



BHUTAN

Education Thematic Report (Grant Reference: SC149905 and SC1809904)

January – December 2018

Students in Walathang school in Punakha district
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BNF	Bhutan Nuns Foundation
C4D	Communication for Development
CLC	Community Learning Centre
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CWD	Children with Disabilities
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
NCWC	National Commission for Women and Children
NEAF	National Education Assessment Framework
NSB	National Statistics Bureau
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
NFCED	Non-Formal and Continuing Education Division
RGoB	Royal Government of Bhutan
S4D	Sports for Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEN	Special Education Needs
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPRPD	UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

A. Executive Summary

Education in Bhutan has made significant progress during the Country Programme Cycle (2014-2018), most notably in access to education. Targets set for enrolment rates and gender parity index for basic education have been met. In 2018, basic education (up to class 10) net enrolment figures were reported at 91.3 per cent (89.3 male, 94.3 female), and the Gender Parity Index at the same level stands at 1.04. At 94.8 per cent, Bhutan has almost met the target of 95 per cent of secondary education completion rate set for 2018. The target for transition between primary and lower secondary education has also been met in 2018 at 95.4 per cent. Bhutan is making considerable efforts to build on its progress in education by undertaking an ambitious set of systemic reforms designed to close gaps in student learning outcomes, school processes, and education support systems.

The effort to address the existing gaps comes with challenges; the progress in education access is yet to be matched with quality and equity. Children in their earliest years have limited access to early learning services with only one in four children enrolled in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) programmes. It is estimated that more than 21 per cent of children of 2-9 years have at least one form of disability, and their access to education support services remain a major challenge. Evidently, additional investments are necessary to ensure equal opportunities and quality education for every child.

The Education Programme links to UNICEF Bhutan Country Programme Document (CPD) 2014-2018, Outcome 2: *By 2018, increased and equitable access, utilization, and quality of inclusive essential social services for all with a focus on sustaining the MDGs and addressing emerging challenges*. More specifically, the Education Programme relates to three key outputs within Outcome 2: strengthened systems capacity for evidence-based decision-making; stakeholders capacity to effectively plan, coordinate, implement and monitor quality and inclusive education services; and improved disaster preparedness and response plans in education systems. These, in turn, are aligned to and contribute to Outcome 5 (Education) of the UNICEF Strategic Plan (2014-2017): *Improved learning outcomes and equitable and inclusive education*; and *SDG 4: Quality Education* and its targets for 2030.

The UNICEF Education Programme partners with government agencies, particularly the Ministry of Education (MoE), educational institutions, and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) to achieve results aligned to the CPD targets and their sustainability.

Access to ECCD services continue to grow - up from 9 per cent in 2014 to 23.4 per cent in 2018 with no disparities in boys' and girls' enrolment. In addition to the establishment of 13 ECCD centres in remote and rural locations, UNICEF launched a pilot mobile ECCD facilitator programme in five districts targeting children in scattered communities where centre-based models are unfeasible. A 'Diagnostic and Planning Workshop on Pre-primary Education Sub-sector in Bhutan' led to the development of recommendations for strategic actions for scaling-up ECCD services and strengthening an enabling environment for multi-sectoral ECCD coordination in Bhutan. Additionally, the continued support for capacity development of facilitators are critical for ensuring delivery of quality programmes and advocating for across all levels.

There has been an expansion of services for children with disabilities (CWDs) with more than 650 CWDs gaining access to education in 2018. Two more schools providing Special Educational Needs (SEN) programmes were identified. To provide equal opportunities for children with profound deafness, UNICEF supported the realignment of the national curriculum to suit the learning needs of children with deafness and provides technical support for the research and development of a sign language at the Wangsel Institute for the Deaf. SEN teachers from across the country were also trained on the newly developed 'Standards for Inclusive Education and Guidelines for Assessments, Examinations and

Promotion of Students with Disabilities’. In 2018, Bhutan received funds from the ‘United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities’ (UNPRPD) for a joint UNICEF, UNDP and WHO initiative to support the government’s efforts in further creating an enabling environment for the UN ‘Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities’ (UNCRPD).

UNICEF provides support to the 400 monastic schools and 28 nunneries in the country, with an estimated of 9,000 children studying and living in these institutions. Since the monastic institutions are increasingly becoming the sole option for children from vulnerable backgrounds, UNICEF has further strengthened its collaboration with the Central Monastic Body.

