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Disabled Persons' Association of Bhutan



ANNUAL REPORT

2019

Disabled Persons' Association of Bhutan (DPAB)

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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

The Association endeavours to meet the following objectives to realize its vision and mission outlined above:

- 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



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.



Seal

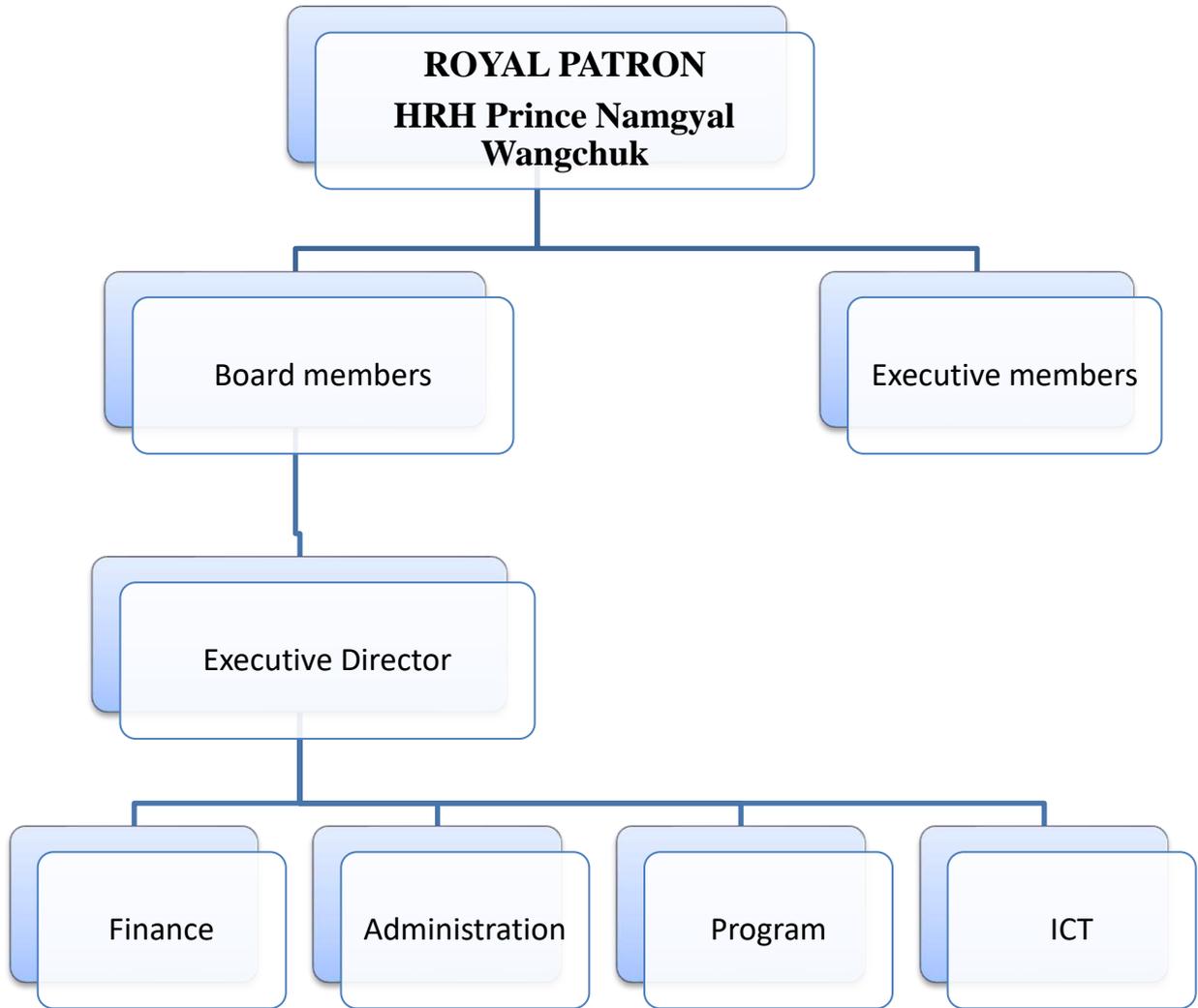
CHAIRPERSON
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Patron-His Royal Highness Prince Namgyel Wangchuck



DISABILITY AWARENESS PROGRAM TO THE LOCAL LEADERS



Local Leaders in Bhutan are the most influential people at the Gewog level, whose decisions can have a lasting impact both on people and environment. Local leaders of the community includes Gups, Mangmis, Tshogpas, Village Health Workers and any other important figures in the community. In view of this, the

members of DPAB initiated and carried out an awareness program on disability issues to the local leaders of three Dzongkhags. The awareness program was carried out through the Disability Equality Training approach whereby persons with disabilities themselves advocated and shared their lived experiences to the local leaders and other participants. The three Dzongkhags covered were Thimphu, Chukha and Pemagatshel.



