

ACTION RESEARCH REPORT

BEYOND THE FINISH LINE – BHUTAN



Making rights real in Bhutan



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Prepared by: Naomi Carrard and Diana Gonzalez with input from Kencho Wangdi, Ugyen Wangchuk, Jigme Choden, Raj Kumar Bhattra, and Ugyen Rinzin.

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Cover photo: Break-out group session during a Make Rights Real workshop. Photo credit: SNV/Jigme Choden.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of SNV, UTS-ISF, and the Australian Government's Water for Women Fund.

Contact information

Gabrielle Halcrow
Multi-country Programme Officer
Beyond the Finish Line Programme, SNV
ghalcrow@snv.org

Naomi Carrard
Research Director
UTS-ISF
naomi.carrard@uts.edu.au

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Acronyms

ABS	Ability Bhutan Society
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices
PHED	Public Health and Engineering Division of the Government of Bhutan’s Ministry of Health
RSAHP	Rural Sanitation and Hygiene Program of the Government of Bhutan
UTS-ISF	University of Technology - Institute for Sustainable Futures
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

1 Introduction and background

1.1 The Make Rights Real approach

Make Rights Real is an initiative supporting use of the human rights framework to drive and shape the delivery of safe, sustainable, and universal water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services. The initiative provides accessible information about the human rights to water and sanitation, a platform for discussion about how to use the human rights in practice, and a suite of tools designed to support local government officials to engage constructively with the human rights framework. A feature of the approach is its flexible application of human rights language depending on context, with discussion of human rights principles identified as an entry point for introducing core concepts. Using the language of principles, rather than 'human rights', provides entry points for progressing core concepts in situations where human rights may be tricky to discuss for a range of socio-political reasons.

The suite of tools designed for local government officials, combined with a suggested process for civil society organisations to engage with local governments, together constitute the 'Make Rights Real approach'. The Make Rights Real approach has been documented in literature¹ and on the [initiative website](#). The approach is adapted to different contexts and is continuing to evolve as we learn more about its effectiveness. Its application to date has included the following typical sequence of activities:

1. A process of engagement between a Make Rights Real partner and an implementing partner (typically a civil society organisation), sharing and learning different perspectives about the human rights framework and the Make Rights Real approach.
2. Tailoring of Make Rights Real materials and tools to suit the local context, e.g., translation and adaptation of wording and format.
3. Selection of 'would-be-heroes' (programme participants), by the implementing partner, involving a process of interviewing and selecting a set of local government officials to work with. The selection of participants is based on identification of four distinct government official 'personas'. Of the four types, a would-be-hero is characterised as an official with motivation and capacity to act who may benefit from a process of learning and support around human rights.
4. Ongoing engagement between the implementing partner and would-be-heroes using Make Rights Real materials, with the aim to support learning about the human rights principles, local government responsibilities and opportunities, and constructive ways in which local government officials can act to drive progressive realisation of the human rights.
5. Ongoing reflection and learning about the process, e.g., through mid-line and end-line interviews with would-be-heroes and implementing partners.

¹ See for example, Carrard, N.; Neumeyer, H.; Pati, B.K.; Siddique, S.; Choden, T.; Abraham, T.; Gosling, L.; Roaf, V.; Alvarez-Sala Torreano, J.; Bruhn, S. Designing Human Rights for Duty Bearers: Making the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation Part of Everyday Practice at the Local Government Level. *Water* 2020, 12, 378. <https://doi.org/10.3390/w12020378>.

