Summary of the Teaching of Philosophy in Bhutan

Philosophy in the National goals of Education
The main goals are holistic development of the child including:

- Development of innate abilities
- Development of moral values
- Development of social values
- Development of social cohesion
- Preparation for the world of work including vocational work

Primary education
Primary education follows a six-year programme.

Weekly time allocation per grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
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<tr>
<td>Language (Dzongkha)</td>
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Population: 658.000

Gross Enrolment Ratio

- Primary: 75% (1999)

Percentage of GDP invested in education: 5.7%

Percentage of government expenditure invested in education: 17.2%

Compulsory Education: N/A

The GER is used in the education sector and by the UN. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics the definition of the GER is the “total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the eligible official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school year.” Its purpose is “to show the general level of participation in a given level of education. It indicates the capacity of the education system to enrol students of a particular age group. It can also be a complementary indicator to net enrolment rate (NER) by indicating the extent of over-aged and under-aged enrolment.” It is calculated by dividing “the number of pupils (or students) enrolled in a given level of education regardless of age by the population of the age group which officially corresponds to the given level of education, and multiply the result by 100.”

This draft country briefing was prepared for comment by RUSHAP, UNESCO Bangkok. Comments are welcome to rushap.bgk@unesco.org
The programme officer of the Ministry of Finance Tashi Wangyal distinguishes between the traditional Bhutanese education and the modern secular courses, which originally come from India and the West. This has led to the introduction of Western ideas into Bhutanese society, which are of a scientific and empirical nature instead of faith and superstition. As a result, traditional ideas are replaced by rationality. She furthermore states that “education today is viewed more as a means to an end i.e., a better job and a better salary. In the context of the modern economy, the people increasingly place importance on modern scientific education, and knowledge of the English language. This is mainly due to the need for such education to enter into the job market. This is in contrast to the traditional notion of education where education was more or less seen as an end in itself in the individual’s quest to remove ignorance and attain greater knowledge for its own sake Monastic education today follows the traditional methods of teaching and imparts lessons in Buddhist philosophy, logic, astrology, traditional medicine and literature.”

Assessment
The All Bhutan Primary Certificate examination is administered at the end of grade 6.

Case studies of philosophy teaching in primary schools: Identified courses called “philosophy” in schools
Not available at this moment.

Case studies of philosophy teaching in primary schools: Philosophy related teaching in schools
Not available at this moment.

Secondary education
Secondary education consists of six years of which the final two years are pre-university classes only provided in selected high schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly time allocation per grade</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
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8 Ibid. p. 118
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Economics</th>
<th>Health and population education (co-curricular, not standalone programme)</th>
<th>Moral and value education</th>
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**Assessment**

For values education, discussed under philosophy related courses, teachers are advised to keep a record of student’s behaviour. Values-oriented learning does not lend itself for formal assessment is therefore best evaluated through a continuous process.⁹

**Case studies of philosophy teaching in secondary schools:** Identified courses called “philosophy” in schools

Not available at this moment.

**Case studies of philosophy teaching in secondary schools:** Philosophy related teaching in schools

As an example, the values education syllabus offers philosophy related information. It is taught for one period of 40 minutes a week.¹⁰

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¹⁰Ibid.
VALUES EDUCATION
Rationale

Teaching of values is regarded very important to develop children intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. The existing school curriculum has values embedded in it. Bhutanese youth have a huge responsibility of keeping and shaping Bhutan the way our beloved King and our forefathers have always desired. To do this successfully, it is imperative that our children have positive experiences in the way they think, act and grow up. The development of values should take place through the formal courses, the personal relationship in the school and through the total school organisation and life. Teaching of values is a complex phenomenon where it is difficult to assess and takes longer time for the outcome to be visible.

Aims

Teaching of values is expected to help to:
1. develop in students a desirable social behaviour.
2. develop patriotism.
3. grow up into responsible citizens.
4. promote self discipline.
5. make them understand the importance of the preservation of culture and tradition.
6. build self confidence and reliance.

Learning experiences

The students should be provided with opportunities to deal with various values systems so that they are engaged in experiences that will help them understand the concepts and realize their importance in the day-to-day lives. The experiences should further help the students internalize the values and make them an integral part of their actions.