The awareness and advocacy programs were attended by around more than 400 local leaders and other significant community figures, whose decisions people in the community valued and respected. DPAB team shared about the rights of PWDs, the challenges they face and what needs to be done to curb the issue of the negligence of PWDs in the community and at the community level. The program also focused on the importance of including persons with disabilities in the decision-making bodies and forum.

DPAB also met with the focal persons in the twenty districts. On thanking all the focal persons for their unwavering service to persons with disabilities, DPAB team shared about the rights of PWDs in general and also the importance of having PWDs in the decision-making body to share lived experiences of challenges faced.

Rehabilitative Programs: Independent Living Skill, 8 January 2019

Persons with disabilities do not require sympathy and pity. They require empathy and opportunities. They need space and attention to their skills. DPAB, as the leading organization in the disability sector, annually organize and conduct rehabilitative program called Independent Living Skills, whereby participants are empowered to enhance their skills through a series of trainings.



In 2019, DPAB, through financial support from UNICEF, provided training to ten youth with disabilities in Tailoring and Embroidery. The youth with disabilities were trained by Mr Pema Dorji (Person with Wheelchair), who is a successful entrepreneur and the proprietor of Tailoring Centre at Babesa. The participants were trained for five months.

The main aim of the project was to provide independent living skills so that youth with disabilities have a chance to earn and lead an independent life. The program also aimed to



minimize the poverty rate amongst the PWDs. With the long term goal of contributing to the overall development of PWDs, DPAB provides platform and opportunities for PWDs to recognize them as a productive citizen, capable of deciding for the larger society.

ICT training



With the advent of information and communication technologies (ICTs), new hopes are emerging for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Despite the enormous challenges, sincere efforts are being undertaken to involve, ICTs to counter issues around disability. With this view, DPAB organized a five-month-long training to PWDs in ICT.

Starting from to 29 April till 7 August 2019, ten persons with disabilities; 5 persons with blindness, two persons with low vision and three persons with physical disabilities, attended training in ICT and office management at Dechen IT & Management Institute, Changangkha, Thimphu. The training mainly aimed to strengthen the existing skills and knowledge of persons with disabilities on ICT and office management. DPAB coordinated it with the financial support from the Austrian Development Agency and Normisjom Project.

Disability Dialogue

DPAB, as an apex organization for persons with disabilities, organized Disability Dialogue to orient and sensitize general mass about the recently approved National Policy for Persons with Disabilities in Bhutan. The Disability Dialogue, which was carried out through workshop and BBS TV Discussion was attended by many expertise from Thailand, India, Japan and Bhutan. Funded by the Austrian Coordination Office based in Thimphu, the program-oriented participants on the content of the policy and objectives of the National Policy. In gist, the policy seeks to improve the lives of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) through following set of objectives:



- a) Empower the PWDs to enjoy their rights so that they can fully and equally participate as member of the society.
- b) To help PWDs to understand their rights and responsibility as a citizen.
- c) Promote inclusive development planning through mainstreaming disability initiatives in

plans, policies and programs in all sectors.

- d) Improve access to opportunities and services for PWDs.
- e) Improve the socio-economic condition of PWDs and their family and
- f) Change the attitude and behaviour of society towards PWDs.

Consumer Protection Workshop



Every citizen of the country has Consumer Protection Rights. These rights protect the people/ consumers from faulty measure, outdated and inferior quality goods. Often than not, people with disabilities are shunned from this fold. The dogma of disability being inability to walk the mall is

prevalent. Owing to this, people with disability remained under-informed about the Consumer Protection Rights. So, on 8 August 2019, the Office of Consumer Protection under the Ministry

of Economic Affairs, Royal Government of Bhutan (MoEA) carried out an advocacy program on consumer protection to persons with disabilities and the DPAB's team.



The objective of the program was to educate the participants on consumer rights and duty, health risk, products hazard, weight and

its measures, prices, quality, credit conduction, products labelling, durability, performance, reparability, truthfulness, availability, consumers' grievances and consumer choice and competitive market as provisioned in the consumer protection act of Bhutan 2012.

