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**Improving Rural Children's Access to Basic Education with a
Focus on Primary Education**
Standard Project Report 2016

World Food Programme in Bhutan, Kingdom of (BT)



World Food Programme

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Country Context and WFP Objectives



Country Context

Bhutan is a small Himalayan country in South Asia, landlocked between China in the north and India in the south. It has a total surface area of 38,394 square km with an estimated population of 768,577 in 2016. The country's development policies and plans are guided by the concept of Gross National Happiness, which stresses the achievement of equitable and sustainable development over economic growth.

Bhutan made an impressive reduction of its national poverty rate from 23 percent in 2007 to 12 percent in 2012, as measured against the international poverty line of USD 1.90 per person per day (Bhutan Poverty Assessment, 2014). However, the country is challenged by its mountainous terrain and poor road access isolating rural populations from markets and social services and limiting their livelihood opportunities. The country's rugged terrain is prone to flash floods and landslides, often leading to the closure of roads for up to weeks in some areas, especially during the rainy season. With a majority of the population living as rural farmers in small villages scattered throughout the mountainous landscape, logistical challenges often impede access to social services. Bhutan is largely agrarian with almost 70 percent of the population working on subsistence farming, yet one-fourth of the population suffers from seasonal food insecurity, especially during the months before the harvest.

Eighty-four percent of all of Bhutan's imports come from India, which is also the destination for 89.4 percent of the country's exports. Overall imports exceed exports by 120 percent, suggesting an economy that is heavily reliant on imports (The Economist, Intelligence Unit: Bhutan, 2014). A booming construction industry, especially for hydro-power projects, and increasing availability of credit facilities has led to rising domestic consumption. The Government has responded to these imbalances by imposing import restrictions on products from India.

The Royal Government of Bhutan considers education as a major key to alleviating poverty and empowering people, as such the sector receives the highest priority and emphasis: 15.2 percent of total government spending, which is 7.5 percent of gross domestic product (Bhutan Annual Education Statistics, 2015). Bhutan has made impressive progress in pursuit of achieving universal primary education with a 95.2 percent net primary school enrolment rate (Bhutan Annual Education Statistics, 2015). Bhutan has also made significant progress in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Gender parity at the primary education level in 2015 stood at 102, or for every 100 boys there were 102 girls enrolled.

The prevalence of child stunting significantly fell from 37 percent in the 2008 Bhutan National Nutrition Survey to 21.2 percent in 2015, while the prevalence of wasting and underweight remained low at 4.3 percent and 9 percent respectively. Nonetheless, child under-nutrition is still high among poor children in rural areas, especially in the eastern region. Micronutrient deficiencies remain a challenge among children and adolescent girls. Anemia affects 31 percent of the girls aged 10-19 years and 43.8 percent of children aged 6-59 months. The anemia prevalence rate is higher in urban areas and among non-pregnant women (2015 Bhutan National Nutrition Survey). In recent years, the Government has recognised the importance of micronutrients for school-going children and is trying to take measures to address the issue through the school feeding programme.

Since 2011, Bhutan has been classified as a lower middle-income country by the World Bank. However, given the vulnerable nature of its economy, it is still listed as a United Nations Least Developed Country (Bhutan Overview, World Bank, 2016). Bhutan ranked 132 out of 188 countries in the 2014 Human Development Index with an index of 0.605 (About Bhutan, UNDP, 2016).

Response of the Government and Strategic Coordination

Since the establishment of secular education in the 1960s, the Royal Government of Bhutan has been implementing school feeding to facilitate boarding for the students. With the arrival of WFP in the country in 1974, the school feeding programme has scaled up significantly, and after more than four decades, WFP is gradually phasing-out its operational support. WFP's development project is facilitating this phase-out by transferring knowledge, systems and skills to government partners, while also handing-over to the Government the responsibility of feeding a number of students on an annual basis. The Government plans to have complete responsibility of feeding all school children by the start of the 2019 school year.

The Government continued to view the provision of school meals as an important enabler for access to quality basic education. The Government allocated a budget of about 15.2 percent of total government spending, or 7.5 percent of gross domestic product (June 2015), for education and the school feeding programme. Since 2014, participating schools receive a stipend of BTN 1,000 per child per month for the procurement of food commodities for nutritious school meals. A separate budget covers transportation costs for the delivery of the meals.

In recent years, more focus has been placed on improving the nutrition of school meals. The Ministry of Education underwent an organisational change that established a School Health and Nutrition Division, which integrated school feeding, health and agricultural programmes under one manager. The division will receive additional staff, a nutritionist and a programme officer for school feeding. Until reinforcements are in place, WFP is supporting the division with three staff recruited to provide national-level management of the school feeding programme and strengthen the capacity of the schools to implement the programme.

In terms of programme, the Government requested WFP to support with rice fortification as a means to address the persistent issue of school children suffering from micronutrient deficiency, especially deficiency of vitamin B1, which has caused beri-beri disease outbreaks in schools since 2011. Fortified rice will be introduced to school meals during the 2017 academic year (February to December) and will reach 17,000 school children. Upon the request of the Government, WFP is facilitating an assessment of the dietary intake of school meals, which may help improve the food basket. The assessment will be conducted from April to November 2017 to account for seasonality and food availability throughout the year.

In terms of supply chain, a centralised procurement system is used to provide a standard list of non-perishable food items with the same nutritional value to all Bhutanese schools. WFP also facilitated a meeting between the Ministry of Education and the Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited to establish a per tonnage rate for reimbursing internal transport, storage and handling costs for the food commodities provided by WFP. This system can then later also be used for the government supported schools.

The Government embarked on a new educational approach for "central schools" where the majority of the children are boarded and are provided three meals. In 2016, students attending these central schools are also provided with lunch.

The Government also formed a national nutrition task force team comprising of multi-sectoral government representatives and development partners—mainly the World Health Organization, UNICEF and WFP—to understand the issues concerning malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies and to develop a strategy to address them.

The School Feeding Technical Committee was established in 2015 to support and ensure continued quality implementation of the national school feeding programme. The committee is chaired by the Ministry of Education and with members from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Gross National Happiness Commission, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance and WFP and has become a powerful platform where partners make strategic decisions regarding school feeding. The committee oversees measures to strengthen the Government's capacity to implement the school feeding programme in accordance with established international best practices.