Some of the experiences suggested below will be useful in teaching values:

• encouraging students to read namthars, life stories of great historical personalities and stories of real life experiences followed by discussions based on them
• maintaining a diary or journal on values-related thoughts, feelings and issues
• helping students write creative stories related to values
• conducting art competitions on value themes
• assigning specific responsibilities for students to carry out
• arranging moral talks by guest speakers and students and staff during the morning assembly
• carrying out project works related to values

It may be noted, however, that the development of values requires continuous reinforcement, whether inside the classroom or outside. Every day incidents of school life offer innumerable opportunities for students to learn values (e.g. punctuality, good manners, cleanliness, responsibility and respect). What teachers say and do, how they reward and punish, the way they smile and frown also teach values. Therefore, it is important for schools to be organised in a way conducive to the learning of values.

(continued on the next page)
Another programme that offers philosophy related information is the history and civic programme. Students will learn about the basic principles of civics like “the concepts of nation-state, government, citizenship, civic duties and responsibilities, civic right; the values of 'sense of belonging' and 'sense of responsibility’”¹¹ but will also learn to understand Citizenship by studying “the concept of good citizenship; citizenship laws of Bhutan; duties and responsibilities of a Bhutanese citizen; basic privileges enjoyed by the citizens in Bhutan”¹²

Learning outcomes

These experiences will help students to:

- be loyal to the King, country and the people;
- recognize their own worth as individuals and develop a personal belief and value system;
- display an attitude of resourcefulness and self reliance;
- be honest, open and cooperative in their dealing and relationship with other people;
- develop a pride in being Bhutanese in a world community;
- contribute and participate in public life, conservation of heritage and environment and care for public and private properties as one’s own.

For example, suggested topics for values education in year 9 (IX) are honesty, obedience/respect, gratitude, responsibility, loyalty/patriotism (national identity), unity, creativity, perseverance & determination.

¹²Ibid.
History and Civics year 9 and 10

The civics portion of the syllabus is intended to develop in students an understanding of basic principles of civics such as, duties and responsibilities of citizens, and the structure and functions of various organs of the government in order to help them grow up as informed, dedicated and responsible citizens.

The aims of this course are to develop in students their ability to:

- a wider and deeper understanding of how Bhutan came to be, what it is today in order to be able to appreciate its cultural heritage as well as its political structure
- a wider historical perspective in order to be able to understand the inter-relationship between different cultures of the world and the impact of history on the present status of the world as a whole
- knowledge and understanding of historical concepts of continuity and change
- the ability to analyse, interpret, synthesise and evaluate historical information
- an understanding and appreciation of rights and responsibilities of citizens
- loyalty and dedication to the Tsawa Sum and commitment to work for the well-being of the nation

Students will achieve these aims by (learning experiences):

- group works in the classrooms
- use of media such as films, journals, newspapers, television and photographs
- first hand experiences in field trips to gather information through direct contact with historical monuments, people and places
- interacting with guest speakers
- making notes and summaries from the texts and other sources
- carrying out project work

Learning outcomes

- demonstrate an understanding of the historical developments in Bhutan from ancient times to the present and their impact on the socio-cultural and political system of the country;
- show an understanding of some historical aspects of the Indian civilization, culture and freedom movement;
- explain the formation of UN and its major agencies, and a few regional organisations and discuss their roles;
- identify some basic principles of civics and explain their importance for good citizenship;
- describe the system of government and structure of administration in the country and explain the main functions of different branches of the government;
- list and sequence historical events to show an understanding of time, change and continuity;
- locate, select, organise and present historical information;
- make deductions from a variety of historical sources (e.g. photographs, graphs, written, oral);
- value the rights and responsibilities of citizens and realise their duty as good citizens of the country;
- value their country’s cultural heritage and work towards its preservation and promotion;
- value the contributions made by the past generations for safeguarding the security of the nation and ensuring peace and progress, and contribute towards nation building; and
- value the contributions made by world organisations in maintaining peace and order in the world and solving problems facing humanity, and contribute towards global understanding.

Identified programmes to provide teaching materials in philosophy
Not available at this moment.
Links
Wangyal, T. (200?). Ensuring Social Sustainability: Can Bhutan’s Education System Ensure Intergenerational Transmission of Values?, *Journal Bhutan Studies*

http://www.education.gov.bt/

Acknowledgements
This summary was prepared by Arthur Wolf, and comments on initial drafts were made by several experts.