



ANNUAL REPORT 2012



READ Bhutan
Inspiring Rural Prosperity

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READ Bhutan is an affiliate of the US-based nonprofit organization READ Global. READ believes that empowering rural communities is critical to alleviating global poverty. We establish community library and resource centers (READ Centers) as vehicles for social and economic transformation.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR

READ Bhutan was established in 2008 with a goal of transforming rural communities by creating access to knowledge and opportunities. With the help of our partner communities, we have built the first rural community libraries in the country. Before READ began its work in Bhutan, the country had only one public lending library.

2012 was an exciting and successful year for us at READ Bhutan. We successfully added three more READ Centers to our portfolio – Chuzagang in the south, Rongthong in the east, and the Model Center in Thimphu – taking the number of Centers in the country to five and reaching out to more than 34,500 people in 11 villages of four districts. From a subsistence farmer who became a business owner, to a mother who was able to learn to read, to a community that is providing outreach to schools through their READ Center, your support helped us reach thousands of new villagers this year. We would like to thank all our funders, partners, and supporters alike for your continued support to READ Bhutan.

In order to deepen our impact, in the coming months and years, READ Bhutan will continue to prioritize programs and activities in rural Bhutan that will enhance literacy, develop communities and create better livelihood options. Some of these programs include literacy classes, both in the local language and English, information and communications technology (ICT) development, promotion of media literacy, women's empowerment programs and leadership trainings, health and sanitation, financial literacy, and livelihood trainings, to list a few.

Though we have achieved a lot and reached some important milestones in our effort to enhance rural literacy skills and provide access to a world of information, and in the process empowered one community at a time, there is still much work to be done. Bhutan has one of the lowest literacy rates in the region and 41% of adults Bhutanese cannot read. Two thirds of our population live in rural areas with rugged terrain and poor infrastructure, 67% still lack access to the Internet and 39% have no electricity. Due to the above factors, access to resources and information is very limited.

It is our sincere hope that rural farmers will have access to not only books and computers, but also resources and programs that will empower them to eventually embrace a brighter future. READ Bhutan will continue to help create vibrant places to live and thrive in Bhutan. And this can only be achieved through the generous support of our funders and tireless efforts of our partners (both local and international). I sincerely hope that you will continue to support us in all our endeavors to create increased rural prosperity – one village at a time!



Thinley Choden, Country Director



2012 in Review

5 READ CENTERS
3 new in 2012

5 SUSTAINING ENTERPRISES
3 new in 2012

REACH:

34,507 VILLAGERS
22,705 new in 2012

Children pick up trash around their community as part of an environmental campaign at their local READ Center.



RONGTHONG CENTER

Trashigang District

Established: April 2012

Reach: 7,000 villagers

Sustaining Enterprise: Poultry cooperative, cafeteria

The lack of infrastructure in rural Bhutan makes access to health-care especially difficult. To meet this need, the Rongthong Center collaborated with the Ministry of Health to conduct monthly clinics for women and children, offering check-ups, immunizations, and post-natal care. Twenty-five to thirty women continue to visit the clinic each month.



CHUZAGANG CENTER

Sarpang District

Established: October 2012

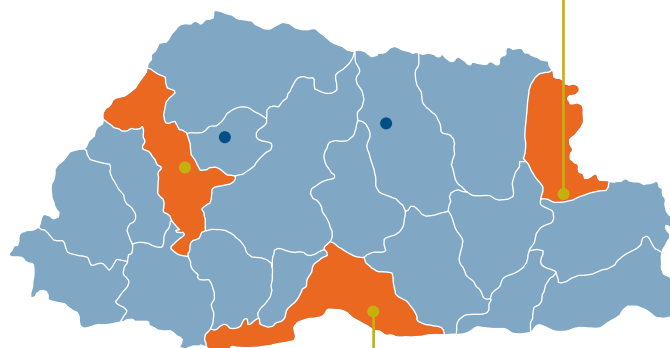
Reach: 3,382 villagers

Sustaining Enterprise: Farm tractor rental

The Chuzagang Center has become a respected resource in the regional agricultural community. Just one month after it opened, the Center in partnership with CAFCO (Chuzagang Agricultural Farmers' Cooperative) held a training with 115 local farmers on the advantages of forming agricultural cooperatives. The farmers also learned about the Center's tractor rental sustaining enterprise and how this resource can benefit their businesses.

Since Bhutan opened its borders in the 1970s, exposure to technology and cultural influences

has created both opportunities for growth and challenges for sustainability. 2012 saw an expansion of mobile networks and electrification, but also an increase in school dropouts and urban migration. READ has been working in Bhutan since 2008 to mitigate these challenges by providing educational and economic opportunities to rural communities through READ Centers. Other than our Centers, only one public lending library exists in the entire country.



