



MESSAGE FROM THE EDUCATION MINISTER

With the release of the first issue of “Sherig”, I would like to take this opportunity to wish the entire education fraternity *“A Very Happy New Year of the Wood Male Horse”* and may you succeed in everything you do and may we once again rededicate ourselves to the task of bringing about all round development in the education sector.

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As we all know, education is undoubtedly the most daunting sector of all because of the very fact that we are entrusted with the task of educating and shaping and moulding the lives of our young children who represent at least one fourth of our entire population. Not only are our teachers expected to devote and dedicate themselves to the noble cause of promoting and bringing about academic excellence but also pursuing our mission to serve as a single body to oversee every child is afforded the opportunity to reach their full potential; by working with all the stakeholders to strengthen our education system.

To achieve our goals and mission, we have recently discussed and deliberated on various national education policy matters in our effort to find a way forward to improving the overall standard and quality of education during the DEOs’ Conference (13–15 January 2014).

2014 also ushers in a number of new initiatives of this government to address the age old challenges of improving the quality of education. Therefore, it was felt imperative that in order to place our education system on a sound footing, not only the education sector but the country’s future direction is the development of new vision for Bhutanese Education system. Based on Malaysian Education Blue Print, Bhutan has launched the process of developing a national vision and long term policy

objective and development targets for the education sector. However, at this point in time, the Royal Education Council (REC) will spearhead this project, with, of course, the involvement and participation of the entire education sector and all the stakeholders to enable us to come up with a document that will serve and guide us all in all our future efforts and endeavours in improving the government's aspiration of better preparing our children for the needs of the 21st century and the increased public and parental expectations of our education policy. In today's global economy, a nation's success would primarily depend on the level of knowledge, skills and competency of its people. An improved education system would provide individuals with better opportunities to improve their lives, become successful members of the community and active contributors in all aspects of national development.

There is a greater realization of the limitations of central programmes and conversely the greater role of the school administration and the teachers to affect quality learning. Therefore, it is crucial that schools are empowered to realize their aims. This has given way to a new policy of this government, which is greater school autonomy and presently being piloted in 17 schools that choose and fulfill certain conditions and enjoy greater autonomy in managing staff, resources and implementing academic programme. This of course does not mean only these schools so chosen shall exercise innovation and take initiatives but I would like to urge every school and teacher to take initiatives and take that extra step to help improve learning amongst our children with whatever ways and means they can. Outcomes of researches carried out on granting greater autonomy to schools in other countries all seem to suggest that, when autonomy and accountability are intelligently combined, they tend to be associated with better school output and performance.

In the past few decades, there has been enormous achievements through many educational indicators despite enormous challenges and insurmountable barriers, particularly, youth related issues and problems.

Even at the highest level, His Majesty the King himself has mentioned on every forum and opportunity that our youths are our treasures because the future of our country would greatly depend on the quality of education that we impart to our children today. Therefore, the education sector cannot afford to make mistakes in our continuous effort to educating and giving them the life skills they require as future leaders of the country. Therefore, it is the sacred duty of the Ministry of Education to go to any length to make every plan, policy or programme "child centric" or "child centered" and as relevant to give them the life skills and tools to become good future citizens and leaders.

I would like to talk about awards of recognition and merit to civil servants, particularly, to our deserving teachers on National Day which was instituted by His Majesty. This has been instituted with the far sighted vision of His Majesty to creating a meritocratic system where people are given due recognition on the basis of their ability and contributions to the society rather than just delving on seniority. We should recognize this magnanimous act of our King and reciprocate by working even harder, aiming for higher goals and objectives in our lives rather than remaining contented and complacent after receiving such awards.

“Tashi Delek”

Mingbo Dukpa
Minister
Ministry of Education



IMPORTANT MILESTONES OF MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CELEBRATED NATIONAL EDUCATION DAY ON HIS MAJESTY'S BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

To mark His Majesty's 34th birth anniversary, the Ministry of Education celebrated the National Education Day coinciding with three important education policy initiatives, which, if implemented well, are expected to transform the education sector in the country.

Lyonchhoen Tshering Tobgay launched the Teacher Human Resource Policy, 2014, which is expected to attract and retain the best in teaching, to make teaching profession a career of choice and to enhance the morale of teachers.

"Teachers are the backbone of the education system", the Director of Department of School Education Karma Yeshey said. However, he added that over the years, the education ministry has observed that the teaching profession has become less attractive to potential candidates owing to many factors.

The policy, which now comes into effect has incorporated key areas of career track, recruitment, deployment, professional development and performance management and to make the teaching profession more attractive and rewarding.

One of the five key policy areas is career track, which, the director said, would enable a teacher to achieve the highest level of a Specialist, "a post, which is equivalent to a secretary or a university professor, through any of the three career tracks."

Lyonchhoen Tshering Tobgay said the education sector would benefit if teachers are well taken care of and that while the country took pride in the work of teachers, it was also concerned about teachers leaving the profession.

"Of the more than 8,000 teachers in the country, only three are at the executive level (grade III)," Lyonchhoen said. "However, I'm happy that this policy benefits teachers."

While teachers, despite challenges, showed positive perceptions on the profession, salary and incentives topped the teachers' priority list according to the "Teachers' Job Satisfaction" survey conducted in 2013. Besides other initiatives, the education ministry has also submitted a teacher incentive package to the pay commission.

Initiated by the Prime Minister, the education ministry granted autonomous status to 19 schools in the country by signing a 'delivery and performance' agreement with the school principals.

Director Karma Yeshey said, while the autonomous schools would remain a part of the public school system and meet the obligations required of all public schools, their autonomous status empowered them to set their own strategic directions, determine priorities and exercise control over their own resources.

Of the 33 schools that applied for autonomy, 19 were identified based on their performance track record in the past three years, ensuring that there were at least, one school from each dzongkhag or thromde with representations from all levels of schools and willingness of these schools to participate in this initiative.

Education minister Lyonpo Mingbo Dukpa said Bhutan has been celebrating National Education Day since 2011 and that it was a very important and significant day for the education sector. "We've seen quality improve when agencies are given some independence," Lyonpo said. "The ministry has worked hard to implement it from this year, following the prime minister's instruction."

Lyonchhoen Tshering Tobgay said if the schools performed well because of good teachers, it would add greater meaning and significance to celebrating

such a special occasion.

“Our country needs good schools and a good school is one, which not only excels in academics but is also outstanding in extracurricular activities and all other areas,” Lyonchhoen said. “For a good school, we need good teachers and, to ensure our teachers perform well, we need good school principals.”

By signing the ‘delivery and performance’ agreement, the 19 school principals, among others, agreed to improve student performance and ensure that teachers monitor student learning for making evidence-based instructional decisions.

The celebrations yesterday also ensured that students across the country would now be fed nutritious meals in schools. The education ministry and the Food Corporation of Bhutan Ltd (FCBL) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for centralised school feeding program.

Director Karma Yeshey said, following the world food program model and standards, FCBL is entrusted to undertake a centralised procurement storage and

delivery of all non-perishable food items to boarding schools for the school feeding programme.

“It provides the most cost effective procurement, storage, handling and delivery of quality food supply to the intended beneficiaries besides ensuring uniform nutrition levels irrespective of location or level of schools,” he said.

Lyonpo Mingbo Drukpa said the school-feeding programme was discussed several times at the cabinet, with the prime minister looking in to it soon after taking office. “Today, we’re signing an understanding with the FCB to ensure that the problems that we faced in the past don’t re-occur.”

Of the Nu 1,000 a student food stipend, 60 percent of the stipend would be paid to FCBL for the supply of nine non-perishable food items.

Lyonchhoen Tshering Tobgay said, although the government and WFP are spending in feeding students, many students were found to be undernourished. He said the ministry should take the school feeding as a priority area, adding, “If children need to study well, they need to have a proper diet.”

Reported by Sonam Pelden

DZONGKHAG EDUCATION OFFICERS’ CONFERENCE 15-17 OCTOBER 2013

The Dzongkhag Education Officers’ Conference for 2014 was held in the main conference hall of the Department of Youth and Sports from 15th till 17th January 2014. The three day conference was graced and inaugurated by the Hon’ble Prime Minister of Bhutan, Lyonchen Tshering Tobgay which was a clear indication of the due importance and impetus accorded by the present government on the vital roles and functions of the education sector and the roles of DEOs to improve the state and quality of education in the country.

The Hon’ble Sherig Lyonpo, in his opening remarks, said that this is the first meeting of the year at the national level and the opportunity to meet the DEOs and TEOs since the formation of the new government and embarking on the implementation

of the 11th Five Year Plan activities. This, he thought was timely and auspicious as well because of the very fact that the Head of the Government himself, despite his very busy schedule and engagements, had decided to come and address the gathering at the inaugural session of the conference. Some of the salient features of his address are as follows:

The Hon’ble Sherig Lyonpo informed the house that in the past few decades, there has been enormous achievements through many educational indicators despite enormous challenges and insurmountable barriers, particularly, youth related issues and problems. Even at the highest level, His Majesty the King himself has mentioned on every forum and opportunity that our youths are our treasures because the future of our country would greatly depend on the quality of education that we impart to

our children today. Therefore, the education sector cannot afford to make mistakes in our continuous effort to educating and giving them the life skills they require as future leaders of the country. Therefore, it is the sacred duty of the Ministry of Education to go to any length to make every plan, policy or programme “child centric” or “child centered” and as relevant as possible to equip them to become good future citizens and leaders.