Local government leaders and district education officials across the country were oriented on planning, supporting and monitoring the Non-Formal Education (NFE) programme in their jurisdictions. UNICEF supported the development of the ‘Non-formal Education Equivalency Framework of Bhutan’ to facilitate flexible learning pathways for children and out of school youth to enter into formal, non-formal, and vocational education. The continuing support for Community Learning Centres (CLCs) are linked to the Equivalency Framework and alternative learning pathways so that youth and children have access to resources for skills development.

The safety of children and teachers in schools always remain a critical focus for UNICEF. In 2018, Education Officials from all the 20 districts were oriented on Education in Emergencies. The training of disaster focal points from selected schools strengthened school-based disaster preparedness, mitigation, risk reduction and disaster risk management in these districts. Nuns from another nine districts were also trained on the basics of disaster management.

As coordinating agency, UNICEF has been instrumental in leveraging Global Partnership for Education (GPE) funds managed by Save the Children. The support from GPE focuses on scaling-up ECCD services and development of a National Education Assessment Framework (NEAF) to address the quality of education and poor learning outcomes in children. As a result, UNICEF has initiated engagement with the ‘Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment’ on the National Education Assessment framework to measure the learning outcomes at various levels of the education cycle.

Key achievements in 2018 have already set momentum for UNICEF to shift focus from access to quality and upstream policymaking. UNICEF supported the development of Bhutan’s first Professional Standards for Teachers. To further strengthen systems capacity for evidence-based decision-making, a study on understanding the situation of dropout, repetition and out-of-school children in Bhutan was carried out in 2018. The findings from the report will not only help in reaching ‘the last mile’, but also address some of the systemic inefficiencies in rationalizing educational resources to improve education quality and equity. To ensure highest returns on investment, UNICEF advocated for the formation of a multi-sectoral national ECCD Steering Committee and has been instrumental in the establishment of an Education Sector Group, which plays a key role in the coordination of all those involved in the education sector.

This is the final report for the grant SC149905 and first report for the grant SC189904. The thematic funds supported the achievement of targets set in the 2014-2018 CPD. Overall, the education sector has benefitted from the support immensely and addressed key Government priorities set for the education sector. Nevertheless, challenges continue to persist and further investments are necessary to address aspects related to education quality, equity and sustainability. The support from the thematic funds have established a solid foundation to transition smoothly into the next Country Programme Cycle (2019-2023).

B. Strategic Context of 2018

Bhutan has seen significant progress in expanding access to education. Net enrolment rate (basic education) stands at 91.3 per cent, and Gender Parity Index (basic) at 1.04.¹ Enrolment in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) is steadily growing. Enrolment rate for ECCD (3-5 years-old) was 23.4 per cent in 2018, up by 14 per cent since 2014. Which means that only one in four children have access to ECCD services; most of whom are in remote locations of Bhutan's rugged terrain and scattered settlement. The concern now is also about quality of education and ensuring equitable access to opportunities for children in disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Another key concern is related to sustainability to ensure that investments lead to impactful and sustainable outcomes.

It is estimated that more than 21 per cent of Bhutanese children aged 2-9 years have at least one form of disability, with the proportion significantly higher among poor children (26 per cent) than children from wealthier families (14 per cent). Access to education and support services are limited and calls for additional investments to ensure equal opportunities and quality education for all children.

The Government has articulated a national target to reach out to at least 50 per cent of children aged 3-5 years by 2024, as well as committing to achieve the ECCD target of the SDGs.² There is increasing policy dialogues and expansion of services for CWDs. For example, by the end of the 12th Five Year plan (2019-2023) the country aspires to have at least one school in each of the 20 districts and four municipalities, providing SEN services. This is seen by the Government as a sustainable approach, although through the Inclusive Education Standards, UNICEF and its partners are advocating for a more social model of inclusive education where all CWDs can access quality inclusive education services from their own communities instead of having to live in far-placed hostels. There is also a growing participation of CSOs in education services ranging from early childhood to adolescence, including for CWDs.

Within UNICEF Bhutan Country Programme Document 2014-2018, which is also closely aligned with Bhutan's 11th Five-Year Plan (2013-2017), the Education Programme relates to Outcome 2 and three of its key output areas as follows:

Outcome 2: By 2018, increased and equitable access, utilization, and quality of inclusive essential social services for all with a focus on sustaining the MDGs and addressing emerging challenges.

Output 2.1: Strengthened systems capacity for improved Education Management Information System (EMIS) for evidence-based decision-making.

Output 2.2: Stakeholders effectively plan, coordinate, implement and monitor quality and inclusive education services.

Output 2.5: Education systems have improved disaster preparedness and response plans.

