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**Further Information**

<http://www.wfp.org/countries>  
**SPR Reading Guidance**



**Improving Rural Children's Access to Basic Education with a  
Focus on Primary Education**  
**Standard Project Report 2017**

World Food Programme in Bhutan, Kingdom of (BT)



**World Food Programme**

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# Country Context and WFP Objectives



## 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 2017, WFP continued to facilitate government initiatives such as international collaboration on school feeding programmes, improvement in the nutrition value 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 improve micronutrient deficiencies among schoolchildren as cases of beri-beri, caused by vitamin B1 deficiency, increased. Upon the request of the Government, WFP supported the introduction of fortified rice to the school feeding programme starting from the beginning of the 2017 school session. The rice provided was fortified with vitamin A, vitamin B1 (thiamine), vitamin B3 (niacin), vitamin B6, folic acid, vitamin B12, iron and zinc.

The Government took steps to strengthen its organizational 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.

The school feeding programme is being carried out in accordance with the project phase-out strategy. The Ministry of Education took responsibility for providing meals to around 3,000 school children in 2017, on track to be responsible for feeding all school children by the beginning of the 2019 academic year.

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. 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 2017 training recipients successfully completed these important courses under the Ministry of Education, while WFP acted as an observer.

## Country Context and Response of the Government

### 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 768,600 in 2016 [1]. 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 12 percent in 2012 to 8.2 percent in 2017, as measured against the poverty line of USD 34.14 per person per month [2]. 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 60 percent of the population depending on agriculture for their livelihood, yet one-fourth of the population suffers from seasonal food insecurity.

About 82 percent of all of Bhutan's imports come from India, which is also the destination for 85.6 percent of the country's exports [3]. Overall, imports exceed exports by almost 190 percent, indicating the country's heavy reliance on imports.

The Government considers education as a major key to alleviating poverty and empowering people, and as such the sector receives high priority and emphasis: 15.2 percent of total government spending, which is 7.5 percent of gross domestic product [4], is dedicated to the education sector. Bhutan has made impressive progress in achieving universal primary education with a 94.8 percent net primary school enrolment rate [5]. While Bhutan ranks at 110 out of 159 countries on the Gender Inequality Index, significant progress has been made in gender equality and the empowerment of women. In terms of gender parity at the primary education level, in 2017 the ratio of girls' to boys' primary school enrolment was 1.02, or for every 100 boys there were 102 girls enrolled.

The prevalence of child stunting fell significantly from 37 percent in 2008 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 undernutrition is still high among poor children in rural areas and micronutrient deficiencies remain a challenge among children and adolescent girls. Anaemia affects 31 percent of girls aged 10-19 years and 43.8 percent of children aged 6-59 months [6]. In recent years, the Government has recognized the importance of micronutrients for schoolchildren and has welcomed the provision of fortified rice to schoolchildren starting from 2017 (only in WFP supported schools).

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 [7]. Bhutan ranked 132 out of 188 countries in the 2014 Human Development Index with an index of 0.605 [8].

### Response of the Government

Since the 1960s, the Royal Government of Bhutan has been implementing school feeding to facilitate boarding for 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, which will end by 2018.

The Government continued to view the provision of school meals as an important enabler for access to quality basic education. Since 2014, participating schools receive a stipend of BTN 1,000 (USD 15) per child per month for the procurement of food commodities, while a separate budget covers transportation costs for the delivery of the food commodities.

In recent years, more focus has been placed on improving the nutrition value of school meals and attempts have been made to integrate school feeding, health and agricultural programmes. The Government hired additional staff, a nutritionist and a programme officer for the school feeding programme and WFP supported the recruitment of three additional staff for whom WFP paid the salaries at the government scale.

Upon the request of the Government, WFP introduced fortified rice in 2017 and planned to reach 17,000 schoolchildren as a means of addressing the persistent issue of micronutrient deficiencies among children attending school. Further, WFP is facilitating an assessment of the dietary intake of school meals, which may help improve the food basket.

In terms of supply chain, WFP made several attempts to establish a per tonnage rate for reimbursing internal transport, storage and handling costs for the food commodities provided by WFP. However, it was not possible to reach a consensus due to resistance by the Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited.

The Government embarked on a "central schools" approach through which the majority of the children are boarded and are provided three meals per day. Day students attending these central schools are provided with lunch, which is not a regular practice under the government school feeding programme.

The Government also formed a national nutrition task force team comprising of multi-sectoral representatives to understand the issues concerning malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies and to develop a strategy to address them.

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[1] National Statistics Bureau, Royal Government of Bhutan. *Bhutan at a Glance 2017*.

[2] National Statistics Bureau, Royal Government of Bhutan. *Bhutan Poverty Analysis Report 2017*.

[3] Ministry of Finance, Royal Government of Bhutan. *Annual Trade Statistics 2016*.

[4] Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan. *Annual Education Statistics 2015*.

[5] Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan. *Annual Education Statistics 2017*.

