



### Build Bhutan Project

*Choki Tashi*

*Sr. Planning Officer, PPD*

When the COVID-19 global pandemic took the world by storm, Bhutan was not spared either as it greatly impacted various sectors of the country's economy, including construction sector, which was among the hardest hit. The restriction on the entry of foreign workers immediately after the outbreak of coronavirus created a huge workforce gap in the construction sector. The implementation of numerous planned activities and private construction risked coming to a complete halt. Ironically, while the sector faced a shortage of workforce, the pandemic unavoidably induced unemployment in other sectors with thousands of people losing their jobs and income. Additionally, thousands of Bhutanese working abroad came back, some upon completion of contracts while others were laid off. Yet, there was another group of young job seekers entering the labour market after completion of their studies who had to be equally taken care of. In 2020, the country recorded the highest ever overall unemployment rate at 5% and youth unemployment rate at a staggering 22%.



*In Picture: BBP participants*

Besides fighting the pandemic, the country had to tackle the issue of unemployment head on. It was estimated that there was a total of over 23,000 un-employed persons registered with the Ministry of Labor and Human Resource, laid off employees, employees on un-paid leave and overseas returnees. Amidst the impacts of the pandemic looming large, an opportunity was presented to transition this sizable pool to the construction sector to address two issues at the same time. Therefore, the Build Bhutan Project with a budget outlay of Nu.726.14 million was initiated and launched on July 1st, 2020 under the under the Economic Contingency Plan (ECP). The project targeted to engage 7,000 individuals over a period of two years of which **Page 2**

#### *Inside this Issue*

*Page 1,2,3 and 4 - Build Bhutan Project*

*Page 5 and 6 - Start-up Hackathon Challenge 2021*

*Page 7 - Skillshare*

*Page 8, 9 and 10 - Basic Entrepreneurship Courses*

*Page 11 - Signing of MoU and ToR*



*Page 12 - Finding Jobs in Homes in the Wake of Pandemic*

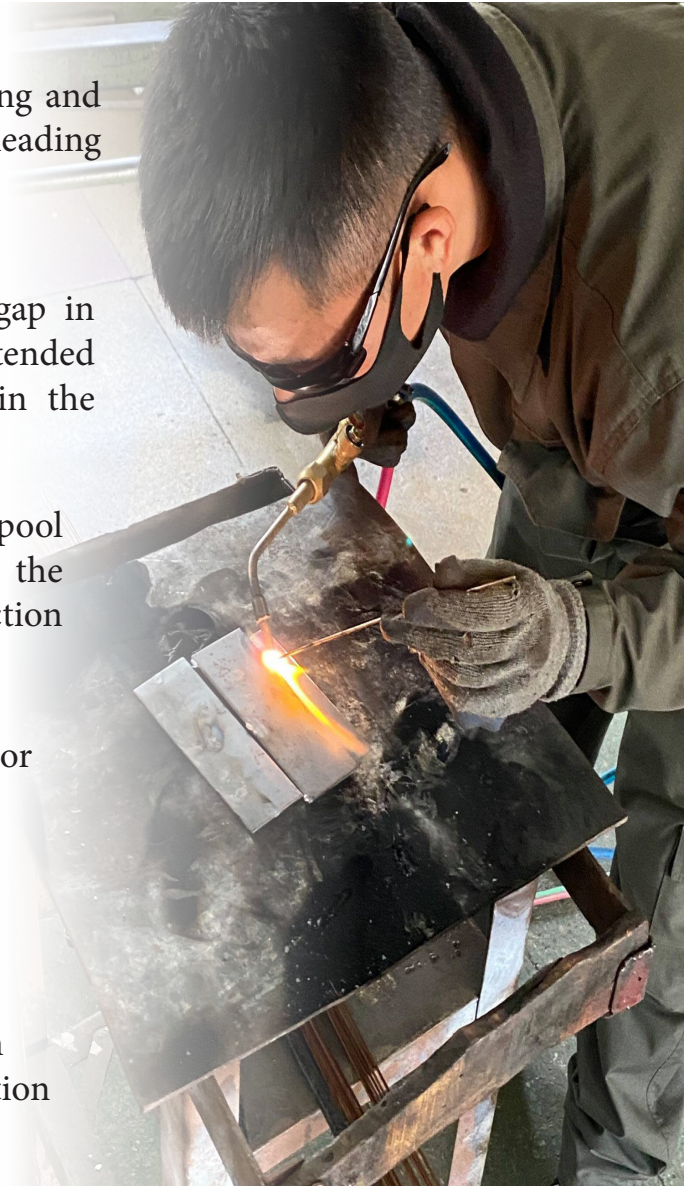
*From Page 1*

2,200 would be provided with skilling, reskilling and upskilling opportunities in construction trades leading to national certification.