The Education Programme is aligned to and contribute to **Outcome 5** (Education) of the UNICEF Strategic Plan (2014-2017): Improved learning outcomes and equitable and inclusive education. It contributes to SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, and particularly to the following targets of the 2030 Development Agenda:

Target 4.1 Free primary and secondary education

Target 4.2 Equal access to quality pre-primary education

Target 4.5 No discrimination in education

¹ Annual Education Statistics 2018.

² SDG Goal 4. Target 4.2: By 2030, 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.

- Target 4.6 Universal literacy and numeracy
- Target 4.7 Education for sustainable development and global citizenship
- Target 4.A Build and upgrade inclusive and safe schools
- Target 4.C Increase the supply of qualified teachers

Since the adoption of the SDGs in 2016, the education programme has aligned partnership programmes and goals with global targets and identified gaps in current programming to achieve the SDG targets. For instance, a focus on evidence-based decision-making has built strong cases for investment in ECCD and identified key bottlenecks related to CWDs. As a result, UNICEF was able to influence policies formulated in the 12th Five Year Plan (2019-2023), where the Government has committed to reach community-based free ECCD services to at least 50 per cent of the ECCD-going age children in the country by 2024. To address inequity and promote greater social inclusion, the Government is listening to the voices of children and persons with disabilities, thereby openly pledging to expand schools for such services. In a way, the Government is serious about leaving no one behind.

As the main partner in promoting ECCD in Bhutan, the growth in ECCD enrolment is a direct result of UNICEF partnership with the MOE and CSOs. UNICEF also leads the work on CWDs through the promotion of inclusive education and support for the SEN programme in schools. UNICEF is also one of the few development partners that support the NFE programme, which focuses on providing functional literacy, positive parenting and life skills to those who have not been to school; and English literacy and numeracy to young monks and nuns.

UNICEF has managed to maintain its focus on providing quality and equitable services to all children despite policy shifts in education with the appointment of new governments every five years since 2008. While short-termism remains a risk, UNICEF's efforts towards upstream policy work could lead to development of more sustainable and equitable policies despite policy shifts with new government appointments.

Implementing partners for the Education Programme are: Department of School Education and Department of Adult and Higher Education within the Ministry of Education, Commission for Monastic Affairs (Dratshang Lhengtshog), Bhutan Nuns Foundation, Royal University of Bhutan, Civil Society Organizations such as Tarayana Foundation, Loden Foundation, and Draktsho Vocational Training Centre.

C. Results in the Outcome Area

Output 2.1: Strengthened systems capacity for improved Education Management Information System (EMIS) for evidence-based decision-making.

In 2018, UNICEF acted on the impetus set by the studies on ECCD (Investment Case Study) and CWDs (KAP Study) that were carried out in 2017. These reports were used for planning and programming both by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF during the finalization of the 12th FYP and UNICEF's new CPD.

A 'Study on Repetition, Dropouts and Children Who Have Never Attended School' was completed in 2018. The recommendations from this study will further inform programmes in the next programme cycle to address 'the last mile' and lead towards greater efficiency in education system. It will provide a solid evidence base for developing strategies, policies, programmes, and services to reduce repetition, dropout, and number of children never attending school. The MoE's Education Information Management System (EMIS) was further developed to integrate a new module based on Washington Group of Questions for CWDs. The EMIS is still being upgraded to strengthen evidence-based planning, monitoring and implementation. UNICEF is supporting the capacity development of EMIS

focal persons at the MoE to strengthen reporting systems, data collection and system maintenance. This adds to sustainability efforts to ensure that the in-house capacity is built for long-term system management and maintenance.

Table 1: Output 2.1 Progress towards 2018 Target

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status
Number of research and evaluation/impact studies conducted on priority issues in education	0	3	3
Education Management Information System (EMIS) upgraded and institutionalized	EMIS v2.0 available	Review of EMIS v2 completed	Ongoing

Output 2.2: Stakeholders have the capacity to effectively plan, coordinate, implement and monitor quality and inclusive education services.

Table 2: Output 2.2 Progress towards 2018 Target

Indicator	Baseline	Target (2018)	Status (as of Dec.2018)
Children in community based ECCD centres	4459	6000	6855
ECCD facilitators/ teachers who received training with funding provided by UNICEF	80	240	125
Number of ECCD/pre-primary classrooms built or rehabilitated with funding managed by UNICEF	30	90	13
Number of schools providing inclusive education program	8	15	18
Percentage of Post Literacy Course learners completing the Course	65 (M: 62, F: 68)	T-70 (M: 70, F:75)	81.6% (M: 85.5%, F: 80.1%)
Number of monastic institutions & nunneries offering functional English literacy and numeracy program	0 (2013)	50	90 (incl. 28 nunneries)

The capacity of the education sector to provide inclusive education and ECCD services to marginalized and vulnerable communities were further strengthened.