- New 2012 Centers
- Centers Established Before 2012
- 2012 Expansion Regions

2012 was an exciting year of recognition of our work and geographic expansion in Bhutan. We opened three Centers in remote districts, doubling our reach. We won two global awards: the Better World Books LEAP Grant to fund a new library, and a Beyond Access award, enabling us to increase women's civic participation. The growing recognition of our model culminated in a partnership with the government of Bhutan to establish the READ Model Center in Changjiji, Thimphu, with the Prime Minister of Bhutan serving as Chief Guest for the Center's inauguration. Through this Center, we are raising awareness about our model and testing innovative programs to be replicated across the country.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

- **22,705** new villagers gained access to READ Centers in 2012.
- **500** students and community members took part in an environmental cleanup campaign for the Ura Center's second anniversary (see photo left).
- **300** women participated in a menstrual health program, a topic that is often considered taboo in Bhutan.

Economic Empowerment



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
EDUCATION
TECHNOLOGY
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

According to Gross National Happiness (GNH) Commission, **65% of Bhutanese people depend on agriculture for their livelihood**, although it accounts for only 20% of the country's GDP. Due to difficult geographic terrain and meager economic returns from agriculture, rural-urban migration is one of the biggest challenges in the country. READ Bhutan works to empower communities with knowledge and livelihood skills to make rural villages vibrant places to live and thrive.



MEET TSHERING ZANGMO

59-year-old Tshering is a farmer in the southern district of Sarpang, where most villagers depend on horticulture, livestock and rice farming. Tshering and her husband had hard time supporting their four children since all of their farm work had to be done manually. But in 2012, READ Bhutan opened its fourth Center in Chuzagang, a neighboring village. As its sustaining enterprise, READ Bhutan purchased a farm tractor to help local villagers transport agricultural products and plow their fields at a small cost. The profits go towards maintaining the Center. With the tractor rental, farming has become much easier for Tshering and her family. They are now able to plow their paddy fields without much manpower. "Before, we had to rely on oxen to plow our fields, but the tractor makes the farm work easier and faster too," she says. "We also hire the tractor to transport our goods to market."

2012 BY THE NUMBERS:

115

115 farmers attended a **FARMER'S TRAINING** at the Chuzagang READ Center in 2012. Officials from Chuzagang Agriculture Farmers Cooperative (CAFCO) educated farmers on the importance of cooperatives and benefits of being a cooperative member.

\$6,949

was generated in sustaining enterprises at READ Centers in Bhutan in 2012. By the end of the year, READ Bhutan had successfully launched **FOUR SUSTAINING ENTERPRISES**, ranging from farm tractors to poultry farms and a cafeteria. On top of creating local jobs, these enterprises also bring about economic benefits for the whole community.



Women Farmers Training, Chuzagang READ Center

Education



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
EDUCATION
TECHNOLOGY
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

More than 40% Bhutanese are illiterate. Women struggle even more – 61% are illiterate, and most lack marketable employment skills. This situation is further aggravated by a lack of access to educational resources. Many rural communities lack non-school based educational resources – leaving illiterate adults with few opportunities to learn. READ Bhutan offers educational programs for villagers of all ages and backgrounds, focusing on developing literacy skills and creating a culture of reading that will be carried on into future generations.





MEET PEMA LHAMO

Like many subsistence farmers in Bhutan, Pema left school at a young age to work and was married as a teenager. Without an education, she couldn't envision a life for herself—or her five-year-old daughter—outside of her farm. The Rongthong READ Center launched a literacy course in partnership with the Ministry of Education for adults like Pema, teaching them to read and write in the evenings after working in the field. Pema has risen to the top of her class. "I have a dream to open my own small business," she said. Her next goal is to learn English. "We need English for everything," she added, "to understand our bus seat number and to pay for meals at restaurants." Because of the Center, Pema can prioritize her education. She has also become a role model for her daughter, who attends the Center's playgroup and uses books and computers. Pema is determined to send her daughter to school and give her the life choices she didn't have.

2012 BY THE NUMBERS:

80

people received **LITERACY** trainings through Non-Formal Education (NFE) classes conducted at the READ Centers in partnership with the Ministry of Education. NFE classes attempt to teach farmers who had no opportunity to go to school. In 2012, two READ Centers participated in the program. READ Bhutan plans to conduct NFE classes in all its Centers with support from Ministry of Education.

500

people received **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND AWARENESS** training in 2012. We launched a Community Waste Management program in the community of Ura through our first READ Center. Cleaning campaigns were also held in READ communities, during which dustbins were distributed and farmers were educated on the health and environmental benefits of waste management.



