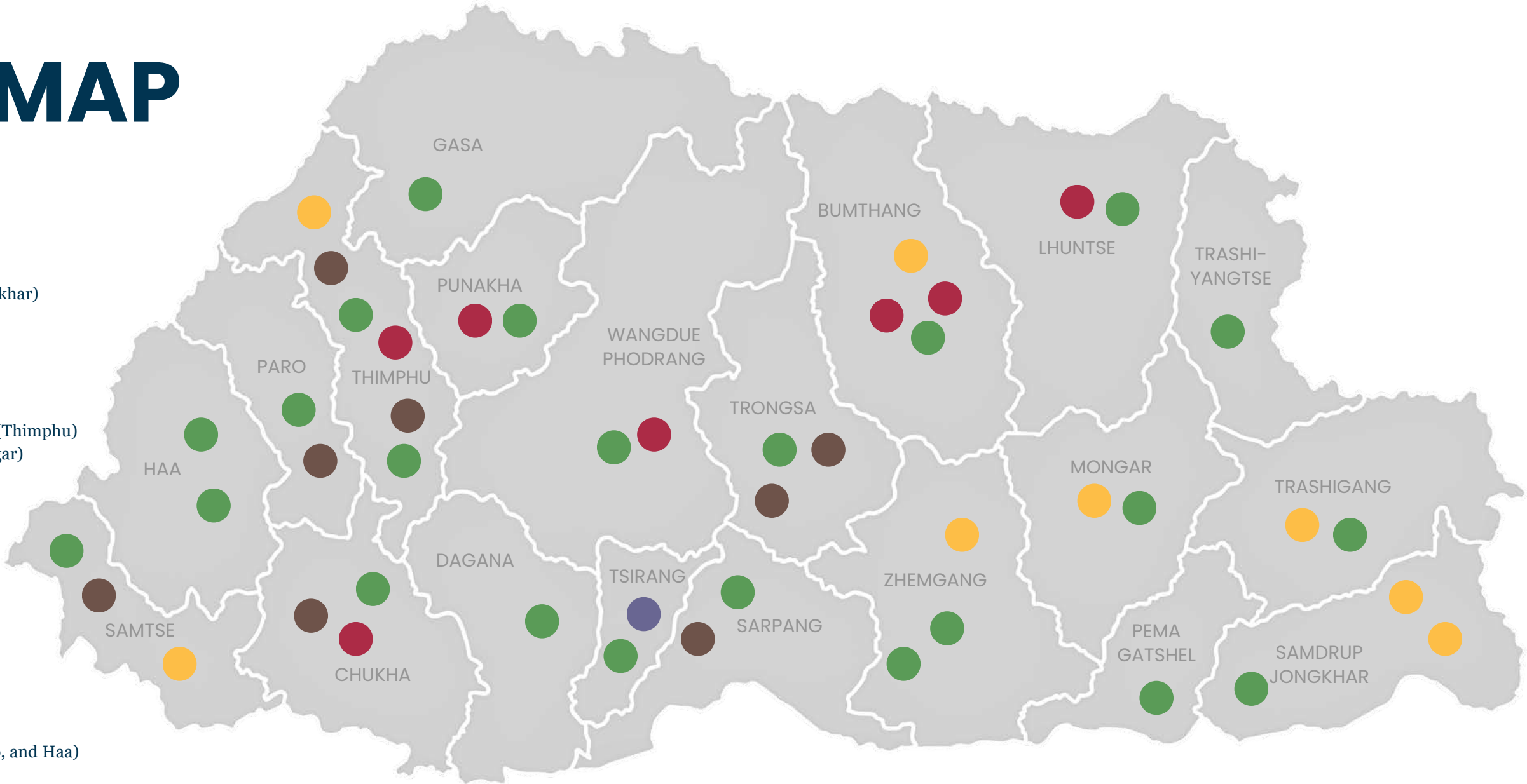
- Snow Leopard Conservation (Thimphu, Paro, and Haa)
- Pangolin Conservation Project (Zhemgang)
- Million+ Tree Plantation in Bhutan Project (All 20 Districts)

Good Governance

- Project Mikhung (Tsirang)

Small Grants Program

- Darkala Yak Cooperative and National Highland Development Center (Thimphu)
- Bhutan Institute of Wellbeing (Thimphu)
- Wangsel Institute for the Deaf (Paro)
- Guengaling Community Cooperative (Samtse)
- Sherchok Women’s Group (Sarpang)
- Water Bhutan (Trongsa)
- Menjong Sorig Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited (Trongsa)
- College of Science and Technology (Chukha)



Project Reach by District

● Sustainable Development	7
● Environmental Conservation	20
● Cultural Preservation	6
● Good Governance	1
● Small Grants Program	6
Total Districts Reached	20

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Securing the Future of Farming

Farming has always been the heart of Bhutan, providing food, income, and a way of life for more than half our people. Farming is survival. But today, farmers face steep challenges: rugged land, scattered plots, fewer hands to help, and the growing weight of climate change. They can't do it alone.

Thanks to your generosity, the Bhutan Foundation has been able to stand with farmers, working alongside government, civil society, and local communities to secure the future of farming and rural livelihoods.

In Samdrup Jongkhar, your support helped ten smallholder farmers become leaders in climate-smart and sustainable farming practices. They created a farmer-to-farmer learning model with agriculture extension officers that's breathing new life into their communities and helping others adapt to climate challenges together.

Through this program, women farmers are emerging as powerful role models. Lhamo, a farmer from Gomdar who never had the opportunity to attend school, now teaches others about farmyard manure, seed saving, and sustainable farming. With a mini-power tiller and other equipment, she has expanded her farmland by 50% and raised her income by 30%, a transformation that has lifted not only her household but her entire community.

Similarly, KB Sinchuri, in Orong, discovered an unexpected second career in farming. "I had no idea about farming when I was a teacher," he says, "But through training I found new skills and confidence." Today, he leads by example, encouraging others to farm. Across the district, lead farmers like him have revived abandoned lands and increased cultivation by forty to fifty percent.