### Objectives

While addressing the immediate workforce gap in the construction sector, the project also intended to address wider and long-term objectives in the construction industry, to:

-  Mobilize, create and manage a pool of skilled workforce to meet the requirement in the construction sector;
-  Promote the construction sector as an attractive avenue for employment; and
-  Design/develop attractive incentives to attract and retain the workforce in the construction sector.



To bring about a significant and transformational change in the construction sector and gradually convert it into a leading sector in terms of providing job opportunities, the BBP implemented its programs and projects largely by providing enabling environment, including policy support, initiating reforms and providing incentives and benefits.

The placements were done in various projects such as:

- Road and bridge construction,
- Building construction,
- Repair and maintenance work,
- Other physical infrastructures

Following are three key programs implemented under the BBP:

- **Engagement** – direct job placement with construction firms
- **Skills training** – training in seven construction trades followed by in-company attachment leading to certification at NC2 level and,
- **Specialized Firms** – to professionalize the construction industry through specialization

## WHO CAN BE PART OF THE BUILD BHUTAN PROJECT?

- Laid-off and/or on unpaid leave
- Overseas returnees
- Registered job seekers with MoLHR
- Private construction
- Construction firms
- Corporations, SOEs, and FDI's undertaking construction

### Engagement program

**Eligibility:** Candidates holding NC2 and NC3 in construction trades, Diploma or Degree in engineering and unskilled workers.

**Benefits:** Wage top up for 1 year, Provident Fund (PF) and basic PPE.

### Skilling program

**Benefits:** Stipend of Nu. 6,000 per month in the institute and during OJT, free food and accommodation during foundational course, hand tools based on skilling trades, basic PPE, PF, and assessment for NC2 through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

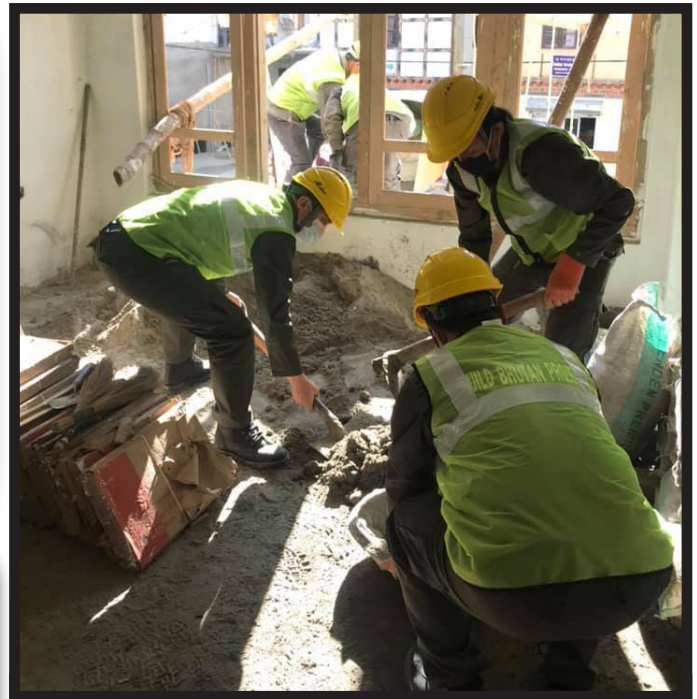
**Eligibility:** Class 6 and above

Skilling modality: 20% in institute, 80% in field.

### Specialized Firm

**Eligibility:** Any individuals/firms meeting the workforce requirement set by CDB.

**Benefits:** Basic PPE, power tools & equipment, PF, wage top up for 1 year, registration & licencing support, facilitation of work award & access to finance.



