

## Bhutan

### Update on the context and situation of children

Building on Bhutan's "gross national happiness" development philosophy, the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGOB) has invested 25 percent of its annual budget in the social sector to ensure free basic services (Ministry of Finance, National Budget Report Financial Year 2019-20). This is critical given children and adolescents comprise thirty-four percent of the country's 735,553 estimated population (48 percent female; 62 percent rural) (RGOB 2017, Population and Housing Census).

Economic growth has increased by 8 percent annually up to 2016 from 2.1 percent in 2013, although Bhutan's Royal Monetary Authority (RMA) records a dwindling Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate of 3.8 percent in 2018 (RMA, 2016/2017 and 2018/2019). In 2018, GDP was USD 3,331 per capita (National Statistics Bureau (NSB) 2019, National Accounts Statistics). Poverty has been reduced from 23.2 percent of people considered income-poor in 2007 to 8.2 percent in 2017, with multidimensional poverty dropping from 12.7 percent (2012) to 5.8 percent (2017) (RGOB 2017, Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)).

As per 2017 Census data, 48.7 percent of the population have moved away from their gewog/town of birth to urban areas, resulting in pressure on housing availability, overcrowding of urban schools and hospitals, rising unemployment, and compounding issues such as family fragmentation, violence against women, and substance use (RGOB 2017, Population and Housing Census).

Infant mortality rates have reduced to 25 from 27 and newborn mortality rates to 16 from 18 per 1,000 live births from 2016 to 2018, respectively (State of the World's Children (SOWC) 2017 and 2019). Infant deaths contribute to 83 percent of under five deaths (SOWC 2019). Only 74.8 percent of the population have access to basic sanitation services (Ministry of Health (MoH) Annual Health Bulletin 2019). One in five children are stunted and two in five, anaemic. One third of adolescent girls are anaemic (RGOB National Nutrition Survey 2015). Twenty-one percent of children aged 2-9 years have at least one form of disability (NSB, Ministry of Education (MoE), MoH, UNICEF 2010-2011, Two-Stage Child Disability Study Among Children 2-9 Years). Enrolment for children aged 3-5 years in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) has increased from 9 percent in 2014 to 25 percent in 2019 (MoE 2019, Annual Education Statistics).

In 2019, the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) at basic education (PP to Class X) is 89.8 percent (F=92.1 and M=87.6), a slight decline from 2018's 91.3 percent. The Adjusted Net Enrolment Rate (6-12 years) is 96.5 percent (F=96.9, M=96.1) with gender parity at 1.03 (PP to Class X). The basic completion rate is 93.5 percent with more girls completing than boys (MoE Annual Education Statistics 2019). About 8,174 children between 6-19-year-olds are estimated to have never attended school (MoE 2019, Study on Dropout, Repetition and Children Who Have Never Attended School in Bhutan). The 2017 Programme for International Student Assessment for Development (PISA-D) report reveals students in Bhutan scored 45.3 percent in Reading literacy (girls 47, boys 44), 38.8 percent (girls 37, boys 41) in Mathematics literacy, and 45.1 percent (girls 45, boys 46) in Scientific literacy (BCEAS 2019, Findings from Bhutan's Experience in PISA-D). More than 800 children with disabilities (305 female) had access to education in 2019. Only about 18 schools across the country cater to students with special education needs (SEN). There are two specialized SEN schools (MoE Annual Education Statistics, 2019).

More than six out of 10 children experienced some form of physical violence at least once. More than two in three children reported experiencing physical violence in school. Nearly one in eight children (12.8 percent) experienced sexual violence at least once (boys, 11.9 percent; girls, 13.5 percent), with more than half between 13 and 17 years at the hands of peers (RGOB and UNICEF 2016, National Survey on Violence against Children and Young People in Bhutan). A baseline study found that there are 13,458 religious persons in the 248 institutions today (RGOB and UNICEF 2019, WASH Baseline Survey in Monastic Schools and Nunneries in Bhutan). A significant number are children with disabilities. The main protection issue for child monks and nuns are associated with living conditions and nutrition.