Collaboration Workshop: Organizations of Persons with Disabilities coming together



One of the most significant factors that contribute to the success of any organization is whether or not there is a team spirit among organizations with similar nature of work. Working in teams enables organizations to be quicker and more effective in their work. Working in a group is collaboration. Collaboration challenges people to think, articulate and

receive clarity about their competencies. It serves as a mirror that gives them a glimpse of their strengths and weaknesses.



In view of this, DPAB organized a five-day collaborative workshop at Paro from 15th -19th August. Three Disabled People's Organizations in Bhutan: Ability Bhutan Society, Disabled Persons' Association of Bhutan (DPAB) and Draktsho Vocational Training Centre for Special Children & Youth, attended the workshop to synchronize mandates of the three organization.

White Cane Safety Day

According to the National Population and Housing Census, 2017, people with blindness tops the list amongst people with disabilities. People with blindness are the forefront of the formation of the Association (like DPAB). People with visual disability are so well-associated with the society that, there are



many people with blindness working in various level in the society. To mark their speciality, the Community of persons with blindness in Thimphu observed the International White Cane Safety Day on 15th October. The White Cane Safety Day was first observed in the United States in 1964. Since then, 15th October of every year is celebrated annually as the White Cane Safety Day. This is the day where the achievements of people with blindness is celebrated. The day also marks the white cane as an essential symbol of independence for persons with blindness. Hundreds of persons with blindness and persons with low vision, walked from three different locations around Thimphu City. The walk was to create awareness about the importance of White Cane to the general population.

The day-long program successfully concluded with cultural show at RUB Hall supported by Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC), UNDP Bhutan, HM's Office, Little Bhutan Tour Company and Disabled Persons' Association of Bhutan (DPAB).

Braille Production Training



On 19 September 2019, a Computerized Braille Production Training was started for five days. DPAB organized the training with financial support from UNICEF, and technical and equipment support from Japan Braille Library (JBL). The main aim of the training was to sieve the following benefits from this Computerized Braille Production.

- ✓ Easy and faster access to information through Braille text on right time.
- ✓ Promote personal knowledge and skills for their future career.
- ✓ Equip DPAB staff with skills to handle Everest Embosser for efficient administration of the DPAB in providing help to all the people with blindness.

Japan Braille Library donated Index Everest V5 Braille Embosser to DPAB on 20 September 2019. The DPAB team has also received training on how to operate Index Everest V5 Braille Embosser. DPAB staff also learned about its services and maintenance. The training concluded with awarding the certificate of completion to all the participants.

Cultural Program



Disability is a global phenomenon. It is much more prevalent than we credit it to be. To help foster diversity and exploration for a better understanding of people with disability in the society, the DPAB members

participated in SAMBHAV program from 15th to 17 November 2019. This has been annually organized by Association for Learning Performing Arts (ALPANA) at New Delhi, India. The event has been a platform since 2006 for the Artists with disabilities to showcase their talents and abilities with other countries around the Asia Pacific Region. The members participated in evening performances, seminars, art workshop, yoga workshop, music therapy and dance therapy sessions.

International Day for Person with Disabilities

Human rights and duties are becoming more defined and streamlined. Every facet of human society and organizations recognize a day to voice their agenda. Like the Feminist society and the LGBTQ organization, DPAB also marked a day to voice out their uniqueness. Coinciding with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities of Bhutan was launched by the RGOB in Thimphu on 3 December 2019. The policy is one of the most comprehensive policies for Persons with Disabilities, which was formulated with the participation of persons with disabilities themselves, their parents and representatives.

The policy covers significant areas such as Education, Health, Economic Security Policy and Planning, Protection and Access to Justice, Built Environment, Family and Caregiver, Public



Transport, Information Communications and Technology, Disaster Risk Reduction, Political Participation among others. The policy was also launched in Braille format for easy access by persons with blindness.

A group of persons with various disabilities also celebrated the day at Phuentsholing Middle Secondary

School. The day was marked with various cultural programs and speeches. The day in Phuentsholing was graced by Honorable Zimpoen Wom Dasho Chewang Rinzin, Director, RIGSS, Phuentsholing.

Disability Equality Training to City Bus Staff

Disability Equality Training (DET) is an approach DPAB employs for creating awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities in Bhutan. Thus, DPAB with the financial support from UNPRPD funding, organized one-day special training session to the whole staff of City Bus Service Limited. The training was organized to improve



accessibility for persons with disabilities, to change the attitude of bus operators and to provide appropriate accommodative support services to passengers with disabilities. A total of 87 city bus operators attended the training on 8 December 2019.