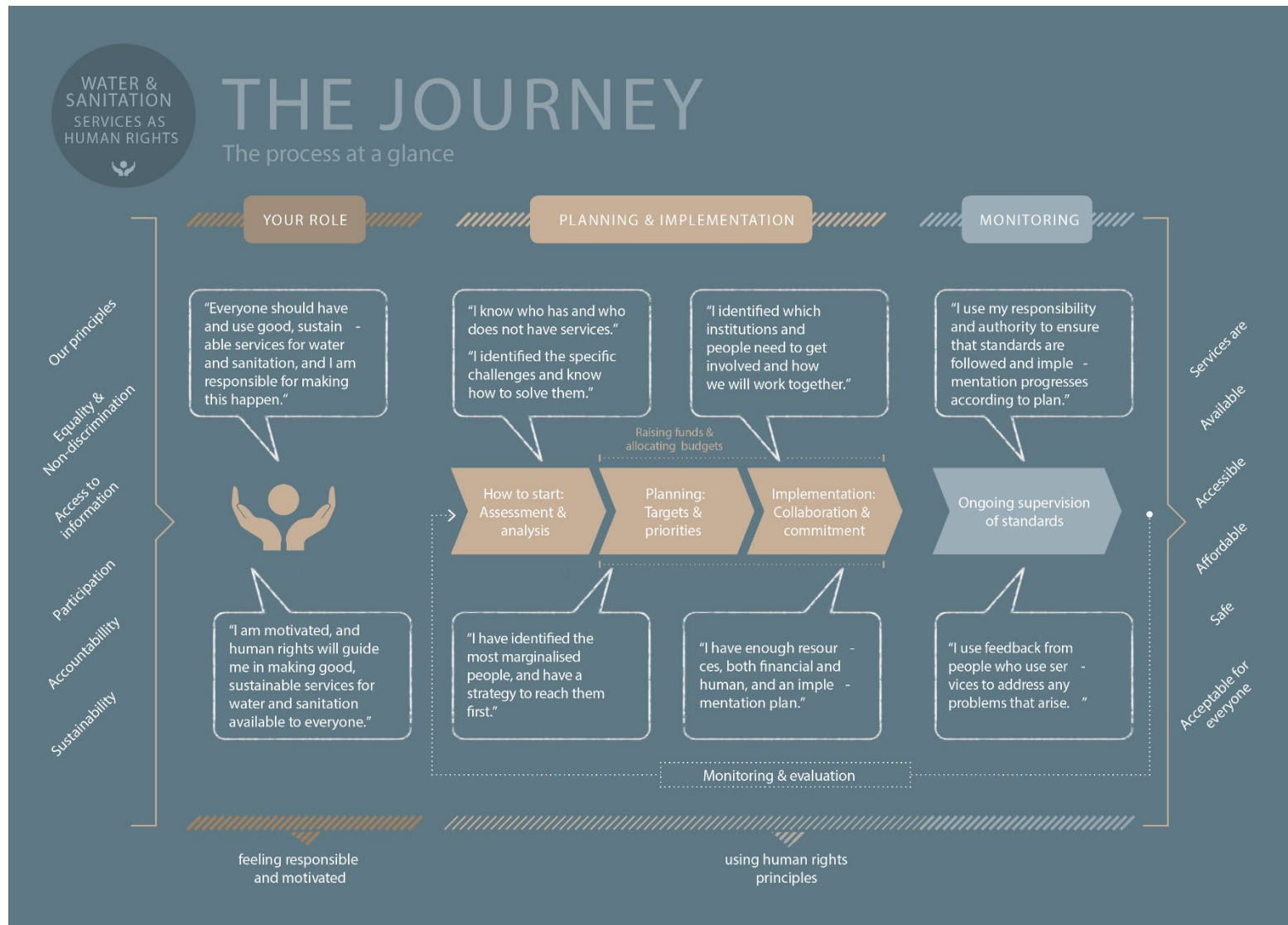


Figure 1. Make Rights Real journey map

Make Rights Real is a collaborative initiative led by WASH United with the University of Technology-Institute for Sustainable Futures (UTS-ISF), WaterAid, Simavi, UNICEF, End Water Poverty and the Rural Water Supply Network. Figure 1 shows one part of the Make Rights Real materials in the form of a 'journey map' illustrating how engaging would-be-heroes is intended to drive change.

1.2 Make Rights Real in SNV's Beyond the Finish Line programme

SNV Bhutan, in collaboration with Bhutan's Ministry of Health Public Health and Engineering Division (PHED) and Ability Bhutan Society (ABS), applied the Make Rights Real approach as part of their Beyond the Finish Line programme. The approach was guided by UTS-ISF as research and learning partner for Beyond the Finish Line, drawing on UTS-ISF expertise as a member of the global Make Rights Real consortium.

Beyond the Finish Line was a five-year programme supporting the Government of Bhutan's Royal Sanitation and Hygiene Program (RSAHP) in eight districts. As part of Australian Aid's Water for Women Fund, the programme prioritised activities designed to strengthen inclusion and transformation towards equality in WASH services and (through WASH) more widely.

The Make Rights Real approach was applied in four programme districts: Chukkha, Dagana, Punakha and Zhemgang. With activities spanning 2019-2022, including throughout a series of COVID-19 interruptions, Make Rights Real was one of several activities undertaken to engage local government officials. The suite of activities focused on developing leadership potential, shifting mindsets towards valuing and prioritising inclusion, and fostering a sense of responsibility for action given the critical role of local government in ensuring sanitation service delivery.

Make Rights Real was highly integrated with complementary programme activities including gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) training, Leadership for Change and Gender-Transformative Leadership workshops. The high level of integration meant that Make Rights Real was included in both targeted activities as well as reflected and discussed in a wide range of programme processes.

Specific activities included in the Bhutan Make Rights Real process are described in section 3, and outcomes are presented in section 4. Section 5 interprets the outcomes with reference to the impact Make Rights Real is seeking and identifies considerations for future application.

2 Research approach

An action research approach sought to strengthen implementation of the Make Rights Real approach by integrating cycles of reflection, learning and adaptation. The research component, led by UTS-ISF, was guided by research questions spanning four dimensions.

Table 1. Four-dimension focus of research questions

1	Process: characteristics and learning, including documenting and reflecting on how Make Rights Real was adapted for Bhutan, and strengths and challenges experienced by the implementing team.
2	Outcomes for implementing team members across SNV, PHED, and ABS. We looked for outcomes associated with shifts in knowledge, attitudes, and practices.
3	Outcomes for participating local government officials: We looked for changes in mindset and engagement with the human right to sanitation.
4	Actions: Outcomes that reflect action towards progressive realisation of the human right to sanitation.

Data collection tools were designed by UTS-ISF and SNV and are described in Table 2.

