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1, San Martin Marg
Chanakyapuri
New Delhi - 110 021 INDIA
Tel: +91-11-26111875, 26111877
Fax: +91-11-26111861
Email: newdelhi@unesco.org

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BHUTAN
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Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASPnet	UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network
BMCI	Bhutan Media and Communications Institute
C2C	UNESCO Category-2 Centre
CPD	Committee of Development Policy
CR	Community Radio
DaO	Delivering as One
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
EFA	Education for All
EPR	Education Policy Reform, UNESCO Asia and the Pacific
FYP	Five Year Plans
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GLOF	Glacial Lake Outburst Floods
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GRE	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GNH	Gross National Happiness
GNHC	Gross National Happiness Commission
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICSSR	Indian Council of Social Science Research
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IHP	International Hydrological Programmes
IPDC	The International Programme for the Development of Communication
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MAB	Man and the Biosphere Programme

MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MLA	Main Lines of Action
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoIC	The Ministry of Information and Communications
NFCED	Non-Formal and Continuing Education Division
NFEP	Non-Formal Education Programme
NKRAs	National Key Result Areas
NPAG	National Plan of Action for Gender
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
REC	Royal Education Council of RGoB
RGoB	The Royal Government of Bhutan
SAARC	The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SACAM	South and Central Asia MAB Network
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFFA	SAARC Framework for Action
SHS	Social and Human Sciences
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
SWAN	South Asia Women's Network
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education & Training
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO HQ	UNESCO Headquarters

Foreword

I am pleased to present the UNESCO Country Programming Document (UCPD) for Bhutan, 2014-2017, which outlines the Organization's strategic cooperation framework and its programmes in Bhutan.

Bhutan has been a member of UNESCO since 1982 and over the years has received technical and material support from UNESCO which has contributed in meeting the challenges faced by the young democratic Bhutanese society and sustaining its centuries-old, rich cultural and natural heritage in the backdrop of rapid socioeconomic developments.

This document highlights UNESCO's contribution, draws on lessons from UNESCO's past efforts and presents the Organization's future commitment in a comprehensive manner. It gives an overview of all UNESCO's activities in Bhutan as well as its on-going cooperation with the Royal Government of Bhutan and other UN partners and international donors.

This document comprises of the following sections:

- A situational analysis of Bhutan which sets out the country's priorities, focus areas, sector challenges and the strengthening of the relationship between the Royal Government of Bhutan and UNESCO.
- UNESCO's past, present and proposed cooperation with the Royal Government of Bhutan, outlining the lessons learnt and key achievements as well as providing an indication of the future of UNESCO's activities in Bhutan.
- Finally, details of UNESCO's collaborative efforts already established in Bhutan with its various partners, both national and international.

The Bhutan-UCPD overlaps with UNESCO's programme and budget for 2012-2013 and the draft programme and budget for the next quadrennial, 2014-2017. It also covers the period 2014-2018 in line with the current Bhutan Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF): Bhutan One Programme which provides the framework for UN's collective work in Bhutan. The Bhutan UNDAF 2014-18 prepared in partnership with the Gross

National Happiness Commission (GNHC) and line ministries of the Royal Government of Bhutan, and the United Nations in Bhutan, is co-signed by the GNHC and UN agencies in Bhutan.

The UNDAF: Bhutan One Programme is a strategic programme framework which follows the latest approach for enhancing UN coherence on a volunteering basis, known as Delivering as One (DaO); Bhutan adopted this in 2008. UNDAF describes the UN system's collective response to national development priorities, and as such is a significant tool in the evolving process of enhancing coherence and harmonization of UN's work in the host country. Under the current UNDAF, four main outcome areas have been identified: Sustainable Development, Essential Social Services, Gender Equality and Child Protection and Good Governance and Participation. These outcomes were validated by United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and aligned with the priorities of the 11th Five Year Plan (FYP) as well as the pillars of Gross National Happiness (GNH). Notably, they serve as a critical bridge between the final years of the millennium development goals (MDGs) and the new post 2015 agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNESCO New Delhi follows a Cluster country focal point system. The function of the focal point is mainly to collect, update and file information on the respective Cluster country that he or she is responsible for in light of the political situation, UNCT activities, developing UNDAF, UNESCO activities and its partners. In addition, it also represents UNESCO at the UNCT activities as and when required. In this regard, the UNESCO New Delhi Cluster Office gratefully acknowledges the continuous support from the Royal Government of Bhutan, and commits itself to developing strategic joint partnerships and drawing on its strengths to deliver and carry on with messages in its fields of competence – Education, the Sciences, Culture and Communication and Information.



Shigeru Aoyagi

Director and UNESCO Representative to Bhutan,
India, Maldives and Sri Lanka



Part I

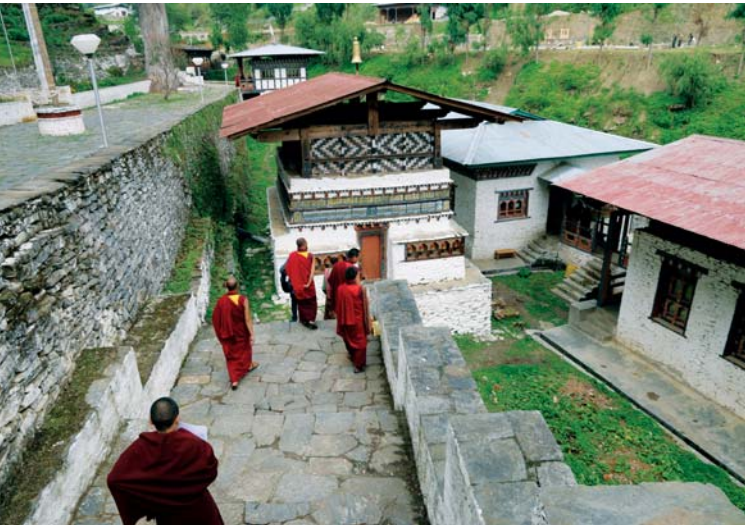
Situational Analysis

Part I: Situation Analysis

Existing Country Assessment

Statistical Overview

The Kingdom of Bhutan is a landlocked southern Asian state situated in the eastern part of the Himalayan mountain range covering a surface area of 38,394 sq km. Although steadily growing by 1.6 per cent annually, Bhutan's population of 765,008 in 2014 (Census figures), places it among the most sparsely populated countries in Asia at 16.3 citizens per sq km, and sets it apart from its neighbours China (which neighbours it in the north)



and India (bordering Bhutan in the south, east and west). Bhutan is experiencing a relatively high urban population growth rate -- an average annual 3.7 per cent increase. In 2014, 37.9 per cent of the country's total population was living in urban areas.¹

In 2014, the sex ratio of Bhutan was 116.1 males for every 100 females,² which is the highest figure in the region. With regard to adult literacy rates, the discrepancy between genders in terms of literacy rates of the population aged 15 and above gives a gender parity index value (GPI) of 0.78, meaning that there were 78 literate females for every 100 males. According to the UNESCO statistical data for 2015, the average literacy rate for the entire population was 63.91 per cent. The total indicator

of literacy showed an 11.1 per cent increase from 2005 to 2015. The discrepancy between genders with regard to literacy rates has also been improving since 2005, as reflected by a GPI increase from 0.6 in 2005 to 0.78 in 2015³.

The gross enrolment ratio (GRE) figures from 2005 to 2014 of the UNESCO data centre, show a steady increase in secondary and tertiary education enrolment rates with a 38.48 per cent increase for the secondary and a 6.19 per cent increase for the tertiary levels of education since 2005.

Nevertheless, the 2013 figures reflecting distribution of higher education

enrolment by gender, corresponding to the tertiary school age of 19 to 23 years, remain worrisome displaying a rather high disparity (GPI value of 0.74), which means that there were 74 females enrolled in tertiary education for every 100 males.

