

Purpose: This report is designed to give an insight into the scope of services provided by DPAB; it provides clear measures and examples of performance for the year 2017 to 2018.

Photographs: Photographs used in this report allow a brief insight into some of the activities and programs offered by DPAB. They also display an example of the relationships built between participants, staff members and the community at large.

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Introduction

In Bhutan, there is a lack of public awareness on the rights and needs for people with disabilities. Further, it is escalated by inaccessible infrastructure and facilities. This highlights the need to work closely with the government to support and empower people living with disabilities so that they can be integrated into the social mainstream to live a fully independent, productive and meaningful life.

The Population and Housing Census of Bhutan (PHCB) 2017 reported the prevalence rate for disability in Bhutan as 2.1%, which corresponds to 15,567 persons. Out of the 15,567 persons, 8,111 are females and 7,456 are males.

The 2-stage disability study on children aged 2-9 carried out in 2010-2011 by Ministry of Education in collaboration with Ministry of Health, National Statistical Bureau and UNICEF also indicated that about 21.3 percent of children in Bhutan are living with some kind of disability. This tells that for a small country with a small population like Bhutan, we have a significant number of people with disabilities in the country. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that at least 10 percent of the population in developing countries comprises of people with disabilities. This is an alarming trend that requires greater attention.

To make the matter worse, the traditional family support systems and community vitality are fast breaking down due to various socio-economic factors such as rapid modernization, rural-urban migration and dysfunctional marriages. As a result, people with disabilities are confronted with more serious challenges especially in rural communities. Many children with disabilities still do not have access to formal education either due to financial constraints or because of the lack of psychosocial support. These issues are further heightened by the country's rugged topography that makes it more difficult and expensive to develop accessible public infrastructure for people with disabilities. As a result, most of the public facilities and services are still not accessible for people with disabilities in the country and this has been one of the greatest challenges for the disabled segment of the society. Considering all these issues and challenges, it was deemed necessary to have an association for the disabled to supplement the efforts of the Royal Government of Bhutan to educate the public on the rights and needs of persons with disabilities and to create an inclusive society for all, where everybody enjoys equal rights and dignity regardless of his or her disability status.

Deeply inspired by this noble idea, a group persons with visual impairments came together in early 2010 to work towards establishing an association for the people with disabilities in Bhutan. Several meetings were convened during the year to discuss, design and develop the entire organizational structure as per the Civil Society Organizations Act 2007. With support from friends and well-wishers, the documents for the registration of the Association was successfully completed and submitted to the Civil Society Organizations Authority (CSOA) in September 2010 for endorsement.

The registration was finally approved on 26th November 2010 and the Disabled Persons' Association of Bhutan (DPAB) was formally instituted as one of the first public-benefit Disabled Persons' Organization in Bhutan under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Namgyal Wangchuck.

The Association has been guided by the following Vision, Mission and Objectives

Vision

An inclusive society that recognizes, respects and promotes the rights and needs of all persons with disabilities in Bhutan.

Mission

To promote physical, psychological and socio-economic well-being of persons with disabilities through inclusion and empowerment.

Objectives

To raise awareness and advocate on the rights of persons with disabilities;

To promote inclusion and effective participation of persons with disabilities in the community;

To enhance the livelihood and independence of persons with disabilities in the society;

To facilitate the empowerment and involvement of persons with disabilities in socio-political decision making and

To explore and strengthen the communication, coordination and collaboration with relevant organizations within and outside the country.

The Association is governed by Board of Trustees, whose members are elected from among members of the Association for a fixed term of office. An Executive Committee oversees the day-to-day functions of the Association. An Advisory Board provides technical and managerial support to the Executive Committee. The functioning of the Association is guided by its charter and the Articles of Association, as per the requirement of the Civil Society Organization Act 2007. Financial transactions and performance of the Association are subject to external auditing and scrutiny by the board and donors. Since the certificate of registration was officially handed over to the Association on 20th December 2010, the members have worked hard to lay a strong foundation for the Association. Despite consistent financial and human resource constraints, the Association has come a long way in addressing some of the needs of people with disabilities in whatever small way possible. This report contains some of the key achievements of the Association from January 2017 to December 2018.



CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AUTHORITY

Certificate of Registration

This is to certify that **The Disabled Persons Association of Bhutan** is hereby registered as a **Public Benefit Organization** under the Civil Society Organizations Act of Bhutan, 2007 with effect from **26th November 2010** corresponding to the **20th day of the 10th Bhutanese month of the Iron Male Tiger Year.**

The Organization is hereby allotted Registration number: **CSOA/PBO-09.**

The Organization seeks to fulfill the objectives as defined in its Articles of Association and Memorandum of Association and shall operate in **the whole of Bhutan.**

The aforementioned organization is subject to the provisions of the Civil Society Organizations Act of Bhutan 2007 and other laws in force in the country.

Validity of this certificate is subject to annual renewal. Please see overleaf for registration status.



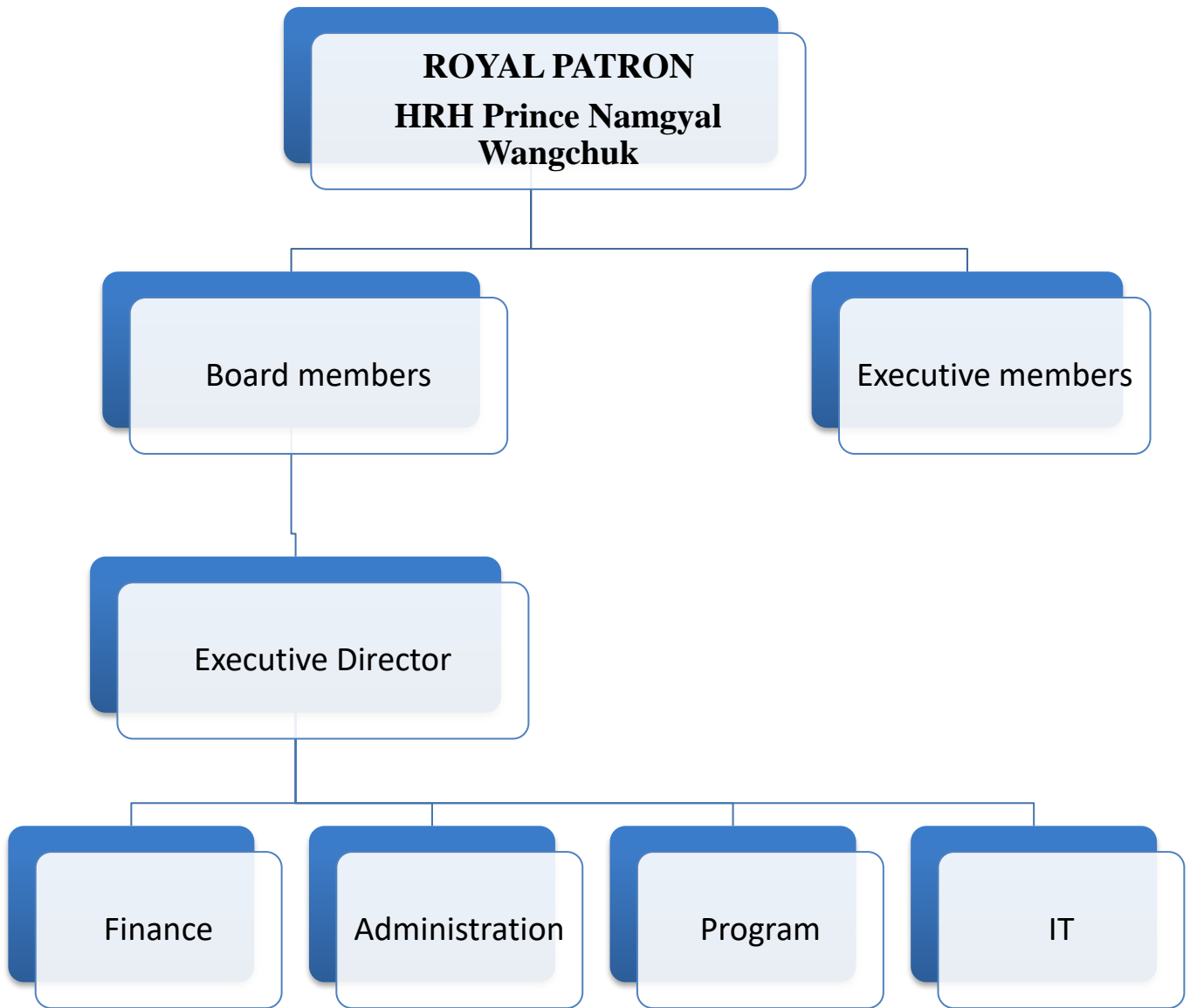
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CHAIRPERSON
Civil Society Organizations Authority
THIMPHU; BHUTAN



Patron-His Royal Highness Prince Namgyel Wangchuk



Austrian Development Agency (ADA) Project

With the funding support from Austrian Development Agency (ADA), DPAB in collaboration with Norbu Healing Art Centre provided High Quality Healing and Massage Therapy training to 10 youth with disabilities. The training was conducted for a period of four months w.e.f 24th March 2018 to 3rd July 2018. The participants successfully completed a four-month training on July 3rd 2018 and were placed in various hotels as SPA Therapists.

