



Annual Report 2020

Towards responsible & independent media for a vibrant democracy



TASHICHHOZONG
THIMPHU, BHUTAN

The rights to freedom of information, expression and of the media enshrined in the Constitution are fundamental to democracy. In our small nation, media can be even more effective in encouraging debate and participation, vital to building a vibrant democracy.

However, today, our media agencies are young and their exemplary commitment and desire to perform their duties are not matched by adequate resources. As it is my sacred duty to ensure the success of our young democracy, I have decided, through the exercise of my Royal Prerogative of Kidu, to strengthen media agencies so that they may carry out their duties, without fear or favour, in the interest of democracy.

It is my hope that the Bhutan Media Foundation established under this Charter, shall serve to foster the growth of a strong responsible media capable of playing an important role in the social, economic and political growth of the nation.

Granted on the 21st day of February, 2010 at Tashichho Dzong.

His Majesty The Druk Gyalpo

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About BMF

Bhutan Media Foundation was established through a Royal Charter issued by His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck on 21 February 2010 to foster the growth of a strong responsible media capable of playing an important role in the social, economic and political growth of the nation. It is mandated to support wholesome development of media so that it can carry out its roles and responsibilities in the interest of democracy.

Accordingly, a team of media professionals formulated a Charter for BMF by distilling the wisdom of His Majesty's Royal Charter. The Charter of BMF was prepared to ensure that BMF operates professionally and sustains its function in times to come.

BMF was registered as a public-benefit civil society organisation on 10 April 2015. A four-member Board of Directors guides the function and operations of BMF. The Board members comprise the representatives of His Majesty The King, The Royal Government of Bhutan, and the media industry.





Ten years on: a note from Executive Director

It takes a while for any organisation to find its footing. And so it has been with BMF. More than 10 years after His Majesty The King established it under his hand and seal, the Foundation has begun to broaden its scope of work enshrined in the royal mandate.

Since 2011, when we started rolling out our programmes, we have conducted 75 programmes and spent Nu 30.593 million. By Bhutanese standards, both the number of activities and spending are quite substantial.

We began small, focusing mostly on the capacity building and upskilling of the Bhutanese media houses. They include training, workshops, reporting grants, subsidies, scholarships, internships, and study visits for journalists and media managers. Given the high rate of attrition in the Bhutanese newsrooms, professional development of the media houses will remain a priority for us.

In recent years, we have broadened the scope of our activities. Mindful of our public mandate as a Public Benefit Organisation, we have started conducting media literacy training for rural people, students, and working professionals based on carefully designed modules. Recognising the challenges posed by infodemic, we will keep updating and improving our media literacy programmes.

We are now venturing into media-related research to generate much-needed data for our activities as well as for policymakers and the public. We want to make sure that all our activities are connected and complement one another. We do not want to spread ourselves too thin but remain focused.

I take this opportunity to thank His Majesty The King for his vision that is BMF and all our partners and stakeholders who have supported us through the years.

Needrup Zangpo

Vision



Take effective action targeted at informed society by fostering the growth of free, independent, responsive and credible media that play a constructive role in the social, economic, and political life of the nation, thereby leading to a vibrant democracy.

Mission



Sustain democracy by developing the Bhutanese media through transformational initiatives that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster freedom of expression, information and press.

Strategic goals 2019-2021

- Support professional growth of the Bhutanese media through training, membership, scholarships, internships, exchange programmes, professional discourse, awards and grants.
- Support or facilitate sustainability of media organisations through direct support and online transition.
- Support media literacy and education through training, workshops, clubs and research
- Build partnerships and collaborations through fund mobilisation, industry engagement and community engagement.



Activities

Media Literacy: Intermediate

BMF conducted its Intermediate Media Literacy Training at Gyalpozhing College of Information Technology from 28 February to 1 March 2020 and at Samtse College of Education from 24 July to 24 July 2020. A total of 360 students from the two colleges attended the training. The students were made aware of various types of media they use, their level of use, their positive and negative impacts, differentiate fake news from real news and Social Media Policy for the Royal Government of Bhutan. The training programmes were part of BMF's project titled 'Inclusive Media Literacy for Democratic Empowerment' supported by European Union and Helvetas Bhutan.