Table 2. Data collection tools

1	Internal reflection questions	Used during regular reflection meetings between UTS-ISF and SNV.
2	Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) survey	Completed by the implementing team at two points in time.
3	Baseline semi-structured interview guide	For selecting potential local government officials to participate as would-be-heroes and establishing a baseline of knowledge and perspectives.
4	Would-be-hero reflection questions	Used during one-on-one discussions between implementing team members and would-be-heroes.
	Endline semi-structured interview guide	Used at the end of the programme to identify outcomes for would-be-heroes and any practical actions inspired or shaped by their participation in the approach.

Data relating to the process and outcomes for implementing team members was collected by UTS-ISF. Data exploring outcomes for would-be-heroes and actions towards realisation of the human right to sanitation was collected by SNV.

Throughout the process, as data was collected, rapid analysis informed next steps in implementation. For example, one reflection session identified a need for a refresher workshop with implementation team members following disruptions due to COVID-19. Discussions with would-be-heroes using guiding questions allowed the implementing team to tailor ongoing engagement with would-be-heroes, for example, by providing consistent and additional support for professional initiatives.

The findings and insights shared in this report is a synthesis of evidence across all data collected during the process. Data was collated and coded in the qualitative data analysis platform Dovetail by UTS-ISF team members. After coding data based on relevance to each of the four research dimensions, an inductive analysis approach identified themes and explored how themes connected to the five human rights principles of (i) sustainability, (ii) participation, (iii) equality and non-discrimination, (iv) transparency and access to information, and (v) accountability. Following initial data analysis, a sensemaking workshop involving UTS-ISF and SNV was undertaken to share, discuss and refine emerging findings and implications.

A limitation of the research was a loss of continuity due to COVID-19 disruptions, which led to a reduction in opportunities for engagement between the implementing team and would-be-heroes. Some reflection discussions happened remotely, though the number and frequency were reduced. Participant changes also influenced research data. A number of would-be-heroes had moved to new roles by activity completion, presenting challenges in tracking changes from baseline to endline. To address this gap the data collection team sought input from as many participants as possible, including those no longer in their local government roles. Finally, changes in the UTS-ISF and SNV teams created gaps in processes of data collection and learning, however new team members were able to work closely with those who had ongoing involvement to minimise the impact on both implementation and action research components.

3 Tailoring Make Rights Real approach for Bhutan

Key activities in the Bhutanese application of Make Rights Real are summarised in Table 3. A feature of the process was close integration of Make Rights Real with related activities. From the outset, GESI was a focus of Beyond the Finish Line. The human rights framework, and Make Rights Real concepts, were integrated into GESI training undertaken with government partners in all programme districts at programme inception. Later, Make Rights Real formed part of initiatives designed to strengthen leadership that drives equality and inclusion, namely Leadership for Change and Gender-Transformative Leadership.

Table 3. Key project activities undertaken as part of Make Rights Real in Bhutan

	2019	2020 - 2021	2022
Implementing team activities	<p>Three-day learning and design workshop on the human rights framework, Make Rights Real approach, and considerations for application in Bhutan. Facilitated by UTS-ISF with participants from SNV, PHED and ABS. KAP survey undertaken with workshop participations.</p> <p>Detailed co-design of the Bhutan Make Rights Real approach, based on initial plan for 2-year implementation (later adjusted due to COVID-19).</p>	<p>Five team reflection meetings to discuss progress, reflect on achievements and challenges, and design adaptations.</p> <p>Refresher workshop with SNV team and partners, including additional government attendees working on sanitation in health care facilities. KAP survey undertaken for a second time (though with limited continuity from the first).</p> <p>Integration of Make Rights Real concepts and activities within a related Leadership for Change activity.</p>	<p>Induction and close collaboration with two new SNV team members on the human rights framework and Make Rights Real approach.</p> <p>Integration of Make Rights Real concepts and activities within a related Gender-Transformative Leadership activity.</p> <p>Sensemaking workshop to discuss and refine findings and implications.</p>
Engagement with would-be-heroes	<p>Inclusion of human rights principles and criteria in workshops on GESI.</p> <p>Baseline interviews and selection of 24 would-be-heroes across 4 districts comprising 9 women and 15 men.</p>	<p>Make Rights Real materials translated into Dzongkha and distributed to would-be-heroes.</p> <p>Two formal one-on-one discussions with would-be-heroes guided by the Make Rights Real materials and focused on inclusive sanitation, the RSAHP process and any support needs.</p> <p>Several informal interactions with would-be-heroes (frequency, duration and number mixed across the cohort), including through the Leadership for Change activity.</p>	<p>Continued informal interactions with would-be-heroes, including through the Gender-Transformative Leadership activity.</p> <p>Endline interviews with would-be-heroes.</p> <p>Reconvergence workshop for would-be-heroes and Transformative Leadership initiative participants. Included introduction of transformative leadership ideas to would-be-heroes and provided space for peer learning and reflection.</p>



SNV, PHED, and ABS team members during the Make Rights Real Bhutan learning and design workshop. Photo credit: UTS-ISF/Naomi Carrard.

Distinctive features of Make Rights Real in Bhutan include its timeframe and level of integration with related activities.

