



The Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative

Activities Report for 1st April to 31st December, 2015

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Organic Agriculture	3
Numbers of people trained were:	5
Land management - terracing:.....	6
Ten intra - Gewog exchange:	6
Appropriate Technology	8
Training on installation, maintenance, and usage of appropriate technologies:	10
Zero Waste	11
Youth and Education.....	16
Mindfulness Camp for Educators.....	17
The Chogyi Gyatsho Institute Pilot Project and LME Teacher Training.....	18
Other Youth and Education activities	19
Internship programme.....	20
Volunteer programme.....	20
Training and workshops	21
The Menchari GNH Model Village Project.....	22
Organizational development	23
Funding Strategies	27
New donor diversification.....	28

Note: Unlike in the past, this report is more activity driven while being mindful of the larger goals.

Introduction

This report is designed to outline in broad terms what activities SJI undertook from April 1st until December 31st, 2015 (which continues from the last report covering the period December 2010-March 2015). This period was a very active time for SJI both programmatically and organizationally. The summer saw the arrival of a new Executive Director, Dasho Neten Zangmo (who completed her term as Bhutan's Anti-Corruption Chairperson), and throughout this period there were a number of new-hires and returning staff and consultants. Structurally, SJI welcomed its sister organization Lhomon Education (LME) into its managerial framework. This merger allows SJI to better address its mandate of education and youth-oriented programming, while allowing LME to function with minimized organizational redundancy, and with a much-improved access to resources. SJI also saw its funding change in fundamental ways. Its non-renewable IDRC grant expired in March, and funding continued through Maitri Trust with effect from July 1st. There were also a number of other grants through various organizations that will be outlined below.

Even though the funding sources changed, the mission and objectives remain unchanged. The previous activity report December 2010 to March 2015 outlined the objectives for IDRC funding as focusing on improving living standards in Samdrup Jongkhar and establishing food security and self-sufficiency, while fully protecting and enhancing the natural environment and making it resilient to climate change, strengthening communities, stemming the rural-urban migration tide especially among educated youth, and fostering a cooperative, productive, entrepreneurial, and self-reliant spirit grounded in a rights-based approach to development, particularly focusing on women and youth.

Internal and external capacity development are mainstreamed into all SJI activities, and work as an underlying thread in everything from collaborations with our stakeholders to research, trainings, events, camps, workshops and other implementation in the field. Indeed, SJI sees community capacity development as essential for long-term project sustainability, to strengthen

local ownership and active community participation in all activities, and to ensure that nothing we do produces a sense of dependence either on SJI or external providers.

Organic Agriculture

Central to SJI's mission of providing ecologically-minded economic development opportunities, designed to increase self-sufficiency while decreasing rural-urban migration, the Organic Agriculture programme has continued to initiate meaningful change across the Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag. The activities below demonstrate that SJI continues to do so by carefully selecting appropriate locations for new projects, continually engaging in a participatory consultation model with all involved parties, qualitative and quantitative assessment of efficacy of program, intensive training and follow-up on proven methods and technologies, and monitoring of the continuation of projects.

- Four vegetable groups formed in Dewathang Gewog:
- Dewathang has good potential for vegetable production, as it is situated near potential local and regional markets, including large institutions and the border with Assam, India. Dewathang's farmers and youth are increasingly leaving farm work and taking jobs like construction work, driving and other small businesses. As a result, aging farmers are left to manage their farms alone, suffering considerable farm labor shortages and increasingly depending on their children's income from off-farm works. In an attempt to alleviate farm labor shortages, and hopefully to minimize rural to urban migration, SJI began working with local government to establish vegetable groups in Dewathang Gewog. From 13th to 23rd April, 2015, four vegetable groups (67 members in total with women in majority) were formed, (Martang, Domphu, Rekhey and Brongteree) with technical support from the Agriculture Extension Officer (AEO).
- Fifty one farmers trained on System of Rice Intensification (SRI):- The SJI is promoting SRI in the Dzongkhag as a means of producing higher paddy yield in the region's limited paddy land. Improvements in yield would promote self-sufficiency among farmers and better enable the Dzongkhag to reduce rice imports. On 18th and 27th July and 6th August,

Activity Report: April to December, 2015

2015, farmers of Rekhey village under Dewathang, Pemathang, Langchenphu and Phuntshothang Gewogs were trained on transplanting paddy using SRI method by AEOs and the SJI staff.

- Forty four farmers trained on plantation of vegetables: Normally farmers broadcast seeds after loosening the soil, which is one of the reasons why farmers don't grow enough vegetable seedlings for transplanting. From 15th to 19th August, 2015, members from three vegetable groups were trained on bed making, nursery raising and transplanting of vegetables in collaboration with the Agriculture Extension Officer.
- Fifty farmers trained on fruit tree grafting and seed saving: Traditionally farmers saved their own seeds and were self reliant. Most farmers continue to do so, especially for the crops that the native crops. However, with changing farming patterns, and diversification of crops there are imminent risks of diminishing native agro-diversity and growing dependence on the government for seeds. This, in turn, makes farmers insecure. High quality, high yielding and weather, diseases and pests resilient seeds that are locally adapted are one of the most important materials for farmers. Seed saving is central to sustainability and food self sufficiency, especially in the face of climate change and food insecurity. The SJI coordinated one-day training on seed saving and fruit tree grafting in Rekhey village, under Dewathang Gewog, on the 2nd of November, 2015. There were 50 participants from Martang, Domphu and Rekhey Chiwogs (cluster of villages). The resource persons were Mr. M.C. Gurung and Jamtsho (lead farmers from Orong Gewog).
- Forty youth trained on compost making: On the 3rd of November, 2015, students from Jigme Namgyel Engineering College (JNEC) and Dungsam Academy were trained on compost making by SJI staff. The immediate aim of the awareness program was to help the students understand the importance of good quality compost in agriculture in the hope that they will share this information with their friends and family who farm in the villages. Another purpose of the program was also to collect good quality compost from villages to send to Ludrong Memorial Garden as a gift from the people of Dewathang. It

Activity Report: April to December, 2015

was symbolic because the garden is dedicated to the Queen Mother of the 4th King, whose 60th birth anniversary the country celebrated this year.