[6] Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan. *National Nutrition Survey 2015*.

[7] World Bank. *Bhutan Overview*. 2016.

[8] United Nations Development Programme. *About Bhutan*. 2016.

## WFP Objectives and Strategic Coordination

Throughout 2017, 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 high quality national school feeding programme.

In line with the project objectives and WFP's commitment to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2: Zero Hunger, 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: Support Sustainable Development Goal implementation, and are aligned with Bhutan's Eleventh Five Year Plan (2013-2018) and the United Nations Bhutan One Programme (2014-2018) objective of providing equitable access to, and the utilisation and quality of, essential social services for all.

The School Feeding Technical Committee, established in 2015, continues to support and ensure 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.

# Country Resources and Results

## Resources for Results

Development Project 200300 was fully funded in 2017. WFP procured all necessary food commodities on time and handed them over to the Ministry of Education who distributed to the schools and carried out the necessary complementary 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 porters (including both people and animals) that carried food commodities from the extended delivery points to the schools with no road connections.

In WFP assisted boarding schools, the Government continued to provide a third meal for all boarding students in addition to the two provided by WFP. In all government-assisted boarding schools and the "central schools", which have been introduced over the past four years, the non-perishable commodities were centrally procured and distributed. Fresh commodities for students were covered through a cash-based stipend system, which was managed by the school feeding management committee of individual schools. In all schools, the Government covered the salaries of cooks, electricity, and firewood for fuel. The task of preparing the dispatch and transportation of WFP procured food commodities to WFP assisted schools was taken over by the Ministry of Education in 2016, and continued to function smoothly with oversight from WFP.

Through the provision of school meals, WFP contributed to maintaining the high enrolment rate and completion of primary level schooling. WFP assisted the Royal Government of Bhutan in enhancing its school feeding programme through capacity development activities that included reviews and studies of the existing aspects of the school feeding programme, such as documenting and standardising its policy and strategic approaches, improving nutrition in school meals, enhancing its supply chain and strengthening its monitoring and evaluation systems. WFP programming is aligned with the Bhutan One Programme under the Education Outcome Group and can be attributed to the education successes that Bhutan has achieved.

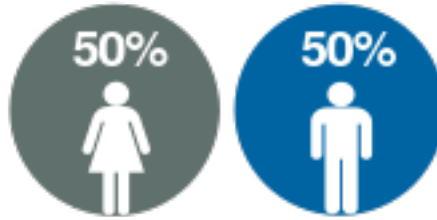
In order to accomplish its capacity strengthening goals on time, WFP recruited an international expert in the country office to manage the activities planned for capacity development. The office has also benefited from technical advice and guidance from the WFP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. For all recruitment in 2017, WFP continued to encourage qualified women to participate.

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 Note on Annual Country Beneficiaries graphic (below): The breakdown of beneficiaries by sex is 50.1 percent female and 49.9 percent male, both of which have been rounded to 50 percent.



## Annual Country Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (5-18 years)	7,953	7,998	15,951
<b>Total number of beneficiaries in 2017</b>	<b>7,953</b>	<b>7,998</b>	<b>15,951</b>



## Annual Food Distribution in Country (mt)

Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Development Project	945	68	137	-	-	1,150
<b>Total Food Distributed in 2017</b>	<b>945</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,150</b>

## Supply Chain

WFP planned, budgeted and procured four food commodities (rice, chickpeas, yellow split peas and vegetable oil), carried out quality and quantity checks for these commodities and then handed them over to the Ministry of Education for storage and distribution to the schools supported by WFP. At each of the schools, there was a mess committee comprised of teachers and student representatives, with equal representation of men and women, to oversee the overall management of the mess.

In 2017, 44.6 percent of the total food requirement was procured from the local market (most these food items, however, were actually imported from India), while 55.4 percent was procured internationally or regionally. Rice was always procured locally since it was not only cheaper but also allowed for better control over the delivery and quality of the rice. Local procurement contributed towards the development of the local market, giving opportunities to the local traders and mills to supply. 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 2017.

During the same year, WFP established capacity with a private sector company to blend white rice with reconstituted fortified rice kernels. Upon the request of the Government, similar capacity will also be established within the Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited. This encompasses both establishing the necessary infrastructure as well as training of staff and introducing quality control measures throughout production as well as post production. In addition, the establishment of a national standard for fortified rice will be initiated, including support to develop national level regulations, legislation and enforcement capacity.

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 distributions to schoolchildren.

On the improvement of supply chain models, WFP continued its collaboration with HELP Logistics of the Kuenhe Foundation, Singapore office, a non-profit organization supporting humanitarian supply chain and logistics operations. WFP and Kuehne Foundation conducted a workshop to discuss the different supply chain models, which resulted in detailed recommendations on the implementation of these models.