Tempa Wangdi in Samdrup Jonkhar set up a vermi-composting unit with a capacity of four metric tons per year. By producing organic fertilizer, he supports local farming and generates new income for his family alongside livestock rearing.

In Lumang, Trashigang, you helped small farmers from remote areas get products to market. With your support, we partnered with the Tarayana Foundation to open a food processing and marketing outlet. Today, it provides livelihoods for six local youth and 26 members of the Tsekpa Self-help Group, while indirectly benefiting 950 farmers. Already, they have developed 21 local products, proof of the innovation and creativity of rural farmers.

These are stories of resilience, courage, and hope, made possible by your commitment. By standing with farmers, you ensure that agriculture remains not just a livelihood, but a foundation for food security and prosperity.



Lungten
Program Officer



"I had no idea about farming when I was a teacher, but through training I found new skills and confidence."

- KB Sinchuri, Retired Principal



Mr. Tempa Wangdi, lead farmer overseeing the Vermicompost Unit



Investing in Bhutan’s Research and Laboratory Capacity

Because of your support, the Bhutan Foundation together with our partner Moderna Inc., is strengthening Bhutan’s public health research and laboratory capacity. At the heart of this partnership is the Immunogenicity and Reactogenicity study, where Bhutanese researchers are working side by side with counterparts at Moderna to better understand the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines. For Bhutan, this is more than a study; it is a bridge to global collaboration, knowledge exchange, and scientific leadership.

This year, you helped deliver more than \$272,000 of medical and laboratory equipment to the Royal Center for Disease Control, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital, and the Khesar Gyalpo Medical University. The impact has been immediate and lifesaving. In June 2025, when a leptospirosis outbreak struck Bhutan, laboratories in Bhutan were able to test and confirm over 400 samples using the very equipment and reagents procured through the project. This swift response helped contain the outbreak and demonstrated how capacity-building efforts translate directly into public health impact.

A significant part of this project also includes training of lab technicians and public health researchers. This year, your support helped train more than 200 laboratory professionals across every district in Good Clinical Lab Practices, a critical step toward ensuring accuracy, accountability, and patient safety.

When Tshewang Dorji, a laboratory technician from Pemagatshel, walked into the training in Mongar, he was nervous. Working in a small district hospital lab with limited supplies, he often wondered if his practices met international standards. By the end of the workshop, his confidence had grown. Standing before his peers to present the results of a mock hospital audit, he said, “This training helped me see how all these aspects – sample collection, data reporting, and patient safety – are interconnected and essential for maintaining high standards.” Back in Pemagatshel, Tshewang has already put his training into action: strengthening documentation, improving sample handling, and raising the bar for overall quality and safety.

This program is a bridge between Bhutanese and international scientists working together on vaccine research, between building public health lab facilities, and for training today and breakthroughs tomorrow.

Thank you for being part of this journey and helping us build trust, knowledge, and resilience that will safeguard the health of communities.



Dawa Sherpa
Director of Programs & Operations



Laboratory professionals receiving training in Good Clinical Laboratory Practices.



Laboratory professionals receiving training in Good Clinical Laboratory Practices.

Strengthening an Ancient Healing and Wellness System

Traditional medicine in Bhutan promotes holistic well-being, and addresses physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of Bhutanese people. According to the National Health Survey of 2023, nearly one in four Bhutanese use it, so its role in universal healthcare in Bhutan is ever-present. Bhutan has everything it takes to become a true wellness destination – ancient wisdom, pristine nature, and authentic healing traditions. But with limited funding, little research, no clear regulations, and pressure on medicinal plants, smart investment is urgently needed.

Bhutan Foundation partnered with the Ministry of Health to address this with the National Traditional Medicine Strategy and Action Plan (NTMSAP) 2025-2035. The goal is bold: to establish Bhutanese Traditional Medicine as a globally recognized healthcare model that drives holistic well-being and economic prosperity.

Your support is making it possible to:

- Raise awareness through advocacy, research, and translation of key texts.
- Expand access with new health packages, wellness services, and specialized camps.
- Safeguard resources through surveys, plant mapping, and community cultivation.
- Advance research and global partnerships through practitioner training, conferences, and institutional linkages.

By bridging tradition and innovation, we’re positioning Bhutan’s traditional medicine system as both a foundation for national health and a niche wellness service of international standards – benefiting Bhutanese people today while preserving its legacy.



Sangay Chedar
Program Manager



Students of Tendruk Central School, where a high number of students with diverse abilities are recorded

Advancing Inclusive Education for Children with Diverse Abilities

Nearly 70 percent of children with disabilities remain out of school. Many of these children are hidden at home, excluded not by choice but by barriers: limited accessibility, lack of resources, and heavy reliance on caregivers. For too long, their voices and potential have gone unheard.

Over the years, Bhutan has taken important steps toward inclusion, establishing two specialized institutes and 50 inclusive schools, and last year ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. These are signs of progress, but they are not enough. Without reliable data, adequate support, and the right tools, too many children with diverse abilities continue to miss out on education and opportunity. One of the reasons children with diverse abilities are still out of schools is accessibility and heavy reliance on their caregivers, but technology can be part of the solution. Thanks to your support, we are strengthening Bhutan’s assistive technology (AT) ecosystem, bringing families, educators, and innovators together to find practical solutions. Already, prototypes have been introduced in inclusive schools, workshops have sparked new ideas, and simple adaptations are transforming lives. One mother, after attending an AT advocacy workshop, went home and wrapped a sponge around her daughter’s spoon. That small change gave her child the ability to feed herself for the first time.

It is moments like these, quiet but powerful, that show the true impact of your generosity. Inclusion in Bhutan is growing, like a seedling taking root. With your continued support, we can ensure that every child, regardless of ability, has the chance to learn, to belong, and to thrive.



Phenki
Program Officer

A Journey of Growth and Gratitude with the Bruce Bunting Scholarship

In Bhutan, where education is both a right and a sacred responsibility, scholarships are more than financial aid – they are bridges to possibility, equity, and national progress. The Bruce Bunting Scholarship exemplifies this truth.