## How To Register?



Apply online through:  
[www.molhr.gov.bt](http://www.molhr.gov.bt)

# Responsibility

## Employer

1. Sign contract agreement with the BBP and contract of employment with employees.
2. Provide monthly wages, and and Personal Protective Equipment.
3. Provide decent and gender responsive accommodation at worksites.
4. Maintain and submit monthly attendance sheet to BBP.
5. Facilitate and support industry-based training.
6. Abide by the Labour and Employment Act of 2007 and its regulation.

## Employee

1. Agree to engage in the areas of engagement identified by BBP.
2. Complete the work assigned and do not abscond from the project/ worksite.
3. Sign an undertaking with the BBP and contract of employment with the employer.
4. Abide by the terms and conditions of BBP and the employer.
5. Abide by the Labour and Employment Act of 2007 and its regulation.



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## Bidding Farewell to Mr. Chewang Jurmi



The MoLHR family bid farewell to Mr. Chewang Jurmi, Director, Directorate of Services on May 4, 2021 in a humble ceremony at the Ministry. He joined the Ministry on July 31, 2019 and served the Ministry till April 30, 2021. Mr. Chewang is now transferred as the Director, Directorate of Services, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests.

The Ministry thanked Mr. Chewang Jurmi for rendering unwavering support to the Ministry and wished him continued success and good health at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests and beyond.

# Startup Hackathon Challenge, Bhutan 2021

# HACKATHON

## Start-up Hackathon Challenge, Bhutan 2021

▶ **Jigme Thinley,**  
**Program Officer**  
**ESED, DoEHR**

The second edition of Startup Bhutan Hackathon Challenge was conducted from 25 to 27 June, 2021. The main aim was to provide a platform for fresh ideas to stimulate the creative and innovative technological solutions for problems faced by the citizens. The three-day event brought in computer programmers and others involved in software development, including graphic designers, interface designers, project managers, and subject-matter-experts and created usable software or hardware that is functional at the end of the event. The event is organized in line with various issues and themes surrounding the business opportunities under the pandemic situation.

This year the event was conducted by the Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment Division under the Department of Employment and Human Resources in collaboration with the Credit Information Bureau (CIB) at Startup Center, Changzamtog based on 4 problem statements under three broad themes viz, FinTech, EduTech, and AgriTech provided by respective partner organizations based on their need.

The winners and runners-up of each problem statement were awarded cash prizes of Nu.300,000 and Nu.100,000 each for all categories to kick-start their idea which was sponsored by the Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment Division under the *page6*



▶ **In Picture: Honorable Lyonpo, Dasho Secretary, Director General of DoEHR, Mentors, officials and the participants at Startup Centre in Changzamtog**



## Get Skilled Online With Skillshare

Skillshare was launched in 2010 and is an online learning community with thousands of inspiring classes for creative and curious people. On Skillshare, millions of members come together to find inspiration and take the next step in their learning journey. Skillshare teachers are real working creatives and experts eager to share their expertise. If you're an experienced creative pro with tips, techniques and skills to demonstrate, Skillshare also offers an extensive suite of resources and responsive support to help you create classes that inspire.

▶ *Tandin Gyeltshen,*  
*Assistant Program Officer, HRSDD, DoEHR*



**LEARN ONLINE WITH SKILLSHARE**

1000 slots available for job seekers and young entrepreneurs interested to learn skills online.

For more information, please visit:  
<https://www.molhr.gov.bt/skillshare/>


More than 22,000+ courses are available on Skillshare. The main course category includes: Creative, Design, Entrepreneurship, Lifestyle and Technology, and more.

The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources with support from ADB technical assistance provides opportunity for job seekers

interested to take up entrepreneurship, self-employment, freelancing or other employment opportunities, and young entrepreneurs interested to expand and grow their business with acquisition of skills on Skillshare.



### How to Register for Skillshare



- 1 Register yourself by entering the URL; <https://www.molhr.gov.bt/skillshare/>
- 2 Check your email for an invitation link from skillshare. If you can't find in the inbox, check in promotions tab.
- 3 Open an email and activate your account.

### Welcoming New Director for the Department of Labour



The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources heartily welcomes Mr. Lham Dorji as the new Director of the Department of Labour. Mr. Lham officially assumed the post of Director on May 14, 2021.

Prior to joining as the Director, Mr. Lham was with the Ministry as the Chief Program Officer of TVET Institute Support Division under the Department of Technical Education.