Summary of WFP Operational Objectives

In 2016, WFP continued to support the Royal Government of Bhutan as it became more self-reliant in the management, coordination and implementation of a cost-efficient, equitable and quality national school feeding programme.

In line with the project objectives, WFP pursued three inter-related strategies. Firstly, WFP continued to support primary schools in remote areas and gradually handed over the responsibility of supplying these schools with food to the Ministry of Education. Secondly, WFP continued to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education to develop its policies, oversee its programmes, and manage its programmes' supply chain. Thirdly, WFP maintained the cross cutting objective of increasing access to and ensuring gender parity in primary education.

These objectives correspond to WFP Strategic Objective 4: Strengthen the means of implementation and are aligned with Bhutan's Eleventh Five Year Plan (2013-2018) and the United Nations One-Programme (2014-2018) outcome of providing equitable access to, and the utilization and quality of, essential social services for all.

Country Resources and Results

Resources for Results

Development Project 200300 was fully funded in 2016. WFP procured all necessary food commodities, distributed them on time, and carried out the necessary complimentary activities as required for an efficient implementation of the school feeding programme. As agreed in the project document, the Royal Government of Bhutan continued to contribute 50 percent of the total internal transport, storage and handling costs. The Government fully covered the transportation costs for men and animals that carried food commodities from the extended delivery points to the schools with no road connections.

In WFP-assisted schools, the Government continued to provide a third meal for all boarding students. In all government-assisted boarding schools and the recently introduced "central schools", the non-perishable commodities are centrally procured and distributed while fresh commodities for students are covered through a cash-based stipend system, which is managed by the school feeding management committee of individual schools. In all schools, the Government covers the salaries of cooks, electricity, and firewood for fuel.

In order to accomplish the capacity development goals on time, WFP recruited an international expert in the country office to manage the activities planned for capacity development. The office has also benefited from technical advice and guidance from WFP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific.

Achievements at Country Level

For more than four decades, WFP has supported the Royal Government of Bhutan's objective of implementing a school feeding programme to improve rural children's access to education. In 2016, WFP continued to facilitate government initiatives such as international collaboration on school feeding programmes, improvement in the nutrition of school meals, and strengthening the management and capacity of the Ministry of Education.

WFP supported the participation of government officials in international forums on school feeding programmes and regional trainings on health and nutrition. WFP also assisted the Government in receiving guidance and support from the projects run by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand, who advocates for school feeding programmes as a platform to improve the overall health and nutrition of schoolchildren.

The Government sought to reduce micronutrient deficiencies among school children as cases of beri-beri, caused by vitamin B1 deficiency, increased. The Government requested WFP to provide support for the introduction of fortified rice to the school feeding programme. In 2016, WFP completed all preparations so that in 2017, fortified rice can be included in all WFP-assisted schools. The fortified rice has added vitamin A, vitamin B1 (thiamine), vitamin B3 (niacin), vitamin B6, folic acid, vitamin B12, iron and zinc.

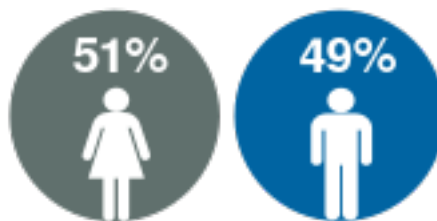
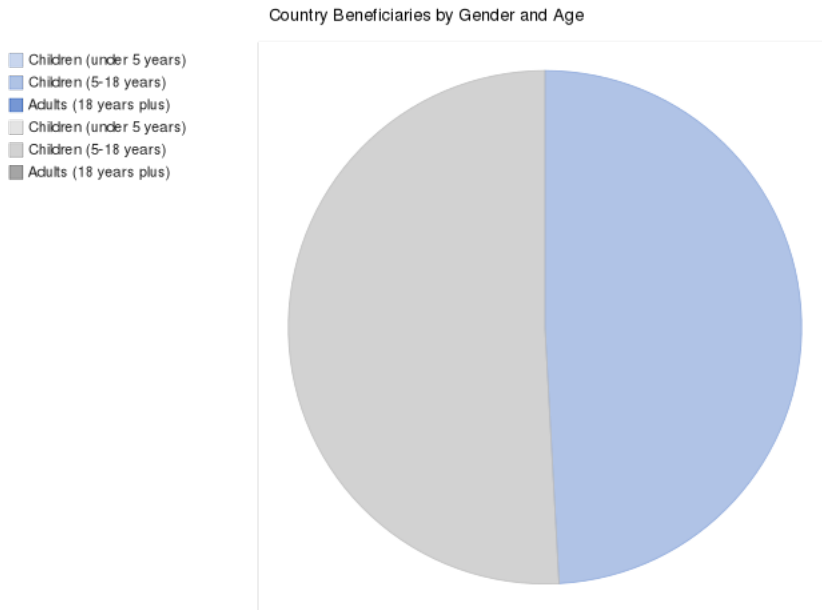
The Government took steps to strengthen its organisational structure in the Ministry of Education by establishing a School Health and Nutrition Division that brought together school feeding, school agriculture, and school health programmes under one management. The strengthened linkages between programmes is expected to yield better results for the nutrition and health of the school children. In 2017, WFP will support the ministry to pilot the one management approach at the school-level.

WFP made two major achievements in the process of accomplishing its phase-out objectives. First, the Ministry of Education agreed to take over the responsibility of managing the logistics of WFP food to be delivered and distributed to the schools. The ministry agreed to continue using the services provided by Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited on a per tonnage basis for payment. Second, the Ministry of Education took over the financial oversight and coordination of the annual trainings for teachers and cooks involved in the school feeding programme. The 2016 batch of trainees successfully completed these important trainings under the Ministry of Education, while WFP acted as an observer.

The school feeding programme is being carried out in accordance with the project phase-out strategy. The Ministry of Education took responsibility for feeding 3,000 school children in 2016, on track to be responsible for feeding all school children by 2019.