## Annual Food Purchases for the Country (mt)

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
Chickpeas	-	40	40
Rice	400	416	816
Split Peas	-	22	22
Vegetable Oil	-	18	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>896</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>44.6%</b>	<b>55.4%</b>	

## Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

The WFP Office of Evaluation commissioned an external team to conduct an independent mid-term evaluation of WFP's development project (DEV 200300) to provide accountability, learning, and evidence-based findings to inform operational and strategic decision-making. The mission took place in-country in March 2016, and looked into the appropriateness of the school meals programme, the results of the programme, and how the programme produced the observed results.

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.**  
 In 2017, activities were ongoing to assess the composition and better understand what is provided in school meals, looking at the quantities consumed and nutritional quality in the school meals programme. As part of an approach to strengthen the links between school meals, school health, school agriculture and nutrition education, efforts were made to improve the nutritional quality of the school meals. In the 2017 academic school year, WFP started the distribution of fortified rice, reaching 15,951 school children.
- Conduct a situational analysis for school meals.**  
 The study was commissioned at the end of 2016, but was only completed in April 2017. A presentation was made to the School Feeding Technical Committee where the study was formally accepted. In August 2017, a follow-up presentation was made during the initial consultation meeting held at start of the process for the development of a National School Feeding (School Nutrition) strategy, in lieu of a policy.
- Management of the School Feeding Technical Committee.**  
 The secretariat function of the School Feeding Technical Committee has now been fully transferred to the School Health and Nutrition Division. In order for the School Feeding Technical Committee to gradually take on more responsibilities for the technical assistance elements of the project, coaching of the members of the technical committee by WFP remains important.

In 2017 there was a follow-up mission by HELP Logistics based on their initial mission in 2016. The recommendations of the mission on the optimization of the supply chain for the National School Feeding Programme have been turned into pilots which are set to be implemented starting in 2018, and have been included in the 2018 annual work plans. Linkages for farm-to-school remain challenging, especially as the Food Corporation of Bhutan Ltd. (FCBL) finds linking farm to school should be more a role for its farm shops. Procurement support has been provided to FCBL for the procurement of fortified rice kernels for the production of fortified rice in Bhutan.



# Project Results

## Activities and Operational Partnerships

**Strategic Objective 4:** Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger

**Outcome:** 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 access education through government-run day and boarding schools. While the Government facilitated the feeding of boarding students, WFP supported schools—mostly primary day schools for children aged 6 to 15 years—located in the remote parts of the country, and communities that are vulnerable to food insecurity and have limited access to markets. The food basket for the school meals provided by WFP consisted of fortified rice (275 g per child per day), chickpeas (20 g per child per day), yellow split peas (20 g per child per day) and vegetable oil (20 g per child per day). The two meals a day—breakfast and lunch—provided by WFP covered around two-thirds of the daily required calories, 62 percent of which was from the WFP provided commodities. Parents complemented the four staple foods from WFP with vegetables and spices. WFP supported 23 percent of the total number of children receiving school meals in the country.

**Strategic Objective 4:** Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger

**Outcome:** 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 depends on the Ministry of Education's ability to take on more operational responsibilities. WFP's role has changed from direct implementer to provider of technical assistance. Under this project, four pillars of capacity development were identified, based on a road map developed following the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) exercise: i) joint policy analysis and priority setting; ii) supply chain management; iii) programme management, oversight and monitoring; as well as iv) nutrition.

### *i) Policy analysis and priority setting*

WFP worked closely with the Ministry of Education on the drafting of a school feeding policy document known as the School Nutrition Strategy and Implementation Plan. This was preceded by a situation analysis for school meals which started in 2016 and was finalized in April 2017 when the School Feeding Technical Committee accepted the report. The situational analysis also brought together elements of earlier WFP studies as well as vulnerability and nutrition data and reports from Government and other United Nations agencies. This report became the basis document upon which to develop a strategy document, and was presented during a consultation workshop which brought together representatives from different parts of the country working in education and related sectors. The School Feeding Technical Committee presented the strategy document to higher managers in the Ministry of Education in December 2017, and the strategy will go through a vetting and approval process in 2018.

### *ii) Supply chain management*

A follow-up mission was conducted by staff from the HELP Logistics. During this visit, further research was conducted on the supply chain run by the Food Corporation of Bhutan Ltd. (FCBL) on behalf of the Ministry of Education for the national school feeding programme. The findings of this study were presented during a workshop and discussed in order to come up with a number of pilot activities to conduct in 2018 to make the supply chain more cost-efficient.

### *iii) Programme management, oversight and monitoring*

The Government's existing monitoring and reporting systems for the school feeding programme are mostly based on self-reporting by schools and districts with challenges related to the timeliness and verifiability of data and information for monitoring and evaluation purposes. Therefore, WFP supported the Ministry of Education to develop an integrated information technology platform for monitoring and reporting covering not only school feeding results but also school health, agriculture and education related activities. A prototype has been developed and tested in two districts in 2017. An online system is planned for development in 2018.

Further, WFP supported the recruitment of three staff members to be temporarily placed in the School Health and Nutrition Division of the Ministry of Education in order to address the issue of staffing shortages to implement the

programme. WFP staff-members have been placed within the same office to provide on-the-job training to staff.