In this regard, DPAB would like to thank Austrian Development Agency for funding support and Norbu Healing Arts Centre for opening this door of opportunity for people with disabilities, for the assistance and support during the training course.



Canada Fund for Local Initiative (CFLI Project)

With the financial support from Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI), DPAB provided high quality Healing and Massage therapy to fifteen women with disabilities including school dropped out girls from economically disadvantaged background at Norbu Healing Arts Centre. The training started from 1st October 2018 to 26th February 2019. The primary objective of providing training program was to help persons with disabilities to develop relevant professional skills so that they could get a decent job and live an independent life.



On 25th February 2019, Hon'ble Lyonpo Ugyen Dorji, Minister for Labour and Human Resources, graced the closing and award certification ceremony of five months SPA and massage therapy training funded by Canada Fund for Local Initiatives.

Now fifteen of them are working as spa therapist in different hotels and resorts in Bhutan and living an independent in the society.

DPAB would like to thank CFLI for funding support and Norbu Healing Arts Centre for opening this door of opportunity for persons with disabilities.



Networking meeting

Three staff of DPAB participated in the 4th Regional Network Meeting for East Asia in Bangkok, Thailand from April 25-29, 2018. The meeting was organized for the member partners and project staff who implement projects financed by Digni. This meeting provided a wonderful platform for all the project

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partners and the members to come together and learn about the challenges of projects, ways of implementations and its success stories from one another other.



ICT Training, Malaysia.



On 24th July 2018, one ICT staff from Disabled Persons' Association of Bhutan, participated in an annual international event of Teruko Ikeda ICT Training Program held in Penang, Malaysia, which is aimed at providing ICT-based knowledge and skills to individuals with visually impairment and low vision in Asia and the Pacific. Its main goal is to enable the selected participants to become leaders and advocates of ICT programs in their respective countries.

Duskin Leadership training program



Mr. Yonten Jamtsho (low vision), working as Office Assistant at DPAB attended Duskin Leadership training in Japan for 10 months. The program is designed for young people with disabilities living in Asia and the Pacific who wish to become future leaders and work for the benefit of the disabled community. It is sponsored by the Duskin Ainowa Foundation and implemented by the Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (JSRPD).

Independent Living Skills Training:

On 6th August 2018, DPAB provided a short-term (5 months) training course on tailoring to 10 people with disabilities and caregivers of people with disabilities. The training was held at Pema Dorji Tailoring Centre at Babesa, Thimphu. The aim of the training was to create a respectful employment opportunity and to improve the quality of life and living condition of people with disabilities and their care givers.

The participants are in capacity to stitch traditional dresses, bags and thangkas (religious scroll).



Collaborations

On 14th April 2018, DPAB in collaboration with the Election Commission of Bhutan conducted first ever Postal Ballot Facilitation services to the People with disabilities around Thimphu area. It was not only an

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opportunity for people with disabilities to experience how free and fair elections are being conducted but also a unique platform to learn about the necessary assistance required by the PWDs to exercise their franchise.

We fully acknowledge that everyone gets equal opportunities in Bhutan. However, there are group of individuals who cannot utilize the opportunity in the same way as others. But this time, we would like to thank Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) for making extra arrangements for people with disabilities of Bhutan to access the same opportunity through different ways. On behalf of people with disabilities, DPAB would like to immensely thank ECB for providing equal access for all the eligible citizens of Bhutan including people with disabilities to participate in the Bhutan's third time National Council Parliamentary Election.



On 9th September 2018, again people with disabilities got the opportunity to participate in the primary round of the third parliamentary National Assembly Election of Bhutan.

Cultural Exchange Opportunities

Every year, with financial support from India-Bhutan Foundation (IBF), DPAB takes part in the international cultural exchange program for persons with disabilities called SAMBHAV in New Delhi, organized by the Association for Learning Performing Arts and Normative Action (ALPANA). In 2018, DPAB sent 5 persons with disabilities to participate in SAMBHAV. The cultural exchange program aims to empower artists with disabilities of Bhutan by giving them the opportunity to showcase their talents during the event.



