

Royal Government of Bhutan

Ministry of Education

National Policy on Special Educational Needs

Acknowledgement

The National Policy on Special Educational Needs has been developed with the participation, support and collaboration from all relevant stake holders for special education programmes and support services. The representatives from various government agencies and Non-governmental Organisations; International agencies; advisory committees and individuals having expertise on special education both at national and international levels have contributed in bringing the policy to this shape. The list of the names who have involved in the process of developing the document as members of Steering committee, Working committee and participants of the consultative meetings can be found in Appendix III.

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Final Draft

Policy on Special Educational Needs

1. Background

Recognizing that all human beings are born with unique gifts and abilities to contribute to the development of the nation and self, the Royal Government is committed to ensuring the healthy functioning of our society by providing equal opportunity to every citizen to develop each gift and ability.

The Royal Government of Bhutan strives to provide the opportunity for every individual citizen to develop their unique gifts to better their lives and contribute to the nation building. In order to provide equal opportunities to all citizens, Bhutan established its first specialized institute catering to the educational needs of the visually impaired in Khaling, Trashigang, in 1973 under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Namgyel Wangchuck.

Through this initiative, visually impaired Bhutanese were able to participate in education for the first time and today are contributing on an equal footing to the socio-economic development of the country. Realizing the need of such enabling services for people with other forms of disabilitiesⁱ, the Royal Government expanded the special education programmes in 2001. A pilot programme establishing Changangkha Lower Secondary School as an integrated school providing special needs educationⁱⁱ was initiated in 2001. In 2003, a Deaf Education Unit was established in Drukgyel Lower Secondary School.

Today a full-fledged Division under the Department of School Education providing special education services exists. The division was started as a unit in 2000 and upgraded to a Division in 2011. Efforts are underway to scale up special education services to reach all sections of Bhutanese Population by starting 3 additional integrated schools in Mongar, Samtse and Zhemgang. These efforts are aimed at realizing the vision of peace, prosperity well-being and happiness of all Bhutanese.

Since policy guidelines to guide programmes and projects to spearhead special education services did not exist, a need was felt to draft separate policy on special educational needs. These policy statements will form a part of National Education Policy. The special educational needs policy was drafted in line with the principles of Educating for GNH, an initiative supported and promoted by the Sherig Lyonpo, Thakur S. Powdyel to promote Green Schools for Green Bhutan, and the Child Friendly School concept. Sherig Lyonpo, in his address to the 36th session of the UNESCO general conference in Paris, 2011 stated that:

“The elements of Green School encompass the multiple dimensions of the learners’ lives - natural, intellectual, academic, social, cultural, spiritual, aesthetic and moral dimensions.”

The Royal Government’s commitment to pursue Education For All is also enshrined clearly in the Constitution of Bhutan and other national strategy documents as under:

1.1. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan (2007, p. 19-20) states:

Article 9.15: The State shall endeavour to provide education for the purpose of improving and increasing knowledge, values and skills of the entire population with education being directed towards the full development of the human personality.

Article 9.16: The State shall provide free education to all children of school going age up to tenth standard and ensure that technical and professional education shall be made generally available and that higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

1.2. Bhutan's developmental philosophy of Gross National Happiness as outlined in Vision 2020 (1999, p. 47) strives to "maximize the happiness of all Bhutanese and to enable them to achieve their full and innate potential as human being". Further, the document also states that "education has become the inalienable right of all Bhutanese" (p.18), indicating that persons with disabilities shall also enjoy equal opportunities in all walks of life.

1.3. Education Sector Strategy 2020 (2003, p. 36) states that "all children with disabilities and with special needs – including those with physical, mental and other types of impairmentⁱⁱⁱ – will be able to access and benefit from education. This will include full access to the curriculum, participation in extra-curricular activities and access to cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activities."

1.4. In addition to the national commitment to provide equal opportunity to all citizens, including those with disabilities, the Royal Government has ratified, acquiesced or is a party to several international Conventions, Instruments, Declarations, and commitments as follows:

- 1.4.1. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) ratified on 23rd May, 1990.
- 1.4.2. The Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities^{iv} (CRPD) signed on 21st September, 2010. *Awaiting ratification.*
- 1.4.3. Millennium Development Goals.
- 1.4.4. Adopted the Education for All -Dakar Framework for Action (1994).
- 1.4.5. Signatory to the Proclamation of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) Commission on Disability on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in 2008.

