

WEDNESDAY PM WORKSHOP #8: EDUCATION AND  
GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS

“A Unique Destination Requires A Unique Path:  
An innovative education policy for Gross National Happiness.”

Dasho Zargley Dukpa  
Tashi Zanguro  
Thakur Singh Powdyol

4 pillars of GNH

True happiness is built up on spiritually, good governance, etc. not just material wealth

Education for Empowerment

- Empower & liberate the human mind and spirit
- -needs to be focused beyond self-interest
- -needs to be focused on local practice

Gandhi- “It is not literacy or learning which makes a man, but education for real life.”

- Each GNH pillar requires choices; each choice has implications for people.
- Education is the main path through which these goals & policies can be successful.
- Current policy in Bhutan is not really different from other places in the world.  
How are we using education policy to pursue the goals of GNH?
- How are we reflecting local culture & values in our education system?

Policy Development -needs to be participatory  
-reflect goals of GNH  
-re-examine traditions at all levels of society  
-re-examine traditions at all levels of society  
-communicate policies to general public (building trust)

Inclusive Policies -quality adult education  
-encourage education for women & girls  
-improve access to education for rural people

Sample Policies -\*value every vocation\*  
Everybody should leave enough for basic needs  
-faster leadership development at all levels  
-learn and appreciate one’s own cultural heritage as well as others  
-practice stewardship of the environment (ex. National tree-planting day in schools, literately pass positive environmental messages to children)

Principles of Implementation -policy makers are role models & followers

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- we can learn from Gandhi
- it's not what you can make someone do but how you do with them
- officials should visit rural schools to see what is going on & address gaps
- feedback loops to assess problems
- treat criticism as constructive feedback

Evaluation -frequent visits from officials to district schools  
-gatherings of teachers & principals  
-regular meetings at teacher's colleges  
-solicit regular evaluation & feedback  
-on-going reflection and action  
-openness to dialogue to change policy when and where needed

Result -literacy  
-appreciation of culture  
-skills in teaching future students culture tradition  
-increased interest in traditions around the world  
-strong leadership at all levels of society

Innovative education policy as the key to national and international happiness.

Bring GNH into everyday life – teaching each other & our children  
Thakur Singh Powdyel  
Royal University of Bhutan

\*University is an extremely powerful tool for the furtherance of GNH.

The goal in Bhutan is to establish a country in which GNH is more important than GNp.

Ending legacy of Universities....

From Newman –teaching universal knowledge  
-essential unity of knowledge  
-universal character  
-theology – philosophy -scientific spirit

Higher Education Objectives –preservation of knowledge  
-transmission of knowledge  
-advancement of knowledge

Training, Research, Public Service

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“Bhutan 2020” - establishing a national university

“Royal Charter” – charter from the Royal University

The university is the expression of the needs of society  
devoted to the fashioning of intellect  
pursuit & propagation of knowledge

advancement of national needs

Pursuit of knowledge for its own sake  
Social transformation  
Modernization  
Human resources  
Knowledge as power

University and Society as allies

Research – Social relevance & impact  
-capacity-building  
-national relevance

What are the needs of the country?  
Human capital needs  
Civil society

--The curriculum is the soul of the university  
--the faculty is the power of the university  
--institutional integrity is the life-force of the university

A GNH University...

A GNH University is a university with a difference engaging in cultivating the public mind.  
 (“purifying national taste”???)

What is specific about a GNH University?

Dasho Zangley Dokpa --Monastery education plays an important role in education in Bhutan.

There are many more students in monastery schools than in other schools in Bhutan.

## Discussion

### **Importance of population having access to Buddhist education.**

Question: Is this only the monasteries?

Answer: Monasteries have been used for higher learning not just spiritual.  
Bhutan also has an institute of language & cultural studies  
Cultural knowledge is compulsory in all education.

Question: Knowledge is empowerment of citizens. How can a modern university be used in a monarchy or theocracy? University is about making each of us as much ourselves as possible.

Answer: Currently this is a government university but there is a green light to de-link from gov't. Universities should engage with communities with society – not be ivory towers.

-conversion of academic & skill-based learning.

We tend to think of monarchs in the conventional sense.

But there are enlightened monarchs.

Bhutan has what it has because of the king. A monarch, who has GNH as the goal, must be an enlightened monarch.

Question: Why Bhutan has been successful:

1. commitment to long-term reform
2. recognizing central role of teachers-raising the bar, raising status
3. shifts in education are generational

These have been huge improvements to education in Bhutan – making good choices and sticking to those choices in the long-term.

Children who can enjoy school & learn there – this is an indication of happiness.

Question: Tension between liberating mind and spirit, and guiding people in the way gov't thinks is best.

How can we leave more flexibility of mind?

What are the steps in liberating people?

Answer: We have to lead by example.

This is a challenging position we are in.

We do need to incorporate our Buddhist values.

We need to teach our children to ask questions

Teachers should be learners.

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-this liberates them

What is the true meaning of freedom?