



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020



BHUTAN ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY



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# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Our work has only just begun. As the world continues to reel under the devastating ravages of COVID-19, we took time to reflect and reenergize. We are convinced, now more than ever, that the foundations of water, food, nature and energy must be secured and strengthened. While the deleterious impacts of COVID-19 may wane off as a short-term blip, we remain alarmed and concerned by the rapid pace with which climate change is insidiously unravelling the very tapestry which holds life together. We must act with the urgency and courage demanded by the moment.

We believe that everyone has a role to play in the stewardship of our world. As such, we value and respect the role played by the Government, civil society, private parties, and multilateral agencies. We intend and commit to play our own meaningful part in helping ensure a sustainable, resilient, and verdant Bhutan. We will play with a spirit of solidarity, collaboration, and partnerships based on trust and mutual respect. And we will actively seek out synergies and opportunities to boost impact.

In the coming years, we will continue to build on impactscales, large landscapes which buffer and help attenuate the negative impacts of climate change. Such landscapes will be secure in water, biodiverse, champion renewables and sustain climate resilient communities.

HRH Ashi Chimi Yangzom Wangchuck continues to guide and inspire us in our humble endeavours. We remain deeply grateful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nawang Norbu', written over a thin horizontal line.

Nawang Norbu



# ABOUT US

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## WHO WE ARE

Bhutan Ecological Society is a non-profit organization that connects science, business, and policy with the goal of building and sustaining resilient communities and functional landscapes. Leveraging the power of enterprise, BES aims to create and sustain functional physical environments (built and natural) that provide for human needs and foster prosperity, while ensuring the integrity of ecosystems. Over the next decade, we will create and sustain impactscapes - large landscapes, both rural and urban, which are functional and provide for food, energy, water and species. Such impactscapes will create jobs, increase self-sufficiency, build resilient communities, proactively adapt to climate change and ensure the persistence of biodiversity. We will pilot, demonstrate and upscale climate adaptation strategies in collaboration with communities, academia, civil society and the government. We will continue to deliver innovative environmental education programs and address key policy, applied and basic science research needs.

## WHAT WE DO

1. Put land to productive use;
2. Ensure functional integrity of large forest landscapes;
3. Help build smarter;
4. Champion solar & renewables;
5. Innovate and pilot water solutions; and
6. Deliver environmental education, promote science and encourage discourse.

## WHY WE DO IT

We believe climate change is the single biggest threat to our common prosperity and well-being. We also believe that it is possible to build a world that is sustainable, resilient and prosperous. Through connecting ecological, social, political and economic perspectives, we seek to maximize positive impacts on human lives and livelihoods whilst attending to the urgent call to action demanded by a rapidly-changing planet.



# IMPACT

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Despite setbacks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 we have worked on improving rural lives and livelihoods in Bhutan through sustainable, climate-smart enterprise, promoting conservation through innovative approaches and introducing renewable energy to our community.

# PROMOTING CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE AND CREATING EMPLOYMENT

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By introducing moringa, a high-value, fast-growing, drought-resistant crop to the people of Chuzanggang in Southern Bhutan, we are promoting climate-smart agriculture as well as creating jobs, especially for women and youth. Through the project, we are strengthening interactions and cooperation among the community, Community Based Organizations (CBO) and the Local Government and exploring participatory approaches to improving livelihoods of the farming community in Chuzanggang. We are currently working on introducing the crop to the farmers and introducing bylaws and structure for the farmer group engaged in moringa plantation. Moving forward, we shall work linking the farmers to the market for selling their crop nationally and/or internationally.



# PROGRESS

**Purchased and planted moringa seeds**



**Propagated moringa from cuttings as a secondary method**

**Prepared soil beds and poly bags for plantation.**



**Installed irrigation system in the green houses**



**Formulated By-Laws for farmers group**

Half of the project activities have been completed. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected this project as the project site is located in the south, where travel restrictions prohibit us from implementing and monitoring progress. The implementing of the activities will resume once the Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

71

FARMERS ENGAGED

5,000

MORINGA PLANTS RAISED

48

WOMEN REACHED



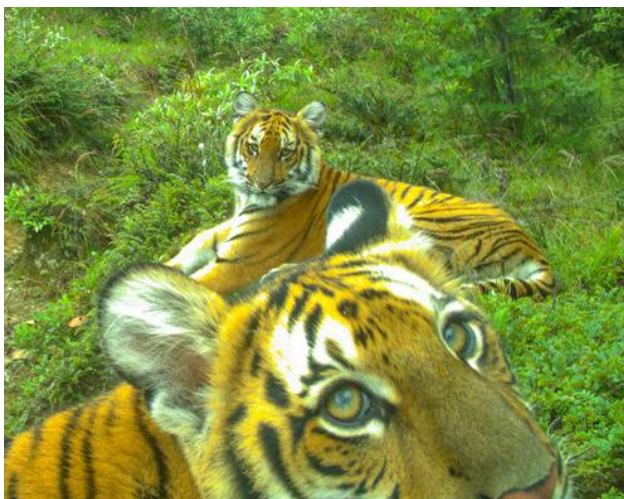
# PUTTING PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF TIGER CONVERSATION

