

# Annual Report 2017



**Bhutan Network for Empowering Women**

BNEW is a networking platform to promote, facilitate and strengthen women's representation in governance, leadership and development in Bhutan, especially at the community and local government levels.

Conceptualised in 2012, BNEW registered as a CSO in December 2016. We have 4,000 members spread over 197 gewogs in 20 dzongkhags.

## ***Of Partnerships and collaborations: Our cornerstones for success and relevance!***

The bygone year of 2017 was BNEW's first year as a registered CSO and one that was immensely fulfilling for all associated with the platform. Whilst moving forward smoothly to stay relevant, we built strategic bridges for meaningful collaborations with all who matter to us for the achievement of our mandate, goals, and objectives. We are most grateful to NCWC, DLG, BDD-ECB, and WCYC of the Parliament in particular, for trust-filled relationships that we have nurtured together! We are equally grateful for the generosity of our core donors – DIPD and International IDEA.

At the local level, we were also able to orient and prepare our elected women representatives (EWRs) in the local governments for their positions of responsibility and meaningful service. For us, the performance of serving elected women is of critical importance in order to gain the trust and confidence of society to elect more women in future elections! EWRs were trained to demonstrate their full potential in the roles they have been elected to, so they would receive appreciation as well as personal satisfaction. In collaboration with the Department of Local Governance and respective Dzongkhags, we organized weeklong "Women Leadership Workshops" per region to ensure all our elected women were covered and supported.

BNEW successfully organised a "National Conference on Women in Governance, Leadership and Politics...with a regional dimension" from 8-10 March 2017, in collaboration with our aforementioned wonderful partners. We could also mark IWD 2017 on 8th March. The day observed with RENEW, was graced by Her Majesty the Queen Mother Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck. More than 200 local participants representing a diverse range of stakeholders, as well as regional and international delegates from Nepal, Myanmar, and Denmark attended the national conference. A key highlight was the "Thimphu Declaration" that carried 3 goals for each level of governance: Parliament, LGs, and Civil service. The declaration was accompanied by a set of measures to aid the advancement of gender equality in Bhutan.

The year ended with a big bang with around 200 of our women members from across the country assembling in the capital to attend the BNEW-AGM 2017. Tremendous energy was added to our movement to strengthen the "Voice and Visibility" of women as we strategized to glide over into the next exciting year of elections. BNEW's first advocacy materials were launched in the presence of ECB and political parties as well.

We pray for yet another free, fair, and successful elections in 2018, and for more women in the 3<sup>rd</sup> elected Parliament of Bhutan (2018-23).

Tashi Delek!



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Namgay Pelden, Chairperson



A handwritten signature in black ink on a light pink background.

Phuntshok Chhoden, Executive Director

## VISION & MISSION

BNEW envisions a Bhutanese society where women's leadership is the norm rather than an exception.

BNEW strives to non-partisan networking platform to promote and facilitate women leadership for the achievement of substantive gender equality in Bhutan.



**17 – 20 Jan, 2018**

Six BNEW members at the Regional Conference of SAWA of CLs (South Asian Women Alliance of Community Leaders) from all 8 SAARC Countries at Islamabad, Pakistan.

**8-10 March 2017**

BNEW organised the “2<sup>nd</sup> National Conference on Women in Governance, Leadership & Politics in Bhutan with a regional dimension” at Terma Linca in Thimphu.

There were a total of 267 participants.



BNEW builds leadership capacities and skills of women.

## WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS

### WLW1 11-17 June 2017

The first Women's Leadership Workshop (WLW) saw a total of 40 participants including 2 Gups, 23 Mangmis, 6 Tshogpas, 2 Thromde Ngotshabs, and 7 Thromde Tshogpas.

WLW1 took place in Thimphu.



### WLW2 27 June- 1 July 2017

The second WLW took place in Paro. There were a total of 44 participants – all Tshogpas from Thimphu, Paro, Haa, Wangduephodrang, Zhemgang, Chhukha, Punakha, and Gasa.