- Twenty seven farmers were given awareness training on organic farming: A common problem in farming is soil fertility, and lack/shortage of compost. Farmers generally say, “Compost making is extra work” but progressive farmers say, “Compost making is extra income”. Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag is generally chemical fertilizer and pesticide free. Hence, training farmers on compost making and bio-pest management have been a priority for the SJI. On the 6th of November, 2015, an awareness program was conducted for framers of Chenary village on land management and soil nutrient management by lead farmers from Dewathang Gewog.
- Training of AEOs, LEOs, local government and farmers in Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag by resource person from Navdanya, India: To stop the usage of synthetic chemicals, farmers need alternatives, which can be found in nature. The key is to identify what works best. This training focused on making NPK (nitrogen, phosphate & potassium) compost, seed saving/storage, land and soil nutrient management and natural pest management with natural and locally available resources. The training was conducted by Mr. D.S Negi of Navdanya from 26th November to 9th December, 2015 in 10 gewogs (Phuntshothang, Pemathang, Martshala, Gomdar, Wangphu, Orong, Dewathang, Langchenphu, Serthi and Lauri).

Numbers of people trained were:

- Three hundred & three farmers (159 male and 144 females);
- Twenty five lead farmers selected from 11 gewogs (19 male and 6 female);
- Eleven government officials (2 Livestock Extension Officers (LEOs) and 9 (AEOs)
- Eighteen government representatives trained: Gup (head of gewog), Mangmi (deputy head of the gewog), Gaydung (clerk), 2 Gewog Administrative Officer and 13 Tshogpas (Village head person);
- 45 trainees from the College of Natural Resources; and
- 9 interns from the Gaeddu College of Business Studies.

Land management - terracing:

In order to maintain soil nutrients and to prevent soil erosion while at the same time educating the farmers on the importance of soil and land management, one terrace of 1.5 meter width and 10 meters long was cut in Menchari village under Orong Gewog and a 2 meter by 8 meter terrace was cut in Rechangloo village, under Gomdar Gewog, as a demonstration and model plot for other farmers.

- **Three Cross - Gewog exchanges:** In a cross-gewog exchange, farmers from one gewog attended training in another gewog to interact with each other and share ideas about and knowledge of relevant topics such as pest management, composting, seed making & saving and paddy or vegetable yields.
- On the 18th of July, 2015, farmers of Rekhey, under Dewathang Gewog, went to Pemathang Gewog to participate in transplantation of paddy using SRI method.
- On the 2nd of December, 2015, farmers of Lauri Gewog attended Mr.D.S. Negi's training in Serthi Gewog.
- On the 24th of November, 2015, farmers of Rekhey village, under Dewathang Gewog, attended a field day/harvesting time to witness the results in Pemathang Gewog.

Ten intra - Gewog exchange:

- Intra-gewog exchange happens during trainings within a particular gewog. During the trainings, farmers get the chance to interact with each other and share idea about and knowledge of relevant topics such as pest management, composting, seed making & saving and paddy or vegetable yields. On the 18th of July, 2015, farmers from

Activity Report: April to December, 2015

Kathubdang and Pemathang gathered in Pemathang village, under Pemathang Gewog, during the transplantation of paddy using SRI method.

- On the 28th of July, 2015, farmers from Dewathang, Langchenphutay, Langchenphumay, Golantee and Aguarthang gathered in Langchenphu Gewog during the transplantation of paddy using SRI method.
- On the 2nd of November, 2015, farmers of Martang and Domphu came to Rekhey Chiwog, under Dewathang Gewog, during the training conducted by 2 lead farmers from Orong Gewog.
- 1st December, 2015, farmers from Rekhey and Martang attended Mr. D.S. Negi's training in Domphu, under Dewathang Gewog.
- On the 6th of November, 2015, farmers from Reshore attended the awareness training program on organic farming and land management in Gayzor, under Dewathang Gewog, which was conducted by one of the lead farmers of Dewathang.
- On the 2nd of December, 2015, farmers from three villages (Sakari, Serthi & Menjong) attended the training in Menjong conducted by Mr. D.S Negi.
- On the 3rd of December, 2015, farmers from four villages (Kharung, Jampani, Jangsa & Tashiling) attended the training in Langchenphu Gewog conducted by Mr. D.S Negi.
- On the 7th of December, 2015, farmers from four villages (Chedungkhar, Bazor, Frami & Denche) attended the training in Khoyer, under Gomdar Gewog, conducted by Mr. D.S Negi.
- On the 8th of December, 2015, farmers from six villages (Pangthang, Shokshi, Yarphu, Hila, Langnangringbo & Sachelo) attended the training conducted by Mr. D.S Negi in Wangphu village.

- On the 9th of December, 2015, farmers of Brongteree vegetable group attended Mr. D.S Negi's training in Chenary Chiwog, under Dewathang Gewog.

Appropriate Technology

SJI continues to meet its mandates across its programming through collaboration with the Center for Appropriate Technology at the Jigme Namgyel Engineering College (JNEC) in Dewathang, with which it is developing appropriate and affordable technology like the roto-weeder. SJI is also continuing to search for and introduce small-scale technologies, such as the bottle-cutter.