ECCD Support

In collaboration with the MoE and local CSOs, UNICEF supported the establishment and rehabilitation of 13 community-based ECCD centres in rural and remote locations across 9 districts, providing more equitable access to ECCD services. Even though the target was 90 centres, UNICEF was only able to support the establishment of 13 centres because of budget constraints. Additionally, given Bhutan's mountainous terrain, scattered population, and decreasing population trend, UNICEF is exploring alternative ECCD models to ensure sustainability while increasing outreach. As a result, a pilot 'Mobile ECCD Facilitator' programme was launched in five districts to reach children in scattered communities where centre-based models are unsustainable. To ensure quality, 125 ECCD facilitators were provided Basic Facilitator's Training. The number of facilitators who are provided training depend on the number of new centres established as well as newly recruited facilitators for existing centres. In 2018, a total of 125 facilitators met this criteria and were provided the Basic Training. Over the years, UNICEF has supported the training of over 400 ECCD facilitators including the enrolment of 59 facilitators in the ECCD Diploma programme at Paro College of Education. UNICEF supported the development of this

course with the goal to professionalize ECCD facilitators and ensure sustained quality services. To facilitate research-based training and learning, a model ECCD centre was also established in the Paro College of Education campus to serve as a demonstration centre and strengthen the Early Childhood Studies Programme in the college.

The Parenting Education Programme Guidebook was translated to Dzongkha, and the Training of Trainers on the Parenting Education Manual was rolled out across all districts. Following the celebration of first ever National ECCD Week in 2017, UNICEF supported the launch of the first district-level ECCD week in Mongar, eastern Bhutan, to promote awareness and support for integrated ECCD services in 2018. The Week involved a series of activities that engaged children, parents, public, district-level leaders, ECCD, Education and Health professionals and Officers. Further, local government leaders within the district were also oriented to the ECCD programme, focused on its long-term benefits, and ways of strategically planning for provision of ECCD services in the district.

A 'Diagnostic and Planning Workshop on Pre-primary Education Sub-sector in Bhutan' led to the participation of 46 participants from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC), Royal Education Council, Paro College of Education and local civil society organizations. The workshop outcomes provide strategic and systemic actions for scaling-up ECCD services and strengthening an enabling environment for multi-sectoral ECCD coordination, including the urgency of endorsing the draft National Education Policy, which also includes ECCD-related policies.

Inclusive Education Support

To progressively transform mainstream schools into inclusive schools, UNICEF supported the identification of two more schools with SEN Programme in 2018, increasing the number to 18. About 40 teachers from these schools exchanged their knowledge and experiences by visiting other schools with SEN programme, thereby enriching the community of practitioners. The Inclusive Education Programme received further impetus when more than 60 teachers were trained on a revised module in Inclusive Education and Rapid NeuroDevelopmental Assessment (RNDA) tool for identification and referral services for CWDs. Further work on development of sign language for Bhutan was carried at the Wangsel Institute for hearing impaired. With the placement of an International Sign Language Linguist at the institute to provide her technical expertise in research, documentation and validation of Bhutan Sign Language, the Wangsel Institute is able to provide basic education to more than 100 children. This support will result in the publication of Bhutan's first ever Sign Language Dictionary, that will serve as an authoritative resource for enhancing the education of deaf. The Bhutan Sign Language will thus enable the deprived group to access education in their own mother tongue, thereby fulfilling their right to education.

Additionally, the 'Guidelines for Assessments, Examinations and Promotion of Students with Disabilities', and the modification and adaptation of the curriculum for hearing impaired children were carried out. To promote advocacy among District Education Officer (DEOs), more than 40 DEOs were oriented on the 'Standards for Inclusive Education' in 2018. The Standards for Inclusive Education are being used as minimum standards to progressively achieve inclusion in school culture, policies and practices. In 2018, for the first time Bhutan received funds from the 'United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' (UNPRPD) for a joint UNICEF, UNDP and WHO initiative to support the government's efforts in further creating an enabling environment for the UN 'Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' (UNCRPD).

Literacy and Non-Formal Education Support

UNICEF supported Non-Formal Education (NFE) and English literacy programmes contributed to enhancing the literacy and numeracy of women, young monks and nuns. Over 200 local government leaders and district education officials were oriented on planning, supporting and monitoring the NFE programme in their jurisdictions. The course books for NFE learners were supplied to centres across the country. UNICEF supported the training of instructors for more than 60 monastic schools to offer English literacy and numeracy to young monks and nuns. In addition, more than 100 instructors from around 61 monastic schools and 28 nunneries were trained in teaching English literacy and numeracy.

