



NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY

(Draft)

Royal Government of Bhutan

Thimphu: Bhutan

02 August 2019

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As I serve my country, I have a number of priorities. Number one on my list is education. Education is empowering- it's a social equalizer and it facilitates self-discovery, which leads to realizing one's full potential. Good education gives you confidence, good judgment, virtuous disposition, and the tools to achieve happiness successfully. A good school gives a child a fair shot at success and ensures that a person's achievement in life will not be predetermined by his or her race, parentage and social connections.

-His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, 2014

Provisions in 'The Constitution of The Kingdom of Bhutan'.

Article 9: Principles of State Policy-

15. The State shall endeavour to provide education for the purpose of improving and increasing knowledge, values and skills of the entire population with education being directed towards the full development of the human personality.

16. The State shall provide free education to all children of school going age up to tenth standard and ensure that technical and professional education is made generally available and that higher education is equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

1. Introduction

Until the advent of modern education in Bhutan in 1961, monastic education was the main form of education. Monastic education has served the social, economic and spiritual needs of the country for centuries. Since the commencement of planned development in 1961, the modern education system has scaled up significantly and has played a principal role in the pursuit of political, cultural, environmental and socio-economic development of the country.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan requires the State to provide education to improve and increase the knowledge, values and skills of the entire population for a more holistic development of the human personality. It also mandates the provision of free basic education to all children of school going age and ensures that technical and professional education is made generally available and that higher education is equally accessible to all based on merit.

Bhutan has made commendable progress in this endeavour, particularly in enhancing access to education. However, more needs to be done to improve quality of and equity in education. In response to this challenge, numerous measures have been initiated such as school reform programmes, teacher development programmes, and curriculum and assessment reforms.

In light of ongoing reforms within the sector, and to make education more relevant for changing needs and expectations, the National Education Policy 2019 aspires to provide an overarching framework and directions for building and nurturing an education system that prepares citizens who are nationally rooted and globally competent.

The National Education Policy 2019 builds upon the constitutional commitment for educational provision, as well as the earlier education policy documents of 1976 and 1985 and Education Policy Guidelines and Instructions that were formulated thereafter.

2. Rationale

Education is a basic necessity to equip citizens with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to become socio-economically productive members of the society. Education should be responsive to the individual interest and changing socio-economic needs of the country in achieving country's aspiration of Gross National Happiness.

Concerted efforts have been made to achieve universal access to education, strengthen foundations for learning, enhance literacy and numeracy, and skills for work and lifelong learning. However, while significant progress has been made, more efforts need to be made in provision of equitable and quality education.

Therefore, this policy is developed to enhance access, quality and equity in education in order to create a strong foundation that aligns with the country's unique values, traditions, and

culture. In addition, this policy will also form the basis for formulation of Education Act in the future. The ultimate goal is to prepare and nurture citizens with values, skills and knowledge necessary for the 21st Century and beyond. Such an education system will lead towards realizing His Majesty's aspiration for a robust education system that is timeless and acts as an ongoing social equalizer.

3. Vision

This policy aims to enable the development of an education system that will contribute to:

"An educated and enlightened society of Gross National Happiness, built and sustained on the unique Bhutanese values of *Tha-Dam-Tshig Ley Gyu-Drey*."

4. Goals

The purpose of education is to develop citizens that value Bhutan's unique national identity, traditional wisdom and culture, who are prepared for right livelihood, and practice contemplative learning. It is also to develop individuals who are lifelong learners, who have a holistic understanding of the world and have a genuine care for others and nature. It should also develop all citizens' competency to deal effectively with the contemporary world, individuals who are critical, creative, informed and engaged in civic affairs.

Therefore, the National Education Policy 2019 aims to create a robust, inclusive and holistic education system that:

- 4.1 Inculcates the principles and values underpinning Gross National Happiness, and upholds the nation's unique cultural and spiritual heritage and values; and
- 4.2 Prepares citizens to become knowledgeable, skilful, creative, innovative, and enterprising, capable of responding to the national needs and emerging global trends.

5. Scope

This policy informs and guides all forms and levels of education in Bhutan, public and private, to support the aspirations of the Royal Government of Bhutan over the long term. This includes early childhood, schooling, monastic, tertiary, training, non-formal and continuing education.

6. Early Childhood Care and Development

Early childhood is the period from conception to approximately eight years where the foundations for children's health, education, social, emotional, psychological and intellectual development are formed. Structured Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) programmes and services therefore provide a holistic and equitable foundation for all children, including those with special educational needs, to develop to their full potential. ECCD programmes and services provide strong foundations for lifelong learning, holistic development and skills for a smooth transition from early childhood education to school.

Policy statements

- 6.1 All children age zero to 8 years of age, their families, and caregivers shall have access to ECCD programmes and services.
- 6.2 Relevant agencies shall collaborate to provide home based parenting education and interventions through awareness and advocacy programmes to cater to children from age zero to 35 months of age to promote child care, nutrition, health, hygiene, protection and stimulation.
- 6.3 The Government shall provide early learning opportunities for children aged 36 to 71 months old through the provision of ECCD centres.
- 6.4 The focus of the programmes and services in ECCD Centres will be on gross and fine motor, language, cognitive, social & emotional, self-help & adaptive, and spiritual & moral development.
- 6.5 ECCD centres shall be responsive to the needs of children in their care, and be inclusive of gender, disability, and socioeconomic status.
- 6.6 Early childhood pedagogies and appropriate interventions shall be instituted in primary schools to transition children aged 6 to 8 years from early childhood education to school education.
- 6.7 The Ministry of Education shall facilitate and regulate the provision of all ECCD education services. The establishment and operation of public, private, community ECCD centres shall fulfil Ministry's prescribed standards and guidelines.
- 6.8 ECCD centres shall not collect any form of fee or contribution from students/families other than fees approved by the Ministry of Education.

7. School Education

School Education in Bhutan provides a formal learning environment, public and private, from Pre-Primary (PP) to Class XII. School education shall offer opportunities to all students to realize their full potential by strengthening access, quality and equity so that they can

become socially useful and economically productive citizens. Hence, the school education policies are geared towards developing a system of school education that shall be dynamic and responsive to the changing local, national, and global needs.