Choki Wangchuk’s story brings this impact into sharp focus. In 2016, after earning a diploma in agriculture from the College of Natural Resources, he began work at the Agriculture Research and Development Sub-Center in Lingmethang, Mongar. For five years, he served with dedication, driven by a quiet ambition: to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture. But the road ahead was uphill. With a wife and young child, no savings, and limited scholarship options for diploma holders, the dream of further education seemed out of reach. The financial strain was daunting.

Then came a turning point. In 2022, Choki was accepted into the BSc program and awarded the Bruce Bunting Scholarship. It wasn’t just support – it was a lifeline. Covering tuition and providing a stipend, it allowed him to run his race without the weight of debt.

The scholarship was only the starting line. What followed was a marathon of sacrifice, grit, and quiet heroism.

“We turned life into a minimalist challenge,” he recalls. “Two tiny rooms – one a kitchen, one a bedroom. So cramped that if I breathed too deeply, my wife would joke, ‘Can you not take all the oxygen?’”

Each morning, his daughter marched off to the ECCD center while he sprinted to college, chasing a degree that felt like a distant finish line. His wife stood by him like an ultra-marathon coach – no complaints, just quiet endurance. Emergency expenses arrived unannounced. Every step forward felt like dragging a mountain.



2025 Bruce Scholarship Recipients



*“This was not just my race,
it was for everyone who stood
behind me – for every bit of faith,
every late-night prayer, and
every tear shed along the way.”*

- Choki Wangchuk
2022 Bruce Bunting Scholarship recipient

Then came the hardest lap. His daughter fell seriously ill. Sleepless nights, hospital corridors, whispered prayers. A close relative passed away. His younger siblings began college, and he couldn’t support them. The weight was crushing.

He nearly gave up. But two thoughts carried him forward: the promise he made to his child to finish what he started, and the trust placed in him by those who funded his scholarship. That sense of responsibility became fuel. That hope was his hydration pack.

Today, Choki has returned to Lingmethang not just as a practitioner, but as a leader – equipped with new knowledge, confidence, and purpose. The scholarship didn’t just change his trajectory, it amplified his ability to serve his community and contribute to Bhutan’s agricultural innovation.

The Bruce Bunting Scholarship is helping build Bhutan one student at a time. It’s not charity – it’s a strategic investment in human capital. It unlocks potential, fosters resilience, and ensures no dream is deferred for lack of means.



David Chalfant
Director of Partnerships and Philanthropy

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION



Community at the Heart of Conservation

Jigme Dorji National Park and the adjoining highlands are among Bhutan's most vital snow leopard habitats. Recognizing their significance, the Bhutan Foundation partnered with the Department of Forests and Park Services and local communities to safeguard this iconic species and the landscapes it depends on. Our program, Promoting Ecological and Community Engagement for Snow Leopard Conservation (PEaCE), directly supports the government's Snow Leopard Action Plan.

At the heart of PEaCE is the belief that people and snow leopards can thrive together. By improving the quality of life and strengthening livelihoods for highland communities, we reduce the economic strain of livestock losses while fostering coexistence. In recent years, we have provided herding families with modern, weather-resilient tents. This year, we went further – distributing solar-powered corral fencing to every herder family in Soe, Lingzhi, and Yaksa, protecting their livestock from predation. Alongside, we are working with park authorities to introduce advanced monitoring and early-warning systems, giving herders real-time tools to safeguard their herds.

Our vision extends beyond protection. In Charzhithang, near Lingzhi Dzong, we are exploring new tourist amenities, while in Soe, we are shaping a sustainability plan for the annual Jomolhari Mountain Festival. Both efforts will strengthen eco-tourism and create enduring benefits for local residents and visitors alike.



Students of Lingzhi school



Students gathering firewood to cook their meals.



Current state of the boys' hostel at Lingzhi School.

Education, too, is central to conservation. We are supporting the construction of an upgraded school in Lingzhi and flood protection for Jomolhari School, while also improving nutrition, health, and hygiene for students. These investments ensure that children in remote snow leopard landscapes have the opportunity to learn, grow, and lead their communities into a sustainable future.

Through PEaCE, we strive to protect snow leopards, uplift communities, and preserve the cultural and ecological heritage of Bhutan's highlands – for generations to come.



Tshewang Wangchuk
Executive Director

Conservation of the Endangered Pangolin Species

In Bhutan, two species of Pangolin find refuge in the pristine southern foothills: the critically endangered Chinese Pangolin and the Endangered Indian Pangolin.

Pangolins are gentle, nocturnal mammals, often described as shy and non-aggressive, mainly feeding on ants and termites. Although they live among us, they remain among the least studied terrestrial mammals, with limited information on their distribution and conservation threats. What we know comes mainly from camera traps set up for other wildlife like tigers, which have occasionally captured images of pangolins in the Royal Manas National Park (RMNP). Rangers have also rescued pangolins from stray dog attacks, and the local communities report their sightings. Yet, in-depth studies are scarce, and we don't know their habitats, their numbers or their immediate threats. Poaching and habitat degradation are also threats

The Bhutan Foundation launched a pilot study to help pangolins thrive in Bhutan with the Department of Forest and Park Services, the Ministry of Energy, and Natural Resources. Park rangers were trained to set 285 camera traps in likely pangolin habitats to learn more about their distribution, occupancy, and population status. We conducted surveys in three local communities to understand people's understanding and attitudes about pangolins. Already, four of the camera stations have confirmed pangolin presence.

This is just the beginning. Further work, including burrow surveys, acoustic monitoring, and genetic analysis, will give us a clearer picture of pangolin ecology. What we learn will guide us to create a conservation action plan for pangolins in RMNP, and it can serve as a model for protecting them in other parts of Bhutan. The findings will also provide much-needed reference data for national conservation strategies.

The initiative is supported by the Pangolin Crisis Fund, Wildlife Conservation Network through the Bhutan Foundation.