The 2017 Bhutan Living Standards Survey found that 40 percent of households have no social insurance (RGOB 2017, BLSS). The Kidu Foundation under the aegis of the Office for People's Welfare and Wellbeing provides financial aid for under privileged students, rehabilitation of landless and socio-economically disadvantaged families, cash and in kind assistance for families affected by natural calamities, and support for disabled and elderly in need of care, among others. Well-targeted, socially inclusive programmes are increasingly necessary to help vulnerable families cope with adverse economic shocks and disaster (NSB and World Bank 2014, Bhutan Poverty Assessment).

**Key challenges and risks to children:** Disparities between population subgroups by wealth quintile, location, gender, and age, challenge achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Ensuring Bhutan's economic sustainability remains a challenge, with growth driven primarily by a high dependence on hydropower. Delays of some major hydropower projects present further risks of macroeconomic instability. The agriculture sector, critical for livelihoods of the rural poor,

## Bhutan

continues to be challenged by low growth rates. The impending transition of Bhutan into lower-middle-income status by 2023 will result in reduced bilateral support putting social sector achievements at risk.

Bhutan is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts and natural disasters (e.g., pollution, earthquakes, glacial lake outburst floods, forest fires). With the National Climate Change Policy now approved, UNICEF will explore opportunities to support child-sensitive climate change initiatives and will continue to strengthen national disaster management capacity. UNICEF will also increase its focus on cross-border issues such as trafficking, drug use, unsafe migration, and water resource management.

There is a lack of high-quality disaggregated data and institutional planning capacity, particularly at decentralized levels. Efforts were made to secure funding from South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to support the 2020 planned Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) but without success. There is a risk that communities do not adopt positive behaviours towards children and adolescents for which communication for development (C4D) interventions are required.

### Major contributions and drivers of results

#### GOAL AREA 1: EVERY CHILD SURVIVES AND THRIVES

With UNICEF's support, the Ministry of Health (MoH) is developing a new "Accelerating Mother and Child Health" policy to be launched in early 2020 that will deliver an integrated set of health, nutrition and developmental interventions for every mother and child. The backbone of the policy will be conditional cash transfers given to mothers in rural communities, private and corporate organizations who are not entitled to six months paid maternity leave. A comprehensive C4D strategy including materials and tools will support the policy in 2020.

With 126 additional health workers (no disaggregated data available) trained on Early Essential Newborn Care and Kangaroo Mother Care in 2019, newborns including preterm and low birth weight babies now benefit from services provided by 626 health workers (out of a total of 1,202 or 62 percent of health workers) in 29 health centres (out of 50 or 58 percent of centres) across nine districts. Relatives, particularly fathers and sisters, are also taking part in Kangaroo care.

Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) and seasonal influenza vaccine were introduced for the first time. UNICEF supported the development of communication materials and facilitated staff training and procurement services. RGOB declared control of Hepatitis B infection among under five children in July 2019 making Bhutan one of three countries in the region to achieve this status.

Over 274 health workers from 139 health centres in nine districts are now using the UNICEF-supported Bhutan Child Development Screening Tool for early detection and management of milestone delays and disabilities for children aged 10 weeks to sixty months. Health staff from the remaining 11 districts will be trained in 2020. With its introduction, over 60,000 children under five will benefit every year.

Thirty-one more ECCD centres and six more alternative ECCD models were established allowing 600 more children (disaggregated data unavailable) from 14 districts to have access to early learning. Pre-primary education has therefore achieved the 2019 target of 25 percent access. Overall enrolment will need to be doubled to achieve the 2023 target of 50 percent. With UNICEF support, Bhutan is formulating a multisectoral ECCD Strategic Action Plan 2020-2030 which could lead to increased investment as well as sustainable utilization of resources. To inform the Strategic Action Plan, UNICEF is currently facilitating Bhutan's first ECCD Evaluation in collaboration with MoE.