Disparities between genders in secondary education (13 to 18 years) was at a slight advantage for females with an enrolment rate of 87.06 per cent against 81.42 per cent for boys in 2014.⁴

Lastly, the country's public education expenditure has been relatively high and this is steadily rising since fiscal year 2012-2013. It was 18.5 per cent of the total expenditure for 2014-15 according to the annual financial statements released by the Ministry of Finance.⁵

Bhutan has made great progress in the last 10 to 15 years in the field of communication and information, which is reflected in the Press Freedom Index, where Bhutan ranks the highest among the other countries in the South Asia region. Bhutan is ranked 94 out of 180 countries in Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index, which measures the level of freedom of information in 180 countries. The report

Bhutan has made great progress in the last 10 to 15 years in the field of communication and information, which is reflected in the Press Freedom Index, where Bhutan ranks the highest among the other countries in the South Asia region

¹ <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Bhutan>

² <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Bhutan>

³ <http://www.uis.unesco.org/DataCentre/Pages/country-profile.aspx?code=BTN>

⁴ <http://www.uis.unesco.org/DataCentre/Pages/country-profile.aspx?code=BTN>

⁵ <http://www.mof.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/AFS2014-15.pdf>

states that Bhutan is now evolving and the media landscape with it. The Annual Info-Comm and Transport Statistical Bulletin released by the Ministry of Information and Communications also indicates a positive trend in yearly mobile cellular subscriptions, which increased from 3.7 subscribers in 2004 to 87.06 in 2015. Likewise, yearly internet subscriptions, both in the form of mobile broadband and fixed (wire) broadband, increased more than ten-fold from 2008 reaching an estimate of 56.68 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in 2015.⁶ There was also a 7-fold increase in international air passenger flow between 2002-2015 along with a steady increase of motor vehicles which registered a 3.34 times increase between 2001 (22,527) and 2015 (75,190).⁷ This reflects a high growth of Bhutan's economy both in terms of expansion of infrastructure and urbanization. This phase of rapid urbanization poses a huge challenge for the Royal Government of Bhutan (henceforth RGoB) for ensuring sustainable and green economic growth that is equitable, inclusive, climate and disaster resilient and which also promotes poverty reduction.

Table 1: World Press Freedom Index

Country	2016 Ranking	2015 ranking	Change
Bhutan	94	104	10
Nepal	105	105	0
Maldives	112	112	0
India	133	136	3
Sri Lanka	141	165	24
Bangladesh	144	146	2

Note: Ranking out of 180 countries.

In 2008, Bhutan held its first nation-wide multi-party elections and adopted the first constitution marking the end of absolute monarchy and placing Bhutan among the youngest democracies in the world. Recent years have witnessed a significant increase in living standards and robust economic development, as reflected in the consistent growth

in the annual real gross domestic product (GDP) which was 5.5 per cent in 2015.⁸ However, the country is still on the United Nations list of 48 least developed countries (LDCs), although a recent review by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) found Bhutan to be eligible for moving up based on its gross national income (GNI) per capita and Human Assets Index. However, economic vulnerability remains the main challenge if Bhutan is to graduate from being a LDC.⁹

Bhutan's approach to development is largely defined by its unique conceptual paradigm known as Gross



National Happiness (GNH), whose principles are enshrined in the state's policy in the Constitution of Bhutan and which in the past years has attracted a lot of attention outside the country's borders. GNH encompasses a range of development goals and, notably, focuses on good governance, education, preservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage in addition to standard socioeconomic progress indicators. In brief, GNH serves as a holistic approach that aims to achieve a balance between material well-being and suitable conditions for the overall fulfilment of the human potential of Bhutanese people. It is through alignment with GNH that UNESCO and other UN agencies coordinate

⁶ <http://www.moic.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Info-Comm.-and-Transport-statistical-Bulletin.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.moic.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Info-Comm.-and-Transport-statistical-Bulletin.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.uis.unesco.org/DataCentre/Pages/country-profile.aspx?code=BTN>

⁹ http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/6th-Draft-Inception-Note_23May2016.pdf

and integrate their development programmes and initiatives in Bhutan.

Human Development Index

In 2015, the Human Development Index (HDI) ranked Bhutan 132 out of 188 countries. As compared to the previous year's listing Bhutan moved up by 4 positions mainly due to improved

life expectancy at birth with an average figure of 68.3 years in 2014 and 69.5 years in 2015 and an increase of GNI per capita – from 6,775 US dollars in 2014 to 7,176 US dollars in 2015. In relation to the other countries in the region, Bhutan stood above Bangladesh and Nepal by 10 and 12 ranking positions respectively and was 2 positions below India and 28 and 59 positions below Maldives and Sri Lanka respectively (Table 2).

Table 2: Bhutan's HDI indicators (2015)

	HDI value	HDI rank	Life expectancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Mean years of schooling	GNI per capita (PPP US\$)
Sri Lanka	0.757	73	74.9	13.7	10.8	9,779
Maldives	0.706	104	76.8	13	5.8	12,328
India	0.609	130	68	11.7	5.4	5,497
Bhutan	0.605	132	69.5	12.6	3	7,176
Bangladesh	0.57	142	71.6	10	5.1	3,191
Nepal	0.548	145	69.6	12.4	3.3	2,311
Pakistan	0.538	147	66.2	7.8	4.7	4,866
Afghanistan	0.465	171	60.4	9.3	3.2	1,885

Sustainable Development Goals

Bhutan's efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by aligning and integrating them into the national development planning framework guided by the principles of GNH have produced substantial results halving poverty, increasing education enrolments and reducing infant mortality rates. However, there are areas where Bhutan has not done so well like eliminating malnutrition, reducing drop-out rates in primary

education and achieving gender equality¹⁰ remain to be guided by the new 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Figure 1).

Initiated at the UN Conference Rio+20 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 20-22 June 2012 and adopted three years later at the Sustainable Development Summit held in the UN headquarters in New York on 25-27 September 2015, SDGs mark a continuation

¹⁰ <http://www.undp.org/content/bhutan/en/home/presscenter/articles/2015/10/30/bhutan-starts-the-journey-towards-agenda-2030-with-undp.html>

Figure 1: The 17 Sustainable Development Goals



Source: <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdoverview/post-2015-development-agenda.html#>

of the progress achieved since 2000 and build on the MDGs. They are aimed at eradicating all forms of poverty globally, strengthening universal peace and combating inequalities within and among countries.

In one of the sensitization sessions of parliamentarians conducted by UNDP, highlighting Bhutan's commitment to the SDGs, Thinley Namgyel, the Director of the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) said: 'Because of the similarities between GNH and the SDGs, we, at the GNH Commission, do not see much of a challenge to integrate SDGs into our development planning.'¹¹

UNESCO's role in achieving the SDGs

UNESCO plays a crucial role in supporting its Member States in fulfilling SDGs, some of which are of specific relevance to UNESCO's mission:

- **Education:**

Goal 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.¹² A wide range of UNESCO's activities address development needs in the field of education, mainly through policy advice, technical support, coordination, partnerships building and research and dissemination of best practices. UNESCO also facilitates regional and global cooperation for its Member States and key stakeholders. The World Education Forum held in Incheon, Republic of Korea in May 2015 established the global education agenda (Education 2030), whose statutes are outlined in the Incheon Declaration. UNESCO has been entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 agenda.

- **Natural Sciences:**

Natural Sciences are central to implementing most of the SDGs. UNESCO contributes to promoting and strengthening the role of Science,

Technology and Innovation (STI) for achieving the SDGs by providing policy assistance, capacity building and helping in designing effective policies based on the best available knowledge, including local and indigenous knowledge systems. UNESCO promotes the sustainable use of water resources and terrestrial ecosystems, including sustainable forest management, combating desertification and halting biodiversity loss through its Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme and the International Hydrological Programmes (IHP). MAB biosphere reserves are learning sites for sustainable development,



where interdisciplinary approaches are tested to understand and manage interactions between social and ecological systems and solutions which reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use are promoted.

- **Social and Human Sciences:**

UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences (SHS) sector addresses a range of issues within the social domain which have to be dealt with if the overarching goals of global peace, anti-discrimination and gender equality are to be achieved. The implementation phase of the SDGs presents an opportunity for UNESCO to further promote and foster universal values and principles based on human rights.

¹¹ <http://www.undp.org/content/bhutan/en/home/presscenter/articles/2015/10/30/bhutan-starts-the-journey-towards-agenda-2030-with-undp.html>

¹² <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdgoverview/post-2015-development-agenda/goal-4.html>

- **Culture:**

UNESCO's commitment to safeguarding and promoting cultural and natural heritage plays a major role in sustainable development. It is for the first time that a reference to culture is made within the framework of SDGs related to education, sustainable cities, food security, the environment, economic growth, sustainable consumption and production patterns, peaceful and inclusive societies. The recognition of culture as an integral element in the path to sustainable development signifies an essential investment in the world's future and constitutes a pre-condition for successful globalization processes that take into account the principle of cultural diversity.

- **Communication and Information:**

SDGs 16 and 9 emphasize the importance of creating inclusive knowledge societies, fostering democracy and civil participation and ensuring the means for technical innovations and infrastructure development. These aims are essential for UNESCO's work within the field of Communication and Information, which includes safeguarding the freedom of expression, promoting universal access to information and nurturing knowledge-driven and context-sensitive media environments.