#### *iv) Nutrition*

A dietary assessment to better understand the nutrient intake in government supported schools was conducted covering different seasons in the year.

The "integrated approach", a proof of concept activity to improve the health and nutrition of the school children, strengthened the link between the School Meals Programme, the School Agriculture Programme, the School Health Programme and Nutrition Education.

To address micronutrient deficiencies among schoolchildren, WFP supported the Government to introduce fortified rice to the school feeding food basket from the 2017 academic session. At the same time, WFP continued to work towards designing and developing a suitable in-country blending facility for rice fortification. WFP contracted a local rice mill to blend imported fortified rice kernels with local white rice.

### **Operational Partnerships**

WFP support in Bhutan is coordinated by the Gross National Happiness Commission, the planning body of the Royal Government of Bhutan. On the operational side, the Ministry of Education was the main counterpart of WFP and the lead agency responsible for the national school feeding programme. WFP partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests on rice fortification and the school agriculture programme. In addition, through the School Feeding Technical Committee, WFP worked closely with the Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance in coordinating technical assistance to the school feeding programme.

Under the umbrella of the United Nations One Programme, WFP partnered with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) under the education outcome group through a common work plan with the Royal Government of Bhutan. In 2017, WFP continued to work together with other United Nations agencies and the Department of Disaster Management, under the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, in developing an emergency preparedness plan and conducted a two-day workshop on earthquake contingency planning. Following this and with support from the WFP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, WFP developed a full emergency preparedness and response proposal to work with the Department of Disaster Management.

## **Results**

**Strategic Objective 4:** Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger

**Outcome:** Increased equitable access to and utilization of education

**Activity:** School feeding programme

The outcome related to education was measured using net enrolment and retention rates. Both enrolment and retention rates in Bhutan were high at the outset of this project in 2014, and WFP support to the school meals programme helped maintain this equitable access to education. In 2017, the Ministry of Education took over support to 3,000 schoolchildren from WFP supported schools as part of the transition strategy whereby annually the Ministry of Education takes over an agreed number of children. WFP supported 15,951 school children in 171 schools in 2017, which was 94 percent of the planned figure of 17,000 children. A total of 1,150 mt of food was distributed, 76 percent of the planned distribution. The lower distribution of food was due to the lower number of children reached than planned, as well as variances in the number of local school session days due to holidays.

**Strategic Objective 4:** Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger

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

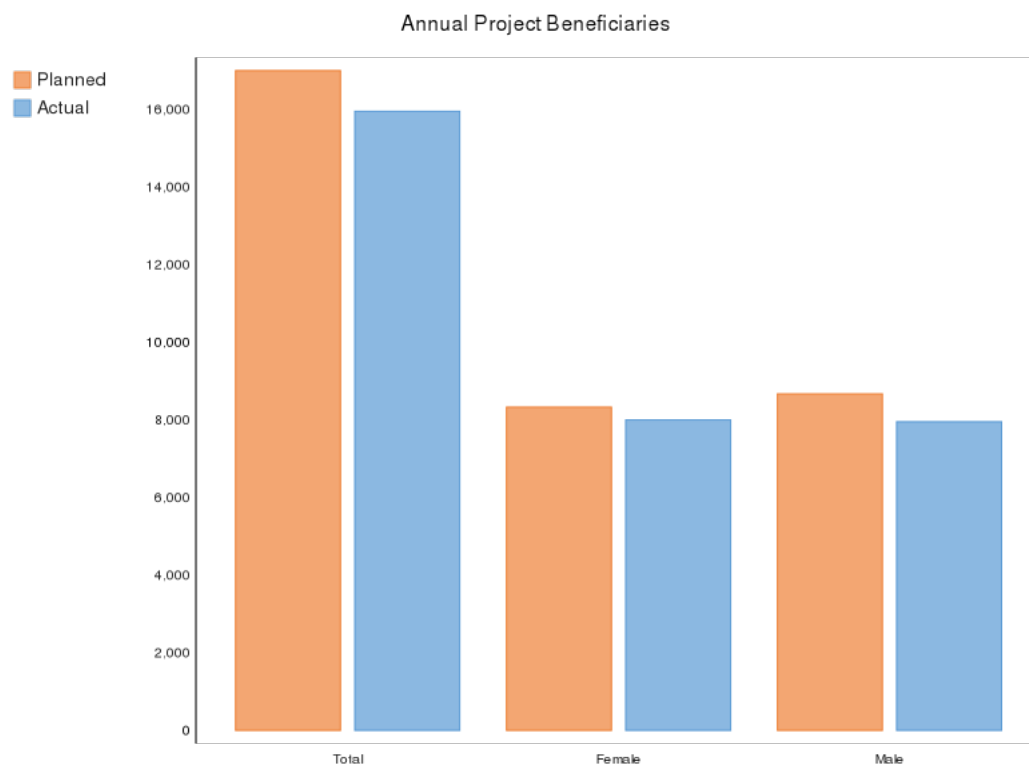
**Activity:** Capacity development—strengthening national capacities

The baseline for National Capacity Index (NCI) for the national school feeding programme was established in 2014 through the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) exercise. The road map which was developed based on the SABER exercise is reassessed annually and joint activities planned accordingly in the annual work plan between Ministry of Education and WFP. NCI data in 2015 and 2017 showed continuous strengthening of government capacity especially in terms of policy setting for school feeding.

