



ཤེས་རིག



 www.education.gov.bt

 facebook.com/Sherig Bhutan

 twitter.com/sherig_bhutan

 instagram.com/sherig.bhutan

THE SHERIG

A Publication of the Ministry of Education

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 17

February 2020 - December 2020

Foreword

I am pleased to present this report, the highlight of an entire year of programs in the Ministry. As you will find in these pages, 2020 was a year marked by important developments and activities in the Ministry, supported by Dzongkhags and Thromdes. Despite the pandemic, the Ministry is proud of the results and outcomes that we have achieved so far.



With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic across the world and detection of the first COVID-19 case in the country, the daily affairs of our country have been affected indifferently across the ministries, agencies, private entities, businesses and the lives of the individual citizens. In particular, the Ministry of Education has been faced with unprecedented challenges such as discontinuation of normal schooling and having to continue instruction remotely.

The giant leap from normal schooling culture and hours of instruction to introducing online classes and resorting to Self-Instruction Materials (SIMs) has been challenging and a defining moment in terms of approach to educating the future citizens of Bhutan. Further, the use of technology and digital platforms such as Google Classroom, YouTube, and broadcast media-Bhutan Broadcasting Service has been highly regarded as inevitable in enhancing proper education during such times where the usual mode of educating is restricted.

The teachers across the country have gone beyond their comfort zones to attend the call of duty to

keep educating the children. The education sector withstood the test of time and proved to rebound with greater resilience under the guidance and wise leadership of the government and the King.

The Ministry's Bi-annual Education Newsletter, "The Sherig" provides a comprehensive report on COVID-19. In addition, it also presents some of the major activities and achievements of the Ministry, sharing information on recent events or changes; policy awards, national or subnational, school-level events and mandate. The publication aims to benefit the education sector and the children in our education system.

On behalf of the Ministry of Education, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the concerned Departments and Divisions for working tirelessly and completing all the scheduled activities and programs. I would also like to thank the Honorable Prime Minister for his unwavering support. Above all, the blessings and wisdom from the Golden Throne is always an inspiration to keep us moving.

INSIDE

- ⇒ Comprehensive report on EIE
- ⇒ Driglam Namzha Refresher Programme
- ⇒ Learning Management System
- ⇒ Scouts prepare for COVID-19 pandemic
- ⇒ Bridge Bhutan Project
- ⇒ Engagement of youth in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic
- ⇒ Development of Design Guidelines for School Construction
- ⇒ Workshop on the development of CSE framework for youth with disabilities
- ⇒ BSA recognizes three Scout Leaders and a retired BSA Training Commissioner
- ⇒ Training on WASH management
- ⇒ Education Management Information System
- ⇒ Orientation program for 21 Leadership Scouts
- ⇒ Career Education & Counselling Division Activities
- ⇒ Capacity building of Leadership Scouts
- ⇒ Financial Literacy training for Volunteers
- ⇒ International Youth Day 2020
- ⇒ Summary of Education Statistics 2020
- ⇒ ECCD COVID Response

Former Secretary

Dasho Karma Yeshey, Hon'ble Secretary of Ministry of Education successfully completed his tenure on 27th February, 2020. Dasho had an illustrious career spanning over more than 33 years and 8 months of dedicated service to the Tsa-Wa-Sum.

Dasho started his career in 1986 as a teacher from Choden Jr High School. He then went on to serve many schools as principal: Headmaster, Wamrong Jr High School, Headmaster, Jakar Jr High School, Principal, Zhemgang Higher Secondary School, Principal, Yangchenphug Higher Secondary School.



In 2003, Dasho was selected as Chief Curriculum Officer for Curriculum and Professional Support Division where he served until 2012. During his tenure as Chief, he was the Chairman of Science Subject Committee of CAPSD during which the Science curriculum material for classes IV to VIII was completely revised. He was appointed as the Director, Department of Adult and Higher Education, Ministry of Education in 2007 and went on to hold the post of Director General, Department of School Education, MoE (2012-2016). In 2016, he was appointed as Secretary of the Ministry of Education.

Additionally, Dasho was a Visiting Lecturer at the University of St. FrancisXaviers, Nova Scotia, Canada, co-teaching Educational Management and Leadership module at the University. He taught Educational Leadership and Management and Educational Supervision modules of the M.Ed programme at the Paro College of Education, Royal University of Bhutan since its inception in 2002 till January 2008. Dasho also participated in the Senior Executive Leadership Program (SELP5) at the Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS) from August till September 2015.

Dasho Karma Yeshey, is from Yangner, under Trashigang Dzongkhag. Dasho earned his Bachelor in Education from National Institute of Education, Samtse in 1986, Advance Diploma in Educational Studies, University of Leeds, UK and Master in Education, University of Leeds, UK. Other achievements include Certificate in Educational Management from Rajabhat Institute Buriram, Thailand and Certificate in Curriculum Studies from the University of New England, Armidale, Australia. Dasho also attended the Executive Leadership Development Programme in Queensland University, Brisbane, Australia.

The Ministry of Education would like to take this opportunity to thank Dasho for his professionalism, commitment and contribution to improve and strengthen the Education System in Bhutan. We congratulate Dasho for his selfless service dedicated to the Tsa-Wa-Sum and wish Dasho and his family a very happy and peaceful life ahead.

With sincere appreciation and deep gratitude, la.

Dasho Karma Tshering, Director General, Department of School Education is appointed as Secretary for the Ministry of Education.



Dasho Karma Tshering, Director General, Department of School Education is from Wangchang under Paro Dzongkhag. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Commerce from Sherubtse College, Kanglung, Trashigang (1883-1986), Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration, Cardiff Business School, University of Wales, UK (1988 – 1989) and a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) from Cardiff Business School, University of Wales, UK (1989 – 1990).

He started his career as Assistant Planning Officer in Royal Institute of Management in 1987. Later, he served as Lecturer and then as Senior Lecturer from 1992-2001 in the same Institute. In 2001, he was transferred and appointed as Deputy Director for the National Employment Board and later served as Director of the Department of Employment from 2005-2008 under the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources.

In 2008, he was transferred back to Royal Institute of Management as the Director and then became Director General in 2015 in the same institute. In 2016, he was appointed as Director General of the Department of School Education, Ministry of Education till date.

In addition, he had served as the President of the Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA); Commission Member of the National Commission for Women and Children; Member Secretary of RIM Board; Chairman of the Draktshok Disabled Institute; Member of Inter-agency Business Opportunity Board; Member of the South Asian Qualification Standard (SAQS) Board; Governing Board Member of SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC); Executive Board Member of AMDISA, Member of Chiphen Righphel Board. Presently, he is serving as Board Director of the Food Cooperation of Bhutan Limited; Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Bhutan Ability Society (ABS); and as the Chairman of the Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN).

He is a recipient of the National Silver Medal Award for his contribution in organization of the Coronation Ceremony for His Majesty the King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck. He has also received Global B-School Leadership Award from World Education Congress, Mumbai 2013. In 2018, he also received the Civil Service Silver Medal Award for his dedicated service to the Nation for more than 30 years.

Comprehensive report on Education in Emergency

Education in Emergency

After the outbreak of the COVID-19 in the region, the Ministry of Education has been following the developments, prevention, and interventions of the situation closely. The Ministry has served an advisory note on precautionary and preventive measures to all Schools, Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Centres, Non-Formal Education (NFE), Community Learning Centres (CLC), and Youth Centres, in line with a notification from the Ministry of Health.

The education institutes in Paro, Thimphu, and Punakha under the Ministry were closed from 6th March 2020 for two weeks as per the directives received from the office of the Honorable Prime Minister with the first confirmed case of COVID-19. The following day, educational institutes under Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhag, Phuntsholing Thromde, and Chumigthang MSS under Chhukha Dzongkhag also closed down. However, boarding students were retained in the school to reduce the movement of students from one place to another. This was to gauge the situation and as a precautionary and preventive measure based on the directives from the Hon'ble Prime Minister's Office.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

The Education Disaster Response Coordination Mechanism (EDRCM) team from the Ministry has also worked out action plans and programs to combat COVID-19.

Following the EDRC structure, three desks have been activated:

* **Operations and Logistics Desk**

The operations and logistics desk is mandated to:

- a) Develop plans and programmes to mobilize food, health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene resources as per the requirement of affected schools and centres.
- b) Establish emergency shelters for education staff, residential students and creation of safe and protected Temporary Learning Spaces in consultation with Dzongkhags and Thromdes.
- c) Keep track of stockpiles and maintain records on the inflow and issue of resources.
- d) Collect, collate and analyze data on disaster situations and rapid education assessment reports.

* **Finance, Information, Communication and Transportation Desk**

This desk has been mandated to:

- a) Manage emergency procurement and financial approvals for mobilizing financial resources.
- b) Set up emergency communication for maintaining communication facilities.
- c) Ensure availability of transportation provisions for emergency transportation requirements.
- d) Mobilize human resources for the response and relief actions.

*** Immediate Restoration of Essential Public Services Desk**

This desk has been mandated to:

- a) Ensure continuity of school/ECCD/NFE/CLC, and youth services at the earliest.
- b) Mobilize counsellors, provide psychosocial support and counseling services.
- c) Ensure an emergency curriculum is in place and the availability of teaching and learning materials.
- d) Ensure assessments and examinations are carried out as per emergency requirements.

Education Emergency Operation Centre (EEOC)

On 6th March 2020, the Education Emergency Operation Centre (EEOC) was activated in line with Education Disaster Response Coordination Mechanism (EDRCM), to respond to Education in Emergencies (EiE). Accordingly, the Core Task Group was activated and the EEOC team was formed to facilitate, coordinate, and mobilize resources for effective response and relief operation.



Figure 1: Core Task Group

After schools closed down, the schools and the Ministry were faced with the question of how to continue the teaching and learning process. For the senior classes until the schools reopened, the students continued with the adapted and prioritised curriculum and lessons delivered through Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS), SIM, Radio, Google Classroom and other social media platforms. For students of Pre-Primary (PP) to Class VIII, it was decided that no campus education should convene and schools were closed for the academic year.

The implications of the COVID-19 outbreak were felt nationwide. The role of students, teachers, and stakeholders has scaled up from creating awareness, practicing preventive measures, and also to continue education in emergencies. The Ministry with support from the Royal Education Council (REC), Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment (BCSEA), Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS), Bhutan Telecom Limited (BTL) and Department of Information Technology and Telecom (DITT) and teachers from Volunteer Teachers of Bhutan (V-ToB) formed a task force to coordinate and develop a strategy for continuity of education under emergency.

To ensure the continuity of education and meaningful engagement of students, the following delivery modalities were developed:

◆ Lesson recording and production

The Volunteer Teachers of Bhutan (VToB) has been mandated to develop multiple online teaching-learning materials to supplement and complement instructional time loss using electronic media. The technical support in lesson recording and production were jointly supported by the Ministry, REC, BCSEA, BBS and DITT. The roll-out of the lessons has been planned from 25th March 2020.

◆ EiE Curriculum: Adapted and prioritized curriculum

With regular teaching and learning out of the question, curriculum was delivered through various innovative modalities.

The adapted curriculum was based on literacy and numeracy at key stage I and II (classes PP to VI), and theme-based curriculum for key stage III, IV and V (classes VII to XII). The Adapted Curriculum delivered under various key stages are as under:

Table 1: Adapted curriculum framework

Key Stage	Class	Learning Areas	Subjects
I	PP-III	Literacy & Numeracy	Dzongkha, English, Mathematics
II	IV-VI	Literacy & Numeracy	Dzongkha, English, Mathematics
III	VII-VIII	Theme Based	Dzongkha, English, Mathematics, General Science, Social Sciences
IV	IX-X	Theme Based	Dzongkha, English, Mathematics, Functional Science, Social Sciences
V	XI-XII	Theme Based	Compulsory to all: English, Dzongkha. Science: Mathematics, Science- Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Environmental Science, and ICT Commerce: Accountancy, Commerce, B. Mathematics Arts: History, Geography, Economics, Media Studies, Rigzhung

The Prioritised Curriculum (PC) is a distilled curriculum. It emphasises on the most fundamental and essential learning contents and concepts, aligned to the most carefully selected learning outcomes and objectives. It encompasses procedural knowledge, skills, values, strategies, and processes. The PC comprises 65 percent of the actual curriculum content which has been developed based on the remaining instructional time left for the academic year 2020.