- Rotary weeder: This technology has been tested in Langchenphu Gewog, where one of SJI's System of Rice Intensification (SRI) pilot projects is being implemented. The trial has been successful and, upon the request of farmers for an additional rotary weeder, SJI, in collaboration with CAT- JNEC, is currently fabricating 12 rotary weeders which will be completed by mid - January and distributed to farmers in our pilot areas in Pemathang and Phuntshothang gewogs. This will benefit approximately 120 households in the upcoming season.
- Material recovery facility (MRF): An MRF has been designed in collaboration with CAT - JNEC and is currently under fabrication and expected to be completed by mid – January, 2016. The new design will then be installed in Orong Gewog, where SJI's new zero waste pilot project is located. If the concept of the MRF and the design proves to be user friendly and successful, SJI will encourage and distribute the designs in other 10 gewogs starting from the February, 2016. Three gewogs (Pemathang, Phuntshothang and Gomdar) have already requested the design and training on the usage of MRF.
- Trained and distributed 40 bottle cutter machines: In order to diversify income generation from appropriate technology, especially focusing on women and youth, SJI has been promoting, distributing and training on the production of bottle cutting tool that can be easily made from available materials (a piece of wood block, nails and a pencil

Activity Report: April to December, 2015

sharpening blade). The bottle cutter is a simple device that can cut discarded PET bottles into one long string, which can then be used for weaving baskets. It is also being widely used by farmers to make string/rope to fence their gardens and farms as protection against wild animals. The idea of the bottle cutter tool has gone viral throughout Bhutan, spreading very much on its own. The bottle cutter tool is first of its kind in the country, and was brought to SJI by zero waste resource person Mr. Vishal Dhaybhai, from Udaipur, Rajasthan, in 2012.

- The SJI zero waste team and local zero waste trainers have trained approximately 300 households in making the bottle cutter tool, and about 40 bottle cutters tool have been distributed to schools, institutions and villages between the 1st of July and the 31st of December 2015. SJI has also developed a tutorial on making the bottle cutter tool, to increase the number of users throughout the country and promote recycling and reuse practices.
- Solar Dryers: After a successful field trial from September 2011 to February 2012, SJI built 23 solar dryers in Lauri (18) and Serthi (5) gewogs with funding from the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC). The demand for solar dryers has been increasing since 2012 and six solar engineers from Lauri have been persistently requesting SJI for additional dryers. In response, SJI had distributed 45 sets of ultraviolet protected sheets and 45 DC-fans in Lauri and Serthi gewogs during September and October 2015 to construct additional solar dryers on a cost sharing basis (labour, timber, CGI sheet and other accessories to be provided by the farmers) with individual farmers. As of the 31st of December 2015, 15 additional solar dryers had been constructed and another 30 dryers are expected to be completed by the end of June, 2016. With the increasing demand for solar dryers from neighboring gewogs, SJI is now up-scaling to another 3 gewogs: Dewathang, Orong and Gomdar. This will be accomplished with funding from the Austrian Coordination Office in Thimphu for building another 50 solar dryers on a cost sharing basis. The project is expected to start from the 1st of January, 2015 and will be completed by the 31st of October, 2015, and is expected to benefit approximately 500 households.

- **Waste Segregation Stations:** The SJI has designed and fabricated 25 waste segregation stations, which are now installed in strategic locations in Orong, Gomdar and Dewathang gewogs. The bins are being maintained by the local stakeholders, leaders and individual institutions. The station design (which includes 3 separate bins) has also been taken up and replicated by 4 other gewogs (Pemathang, Martshalla, Wangphu and Gomdar) and the Samdrup Jongkhar Municipality.
- **Tailoring training:** With funding from UNDP and the Agency for the Promotion of Indigenous Crafts (APIC), SJI conducted a 10 day (December 7–16, 2015) tailoring training for Dewathang’s zero waste craft group members (13 total members) and two representatives from Mantsang and Menchari village under Orong Gewog. At the end of the training programme, participants were able to design, cut and stitch different kinds of bags, purses and cushions, and they were also trained on the basic maintenance and repair of tailoring machines. In total, 5 stitching machines and one interlocking machine with accessories were handed over to the SJI office. SJI will distribute these machines by the end of January 2016 to the communities (Orong and Menchari) and to Dewathang’s zero waste craft group. SJI expects that this training will help the recipients increase and diversify income generating opportunities in their respective communities.

Training on installation, maintenance, and usage of appropriate technologies:

- **Rotary weeder:** SJI’s farmer liaisons and Dewathang’s Agriculture Extension Officer trained the SRI trial promoters (10 farmers) on the usage and maintenance of rotary weeders. According to these farmers, this technology saves them time and helps ease the challenge of labor shortage.

- Material Recovery Facility (MRF): 167 households will be trained in the usage and maintenance of the MRF by the end of January 2016 by SJI staff, a local resource person from CAT - JNEC, and SJI's zero waste trainers.

Zero Waste

One of SJI's most visible projects in the urban centers has been its zero waste programme, which uses an innovative mix of creative awareness building and concrete waste-reduction strategies in order to reduce the amount of waste created, ensure its disposal is done as ecologically as possible, and even to help change people's attitudes towards waste so that instead of being seen as something dirty, waste can be seen as an untapped resource.

The easiest example of this can be seen on any given day in the market of Dewathang, where "bottle bags," made from discarded plastic bottles, have supplanted cheap imported bags from outside. This simple project, created by SJI, not only has concrete environmental impact, but also increases self-sufficiency, creates income-generation for otherwise unemployed women, changes people's perceptions of waste, and instills a sense of involvement and pride in the community on all of these issues.