The opening remarks of Sherig Lyonpo was followed by Lyonchen Tshering Tobgay’s key note address to the conference. At the very outset, Lyonchen pointed out that the first critical area that this conference should deliberate on was to explore ways of improving the quality of education. He also said that earlier both quality and access to education were considered equally important because of the very fact that many of our schools were located in far flung remote areas with very poor infrastructure development and other resource constraints. However, he said that access is now not a problem but improving the quality of education is indeed a big concern of the government. Among other strategies and programmes, Hon’ble Lyonchen emphasized on the concept of “Lifelong Learning”. He said that as a teacher, one should strongly believe in lifelong learning and that learning is not confined to childhood or the classroom but takes place everywhere throughout life and in a range of situations.

He also highlighted on the feeding programme in our schools because proper nutrition is vital to a child’s growth, both physically and mentally. He said that without a balanced diet, it would not be possible to help promote healthy growth and development of a child. If this very basic need of the child is curtailed or deprived, we simply cannot expect them to remain healthy, let alone, do well in school. Therefore, he stressed the need for every school with boarding facilities or day meal programme to seriously review and find ways and means of how best they can make use of the stipends allocated for the school feeding programmes instead of coming up with all kinds of excuses. There is absolutely no excuse about the stipend being less or insufficient (which is not true) but we should much rather concentrate on improving the management of how best we can go

about managing this allowance in the best interest of children’s nutrition that is crucial for their healthy growth and development.

Speaking on allowing greater autonomy to schools, Lyonchen said that perhaps it’s time for us to adopt and introduce this strategy for better outcomes and accountability in schools. Outcomes of researches carried out on granting greater autonomy to schools in other countries all seem to suggest that, when autonomy and accountability are intelligently combined, they tend to be associated with better school output and performance. The Lyonchen urged the DEOs to discuss during the course of this forum to come up with a strategy as to how schools can be given greater autonomy starting from this academic year.



For the general information of the conference, Lyonchen informed that two campaigns (namely, Clean Bhutan and Greening of Thimphu City) will be carried out to make a befitting tribute to His Majesty, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck on the occasion of his 60th birth anniversary next year. What would make our 4th Druk Gyalpo more pleased than the gift of a clean and green Bhutan to a King who had championed this cause ever since his enthronement besides giving so much more to the people of Bhutan. For this, Lyonchen asked the conference to deliberate on how and in what ways the schools could be involved and contribute to these noble initiatives of the government.

Lyonchen also talked about awards of recognition and merit to civil servants, particularly, our deserving

teachers on National Day which was instituted by His Majesty. This has been instituted with the far sighted vision of His Majesty to creating a meritocratic system where people are given due recognition on the basis of their ability and contributions to the society rather than just delving on seniority. We should recognize this magnanimous act of our King and reciprocate by working even harder, aiming for higher goals and objectives in our lives rather than remaining contented and complacent after receiving such awards. So he urged the floor to ponder as to how and in what ways we can serve our king and country better.

The same afternoon, the conference deliberated on “School Autonomy” after the Director of the Department of School Education made a presentation on the proposal and guidelines on the topic. For a more in-depth discussion, participants were put into groups to review the guidelines which generated a lot of discussions, which were mostly clarification of ambiguities and observations of inconsistencies in various reports generated by different groups.

On the whole, participants expressed that the move to granting greater autonomy to schools was a good idea and that it would definitely go a long way in bringing about greater efficiency and accountability in schools. However, there were also concerns and apprehensions of some members with regard to the timeframe, the increased responsibility and accountability and the likely conflict with the Local Government Acts. Some even felt that the responsibilities and accountability enshrined in the new set up far more outweighed the benefits through empowerment of greater autonomy to schools.

The second day kick started with the presentation and discussion on Teacher HR Policy. All the five components in the HR Policy were deliberated at length chaired by Aum Secretary. Later in the evening, the summary of discussion was presented in the presence of the Hon’ble Sherig Lyonpo. Since a lot of effort had already gone into the development of a sound HR policy which has been endorsed by the Cabinet and the RCSC, there was no need for the conference to recommend for major changes. However, some of the important concerns raised were noted with the assurance to further fine tune the document.

It was decided that student number would be considered for boarding facilities in schools where ES principals would be considered for placement. It was also suggested that Principals teach at least one subject instead of the requirement of principals to teach 11 hours a week to enable them to concentrate more on school management which the house unanimously endorsed. Suggestions were also made for the requirement of ES Principals to mentor Principals of cluster schools and teachers by Master Lead Teachers (MLTs).

On the recruitment policy, the house agreed on all the clauses provided in the policy as it is. The house supported the idea of instituting Teacher Licensing system.

However, on deployment, a long discussion ensued on the delegation of authority to transfer principals at all levels to dzongkhags/thromdes. After extensive deliberation, the house came to the conclusion that intra-dzongkhag transfers to be delegated to dzongkhags/thromdes while inter-dzongkhag transfers would remain as the prerogative of the Ministry who would be more well versed with the requirement of the entire country.

The house saw a very constructive debate on the deployment of teachers in rural and remote schools. As per the policy in question, teachers were required to serve at least three years in rural schools in the first ten years of their teaching career. Regarding the transfer or deployment of senior teachers in rural areas, understanding the challenges and difficulty it would pose in implementing such a policy, the house decided to maintain the status quo for the time being.

One of the challenges faced in the field as reported by the DEOs in deploying teachers was the mismatch of the demand and supply. While the demand was felt much more at primary level or lower schools, the supply often happened at secondary levels. The Ministry justified that presently, there were teacher shortages in many of our schools irrespective of the size and location of schools and that this scenario would remain so long as we do not have enough teacher graduates every year to bridge this gap or discrepancy. Realizing this, the Ministry, in

consultation with the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) have started a process of resolving this problem but although the result may not be dramatic, this resource gap has been reduced to a great extent compared to the past. Another issue that was raised was that the challenge of deploying teachers in rural schools, a part of which could possibly be attributable to the stark absence of morale boosting mechanisms (like improving of conditions and allowance etc) in place. Meanwhile, the house endorsed the proposal of effecting the transfer of 10% of the teachers annually from schools.

Coming to Professional Development, the house deliberated extensively on the Teacher Resource Centers (TRCs) and decided that DEOs/TEOs will review and reconfirm the TRCs based on the mandates and feasibility on or before the end of January 2014. The house endorsed that in future, a professional body would look after teacher licensing, accreditation and grievances.

With regard to the Performance Management System, the house was informed on the prevalence of different systems and mode of evaluation, some of which were not even in line with the Bhutan Civil Service Rules (BCSR). On the issue of non-uniformity in the existing evaluation process, it was decided that the HRD, MoE would take it up with the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) to develop a Performance Management system projecting greater transparency, consistency and uniformity.

In the late afternoon, the presentation on the Clean Bhutan Project by Mr. Nedup Tshering gave the much needed respite from all the discussions that invariably percolated down to the quality of education, teachers and schools etc. He presented on the waste management especially in the context of the present practices prevalent in schools and how we can go about integrating them for better outcomes. He highlighted on what “Clean Bhutan” intended to do, why and how to go about achieving the desired outcomes. He also shared his broad plan of action with the house. The house applauded the noble initiative taken by him and the team. All the members assured their full support in this endeavour. The members also shared some of the best practices they already have in place in their schools and

dzongkhags while others suggested new ideas on how to make this a successful programme. However, the members cautioned that this programme in schools could be more successful and beneficial if schools were allowed to carry out the activities without affecting the daily routine of schools which was noted by all.

The third or the last day began with the presentation of the school feeding programme (SFP) by the Director of the Department of School Education. He highlighted on the issue of sustainability with the impending and complete phasing out of WFP by 2018. The significant role of the SFP includes school enrolment, retention and social safety net. According to figures released during the Conference, the SFP had 52,110 beneficiaries in 2013 comprising 36,757 students under WFP (in 233 schools) and 15,353 students under RGoB stipend (in 33 schools). In 2014, there are over 7,000 students to be taken under RGoB under the SFP, targeting classes VII and VIII students. Moreover, for sustainability, Karma Yeshey, the director of School Education reported that re-targeting exercises are being carried out, strengthening programme such as linking farmer’s cooperatives to schools through the Department of Agriculture Marketing, CORRB, FAO, etc.