Part II: UNESCO Past and Present Cooperation and Lessons Learnt

Part II: UNESCO Past and Present Cooperation and Lessons Learnt

While Bhutan's development policy framework is guided by the principles of GNH, GNHC serves as the main partner agency for the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) since it monitors and evaluates all national development plans, policies and programmes. Its Five Year Plans (FYP), on the other hand, serve as Bhutan's socioeconomic development agenda set out by the government. Thus, it is both through cooperation with GNHC and alignment with FYP that United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) mainstreams its policies and manages coordination in Bhutan.



To increase the coherence of UN programmes and facilitate coordination between UN agencies and country-level organizational bodies, UN initiated a new approach - **Delivering as One (DaO)** – which Bhutan adopted in 2008. In line with DaO, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) document *Bhutan One Programme 2014-2018* outlines UN's response to the priorities laid out in FYP and presents an action plan, budget and a strategic overview of UN interventions in Bhutan. Although a non-resident UN Agency, the UNESCO New Delhi Cluster Office plays a proactive role within UNCT and provides necessary technical assistance and inputs on a regular basis.

2.1 Education

The comprehensive National Education System was introduced in Bhutan in 1961 although the monastic

form of education has existed in the country for a long time. The education sector has greatly progressed since then in terms of the number of schools, quality of education and enrolment rates,¹³ although a number of challenges remain if Bhutan is to fulfil the global education agenda (Education 2030).

The overall goal of the Bhutanese education system is to provide learners with the skills and knowledge necessary for the realization of Bhutanese peoples' well-being based on GNH principles, which set Bhutan apart from other countries in terms of their education practices.¹⁴ The close ties with GNH ensure that education strives for a balance in instilling traditional cultural and universal values shaped by the Buddhist philosophy and the necessary skills and qualities for successful adaptation to changing socioeconomic conditions.

Bhutanese education infrastructure includes monastic education, continuing and non-formal education centres and general education schools at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. In 2015, the former group of institutions (monastic, continuing and non-formal education) had 1,111 schools out of a total of 1,926 schools (Ministry of Education). Despite these numbers, the general type of education is predominant and is often seen as the only education structure in the country.¹⁵

The largest administrative body in the education system in Bhutan is the Ministry of Education (MoE) which strives to improve access and quality

Bhutanese education infrastructure includes monastic education, continuing and non-formal education centres and general education schools at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

¹³ <http://www.education.gov.bt/documents/10180/12664/Annual+Education+Statistics+2015.pdf/54daad9f-036d-4556-8b1e-cfe991014904?version=1.0>

¹⁴ <http://www.education.gov.bt/documents/10180/12664/Annual+Education+Statistics+2015.pdf/54daad9f-036d-4556-8b1e-cfe991014904?version=1.0>

¹⁵ <http://www.education.gov.bt/documents/10180/12664/Annual+Education+Statistics+2015.pdf/54daad9f-036d-4556-8b1e-cfe991014904?version=1.0>

of education by undertaking various initiatives and implementing development programmes. In 2015, the **School Reform Programme** was initiated under Bhutan Education Blueprint 2014-2024¹⁶ with the goal of enhancing access and quality of school education in the country. Inspired by the Malaysian Education Blueprint (2012), the Education Blueprint serves as a holistic long-term development agenda. Structured under four outcome themes – Achieving Access to Education, Achieving Quality Education, Achieving Equity in Education and Achieving System Efficiency¹⁷ – the Education Blueprint identifies eight shifts based on a review of the present education system and nation-wide consultations, which are to guide the transformation and development of the education system in order to achieve education standards that reach the level of OECD countries. Additionally, It incorporates other initiatives, such as Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) which aims to enhance the quality of education by paying particular attention to the needs of young children (3 to 5 years old) and those from the most disadvantaged parts of the community by preparing them for formal education through community-based ECCD; there were 251 ECCD centres in Bhutan in 2015.¹⁸

Non-Formal and Continuing Education Division (NFCED) was started in 2004 as a sequel to the Non-Formal Education Programme (NFEP) which was initiated in 1992 by the Dzongkha Development Authority (DDA) and the National Women's Association of Bhutan with an aim of empowering Bhutanese women by enhancing their literacy and numeracy skills. Since 2004, NFCED has increased its presence throughout the country and is providing opportunities for adults (illiterate 15 year or older learners) who missed their chance at formal schooling or had dropped-out and now want to get back on the education track. A cross-sectional study on the Non-Formal Education

¹⁶ <http://www.education.gov.bt/documents/10180/12664/Annual+Education+Statistics+2015.pdf/54daad9f-036d-4556-8b1e-cfe991014904?version=1.0>

¹⁷ http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Bhutan/Bhutan_Education_Blueprint_2014-2024.pdf

¹⁸ <http://www.education.gov.bt/documents/10180/12664/Annual+Education+Statistics+2015.pdf/54daad9f-036d-4556-8b1e-cfe991014904?version=1.0>

Programme was conducted in 2015 to review NFEP's impact.¹⁹

The primary aim of the UNESCO education programme is to achieve **Education for All (EFA)**. UNESCO New Delhi's Education sector contributes to this attempt of achieving EFA with its programmes focusing on: Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Secondary Education (out-of-school children), Technical and Vocational Education & Training (TVET), Higher Education, Literacy and Life-long learning, Teachers, Gender Equality, ICT in Education, HIV/AIDS & Adolescent Reproductive



Health and Youth Health Services, Enhancing sector-wide policy formulation, planning, monitoring and evaluation for achieving EFA.

UNESCO has played an active role in the transformation and development of Bhutan's education system. The preparation of the **Bhutan Education Blueprint 2014-2024** was coordinated by UNESCO New Delhi which also organized a study visit to Malaysia for Bhutanese officials to gain first-hand knowledge about implementing a similar project.²⁰ Further, UNESCO New Delhi collaborated with the Teacher Development and Education Policy Division at the UNESCO headquarters and the

¹⁹ <http://www.education.gov.bt/documents/10180/828562/nfe+review+report+page.pdf/ba8354f8-a61b-4d7c-a060-7b88380a50f9?version=1.0>

²⁰ http://www.unesco.org/new/en/member-states/single-view/news/bhutan_school_education_sector_blueprint/#.V4xTgalizr

Education Policy Reform (EPR) section of UNESCO Bangkok to provide technical and managerial support to the School Education Department of the Ministry of Education, RGoB.

The activities organized during 2014 are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Activities organized by the Education sector during 2014-2016

Year	Programme/Activity	Type of Activity	Budget Allocation	MLA	UNDAF Outcomes
2014-2024	Provided technical and financial support to prepare the Bhutan School Education Sector Blueprint 2014-2024 Date: 2014 – on-going Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	EXB	US\$ 98,875	MLA 1	Outcome 2
2014	UNESCO mission to develop the MUFIT project for the Bhutan School Education Sector Blueprint and National EFA 2015 Review Date: 2014 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	EXB	US\$ 1,700	MLA 1	Outcome 2
2014	Support to the National EFA 2015 Review (Mission by UIS Advisor to Thimphu/Paro, Bhutan to support the National EFA Review Team) Date: 14 April 2014 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	RP	US\$ 1,483	MLA 1	Outcome 2
2014	2 nd Meeting of SAARC Ministers of Education Date: 30-31 October 2014 Venue: New Delhi, India	RP	US\$ 21,558	MLA 2	Outcome 2

MLA 1: Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high-quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all.

MLA 2: Leading and coordinating the Education 2030 agenda through partnerships, monitoring and research.

UNDAF Outcomes

Outcome 2: Strengthened the education system's capacity for improved education knowledge management for evidence-based decision making

2014-2017:Regular Budget: **US\$ 1,483**Extra Budgetary: **US\$ 98,875****Key results achieved/lessons learnt**

Bhutan's education sector has played a dynamic role in the preservation of cultural and social values as well as the modernization of the country. Consistent with the national education priorities of the country, UNESCO has actively supported the reforms and modernization of the country's education sector. UNESCO New Delhi has facilitated the participation of Bhutanese authorities in international and regional/sub-regional activities/events. UNESCO New Delhi has supported the development of the country's education sector by providing evidence-based advice, innovative ideas and international best practices. Bhutan has benefitted from UNESCO's technical support and policy advice in sector-wide planning, learning assessment, management, statistics and monitoring. This support has enhanced the capacity of the education sector. One of the key achievements of this support is the Bhutan Education Sector Blueprint, a result of UNESCO New Delhi's direct support in coordination with UNESCO Bangkok delivered under the Malaysian Funds in Trust. UNESCO New Delhi has been promoting cooperation among SAARC countries in the area of education, especially focusing on SDG 4. The SAARC Framework for Action (SFFA) is being prepared. The Framework seeks to mobilize both national and sub-regional actions to facilitate the achievement of SDG 4's targets. This will enhance national capacity in the planning, coordination, implementation and monitoring of the new education agenda.