2. Rationale

In many countries, children with Special Educational Needs are still vulnerable to exclusion from education and other support services. They mostly remain unseen and unreached by the mainstream educational services. Education, particularly inclusive education, is able to reduce discrimination through enabling children with and without disabilities to grow up together. Education gives children with disabilities skills to allow them to become positive role models and join the employment market, thereby helping to prevent poverty.

In Bhutan, the prevalence of children with disabilities is evident from the Disability Assessment Report, 2011 which reveals that at least 21.7 % of children aged two to nine years in Bhutan have mild to severe disability. Although, numerous initiatives to create provisions for education and other support services to cater to the needs of children with special educational needs are underway, there needs to be more focused plans and strategies.

The provision of Special Educational Needs services in Bhutan will enable to break the cycle of invisibility and deprivation by bringing every child with Special Educational Needs into the forefront of any developmental activity. Educating children with Special Educational Needs will help them realize their inherent potentials, build their self-esteem, enable them to earn livelihood and become independent productive and responsible citizens.

The policy will ensure more enabling and responsive educational services to the children with Special Educational Needs and will go a long way in achieving GNH. Therefore, the government of Bhutan recognizing the need and importance to provide education to all without any forms of discrimination and exclusion has decided to develop a comprehensive policy on Special Educational Needs.

2.1. Special Education

Special Education^v in Bhutan is an educational programme designed for students with special educational needs, which requires additional support services in the form of trained teachers, teaching approaches, equipment and care within or outside a regular classroom. These require creating appropriate learning environment that are accessible to all learners and supported by legislation.

2.2. Special Educational Needs

Children/adults with special educational needs refer to those who need services in addition to, or otherwise different from the educational provision made generally available for children of their same age and grade in a regular school.

2.2. A child has *Special Educational Needs* if he/she has any of the following:

- a) Has a significant difficulty in performing any activity compared to the majority of children of the same age;

- b) Has a barrier which prevents or hinders her/him from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in school;
- c) Is gifted^{vi}
- d) Is of school going age and fall within the definition given in (a), (b) and (c).

3. Vision

Strive towards a caring, inclusive^{vii} and enabling society.

4. Objectives:

- 1) To ensure that every child with special educational needs has equal access to quality education that is more appropriate, enabling and responsive.
- 2) To empower the children with special educational needs to become independent, responsible and productive citizens.

5. Policy Statements

- 5.1 Children irrespective of abilities shall have equal access and opportunity to education from early childhood to vocational/technical and tertiary without any form of discrimination.
- 5.2 There shall be specialized educational services with appropriate support services and facilities including teaching learning materials, assistive devices, access and sanitation infrastructure, etc. for children with severe disabilities in identified institutes.
- 5.3 Children with mild to moderate disabilities shall be mainstreamed^{viii} or integrated^{ix} into schools with appropriate facilities and support services.
- 5.4 All schools shall have support services and appropriate infrastructure to cater to the needs of children with mild to moderate learning difficulties^x.
- 5.5 There shall be adequate and appropriate teachers/support staff for schools and institutes catering to children with special educational needs.
- 5.6 Teachers educating children with special educational needs shall be trained in relevant pedagogy and curriculum.
- 5.7 Schools and institutions catering to children/students with special educational needs shall receive adequate budget support.
- 5.8 All schools shall incorporate policy on special educational needs in their school policy document.
- 5.9 All items for programmes, activities and to be used by children with special educational needs shall be exempt from tax (including Import Duty, Excise and Customs [IDEC]) and postal charges.
- 5.10 There shall be collaboration with various stakeholders to support education and other services to children with special educational needs.
- 5.11 There shall be appropriate programmes and support services to cater to the needs of the gifted students.
- 5.12 The Government of Bhutan shall direct all relevant Ministries and agencies to jointly frame a clear policy to encourage all persons with disability to participate meaningfully in the socio-economic development of Bhutan by ensuring among others equal livelihood opportunity, access to healthcare, information, harnessing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) opportunities, transportation and tax benefits.

Policy Implementation Strategy

The Government of Bhutan places highest priority in ensuring the provision of educational services to all its citizens. In such endeavor, the government realized that the children with special educational needs require concerted efforts to improve access to quality educational services. This will enable the government to achieve its goal of 'Education For All'. Therefore, the Ministry of Education has initiated the development of policy and strategies to enhance the special educational services.

