Drukyul News

Issue #15, May 2019
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1. From the Field

Programming: Building Capacity and Supporting Access to Education

Our teachers have been busy this year supporting teacher training and resource development. We were very grateful to see volunteer teacher Navpreet return to Lhuentse in Eastern Bhutan to build upon the professional development work she began last year. Navpreet delivered a district-wide workshop on phonics, sharing ways teachers can adopt the fundamental values of phonics alongside Bhutanese curriculum. In Paro, our volunteers created reading resources. Teachers Terri and Wendy used classroom storybooks to develop audio tools for the school's Google Classroom. A special thank you to Terri for leading this tricky project! Earlier this year, our partnering schools in Punakha, Trashiyangtse, and Mongar saw the return of our year-long teachers who will continue to support teacher mentorship and build upon their work to foster education in the classroom.

News: Expanding Reach

We will be working with the Ministry of Education to spread the reach of our Reading Program. Starting this summer, teachers will be placed in new schools and districts. Through this, we may see more teachers in remote locations in Central and Eastern Bhutan. This decision was made after requests from school principals seeking additional classroom support and mentorship opportunities for teachers. We are looking forward to working with these new schools!
2. Upcoming Events

October 2019 Trip to Bhutan with former Canadian Ambassador

Overlook panoramic views of the Himalayas in the land of happiness. Witness the deep spiritual practice of Vajrayana Buddhism. A visit to the once-isolated Kingdom of Bhutan is an enriching opportunity that few have experienced. Join the fall trip to Bhutan in the company of chief guest, former Ambassador Lucie Edwards. This trip will give you special access to sites across the country and will include lectures from Lucie on the geopolitics of the Himalayas and on the historical relations between Bhutan and Canada. Learn more

Reading Program - Seeking Teachers for August, September, or October

We are seeking volunteer teachers for the 4 week Reading Program this August, September, or October. Teachers will support elementary students with their English reading skills and mentor Bhutanese teachers. This is an incredible opportunity to see education through a different context and witness firsthand how the four pillars of Gross National Happiness are practiced in schools. Apply now
3. Celebrating 10 Years

For the past 10 years, the Bhutan Canada Foundation has played an important role in sending Canadian (and other) teachers to Bhutan. These teachers helped fill a critical gap given the insufficient numbers of Bhutanese teachers in the country. While we will continue this role, we are also exploring exciting new opportunities with our Bhutanese partners. These opportunities will shift our focus to building capacity within the education sector to enhance the quality of education. But we need your help to make this a reality. Please consider making a donation. You can become a monthly donor, provide a one-time donation, or donate aeroplan miles.

We thank you for your support in helping us continue Canada’s long history of cooperating with Bhutan to strengthen its education system.

- $25 one-time donation
- $100 one-time donation
- Donate aeroplan miles

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4. In the News

1. Royal Education Council revises school curriculum

2. Bhutan’s new government removes the Class X cut off point, enabling free schooling to Class XII
   https://thebhutanese.bt/the-great-cut-off-point-debate/

3. Action taken to improve school feeding
   http://www.kuenselonline.com/actions-taking-to-improve-school-feeding/

4. Saturday classes ended beginning in 2019
   https://www.businessbhutan.bt/2019/01/01/no-classes-on-saturdays/

5. Results released for Bhutan's PISA-D (Programme for International Student Assessment – Development)
   http://www.kuenselonline.com/students-learning-without-understanding/

5. From the BCF Blog

Digital media and Gross National Happiness: Where to from here?

March 20 is the International Day of Happiness. It is also the day that the annual World Happiness Report is released. The Report, edited by renowned academics John Helliwell, Richard Layard and Jeffrey Sachs, ranks the world’s countries by the level of subjective happiness among their citizens (the 2019 Report can be accessed here). This year’s Report also analyzes the ways in which interactions within communities are changing, and the implications of this change for happiness. Central to the Report’s analysis is an exploration of the influence of digital media use on happiness. The evolution of the role of information and communications technology (ICT) in Bhutan, and digital media in particular, is an interesting one. It is best viewed through the lens of Gross National Happiness (GNH)....

(continue reading)
6. GNH Corner

Bhutan is perhaps the only country in the world whose constitution (article 9.2) commits the state to promoting the conditions that enable happiness among its people.

7. Recommended Viewing

BCF’s executive director, Kent Schroeder, was invited to attend the inaugural conference of the International Society for Bhutan Studies (ISBS) at Oxford University in January. The keynote address was delivered by His Excellency Dasho Tshering Tobgay, former prime minister of Bhutan. His full address, focused on the first 10 years of Bhutanese democracy, can be viewed below.