



BHUTAN ECHOES

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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WORDS FROM THE PRODUCER

Dear Friends,

As we bid farewell to 2023, we reflect with gratitude on the incredible journey we've shared with Bhutan Echoes. The year unfolded with a delightful children's session featuring the esteemed author Yuval Noah Harari. To honor our rich storytelling heritage, His Serene Highness DASHO Jigje Singye Wangchuck initiated the nationwide competition, "Our Children's Stories." DrukYul's Digital Salon series continued, fostering intimate conversations around stories, ideas, and art. The year culminated with the launch of The Write Circle series, a cherished literary initiative by the Prabha Khaitan Foundation and in collaboration with Siyahi.

With celebration and joy, we welcomed the much-anticipated in-person DrukYul's Literature Festival and reunion after nearly four challenging years in August. Speakers from Bhutan and around the globe graced our stages, leaving us in awe. The festival theme, "Reconnecting and Reviving," captured the core of our efforts to bridge connections and rekindle the essence of literature and the arts.

Discussions spanned diverse topics, from the power of language, post-pandemic human connections, and fashion to environmental concerns and digital technology. Luminaries such as Kunzang Choden, Geetanjali Shree, Benjamin Flouw, Shrayana Bhattacharya, and Toby Walsh enriched our stages.

We are also thrilled to announce the evolution of our festival from "DrukYul's Literature Festival" to "**DrukYul's Literature and Arts Festival**," reflecting our commitment to embracing a broader spectrum of artistic expressions.

Heartfelt thanks to our partners, sponsors, speakers, performers, volunteers, and attendees. Your support, participation, and enthusiasm, whether in-person or online, contributed to its success and inspired us. Thank you all for being part of our story this year.

In a year marked by transition and return, our efforts have been dedicated to fostering community through shared books, ideas, stories, and dialogue, promoting literacy, culture, creativity, and connection. This report will highlight the fulfillment of our mission commitments, and recognize individuals and organizations who have contributed to our success.

With gratitude,



Kitso Pelmo Wangdi
Festival Producer

DRUKYUL'S LITERATURE FESTIVAL 2023



Festival attendees

The Bhutan Echoes 12th edition of Drukyl's Literature Festival in 2023 marked a significant milestone as it celebrated its first in-person launch in four years. Bringing together a diverse assembly of renowned literary figures from Bhutan, India, and beyond, the festival served as a dynamic platform for engaging

discussions on a wide range of cultural and contemporary topics.

The festival facilitated discussions on various issues, including the power of language, fashion, and film, redefining travel, the significance of human and community connections post-pandemic, as well as environmental concerns, digital technology, and holistic well-being. Authors, artists, and literary figures across generations converged to explore the evolution of oral storytelling and the transformative trajectory of literature, reading, and writing in Bhutan.



Workshop on Embroidery by Dr.Vandana Bhandari



Day One of DLF at the Royal University of Bhutan



DRUKYUL'S LITERATURE FESTIVAL 2023

The luminaries of this year's festival included esteemed personalities such as Her Majesty The Queen Mother, author Kunzang Choden, French artist Benjamin Flouw, Binod Chaudhary, the mind behind the beloved instant noodle brand Wai-Wai, and Indian author Vikas Swarup, among others. The festival's theme, "Reconnecting and Reviving," held profound relevance in the post-pandemic world, urging participants to foster genuine human connections and rediscover the essence of storytelling, literature, culture, and the arts.



Her Majesty in conversation with Dasha Paljor Dorji

Notably, the festival paid a heartfelt tribute to local talents, recognizing their invaluable contributions to Bhutan's literary landscape. Her Majesty the Royal Queen Mother expressed her profound belief in the festival's significance as a unifying platform, bringing people together in love and appreciation of literature.