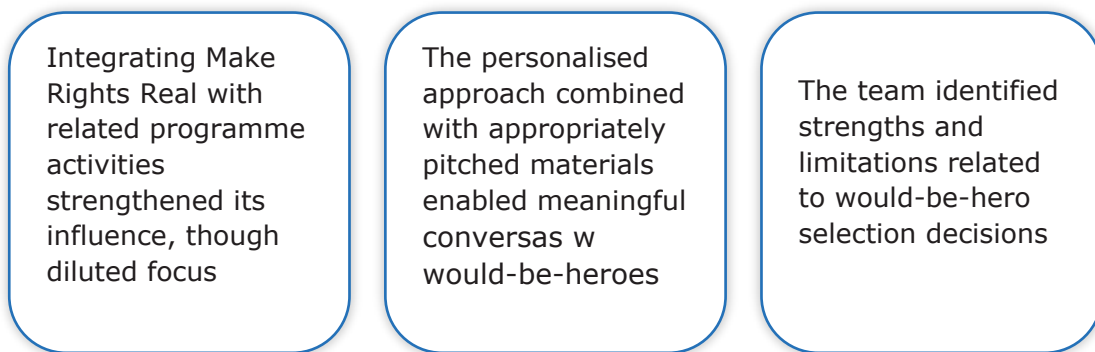
- Timeframe: activities ultimately spanned 3.5 years including COVID-19 interruptions, substantially longer than other Make Rights Real applications which typically occurred over a few months.
- Integration with related leadership activities: as described above, Make Rights Real was integrated with GESI and leadership activities.
- Inclusive approach to identifying would-be-heroes: the Bhutan implementing team erred towards inclusion in offering all local officials interviewed for the baseline survey the opportunity to participate as would-be-heroes.

4 Findings

This section presents key findings related to each of the four research dimensions.

1 Reflections on the process

Team reflections identified strengths, challenges, and suggestions for future applications with reference to three areas: (i) alignment and integration with the wider programme, (ii) the Make Rights materials and personalised approach, and (iii) reflections about the selection of would-be-heroes.



Alignment of Make Rights Real with wider sanitation programme approaches and the integration of Make Rights Real activities with related programme initiatives were identified as bringing both strengths and challenges. Make Rights Real was seen by implementing partners to be an excellent fit with RSAHP, with its focus on inclusion and leaving no one behind. It was also strongly aligned with Beyond the Finish Line priorities which reflected the Water for Women Fund’s transformative orientation (as defined in their Towards Transformation Strategy). As one team member noted,

There’s no burden, there is always value addition with Make Rights Real because it links well with other programme activities.

Because of this alignment, introducing human rights principles into discussions with would-be-heroes was smooth. Discussions of human rights principles resonated for would-be-heroes, and reinforced for them that they were focused on appropriate areas in their work. One team member, describing the ‘fit’ between Make Rights Real and the government’s approach, stated: ‘the ‘Make Rights Real technology’ is new, but the ideas are not new which puts us in a strong position.’ Further, closely integrating Make Rights Real activities with related leadership initiatives and GESI training facilitated consistent messaging on concepts of inclusion and local government leadership that deepened learning.

While alignment with, and integration of, Make Rights Real with the wider program was generally considered a strength, it did present challenges. First, the process lost some focus along the way due to competing programme priorities in the context of COVID-19 interruptions. The loss of focus resulted in less frequent check-ins with would-be-heroes than originally planned, and reduced engagement from PHED and ABS than originally anticipated, though one PHED team member stayed involved

throughout. Second, the close integration of Make Rights Real activities made it difficult to untangle how Make Rights Real specifically contributed to programme outcomes. While the team ultimately felt that the benefits of integration outweighed challenges of articulating causal pathways, developing tools to explore the specific contributions of Make Rights Real would be helpful for future applications.

The Make Rights Real manual paired with the personalised approach were identified as foundational for the initiative's success in Bhutan. The manual was appropriately pitched for would-be-hero participants and successfully used to guide conversations. Translating the materials into local language was key to their usefulness. The Manual was used more than the journey map (Figure 1) because of its broader overview of the approach and capacity to customise for context. Reflecting on the overall experience, the team noted that they could have complemented engagement with the manual by using the journey map to convey a trajectory towards action.

The one-on-one conversations were a unique aspect of Make Rights Real compared with related activities, and team members identified this personalised approach as a strength. The conversational interactions enabled relationship-building with would-be-heroes that strengthened trust and openness, which were foundational for participants to reflect on their role, responsibilities, and capacity to act towards progressive realisation of the human right to sanitation. The individualised approach also allowed the implementing team to tailor their interactions and support to meet evolving would-be-hero needs over time. As one team member stated:

The one-one-one conversation was a good platform for personal reflection for all and looking at what has been achieved. It provided opportunity to rethink and realign priorities.