Technical Support to Education Programme

A part of the Thematic Fund was utilized to support an Education Specialist at the UNICEF Country Office. The specialist provides strong technical support to the Education Programme. She brings in technical expertise in areas of ECCD, inclusive education, learning, monitoring and evaluation. Besides leveraging funds, such as funds from GPE, the educational specialist also provides oversight in programme functions, guides and supervises the national staff in the education section. The specialist fosters partnerships with government as well as CSOs in delivering education results, ensuring synergy by not duplicating limited resources among various education stakeholders. In addition, the education specialist is responsible for bringing in international best practices in the country, adopt in the country context and transfer such technical expertise to government counterparts as well as programme colleagues.

Output 2.5: Education systems have improved disaster preparedness and response plans.

Table 3: Output 2.5 Progress towards 2018 Target

Indicator	Baseline	Target (2018)	Status
Proportion of schools with focal points trained on emergency preparedness	80	100	100
Amongst schools with focal points trained, proportion that has contingency plans	80	100	60

Through thematic and other OR funding, UNICEF continues to strengthen the Ministry of Education's institutional capacity, particularly in promoting safe schools through school-based disaster management programme.

Disaster Management in Schools

Disaster preparedness, mitigation, risk reduction and disaster risk management in schools and nunneries has been enhanced through training of teachers and education officials. The capacity of teachers and education officials has been further strengthened, to enhance school safety and resilience. In 2018, about 30 district education officials and another 30 school disaster focal teachers from schools, including some from the schools with Special Educational Needs, were provided a refresher course in education in emergencies. To improve disaster management in nunneries, 21 nuns in nine western districts were trained on the basics of disaster management through a four-day workshop. The training has helped to enhance the safety of nuns who are mostly living in remote nunneries. The Education Emergency Operation Center (EEOC) is being instituted with Standard Operating Procedures. Items like school-in-a-tent, school-in-a-box and ECD kits were prepositioned to be distributed during emergencies. Thus, the institutional capacity of MoE was enhanced and matched with the field-level preparedness in responding to emergencies. Without stand-alone fund for emergency preparedness, UNICEF could only support the contingency plans for 60 schools.

Additionally, UNICEF and Save the Children are the only two agencies supporting the MoE in this area and this adds to the challenges related to budget and outreach.

A refresher training in Education in Emergencies was conducted in Tsirang district for the Chief District Education Officers and School Disaster Focal Points in Tsirang. More than 38 (37 M, 1 F) participants from western region of the country received the training in proven first response mechanisms in saving and sustaining the lives of affected children in a post disaster situation. The participants learned to use temporary learning spaces to prioritize education after a disaster. Life support services such as food, water and sanitation facilities, health & nutrition as well as psychosocial services that can be immediately put ensure that children's right to education is not compromised after any major disaster.

Status of the Education Programme

Overall, the Education Programme is well on track to achieve the CPD targets. By the end of 2018, gross enrolment for pre-school education stands at 23.4 per cent; the transition rate for primary to secondary education at 95.4 per cent; and the basic completion rate at 94.8 per cent. The basic education net enrolment and completion rate targets for girls have been met. However, the net enrolment rate (91.3 per cent) target remains almost 5 per cent shy of the 2018 target set at 96 per cent..

The capacity of the education sector to provide inclusive education and ECCD services have been further strengthened through several activities ranging from advocacy, policy development, training, and creation of structures and systems. These included support for establishment and rehabilitation of ECCD centres and SEN schools; training of ECCD facilitators and teachers; celebration of ECCD Week, orientation and advocacy programmes for local government leaders; sign language development; development of standards and guidelines for Inclusive Education, supply of special needs furniture and play and learning materials for ECCD centres and NFE centres.

While 2018 saw good progress, challenges persist, and further investments are needed to address the situation of children with disabilities, including development of early intervention services for children with special needs and developmental delays. Based on the KAP study, a C4D strategy to positively shift public knowledge, attitude and practices towards disabilities is already a step forward in our efforts to create an inclusive society for CWDs. Rugged terrain and scattered settlements remain a challenge while reaching out to children in remote locations. To address this, there is a critical need to move beyond the traditional focus on centre-based models and shift the focus to alternative models so that children in remote locations and disadvantaged communities will also have access to ECCD services.

