

Proceedings
Educating for Gross National Happiness Workshop
7–12 December 2009

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Ministry of Education
Royal Government of Bhutan
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Notes on the Proceedings:

The following proceedings are from the Educating for Gross National Happiness Workshop, held at Hotel Phuntsho Pelri, Thimphu, Bhutan, 7–12 December 2009.

All speeches, addresses, and remarks made by Their Excellencies the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Education, and by the Education Secretary are transcribed in full, as are the Keynote Address by Dr. Vandana Shiva and the remarks by Dr. Mark Mancall, Dr. Judith Simmer-Brown, and Kezang Yuden (student observer).

Many of the remarks made by the facilitator, Ms. Ivy Ang, are also transcribed in full (and lightly edited). Although not usually included in proceeding records, these facilitator remarks were included here mainly for the benefit of the Bhutanese facilitators-in-training who will facilitate the workshops for Bhutanese school principals and teachers that are to follow this workshop. Many of the explanations given by Dr. Tashi (Ron) Colman of GPI Atlantic have also been included.

For the most part, participant remarks and breakout group reports are summarized, although a few participant statements are also verbatim transcriptions. Because it was not possible to identify some of the participants during the preparation of the proceedings, the names of the participants who are speaking have not always been used.

We would also like to thank Dr. Judith Simmer-Brown, not only for writing the Dedication of Merit for Educating for Gross National Happiness, which was recited by the group at the end of each day, but also for allowing us to include selections from the daily “blog” she wrote for Naropa University. These sections are identified within the following text and are reproduced in italic type.

Needless to say, any errors or omissions are the sole responsibility of those who prepared the proceedings.

Summary of Key Workshop Outcomes

Prepared on 14 December, 2009

1. Broad outcomes

It is too early to evaluate the full impact of the 7–12 December *Educating for Gross National Happiness* workshop, or even to enumerate the workshop outcomes. In his closing speech, the Honourable Prime Minister alluded to several key workshop outcomes that transcend the explicit workshop objective of bringing GNH principles and values into Bhutan’s education system. For example, he remarked on how much was learned, as a new democracy, on the capacity of a participatory process and dialogue to generate honest and open dialogue and creative action plans. He also noted that the process and the workshop were instrumental in energizing the Ministry of Education itself, mobilizing the Ministry behind a noble common objective, and deepening commitment to a balanced GNH development approach among his own colleagues in government.

As well, the Honourable Education Minister referenced the fact the workshop had generated daily newspaper and television coverage, and thus stimulated important public dialogue on key education issues beyond the official and education arenas. He and the Education Secretary noted that the workshop had raised the profile of education in the public eye as key to the continuation and success of the Kingdom of Bhutan’s unique development approach that seeks to balance equitable and sustainable economic development with environmental conservation, cultural promotion, and good governance.

In that regard, the Hon. Prime Minister also noted on more than one occasion that the workshop was effectively launching the third key phase in Bhutan’s development. For two decades since His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo first declared that “Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product”, the Hon. Prime Minister remarked that GNH was largely a felt intuitive understanding that material development alone was insufficient to contribute to true wellbeing. As the Kingdom emerged from relative isolation and opened to the world, he said, Bhutan came under increasing scrutiny and even pressure to define, explain, and even measure its development goals. That second phase, he noted, had been accomplished with some success in the last five years, with the delineation of four GNH pillars, nine domains, and 72 indicator sets measuring key conditions of wellbeing including population health, living standards, time use, community vitality, and ecological integrity. This workshop, the Hon. Prime Minister remarked, launched a third phase in which these concepts will be translated into action, with education the appropriate starting point, since it directly affects all domains.

In short, many important potential workshop outcomes have been identified that strengthen Bhutan’s democracy and development in ways that go far beyond intended reforms to Bhutan’s education system. Here, however, we summarize very briefly only the explicit education-related action plan and workshop outcomes, as enumerated by the

Ministry of Education of the Royal Government of Bhutan, beginning with the vision and goals agreed during the second workshop day. This vision will be presented later this month to Bhutan's principals and teachers.