Rolf Hermann and Sonam Pem Tshoki



Honoring Bhutanese literary debutants



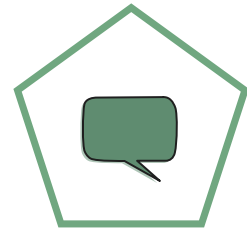
FESTIVAL IN NUMBERS



27
Sessions



300+
**Footfall per
day**



60
Speakers



10
Workshops

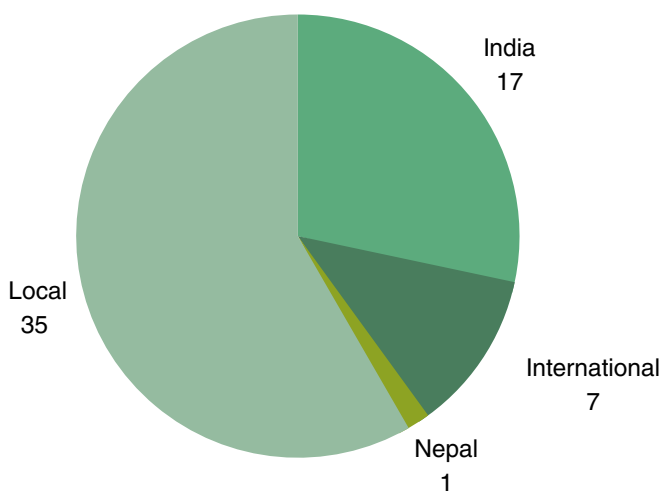


41
**Sponsors &
Partners**



13K
Peak live views

Our featured speakers



About 1050 followers gained on Instagram and 1500 on Facebook during the pre and post-festival period



DLF 2023 IN THE MEDIA

THE STORY KEEPERS OF BHUTAN

These writers, historians, designers and artists are gathering the tales of their people, textiles, artefacts and symbols to preserve the country's legacy

THE HINDU

"TRENDS will come and go but I believe that our NATIONAL DRESS will stay for a very LONG TIME—we have subconsciously realised that this is our ARMOUR"

— Karma Tshering Wangchuk

THE WIRE

Bhutan's Funny Women and Brave Dreams

A literature festival in the mountains shows a Bhutan that straddles the ambition of its youth with the wisdom of centuries — with a little help from good and bad jokes.

Bhutan Echoes: Drukyl's Literature Festival



Her Majesty The Queen Mother in conversation with Dashi Paljor Jigme Dorji.

Travel + Leisure

In its 12th edition, the rebranded Bhutan Literature Festival celebrates stories, traditions, and the joy of storytelling



Royal patron of the festival, Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuk with author Geetanjali Shree. (Courtesy Bhutan Echoes)

Hindustan Times

ThePrint

Bhutan's Drukyl Literature Festival to return on ground after 3 years; Geetanjali Shree, Toby Walsh among speakers

New Delhi, Jun 7 (PTI) International Booker Prize winner Geetanjali Shree, AI scientist Toby Walsh, former diplomat Vikas Swarup and historian Aanchal Malhotra are among the noted names taking part in the 12th edition of Bhutan's Drukyl Literature Festival (DLF), starting August 4. Organised by Bhutan Echoes, the three-day fest is returning on ground after [...]

This custom, she writes, is to prevent the spirits from stealing the stories. "As long as a human being reproduces and indicates that the story is being listened to, the spirits cannot steal them." A pretty alright copyright arrangement.



Harper's Bazaar

Bhutan's Funny Women and Brave Dreams

A literature festival in the mountains shows a Bhutan that straddles the ambition of its youth with the wisdom of centuries — with a little help from good and bad jokes.



The Wire



Thanking Her Majesty, The Queen Mother of Bhutan, Tara wrote, "There is nothing I treasure more than to share my love for music, theatre, film and dance"



Themed "Reconnecting and Reviving", the annual literary festival has something for everyone as it covers issues ranging from redefining travel and rebuilding human connections post-pandemic to environmental concerns, the economy, and holistic well-being. (www.drukyl.org)

International Booker Prize winner Geetanjali Shree, AI scientist Toby Walsh, former diplomat Vikas Swarup and historian Aanchal Malhotra are among the noted names taking part in the 12th edition of Bhutan's Drukyl Literature Festival (DLF) starting August 4.

Indian Express

PROGRAMS

Children's Session with Prof. Yuval Noah Harari

In our endeavor to cultivate a profound appreciation for literature and the world among young students, we organized a compelling program at the Royal Textile Academy. The event featured the world-renowned Professor Yuval Noah Harari and brought together students from the Royal Academy.



Prof. Harari with Royal Academy Students



At the Royal Textile Academy

During the engaging discussion with students about his recent book "Unstoppable Us - How Humans Took Over the World", students discovered and explored the depths and complexities of humanity and the world through the renowned professor's lens. The impact of this discussion was extended through its broadcasts on Bhutan's broadcasting channels, BBS2 and BBS3. This event, graced by His Serene Highness Dasho Jigje Singye Wangchuck, was a meaningful stride in fostering intellectual curiosity and highlighting the importance of literature within Bhutan's youth community.