### WLW3 10 - 14 July 2017

34 Tshogpas from the Eastern regions participated in the third WLW that was organised in Trashigang.



### WLW4 30 Aug - 3 Sept 2017

39 Tshogpas, 1 Thromde Tshogpa, and 1 Mangmi participated in the fourth WLW that was organised in Thimphu.

## 25-30 September 2017

4 Mangmis and 2 BNEW staff traveled to India to attend a training on “Democratic Decentralisation” at the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA).

There were participants from eight other countries as well. The training was a joint initiative of KILA and LOGIN Asia.



## 13-16 November 2017

BNEW organised a workshop for journalists, bloggers, and writers on “Gender Sensitive Reporting in the Media” in Paro.

There were 51 participants in the workshop.



## MEDIA ADVOCACY COMPETITION August – December 2017

BNEW organised a national media advocacy competition calling for short film, short story, lozay, and mascot entries related to women, empowerment, and leadership. There were 32 contestants. The results were declared in December at the end of BNEW’s Annual General Meeting in Thimphu.

## Annual General Meeting (AGM) 21-23 December 2017

A total of 181 elected women representatives (EWRs), women who contested in the Local Government elections, and BNEW members attended the Annual General Meeting in Thimphu.

In the EWR group, there were 2 Gups, 22 Mangmis, 103 Gewog Tshogpas, 5 Thromde Tshogpas, and 3 Thromde Ngotsaps. There were also 46 women who contested in the LG elections.

Speakers were invited from the Election Commission of Bhutan, the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy, and political parties to talk about women in leadership, governance, and democracy.



## Quotes from BNEW members

“BNEW gives hope to women like me. If it weren’t for BNEW, I wouldn’t even be here. I was encouraged to participate in the Local Government elections, given leadership skills, and taught to swallow my tears and stand up no matter what the circumstance. BNEW has shown the way to a brighter future for women. BNEW is my backbone.”

Gup Pema Wangmo Tamang



“My public speaking, writing and networking skills have greatly improved because of BNEW. I have been on a foreign study tour and training through which I’ve gained tremendous knowledge. We are lucky to be part of and working with BNEW. BNEW inspires us to become leaders.”

Tsheten Zangmo

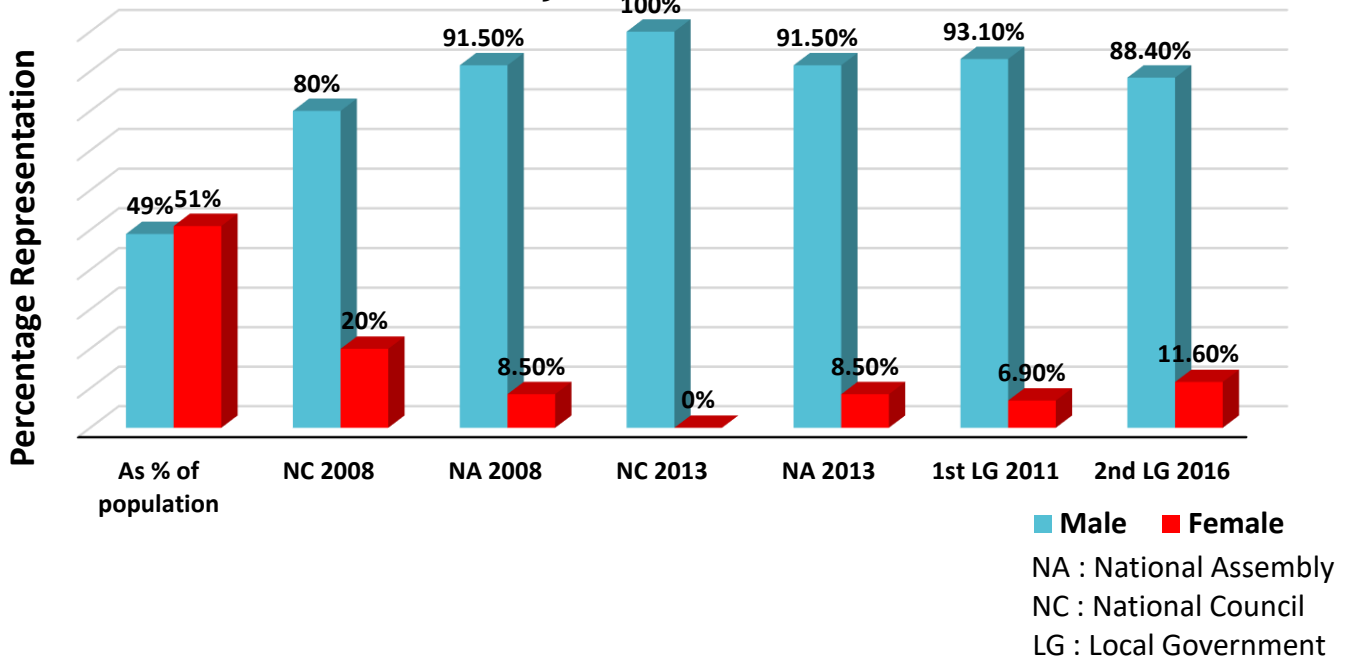
“I learnt about leadership, management, and planning through BNEW trainings. My communication and leadership skills were also polished by BNEW. I would not have had this confidence to lead were it not for Aum Phuntsho Chhoden and the BNEW team. I am a Mangmi today, but I do aspire to be a Gup too thanks to BNEW. Kadrinchela!”