Three lessons are critical from UNESCO New Delhi's support to Bhutan:

- A long-term education sector plan is critical for the development of the country's education sector. National capacity to plan, implement and monitor is important and UNESCO should
- support countries in their efforts in sector-wide planning.
- UNESCO's support should be aligned with national priorities; once this is ensured, it will be possible to ensure national ownership.
- Besides support for sector-wide planning, UNESCO's technical support can focus on thematic areas of education, such as curricula, teacher education and assessment, including monitoring and evaluation. These are areas that have a direct bearing on the quality of education.



2.2 Natural Sciences

Ensuring responsible and transparent management of natural resources and safeguarding the natural landscape are integral to Bhutan's sustainable development agenda. Environmental conservation constitutes one of the pillars of the GNH principles and hence all development programmes are aligned with GNH and all policies are screened to assess their impact on GNH. In a similar vein, Article 5 of the 2008 national Constitution makes it clear that the commitment to preserving the environment is every Bhutanese responsibility. Hence, RGoB strives to:



- Protect, conserve and improve the pristine environment and safeguard the biodiversity of the country;
- Prevent pollution and ecological degradation;
- Secure ecologically balanced sustainable development while promoting justifiable economic and social development; and
- Ensure a safe and healthy environment.²¹

Lastly, the Constitution commits to ensure that at least 60 per cent of the total area be covered by forests at all times. In 2012, this indicator stood at 85.8 per cent and almost half – 47.3 per cent – of the total territory was protected under national

²¹ <http://www.bhutanaudit.gov.bt/About%20Us/Mandates/Constitution%20of%20Bhutan%202008.pdf>

parks, nature preserves or wildlife sanctuaries.²²

While Bhutan has received international acclaim for such commitments to environmental protection, the on-going effects of socioeconomic change, namely, infrastructure development, rapid urbanization, increasing industrialization and the growth of the total population, hint at challenges ahead. These suggest that Bhutan's ability to keep its promises will in-part depend on its capacity to foster scientific knowledge, technology and innovation within the field of natural sciences. The areas in which Bhutan's environment is facing pressures include the quality of air and water, land degradation, solid waste management in urban areas and human-wildlife conflict in rural areas²³. Further, Bhutan is vulnerable to natural disasters such as Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF), floods, droughts and landslides.

Bhutan's efforts at addressing these problems are directed towards 'strengthening Constitutional bodies and empowering local governments,' strengthening and deepening decentralization, implementing the **National Strategy and Action Plan for Low Carbon Development 2012** and the **Integrated Water Resource Management Plan**.²⁴

The overarching objective of UNESCO New Delhi's Natural Sciences sector, on the other hand, is to mobilize scientific knowledge and policy for sustainable development with the following three strategic programme objectives:

- Leveraging scientific knowledge for the benefit of the environment and the management of natural resources;

²² <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Bhutan#Environment>

²³ <http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Eleventh-Five-Year-Plan.pdf>

²⁴ <http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Eleventh-Five-Year-Plan.pdf>

Bhutan has been a part of the science programme 'Building capacity for the integration of multiple forms of knowledge for making sound policy for societal transformation to a sustainable world,' implemented by UNESCO New Delhi.

- Fostering policies and capacity-building in science, technology and innovation; and
- Contributing to disaster preparedness and mitigation.

Bhutan has been a part of the science programme '**Building capacity for the integration of multiple forms of knowledge for making sound policy for societal transformation to a sustainable world,**' carried out by UNESCO New Delhi. The central aim of the programme is to promote and strengthen science-policy interface specifically focusing on sustainability science based on solution-driven approaches. Three key deliverables are to be realized by the end of 2017:

- At least one major regional consultation of high level policymakers and science professionals should take place to share best practices and strengthen STI policies and to develop the science-policy interface.
- A report on deliberations for better integration of evidence-based science in regional policy.
- Measurable indicator: At least one regional meeting to be held to come up with a regional policy document.

In view of the fact that Bhutan's development in part depends on its ability to mitigate its vulnerability to natural disasters, disaster risk reduction is another area in which natural sciences can make a significant contribution. An international workshop on the role of **world heritage sites in disaster risk reduction** was held in August 2015 at the Wildlife Institute of India in Dehradun. Organized by the UNESCO Category-2 Centre (C2C) on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for the Asia-Pacific region, 150 participants from 10 countries, Bhutan being one of them took part in the training. The workshop addressed a variety of topics including understanding and identifying disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk management and investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience. These were documented and will be used to guide further studies.

Bhutan has constituted an active National Man and Biosphere (MAB) Committee which is in the process of preparing a proposal for the country's first

Biosphere Reserve. Bhutan is the founder member of the South and Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM) and participates in the network's meetings on a regular basis.

Since 2011, the UNESCO Science Sector has been unable to implement any specific activity in Bhutan due to lack of funds. However, Bhutan has participated in a number of programmes organized at the Cluster level by the Natural Sciences Sector.

A number of initiatives were undertaken in earlier years, including:



'Bhutan Year of Science and Technology – Exploring and Engaging Science, 2009-2010'

– was organized in all schools throughout the country as a way of building awareness about the role of science in development within all spheres of life. The programme included activities like essay competitions, debates and field trips as well as publishing science bulletins.

Hands-on training in molecular propagation of medicinal plants - a workshop was organized on 2-6 June 2009 for 35 students and researchers which provided hands-on, laboratory training in the molecular propagation of medicinal plants. This was the first training of its kind in Bhutan.

Promoting training and education in basic sciences – the project aimed to promote natural sciences by assisting in the preparation and revision of a National Curriculum Framework for Science Education for Bhutan (January 2011).

Table 4: Activities organized by the Natural Sciences sector during 2015-2016

Year	Programme/Activity	Type of Activity	Budget Allocation	MLA	UNDAF Outcomes
2015	Conference to Commemorate the International Year of Light (Bhutan's participation funded by UNESCO New Delhi) Date: 17-18 November 2015 Venue: New Delhi, India	RP	US\$ 1,400	MLA 2	Outcome 1 (Output 1.2)
2015	7th Meeting of the South and Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM) Bhutan's representative, Mr Damber Singh Rai's participation was funded by UNESCO New Delhi Date: 14-15 December 2015 Venue: Dhaka, Bangladesh	RP	US\$ 555	MLA 5	Outcome 1 (Output 1.2)
2015	Regional Dialogue on Science and Technology Policy in the context of Biotechnology (Bhutan's participation funded by UNESCO New Delhi) Date: 29-30 December 2015 Venue: New Delhi, India	RP	US\$ 500	MLA 1	Outcome 1 (Output 1.2)
2016	4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserve (Bhutan's participation funded by UNESCO New Delhi) Date: 14-17 March 2016 Venue: Lima, Peru	RP	US\$ 4,000	MLA 5	Outcome 1 (Output 1.2)

MLA 1: Strengthening STI policies, governance and the science-policy-society interface.

MLA 2: Building institutional capacities in science and engineering.

MLA 5: Strengthening the role of ecological sciences and biosphere reserves.

UNDAF Outcomes

Outcome 1 (Output 1.2): National and local institutions and individuals are better prepared and able to respond to and reduce climate change.

2014 -2015:

Regular Budget: **US\$ 1,955**

2016-2017:

Regular Budget: **US\$ 4,000**

Key results achieved/Lessons learnt

The Natural Sciences' programmes specifically related to science policy, conserving biodiversity and water and disaster management were implemented in Bhutan with limited resources. Of particular mention is the MAB programme which has been reactivated. Bhutan MAB actively contributed to SACAM meetings and is in the process of nominating its first Biosphere Reserve for designation under UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

2.3 Social and Human Sciences

There are a number of serious development issues in Bhutan which fall within the social sphere including worrisome indicators in the areas of rural-urban migration, providing gender parity in tertiary education, representation of women in the Parliament, gender-based violence (GBV) and due

to the recent political change the lack of a strong democratic culture.²⁵

Urbanization has been rapidly growing in Bhutan. Projections by UNDAF for 2014-2018 estimate that urbanization levels will reach 50 to 73 per cent by 2020 and there will be an additional urban population between 180,000 to 360,000 people. The challenges because of this are likely to contribute to socioeconomic problems, such as increasing poverty and economic disparities, higher unemployment and underemployment among the youth and vulnerability to reproductive health problems.