Key stage	Class	Subjects
I	PP - 3	Dzongkha, English, Mathematics, HPE & Values, ICT, Arts Education
II	4 - 6	Dzongkha, English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, HPE & Values, ICT, Arts Education
III	7 - 8	Dzongkha, English, Mathematics, General Science, Geography, History, ICT
IV	9-10	Dzongkha, English, Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Agriculture for Food Security, TVET, Geography, History and Civics, ICT, Economics.
V	11	English, Dzongkha compulsory for all
		Science: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Environmental Science, and ICT
		Commerce: Accountancy, Commerce, B. Mathematics, TVET, AgFS
		Arts: History, Geography, Economics, Media Studies, Rigzhung

Table 2: Prioritized Curriculum

* **Mode of Lessons delivery**

Lessons broadcasted through BBS

The Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Royal Education Council, and volunteer teachers developed and recorded a total of 470 video lessons to be broadcast on BBS TV.

All the lessons delivered in EiE through BBS were also uploaded in e-library website, YouTube and Facebook pages for student's easy access. In addition, REC's textbooks were also made available online.

Social Media & Google Classroom

The delivery of curriculum through BBS TV is supplemented by the use of social media platforms like WeChat, WhatsApp and Telegram. Introduction of Google Classrooms to establish teacher-student-parent linkage for children's engagement and interaction in learning in line with the Guidelines for Curriculum Implementation Plan for Education in Emergency.

Self-Instructional Materials and Radio

The Self-Instructional Materials (SIM) with the theme 'Reaching the Unreached' were developed primarily to facilitate education of 32,135 students living in remote places with either limited or no access to BBS and Internet for e-learning lessons.

SIM are print materials that carry the same learning lessons as per the adapted curriculum broadcast through BBS. SIM is targeted to reach and support those students who do not have access to TV or reliable internet services. The implementation of SIM was launched on May 02, 2020 coinciding with the Birth Anniversary of the Third Druk Gyalpo, which is also observed as the Teacher's Day. In order to guide and support their learning particularly at lower grades (PP-III), achievement of learning outcomes through SIM were supplemented and supported by lessons aired through Radio.

A total of 670 SIM was developed and printed for Key Stage I-V. There were about one hundred and four teachers involved in the development and editing of lessons in SIM for various Key Stages.

* **Assessment and Examination**

With the schools closed down for a prolonged period due to the prevailing situation, the implementation of the regular curricula was not feasible. Schools were directed to implement the adapted or prioritized curricula based on the situations.

The guidelines on Assessment & Examinations for Education in Emergency Curriculum was developed through consultative approach among the professionals from the Ministry of Education, Royal Education Council and the Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment.

* Preparing infrastructure for re-opening

The Ministry developed guidelines for reopening of schools/centres outlining the details required to be fulfilled by schools before, during and after reopening. With support from development partners, the Ministry fast tracked numerous efforts to improve Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities in all schools.

In addition, several advisory notes, checklist, and awareness materials on the outbreak and preventive measures related to COVID-19, and closure of schools were also issued by the Ministry in line with the guidance from the Ministry of Health, WHO and Prime Minister's Office.

Upon declaring the Phuntsholing Thromde as red zone, on September 13, a total of 1,500 students of class IX to XII and 205 teachers and staff from four schools were relocated to Punakha (Shengana LSS, Khuruthang MSS and Thinleygang PS) and Wangdue Dzongkhag (Wangdue PS).

Following the directives from the government, the academic session for classes XI and XII were resumed from 1st July 2020. However, schools were closed from 11th August 2020 with the nationwide lockdown caused by a COVID-19 case detected in Gelephu.

As per the directives from the government, the Ministry reopened classes IX to XII from 15th September 2020 except in Gelephu, Samdrup Jongkhar and Phuentsholing Tromde.

Response Plan

Following the plan outline of EDRCM, the Ministry carried out the following preparedness and response plan:

* Sherig Counselling Services

Sherig Counselling Services Facebook page has been created to reach out to students, teachers and parents to provide psychosocial support. The contact numbers of 152 counsellors were shared through various communication platforms to provide choices for the help seekers. The counselling services are made available 24/7.

Besides, all the Dzongkhags and Thromdes have a Psychosocial Support Plan, supported by focal counselors, to ensure that impact on the mental health of children, teachers and parents are supported and issues addressed. The Dzongkhag Psychosocial Support Plans are developed to cater to schools, Non-Formal Education Centres, Early Child Care and Development Centers, Youth Centers, and to other stakeholders where professional counsellors are not placed. During the closure of the schools, counsellors reached out to students through Google Classroom and parents through Teacher-Parent social media networks.

To ensure a faster and easier referral and reporting system, twenty Dzongkhags and four Thromdes have been divided into four clusters and appointed four cluster counsellor supervisors from the Ministry.

* **Water Sanitation and Health (WASH)**

As also communicated via advisory notes, all Dzongkhags and schools are guided with precautionary and preventive measures including the need to scale up efforts in setting up hand washing stations in schools. Further, the Ministry has also provided basic handwashing provisions such as handwashing soap to all schools, and hand sanitizers to identified needy and vulnerable schools with support from UNICEF and Save the Children International.

* **Communication with the schools**

To set a clear network of communication to share information, direction, and guidance, all communication lines were sent through the EEOC to Dzongkhags/Thromdes and schools/Centers. This also included efforts to reach out to students who are studying abroad.

All advocacy and awareness materials, directives and guidance were also shared through direct emails, Sherig Facebook page, and Telegram message to the Dzongkhags, Thromdes, Schools and Centers, and to students/student representatives who are studying abroad, in addition to direct calls.

The students studying outside the country were provided support in terms of guidance, precautionary notes. They have also been instructed to register online with the Ministry, to provide any possible support if necessary. The Ministry is also closely monitored students studying abroad.

The digitalised way forward - New normal in education

The Ministry is in the process of developing 21st Century Education Pathways: Education for Human Development by focusing on Knowledge and Skills with aims to transform the education system to one that is well positioned to future needs, to facilitate continuity in learning through various means of teaching-learning (classroom & digital) and achieve the desired learning outcomes and to outline an overall support system for teaching and learning needs in the new normal.

The pathway will focus on some of key areas such as student learning outcomes, need based curriculum, structural changes in school education, teacher development, examination and assessment, ICTisation of education, safety, health and wellbeing, transition of school education to tertiary education and education financing among others. The Ministry conducted two rounds of consultative meetings and developed a concept note.

Continuity of learning

Students' learning is no longer tied to the traditional classroom. The access and use of tablets will not only ensure learning out of class hours but also encourage self-directed learning. The wide availability of online and live resources will enable students to explore the world around them and areas that pique their interest. This will help develop a love for learning and also aid them in being expert navigators of the World Wide Web to skilfully extract information and resources that they require.

Through the ICT in education flagship project, all schools will be equipped with computer lab(s) and computers. Internet connectivity infrastructure is also planned to be laid out for all schools. However, this will only facilitate learning in schools. For learning without disruption, students must be able to learn from home and by themselves. Thus, the Ministry is exploring a modality to provide a tablet to the students and a laptop to the teachers.

Two-day Driglam Namzha Refresher programme



In accordance with the decision of the 293rd HRC meeting held on 7th July 2020, the Ministry of Education conducted a two-day refresher programme on Driglam Namzha for all its employees at the headquarter at DYS Auditorium. The programme was conducted in three cohorts: first cohort on 13th and 14th July; second cohort on 16th and 17th July; and third cohort on 21st and 22nd July 2020. The programme was facilitated by three Driglam Officers from the Driglam Division under the Department of Culture, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs.

A total of 201 employees including Director Generals, Director, Specialists, Chiefs, Officers and Support Staffs including ESP and GSP attended the refresher programme as scheduled. The main objective of this programme was to create awareness and educate adequately through the theory and practices on Driglam Namzha and Bhutanese culture and tradition and to promote and strengthen its practices daily at any place. Through the daily practices, the Ministry of Education also felt it important to lead by example.

The two-day programme is summarized below. The Facilitators provided detailed explanations citing examples.

Day 1: The need, importance, significance and origination of:

- ◆ Driglam Namzha and culture and tradition;
- ◆ Gho and Kira and significance of its different parts and Drig Chenma (ལྷོག་ཤིང་མཚན་མཚམས་)
- ◆ Kabney and Rachu including its dimension (length and breadth), how to fold it, carry, wear, bow (with and

without it), wearing Kabney and Rachu for a dance.

- ◆ Prayers and wishes before dancing and proper way of dancing.

Day 2: The topics covered were:

- ◆ Significance of Za (བཟའ), Cha (བཟའ), Dro (འགྲོ) sum (གསུམ);
- ◆ Discipline through body, speech and mind;
- ◆ Holding and offering the Khadar including offering the Khadar at the reception for the Chief Guest and during the promotion;
- ◆ How to prepare Khadar for the opening ceremony;
- ◆ How to carry files and submit to the Superiors; receiving certificate;
- ◆ Desired behaviour in presence of the Superiors, particularly while eating/drinking.
- ◆ Value education.

The participants have learned and understood that Bhutanese culture and tradition and Driglam Namzha are inseparable from each other. Driglam Namzha reinforces the rich Bhutanese culture and tradition. Driglam Namzha needs to be taught by the parents at home. Having learned and understood about the Driglam Namzha, the participants are confident and they will demonstrate, practice, teach and disseminate the desired behaviours and actions hereafter.

The Driglam Namzha refresher programme ended with the closing ceremony arranged at the DYS auditorium graced by the Hon'ble Sherig Lyonpo on 22nd July 2020 at 5:20 PM.

Learning Management System/e-Learning Platform

Quality of Education as one of the Sustainable Development Goals plays a pivotal role in shaping the knowledge, ideas, values and behaviors of any society. Quality of Education in Bhutan is identified as one of the 16 National Key Result Areas in the 12th Five Year Plan. Thus, for sustainable Quality of Education, ICT for teaching and learning was identified as one of the focus areas to improve student learning outcomes and promote lifelong learning in the 12th Five Year Plan, iSherig-2, Education ICT Master Plan (2019-2023) and NEP (draft).

The Information Communication and Technology Division under the Directorate of Services, Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Royal Education Council is developing the Learning Management System (LMS) which is the part of Digital Flagship Programme and is

funded by the Government of India. The main objective of the project is to provide access to quality online courses for students and teachers and host customized learning materials that are aligned with the curriculum enabling collaborative learning among students and teachers. Hence it will provide statistics on student learning for intervention and decision making.

LMS is a web-based, device-independent system that will facilitate learning anywhere anytime which is expected to access all formal schools from classes PP to XII. Some of the features LMS consists of are bilingual (English and Dzongkha), quizzes, multiple-choice questions, short questions and answers, performance tracking and reporting, chat options.

Scouts prepare for COVID-19 pandemic

The Scouts & Culture Education Division, Department of Youth & Sports, in collaboration and Partnership with UNICEF Bhutan conducted a three-day orientation program for Leadership Scouts in Gelephu from 29th to 31st July, 2020. A total of 25 Leadership Scouts from Dagana, Tsirang, Sarpang and Gelephu attended the orientation program to explore ideas and solutions to contribute towards the COVID-19 Response Plan in line with Scouting's vision and mission. To date, 133 Leadership Scouts from Thimphu, Paro, Punakha, Wangdu, Phuntsholing, Samtse, Tsirang, Sarpang and Gelephu attended the program.