2. Educating for GNH: Statement of Vision and Goals

The principles and values of Gross National Happiness will be deeply embedded in the consciousness of Bhutanese youth and citizens. They will see clearly the interconnected nature of reality and understand the full benefits and costs of their actions. They will not be trapped by the lure of materialism, and will care deeply for others and for the natural world.

HOW: Bhutan's entire educational system will effectively cultivate GNH principles and values, including deep critical and creative thinking, ecological literacy, practice of the country's profound, ancient wisdom and culture, contemplative learning, a holistic understanding of the world, genuine care for nature and for others, competency to deal effectively with the modern world, preparation for right livelihood, and informed civic engagement.

3-year goal: Bhutan's school system will have GNH-minded teachers and a GNH-infused learning environment, and access to these by all Bhutanese children and youth. Within three years, all of Bhutan's teachers will have received effective education in these areas, and within one year, all of Bhutan's school principals will have received GNH-inspired education.

3. Proposed Action Plan: Phase 1: December 2009 – February 2010

As a first phase, the Ministry of Education will bring together all 541 Bhutanese school principals, teachers' college lecturers, and district education officers in three six-day workshops at the Paro Teachers' College for preparation / initiation into Educating for Gross National Happiness—19–24 January, 31 January–5 February, and 7–12 February, 2010. Please see the draft principals' workshop program attached.

The Ministry has established a core group of 12, including several school principals, to lead this process, with Aum Phuntsho Lham coordinating the effort. A content committee has been established, headed by the RUB Vice-Chancellor, and a budget and logistic committee will be led by CAPSD. In-depth facilitator training and program meetings began on 26th December 2009 with a small leadership group consisting of Phuntsho Lham (Ministry of Education), Sonam Chuki (Royal Institute of Management), Chencho Lhamu (Royal Education Council), Karma Zangmo and Jigme Dorji (school principals) and Omnath Baraily (CAPSD — the curriculum design division of the Ministry). From 7–12 January, 16 facilitators will be trained to lead the Paro principals' discussions. Five international educators have worked since the December workshop to review that

workshop's breakout group recommendations, train facilitators, and prepare materials for the principals' workshops.

The 200 or more principals, lecturers, and DEOs expected to attend each workshop will be divided into 7 groups of 28–30, each to be led by two facilitators, with Sonam Chuki and Naina Kala Guring (principal of Phuentsholing Middle Secondary School) facilitating plenary sessions. During breakout sessions, each group of 28 will further divide into four small discussion groups (designated as tak, sing, chung, and druk) to allow in-depth participation by all principals. The Hon. Prime Minister, Education Minister, Education Secretary, and Director of the Royal Education Council will themselves participate in the principals' gatherings to convey the full support of the leadership for this important initiative.

UNICEF has kindly agreed to provide funding to cover both the direct costs of the principals' workshops and further development of the Educating for GNH initiative in the coming year.

The Hon. Prime Minister has described this first implementation phase as follows: “Given the urgency and immediacy of our objective to bring GNH principles and values into the educational system without delay, the Royal Government of Bhutan will initiate this process in the coming 2010 academic year. The immediate goal—during this present 2009–10 winter vacation—is to prepare all Bhutan's school principals and teachers' college representatives for this transition. The January/ February 2010 principals' and teachers' college workshops will produce concrete plans to initiate GNH practices in all the country's schools and to prepare teachers for this transition.”

A participatory workshop process will be used to elicit from the school principals and teachers' college lecturers specific commitments and resolutions on what they will do to engender a GNH atmosphere in their own schools, and inspire their teachers in these approaches and methods. They will be encouraged to involve the broader community in these reforms, and to let the Ministry and local government administration know what kind of support they need. The workshop program is designed to encourage the principals to share best practices in GNH-related educational initiatives already being practised, so that the principals may learn from each other.

