

Lhomon Education

Curriculum Framework & Map

The Lhomon Society, Bhutan
Contact: Noa Jones, +975 1734 8878
noa@khyentsefoundation.org

Education for Bhutan and Beyond

Lhomon Education (LME) is a grassroots initiative fostering the development of innovative curricula designed specifically for Bhutanese students. The basis of the LME initiative is an alternative model of teacher training and curriculum development that integrates principles of Gross National Happiness (GNH) in the truest sense of the term. Based on the overarching mission of Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche's Lhomon Society, and on the values and principles laid out in this document, Lhomon Education is helping teachers create innovative GNH-based curricula for use in a variety of education environments. LME curriculum development workshops and teacher training seminars are open to a wide range of education institutions, including government schools, monasteries, nunneries, women's organizations, rural education centers, and other formal and non-formal education institutions and initiatives in Bhutan.

Pilot projects include:

- **Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurs**, an organization that empowers Bhutanese women through the promotion of knowledge and business skills, is revamping their domestic helpers program curriculum using the LME Framework for implementation in 2012.
- **The Bhutan Nuns Foundation** is committed to using the LME framework and trainings to develop a secular education program for nuns in East Bhutan. Many girls and women in Bhutan enter nunneries to gain an education and escape poverty and abuse. These women dedicate their lives to serving society. They are very involved in local communities, often helping needy families and serving as role models for other girls and women.
- **Chokyi Gyatso Institute** (CGI), a monastery in Dewathang, Samdrup Jongkhar, East Bhutan is scheduling implementation of a secular curriculum for monks based on the LME framework in January, 2013 to help the monks become more integrated members of society, active in supporting the health and wellbeing of surrounding communities.
- **The Non-Formal Education Programme**, a basic functional literacy programme supported by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF, will develop units to extend their existing curricula into areas of math, science, technology, social sciences and mindfulness.
- **The Royal Education Council**, an education think tank of Bhutan, will work with LME to develop a sample of integrated curriculum as part of the innovative research and experimentation they are conducting in a select group government run public schools.
- **The Tarayana Foundation** was established in 2003 by Her Majesty the Queen Mother, Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, to help bridge local needs of disadvantaged remote communities with larger national initiatives. The Foundation will send one Field Officer and one Programme Officer to LME's Curriculum Design Workshop to develop units for their work in rural communities.

Additional pilot projects are currently being explored. The intention is to offer all of these targeted units free online, to share the process by which they have been created, and perhaps to influence the future of education in the country.



Even the best curriculum needs skilled teachers who have the qualities of a *kalayana mitra*, a friend who can guide a student along the path, therefore LME's primary focus is on teacher training. A special seminar on developing the inner qualities of the teacher will take place in December, 2012. The teacher must believe in and embody the qualities we hope to instill in our students in order to pass them on. Bhutan is built on a legacy of master to disciple transmission of wisdom and we wish to follow that example.

"Education is the key."

– Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche

About Lhomon Society



LHOMON SOCIETY

The Lhomon Society was established in 2011 by Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, one of Bhutan's most beloved and vocal Buddhist masters. It is Bhutan's first major civil society development project with a mission to foster genuine GNH-based development in harmony with government goals. Lhomon Society's purpose is to raise living standards in Bhutan in an ecologically friendly way, and to establish food security and self-sufficiency, while fully protecting and enhancing the natural environment, strengthening communities, promoting Bhutan's unique culture, stemming the rural-urban migration tide, and fostering a cooperative, productive, entrepreneurial, and self-reliant spirit. The Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative (SJI) was Lhomon Society's first project and remains a vital part of the organization. Lhomon Education began as part of SJI and has since grown into its own separate entity so that it can address the education needs of the entire country.

Lho, in Bhutanese, means south or southern, and Mon refers to the people of the southern regions of Bhutan and the surrounding subtropical regions of Assam and Burma. Rinpoche chose the name to indicate that people are unified not only by government country borders but by the natural environments in which they live.

Table of Contents

Pages 1-7	Framework Guidelines
Page 1	Forward & Historical Context
Page 3	Vision: What We Want for Our Students
Page 4	Principles: Foundations for Curriculum Decision Making
Page 4	Key Competencies & Practical Outcomes
Page 5	Values
Page 6	Learning Areas
Page 6	Official Languages
Page 7	Best Practices
Page 8-12	Curriculum Map
	Levels 1 and 2 curricular outcomes**
Page 13-22	Appendices I-VI
Page 13	I) Proposed Thematic Unit Subjects
Page 15	II) Excerpts from Speeches by Hon. Prime Minister
Page 16	III) Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche's SJI Launch Address
Page 18-21	IV) Partners
.....	V) Budget and Timeline**
.....	VI) GNH Projection Tool*
Page 23	Bibliography & Acknowledgments

"GNH has become Bhutan's philosophical banner and a gift to the world grappling with materialistic 'growth economics'. Based on core Buddhist and human values, this measurable index is a counterpoint to the economist's GNP. It is also a revolutionary philosophy that places real value on things such as cultural heritage, health, education, good governance, ecological diversity and individual well-being. Importantly, it sees economic growth not as an end but rather as a means of achieving more important ends." – Lonely Planet

** Available upon request.

* Web version only.

Eyes on Bhutan: The Concept of Gross National Happiness

When a society accepts materialist measures as the sole indicators of its progress, it encourages imbalanced governance that actually threatens the well-being of the people. Working against the tide will take enormous effort, critical thinking, collaboration, innovation, and a bit of bravery. But because Bhutan is a country like no other—a benevolent, carbon-neutral kingdom with profound ancient wisdom traditions—it is a fertile ground for such an effort. Countries around the world are looking to Bhutan, which for many years has marked success by gross national happiness (GNH) rather than gross domestic product (GDP), as a model of how things could be.

Using Bhutan as an example, the UN General Assembly recently invited countries “to pursue the elaboration of additional measures that better capture the importance of the pursuit of happiness and well-being in development with a view to guiding their public policies.” The resolution said “the pursuit of happiness is a fundamental human goal” and embodies the spirit of the globally agreed targets known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

But has Bhutan established a sustainable system of educating the next generation to uphold these ideals? Time will tell.

In order to turn these high-minded ideas into practical outcomes, an international community of educators came to Thimphu, Bhutan in 2009 for the Educating for GNH Conference. The group addressed the need for an education system that is uniquely Bhutanese and that reflects GNH principles. Building upon the momentum of that conference, the Lhomon Society began investing in the creation of this curriculum framework.