As identified by UNDAF, gender mainstreaming has not been effective in Bhutan and various issues relating to gender like instances of domestic violence and sexual abuse, discrimination against, lack of engagement by both women and men in women's studies and women empowerment activities and the prevalence of preconceived notions about women's inferiority still permeate the entire society. Accordingly, gender is an integral part of RGoB's efforts to promote good governance practices in 11th FYP. This is to be tackled through a number of initiatives such as the National Plan of Action for Gender (NPAG), 2008-2013; the Domestic Violence Prevention Act 2013; building capacities of women leaders; and ensuring

²⁵ http://www.undp.org/content/dam/bhutan/docs/Misc_CO_documents/2014-UNDAF.pdf

a Gender Friendly Environment for Women's Participation as one of the NKRA (National Key Result Areas).²⁶

As noted by Dr Tashi Choden, researcher for Centre for Bhutan Studies during the UNESCO-ICSSR Research Meeting on Social Protection Policies in South Asia (18 -March 2010) it is not only the government which gives great importance to the social sector, but also non-governmental entities whose support has been increasing and is now quite significant for Bhutan.²⁷



In this context, UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences' sector has a role to play in contributing to the overall fulfilment of Bhutan's sustainable development agenda.

The main objective of the activities of the sector is supporting Member States in their efforts in creating more inclusive, just and sustainable societies. The strategy involves strengthening the link between research and policymaking, contributing to advocacy and policy dialogues and stimulating innovative thinking to ensure protection of the most vulnerable groups of the population, social inclusion and cultural diversity.

UNESCO New Delhi seeks to advance knowledge and policy in the areas of social protection and urban inclusion.

MLA 1: Mobilizing future-oriented research, knowledge and policymaking to support social transformations, social inclusion and intercultural dialogue.

MLA 2: Empowering Member States to manage the ethical, legal, environmental and societal implications of scientific and technological challenges with a view to achieving inclusive and sustainable social development.

While Bhutan largely retains its traditional culture, preservation of heritage has become an urgent national agenda due to steadily increasing tourism and rapid urbanization over the past decade.

2.4 Culture

Sustaining cultural identity is an essential part of the roadmap for achieving the well-being and happiness of Bhutanese people as enshrined in the GNH philosophy. While Bhutan largely retains its traditional culture, preservation of heritage has become an urgent national agenda due to steadily increasing tourism and rapid urbanization over the past decade.

The major issues identified in the area of culture in the 11th FYP include threats to age-old local customs and traditions due to rural-urban migration and changing lifestyle preferences of the

²⁶ <http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/themes/WP-GNHCC/attachment/11FYP.pdf>

²⁷ http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/New_Delhi/pdf/summaryreport.pdf

younger generation,²⁸ tangible cultural properties of Dzongs and Lhakangs being subject to natural and manmade disasters such as earthquakes, windstorms, landslides, vandalism and fire and limited access to finance and markets, poor economies of scale and quality of products which are hindering the promotion of cultural industries.²⁹

Accordingly, UNESCO New Delhi's Culture sector has developed a series of collaborations with the Department of Culture, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs with a view to strengthening the legal and policy framework of the Bhutanese government and building the technical capacity of its officers to manage heritage resources as per the requirements of the UNESCO 1972 World Heritage Convention and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which Bhutan is party to.

Developing a legal framework for preserving the heritage

UNESCO New Delhi in collaboration with Kyushu University (Japan) has been supporting the drafting of heritage related laws since March 2011. By December 2015, this collaboration had led to the drafting of a National Archives Bill, a Heritage Sites Bill and an Intangible Cultural Heritage Bill as well as a review of the 2005 Cultural Property Act. Following the instructions of the Council of Ministers, Heritage Sites Bill and the Intangible Cultural Heritage Bill have been merged with the 2005 Cultural Property Act to form a comprehensive national heritage law. The drafting of Rules and Regulations for the Heritage Bill started in 2015 in order to define administrative procedures of the future law by the Department of Culture.

A tri-party agreement signed in 2012 by UNESCO New Delhi, Kyushu University and the Government of Bhutan, was renewed at the end of 2015 to continue cooperation for another three years.

Managing the Cultural Landscape of Bhutan: International Workshops

The future heritage law sets a unique and ambitious target to protect the whole of Bhutan as a cultural landscape. It will endeavour to protect not only individual monuments but also larger areas such as rural settlements with their surroundings and will also introduce provisions for local authorities to regulate development activities to respect local heritage assets.

To raise awareness on the concept of a 'cultural landscape' within the Government of Bhutan and



to improve an understanding of the technicalities involved in managing a cultural landscape, the Department of Culture with technical inputs from UNESCO New Delhi and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre has been organizing a month-long workshop on cultural landscape with the participation of international resource persons every year since 2014. The events have been supported by the Oriental Cultural Heritage Sites Protection Alliance for three consecutive years since 2014, by Kyushu University since 2015 and by UNESCO Japanese Funds in Trust for 2016 and 2017.

Improving the National Inventory System of Heritage Site

With the support of UNESCO Korean Funds in Trust and technical inputs from the World Heritage Centre and University College London, the Department of Culture is in the process of upgrading the national

²⁸ <http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Eleventh-Five-Year-Plan.pdf> p. 22

²⁹ <http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Eleventh-Five-Year-Plan.pdf> p.22

inventory of heritage sites since August 2014 by introducing the ARCHES heritage inventory and management system.

Implementing the UNESCO 2003 Convention for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Three training workshops were organized between 2012 and 2014 as part of a global capacity building programme of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage section and with funding support from the UNESCO Japanese Funds in Trust. The workshops targeted government officers and imparted training on the principles and requirements of the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible

Cultural Heritage, in particular the development of a national inventory, technicalities of community consultations and developing a safeguarding plan. Deliberations during the workshops formed a useful basis for the drafting of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Bill of Bhutan.

Another training workshop is planned in November 2017 targeting district level cultural officers to discuss the concept of 'intangible cultural heritage' and its safeguarding strategies, as well as provisions relating to intangible cultural heritage in the future national heritage law. The various activities organized during 2014-2016 are given in Table 5.

Table 5: Activities organized by the Culture sector during 2014-2016

Year	Programme/Activity	Type of Activity	Budget Allocation	MLA	UNDAF Outcomes
2014	UNESCO-Kyushu University workshop on Heritage Bill Date: 27 January-1 February 2014 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	EXB	In-kind	MLA 1 and 2	Outcome 1 (Output 1.1, 1.2, 1.6)
2014	Capacity Building workshop on the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage Date: 4-8 March 2014 Venue: Paro, Bhutan	EXB	US\$ 20,000	MLA 2	Outcome 1 (Output 1.6)
2014	UNESCO-Kyushu University workshop on the Heritage Bill Date: 3 -10 May 2014 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	EXB	In-kind	MLA 1 and 2	Outcome 1 (Output 1.1, 1.2, 1.6)
2014	1st International workshop on the Cultural Landscape Date: 7-20 August 2014 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	RB	US\$ 20,000	MLA 1	Outcome 1 (Output 1.1, 1.2, 1.6)

Year	Programme/Activity	Type of Activity	Budget Allocation	MLA	UNDAF Outcomes
2014	Workshop on National Inventory using ARCHES by University College London Date: 2014 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	EXB	US\$ 13,500	MLA 1	Outcome 1 (Output 1.1, 1.2)
2014	Sub-regional workshop on the Nomination Strategy for the South Asia Silk Roads organized by UNESCO World Heritage Centre and UNESCO Kathmandu Bhutan was one of the participating countries. Date: 23 – 24 September 2014 Venue: Kathmandu, Nepal	EXB	In-kind	MLA 1	Outcome 1 (Output 1.1)
2015	UNESCO-Kyushu University workshop on the Heritage Bill Date: 23-27 February 2015 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	EXB	In-kind	MLA 1 and 2	Outcome 1 (Output 1.1, 1.2, 1.6)
2015	Digi monastery workshop targeting monks on documenting movable cultural property using mobile phones Date: 18-24 May 2015 Venue: Taktse, Bhutan	RB	US\$ 5,000	MLA 1	Outcome 1 (Output 1.2),
2015	2nd International workshop on the Cultural Landscape Date: 22 July-7 August 2015 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	RB	US\$ 20,000	MLA 1	Outcome 1 (Output 1.1, 1.2)
2015	Workshop on the National Inventory using ARCHES by University College London Date: 20-22 August 2015 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	EXB	US\$ 14,500	MLA 1	Outcome 1 (Output 1.1, 1.2)
2015	UNESCO-Kyushu University workshop on the Heritage Bill Date: 25–30 December 2015 Venue: Kyoto, Japan	EXB	In-kind	MLA 1 and 2	Outcome 1 (Output 1.1, 1.2, 1.6)