5.1. Children irrespective of abilities shall have equal access and opportunity to education from early childhood to vocational/technical and tertiary without any form of discrimination.

Short Term Strategy^{xi}

The Ministry of Education shall:

- 5.1.1 Plan, execute and monitor all special educational needs programmes in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.
- 5.1.2 Ensure participation of Dzongkhags, Thromdes, Gewogs, Schools and relevant stakeholders in supporting, implementing and monitoring of special educational needs programmes.
- 5.1.3 Sensitize, support and train facilitators and proprietors of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres in incorporating strategies of early intervention, differentiated learning and providing necessary facilities for children with special educational needs.
- 5.1.4 Advocate with the Royal University of Bhutan and other tertiary education providers to establish learning resource centres for students with Special Educational Needs in each tertiary institute and to train lecturers/professors/teachers and support staff in special educational needs services.
- 5.1.5 Enhance awareness and sensitization on special educational needs through Non Formal Education Programmes and other avenues.
- 5.1.6 Create awareness and advocacy on the rights and responsibilities of children with special educational needs. Example, in collaboration with national media and other avenues.

Medium Term Strategy^{xii}

The Ministry of Education shall:

- 5.1.7 Create advocacy campaign to educate all Bhutanese on Special Education Needs.
- 5.1.8 Train teachers of special educational needs schools on special education components.

Long Term Strategy^{xiii}

The Ministry of Education shall:

5.1.9 Provide support to private educational institutions in delivering special educational needs programmes.

5.2. *There shall be specialized educational services with appropriate support services and facilities including teaching learning materials, assistive devices, access and sanitation infrastructure, etc. for children with severe disabilities in identified institutes.*

Medium Term Strategy

The Ministry of Education shall:

5.2.1. Upgrade and expand the special educational needs facilities in the existing institutes for children with severe disabilities.

5.2.2. Provide the following additional staff in adequate numbers to every special educational needs institute for children with severe disabilities:

1. Teacher assistant
2. Care-giver
3. Counselor/Psychologist
4. Sports Instructor
5. Occupational therapists

Long Term Strategy

The Ministry of Education shall:

5.2.3. Create provision for specialized educational centers for children with severe disabilities in addition to National Institute for the Visually Impaired and Deaf Education Unit at Drukgyel Lower Secondary School.

5.2.4. Deploy trained teachers and provide necessary facilities (including boarding) and support services to cater to the needs of children with severe disabilities.

5.2.5. All schools that mainstream children with special educational needs shall have trained teachers in differentiated teaching and to identify severe learning needs- and a resource room for special educational needs programmes.

5.2.6. Develop social and life skills programmes apart from numeracy and literacy for the children with severe and multiple disabilities. E.g. Blind, Deaf, Deaf-blind, limb deficiency, etc.

5.2.7. Provide the following additional staff in adequate numbers to every special educational needs institute for children with severe disabilities:

1. Teacher assistant

2. Care-giver
3. Counselor/Psychologist
4. Sports Instructor
5. Occupational therapists

5.3. Children with mild to moderate disabilities shall be mainstreamed or integrated into schools with appropriate facilities and support services.

Short Term Strategy

The Ministry of Education and Dzongkhag/Thromde Administration shall:

- 5.3.1. 5.3.1. Establish a learning resource centre^{xiv} in each mainstreamed and integrated school for children with Special Educational Needs and deploy teachers and support staff with specialized in special educational needs skills. Ensure that every mainstreamed or integrated school has easy access facilities (ramps, walkways, footpaths, etc.); disable friendly toilets and a learning resource centre with adequate equipment and assistive devices, including ICT equipment and software.
- 5.3.2. Establish one integrated school in every Dzongkhag. The integrated school shall have easy access facilities (ramps, walkways, footpaths, etc.); disable friendly toilets and a learning resource centre with adequate equipment and assistive devices, including ICT equipment and software. All teachers in these integrated schools will be trained to facilitate differentiated learning.
- 5.3.3. Allow flexibility to adapt/adopt curriculum, assessment and other teaching-learning materials to meet specific learning needs of children with special educational needs.
- 5.3.4. Ensure provision of teaching-learning materials and necessary information in appropriate mode of communication (Braille, electronic version, sign language, large print, etc).
- 5.3.5. Ensure the development and implementation of Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for each child with special educational needs.

