



Welcome to edition number 4 of **CeeZine**, the quarterly e-Zine newsletter for people interested in the **BRIDGE Civic Education Development Project (CEDP)**. The purpose of the newsletter is to keep you all informed about current planning, developments, issues and ideas.

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Participants at the second trial workshop of *Democracy in Our Place* in Paro, Bhutan, September 2009.

## 1. Trial of the Pilot Module – Asia

The *Democracy in Our Place* module travelled to a very different part of the world after its world-first trial in Vanuatu. The cool mountain air of Bhutan proved a contrast to the tropical heat of Vanuatu, however the enthusiasm and commitment of participants and facilitators remained as strong as ever.

The CEDP team was fortunate to be working with the Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) in the delivery of the workshop, and also greatly honoured to have the workshop opened by Her Royal Highness Ashi Sonam Dechen Wangchuck. The goodwill and dedication of all stakeholders in Bhutan was evident and much appreciated, and it proved an ideal place to run the trial workshop.

Once again, the CEDP team had two main objectives for the workshop:

- ✦ That participants explore the concepts of democracy and good governance as well as develop their knowledge, skills and values about these concepts;
- ✦ That the CEDP team assess the appropriateness of the CEDP materials and methodology.

The lessons learned from Vanuatu gave the team a strong foundation to work from, and the Bhutanese experience has provided further valuable lessons for the consolidation of the pilot module.

### The team



Once again the CEDP team of Yvonne and Melanie had great support from a broad team of local and international members. Curriculum Advisor Noel Matthews returned to act as lead facilitator, heading a team including Ugyen Gonphel, Sonam Pelden Thaye, Kinley and Chimmi Dem from the ECB; the AEC's Beatrice Barnett (one of the key writers for the module); and Michael Bergmann from AusAID, the project funders. Michael also completed his BRIDGE accreditation through his work in Paro.



Ross Attrill, the BRIDGE Coordinator, also took a mentoring and facilitation role in the workshop. This was an opportunity for Ross to see the CEDP in action for the first time, having been a strong proponent of it during its development. The team was also fortunate to have Paul Guerin from International IDEA, one of the founding BRIDGE partners, attend as an observer.

A special thank you also goes to Tshewang Jamtsho from the ECB who played a key role in the logistics and delivery of the workshop, in particular the royal opening ceremony which was a huge task. The team would like to thank him for his fantastic efforts.

### The participants

The participants came from a wide range of government, community and civil society organisations, including six of the newly elected members of parliament. There were representatives from political parties, civil society organisations, the judiciary, the ECB, the education sector and the media.



### The workshop

The workshop was opened by HRH Ashi Sonam Dechen Wangchuck in a traditional procession and ceremony. She was a gracious and eloquent guest and spoke warmly of the synergies between the objectives of the workshop and the hopes for democracy in Bhutan. She encouraged participants to participate actively during the week, and to take from the workshop the ideas and critical thinking that would contribute to the strong development of democracy and governance in the country.

Following the ceremony, participants and facilitators alike took Her Royal Highness' words to heart and dove straight into the lively discussions, debates and activities with enthusiasm.

#### Facilitator Ross Attrill's impressions of the workshop

*The Bhutanese members of the facilitation team impressed me greatly. Most of them had no previous experience in BRIDGE style facilitation and yet they quickly engaged with the spirit of the program and the activity based methodology used. Aside from their knowledge of Bhutanese culture and the local actors, they were invaluable members of the team as, time and again they illustrated that the methodology was appropriate to Bhutan. One of the many highlights of the week was watching our colleague Ugyen Gonphel conduct a warm up activity on the afternoon of the 3rd day. Ugyen was the first to admit that this methodology was new and somewhat daunting to him. However, he persevered and, by the time he conducted his activity, it was delightful to see how much more comfortable he had become with the material and the participants. The participants' enthusiasm for the activity and their generosity of spirit was evident in the laughter and warmth in the room. The activity not only energised the participants, but also the facilitators. It was a wonderful illustration that, central to the CEDP curriculum is an emphasis on creating a safe and enjoyable learning environment.*

### Lessons learned

The lessons learned in Bhutan were many and varied. Participants and facilitators were very helpful and forthcoming with feedback on the different aspects of the workshop, e.g. the overall structure; content; methodology; materials; and the general tone of the workshop. Although every situation is very different, and will reveal different lessons, this second workshop proved again that the methodology and lesson plans adapt well to a range of circumstances.