A final strength of the approach was its flexibility about use of 'human rights' language. Introducing the principles without using strong rights-based language proved constructive in the Bhutan context, as one implementing team member shared:

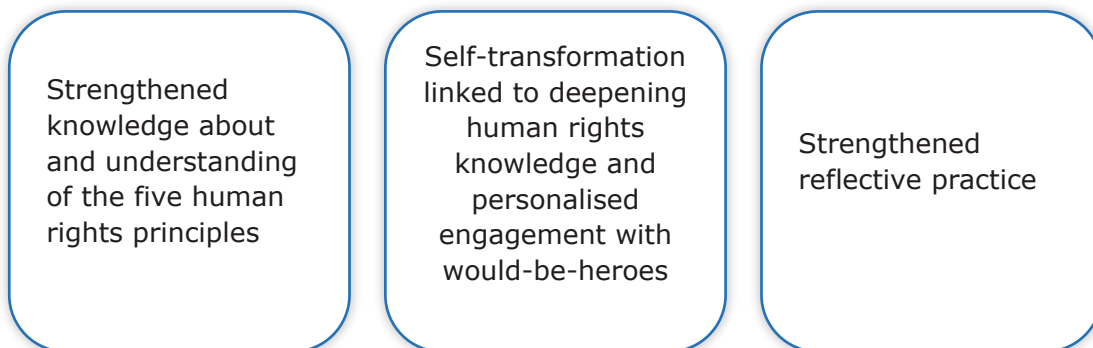
One of the things we need to be careful of is not pushing Make Rights Real as a rights-based approach but linking it to what the leaders are trying to achieve as total sanitation coverage. They always plan for the last mile, pro-poor support, disability inclusion, other aspects. When we link up with ongoing initiatives and what they are trying to achieve, then it's so much easier.

A final team reflection about the application of Make Rights real in Bhutan relates to the **selection of would-be-heroes**. Baseline interviews were undertaken with local government officials in leadership roles. All interested local government officials were selected to be would-be-heroes, and the cohort of 24 had variable levels of authority and influence. Implementing team members discussed whether it would have been helpful to explore and prioritise the potential for influence during the would-be-hero selection process. This might include focusing more on district-level officials to leverage their higher sphere of influence compared with local officials.

Ultimately, the team agreed that there are pros and cons to an inclusive versus influence-seeking participant selection approach. Working with influential district-level officials has potential to drive action more rapidly or at wider scales. However, there is also value in engaging local officials who are motivated, working with them to identify the range of actions they can take in their role towards the progressive realisation of the human right to sanitation.

2 Outcomes for implementing team members

Three outcome areas were identified as commonly experienced by individuals within the implementing team: (i) strengthened knowledge about the five human rights principles, (ii) self-transformation in terms of understanding about and motivation to progress human rights, and (iii) strengthened reflective practice.



Team members identified **learning about the human rights principles** as an important outcome associated with their participation in Make Rights Real. Previously, when engaging with the human right to sanitation, team members focused on the criteria (or 'components') of the human right, under which sanitation must be safe, hygienic, secure, socially, and culturally acceptable, provide privacy and ensure dignity. Results of the baseline KAP survey confirmed lower levels of knowledge about human rights principles compared with criteria.

After participating in Make Rights Real, team members expressed having greater awareness of, and incorporating into their work, the five human rights principles of sustainability, participation, equality and non-discrimination, transparency and access to information, and accountability. As one team member shared: 'Make Rights Real gave room to reflect on human rights principles.' Another noted that learning about human rights supported 'uniformity of interpretation' for the team, which enabled Make Rights Real thinking to inform programme activities across all districts, including those not formally part of the activity:

Make Rights Real gave room to reflect on human rights principles. When taken to the would-be-heroes, [this reflection] created a uniformity of interpreting human rights and principles. When implementing structural changes, uniformity (consensus) is important. It helped give structure to approaching human rights. When implementing in other non-Make Rights Real districts, this was still helpful, even though we did not use Make Rights Real language explicitly. [It gave both] 1) a sense of clarity and coherence about a way to talk about rights [and] 2) helped develop thinking about what will be useful for government to hear. – SNV team member

Data from team reflection meetings indicated particular focus on two of the five principles: equality and non-discrimination and participation. Both aligned strongly with the inclusion-orientation of the overall programme and were identified during the Make Rights Real refresher workshop as strong principles in Bhutan because they fit with the national ethos. Sustainability was also frequently mentioned, commonly with reference to maintaining post-ODF gains in sanitation access (rather than wider sustainability considerations). Reflection data suggested further opportunity to integrate accountability and access to information and transparency into programme activities. However, during the sensemaking workshop the team expressed strong awareness of these principles and a belief that they had been integrated – albeit without being directly named – into conversations with would-be-heroes. Further interrogating and expanding the ways in which these principles were integrated would be beneficial in future rights-oriented programme activities.

In addition to learning about human rights principles, team members reported varying levels of **self-transformation** associated with their involvement in Make Rights Real. For some, deepening their learning about human rights principles complemented existing knowledge and prompted reflection about different strategies for engagement with government. For others, particularly those newer to SNV and the programme, the experience prompted deeper shifts in mindset about both human rights and ways of working. As one team member shared:

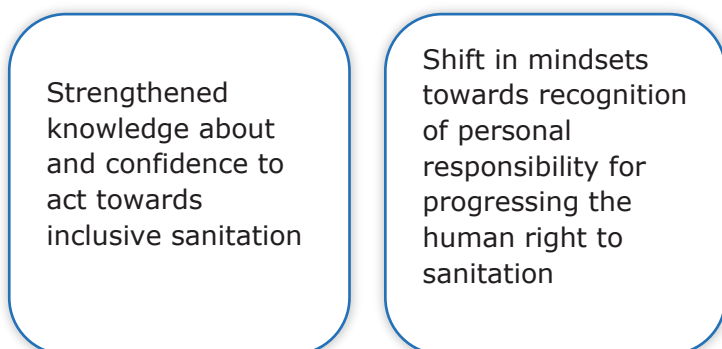
The whole process has been a transformation for me. We're very cautious and very gentle with how we approach [talking about human rights]. Instead of talking about human rights, we talk about responsibilities... Self-transformation has influenced my actions and conversations in institutions.