Medium Term Strategy

The Ministry of Education and Dzongkhag/Thromde Administration shall:

- 5.3.6. Upgrade the special educational needs facilities in the existing mainstreamed and integrated schools established in the previous plan periods to ensure that every mainstreamed and integrated schools have easy access facilities (ramps, walkways, footpaths, etc), disable friendly toilets and a learning resource centre with adequate equipment and assistive devices, including ICT equipment and software.
- 5.3.7. Provide relevant technology and other assistive devices to schools offering special education services.
- 5.3.8. Provide the following additional staff in every integrated and mainstreamed school:
 1. Teacher assistant

2. Care-giver
3. Counselor/Psychologist
4. Sports Instructor
5. Occupational therapists

Long Term Strategy

The Ministry of Education and Dzongkhag/Thromde Administration shall:

- 5.3.9. Encourage maximum enrollment, retention and completion in education through appropriate strategies.
- 5.3.10. Provide the following additional staff in every integrated and mainstreamed school:
 1. Teacher assistant
 2. Care-giver
 3. Counselor/Psychologist
 4. Sports Instructor
 5. Occupational therapists

5.4. All schools shall have support services and appropriate infrastructure to cater to the needs of children with mild to moderate learning difficulties.

Short Term Strategy

All schools shall:

- 5.4.1. Put in place the support services contributing towards the fulfillment of the policy on full enrollment, retention and completion through appropriate strategies for the children with mild to moderate learning difficulties in their education.
- 5.4.2. Build capacity of teachers to carry out the responsibilities of providing educational services to the children with mild to moderate learning difficulties.
- 5.4.3. Provide teachers with appropriate support to enhance their ideas and skills to adapt curriculum, assessment and other teaching-learning materials to meet specific learning needs of children with special educational needs.
- 5.4.4. Develop and implement Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for each child with special educational needs.

Medium Term Strategy

The Ministry of Education shall:

- 5.4.5. Identify and establish at least two inclusive schools in each Dzongkhag. Each inclusive school will have a learning resource room^{xv} with adequate teaching learning materials,

and equipment, including ICT equipment and software for children with Special Educational Needs. Teachers and support staff will be trained to facilitate differentiated learning creating an inclusive learning environment.

Long Term Strategy

The Ministry of Education shall:

- 5.4.1. Strive towards every school in Bhutan to be inclusive, with a learning resource room and adequate teaching learning materials, relevant technology and equipment for children with Special Educational Needs. Teachers and support staff will be trained to facilitate differentiated learning.
- 5.4.2. Provide the following additional staff in every integrated and mainstreamed school:
 1. Teacher assistant
 2. Care-giver
 3. Counselor/Psychologist
 4. Sports Instructor

5.5. There shall be adequate and appropriate teachers/support staff for schools and institutes catering to children with special educational needs.

Short/Medium/Long Term Strategy

The Ministry of Education shall:

- 5.5.1. Deploy adequate teachers in schools and institutes having children with special educational needs in order to help schools provide adequate and appropriate educational services.
- 5.5.2. Deploy adequate support staff (teacher assistants and care-givers) in schools and institutes having children with special educational needs in order to provide proper educational and support services.

5.6. Teachers educating children with special educational needs shall be trained in relevant pedagogy and curriculum.

Short/Medium Term Strategy

The Ministry of Education shall:

- 5.6.1. Include plans and strategies for capacity building of teachers in special educational needs and services in Human Resource (HR) master plan.
- 5.6.2. Consider the placement of teachers trained in special education in the schools where there are children with special educational needs.
- 5.6.3. Build linkages with external agencies working in areas of special educational needs for exchange programmes, technical support and research.
- 5.6.4. Ensure all graduating teachers have skills in special education services to cater to mild to moderate learning difficulties in collaboration with Royal University of Bhutan and Colleges of Education for appropriate training modules and programmes.

Long Term Strategy

The Ministry of Education shall:

- 5.6.5. Collaborate with Royal University of Bhutan and relevant institutes to initiate specialized courses to train teachers catering to the needs of children with severe disabilities.

5.7. Schools and institutions catering to children/students with special educational needs shall receive adequate budget support.

Short/Medium/Long Term Strategy

The Ministry of Education shall:

- 5.7.1. Ensure separate budget head for schools providing special educational needs programmes.
- 5.7.2. Provide additional financial assistance to children with special educational needs to meet additional educational expenses based on needs. Example, assistive devices, stationery, uniform, medical expenses, transportation and escort expenses for to and fro journey.