HSH Dasho Jigje and Prof. Harari



Students from Royal Academy



Prof. Harari signing books



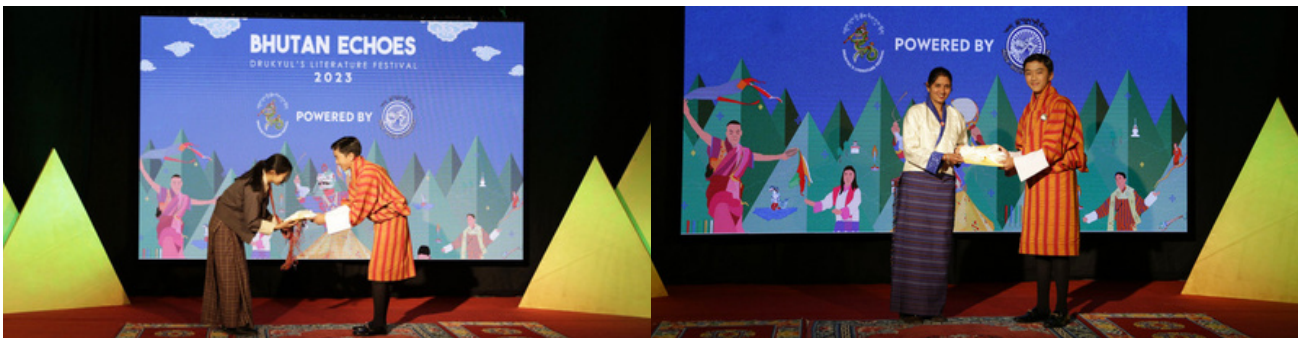
'Our Children's Stories' National Storytelling Competition



HSH Dasho Jigje Singye Wangchuck

Bhutan Echoes organized the "Our Children's Stories" National Storytelling Competition, an initiative of His Serene Highness Dasho Jigje Singye Wangchuck in collaboration with ELC High School.

This initiative aimed to preserve Bhutan's storytelling tradition, inspiring students to connect with their roots and exchange perspectives. The competition invited students across Bhutan, from grades 7 to 12 to share real stories in English or Dzongkha from their families and communities through short video submissions. The competition not only celebrated our rich cultural heritage but also the immense storytelling potential of our young people.



HSH Dasho Jigje Singye Wangchuck presenting the awards to the winners

With an overwhelming 300 video submissions to Bhutan Echoes from students all over the country, a panel of distinguished judges from among Bhutan's literary community selected eight winners. His Serene Highness Dasho Jigje Singye Wangchuck recognized and awarded the winners at the closing of Drukyul's Literature Festival 2023. Recognizing outstanding storytelling prowess, winners in the Dzongkha and English categories received a substantial cash prize of 15k each, while Class-level winners were awarded 6k each.

Our Children's Stories

National Storytelling Competition Winners



Dzongkha Category:
Dorji Om, class 12
Karma Academy, Paro



English Category:
Yeshe Lhamo, class 8
Trashigang MSS, Trashigang



Class 12 Category:
Tshewang Namgay
Drametse HSS, Mongar



Class 11 Category:
Kinley Sonam Phunsum
Ugyen Academy, Punakha



Class 10 Category:
Pema Choden Tshering
Ugyen Academy, Punakha



Class 9 Category:
Yeshey Lhamo
Tashidingkha HSS, Punakha



Class 8 Category:
Maylam Wangdi
ELC HS, Thimphu



Class 7 Category:
Samden Jurmey Dema
Samtse LSS, Samtse



Honorable Mention:
Siddhanth Chhetri
Norbugang HSS, Samtse



Drukyul's Digital Salon



Dasho Paljor Jigme Dorji and Tshering Khenden Namda

Throughout the year, our steadfast commitment to promoting literature, arts, and culture remained evident through the Drukyul's Digital Salon series. This ongoing series served as an enriching

platform, fostering intimate conversations with a diverse array of artists, authors, and intellectuals. It provided a unique opportunity for storytellers to openly discuss and share their ideas, creative works, and personal journeys. The program aims to actively engage, inspire, and resonate with our Bhutanese youth.

We had the privilege of hosting distinguished luminaries such as Emily Perkins, Dasho Paljor Jigme Dorji, and Linda Leaming. These sessions provided nuanced and intimate insights into the intricate worlds of writers, unveiling the internal and external landscapes that shape their creative processes. Additionally, our discussions unearthed the unique and compelling internal world of Bhutan, presenting it to the global audience as a narrative that deserves to be shared and celebrated.