# Basic Entrepreneurship Courses

## Encouraging Entrepreneurship in Commercial Farming

► **Dawa Zangmo Tamang**  
**Program Officer, DoEHR**

In collaboration with Thimphu Techpark Limited and Bumthang Dzongkhag, the Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment Division under the Department of Employment and Human Resources, Ministry of Labour and Human Resources conducted Basic Entrepreneurship Course (BEC) for 27 youths at Bumthang Dzongkhag from 15-31 March, 2021.

The top 4 participants, who are passionate

about commercial farming were awarded cash prizes to help them expedite their plan to establish commercial farming and dairy farming using modern greenhouse amenities to produce vegetables throughout the season. One of the winners of this prize, Pema Seldon said that she would like to buy additional milking cows and start a dairy business using the valuable insights she gained from the training.

Further, there were other groups of youths who aspired to start business on producing buckwheat hull pillows and cushions since Bumthang is famous for production of buckwheat. A participant said, "I would like to learn the art of making hull pillows and cushions from my grandfather and expand his business using the business insights I learned today".



► **In picture: DASHO DZONGRAB with Participants, Bumthang Dzongkhag**

## Basic Entrepreneurship Course for youth of Zhemgang

► **Tshering Choki**  
**Program Officer, DoEHR**

The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources in collaboration with the Zhemgang Dzongkhag Administration and

RENEW (Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women) conducted the Basic Entrepreneurship Course for youth of Zhemgang Dzongkhag from March 22 to April 7, 2021. The 15 days training was attended by 25 youth, of which 13 were female and 12 were male.

Seven selected Trainees pitched their ideas . Dorji Gyeltshen, Jetsen Yangdon, **Page9**



Rinchen Lhazom and Rinchen Wangmo bagged a cash prizes of 50,000 each for commercial farming, paneer production, cotton cultivation and wick production, and beauty parlor respectively. The main objective of the cash prize is to help them to realize their business ideas.

The Dasho Dzongdag of Zhemgang Dzongkhag graced the closing ceremony of the training program.



► *In Picture: Winners and the Chief Guest*



► *In Picture: Dasho Dzongdag and participants in Zhemgang Dzongkhag*

## *Creative Business Ideas from the Highlands*

► **Tshering Choki**  
**Program Officer, DoEHR**

The basic entrepreneurship course conducted in Gasa recently helped to bring about the best from young minds of the Dzongkhag

Youths in Gasa have pitched modern business ideas to bring them to the highlands during the basic entrepreneurship training conducted in the Dzongkhag recently. Around 26 unemployed

youths have participated in the training which saw them gain skills to plan, set-up and operate their own businesses. There was overwhelming participation from the females which is helping to turn gender equity in entrepreneurship.

The training encouraged youths to write their own business plans. At the end of the training, there were 19 business ideas on the table including the four proposed by groups. On the final day, seven business ideas were selected to be pitched to a panel of judges in the presence of Dasho Dzongdag as the chief guest. *page 10*

## *From Page 9*

The top four winning ideas were awarded the cash prizes of Nu. 50,000 each to assist in realizing their ideas.

Setting up a technology service outlet on the highest altitude in the country was one of the four winning ideas, aptly named: Laya GameZone and Internet Café. It was written by Pema Lhaden. Another idea was to set up a tour and trek company to lure tourists to Laya (proposed by Chaba Wangchuk) while the third idea was to produce a mineral water based on medical value to be branded as Gangri-Menchu (ideated by Leki Wangchuk). At Gasa, Sangay Thinley proposed to set up an E-Zom-Sa Business Center to provide IT-enabled services.

The young participants were so much impacted by the training that they are willing to pursue their start-up ideas through funding from various sources. The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources encouraged the youths to submit their ideas to the government's national credit guarantee scheme and oriented them towards local start-up funding agencies. Access to finance for the start-ups has been one of the main priorities of the government to create employment and economic growth.

Youths have also demonstrated their qualities to work in groups as a team. Some have displayed good leadership skills to lead teamwork. Participants were actively involved in interactions and interpersonal

relationships. Such were the virtues that the training helped to bring out of our youths.