Policy statements

- 7.1 All children of school going age shall have equitable access and opportunity to free quality and inclusive basic education as defined in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan.
- 7.2 The entry age to the Pre-Primary shall be six years (72 months), and admission procedures shall be guided by the school admission guidelines of the Ministry of Education.
- 7.3 The Ministry shall facilitate the enrolment and retention of out-of-school children aged 6 to 14, including children with special educational needs, children in conflict with the law in basic education through appropriate support systems.
- 7.4 The entry to public higher secondary education shall be made accessible to all students on the basis of merit. Efforts shall be made to ensure that students shall complete higher secondary level or equivalent.
- 7.5 All schools shall promote students to the next level upon attaining set standards, and engage parents on matters relating to students' academic progress and learning achievements, promotion and repetition.
- 7.6 All schools shall promote core values and facilitate productive and critical engagement in society as active and informed citizens. To this end, schools shall teach the country's spiritual and cultural heritage throughout schooling and develop civic, financial, entrepreneurial, environmental, media literacy, and provide life skills education programmes.
- 7.7 The annual school academic calendar shall ordinarily consist of 800 instructional hours delivered over 150 instructional days. Variations to this will consider class cohorts, seasonal conditions, and other relevant factors. Details on instructional hours shall be maintained and reviewed periodically in school management and operational guidelines.
- 7.8 Schools shall contribute to the expansion of required vocational skills by offering a diverse range of technical and vocational education and training subjects and programmes.
- 7.9 Schools, Technical Training Institutes (TTIs), and Institutes of Zorig Chusum (IZCs) shall collaborate in order to enhance the quality of technical and vocational education and

training (TVET) subjects and programmes and to promote the TVET system as an equivalent and integral aspect of education and training in Bhutan.

- 7.10 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) shall be promoted in schools through provision of ICT based resources to leverage the power of ICT in teaching and learning.
- 7.11 The Ministry, Dzongkhags/Thromdes and Schools shall maintain a class size of maximum of 24 for primary, and 30 for secondary levels.
- 7.12 Schools shall foster best practices and promote innovative methods to engage students and develop their full potential and life-skills.
- 7.13 Schools shall put in place appropriate measures for all students, including children with special educational needs, across all grades to ensure equitable access to and participation in school. This includes support with specialized, appropriate educational services and facilities, including trained personnel.
- 7.14 Schools shall not collect any form of fee or contribution from students/families other than fees approved by the Ministry of Education.
- 7.15 Special provisions and considerations shall be made for schools with exceptional circumstances, such as extreme remoteness, high altitude, and socio-economically disadvantaged communities.
- 7.16 All students studying in public schools shall be provided with appropriate and adequate learning materials, including textbooks.
- 7.17 All students at the primary level (public), and students in rural schools (public) shall be provided free stationery. Options shall be made available for needy secondary students from urban areas to study in nearby boarding schools as per boarding guidelines.
- 7.18 Teachers in public schools shall be provided with appropriate and required teaching materials and stationery.
- 7.19 Schools shall practice proactive and positive forms of behaviour management. The use of restraint or force shall never be used as a means of corrective measure or punishment.
- 7.20 Schools shall have standard physical facilities, including classrooms, libraries and counselling rooms, functioning water and sanitation facilities, sporting facilities and administrative facilities. Such facilities shall be accessible, safe, enhance effective teaching and learning, enhance growth and development of students and that considers age, gender, disability, and climatic conditions.

- 7.21 Schools shall have eco-friendly infrastructure with Bhutanese architectural designs.
- 7.22 Schools shall operate as either Primary with classes from Pre-Primary to Class VI, Secondary with class X as the highest grade, or Higher Secondary with class XII as the highest grade.
- 7.23 All schools shall have Bhutanese principals who are qualified educators with appropriate and extensive teaching, educational leadership and management experience.
- 7.24 The Ministry of Education shall facilitate and regulate the establishment and operations of all public, private and international schools in Bhutan.
- 7.25 Schools shall have an inclusive disaster management and preparedness plan.
- 7.26 Schools shall hoist the national flag of Bhutan as per the laws of the Kingdom of Bhutan.
- 7.27 All students shall attend academic sessions in national dress as a standard school uniform.
- 7.28 The National Anthem shall be sung during morning assembly sessions and on all formal school occasions.

8. Monastic Education

Monastic education refers to the traditional Buddhist form of education and remains the central form of spiritual learning and development in Bhutan. Monastic education provides distinct medium of acquiring knowledge, skills and values. There are a number of public and private Monastic education systems within Bhutan each with their own established governance arrangements and each with an independent curriculum, assessment and examination systems, and standards. *Zhung Dratshang* is the constitutionally recognized as the supreme Monastic governing body. It oversees the public Monastic education system in Bhutan.

The policy statements below apply to Monastic education institutions under *Dratshang Lhentshog*. However, all Monastic education institutions may adopt this policy to strengthen cooperation and collaboration among the educational institutions and to provide accessible, quality and inclusive education to children and learners.

Policy statements

- 8.1 *Zhung Dratshang* shall maintain its independent governance, regulations, and guidelines for Monastic Education.

- 8.2 Children shall have equitable access to Monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras* registered and recognized by *Zhung Dratshang*.
- 8.3 Identified Monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras* shall put in place appropriate measures for students with special educational needs across all grades to ensure equitable access to and participation in monastic education.
- 8.4 *Zhung Dratshang*, the Ministry of Education, and other relevant government agencies shall collaborate to facilitate the enhancement of quality and inclusive education. Collaboration shall include areas such as sharing of resources and provision of education support services, including provision of support for students with special educational needs.
- 8.5 *Zhung Dratshang* shall put in place mechanisms to strengthen and maintain access, quality and equity of education in Monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras*.
- 8.6 Monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras* shall promote students to the next level based on their attaining set standards.
- 8.7 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) shall be promoted in Monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras* through provision of ICT based resources to leverage the power of ICT in teaching and learning.
- 8.8 *Dratshang Lhentshog*, in consultation with *Zhung Dratshang*, shall support teachers and students with adequate and appropriate teaching and learning materials, including textbooks.
- 8.9 Monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras* shall have standard physical facilities including classrooms, functioning water and sanitation facilities, sporting facilities and administrative facilities that ensures accessibility, safety, effective teaching and learning, enhances growth and development of students and that considers age, gender, disability, and climatic conditions.
- 8.10 Monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras* shall operate as *Zhirim Lobdra* ranging from classes from Pre-Primary to class VIII, *Dingrim Shedra* from classes IX to XII, *Thorim Shedra* from class XIII to XV, and *Tsugla Lobdra* equivalent to Masters level.
- 8.11 Monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras* shall have an inclusive disaster management and preparedness plan.
- 8.12 Monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras* shall promote culture, tradition and the values of *Tha-Dam-Tshig Ley Gyu-Drey*.