Year	Programme/Activity	Type of Activity	Budget Allocation	MLA	UNDAF Outcomes
2016	UNESCO-Kyushu University workshop on the Heritage Bill Date: 24-29 February 2016 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	EXB	In-kind	MLA 1 and 2	Outcome 1 (Output 1.1, 1.2, 1.6)
2016	3rd workshop on National Inventory using ARCHES by University College London. Date: Oct 2015 to March 2016 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	EXB & RB	US\$ 24,500	MLA 1	Outcome 1 (Output 1.1, 1.2)
2016	3rd International workshop on the Cultural Landscape Date: 12 July – 3 August 2016 Venue: Thimphu and Paro, Bhutan	RB	US\$ 20,000	MLA 1	Outcome 1 (Output 1.1, 1.2)
2016	UNESCO-Kyushu University workshop on the Heritage Bill Date: 25-29 July 2016 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	EXB	In-kind	MLA 1 and 2	Outcome 1 (Output 1.1, 1.2, 1.6)

MLA 1: Protecting, conserving, promoting and transmitting culture, heritage and history for dialogue and development.

MLA 2: Supporting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions, safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage and developing cultural and creative industries.

UNDAF Outcomes

Outcome 1

Output 1.1: Policies and studies for integrated natural resource management, climate change adoption/mitigation and poverty environment nexus developed.

Output 1.2: National and local institutions and individuals are better prepared and able to respond to and reduce climate change.

Output 1.6: The rural poor and the underemployed have access to alternative income generation opportunities.

2014-2015:

Regular Budget: **US\$ 45,000**

Extra Budgetary: **US\$ 48,000**

2016-2017:

Regular Budget: **US\$ 40,000**

Extra Budgetary: **US\$ 24,500**

In addition, UNESCO has benefited from in-kind support from Kyushu University which covered all the expenses related to the Kyushu University-UNESCO technical support to Bhutan to the tune of US\$ 50,000 per year.

Like 2014-2015, Kyushu University is expected to continue its kind-support for the implementation of Kyushu University-UNESCO technical mission for Bhutan.

Key results achieved/lessons learnt

The draft of a comprehensive heritage bill consolidating the provisions for movable cultural

property, heritage sites and intangible cultural heritage was completed in February 2016 and is being translated into *Dzongkak* prior to submission to the Parliament, tentatively in 2017.

A preliminary draft of Rules and Regulations was completed in July 2016 for further review during 2016 and 2017. Although Rules and Regulations are not required for the adoption of the bill, the exercise has turned out to be extremely useful in stimulating future activities by the Department of Culture for administrating the law.

The process of drafting a national heritage law and its rules and regulations with more than 11 workshops since 2011 has created the basis for a dynamic and proactive dialogue between UNESCO New Delhi and all the divisions of the Department of Culture to review the current practice of heritage management and evolving a new system.

Intensive debates during the drafting exercise also led to the capacity-building of the staff of the Department of Culture, supplemented by activities such as the International Cultural Landscape Workshop, the ARCHES heritage inventory and the Capacity Building Workshop on the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The process further created opportunities for intensive inter-ministerial dialogues with government departments such as the Ministries of Work and Human Settlement (urban development); Forest and Agriculture; Health (traditional medicine); Labour (craft); Information and Broadcasting; and the Tourism Council.

2.5 Communication and Information

Television and the internet were introduced in Bhutan as recently as 1999, and the country's media environment has experienced unprecedented changes since the liberalization of its media market in 2006. The privatization of the media constituted an important part of the political reforms leading up to Bhutan's transition from monarchy to a multi-party democracy in 2008.

Today, Bhutan has 11 newspapers (including an online newspaper), four magazines, eight radio

stations (including community and campus radio stations) and two television channels operated by the national broadcaster, the Bhutan Broadcasting Service. As of December 2015, mobile services had reached 87.06 per cent of the total population of Bhutan, with 58.71 per cent of the population being internet subscribers. The number of internet subscribers represented an increase of 30.52 per cent over December 2014.³⁰

The annual Press Freedom Reports for South Asia (PFRSA) 2015 and 2016, jointly produced by UNESCO and the International Federation of



Journalists (IFJ) observe that the sustainability of Bhutan's media sector has emerged as a challenge both in terms of the economic viability of media organizations and the quality of media content. As the PFRSA 2016 notes: 'The opening up of the media market encouraged an unfettered growth and proliferation of private media houses, resulting in an overcrowding of the small advertisement market. The Government is the biggest advertiser and the print media depends on advertisement revenue from the Government. A cutback in the Government advertising budget and an unclear advertising policy has adversely impacted the business sustenance of private media houses.' The deteriorating financial position of media organizations has led to 'shrinking newsrooms' with a considerable number of senior

³⁰ <http://www.moic.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Info-Comm.-and-Transport-statistical-Bulletin.pdf>

editors and trained journalists leaving the industry for more secure jobs. This 'exodus of trained journalists' and the reduction of organizations' operational costs have led to a decline in the quality of journalism, particularly field reporting.³¹

Building the media's capacity and strengthening institutional sustainability

In order to address the challenges of sustainability, in 2015 UNESCO partnered with the Bhutan Media and Communications Institute (BMCI) – one of



the country's premier media training institutes – to implement the project, '**Capacity Development to Enhance Media Sustainability in Bhutan.**' A part of UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), the project consisted of a series of four professional workshops for: (i) Media managers to be trained in a variety of business management issues; (ii) Media staff responsible for functions such as advertising, sales, marketing and circulation; (iii) Senior reporters to enhance their business reporting skills, with a view to increasing circulations and advertising revenues in urban areas; and (iv) Senior reporters to identify and report on rural issues in order to strengthen media circulation in rural areas. Close to 60 media persons were trained in the four workshops and the project was successfully concluded in early 2016.

³¹ http://www.ifj.org/fileadmin/documents/IFJ_PF_2016_LR.pdf

In 2016, UNESCO and BMCI are launching another IPDC project, titled '**Building the Capacities of Media Professionals in Bhutan,**' under which three separate professional training courses will be conducted. The courses on 'Reporting Youth Issues' and 'Data Journalism' will target mid-level and senior reporters, while the course on 'Media Management' will address the capacity development needs of senior media managers and personnel involved with media economics /financial planning. Around 40 professionals are expected to be trained during the three courses, with the two journalism courses resulting in least 10 pieces of model reportage each on the subjects of the courses.

Developing Bhutan's Community Radio Sector

UNESCO has played an integral role in the development of Bhutan's community radio (CR) sector since its earliest stages. The Media Development Assessment for Bhutan conducted by UNESCO in collaboration with RGoB in 2008–2010 had made a number of recommendations for launching a CR sector in the country, including conducting a feasibility study and piloting a limited number of CR stations. Acting on these recommendations, in 2012 UNESCO commissioned a feasibility study, and after identifying several potential sites for CR stations, it conducted a site-level technical analysis for setting up stations at these locations.

In 2014, **UNESCO facilitated a tripartite understanding with the Department of Information and Media (Ministry of Information and Communications, RGoB) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)**, according to which SDC will purchase the necessary equipment and set up CR stations at the sites identified by the UNESCO feasibility study and UNESCO will partner with the Department of

In response to SDGs 5 and 16, UNESCO is collaborating with Bhutan for the regional initiative 'Women for Change: Building a Gendered Media in South Asia' in partnership with the South Asia Women's Network (SWAN).

Information and Media (DOIM) to conduct a National Capacity Building programme for the managers and staff members of these upcoming CR stations.

Accordingly, UNESCO partnered with DOIM in 2014–2015 for an IPDC project titled **‘Support for the Development of a Community Radio Sector in Bhutan.’** The country’s first ever National Capacity Building Programme for Community Radio took place in Phuentsholing in October 2015. Conducted by the UNESCO Chair on Community Media, the programme was delivered through stakeholder orientation sessions and an intensive 10-day training workshop for the 22 station managers and programme producers from Bhutan’s eight pilot stations. The capacity development workshop was enthusiastically received by the stakeholders, and all the eight pilot stations are now operational. UNESCO is currently in talks with DOIM about further activities related to CR development.