Many of the lessons learned previously in Vanuatu were confirmed and reinforced in Bhutan. The target audience (i.e. an audience already engaged in democracy and governance), the curriculum structure and content focus, the materials and the implementation and facilitation requirements were all verified as appropriate. The workshop also highlighted the need for a thorough participant needs assessment before workshop content is selected. This helps the workshop curriculum designers to decide on the focus and topics, which methodologies suit particular topics, and whether in-depth analysis of certain areas is needed, and where knowledge inputs such as mini-lectures and/or PowerPoint presentations by experts in the relevant subject field are required.



The team now has the task of refining the curriculum framework yet again – essentially narrowing the ‘Core’ and ‘Elective’ structure and strengthening the two core themes (‘Democracy Tree’ – see item 3 below – and ‘Governance Challenges/Strategies’).

### Next steps

- ⊕ The project team will prepare final donor reports and evaluations
- ⊕ A Phase One final CEDP team meeting has been scheduled for 16-20 November to finalise the curriculum framework and complete the implementation guidelines (including evaluation guidelines) for the *Democracy in Our Place* module.

### Comments from workshop participants

*I learned that democracy is not just what I know – it is a broad concept.*

Single most important learning – ‘Me’ as an advocate for change, ‘me being the most effective enforcer of democracy’.

*Democracy is not just about political parties and elections, but a way of life.*

I think I am better equipped to carry out more effective voter education and awareness programs.

*Democracy has no end – it is a dynamic process.*

I think the relation between culture/tradition and democracy needs to be explored more. It is a huge topic so maybe hopefully the concerned agencies will take up that issue.

## 2. *Democracy in Our Place* – the Pilot Module

The *Democracy in Our Place* module is now well-established following the second trial in Asia and has evolved and developed over the life of the first phase of the CEDP. The module explores concepts of democracy and good governance, and is highly participative, building on the knowledge, attitudes and experience of the participants.

The module workshop is structured around four main sections:

1. In **Democracy Is Good for All** participants examine what democracy means both internationally and in their own country. Participants examine the values they hold and reflect on their experiences as a basis for the learning process. This section also introduces concepts of democratic values and how human rights and gender perspectives shape a democracy. These issues are discussed in a global as well as a local context. This foundation section sets the agenda for the rest of the program and begins a learning dialogue with participants where they engage personally with the challenge of promoting democracy in their context.
2. **Making Democracy Real** considers issues of power and conflict in decision making processes and asks how these issues apply locally. It looks at how culture impacts on the practice of democracy and governance and how our own beliefs and practices impact on decision making processes. In this section participants explore the principles of democracy and reflect on how they can address any gaps between the ideals of democracy and how they are applied in reality.
3. **Making Democracy Better** considers how a democracy functions in reality. It discusses key concepts of participation and representation and looks at how the principles and values discussed earlier shape governance mechanisms. Participants discuss issues of accountability and good governance and reflect on individual responsibility and opportunity to strengthen local democratic institutions.
4. **Democracy in Action** builds on these discussions to enable participants to identify ways in which individuals make practical contributions to promoting democracy in their local community and/or broader society. Participants engage in practical strategic or program planning, focussing on a democratic challenge identified earlier. They will also identify the networks and alliances that contribute to the implementation and success of a plan, and communication strategies for obtaining wider support.



In a typical five-day workshop, each section roughly corresponds to one day of the workshop, with the exception of **Democracy is Good for All**, which is delivered over the first two days.