9. Curriculum, Assessment and Recognition

9.1 Curriculum and Pedagogy

The curriculum is central to education and plays a vital role in achieving the purpose of education as defined under the policy goals. It secures the right of all children and young people to a holistic education. Curriculum and pedagogy should provide opportunities for a variety of experiences and knowledge to enable students to think rationally, be reflective, understand the world through its various disciplines, and foster aesthetic appreciation and strive for global harmony. Curriculum should also promote the country's unique culture and tradition, values, while learning to participate actively in the process of building an educated, enlightened, and cohesive society.

Policy statements

- 9.1.1 The curriculum shall equip students with the knowledge, skills, beliefs, and attitudes based on Bhutanese values of *Tha-Damtse Ley-Judrey*, *Zacha-Drosum*, and *Sampa-Semke*.
- 9.1.2 The curriculum shall be designed to develop sound foundation in literacy, numeracy and language.
- 9.1.3 Dzongkha as the national language shall be taught in all schools to ensure that all students acquire high proficiency.
- 9.1.4 English shall be the medium of instruction in schools. Efforts shall be made to ensure that all students acquire high proficiency in English, and continually improve the standard of English teaching and learning.
- 9.1.5 The curricula designs shall be informed by national priorities, learners' needs and emerging societal demands and suitable to local contexts to enable students to be innovative and creative, lifelong learners, and prepare them for the world of work.
- 9.1.6 The curriculum shall provide opportunities for learners to pursue diverse academic and vocational pathways.
- 9.1.7 All educational institutes shall encourage strong reading habits to foster a reading culture and study skills among students for their personal growth and intellectual development.
- 9.1.8 School curriculum shall strengthen Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education to promote creativity and innovation, and prepare students to participate meaningfully in a society and economy that is increasingly reliant on information and communication technologies. It shall also promote Arts education to develop and enhance creativity.

- 9.1.9 Curriculum shall emphasize the use of pedagogical approaches that promote active student participation, communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking, development of competencies, and the use of ICT in teaching and learning.
- 9.1.10 The curriculum and pedagogy shall be inclusive of gender, special educational needs, socio-economic circumstances and geographic location.
- 9.1.11 Curriculum design and development shall integrate technical and vocational skills in relevant subjects across all levels.
- 9.1.12 Curriculum shall be based on current research to remain relevant, dynamic, and current, while preserving and promoting traditional knowledge, values, and cultural heritage.
- 9.1.13 Any school curriculum revision and reform shall follow the standard curriculum development cycle.
- 9.1.14 An overarching national school curriculum framework shall guide the selection of learning experiences, outcomes, standards, and assessment for all learning areas. The curriculum framework shall be inclusive of gender, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, diverse geographic locations, students with disabilities, domestic and work responsibilities. It shall contain sufficient flexibility as to enable students to complete basic and higher secondary education over an extended period, and to be adapted for students who are unable to access the general curriculum.
- 9.1.15 An independent professional body shall be responsible for the development of school curriculum under the guidance of the Ministry.
- 9.1.16 There shall be a clear governance, roles and responsibilities among the Ministry of Education and the independent professional bodies responsible for school curriculum, assessment and examinations with respect to the development, implementation, and review of school curriculum, assessment and examinations.
- 9.1.17 The Ministry of Education shall facilitate collaboration amongst key agencies and other stakeholders on matters related to school curriculum implementation, assessment, monitoring and evaluation, and relevant teacher pre-service education and development. *Geden Tsugla Dutshog* shall facilitate collaboration in all matters related to curriculum implementation, assessment, monitoring and evaluation in monastic education institutes under *Zhung Dratshang*.

9.2 Assessment and Examinations

The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning. It informs students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders about student's learning achievements. Assessment can also provide valuable information about the health of the education system, specifically to inform if the curriculum is being delivered in line with its intended purpose and goals. Assessment practices shall incorporate formative and summative forms, including standardized examinations. In view of this, it is imperative that assessment and examinations are adaptable to ensure continuous improvement of the quality of education.

Policy statements

- 9.2.1 The health of school education shall be monitored through a periodic national and/or international education assessment system.
- 9.2.2 Mechanisms shall be instituted at both school and national level to ensure that assessment is reliable, valid, and authentic, and are comparable to international standards.
- 9.2.3 Assessment of student learning shall be based on learning standards or outcomes prescribed in the school curriculum, and shall include standardized holistic school level assessment and national examinations. It shall incorporate formative and summative forms, and emphasize competencies.
- 9.2.4 Standardized modes of assessment including national examinations shall be based on the students learning outcomes or standards prescribed in the curricula.
- 9.2.5 Appropriate arrangements shall be made available for students with disabilities in assessment and examinations to ensure that all students are able to demonstrate their learning outcomes.
- 9.2.6 An independent professional body shall be responsible for standardized assessment and examinations, including certifications, protocols, and regulation under the guidance of the Ministry.

10. Tertiary Education

Tertiary education system in Bhutan aspires to be a nationally rooted and globally competitive that aims to develop productive, socially responsible, culturally grounded, ecologically sensitive, and spiritually aware citizens equipped to lead Bhutan into a knowledge based society that values lifelong learning. Tertiary education plays a central role in building human resource requirements of the country. It develops citizens who can resolve complex social and technical problems. In addition to the following policy statements, the provisions of tertiary education shall be guided by the Tertiary Education Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2010 (TEP) and amendments thereof.