Highlighting ‘sustainability’ as one of the major drawbacks, the director said that the school agriculture programme is the best possible means of sustaining the practice as Bhutan continues to grapple with nutritional value of food. Concerns were also raised on the inclusion of the nutritious Amul Cheese in the 60 percent package of the students’ food stipend. It was resolved that while the memorandum of understanding (MoU) is on the verge of being signed, the recommendations of the house would be incorporated in consultation with the Food Corporation of Bhutan (FCB). It was further resolved that the FCB will be instructed to have small and air tight packets so that perishable goods will not get spoiled before students consume it.

The conference assured that once WFP is completely phased out, it would be the responsibility of the Ministry to maintain the status quo as per the present trends.

This was followed by a presentation on the Education Endowment Fund. The purpose and the management of the fund and as to who would govern, the duties and power of the board and auditing guidelines were presented to the house. The house resolved that only schools/dzongkhags would be allowed to avail the fund. Regarding the judicious use of the fund, a lot of creative ideas were generated like using it for innovative learning, bringing ICT into the classroom and improving pedagogy materials and skills among others. During the course of the discussions, it came out loud and clear that such fund should not be used for infrastructure development activities.

Mr. Mark, the former Country Director of the World Bank, currently a researcher undergoing his PhD in a University in London, on the request of the Ministry presented his research findings on English medium of instructions in Bhutan. He presented the situation and factors influencing English medium education and teaching learning strategies and practices in schools. Factors influencing English medium education and English competency of not only students but also teachers were shared. Before opening the floor for discussion, he presented a wide range of recommendations as to how to improve the existing situation.

In the afternoon, aiming to strengthen the education system with time bound strategies and activities, Sherig Lyonpo shared a draft Education Blue print based on the successful experience of the Malaysian Educational System. He presented the rationale for having such blue print in our country. Sherig Lyonpo emphasized that the Blueprint will be owned by the people of Bhutan as it will be developed with a wide range of consultation with people from all walks of life. Sherig Lyonpo explained the urgent need of having such a document was in the context of rising international education standards, the government's aspiration of better preparing our children for the needs of the 21st century and the increased public and parental expectations of our education policy. He added that in today's global economy, a nation's success would depend primarily on the level of knowledge, skills and competency of its people. An improved education system would provide individuals with better opportunities to improve their lives, become successful members of the

community and active contributors in all aspects of national development.

Hon'ble Lyonpo clarified that the Royal Education Council (REC) would spearhead this project with the involvement and participation of all the stakeholders and come up with a document that will serve and guide us all (especially the education sector) in all our future efforts and endeavours.

Hon'ble Lyonpo shared some of the feedbacks from the field which he felt should be noted by all concerned as follows:

- School leadership must always try to lead others by examples through honesty, sincerity, respect for others and appreciation for hard work etc.
- A school principal should not be out of school unless felt absolutely necessary or unavoidable.
- Basic education is free for all and so schools should try to refrain from charging any kind of fee.
- Need to have good public relations and practice total transparency when dealing with teachers, SMB, parents and LG officials at all times.
- Cultural programmes should be well organized and not necessarily for fund raising but rather take all cultural events as educational.
- Note and try to implement all the conference proceedings and recommendations for further improving the system.

Reported by Phuba, PPD



7TH CHILDREN AND YOUTH FESTIVAL 16-19 OCTOBER 2013

The 7th Children and Youth festival with the theme **“Be seen, Be heard: Youth Participation for Development”** was held at Harmony, the Centenary Youth Village, Thimphu. The 4 day festival (from 16th -19th October) constituted almost 200 students from different Dzongkhags (Punakha, Thimphu, Chukha, Trongsa, Dagana, Tsirang and Sarpang) along with their escort teachers and about 20 youth volunteers (both in and out of school youths).

Opening Ceremony:

The official inauguration of the festival was held on 17th October which was graced by Lyonpo Yeshe Dorji, Minister of Agriculture and Forests as the Chief Guest. There was a Youth Forum on the topic, “Be seen, Be heard: Youth Participation For Development” where youth in their groups discussed their strengths and challenges as youths and how they can contribute in development and growth of families, communities and schools. The findings of each group were later presented during the plenary session. Some of the other important activities of the Youth Festival were community service, orientation on mental health and substance abuse.



Closing Ceremony:

The closing program was graced by Lyonpo Mingbo Dukpa, the Minister of Education. At the closing, the rural youths were given the opportunity to present their reports and recommendations on the youth

festival. Many of them expressed that the Youth Festival was once in a life time opportunity and a great learning experience for them.

The 7th Children and Youth Festival was successful in that, it provided a platform for young people to come together, get new information on a host of subjects, showcase their talents and make new friends.



Further, this event was a culmination of adult-youth partnership where the youth were involved in the facilitation and conduct of the youth forum as well as management and other logistics of the festival. The recommendations of the youth forum are circulated to relevant agencies to formulate relevant action plans.

The youth festival therefore, provides a forum for youth not only to meet and make friends but also to be involved in the decision making. With such avenues being provided, we are definite of achieving greater contribution from them in the development at a family, community, school and national level.

Contributed by Youth Centre Division, DYS, MoE



GLIMPSES OF SCOUTING PROGRAMMES IN 2013

1. Youth Leadership Camp at Tango (31st August- 1st September, 2013):

The Youth Leadership Camp at Tango Monastery on 31st August for 33 youth from six schools in Thimphu was concluded successfully. The highlight of this programme was when His Majesty personally visited the camp site and granted the participants an hour long audience. His Majesty's strong message to the youths were that they must all be driven by finding a purpose and meaning in their lives. They should have a strong sense of purpose and determination as to what they wanted to do or become in life and not wait indefinitely for something to happen or come to them which would most likely never come.



His Majesty also shared with the children that when he was young, he had a group of friends who strongly believed in the principles of “love, honour and duty” and likewise, he expected them to have the same attributes which definitely will serve them well throughout their lives.

The visit of His Majesty the King at the campsite gave the children a renewed sense of pride, hope and self-confidence. His Majesty gifted the children with individual flash lights, warm blankets, T-shirts, badges and additional snacks and juices.

2. Youth Leadership Camp at Wangchuk Resort, Taba (7th - 8th September 2013):

The His Majesty, during his visit to camp site at Tango on 31st September commanded to conduct a second round of leadership camp for the same vulnerable youths and accordingly, the Gyalpoi Zimpoen had arranged the second Leadership camp in the Wangchuk resort in Taba for two days.

The first day of the Youth Leadership Camp was graced by His Majesty, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and Her Majesty, Azhi Jetsuen Pema Wangchuck who magnanimously and very casually talked and interacted with all the participants in the camp. The presence of their Majesties clearly portrayed and indicated the priority and importance attached to such programmes for youth even at the highest level.

It was understood that the concerns of such vulnerable youths would cease after holding such camps but continue in various ways and means. In this regard, the Department of Youth and Sports would continue their support by ensuring that their academic progress are routinely monitored with the help of designated teachers in their respective schools and provide for other support through remedial measures by counselors to improve their performance in school. Those students who come from financially disadvantaged families, the Department will explore ways and means of providing them with some form of sustenance allowance until they complete their schooling.

The Department recommended for continued counseling on relapse prevention and further medical referral for students who have severe form of dependence on substances and have meaningful sessions and interactions with the parents and families of these students for greater outcomes.

3. **Spiritual Retreat for Scouts at Talekha Goenpa (27 September - 3 October, 2013):**

Scouts and Culture Education Division, Department of Youth and Sports organized a week long Spiritual Retreat at *Talakha Goenpa* from 27th September to 3rd October, 2013. A total of 30 students (15 boys and 15 girls) from six Higher Secondary Schools under Thimphu Thromdey participated in the programme.

The main aim of this programme was to select participants falling in the age group mature enough to comprehend, understand and absorb the true meaning and importance of spiritual learning and aspects of life. The Programme was geared towards nurturing their blossoming intellect and rouse greater spiritual awareness in a coherent, genuine and careful way to enable them for a smooth transition of their life from childhood to adulthood.

4. **Training Program On Community Based Scouting For Army Officers (30th October- 1st November 2013)**

As per the Royal Command, Scouts and Culture Education Division, Department of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education organized a 3 day training program on Community Based Scouting for 18 Army Officers at Phuntsholing from 30th October to 1st November, 2013.

The aim and objectives of this programme was primarily to use existing resources within the Royal Bhutan Army for engagement of youth in progressive and rewarding activities through promotion of Community Based Scouting.

5. **Orientation Programme On Scouting For Pre-Service Teachers**

The scouting programme in schools is implemented by teachers who volunteer to become scout leaders by acquiring necessary knowledge and skills through relevant in-country training courses in scouting. It has been observed that many teachers who are not scout leaders do not understand the fundamentals of scouting and often develop the tendency to criticize and discourage scouting programmes in schools. As

such, it was felt imperative to educate all our teachers to better understand the finer tenets and elements of the existing scouting programmes and how they contribute to the growth and development of our youth by instilling values like leadership, discipline and patriotism through these programmes. With this objective, His Majesty, as the Royal Patron, commanded that scouting as a value based youth programme must be oriented to all pre-service teachers in the two colleges of education so that teachers who enter the education system understand and support scouting programmes in the country.

