



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief January 2020



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 saw major progress in its work related to disaster risk management, presenting an Emergency Telecommunication Cluster (ETC) Roadmap to government officials as an outcome of the recently-held ETC workshop in the capital.

WFP's contribution towards improved nutrition was seen during a winter camp programme that taught rural students about nutrition through locally sourced food and interactive game-based sessions.

WFP continues to support capacity strengthening activities for its government beneficiaries, as exemplified by training sessions for cooks and teachers held within Bhutan, as well as a training for Bhutanese nutrition and food safety lab technicians in Singapore.

Operational Updates

- WFP presented the ETC Roadmap to the Department of Information Technology and Telecom in January, with the focus on strategic components and operational requirements to ensure uninterrupted telecommunications during disasters. This was an outcome of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) workshop held in December 2019. WFP will enlist a volunteer from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to assist in taking forward the ETC Roadmap.

These activities form part of initiatives to transfer essential technical skills and operational knowledge to national responders. WFP will also hire an international consultant with experience in disaster risk management to lead and take forward WFP's support to disaster coordination, data preparedness, logistics and emergency telecommunication activities.

- WFP partnered with JICA in Bhutan to organize a winter camp for highland students from Laya Central School in Punakha district, a remote area inhabited by Yak herders. WFP facilitated interactive game-based sessions to the children to advance their knowledge on food, nutrition and dietary habits. WFP also provided nutritious meals using local food, for the camp's duration.
- The programme, held in the town of Khuruthang, also taught the students through sessions on health and physical education, arts and crafts, music, martial arts, customised lectures on the sustainable farming system, waste management, machinery and construction.

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Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/Bhutan

WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Feb-Jul 2020 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
8.9 m	5.3 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.

- In a major capacity strengthening drive targeting school cooks and teachers, WFP supported the School Health and Nutrition Department of the Ministry of Education in a training programme involving 109 school cooks and 28 teachers from 15 schools. Held in the eastern district of Tashigang and the western district of Punakha, the programme allowed participants to gain deeper insights into areas related to food preparation, school feeding and nutrition management programme. The sessions were held in four batches between 8 to 30 January 2020. Capacity strengthening activities related to food safety, improved dietary habits and nutrition education have been identified as major WFP contributions in the Country Strategic Plan 2019-23.
- WFP also supported a capacity strengthening activity of laboratory technicians from Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority. WFP supported two participants from the organization to receive training at Romer Labs Singapore Pte Ltd in Singapore on operation and troubleshooting of laboratory equipment called high performance liquid chromatography, which is used for vitamin analysis. The activity is part of WFP's overall contribution towards the capacity strengthening initiatives of government officials in various fields including nutrition and food safety.

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.

Donors

- [Korean International Cooperation Agency \(KOICA\)](#)
- [The Government of Australia](#)
- [The Government of Canada](#)

Photo: © World Food Programme /Udaya Sharma. School Children from Laya engaged in an interactive learning session during the winter camp in Punakha organized by JICA with support from WFP