Through the Scouting Network of 59,000 Scout members registered with Bhutan Scouts Association, young people will be engaged in creating a nationwide awareness campaign on COVID-19 pandemic to help themselves, their family members, friends and neighbors prepare for the second wave of COVID-19 Pandemic.

The focus of the three-day program were based on the following strategic priority areas:



- To address complacency on preventive behaviors.
- To promote lifesaving behaviors around COVID-19 triggered social issues.
- Appreciate: Thank frontline workers and volunteers for their sacrifices.

Strategic focus: Solidarity, Resilience and kindness

Bridge Bhutan Project

The Bhutan National Commission for UNESCO in collaboration with the Non-Formal and Continuing Education Division under the Department of Adult and Higher Education launched the Bridge Bhutan Project. The launch was graced by Dasho Karma Yeshey, Hon'ble Secretary, Ministry of Education. Director General, DAHE, Chief of Divisions and relevant officials from the Ministry were in attendance.

The project is aimed at enhancing adult literacy and skills development in the country through the support of Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU), Republic of Korea under UNESCO National Commissions Partnership Programme for Sustainable Development Goal 4. The objective of the programme is to enhance access to quality education for educationally marginalized

people through provision of non-formal education and also strengthen the capacity of partner countries with regard to providing non-formal education.

KNCU has been supporting Bhutan in achieving adult literacy since 2015 on an annual basis through various capacity building programmes and provision of teaching learning resources. However, for 2020 to 2024, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between KNCU, MoE and GNHC to support for the next five years in strengthening Non-Formal Education and Community Learning Centre programmes.

The Education Officers from Thimphu and Learners from Community Learning Centres and Non-Formal Education Centres took part in the programme.



Samjong Community Pelyoen Tailoring Shop

Five graduates of Samdrup Jongkhar Community Learning Centre (CLC) expressed interest to demonstrate their basic vocational skills acquired through CLC to improve their livelihood. On May 30, 2020, Samjong Community Pelyoen Tailoring was established.

A task force was formed led by Thromde Education Officer, Principal Samdrup Jongkhar Middle Secondary

School, CLC Instructor and two learner representatives to manage the shop. The 1st batch of CLC learners graduated in 2018 and consecutively 2nd batch in 2019. All the 11 current learners are female.

Samjong Community Pelyoen Tailoring shop further plans to initiate dry cleaning services, laundry services and expansion of tailoring shops in other Dzongkhag to motivate Non-Formal Education and CLC graduates.

Training on Advanced Tailoring for Community Learning Centres (CLC)

The Non-Formal and Continuing Education Division, Department of Adult and Higher Education, Ministry of Education is conducting a two week training on advanced tailoring for CLC managers and learners. The project is funded by Korean National Commission For UNESCO in coordination with Bhutan NatCom.

The training is provided by Lekdrup Skills Development Training Institute in Olakha, Thimphu. It is aimed at providing hands on experience in tailoring and to upgrade skills in sewing gho and jacket. Later the participants will roll out the same to other learners in the respective centres. So far, 83 learners and 18 managers from 24 CLCs across the country took part in the training.



The Ministry of Education recruited 20 Engineers to support Dzongkhag Administrations to implement the project approved under PTA project funded by the Government of India in the 12th plan. A week-long induction program for the Engineers was conducted from 8th to 12th June in Thimphu.

PTA – Project Tied Assistance



Orientation Program for Leadership Scouts

A total of 24 Leadership Scouts and Dzongkhag Scout Secretaries of Trongsa, Bumthang, Mongar, Lhuentse, Tashigang and Tashiyangtse Dzongkhags attended the Orientation Program for Leadership Scouts.

The program aimed at orienting the leadership Scouts on COVID-19 Q&A handbook, PPE, communication skills, psycho-social aspects and other safety measures to build the capacity of Scouts and help them support their community members keep safe and prevent community transmission of the virus.

Training on Baking for Community Learning Centres

The Non-Formal and Continuing Education Division, Department of Adult and Higher Education, Ministry of Education in collaboration with RENEW conducted a two week training on Baking for managers and learners of Community Learning Centres. The project was funded by Korean National Commission for UNESCO and coordinated by Bhutan NATCOM.

The training began on 27th October, 2020 at Gawaling Happy Home in Wangsisina, Thimphu. It is aimed to improve livelihood skills by providing hands-on experience. Later, the participants will have to roll out the skills to other learners in the respective centre.

There were thirty eight participants, eight CLC managers and thirty learners, from seven CLCs under Bumthang, Dagana, Chukha, Wangdiphodrang Dzongkhag, and Thimphu Thromde.



Engagement of youth in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic

After the Royal Government of Bhutan closed down educational institutes and public recreational facilities in March 2020 in a bid to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the country, thousands of youth were left with nothing meaningful to do at home. They could neither go out to hang out with friends nor could they find anything interesting to do with their families at home. As a result, many of them were found to be restless, frustrated and stressed out. Moreover, most of them had unsupervised access to the internet by virtue of having to attend online classes, and this excessive exposure to the internet was found to pose even greater risks as they become more vulnerable to cyber-bullying/harassments, and internet addiction especially related to online gaming.

The Youth Center Division of the Department of Youth and Sports, which is mandated to cater to the educational, recreational and psychosocial needs of young people, stepped up efforts to reach out to the general youth population through social media and positively engage them through online programs and activities. Since March 2020, the Division took a number of initiatives with the objective of not only engaging youth productively during such a critical time but also to equip them with new knowledge and skills that could help them stay safe and healthy. The following are some of the key initiatives taken by the Division for young people during the pandemic:

- **Online awareness campaign on COVID-19 pandemic:**

As soon as the 1st positive case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Bhutan on 6th March 2020, the Youth Center Division worked closely with regional Youth Centers (YCs) and Youth Friendly Integrated Service Centers (YFISCs) to channel out important and relevant information for young people to help them stay safe from the pandemic. The messages on the importance of regular hand washing, using face-masks, maintaining social distancing, avoiding crowds and how to contact health professionals in times of medical emergencies were all disseminated through social media including the Facebook pages of YCs and YFISCs across the country. Besides, the Division also constantly followed up with YCs and YFISCs on the health status of their youth volunteers to make sure that they are safe. Although the youth services were suspended, the Division continued to reach out to youth through social media. The priority for the Division was to make sure that every youth has access to all relevant information that came from the government and health professionals so that they would be able to stay safe from the virus.



(ECCD)

The Ministry of Education in collaboration with UNICEF Bhutan launched the report on Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Evaluation Report 2020.

The Evaluation focuses on the critical contributions of ECCD services in achieving national objectives and global priorities that are aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets. This target specifies that countries need to ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

The objective of this study is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the provision of ECCD services in Bhutan. ECCD programmes are recognized in providing strong foundations for human development and lifelong learning in the 12th Five Year Plan and the Bhutan Education Blueprint 2014-2024.

- **E-course on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and gender-based violence**

Considering the vulnerability of young people especially those living in an unsafe home environment, it was felt important to educate them on CSE and gender-based violence so that they can at least take care of themselves when they are exposed to abuses or violence at home. In order to build the capacity of YPEER Bhutan members to plan and implement such programs for young people, an online e-Course on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) was piloted from 25th May to 7th June, 2020.

The main objective of the online e-Course was to provide new knowledge and skills that can enhance the capacity of Y-PEER members to initiate and provide quality programs/ services related to CSE and GBV online through different media platforms. The e-Course was developed with an expectation to facilitate engaging young people meaningfully and productively during the COVID-19 pandemic where people are encouraged to stay at home.

The sessions were facilitated by 6-Y-PEER members who attended various capacity development training and workshops both at the national and international level. The participants for the e-Course were selected through an open call that required interested and eligible members to apply online. A total of 125 youth members from various YPEER networks in Bhutan attended the e-course during its pilot phase.

Following the pilot e-course, a 5-day retreat program for the facilitators was conducted to finalize the e-Course training package by incorporating the feedback and comments that were collected from the participants of the piloted e-Course. The main objective of conducting the retreat program was to discuss and come up with a Framework for the training package that is delivered online even during the post-COVID19 era. YPEER Bhutan is a network of youth peer educators set up in 2012 to promote sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) amongst young people and has networks in tertiary institutions and Technical Training Institutes.

- **Digital media literacy for youth**

Keeping in view the vulnerability of young people to online harassments, cyber-bullying and internet addiction especially with e-learning and other virtual engagements requiring them to access internet more during the COVID-19 pandemic, a 6-day online training on the responsible use of social media was initiated through YCs and YFISCs in May and June 2020.

The training which began on 23rd May 2020 was delivered during the weekends and was completed by the end of June 2020. Since most of the youth have been exposed to the internet due to e-learning and other online engagements, it is felt important to educate them on online safety and responsible use of social media.

The training was designed not only to help young people understand the risks associated with excessive exposure to social media such as internet addiction, cyberbullying, online scams and violent and unhealthy digital contents, but it was also to engage them meaningfully at home. The sessions were facilitated by the managers of four YCs (Changjiji, Paro, Khuruthang and Trashigang) and two YFISCs (Gelephu and Samdrup Jongkhar). A total of 418 youth from all over Bhutan took part in the training which was conducted every Saturday. Most of the participants acknowledged that the training was very relevant and useful for them.



- **Extended virtual classes on Pi Top**

In order to help young people spend their free time meaningfully in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, the Youth Center Division initiated advanced online classes for youth on coding and programming through Pi-Top, a digital programming computer. Facilitated by professionals from FABLAB Bhutan and youth who have availed the National Training of Trainers (NTOT) workshop on Pi-top which was held from 25-30 January 2020 in Thimphu, the participants were taught how to use Python, 3-D printing and develop other innovative ideas. The classes were provided during the weekends. The first class was held on 6-7 June, 2020. 24 youth participants attended the classes in small groups from their respective Youth Friendly Integrated Service Centers (Thimphu, Gelephu, Samdrup Jongkhar and Phuentsholing).

- **Webinar on CV writing and youth leadership for Young Bhutan Network**

In order to engage youth-led groups, webinars on CV writing and leadership skills for the members of Young Bhutan Network, the network of youth-led groups in Bhutan was initiated. The webinar sessions were to provide youth-led groups with relevant knowledge and skills that could build their capacity to lead a more healthy and responsible life.

The first webinar was conducted on 11th June 2020 during which the participants were taught how to write better CVs. They were introduced to the importance of a professional CV and how they can use it to sell their skills and knowledge for better employment opportunities. On 19th June 2020, the participants were taught how to set goals to achieve success in life. They were introduced to the concept of SMART goal setting and how they can apply it to prioritize and plan what they want to achieve in everyday life. Then finally on 28th June 2020, the participants learned about building self-confidence and self-esteem. They were provided insights into how to boost their self-esteem and self-confidence so that they can become successful in life. The entire webinar sessions were facilitated by a professional volunteer from Sri

Lanka. A total of 32 youth from different youth-led groups attended the webinar which was conducted during the weekends.

In general, the overall initiatives were received well by young people as these engagements not only helped them spend their time productively, but they also got additional knowledge and skills that they can apply in their everyday life.

- **Online training for youth through Youth Centers**

As part of the effort of Youth Center Division, Department of Youth and Sports, to productively engage young people in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, a 6-day online training on the responsible use of social media and self-care has been initiated through the regional Youth Centers (YCs) and Youth Friendly Integrated Service Centers (YFISCs).

The training which began on 23rd May 2020, delivered during the weekends and completed in a month's time. Since most of the youth are currently exposed to the internet due to e-learning and other online engagements, it is felt important to educate them on online safety and responsible use of social media.

The training is designed not only to help young people understand the risks associated with excessive exposure to social media such as internet addiction, cyber bullying, online scams and violent and unhealthy digital contents, but it is also to engage them meaningfully at home. Besides, the training also covered a session on self-care and personal safety to equip young people with appropriate knowledge and skills that can help them stay safe from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic as well as from other risks such as sexual exploitation, substance abuse, violence and risky sexual behaviors.