SJI has been taking its successful zero waste initiatives and, with new funding from the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation, expanding them. The crafts initiative has grown from a few interns to a dedicated cooperative group receiving frequent training, producing large amounts of Zero Waste crafts for markets, and providing its members with income. The Model Waste Reducers program has expanded, and SJI has advised groups on their own independent projects.

- Two zero waste committees formed: In addition to the ones in Wooling and Dewathang, a zero waste committee each has been formed in Samdrup Jongkhar town and Orong village on the 16th and 25th of September, 2015 to gradually instill a sense of ownership in the community through engagement and awareness creation on the dire consequences of increasing waste production. Committees consist of volunteers who are interested in systematic waste reduction. The role of a committee is to be responsible for

the implementation and internal monitoring of the zero waste practices that citizens decide to pursue, and to provide feedback to SJI and concerned authorities on the waste management activities, including future plans.

- Four zero waste trainers selected and trained: Each in Dewathang, Wooling, Orong and Samdrup Jongkhar from the 25th of September, 2015 to the 1st of October, 2015. Trainers are responsible for on-site monitoring of the project, enforcing and conducting trainings on waste segregation and creating awareness about waste-related issues in their communities with guidance from the zero waste committee. Trainers' work is monitored through their monthly work plans, which they present to the SJI based on which their salary is released. Trainers are also responsible for assisting with baseline data collection and community mapping exercises to identify and promote positive waste reduction activities in each community.
- Four model waste reducers identified and developed: One each in Dewathang (local monastery), Samdrup Jongkhar Dratshang (monastic institution), Orong (temple) and Wooling (temple). Temples and monasteries have been chosen because as centres of community events, they provide an effective platform for awareness creation and education. Zero waste *tshog* (offering) sign boards have been installed at each site. These institutions will be used as demonstration sites, especially during festivities, to train community members on the practical details of personal waste reduction strategies and where the community can look to for working examples. For example, Chokyi Gyatso Institute for Buddhist Studies in Dewathang already serves as one such model waste reducer demonstration site. In terms of organic *tshog* offering it has created a huge impact not only in the district but beyond.
- Two material recovery facilities (MRFs) designed: Land for the construction of MRF in Orong has been allocated on government land. Final approval from the dzongkhag (district) administration is awaited. Meanwhile, the design is being developed and fabrication work will start from January 2016 and expected to be completed by mid - January 2016.

- In Wooling, private land (12 decimals) was bought by the committee members for Nu. 30,000.00. Work to reconstruct the existing MRF will start from January 2016 and will be completed by the end of January 2016. The MRF will enable the local zero waste craft weavers to find materials, allow the community to store segregated materials for recycling, and prevent the community from dumping and burning their waste.
- Twenty five public segregation stations established: With the purpose of promoting waste segregation to facilitate recycling and reuse, creating awareness on the importance of waste reduction and to influence decision makers to prioritize waste management activities, SJI has installed 25 waste segregation stations (3 bins for each station) in strategic locations in Orong, Gomdar, Dewathang and Samdrup Jongkhar municipality. The bins are now being maintained by the local stakeholders and leaders.
- Five zero waste festivals/events and supplements held: SJI has conducted educational interventions (supplements) to promote waste reduction during large events in our pilot areas: Orong annual tsechu (local festival) from the 20th - 22nd of October 2015; Wooling annual tsechu from the 19th - 21st of November 2015; two events in Samdrup Jongkhar (saved over 9000 plastic cups and plates) and Dewathang coinciding with the 60th birth anniversary of 4th King from the 9th - 11th of November 2015.
- During the festivals/events, SJI demonstrated waste segregation, held recycled art exhibitions and workshops, initiated *Atsara* (festival clown)-led awareness programmes, discouraged the usage of plastic cups and plates by telling people to bring their own plates and mugs and, in some cases, providing bamboo cups and banana leaves (as plates) as alternatives.
- Engaging in recycling, repair, and zero waste handicraft enterprises: One women's zero waste craft group formed in Dewathang; supported and instituted one local recycling

Activity Report: April to December, 2015

business in Dewathang; initiated a paper bag making enterprise utilizing old newspapers; and improved linkages between local scrap dealers and the community in all SJI pilot areas.

- Nineteen educational workshops conducted: The SJI zero waste staff and local zero waste trainers conducted educational workshops in various schools, institutions and communities.
 - a. Dewathang: Dungsam Academy, Garphawong Middle Secondary School, Jigme Namgyel Engineering College and Dewathang Milk Marketing Cooperative - 4
 - b. Samdrup Jongkhar Municipality: Royal Bhutan Police 2, Dratshang 1, Community 1, School 1
 - c. Orong: Orong Higher Secondary School 1, Orong Lower Secondary School (LSS) 1, Orong Community 1
 - d. Pemathang: Pemathang LSS 1 and community 1
 - e. Gomdar: Crafts group 1, Narphong shopkeepers 1 and Tsangchelo community 1
 - f. Reshore: Community 1
 - g. Menchari: Community 1
- Six zero waste craft and four shoe repairing workshops conducted. The SJI zero waste staff, Dewathang zero waste craft group members and local zero waste trainers conducted a series of craft workshops in schools and institutions in the entire pilot project areas.
- Distribution of knowledge products: Fifteen zero waste manuals distributed to schools and institutions in all four pilot project areas and translated the zero waste manual from a

text to audio version - in English and Dzongkha. All knowledge products have been uploaded on SJI's website and the SJI YouTube channel. This was a product which was sought after at the GNH international conference in Paro.