The aim of this project was to make a critical start to professionally planned and inclusive media literacy. Under this project, BMF developed three media literacy training modules at three levels – basic, intermediate and advanced – and subsequently conducted media literacy training at each of these levels.





Media Literacy: Advanced

BMF conducted a two-day Advanced Media Literacy Workshop for the Parliamentarians in Paro from 22 to 23 October 2020. Thirty-one Members of Parliament, including the Speaker and the Leader of the Opposition, attended the workshop.

The aim of this training was to sensitise the parliamentarians on the

workings of the media, critical consumption and production of media content, effective engagement with the media, and socially beneficial use of social media, among others. This training was part of BMF's project titled 'Enhancing the Interface between Media and Parliament' supported by the Swiss Embassy, New Delhi.



Journalism Training: Understanding the Processes and Proceedings of Parliament

BMF conducted training on 'Understanding the Processes and Proceedings of Parliament' for 30 journalists in Paro on 10 August 2020.

The objective of this training was to sensitise the journalists on the structure of the Bhutanese Parliament, how it functions, processes involved in legislation and public policy review, and parliamentary lingo.

The training was conducted by Mr Sangay Khandu, former Member of Parliament in the National Council. This training was part of BMF's project titled 'Enhancing the Interface between Media and Parliament' supported by the Swiss Embassy, New Delhi.

Journalism Training: Parliamentary Reporting

BMF conducted a two-day Hands-on Training on Parliamentary Reporting for 22 reporters and editors from different print and broadcast media from 9 to 10 November 2020. This training was part of BMF's project titled 'Enhancing the Interface between Media and Parliament' supported by the Swiss Embassy, New Delhi.

This project was the first of its kind in Bhutan. Since the introduction of parliamentary democracy in Bhutan in 2008, two democratic institutions – the media and Parliament – have mostly worked in silos

without understanding and interacting with each other. Therefore, the media's coverage of Parliament has been constrained by the journalists' lack of understanding of parliamentary processes.

On the other hand, the parliamentarians' engagement with the media has been constrained by their lack of understanding of the media. This shows lack of a clear interface between the media and Parliament. Therefore, this project aimed to bring the two institutions closer and create a mutually beneficial relationship between the two.



Journalism Training: Climate Change Reporting

BMF conducted a three-day Training on Climate Change Reporting from 13 to 15 July 2020 in Thimphu. Around 30 journalists from print and broadcast media, and freelance journalists attended the training. The training was conducted by a local climate change journalism expert. Three guest speakers – Bhutan's chief climate negotiator, a

senior climate change journalist, and Mr Ramesh Bushal from EJM – joined the training as guest speakers.

The training was supported by Earth Journalism Network under the project titled 'Linking Climate Change Reporting with Public Policy.'



Reporting Grant: Climate Change Reporting

Nine reporters, including two freelance journalists, received the Climate Change Reporting Grant (CCRG) from BMF on 31 July 2020.

The CCRG aims to produce well-researched, in-depth stories on the impact of climate change on vulnerable rural communities of Bhutan and link them with the country's public policy on climate change through two reporting grants. Each grantee is attached to a mentor, a journalist-consultant, who guided him/her through the whole process of reporting and publishing the story.

In the first round of the CCRG, eight stories, including two documentaries, were produced and published/aired in the Bhutanese media. The stories have been compiled into a booklet and published online. Copies will be distributed to relevant individuals and organisations.



