



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bhutan Country Brief August 2023



Students playing an Emo-Demo game at Chapcha school, Chhukha district. Photo: Susan Shulman/WFP

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 and again increased to 12.4 in 2022.

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 disaster event 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

WFP and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock conducted two workshops and had discussions about the progress and the way forward for the Adaptation Fund large innovation grant proposal.

The *Eat Kheta, Be Seta (Eat Smart, Be Smart)* healthy diets campaign was fully underway at 15 pilot schools in Thimphu and Chhukha districts, where teachers trained in July provided onward training to their colleagues, students, and parents on the project's core healthy diet messages.

Operational Update

- WFP, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture (DoA), organized a workshop for the proposal development of the Adaptation Fund large innovation grant on 8 August. Participants included a total of 18 participants (six women and 12 men) from DoA, Tarayana Foundation, Respect, Educate, Nurture, and Empower Women (RENEW), College of Natural Resources (CNR), Agriculture Logistics and Marketing Cooperatives, National Soil Services Centre, Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation, National Seed Centre, and Agriculture Research and Development Centres (ARDC). The workshop identified secondary innovations to complement the primary innovation of climate risk insurance for smallholder farmers with inputs from DoA, ARDC, and CNR.
- WFP, in collaboration with the DoA, held a taskforce meeting to discuss the progress of and the way forward for the Adaptation Fund large innovation grant proposal. The meeting was attended by 12 participants (five women and seven men) from DoA, Department of Macro-fiscal and Development Finance, RENEW, Tarayana Foundation, Bhutan Insurance Limited, and Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan Limited. The main objective was to update on the current progress and the way forward on project implementation arrangements.
- In August, 30 trained focal point teachers at 15 pilot schools in Thimphu and Chhukha organised events and activities at their schools using the *Eat Kheta, Be Seta (Eat Smart, Be Smart)* materials and guidance. They offered training to school staff on the messaging and use of social behaviour change materials. As a result, some teachers delivered nutrition training sessions at the parent-teacher meetings and to host school events, where students played an interactive, participatory game known as emotional demonstrations (Emo-Demos) and "Snacks and Ladder" game designed to illustrate key nutritional messages.

WFP Bhutan Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2019 – 2023)

Total Requirements (in US\$)	Allocated contributions (in US\$)	September 2023 – February 2024 net funding requirements (in US\$)
8.94 m	7.35 m	0.09 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.

- WFP and the Health and Wellbeing Division of the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD) trained 29 school cooks (2 women and 27 men), 23 mess in-charges, 1 district education officer and 1 principal from 24 selected schools in Samdrup Jongkhar District. Participants learnt about the basic concepts of nutrition, food safety, hygiene, and sanitation with proper preparation of healthy and nutritious school meals, food store management, bookkeeping and reporting requirements for the National School Feeding and Nutrition Programme.
- With funding support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), WFP and MoESD successfully completed construction of kitchens and stores in 15 selected school across the country. The design of the new school kitchens and stores improved food preparation and storage functionality that further enhanced health and hygiene behaviours of the kitchen staff. With the positive benefits resulting from these new kitchens and stores, WFP and MoESD will develop a minimum standard for school kitchens and stores to be applied to all kitchens and stores in schools in the country.



Training the school cooks on proper food preparation of nutritious school meals. Photo: Kencho Wangmo /WFP

Donors

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