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Tiger is the most endangered cat in Asia, and the most tigers are lost to poaching. In addition to direct poaching, inadvertent and retaliatory killings of tigers are a major threat in Bhutan. We believe that the most pragmatic way save tigers is to bring communities together and make them part of the tiger conservation programs. Through economic empowerment and using faith-based approach, BES is helping tiger conservation along the eastern edge of the Royal Manas National Park (RMNP) in Norbugang, Pemagatshel. Located along the Indian borders, Norbugang is one of the poaching hotspots where the community not only views tigers as an economic opportunity but also a nuisance.

Working with the local monastery, the Global Tiger Center (GTC), the local community leaders and the RMNP, we have been successful in using Buddhist teachings to wean poachers from killing tiger. We continue to work with the Dhognga Tenpailing monastery in using Buddhist teachings and folklore for protecting tigers. Furthermore, through camera trap images, wildlife observation, and education and awareness programs, we aim to offer the monks and the villagers a more inspiring view of the wildlife and instill a sense of ownership in tiger conservation. Finally, through providing avenues to improve livelihood of the local community, we hope to alleviate some human-wildlife conflict issues and make the community a core partner in tiger conservation.

BES conceptualized and developed a similar tiger conservation project in Dangchu, Wangdue Phodrang where we have successfully empowered the local community to take ownership of the initiative. The Chubar Dendupcholing Community Forest Management Group (CDCFMG) members are active partners in conservation. whilst receiving technical and other assistance for farming from the district forest division and the local government.



# PROGRESS

**Conducted the inception workshop**

**Conducted the first socio-economic survey**

**Improved livelihood of the community by providing “Yoe-Gi Thab”, as an energy-efficient electric cook stoves**

**Developed tiger mascot for educational purposes**

**In conversation with Dhognga Tenpiling monastery for further teaching for poachers**

**Assessing further livelihood improvement activities with local leaders**



# 103

TIGERS IN BHUTAN



# 34

POACHERS TURNED INTO  
CONSERVATIONISTS



# 277

HOUSEHOLDS  
REACHED



# CAPTURING PUBLIC IMAGINATION IN URBAN SPACES

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The Fruits for All initiative, started in 2018, aims to help nurture green public spaces in urban areas. Since its inception, we have worked with local government and schools to plant over 1000 fruit tree saplings in Thimphu, Wangdue Phrodrang, Tsirang, and Paro.

To mark Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen's birth anniversary and the World Environment Day, BES launched the Paro chapter of the initiative in June 2020 by planting 31 fruit trees (chestnut, walnut, apple, pear, peach and persimmon) at the Paro Children's Park and 90 fruit and ornamental tree saplings as part of a plantation program on a reclaimed land tract along the river at Tsendona gewog, in partnership with the Paro Forest Division and Rema Resort. The reclaimed land will serve as an urban park with free access to fruit trees for urban residents. The park will also serve as a sanctuary for birds and insects. In addition, we planted 50 fruit saplings around the Skate Park in Bebena, Thimphu to mark Social Forestry Day.