As the world looks to Bhutan, we hope that Bhutan will look to Lhomon Education and from this model, develop progressive and sustainable education alternatives and further the implementation of authentic GNH-based education.

Historical Context

History of the Bhutanese Education System

Source: *U.S. Library of Congress*

Western-style education was introduced to Bhutan during the reign of Ugyen Wangchuck (1907-26). Until the 1950s, the only formal education available to Bhutanese students, except for private schools in Ha and Bumthang, was through Buddhist monasteries. In the 1950s, several private secular schools were established without government support, and several others were established in major district towns with government backing. By the late 1950s, there were twenty-nine government and thirty private primary schools, but only about 2,500 children were enrolled.

Secondary education was available only in India. Eventually, the private schools were taken under government supervision to raise the quality of education provided. Although some primary schools in remote areas had to be closed because of low attendance, the most significant modern developments in education came during the period of the First Development Plan (1961-66), when some 108 schools were operating and 15,000 students were enrolled.

The First Development Plan provided for a central education authority—in the form of a director of education appointed in 1961—and an organized, modern school system with free and universal primary education. Since that time, following one year of preschool begun at age four, children attended school in the primary grades—one through five. Education continued with the equivalent of grades six through eight at the junior high level and grades nine through eleven at the high school level. The Department of Education administered the All-Bhutan Examinations nationwide to determine promotion from one level of schooling to the next.

Examinations at the tenth-grade level were conducted by the Indian School Certificate Council. The Department of Education also was responsible for producing textbooks; preparing course syllabi

and in-service training for teachers; arranging training and study abroad; organizing interschool tournaments; procuring foreign assistance for education programs; and recruiting, testing, and promoting teachers, among other duties.

The core curriculum set by the National Board of Secondary Education included English, mathematics, and Dzongkha. Although English was used as the language of instruction throughout the junior high and high school system, Dzongkha and, in southern Bhutan until 1989, Nepali, were compulsory subjects. Students also studied English literature, social studies, history, geography, general science, biology, chemistry, physics, and religion. Curriculum development often has come from external forces, as was the case with historical studies. Most Bhutanese history is based on oral traditions rather than on written histories or administrative records. A project sponsored by the UNESCO and the University of London developed a ten-module curriculum, which included 4 courses on Bhutanese history and culture and 6 courses on Indian and world history and political ideas. Subjects with an immediate practical application, such as elementary agriculture, animal husbandry, and forestry, also were taught.

Bhutan's coeducational school system in 1988 encompassed a reported 42,446 students and 1,513 teachers in 150 primary schools, 11,835 students and 447 teachers in 21 junior high schools, and 4,515 students and 248 teachers in 9 high schools. Males accounted for 63 percent of all primary and secondary students. Most teachers at these levels—70 percent—also were males. There also were 1,761 students and 150 teachers in technical, vocational, and special schools in 1988.

Despite increasing student enrollments, which went from 36,705 students in 1981 to 58,796 students in 1988, education was not compulsory. In 1988 only about 25 percent of primary-school-age children attended school, an extremely low percentage by all standards. Although the government set enrollment quotas for high schools, in no instance did they come close to being met in the 1980s. Only about 8% of junior high-school-age and less than 3% of high-school-age children were enrolled in 1988. Bhutan's literacy rate in the early 1990s, estimated at 30% for males and 10 percent for females by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ranked lowest among all least developed countries. Other sources ranked the literacy rate as low as 12 to 18%.

Some primary schools and all junior high and high schools were boarding schools. Tuition, books, stationery, athletic equipment, and food were free for all boarding schools in the 1980s, and some high schools also provided clothing. With the assistance of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's World Food Programme, free midday meals were provided in some primary schools. Higher education was provided by Royal Bhutan Polytechnic in Dewathang, and by Kharbandi Technical School in Kharbandi, Chhukha District. Founded in 1973, Royal Bhutan Polytechnic offered courses in civil, mechanical, and electrical engineering; surveying; and drafting. Kharbandi Technical School was established in the 1970s with UNDP and International Labour Organisation assistance. Bhutan's only junior college—Sherubtse College in Kanglung, Tashigang District—was established in 1983 as a three-year degree-granting college affiliated with the University of Delhi. In the year it was established with UNDP assistance, the college enrolled 278 students, and seventeen faculty members taught courses in arts, sciences, and commerce leading to a bachelor's degree. Starting in 1990, junior college classes also were taught at the Yanchenphug High School in Thimphu and were to be extended to other high schools thereafter.

In 1990 the Asian Development Bank granted a US\$7.13 million loan for staff training and development, specialist services, equipment and furniture, salaries and other recurrent costs, and facility rehabilitation and construction at Royal Bhutan Polytechnic. The Dept. of Education and its Technical and Vocational Education Division were given a US\$750,000 Asian Development Bank grant for improving the technical, vocational, and training sectors. The New Approach to Primary Education, started in 1985, was extended to all primary and junior high schools in 1990 and stressed self-reliance and awareness of Bhutan's unique national culture and environment.

Most Bhutanese students being educated abroad received technical training in India, Singapore, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Britain, Germany, and the US. English-speaking countries attracted the majority of Bhutanese students. The vast majority returned to their homeland.

We would like to see more connected, actively-involved, life-long learners grounded in Bhutan's ancient wisdom traditions, principles, values, and practices. To that end, we have developed the framework for a comprehensive curriculum that can be adapted and delivered in five-week units individually or sequentially. The units within this framework help students develop the values, knowledge, competencies, and practical life skills that will enable them to live full and satisfying lives and to become contributing members of society. Khyentse Rinpoche said that true freedom only comes when one is no longer enslaved on an inner level by the emotion and desire and on an external level by ignorance. LME would like to help guide students to this level of freedom.

As connected individuals they will:

- Value and seek out a deep understanding of interdependence
- Relate well with others
- Effectively use communication
- Be connected to their inner world through mindfulness training

As actively involved citizens they will:

- Understand and embrace GNH principles
- Understand their responsibilities, roles and opportunities in society
- Feel empowered to contribute to the well-being of Bhutan—socially, culturally, economically, and environmentally
- Participate as informed decision makers

As life long learners, they will:

- Know how to learn and how to think creatively
- Have the ability to find and use information with critical discrimination
- Possess knowledge, skill, wisdom, good character, and emotional maturity
- Actively seek, use and create knowledge
- Take responsibility for their education and development
- Enjoy learning for the sake of learning

What Does an LME Graduate Look Like?