- 233 households trained in basic recycling, repair, and zero waste handicraft practices: The SJI zero waste team and four local zero waste trainers conducted a series of trainings in all the pilot project areas. One household from the each pilot project site was identified and trained on zero waste management including recycling, repairing, and zero waste craft works.
- Creation of a community waste fund: The aim of a community waste fund is to reduce dependency on the government or any institutions for waste management services and to instill a sense of local ownership and responsibility. The willingness of a community to contribute to this fund signals their commitment to, and ownership of, the project. Reshore village, under Dewathang gewog; Narphung town, under Gomdar gewog, and Wooling village, under Orong gewog, are the first of their kind to establish a formalized community waste fund whereby the community will collect a monthly waste management fee from each household, deposited in a bank account and managed by the zero waste committee. The money, among others will be used to fund a local waste management coordinator and transportation of waste and recyclable materials to appropriate facilities.

Youth and Education

As explained in the introduction, on July 1, 2015 Lhomon Education (LME) has been merged with SJI. Besides the many benefits this extended to LME, it also provided SJI with an opportunity to better meet its mandates on education. With the infusion of organizational support, LME was, after this merger, able to redouble its efforts towards some of its key programmes: developing a holistic, student-based curriculum; and conducting a Mindfulness Camp for Educators. Additionally, LME has continued with its other two core projects: the Pilot programme and teacher training programme, outlined below.

Curriculum Development: LME has strived to develop holistic curricula for the Bhutanese classroom since its inception. Without a dedicated curriculum developer, however, the project has not moved as quickly or been as thorough as hoped. To address this need, LME hired Ms. Jackie Mitchell as its lead curriculum developer and invited her for the first introductory visit to the LME pilot programme at Chokyi Gyatso Institute (CGI) in Dewathang in December 2015.

Jackie was one of the cofounders of the Shambhala School in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, and for over twenty years has been instrumental in their curriculum design and implementation. Besides her vital experience of teaching young children, the Shambhala School has been a pioneer in mindful education, the sort of which is a key interest of LME, making Jackie an ideal candidate for such a project. To assist her in her initial information-gathering visit, SJI invited the Royal University of Bhutan and Ministry of Education to send qualified individuals to join in the curriculum development programme. Mr. Jangchub Tenzin, an assistant research officer with Centenary Institute of Education (CIE), Yonphula, and Mr. Sangay Wangchuk, a lecturer from Samtse College of Education, attended the programme. These three were joined by three SJI staff: Dr. Tashi Colman, who has been helping coordinate LME's efforts since the departure of the previous director, and who among other achievements was both a university lecturer and a key participant in the 2009 Educating for GNH Workshop in Thimphu; Dawa, LME's resident teacher, who has been helping in the development of curriculum materials thus far; and Brodie Lewis, who is serving in his third term as LME's visiting English teacher.

Together, the team undertook a wide variety of activities to jumpstart the renewed curriculum development project, including observing class at the LME CGI pilot project; meetings with dozens of local people, ranging from farmers to Rinpoches; conducting in-house meetings to develop strategy and compile a list of advisors; revisiting and familiarizing with materials like the extant Bhutan government textbooks and findings of the Educating for Gross National Happiness Workshop; and visiting local communities to discover local resources on traditional knowledge. The team has also developed a framework and strategy to enable collaboration moving forward, such that materials developed can be audited by the group and then implemented in the classroom to assess efficacy.

Mindfulness Camp for Educators

Before the entire curriculum development team had even left, LME began hosting its second Mindfulness Camp for Educators. From 21st December, 45 participants (41 were educators), predominantly from Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag, took part in a week-long mindfulness camp.

The week-long mindfulness camp was designed to provide an introduction to and foundation of mindfulness techniques to Bhutanese educators, both for their own practice and benefit, as well as to help them implement those techniques in the classroom, for the benefit of their students. Besides the coordination by LME staff, the 2015 Camp was fortunate to have teachings from Drubgyud Tenzin Rinpoche (CGI Director), Lopon Pema Longdrol (CGI Principal Teacher) and Ms. Jamyang, a longtime practitioner of mindfulness techniques who also taught at the first camp.

The camp was not only an opportunity for educators to develop their mindfulness, but also to understand some of the motives and methods of LME, who hoped to demonstrate that valuing the science of the mind that has been developed over the centuries by Bhutanese masters is a great example of how we can bring the principles of GNH, such as valuing traditional culture and wisdom, into Bhutan's educational sphere in a meaningful and tangible way.

SJI's underpinning philosophy and values was also introduced to the participants (SJI in essence is about conscious, mindful choices) in a modernizing society that is increasingly becoming materialistic.

The Chokyi Gyatsho Institute Pilot Project and LME Teacher Training

Additionally, LME continued with its two other main programmes: the Chokyi Gyatso Institute Pilot Project, and its teacher training programme.

CGI, a cultural and religious hub for the entire dzongkhag, has been the site of LME's pilot project since its inception. The monastery leadership has graciously invited LME to provide secular education to its young monks for up to 18 hours a week. Besides providing a crucial opportunity for LME to test out its curriculum and develop methods, it also provides a much-needed basic, secular education to young monks. At CGI, like most monasteries in Bhutan, monks join as young as 8 years old and lose all access to government education. And while they receive education in the traditional religious subjects, in modern Bhutan this is no longer an adequate preparation for those monks who choose to leave the monkhood later on.

In 2015 the pilot project bid farewell to its original 20 monks, who had been receiving LME education since 2012, and welcomed the 47 new young monks that had joined CGI the previous year.

These 47 monks formally started their classes in April 2015 with Teacher Dawa and Teacher Lawrence, who taught from April until September. In addition, continuing vocational education was offered to the recently "graduated" 20 monks, including computer science and electrical wiring, both taught by volunteers from the community. A remedial English class was established for 7 young monks (who had a mixture of little to no education and potential learning disabilities) which was taught by Jambay Lhamo (September through December), an intern provided by the joint effort of SJI and the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources. To continue the monks' education after Lawrence left, LME welcomed back Brodie Lewis, who had served as the visiting English teacher from October 2013 to June 2014.