As well as learning about different ways to engage with and share human rights, team members were inspired by the one-on-one conversations with would-be-heroes. They described the 'passion' and 'honesty' demonstrated by would-be-heroes and identified the personalised approach of Make Rights Real as motivating.

Finally, the Make Rights Real approach **strengthened reflective practice** for individuals and the team. For individuals, conversations with would-be-heroes provided space to go to depth (more so than during workshops) exploring experiences, challenges, and opportunities. For the team, meetings with UTS-ISF structured around a set of consistent reflection questions encouraged stepping back and assessing broader progress and challenges. Implementing team members valued the space and critical questioning provided in team reflection meetings to identify areas to focus on in future conversations with would-be-heroes.

3 Outcomes for would-be-heroes

Data capturing outcomes for would-be-heroes identified two themes: (i) strengthened knowledge about and confidence to act towards inclusive sanitation, and (ii) a shift in mindsets towards recognition of personal responsibility for progressing inclusive sanitation.



Comparison of baseline and endline interviews with would-be-heroes revealed **increased knowledge about, and confidence to act** towards, inclusive sanitation. All would-be-heroes identified increased knowledge about the critical importance of inclusion in progressing access to sanitation, and an associated increase in confidence to incorporate inclusion-oriented activities in their work. Several specifically mentioned disability inclusion in their responses, highlighting the focus of the programme on ensuring people with disability have their voices heard and benefit from efforts to improve sanitation. A few would-be-heroes framed their increased knowledge and motivation with reference to human rights ideas, though this was less common. Table 4 presents illustrative quotes from would-be-heroes for four dimensions of this outcome – knowledge, confidence, disability-focus and human rights integration.

Table 4. Illustrative quotes from would-be-heroes

Outcome dimension	Illustrative quotes from would-be-heroes (W or M indicates gender as woman or man)
Increased knowledge about inclusive sanitation	<p><i>My existing knowledge on disadvantaged groups was further deepened after engaging with Make Rights Real. It provided me a sense to work [from a place of] empathy [rather] than sympathy. (W)</i></p> <p><i>[Before I had] not given much importance to inclusive sanitation due to my lack of knowledge on it. Now I could understand the different needs of people with different disabilities and other social issues. (M)</i></p> <p><i>After attending the sessions on Make Rights Real, my knowledge on rights based enhanced. I became more aware on the approach of my works inclined towards the community members. I am aware</i></p>

	<p><i>that the most vulnerable groups of people are deprived of basic sanitation facilities. (M)</i></p>
<p>Increase in motivation and confidence to act</p>	<p><i>[Following] my engagement with SNV for more than three years, I got motivated to make inclusive sanitation after having heard stories of change, resource mobilisation, community engagement for the disadvantaged. (M)</i></p> <p><i>It was only after attending a workshop on Make Rights Real, my morale boosted in improving inclusive sanitation. (M)</i></p>
<p>Specific focus on disability</p>	<p><i>[Participation in the programme] has changed my approach and now I am making sure to include gender inclusion and disability in taking sanitation and hygiene forward. (W)</i></p> <p><i>Being an elected local leader for 20 years, my confidence has definitely improved...I knew that there are areas of work where I will not have the knowledge. And that area will be of great learning- inclusive sanitation is one of them. Now, [households] in the village who have people with disabilities come to me for suggestions on how to make toilets accessible – we sit together and discuss with whatever we can work with. (M)</i></p> <p><i>I was unaware of disability and elderly friendly sanitation facilities. I was just focusing on general public toilet and never gave a thought on disability and gender friendly...now I am aware of the above issues...gained knowledge that I will be able to implement in the field level from all perspectives. (W)</i></p> <p><i>Other than the coverage of sanitation facilities, I did not have much ideas on inclusive sanitation. My thoughts on inclusive sanitation enhanced and I can now advise family members who have disabilities in their family. (M)</i></p> <p><i>[Previously] I had not at all thought on the disabilities issues. Now it is sure that inclusive sanitation should be priority as everyone has to face such stages one day or the other. (M)</i></p>
<p>Specific integration of human rights perspective</p>	<p><i>After my engagement with Make Rights Real, the approach to the programme was based on rights and not an obligation or extra duties on my part. (M)</i></p> <p><i>My engagement with human rights and inclusion furthered my approach and passion. It helped to approach the programme from empathy and rights-based. (M)</i></p>

While the dimensions of knowledge and confidence plus motivation to act are separated in the table, would-be-heroes conveyed how interconnected they are. connections. An increase in knowledge provided foundation for improved confidence, which in turn prompted motivation (and knowledge how) to act. As one man shared:

Although an elected leader, I did not have much idea on inclusion given little knowledge on the need for it. Now I am confident enough on the needs of inclusive sanitation, [and] I can orient the [work to meet the] needs for inclusive sanitation.

Similarly, one woman identified how increased knowledge led to boosted self-confidence and inspired advocacy:

Before, I was not much aware on inclusive sanitation. So my self confidence level was also low on the subject. Having attended such trainings and workshops, my self-confidence boosted and I can lobby on having inclusive sanitation facilities.