Ecological Literacy: Students will have an understanding of ecosystems and the capacity of the environment to sustain human activity within natural resource limits without compromising ecological integrity.

Interconnectedness: Students will see themselves as interdependent with each other, all living things, and natural systems. They will have a deep understanding of the law of cause, condition and effect and will put their knowledge and understanding to use in service of their lives, their communities and the world.

Multiple Perspectives: Students will truly value and learn from the experiences of others around them—across generations, cultures, and other divides.

Place: Students will understand the profound and complex way that the geography and ecology of a place interact with the society and culture of the people who live there.

Competency: Students will have life skills to be able to function effectively in society.

Sustainable Economics: Students will understand the true costs of human behaviour and economic activity, and how to measure well-being and progress genuinely, accurately, and holistically.

Responsible Citizenship: Students will understand their rights and responsibilities and the impact of their actions as citizens, and assume participatory roles in society. As active members of society they will work with others to provide effective solutions and ongoing service to their communities.

Creativity and Visioning: Students will creatively apply knowledge and skills to foster sustainable, “truly Bhutanese” solutions to current and future challenges. They will have the confidence, insight, and ability to see through, resist, and seek alternatives to consumer-driven cultural tsunamis.

Cultural Preservation: Students will have a deep appreciation for their rich cultural heritage and wisdom tradition and discern what cultural practices are worthy of preservation and what must change in order for future generations to thrive.

The foundations for the LME curriculum framework differ from the current Bhutanese education model in that they aim to produce a curriculum not tied to standardized tests or certificates. This curriculum aims to engage the heart and mind and to develop long lasting skills. The LME principles, which underpin the development of all our curriculum development, serve to lessen the division between in-school learning and life-long learning. The aim is to educate the whole person in a way that engages and challenges students, is forward-looking and inclusive, project-based, reflects GNH values, and affirms their unique Bhutanese identity. The curriculum will provide a modern education that is consistent with traditional values. Mindfulness training is incorporated across subject areas as it is a key component of living a balanced and peaceful life.

An LME Curriculum:

- Has meaning for students, connects with their lives, and engages the support of their families, dzongkhags (districts), and local communities.
- Makes links within and across learning areas, and connects with their abilities, interests and culture.
- Values local wisdom.
- Encourages students to reflect on their own learning processes and learn how to learn.
- Uses the local environment (both physical and cultural) as the context for imparting knowledge.
- Offers students a broad education with practical application.
- Teaches essential life skills and opens up pathways to future learning.
- Encourages students to explore significant future-focused issues such as: sustainability, citizenship, equity, enterprise, and globalization/localization.
- Recognizes and honours the unique intelligence and learning style of each student.
- Requires continual feedback from teachers, peers, etc.
- Provides assessment tools that are closely linked with the students' own learning.
- Promotes cooperation rather than competition.
- Supports and empowers all students to learn and achieve personal goals.
- Promotes dignity of labour.

Key Competencies & Practical Outcomes

Capabilities for Living and Lifelong Learning

Key competencies help people live meaningfully and contribute to a well-functioning society:

- 1. Thinking** - cultivating creative, critical, and logical thinking; meta cognition; self-awareness and reflection, understanding the concept of self
- 2. Participating and Contributing** – active listening, taking part in discourse, developing curiosity and confidence that translates into active involvement in and service to their communities
- 3. Managing Self** - making sound decisions, setting goals, and planning; distinguishing wants from needs, exploring the notion of the self as the source of suffering, mindfulness training in action
- 4. Relating to Others** - developing the knowledge, communication skills, attitudes, and values necessary for working and interacting with others, compassion in action
- 5. Using Language, Symbols and Texts** - discovering meaning, comprehension

Practical Outcomes

Our students will develop the skills to live successfully and responsibly in the world, with a natural inclination to conserve nature and benefit others. They will learn to manage a household budget, apply first aid, sow a vegetable garden, make sustainable choices at the market, and prevent alcohol abuse and forest fires. Their appreciation for their communities and nation as a whole, and expanded understanding of local and global issues, will help stem rural-urban migration.

The Government of Bhutan's Four Pillars of Gross National Happiness

1. Environmental Conservation
2. Cultural Promotion
3. Sustainable and Equitable Development
4. Good Governance



Issue:

“Infusing GNH into the education system is not adding a new subject but enriching learning, and improving the process of education. It has to do with creating a context and approach that infuse a GNH consciousness into everything that is learned and taught. This will make the curriculum and learning more enjoyable, more pleasurable, and more relevant. Often there is no clarity on why we teach things, and so, learning is inevitably boring. Infusing GNH understanding creates a purpose and goal for teaching and learning for both teachers and students that makes study less burdensome and more enjoyable.”

—Hon. Prime Minister, Lyonchhen Jigmi Y. Thinley

Our Solution: Integrated Curricula, Minimal Testing, Assessment for Mastery

Issue:

“Above all, we look upon our schools and institutions becoming morally and ethically green – that is developing an orientation of mind and heart that is positive in itself and that inspires positive thought and creative action in others. Our children growing and developing in such an environment will certainly build a society that is happy and at peace with itself. The stakes are high, but there is no other way to do our job. And [teachers] hold the key to the success of our mission.”

—Lyonpo Thakur S. Powdyel, Education Minister of Bhutan

Our Solution: Teacher Training that develops innate qualities that we seek in our students

Issue:

“What is necessary in value education is a process of expansion of our boundaries of consideration and caring consciousness of others beyond ourselves...”

—Dasho Karma Ura, Center for Bhutan Studies, *A Proposal for GNH Value Education in Schools*

Our Solution: Mindfulness training for teachers and students

“Skilled instructors teach their students to make the finer distinctions between ‘education’ and ‘literacy’; between ‘knowing’ and ‘assuming’; between ‘knowledge’ or ‘understanding’ and ‘skill’; between ‘meaning’ and ‘word’. This process is primarily dependent on the ability, attitude, sensitivity and enthusiasm of the teacher. There can be no standardisation of this process. For creative teachers this can be a boon; the attempt is to take the student from the known to the unknown. While doing this we acknowledge what the student already knows and we bring the school closer to the student’s reality.”

—Pawan Kumar Gupta, Society for Integrated Development of Himalayas

How Does an LME Graduate Function in Specific Discipline Fields?