Lungten
Program Officer



The Million+ Trees Initiative: A Community Effort for the Future

In Lumang, Trashigang, Ngawang walks through rows of young mango saplings planted a few seasons ago. By 2025, some had already borne fruit. What was once dry, unused land is now alive with green shoots and the promise of harvest. “Some of the trees, such as grafted mangoes, have started bearing fruit and generating additional income for my family,” he shared.

Ngawang’s story, and thousands like it, began with a seed planted by the Bhutan Foundation. In 2022, we partnered with the Bhutan Ecological Society on the Million+ Trees initiative to restore Bhutan’s degraded forests and fallow lands, while creating sustainable income for rural households. With your support, that seed has grown into a national movement: one million trees planted across 20 districts, restoring more than 2,000 acres of land and directly helping over 2,000 households.

From the start, it was more than the number of trees. Forest officials walked hillsides to identify degraded forest, while the Department of Agriculture advised on high-value fruit and nut trees. Green Bhutan Corporation, along with community and private nurseries, prepared truckloads of saplings, and De-suup volunteers joined farmers in the fields. Together, they turned barren land into orchards of walnuts, citrus, arecanuts, mangoes, and other varieties and restored vegetation. The return of shade, soil stability, and even birdsong gave communities more than just food and income; it gave them a renewed connection to the land.

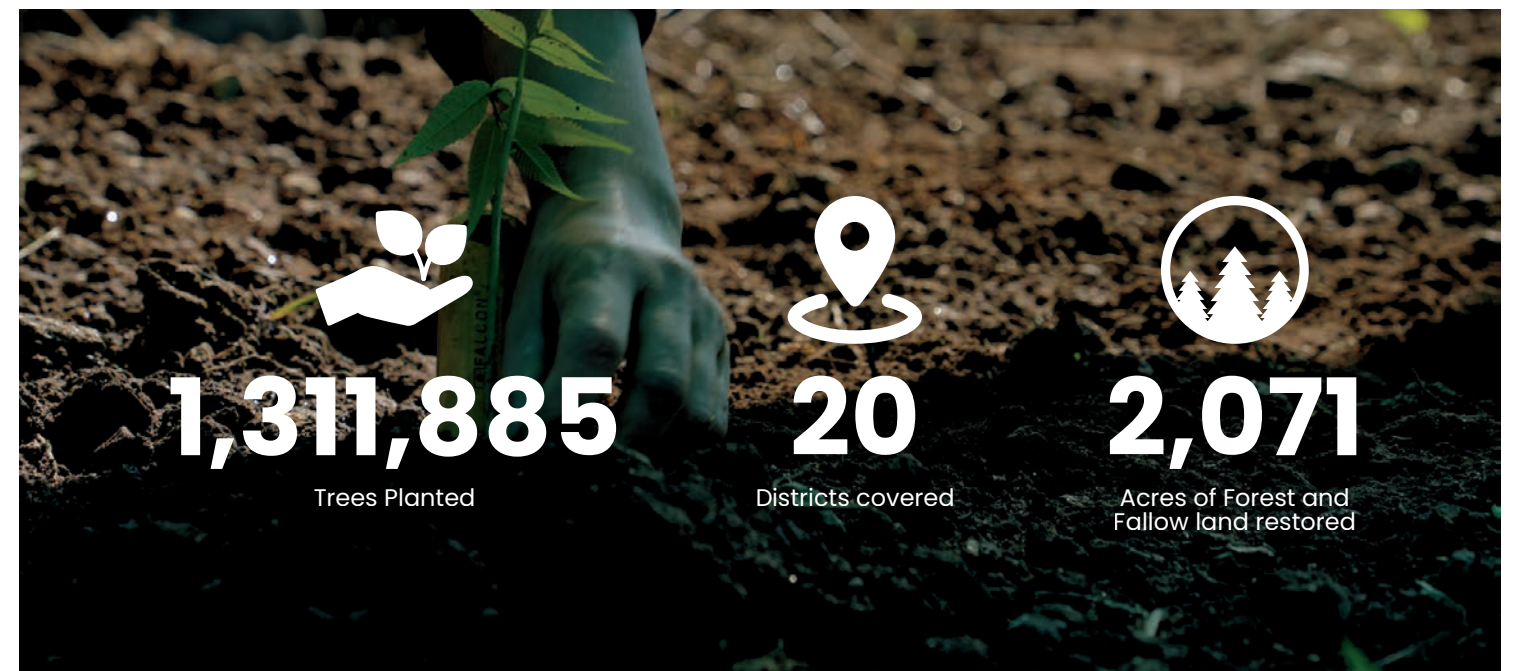
To sustain this effort, a digital platform was set up to match farmers with nurseries, track planting sites, and ensure follow-up. More than 50 nurseries and 300 farmers are already engaged, transforming planting from a one-time event into a cycle of long-term care.

The vision does not end here. The Bhutan Ecological Society is now scaling up with the bold vision of planting ten million trees by 2030. Building deeper on these foundations with the support of the Royal Government, the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation, and international partners, they will scale restoration efforts to match the looming challenge of climate change.

Planting a tree is always an act of hope. Planting together is an act of community. The Million+ Trees initiative has been both. Behind each sapling stands not only a farmer or a volunteer, but also you – our supporters – whose belief in Bhutan makes this vision possible. Together, we are growing forests, livelihoods, and a legacy that will endure for posterity.



Sonam Deki Tshering
Operations Officer



CULTURAL PRESERVATION



The Palace that Bridges Generations

The long-awaited opening of the Wangduechoeling Palace Museum and Culture Centre (WPMCC) stirred excitement across Bumthang since its consecration on 30th October 2024. Since then, it has quickly become a cultural beacon in Bumthang, drawing over 4,000 visitors – locals and travelers alike – eager to immerse themselves in Bhutan’s living history.

Executive Director Kuenga Lhendup and his team shared that they were overwhelmed with the enthusiastic initial responses and even had to turn down requests from schools and tour groups because of the sheer number of visitors.