An interactive portal and website will be set up to post materials and reports of exemplary best practices from around the country, and for principals and teachers to exchange views and information on what works and what challenges are encountered. The website will also contain practical information from the December Educating for GNH workshop and from many model alternative schools throughout the world that have adopted approaches consistent with GNH principles and values. Eleven such schools were represented at the 7–12 December Thimphu workshop by founders and principals. One portion of the website will be devoted to alternative assessment methods used in these schools.

4. Evaluation, Monitoring, Documentation, Research

Immediately following the principals' workshops, a plan will be developed on 16–19 February to monitor, evaluate, and document the Educating for GNH process and assess outcomes and challenges. That process will be led by the head of EMSSD and his staff, who will also participate in at least one principals' workshop, and will be facilitated by Prof. Daniel Buckles of Carleton University, Ottawa—a founder of and expert in SAS2 facilitation methods. Dr. Buckles' costs are being met entirely by the International Development Research Centre in Ottawa.

The systematic monitoring and evaluation of the Educating for GNH process is likely to include individual direct contacts, a survey, and follow-up workshops, in order to identify both successes and problems. The need for careful documentation is accentuated by the fact that a nationwide educational transformation of this kind and along these lines is unprecedented in the world and without any road map. For the Bhutan process to be useful and applicable in other parts of the world as was consistently suggested throughout the December workshop, therefore, it must be accompanied by first-rate research and documentation.

To that end, a research partnership is now emerging consisting of four potential national partners (Ministry of Education, Centre for Bhutan Studies, Royal University of Bhutan, and National Statistics Bureau) and five likely international partners (Dr. Jack Miller, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto—a key workshop participant and pioneer in holistic education; GPI Atlantic; Michael Pennock (Vancouver Island Health Authority); Prof. John Helliwell (University of British Columbia) and UNICEF. The research would assess both outputs (changes within schools) and outcomes (societal impacts) and attempt to relate the two. The first step is likely to be a baseline survey administered to the principals at the upcoming workshops. Funding will be sought from both UNICEF and the International Development Research Centre in Ottawa.

5. Proposed Action Plan: Phase 2: 2010–2011

The second phase of this implementation plan will take place during the 2010–2011 academic years and will include the development of the more substantive and complex curricular, extra-curricular and class materials, readings, activities, and methods required to bring GNH principles and values fully into the educational system. This will include the design and initiation of appropriate teacher education programs.

During the winter of 2010–11, full-fledged country-wide teacher education programs for all teachers are planned. As well, the Colleges of Education will ensure that teachers graduating in November, 2010, will receive effective orientation in GNH-inspired educational methods and approaches before graduation. A three-year budget has been developed by the Ministry of Education, and this second phase will involve the whole

Education Ministry curriculum design team, as well as top international educators and resource people.

6. Other Potential Actions

Beyond the core action plan described above, several other potential actions may be initiated as a direct result of meetings held in association with the workshop. Bhutan's Department of Youth and Sports, in association with the Youth Development Fund, Royal Society for the Protection of Nature, GPI youth program, and the ten members of the Mekong delegation to the workshop (consisting of representatives from Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Burma, and China) resolved to expand this GNH education initiative into the sphere of informal education. They agreed to create a GNH youth network to support voluntary work and community service, and particularly to work with out-of-school and marginalized youth to integrate them into their communities and foster a spirit of life-long learning. As a first step in this process, a GPI youth intern will work closely with Lama Shenphen in the next two months to support his work with addicts in Thimphu.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the December 7–12 Thimphu workshop was the interaction between a bottom-up bubbling of ideas, knowledge, expertise, and information on the one hand and leadership and translation to immediate action on the other hand. The gathering was privileged to have the input of some of the world's top educators in educational approaches like critical and analytical thinking, eco-literacy, contemplative education, Indigenous knowledge, and holistic education, as well as top Bhutanese educators including the University's Vice-Chancellor, Education Ministry officials and curriculum designers. And those educators in turn were gratified that their recommendations were so eagerly transformed into a concrete action plan. The Education Minister and Education Secretary participated directly and continuously in the workshop, and the Prime Minister himself participated in as many sessions as he could, as well as receiving daily briefings.