Learning Areas

Math

Students are comfortable applying math processes to the world around them. They can create and maintain personal and organizational budgets with accuracy, calculate with precision, and read the statistics in news articles with discernment. They have a general understanding of how the world of finance and economics works. With a firm grounding in math reasoning, they know how and when to locate formulae as needed.

Science

Students appreciate the science at play in their ordinary, everyday lives. Looking at the sky, they can say *I know what that cloud is made of and how it got there*. They can assess basic wiring and know if it's safe to plug in a heater. They understand the principles behind every day phenomena such as frozen water pipes and slippery roads, and can therefore make smart and safe choices when needed. They explore and appreciate the interplay between ancient wisdom and modern science and make informed decisions based on this study. They strive to lead balanced lives in harmony with the natural world.

Technology

Students are computer literate and comfortable with the latest technology and can effectively interact, communicate, collaborate, problem solve, and access information. They are discerning consumers able to evaluate the authenticity and validity of web-based information and are not manipulated by advertising and media messages. They understand how and why things work with a special focus on appropriate technology. They value technology but also value their time away from technology, realizing that it does not represent ultimate wisdom.

Social Studies

Students explore how societies and the world function and how they themselves can participate and take action as critical, informed, and responsible citizens.

Health & Physical Education

Students will make informed choices that positively affect the health, safety, and well-being of self and others. They understand how the body functions and how it heals, and how to optimize wellness. They have a collection of useful interpersonal skills and a developed awareness of the mind-body connection.

Official Languages

Our teacher trainings will be lead primarily in English as will the pilot project at CGI. However, a creative and experienced teacher can easily adapt the lessons to native languages and participating teachers can develop their units in whatever language is most suitable for their students.

Integrated Curricula: The Holistic Approach

Joining “head, heart, hands.” When introducing new material teachers guide students to relate it to their lives on many levels, inspiring them to contemplate how the material pertains to their:

- inner world
- physical health
- family
- class and school
- immediate environment and the natural world
- immediate community
- the global community

Understanding the Modes of Teaching

There are three traditional modes of teaching, all of which are valid and effective, but teachers must assess their use of all three to insure class time has a balance of the three:

- Transitional – *Hearing*. Information passed from the teacher to the students through lecturing and direct instruction.
- Transactional – *Contemplating*. Students interact with the material, develop questions, explore relationships to other subjects, reflect on ways in which it is meaningful to their lives.
- Transformational – *Meditating*. Students are thoroughly engaged, they apply the learning to develop solutions and share those solutions. The result is genuine self-transformation.

Brain Based Learning:

Brain based learning is an approach to instruction based on how current research in neuroscience suggests that emotional and physical health play into the process of learning. Science has deepened our understanding of how the human brain functions in a variety of conditions. When we understand these conditions and factor them into the design and learning process, we increase the success of the learning experience. Brain based learning emphasizes the importance of creating a safe learning environment, stimulating the different parts of the brain (logic, creativity, memory, patterns, motor skills, visual processing, language etc), strengthening connections between concepts, developing neural pathways and reinforcing learning.

Other strategies:

Cooperative Learning, differentiated instruction, active learning, multiple intelligence, and more.

Who Will Teach?

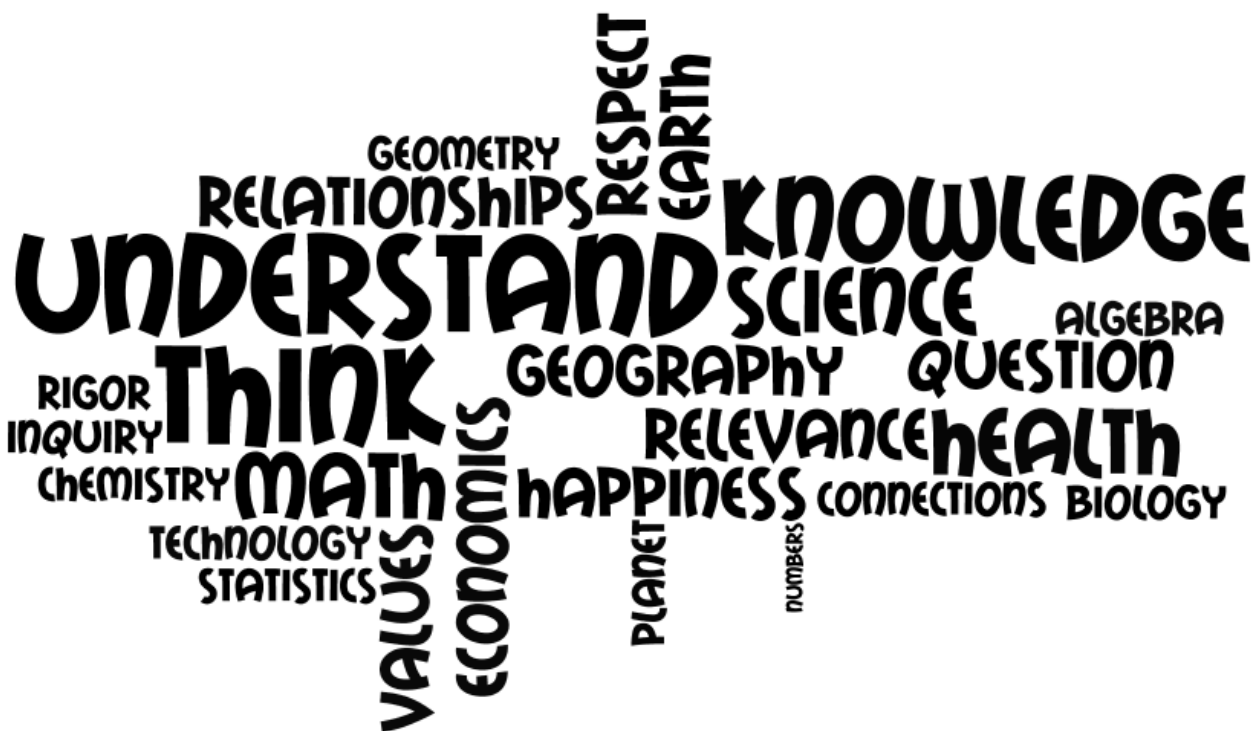
Mentoring and modeling is an essential aspect of the Lho Mon Education process and will be incorporated in the creation and implementation of the curriculum. The LME teacher training will be conducted in Bhutan in 2012-2013 with additional reflection and review sessions planned for teachers every six months through 2016. A key to the success of the project is that our teachers will learn how to develop the units themselves, they will be the designers of their own curricula. LME teaching and development training will be open to a group of nonformal and formal education teachers in Bhutan who wish to expand their range of teaching skills. We are looking for creative, enthusiastic teachers with a passion for their profession, who embody the principles and values we seek to embed in our educational system and who have something authentic to share with their students.