The sessions are being facilitated by the Managers of four YCs (Changjiji, Paro, Khuruthang and Trashigang) and two YFISCs (Gelephu and Samdrup Jongkhar). About 500 youth from all over Bhutan attended the training which is being conducted every Saturday. Each participant is being provided the internet data package of Nu.99 for each session of the training. This entire initiative is supported by UNICEF.

DEVELOPMENT OF DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION



The school Planning & Building Division, Ministry of Education launched the **“School Design Guideline” for the School Projects on 24th June 2020**. This initiative was taken to benefit all architects, engineers and builders while designing and implementing any new schools under the Dzongkhags and Thromdes level.

With the rapid growth of construction technology, it has become mandatory to build a sustainable and safe infrastructure to habitat all children seeking education in a secured structure. The Engineers and the Architects in the construction professions today are faced with increased challenges in School construction projects in terms of designing the seismic resilient structure, disabled-friendly structure, preservation of traditional architecture façade and execution of high-quality structures.

In the past, SPBD developed many manuals for the School Projects to maintain the safety of the structures after it's been constructed. However, due to a lack of user-friendly structure at the school level, most of the structures are either in a dilapidated condition or require major maintenance which entails huge expenditure. Therefore, this guideline primarily focuses on the proper planning, selection of new construction sites, take accounts of the

disaster-resilient features, designing of safe RCC structures and maintenance at the later stage. It also clearly outlines the different stages involved in the administrative and planning process.

The document comprehensively covers different aspects of a building construction viz. architecture, civil, electrical, plumbing and sewer components. It is also intended to guide the professionals to control the material quality and workmanship by specifying the selection of approved branded materials, various tests to be carried out and measures to be taken at the construction site. References are also made to relevant codes and standards developed by the Bhutan Standard Bureau and Ministry of Works and Human Settlement. This document further provides directives and guidance for supervising and monitoring professionals.

The development of this document was supported by "Bhutan Foundation" and in-house consultation by SPBD to bring a positive impact for safe and user-friendly infrastructure for all times to come.

Workshop on the development of CSE framework for youth with disabilities

With the objective of developing tools and strategies for the introduction of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) programme for visually impaired students of Muenselling Institute of Khaling (MIK), a 2-day consultative meeting with relevant stakeholders was organized by Youth Center Division, Department of Youth and Sports. The main purpose of the workshop was to review the existing training materials related to CSE/SRHR and develop a framework for the delivery of training contents to youth with disabilities especially those who are visually impaired.

Since the youth with disabilities also go through the same physical, emotional, sexual and social developmental stages like those non-disabled youth, it is felt equally important to equip them with appropriate knowledge and skills so that they can cope with issues affecting them and

lead a healthy and responsible life. The participants reviewed the existing guideline/training manual on CSE and looked into how the contents could be made more inclusive and relevant to the needs of visually impaired children. The CSE program for youth with disabilities will be first piloted at Muenselling Institute of Khaling (MIK); Trashigang.

The Principal of MIK and relevant officials from the ECCD/SEN Division of DSE, along with officials from UNFPA Bhutan and DYS participated in the workshop. The workshop also saw discussions on the challenges faced by visually impaired students in the Institute and developed a tentative work plan to take the CSE program forward.

This consultative workshop was supported by UNFPA.



Bhutan Scouts Association recognizes three Scout Leaders and a retired BSA Training Commissioner



Three Scout Leaders and a BSA official received Scout Service Award at the 6th National Scouts Day Celebration. The award is also initiated to commemorate the 40th Birth Anniversary of His Majesty The Fifth Druk Gyalpo Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, who is also the Patron of Bhutan Scouts Association.

Award Recipients:

- i. Lifetime Achievement Medal: Mr. Pema Wangchuk, Retired National Training Commissioner, BSA (1999-2019).
- ii. Gold Medal: Mrs. Sonam Lhamo, Leader Trainer, Scout Secretary, Thimphu Thromde Scout Association.
- iii. Silver Medal: Mr. Phub Wangdi, Assistant Leader Trainer, Secretary, Dagana Scouts Association.
- iv. Bronze Medal: Mrs. Sherab Wangmo, Assistant Leader Trainer, Secretary, Mongar Scouts Association.



The Youth Center Division with UNICEF Bhutan conducted a two-day capacity development workshop for facilitators of the Young Girls' Circle. They were trained on the guideline, counseling skills, and facilitation skills and given basic knowledge on Sexual and Reproductive Health. This program offers a platform for adolescent and young girls to come together and discuss issues of their concern and find solutions to it by themselves and through interventions. The workshop was attended by facilitators from Thimphu Youth Friendly Integrated Service Center, Kabesa Youth Center,

Training on WASH management

In order to ensure safe and adequate WASH facilities at the Youth Center and Youth Friendly Integrated Service Center, the Youth Center Division, Department of Youth and Sports in collaboration with the UNICEF Bhutan and Bhutan Toilet organization organized a 3-day capacity building training for the staffs on water, sanitation and hygiene management from 27th -29th October 2020 at City Hotel, Thimphu.

The objective of the training is to educate all YCs and YFISCs staff on the importance of having water, sanitation and hygiene management at the YCs & YFISCs, to ensure young people to have a safe and healthy environment while availing the services and programs. The staffs were engaged in how to maintain and manage the toilets, WASH facilities and the overall sanitation in and around their Centers through presentations and practical sessions. Since poor sanitation poses greater risks for the spread of infectious diseases in the community, it is important to have safe and adequate WASH facilities so as to ensure good health and hygiene in the Centers for young people at all times. This becomes critical in the current COVID-19 situation.



A total of 13 YC/YFISC staff attended the training facilitated by the officials from BTO and UNICEF Bhutan WASH section.

The whole training program was supported by UNICEF Bhutan.

6th National Scouts Conference

The three day conference, 1st to 3rd March 2020, was held in Phuentsholing. The conference reviewed, analyzed and revised scouting programs to make it more relevant and pragmatic. The focus of the deliberations were on the alignment of all scouting programs, activities and events based on the five strategic priorities in line with the National Strategic Plan.

Contemplative debates, deliberations and dialogues were held to finalize solutions and suggestions to make the program challenging, fun and educational. The Meet worked on digitizing the online registration system, networking, implementation of the strategy connect, scout.org and online reporting system. The three day Meet also oriented the participants on the National Strategic Plan 2030.

Education Management Information System

A. Introduction

EMIS is one of the main systems that is operated by the Ministry of Education. It was established in 2010. The baseline data was collected for 2011. It is a web-based system that collects extensive data on the following:

- Organization data comprising of Schools, Extended Classroom resources and Early Childhood Care and Development Centres.
- Staff information that includes HQ staffs, Dzongkhag Staffs, School Staffs and Teachers, ECCD Facilitators and HQ Staffs.
- Students data that include Continuing Education, Regular Students, and ECCD Students.

The main users of the current EMIS are the Ministry of Education. Inputs in the Annual Education Statistics are generated from the EMIS. EMIS has enabled online education data collection.

While the current EMIS has enabled the creation of a centralized database of education data, challenges were confronting all the stakeholders. Therefore, decisions were made to enhance the EMIS.

Enhancement of EMIS is being done in two phases:

1. Review, Assessment, and Need Analysis: Supported by UNICEF a review, assessment and need analysis for EMIS was carried out to review the process, policy and people that comprise the EMIS system.
2. Enhancement of EMIS: Part of the digital flagship project, the EMIS software is being enhanced and upgraded.

Main Objectives of the EMIS are:

1. Institute an integrated and comprehensive Education Management Information System (EMIS).
2. To ensure quality data collection and information processing for evidence-based

planning, decision making, interventions, research, monitoring and evaluation for all levels of stakeholders.

3. To ensure flexibility in system design to adapt/accept the changes in data that may be required in future management
4. To expand and automate data collection and validation using integration with a single source of data by reducing manual intervention.
5. To improve data dissemination to support effective quality assurance and continuous improvement of data culture within and outside of the Ministry of Education.

B. Current implementation status (Please provide a detailed report on the progress of activities carried out from July 2019 – June 2020)

I. Review, Assessment and Need Analysis- Completed

This project was implemented with support from UNICEF and WFP. It was outsourced to a Consulting firm. The scope of the project was the following:

- * Holistic review and assessment of the existing EMIS against national policies and strategies and international practices. The consultant is expected to not only conduct a review and assessment of the software and data/data quality but also the processes and policies involved in EMIS functioning.
- * Conduct a needs analysis in discussion with the stakeholders of EMIS. This will also include a comprehensive study of the EMIS and other systems in place (PMS, BCSEA, RCSC, School Feeding Software, etc.) to analyze how this could be integrated into EMIS. The consultant is also expected to guide the needs analysis within the global framework of EMIS and ensure the integration of the needs of national and international indicators for Education (SDG etc).

The firm had to deliver the following deliverables:

- * **Gap analysis** report in terms of environment (processes, accountability, policy), software, data, data quality, and data usage for decision making along with recommendations for bridging the gap in line with national and international best practices.
- * **A strategic document** that incorporates recommendations to improve data collection, monitoring and evaluation, and quality assurance processes in line with international and national best practices.
- * **Terms of Reference** for development consultant for enhancing EMIS as a result of needs analysis. This should include recommendations on architecture for

enhancing EMIS, scalable and most recent open source technologies, best-fit project development methodologies and approaches.

II. Development of EMIS

After the successful completion of the Review, Assessment and Need Analysis of the EMIS, the Tendering process for the development of EMIS was done on 12th May 2020. This development is part of Digital Drukylu flagship program which is funded by the Government of India. Re-Tender was done since none of the participating firms qualified for the financial bid opening. Re-Tender was delayed by one month due to Covid lockdown.

Orientation program for 21 Leadership Scouts

The Scouts and Culture Education Division, Department of Youth and Sports, in collaboration with UNICEF Bhutan office conducted a day-long orientation program for 21 Leadership Scouts on 27th May, 2020 in Thimphu. The program was initiated to build the capacity of Scouts and help young people remain prepared to face adverse situations caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

A total of 21 Leadership Scouts from Thimphu were oriented on COVID-19 manual developed by the Ministry of Health. The participants were also made aware of Basic Psychological Skills and Crowd Management, focusing on the advocacy and awareness program associated with COVID-19 pandemic. Scouts who received 3-weeks intensive Leadership Training at Tencholing, Wangduephodrang, will be oriented on COVID-19 safety health protocols and trained with basic skills necessary to support young people affected by COVID-19 pandemic. The Division will deploy Leadership Scouts for COVID-19 duty to assist De-Suups and RBP personnel.

The initiative is aligned with the Education Contingency Plan, intended to support young people while in school and community during the emergency caused due to



COVID-19 pandemic. With support from UNICEF Bhutan office, the Department of Youth and Sports will initiate a similar program to Scouts in other Dzongkhags and Thromdes on a need basis.