Printing Subsidy

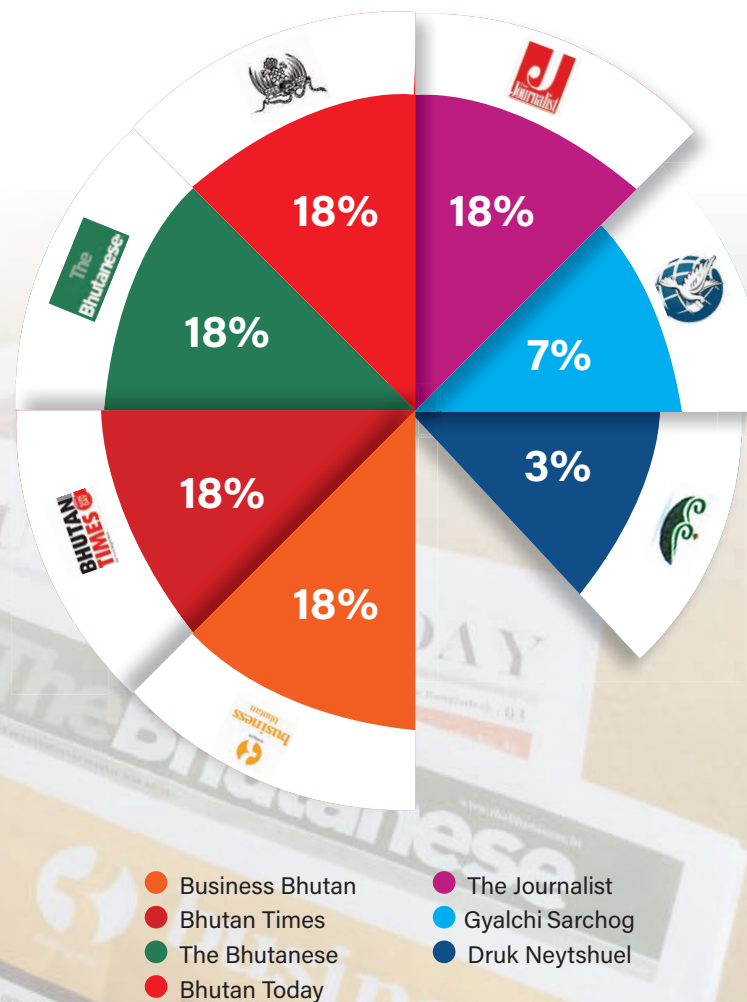
Sustainability has always been one of the biggest challenges facing the private newspapers in Bhutan with printing being one of their biggest expenditures. According to the study 'Determining the timely reach and circulation figures of the newspapers for the year 2018' by BICMA, there has been a downward trend in both print and circulation numbers in recent years for most newspapers, with some newspapers showing a decrease of more than 50% in the number of print-runs between the years 2013 and 2018.

The Royal Government of Bhutan graciously approved a two-year printing subsidy of 50 percent of the printing cost of the private newspapers in the country in 2018. BMF was tasked to implement the printing subsidy.

Among many other initiatives undertaken by the government, the printing subsidy made a huge impact on the private newspapers.

The printing subsidy has helped the print media retain their employees, thus addressing the sustainability issues to some extent. Apart from Druk Neytshuel, which closed down in 2019, the six other private newspapers have a total of 64 employees. With 50 percent of the printing subsidy supported by the government, it has helped the private newspapers save on the printing cost, which eventually helped them pay their staff salaries. After the printing subsidy, the print-runs for English newspapers have stabilised at 1,200 copies per issue and 600 copies for Dzongkha newspapers.

Expenditure



A magnifying glass with a black handle is positioned over the word 'NEFAKE'. The word is written in large, bold, black capital letters. The magnifying glass's lens is centered over the letters 'FAKE', making them appear significantly larger and more prominent than the 'NE' on either side. The background is white.

Besides the mainstream media and the Ministry of Health, Bhutan Media Foundation in collaboration with the Journalists' Association of Bhutan has helped combat fake news on social media. For every fake news, a verified and validated post was uploaded on BMF's and JAB's social media platforms and shared. This helped reduce the spread of fake news since many people started verifying information with BMF and JAB before sharing.

CLAIM

WEARING MASKS CAN CAUSE
HYPERCAPNIA, CARBON DIOXIDE TOXICITY.