Policy statements

- 10.1 Tertiary Education Institutes (TEIs) in Bhutan shall offer courses/programmes of international standard that are relevant to the current and future national, social, economic, and spiritual needs. Skills development courses such as TVET and ICT shall be the priority area.
- 10.2 Entry to all TEIs shall be on the basis of merit appropriate to students' abilities, interests, competencies and performance, and consider students' economic circumstances, gender and/or special educational needs.
- 10.3 Scholarships and access schemes within and outside Bhutan shall be made available to meritorious candidates, especially in critical areas of national human resource requirements, and consider gender, disabilities, geographical location and students from low socio economic backgrounds.
- 10.4 TEIs shall provide different modes of study responsive to learning needs, and flexible course structures.
- 10.5 TEIs shall conduct research, and institute strategies to promote a strong culture of research and development.
- 10.6 TEI educators shall deploy pedagogical approaches that involve active student participation, communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking, development of competencies, and promote active, informed and transformative citizenship.
- 10.7 Program content and pedagogy deployed shall be inclusive of gender, special educational needs, socio-economic circumstances and geographic location.
- 10.8 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) shall be promoted in TEIs through provision of ICT based resources to leverage the power of ICT in teaching and learning.
- 10.9 All relevant educational agencies shall collaborate to promote and provide pathways for learners and credit transfer among non-formal education, school education, technical, vocational education and training, and tertiary education.
- 10.10 TEIs shall collaborate with local, regional and international industries, employers, and educational institutes to strengthen the courses/programmes, exchange knowledge and resources, and enhance research and development.
- 10.12 The overall policy directions for and regulation of all TEIs shall be through the recognized national tertiary education regulatory bodies.

10.13 All TEIs shall have physical facilities that support appropriate and quality delivery of its programmes, enable quality and innovative research and development, and provide appropriate support for students and staff. These facilities include lecture and tutorial rooms, offices for academic staff, appropriately resourced libraries, counselling rooms, functioning water and sanitation facilities, sporting, dining and administrative facilities. All facilities shall be functional and well maintained, built to Bhutanese design standards, environmentally friendly, safe, accessible, and consider age range, gender, disability and climatic conditions.

10.14 All TEIs shall have an inclusive disaster management and preparedness plan.

10.15 Tertiary education shall promote culture, tradition and the values of *Tha-Dam-Tshi-Ley Gyu-Drey*.

10.16 An independent governing body shall be established to support and oversee research priorities, and to fund research and development activities to support the short, medium, and long term needs of the country.

11. Literacy and Lifelong Learning

The Royal Government of Bhutan encourages all of its citizens to pursue lifelong learning both formally and informally. This enables a society that responds to changing labour market demands, and well-rounded individuals who can effectively contribute culturally and economically. An individual's level of formal education and their consequent literacy directly influences their ability to effectively participate in society and pursue lifelong learning. This also helps conserve, strengthen, and promote country's culture, traditions, and values. As such, measures need to be put in place to ensure all citizens are equally competent to fully participate in lifelong learning and community services.

Policy statements

11.1 The Ministry of Education shall support and promote the development of literacy and numeracy skills for all citizens.

11.2 Opportunities shall also be provided to enhance literacy, numeracy, and vocational skills through appropriately resourced educational institutes, distance and online learning.

11.3 Opportunities shall be provided for those from fifteen years of age and above who wish to upgrade their qualifications and skills through continuing education and equivalency programmes, and consider their economic circumstances, gender, disabilities, and/or special educational needs.

11.4 Non-formal education shall be provided and made accessible to all those from fifteen

years of age and above who have missed formal education, for those who have dropped from the formal education system, and/or for those requiring basic literacy development and vocational skills.

- 11.5 Non-formal education shall infuse life skills such as health and reproductive issues, environment, disaster management, social dimensions such as gender, childcare and protection, democracy, Gross National Happiness within its course content. Programme design, content delivery and duration should be flexible in order to be inclusive of gender, disability, geographic location and socio-economic circumstances.
- 11.6 Non-formal and continuing education shall be directed and strengthened by an appropriate governing board and operational guidelines.
- 11.7 Education shall be provided to parents and caregivers of children in matters including child care, nutrition, health, hygiene, child protection, stimulation, child and adolescent development.
- 11.8 The relevant agencies shall collaborate to support out-of-school youth, including those in conflict with the law and serving prison sentences, to engage in appropriate education pathways.

12. Accreditation & Quality Assurance

The credibility of educational institutes can be maintained through a rigorous accreditation and quality assurance process. These processes ensure that educational institutes meet and maintain a minimum standard of quality and integrity regarding academic standards, administration, and related services. They establish recognition, legitimacy and credibility of educational institutes, both within and outside the country.

Policy statements

- 12.1 All schools shall follow nationally or internationally recognized assessment, examination and certification system endorsed by the Ministry of Education or the relevant agency of the Royal Government of Bhutan.
- 12.2 The Ministry of Education shall assess the quality of public and private ECCD Centres.
- 12.3 The Ministry of Education shall assess the quality of private and international schools.
- 12.4 A quality assurance and accreditation body shall assess the quality of and accredit Tertiary Education Institutes.
- 12.5 A comprehensive framework shall be developed, maintained and periodically

reviewed to recognize equivalency of assessment results /certification of students studying outside Bhutan.

- 12.6 The Ministry of Education shall recognize internationally orientated primary and secondary curriculum such as International Baccalaureate, Cambridge International General Certificate for Secondary Examinations or equivalent.
- 12.7 Mechanisms shall be put in place to recognize prior learning and facilitate credit transfer for seamless movement of students between and into schools, technical and vocational education and training, tertiary, and other forms of education.
- 12.8 Accreditation systems that recognise the learning and achievements of students with disabilities will be developed. Accreditation shall be recognised nationally for employment and further training opportunities.
- 12.9 An effective monitoring & evaluation framework shall be put in place to oversee the overall health and quality of education to inform future planning related to curricula, teachers, resource allocations, and system efficiency.