The second aspect of the pilot project is to aid in teacher training for LME's Resident Teacher Dawa (and any future Resident Teachers). Dawa was hired as the Resident Teacher after a favourable meeting at the Curriculum Design Workshop in Paro, and since then has been

Activity Report: April to December, 2015

fortunate enough to receive generous amounts of training, including a session at the Alice Project in Varanasi and six weeks in California studying with the Exploratorium and Edible Schoolyard. Dawa has also received extensive training from a number of visiting teachers, including educational experts from the US, Canada, Australia, and Bhutan.

From April to the end of 2015, Dawa continued his training in several ways. First, in April, Dawa traveled to Himachal Pradesh, India for training on “21st Century Teaching Strategies,” led by an expert from Singapore. In addition, he worked closely with Teacher Lawrence, who has over twenty years of English teaching experience in Asia, and continued working with Teacher Brodie, who has developed a strong rapport with Dawa, developing materials, examining pedagogy, and developing capacity in a number of different operational ways. Dawa was also fortunate to have three visiting education experts (as mentioned above, Ms. Jackie Mitchell from the Shambhala School, Mr. Sangay Wangchuk from the Samtse College of Education, and Mr. Jangchub Tenzin from the Royal Education Council) in December, all of whom observed Dawa’s teaching and offered reflection and critiques. Dawa was also able to observe Jackie as she taught his class and implemented some of the techniques she has developed over a career of teaching children.

Other Youth and Education activities

SJI’s Youth and Education programmes, besides incorporating LME, also have a range of activities designed to engage local youth, giving them a sense of commitment to their local community, developing skills, and hopefully helping to stem the tide of rural-urban migration. Broadly speaking, these activities include providing paid internship positions for local unemployed youth, creating local volunteer opportunities, and providing workshops and trainings to the public on a variety of practical and ecologically-friendly skills. SJI also has a programme to bring in college interns on their winter vacations so they can meaningfully benefit the communities of Samdrup Jongkhar.

SJI recruited a total of 250 volunteers, 15 interns, and provided trainings to hundreds of local residents.

Internship programme

- In collaboration with Regional Office of the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, based in Samdrup Jongkhar, SJI recruited 2 unemployed youth from 1st March 2015 to 30st September 2015 as part of their training programme and preparing them for the job market.
- Recruited 4 zero waste trainers.
- Recruited 9 students from Gaeddu College of Business Studies (GCBS) and 2 from College of Natural Resources (CNR) as part of their on-job training programme, beginning 7th December 2015 (GCBS students will conclude 7th February 2015, while CNR students will conclude on 7th March 2015). Currently they are placed in Menchari village under Orong gewog where SJI has chosen to pursue a comprehensive development agenda with an aim to build a model GNH village dedicated to the 4th King. These 11 students, led by the SJI Youth Coordinator are training farmers on financial literacy while creating awareness on health, sanitation, nutrition, and the effects of alcoholism. Financial literacy training will also extend to farmers' groups. A community mapping of the farmers' socio-economic situation and biodiversity registry are also being conducted/prepared by the interns. With total rural immersion and working with the farmers, the interns learn about local culture and tradition, indigenous knowledge on health care and biodiversity and food, etc. greater appreciation for farming, organic food, understand human-wildlife conflict, cultivate life skills and spiritual values of contentment inspired by the humble lives of the farmers.

Volunteer programme

- Dumpsite cleaning: The SJI in collaboration with the Samdrup Jongkhar Municipality organized a day long dumpsite cleaning and recovery work in Dewathang where 212

volunteers from a various schools, institutions and the community extensively participated. Over 70 tonnes of garbage was segregated (whatever was possible from the waste dumped at the site for over 4 years) and collected on that day.

- Newspaper distribution: With an aim to keep the local youth engaged, informed, and to improve their reading habits, SJI installed 3 newspaper reading stations in Dewathang market on 20th March 2013. Every month, one new youth volunteer is recruited to distribute the local newspapers on a daily basis to the reading stations. The programme is now being fully run by youth volunteers and as of 31st December 2015, SJI recruited a total of 34 youth volunteers.

Training and workshops

- On 3rd November 2015 parallel with the collection of compost offered by the farmers of Dewathang for Ludrong Memorial Garden on 3rd of November 2015, in commemoration of the 60th birth anniversary of 4th King, SJI engaged 40 youth who were made aware on the importance of manure and also partially trained them on how to make quality compost.
- Recruited and trained one local teacher from 1st October to 31st December 2015 under the guidance of Lho Mon Education resident teacher. Among other administrative duties, the teacher taught remedial English class to young students at the Lho Mon Education (LME) pilot programme.
- For job-skill development and raising ecological concerns, SJI organized training in shoe repair for local youth, women, and monks from Chokyi Gyatso Institute from 5th - 8th May, 2015. The participants were trained in basic footwear repair (those available in Samdrup Jongkhar are largely of poor quality) and were supplied with basic shoe repair tools at the end of the training programme.

- Conducted an awareness programme on nutrition, health, sanitation and ills of alcoholism for Menchari village on 1st November, 2015 for 22 households together with local resource persons.
- Organized nutrition workshop for 18 villagers of Menchari on 6th November, 2015.
- Started basic computer science and electrical classes for 23 former pilot programme students at CGI on 6th October, 2015. The weekly classes are intended as a continuing vocational education for those students.
- One job skills development workshop conducted for 15 youth of Samdrup Jongkhar and Dewathang on 22nd December, 2015 in collaboration with Regional Office of the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, Samdrup Jongkhar.