5.8. All schools shall incorporate policy on special educational needs in their school policy document.

Short Term Strategy

The school shall:

- 5.8.1. Accept children aged 6-18 years with special educational needs for admission.

- 5.8.2. Retain a child based on her/his performance, ability and progress and encourage the full completion of basic education. The school in consultation with ministry shall also explore possibilities to provide other alternatives like vocational and technical training based on the aptitude of the student.
 - 5.8.3. Have detail structures defining the roles and responsibilities of principals, special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), teachers, parents and other stakeholders.
 - 5.8.4. Allot sufficient time to SENCo and teachers teaching children with special educational needs for the effective planning and implementation of the special educational needs programmes. Example, if a teacher in an ordinary school teaches 22 hours in a week, the teacher for children with special educational needs would teach about 11 to 16 hours in a week based on the severity of children with special educational needs in the school.
 - 5.8.5. Maintain a class size of 20, where there are not more than 4 children with SEN in order to provide adequate attention and effective teaching.
 - 5.8.6. Strive towards ensuring that the number of children with severe and multiple disabilities in a self contained class^{xvi} in special schools like National Institute for the Visually Impaired (NIVI) and Deaf Education Unit does not exceed more than 6 to enable have adequate attention and effective teaching.
 - 5.8.7. Involve parents/guardians in consultative processes in developing Individualized Educational Plan, interventions and advocacy for children with special educational needs.
- 5.9. Items imported for programmes, activities and to be used by children with special educational needs shall be exempt from tax (including Import Duty, Excise and Customs [IDEC]) and postal charges.***

Short Term Strategy

The Ministry of Education shall:

- 5.9.1. Collaborate with Department of Revenue and Customs, Ministry of Finance for tax (including import duties, excise and customs) exemption on both imported and local goods for special educational needs programmes.
 - 5.9.2. Collaborate with postal agencies for exemption of postal charges on materials for use by the children with special educational needs.
- 5.10. There shall be collaboration with various stakeholders to support education and other services to children with special educational needs.***

The Royal Government of Bhutan recognizes that special educational needs services require support and partnership from multiple stakeholders. Collaborative interventions from other ministries, agencies, civil society and private sector organizations are required for early intervention, accessible infrastructure, communications and transportation, technical and vocational training, tertiary education and employment, etc. as these services are beyond the mandates of the Ministry of Education.

In order to ensure successful implementation of policy on special educational needs, a very strong partnership amongst the ministries and agencies is crucial. Although the Ministry of Education shall play a lead role, the concerned ministries and agencies will have a vital role and responsibilities for the implementation of the policy.

Short Term Strategy

To enhance the quality provision of services to the children with special educational needs:

- 5.10.1. The Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs and the National Statistics Bureau shall maintain a data base of children with disabilities.
- 5.10.2. The parents/guardians of children with special educational needs shall involve in identification and placement in schools.
- 5.10.3. The Ministry of Health shall put in place strategies for early identification, intervention, referral and provision of assistive devices and provide disability identification card. The disability identification card will facilitate the individuals with disabilities to avail the special services.
- 5.10.4. The Ministry of Health shall render the services of health professionals such as audiologists, speech therapists, physiotherapists, ophthalmologists, clinical psychologists and occupational therapists.
- 5.10.5. The Ministry of Information and Communications (MoIC) shall generate provision for subsidized public and private transportation facilities for persons with disabilities. Also the Ministry shall ensure that all public information is accessible.
- 5.10.6. Thromdes shall incorporate in their developmental plans in developing disable friendly infrastructure and public facilities.
- 5.10.7. The Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) shall initiate the mobilization of technical and financial support from Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Private Organizations, Corporate Organizations, Mega Projects, Development Partners and Foundations.
- 5.10.8. The Ministry of Education shall initiate the formation of the National Coordination Committee for Disabilities (NCCD), in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders to facilitate and promote the coordination to enhance the support services for persons with disabilities.

- 5.10.9. The Ministry of Education shall provide necessary guidance and support in ensuring minimum standards to private educational institutions delivering special educational needs programmes.
- 5.10.10. The interested individuals/groups shall be encouraged by relevant stakeholders to establish services for children with special educational needs.
- 5.10.11. The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (MoLHR), Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC), Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) and relevant organizations shall modify the entry level qualification for admission and employment of persons with disabilities to Tertiary and Training Institutes.
- 5.10.12. The Bhutan Council for School Examination and Assessment will incorporate appropriate assessment strategies to make the evaluation process more disable friendly. Example:
- a. Provide alternative brailled questions for graphics, diagrams and map related questions for candidates who are blind or visually impaired.
 - b. Provide questions in large print for candidates with low vision.
 - c. Provide extra time for candidates with special educational needs (25 % more than the actual time allotted for a paper)
 - d. Create avenues for adjustable assessment strategies for the candidates with special educational needs who have been following adaptive curriculum in their schools.