The Museum’s exhibits have transformed how history is experienced by school children in Bhutan. Kids love the multimedia integration that offers immersive ways to connect with the past. A mother who visited Bumthang said that her daughter wasn’t interested in another Dzong or museum. But once inside the palace museum, she was engrossed in the galleries. For the Bhutan Foundation and WPMCC, this feedback affirms the vision of creating a space that inspires not just tourists, but visitors of all ages and backgrounds.

In recent months, the Museum has opened three more galleries to the public: one dedicated to Gongsar Jigme Namgyel, the Duar Wars and the enduring influence of Zhabdrung Nawang Namgyal. The Jigme Namgyel Gallery is fittingly housed in the Utse (Central Tower), the very first structure he built at Wangduechoeling, and where he resided. The Duar Wars gallery reflects a pivotal time in Bhutan’s history when Jigme Namgyel steered the country through turbulent times, safeguarding sovereignty towards an era of peace and stability amidst both internal and external threats. The exhibit in this gallery combines original artifacts from the Palace exhibited with a modern interpretation through installations. Together, these galleries explore and provide insights to the foundations upon which Bhutan as we know today was built.

For anyone traveling through Bumthang, Wangduechoeling Palace Museum and Culture Centre is a stop not to be missed. The museum houses more than twenty galleries, and a complete tour takes about two hours. Special exhibitions are also hosted from time to time. The Museum is open Monday through Saturday 9AM to 5PM and Bhutanese are required to come in formal attire.

This remarkable achievement would not have been possible without the generosity of our many donors and supporters. The Bhutan Foundation extends heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to bringing this vision to life. Your support has preserved a vital piece of Bhutan’s heritage and created a space that will continue to inspire, educate, and connect people across Bhutan and beyond.



Norbu Dema
Country Director



Wangduechoeling Palace Museum and Cultural Center, Bumthang



Sacred Knowledge, Modern Tools

Monks in Bhutan are the custodians of many sacred artifacts of profound national significance found in more than 2000 monasteries, dzongs, and temples in Bhutan. These artifacts are Bhutan's unique cultural, historical, and spiritual identity. Yet, they remain vulnerable to natural disasters, theft, fire, and gradual deterioration. Recognizing these threats, the Bhutan Foundation, in collaboration with the Central Monastic Body and with support from the U.S. Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP), initiated the Conservation of Ancient and Historic Buddhist Ethnographic Objects project to safeguard Bhutan's sacred antiquities through conservation and modern preservation tools.

Monks who otherwise have no connection to technologies are being trained in camera handling, lighting, and use of collection management systems to document, digitise and archive sacred relics. Today, monks preserve and conserve sacred artefacts with no technical assistance from experts.

The project documented and digitized more than 5,000 ancient Buddhist objects across 20 monasteries in six districts, a major step in safeguarding Bhutan's cultural heritage. As part of the effort, the Natural Disaster and Art Theft Prevention Workshop helped shape Bhutan's first National Plan for Heritage Protection, now under parliamentary review. According to Lopen Kencho, Project Manager with the Antiquities Department under the Central Monastic Body.

The project also introduced modern conservation techniques through collaborations with international experts – from Japanese specialists in paper and textile preservation to U.S. artist Beatrice Coron and U.S. Fulbright Scholar, Dr. Ariana Maki, who engaged monks, artists, and youth in reimagining sacred symbols with contemporary design tools. To reach a wider audience, the Zhung Dratshang Conservation Center launched a YouTube channel. Despite staffing challenges and technical skills among monks, the initiative proves how modern tools can strengthen the guardianship of sacred knowledge.



Sangay Chedar
Program Manager



A monk uses a camera to capture sacred relics at Palden Tashicholing Shedra.



5,000+

sacred artifacts have been recorded in the collection management system



20

monasteries across 6 districts completed



200+

monks trained and sensitized on digitization of sacred artifacts

GOOD GOVERNANCE



Citizens at the Heart of Democracy

What it means to be a democratic constitutional monarchy is not well understood in Bhutan. Too often, citizens look to the government for solutions. True progress, however, comes when citizens see participation not only as a right but as a shared responsibility.

With your support, the Bhutan Center for Media and Democracy (BCMD) is leading Project Mikhung to help communities embrace active citizenship. This year we worked together in Tsirang District to train the community in democratic practices that ensure citizens' voices are heard in decision-making.

Bijay, one of the participants, shared that before the training, he did not realize the importance of truly involving all stakeholders in planning. Kintu, another participant, shared that most of the local development plans come from the administrative level rather than being rooted in the voices of the people. This is why this initiative is critically needed in districts to help the local governments and communities realign their goals and targets through inclusive evidence-based planning — ensuring that critical resources and funding reflect the needs of the people.

With BCMD's continued efforts, mindsets are changing. What was once a top-down planning process is now opening to citizens voices, and local governments are listening. Local leaders, teachers, students, and Civil Society Organizations trained through the program are also preparing to implement initiatives in their own communities — proof that democracy grows stronger when people themselves take part in shaping it.



Officials from BCMD conducting ToT on GNH-Based Participatory Planning and Community Analysis



Officials from BCMD conducting ToT on GNH-Based Participatory Planning and Community Analysis



Officials from BCMD conducting ToT on GNH-Based Participatory Planning and Community Analysis

Democracy flourishes when people see themselves not just as voters, but as stewards of a shared purpose. Through this project, the Bhutan Foundation continues to strengthen good governance by engaging communities and youth in active democratic participation. By motivating them to be involved, we ensure that their planning and implementation reflect the diverse voices of Bhutan.



Phenki
Program Officer

Building Bridges of Ideas: The Druk Journal, Climate Change, and Bhutan's Global Voice

Centuries ago, Thangtong Gyalpo, the great “Iron Bridge Builder,” spanned rivers and gorges to connect people. Today, The Druk Journal carries that spirit forward, linking ideas and dialogue, connecting citizens, policymakers, scholars, and friends of Bhutan in open and thoughtful conversation about the nation's future.

Launched in 2015 under the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy, the Druk Journal provides a non-partisan platform for evidence-based dialogue on national issues, nurturing a community of critical thinkers where few such spaces had existed before. Its thematic issues have explored identity, governance, youth aspirations, and economic transformation, serving as a meeting point between government and civil society, and between Bhutanese realities and global insights.