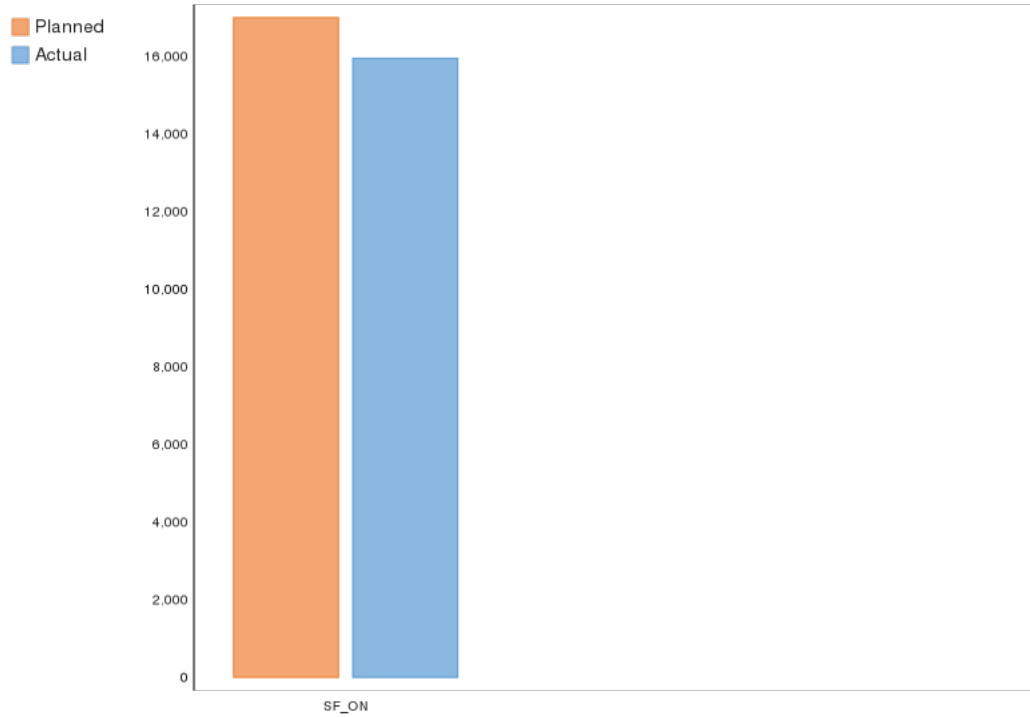
A total of 161 government and national partner staff received technical assistance and training in 2017. These staff consisted of officials at different levels and from different sectors including staff at the Ministry of Education headquarters, district education officers, teachers, cooks, staff from the Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited,

Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Gross National Happiness Commission and other partners. The number of people trained increased compared to previous years, as WFP focused more on building technical capacities of government counterparts. Areas of technical assistance and training included the “integrated approach” that brought together school nutrition and health planning and implementation, rice fortification, monitoring and reporting, dietary assessment, supply chain and support for the participation of counterparts in international and regional school feeding forums.

To support increased understanding of the ways school feeding can work with other sectors and learn from partners on a global level, WFP supported the participation of the Director General and Chief Programme Officer from the Ministry of Education in the 19th Global Child Nutrition Forum held in Montreal, Canada. As a follow-up to the First South Asia School Feeding Meeting organised in Bhutan in 2016, the second such meeting was organised in New Delhi, India, in 2017. A four person delegation from Bhutan took part in this meeting which provided the opportunity to learn from experiences with school feeding in neighbouring South Asian countries. There was high commitment to maintain this momentum and several countries have already volunteered to organise the next annual meeting in 2018, continuing an initiative that originated from Bhutan.