The team of 3 (Three)- Mr.Pema Tshering, wheel chair user, Mr.Tshering Namgyel, caregiver/Volunteer and Ms.Sonam Deki from DPAB attended the South West Asia para game 2018 from 24th to 26th August 2018 in Nepal at Dashrath Ranga Sala Stadium. The participants were from Bhutan, Nepal and Indian.

This platform gave the participants to experience and learn that Persons' with Disabilities can participate equally with others if given an opportunity. The team also had an opportunity to build network with other participants from Nepal and India.

Awareness and Advocacy Program

1. On 21st July 2018, a group of people with disabilities led by DPAB, participated in one of the parties' conventions. This was mainly to create a social movement so that everyone from all walks of life understands people with disabilities and come forward to support them. Moreover, this was mainly to advocate and create awareness about disabilities and inclusion to the future policy makers. More than 2000 people were present at the convention.

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2. DPAB and group of people with disabilities joined to highlight the Menstrual Hygiene needs of women and girls with disabilities initiated by Ministry of Education. This was an opportunity to include the voices of the people with disabilities in such important issues and as well an opportunity for our society to realize the needs of people with disabilities.



3. To

create

awareness on disability issues in Bhutan among the local leaders and village health workers, DPAB led the "Disability and Inclusion Awareness Program" in 4 districts, Chukha, Punakha, Dagana and Paro from 11th December 2018. The session included talks on challenges faced by people with disability, importance of accessibility, inclusive education. As the part of the program, the participants were briefed on the rights of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, participants were also given opportunities to share their views on disability.



International Day for Persons with Disabilities: 3rd December 2018

The observance of 3rd December Day aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. It also seeks to increase awareness of gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life. Each year, the day focuses on a different issue with different theme and DPAB observes this day in different places every year.

In 2018, DPAB observed the International Day of Persons with Disabilities at Gelephu Lower Secondary School which is one of the Special Education Needs (SEN) schools in Bhutan. The theme for the year was “Empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”. The day was graced by Honorable Dasho Dzungda as the Chief Guest and dignitaries of Sarpang District. The honorable chief guest Dasho Dzungda in his keynote address shared about the disability issues in Bhutan and importance of inclusion. The chairperson of DPAB presented about disability issues, rights of disability, activities of DPAB and importance of accessible infrastructure in the society which was later followed by cultural programs by children/persons with disabilities and art exhibition. More than 200 people gathered during the event including persons with disabilities.



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Some glimpse of the event:

Training & workshop

DPAB led a day long workshop on basic ICT knowledge and skills to individuals with visual impairment living in Thimphu area on 19th of August 2018. The workshop was facilitated by two staff of DPAB who were trained on ICT knowledge from Teruko Ikeda ICT Training at Penang, Malaysia. The workshop has also helped in implementing their knowledge, skills and their experiences to the participants. The main objectives for conducting such workshop were to: (1) share what was learnt in the training at Malaysia by two staff of DPAB, (2) provide basic knowledge and skills on computer using NVDA Screen Reader to the visually impaired.

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the end of December 2018, DPAB invited all the twenty-district's focal person and organized a day long workshop to educate and create awareness on the rights and needs of persons with disabilities in Bhutan. One of the officials from Gross National Happiness Commission gave a presentation about the current policy and plans on disabilities issues in the country. Followed by the presentation on Special Education in Bhutan by one of the Board members (Deputy Chief Programme Officer, Ministry of Education). This workshop created a platform for the participants to further discuss their views, challenges and recommendations to work closely for person with disabilities in Bhutan.



Leadership Award:

On 23rd December 2018, DPAB was honored to receive the SDG's & NGO's Achievers & Leadership Award 2018 from World CSR Day.

The SDG's & NGO's Achievers & leadership Awards recognizes Leaders & organizations who have contributed value & made a change as a strategic tool for sustainable growth. Such Leaders & Organizations who are impactful & believe that there is a MAD approach to their work (Making A Difference). The approach is driven by passion & commitment towards Social Change.

On behalf of persons with disabilities of Bhutan, it is deeply humbling and cherishing to know that we have been nominated for the work we do to achieve the profound vision of SDGs 'Leaving No one Behind'. We would like to thank Dr. R. L. Bhatia, Founder, World CSR Day and the team for the recognition accorded to

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us for SDG's & NGO's Achievers & Leadership Award. This not only motivates us to work but also inspires us to give our best.