5.11. There shall be appropriate programmes and support services to cater to the needs of the gifted students.

Short Term Strategy

The Ministry of Education shall:

- 5.11.1. Build capacity of teachers to identify and use appropriate strategies to cater to the needs of the gifted children.
- 5.11.2. Encourage schools to recognize, groom and support the gifted children.
- 5.11.3. Institute a reporting/referral system for gifted children.

5.12. The Government of Bhutan shall direct all relevant Ministries and agencies to jointly frame a clear policy to encourage all persons with disabilities to participate meaningfully in the socio-economic development of Bhutan by ensuring among others equal livelihood opportunity, access to healthcare, information, harnessing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) opportunities, transportation and tax benefits.

Medium Term Strategy

The Special Educational Needs policy is sponsored by the Ministry of Education, whose mandate is limited to education, school, tertiary and non-formal education, and to youth. Therefore the policy is limited to the special educational needs of persons with disabilities. Recognizing that the special needs of this category of citizens is not limited to education, it is recommended that the Royal Government entrust the GNH Commission or some other cross-sectoral agency to develop and frame a clear policy that enables all persons with disabilities to participate in nation building.

The relevant agencies would include amongst others, the MoIC for transportation and communication infrastructure, the MoWHS for building standards, MoLHR, RCSC and BCCI for employment, MoH for health intervention and facilities, MoEA for economic opportunities, etc.

The Way Ahead

The Special Education Policy shall be implemented in a phased manner to attain its long-term objectives:

Stage 1: The Royal Government of Bhutan approves the policy in January 2012.

Stage 2: All the necessary policy framework and institutional arrangements are established by end of 2012.

The Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) and Ministry of Education shall take responsibility to review the implementation of the policy, monitor performance, make projections about the future and recommend appropriate policy measures.

Appendix I

Glossary/Endnotes

ⁱ *'Disability'* refers to an inability or a reduced capacity to perform a task in a specific way. A disability is a limitation imposed on an individual by a loss or reduction of functioning, such as the paralysis of leg muscles, the absence of an arm, or the loss of the sight. In other words, disability can be interpreted as the incapability to perform as other children do because of some impairment in sensory, physical, cognitive or other areas of functioning. These limitations make children incapable of doing what other children do. Therefore, a *'disability'* is the functional consequence of the impairment. For example, because of the impairment of spina bifida, a child is unable to walk without the assistance of calipers and crutches.

ⁱⁱ The definition of special needs education refers to those with special educational needs defined by the additional public and/or private resources provided to support their education. The use of this definition in a consistent manner calls for agreement about the term "additional" and an appreciation of the various kinds of possible "resources provided" which should be considered. Thus, "additional resources" are those made available over and above the resources generally available to students where no consideration is given to needs of students likely to have particular difficulties in accessing the regular curriculum [OECD, CERI, 2005]

ⁱⁱⁱ The term *'impairment'* refers to an abnormality in the way organs or systems function. It usually refers to a medical or organic condition of a person which may include short sightedness, heart problems, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, spine bifida or deafness. Sometimes impairment can be treated in such a way that the person has no disability. For example, a person who is shortsighted may have excellent vision when wearing glasses and therefore, does not have disability.

^{iv} Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 1 UNICEF p.5]

^v Special education is the term used in earlier days where different people with same disabilities were grouped together forming different community of their own. Special education is the form of education that needs the provision of extra help, adapted programmes (specially designed instructions) or learning environments, specialized equipments or materials to support children and young people with disabilities in learning.

^{vi} Gifted students are generally understood to be those children who are capable of achieving higher performance and have talents that are rare. Such students may require differentiated educational programmes beyond those provided in a regular school programmes.

^{vii} Inclusion is a term used to include every child regardless of her/his disabilities, colour, creed, culture, religion, language, regions and ethnic background for her/his education. All children are a part of the regular school system enjoying the full-time programme from the very beginning of the schools till the completion of their schooling. It involves bringing the support services to the child rather than moving the child to the services.