THE TRUTH

1. WEARING MASKS CAN LEAD TO CARBON DIOXIDE BUILDUP, BUT PEOPLE DON'T WEAR MASKS LONG ENOUGH FOR THE BUILDUP TO BE TOXIC.

2. MINISTRY OF HEALTH NOTES THIS DOES NOT CONCERN THOSE USING GENERAL MASKS, ONLY N95 MASKS. THOSE WHO USE N95 MASKS ARE TRAINED TO DEAL WITH HYPERCAPNIA.

3. CONCERNS ABOUT THIS SEEMS TO COME FROM ANTI-LOCKDOWN CIRCLES IN THE US.



CLAIM

"A CHINESE EXPERT ASSURES EVERYBODY THAT INHALATION OF STEAM FROM HOT WATER KILLS CORONAVIRUS 100% STEAM INHALATION THERAPY IS 'SIT' **FAKE**

THE TRUTH

1. NEITHER THE WHO NOR THE US-CDC RECOMMENDS 'SIT' AS A TREATMENT OF COVID-19.
2. IN FACT, SIT CARRIES BURN RISK (IT ONLY TAKES 3 SECS OF CONTACT WITH WATER OVER 60C TO CAUSE SURGERY-REQUIRING BURNS).

JAB bTF

Fact

Your hands can catch fire if you do not let your hands dry after using hand sanitiser and put them near a fire.

Hand sanitiser is an alcohol based product and anything with alcohol is flammable. However, the WHO on their website maintains the benefits of sanitisers far outweigh the fire risks."

WHO advises that you allow the hand sanitiser to dry before handling fire: "Once dry, your hands are safe."

Follow WHO's website for the latest developments or add them on
WhatsApp: +4798931992

चेक फ्याक्ट -

आमका हात आलकोहल बेस्ड हान्ट साइनिजर प्रयोग करे के बाद हमें हाथ सूखने देना चाहिये। यदि हम इसे सूखने से पहले ही किसी भी स्रोत के पास ले जायेंगे तो यह आग लगाने का कारण बन सकता है। हालांकि, विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन (WHO) अपने वेबसाइट पर बताता है कि हान्ट साइनिजर के उपयोग के लाभ बहुत अधिक हैं जो कि आग लगने के खतरों से अधिक हैं।

WHO की सलाह है कि आप हान्ट साइनिजर को सूखने दें और तभी उसे छुएं। एक बार सूख जाने के बाद ही इसे जलवायु में लाना चाहिए। इस प्रकार हम आग लगने के खतरों से निवारण कर सकते हैं।

हाल ही में भारत सरकार ने भी इस संबंध में चेतावनी दी है। उन्होंने कहा है कि हान्ट साइनिजर को सूखने देने के बाद ही छुएं।

फॉलो अप: +91989319992

FACT-CHECKED BY

JAB

BTF

FAKE

Another new virus has emerged in China called the Hantavirus and it can kill you.

Fact

The Hantavirus is an old virus. It has been around for many years with some health experts claiming it originated in the 1950s in Korea.

The virus is spread by rats/ mice according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We get infected if we ingest their saliva, feces or urine. Although the hantavirus can kill (about 38% mortality rate), it can be treated unlike the Coronavirus.

It is also not contagious among humans. One infected human cannot infect another. It can only be passed from a rat to human (zoonotic). Not all rats carry the virus.

Follow WHO's website for the latest developments on COVID-19 or add them on WhatsApp: + 41789893892.

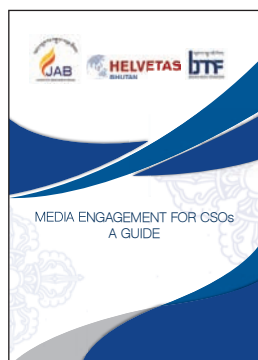


FACT-CHECKED BY



BTF
BUDHA TRUTH FOUNDATION

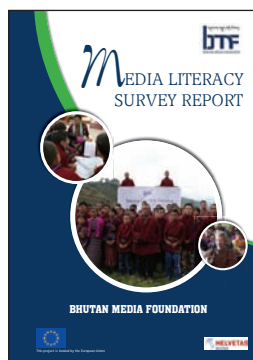
Ten Years On: BMF Publications



Media Engagement Guide for CSOs (2020)

This guide was developed as part of BMF's project titled 'Media Engagement for CSOs' in collaboration with the Journalists' Association of Bhutan with support from Helvetas Bhutan and the European Union.