The Curriculum Map presents a sample overview of possible content and outcomes that could be covered in a four-level curriculum plan. It is like a menu from which unit designers can select relevant material to develop their own integrated, thematic units. Project-based learning asks students to go through an extended process of inquiry in response to a question, problem, or challenge. Projects allow students to learn key academic content and practice collaboration, communication, and critical thinking.

Each pilot will decide the parameters of their project —duration of classes, number of classes per week, number of weeks per unit, language of instruction, and teacher/student ratio. For example, the CGI curriculum is to be delivered in daily three-hour blocks over the course of six five-week units each year. Part of each day will focus on skills training in which students will develop specific literacy, numeracy, and technology skills required for successful completion of the lessons. The skills training will be followed by the integrated lesson. These lessons will move students towards answering the unit's essential questions and coming to long-lasting understandings.

For most pilots, skills training will require some standardised textbooks such as the XSeed Curriculum. LME is presently researching the feasibility of using XSeed, the Khan Academy system or other more effective means of teaching the math and science skills block.



Proposed Thematic Units: Level One

Basic Elements of Being

1) Who Am I? And How Am I?

This unit be the first of the series and will focus on team building and class building to help create a safe and inviting environment for the students while allowing the teacher to get to know each student individually. Students create a code of conduct for the class. They will evaluate their educational, health, and other objectives, and set personal goals. They will each be given materials to create a personal portfolio in which they keep their work and chart their progress over all 4 levels. Essential questions will revolve around personal health and wellbeing.

Dharma: Five aggregates and notions of the self.

2) My Place on This Planet

A unit on place, focusing on local issues, beginning with the immediate teaching environment (monastery, village, community school). Pages can be added to the portfolio about students' home villages, gewogs (village groups), and where the dzongkhag (district) fits into the country as a whole. Emphasis on community involvement.

Dharma: 6 realms; Introduction to the wheel of life.

3) What's on my Plate?

A focus on food. Commencement of vegetable garden project. Discussion of real costs, organic farming, with an emphasis on health and nutrition. Journey of waste. Biodiversity. Intro to managing household/business/organization budgets. Bumthang apple juice vs Coke.

Dharma: Karma. Basic understanding of cause, condition, and effect. If there is no milk, is there tea? Not wasting what's on your plate because animals have suffered and people have worked hard.

4) Water

A focus on the role of water in our lives including identifying local, national, international resources. Political conflict. Hydropower and kinetic energy. Conservation and pollution. Class project will address rainwater harvesting. Focus on microorganisms, importance of cleanliness and hygiene. Students will think about: *Where does my water come from and where does it go?* Perhaps take a walking tour to local springs. Traditional medicine component on water element. Continuation of vegetable garden.

Dharma: Water dakini. Also, why we offer water on the shrine.

5) Fire and All That is Hot

Continuation of discussion on energy. Fire prevention/community involvement. The real cost of firewood and other energy sources. Measuring temperature. Special focus on the sun and the solar system. Photosynthesis as it pertains to the vegetable garden. Solar drying techniques and solar power. Who discovered fire? Bhutanese lore. Why we don't burn plastic. Traditional medicine component on fire element.

Dharma: Pandaravasini.

6) Air and Space

A focus on properties of air. Discussion of air pollution. How do plants help? Discussion about cigarette smoking/community involvement. Students will ask *What else is out there?* Emphasis on world geography and astronomy. Weather as science. Seasons, planning garden planting. Climate change. Wind power. Traditional medicine component on lung.

Dharma: Air dakini.

Proposed Thematic Units: Level Two

What Moves Us, What Binds Us

1) Earth and Its Systems

Looking at planet earth: This place we live. Geosphere/biosphere. Earth systems. Interdependence. Interaction of solar and lunar cycles. Personal responsibility, our role in this system. Class project around zero waste: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Working with local government to affect change. Vegetable gardening and Composting. Population. Gravity.

Dharma: Relevant dakini, holy places, pure lands.

2) Trade and Globalization

Students will start by looking at what they are wearing: *Where did you get that shirt?* Discussion of economics, fair trade, real costs, economic interdependence, intro to GNH vs GDP. Environmental impacts of trade and economic activity (acid rain, weather, global warming)

Dharma: Karma and renunciation.

3) Change/Innovation

How things work. Developing creative thinking skills. Necessity is the mother of invention. History (the wheel, the car, the Internet). Solar engineering.

Dharma: Impermanence on a more subtle level.

4) Radio/Media Literacy

Developing writing and communication skills. Sharing information and stories. Setting up a web site for the monastery. Blogging. Interviewing local people local histories. How does a camera work? Television? And when do media messages attempt to control our emotions?

Dharma: Bodhicitta.

5) What Do I Believe and Why?

A unit on world religions and philosophy. Different astrological systems (Chinese, Zodiac, Tibetan) and medicinal studies (allopathic, Chinese, Traditional Bhutanese).

Dharma: Buddhist Logic/ come and see not come and join. Analyzing of the guru.

6) Gross National Happiness

What is GNH, what are its values, principles, and practices, and how can Bhutan be a model for the rest of the world? Personal responsibility. Projects that can make a difference. Community involvement, political systems, social justice, civic norms, real cost.

Dharma: 7 sublime noble wealths.

Levels Three & Four

The themes for classes in the third and fourth year will remain unspecified at present so that the teachers and students can decide among themselves what themes they are interested in pursuing. These are some general ideas:

The Essences

1) **Salt** - a world in a pinch of salt. History of salt, physics, politics, function, health

2) **Phosphorous** - The good the bad and the ugly

3) **Secrets & Invisible World** - The most important things cannot be observed- Things are not as they appear. What's not seen. Secret life of bees. Cryptography.

4) **Greed & Gratification** - How much is enough.