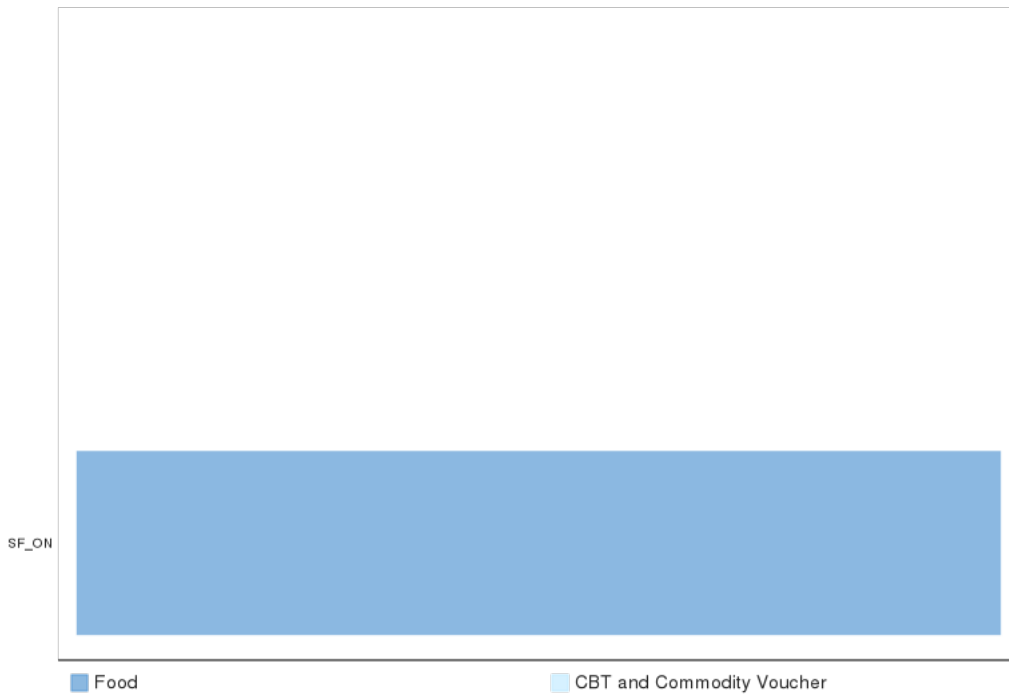


### Annual Project Beneficiaries by Activity



SF\_ON: School Feeding (on-site)

### Modality of Transfer by Activity



SF\_ON: School Feeding (on-site)



## Annual Project Food Distribution

Commodity	Planned Distribution (mt)	Actual Distribution (mt)	% Actual v. Planned
Chickpeas	90	68	75.8%
Rice	1,239	945	76.3%
Split Peas	90	68	75.7%
Vegetable Oil	90	68	75.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,509</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>76.2%</b>

## Performance Monitoring

Based on WFP's monitoring and evaluation framework for monitoring school meals activities, WFP Bhutan developed a monitoring plan for 2017. The plan detailed the list and timeframe of monitoring visits to schools.

The school feeding programme is government-led and is steadily relying less and less on WFP support. At times, WFP and the Government supported the same children within the same school, and attempted to align the targeting approach, food basket composition and programme monitoring. 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.

One of the areas identified during the SABER exercise for improvement was the monitoring and evaluation system for the national school feeding programme. In 2017, WFP helped develop a more comprehensive monitoring and reporting system for the school feeding programme. An Microsoft Excel based prototype for what should become an online monitoring and reporting system was developed and tested in a few selected schools. An information technology solution was preferred as the Internet connectivity is spreading steadily across Bhutan and almost every school is now connected with the Internet.

In 2017, WFP continued to cost-share a staff member in the Ministry of Education who monitored and visited both government-run and WFP-supported schools. In 2017, 22 percent of WFP-supported schools were visited. Based on the findings it was observed that schools continued to face shortages of proper storage space. With schools dispersed across difficult terrain, food was delivered every two to three months, which could result in storage challenges. To assess actual intake by students, a dietary assessment was carried out, the results of which will be available in early 2018. Preliminary analysis indicated that dietary requirements are not always met.

The overall indicator for progress in capacity development activities in the project framework is the National Capacity Index. While over a period of time this might help to measure progress, it was found to not be sensitive enough as a management indicator to monitor the effectiveness of capacity development activities. Therefore, WFP identified a set of indicators and an approach to monitor progress in terms of capacity development at the national and school level. A framework for the systematic analysis of the programme portfolio that is aligned with the corporate framework for capacity development was introduced. This entailed articulating WFP engagement across five pathways (policies and legislation; institutional coordination; strategic financing; programme design and delivery; and sustainability and continuity), defining activities, outputs, immediate outcomes, intermediate outcomes and impact level results. Indicators were defined for different timeframes: one year (outputs), two to three years (immediate outcomes), four to five years (intermediate outcomes) and long term (impact).

As part of WFP's 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 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 feedback from bilateral discussions between WFP and the Ministry of Education.

## Progress Towards Gender Equality

At the start of the current project the enrolment rates for girls and boys were almost equal at primary education level, at 96 percent for girls and 95 percent for boys in 2014. By 2017, the rates for girls were slightly higher than that for boys, at 96 percent and 93.7 percent, respectively. The retention rates for girls at primary level have reached 99.1 percent, while that for boys is at 97.9 percent. Overall, these high enrolment and completion rates are positively viewed, and WFP hopes to contribute to further improving these rates. The decrease in boys' enrolment in Ministry of Education schools may be attributed to boys who have enrolled in monastic schools where they receive meals.

Gender sensitisation continued to be included in all WFP activities, with a special focus on school feeding management training for teachers, both male and female, and cooks' training, where the participants were sensitised on gender equality and the importance of its application at schools.