D. Financial Analysis

With the support provided through the thematic funds, UNICEF Bhutan has been able to achieve the results towards providing quality inclusive education for children in Bhutan. The flexibility of the thematic funds has allowed a more holistic approach to strengthening the capacity of education system in Bhutan by ensuring that the key tasks of creating enabling environments, a demand for quality services and supply of resources work in tandem. The tables below provide the financial analysis of the contributions:

Table 4: Planned Budget by Outcome Area in 2018 (in US Dollar)

Output Results	Funding Type ¹	Planned Budget ²
2.1: EMIS	RR	2,626
	ORR	28,497
2.2: Quality and Inclusive Education	RR	120,433
	ORR	894,327
2.5: Education In Emergencies	RR	3,780

	ORR	42,313
Total Planned Budget 2018		1,091,976

1. RR: Regular Resources, ORR: Other Resources - Regular (add ORE: Other Resources - Emergency, if applicable).

2. Planned budget for ORR (and ORE, if applicable) does not include estimated recovery cost (only programmable amounts).

Table 5: Country-level Thematic contributions to outcome area received in 2018 (in US Dollars)

Donors	Grant Number*	Contribution Amount	Programmable Amount
Danish Committee for UNICEF	SC1499050507	30,860	29,317
Andorran National Committee for UNICEF	SC1499050526	88,863	84,419
Danish Committee for UNICEF	SC1899040029	16,215	15,080
Total		135,938	126,423

Table 6: Expenditures in the Outcome Area in 2018 (in US Dollars)

Organizational Targets	Expenditure Amount*			
	Other Resources - Emergency	Other Resources - Regular	Regular Resources	All Programme Accounts
22-01 Equitable access to quality education	-	386,383	168,270	554,653
22-02 Learning outcomes	-	45	42	87
22-03 Skills development	-	-	-	-
Total	-	386,428	168,312	554,740

Table 7: Thematic expenses by programme area in 2018

Programme Area	Expenses
Other Resources - Regular	386,428
22-01 Equitable access to quality education	386,383
22-02 Learning outcomes	45
22-03 Skills development	-
Regular Resources	168,312
22-01 Equitable access to quality education	168,270
22-02 Learning outcomes	42
Grand Total	554,740

Table 8: Expenses by Specific Intervention Codes in 2018

Specific Intervention Codes	Expenses
22-01-01 Provision of parental education for school readiness (including in temporary learning spaces.	7,369
22-01-05 Provision of (formal and non-formal) multiple-levels or alternative pathways of education (including in temporary learning spaces)	85,166
22-01-06 System strengthening-inclusive education for children with disabilities	136,062
22-01-08 System strengthening-risk informed programming, including climate, resilience, disaster, conflict, and emergency preparedness	25,981
22-01-13 Education humanitarian cluster/humanitarian sector coordination	-
22-01-14 Education Management Information System (EMIS) (excluding learning assessment systems)	2,683
22-01-99 Technical assistance - Equitable access to quality education	257,731
22-02-20 System strengthening - teacher development, management, and support	78
22-02-24 Education humanitarian cluster/humanitarian sector coordination	-
22-03-09 Education humanitarian cluster/humanitarian sector coordination	-
26-02-07 Data dissemination	2
26-02-08 Programme monitoring	20,591
26-03-99 Technical assistance - Cross - sectoral communication for development	25
27-01-15 CO programme coordination	1,894
27-01-16 CO advocacy and communication	2,723
28-07-04 Management and Operations support at CO	14,435
Grand Total	554,740

H. Future Work Plan

Consistent with the priorities of the SDGs and the UNICEF Strategic Plan, the Education Programme will support the following key interventions in 2019 as part of the new Country Programme Cycle (2019-2023):

Output 2.1: Government and partners have increased capacity to strengthen inclusive and evidence-based policy making and programming for education

Under this output, an evaluation of ECCD and SEN programme will be carried out to focus on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the programmes in achieving its desired objectives in line with national and global goals. The 'Study on Repetition, Dropout and Children Who Have Never Attended School', which is being finalized, will be launched and disseminated to stakeholders to address the gaps. The focus is to improve the quality of education through better policies and services to ensure quality education for every child. To add to these efforts, UNICEF is supporting the BCSEA in the development of Bhutan's first National Education Assessment Framework (NEAF) to improve learning outcomes in children. Additionally, the support for EMIS upgradation will continue to ensure quality and reliability of data for evidence-based planning, monitoring and implementation. There will also be an increased focus on learning and cognitive

disabilities to increase efforts towards early childhood interventions. This will also strengthen collaboration between ECCD and inclusive education programmes.