#### GOAL AREA 2: EVERY CHILD LEARNS

UNICEF supported MoE to develop and finalize Bhutan's first Non-Formal Education Equivalency Framework in 2019 which will create flexible pathways to learning. UNICEF also supported the development of Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers. Based on PISA-D experience, the Bhutan Council for School Examination and Assessment (BCSEA) is leading the development of National Education Assessment Framework with a first assessment planned for 2020 to inform the next Education Blueprint and Education Flagship Programme.

With UNICEF support, two more schools in central and eastern Bhutan now provide the Special Education Needs (SEN) programme, with 16 out of 20 districts now reaching the target of having at least 1 SEN School. UNICEF supported MoE to develop a C4D strategy and an action plan together with materials to address knowledge gaps and social norms around disability to be implemented in 2020.

More than 300 children (90 female) in monastic institutions (or 5 percent of the total of child monks and nuns) can now avail English Literacy and Numeracy programme with the training of 30 additional teachers in interactive teaching

## Bhutan

approaches. To counter increasing Non-Communicable Diseases among monks and nuns, a physical education programme is being piloted in 11 monastic institutions.

### **GOAL AREA 3: EVERY CHILD IS PROTECTED FROM VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION**

During the reporting period, UNICEF assisted the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) to commence drafting the first ever National Child Policy to guide all stakeholders in achieving optimal well-being of children as well as to promote the rights of all children. UNICEF advocated with RGOB to accept some of the concluding observations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). UNICEF's advocacy also helped bring out issues of corporal punishment and amendment of the minimum legal age of marriage during the recent Universal Periodic Review.

To address the critical gap in the availability of a skilled social service workforce in the social protection sector, UNICEF and the Royal University of Bhutan launched the first ever Bachelor of Arts in Social Work at the Samtse College of Education. A total of 36 students (25 female) have enrolled into the programme to become Bhutan's first cohort of professional social workers when they graduate in 2022.

To change negative social norms and to promote positive parenting and disciplining at home and in schools, in 2019 UNICEF together with partners designed Bhutan's first public C4D campaign to end violence against children. The campaign will be rolled out from 2020 onwards.

With the establishment of Central Schools, the informal boarding homes have been closed. However, there are children studying in pre-primary to Class XII in some Central Schools. To build a safe environment in Central Schools, UNICEF supported the MoE to enhance the capacities of the 140 counsellors on psychosocial support and also equipped with knowledge and skills related to preventing, recognizing, and responding to violence against children. UNICEF also worked with five partner agencies including CSOs to implement the national training package on child protection and participation. More than 21,937 children (10,858 female) out of 124,114 children aged 10-18 years have been reached by end of 2019 across 20 districts.

UNICEF continued to support the Royal Bhutan Police to expand the Women and Child Protection Units and Desks. During the reporting period, one Desk was established, bringing the total number of districts providing child-friendly policing services to 14 out of 20. During the reporting period 342 children (93 female) who came in contact with the law benefited from these services.

UNICEF led the development of National Standard Operating Procedures for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence. UNICEF supported NCWC to enhance the capacity of its Gender Division and brought on board UNDP, UNFPA, WHO and UNODC.

UNICEF worked with the Central Monastic Body and Bhutan Nuns Foundation to strengthen their child protection system. More than 1,280 child monks (of 5,496) and 235 child nuns (of 501) have now been trained to recognize and report issues of violence, abuse and exploitation. Additionally, 78 child protection focal points (an adult and a child) have been appointed in 39 monastic institutions and nunneries in 2019. Twenty-eight percent of monastic institutions now have access to child-friendly reporting mechanisms.