Monitoring the Media Environment in Bhutan

On World Press Freedom Day every year (3 May), UNESCO and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) jointly launch the Press Freedom Report for South Asia, which is considered a definitive annual review of the media environment and press freedom-related issues in eight South Asian countries. One chapter of the publication is reserved for Bhutan. The 2014, 2015 and 2016 reports were titled *The Campaign for Justice*, *The Freedom Frontier* and *The Road to Resilience* respectively.

Women for Change: Building a Gendered Media in South Asia

In response to SDGs 5 and 16, UNESCO is collaborating with Bhutan for the regional initiative ‘Women for Change: Building a Gendered Media in South Asia’ that is being delivered in partnership with the South Asia Women’s Network (SWAN). The regional project seeks to promote the mainstreaming of gender in the media through an extensive process of consultations and advocacy; developing normative guidelines, tools and knowledge products for stakeholders; promoting the safety of women journalists; and the capacity building of media professionals. Women journalists

and media practitioners from Bhutan have been participants and beneficiaries of the project since its earliest stages. The project was launched at SWAN’s 6th annual conference in Thimphu in 2014, the operational strategy was strengthened with Bhutan’s participation in the course in 2015, and in 2016 SWAN members from Bhutan contributed to the development of the UNESCO–SWAN Gender-Sensitive Guidelines for Women in Media in South Asia. Upcoming activities in Bhutan in 2017–2018 include capacity building of media researchers/analysts and a baseline study and desk research on the status of women in the media, the findings of



which will inform subsequent advocacy efforts in the country.

International Day for Universal Access to Information 2016

The International Day for Universal Access to Information was observed for the first time globally on 28 September 2016. UNESCO New Delhi marked the day with a regional event on the theme ‘Universal Access to Information for Underserved Communities in South Asia as a Means to Achieve the SDGs.’ The event included a regional panel on theme which saw the participation of Mr Kinley T. Wangchuk, Director General of the Department of Information and Media, Ministry of Information and Communications, RGoB. The Director General offered an overview of Bhutan’s media sector, the challenges it faces and the country’s initiatives to promote access to information.

Table 6: Activities organized by the Communication and Information sector during 2014-2016

Year	Programme/Activity	Type of Activity	Budget Allocation	MLA	UNDAF Outcomes
2014	Training workshop for photojournalists (concluding workshop of the 2013–14 IPDC project with BMCI) Date: 27–29 January 2014 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	EXB	US\$ 15,000	MLA 1	Outcome 4 (Output 4.4)
2014	Launch of the UNESCO–IFJ Press Freedom Report for South Asia 2013–2014 Date: 3 May 2014 Venue: New Delhi, India	RP	US\$ 5,000	MLA 1	Outcome 3, Outcome 4 (Output 3.2, 3.3, 4.3, 4.4)
2014	Formal launch of the UNESCO–SWAN regional initiative, ‘Women for Change: Building a Gendered Media in South Asia,’ at SWAN’s 6 th annual conference Date: 2 September 2014 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	NA	In-kind	MLA 1	Outcome 3, Outcome 4 (Output 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 4.4)
2014	Training workshop on ‘Climate Change Reporting’ – part of regional extra budgetary project, ‘Combating Climate Change in South Asia: Media Interventions for Public Awareness and Action’ Date: 27–31 October 2014 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	EXB	US\$ 6,936	MLA 1	Outcome 1, Outcome 4 (Output 1.2, 4.4)
2014	Tri-partite understanding between UNESCO; the Department of Information and Media (DOIM), RGoB; and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) regarding developing the community radio (CR) sector Date: December 2014 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	NA	In-kind	MLA 1	Outcome 4 (Output 4.4)
2015	Site-level technical analysis of pilot sites for CR stations identified through the UNESCO feasibility study (part of the 2012–2015 IPDC project with AMARC Asia-Pacific) Dates: 10–19 February 2015 Venue: Multiple locations in Bhutan	EXB	US\$ 16,000	MLA 1	Outcome 4 (Output 4.4)

Year	Programme/Activity	Type of Activity	Budget Allocation	MLA	UNDAF Outcomes
2015	Launch of the UNESCO-IFJ Press Freedom Report for South Asia 2014–2015 Date: 3 May 2015 Venue: New Delhi, India	RP	US\$ 5,000	MLA 1	Outcome 3, Outcome 4 (Output 3.2, 3.3, 4.3, 4.4)
2015	Training workshop for media managers on business management issues (part of the 2015-2016 IPDC project with BMCI) Dates: 14–16 September 2015 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	EXB	US\$ 16,994	MLA 1	Outcome 4 (Output 4.4)
2015	Training workshop for media advertising, sales and marketing personnel (part of the 2015-2016 IPDC project with BMCI) Dates: 5–7 October 2015 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	EXB	US\$ 16,994	MLA 1	Outcome 4 (Output 4.4)
2015	National Capacity Building Programme on Community Radio – Bhutan’s first training workshop for CR personnel and stakeholders (part of the 2014–2015 IPDC project with DOIM) Dates: 21–30 October 2015 Venue: Phuentsholing, Bhutan	EXB	US\$ 18,000	MLA 1	Outcome 4 (Output 4.4)
2016	Training on business reporting (part of the 2015–2016 IPDC project with BMCI) Dates: 15–17 February 2016 Venue: Thimphu, Bhutan	EXB	US\$ 16,994	MLA 1	Outcome 4 (Output 4.4)
2016	Launch of the UNESCO-IFJ Press Freedom Report for South Asia 2015–2016 Date: 3 May 2016 Venue: New Delhi, India	RP	US\$ 6,000	MLA 1	Outcome 3, Outcome 4 (Output 3.2, 3.3, 4.3, 4.4)

Year	Programme/Activity	Type of Activity	Budget Allocation	MLA	UNDAF Outcomes
2016	Bhutan's participation in the UNESCO–SWAN Regional Consultation on Developing Gender-Sensitive Guidelines for Women in Media in South Asia Dates: 3–5 May 2016 Venue: New Delhi, India	RP	US\$ 950	MLA 1	Outcome 3, Outcome 4 (Output 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 4.4)
2016	Bhutan's participation in the International Day for Universal Access to Information Dates: 28 September 2016 Venue: New Delhi, India	RP	US\$ 1,300	MLA 2	Outcome 4 (Output 4.4)
2016 – 2017	Building the capacities of media professionals in Bhutan (new 2016–2017 IPDC project to be implemented in partnership with BMCI)	EXB	US\$ 9,091	MLA 1	Outcome 4 (Output 4.4)

MLA 1: Promoting an enabling environment for freedom of expression, press freedom and journalistic safety, facilitating pluralism and participation in media and supporting sustainable and independent media institutions.

MLA 2: Enabling Universal Access and Preservation of Information and Knowledge.

2014-2015:

Regular Budget: **US\$ 10,000**

Extra Budgetary: **US\$ 64,433**

2016-2017:

Regular Budget: **US\$ 8,250**

Extra Budgetary: **US\$ 17,588**

UNDAF Outcomes

Outcome 1: By 2018, sustainable and green economic growth that is equitable, inclusive, climate and disaster resilient and promotes poverty reduction, and employment opportunities particularly for vulnerable groups enhanced.

Outcome 3: By 2018, communities and institutions strengthened at all levels to achieve enhanced gender equality, empowerment and protection of women.

Outcome 4: By 2018, governance institutions and communities exercise the principles of democratic governance at the national and local levels with a focus on inclusiveness, transparency, accountability and evidence-based decision making.

Key results achieved/lessons learnt

Since 2014, UNESCO has focused chiefly on two areas of work in Bhutan – developing the mainstream media and community radio. All interventions that seek to strengthen the mainstream media ultimately aim to achieve the economic viability or sustainability of the media. As such, capacity development exercises have targeted not just practicing journalists, but also media managers and personnel involved with functions such as media advertising, sales and marketing. The ‘short course’ format – typically focused training workshops of three days – is clearly the most popular and accessible among media professionals in the country. There has been high demand for the UNESCO-supported training workshops and UNESCO’s implementing partners like the Bhutan Media and Communications Institute have been requested by media houses to repeat the courses for their own personnel.