Samtse College of Education

The three day orientation programme on scouting (annexure 2) was conducted at Samtse college of education from 28th to 30th November, 2013 which was attended by 162 pre-service teachers (104 male & 58 female) who had completed their final B.Ed examinations.

Paro College of Education

At the Paro college of Education, the three day orientation programme was carried out from 6th to 8th December, 2013 attended by 241 pre-service graduate teachers (138 male & 103 female) who had completed their PGDE or B.Ed examinations.

The programme in both the colleges started with the sharing of His Majesty's vision and concerns for the development of young people. Insights into what the



scouting programme could do to help young children grow productively with confidence and leadership skills were shared with the teachers. The pre-service teachers were then oriented on the fundamentals of scouting with practical sessions. At the end of the

programme, an evaluation was carried out to obtain feedback and suggestions so that future programmes can be made more relevant.

6. Winter Youth Engagement Programme in Gyelpozhing HSS, Mongar (29th December 2013 – 31st January, 2014)

As per Royal Command, the Department of Youth and Sports organized a month-long Winter Youth Engagement Program starting from 27th December 2013 to 31st January 2014 for 411 girls studying in 69 schools under six eastern dzongkhags. Students in this camp constituted girls of age ranging from 12 to 20 from classes IV to XII .

The programme targeted vulnerable female students, to engage them in meaningful activities during their winter break. Out of 411 girls, 104 came from divorced parents, 181 lived with single parent, 14 orphans and 34 were Gyalpoi Tozey.

The main source of income for 211 girls was farming while the other 164 relied on income generated through manual labor such carrying oranges, breaking stones by the road side, construction site, working in shops and restaurants or as babysitters. On an average, girls spend 32 days of their vacation working to earn an average daily wage of Nu. 150. More than the others, these girls were vulnerable to dropping out of school and so the programme was primarily designed to equip them with the life skills they required to handle and cope with such situations. The girls in this camp came from a wide range of family and social backgrounds but all of them had common goals and objectives in lives with dreams of a

brighter tomorrow. The main focus of the programme was to keep the girls engaged meaningfully and productively for better performance in academic learning, skills development and learning about the negative impacts of substance abuse and teenage pregnancy etc.

7. The 1st Leadership Training Programme for Scouts

A two week Leadership Training Programme was given to 103 scouts (53 boys and 50 girls) at Tencholing, Wangduephodrang with effect from 22nd December, 2013 to 5th January, 2014. The participants were selected from four western Dzongkhags and one Thromdey since the new scouting framework is being piloted in Haa, Paro, Wangdue, Punakha Dzongkhag and Thimphu Thromdey. It is a programme initiated under the Royal Comand to revitalize scouting programme besides spiritual development, outdoor education, experiential learning and various other youth enrichment programmes.

During the two week long training programme, the scouts underwent physical training, drills, first aid, safety tips, rescue and river crossing technique, improvised raft making exercise, forest fire prevention, disaster management and emergency casualties evacuation, among others. Besides theoretical and practical sessions, guest speakers were invited to give talks on thematic topics like spirituality and practical application in daily life; tradition, culture and Drig- lam- Namzha; life skills education; peer helping skills and lectures by youth role models. Other recreational activities were rappelling exercise, white water rafting, paint ball and firarm shooting etc.

The programme has been very successful and henceforth, two batches of 125 scouts in each batch will undergo similar Leadership Training Programme annually, one in July and the another one in December. However, the selection of participants will be strictly done as per the set criteria to enable the best scouts to avail the opportunity.



8. 1st ANNUAL SCOUT CONFERENCE (30 January – 1 February 2014)

“New Horizons in Scouting”

The Scouts and Culture Education Division, Department of Youth and Sports organized the 1st Annual Scout Conference at Harmony, Centenary Youth Village in Thimphu from 5th to 7th February 2014 on the theme “**New Horizons in Scouting**”. The main objective of the Conference was to share the expectations and vision of His Majesty and as Commanded, to explore new horizons in scouting to further strengthen and revitalize the programme in the country.

A total of 120 participants comprising DEOs/TEOs, two scout focal person and two youth (scout) representatives representing Dzongkhags and Thromdeys attended the 3 day conference. In addition, the award winners for scouting were also invited to share their rich and varied experiences in promoting and strengthening scouting programme in the country. The recommendations of the 1st Scout Conference were as follows:



The scouting programme supports the tenets of wholesome education and development of youth through activities that focus on helping them to develop positive attitude towards life in the pursuit of excellence through:

- Designing and putting in place a relevant and dynamic scouting programme to help scouts to acquire leadership qualities with strong values of “Tha Dhamtsi and Lay Zumday”.
- The Scout programme is for youth between the age of 13 – 17 years (classes VII to XII) and

geared towards promoting citizenship education and self development through attractive, meaningful and challenging activities focusing on the value of sharing, community living, pursuing a life of spirituality, building a spirit of brotherhood and trust among themselves and others and making them understand their role in nation building.

- Involving and grooming them throughout their formative years in non-formal, experiential learning, educational activities and giving them the life skills to help them achieve their full potential and develop into responsible citizens and leaders of tomorrow.

Resolutions of the First Annual Scout Conference

1. To review progress, share experiences towards further strengthening the scouting movement, it was resolved that the scout conference would henceforth become an annual event.
2. Every Dzongkhag/Thromdey to present at least one innovative scouting programme during the annual scout conference.
3. For uniformity, it was recommended that the Cub programme be implemented in Primary schools, Scout programme at Secondary schools and roving at tertiary institutes, irrespective of the age of members.
4. Dzongkhag/Thromdey Education Officers to ensure that there is at least one trained scoutmaster in every school.
5. Scouting in schools to be instituted as a programme and not implemented as a club activity.
6. Scouting to be made accessible with special impetus to include children with special needs.
7. The annual membership fee of Nu. 3 to BSA to be discontinued and instead, from henceforth, membership fee of Nu. 15 to be retained by Dzongkhags and schools at the ratio of Nu.5 and Nu.10 respectively for scouting activities.
8. Scout leaders to be given preference to avail Desuung training organized by the RBA

military training center in Wangduephodrang.

9. To encourage greater membership and participation, interested support staff (if any) from schools to be allowed to avail BULT and HWB training facilities.
10. Irrespective of the stages of advancement, implementation of all stages of advancement tests (Kuengao, Maugalbu, Sharibu, & Toenpa) to be decentralized to scout leaders of respective schools.
11. Procurement of scout materials to be decentralized to Dzongkhags while quotations to be called by BSA at the national level. BSA, through the Ministry of Education in consultation with the Ministry of Finance to create a separate budget head for procurement of scout materials and other scout activities in the Dzongkhags. [w.e.f. 2015-2016]
12. Community Based Scouting programmes to be initiated by Dzongkhags/Thromdeys to involve out-of-school youth to encourage scouts to continue scouting as a lifelong experience.
13. Advocacy on scouting programme for school principals, DEOs/TEOs and teachers to be conducted by BSA/DSA.
14. A national scout dress to be identified and used as scout uniform for all formal events while pants/shirts can be worn by scouts as working dress.
15. Scouting activities need to be diversified with incorporation of essential elements comprising adventure/fun, social/community service, tradition/spirituality to infuse values of Tha Dhamtsi and Lay Zumday.
16. The proposed structure for DSA/TSA was endorsed with Dasho Dzongda/Thrompon as the president. BSA will formally intimate the information to Dzongkhags/Thromdeys through the Ministry.
17. Towards decentralization and empowering Dzongkhags/Thromdeys, all BULT and HWB trainings to be conducted by Dzongkhags/Thromdeys. BSA will continue to conduct trainings for ALT and LT at the national level.
18. Scout database to be included in EMIS.
19. A Facebook page will be created as an official social networking system for greater exchanges of information, dissemination and interaction between scouts as well as scout leaders.
20. 26th July to be designated as National Scout Day as this day was considered to be auspicious, being the day Bhutan became a member of WOSM.
21. The Monitoring & Evaluation format that has been endorsed at the conference to be incorporated along with PMS for DEOs/TEOs to implement scout activities. Information generated from such M&E to be used by DSA/TSA/BSA for the purpose of planning and also to institute a recognition and award system.
22. All Dzongkhags/Thromdeys to strictly adhere to agreed timelines for all routine or annual scout activities and programmes as unanimously agreed and endorsed by the conference.
23. In order for scouts to take lead roles in the celebration of 60th birth anniversary of HM the fourth Druk Gyalpo in 2015, all Dzongkhags/Thromdeys/schools to start planning for activities/programmes as discussed in the conference.
24. To promote scouting programme, there is a need to institute scholarships for scouts and awards for scout leaders which will be further explored by BSA.

Submitted by Scouts and Culture Education Division, DYS



THANK YOU Teachers for the Light and Learning!