5) **Heroes** - www.youthink.worldbank.org

6) **The Journey** - Buddha, Gallileo

7) **Awareness** – Through still life drawing

8) **Balance** – physical and mental

9) **Media Literacy level 2**

10) **Country Focus** – students select a country to study from all angles

Educating for Gross National Happiness

Excerpts from speeches by Hon. Prime Minister, Lyonchhen Jigmi Y. Thinley

In this globalised and interconnected world, what happens in any country has meaning for the larger world — for better and, sadly, often for worse. We have learnt the hard way that carbon spewed into the atmosphere in Houston, London, and Sydney will cause flooding and devastation in Tuvalu and Bangladesh, and threaten the livelihood of Inuit and the very survival of polar bears in the Arctic Circle. But equally, and perhaps ever more so, we know that the world is yearning for, and ever more desperately needs, working models of sane and responsible behaviour and above all of a change in consciousness to which education is surely the key.

At the United Nations recently, I was deeply discouraged to see a world faced with unparalleled challenges being offered only partial, disconnected and piecemeal solutions to this or that particular crisis, whether in energy, food, poverty, resource degradation, water shortage, economic collapse, terrorism, or climate change. What was patently missing—both in the analysis and in the solutions offered—was any understanding of the common disease underlying the symptoms and of the deep malaise that threatens our collective wellbeing and survival. In fact, many of the solutions offered—like financial stimulus packages designed to spur more growth and spending—will not only return us to the dubious temporary comfort of living in debt and delusion, but are the very cause of our most serious present global problems. To address the greed, materialism, and consumerist fallacy that have turned us into mindless economic animals, and are destroying the planet, requires nothing less than a change of consciousness and hence of lifestyle. Education is the key...



...I am absolutely convinced that there is no more effective, comprehensive, and far-reaching way to put GNH fully into practice and to realize our shared vision and goals—not in a frustratingly piecemeal way but so that our collective national consciousness naturally translates into enlightened action—than to infuse our education system fully and properly with the humane and ecological principles and values of Gross National Happiness. If we want to be of any service to ourselves, let alone to the larger world, there is no better way than to begin here...



[The] framework—based on the most profound human and ecological values—will transcend politics entirely and withstand any political attempt to dismantle it. We have a word for such indestructibility in our language—*dorji*—which means diamond-like—and it stems from our ancient teachings on the true and indestructible nature of mind that is characterized by innate wisdom and expressed in natural compassion. Whatever change we make in our educational system, however modest in curriculum or other practical terms, must be characterized by that indestructible wisdom, compassion, and humanity...



We share the noblest possible aspiration—to see young people graduate from our educational system with a deeply felt care for nature and for each other, steeped in their culture, seeing reality clearly, living in harmony with the natural world and with their neighbours, and acting wisely for the benefit of all beings.

We've actually reached the point where we no longer need to obsess too much more about definitions and concepts when we talk about GNH. If we want to help ourselves and the world, we now have to act decisively and effectively so that we embody what we express, and so that our behaviour and actions, rather than just our words and good intentions, not only realize the vision of our enlightened monarchs but act as a genuine and worthy example for a world desperate for sanity."

Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche Address to the Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative Launch

Excerpt Translated from Tshangla-Lo



I have been thinking about an initiative like this for some time. In general in Bhutan, lots of changes are taking place. Some of these could be good changes, but it is difficult to comment because what we think is a positive change this year could be considered a negative next year.

Following the wishes of our monarchs, we now have democracy in place, and in line with these developments, it is important for the people to shoulder responsibilities and start fulfilling roles properly. Based on that, we have started the Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative and see what it can bring forth.

Although religion is deeply woven into our lives in Bhutan, I want to make it very clear that the Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative is not a religious entity. I also want to emphasize the apolitical nature of the Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative.

So what, then, is the Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative?

Bhutan has seen good progress which is due to the collective merit of the people of Bhutan, the blessings of the Three Jewels, and the far-sighted vision of our Kings who have guarded the wellbeing of Bhutanese people for generations. While Bhutan continues to embrace the offerings of the modern world and learns the ways of the modern world, it has done so without losing the essence of our unique culture, our unique thinking and mentality, even the way we sit and eat. All these have not diminished, and the credit for this goes to our monarchs.

Bhutan is a democracy now. So far things have gone well. So why then are we forming the Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative? The English word "initiative" is hard to translate but its meaning includes carrying or shouldering responsibility. It is about carrying our responsibility without the prodding of a cowherd. It is for us and it is for our children. The government has looked after us like a mother after a child. The government has looked after us even beyond the stage that it should, even after the child is now able to ingest solid foods. The government has taken care of us thus far. We are now like 15 and 16 year old teenagers. With democracy in place, Bhutan and her culture, education, environmental preservation and protection, our unique philosophy and psyche, our thinking the caretaker and the custodian of these should not be just the government and the work of a department alone.

Once a child grows up, it should not expect its parents to take care of it further. When the child reaches the age of 15 or 16 or 20 and still expects the parents to look after it, then that is not good. Likewise, the people of Bhutan should now work sincerely in tandem to fulfill the aims of the government and the vision of our King. In doing so, we have to think not only of the present but of the generations to come in the future.

We should not only engage in talk about Gross National Happiness, but also translate it into action, to “walk the talk.” All of us, each one of us, on our own, should start working in line with the philosophy of the government.

The government is doing its job and the hope is that it will continue to do so. But we have to do our bit and not just leave it to the government. After all, it is for us that these actions are being done. We have become so dependent on foreign aid, a mentality like that means that we can never mature and grow up. So being self reliant and realizing our potential, I think these issues will arise in discussions in the upcoming meetings, but I am mentioning this here just to highlight its importance.

In our villages, even though we have enough to feed our children, the trend has set in where our youth want to go to Thimphu and to the urban areas. These days you can no longer say things like “you cannot go” and “you should not go.” Why are our young ones wanting to go to the urban areas? Once they reach the urban areas, if they have no problems living a decent life, it is not a problem at all. But often they end up having no jobs, or if they get jobs, those jobs are not up to their expectations, and then they get exasperated and land up in a situation where they feel ashamed to go back to their homes and end up abusing drugs or drinking alcohol.

How can we stem this flow of our youth to the urban areas? We cannot use force and threat. Within Samdrup Jongkhar and Dewathang, what are the things that we can do to create the enabling environment and conditions that will keep our young men and women here? As I say these words, I am reminded of this way of thinking that many of us have a tendency amongst us to think: “We cannot do this. This is un-doable.” We should do away with such thinking and abandon such thoughts.

Even if something does not work this year, next year, or in five or six years, if we start our project now, we will have a long term plan, because we have to think long term. We have to think long term. If we start now, if we begin our activities now and start now, then even if we are not able to accomplish our aims during our lifetimes, it is not a problem. If we start this plan and establish it now, then it will bear fruit in our children's lifetime. If we don't do this now, it will be too late later.