**1,134** FRUIT TREES PLANTED IN **4** DZONGKHAGS  
THUS FAR

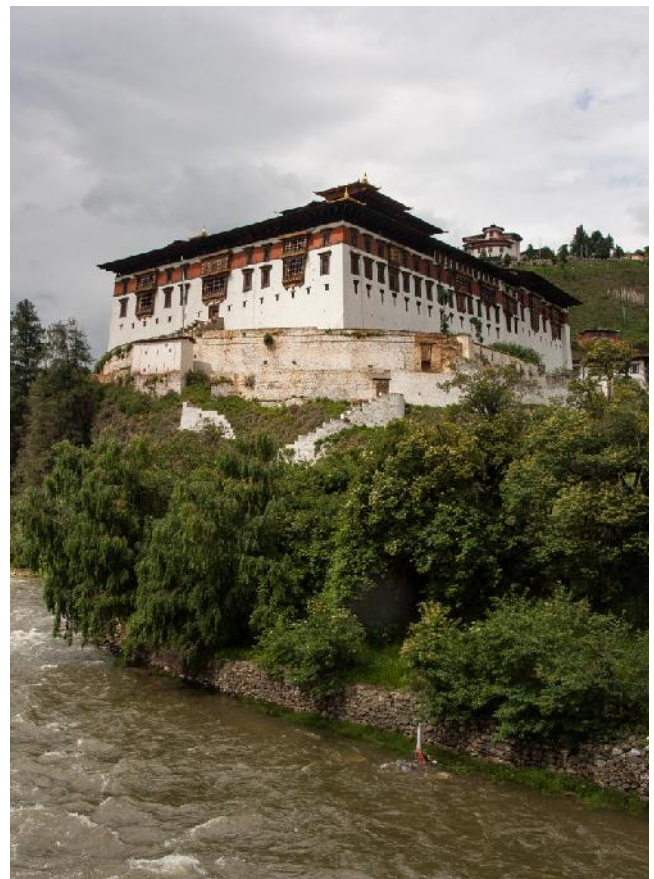


## SPURRING RENEWABLE ENERGY

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Bhutan Ecological Society installed a solar water heating system at Paro Dratshang, which will now help over 300 monks staying at the Dratshang to have access to hot water. Solar heating systems are an effective and efficient way to heat water while avoiding carbon and greenhouse gas emission.

The 1000-liter water heating system was installed in February 2020 with technical assistance from JB Solar Solutions. The system will supply hot water to the bathrooms as well as the Dratshang kitchen.



**300+** MONKS HAVE ACCESS TO HOT WATER

# NURTURING AND LEVERAGING A UNIQUE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

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The School for Field Studies (SFS), Bhutan Ecological Society, Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environmental Research (UWICER), and the Department of Forest and Park Services (DoFPS) continue to operate a 5-year MoU to host undergraduate students at the BES operated Center for Himalayan and Environment Studies in Paro for 2 transformative semesters and 2 summer sessions. The research at the Center focuses on enhancing the condition of forest, river, and mountain ecosystems while balancing modernization and cultural preservation. Students contribute to this collaborative research agenda in several priority areas including mountain biodiversity and biogeography, climate change, sustainable forestry, conservation biology, water resources, socioeconomic development, human well-being, and public policy.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only the Spring semester was convened where 24 students from 21 different institutions from across the United States successfully completed the program.

**361** STUDENTS FROM **25** DIFFERENT US UNIVERSITIES  
HOSTED THUS FAR





# PARTNERSHIPS

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In 2020, we established important partnerships with various agencies.

## Department of Renewable Energy (DRE)

Bhutan Ecological Society installed a solar water heating system at Paro Dratshang, which will now help over 300 monks staying at the Dratshang to have access to hot water. Solar heating systems are an effective and efficient way to heat water while avoiding carbon and greenhouse gas emission.

## Ministry of Works and Human Settlement (MoWHS)

The Ministry of Works and Human Settlement (MoWHS) and BES signed an MoU on 24th June 2020 to establish and strengthen cooperation between the two entities to support sustainability and energy efficiency in the building sector of Bhutan. We seek to collaborate on research, education, awareness creation, capacity building and supply chain enhancement to achieve a common goal of sustainable and energy efficient buildings across Bhutan.

## Bhutan Olympic Committee (BOC)

Coinciding with the Social Forestry Day (2nd June, 2020), BES signed an MoU with the Bhutan Olympic Committee to beautify sport venues in and around Thimphu. This would not only provide aesthetic value and access to fruits, but also increase the appreciation of nature among athletes and public alike. BES planted about 50 saplings at the Skate Park in Bebena to mark the beginning of the partnership. This partnership is in line with our 'Fruits for All' initiative.