Annual Country Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (5-18 years)	9,379	9,713	19,092
Total number of beneficiaries in 2016	9,379	9,713	19,092



Annual Food Distribution in Country (mt)

Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Development Project	1,104	81	160	-	-	1,344
Total Food Distributed in 2016	1,104	81	160	-	-	1,344

Supply Chain

In 2016, 70 percent was procured from the local market*, while 30 percent was procured internationally or regionally. The rice available locally was not only cheaper but also allowed for better control over the delivery and quality of the rice. The local procurement also contributed towards the development of the local market. All international shipments were received in the Indian port of Kolkata and were transported by truck to the warehouses in Bhutan by WFP-appointed transporters. There were no in-kind shipments in 2016.

As a part of the WFP corporate requirement, WFP's logistics execution support system was rolled out in the country. In the first half of 2016, the Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited continued to be responsible for all internal transport, storage and handling of WFP food as governed by a memorandum of understanding with WFP. In the second half of 2016, the Ministry of Education took on the responsibility for delivery to WFP-assisted schools. The Ministry of Education continued to engage the Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited in an oversight role, which strengthened its logistical knowledge.

While there were no significant delays in deliveries of food to the schools, local circumstances, such as landslides or difficulties getting porters or donkeys, occasionally resulted in food being delivered a few days later than planned. Since these schools still had some carry-over stocks from the earlier delivery round, there was no disruption in the actual food distribution to the school children.

Based on the recommendation from a scoping mission conducted by WFP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, a consultant from the Kuenhe Foundation was invited to the country to evaluate and assess the logistical set-up with the Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited and provide guidance on improving the logistics of the national school feeding programme. The recommendations from the assessment were presented to the School Feeding Technical Committee, where it was decided that a few of the recommended supply chain models should be piloted in 2017 to make the supply chain more efficient. The main recommendations from the assessment were as follows:

- Strengthen procurement systems at the school levels for perishable goods to achieve cost efficiency and to avoid irregularity in supplies;
- Strengthen logistical capacity of the Ministry of Education to comprehend, monitor, and be accountable across the various key processes of the school feeding programme supply chain;
- Provide technical training to all schools for the management of commodities in the areas of quality control, proper storage, and maintain accurate record keeping in order to improve storage and minimise damage and losses; and
- Increase the frequency of food distribution using hubs closer to the schools in light of the limited storage facilities in many schools.

Footnote:

*Most of the food items, though procured from local suppliers, actually came from India.



Annual Food Purchases for the Country (mt)

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
Chickpeas	-	66	66
Rice	640	-	640
Split Peas	31	88	119
Total	671	154	825
Percentage	81.3%	18.7%	

Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

WFP's Office of Evaluation commissioned an external team to conduct an independent mid-term evaluation of Development Project 200300 to provide accountability, learning, and evidence-based findings to inform operational and strategic decision-making. The timing of the evaluation allowed the findings to guide the WFP programme phase-out in December 2018, when WFP food support to schools will have ended. The main evaluation questions were: i) how appropriate is the operation?, ii) what are the results of the operation?, and iii) why and how has the operation produced the observed results?

The evaluators' methodology included a secondary data review and a field visit, interviews with officials at the national, district, and school level. The country office coordinated the evaluation by providing all relevant documents to the evaluation team and arranging appointments with stakeholders for the interviews.

The main recommendation that emerged from the evaluation was to re-calibrate WFP Bhutan's strategic and operational direction through a number of planned actions:

- Review the nutritional composition of the food basket of the school feeding programme—with support from WFP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and in collaboration with the Ministries of Education and Health, the country office started the process of a programmatic assessment to better understand what is provided in school meals and estimate the quantities of food consumed and its nutrient quality in the school feeding programme.
- Conduct a situational analysis for school feeding—the situational analysis for school feeding was carried out by a local consultant. The draft report will be presented to the School Feeding Technical Committee and finalised. The findings from the analysis will be used during a national level stakeholders' discussion to ultimately feed into the development of a common comprehensive vision for the national school feeding programme.
- Management of the School Feeding Technical Committee—the country office has increasingly engaged with the Ministry of Education to take the lead in organising and coordinating the technical committee meetings and activities, including following up on agreed actions. The ownership of the committee by government stakeholders became stronger since its establishment in 2015. Many decisions on the operational implementation of school feeding were taken and accepted.
- A team from Kuehne Foundation visited Bhutan in May 2016 to assess the existing supply chain of the school feeding programme. The team suggested piloting a few supply chain models to enhance its operational and cost effectiveness. The report from the mission was presented to the School Feeding Technical Committee where it was agreed to pilot two supply chain models in 2017 to identify logistical improvements to the supply chain.

Rice Fortification and South Asia Regional Meeting on School Feeding

Rice Fortification

Following several cases of vitamin B1 (thiamin) deficiency (beri-beri) among school children in several schools since 2011, as one of the mitigation measures, the Government requested WFP to provide support with rice fortification. Following an initial workshop in 2015, a landscape analysis mission for rice fortification was organised, resulting in concrete recommendations including specifications. Subsequently, the Government formed a rice fortification task force to oversee the progress in the implementation of fortification works. In 2017, WFP plans to provide fortified rice to all of the school children that it supports through its development project in Bhutan.

South Asia Regional Meeting on School Feeding

In August 2016, a three-day meeting on school feeding was hosted by the Royal Government of Bhutan bringing together experts from the South Asian countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Officials from the Government and WFP represented the countries along with the WFP Centre of Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil. The meeting, which was the first of its kind, encouraged an active learning process among countries implementing national school feeding programmes by creating an opportunity for school feeding practitioners to share their experiences and learn from their peers in neighbouring countries, possibly leading to future collaboration among government officials from South-Asian countries.

During the open and frank discussions, participants declared that school feeding is an important investment in the development of a country and contributed towards meeting the commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals. The participants discussed the importance of creating institutional capacity to implement school feeding initiatives; how to use school feeding as an entry point for complementary activities such as food fortification; how to involve local communities; and the relevance of having a robust policy framework for school feeding. A visit to two schools was arranged for the participants, which enriched their experience and enabled them to interact with students and teachers during a school lunch.

