



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief December 2019



Operational Context

Bhutan will transition to lower Middle-Income Level status by 2023 and considers WFP's support critical to this transition process.

The national poverty rate, as measured by the international poverty line of USD 1.90 per person per day (PPP), has fallen from 23 percent in 2007 to 8.2 percent in 2017.

Although people's overall nutritional status has improved, health problems related to a lack of nutritional and balanced diets remain a challenge, including micronutrient deficiencies.

Bhutan remains highly vulnerable to earthquakes but lacks the necessary data information systems, response plans and coordination systems to adequately prepare for emergencies.

WFP has been present in Bhutan since 1974.



Population: **0.73 million**

2015 Human Development Index: **132 out of 188**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **21.2% of children between 6-59 months**

Highlights

WFP, along with high level government officials, took part in the [Global Child Nutrition Forum](#) (GCNF) in Cambodia. This forum consolidated partnerships with various country representatives and helped convey a greater understanding of WFP's role in school feeding and addressing malnutrition.

WFP has contracted a company to develop a social and behaviour change communication strategy for improved dietary and health practices among Bhutan's 6-18-year-old school students.

WFP hosted a workshop on emergency telecommunications to improve understanding of telecommunications' important role in preparedness and response.

Operational Updates

- WFP supported the participation of Government officials in the 21st Global Child Nutrition Forum (GCNF) in Siem Reap, Cambodia from December 2-6, 2019. The Minister of Education, accompanied by eight officials from various government agencies and WFP, participated in the forum. The Minister of Education met with the Cambodian Education Minister and had a fruitful discussion on possible ways to learn from one another's experience in school nutrition and feeding programmes. The Minister also met with the WFP Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific and shared Bhutan's plans and strategies for addressing issues related to school nutrition. The forum provided opportunities for the Bhutanese government officials to gain a broader understanding of the significance of school feeding programmes globally and their role in addressing malnutrition and improving educational outcomes for children. It also helped them to appreciate WFP's role in school nutrition and feeding in Bhutan, paving the way for a smoother collaboration in the future. The officials also had several side meetings with representatives from selected countries to learn how the school feeding programme is being implemented in their countries.
- WFP is taking a social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) approach to support the Government in promoting healthy eating practices among school students. As part of this approach, WFP is contracting a company to develop a baseline report, SBCC strategy, as well as a monitoring and evaluation plan and impact study design. These initiatives aim to not only promote healthy eating practices, but also to create long-term demand for local, fresh and nutritious food.

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WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Jan-Jun 2020 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
8.9 m	5.32 m	0.0 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: School-age children, women and vulnerable groups in Bhutan have improved nutrition in line with national targets by 2023

Focus area: Root Causes

Activities:

- Assist the Government in its transition to a national school nutrition programme based on an integrated approach to school feeding that connects school feeding with nutrition education, school health and school agriculture and embeds gender across all activities, strengthened supply chains and school nutrition infrastructure optimization.
- Provide technical assistance to the Government and the national food production and trade sectors to ensure that sound policies are in place and ensure quality and safety of fortified foods, especially rice, throughout their supply chains.

Strategic Result 5: Countries have strengthened capacities to implement the SDGs

Strategic Outcome 2: Government has strengthened capability to address food security and nutrition challenges and prepare for and respond to crises, including those resulting from climate change, by 2023.

Focus area: Root Causes

Activities:

- Provide the Government with gender-informed and vulnerability-focused capacity strengthening relevant to its management of national emergency resources, development, enhancement and testing of national emergency response plans and coordination systems, through WFP's leadership of the emergency logistics and communications sectoral working group.

Challenges

- Bhutan lacks a full awareness of disaster risks, partly compounded by the fact that the country has not faced major disasters in recent times. There is low awareness on the relationship between disasters and its impact on food security. WFP is therefore working with government partners to increase national disaster awareness.
- While the implementing partners in nutrition are highly committed, their numbers are limited, which hinders their ability to support the implementation of national health and nutrition strategies. WFP is therefore supporting the Department for Disaster Management to build stronger national capacity to prepare and respond to disasters.

Photo: © WFP Bhutan/ Dungkar Drukpa. Bhutan's Education Minister, Government officials and WFP staff at the GCNF, Cambodia (December 2019)

- WFP facilitated an Emergency Telecommunications workshop in partnership with the Department of Information Technology and Telecom, which saw the participation of 45 stakeholders from government agencies, international development partners and private sectors. This workshop focused on operational requirements for major disaster response, to ensure enhanced and uninterrupted emergency telecommunications during emergencies. Participants engaged in a discussion on how to enhance disaster response, as well as their needs and strategies in the response. Based on the workshop, an Emergency Telecommunication Preparedness and Response Action Plan on Emergency Communications will be developed for Bhutan.
- WFP, in collaboration with School Health and Nutrition Division, Ministry of Education, conducted a review of the school monitoring and reporting system. During this review, which marked a year of implementation, WFP received feedback from counterparts. The Ministry also decided to mainstream the system into their Education Management Information System (EMIS), which will be a one-stop data centre for all education-related statistics. In 2020, WFP will support the Ministry in integrating the module into EMIS.
- In support of establishing the 72 Hours Needs Assessment Approach, WFP representatives from the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific conducted a mission in Bhutan. During this mission, they coordinated with Geographic Information System (GIS) officers from various government sectors and trained them on the geographic preparedness, data availability, data cleaning and data linking between relevant stakeholders. The mission helped to create the overall list of data needed for key indicators and identified data gaps. This included converting existing data formats into the geographic structure so that the data set is ready for use during disaster. The mission also evaluated capacity in key government sectors in terms of people, hardware, software and proposed spatial data infrastructure setup plans and options.

Donors

Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) – confirmed for the next four years;
Australia,
Canada