In Bhutan, when we build a house, we face labour shortages. We cannot get labourers. There is a lack of skilled workers. Even if we get labourers, we have to contend with the shame factor because such vocations are looked down in our society with the common aspiration to land a white collar job. How can we change this attitude, this thinking?

Dewathang and Samdrup Jongkhar are fertile areas and receive abundant rainfall. Yet we get our food and vegetables from outside. How can we be self sufficient and feed ourselves? How to inculcate such thinking? **How do we make our people think in those terms and in terms of environmental conservation and ecological awareness and prevention?**

Education is the key.

With the Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative, the thinking is to go beyond the common and established view, the prevalent view that chanting mantras and counting malas constitutes practice and instead take it beyond those rituals and really integrate spiritual practice. So the Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative will look at how to integrate religious practice and go beyond the chanting and counting of malas. And with this kind of initiative, we will work with all of us united in such thoughts.

Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurs (BAOWE)

BAOWE was founded in 2010 as a means for fostering a just and equitable society in which women recognize their strengths and become successful, empowered entrepreneurs leading meaningful lives as responsible and responsive citizens of Bhutan. BAOWE is working to develop a social-consciousness-driven private sector and promote women entrepreneurs at the grassroots level thereby contributing to poverty reduction, self-reliance, and business from a GNH perspective to achieve the economic empowerment of women. BAOWE will provide a common platform through which the needs, concerns and aspirations of women entrepreneurs are collectively and effectively advocated, voiced and addressed by facilitating meaningful dialogues with relevant stakeholders, key partners and business community in general.

Under the partnership BAOWE and the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (MoLHR), a Domestic Helpers' Training Course was implemented to professionalize and create alternative employment opportunities for unemployed women and girls in particular. The project is intended to be an answer to the acute lack of support services at home for working women and young couples. It also takes into account the range of issues faced by domestic helpers. Once established, it is a service industry that will empower women and girls (and men) at both ends – as recipients and providers of domestic help -which will be of superior quality and professional in nature.

In March 2011, the training of the first batch began with the 51 enrolled trainees (20 Boys and 31 girls). The training covered all aspects of housekeeping including kitchen, food and beverage management, Healthcare and personality development. Handling first aid and home emergency situations, childcare, caring for the old, personal hygiene, HIV/AIDS and STDs will be taught by a Senior Nurse from JDWNRH. Driglam namzha/Bhutanese etiquettes, spirituality and awareness raising about social issues and other trends and developments among others are also incorporated into the curriculum in an effort to contribute to their character building as knowledgeable, confident and well rounded individuals/professionals.

The Bhutan Nuns Foundation

The Bhutan Nuns' Foundation (BNF) is a non-profit organization that was founded in 2006 under the patronage of Her Majesty the Queen Mother, Ashi Tshering Yangdon Wangchuck. The Foundation seeks to help make nunneries leading agents and self-reliant institutions for women. It is committed to women's education and empowerment as a way of enhancing their capacity to support society in its search for Gross National Happiness. The vision of BNF is to enhance Bhutanese society by empowering girls and women through education and economic self-sufficiency.

This commitment arises not only on grounds of the deplorable conditions of life in the nunneries but also in cognizance of the spiritual education and nourishment that a GNH society will search for as Bhutan experiences material growth. The future role of nunneries in reigning in and tempering the accelerating material changes with compassion and basic human values must be recognized. Otherwise, the Bhutanese people are as likely as any other people to be converted to consumerism and the worship of the "God and Goddess of Wealth".

The BNF provides a high leverage means of empowering and educating Bhutanese girls and women, improving the living conditions and economic vitality of rural villages, and preserving Bhutan's strong, sustainable culture as it faces rapid economic development. Dr. Tashi Zangmo is the Executive Director.

Chokyi Gyatso Institute, Dewathang, East Bhutan

In March, 2010, Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche offered his Chokyi Gyatso Institute (CGI) for Buddhist Studies in Dewathang, Samdrup Jongkhar, in south-eastern Bhutan, as a laboratory for GNH-based education for the country and beyond. Since GNH principles are so consistent with Buddhist values and traditions, Rinpoche felt that the Institute could now become the first monastery in the country to introduce a full secular curriculum of language, math, science, computer science, and social studies alongside and integrated with the traditional monastic curriculum.

CGI upholds the tradition and practices of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo's lineage. Philosophical study includes four years at the elementary level, continuing with higher studies. Just like all monastic colleges, the syllabus contains core texts along with elective texts. Regular retreats ranging from a few months to three years are also included in the curriculum for senior students.

Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche is a Bhutanese meditation master from a great line of masters and yogis, a teacher of Buddhist philosophy, a lineage holder of Tibet's great Dzongsar Khyentse Chokyi Lodro, and one of the most progressive lamas teaching today. Chokyi Gyatso Institute is one of four monasteries in India, Tibet and Bhutan for which Rinpoche is responsible. With his blessing, we have the freedom and support to experiment and implement a groundbreaking new curriculum. Our hope is that this experiment will bring great benefit to Bhutan and beyond.

The Non-Formal Education Programme

The Non-Formal Education Programme (NFE) is a basic functional literacy programme that was started in 1992 by the Women's Association of Bhutan. There were 623 NFE centres in Bhutan in 2005 providing instruction relevant life skills ranging from reading, writing, simple calculating to tailoring, furniture making, hairdressing etc to out of school youth and adults.

NFE Programme was conceived as an alternative educational channel to help people acquire literacy skills. Early school dropouts, young men and women are the main target groups of the programme and services are provided free of charge.

Because of the limited resources and experience, the programme was initiated on a very small scale in 1990. Wherever possible, formal schools are used as NFE centres during off hours. Apart from the benefits of the physical infrastructure such as classrooms, this also enables the programme to draw on other resources from the school such as its teachers and library facilities. The first structured curriculum for the NFE programme was drawn up in 1992. The curriculum tries to meet three broad objectives as defined below:

- a) To provide literacy training in Dzongkha (national language) to both men and women who have not received such training through the formal education system.
- b) To provide functional and basic life-skills related knowledge
- c) To provide post literacy and continuing education programme to help establish a literate society.

Beginning with almost nothing, the NFE programme in Bhutan has now a structured curriculum and reading and learning materials to support it. A total of 30 readers have been developed on a wide variety of subjects to help the learners. The programme at present is structured into 3 distinct levels beginning with very basic literacy skills in level 1 and continuing to much more complex skills. The duration of the course ranges between 6 to 12 months. By the end of the course, learners are not only able to read and write but do simple, every day arithmetic. They also acquire basic knowledge on health, hygiene, family planning, agriculture, forestry, environment, culture and tradition.