Playgroup, Rongthong READ Center

Technology



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
EDUCATION
TECHNOLOGY
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Nearly two-thirds of Bhutanese live in rural areas.

40% have no electricity, and only 14% have access to the Internet. The gap between urban and rural areas with regards to access to information is wide owing to lack of adequate information communications technology (ICT) infrastructure, and poor Internet access in rural villages. READ Centers offer trainings to enhance computer and Internet skills, and provide free access to computers and the Internet where available





MEET KEZANG CHODEN

Growing up in rural Bhutan, Kezang had never used a computer, and she was unaware of how they could be useful in her life. When she heard about basic computer classes and trainings offered through her local READ Center, she was intrigued and signed up. The training program covered basic computer literacy, along with an introductory course on Internet browsing. Kezang enjoyed the classes so much that she enrolled in advanced ICT trainings on Microsoft Word, Excel and more. "[The classes] helped me learn a great deal about computers," says Kezang. "Earlier I could hardly use a computer, but now I use it with so much ease." Kezang's newfound skills helped her do more in her job as an instructor at the Skills Training Center established by the Youth Development Fund (YDF) – a partner of READ Bhutan. "The Internet has made my life so much easier!" says Kezang.

2012 BY THE NUMBERS:

101

people received **BASIC COMPUTER TRAINING** in 2012. These trainings were conducted to impart basic computer literacy skills and introduce the wealth of information available on the Internet. The ICT trainings also covered software useful for school and the job market, such as Microsoft Word and Excel. The participants ranged from young students to monks.

29,066

villagers have access to **FREE INTERNET SERVICES** through our three READ Centers with Internet connection. Each READ Center is equipped with an ICT room with computers, Internet access (where available) and provides computer skills training to the community members.

In 2013, in partnership with our local ICT consultant – Athang Training Academy, READ Bhutan plans to formalize ICT strategy and work towards providing Internet services to more rural communities and conduct trainings for READ communities.



Monks learn to use computers

Women's Empowerment



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
EDUCATION
TECHNOLOGY
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Although the Bhutanese government has encouraged greater participation by women in political and administrative life, men continue to dominate the social system. The trend is due mostly to traditional norms and a lack of access to information. There are very few women in leadership roles. READ Bhutan advocates for and enables women to participate in the public space and take part in democratic processes by empowering them with a variety of programs, including literacy, health, and leadership trainings.





MEET AUM TSHERING CHODEN

Growing up, Tshering wasn't taught very much about women's health, as subjects like menstruation were considered taboo. In 2012, at the age of 45, Aum Tshering finally got to learn about menstrual health, hygiene and management through her local READ Center. READ Bhutan provided the training as part of women's health awareness program in all five READ communities of Ura, Rongthong, Chuzagang, Punakha and Changjiji (Thimphu). Aum Tshering said that the program was "really helpful" to the community women. "It opened our eyes to this important subject of women's health. Normally, we never speak of such issues, but the library [Ura READ Center] provided a platform to talk about [them]. I feel it is important for all women to understand at least the basics of maintaining our menstrual health. And today we are more aware of the issue from what we learned from the sessions conducted at the library."

2012 BY THE NUMBERS:

34

women and children received **HEALTH SERVICES** at the Rongthong READ Center's outreach clinic. The clinic, which is carried out in partnership with the Ministry of Health, conducts a monthly check up both for mothers and their children. Through the clinic, services like de-worming, nutrition, safe motherhood, and family planning are carried out.

300

community women received **AWARENESS TRAINING ON WOMEN'S HEALTH AND HYGIENE**. The awareness training and workshop educated women on menstrual health and methods of maintaining hygiene – a topic that is not well understood in many rural areas of Bhutan. Sex education is never part of school curricula and talking of topics like menstrual health and hygiene is considered a taboo.

\$10,000

was awarded to the Ura READ Center for a **WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAM** in 2012. READ developed the program, entitled "**WOMEN REPRESENT: BOOSTING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC SPHERE,**" which was awarded the global prize by Beyond Access in the category of Civic Participation. The Project aims to educate and inform women on the need to become active participants in roles ranging from politics to everyday social life. In 2013, READ Bhutan will conduct women's leadership trainings, offer health classes on women's health, conduct period discussion forums at Ura to discuss women's issues among others.

Institutional Partners

READ Bhutan would like to thank all our institutional partners in Bhutan and from around the world for joining us in inspiring rural prosperity. Leading corporations, foundations, international NGOs and the government have partnered with READ Bhutan to further our mission through monetary contributions, program partnerships, in-kind support, and employment engagement. Through these partnerships, we have been able to expand our reach across Bhutan.



BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation

THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has been an integral partner for READ since 2006. Since then the Foundation has supported our expansion into Bhutan and India, and has more recently provided capacity-building support to help us strengthen our program design, information and communication technologies offerings, monitoring and evaluation processes, and fundraising capacity.

Linklaters

LINKLATERS

Linklaters Tokyo LLC partnered with READ Bhutan to fund the Ura Center, our first READ Center in Bhutan, thus enabling READ to become the only organization establishing public lending libraries in the country. Since this initial partnership, Linklaters has continued to support READ's programmatic work in Bhutan, including the funding of resources for our Center in Pema Gatshel.



DRUK SATAIR

Druk Satair is a mining company based in Samdrup Jongkhar and Pema Gatshel, eastern Bhutan. In 2013, as part of the company's corporate social responsibility drive, Druk Satair is partnering with READ Bhutan to establish the infrastructure of our Center in Pema Gatshel.



Better World Books awarded their annual LEAP (Literacy and Education in Action Program) grant to READ Bhutan in 2012 to establish the library section of READ Bhutan's Model Center in Thimphu.



Beyond Access and **IREX** granted the Ura READ Center its 2012 award in civic participation for a program entitled "Women Represent: boosting women's participation in the public sphere".



Marion Institute and **Eco-Cycle Design** provided funding for the READ Center in Rongthong, and partnered with READ Bhutan to provide trainings on eco-friendly design and construction.

The Rogers Family Foundation

The Rogers Family Foundation based in Hawaii provided funding towards READ Center programs and activities.

OTHER INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTERS:

Bank of Bhutan
Bhutan Power Corporation
Blue Planet Foundation
CAFCO
Druk Holding and Investments (DHI)
SABAH Bhutan
Space 34

IN-KIND SUPPORTERS:

Google
IREX
Judith Reading Room
National Housing Development Corporation Ltd. (NHDCL)

PROGRAM PARTNERS:



Ministry of Education

READ Bhutan partners with the Ministry of Education to conduct Non-Formal Education and other literacy programs through READ Centers.



The Loden Foundation

READ Bhutan partners with Loden Foundation to conduct Early Childhood Care and Development programs at our Ura READ Center.



VAST Bhutan

READ Bhutan partners with VAST Bhutan to conduct and organize youth interaction annual art camps.

OTHER PROGRAM PARTNERS:

Athang Training Academy
Bhutan Center for Media and Democracy
Bhutan Youth Foundation
Department of Agriculture and Marketing Cooperatives,
Ministry of Agriculture
Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF)
KCD Productions
Lhaksam
Ministry of Health
Radio Valley
RENEW Bhutan
Taj Tashi

Financial Summary

READ Bhutan's financial highlight represents the sources of revenue collected and consolidated program and administrative expenses of our activities in 2012.

- In 2012 the biggest sources of funding continued to be from foundations and individuals abroad. The most significant was a grant from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to enhance our organizational capacity and promote our long-term sustainability, which resulted in significant investments in monitoring and evaluation, strategic planning, and sustainability.
- READ Bhutan's program related expenses increased considerably compared to the previous year, due to program expansion including the establishment of three new READ Centers, and new program initiatives in information and communications technology, women's empowerment, and health education.
- The net income surplus of BTN 6,933,030 is the result of program delays due to slower than anticipated community mobilization and participation. Since community mobilization is an important part of our model, we delayed some program implementation. As a result, we carried over the funding to 2013.

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT SUMMARY, IN BTN

	2011	2012
REVENUE		
Fundraising Income	7,674,525	16,683,803
Total Revenue	7,674,525	16,683,803
EXPENSE		
Program Services	5,384,127	7,978,306
Fundraising	192,162	1,304,310
Administrative	254,346	468,158
Total Expense	5,830,635	9,750,773
Net Income	1,843,900	6,933,030

SUMMARIZED BALANCE SHEET (BTN)

	2011	2012
ASSET		
Current Assets	4,883,970	11,555,053
Fixed Assets	1,218,379	1,958,580
Other Assets	-	14,000
Total Assets	6,102,349	13,527,633
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities	1,352,870	1,845,124
Equity	4,749,479	11,682,509
Total Liabilities	6,102,349	13,527,633



Leadership

READ Bhutan Team

Thinley Choden

Country Director

Tandin Norbu

Deputy Director

Kezang Choden

Program Officer

Ngawang Phuntsho

Development Officer

Rinchen Choden

Field Coordinator

Ganesh Chettri

Field Coordinator

Tashi Pem

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