To provide clearer directions on how to address emerging youth concerns through cross-sectoral collaboration, UNICEF is supporting the Department of Youth and Sports (DYS) to revise the National Youth Policy 2011 and to develop a costed action plan. For the first time, young people will be engaged in the policy's revision and development of its action plan so that they can influence the content and implementation of both documents. In this regard, UNICEF is supporting the Bhutan Centre For Media and Democracy (BCMD), a CSO, to build the knowledge and competency of 24 young people on policy review and facilitation of focus groups and will be engaged throughout the process of the revision of the policy. These young people are representatives from rural areas, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning (LGBTIQ), special needs, out-of-school youth and those in conflict with the law, and will further interact with a cohort of young people across the country.

UNICEF continued its support to four Integrated Youth-friendly Service Centres (located in different districts) managed by the Ministry of Education's DYS. Several initiatives were conducted through the centres this year: 1) around 5,000 young people (2,600 female) acquired foundational skills to help them connect with the labour market 2) health, protection, education, counselling, and civic engagement services were provided to 52,083 young people (26,551 female) (representing 24 percent of all young people between 10-24 years in Bhutan); 3) DYS and Fablab Bhutan introduced the 'pi-top' programme to around 1,000 (350 female) young people, empowering them in digital literacy as well as enhancing their negotiation, teamwork and problem-solving skills; and 4) Loden Foundation and DYS helped 127 out-of-school youth (49 female) acquire entrepreneurship skills such as business idea generation and to generate 140 business ideas competing for a USD 15,000 interest-free loan repayable within three years to Loden Foundation.

## Bhutan

### GOAL AREA 4: EVERY CHILD LIVES IN A SAFE AND CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Health and the Religion and Health Project of Dratshang Lhentshog collected baseline data for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities/services in monastic institutions, health centres and rural communities aligned with WASH Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators.

To address the issue of improper handwashing facilities, 76 schools across 4 districts now have improved handwashing stations benefiting 23,762 children (50 percent female). By the end of 2019, around 18,075 more people are living in newly certified Open Defecation Free communities taking the total to 45.4 percent of the total population.

To improve menstrual hygiene practices in schools and nunneries, the 'Red Dot Campaign' was launched on Menstrual Hygiene Management Day to promote disaggregation of used sanitary pads before disposal. Around 184,000 sanitary pads were distributed to 105 remote schools and 17 nunneries out of a planned 100 schools and 28 nunneries.

UNICEF facilitated an MoU between MoE, the Religion and Health Project of the Central Monastic Body, and the Bhutan Toilet Organization (BTO) to improve the sanitation situation in schools and monastic institutions. BTO provided technical support and supplied Safe Toilet (SATO) pans supplied by Lixil. As a result of this partnership 16,896 children (8,032 girls) in 50 schools (2019 target was 40 schools) and 1,410 monks in 26 monastic institutions (target was 30 monastic institutions) were given access to clean toilets.

Two Government officials attended a training on Climate Resilient WASH interventions in 2019. Following the training, climate resilient WASH interventions are included in WASH in Health Facilities, WASH in Schools and WASH in Monastic Institutions 2020 Annual Workplans. UNICEF will continue to advocate with Green Climate Fund (GCF) to promote climate resilient WASH interventions in Bhutan.

### GOAL AREA 5: EVERY CHILD HAS AN EQUITABLE CHANCE IN LIFE

UNICEF, Sherubtse College and the Royal University of Bhutan conducted the fourth Social Policy training for thirty-two participants (23 males and 9 females) mainly focusing on the Parliamentarians, mid-level programme managers and CSO managers to increase their knowledge and skills on Social Policy and Social Protection, along with the tools for Policy Analysis and Review. The offshoot of the course led to the introduction of a social policy module within social science degree courses at Sherubtse College.

Together with UNDP, UNICEF strengthened RGOB's SDG Committee's capacity in their monitoring and oversight role. UNICEF and UNDP supported RGOB in designing an SDG dashboard to collate and display Gross National Happiness (GNH), SDGs and Five-Year Plan (FYP) indicators, allowing Bhutan's progress against these indicators to be tracked and to make evidence-based decisions.