13. Holistic wellbeing of children and young people

In addition to academic, intellectual and cognitive development, educational institutes play an important role in the holistic development of the wellbeing of children, youth and adult learners. Educational institutes can support children, youth and adult learners through mechanisms and programmes that promote their physical and mental health, leadership attributes, life skills, career aspirations, and safety.

Policy statements

- 13.1 All educational institutes shall provide adequate and appropriate programmes and support to enrich and empower learners to facilitate their growth and wellbeing.
- 13.2 All programmes for children, young people and learners shall meet the safety and protection standards set by the relevant regulatory bodies.
- 13.3 All educational institutes shall put in place plans and programmes to imbue a sense of volunteerism and foster character building of children, young people and learners based on the country's unique values and culture.
- 13.4 All educational institutes shall provide safe, supportive, inclusive, and learner-friendly environment that is conducive to holistic learning, intellectual engagement and growth. This includes an environment free from abuse, harassment and violence including bullying.

- 13.5 All educational institutes shall develop, maintain and periodically review policies and procedures to minimize the risk to the safety of all children, young people and learners in their care. The procedures shall include reporting cases of suspected abuse, while attending, travelling to and from, or outside the educational institute, to appropriate authorities. [EDS: This looks fine to me. However, I hope other areas of concern or need is covered under other provisions.]
- 13.6 All educational institutes shall maintain the privacy and confidentiality of personal information, including images of children, young people, learners and staff under their jurisdiction.
- 13.7 All educational institutes shall provide comprehensive counselling and guidance to all students with designated trained counsellors. A Guidance and Counselling Framework shall guide protocols and procedures.
- 13.8 Every child shall be supported to complete basic education through strategies such as transportation, accommodation with bedding facilities, school feeding programmes, additional support for students with disabilities, and other innovative support services.
- 13.9 All children in public ECCD centres, schools, Monastic Lobdras and Shedras shall be provided with at least one balanced and nutritious meal per day, and those in boarding schools and Monastic Lobdras and Shedras shall be provided with three meals per day to foster their physiological and cognitive development.
- 13.10 The Ministry of Education shall develop school feeding and boarding admission guidelines to guide school feeding programmes and to ensure sustainability, effective and efficient use of resources.
- 13.11 All schools shall promote agricultural programmes that are integrated with the local food production systems to supplement nutrition and ensure sustainability of feeding programmes, to educate children about food, nutrition, and sustainable farming practises.
- 13.12 All educational institutes with feeding programmes shall provide balanced, nutritious and sufficient food.
- 13.13 Learner's health shall be monitored through periodic checks in a academic year to educate, prevent, treat, and rehabilitate for their wellbeing.
- 13.13 All schools shall institute and strengthen scouting programmes to support the holistic development of children and young people.

13.14 All educational institutes shall promote sports and physical education for all round development and wellbeing of children.

13.15 Recreational, educational and remedial services and programmes for youth in schools, Monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras*, and out-of-education shall be provided.

14. Human Resources

Educational personnel are critical in realising educational goals and national aspirations. Adequate and competent human resources with the right aptitude and attitude, and supply of critical human resources are pre-requisites for an effective and efficient education system. Hence, it is imperative that all educational institutes are adequately staffed with competent and well-motivated personnel. In addition to the following overarching policies, the Teacher Human Resource Policy 2014 and amendments thereof shall also guide the educational professionals within the Ministry of Education.

Policy statements

14.1 Opportunities shall be created to attract competent high calibre graduates with the right aptitude and strong commitment to education, from diverse backgrounds, to undertake pre-service courses in education.

14.2 A competitive selection process shall be put in place to facilitate the recruitment of competent candidates to all educational institutes with the right aptitude and strong commitment to education.

14.3 Education professionals, either national or international, highly specialized in fields where their service is required, shall be employed to meet critical human resource needs.

14.4 Incentives and rewards shall be put in place in order to facilitate enhanced performance and retain effective teachers in classrooms.

14.5 The Ministry of Education shall provide incentives to attract and retain education personnel to remote locations, high altitudes, and boarding schools.

14.6 Clear career pathways, advancement opportunities, specialization choices, and entry and exit requirements shall be provided for educational personnel.

14.7 Efficient deployment systems shall be put in place to ensure all educational institutes are adequately staffed with appropriately qualified and competent personnel.

- 14.8 Sufficient additional professionals shall be made available to provide effective and inclusive special education services.
- 14.9 All education personnel shall be encouraged and supported to undertake continuous professional development to expand their knowledge, improve their skills and upgrade their qualifications. Education personnel shall receive adequate, relevant, and regular professional development.
- 14.10 Professional development shall be targeted to develop competency of teachers in their subject areas, and other educational professional areas based on national priorities and emerging needs through coordinated resource sharing.
- 14.11 Opportunities, programmes and support systems shall be put in place to continually develop and enhance educational leadership capacity, including programs and initiatives that focus on supporting, developing and enhancing women leaders, leaders with disabilities, and leaders from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.
- 14.12 Mechanisms shall be developed to maintain continuity of student learning and instructional hours resulting from teacher absenteeism in classes due to circumstances such as professional development, transfers or resignation.
- 14.13 A performance-based management system shall be instituted in order to maintain and enhance quality performance.
- 14.14 An autonomous governing body under the auspices of the Ministry shall be instituted to regulate the teaching profession and promote professional standards through functions such as, certifications, registration, and licensing.
- 14.15 The relevant regulatory body shall develop and periodically review standards for education personnel and code of conduct to ensure professionalism of all education personnel.
- 14.16 All education personnel working with children shall undergo a comprehensive background check, including security clearance, as appropriate during the recruitment, and periodically thereafter. Those found to have offences where it is deemed that children may be at risk of harm will not gain employment.
- 14.17 All teachers shall refrain from providing private tuition. Schools shall provide in-school support for those students who require learning support.
- 14.18 Support systems and mechanisms shall be put in place for education personnel's wellbeing and overall welfare, morale and motivation, including responses to allegations of harassment and abuse.