Career Education & Counselling Division Activities

Career Education & Counselling Division Activities (Feb-August 2020)		
Activity TYPE	ADDITIONAL INFO	2020 Timeline
Coordinated School Level Risk Assessment and Vulnerability Mapping & planning Interventions		
	<i>All school (145) with School Counselors conducted Risk and Vulnerability mapping to plan and implement activities to support students in the event of School closure due to Covid 19.</i>	Feb-March
	<i>Schools coordinated planning and implementations of the interventions</i>	
Online Sherig Counselling Services		
	<i>Counsellors at the Division developed various social media assets and emergency Hotline numbers of counsellors from 20 Dzongkhags and 4 Thromdes to provide Online Counselling Services with special focus on School Children</i>	March and Ongoing
	<i>All School Counsellors were provided with data package of Nu. 500. by the Ministry of Education to facilitate Online Services</i>	
	<i>685 total cases (305 M/380 F) have sought Counselling between March - August 2020</i>	
Support and Consultation Services to School Counsellors		
	<i>Counsellors at the Division provide Case Consultation services to Field Counsellors on Child protection Issues, Critical Incident Management, Post Vention activities, Substance Use, Mental health Issues, Referrals and Academic concerns</i>	Ongoing
Training of District Education Officers, principals & school counselors on psychosocial support for children during emergencies		
	<i>With School Closure due to Covid 19 situation, School Counsellors were trained to provide Basic Psychosocial Support Interventions in areas of Child protection, Mental health & Wellbeing</i>	May
	Total Participants 138 School Guidance Counsellors , 10 Principal and 21 Dzongkhag Education Officers attended the training	
Extended Psychosocial Support for Students after Schools reopen		
	<i>Division developed implementation Guidelines on Extended PSS Guidelines for Schools (7-12)</i>	July and Ongoing
	<i>Extended PSS will be provided to all schools virtually during the school closure and physically after the schools reopen</i>	
Other Spill-over Activities Carried out from 2019-2020 Work Plan		
	<i>Developed Draft Guidelines and Framework on Clinical Supervision</i>	March
	<i>First draft review on Career Education & Guidance Materials</i>	June
	<i>Family Intervention Training for School Counsellors</i>	Ongoing

Capacity building of Leadership Scouts as a Service Provider during COVID-19 pandemic



The Department of Youth and Sports, conducted a two-day orientation program for 87 Leadership Scouts in Thimphu, Paro, Punakha and Wangduephodrang with the funding support from UNICEF Bhutan office. The program was initiated to prepare Scouts as a Basic Service Provider to their family, friends and relatives in the community in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic.

The Scouts were oriented on the COVID-19 manual developed by the Ministry of Health. They also attended sessions on basic psychosocial skills, a tool kit for communication and social media, social innovation and crowd control.

Leadership Scouts will carry out various activities and projects to protect their community from COVID-19. They formed a youth team in their Dzongkhag/Thromde to provide basic services to their family and others in the community in the event of local transmission of COVID-19.

Following series of projects have been proposed to carry out immediately in their communities;

1. C-Learning (Community Learning to help young school-going children in rural places learn basic literacy and also support the local school to deliver SIM and other

- educational materials to children).
2. Advocate on COVID-19 standard Safety Health Protocols using the e-manual provided starting from family members, neighborhood and later to the community members.
3. Audio-visual production on COVID-19 in Dzongkha.
4. Project to read 15 pages daily for youth.
5. Advocacy on Druk Trace App to rural communities.



First Rover Moot

The Opening of First Rover Moot was graced by The President of Jigme Namgyel Engineering College on 12th February, 2020. A total of 130 Rovers from 8 different Colleges of Education took part in a week-long Rover Camp. They participated in various Rovering activities including Betterworld Framework, SDGs, Scouting skills, survival course, and expedition beyond boundaries, gastronomy and cultural competition. The event ended on 17th February, 2020.

Financial Literacy training for Volunteers (YDF)

Volunteerism amongst young people is becoming visible; there are now 15 youth-led groups under the banner of Young Bhutan Network (YBN) which is an encouraging sign. These youth groups raise funds as well as receive funds to implement activities; however, most of them lack the knowledge and the skills to keep accounts. Therefore, the Youth Centre Division, Department of Youth and Sports in collaboration with the Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan and supported by UNICEF

Bhutan organized a 3-day program for volunteers from various youth groups under YBN (Young Bhutan Network) to make them financially literate. The training was conducted from 28th to 30th October, 2020 at the Thimphu YFISC training hall.

The youth volunteers were expected to learn the skills to develop business model canvas, basic book keeping and manage their finances effectively & carefully. 24 young people from 12 youth-led groups attended the workshop.

International Youth Day 2020

Had it not for the nationwide lockdown in the country, we at the Department of Youth and Sports would have celebrated this year's International Youth Day with a small group of youth. Although we could not come together to celebrate the day, our young people continued with their plan to help the government combat COVID-19 pandemic in the country especially through online campaigns. Based on the UN theme for the day "Youth Engagement for Global Action", a number of activities were implemented by different youth groups in an effort to fight this pandemic.

On 10th August 2020, a day-long workshop on communication strategies was organized for about 16 youth in preparation for their online campaign which was supposed to be launched on the International Youth Day. The youth participants from different youth-led groups under the Young Bhutan Network were introduced to different strategies for getting their messages across the communities more effectively. Facilitated by Communication experts from UNICEF, the sessions were designed to equip the participants with knowledge and skills that would help them become better advocates of change in the society.

The participants developed their action plans to contribute towards fighting COVID-19. They pledged to launch online campaigns through the social media platforms of their respective groups to raise public awareness on how to stay safe in the wake of the pandemic. Some of the activities they planned to initiate were: production and circulation of short videos on the



proper usage and disposal of facemasks, messages on the prevention and risks of COVID-19, articles of gratitude to the frontline workers, sensitizing young mothers in the neighborhood on COVID-19 and supporting underprivileged children/youth. While those activities requiring physical interaction were not feasible during the lockdown, they implemented other activities through online channels.

This initiative was coordinated by the Youth Center Division, Department of Youth and Sports and was supported by UNICEF.

Final consultation on the revised National Youth Policy held in Thimphu



Coordinated and led by the Youth Center Division, Department of Youth and Sports, the final consultation on the revised National Youth Policy was held on (28/07/2020). The main purpose of the consultative meeting was to review and finalize the draft policy document especially the policy statements. The policy looks at youth development through different themes such as mental health and well-being, education, employment, social culture, environment, youth participation. The participants discussed the statements under each theme, deliberated on the issues they are intended to address and revised them wherever deemed necessary.

Besides, the meeting also facilitated the exchange of views and experiences amongst different agencies working for and with youth. The participants had meaningful discussions on the overall contents of the policy document in relation to the mandates of their

respective agencies and how to move forward with the development of the National Youth Action Plan. The feedback and comments shared by the participants were recorded to be incorporated into the revised policy. The meeting was attended by representatives from agencies working for and with youth and youth-led groups. It was supported by UNICEF.



To ensure the safety of students, schools across the country constructed Water, Sanitation and Hygiene facilities, focusing on handwashing stations to welcome the students. Teachers, who are at the forefront, helped schools install the handwashing stations. Having proper handwashing facilities for students in schools is one of the conditions the government has set to reopen the schools. A total of 26,195 class X and XII students returned to school on July 1.

Mr. Kinley Gyeltshen, Director, Directorate of Services is transferred to Ministry of Economic Affairs



In accordance to the Transfer Order received from the Royal Civil Service Commission vide RCSC/ESMD/Transfer/8/2020/416 dated 17th September 2020, Mr. Kinley Gyeltshen, Director, Directorate of Services (DoS), Ministry of Education has been relieved from the Ministry with effect from 1st November 2020 to join his new place of posting at DoS under the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

He started his career as a Teacher in August 1998. He had also served as the Royal Tutor till 2001. Further, he had served as a Vice Principal and Principal in Schools under Trongsa Dzongkhag. In 2007, he was appointed as the District Education Officer for Lhuentse Dzongkhag and served till 2010. Thereafter, he joined the Education Monitoring Support Services Division under the Department of School Education, Ministry of Education and served as the Education Monitoring Officer from 2010 to 2012. Simultaneously, he had assumed the role of a Programme Officer under the same Department to oversee the ICT programmes and activities in the Schools. In October 2013, he was appointed as the Chief Human Resource Officer in the Ministry of Education. He was appointed as the Director, DoS, Ministry of Education in September 2017 and served till October 2020.

He is a recipient of the National Order of Merit in Education Excellence from His Majesty the King on 17th December 2009 while he was serving as the District Education Officer in Lhuentse Dzongkhag.

He holds a Bachelor of Education (Secondary) from Samtse College of Education (1995-1998). He also possesses a Post Graduate Certificate in Teaching Information System (PGCTIS) from Sherubtse College (2001-2003) and a Master's Degree in Educational Management from the Mahidol University, Thailand (2005-2007). He also attended the prestigious Senior Executive Leadership Programme from the Royal Institute of Governance and Strategic Studies. In 2015, he had successfully completed the De-Suung Integrated Training Programme at Tencholing, Wangduephodrang.

The Education fraternity would like to thank him for all his contributions to the education sector in various capacities till date. The Education fraternity would like to convey the best wishes and prayers to him in his new place of posting.

Specialist for Department of Adult and Higher Education



Mr. Baburam Sherpa who was working as the Chief Programme Officer for the Scholarship and Student Support Division of the Department of Adult and Higher Education since December 2011, has been appointed as the Specialist for DAHE with effect from 1st July 2020.

Prior to his joining as the Chief for the Scholarship and Student Support Division, Mr. Baburam was the principal of Gedu Higher Secondary School under Chukha Dzongkhag from 2007 to 2011 after having worked at Yangchenphug Higher Secondary School as the teacher and Assistant Principal for a decade upon the completion of PGCE from NIE, Samtse in 1996.

Having completed his high school from the then Punakha High School in 1988, Mr. Baburam pursued his higher education from Sherubtse College and graduated with English Honours from its first batch in 1994 and M.Ed in Educational Leadership and Management in 2008.

Mr. Baburam is from Goshi Gewog in Dagapela under Dagana Dzongkhag and is an International Visitor Leadership Programme (IVPL) alumni of the U.S Department of State and a recipient of Civil Service Award for Bronze and Silver Medals for his dedicated service to the nation for the last 25 years. Mr. Baburam had been actively engaged in the development of the National Education Policy, Guidelines for Educating for GNH, Guidelines for Autonomous Schools, Nurturing Green School for Green Bhutan- A Guide to School Management to name a few.

19th Bhutan Accreditation Council (BAC) Meeting



In an effort to enhance quality of education and encourage a sustained culture of excellence in higher education in the country, the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Division (QAAD), Department of Adult and Higher Education, Secretariat to Bhutan Accreditation Council (BAC) launched the revised Institutional Accreditation Manual (IAM) 2020 during the 19th Council Meeting held on 4th December, 2020 at The Pema by Realm, Motithang, Thimphu. The Chairperson of the Council, Hon'ble Secretary of Ministry of Education graced the event in a simple Tendrel Ceremony. The Hon'ble Council members and officials from the Department of Adult and Higher Education attended the event.

The revised IAM 2020 was launched to support Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to examine their institutional vision, standards and performance. Moreover, it will immensely benefit the HEIs in identifying strategies to improve educational effectiveness. The Secretariat initiated review of IAM since October, 2018 as per the directives of the Council. The Division organized numerous review workshops amongst core working groups and consultation meetings with the key stakeholders including all HEIs, Professional Councils and the assessors who had been involved in the previous accreditation exercise.

The revised IAM 2020 will be distributed to the Universities, HEIs and relevant agencies for their reference to ensure continuous quality enhancement of higher education in the country.

The 19th Council Meeting also oriented the new members on the functions and mandates of the Council. Further, the Secretariat updated the Council on the important tasks that the Secretariat has initiated in this financial year despite the pandemic. The Hon'ble Council members provided valuable comments and directives for the seamless conduct of the ongoing activities initiated by the Secretariat.

Scouts of the World Award



65 Rovers and 22 Rover Leaders (Lecturers) from 15 Colleges attended the virtual training on “Empowering Young People through the Scouts of the World Award” (SWA). The virtual training began on 16th August and ended on 12th September.

The Scouts of the World Award Training was conducted with financial support from the Asia Pacific Regional Office of the World Scout Organization of the Scout Movement.

The SWA program offers you the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become a world citizen: someone who can play an active role in making the world a better place, starting with your local community.