Given the diversity of school feeding programmes across South Asia, participants acknowledged that they would benefit from more systematic exchanges of school feeding information. Participants decided to establish a platform for regular knowledge sharing among South Asian countries, to be facilitated by WFP. This platform will provide technical support to governments and create opportunities to engage in cross-country learning exchanges, with the support of WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil, to integrate nutritional objectives and innovative approaches into school feeding programmes.

Important outcomes of the meeting included agreement on the following actions:

- Developing and strengthening school feeding policy frameworks in respective national and sub-national levels;
- Using evidence-based approaches to review the objectives of participating countries' respective school feeding programmes;
- Using systematic analytical and diagnostic tools to advocate for improved school feeding programmes;
- Developing a roadmap for the way forward of the school feeding programmes in participating countries;
- Reporting on the importance of enhancing investments in school feeding to the senior levels of government;
- Conducting studies to incorporate innovative approaches from the experience of other South Asian countries.

Project Objectives and Results

Project Objectives

The programme had two primary objectives aimed at phasing out WFP support to school feeding by the end of 2018:

1. To strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education (MoE) to be an effective steward of a nationwide school feeding programme; and
2. To maintain access to and gender parity in primary education that contributes to enhanced learning.

In line with these objectives, WFP pursued two inter-related strategies:

1. To continue supporting primary schools in remote areas with provision of meals comprised of rice, yellow split peas, chickpeas and fortified oil, and to gradually hand over this responsibility to the MoE; and,
2. To strengthen the capacity of the MoE to set policy and priorities, manage the supply chain, and oversee programmes so that it can independently administer the nationwide school feeding programme.



Approved Budget for Project Duration (USD)

Cost Category	
Capacity Dev.t and Augmentation	900,000
Direct Support Costs	1,184,000
Food and Related Costs	5,934,242
Indirect Support Costs	561,277
Total	8,579,519

Project Activities

- **Strategic Objective**
: Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger (Strategic Objective 4)
- **Outcome:**
4.2 Increased equitable access to and utilization of education
- **Activity**
: School feeding programme

The national school feeding programme of the Royal Government of Bhutan helped children from remote villages to get an education through government-run boarding schools. While the Government facilitated the education of boarding students, WFP supported schools—mostly primary schools for children of ages 6 to 15 years—located in the remote parts of the country. The children attending these schools come from communities that are vulnerable to food security and have limited access to markets because of poor or non-existent road connections.

The food basket for the school meals provided by WFP consisted of rice, chickpeas, yellow split peas and vegetable oil. The two meals a day—breakfast and lunch—provided by WFP covered 56 percent of the daily required calories. The four staple foods from WFP were complemented by vegetables and spices contributed by parents. WFP supported around 27 percent of the total number of children receiving school meals in the country. A gradual hand-over of WFP supported school feeding is in progress; by 2018, the Government will fully take over responsibility for the current WFP-assisted school children.

- **Strategic Objective**
: Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger (Strategic Objective 4)
- **Outcome**

: 4.3 Ownership and capacity strengthened to reduce undernutrition and increase access to education at regional, national and community levels

- **Activity**

: Capacity development—strengthening national capacities

The success of the hand-over of the school feeding programme will depend on the Ministry of Education's ability to take on more operational responsibilities over time. WFP's role has changed from direct implementer to provider of technical assistance. Under this project, three pillars of capacity development were identified: i) joint policy analysis and priority setting; ii) supply chain management; and iii) programme management, oversight and monitoring.

Following a Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) exercise for the national school feeding programme in December 2014, a roadmap to improve the programme was developed, and government stakeholders committed to it. The roadmap prominently featured three pillars of capacity development for WFP's development project. WFP also included an additional pillar, support to nutrition that was deemed important especially with the growing focus of the Government in improving nutrition in the school meals.

WFP provided technical assistance to the Government in 2016 to assess how to improve nutrition in school meals, strengthen the supply chain of the national school feeding programme, and develop an integrated monitoring and evaluation system within the Ministry of Education's Education Monitoring and Information System. Based on these assessments, activities were developed for trial in 2017. These activities include piloting of supply chain models to determine the best and most efficient model for the national school feeding programme; conducting a programmatic dietary assessment of the current food basket of the national school feeding programme to improve the nutritional value of the school meals; piloting an integrated approach of implementing the school feeding at the school-level; stock taking of reports to develop a user-friendly reporting tool for the national school feeding programme.

The Secretary of the Ministry of Education and a chief programme officer from the Gross National Happiness Commission (planning body of the Government) participated in the 18th Global Child Nutrition Forum held in Yerevan, Armenia. Upon an invitation from the Global Child Nutrition Forum organisers, Bhutan presented the outcome of the South Asia Regional Meeting on School Feeding that took place in Paro, Bhutan, which was well-received by the audience.