- 14.19 The maximum number of classroom contact hours for full-time teachers in a week shall be 18 hours, pro-rata for part-time teachers. The details shall be articulated in teacher workload guidelines.
- 14.20 Teacher workload guidelines shall be maintained and regularly reviewed to enable effective instructional delivery. The guidelines shall include number of subjects a teacher shall teach, classroom contact hours, and a teachers' scope of responsibilities.
- 14.21. A minimum of two trained teachers shall be deployed every school irrespective of its enrolment for smooth functioning.

15. Financing Education

As mandated by the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, Article-9, Section-16, "the State shall endeavour to provide free basic education up to tenth standard to all school going age children", the Ministry shall ensure that all children have access to quality and inclusive education through necessary provisions. Also, to ensure a sustainable education system, it is important to formulate a state funding mechanisms to build on the achievements made to realize the goal of providing quality education to all.

Policy statements

- 15.1 The government shall ensure adequate funding allocation to education in order that appropriate levels of resourcing can be made available to provide equitable access to quality and inclusive education for all. An international benchmark shall be maintained, which is at least 7.1% of Gross Domestic Product and/or 23% of the national budget outlay for education.
- 15.2 Innovative funding mechanisms shall be put in place to supplement public investment in, strengthen and sustain, higher education courses/programmes, and research and development activities.
- 15.2 A financing model shall be applied that enables effective and equitable distribution of resources within the education sector. The model will consider an optimum and differential allocation of funding for different models and levels of educational institutes, geographic location of educational institutes, socio-economically disadvantaged educational communities, and educational institutes with students who have special educational needs.
- 15.3 Resource allocation will consider priorities such as early childhood care and development, primary education, gender, special educational needs, vulnerable youths, schools in diverse geographic locations, schools that service socio-

economically disadvantaged communities, emergency contingency funding, tertiary education, research and development, and professional development of education personnel.

- 15.4 To achieve greater efficiency, accountability and transparency in the system, financial and human resources decentralization shall be enhanced at all levels of education administration and management. Guidelines to this effect shall be regulated by the Ministry.

16. Educational Administration and Governance

To enhance and ensure efficiency and quality in the delivery of services, and to support the Ministry and agencies in managing programmes, projects, and services, it is important to outline the broad roles and responsibilities at each level of service delivery. In this regard, the following key agencies shall play a vital role in ensuring effective education administration and governance of education in the country.

Policy statements

16.1 The Ministry of Education shall:

- 16.1.1 Provide the overall policy guidelines for development of education in the country;
- 16.1.2 Facilitate effective coordination and collaboration within the Ministry, with other agencies, local governments and schools for the development and implementation of educational policies, plans, services; and
- 16.1.3 Review its structure and mandates from time to time to enhance its efficiency and service delivery.

16.2 The Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, as an agency responsible for Technical and Vocational Education and Training & Zorig Chusums shall:

- 16.2.1 Provide the overall policy guidelines for the provision of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the country;
- 16.2.2 Facilitate effective coordination and collaboration within the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, with the Ministry of Education, and other agencies, local governments and TTIs/IZCs for the development and implementation of educational policies and plans; and
- 16.2.3 Review its structure and mandates from time to time to enhance its efficiency and

service delivery.

16.3 The independent professional bodies responsible for the development of school curriculum and standardized assessment and examinations shall:

- 16.3.1 Provide the overall frameworks and guidelines for the development and implementation of curriculum, assessment and standardised examinations in the country;
- 16.3.2 Develop teaching, learning and assessment resources for schools, teachers and students;
- 16.3.3 Conduct research into effective curriculum, pedagogy and assessment design and practices;
- 16.3.4 Develop and implement initial professional development programs as part of the roll-out of new or revised curriculum and standardised assessment and examinations;
- 16.3.5 Consult and collaborate with relevant agencies on matters that influence their core business; and
- 16.3.6 Review its structure and mandates from time to time to enhance its efficiency and service delivery.

16.4 The professional bodies responsible for the Tertiary Education in Bhutan shall:

- 16.4.1 Facilitate effective coordination and collaboration with the Ministry of Education or other central agencies, local governments and TEIs for the development and implementation of educational policies, plans, services; and
- 16.4.2 Review their structure and mandates from time to time to enhance their efficiency and service delivery.

16.5 Zhung Dratshang/Dratshang Lhentshog shall:

- 16.5.1 Facilitate effective coordination and collaboration within Monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras*, with the Ministry of Education, other agencies, and local governments for the development and implementation of educational policies, plans, and services;

- 16.5.2 Review its structure and mandates from time to time to enhance its efficiency and service delivery;
- 16.5.3 Ensure that the quality and performance of the Monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras* are maintained through regular monitoring;
- 16.5.4 Ensure systematic planning and budgeting for Monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras* and programmes; and
- 16.5.5 Coordinate and report educational data to the Ministry periodically.

16.6 Dzongkhags/Thromdes shall:

- 16.6.1 Support and facilitate coordination, collaboration, and implementation of educational plans, programmes and services;
- 16.6.2 Ensure systematic planning and budgeting for their respective ECCD centres, schools, NFE centres, Youth Centers, and programmes;
- 16.6.3 Ensure that the quality and performance of ECCD centres, schools, NFE centres, and Youth Centers are maintained through regular monitoring; and
- 16.6.4 Coordinate and report educational data to the Ministry periodically.

16.7 TEIs/ Schools/ECCDs/NFE Centres/ Monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras* shall:

- 16.7.1 Deliver quality and inclusive educational programmes and towards this, assess their own performance on a regular basis and develop and implement their improvement plans;
- 16.7.2 Engage communities through consultation on current policy issues, soliciting opinions, views and feedback to strengthen the delivery of educational services;
- 16.7.3 Engage learners in the respective educational institute's policy formulation and implementation, decision making and governance processes;
- 16.7.4 ECCD Centres/Schools shall engage the community through ECCD/school management boards, parent teacher meetings/associations, parenting education awareness programme, alumni associations and community services; and
- 16.7.5 Maintain and update records of students, staff, and facilities in education management and information system on annual basis.

17. Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation

The effectiveness of policy lies in its successful implementation, monitoring and appropriate changes and improvements as they are identified. To this end, clear processes, governance arrangements and timelines for implementation, monitoring and evaluation are required.

Policy statements

17.1 The Ministry of Education in collaboration with key stakeholders shall develop an implementation plan to achieve the policy goals and objectives.

17.2 The Ministry of Education and respective agencies shall carry out a periodic monitoring of the implementation plan.

17.3 Evaluation of the policy shall be conducted by an external agency after five years and at regular intervals thereafter.

18. Amendments

18.1 The Ministry of Education, as the lead agency, in collaboration with other relevant agencies shall review and amend this policy periodically.

19. Glossary

- 19.1. **Academic calendar:** The schedule of events occurring in the academic year; that includes term times, assessment and examination dates.
- 19.2. **Academic year:** The customary annual period of instruction at an educational institute. In Bhutan this is the period from February till December each calendar year.
- 19.3. **Access Scheme:** Additional merit for a student to overcome long-term educational disadvantage experienced due to circumstances outside their control.
- 19.4. **Accreditation:** The process of self-study and external review for quality assurance, accountability and for quality improvement of education institutions. It is an assurance that a program or institution meets established quality standards.
- 19.5. **Assessment:** Evaluation of a student's progress in learning and their achievements or performance through a scientific method of collecting learning evidences, analysing and interpreting to strategize interventions
- 19.6. **At risk:** exposed to the possibility of danger or harm
- 19.7. **Behaviour management:** Approaches and strategies that facilitate fostering positive behaviour, and build a positive social and physical environment for learners. Behaviour management can adopt a whole school approach, or other forms.
- 19.8. **Bullying:** unwanted, aggressive behaviour by an individual or group that intentionally or effectively physically, psychologically, emotionally and/or sexually intimidates another. Bullying involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.
- 19.9. **Child:** a person under the age of eighteen years.
- 19.10. **Child abuse:** Physical, psychological, emotional and/or sexual maltreatment of a child, including neglect by an adult. Child abuse involves an imbalance of power, and can be repeated behaviour, or behaviour that has the potential to be repeated.
- 19.11. **Child protection:** refers to the systemic protection of children from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provides for the protection of children in and out of the home.
- 19.12. **College:** refers to an institution responsible for the delivery of tertiary education. Any college shall be either a constituent college of a university, affiliated to a university, or an autonomous branch of a foreign university, and in all cases, governed by the related university's rules and regulations.
- 19.13. **Community Learning Centre:** A local educational institution outside the formal education system, usually set up and manage local people to provide various learning opportunities in the fields of livelihood skills program, life skills, and literacy.
- 19.14. **Competency-based learning:** Refers to systems of instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating that they have learned the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education.
- 19.15. **Continuing education:** An instructional program that facilitates adult learners to update

their knowledge and skills in a particular area.

- 19.16. **Curriculum:** A planned integrated course of academic studies for schools and monastic *Lobdras* and *Shedras*
- 19.17. **Disabilities:** Social position resulting from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
- 19.18. **Dratshang Lhentshog:** The Commission for the Monastic Affairs of Bhutan
- 19.19. **Early Childhood Care and Development:** refers to the care of young children and their gross and fine motor skills, language, cognitive, social, emotional, self-care, spiritual and moral development during early childhood.
- 19.20. **Early childhood education:** refers to activities and experiences designed to aid the gross and fine motor skills, language, cognitive, social, emotional, self-care, spiritual and moral development of young children. It should be noted that while educational experiences may be planned, they are not necessarily formal. For example, play based experiences is common in early childhood education.
- 19.21. **Education personnel:** All staff who work in educational institutes to support learner's formal and informal education, health and wellbeing, and intellectual, social and emotional development, such as Teachers, Principals, Lams, Lopens, Professors, Lecturers, Instructors, School Guidance and Counsellors, Dzongkhag/Thromde Education Officers, Librarians, Lab assistants, Warden, Matron, Care givers, ECCD facilitators, etc.
- 19.22. **Education:** Any form of teaching and learning, including through an educational institute, both formal and non-formal.
- 19.23. **Educational institutes:** Places of learning that offer structured educational courses and/or programs and attended by learners. It refers to all places of learning from early childhood to adult.
- 19.24. **Educational personnel:** Refers to all personnel working in the educational institute campus such as teachers, warden and matrons, support staff, caregivers, counsellors, sports personnel, etc.
- 19.25. **Educational professionals:** Inclusive of the following education personnel: Principals, Vice Principals, teachers District Education Officers, Thromde Education Officers, Curriculum Officers, Education Monitoring Officers, Counsellors in schools and the Ministry of Education
- 19.26. **Examination:** A formal test of a person's knowledge or competency in a subject or area of learning.
- 19.27. **Family:** A group of people related by birth or who reside together and have caring responsibilities for another in the residence and relate to each other as family. Care givers and guardians are included within a family group.
- 19.28. **Fee:** an amount of money charged for educational tuition or related educational activity
- 19.29. **Formal education:** Certified education services provided by educational institutes.
- 19.30. **Formative assessment:** An ongoing process of gathering and interpreting evidence of

student learning through formal and informal procedures, conducted by teachers during the teaching and learning process in order to monitor learning progress in student learning. Formative assessment is often used to guide teachers to modify teaching strategies, or learning activities to enhance students' learning and achievement. It may also be used to prepare students for summative assessment.