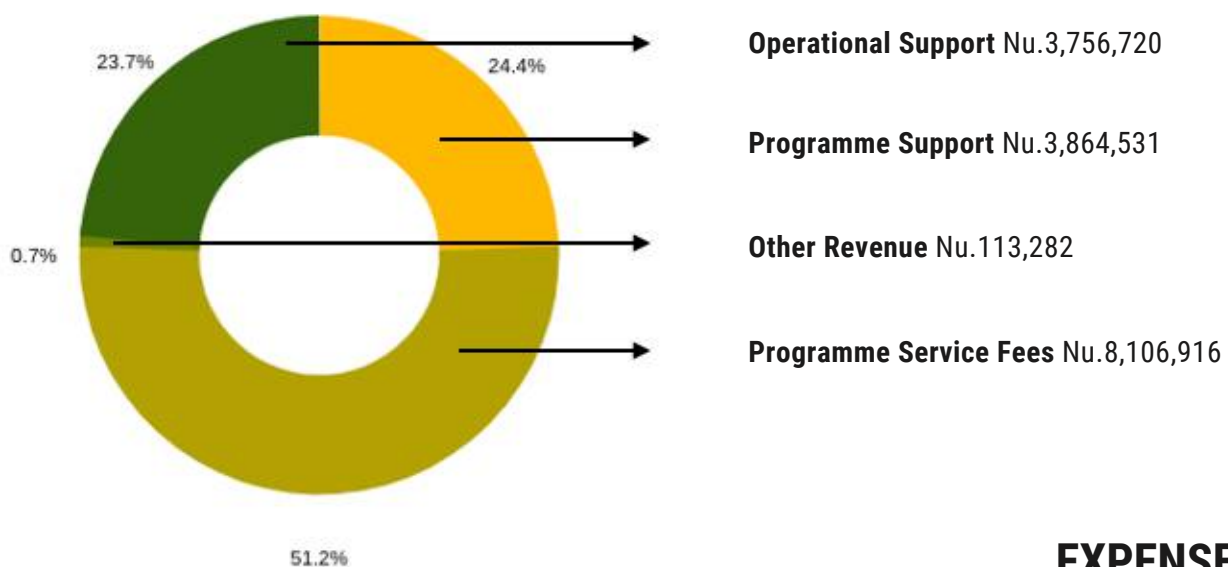
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**BHUTAN  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE**

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FISCAL YEAR 2020

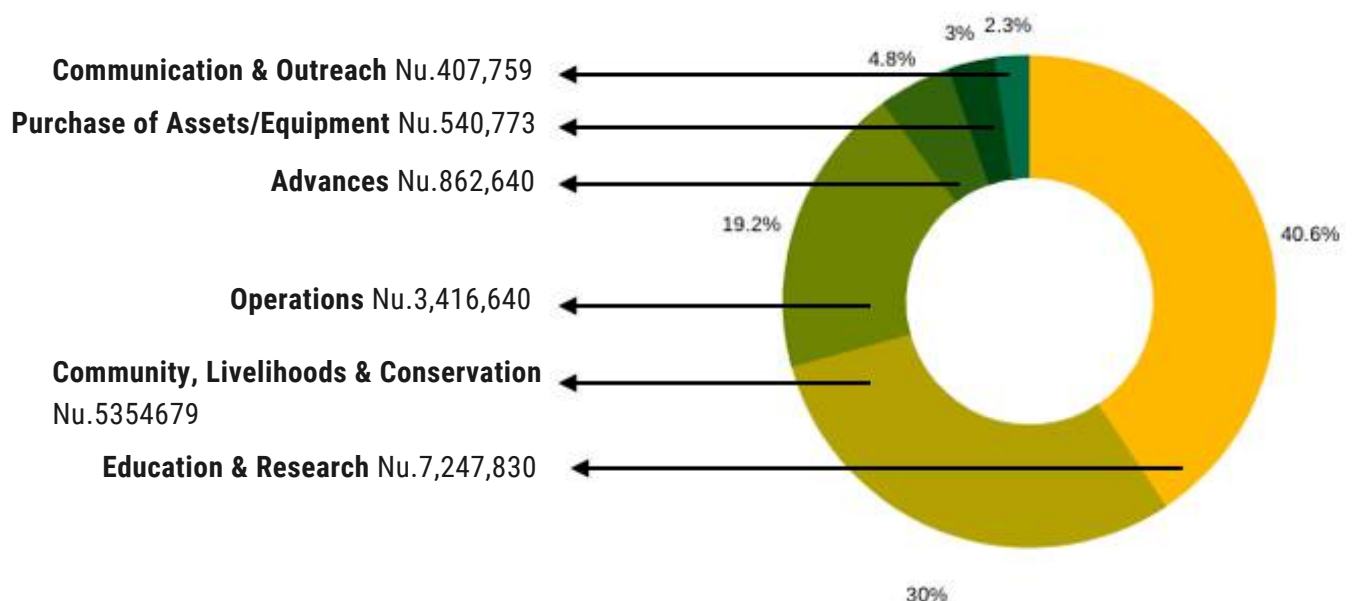
## FUNDS RECEIVED

**NU.15,841,449**



## EXPENSES

**NU.17,830,320**



# SUPPORTERS

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**KARUNA**  
FOUNDATION



**SGP** The GEF  
Small Grants  
Programme



# CONTACT US

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Photo credits: Dr. Joshua Goldberg, BES Project Team and Global Tiger Center,  
Department of Forests and Park Services.