The aims of SWA Training:

- To encourage stronger involvement in the development of society by providing knowledge, skills, motivation, and opportunities to face today’s global challenges.
- To recognize and promote voluntary service project in the fields of development, peace, and the environment.
- To encourage Scouts & Culture Education Division, Department of Youth & Sports to develop more educational opportunities for Scouts to become global citizens. Initiate new activities for young people to take local actions and take up genuine responsibility and undertake voluntary projects to make positive impact in the community.

Summary of Education Statistics 2020

Indicators	Female	Male	Both
Net Enrolment Rate in ECCD	23.5	23.9	23.7
Net Enrolment Rate in Primary (PP-VI)	94.3	91.6	92.9
Net Enrolment Rate in Basic (PP-X)	93.2	88.0	90.6
Net Enrolment Rate in Secondary (VII-XII)	80.2	71.2	75.7
Gross Enrolment Rate in ECCD	24.0	24.4	24.2
Gross Enrolment Rate in Primary (PP-VI)	110.0	107.6	108.8
Gross Enrolment Rate in Basic (PP-X)	106.0	100.7	103.3
Gross Enrolment Rate in Secondary (VII-XII)	97.6	88.6	93.1
Gross Enrolment Rate Higher Secondary (XI-XII)	95.7	84.0	89.8
Gross Enrolment Rate in Tertiary within Bhutan	17.9	17.8	17.9
Gross Enrolment Rate in Tertiary within and outside Bhutan	23.5	23.6	23.6
Gender Parity Index for ECCD	0.96		
Gender Parity Index for Primary (PP-VI)	0.98		
Gender Parity Index for Basic (PP-X)	1.02		
Gender Parity Index for Secondary (VII-XII)	1.11		
Gender Parity Index for Tertiary within Bhutan	0.95		
Gender Parity Index for Tertiary within and outside Bhutan	0.94		

Table A: Summary of Schools, Institutes and Centres

School/Institutes/Centers	Government	Private	Total
Early Childhood Development			
ECCD Centers	432	63	495
School Education			
Primary Schools	304	15	319
Lower Secondary Schools	60	1	61
Middle Secondary Schools	70	1	71
Higher Secondary Schools	61	21	82
Special Institutes	2	0	2
Sub-Total	497	38	535
Extended Classrooms	74	0	74
Schools with SEN program	26	0	26
Central Schools	64	0	64
Autonomous schools	69	0	69
Tertiary Education			
Tertiary Institutes	15	3	18
Technical Training Institutes			
Technical/Vocational Institutes	6	0	6
Institutes of Zorig Chusum	2	0	2
Sub-Total	23	3	26
Other Forms of Education			
Monastic Education Institutes*	184	...	184
Continuing Education Centres	0	3	3
Non-Formal Education Centres**	427	0	427

**Number of Monastic Institutions taken from Dratshang Lhentshog website*

***The non-formal education centres include GLCs as well*

ECCD COVID Response: An Analysis of the Effectiveness of ECCD Interventions

1. Introduction

As the COVID-19 crisis emerged, all institutions were required to remain closed by the government to ensure that the spread of the pandemic is effectively prevented, mitigated and contained. ECCD centers were no exception given that young children in group settings could very well be infected and also be carriers of the virus. As much as adults are affected in the way we live and work, the unusual circumstances may have been taking a toll on children's well-being and development. The scenario of stay-at-home is not a normal situation and the impact of such a situation could immensely affect children emotionally and psychologically. Therefore, adults need to help children understand and adapt, to enable them to think, feel and function normally. This involves keeping children engaged physically, mentally and socially and helping them cope with the stress and anxiety that comes with an unnatural situation.

On the other hand, the need for children to learn regularly even in an abnormal situation has to be recognized and addressed. In this sense, children needed to be kept engaged in new learning activities and experiences to help enhance their developmental outcomes. These kinds of activities and strategies do not normally happen in average homes and families and this is where the ECCD Facilitators could play a critical role in educating families and supporting them to engage children in learning activities at home.

2. Aim:

The survey aims to study the extent to which ECCD Facilitators have accessed and utilized the COVID-19 Response Guidelines and Resources and how effective it has been in supporting families to engage children at home. The primary question of the survey is 'How are ECCD Facilitators engaging with families in their communities and how much of a difference is it making in helping parents engage children meaningfully at home?'

3. Methodology

This survey was designed as an open online multiple-choice questionnaire to gauge the efficiency and effectiveness of the COVID response strategy developed and promulgated by the ECCD program under the Ministry of Education considering the critical importance of the potential role of ECCD Facilitators in engaging with parents and children even as the ECCD centers remain closed. The expectation was to draw a sense of the extent to which ECCD Facilitators have accessed and made use of the guidelines and resources and how effectively they have been able to engage with the families. The questionnaire included 10 multiple choice questions as follows:

- i. Did you get hold of a copy of the ECCD COVID Response Guidelines?
- ii. Where did you get it from?
- iii. How often did you use the guidelines and resources?
- iv. How useful was it?
- v. Did you use any other resources apart from the guidelines?

- vi. How helpful were your interactions with colleagues on the social media groups created by the ECCD Unit?
- vii. What proportion of families in the community have you been able to reach out to?
- viii. Why were you not able to engage with some of the families if any?
- ix. What alternative strategies did you use when /where there are challenges related to access to technology?
- x. Are you happy with what you have been able to do to support families in your community?

not indicative in the responses. All of the questions were answered by 99% of the respondents. The findings of the survey are organized into the following aspects:

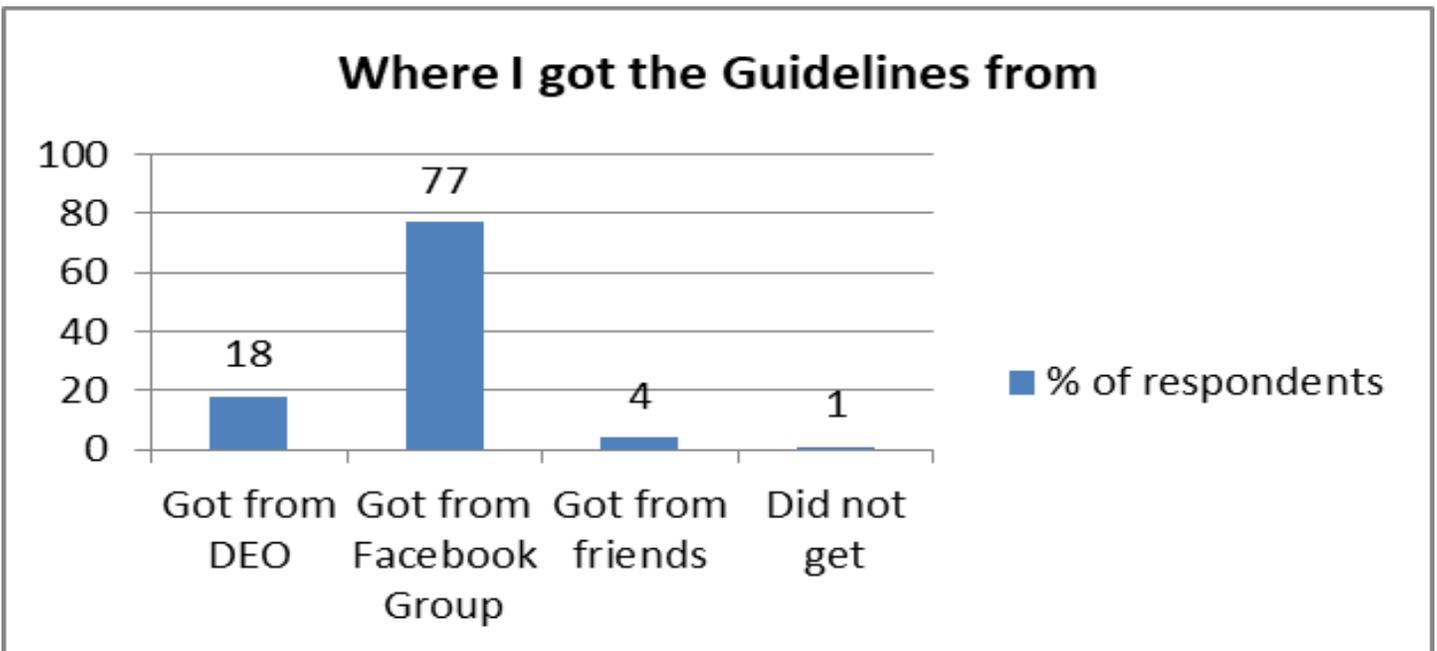
- Access to guidelines and resources
- Implementation of the interventions
- Quality of the interventions
- Coverage of the intervention
- Reflection

4. Findings

The survey was shared in the Community Facebook group for ECCD called ‘Our ECCD Family’. It was taken up by a total of 285 ECCD facilitators, which constitutes about 45% of the total number of ECCD Facilitators in the country. While the findings of the survey indicate that most of the 285 respondents have been engaged in supporting families using the prescribed interventions, it is not clear if the other facilitators who have not participated in the survey have also been doing it as it is

4.1. Access to guidelines and resources

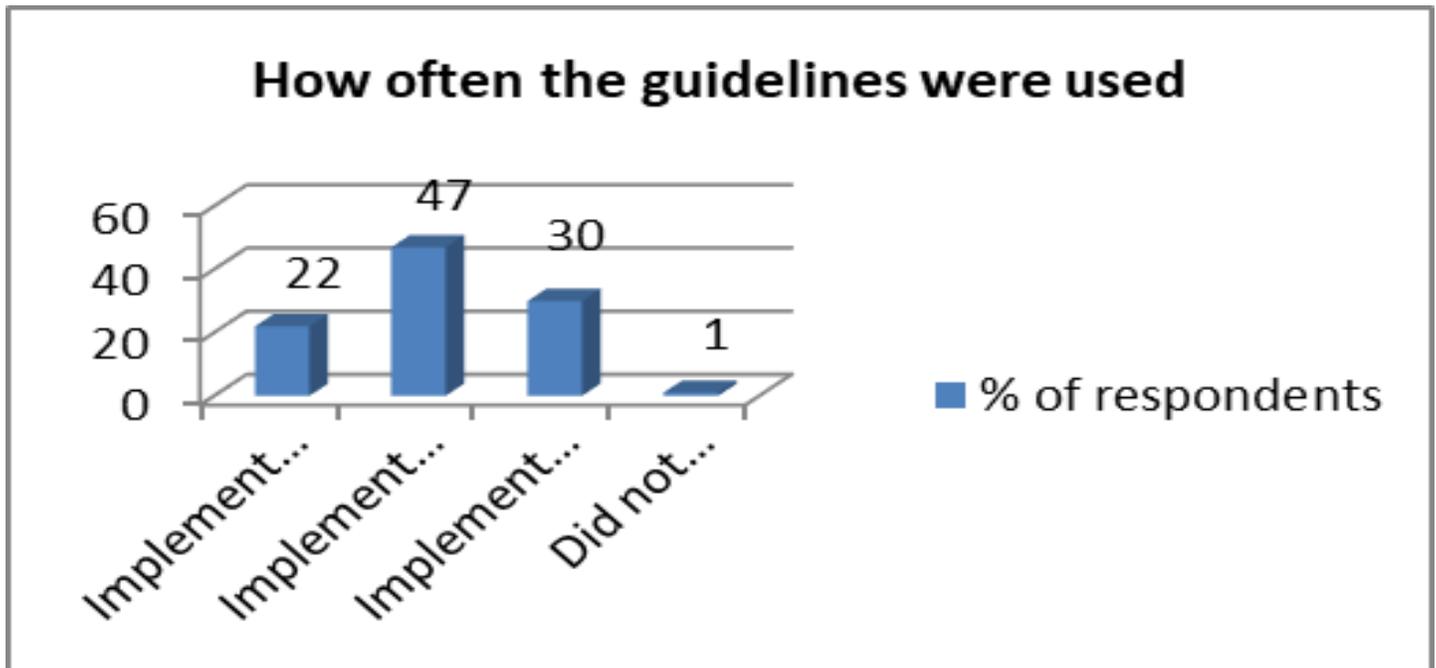
The findings indicate that 99% of the respondents were aware of the existence of the guidelines and resources circulated by the ministry of education. However, in terms of the source of Information, 18% have accessed the guidelines through the Dzongkhag/ Thromde Education Offices (DEOs) while 77% have accessed from the Facebook Group called ‘Our ECCD Family’ of which they are members. Still another 4% have got it from colleagues while 1% did not at all access it as indicated below



4.2. Implementation of the interventions

While 98 percent of the respondents have accessed the guidelines, the findings indicate that there is no uniformity in the frequency of the interventions using the guidelines. While 22% of the respondents used the

resources regularly (daily), 47% of the participants have only used it a few times a week, while still another 30% used it once a week. There is also 1% that has not at all used it.