Linda Leaming and Tsedon Dorji



Emily Perkins and Chimi Nangsel Dorji



The Write Circle's Debut in Bhutan

We celebrated the culmination of the year with the inaugural event of The Write Circle series at the dusitD2 Yarkay Hotel. The program is a cherished literary initiative by the Prabha Khaitan Foundation, known for bringing together literature enthusiasts in an intimate setting, featuring conversations that bridge authors and readers.



Renowned author Nilanjana S. Roy, accompanied by moderator Sonam Pem Tshoki, captivated the audience with profound insights, leading them on a journey to rediscover the joy of writing and unravel the enchantment within storytelling. Laughter and engaging discussions filled the room as they delved into the pages of Nilanjana's noir fiction 'Black River.'

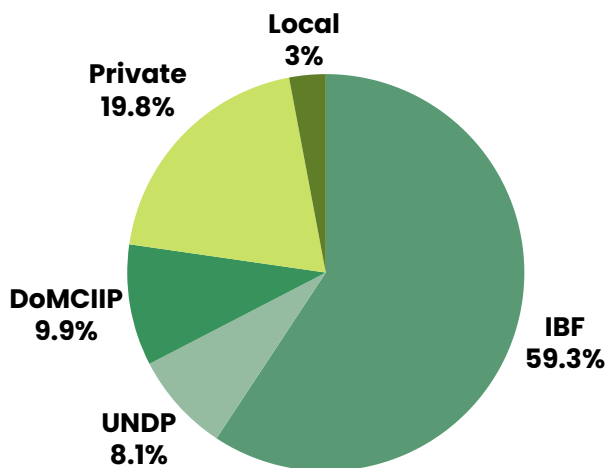


Every word resonated deeply, forging a profound connection with the audience. The evening concluded with a Q&A session and book signing, where participants received a complimentary copy of Nilanjana's book. The inaugural event of The Write Circle Series was not only an enriching experience for attendees but also added an extraordinary chapter to the local literary landscape.



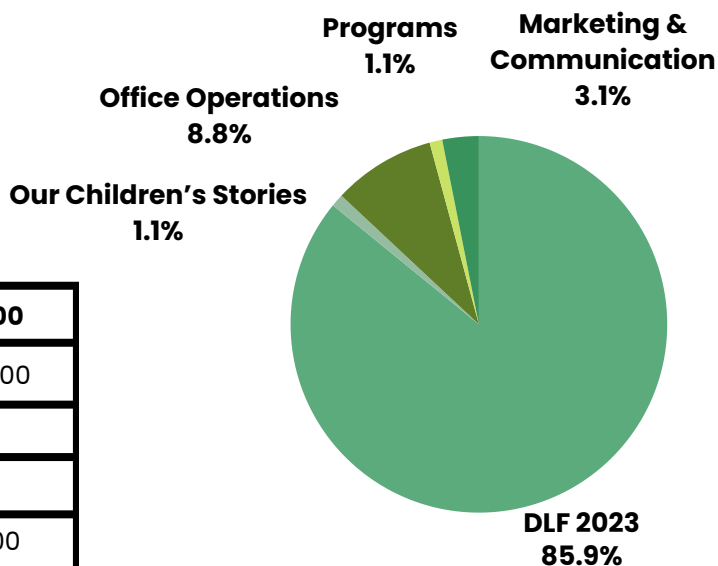
BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE

Total Funding Received



| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Total Funding recieved | Nu.6,461,250 |
| Government | Nu. 45,00,000 |
| Foundation | Nu. 4,11,250 |
| Private Individuals | Nu. 1,40,00,000 |
| Corporate | Nu. 1,50,000 |