About Reverend Father William Mackey, SJ who started English Medium Schools in Bhutan from the Sixties till he died peacefully at the age of 80 in Thimphu in 1995

Father William Mackey, SJ is the only man I know who could somersault at the age of 50 and pull out all his teeth and gums out to amuse hordes of rustic children. He also rode with the King (I still remember the picture of him and the King in a Jeep) and was equally comfortable bantering and sharing obscene jokes with his old farmer friends from Kanglung.



Fr. Mackey receiving the coveted Druk Thuksey (the Beloved Son of Bhutan) from the fourth Druk Gyalpo

He was a priest who rarely discussed his faith. But he did once bring a wandering, bedraggled Mani Lama with his retinue of stray dogs to the School auditorium and encouraged him to talk and bless us. His favourite mantra was “Life is Hard Jackpo”. He told us never to covet; but to work honestly for our small, poor country. He knew each of us right down to our inner core, hated pretensions, sycophancy and anything that was remotely dishonest. He could smell that out a mile and exorcise it with public ridicule.

He loved Mathematics and drilled us to say our tables under rapid fire. But he never kept a score, he showed us how to forgive.

Father died at the ripe age of 80. We took turns to hold his feverish hands as he passed through the “valley of shadows”. Many walks of people came to see him, royalties, senior officials, members of just fraternity and common man and women whose life he had touched.

Someone once asked me whether Father Mackey was a good teacher. I mumbled that he taught me Mathematics and a bit of English, and he was terrible at both. And yet he was the greatest teacher of them all. He taught us how to live. I would like to think that I carry a bit of him always. That’s the only tribute Father would have ever wanted from his students.

About Brother Quinn, SJ , My English Teacher – The Man of All Seasons

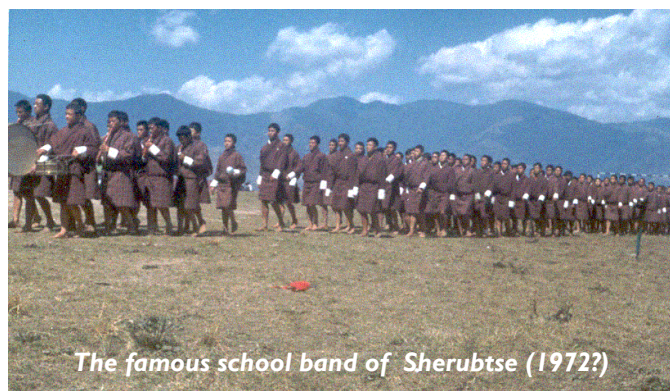
Brother Quinn was the tallest man in the world. Thin and stern, I never saw him smile or laugh. He taught us of the Phoenicians and the Greeks with their half naked bodies and funny metal hats always running and fighting. Brother Quinn did not really care for grammar nor was he too concerned with discipline. We could talk in his class and trace ancient ships and warriors off the textbooks. He did not vent his anger at us when we spilled ink on the desk, but when he was really exasperated he would call someone a “goose”. None of us knew what it meant.



Brother Quinn with Chambula (1974)

Brother Quinn was more than a teacher. He was there to heal us. He kept a cabinet filled with sweet smelling cures; he gave a yellow tablet for headache, white for flu and merrily painted all our bruises and cuts with double coatings of purple iodine. For really serious ailments he would put a needle in our buttocks when we were aptly distracted by his booming Tra-LA-LAs. But the best was his CRACK Medicine which he dispensed in generous scoops and which we applied on our cracking face and cracking feet under the harsh wintery sun. Despite its strong petrol fume, it was a great advancement from rolling wads of black sticky tar to take off dirt and flaking skin from our faces.

He taught the school band to play the wooden flutes, and got the rest excited about beating the drums. Every year, he would direct a Shakespearean play and stage in front of overstuffed local dignitaries and highly inebriated and noisy folks from our Kanglung neighbourhood.

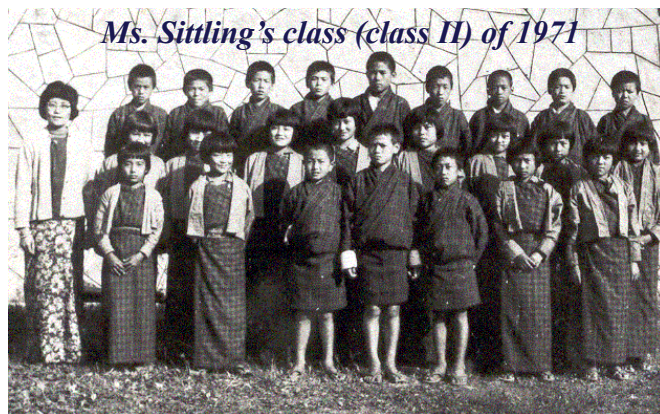


The famous school band of Sherubtse (1972?)

There are many ways of describing this noble soul - the gentle giant, the man of all seasons, the ex-Mountie, the choreographer, musician, kindly saint, doctor of broken skins bones and more, but only one name describes it all - Brother Quinn.

About Ms. Sittling, My English and History Teacher

Miss Sittling was the fancy of every adult male and growing boy in Sherubtse. Her bright powdered face and array of colourful dresses even made the gaylong lopen turn his blessed head. My own encounter with Miss was at the beginning of grade 3. I was sent home by the principal for forgetting to bring my school uniform. By the time I trekked the mountains to the cozy warmth of home and back, it was 5 days,



Ms. Sittling's class (class II) of 1971

and one full week's worth of class missed. But not miss Sittling's. She had thoughtfully prepared a notebook for me in which she had written down in her trademark hand script, all the lessons she had covered for her English class. From that day, when every second teacher seemed to be bent on pounding mystic syllables into our bewildered lice infested heads with knuckles and sticks, she was a god sent balm, always humming a mysterious tune.

In later years, she taught us Indian history during which she mesmerized us with her passionate narratives of bygone battles while her bony, gilded hands helped crush the Marathas and the Rajputs. I always made a special effort for her class and would top her tests. For this, the school would give a prize of freshly printed storybooks that smelt of vast grasslands and ferocious wild men on galloping horses, if not, she made up her own prizes. Once she gave me a gleaming tea pot that I had no use for whatsoever. A gift of silky blue fabric with outlandish prints however became my only decent shirt after I graduated from class 10. But it took another 30 years for me to realize her most precious gift. All I can say now is a humble "Thank you Miss for Caring!"

The above three articles were contributed by Tenzin Chhoeda, former Chief of PPD (MoE) and Director of Department of Information & Technology and now a Free Lance Consultant residing in Thimphu with his family.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND SPORTS

“A quality education should ensure not just the attainment of high academic performance, but also the inculcation of the right skills, values and attitudes so that the school graduate is prepared for both life and the world of work and are a practitioner of the values and principles of Gross National Happiness (GNH). The quality of education therefore, determines the final outcomes for each child and ultimately for the entire country”.

(Ministry of Education, Bhutan, 2013)

It has long been recognized that the development of sound mind depends much on the development and care of physical body and that the two cannot be isolated. As such, physical fitness in all aspects of the human personality is considered important and crucial not only for proper development of physical growth but also for sound mental, intellectual and social development. It is more so important when children are in the formative years (AAPAR, 2011). The freedom to develop physical, intellectual and moral powers through physical education, sports and physical activities have been recognized within the education system and other aspects of social life (UNESCO's Article 3.1 of the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport, 1978).



As far as education is concerned, sport and physical activity is invaluable and should be an integral part of every child's schooling as it allows children to have fun while fostering their physical and mental health

which otherwise are not able to generate through other areas of the curriculum.



It is because of these positive contributions, countries across the world have readily adopted sports and physical activities policies fully integrated into the school system. Researchers also suggest that the need to have physical activities are not only limited to the school system but also has increasingly been felt important and accepted in the work place and in the communities.

Sports and physical activities properly instituted would not only improve the quality of education system but also improve individual child's physical and intellectual capacity at the optimum. Studies have found that having proper sports and physical activity culture in school enhances school enrolment, attendance and overall educational achievements and standards. Among other studies on benefits of school sports and physical education has shown that

as a result of investing in these activities the schools becomes 'happier, healthier and more successful and pupils have greater confidence and self-esteem' (DCDA, UK, 2007).

“Sport based programs in schools aid in the social development of children, and in most basic way participation help children to learn skills and facilitate them to remain active and healthy at the later life”
(Hedstrom, R. & Gould, D., 2004).

On the other hand, if unhealthy lifestyles including inactiveness, poor diet and substance abuse are adopted at early age and the same are likely to persist in adulthood causing many health problems such as obesity and diabetes which have increased in recent years (DSR, 2013). The Lancet, 2012 states that “physical inactivity should be appropriately described as a pandemic, with far-reaching health, economic, environmental, and social consequences.”

