



Autumn Newsletter 2023

BHUTAN
TOILET
ORGANIZATION



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About Us

Established in October 2014, the Bhutan Toilet Organization (BTO) began as a citizen-engagement social media campaign led by Mr. Passang Tshering, an Educator and Blogger. It aimed to fix responsibility and accountability for the condition of public toilets in the country. Recognizing the need for broader action, the group evolved from blame attribution to proactive collaboration in the sector.

BTO was officially registered and recognized as a Civil Society Organization (CSO) in December 2016. The organization was also honoured with the National Order of Merit (Gold Medal) and its founder, Mr. Passang Tshering, was conferred the title Chablop (Toilet Teacher) by His Majesty the King for their commendable work during the preceding two years, reinforcing the significance of its mission.

Noteworthy initiatives of BTO include portable toilet services, event toilet management, bedside toilet initiative, standardizing public toilet facilities, upgrading school and monastic institution toilets, introducing household sewer treatment tanks, improving rural toilet construction, pressing for better toilet at construction site, temporary settlements and camping sites, working on mainstreaming accessible toilets, emergency toilets for disaster response and several others, all made possible through generous support from local and international partners.

The organization remains committed to its mission of providing universal access to clean and safe toilets, upholding human dignity, and improving the quality of life for every Bhutanese. Through continued dedication and collaborative efforts, BTO strives to make a lasting impact on sanitation in Bhutan.

CWIS Service

Citywide inclusion sanitation (CWIS) focuses on providing urban areas with access to and benefits from adequate and sustainable sanitation services, including the safe, effective and sustainable management of all human waste along the whole sanitation service chain. With rapid growth of urban areas such as Thimphu, it is important to implement CWIS concept and be familiarized with the framework.

Thus, FANSA Bhutan initiated a CWIS project where BTO took the opportunity to organize a workshop aiming to provide information regarding CWIS framework to people from target communities (enumerators, Thimphu Thromde officials, Department of Public Health, and Department of School), with Mr. Tshedrup Dorji, Project Coordinator of FANSA, being the facilitator to guide the participants through the agenda.



The workshop was conducted at Haa and it commenced from 7/09/2023 till 10/09/2023. Then, a sanitation assessment was conducted in Thimphu Thromde whereby enumerators were deployed to gather data. The assessment covered vulnerable communities that consist of temporary settlements and slum areas of Thimphu Thromde.



Training and workshops are an approach to acquire new skills or upskill and reskill to persevere in the demanding times and situations. The CWIS service project was the first approach to bring CWIS to Bhutan. The participants of the project got the opportunity to work toward providing a safe, adequate and sustainable sanitation services. To sum up, the project concluded without any hurdle.

The Toilet of Compassion-Fundraising

BTO, in collaboration with the Ability Bhutan Society (ABS) and the Royal Society for Senior Citizens (RSSC), launched a fundraising campaign called 'The Toilet of Compassion.' This campaign addresses the challenges faced by critically ill patients, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities in accessing toilets when they are bedridden.

The Bedside Toilet stands as a beacon of independence, a lifeline for bedridden patients, individuals with disabilities, and our cherished elderly. It's a portable toilet that gracefully finds its place beside the bed, granting a newfound sense of autonomy. These bedside toilets have proven to be a game-changer, empowering patients by granting them easy access to a hygienic toilet located right next to their beds when they are unable to reach a usual toilet.

In 2022, BTO donated 60 bedside toilets to primary healthcare centers in Haa, Paro, and Samtse districts. Furthermore, BTO aspires to extend this lifeline to even more vulnerable members of our society in the remaining 17 Dzongkhags. Thus, the fundraising campaign aimed to raise Nu. 3.4 million to purchase 500 bedside toilets out of which 252 of them would be distributed to healthcare centers in the remaining 17 dzongkhags. Then, 120 each would be donated to ABS and RSSC for the disabled and elderly.