Output 2.2: Government and partners have increased capacity to provide quality and inclusive early learning and education for children and adolescents

UNICEF will continue to deliver quality and equitable services for children starting from their earliest years. However, during this country programme UNICEF hopes to make a strategic shift from service delivery to system strengthening. As part of this shift, a 'Multi-sectoral ECCD Strategic Committee' will be formed to focus on upstream policy work and promote cross-sectoral ECCD policymaking and programming. This will be followed by the development of 'A Multi-sectoral ECCD Strategic Action Plan' to formulate implementation strategies. To ensure equitable access to ECCD services to all children, UNICEF will continue to explore alternative models to reach out to children in remote and isolated communities. The Parenting Education Programme will be rolled out to all districts and leveraged to promote home-based ECCD programmes. Additionally, the use of information and communication technologies will also be explored to develop innovative ECCD strategies for advocacy and capacity building. As the Coordinating Agency for GPE, UNICEF will support the strategic orientation and monitoring of the ECCD and NEAF activities. As part of ECCD advocacy and cross-sectoral efforts, four more districts will celebrate ECCD week in 2019. This will be an annual activity until all 20 districts are covered as part of efforts to establish strong ECCD networks at the district-levels.

Similarly, the inclusive education programme seeks to establish a 'Multi-sectoral Inclusive and Special Education Coordination Committee' to oversee and implement the 'Ten-Year Roadmap for Inclusive and Special Education'. The capacity of teachers and principals of schools, including SEN schools, will continue to be developed so that in the future every school in Bhutan is equipped to meet the needs of CWDs. Quality assurance measures will be strengthened through improved monitoring and evaluations tools, and as well as orientation of relevant stakeholders on 'Standards for Inclusive Education'. To ensure transition of CWDs from schools to higher education, exchange programmes will be explored with vocational institutes.

In partnership with the MoE, UNICEF will build on the newly developed equivalency framework to further develop guidelines, competencies and curriculum to recognize educational credentials of graduates from NFE programmes and Community Learning Centres (CLCs). This will help establish flexible learning pathways among formal, non-formal and vocational education for out-of-school children and youth. The CLCs will continue to be strengthened as resource centres for exploring alternative education pathways as well as centres of skills development.

In addition to literacy and numeracy support, the monastic institutions will also receive support to improve health and wellbeing of monks and nuns through Sports for Development (S4D) programme. This is to ensure that all children and youth in Bhutan, including those in nunneries and monastic institutions, have literacy skills and health-related services for improved well-being.

A landmark initiative will be the launch of the first 'Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers' in early 2019. The endorsement of the standards for teachers will set a momentum to improve teacher professionalism in Bhutan, which will subsequently lead to improved learning outcomes in Bhutanese children.

The safety of children during emergencies remains a concern. UNICEF will continue to support the capacity development of Disaster Management Focal Persons across all educational institutions, including ECCD centres.

Output 2.3: Children, adolescents, caregivers and communities have increased capacity to demand quality and inclusive early learning and education

C4D strategies are critical for influencing improved public awareness and social behavior change. Through use of C4D strategies, UNICEF and its partners will work towards improvement and advocacy for quality parenting programmes and early intervention. The move is to implement these strategies based on cross-sectoral approaches to increase synergy across thematic areas. Additionally, whenever possible, innovative approaches will be piloted to demonstrate good models for the government to scale up and pursue.

UNICEF Bhutan successfully completed its 2014-2018 programme cycle and established a strong foundation for transitioning into its new programme cycle 2019-2023. The new programme cycle is geared towards transformational change by shifting towards upstream policy interventions, while maintaining support for innovative service delivery and capacity building programmes on the ground. It also includes an increased focus on cross-sectoral collaboration to strengthen synergies across sectors to address cross-cutting issues in early childhood, disability, health, gender, and protection.

The move towards transformational change in the new programme cycle will depend on the funding availability. A steady commitment in funds to match the implementation commitment from UNICEF and partners will help build on the momentum already gained during the previous CPD cycle.

Table 9: Planned Budget and Available Resources for 2019

Intermediate Result	Funding Type	Planned Budget ¹	Funded Budget ¹	Shortfall ²
201-001: Inclusive and evidence-based policy making & programming for education	RR	50,000	47,510	2,490
	ORR	465,000	126,000	339,000
201-002: Supply of quality and inclusive early learning and education	RR	60,000	57,012	2,988
	ORR	604,500	350,000	254,500
201-003: Demand for quality and inclusive early learning and education	RR	40,000	38,008	1,992
	ORR	437,100	134,469	302,631
Sub-total Regular Resources		150,000	142,530	7,470
Sub-total Other Resources - Regular		1,506,600	610,469	896,131
Total for 2019		1,656,600	752,999	903,601

¹ Planned and Funded budget for ORR (and ORE, if applicable) excludes recovery cost. RR plan is based on total RR approved for the Country Programme duration.