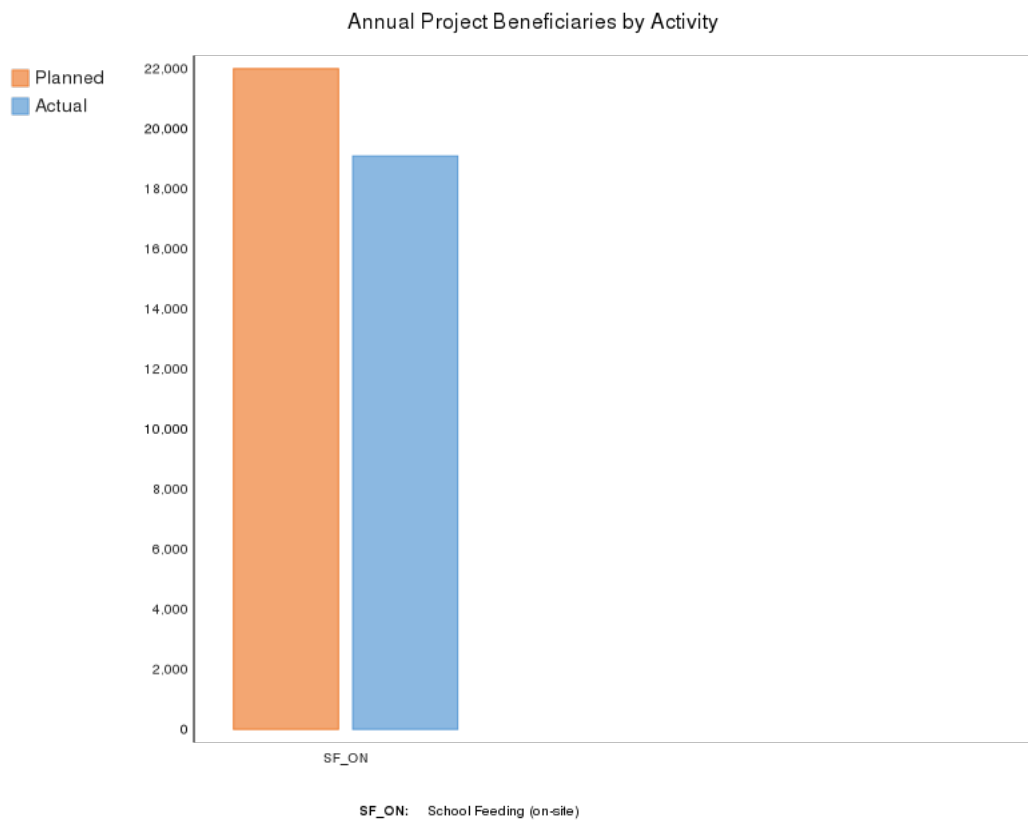
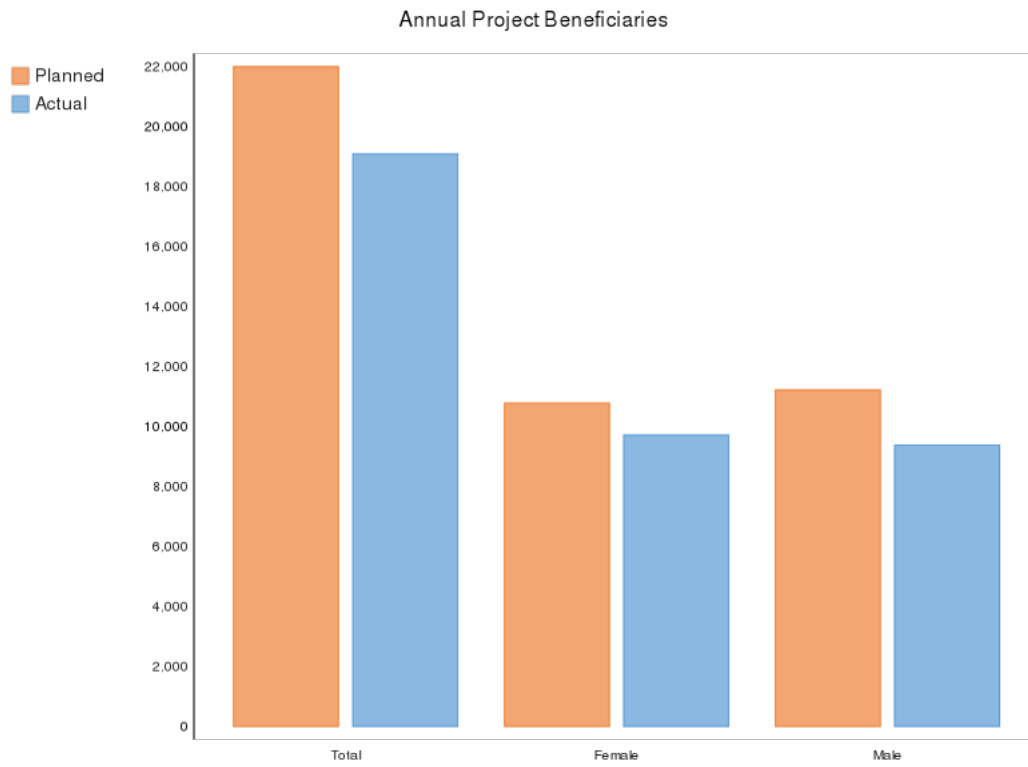
After a detailed landscape analysis established that rice fortification was feasible in Bhutan, WFP started preparations to procure fortified rice from the neighbouring country of Bangladesh, currently the nearest available source. This procurement of fortified rice was met with some delays because of policies and protocols from both the countries. Fortunately, all issues were resolved, and WFP will receive fortified rice to be distributed in the schools beginning in February 2017. WFP will support the introduction of rice fortification by providing it in the meals of all WFP-supported schools, benefiting 17,000 students in 2017. The Ministry of Agriculture, the identified Government focal agency for rice fortification, and the Ministry of Education will be supported with capacity development on rice fortification.

Simultaneously, WFP continued to work towards designing and developing a suitable in-country blending facility for rice fortification. In the meantime, WFP contracted a local rice mill to blend imported fortified rice kernels with local white rice.