Effective media engagement requires specific skills and knowledge. However, not all CSOs have the means to engage effectively. This guide was developed to help CSOs engage with the media in a manner that will be most useful and impactful. This guide is tailored to help CSOs successfully navigate media engagement territory.



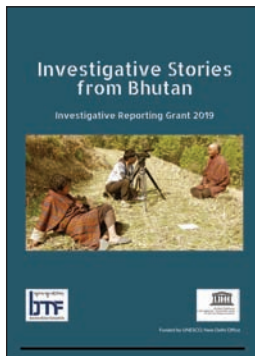
Media Literacy Survey Report (2019)

This Media Literacy Survey conducted by BMF is a modest attempt to understand the pattern of media use by different sections of the Bhutanese population. The findings of the survey enabled us to plan our media literacy programmes better based on the needs and media use patterns. It is, by no means, a stand-alone, fully-fledged survey. Small questionnaires were administered to the participants of the media literacy workshops conducted by BMF in four different locations of the country.



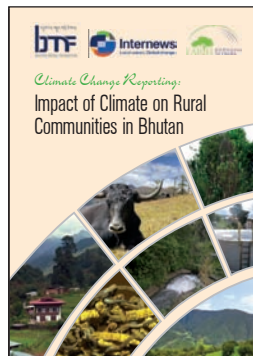
Media Literacy Training Modules (2019)

These Media Literacy Training Modules were developed as part of BMF's project titled 'Inclusive Media Literacy for Democratic Empowerment' supported by Helvetas Bhutan and the European Union. The objective of developing these modules is to put in place media literacy training modules that encompass all sections of the population: basic for grassroots, intermediate for high schools and colleges, and advanced for working professionals, including politicians and parliamentarians. The training programmes based on these modules were more organised and reached a cross-section of society, across different places of residence, age groups, educational levels, and professions.



Investigative Stories from Bhutan (2019)