The second outcome for world-be-heroes was a shift in mindset. Through the course of the programme, would-be-heroes changed from seeing sanitation as a household concern, to recognising their own responsibility to act. As illustrated in Figure 2, would-be-hero perspectives shifted from a narrative of sanitation as a household and/or individual duty, to one which recognises the role of local government (and them personally as local leaders) as responsible. Endline narratives also noted the importance of government support to ensure sanitation services reach all.

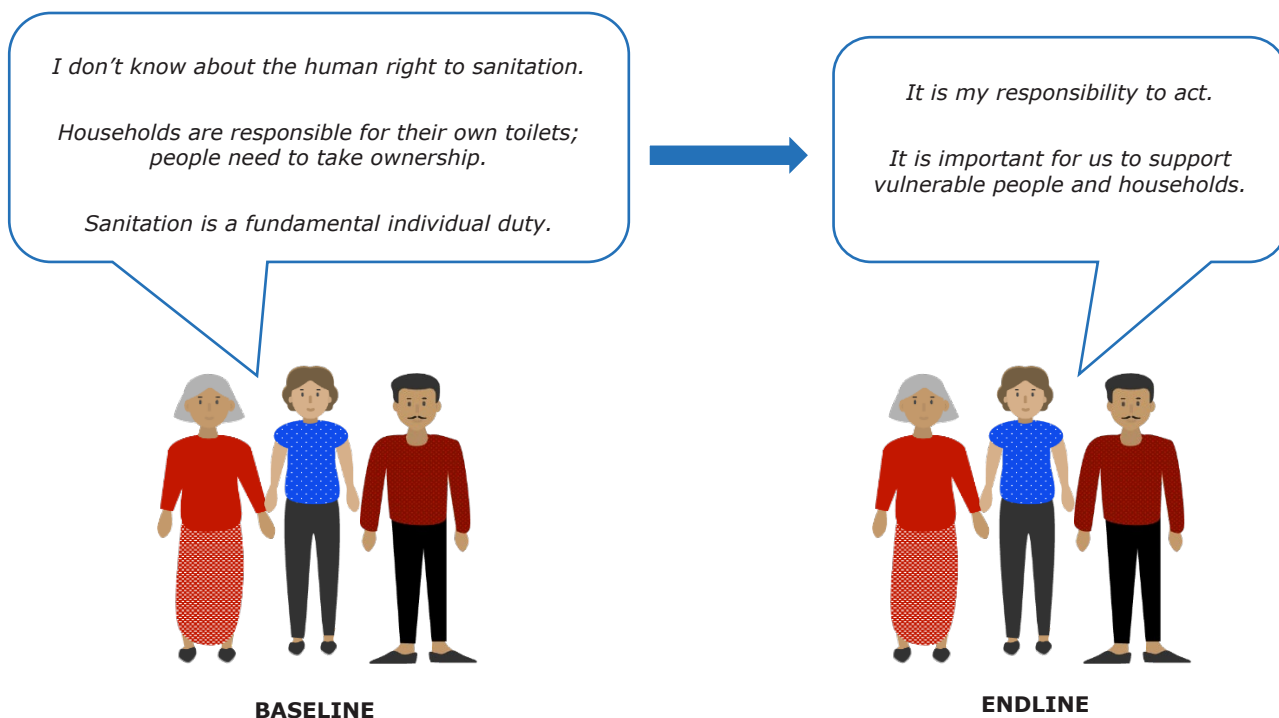


Figure 2. Changes in mindset of would-be-heroes from baseline to endline

N.B. Phrases presented here characterise sentiments in baseline and endline reviews.

Comments shared by would-be-heroes in endline interviews demonstrate new perspectives on responsibility and duty to act. One man reflected on the insufficiency of his previous efforts: *'I, as a civil servant, have failed to listen to the challenges and difficulties [of potentially disadvantaged groups].'* One woman expressed similar reflections about her past efforts, and described a change towards progressing inclusion: *'I realised that I as a duty bearer, I have failed to take up some issues in terms of sanitation. [Now] the dialogue to have accessible sanitation in my office is under way. My management is also convinced on the issues.'* Another woman explained how her conception of her role had expanded to address inclusion:

Initially, I saw the role I had was to monitor rural water supply and sanitation in communities, make sure every household did have proper toilet and a disposal pit. [Working with SNV] has changed my approach and now I am making sure to include gender inclusion and disability in taking sanitation and hygiene forward.

Finally, one woman specifically referenced human rights language and recognition of her role as duty bearer:

I realised that one should approach from the rights-based and as a duty bearer, it is one's duty to play one's own part.

Overall, outcomes observed for would-be-heroes align with those expected in the Make Rights Real journey (see Figure 1 on p.6). In Bhutan, would-be-heroes felt both responsible and motivated to act after participating in the process, and had begun to take action – as detailed in our fourth finding area below.

4 Practical action towards progressive realisation of the human right to sanitation

Actions undertaken by would-be-heroes in which Make Rights Real played a contributory role (as expressed by would-be-heroes) span three areas: (i) ensuring accessible services for people with disabilities, (ii) budgeting for inclusive sanitation, (iii) advocating for and integrating inclusion principles into sanitation planning.