By participating in sports and physical activities, children can gain a greater sense of self-esteem as well as a feeling of empowerment as they watch their physical abilities develop. Partaking in sports and physical activities can help children gain their sense of confidence around

other children as they begin to feel a sense of camaraderie with other players. They will learn to cooperate with one another and to subordinate their selfish desires for the interest of the team. They also learn to play the game fairly, respect rules and show greater sportmanship and compassion towards their opponents. In other words, they cultivate the quality of sportmanship, which is putting self-interest before the team and playing a game according to its rules besides learning to accept the wins or losses more graciously.

cognitive functioning (information processing), memory, concentration, behaviors and academic achievement for children. The International for Peace, Sport and Development indicate that 'participation in sport and physical activities improve academic performance under certain conditions.' Sports do not only improve child's ability to learn and absorb other studies, it promotes culture and understanding and improved communication skills (P. Marriott-Lloyed, 2006).

who are engaged in school sports have better grade, more positive attitude towards school and have more interest in continuing with education even after completing high school.



According to International Platform on Sport and Development (2008) and other researchers suggests that boys and girls have natural inclination for sports and they derive exercise from them in an agreeable way, without specially exerting themselves. They return to their studies, feeling refreshed and energetic. Research also informs that physically active children learn better, are better at problem-solving and are better adjusted socially and emotionally.' (WHO, 2009).

With continuous practice of the idealism of sportmanship spirit, it is likely that they will not only live healthy and productive life but also live a more responsible life.

According to the American College of Sports Medicine (2008) and studies by the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports at Michigan State University (2009), participation in the sport and other forms of physical activity is thought to lead to enhancement of

According to Ward, 2008, most studies on school sports find positive correlation between participation in sports and academic success. A research by Evensen, Ballard, Ginny. & Ammerman (2009) on the North Carolina State Board of Education's 2005 Healthy Active Children Policy to increase physical activity found positive effect on children's studies, awareness of health, study alertness, student enjoyment and staff involvement after being implemented. It has also been proved that students

"Exercises are as important for the body as is food and nutrition. Without exercise, the body becomes weak, dull and prone to illness. All games exercise the body. The blood circulation increases and also the organs function normally. When the body is healthy, the mind will also be healthy. When both are working well, we shall be successful in life".

(Chimi Yuden, Class-X, Lhamoy Zingkhaw MSS, 2011)

*Contributed by Nima Gyeltshen,
Games and Sports Division, DYS*

Celebrating 100 Years of Modern Education in Bhutan

“A Silver Lining in Every Cloud”

Education, down the years, has played a crucial and vital role in shaping the lives of our people and was instrumental in bringing about all round development and putting our tiny kingdom of Bhutan on the world map. The development in the midst of rapid transformation, be it politically, economically or intellectually, we salute all our teachers, past and present, for their invaluable contribution to nation building.

The preservation and promotion of our age-old culture and tradition with critical analysis for its refinement is greatly attributable to the significant contribution of the education sector. The nature and the quality of our education have greatly contributed to the success and glory of our nation.

The essence of a good and sound education system of any country, needless for us to point out here, invariably depends on the quality of our educators or teachers by providing quality education to our children. Quality in any sector of development cannot be compromised nor ignored.

In a tiny Himalayan nation like ours, teachers have contributed a lot in the development of our nation since time immemorial. Right from the monastic and spiritual education to modern education, the contribution to the growth and the development of our nation is immeasurable. Bhutan is what it is today, we take pride in being a Bhutanese and there is all round development in every sector.

However, with the passage of time, our education system has undergone a dramatic change with the introduction of IT and the internet posing new challenges and threats as well. The coming of the space age and the internet and the proliferation of information, good or bad, can easily be accessed at the touch of a button. These changes are inevitable and unavoidable. The advancement in science and technology and its proliferation in schools have posed new challenges, not only to school children but to teachers and parents alike as to how to perform the balancing act!

How can the teachers alone be responsible for the academic failures of children, substance abuse,

the soaring suicide rates, teenage pregnancy and child abuse, to name just a few of the paradoxical phenomenon of the 21st century! But the blame game is rife and ultimately and sadly enough, the teachers are made the scapegoats for the state of affairs and deterioration of the quality of education over the years.

It's neither fair nor reasonable to put the blame squarely on the shoulders of teachers. Well, how about the other stake holders like the policy makers, the different agencies and the society itself including parents and children who are as much responsible as the teachers for the general state of affairs of education in the country. The quality of education in schools simply cannot materialize without the timely support and intervention of all the stakeholders especially our society instead of just blaming the teachers and the education sector in general. In a way, we should all be held responsible and accountable and so gives all the more reasons for all of us to come forward to lend a helping hand to improve the state of education in the country. They are all our children and it's our responsibility to mould and shape the lives of our future citizens and leaders.

So long as the children are in schools, the teachers are their custodians but once they are at home, it's the responsibility of parents and society to guide, mould and shape the lives of our young lives. Since the stakes for parents are higher, more than the teachers, the parents are expected to take greater responsibility for the upbringing of their own children.

Interestingly, the respects and reverence that the teachers from all walks of life which they once enjoyed is a thing of the past. Parents, now a days, are more prone to blaming teachers and even would not think twice from suing teachers and dragging them to the court at the drop of the hat! This has demoralized teachers in general and perhaps this might be one of the many reasons as to why many aspiring job seekers do not opt for the teaching profession. This new emerging trend of some parents is here to stay in the name of “Child Rights” and “Child Abuse” but how has it really helped in improving the situation or the quality of education?

Furthermore, corporal punishment in schools have been long banned. I am not saying that corporal punishment must be there. In fact, I am a supporter of child friendly schools and that no school in any parts of the country should, under any circumstances, resort to using it even as a last option for disciplining children's behaviour. Yes, we must appreciate and uphold a child's right but we must also understand that the society should not take undue advantage of the situation, throwing caution to the wind and compromising our unique tradition and culture of instilling respect and discipline in schools. We feel that there should be a middle path to everything.

What we have to value is that teaching is not an easy job as many of us are apt to think or believe. It demands a lot of patience, experience and sacrifice, if not the most demanding profession of all. After all, we are also only human like any other civil servant, simply trying to do our jobs as well as we can, which can be true for most of us.

Nevertheless, whatever you may hear on the grapevine or through the media about the quality of education, we feel that teachers in this 21st century are on the right track and doing the best we can with the limited resources at our hands. The government and the parent ministry are exploring every ways and means to train our teachers and give them the necessary tools and life skills by integrating the unique philosophy of GNH in schools. Please remember that many of our teachers are toiling hard in far-flung and remote nooks and corners of the country undeterred by the deprivation of basic modern amenities and facilities in their attempt to render education to all.

If our society has a better knowledge and insight of the plight and difficult working conditions of many of our teachers, particularly those in remote areas, perhaps, they will slowly change their attitude towards teachers. Until that happens, they may never understand the true conditions and plights of teachers and yet expect them to function with the highest integrity and professionalism that the noble profession demands. Unless that trust and faith in teachers are built or restored, I cannot see any way forward nor cling unto teaching as a noble profession!

By Pema Tshewang, Teacher, Gaytsa LSS

A Tribute....

For centuries, Bhutan, the reclusive Himalayan kingdom

Like a jewel in the crown

Hidden and unknown to the outside world for centuries,

Untouched and unspoiled by all outside phenomenon

Innocent and pure - a peace loving people,
Spiritually blessed and purified in hearts by

Guru Rimpoche,

Blissfully unaware of the changing face of the outside world,

Yet wise enough to decide the course of our own destiny

One hundred years ago in the year 1913,

After the establishment of hereditary monarchy,

The country embarked upon the road to modern education,

With profound hopes and dreams of a brighter tomorrow

Since then, education flourished,

From strength to strength, year after year,

Ever pushing us to greater heights,

In our quest and thirst for knowledge

One hundred years have passed and gone,

Over time, we have tasted the sweet fruits of success,

Our education system made us a proud people,

To hold our heads high in the comity of nations.

Pema Tshewang

Teacher

Gaytsa LSS-Bumthang

Tang Ugyen Choeling Museum

Admire our Rich Cultural Heritage



Longchen Rabjam was born in central Tibet but after a dispute with a regional power named Tai Situ Changchup Gyeltshen, he came to Bhutan in self exile around 1350. After his arrival in Bhutan, he went to different parts of the country teaching as he went. To further strengthen the teachings of the Dharma, he established eight Lings viz:

1. Tharpaling
2. Shingkar dechenling
3. Ogyen Choeling
4. Samtenling in Bumthang
5. Kuenzangling in Lhuentse
6. Rinchenling
7. Menlok Kuenzangling in Wangdu and
8. Nyenlong Drechagling in Paro

Out of the eight Lings he created, he choose Ogyen Choeling because of its auspicious topography. The master saw the eastern mountain side in the shape of a head of an elephant (an auspicious animal in the Buddhist iconography) and the spur that stretches down to Tang River as the trunk of the elephant thus completing the picture of an elephant drinking water from the river.