In sum, the December *Educating for GNH* workshop was certainly a first step in what could be a far-reaching national educational transformation with impacts extending well beyond Bhutan's borders. A detailed overview of the full December workshop proceedings should be ready for distribution by the end of January, 2010. Key documents from that workshop, such as the Hon. Prime Minister's opening presentation, will be included in the delegate book for the Principals' workshops.

7 December: Educating for GNH Opening Ceremonies and Welcoming Addresses

The opening ceremonies and welcoming addresses for the Educating for GNH Workshop, which were presided over by the Honourable Prime Minister and members of his cabinet, took place in the early evening of 7 December 2009, prior to a delightful cultural programme of traditional songs and dances by Bhutanese students and a dinner hosted by the Honourable Minister of Education. The participants and observers were warmly welcomed by the Master of Ceremony, Mrs. Phuntsho Lham, which was followed by a sacred Marchang Ceremony (an offering to the local deities conducted at the beginning of important occasions), a Welcome address by the Honourable Minister of Education Lyonpo Thakur S. Powdyel, and a Keynote address by the Honourable Prime Minister Lyonchhen Jigmi Yoser Thinley.

Programme

Hotel Phuntsho Pelri, Thimphu

- 4:00 – 5:30 pm Registration of participants and observers
- 5:40 pm Arrival of guests
- 6:15 pm Arrival of Chief guest
- 6:30 pm Marchang Ceremony
- 6:45 pm Welcome address by Hon. Minister of Education Lyonpo Thakur S. Powdyel
- 7:00 pm Keynote address by Hon. Prime Minister Lyonchhen Jigmi Yoser Thinley
- 7:30 pm Vote of Thanks (Programme Coordinator)

Cultural programme – Traditional dances and songs performed by Bhutanese students
Dinner hosted by Hon. Minister of Education

Master of Ceremony Mrs. Phuntsho Lham:

Your Excellency Honourable Prime Minister Lyonchhen Jigmi Yoser Thinley, Honourable Ministers, Secretaries, Honourable Ambassadors, dignitaries from the international communities, and participants from home and abroad, Members of the Parliament, observers, media community, distinguished guests, teachers, and students.

Educating for Gross National Happiness is the theme of the workshop. The Ministry of Education is highly privileged and fortunate to partner with the Prime Minister's office in coordinating such a novel venture. We have an ensemble of educators, both international and Bhutanese, to deliberate on strategies to bring GNH into the classroom. I present to you the Honourable Minister of Education His Excellency Lyonpo Thakur S. Powdyel who will now welcome the participants and the guests.

Welcome address: Honourable Minister of Education Lyonpo Thakur Singh Powdye

In the beginning was the king. And he had a dream—a dream looking for a voice. And thus it was: *gyel yong gakid pelzom* – Gross National Happiness. It took the sensibility of a courtier to decipher the code and spread the good news. And thus you are here. It is the fulfillment of a prophecy – that, the world will come home. The circle is complete, if you will.

On behalf of His Excellency the Honourable Prime Minister Lonchhen Jigmi Yoser Thinley, our guest of honour, who conceived of this idea of a commonwealth of like-minds, and the Ministry of Education, which has the proud privilege of hosting this unprecedented event, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you, our dear guests, who have travelled from around the world to be here with us today. To all of you, honourable members of the Cabinet, Your Excellencies, esteemed members of the Parliament, our invitees, Dashos and Aums, dear colleagues and students, and representatives of the mass media, I would like to say what a great honour it has been for all of us to have your deeply reassuring presence with us this evening. You fill this hall with your presence and our hearts with joy.

