



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief January 2022



Operational Context

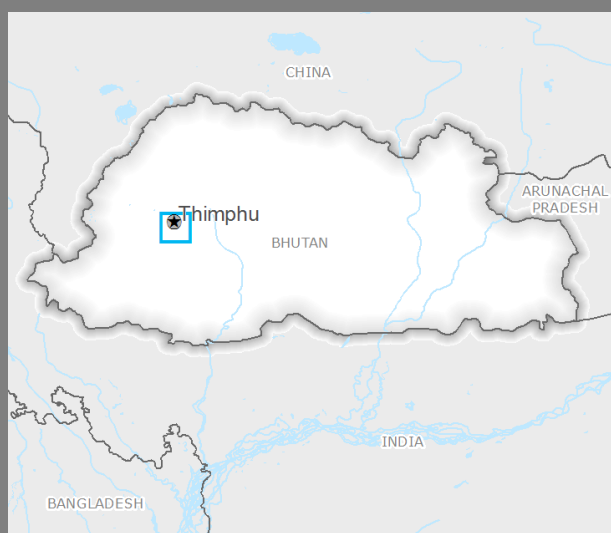
Bhutan will transition to Lower Middle-Income Level status by 2023 and considers WFP's support critical to this transition process.

The national poverty rate, as measured by the international poverty line of US\$ 1.9 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, together with the Ministry of Education, introduced the [School Menu Planner \(SMP\) PLUS](#) tool to schools in Tsirang district, which has over 3,800 students in its school feeding programme.

Field production of Pinda's Magic Bowl, a TV series promoting healthy diet among children, supported by WFP, was completed and post-production is underway.

Operational Update

- WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, rolled out the School Meal Planner (SMP) PLUS tool in Tsirang district. It covered 17 schools with 3,828 students.

Prior to the roll-out, WFP organized a workshop to familiarize participants with the PLUS tool. Participants included officials from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Cooperatives, and the Department of Agriculture. This also included teachers, and officials from district education, health, and agriculture offices.

WFP continues to test and improve the tool with the Ministry of Education. The digital tool will help to create optimal school menus, reducing costs and increasing nutrition by using locally sourced ingredients.

- With shooting of Pinda's Magic Bowl, a five-episode TV series completed, post-production work has started. The first episode is ready for broadcast. This WFP-supported series aims to promote healthy diets to its target audience of children aged 6-13 years. Edutainment is an effective tool for changing health behaviours; nutrition education will help children and their families make informed food choices and practice healthy eating habits. The series will be launched in March 2022.
- WFP conducted monitoring and evaluation of its agriculture programme through a year-end meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests and other implementing partners.

As part of programme monitoring, WFP also conducted a spot check on the Department of Agriculture. The spot check assessed due diligence and appropriate fund utilization in WFP supported components.

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WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Feb-Jul 2022 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
8.94 m	6.36 m	0.00 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

- The surge in community transmission of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 resulted in the lockdown of most districts in the country, including Thimphu. This has affected implementation and monitoring of activities.

Donors

KOICA; First-line of Defence (USAID); Global Logistics Cluster support; WFP internal funds

Photo Page 1: Officials representing various school feeding programme stakeholders in Tsirang attended a PLUS tool familiarisation workshop. @ WFP/Udaya Sharma

Photo Page 2: WFP staff with members of a farmers' group in Zhemgang © WFP

WFP reported progress and lessons learned from these monitoring and evaluation activities to stakeholders through the United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF) year-end outcome group meeting.

In 2021, WFP supported 147 farmers groups and cooperatives, comprising of 1,959 farmers (of which 65 percent were women), to gain more sustainable income. This was achieved by establishing market linkages with 96 schools and three hospitals where school feeding programmes were already in place. Through this initiative, 40 government officials also benefitted from a direct capacity strengthening programme/training and study exchange that enabled the provision of sound technical support to the farmers.