The Menchari GNH Model Village Project

October 2015 saw the launch of a major new project by SJI to create a model GNH village in Menchari in Orong Gewog. Menchari has struggled to keep up with some of its neighboring villages like Orong and Wooling and is suffering from many of the common afflictions of poverty, including substandard habitation, poor health, nutrition, and sanitation, low levels of education, high rates of alcoholism and premature death, and low morale.

The issues affecting Menchari, however, are not unique to them, and can be found in villages across Bhutan and the developing world. SJI has chosen Menchari specifically for this reason to try and help it become a model village, implementing holistic development that integrates a wide range of social, economic, environmental, and human dimensions to improve the wellbeing of the people as a whole. This new project spans all the objectives above and includes new objectives related to improving nutrition, health, sanitation, and morale.

Activity Report: April to December, 2015

After securing funding from Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD), and convening with local resources and stakeholders, the launch of the Menchari Model Village Project was officially launched on December 15, 2015, and included SJI staff including Executive Director Dasho Neten Zangmo, Denjong Rinpoche (who, as the local spiritual leader has committed himself to this project), and the village and gewog heads, along with the entire Menchari community. The event featured an invocation, celebratory cultural events, and speeches from the visiting dignitaries, but most importantly featured a town hall discussion of how the program can move forward.

The same month, nine interns from the Gaeduu College arrived along with two interns from the College of Natural Resources and one SJI staff person in order to work intimately with the villagers on a number of different projects, as well as to provide the villagers with much needed financial counseling.

SJI also arranged health and sanitation trainings by a local Dewathang doctor, and has incorporated Menchari into its Organic Agriculture Programme, organizing various trainings with SJI trainers. These activities will be ongoing as further funding and projects are developed.

Organizational development

The second half of 2015 was a momentous time for SJI in terms of strengthening the organization and transforming it into a resilient and self-sufficient organization.

Activity Report: April to December, 2015

Most importantly, as mentioned in the introduction, SJI welcomed a new Executive Director, Dasho Neten Zangmo, a qualified and well respected leader who was formerly Bhutan's Anti-Corruption Chairperson for nearly a decade.

The new Executive Director joined the SJI office from 1st September 2015, with formal transition documents signed by the incoming and outgoing Executive Directors on 19th September 2015. She has instituted a full six-day working week (in pursuance of the LMS' Article of Association) and, in her first five months, has greatly strengthened staff discipline, morale, work ethic, vision, and commitment.

Dasho Neten has also visited Samdrup Jongkhar's different far-flung gewogs (27 villages), met village and district elected and appointed leaders as well as directors, principals and teachers in educational institutions, conducted and spoken at many meetings, and generally raised the SJI profile and greatly enhanced its credibility and reputation at both official and community levels. She has most effectively communicated the SJI vision and activities in the region. Her SJI presentation to the international GNH conference in November 2015 was widely acclaimed and reported in Bhutan's national press.

Another key component of the management transition was to embark on a significant upgrade of SJI's documentation and external communication tools. Thus, the full SJI team worked for a solid week to rewrite and update the SJI website and upload the many missing reports and documents. Then SJI produced its first ever brochure (many hundreds of copies of which were distributed at the international GNH conference). SJI is now working hard to archive all its reports, photographs, and other documents in one central archive for easy accessibility as opposed to having them scattered among the various staff members.

Additionally, SJI welcomed several new board members, including Mrs. Kinley Om, Secretary (Royal Institute of Management, Royal University of Bhutan); Mr. Kencho Namgay, Treasurer (Gross National Happiness Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan); Mrs. Tsering Choden, (Executive Producer, News & Current Affairs, BBS News); Mr. Sherab Jamtsho (Department of

Activity Report: April to December, 2015

Renewable Energy, Ministry of Economic Affairs); and Mr. Tashi Tshering Dukpa (Royal Civil Service Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan).

On the ground, SJI also hired four staff on contract basis: Karma Choki, and Karma Dema were hired in July as office administrator and accountant and assistant zero waste coordinator, respectively; and Sonam Tshering and Rigzin Dorji were hired in September as assistant coordinator for appropriate technology and youth and education programmes, and office driver, respectively.

As mentioned earlier, SJI also benefited of the services of three foreign consultants, Dr. Ronald Colman, Ms. Taylor Stevenson, and Mr. Brodie Lewis, all of whom had worked for SJI/LME previously, and returned to work on projects and provide trainings to the staff on a variety of topics. Dr. Colman was present throughout the year, and Taylor and Brodie were present in November and December.

Further, capacity development of SJI Staff for efficient operational management was continuously taking place during the year, particularly through increasing the complexity and responsibility of project and organizational management by local SJI staff and partners, and through internal and external trainings.

SJI has also, during this period, endeavored to increase teamwork and communication by holding extensive Saturday meetings wherein staff are briefed on the activities of their colleagues and encouraged to find areas of collaboration and cooperation. Additionally, SJI has also conducted or participated in specialized trainings for the existing and newly-recruited staff, including the following:

(a) Workshops: The SJI accountant and office administrator attended a 2-day workshop on taxation conducted by the Regional Revenue and Customs office, Samdrup Jongkhar, Ministry of Finance. She received essential training on managing SJI taxes including staff salary taxes, personal income tax, and taxes on goods and services. This was followed by another day's training programme conducted by Mr. Cheku Dorji (SJI former accountant and office

Activity Report: April to December, 2015

administrator) on the Revenue Administration Management Information System (RAMIS) and basic procurement policies and methods.

(b) Trained 3 SJI staff (Cheku Dorji, Norbu Samphel and Sherab Dorji) and 2 interns on SJI's programmatic and operational work with annual work planning - AWP (June and July 2015). This was followed by two more training sessions for all SJI staff in October-November 2015 on using and updating the SJI Annual Work Plan.