Total Expenses

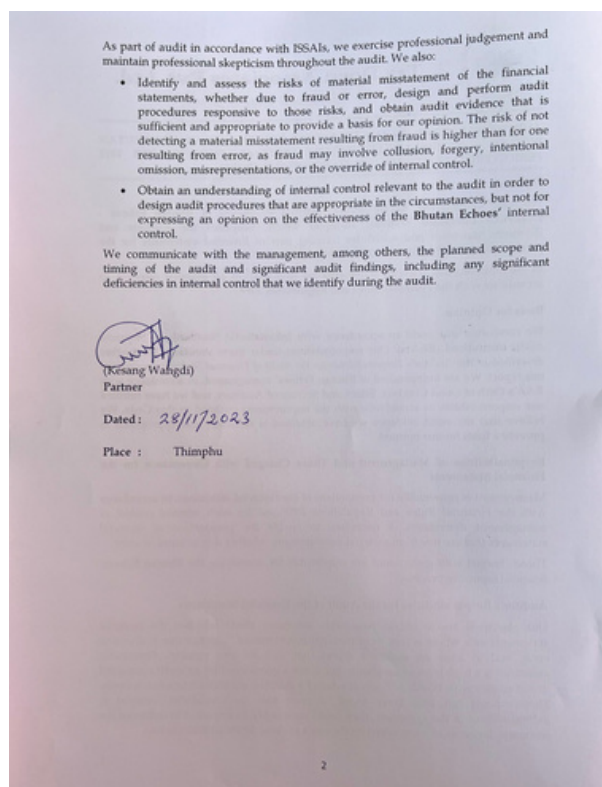
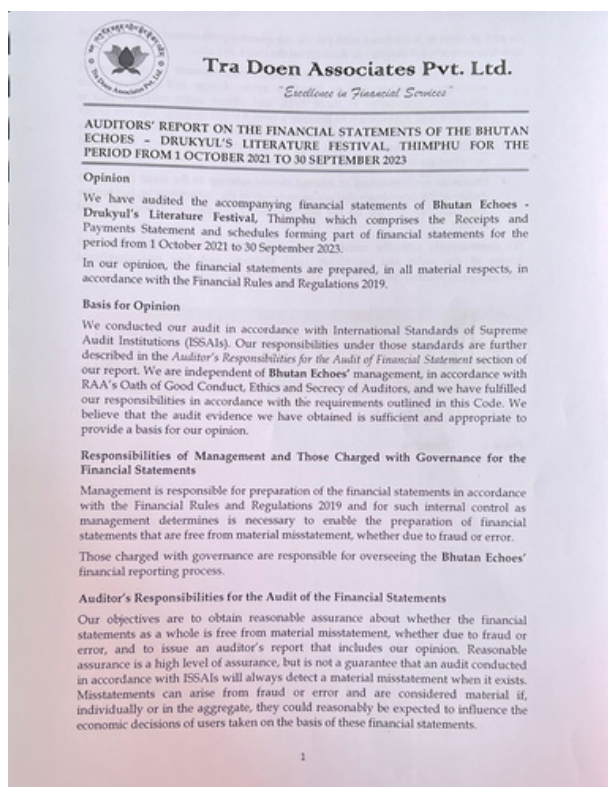


| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Total Expenses | Nu.6,404,000 |
| DLF 2023 | Nu. 55,00,000 |
| Storytelling Competition | Nu. 70,000 |
| Programs | Nu. 70,000 |
| Office Operations | Nu. 5,64,000 |
| Marketing & Communication | Nu. 2,00,000 |



BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE

Tra Doen Associates Pvt. Ltd. conducted a thorough audit of Bhutan Echoes financial records for the period spanning from October 1st, 2021, to September 30th, 2023. This audit was conducted in compliance with the guidelines set by the Royal Bhutan Audit Authority as outlined in the Financial Rules and Regulations 2019 and verified our steadfast commitment to transparency, accountability, and the soundness of our financial practices throughout the specified period.



FESTIVAL ANNOUNCEMENTS



We are delighted to announce that our festival is transforming from "Drukyul's Literature Festival" (DLF) to the more encompassing

Drukyul's Literature and Arts Festival (DLAF)

This expansion reflects our commitment to celebrating not only the written word but also the rich tapestry of artistic expressions, fostering a holistic exploration of literature and the arts.

August 2nd , 3rd, and 4th 2024

Join us for next year's festival and immerse yourself in the promising experience!

FESTIVAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Festival Theme - Mindfulness

Drukyl's Literature Festival 2024 is inspired by the illuminating 116th National Day Address delivered by His Majesty the King, on the vision for Gelephu Mindfulness City. Our festival embraces the theme of "Mindfulness," aiming not only to preserve but also to usher in an era of evolution and positive change.

Mindfulness, as the central theme, encompasses a wide array of literary genres, reflecting its deep connection to the diverse facets of the human experience. Our festival provides a unique opportunity to reflect on profound concepts and witness their transition into tangible reality.

From visionary keynote speakers to intimate author conversations, to immersive experiences of Bhutan's culture and natural beauty and beyond. The Festival will be a place to learn, share, refresh, reflect, reconnect, and reimagine with ourselves and the world.



SPONSORS AND PARTNERS



CONTACT US

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Website | Drukyul.org



@bhutanechoes



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@BhutanEchoes



Bhutan Echoes

**WE HOPE YOU WILL BE
INSPIRED TO JOIN OUR
CELEBRATION OF BOOKS,
STORYTELLING, ARTS,
IDEAS AND THE
POSSIBILITIES THEY
INFUSE.**