In the area of social protection, UNICEF supported 11 Government officials (4 female) to learn about Nepal's conditional cash transfer (CCT) mechanism, including fund disbursement, challenges and lesson learnt. Following the study visit, the Government with UNICEF support is developing a policy on 'Accelerating Mother and Child Health (AMCH)' described under Goal 1 (above).

### CROSS-CUTTING

**Gender.** Recommendations from the 2018 Gender Programme Review have been mainstreamed into annual workplans. A gender workplan is being developed jointly with partners and UNICEF's Regional Office for South Asia. UNICEF provided technical support during development of the National Gender Equality Policy and revision of National Action Plan for Gender.

**Humanitarian assistance.** Preparedness for WASH in Emergencies guidelines were developed with relevant Government partners. A separate Education Emergency Operations Center (EEOC) was established within MoE. UNICEF-trained disaster management focal points responded quickly by dispatching eight emergency tents to Daksa Primary School in Weringla, Mongar when the school suffered damage from heavy rain benefitting ninety students (33 female). When the ECCD centre in Nakeything, Lhuentse, suffered structural damage due to a flash flood, UNICEF's 'ECCD in a box' was dispatched immediately helping facilitators to create a safe learning environment for 27 preschool children (14 girls).

### CHANGE STRATEGIES

Eight change strategies underpin UNICEF Bhutan's programme, examples of which are provided above but some additional highlights are provided below.

## Bhutan

**Programming excellence for at-scale results for children.** UNICEF Bhutan has heightened its focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized children. Agreement has been reached for UNICEF to join UNDP's support for local governance through which UNICEF will improve subnational child data sources to better identify those left behind and build capacity of district administrations and communities to improve planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring to achieve results for children and adolescents.

**Gender-responsive programming.** Described under Cross-Cutting above.

**Winning support for the cause of children from decision makers and the wider public.** The Government renewed its commitment to the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Child on World Children's Day, making Bhutan one of the 109 countries to align to the "Global Pledge: For every child, every right." UNICEF also supported RGOB in celebrating International Youth Day with many partners including the Prime Minister, and the Ministers of Health, Education and Labour, demonstrating the highest level of RGOB commitment to address issues affecting youth. UNICEF's Regional Office for South Asia commissioned a regionwide study on the skills that youth need to succeed in the future which is already shaping the national youth policy and what skilling programmes need to be introduced in secondary education.

UNICEF facilitated the participation of three Members of Parliament and a youth representative (4 males) in the 3rd South Asia Parliamentarian Forum in Sri Lanka. By signing the Forum's Declaration, the parliamentarians committed to creating greater fiscal space and supporting child-friendly policies and legislations.

On national media, there was one positive story a month on UNICEF's work with partners in Bhutan. Our social media total reach was 2,081,137 while total engagement was 166,699. Twitter saw 4,845 engagements and 553,937 impressions. Instagram saw 13,509 engagements.

**Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children.** UNICEF Bhutan has played an instrumental role in leveraging millions of dollars for Bhutan from the Global Fund, GAVI, Vaccines for the World's Children, and the Global Partnership for Education. UNICEF also successfully leveraged resources from Asian Development Bank (ADB) to support strengthening of cold chain supply systems for immunization programme. Examples of national level partnerships are provided in the Goals above.

**Harnessing the power of business and markets for children.** UNICEF has commenced discussion on possible partnerships with several corporate partners and the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce. Bhutan is one of few countries that has secured partnership with Lixil Partnership (for the installation of Safe Toilet (SATO) technology) which could lead to other corporate relationships.

**United Nations working together.** UNICEF plays an active role in Outcome groups, Inter-Agency Task Teams, and UN Business Operating Strategy under the new UNSDPF. Other examples of UNICEF collaboration include: mobilizing funds from United Nations Partnership for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities together with WHO and UNDP to strengthen RGOB's policy environment for persons with disabilities; partnering with the Resident Coordinator's Office to organize the first ever "One UN" event on World AIDS Day; and commencing discussions with WFP and FAO on a comprehensive approach to nutrition and food security linked to commercial agricultural development.