WFP continued to promote equal representation of boys and girls, men and women in all school feeding management committees in WFP assisted schools. These committees, present in each supported school, oversaw and ensured proper management and provision of meals, empowering women and giving them increased leadership and decision-making opportunities, creating a platform for their ideas and concerns to be heard. This positive example created by WFP is now replicated in all schools as part of the national school feeding programme.

Anaemia remains a major public health problem with 44 percent of children aged 6-59 months and 31 percent of adolescent girls anaemic according to the National Nutrition Survey of 2015, and more than 1 in 5 preschool aged children (22 percent) deficient in vitamin A. In this context, the introduction of fortified rice in school meals has become a powerful tool to address these issues. With the Government adopting the technology for the entire school feeding programme in the country, and even considering going beyond school feeding, fortification can help address these micronutrient deficiencies.

## 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 2017. There were some safety challenges for girls camping near the schools in shacks and huts as informal boarding sites. Like in previous years, in 2017, the Royal Government of Bhutan identified vulnerable girls living informally as boarders and admitted them into boarding central schools.

WFP 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 of damaged food items.

Beneficiaries are aware of their food entitlements since WFP made it compulsory for every school to display the ration scale and daily menu on classroom boards, which were visible to all children. A school mess committee was formed in every school where student representatives formed a bridge between school management and the students, and such forums were also used as a feedback mechanism for the school children.

Given WFP's long history 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. Informal contact with children and the quarterly reports help to identify protection risks which were then referred to the parent ministry for redress.

## How school feeding can be a vehicle to take forward a broader development agenda

With the phasing out of in-kind WFP support to the school feeding programme in Bhutan approaching, WFP Bhutan had an internal and comprehensive reflection on its programme and the context in which the national school feeding programme takes place. In discussion with partners, a few areas were identified where technical support and improvements to the school feeding programme could benefit more holistically. The continued challenges Bhutan faces with regard to nutrition, especially micronutrient deficiencies, was one such issue, despite the prevalence of undernutrition having dropped over the years. Indeed, in recent years, there have been recurring incidents of micronutrient deficiencies in schools, which is a proxy for what happens in the population at large. The Government, WFP and partners agreed that fortification could be an important mechanism to start addressing this problem. However, fortification alone cannot resolve the larger problem which has elements of dietary habits, availability of diverse food, hygiene, food preparation, and health issues at large.

With rice being the major staple of the school feeding programme and of the larger part of the population throughout Bhutan, in discussion with government partners it was agreed that rice has the best potential to be a vehicle for micronutrients to reach a large number of people. In 2015, the initiative was kicked off with a visit by government officials from Bangladesh who shared their experience with their Bhutanese counterparts. It was agreed that school feeding would be the entry point for the initiative, with the objective to go beyond school feeding to institutional feeding (such as at hospitals and the Royal Bhutan Police), and at a further stage also making fortified rice available to the public at large. A landscape analysis confirmed that the market for rice fortification was sound and that this approach was feasible.

Starting in 2017, all rice WFP provided to schools was fortified, and by December 2017 even the Ministry of Education distributed fortified rice to all schools it supports. From 2018 onward, fortified rice will have replaced normal rice for the entire school feeding programme. To achieve this, WFP has worked with a newly established Food Fortification Task Force. Study visits were made to Bangladesh and India to learn from the experience in these countries, to see how rice fortification is integrated in national programmes and how the regulatory and legislative frameworks are set up, while also learning about technical challenges and meeting with fortified rice kernel suppliers. In parallel, WFP worked together with a private sector rice mill to set up fortified rice kernel blending capacity in the country. Along with this, technical assistance was provided on quality control and food safety issues, with Standard Operating Procedures developed and training provided.

Addressing micronutrient deficiencies with fortification only would be addressing the symptom, not the cause. The Bhutanese diet lacks diversity with high carbohydrate intake, and together with an increasingly sedentary life style, is one reason for the steadily increasing rate of non-communicable diseases, overweight and obesity. To combat this, dietary habits need to be improved. Changing dietary habits needs to go hand in hand with improved ways of preparing food, food safety, food quality, health related practices and, most importantly, all these measures need to complement and inform each other. To initiate this process, which will take many years, WFP started supporting the Ministry of Education to strengthen the links between school feeding and school health, school agriculture and nutrition education; not limiting this to the school alone but looking at outreach to involve parents and communities.

When the Ministry of Education introduced fortified rice in school feeding, the need for food safety and quality control became much more apparent and, as a result, the Ministry of Education started formalising its cooperation with the Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority (BAFRA). In turn, this has opened the door for WFP to work with them on food safety and quality issues, initially for school feeding, but the expertise transferred will be equally important for the BAFRA work as a whole. Similarly, the technical assistance and capacity development that WFP provides to the Food Corporation of Bhutan Limited. (FCBL) to deliver food to schools and work with fortified rice—in 2018, WFP will assist establishing blending capacity in FCBL—provides them with capacity for the other aspects of their mandate. These different strategic interventions clearly illustrate how working with government partners on school feeding can have an impact beyond school feeding alone.