After the demise of Master Longchen Rabjam, Ogyen Choeling became the main seat of Dorji Lingpa (1363-1405) and home of his spiritual son and heir Chokten Gembo. The present building with the central tower 'Utse' surrounding the residential buildings, shagkhor and the tsuglha khang or the main temple were rebuilt and expanded to its present glory by Jakar Dzongpoen Ugyen Dorji at the turn of the last century. The old complex had succumbed to an enormous earthquake in 1897. The small structure between the central tower and the temple, the chamkhang were the only structures unaffected by that earthquake.

To mention a few of the direct descendents of Longchen Rabjam were Trongsa Poenlop Tshokey Dorji, Dungkhar Gyeltshen and Ashi Kuenzang Choden. In an effort by the heirs of Ogyen Choeling to preserve the old structures, a trust fund was instituted in 2001 to convert it into a national heritage site thus renaming it as the Tang Ogyen Choeling Museum.

Ogyen Choeling as a museum has been open to visitors since May 2001. It provides an opportunity for tourist and Bhutanese to learn about our culturally rich past and the need to preserve such for all our future generations. The exhibits provide a rare glimpse into the past and how land owners lived, much before social land reforms were introduced in 1950s by our visionary monarchs.

Inside the museum are countless artifacts, from old weaponry to wall paintings, thankas and fabrics. The whole museum is divided into four floors. These floors are further divided into rooms like the trade room, kitchen, living room, war and armory room, library, textile room, administrative room, sleeping and alters.

a. The trade room

Ogyen Choeling used to trade/exchange rice to procure 1000-2000 kilograms of salt every year. They had to have large reserves of salt not only for the family but also for the whole village. Normally, traders from both sides had intergenerational trading partners. Trading occurred twice a year that is on 4th and 11th month of the year. They also had trade links with India to trade for gold dust, salt, woolen clothes and borax etc. They exported rice, traditional paper (desho), sandal wood, English broad cloths, and leather, indigo and madder etc.

b. War and armory room

Though Ogyen Choeling was not a political centre, it could not remain completely isolated or detached from political and territorial conflicts that used to be rife in those days.



Such occurrence invariably necessitated a well-stocked armory. Ogyen Choeling house was called upon by all rich and powerful as allies during times of conflicts against the British Raj in the south and the Tibetans in the north. For example, Tshondrue Gyeltshen joined forces with Trongsa Poenlop Jigme Namgyal to ward off an invasion by the British forces in Dewangiri in 1865.

We can still find in the museum crude arms and ammunition, old armor, crude canons, guns, short bows and arrows, swords, gun powder and leads.



c. Library

On the second floor, there is a big library with countless religious texts and scriptures such as Doring Kabum, Choe Bum, Do mang, Gay tongpa etc. All the religious texts were contributed by the successive descendents of the Ogyen Choeling Choeje. In the 20th century, monks used to read such religious texts in religious ceremonies and auspicious days. All these religious texts are now preserved.



On the right side of the museum, there is a two storied Lhakhang which is also part of the Ogyen Choeling complex. It is still used for religious activities and the main statue is Shacha Muni and Dorji Sempa with Sangay Tsepamey. It was renovated and expanded by the Trongsa Poenlop Tshokey Dorji and lived there till his death. Every year, they conduct Tshechu from 8th to the 10th day of the 9th month of the Bhutanese calendar. The museum and the Lhakhang are maintained and looked after by the descendents of Ogyen Choeling.



*Compiled by: Kencho
(UNESCO Coordinator)Jakar HSS*



A Green School

A supplementary text to educating for Gross National Happiness (GNH)

The purpose of this document is basically an attempt to highlight the need for a common need and desire to understand the school pledge better and to analyze what it takes to really understand the very concept of “Green School for Green Bhutan.” An acronym for GREEN SCHOOL has been coined as a supplementary text to educating for GNH in our school. It has been tested with teachers and students of Kurichu Lower Secondary School with the noble intention of taking teaching and learning experience to a whole new level by integrating and infusing the core values of GNH into our school curricular and co-curricular practices.

Based on the findings of the data analysis and observations of the participants, it offered substantial information and solutions about what it takes to creating an enlightened work place and work relationship in a GNH school. Everything percolated down to just one thing and that is by simply being a good practitioner of GNH values.



By and large, our research findings recommended that all the school stakeholders to critically look and review the school leadership roles, management and administrative styles and how we can infuse these looking through the lens of a Green School.

Introduction

Needless for me to mention here, a green school invariably works together as a family to bring about a conducive teaching and learning environment in the school. In its truest sense, the concept of green school plays a vital role in educating for Gross National Happiness (GNH). It is substantiated that the school stands as one of the strongest influencing change agents on society by building and nurturing true citizens of the country. It is, thus, imperative for a school to inculcate values and principles of GNH both consciously and subconsciously. Perhaps, the subsequent paragraphs outlined by our school would contribute in defining the true meaning and sense of a “Green school” :

G – Gift of Knowledge

The school is a temple - the abode of learning. Acquisition of knowledge by students and teachers in the school is a life time gift. There is a mutual illumination and sharing of knowledge amongst both the learners and the learned. The bond between the teachers and students get cemented as one knows how to appreciate the very purpose of being in the school. It is important that students know the source of their knowledge. Learning to value the knowledge acquired from teachers is a true testimony of their gratitude to teachers for shaping and moulding them into better human beings. However, learning is always a two way process. Both the teachers and students mutually benefit as the continuum of teaching and learning unfolds in the schools. It is generally believed that the school will always remain psycho-socially green if GNH values are permanently etched and embedded into the minds of our students and teachers while going through the teaching and learning process. The teachers and students of Kurichu Lower Secondary School have come to realize and embody these virtues in their daily school curricular and co-curricular activities.

R – Reward for Hard work

There is a robust truth in saying that what gets rewarded gets done and what is rewarding gets done (Sergiovanni, 2002). In the school, there are so many curricular and co-curricular activities designed essentially to inculcate wholesome education in our students. Lack of a reward mechanism in our school system could cause a downward curve of motivational level of students, teachers and supporting staff, which would, in the long run, adversely affect our very effort to imparting wholesome education. It is always worthwhile to have a culture of lifting the morale of staff and students by instituting a culture of recognition and appreciating those who work hard and sincerely.

The award of recognition should be instituted not only for students but for hard working staff as well. If such a culture exists in the school, there cannot be a better or greener way to encourage the school citizens. If deserving ones are not rewarded, it would be something like wrapping a gift and not giving it to our loved and dear ones. The reward culture would definitely go a long way in developing better understanding of GNH to school citizens. Everybody will be encouraged to work harder thereby achieving our common goals and objectives of a green school.

E – Educating for Livelihood

Einstein once said, “Education is what remains after you have forgotten everything you’ve learned in school”. Nothing can be more true than this statement made by one of the greatest scientists of the 20th century. Educating for GNH is an education that will serve us well for a better livelihood all our life. A school is not a place where one can get only scholastic education but much more. These are some of the questions that should be often asked in a GNH school. How would they survive in the real world, away from the safety zone of the classroom walls? How can we train them to fit in the society beyond the school environment? How can we give them the life skills required by the world of work? How can they make better use of the values they have acquired or learned in the school? Will they be able to stand on their own feet once they leave school? Teaching values, concepts and skills required by students in

their daily life is far more meaningful and practical than just the scholastic knowledge gained.

It is of paramount importance that inculcating GNH values and life skills through teachers’ daily lessons would address and fulfill many of the problems that young graduates would face once they are out in the real world. At the end of the day, as said by W.B. Yeats, “Education is not the filling of a pail; it is the lighting of a fire” (Retrieved from Google on educational quotes dated 12/4/2011). It is good for a teacher to know how to mould their lessons consistently through the GNH lens and make them as practical and useful as we can. Thus, teachers must always strive to align and tailor one’s teaching strategies according to the learning styles of the students. Tomlinson (1999) said, “If students can’t learn the way we teach, we must teach them the way they learn.” The nation’s future would be reflective of the type of education our youth have received during their formative years. No doubt then that a green school would always strive to give our children the education and life skills required for their livelihood and survival.

E – Empowerment of School Citizenship

Running a school is no longer a one-person job. The delivery of quality education would greatly depend on the type of education we impart and how collectively and responsibly we can deliver it. In a green school, everyone should be empowered to effectively carry out their respective roles and responsibilities. Just like a family member that owes allegiance to their family, so is every member of the school family expected to work and contribute in the best interest of the school. Every stakeholder in the school must showcase their identity as a true family member of the school through various initiatives and good deeds.

In the same vein, in a green school, delegation of jobs are done on the basis of giving the right job to the right person, thus, enabling a good and sensible way of using the available human resources at hand and ensuring that the responsibilities entrusted to them are carried out to the satisfaction of all concerned. What ultimately matters or could possibly work is to make every member of the school feel like a member of a big family and that every member’s

contribution is paramount to the successful running of a GNH school family.

