



World Food Programme

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WFP Bhutan Country Brief June 2023



WFP Deputy Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, Anthea Webb, with the chairperson of Kuenphen farmers group, Kinley Dema, in Punakha. © WFP/Kinley Wangmo

Operational Context

As Bhutan transitions from the Least Developed Country category by end of 2023, WFP's support remains critical to the transition process.

The national poverty rate, as measured by the international poverty line of US\$1.9 per person per day, decreased from 23 percent in 2007 to 8.2 percent in 2017.

Although the population's overall nutritional status has improved, there is a 'triple burden of malnutrition' with undernutrition, overnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. These are related to a lack of knowledge and access to nutritious and diversified foods.

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 in Bhutan since 1974.



Population: **0.66 million**

Chronic malnutrition: **21% of children under five**

Income Level: **Low-income**

2021/22 Human Development Index: **127 out of 191 countries**

Highlights

To reaffirm WFP's commitment to Bhutan – as the country graduates from Least Developed Country status by the end of 2023 – the Deputy Regional Director (DRD) for WFP Asia and the Pacific, Anthea Webb, visited Bhutan from 12 to 16 June. During her mission, the DRD met with government counterparts, visited a school under the National School Feeding and Nutrition Programme, and met members of a farmers group.

Operational Update

- The Deputy Regional Director (DRD) for WFP Asia and Pacific, Anthea Webb, was on a mission from 12 to 16 June. During the visit, the DRD met with government counterparts, visited a school, and met with members of a farmers' group. In the meetings with government officials, the DRD expressed WFP's support to Bhutan, as the country graduates from Least Developed Country status. The government is currently formulating its 13th Five-Year Plan. The DRD reiterated WFP's commitment in aligning the Country Strategic Plan (2024-2028) to the Government's 13th plan.
- WFP, in partnership with Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock MoAL) conducted out community consultations in Trashigang District to gain insights into climate change adaptation techniques to address crop loss for smallholder farmers. Fifty-one farmers participated in the consultations. The consultations were carried out as part of proposal development to be submitted to the Adaptation Fund's Large Innovation Grant. In Bhutan, there is no crop insurance while climate events are increasingly causing crop loss.
- WFP initiated the Consolidated Livelihood Exercise for Analyzing Resilience (CLEAR)+ in preparation for the Building Resilient Commercial Smallholder Agriculture (BRECSA) project. CLEAR+ is an analytical approach, developed by WFP to understand how food security and nutrition are or will be affected by the climate crisis. CLEAR+ seeks to align and enhance the results from the National

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WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2019 – 2023)

Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated contributions (in US\$)	July – December 2023 net funding requirements (in US\$)
8.94 m	7.04 m	0.59 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 national school nutrition programme based on an integrated approach to school feeding that connects school feeding with nutrition education, school health and school agriculture, 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 the 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 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.

Donors

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), World Bank, First-line of Defence (USAID), Global Logistics Cluster support, WFP internal funds

Adaptation Plan to identify climate-resilient livelihoods and value chains for the formulation of agriculture resilience plans. WFP met with officials from the MoAL and shared insights on the methodological approach of the tool.

- WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD) and the Ministry of Health (MoH), carried out a baseline knowledge, attitude, and practices (KAP) survey from 29 May to 7 June in 15 schools in Chhukha and Thimphu districts. With a sample size of 390 randomly selected schoolchildren, the survey measured knowledge, attitude, and practices around healthy diets. The KAP survey is part of the social behaviour change and communication action plan rollout. A similar survey will be carried out among the same group of schoolchildren to measure changes after exposure to SBCC campaigns and activities. Findings will inform the MoESD and MoH on whether to scale-up the SBCC campaign.
- WFP donated a fixed-wing drone to the De-Suong (Guardians of Peace) to support the national service's emergency preparedness and response. WFP supports the De-Suong in emergency coordination, logistics and response.

