



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief November 2020



WFP
SAYS
NO to
GENDER
BASED
VIOLENCE

Highlights

Earthquake Impact Planning (EQUIP) Study Dissemination Workshop: WFP, together with the Department of Disaster Management launched an EQUIP study workshop from 25-27 November. The study was conducted with Durham University and produced, for the first-time, quantifiable numbers of earthquake impacts in Bhutan in terms of fatalities, injuries and displaced persons in 110 possible scenarios.

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**

Operational Updates

1. The EQUIP workshop kicked off sector preparedness to identify preparedness and mitigation measures across eight clusters (food security, health, logistics, WASH, housing, emergency telecommunications, public order, and power and energy) formed by government officials and development partners. Participants identified measures such as reinforcing buildings, and prepositioning of water, food and medicine to remote areas, to save lives and livelihoods and build stronger national earthquake resilience. These measures will be further elaborated and tested through a functional simulation exercise in 2021.
2. WFP continued to support the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests to implement agriculture production and marketing under the Economic Contingency Plan programme, particularly in Trongsa and Zhemgang. Through funding from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), WFP finalized the list of interventions with its implementing partners (the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture Marketing and Cooperatives) to expedite activity implementation, focused at critical stages of the food system. These activities will prioritize post-harvest handling and management, agriculture marketing, livelihood zoning, and capacity strengthening of local service providers and farmers.
3. WFP convened the third and last technical webinar between Bhutan’s national food testing laboratory and the Association of Official Analytical Collaboration, Indian chapter. The session was on: “Building robust food testing – experiences from India and global food trade and regulations.”

Contact info: Gopi Chandra Kharel (gopichandra.kharel@wfp.org)
Country Director: Svante Helms
Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/Bhutan

WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Dec 2020 – Jan 2021 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.

Challenges

- Bhutan has limited awareness about its disaster risks, compounded by the fact that the country has not faced major disasters in recent times. There are also some knowledge gaps on the relationship between disasters and its impact on food security. In response, WFP is 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.

4. WFP submitted with the Ministry of Health a rice fortification [poster](#) titled “A Multi-sectoral Approach Towards Improving the Micronutrient Status of School Children in Bhutan Through Inclusion of Fortified Rice in School Meals” at the [global Micronutrient Forum](#).
5. WFP supported a technical workshop to develop a management protocol for Glossitis outbreaks amongst school children.
6. Together with the Ministry of Education, WFP is developing a handbook for the management of the national school nutrition and feeding programme. A consultation workshop with 32 selected schools in eastern Bhutan was held on 23-25 November 2020. In the same workshop, the Ministry provided feedback on the functionality of the WFP-supported online monitoring and reporting system for school health and nutrition. This system will be integrated into the Education Management Information System (EMIS) of the Ministry of Education.
7. A joint visit by officials from School Health and Nutrition Division and WFP was made to Zhemgang central school to assess its existing kitchen and store for improvements needed to ensure food safety and hygiene in the provision of nutritious meals to school children.



Photo page one: Opening of Earthquake Impact Planning (EQUIP) Dissemination workshop funded by WFP. © WFP/Jigme Tenzin -

Photo page two: Vegetable production under ECP supported by WFP. © WFP/Binai Lama -