Mangmi Phub Wangmo

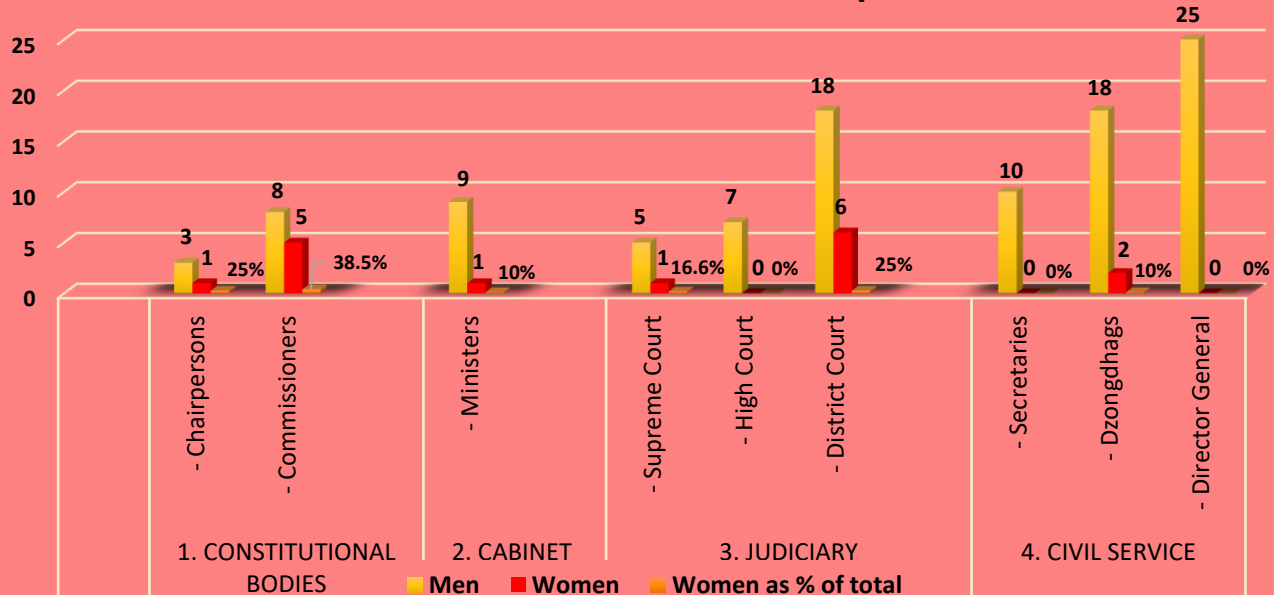


The transition to democracy in Bhutan is a success story, but from a gender angle, it can hardly be called that. Gender-stereotypical social norms, attitudes, and mindsets continue to challenge female leadership. Currently, leadership is highly male-dominated in every sphere. Therefore, BNEW advocates to transform societal mindsets and attitudes for gender equity in leadership.

### Gender division of representation in Elected offices of Bhutan (Only elected Reps) in comparison to Population data (PHC 2005)..... <BNEW 2018>



### Women in Governance & Leadership (BNEW 2017)





## WE ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR PARTNERS



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