In discussing these four sections, specific content is covered to ensure that participants develop the knowledge and skills necessary for building more democratic societies. These content areas are:

- ⊕ **Global Knowledge** consisting of case studies and examples from the region and beyond; analytical tools to look a range of approaches to democracy; strategic planning tools necessary to impact own local and/or professional context.
- ⊕ **Local Knowledge** is drawn from the participants, local facilitators and other key resource persons. Participants examine the values, theories and practices used in our own civic engagement and place global knowledge within the local context.
- ⊕ **Communication & Process Skills** are fundamental to the 'how' of democratic practice. Participants are invited to analyse how different communication styles and approaches to decision making are appropriate to different contexts, and to consider their own professional practice and skills in light of this.
- ⊕ **Action Learning.** A key focus of the program is on helping participants identify the democratic challenges they are facing and how they can take learning from the program and apply and test it in practice. Participants will reflect and plan through each progressive section looking at their learning and how it can be applied on their return to their job or community.

#### How did this work in Bhutan?

The Bhutan workshop covered all of the above sections in approximately this order. However, as would happen in any *Democracy in Our Place* workshop, modifications were made for the context. For example, knowledge inputs such as country case studies were identified as important for this target group when the project team met with ECB staff in Bhutan to plan the workshop in June. This meant dropping a lot of the planned activities from sections two and three to accommodate this. It prompted the project team to think about the over-crowded 'core' curriculum, and to ask whether the proposed structure tried to squeeze in too much mandatory content at the expense of the real needs of the participants.

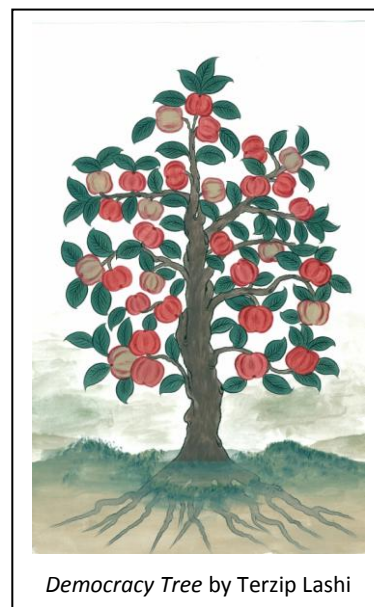
This is an early emerging understanding for the CEDP team, comparing the fairly linear delivery model to a more flexible approach which is guided by the needs of the participants (as determined by a needs assessment and the adoption of a more participatory design approach). The team has a lot more thinking to do on this, and will focus on this aspect of the curriculum framework in the final months of this phase. The CEDP team welcomes any views by stakeholders.

### 3. The Democracy Tree

You might notice the new image which sits at the head of this newsletter. This was a painting by artist Terzip Lashi from Bhutan and represents one of the key tools in the *Democracy in Our Place* module – the 'Democracy Tree'.

The tree is a central reference point for the structure of the module, and how it can be delivered in a workshop. Participants explore the tree as a metaphor for democracy, with the **benefits of democracy** (the fruits) the product of a strong foundation built on the following:

- ⊕ Soil: **Democratic values**
- ⊕ Roots: **Democratic principles**
- ⊕ Trunk: **Institutions of democracy**
- ⊕ Branches: **Democratic governance mechanisms**



## 4. Noel Matthews and Nicolas Garrigue

The project team would like to thank Noel Matthews and Nicolas Garrigue for their incredible contribution to the CEDP. Both have brought highly regarded expertise and advice in two of the key elements of the CEDP – the curriculum and the project evaluation. Both Noel and Nicolas will be travelling to Melbourne in November to further consolidate the work of the project and their great contribution.



### Noel Matthews – Curriculum Advisor

Noel has worked on learning, capacity development, pro-poor policy development, public sector management, social accountability, governance reform and civic education /participation within local and national governments, civil society and the UN in both Europe and Asia over the last 20 years. In recent years his work has focused more on developing learning, strategic and institutional development initiatives for government officials and civil society actors in order to develop capacity for effective democratic governance.