In 2025, the Journal's 21st edition: *Climate Change in Bhutan: Impact and Response*, highlighted the country's frontline role in the global climate crisis. It examined glacier melt and water security, biodiversity threats, and the resilience of rural communities that rely on traditional wisdom to adapt. Articles ranged from analysis of global climate finance politics to intimate portraits of how climate disruption reshapes daily life and faith in Bhutan's highlands.

Bhutan's carbon-negative status, constitutional mandate to preserve forests, and advocacy for mountain ecosystems have made it a recognized leader in global climate discourse. Yet the Journal underscored the urgency: emissions from transport and industry are rising, water systems are under strain, and adaptation efforts need far greater funding. As Bhutan graduates from Least Developed Country status, the nation must continue to stand out as a global advocate for fragile mountain ecosystems.

With your generous support, the Bhutan Foundation has been a steadfast supporter of the Journal, funding research, publication, and dialogue to ensure Bhutanese voices are heard at home and abroad. This work enriches national understanding while signaling to the world that Bhutan is not only a symbol of harmony with nature but also an active contributor to global climate solutions.

The Journal's climate edition is a link between disciplines, local realities, and global policy, and between Bhutan's highlanders and international decision-makers. The Bhutan Foundation helps link traditional wisdom with modern science, national priorities with global goals, and the voices of vulnerable communities with the global climate movement.



Pemma Lhazin
Development Officer



The Druk Journal: First Conversation
at the College of Natural Resources



The Druk Journal: Second
Conversation at Sherubtse College



SMALL GRANTS, BIG IMPACT



Members of the Beethang Aumtshu
Throedhen Tshogpa preparing *Jangbali*
and *Putu*, traditional Bhutanese noodles.

Small Grants, Big Impact

Real progress happens when communities own their solutions. This is the guiding principle of the Bhutan Foundation's Small Grants Program made possible through your generosity. With small but powerful investments, you are fueling the determination of people at the grassroots, sparking hope, building capacity, and empowering communities to create lasting change.

When the idea of introducing a new variety of cheese first came to Darkala, Thimphu, the reaction was mixed. For some herders, it was an unwelcome disruption to tradition. But for Buthri, it was a new hope. She saw beyond the daily work to the potential, a way to strengthen her community and create new opportunities without leaving their home. That's why she volunteered, becoming the only woman among the six cheese processors. Her vision is now becoming reality. In collaboration with the Royal Government of Bhutan, the cooperative has officially launched two premium cheese products. The recent success of their first consignment is a tangible sign that this risk is paying off, promising a vital stream of income for the yak herders of the region.

In Samtse, the Guengaling Beekeeping Cooperative is showing a transformation in their village. Led by Mer Man Gurung, a young man who left to gain an education, returned with a purpose. After earning his master's degree, he came back to the village, determined to make a difference. His answer was honey. He now leads the cooperative with a group of dedicated locals. Mer Man and his group launched their first honey product, capturing the attention of nearby villages, who now see new possibilities for their own futures. They are proud of what they have created together. They have built something real from the ground up. Yet, for them, this is not a final destination. They continue to learn and experiment, driven by the belief that their best product is yet to come.



"Some herders perceive these activities as work done for others, without realizing that the projects are in fact designed to enhance their own wellbeing."

- Buthri
Darkala Yak Cooperative member



Scan the QR codes below to download the Bhutan Sign Language app

App Store



Play Store



Beehives used by the Guengaling Cooperative

The Bhutanese Sign Language (BhSL) project at Wangsel Institute in Paro is opening new doors for the deaf community, who once struggled to access education, now see their language honored in a revamped app and website co-designed by their community. Ugyen Penjor recalls his life before learning BhSL, "Before I learned BhSL, my life felt meaningless. I couldn't interact with others, and I remained silent most of the time. I had no access to information, and the world felt distant and disconnected. But after I started learning Bhutanese Sign Language, everything began to change. Today, I am proud to speak Bhutanese Sign Language. It has transformed my life, empowered me, and helped me grow into the person I am today." This story reflects the purpose of the app: to bridge gaps between the deaf and hearing communities, further enhancing the impact of BhSL. As Instructor Tenzin Dralha noted, "The problem is not with the deaf community; people who can hear must learn Bhutanese Sign Language and communicate with us and make it inclusive for us." Hence, the BhSL app is more than an app; it is a step toward an inclusive Bhutan by fostering a society through empathy where everyone can belong.

These stories show what's possible when you place trust in communities. Small grants are planting seeds of hope that grow into lasting change, strengthening livelihoods, nurturing innovation, and building a more inclusive Bhutan.



Jamyang Choden
Program Officer

SPREADING AWARENESS IN THE US AND INTERNATIONALLY

Spreading Awareness in the US and Internationally

An important role the Bhutan Foundation plays is to increase awareness of Bhutan in the United States and internationally. In 2025, we hosted events and forged partnerships that brought Bhutan’s story to new audiences, deepened ties with the Bhutanese diaspora, and inspired fresh opportunities for collaboration.

San Francisco Earth Day Celebration

In April, board members Rebecca Winsor and Lisa Danzig hosted the Bhutan Foundation Earth Day celebration at Greens Restaurant in San Francisco. The evening brought together over one hundred guests, including Board and Advisory Council members, long-time supporters, Bhutanese community members, and new friends of Bhutan.

The event featured a screening of the Bhutan Foundation’s Earth Day video showcasing our environmental initiatives, followed by presentations from Executive Director Tshewang Wangchuk and Country Director Norbu Dema, who recently visited Bhutan’s highlands. Guests tasted Bhutanese-inspired cuisine and connected with Bhutanese community members, creating a sense of belonging and shared commitment.

The celebration strengthened ties with the Bhutanese diaspora in the Bay Area, expanded our network with dozens of new supporters, and generated new funding opportunities for environmental programs. The evening also inspired future collaborations, with several attendees offering to host Bhutan-related events and discussions in the year ahead.