(c) Conducted a day-long induction course for the 4 newly recruited SJI staff and 2 interns on the LMS-SJI philosophy, vision, mission, and core programmes. (25th August 2015).

(d) Training for 5 SJI staff on photography, video shooting, and maintaining SJI Facebook and social media presence, conducted by outgoing Executive Director Tshewang Dendup in September 2015. This training was followed up by extensive one-on-one and team training with Brodie Lewis.

(e). Report writing: From September to November 2015, Dr. Ronald Colman conducted 4 hands-on training sessions for all 9 SJI staff on reporting and proposal outline preparation and organization; website and project description updating; annual work planning and updating' and teamwork. It was followed in December by training on cloud-based report sharing and archiving by Mr. Brodie Lewis.

(f). Through detailed electronic communication, GPI Atlantic's accountant and bookkeeper Sara Winchell has trained the SJI accountant and administrator Karma Choki in how to organize the accounting spreadsheets to track variances from budget and to assess SJI's financial status on an ongoing and cumulative basis. This service will now be explored locally.

(g). Follow up: All these group trainings have been followed up by hands-on day-to-day supervision and training of all SJI staff in all the areas referenced above, with particular focus on improved writing and reporting skills – all with the goal of strengthening overall organizational capacity so that SJI will become fully self-reliant.

Funding Strategies

1. Funding status - committed to the project by other donors during the submission of proposal
2. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
3. Samdrup Jongkhar County Administration:- Pemathang gewog is currently implementing zero waste activities through Gewog Development Grant (GDG), scheduled from 1st July 2015 to 30th June 2016. Total amount: 200000/-
4. National Organic programme (NOP) - Ministry of Agriculture and Forest:- Mr. Lungten, Agriculture Extension Officer (AEO) from Pemagatshel district, was initially transferred to SJI office on deputation with effect from 17/2/2015. He, however, left SJI by the end of April 2015 after his ministry's human resource committee objected to it as it was inadmissible for a civil servant to work in a CSO-led project, although the Minister had promised to provide an agriculture coordinator for SJI. He was transferred as the new AEO of Dewathang Gewog. The former liaisons of SJI work closely with him.
5. Bhutan Trust Fund for Environment Conservation (BTFEC) is currently funding SJI's Zero Waste project activities from 1st July 2015 to 30th June 2016. The grant is eligible for extension. Total amount: Nu. 1,914,000 .00
6. Samdrup Jongkhar District Administration :- Project: Additional funding for SJI zero waste project for conducting educational trainings in Samdrup Jongkhar. Amount: Nu. 100000 for one year 2015-2016.
7. Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, and Gaeddu College of Business Studies is currently co-funding SJI's internship programme by paying the salaries of qualified participants.

Total amount: Amount: Nu. 763200 for two years (Youth and Education programme).

New donor diversification

1. Bhutan Foundation has funded the Organic Agriculture Project, particularly the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) project from 10th July 2015 to 31st December 2015. Total amount: Nu. 63,310/-
2. Community members from Samdrup Jongkhar and Dewathang funded zero waste activities (landfill cleaning and paper bag making initiative): Nu. 15,000/- (27th September and October 2015).
3. The Association for Bhutanese Tour Operators (ABTO) has funded the zero waste, youth and education, and organic agriculture projects from 27th October to 20th November 2015. Total amount: Nu. 418,450/-
4. The Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy (BCMD) funded the Youth-led initiative programme from 14th November to 8th February 2016 (integrated development of Menchari village). Total amount: Nu. 119,880/-
5. The Agency for Promotion of Indigenous Crafts (APIC) under Ministry of Economic Affairs funded the tailoring training programme from 7th - 16th December 2015. Total amount: Nu. 90000/-
6. The Austrian Coordination Office, Thimphu, Bhutan is funding our Appropriate Technology Project for the installation of solar dryers from 1st January 2016 - 31st October 2016. Total amount: EUR 10,000/-
7. The Sustainable Development Secretariat of the GNH Commission is supporting the development of Menchari as a model GNH village. Total amount: Nu. 1000000/-

Activity Report: April to December, 2015

8. The San Francisco Tomkat Foundation will support construction of compost and urine harvesting sheds, micro-irrigation and rain harvest (energy saving & wellbeing). Total amount: US\$ 10000.
9. Orong Gewog (block) is funding Organic Agriculture activities from 1st July 2015 to 30th June 2016. Total amount: Nu. 50,000/-
10. Gomdar Gewog is funding zero waste project activities from 1st July 2015 - 30th June 2016. Total amount: Nu. 250,000/-
11. Martshalla Gewog is funding zero waste project activities in the gewog from 1st July 2015 - 30th June 2016. Total amount: Nu. 100,000/-
12. Pemathang Gewog administration also has again confirmed another Nu. 300,000/- for implementing the zero waste activities from 1st July 2016 - 30th June 2017.

SJI has written to all the heads of 11 gewogs expressing the need to build a culture of cooperation and collaboration in serving the community and soliciting financial support.

A proposal is being prepared for funding from Japanese Grant for Grassroots programmes. Submission is being targeted for January 2016.

3. Finalized funding raising strategy: Trained three new board members (Kinley Om - Secretary, Kencho Namgyal - Treasurer and Sherab Jamtsho - Member) on fundraising strategy from 23rd - 25th March 2015 in Thimphu. The SJI Executive Director is already an accomplished fundraiser as witnessed by (i) her successful Thimphu meetings (e.g. with GNH Commission), (ii) her negotiations with ABTO, and (iii) by dint of her prior reputation, which is our best guarantee of integrity and probity in fund disbursement in the eyes of Bhutan-based donors.