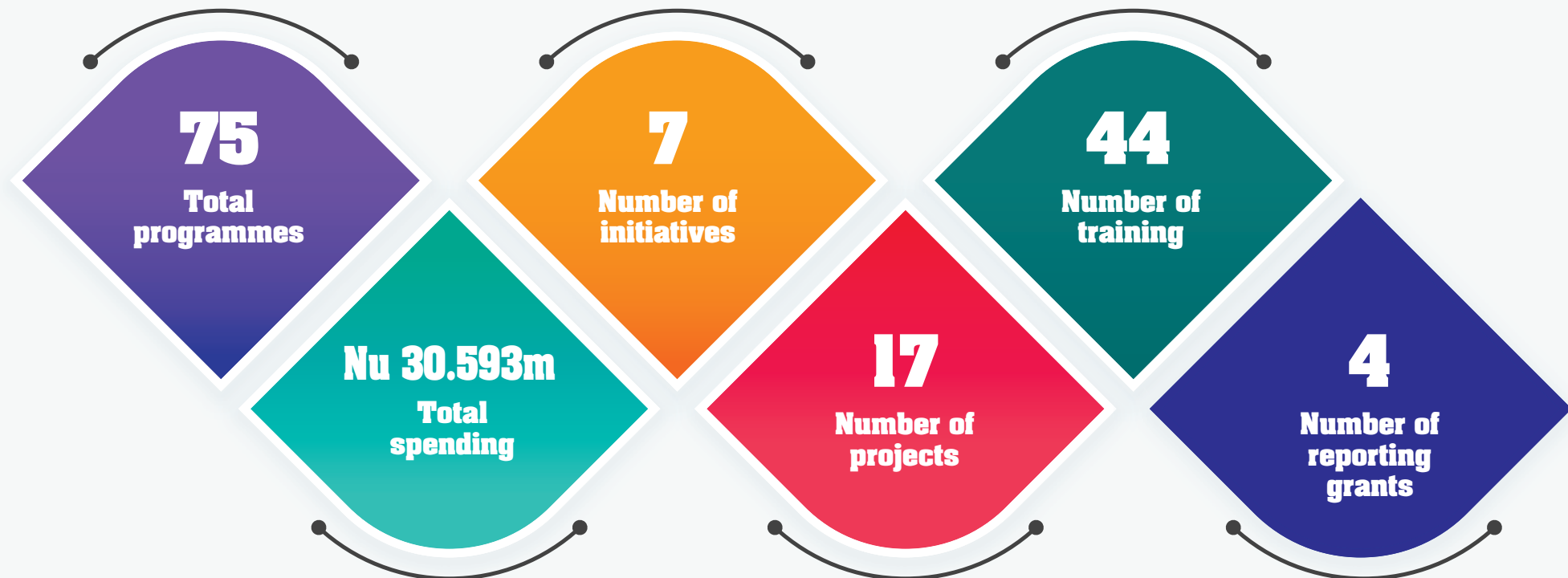
Ten reporters from Bhutanese media were selected and awarded Investigative Reporting grant in 2019, with support from UNESCO, New Delhi under the project titled 'Promoting SDG 16.10: Strengthening Investigative Journalism to Ensure Public Access to Information.' Within 5 months, the grantees produced 16 stories, which has been compiled into this booklet.



Climate Change Stories from Bhutan (2020)

This booklet on 'Impact of Climate on Rural Communities in Bhutan' consists of seven stories published in Bhutanese print media and two news documentary aired on broadcast media. These stories have been produced as part of BMF's Climate Change Reporting Grant, which aims to produce well researched, in-depth stories on impact of climate change on vulnerable rural communities of Bhutan.

Ten Years On: How Far We Have Come



Beneficiaries



Grants

60 reporters and freelancers
4 private radio stations



Scholarship

2 journalists awarded
scholarship



Training

1,354 media professionals trained
137 rural community members trained
1,254 students trained
91 working professionals, including Members of Parliament, trained