N – Nature, our second mother

Nature is an elixir of life. Nature will never betray a heart that cares. Our school should be the birth place of the bounties of nature. When a school has a green tree to give shade, fresh air to breathe, good soil to grow our vegetables on, clean water to drink, beautiful flowers to bloom for our eyes to feast on and fresh fruits to eat, then there cannot be a better word to describe nature than calling it our “second mother”. Core values like eco-consciousness, sustainability, reverence and bio-diversity naturally gets permanently embedded in young impressionable mind if we always impress on the goodness of nature and why we need it for our very sustenance. The GNH tree in KLSS is testimony to good practices in the conservation of mother nature. The school greening project is successfully managed through various activities coordinated by the School Nature Club.

S – Safe Surrounding

Learning how to keep our school safe and clean is paramount. Like they say that “cleanliness is next to



godliness”, a green school like ours will always have health and safety policies in place. The culture of religiously observing the school health and safety day once a week is testimony to our continuous effort to make our school environment as safe as we possibly can. The school has already drawn up a disaster management plan in order to keep the school safe in the event of natural calamities besides having

a management strategy plan as to how to cope with our wastes, junk food, stray dogs and even tackling with bullying in school.

C –Caring Community

Green school teachers always strive to make a school as child friendly as possible and to treat every child as their own and that the school is free from bullying, harassment, humiliations and trauma and meting out corporal punishment. Irrespective of the diverse cultural and economic backgrounds, this school attempts to treat everyone as equal with honesty and sincerity and in the process, teaching them to trust, respect and appreciate the goodness they see in one another.

Teachers in our school are not judgmental or discriminative but always try to be patient and adaptable in trying to accommodate different teaching methods and tools as per the learning need and intelligence level of a child. In a green school, we try not to use terminologies like ‘mine’ or ‘yours’ but rather learn to say “ours”. We should be caring to all and regard all with the same token of love and appreciation that we all yearn for. Our students now say that the KLSS is free from using force or coercion, ill-treatment and using harsh words by their teachers and friends.

H –Happy Home

School is a home away from home for our students. In a green school, we should create conducive situations to make our students feel good about coming early to school and going late to home. The homely atmosphere entails a situation for a happy home. What more can students ask from their school if the school could create an ambience of good livelihood, affection, brotherhood and fraternity amongst students and teachers? Nevertheless, the management also project the same ambience to the teachers while dealing with them and meeting their needs. The green school views every member of the school as another family member and try to give them the feeling that the school is their second home.

O – Offering Opportunities

Opportunity is a road to learning and path to success. It is like a door which opens the mental cognition and the meta-cognition of our students. Availing ample learning opportunities to students through vocational, co-curricular and curricular activities enhance the students' ability to view the world from a better perspective. Indeed, students have their fair share of school responsibilities, thus, the green school always see that every child gets a fair share of every opportunity". The school should ensure that lessons are carefully planned and prepared with the objective of imparting wholesome education to students.

O – Ownership and Mindfulness

Unity is bringing together the confluence of minds. When the minds are strong and one, things can not fall apart. If the school citizens own and live up to the phrase such as "we stand if united and we fall if divided", success is almost guaranteed. Teachers and students must commit themselves to work towards achieving academic excellence as these two are the major dimensions of quality education. Meanwhile, we should not forget to say our prayers, read our books and participate in all the all the school co-curricular activities which are all geared towards attaining the merits of a true green school.

L – Lifelong Learning Laboratory

"Learning can no longer be divided into a place and time to acquire knowledge (school) and a place and time to apply the knowledge acquired (the workplace). Instead, learning can be seen as

something that takes place in a continuous process through our daily interaction with others and with the world around us".



The school is a living example for deeper learning. Half of a student's life is spent in schools, learning and growing all the time, acquiring the life skills and values, ultimately, preparing themselves for the unknown future that awaits them. Students are nurtured and groomed to become responsible and productive citizens of our country. The crucial role of school as a learning laboratory goes a long way in shaping the lives of our students. We always strive that the school is like a lamp which sheds light and warmth and guiding them along in their quest and thirst for knowledge and new horizons. The school is like a seed or a plant that grows into a magnificent tree that ultimately gives fruits for our younger generations to collect and eat. What type of fruits we want to reap in future would however depend on how we have cared and nurtured it during its growth.



The GREEN SCHOOL concept may help to better understand the very essence of educating for GNH in schools. It is hoped that the school citizens are encouraged to work towards fulfilling the vision, mission and goals of the school. Perhaps, the stakes are too high but we will leave no stones unturned to achieve our goals and objectives, no matter how long it might take to get there.

*Contributed by : Pema Thinley, Principal
Kurichu LSS, Gyelpozhing, Mongar*



A CHILDHOOD I NEVER HAD! :

*Contributed by Samten, Vice Principal,
Ura MSS, Bumthang*

Like I read somewhere “Childhood is the time for children to be in school and at play, to grow strong and confident with the love and encouragement of their family and an extended community of caring adults. It is a precious time in which children should live free from fear, safe from violence and protected from abuse and exploitation. As such, childhood means much more than just the space between birth and the attainment of adulthood. It refers to the state and condition of a child’s life, to the quality of those years.” Practically everyone, I am sure will agree with this sublime definition of childhood but not me. Well, if you don’t believe me, go on and read what my childhood was like!

I come from an ordinary family background but brought up unlike most other ordinary children. I was brought up in a very peculiar way by my parents or my so called beloved ones. As far as I can remember, I can still vividly remember the day I was admitted in school, despite all my protests and flailing arms and legs, I was left with my cousins to study and fend for myself in a strange place. It was only a matter of time before I got adapted and adjusted to school life but all I ever wanted to do was play with my cousins and friends whenever the school permitted. Towards the end of each academic year, how I yearned to go home and be with my family and friends for the next few months every winter.

I would be the happiest of all in the first day at my home when I got to meet all the family members but not without a foreboding and uneasy feeling about how the rest of my days would turn out. Yes, my uneasiness and premonition was correct because from the next day onwards, my dooms day would come crawling, one day at a time. I always thought that my father was a highly qualified judge but someone prone to making wrong judgment and choices. I was never let out of the house but instead forced to read and recite the monotonous religious scriptures like a monk would, which, at the time, I thought was most irrelevant. I used to feel like an innocent man, trapped and wrongly accused and put behind bars. As a child, I thought that reciting the ancient scriptures without understanding a single mantra would be the worst case scenario in the life of a child.

Although the winter months, I believed were vacation and leisure time for children of my age, I felt trapped like a little innocent fish in a small pond, running around, day after day, without an escape route nor contributing to its wellbeing or growth. My door to the outside world remained tight shut and everything appeared to have come to a complete standstill looking beyond the volumes of scriptures piled up in front of me, images blurred as my eyes began to well up. Stealing glimpses of the outside world through the little open windows, how I yearned for company and to be amongst my peers, who at that tender age, would not have wanted to be engaged in anything else except play and fool around and grow normally into adulthood.



I used to wonder why my father was so heartless and did what he did to me when I was just a mere child and stealing and robbing me off my childhood. However, now looking back, I realize that whatever my father did was definitely not to ill treat or abuse my childhood but to train me to become more scholarly and spiritual in my thoughts and mind. As I grew older and wiser, I promised my dad that I’d always read the scriptures and pray to God. Coming to think of it now, it did have a profound impact in disciplining and building my character and personality that held me in good stead all my life. Thank you for being my teacher, my Guru, my judge, my guiding light and most of all, for being the stern, firm and unwavering dad to shape and mould me into what I am today – a stern but a good teacher (that’s how I’d like to think); but dad I promise to break one promise and that is, I’ll never make my children and others read the scriptures ever! Thank you dad for teaching me why!

INSPIRITIONAL QUOTES FOR THE NEW YEAR

Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Hope Smiles from the threshold of the year to come, Whispering 'it will be happier'..."

Alfred Tennyson

Your success and happiness lies in you. Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties.

Helen Keller

Let our New Year's resolution be this: we will be there for one another as fellow members of humanity, in the finest sense of the word.

Goran Persson

"Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right"

Oprah Winfrey

All of us every single year, we're a different person. I don't think we're the same person all our lives.

Steven Spielberg

Character is the ability to carry out a good resolution long after the excitement of the moment has passed.

Cavett Robert

A year from now, you're gonna weigh more or less than what you do right now.

Phil McGraw



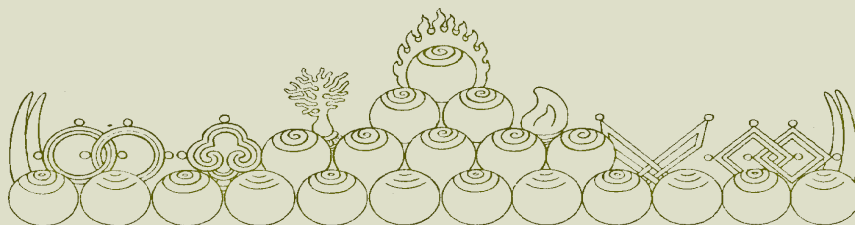
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