I. Expression of Thanks

UNICEF Bhutan would like to express our gratitude for the generous contributions from the Andorran and Danish Committees for UNICEF. The continued support through thematic contributions for the Education Programme continues to effectively improve both access and quality of education for the children of Bhutan, most notably those from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds. UNICEF, on behalf of all the children, young people and women in Bhutan, wholeheartedly thank the donors for their generous support.

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J. Annexes

Annex I: Human Interest Story – “Every Facilitator Should Get Basic Training”

Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) facilitators get trained before going to the field to ensure a safe, stimulating, and an improved early learning environment for every child.

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It is a busy day at Sonamgang Middle Secondary School in Phuentsholing with 123 Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) facilitators attending the 12-day basic training for facilitators. Despite the hectic schedule, the facilitators are fully energized and engaged in their sessions.



For 27-year-old Yeshey Dema, this is her first training even though she has been working as an ECCD facilitator in Samtse district for the past six years. Yeshey represents the many facilitators recruited by NGOs who were sent to ECCD centres without training. This year, Yeshey's centre was handed over to the Ministry of Education by the NGO, which led to Yeshey attending the ECCD basic training for the first time.

The basic training for ECCD facilitators is one of the main ECCD programme activities that UNICEF supports in Bhutan together with the Ministry of Education to ensure that the quality of the ECCD programme is not overlooked while increasing access.

Having been in the field for several years without training, Yeshey is eager to share her first impressions about the basic training.

According to Yeshey, for the first time in six years, she finally understands what her roles and responsibilities are as an ECCD facilitator. She describes this feeling as “inspirational”. The ECCD curriculum, early learning development standards, and operational manuals gave me some theoretical knowledge about ECCD earlier. But that knowledge hardly compares to the vast experiences I have

gained in the 12-day training,” Yeshi said. She also said that she gained practical and valuable knowledge and skills from the resource persons and other ECCD facilitators.

During the 12-day training, participants are given practical and theoretical sessions on child development, effective use of existing manuals and curriculum, planning and management, simulations of daily schedules, group work and parenting education.

Since the participants come with different experiences and backgrounds, the basic training also becomes a knowledge-sharing platform for all the facilitators to learn from each other and share best practices. “Through my interactions with other ECCD facilitators, I learnt that there are so many ways of carrying out activities with children besides what is given in the curriculum and guidebooks”, shares Yeshey. She adds by stating that, “Within just a matter of days, I was exposed to so many tips, songs, games, and activities and now I am looking forward to going back and applying everything because I am certain that the children will find their daily activities more exciting now since I have so much more to share with them.”

Ideally, facilitators should be trained before they are sent to the field, but this is not always possible as facilitators are recruited throughout the year (for example to replace facilitators who left the job).

Another issue is the case of facilitators who are recruited by NGOs and miss out on trainings because of various constraints in NGO-run ECCD centres. These are serious concerns and challenges for UNICEF and its partners. However, UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Education, is keen on working towards practical and sustainable solutions to address these challenges because every child has the right to quality ECCD services. For UNICEF this also means that every facilitator has the right to receive basic training on ECCD programmes to provide every child a safe, stimulating, and healthy environment for development.

Prior to her training, Yeshey said that she faced many struggles – mainly in engaging parents constructively in the holistic development of their children. But now she feels more equipped and is confident that the parenting education sessions will make a big difference once introduced in her community. “The other facilitators who have conducted the parenting sessions told me that parents are very supportive during the sessions, I hope that this is the case for me too when I start the parenting sessions in my community”, says Yeshey. When asked what she would like to change about the basic training programme, Yeshey shares without any hesitation, “I am very satisfied with this training and I strongly believe that every facilitator should get basic training before going to the field”.



Yeshey Dema engaging with other ECCD facilitators during the basic training.

Annex II: Donor Feedback Form

Please evaluate the quality of this report and contribute towards improving the quality of future reports that we share with you. Kindly send your comments by email to thimphu@unicef.org; unicefbhutan@gmail.com.

Name of the Report:

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SCORING:

5 - "Highest level of satisfaction"

4 - "Good"

3 - "Fair"

2 - "Poor"

1 - "Complete dissatisfaction"

1. To what extent did the narrative content of the report conform to your reporting expectations?

5

4

3

2

1

2. How useful was this report in helping you respond to queries from the donors?

5

4

3

2

1

3. Were there any aspects or sections of this report that were difficult to understand? If YES, what sections or aspects were difficult to understand

4. Which aspects of this report were most useful?

5. What suggestions do you have to improve the quality of such reports in future?

6. Any other suggestions or comments you would like to share with us.

Thank you for completing this form.



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