An important lesson learnt has been the need of offering training material in both English and Dzongkha. Even if training courses cannot always be delivered in Dzongkha, it is imperative to translate the resource material into Dzongkha so that it can be optimally utilized by the widest possible group of media professionals. There is also a need to build the capacities of a larger number of media trainers within Bhutan, thereby gradually reducing dependence on external trainers or consultants. The particularly enthusiastic response to niche journalistic areas or topical reportage such as climate change reporting, business journalism, reporting on women’s issues and rural affairs indicates that there are yet untapped areas for content generation that are of equal interest to news producers and consumers. These areas ought to be explored in greater detail.

The experience of assisting RGoB in developing a CR sector has been a most rewarding one for UNESCO. Today, eight fully operational CR stations are being piloted in different parts of the country. Although the CR sector is still in its infancy, it is important to draw on the lessons learnt from other countries in the South Asian region and make every effort to ensure the sustainability of the sector. While further capacity building across the range



of roles and functions at CR stations will certainly be required, an enabling regulatory framework, mechanisms such as editorial policies, a content sharing network and a systematic approach to revenue generation, self-evaluation and continuous improvement are equally critical and must be crafted and instituted with care.







Part III- Proposed Cooperation Framework

Part III: Proposed Cooperation Framework

The UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is the strategic programme framework that describes the UN System's collective response to national development priorities, and as such it is a significant tool in the evolving process of enhancing coherence and harmonization of the

UN's work in the host country. UNDAF ensures that the UN's work is aligned with national development strategies and processes and creates synergies with all development actors in the country. Its priorities are fully aligned with the host government's development plans.

Education	
Objective : Supporting Member States to develop education systems to foster high quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all.	
Programmes	UNDAF Outcome Served
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinating the Education 2030 Agenda through partnerships, monitoring and research in SAARC countries. Support to national policies and plans to foster quality lifelong learning opportunities for all. Supporting the integration of SDG 4 targets into the country's education through a gap analysis between SDG 4's targets and the Education Blueprint. Support to develop a system of continuous professional development (CPD) to enhance the quality of the teaching force. Strengthening the national EMIS system and enhancing statistical capacities. 	<p>Outcome 2: Essential social services</p> <p>By 2018, increased and equitable access, utilization and quality of inclusive essential social services for all with a focus on sustaining the MDGs and addressing emerging challenges.</p> <p>Strengthened the education system's capacity for improved education knowledge management for evidence-based decision making.</p> <p>Outcome 4: Good governance and participation</p> <p>By 2018, governance institutions and communities exercise the principles of democratic governance at the national and local levels with a focus on inclusiveness, transparency, accountability and evidence-based decision making.</p> <p>Key national and local institutions' systems strengthened for effective public finance management, integrated monitoring of plans and programmes and evidence-based decision making based on harmonized national statistics and information.</p>

Natural Sciences

Natural Sciences sector will continue providing support to Bhutan in its national development strategies and processes and will create synergies with relevant development actors in the country in accordance with the national development priorities outlined under the UNDAF. It will assist in strengthening of the MAB (Man & the Biosphere) programme including creation of a biosphere reserve/natural heritage, water security, climate change and disaster risk reduction activities in Bhutan. Through these it will help in achieving the SDG Goals 6, 13 and 15.

Culture

UNESCO's Culture sector's areas of intervention remain the capacity building of the government in the implementation of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention. This includes technical support for the operationalization of the National Heritage Law. UNESCO in cooperation with Kyushu University has been supporting the drafting process of the law 2011. National discussion needs to be steered further on how to strategically link heritage preservation with community well-being, such as employment and income generation or improving the quality of living in a heritage village.

Communication and Information

In 2016–2017, UNESCO's Communication and Information sector proposes to work in Bhutan both in the area of media development and the use of ICTs for access to information and knowledge.

As observed, there is strong demand for short training courses for media professionals in their journalistic and editorial roles on the one hand, and functions related to media economics and management on the other. In 2016–2017, UNESCO will continue to work with local institutions in Bhutan to promote the capacity building of media professionals and media trainers.

Supporting the development of Bhutan's recently launched community radio (CR) sector is a priority for UNESCO. In this regard, future areas of collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Communication, RGoB could include capacity development for personnel at CR stations and technical support for creating an enabling regulatory framework, editorial policies, a content sharing network and mechanisms for CR stations to generate revenue.



Under its International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), in 2016–2017 UNESCO intends to support a comprehensive baseline survey and desk research exercise to study the status of women media professionals in Bhutan and the portrayal of women in media content. The findings from this exercise will inform subsequent interventions related to gender and the media.

Finally, UNESCO seeks to partner with RGoB to initiate the Memory of the World (MOW) programme that promotes the preservation of countries' documentary heritage using ICTs.

Communication and Information

Objective: Promoting an enabling environment for freedom of expression, press freedom, media pluralism, participation in media and supporting sustainable and independent media institutions.

Programmes

- Promoting the capacity development of media institutions and professionals.
- Promoting media pluralism through the promotion of community media and the mainstreaming of gender in the media.

UNDAF Outcomes Served

Outcome 4: By 2018, governance institutions and communities exercise the principles of democratic governance at the national and local levels with a focus on inclusiveness, transparency, accountability and evidence-based decision making.

Outcome 3: By 2018, communities and institutions strengthened at all levels to achieve enhanced gender equality, empowerment and protection of women.

Objective: Enabling universal access and preservation of information and knowledge, including the preservation of documentary heritage through the Memory of the World programme

Programmes

- Promoting the preservation of documentary heritage.

UNDAF Outcomes Served

Outcome 4: By 2018, governance institutions and communities exercise the principles of democratic governance at the national and local levels with a focus on inclusiveness, transparency, accountability and evidence-based decision making.





Part IV: UNESCO Partner Networks in Bhutan

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UNESCO works with a wide range of partners in all its fields of competence. Partnerships are a key enabler in meeting global challenges and generating sustainable change and long-lasting impact. Partnerships are firmly embedded in UNESCO's way of working at global, regional and national levels. By joining forces with its partners UNESCO can leverage resources, expertise and competencies to promote all UNESCO's ideals and values to achieve common development goals and to strengthen the visibility and impact of its actions.



UN Country Team in Bhutan

The aim of UN Country Team (UNCT) is to ensure inter-agency coordination and decision making at the country level. In Bhutan, UNCT is led by UN Resident Coordinator (RC), Christina Carlson and comprises of 21 representatives of UN programmes, specialized agencies and other UN entities, out of which eight are resident and 13 are non-resident representatives supporting activities in Bhutan from their regional offices or the UN headquarters.

The tasks undertaken by the different agencies range from providing technical assistance, financial support and specialized expertise in many areas of development and coordinating with RGoB.

Bhutan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

'UNESCO is the only UN Agency to have a global network of national cooperating bodies known as National Commissions for UNESCO.'³² There are currently 199 National Commissions for UNESCO worldwide including one for Bhutan. By providing intermediation between the Organization and national partners and civil society and ensuring reciprocal flow and exchange of information, the National Commissions significantly contribute to the implementation of the Organization's objectives in Member States and offer comparative advantage to UNESCO within the UN system.

Currently, Bhutan's delegates at the National Commission for UNESCO include Chairperson Mr Norbu Wangchuk and Secretary-General Mrs Sangay Zam.³³

UNESCO Global Networks

- UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet)
- Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB)
- International Hydrological Programme
- International Programme for the

³² <http://en.unesco.org/countries/national-commissions>

³³ http://www.unesco.org/ncp/index.php?lc=E&module=national_commissions&rid=260

Development of Communication

- South and Central Asia MAB Network (SACAM)

Other Implementing Partners:

Education:

- Ministry of Education (MoE), RGoB
- Royal Education Council (REC), RGoB, Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment
- The Department of School Education, (MoE), RGoB
- Teacher Development and Education Policy Division of UNESCO HQ
- The Education Policy Reform (EPR), UNESCO Asia and the Pacific

Natural Sciences

- Department of Forest and Park Services, Government of Bhutan
- National Environment Commission

- GNH Commission
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Royal Society for the Protection of Nature

Social and Human Sciences

- Gross National Happiness Committee (GNHC)
- Centre for Bhutan Studies & GNH Research
- The GNH Centre Bhutan

Culture

- Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs
- University College London
- Kyushu University (Japan)

Communication and Information

- The Ministry of Information and Communications (MoIC)
- Bhutan Media and Communications Institute (BMCI)
- South Asia Women's Network (SWAN)





United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

New Delhi Office

Cluster Office for Bangladesh,
Bhutan, India, Maldives,
Nepal and Sri Lanka

1, San Martin Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi 110021, India

Tel: +91 11 2611 1873, 2611 1875

Email: newdelhi@unesco.org; Website: www.unesco.org/newdelhi



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