**Fostering innovation for children.** Innovations fostered in 2019 are described in the Goal Areas above. Additional innovations are highlighted in the final section of this narrative below.

**Harnessing the power of evidence as a driver of change for children.** UNICEF Bhutan supported several key studies and assessments in 2019 but only two are described here. UNICEF helped to assess Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illness implementation status and Adolescent Health and Nutrition services to make recommendations to improve each programme's implementation. UNICEF and MoE carried out quantitative and qualitative analyses to understand the situation of children at risk of dropping out, repeating, and never attending school to provide critical information related to the quality of education, high-risk districts and vulnerable groups.

### ENABLERS

The delivery of UNICEF Bhutan's results and change strategies are supported by 4 organizational performance enablers. While several references have been made to these enablers above, further highlights are provided below.

**Governance (Modern, transparent and accountable governance for the organization).** The Office surpassed global targets for both financial and programmatic assurance activities and successfully carried out fund utilization, bank optimization reports and financial reporting. Programmatic and operational risks were regularly reviewed, and mitigation measures identified using the new e-Global Risk Control tool. The Office continued to maintain 100 percent timely

## Bhutan

submission of donor reports.

**Management (Results oriented, efficient, effective, and collaborative management).** UNICEF Bhutan continued to invest in strengthening results-based management in order to protect and further improve its reputation for programming excellence. With the roll out of the new Field Monitoring Guideline, the Office enhanced joint monitoring visits not only within the Office but also with other UN agencies and development partners. The Office complied with 7 out of the UNICEF Division of Financial and Administrative Management's 8 simplification areas.

**People (Versatile staff, staff as agents of change).** An ambitious staff learning and training plan was implemented in 2019. Topics included: enhancing Office Speak-up culture; working with private sector and fund raising; media training; 7 Habits of Highly Effective People; Empowering Conversations for Supervisors; Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority; Gender; Ethics; and First Aid training. A Staff Retreat focused on strengthening the Office's management culture. One National Officer participated in a Regional staff exchange opportunity. Two National Officers received stretch assignment opportunities in the region.

**Knowledge and information systems (Efficient, safe and secure systems connecting results & people).** Besides embarking on the development of a Technology for Development (T4D) strategy (to enhance real-time information systems and potential social media applications), UNICEF Bhutan piloted iCloud technology which allows staff members to take work away from the workplace and do their tasks in the virtually replicated office setting.

### Lessons Learned and Innovations

#### GOAL AREA 1: EVERY CHILD SURVIVES AND THRIVES

**Innovation:** The introduction of micronutrient powder (MNP) was piloted to address micronutrient deficiency among children. About 70 health workers were trained for the pilot. The pilot's assessment revealed that care-giver's compliance with MNP was significant at 96.4 percent, early initiation of breastfeeding increased from 77 to 94 percent, continued breastfeeding increased from 74 to 91 percent, meal frequency increased from 78 to 89 percent, and dietary diversity including vitamin A rich fruits and vegetables increased from 43 to 55 percent. Care-giver's knowledge on the use of micronutrient powder was very high with 97 percent knowing the correct schedule.

**Innovation:** ECCD is expanding at a rapid pace but with limited national expertise in ECCD, many challenges are arising related to effective and efficient use of district-level resources. For example, capacity development of facilitators and other stakeholders, if conducted at the national level, is a major concern due to acute human and financial resource constraints. To address this concern, UNICEF supported a national Training of Trainers on Parenting Education in 2018, which has facilitated the nationwide rollout of parenting education training in 2019 at district level. This innovative, decentralized approach to Parenting Education training has amplified the outreach to all districts and municipalities at a reduced cost this year. Through this approach, UNICEF supported the MoE in ensuring that all 582 facilitators (536 female) in community-based ECCD centres are trained on parenting education. To support the development of the alternative models for ECCD as only one in every four preschool-aged children has access to early learning and to ensure that enrolment will achieve the target of 50 percent by 2023, UNICEF supported an innovative approach to develop 24 (17 female) mobile facilitators training in ECCD.