The Royal Education Council

The REC was established through a Royal Command in August, 2007 to initiate and implement education reforms across the entire spectrum covering school, technical and tertiary education.

The basis for education reform is founded on the following:

- His Majesty the King's vision for the country;
- Policies of the elected government to realize the Royal vision;
- The acknowledgement among the general population that the present system leaves much to be desired in terms of providing high quality education and the need to resuscitate the education system;
- The confidence that successful reform is achievable in Bhutan considering the small size and the political will at the all levels to support education reforms.

REC has formulated an ambitious reform agenda for school education reforms to provide a comprehensive set of linking policies that will ensure systemic reforms. The Council plans to establish an Institute for Technical Education and a consolidated single campus University to provide greater opportunities for vocational, technical and university education as well as for it to provide an incentive for students to excel in school.

REC's School and Education & Research Unit (SECRU) was created to improve education quality, relevance, and build capacity of education leaders, teachers, and other professionals aligned with GNH values and principles through research and studies.

The SECRU's mission is to develop a broadened vision of educational contents and methods and facilitate a holistic approach to school education research and development in light of the guiding principle of learning throughout life and GNH values. The SECRU will address the current needs for an autonomous school education research body that supports the development of quality school curriculum, teaching strategies and approaches, and school management and governance through research and studies.

The SECRU seeks to build relevant curriculum that will allow students who are not only capable to meet the challenges they will face in the future, but also to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and values that will enable them to assume leadership roles in their community and society. The Unit will also be involved in researching to improve the quality of school management and governance through the GNH SEED schools.

Specifically, the UNIT will:

- Promote creativity, innovation, and enterprise to bring innovation in curriculum development through action research by engaging best practitioners both from local and international.
- Build Institutional capacity by creating a pool of high quality professionals (to provide quality professional and academic support services to the schools)
- Empower teachers as curriculum developers to use research and to make informed decisions in leading and facilitating curriculum development and renewal.
- Build institutional image and create a congenial working culture in the organisation.

The Tarayana Foundation

Tarayana Foundation is a non-profit organization working to uplift and enhance the lives of vulnerable individuals and communities in Bhutan. Tarayana complements and supplements the efforts of the Royal Government in poverty reduction by espousing the national goal, Bhutan 2020: A Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Happiness.

Tarayana was established in 2003 by Her Majesty the Queen Mother, Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, to help bridge local needs of disadvantaged remote communities with larger national initiatives. Despite the pro-poor development strategy of the government, small communities in the remote corners still lag behind on many socio-economic development indices. The Foundation was thus established to help these communities achieve self sufficiency through small and targeted interventions through the process of true local empowerment.

"The work you have set out to do under the overall guidance of Rinpoche is very unique and profound. I am inspired. This is going to be a very useful innovation and development, not just for monasteries and nonformal education but generally on how we educate our people."

— Dasho Dr. Pema Thinley, Vice Chancellor of Royal University of Bhutan

"I think the value of this innovative curriculum is its unique approach of educating the nation – by drawing the best needs and experiences from the monastic education, non-formal, formal etc."

— Lhundup Dukpa, Royal Education Council

"I am positive that any programme initiated under the guidance of Rinpoche will not be in vain....we are delighted that the Lhomon Education is established and would like to take this opportunity to thank both Rinpoche and all the volunteers who are serving the under-served. I am sure the Field Officer and Programme Officer who will attend your workshop will be in a position to both learn as well as share their experiences in working with rural communities, and in zeroing in on what worked for us and what did not. We are be happy to collaborate with Lhomon Education."

— Chime Paden Wangdi, Secretary General, Tarayana Foundation

"It is a great and noble initiative that you're doing. And I just pray wholeheartedly that you meet with sponsors."

—Chungla Dorji, Assistant District Education Officer, Samdrup Jongkhar

"Education is the key. Understanding is when someone tells you about Bodhgaya and you get a picture in your mind of a temple and a tree. Experience going there and seeing it from a far. And realization is when you actually arrive there."

—Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche

- Center for Ecoliteracy, ed. *Big Ideas: Linking Food, Culture, Health, and the Environment*. Berkeley, CA, USA: Learning in the Real World, 2008. Print.
- "Curriculum and Instruction." *CSSU Framework*. Chittenden South Supervisory Union. Web. 20 Feb. 2011. <<http://www2.cssu.org/20081092884419610/site/default.asp>>.
- Educating for GNH Workshop*. Paro, Bhutan, 2010. Print.
- "Guidelines and Instruction." *Ministry of Education*. Ministry of Education Bhutan. Web. 14 Feb. 2011. <<http://www.education.gov.bt/index.htm>>.
- Khyentse, Dzongsar Jamyang. "Many Questions, Few Answers." *Kuensel* [Thimphu, Bhutan] 9 May 2010. Print.
- Mahajan, Jyoti, Pooja Sukhpal, Monkia Udit Patel, Amarjit Kaur, and Punam Sharma. *XSEED Student Workbooks: Idiscover*. Gurgaon, India: IDiscoveri Education, 2009. Print.
- Meuller, Jon. "What Is Authentic Assessment?" *Authentic Assessment Toolbox*. North Central College, 2011. Web. 27 Jan. 2011. jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/whatisit.htm#traditional.
- The New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media Limited, 2007. Print.
- Royal Education Council. *Bhutan's Annual Status of Student Learning*. Thimphu, Bhutan: Educational Initiatives Pvt., 2009. Print.
- Sleeter, Christine. *Un-Standardizing Curriculum: Multicultural Teaching in the Standards-based Classroom*. Teachers College, 2005. Print.
- Stone, Michael K. *Smart By Nature: Schooling for Sustainability*. Healdsburg, CA, USA: Watershed Media, 2009. Print.
- "Syllabus." *Department of Curriculum and Research Development*. Department of Curriculum and Research Development, 2011. Web. 7 Feb. 2011. <<http://www.curriculum.bt/>>.
- Tillman, Tiffany. *Healthy Neighborhoods Healthy Kids Guide*. Shelburne, VT, USA: Shelburne Farms, 2007. Web.
- Ura, Dasho Karma. *A Proposal for GNH Value Education in Schools*. Thimphu, Bhutan: Gross National Happiness Commission, 2009. Print.