Partnership with the University of Texas at El Paso

Another highlight was the continued partnership with the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). Since the 1940s, UTEP has embraced Bhutan as a cultural and architectural cornerstone of its identity. Her Majesty the Royal Grandmother, as a young queen, corresponded with the administrators of UTEP in the 1970s, and Bhutanese students first attended UTEP thereafter. Twenty years ago, His Majesty the King visited the campus. Today, the Bhutanese-style architecture across its campus, a Bhutanese Student Association, and a lhakhang (Bhutanese temple) at the center of campus stand as symbols of this enduring friendship. UTEP also has the largest number of Bhutanese students of any university in the United States.

In April 2025, the Foundation collaborated with UTEP to bring new energy to Bhutan Days. The program included talks by Bhutan Foundation leadership, screening of a Bhutanese movie *The Monk and the Gun*, and interactive activities led by students. Hundreds of students and faculty attended, celebrating Bhutan’s culture through dance, storytelling, and dialogue. The events also highlighted UTEP’s ongoing academic collaborations in Bhutan and honored long-time champions of Bhutanese students.

Looking Ahead

These efforts – the San Francisco Earth Day celebration, UTEP partnership, and others – exemplify the Foundation’s approach to spreading awareness internationally. With your support, we combine cultural celebration, dialogue, education, and community-building to share Bhutan’s story with the world. These connections not only introduce Bhutan to new audiences but also build lasting partnerships that support Bhutan’s environment, education, culture, and communities.



Pemma Lhazin
Development Officer



Earth Day Celebration in San Francisco



Bhutan Days at UTEP

Your Legacy through Planned Giving

For more than forty years, the Bhutan Foundation has worked to be a bridge – connecting Bhutan’s rich traditions with a future filled with promise. With your support, we have strengthened democratic institutions, fostered sustainable businesses, safeguarded endangered species, and preserved the extraordinary biodiversity that makes Bhutan unique.

We invite you to consider how your legacy might continue this important work. By including the Bhutan Foundation in your estate plans, you extend your values and commitments far into the future. Planned giving ensures that the four pillars of Gross National Happiness – sustainable development, cultural preservation, environmental conservation, and good governance – remain strong for future generations.

If you do not already have a will, we encourage you to take this essential step. Nearly 79% of Americans pass away without one, leaving their intentions unfulfilled. A carefully prepared will provides for your loved ones and allows you to continue supporting the causes you value most.

We are deeply grateful for all you have done to support the Bhutan Foundation.

By considering a planned gift, you help ensure that Bhutan’s heritage and future remain linked, and that the bridges you have helped build will stand the test of time.

When making a bequest, please use our full legal name:

The Bhutan Foundation
Federal Tax ID #13-3376290





WAYS TO GIVE

Your generosity fuels our mission and our hope that Gross National Happiness continues to inspire and have a positive impact. Whether you're making a one-time gift or building upon your legacy, there are many impactful ways to contribute.

We believe in building lasting relationships. Donors are invited to participate in events, receive regular updates, and, when possible, join us in Bhutan to see the impact you have made firsthand.

Every gift makes a difference.

Thank you for being part of our journey.

Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs)

A donor-advised fund is a simple, flexible, and tax-efficient way to support the Bhutan Foundation.

How to Give via DAF:

- Contact your DAF provider and recommend a grant to the Bhutan Foundation.
- Use our EIN: 13-3376290 to ensure proper designation.
- Let us know about your gift so we can acknowledge your support and keep you informed about its impact.

Matching Gifts

Many employers offer matching gift programs that can double or even triple your impact. Reach out to us for help navigating the process.

Corporate Partnerships

We welcome collaboration with businesses that share our commitment to sustainability and cultural preservation. Corporate sponsors can support specific projects, employee matching programs, or strategic initiatives aligned with their values.

Donate Cryptocurrency

The Bhutan Foundation accepts gifts of cryptocurrency. Please contact us so we may assist you with your donation.

Mail-in Contributions

Prefer to send a check? Donations can be mailed to:
The Bhutan Foundation
1050 Connecticut Ave. NW
#66013
Washington, DC 20036

Gifts of Stock or Securities

Donating appreciated assets can offer tax advantages while supporting our mission. Please contact us at dawa.sherpa@bhutanfound.org or 202 609 7363 for transfer instructions and assistance.

Online Giving

Make a secure donation at www.bhutanfound.org. When you choose set up a recurring monthly donation you help us plan with confidence.



Scan QR Code to make an online gift today!



The Bhutan Foundation is an Internal Revenue Code section 501c(3) organization incorporated in the State of Delaware.

The Bhutan Foundation has received a platinum rating from charity watchdog [Candid](https://www.candid.org/) and a four-star score from [Charity Navigator](https://www.charitynavigator.org/). These hold the highest standards for evaluating non-profit organizations and advise supporters like you, so that you know every dollar is making the largest possible impact.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Revenue

90.89%	Contributions and Grants	\$4,013,860
2.62%	In-kind Contributions	\$115,464
4.12%	Government Grants	\$181,862
2.41%	Interest & Miscellaneous Income	\$106,610
	TOTAL	\$4,417,796

Expenses

86.98%	Programs	\$4,037,339
7.79%	Admin/Management	\$361,438
5.23%	Fundraising	\$243,012
	TOTAL	\$4,641,789

Liabilities & Net Assets

Depreciation and Amortization	\$19,858
Change in Net Assets	\$243,851
TOTAL	\$263,709

Net Assets Breakdown

Beginning of year	\$5,887,853
End of year	\$5,644,002

*Audited financial statements for fiscal year 2024



86.98%
programs



7.79%
admin

5.23%
fundraising

BHUTAN FOUNDATION GRANTS

Conservation of the Environment

100,000 to 250,000

Bhutan Ecological Society
Million Tree Project

50,000 to 99,999

Jomolhari Community
Snow Leopard Conservation Community Program

10,000 to 49,999

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Renewable Energy, Department of Disaster Management and Department of Forest and Park Services and Department of Agriculture
Conference of Parties 27