#### GOAL AREA 2: EVERY CHILD LEARNS

**Lesson learned:** A lesson learned in 2019 is that programmes for adolescents particularly focusing on skills and employability may be required in the next Annual Work Plan. Since skills and jobs are constantly changing, it would be essential to equip children with 21st century skills through secondary education. To address this youth skills crisis in Bhutan, the government, private sector, and International Organizations must increase the level of engagement with young people and scale-up sustainable solutions. A lesson learned in 2019 was that skill-building interventions need to help young people to be: digitally literate; able to critically think through complex problems; and able to work and communicate across diverse teams.

**Innovation:** To provide equal opportunities for children with profound deafness, UNICEF continues to provide technical support to 'Wangsel Institute for the Deaf' to develop Bhutan's first ever national Sign Language system, enabling more than 100 deaf children (45 female) to access education using more standardized sign language. A separate curriculum for Wangsel Institute is being finalized.

#### GOAL AREA 3: EVERY CHILD IS PROTECTED FROM VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION

**Lesson learned:** With multiple agencies-government, CSOs and UN involved in prevention and response to gender-based

## Bhutan

violence (GBV), a lesson learned was the need for a standardized operating procedure (SOP) on GBV which defines the roles and responsibilities of each agencies and thereby, improve the services for survivors of GBV. UNICEF brought together four UN agencies to develop the SOP on GBV which has been used to train front liners and case managers from government and CSOs.

**Innovation:** UNICEF has been working with five national partners to increase the knowledge and skills of children and young people on prevention of and response to violence against children. As an innovative approach to increase the reach, in 2019 UNICEF engaged with the Youth Bhutan Network and built the capacities of youth group members. As a result, these youth groups were able to create awareness to additional 5,493 (2,929 female) adolescents and young people on violence against children.

**Innovation:** As part of an ongoing innovation, the Integrated Youth-friendly Service Centres were upgraded to include new services such as entrepreneurship education and computer coding and programming. Besides formal education in schools, marginalized groups and out-of-school children can be provided with informal learning opportunities through such centres.

### **GOAL AREA 4: EVERY CHILD LIVES IN A SAFE AND CLEAN ENVIRONMENT**

**Innovation:** An innovative MoU between the MoE, Religion and Health Project of the Central Monastic Body together with UNICEF and the Bhutan Toilet Organization (BTO). This partnership enhanced access to clean toilets through installation of Safe Toilet (SATO) technology provided by Lixil giving 16,896 children (8,032 girls) in 50 schools (2019 target was 40 schools) and 1,410 monks in 26 monastic institutions (target was 30 monastic institutions) access to clean toilets.

### **GOAL AREA 5: EVERY CHILD HAS AN EQUITABLE CHANCE IN LIFE**

**Lesson learned:** The certificate course on Social Policy was delivered for the 4th Cohort mainly focusing on the Parliamentarians, mid-level programme managers and programme manager from the civil societies. With the decentralization of 12th Five Year Plan and 50 percent of the budget which needs to be planned and used at the local level, a lesson learned is that the course will need to be customized to build the capacity of the local government at the district level to build their understanding on policy development, policy analysis and Result Based Management. The course curriculum will be reviewed to fit the needs of local government counterparts.

**Lesson learned:** The 2013 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the Monitoring and Evaluation System in Bhutan showed that there is very weak evaluation culture in Bhutan. With limited local capacity in the country, a lesson learned is that the Evaluation Association of Bhutan will need to network with other similar global and regional networks to be able to build its own capacity as well as advocate and train local evaluators on the need for high quality evaluations. UNICEF Bhutan will need to support and leverage such platforms for the newly established Evaluation Association of Bhutan as part of its National Evaluation Capacity Building Plan.