^{viii}Mainstreaming is the selective placement of children with special educational needs in one or more "regular" education classes in identified 'Mainstreamed' schools. Some children with particular disabilities first need to be placed in special education environments that help the child make her/his way into the regular education environment.

^{ix}Integration refers to a child's attendance at an integrated school. The term also refers to the process of transferring a student to a less segregated setting, i.e. a regular school with additional facilities and infrastructure to support the integration of children with special education needs, such as learning resource centres and specially trained teachers, etc. A child who attends a regular school, but is in a separate special unit or class, can still be said to be integrated. In this setting a child is less restricted to the environment. A child has opportunity to interact with other school members, thereby sharing and learning with each other. A child can attend both special and in some regular school activities.

^x'*Learning Difficulties*' Learning difficulties refer to children who manifest significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. Such disorders are intrinsic to the individual and presumed to be due to Central Nervous System Dysfunction.

^{xi} *Short Term Strategy* – Plans and programs to be executed in a period of one to two years.

^{xii} *Medium Term Strategy* – Plans and programs to be executed in next Five Year Plan.

^{xiii} *Long Term Strategy* – Plans and programs envisaged and to be executed beyond next five to 10 years

^{xiv} Learning Resource Centre is a centre in educational institutions, such as schools, colleges and universities that includes and encourages the use of audiovisual aids and other special materials for learning in addition to books, periodicals, etc. These centres contain educational resources such as books, journals, software and audio/visual materials. They also exist to promote electronic information resources. These centres can also be used as a resource room for students with special educational needs.

^{xv} A resource room is a designated room where a special education program can be delivered to a student with special educational needs. It is for the student who qualifies for either a special class or regular class placement but needs some special instruction in an individualized or small group setting for a portion of the day. This room will also facilitate withdrawal, pull out, remedial and special sessions to individuals or small group of children with special educational needs. Such rooms will be equipped with appropriate teaching learning materials, computer with printing facilities and others. This type of support helps ensure that the inclusion model is still in place.

^{xvi} A self-contained classroom is one in which the students share similar academic requirements. For example, all the gifted children in a school or district will be contained in the same classroom. Sometimes the children are all in the same grade level, but on other times, particularly when there are limited numbers of gifted children. The classroom may contain children spanning more than one grade level, ranging from grade level one to six.

Appendix II

References

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Comments and suggestions from Special Education Advisory Committee, US.

Comments and suggestions from UNICEF regional office, South Asia and Headquarters (New York)

Appendix III

List of people involved in the development of the policy

Members of the Steering Committee:

1. Mr. Tshewang Tandin, Director General, DSE, MoE (Chair)
2. Mr. Yangka, Director, Academic Affairs, OVC, RUB, Thimphu.
3. Dr. Chencho dorji, Head, Psychiatry Division, JDWNRH.
4. Mr. Kinga Drakpa, Offtg. Director, DCRD, Paro.
5. Ms. Yandey Penjor, Executive director, YDF, Thimphu.
6. Ms. Ruby Q. Noble, Education specialist, UNICEF, Thimphu.
7. Mr. Kinley Gyeltshen, Chief, ECCD & SEN Division, MoE.
8. Ms. Dechen Zam, Chief, PPD, MoE.
9. Mr. Chencho Dorji, Chief, SLCD, DSE, MoE.
10. Mr. Karma Sonam, Chief, SPBD, DSE, MoE.
11. Mr. Wangchuk Namgyal, Chief, EMSSD, DSE, MoE.
12. Mr. Sonam Wangyel, Chief, HRMD, MoE.

Members of the Working Committee:

1. Mr. Dorji Tshewang, Sr. Curriculum Officer, DCRD, MoE
2. Mr. Karchung , Sr. Curriculum Officer, DCRD, MoE
3. Mr. Rinchen Dorji. Sr. Curriculum Officer, RUB, Thimphu.
4. Mr. Jigme Dorji, Principal, Changangkha, LSS, Thimphu.
5. Mr. Sanga Dorji, Physiotherapist, JDWNRHMoH, Thimphu.
6. Mr. Kharka Bdr. Mongar, Vice Principal/SEN Focal person, DLSS, Paro
7. Mr. Bishnu B. Mishra, Education Officer, UNICEF, Thimphu.
8. Mr. Karma Tshering, Principal Shaba MSS, Paro
9. Ms. Kinley Lhamo, Program Officer, Special education, YDF, Thimphu.
10. Mr. Singye Namgyal Dorji. Planning Officer, PPD, MoE, Thimphu.
11. Mr. Pema Chhogyel, Sr. Program Officer, SEN, DSE, MoE.