Nature Conservation Division, DoFPS
Pangolin Conservation Study

Prime Minister's Office
River Cleaning Project

5,000 to 9,999

River Guides of Panbang
Capacity Building

Equitable and Sustainable Development

Over 250,000

Ministry of Infrastructure and Trade, Ministry of Education and Skills Development and Ministry of Finance,
Bhutan Education and Economic Support Activity (BEESA)

100,000 to 250,000

Bhutan Institute of Wellbeing, College of Science and Technology, Guengaling Youth Group, Menjong Sorig Pharmaceuticals, Thimphu Tech Park, Sherchok Women’s Group, Water Bhutan, Wangsel Institute for the Deaf and Yak Cooperative of Darkala Gewog.
Small Grants Program

Ministry of Education, Aims Multimedia Pvt. Ltd, VTOB Lifelong Learning Institute, Athang Institute, UNICEF, PHENSEM Parent Support Group, Draktsho, JNW Super FabLab and CST FabLab
Special Education Program

50,000 to 99,999

Tarayana Foundation and Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative
Sustainable Agriculture

10,000 to 49,999

Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
Veterinary Equipment support

Traditional Medicine Institute
Improving access and education on traditional medicine

Preservation of Culture

Over 1,500,000

Ministry of Home and Culture
Adaptive Reuse and Restoration of Wangduechhoeling Palace

250,000 to 499,999

Khedrup Foundation
Construction of Rephar Mebar Monastery

50,000 to 99,999

Ministry of Home and Culture
Documentation of Cultural Heritage Sites

Below 4,999

Gogona Milk Processing Unit
Construction of wall partition

Good Governance

Over 1,400,000

Civil Society Organizations and other partners
Facilitating funds transfer to Bhutan

250,000 to 300,000

Bhutan Youth Development Fund
General Support, Wellness Center, and Nazhoen Pelri School

10,000 to 49,999

Bhutan Center for Media and Democracy
Project Mikhung, Citizen Engagement, and General Support

Venice Biennale
Ancient Future, Bhutan Exhibit

5,000 to 9,999

Bhutan Echoes
Bhutan Echoes of a Kingdom

Nazhoen Lamtoen
Establishing Child Protection Team in Zhemgang

Below 4,999

Katsho Eco Camp
Solar electrification



OUR TEAM

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The Queen Mother of Bhutan

Mrs. Lucy Goelet

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OUR PARTNERS

Local Partners

Ability Bhutan Society	Ogyen Choling Foundation
Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators	Panbang Youth Cooperative
Bhutan Animal Rescue and Care	PHENSEM Parents Support Group
Bhutan Art & Culture Conservation Center	Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women
Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurs	River Guides of Panbang
Bhutan Cancer Society	Royal Society for the Protection and Care of Animals
Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy	Royal Textile Academy
Bhutan Ecological Society	Royal Society for the Protection of Nature
Bhutan Film Institute	Royal Thimphu College
Bhutan for Life	Royal University of Bhutan
Bhutan Institute of Wellbeing	Sherchock Women’s Group
Bhutan Nuns Foundation	Tarayana Foundation
Bhutan Softball and Baseball Association	Thimphu Dzongkhag Administration
Bhutan Stroke Foundation	Faculty of Traditional Medicine
Bhutan Tiger Center	Traditional Medicine Hospital
Bhutan Trust Fund For Environment Conservation	Trongsa Dzongkhag Administration
Bhutan Water Partnership	UNICEF Bhutan
Bhutan Yak Federation	Wangsel Institute for the Deaf
Bhutan Youth Development Fund	Wangduechoeling Palace Museum and Cultural Center
Bumthang Dzongkhag Administration	Water Bhutan
Central Monastic Body	WWF-Bhutan
College of Natural Resources	Yangya Foundation
College of Science and Technology	Zhemgang Dzongkhag Administration
Department of Forest & Park Services	
Department of Energy	
Dhyana Foundation	
Disabled Persons’ Organization of Bhutan	
Dorje Phagmo Foundation	
Draktsho Vocational Training Centre for Special Children and Youth	
Green Bhutan Corporation Ltd.	
Guengaling Community Cooperatives	
Gyalyum Charitable Trust	
Innovate Bhutan	
Jangsa Animal Saving Trust	
Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital	
Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck Super Fab Lab	
Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law	
Katsho Eco Camp	
Khedrup Foundation	
Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences	
Lhomon Education, Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative	
Loden Foundation	
Menjong Sorig Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited	
Ministry of Finance	
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & External Trade	
Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock	
Ministry of Education and Skills Development	
Ministry of Health	
Museums of Bhutan	
Nazhoen Lamtoen	
Nazhoen Pelri School	

International Partners

Direct Relief
The Explorers Club
Health Volunteers Overseas
Hoffman Creative
IEEE Smart Village
Karuna Foundation
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Moderna
MyBhutan LLC
NASA
Perkins School for the Blind
Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP
Rubin Museum of Art
Smithsonian Institution
Snow Leopard Conservancy
Squire Patton Boggs
Tsao & McKown
University of Texas at El Paso
US Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation
US Department of State
Wildlife Conservation Network, Pangolin Crisis Fund
Yale University



**In Memoriam
Ambassador Frank G. Wisner
(1938–2025)**

We honor the extraordinary life and enduring legacy of Ambassador Frank G. Wisner – a visionary diplomat, dedicated public servant, and cherished friend of Bhutan.

As Director Emeritus of the Bhutan Foundation, he played an instrumental role in strengthening the bonds of friendship and understanding between Bhutan and the world. His deep affection for Bhutan and its people shone through his tireless efforts to promote cultural preservation, peace, and sustainable development. Throughout his distinguished career, Ambassador Wisner embodied the highest ideals of diplomacy and service. His wise counsel, empathetic leadership, and unwavering commitment to dialogue enriched international relations and left a lasting imprint on all who had the privilege of working alongside him.

The Bhutan Foundation is profoundly grateful for his contributions, guidance, and friendship. His legacy endures in the programs, partnerships, and lives he touched, serving as a beacon of inspiration.

Om Mani Padme Hum