Before working with AEC on the CEDP, he was regional director for an international NGO in South East Asia, and prior to that he was advisor on capacity development for UNDP's Democratic Governance Group in Oslo, Norway, working globally. He is currently Regional Director for CORD based in Cambodia.

He has also spent the last few years working with other Sub-Mekong Region CSOs and government officials on governance capacity development and organisational development as well as on a wide range of Asia-Pacific and global UN initiatives including conflict and governance, aid effectiveness, combating human trafficking and elections. Previous posts include serving as Regional Director for Traidcraft in South East Asia with projects in Vietnam and Cambodia as well as several leadership and advisory roles for international NGOs. Noel initially trained and practiced as a psychotherapist before going on to train and work in the public, private and non-profit sectors. His qualifications include a Masters Degree in Education and he is currently a Doctoral candidate at the University of Sheffield (UK).

### Nicolas Garrigue – Evaluation Advisor

Nicolas is a freelance consultant on governance and human development who has worked for organisations such as the European Union, CARE International, the World Bank, International IDEA and United Nations agencies. His main area of work and interest currently is governance, and he has a particular interest in the transition from traditional to modern societies and how democracy-building, far from being a linear process, follows multi-dimensional, and at times chaotic, processes.



Nicolas is French and holds a MSc. in Rural Development Studies from Montpellier University (France). Early in his career he was involved in socio-economic research of traditional societies in Haiti, Burma and Egypt, in the framework of community development projects. He worked for the United National Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) from 1999 to 2002, and since then has worked mostly in the Middle East on local governance, electoral assistance and civic education. In 2006-2008, he managed the UNOPS Iraq Governance Program in which human rights protection and civil society empowerment featured prominently. Nicolas is also an experienced BRIDGE facilitator since 2002, and has been involved in BRIDGE workshops all over the world, including in Sweden, Palestine, Yemen, Ghana, Bolivia, Colombia and Peru. He is also currently engaged as an evaluator for a civic education project in East Timor.

Nicolas has been involved with the CEDP from the beginning as the evaluation advisor and had the opportunity to attend and facilitate at the first trial workshop in Vanuatu. He enjoyed tremendously seeing the new curriculum become a reality.



## 5. UNDEF and AusAID Update

The CEDP team is pleased to report that funding for the next phase through UNDEF has now been confirmed, and AusAID support funding has also been approved in principle. The team is now wrapping up the great achievements of the first year and will commence work on the first outputs of phase two from November 2009.



Australian Government  
AusAID

## 6. Phase 2

As reported in the last newsletter, phase 2 proposes to deliver the following outputs (dates are tentative):

- ⊕ **Output 1 (end 2009):** Completion of a mapping and scoping of civic education resources in the region (a more in depth mapping than that conducted in 2008)
- ⊕ **Output 2 (end 2009):** Establishment of a Community of Practice (CoP) of civic education practitioners in the region, including setup of a 'Knowledge Portal' for the CoP, and other structures for communication and sharing (e.g. website)
- ⊕ **Output 3 (start 2010):** Development of a Training of Trainers for delivery of CEDP modules, and further work on the existing *Democracy in Our Place* module – to be used as a resource for the CoP
- ⊕ **Output 4 (mid-2010):** A combined CoP meeting and training workshop, incorporating the new ToT, the DiOP workshop, and the opportunity for CoP members to network and share – to be held in an Asia Pacific location TBC
- ⊕ **Output 5 (mid-2010):** Development of a module in *Democratic Governance* or *Civic Education Programs*, and further development of information resources
- ⊕ **Output 6 (end 2010):** Mentor civic education practitioners to deliver the training curriculum at their national level
- ⊕ **Output 7 (end 2010):** Trial workshop of new curriculum delivered

### Want more info on the CEDP?

CEDP website: <http://bridge-project.org/index.php/CEDP>

Contact:

[civics@bridge-project.org](mailto:civics@bridge-project.org)

Yvonne Goudie, CEDP Coordinator – [yvonne.goudie@aec.gov.au](mailto:yvonne.goudie@aec.gov.au)