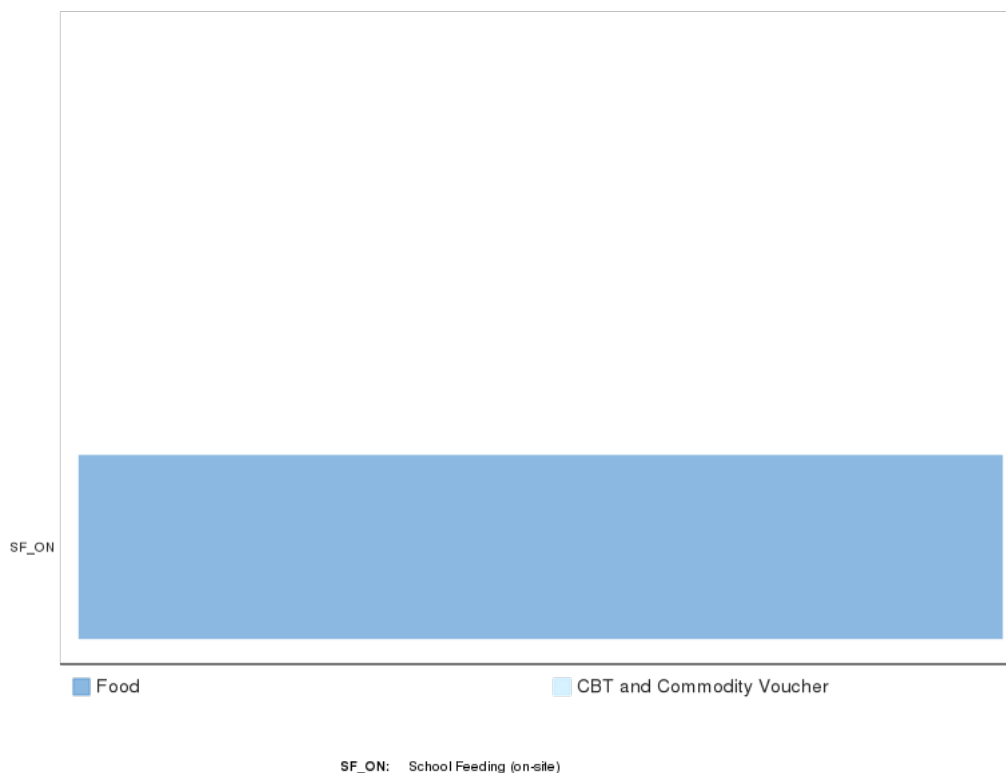
The Ministry of Education, concerned about the lack of quality checks in place for the national school feeding programme, requested WFP to support and assist the Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA) to establish a system for quality and quantity checks. A joint Ministry of Education and BAFRA mission to observe and learn from the Q&Q process and procedures conducted by the WFP Superintendent was conducted in July 2016 with the hope that BAFRA will be able to ensure the quality control of school feeding commodities after a complete hand-over by WFP.

A cost benefit analysis of the national school feeding programme was initiated in mid-September 2016 with support from MasterCard volunteers who helped WFP and the Ministry of Education through the process. The result of the analysis is expected to be ready in early 2017. A situation analysis for the school feeding programme was also carried out in order to have a discussion on possibly revising the objectives of the programme. This new discussion is required given the country already has high enrolment and retention rates in primary education. At the same time, there is a gradually increasing need to control the rise of non-communicable diseases and promote healthy diets as emerging public health priorities. The results from the cost benefit analysis and the situation analysis will help inform the development of a national school feeding programme strategic document in the coming year.

The School Health and Nutrition Division in the Ministry of Education was newly established in the first half of 2016 and does not have sufficient staff to implement the school feeding programme. To help fill this gap, WFP supported the recruitment of three staff-members to be temporarily placed in the division until longer term measures are taken by the Government. In addition, WFP staff-members have been placed within the Nutrition Division to provide on-the-job training to government school feeding staff-members.



Modality of Transfer by Activity



Annual Project Food Distribution

Commodity	Planned Distribution (mt)	Actual Distribution (mt)	% Actual v. Planned
Chickpeas	117	80	68.5%
Rice	1,603	1,104	68.9%
Split Peas	117	80	68.5%
Vegetable Oil	117	81	69.2%
Total	1,953	1,344	68.8%

Operational Partnerships

The WFP programme in Bhutan fell under the overall oversight of the Gross National Happiness Commission, the planning body of the Government, which coordinated the bilateral and multilateral assistance to Bhutan. On the operational side, WFP's major partners were the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, and the Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited. The WFP component of the school feeding programme is fully integrated into the One Programme of the United Nations (UN) system in Bhutan, a Delivering as One country.

The Ministry of Education was the main counterpart of WFP and the lead agency responsible for the national school feeding programme. The ministry lived up to its obligation of gradually assuming responsibility of students from schools or grades no longer supported by WFP in accordance with the hand-over strategy, aimed for completion in 2018.

The Ministry of Forests and Agriculture was WFP's partner for the school agriculture programme, a collaboration with the Ministry of Education that received support from Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand thanks to coordination with WFP. The objective of the school agriculture programme was to educate school children on agricultural and farming practices through practical demonstrations, the products of which

were used in school meals to add diversity to the diet. WFP started to phase-out its financial support to the school agriculture programme as it prepared for its integrated approach pilot, which will start in 2017. WFP also partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests on rice fortification. The ministry was the lead agency in the rice fortification task force established by the Government to oversee the progress of the project.

Additionally, through the School Feeding Technical Committee, WFP partners worked closely with the Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance in providing technical assistance to the school feeding programme as and when required. Also, as an active member of the National Nutrition Task Force, WFP collaborated with UNICEF and the World Health Organization, and various government agencies to accelerate actions to reduce undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies in the country.

With the project fully integrated into the UN One-Programme, the activities were coordinated with the education sector support provided by UNICEF and UN Population Fund (UNFPA) as part of a common workplan with the Royal Government of Bhutan. WFP collaborates further with UN Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF and UNFPA as well as the Development Partners Group for Bhutan under the theme groups for education, poverty, environment and disaster preparedness.

In 2016, the Department of Disaster Management, under the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, became a new partner with whom WFP and other UN agencies are developing an emergency preparedness plan and, if possible, organise an earthquake response simulation.

Performance Monitoring

The school feeding programme is government-led and is gradually relying less on WFP support. Although there were differences in terms of targeting approach, food basket, general programming and monitoring, both parties, at times, supported the same children within a single school with WFP providing breakfast and lunch and the Royal Government of Bhutan providing dinner. WFP relied on secondary data compiled annually by the Ministry of Education to report on outcome indicators such as enrolment and retention rates. A Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) school feeding exercise was done in 2014 and served as a baseline for the National Capacity Index. A roadmap was developed following the exercise and was reviewed and updated in 2016.

The overall indicator for the progress of capacity development in the project framework is the National Capacity Index. While over a period of time this might help to measure progress, it was not sensitive enough as a management indicator to monitor effectiveness of capacity development activities. Therefore, WFP identified a set of indicators and an approach to monitor the progress in terms of capacity development at the national and school level. As part of the approach, a monitoring and evaluation strategy was developed with a timeline and implementation plan for the roll-out of the system and ways to report on capacity development activities both internally and externally. The monitoring and evaluation system, to be piloted in 2017, will assist the Government to monitor, report on and evaluate the outcomes of its national school feeding programme.