The training intends to inspire and motivate aspiring entrepreneurs to take up business as self-employment to sustain their livelihood and to create more employment opportunities. While such an aim is materialized, there would be a gradual development of entrepreneurial culture in the country which would help towards economic growth and mitigate the current unemployment issues.

The basic entrepreneurship course imparts skills to plan, write and operate one's own business idea. Financial modelling, profitability analysis, securing investments from national international sources, business management skills, are some of the contents of the course.

Funded by the Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment Division under the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, the training was organized by Bhutan Innovation and Technology Center at Thimphu Techpark. The participants were the 9th cohort of the course which took place from 12-29 April, 2021, in collaboration with Gasa Dzongkhag administration.



*In picture: Dasho Dzongdag of Gasa Dzongkhag, officials and the participants*





## Signing of Memorandum of Understanding and Terms of Reference


**Karma dorji**  
**Dy. Chief Program Officer**  
**DTE**

Mr. Sonam Tobgay, Director, Department of Bilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and H.E. Mr. Simon Wong, Ambassador of Singapore to Bhutan in New Delhi signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) virtually on the Establishment of Model Technical Training Centres (MTTC) in the Technical Training Institute of Thimphu and Technical Training Institute of Khuruthang on 29 June 2021.

Concurrently, the Terms of Reference (TOR) detailing the areas of support was signed between Mr. Sonam Wangchuk, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (MoLHR) of Bhutan and Mr. Bruce Poh, Chief Executive Officer, Institute of Technical Education Services (ITE-Education Services), Singapore. The ITE-Education Services of Singapore will provide technical assistance to MoLHR in developing Modal Technical Training Centers.

The Government of the Republic of Singapore through ITE-Education Services of Singapore will provide high-quality practice-oriented skills training for Bhutanese youth in Automotive Technology at Technical Training Institute-Thimphu and Facility Technology-Mechanical & Electrical at Technical Training Institute-Khuruthang, Punakha.

The first MoU between MoLHR of Bhutan and ITE-Education Services of Singapore was signed on 15 May 2017 in Thimphu during the Singapore Foreign Minister's visit to Bhutan. The MoU was signed to strengthen the Technical & Vocational Education & Training (TVET) through establishment of collaboration and co-operation between MoLHR and ITE-Education Services, Singapore.

## Birth Anniversary of Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen

The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources [MoLHR] family with much joy in our hearts, would like to join each and every Bhutanese on this most joyous occasion (4th June 2021) to Wish Our Gyaltsuen, Her Majesty Queen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck, a Very Happy 31st Birth Anniversary.



## Finding Jobs in Homes in the Wake of Pandemic

▶ **Tshering Choki**  
**Program Officer, DoEHR**

Fifteen Bhutanese who lost their jobs in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic were trained as homecare and hospitality personnel in Thimphu this month. The training was aimed at re-engaging those individuals who were laid off, due to the pandemic, into other productive sectors.

The training of these personnel will be the first step towards fulfilling the market demand for household and caregiving services. They are ready to provide services to the clients. The trainees were introduced to and briefed by The Care, a door-to-door home and care service firm based in Thimphu, on possible employment opportunities and various employment services and support provided by the Ministry.

“I lost my job due to global pandemic. I couldn’t waste my time at home doing nothing,” said a 35-year-old Sonam Yudon who returned from overseas in September, 2020. “I saw the opportunity to learn new skills. Now, I’m ready for a new job.”

Prem Kala Pradhan, 43, said that she decided to get trained rather than age without any skills. “I want to work as a professional caregiver one day,” she said with a smile.

A month-long training was initiated by the Ministry of Labour & Human Resources in collaboration with RENEW Vocational Institute supported by UNDP-Bhutan. The training was conducted from 17 February to 17 March, 2021, with funding from GOI-PTA project implemented by the Ministry. The Ministry plans to formalize and certify the trainees in homecare and hospitality in future to ensure safe and decent work environment. Relevant stakeholders like National Commission for Women & Children (NCWC) and other CSOs will be consulted to develop work profiles for such services.



▶ ***In Picture: Participants with stakeholder officials***

## Welcoming the new Chief HRO



The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources family warmly welcomes Mr. Karma Wangchuk as the new Chief Human Resource Officer to the Ministry’s fraternity.

Prior to joining the Ministry, Mr. Karma has been serving in the capacity of Dy. Chief Human Resource Officer in the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

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