Action areas are presented in Table 5 with illustrative quotes. Some quotes relate to more than one action area due to the overlapping nature of actions spanning advocacy and implementation. The actions can be characterised as driving meaningful local changes, for example ensuring all people in a community have access to

sanitation services by improving accessibility of services in relevant households and community facilities.

Table 5. Actions reported by would-be-heroes

Action area	Illustrative quotes (W or M indicates woman or man)
Sanitation services for people with disabilities	<p><i>I initiated to carry out assessment of those households, who needed support from the local government. (M)</i></p> <p><i>I [sought] support from the District Engineer section...When I ended my term...a few schools were able to make the sanitation facilities inclusive. (W)</i></p> <p><i>To make accessible sanitation especially in public places was further discussed in my community and all members agreed on it. We initiated to build. (M)</i></p>
Budgets – including lobbying for budget to support inclusive sanitation and earmarking funds	<p><i>I was involved in lobbying local government in allocating budget for the inclusive sanitation including monitoring. (M)</i></p> <p><i>I was able to lobby the local government in keeping budget for consultation and monitoring sanitation facilities. (M)</i></p> <p><i>I was able to lobby Dzongkhag Education sector to allot a separate budget for inclusive sanitation facilities in the schools and institutions, awareness creation and sensitisation in the school. (W)</i></p> <p><i>I could motivate in mobilizing local human and financial resources to support vulnerable groups. I could also engage local Hydro power company to mobilise their CSR components to support people with disabilities, community infrastructure. (M)</i></p>
Being an advocate for inclusive sanitation, integrating inclusion principles into planning processes	<p><i>As a local government leader, I could play a vital role and influenced other colleagues in making priority in budget allocation, planning and monitoring process. (W)</i></p>

5 Interpreting the outcomes and considerations for further work

Ultimately, the changes experienced and effected by would-be-heroes are intended to drive wider shifts in local government systems and beyond. In other words, Make Rights Real seeks individual transformation that can eventually drive structural transformation – an evolution of local government systems towards integration of human rights principles and the realisation of inclusive, sustainable service delivery.

The outcomes described in this report – for implementing team members, would-be-heroes, and practical action – can be interpreted as small yet meaningful steps towards systems change. From this perspective, the Bhutan experience was a success. It resulted in positive outcomes for those involved (implementers and would-be-heroes) and inspired action.

However, the success of Make Rights Real Bhutan should be interpreted with reference to two considerations that can inform future work in Bhutan, and applications of Make Rights Real in other contexts. First, within the timeframe of this programme, we did not find evidence of wider systemic changes. Implementing team members identified that in addition to motivating local actions, influencing central government to prioritise inclusive budgeting is essential if gains are to be sustained and wider change achieved. They also reflected that the internal transformations experienced by would-be-heroes, which drove motivation and action, may not be maintained if local systems do not enable more or larger actions. Challenges in creating change persist, for example a lack of requisite expertise and continuing COVID-related restrictions.

Second, untangling the specific role of Make Rights Real in driving reported outcomes was challenging due to the integration of Make Rights Real with related activities. Both implementing team members and would-be-heroes credited Make Rights Real with influencing their perspective on human rights, their attitudes towards inclusion in sanitation, their confidence to act, and their sense of personal responsibility. However, these outcomes were also inevitably inspired and influenced by GESI training and leadership initiatives.

On a similar theme, tracing any future systemic change that may flow from the foundational work of Make Rights Real is highly challenging. We hope and expect that the small meaningful actions lead to bigger changes, but any longer-term and larger-scale outcomes and impacts will inevitably be shaped by multiple interacting processes of which Make Rights Real is one component.

Taking these considerations into account, we conclude this report by flagging five considerations for organisations implementing Make Rights Real or comparable change creation approaches:

- There is more thinking and piloting to do in terms of **contribution analysis**. How can we trace the specific contributions of Make Rights Real within wider programmes where multiple activities work in synergy? How can we determine the ways in which Make Right Real might influence wider systems change? Establishing

an evidence-base for the value-add and potential of Make Rights Real continues to be a priority to inform its ongoing refinement.

- How can small actions be amplified to maximise the potential for longer-term change? Future engagement with would-be-heroes could pursue actions that 'scale up' change (such as **changing laws and procedures**) as well as continuing focus on the 'scale deep' outcomes (personal transformations) that are foundational for systems change.²
- Engaging with **central governments** in parallel to work at local level has potential to enable structural change. Strategies might include advocating for central-level budget allocations that enable local government action.
- Sustaining and growing nascent changes in local government settings can be hampered by changes in personnel, which is highly likely particularly when elected officials are programme participants. **Assessing and planning for known changes** may inspire complementary strategies, for example, intentionally working with both professional and elected officials, and undertaking activities to diffuse key messages and concepts more widely.

² The scaling for social innovation framework identifies 'scaling deep' as shifting mindsets, 'scaling up' as changing rules and 'scaling out' as replication. See Moore M-L, Riddell D, Vocisano D (2015) Scaling out, scaling up, scaling deep: strategies of non-profits in advancing systemic social innovation. JW McConnell Family Foundation, 2015:67–84. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.9774/GLEAF.4700.2015.ju.00009>.



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