As part of the United Nations (UN) One Programme 2014-2018, WFP supported the Essential Social Services—Education Outcome. An annual work plan was jointly prepared along with other UN agencies supporting the same outcome and their cooperating partners. The annual work plan was reviewed twice during the year—once in the second quarter and again in the last quarter by the Government and UN partners of the Education Outcome Group. The joint review encompassed an assessment of progress made towards the achievement of the outcomes of the One Programme and the feedback from bilateral discussions between WFP and the Ministry of Education.

In view of the imminent phase-out of WFP's support to the school feeding programme and as part of the transfer of responsibilities, WFP agreed with the Ministry of Education to organise joint monitoring visits by placing a staff member within the ministry, initially funded by WFP. This person monitors the programme implementation at field level for both the Government and WFP-supported schools.

During the monitoring visits, interactions with the beneficiaries indicated a positive response on the quality and quantity of food provided by WFP. Many schools continue to face the problem of improper and insufficient storage facilities and issues such as kitchens where good hygiene is not practiced. In response to this, WFP conducted a review of the supply chain and is planning to support the Government in piloting alternative supply chain approaches.

Results/Outcomes

- **Strategic Objective**
: Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger (Strategic Objective 4)
- **Outcome:**
4.2 Increased equitable access to and utilization of education
- **Activity**
: School feeding programme

In 2016, WFP provided 19,092 school children (87 per cent of plan) in 176 schools with breakfast and lunch, 51 percent of whom were girls, utilizing 1,344 MT of food commodities. While WFP planned to cover 22,000 school children, actual number was slightly lower because some students enrolled in "central schools", where in addition to school meals, other mandatory school items such as uniforms, learning materials and boarding facilities were provided at no cost. The number of feeding days were also less than planned due to variance in local school session holidays in different districts.

Positive results were observed in retention rate for both girls and boys in primary schools. The net enrolment rate in primary schools for boys increased, but for girls the rate decreased by 1.9 percent compared to the previous year. Since WFP-supported schools are part of the national school feeding programme, data for enrolment and retention were sourced from statistics of the Ministry of Education.

- **Strategic Objective**
: Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger (Strategic Objective 4)
- **Outcome**
: 4.3 Ownership and capacity strengthened to reduce undernutrition and increase access to education at regional, national and community levels
- **Activity**
: Capacity development—strengthening national capacities

In 2016 a milestone towards the transition to full government management of the school feeding programme was reached. The Ministry of Education managed trainings of teachers and school cooks involved in the school feeding programme and the financing and facilitation of the training sessions. WFP co-facilitated the trainings for teachers and observed trainings for cooks. The trainings were conducted annually because of the high turnover of teachers and since there is no school staff hired specifically to manage the school feeding programme.

Technical assistance and training was provided to 129 government and national partner staff at different levels, including staff at the Ministry of Education headquarters, teachers, cooks, staff from the Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited, and other partners.

As part of the handover process to the Ministry of Education, WFP helped analyse the supply chain of the school feeding programme. Some of the concerns cited were shortage of transport capacity in the country; use of some food commodities for the government-supported schools that do not fully comply with the set quality standards; spoilage of food items as a result of unfavourable conditions at warehouses; and, outdated storage facilities. Piloting of alternative supply chain approaches such as "hub and spoke" and "milk-run" methods were recommended, and WFP plans to support the Royal Government of Bhutan with this in 2017.

In 2016, the school feeding programme was coordinated by the School Feeding Technical Committee, which was comprised of representatives from various government agencies who made decisions on key issues related to education, health and nutrition. WFP recognizes that the school feeding programme must continue to be a multi-sectoral effort.

WFP did not measure the National Capacity Index for the school feeding programme in 2016 but plans to conduct another review for 2017; the National Capacity Index was last reviewed in 2015.

Progress Towards Gender Equality

WFP continued to support and advocate for progress towards gender equality in education. At the primary education level, girls and boys had the same enrolment and attendance rates in 2015, but girls had higher enrolment and attendance rates than boys in 2016, with 102 girls for every 100 boys present at the schools. Girls also completed primary education at rates 10 percent higher than boys. While the higher enrolment, attendance and completion rates for girls is a positive reflection of efforts to increase gender equality and empower girls, WFP hopes to improve these for boys as well.

During the training of teachers in charge of school feeding and school cooks, as organised and managed by the Ministry of Education, female participation is encouraged, and gender sensitisation was also included. WFP promoted equal representation of girls and boys and male and female teachers in the school feeding management committees. These committees were instituted in each of the schools supported by WFP in order to oversee and ensure proper management and provision of meals to the school children. Gender parity on the school committees is encouraged as a way of empowering women, providing women with increased leadership and decision-making opportunities and ensuring that the ideas and concerns of both men and women are being heard. Following the example of WFP, schools supported by the Royal Government of Bhutan now have similar gender representation requirements in their school feeding management committees in schools.

Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations

Safety issues for beneficiary children were mostly related to the risk of attacks by wild animals or of crossing the streams during their daily commute from home to school and back, although none of the beneficiaries were affected by these risks in 2016.

There were some safety challenges for the girls camping near the schools in shacks and huts as informal boarding sites. In order to address these issues, WFP used to support the construction of hostels with proper water and sanitation facilities so that the girls could stay in school and live in a safe environment. In 2016, the Royal Government of Bhutan continued this effort, identified vulnerable girls living informally as boarders, and admitted them into boarding schools.

WFP's mainly interacted with beneficiaries through the school teachers who received the food, took care of storage and provided timely reports. During monitoring visits, WFP met with some of the children privately to talk about the quality and quantity of food. Responses from the children were positive, and there were no complaints. A communication channel was established to inform the schools if food was delayed and how to properly dispose damaged food items.

Beneficiaries were aware of their food entitlements because WFP made it compulsory for every school to display the ration scale and daily menu on classroom boards, which were visible to all children.

Given the long history of WFP in Bhutan, spanning 43 years, both WFP beneficiaries and their parents were aware of the food provided by WFP. During WFP's monitoring visits, children indicated that they knew about WFP's work and were familiar with the WFP logo. The informal contact with the children and the quarterly reports from teachers helped to ensure that any safety or protection issues were promptly identified. As WFP monitored safety and protection issues more informally, no specific protection indicators were collected in 2016.