# Figures and Indicators

## Data Notes

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Children who participate in the school feeding programme attend their morning assembly in Mongar, Bhutan.

## 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	8,670	8,330	17,000	7,953	7,998	15,951	91.7%	96.0%	93.8%
<b>By Age-group:</b>									
Children (5-18 years)	8,670	8,330	17,000	7,953	7,998	15,951	91.7%	96.0%	93.8%
<b>By Residence status:</b>									
Residents	8,670	8,330	17,000	7,953	7,998	15,951	91.7%	96.0%	93.8%

## 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)	17,000	-	17,000	15,951	-	15,951	93.8%	-	93.8%

## 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)	17,000	-	17,000	15,951	-	15,951	93.8%	-	93.8%



## 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)
<b>School Feeding (on-site)</b>									
Children receiving school meals in primary schools	8,670	8,330	17,000	7,953	7,998	15,951	91.7%	96.0%	93.8%
Total participants	8,670	8,330	17,000	7,953	7,998	15,951	91.7%	96.0%	93.8%
Total beneficiaries	8,670	8,330	17,000	7,953	7,998	15,951	91.7%	96.0%	93.8%

## Project Indicators

### Outcome Indicators

Outcome	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
<b>SO4 Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger</b>				
<b>Increased equitable access to and utilization of education</b>				
<b>Retention rate (girls) in WFP-assisted primary schools</b>				
<i>BHUTAN, Project End Target: 2018.12, Base value: 2013.12, Secondary data, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2016, Ministry of Education, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2017</i>	=100.00	96.20	99.10	99.10
<b>Retention rate (boys) in WFP-assisted primary schools</b>				
<i>BHUTAN, Project End Target: 2018.12, Base value: 2013.12, Secondary data, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2016, Ministry of Education, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2017</i>	=100.00	96.00	97.40	97.90
<b>Net Enrolment Rate (NER) (girls) in WFP-assisted primary schools</b>				
<i>BHUTAN, Project End Target: 2018.12, Base value: 2013.12, Secondary data, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2016, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2017</i>	=98.00	96.00	96.00	96.00
<b>Net Enrolment Rate (NER) (boys) in WFP-assisted primary schools</b>				
<i>BHUTAN, Project End Target: 2018.12, Base value: 2013.12, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2013, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2016, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, Secondary data, Annual Education Statistics 2017</i>	=97.00	95.00	93.60	93.70
<b>Ownership and capacity strengthened to reduce undernutrition and increase access to education at regional, national and community levels</b>				

Outcome	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
<b>NCI: School Feeding National Capacity Index</b>				
<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: 2017.12, Joint survey, Stakeholders consultation</i>	>14.00	11.00	12.00	13.00
<b>Hand-over strategy developed and implemented [1=not achieved; 2=partially achieved; 3=achieved]</b>				
<i>BHUTAN, Project End Target: 2018.12, Base value: 2013.12, WFP programme monitoring, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, WFP programme monitoring, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12, WFP programme monitoring</i>	=3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00

## Output Indicators

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
<b>SO4: Capacity Development - Strengthening National Capacities</b>				
Number of government/national partner staff receiving technical assistance and training	individual	130	161	123.8%
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	15	16	106.7%
<b>SO4: School Feeding (on-site)</b>				
Number of schools assisted by WFP	school	160	171	106.9%

## Gender Indicators

Cross-cutting Indicators	Project End Target	Base Value	Previous Follow-up	Latest Follow-up
<b>Proportion of women beneficiaries in leadership positions of project management committees</b>				
<i>BHUTAN, School Feeding (on-site), Project End Target: 2018.12, Base value: 2015.12, Previous Follow-up: 2016.12, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12</i>	=50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00

## Partnership Indicators

Cross-cutting Indicators	Project End Target	Latest Follow-up
<b>Number of partner organizations that provide complementary inputs and services</b>		
<i>BHUTAN, School Feeding (on-site), Project End Target: 2018.12, Latest Follow-up: 2017.12</i>	=8.00	8.00

## Resource Inputs from Donors

## Resource Inputs from Donors

Donor	Cont. Ref. No.	Commodity	Purchased in 2017 (mt)	
			In-Kind	Cash
Australia	AUL-C-00260-01	Chickpeas	-	23
Australia	AUL-C-00260-01	Rice	-	116
Australia	AUL-C-00260-01	Split Peas	-	17
Australia	AUL-C-00260-01	Vegetable Oil	-	18
Canada	CAN-C-00496-10	Rice	-	21
Canada	CAN-C-00496-22	Rice	-	357
MULTILATERAL	MULTILATERAL	Rice	-	18
Private Donors	WPD-C-02832-04	Chickpeas	-	17
Private Donors	WPD-C-02832-04	Split Peas	-	5
Private Donors	WPD-C-03761-04	Rice	-	4
		<b>Total</b>	-	<b>596</b>