Because of the existence of the social media platform and discussion groups, the support for the intervention was not limited to the one-time comprehensive package. Supporting resources and materials are continuously fed into the groups to supplement the intervention package. Hence, the survey also sought their perspectives on the usefulness of the additional support provided through these groups and platforms.

While 22% of the respondents used the resources regularly (daily), 47% of the participants have only used it a few times a week, while still another 30% used it once a week. There is also 1% that has not at all used it.

4.3. Quality of the intervention

There have been no assessment schemes developed to measure the quality of the intervention package. Hence, the quality aspect as highlighted in the report is based on the usefulness scale ranging from extremely useful to not at all useful, based on the perspectives of the facilitators,

which could have been based on their experience of the receptivity and enthusiasm of the parents. The data indicates that 33% of the respondents found it extremely useful while 60 % found it very useful and 7% somewhat useful. None of the respondents felt that the package was not useful.

Responses	% of respondents
Extremely useful	33
Very useful	60
Somewhat useful	7
Not useful	0

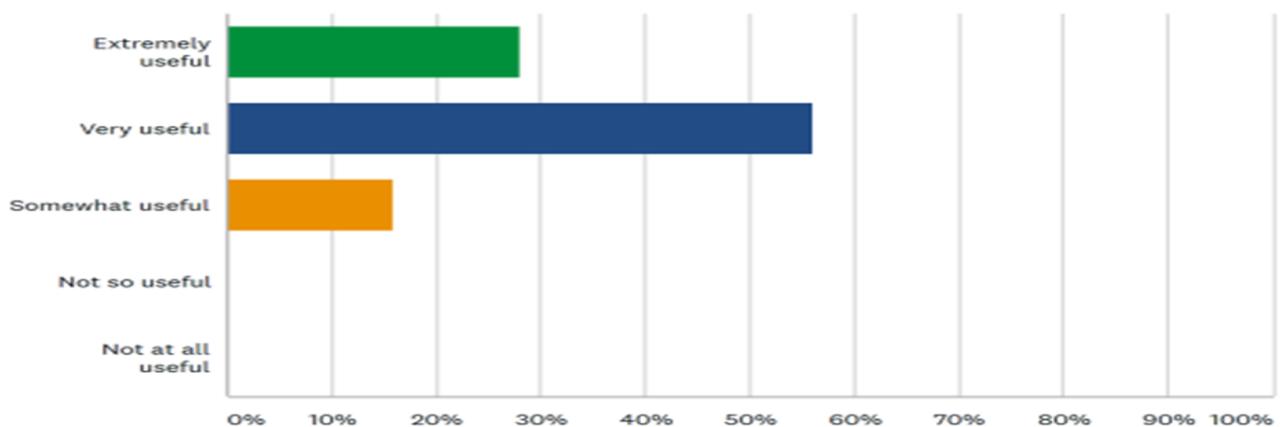
Because of the existence of the social media platform and discussion groups, the support for the intervention was not limited to the one-time comprehensive package. Supporting resources and materials are continuously fed into the groups to supplement the intervention package. Hence, the survey also sought their perspectives on the usefulness of the additional support provided through

these groups and platforms.

While 22% of the respondents used the resources regularly (daily), 47% of the participants have only used it a few times a week, while still another 30% used it once a week. There is also 1% that has not at all used it.

Apart from the Guidelines, the other resources provided through Social media was useful

Answered: 100 Skipped: 0

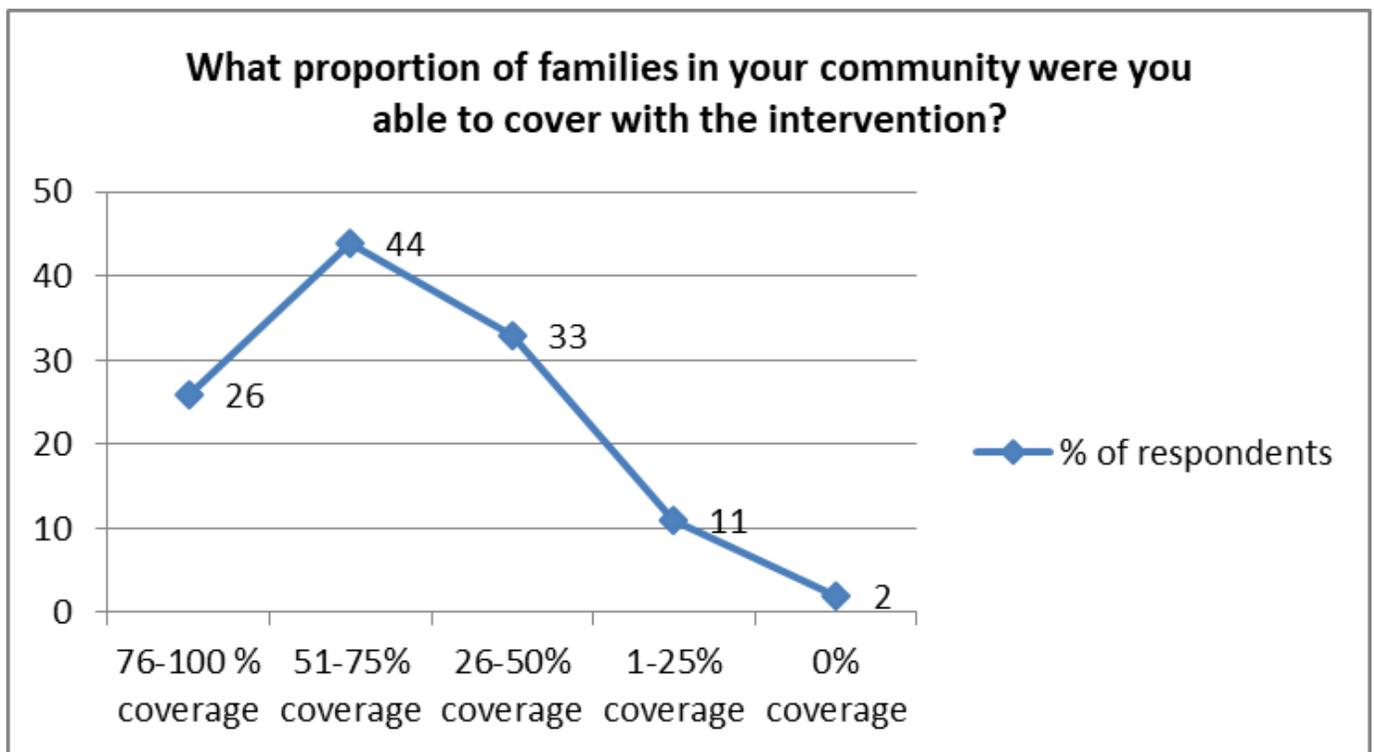


4.4. Coverage of the intervention

In terms of the coverage of families in the communities using the prescribed intervention package, it is evident that not all the respondents have been able to reach out to everyone in the community. As such, there is a clear range of difference in terms of how far each of the respondents has been able to reach. According to the survey, only 26% of the ECCD Facilitators have been able to reach out to 100% of the families in their communities; 44% of the respondents have been able to reach out to 75% of the families in their communities; 33% have reached out to 50% of the families in their communities; 11% of the reached out to only 25% of the families in their communities, and 2% of the respondents have not reached out to any of the families in their communities.

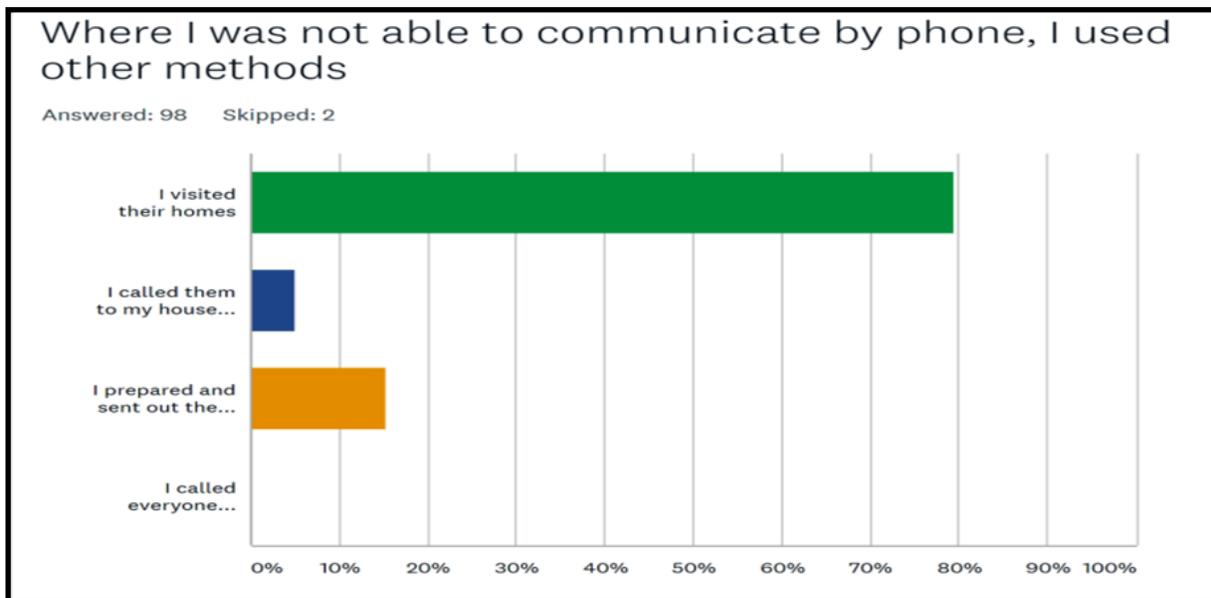
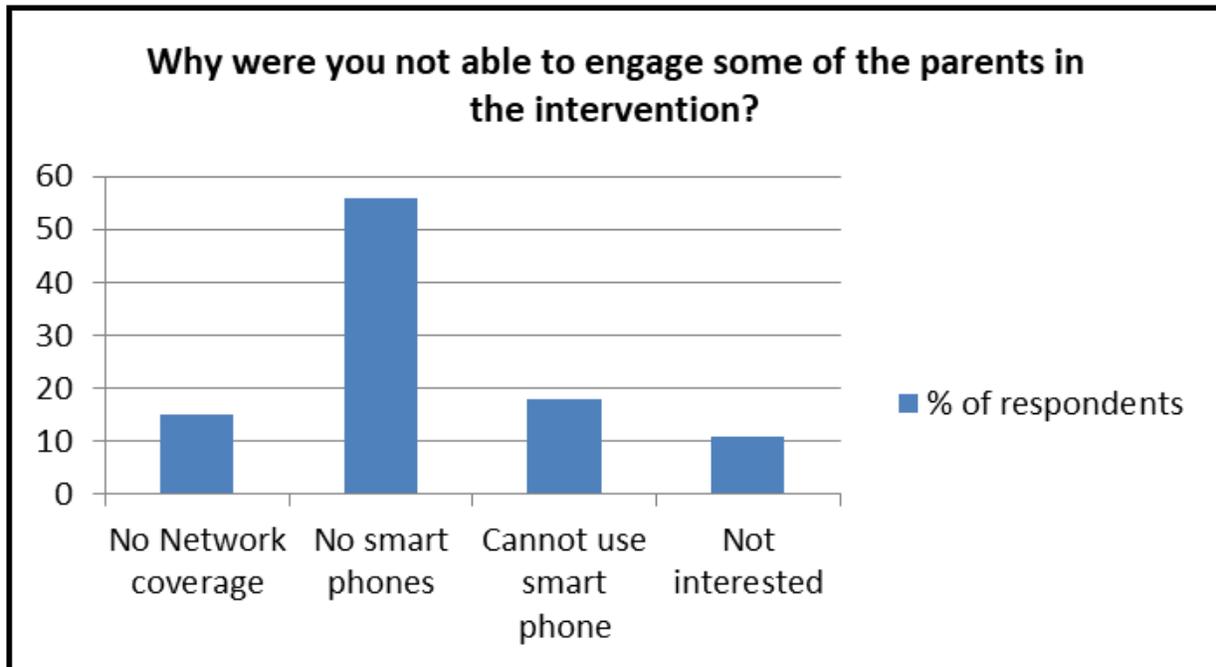
The survey sought to further delve into why all the facilitators were not able to reach out to all of the families in their communities by using another question; “Why were you not able to engage with some of the families if any?”. In context of the question, the inability to reach out to all families in the community was attributed to four main reasons:

- There is a challenge with network coverage in the locality
- Parents did not have phones
- Parents could not use the gadgets (smartphones)
- Parents were not cooperating/ interested



In this regard, it was found that 15% of the respondents were not able to reach out because there were challenges related to network coverage while 56% could not interact effectively with parents as they had no smartphones. In many cases, there were not enough smartphones as older children in the family had to use it

for e-learning. 18% of the respondents reported that parents could not use smartphones and 11% pointed out that some parents were not even interested to interact for home-based parenting support.



The survey further probed into what alternative strategies facilitators used to reach out to parents. The respondents pointed out four approaches as alternative strategies when they could not interact and communicate with parents on phone:

- ◆ I visited their homes to deliver the materials and provide parenting support
- ◆ I called them individually to my house to provide the intervention
- ◆ I prepared and sent out the materials through someone

In this regard, 78% of the respondents reported having visited the homes of children to intervene while 5% invited parents individually to their house and 15% prepared materials and sent them to parents.

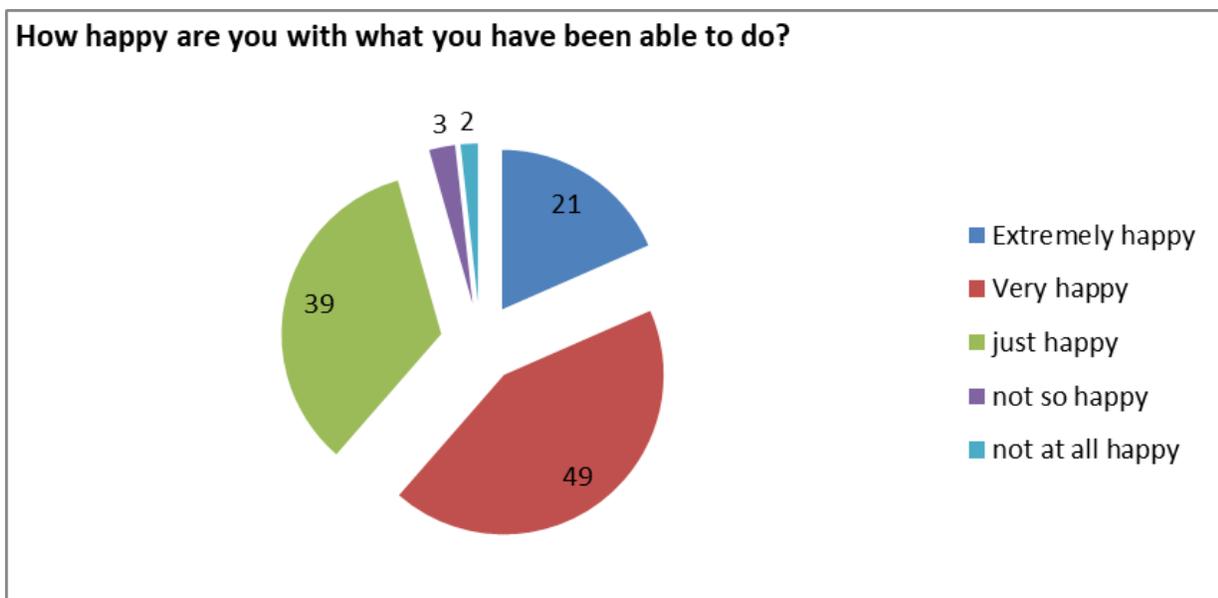
4.5 Reflection

At the end of the survey, a question was asked to gauge their level of satisfaction with what they are currently

doing to support parents to engage with their children at home. In response to this question, it was found that 21% are extremely happy, 49% are very happy, 39% are happy, 3% are not so happy and 2% are not at all happy with what they have been able to do.

The summary of the findings and the key lessons are as follows:

- i. Even though the COVID-19 interventions are being implemented, it is not being done at the same rate and in the same manner in the whole of the country.
- ii. The COVID -19 response interventions as prescribed / suggested by the Ministry of Education are not fully implemented by all Facilitators for various reasons.
- iii. There are challenges to effective implementation of the home-based COVID response interventions such as technological, geographical and attitudinal difficulties.
- iv. Despite the challenges, most ECCD Facilitators are trying their best to explore and experiment with alternative strategies when faced with challenges.



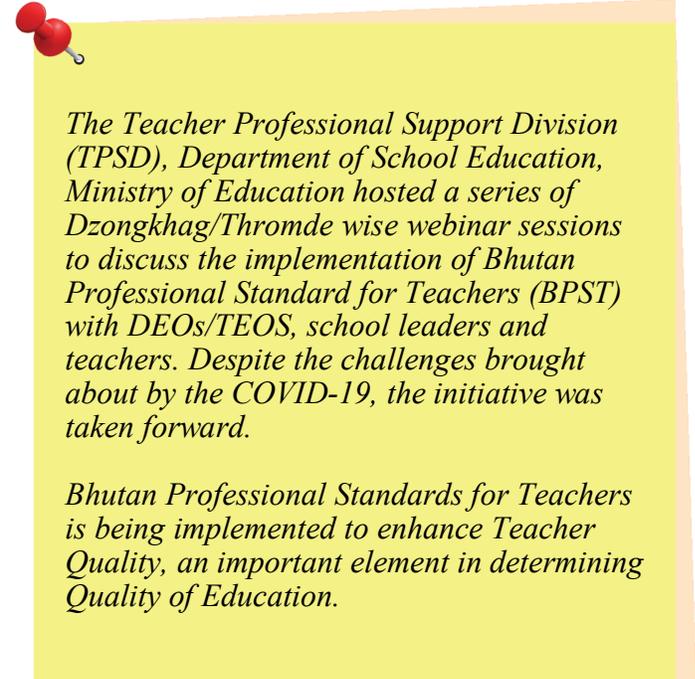
5. Recommendations

Considering the limitations and challenges in the implementation of the COVID-19 response interventions, the following recommendations are made with the hope that they may contribute to mitigating the challenges and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the interventions:

- i. A coordinated review of the intervention may help to ensure that there are a range of interventions available as per the needs of different situations.
- ii. As it is evident that there are gaps in the engagement of the families with the same degree of efforts and intensity, it may be necessary to consider focused professional development and continued mentoring of ECCD Facilitators, so that they can step up their efforts in motivating families to participate and also heighten the quality of their interventions and delivery.
- iii. As there appears to be a need for materials to cater to diverse modes of delivery, it would be necessary to revise and package the materials to cater to the needs

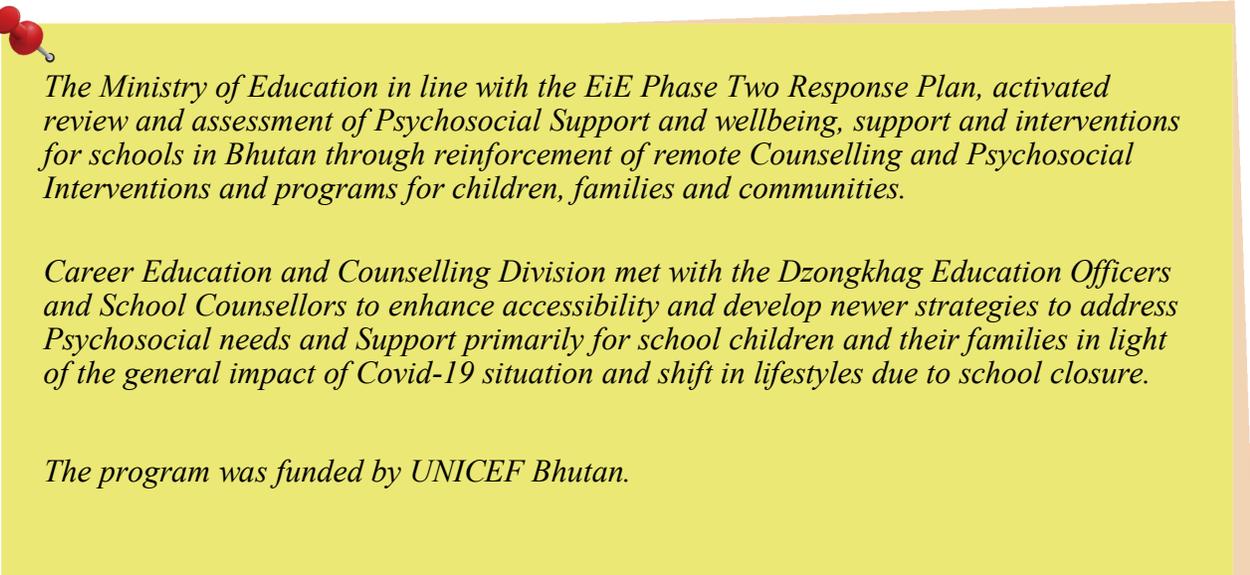
of different types of delivery modes such as for home visits, send home instructions for parents and delivery through phone and social media.

Notwithstanding the challenges due to various factors, the ECCD intervention in an emergency is turning out to be effective and proving to be useful for families and children in the absence of ECCD Centres.



The Teacher Professional Support Division (TPSD), Department of School Education, Ministry of Education hosted a series of Dzongkhag/Thromde wise webinar sessions to discuss the implementation of Bhutan Professional Standard for Teachers (BPST) with DEOs/TEOS, school leaders and teachers. Despite the challenges brought about by the COVID-19, the initiative was taken forward.

Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers is being implemented to enhance Teacher Quality, an important element in determining Quality of Education.



The Ministry of Education in line with the EiE Phase Two Response Plan, activated review and assessment of Psychosocial Support and wellbeing, support and interventions for schools in Bhutan through reinforcement of remote Counselling and Psychosocial Interventions and programs for children, families and communities.

Career Education and Counselling Division met with the Dzongkhag Education Officers and School Counsellors to enhance accessibility and develop newer strategies to address Psychosocial needs and Support primarily for school children and their families in light of the general impact of Covid-19 situation and shift in lifestyles due to school closure.

The program was funded by UNICEF Bhutan.

VISION

An educated and enlightened society of GNH, built and sustained on the unique Bhutanese values of tha dam-tsig ley gju-drey.

MISSION

Develop sound educational policies that enable the creation of a knowledge-based GNH society.

Provide equitable, inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning opportunities to all children and harness their full potential to become productive citizens.

Equip all children with appropriate knowledge, skills and values to cope with the challenges of the 21st century.



ཤེས་རིག

Ministry of Education
Kawajangsa, PO Box: 112
Thimphu : Bhutan