Internship

10 marketing managers and journalists
sent to India and Thailand

Financial Statement

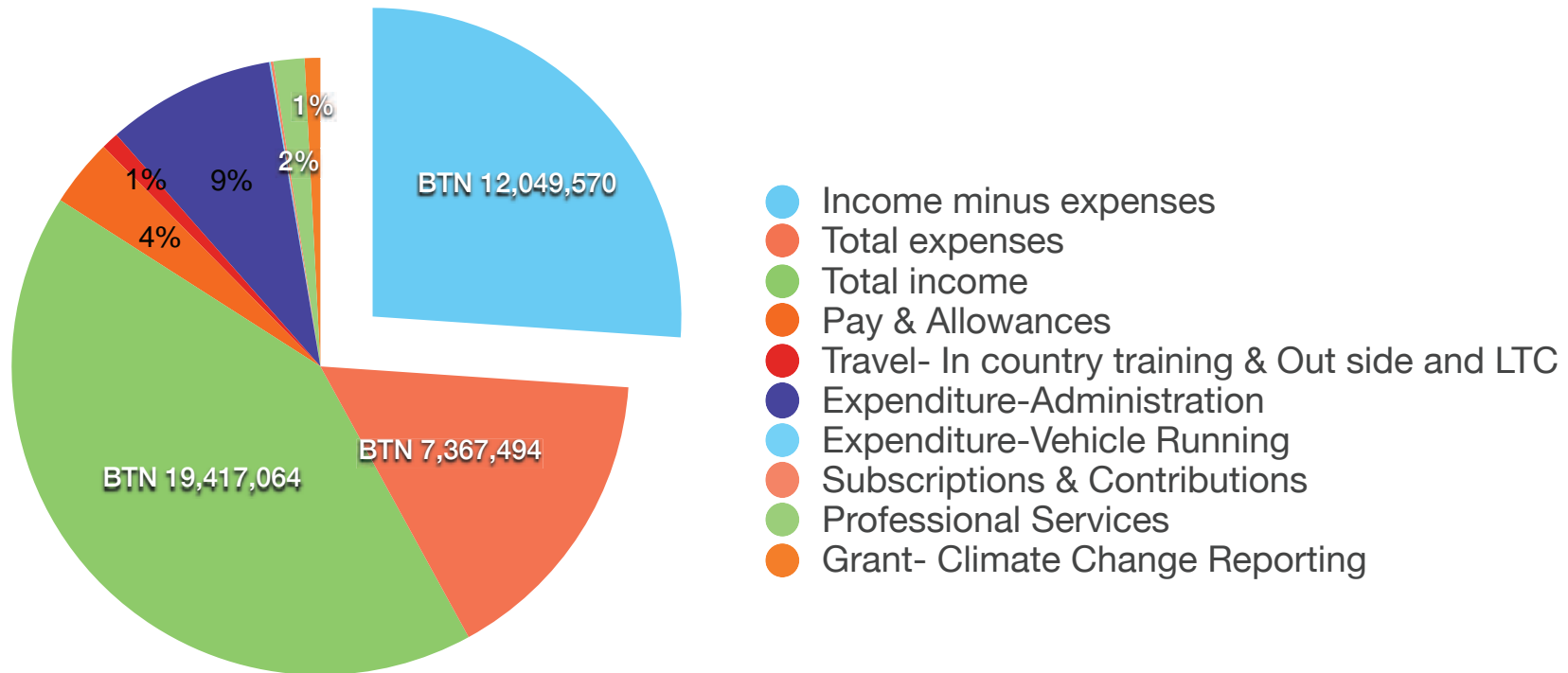
Statement of financial income and expenses (January to December 2020)

MONEY IN	
Grant-CFLI,EJN,EU Helvatus, ,RGOB Printing subsidy,RGoB Media Enterprise, SASGP, BCMD,Swiss Small Action Project & UNESCO	BTN 11,501,011
Interest Income	BTN 696,053
Seed Fund	BTN 7,220,000
TOTAL INCOME	BTN 19,417,064

MONEY OUT	
Pay & Allowances	BTN 1,642,220
Travel- In country training & Out side and LTC	BTN 416,850
Expenditure-Administration	BTN 4,078,955
Expenditure-Vehicle Running	BTN 35,751
Subscriptions & Contributions	BTN 63,718
Professional Services	BTN 750,000
Grant- Climate Change Reporting	BTN 380,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	BTN 7,367,494

BALANCE AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2020	
Income minus expenses	BTN 12,049,570

Income/Expenses



Our Team

BOARD MEMBERS



Mr Gelay Jamtsho (Chairperson)
Director
Royal Office for Media



Ms Kuenzang Lham Sangye (Board Member)
Chief Planning Officer
Gross National Happiness Commission



Mr Tenzing Lamsang (Board Member)
Editor-in-Chief
The Bhutanese



Mr Ugyen Penjor (Board Member)
Managing Director
Kuensel



Mr Needrup Zangpo (Member Secretary)
Executive Director
Bhutan Media Foundation

SECRETARIAT STAFF



Mr Needrup Zangpo
Executive Director



Ms Sonam Wangmo
Programme Officer (Administration)



Ms Tenzin Yangden
Programme Officer (Communications)



Mr Dawa Tshering
Finance Officer

Our Supporters and Partners

INTERNATIONAL



LOCAL



MEDIA STAKEHOLDERS



How can you support us?

You can make a one-time or annual DONATION to the media development fund of BMF.

You can FUND a programme, project, or a scholarship.

You can PARTNER with BMF on media development activities.

Visit www.bmf.bt to learn more about us.

Bhutan Media Foundation

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