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

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Girls in Dawakha Lower Secondary School, Paro district, enjoying their lunch.

Overview of Project Beneficiary Information

Table 1: Overview of Project Beneficiary Information

Beneficiary Category	Planned (male)	Planned (female)	Planned (total)	Actual (male)	Actual (female)	Actual (total)	% Actual v. Planned (male)	% Actual v. Planned (female)	% Actual v. Planned (total)
Total Beneficiaries	11,220	10,780	22,000	9,379	9,713	19,092	83.6%	90.1%	86.8%
By Age-group:									
Children (5-18 years)	11,220	10,780	22,000	9,379	9,713	19,092	83.6%	90.1%	86.8%
By Residence status:									
Residents	11,220	10,780	22,000	9,379	9,713	19,092	83.6%	90.1%	86.8%

Participants and Beneficiaries by Activity and Modality

Table 2: Beneficiaries by Activity and Modality

Activity	Planned (food)	Planned (CBT)	Planned (total)	Actual (food)	Actual (CBT)	Actual (total)	% Actual v. Planned (food)	% Actual v. Planned (CBT)	% Actual v. Planned (total)
School Feeding (on-site)	22,000	-	22,000	19,092	-	19,092	86.8%	-	86.8%

Annex: Participants by Activity and Modality

Activity	Planned (food)	Planned (CBT)	Planned (total)	Actual (food)	Actual (CBT)	Actual (total)	% Actual v. Planned (food)	% Actual v. Planned (CBT)	% Actual v. Planned (total)
School Feeding (on-site)	22,000	-	22,000	19,092	-	19,092	86.8%	-	86.8%

Participants and Beneficiaries by Activity (excluding nutrition)

Table 3: Participants and Beneficiaries by Activity (excluding nutrition)

Beneficiary Category	Planned (male)	Planned (female)	Planned (total)	Actual (male)	Actual (female)	Actual (total)	% Actual v. Planned (male)	% Actual v. Planned (female)	% Actual v. Planned (total)
School Feeding (on-site)									
Children receiving school meals in primary schools	11,220	10,780	22,000	9,379	9,713	19,092	83.6%	90.1%	86.8%
Total participants	11,220	10,780	22,000	9,379	9,713	19,092	83.6%	90.1%	86.8%
Total beneficiaries	11,220	10,780	22,000	9,379	9,713	19,092	83.6%	90.1%	86.8%

Project Indicators

Outcome Indicators

Outcome	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
SO4 Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger				
Increased equitable access to and utilization of education				
Retention rate (girls) in WFP-assisted primary schools				
<i>BHUTAN, Project End Target: 2018.12, Base value: 2013.12, Secondary data, Previous Follow-up: 2015.12, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2015, Ministry of Education, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2016, Ministry of Education</i>	=100.00	96.20	98.80	99.10
Retention rate (boys) in WFP-assisted primary schools				
<i>BHUTAN, Project End Target: 2018.12, Base value: 2013.12, Secondary data, Previous Follow-up: 2015.12, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2015, Ministry of Education, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2016, Ministry of Education</i>	=100.00	96.00	96.80	97.40
Net Enrolment Rate (NER) (girls) in WFP-assisted primary schools				
<i>BHUTAN, Project End Target: 2018.12, Base value: 2013.12, Secondary data, Previous Follow-up: 2015.11, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2015, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2016</i>	=98.00	96.00	98.10	96.00
Net Enrolment Rate (NER) (boys) in WFP-assisted primary schools				
<i>BHUTAN, Project End Target: 2018.12, Base value: 2013.12, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2013, Previous Follow-up: 2015.11, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2015, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2016</i>	=97.00	95.00	92.40	93.60

Outcome	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
Ownership and capacity strengthened to reduce undernutrition and increase access to education at regional, national and community levels				
NCI: School Feeding National Capacity Index				
<i>BHUTAN, Project End Target: 2018.12, Stakeholders consultation workshop, Base value: 2014.12, Joint survey, Stakeholders consultation workshop, Previous Follow-up: 2015.12, Joint survey, Stakeholders consultation, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, Joint survey, Stakeholders consultation</i>	>14.00	11.00	12.00	12.00
Hand-over strategy developed and implemented [1=not achieved; 2=partially achieved; 3=achieved]				
<i>BHUTAN, Project End Target: 2018.12, Base value: 2013.12, WFP programme monitoring, Previous Follow-up: 2015.11, WFP programme monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP programme monitoring</i>	=3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00

Output Indicators

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
SO4: Capacity Development - Strengthening National Capacities				
Number of government/national partner staff receiving technical assistance and training	individual	125	129	103.2%
Number of national programmes developed with WFP support (nutrition, school feeding, safety net)	national programme	1	1	100.0%
Number of technical assistance activities provided	activity	12	9	75.0%
SO4: School Feeding (on-site)				
Number of schools assisted by WFP	school	182	176	96.7%

Gender Indicators

Cross-cutting Indicators	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
Proportion of women beneficiaries in leadership positions of project management committees				
<i>BHUTAN, School Feeding (on-site), Project End Target: 2018.12, Base value: 2015.12, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	=50.00	50.00	-	50.00

Partnership Indicators

Cross-cutting Indicators	Project End Target	Latest Follow-up
Number of partner organizations that provide complementary inputs and services		
<i>BHUTAN, School Feeding (on-site), Project End Target: 2018.12, Latest Follow-up: 2016.12</i>	=8.00	8.00

Resource Inputs from Donors

Resource Inputs from Donors

Donor	Cont. Ref. No.	Commodity	Purchased in 2016 (mt)	
			In-Kind	Cash
Australia	AUL-C-00236-03	Rice	-	185
Australia	AUL-C-00246-03	Rice	-	92
Canada	CAN-C-00496-10	Chickpeas	-	66
Canada	CAN-C-00496-10	Rice	-	310
Canada	CAN-C-00496-10	Split Peas	-	119
Canada	CAN-C-00496-22	Rice	-	23
Private Donors	WPD-C-02832-02	Rice	-	460
Private Donors	WPD-C-02832-03	Rice	-	173
Private Donors	WPD-C-03761-04	Rice	-	157
		Total	-	1,585