- 19.31. **Gender:** The physical and/or social condition of being male or female.
- 19.32. **Geden Tsugla Dutshog:** Monastic Education Council of Bhutan.
- 19.33. **Harm:** Physical, Mental or emotional injury, especially that which is deliberately inflicted
- 19.34. **Harassment:** Behaviour which is intended to trouble or annoys or upset someone often through threats/demands. It is often repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, and involves unequal power relations.
- 19.35. **Inclusive education:** The process of valuing, accepting and supporting diversity in schools and ensuring that every child has equal opportunity to learn.
- 19.36. **Learner friendly:** Educational institutes and learning environment that are conducive to learning, aesthetically appealing and welcoming, which ensure safe and supportive school enrolment regardless of their background or ability. Learners have equal opportunities to enter the educational institutes and to participate in learning inside and outside the classroom.
- 19.37. **Learning experiences:** Refers to any interaction, course, program, or other experience in which learning takes place, whether it occurs in traditional academic settings (schools, classrooms) or non-traditional settings (outside-of-school locations, outdoor environments), or whether it includes traditional educational interactions (students learning from teachers and professors) or non-traditional interactions (students learning through games and interactive software applications)
- 19.38. **Learning Outcomes:** what students are expected to know and be able to do at the end of a period of learning (for example at the end of a class, term, grade level, primary education, basic education).
- 19.39. **Learning standards:** Statements that define of what students are expected to know and be able to do at the end of each stage. Sometimes, it is referred to as bench mark
- 19.40. **Lobdra:** Monastic school where learners are taught general subjects with more emphasis on art and skills development such as the conduct of rituals and mask dances.
- 19.41. **Merit: Merit:** Having the quality of being suited to enter a phase of education or training, that is, attaining certain minimum academic performances, possessing certain behavioural attributes, attitudes, aptitudes, talents and potential suited to a particular standard or field of study. Assessment of merit takes into consideration the recognised situational advantages and disadvantages surrounding an individual's performance and effort. It also considers students' economic circumstances, gender and/or special educational needs.
- 19.42. **Ministry:** The Ministry of Education.
- 19.43. **Monastic education:** The Buddhist traditional form of education
- 19.44. **National Curriculum Framework:** A document that provides a road map to what students

are expected to learn and be able to perform at different key stages. It is an overarching curriculum document that guides the drafting of curriculum frameworks for different subjects.

- 19.45. **National Education Assessment:** It is the system of assessing the national standard of students' learning and performance in schools. Generally, a specific key stage is chosen and the test is administered, either nationwide or through random sampling.
- 19.46. **National Examination System:** The set of protocols adopted and practiced during the conduct of national high stakes examinations at selected grades.
- 19.47. **Non-Formal Education:** Education that has tailored learning experiences to meet the learning needs of the population in a given community, generally targeting learners who did not go to school or could not continue studies.
- 19.48. **Principal:** The educator who has executive authority for a school.
- 19.49. **Priority:** Educational institutes that are given resourcing priority at a given point in time due to particular circumstances affecting the community (e.g. secondary schools in low socioeconomic communities).
- 19.50. **Professional Development:** Structured, semi-structured and informal forms of education that enhance the knowledge and pedagogical skills of educational personnel with the aim of improving teaching and learning.
- 19.51. **Programme:** Provision of several related projects, activities or services designed to support educational goal, to educate, to promote, and build skills for learners.
- 19.52. **Quality Assurance:** The systemic and systematic monitoring and evaluation of service and program provision to assure the required standards are met, maintained and improved.
- 19.53. **Safe and Supportive Environment:** Educational environment that is child-centred, gender-sensitive, inclusive, community-involved, environmentally friendly, protective, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually healthy, and free of any form of violence against children.
- 19.54. **Sampa-Semke:** Notion, thought, idea, or anything arising or dawning in the mind.
- 19.55. **School:** A formal educational institution with classes from Pre-Primary to Class VI, Secondary with class X as the highest grade, or Higher Secondary with class XII as the highest grade where learners receive education services.
- 19.56. **School Going Age:** Ages six to sixteen years/72 months.
- 19.57. **Services:** An agency that performs a public service subject to government regulation. This includes youth, health, childcare and protection.
- 19.58. **Shedra:** Monastic institute where learners are engaged in in-depth learning with an emphasis on literature, language and research.
- 19.59. **Special communities:** Communities that are accorded priority by the Royal Government of Bhutan, the Ministry of Education or the local government, due to particular unique circumstances of that community (e.g. remoteness, high altitude, populated by an ethnic minority).
- 19.60. **Special educational need:** A child or young person who has significant learning difficulty

than most children, or young person of the same age, or has disability, which prevents or hinders from making use of facilities of a kind, provided for others of the same age in mainstream educational institutes.

- 19.61. **Standard physical facilities:** Standard infrastructure in an educational institute which shall include classrooms, appropriate furniture and teaching and learning equipment, learning support facilities such as libraries and counselling rooms, administrative facilities, water and sanitation facilities, games and sports facilities and equipment, as issued by the Ministry of Education or relevant agencies.
- 19.62. **Standardized holistic school level assessment:** A set of tools developed to measure holistic development and progress of a student in the school
- 19.63. **Summative assessment:** Assessment that measures student's achievement at the end of a period of learning. It is used to communicate information on student achievement to students, teachers, parents and guardians, and others.
- 19.64. **Teaching and learning materials:** Curriculum resources which include teachers guide, textbooks, manuals, notebooks, stationery, and other supporting materials that aids teaching and learning.
- 19.65. **Tertiary Education Institutes (TEIs):** Educational institutes offering specialised tertiary courses affiliated to a university.
- 19.66. **Tertiary education:** formal and structured education courses, usually offered by a university, culminating in the awarding of a degree or higher degree.
- 19.67. **Tha-Dam-Tshig Ley Gyu-Drey:** Sublime values of solemn devotion and trust based on interconnectedness, relationship and bonding, and cause and effect.
- 19.68. **Transformative citizenship:** citizenship that is concerned about reconstructing society by developing a critical understanding of and engagement with social issues and institutions.
- 19.69. **University:** Institute of post-secondary learning offering degree level courses or higher.
- 19.70. **Violence:** the intentional use of physical or emotional force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation.
- 19.71. **Vocational Skills:** Skills needed for an occupation, trade, or a profession acquired either through orientation or practical or first-hand skills to prepare learners to work in various jobs such as in trade, craft, or in technical areas.
- 19.72. **Youth centre:** A place where information or services relating to health, career, and employment are provided targeting for youths.
- 19.73. **Youth:** People in the age group of 13 to 24 years.
- 19.74. **Zacha-Drosum:** Etiquette of how one eats, one behaves, and how one walks/moves based on national values.
- 19.75. **Zhung Dratshang:** Central monastic body of Bhutan.

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Date: 02 August 2019