Monastic Toilet Project

BTO in collaboration with Religion and Health Project (RHP) under Zhung Dratshang signed MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) in which BTO provided technical assistance, technology and training. The collaboration aimed to transform the toilet culture and improve health and hygiene in the monasteries by upgrading the pit latrines and aqua-privy toilets to safe pour-flush toilet using SATO pan. In phase I of monastic toilet up gradation project, 95 units of pit latrines and aqua-privy toilets were upgraded. In phase II, 25 units of pit latrines and aqua-privy toilets were upgraded.

That is, phase I covered Thimphu, Haa and Punakha Dzongkhags. Whereby, during phase II, additionally Dagana and Tsirang dzongkhags were covered. Now, in Phase III, BTO extended their work to eastern dzongkhags (Tashigang, Tashiyangtse and Bumthang). The institutions that were part of the phase III were: Petshaling Monastery, Kanglung Shedra, Gomphukora, and Dangchhu.



Petshaling Monastery	5 units of existing aqua-privy toilet were up graded with use of SATO 130. 8 units of water taps were replaced in place of the damaged ones
Kanglung Shedra	4 units of temporary toilets with the use of 3 SATO 130 and SATO 204 were provided. 10 units of unused toilets were converted to bath house.
Gomphukora	10 units of aqua-privy toilets were up graded with the use of SATO 130. 10 units of health faucet was installed in the up graded toilets and 3 units of health faucet was installed
Dangchhu	Up graded 4 units of toilet using SATO 130 and one unit using SATO 204. Installed health faucets in five unit old toilet and 2 health faucets in new toilet. Replaced 6 damaged water taps. The cracks in the walls of the toilet was also repaired and repainted.

Panel Discussion

citywide inclusive sanitation(cwis)



Objectives

- Foster partnership
- Engage in knowledge and experience sharing from domestic and regional perspectives surrounding sanitation issues and solutions for safe and equitable sanitation services for all
- Invigorate the role of CSOs in community mobilization and facilitate participation to compliment the public sectors to improve and sustain sanitation services for all.



FANSA is the Regional Network of South Asian Countries with the vision - An inclusive, equitable and climate resilient WASH facilities and services for ALL in South Asia. Similarly, BTO is also dedicated towards advocating for universal access to clean and safe toilet to enhance health, preserve human dignity, and elevate the quality of life for every Bhutanese.

Thus, BTO also known as FANSA Chapter Bhutan initiated the conversation on 'Approaching safe, equitable and sustainable sanitation practices' at Apollo Bhutan Institute of Nursing. The event was an approach to discuss innovative solutions and understand the situation and challenges in the WASH sector.

The focal individuals at the panel discussion were:

Ramisetty Murali, Chairperson, FANSA Regional Council,

Kabir Das Rajbhandari, Regional Coordinator, FANSA

Chablop Passang Tshering, Executive Director, BTO

Tshedrup Tshering, Moderator

Civil Society Partnership Day

Civil Society Partnership Day serve as a platform for civil society organisations to showcase their work, highlight their achievements, and advocate for their causes. It is a day where CSOs come together to collaborate, share knowledge, and build partnerships for collective action.

It is an opportunity for CSOs, NGOs, and grassroots movements to connect with each other and with other stakeholders such as governments, businesses and international organizations. Overall, Civil Society Partnership Day promotes collaboration, solidarity, and collective action among CSOs, enabling them to work together towards a more just, inclusive, and sustainable world

Thus, Asian Development Bank in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance and leading Civil Society Organizations in Bhutan hosted the first Civil Society Partnership Day. More than 70 participants comprising officials from government agencies, CSOs and relevant stakeholders took part in the two-day seminar. The event took place at Hotel Kaachi Grand, Paro starting from 25th October till 27th October. The activities organised during the event were:

- About sixteen CSOs showcased their ideas, projects and activities through booth set up as a part of the seminar.
- Panel discussion were held to discuss about the opportunities and challenges of CSO Partnerships.
- group discussions were done on the 13th FYP Period, the next phase of Bhutan's Development Agenda.
- Project site visits to 3 organizations (Tarayana, Draktshog Vocational Training Centre for Special Children and Youth, and YDF) in Thimphu were initiated.

The partnership, first of its kind was focused on the idea of "tri-unity," creating channels of communication between the ADB-Bhutan, CSOs and the Bhutanese government.