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12. Ms. Tshering Lhamo, Sr. Program Officer, SEN Div. DSE, MoE.
 13. Mr. Karma Norbu, Asst. Program officer, SEN Div. DSE, MoE.
 14. Mr. Kuenga Dorji, Asst. Program Officer, BPU, DCRD, Paro.
 15. Ms. Chimi Lhamo, Teacher, Changangkha LSS, Thimphu.
 16. Ms. Chimi Zangmo, Teacher, Deaf Education Unit, Paro.

Participants of the consultative meetings with the stake holders of different ministries and agencies:

1. Mr. T.S Podyel, Hon'ble Sherig Lyonpo, Ministry of education.
2. Ms. Sangay Zam, Hon'ble Secretary, Ministry of Education.
3. Mr. Chencho Dorji, Director, DYS, MoE, Thimphu.
4. Mr. Jamyang Galey, Director, Dept of Employment, MoLHR, Thimphu.
5. Mr. Sonam Rinchen, Director, Dept. of Human Resources, MoLHR, Thimphu.
6. Ms. Kezang Choden Dorji, Director, DCRD, Paro.
7. Ms. Vathuine Jitjaturant, Dy. Rep. UNICEF, Thimphu.
8. Ms. Jigme Wangmo, Executive Director, Draktsho VTC, Thimphu.
9. Ms. Ugen Choden, Program Director, Bhutan Foundation, Thimphu.
10. Ms. Dorji Om, Program Director, YDF, Thimphu.
11. Ms. Maina Kharga, Offtg. Director, DAHE, MoE, Thimphu.
12. Mr. Dorji Tshering , Chief HRO, RCSC, Thimphu.
13. Mr. Karchung Tshering, Chief, AFD, MoE, Thimphu.
14. Mr. Namgyel Wangchuk, Chief Budget Officer, DNB, MoF, Thimphu.
15. Mr. Kesang Wangdi, Chief Transport Officer, RSTA, Thimphu.
16. Mr. Chhador Wangdi, CPO, SAFED, DSE, MoE, THIMPHU.
17. Mr. Karma Tenzin, CPO, SCED, DYS, MoE.
18. Mr. Phintsho Dorji, DMD, AFD, Bhutan Post, HQs, Thimphu.
19. Mr. Ugyen Wangdi, Dy. Collector, DRC, MoF, Thimphu.
20. Dr. Roy Greenwood, Paro College of Education, RUB, Bhutan-Canada Foundation
21. Ms. Nancy Simpson Greenwood. Paro College of Education, RUB, Bhutan-Canada Foundation
22. Mr. Karma Nidup, Lecturer, PCE, Paro.
23. Mr. Ugyen Dorji, Sr. curriculum Officer, DCRD, Paro.
24. Mr. Karma Jurmi, Sr. Program Officer, SLCD, DSE, MoE, Thimphu.
25. Mr. Karma Gayleg, Sr. Program Officer, ECCD & SEN Div, DSE, MoE.
26. Ms. Karma Choden, Sr. Program Officer, ECCD & SEN Div, DSE, MoE, Thimphu.
27. Mr. Tashi Dorjee, Sr. Statistical Officer, NSB, Thimphu.
28. Mr. Kesang Jigme, Planning Officer, MoWHS, Thimphu.
29. Ms. Dorji Wangmo, Sr. Planning Officer, PPD, MoIC, Thimphu.

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30. Mr. Tenzin Rabgyel, Sr. HRO, HRD, MoE, Thimphu.
 31. Mr. Sangay Tshering, Asst. Lecturer, SCE, Samtse.
 32. Ms. Tshering Wangmo, Planning Officer, RED, GNHC, Thimphu.
 33. Ms. Ugyen Pem, ATEO, Thimphu Thromde.
 34. Ms. Dawa Wangmo, Dy. Exe. Engineer, SPBD, DSE, Moe, Thimphu.
 35. Mr. Kinzang Drukpa, Principal, Drukgyel, LSS, Paro.
 36. Mr. Phurba, Planning Officer, PPD, MoE, Thimphu.
 37. Ms. Chhoekhi Penjor, NCWC, Thimphu.
 38. Ms. Syelden Namgyel, Program Officer, YDF, Thimphu.