Some of the finest minds engaged in the celebration of the sublime have assembled here today. It is a singular honour for Bhutan and the Bhutanese to have this exceptional congregation of exceptional individuals from many parallels and meridians of the globe. The task before us is no less sublime either—educating for gross national happiness. You have brought to bear the marvels of your mind and the gracefulness of your heart on the most deeply cherished goal of our country—the search for gross national happiness, which is at the same time the most fundamental desire of the human race.

Today, we attempt to link the present with the future and the living with the unborn. And the kind of experience, educational experience, to be sure, that we provide to our younger generation will determine our success with our national vision. Today, we are, in effect, affirming and asserting the claims of a nation's dream on its education system.

As a teacher, during some of my rare moments of truth, I have discovered that teaching blesses both the giver and the receiver. By way of a small recompense for the large sacrifices that you have had to make, I hope it will be this blessing that you will be able to take with you when you go home. Today, we are called upon to carry and deliver on a king's dream.

Whatever we do here in the course of the next few days will be a gift that will help make this little gem of our good earth that much dearer and that much more special. Once again, to all of you, our dear participants and observers from home and abroad, and to all of you, our honoured guests, I would like to extend our very warm welcome and thank you for the privilege of your kind presence with us.

May the Triple Gem bless us all! Kadinchee.

Master of Ceremony Mrs. Phuntsho Lham:

Bhutan has in His Excellency the Prime Minister of Bhutan a charming champion of GNH who promotes our development philosophy as introduced by His Majesty the fourth King of Bhutan. His Excellency has shared our national ideals with people from Korea to Canada and Japan to Brazil. The conference would not have had a better person to kickstart the conference. I have the honour to request His Excellency Jigmy Yoser Thinley the Prime Minister of Bhutan to deliver the keynote address of the conference.

Keynote address: His Excellency Honourable Prime Minister Lyonchhen Jigmi Yoser Thinley

Most learned and distinguished participants from abroad, Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Members of Parliament, dear friends.

First and foremost, I would like to extend to all our international visitors and esteemed educators from 16 countries the very warmest welcome to the Kingdom of Bhutan. We are deeply honoured that you are freely giving us your very precious time and the profound gift of your vast knowledge and experience. Our little country, perched in the high Himalayas, is not the easiest place in the world to reach, and I am deeply moved that you have made a very great effort to get here, enduring long plane rides and, I am sure, considerable discomfort, jet lag, and sleeplessness along the way. The only reason I can imagine you are doing all this is that we must hold—very deep in our hearts—a shared vision, understanding, and determination to create a better world for our children.

I hope you will forgive me if I tell you frankly, right from the start, that we intend to exploit you mercilessly in the coming week. This is an extraordinarily rare and precious opportunity—not only for Bhutan, but for the world at large—to have assembled in one room some of the world’s leading practitioners of those educational approaches that can nurture the very best of human qualities and potential. And so, all of us here in Bhutan—educators, officials, students, curriculum design specialists and more—intend to listen and to learn intently, and literally to milk your wisdom and expertise for all it’s worth so that we can quickly and genuinely put into practice the very methods you have so long advocated. I know from your responses to our pre-workshop survey on your educational vision and goals—that we already share deeply the view of what needs to be done and why. What we want to know now is how to do it!

While I shall not conceal our intent to exploit you in this way, I am also not embarrassed to say that what we accomplish in this room this week may—and indeed should—have a powerful and positive impact far beyond the borders of this country. 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.

The good news is that—even as current economic, financial, and natural systems collapse—there is also increasing awareness that the temporary material satisfaction of fleeting desires leads to misery rather than happiness. Until just a few years ago, we in Bhutan used to think that our esteemed King’s proclamation three decades ago that “Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product” was our own unique and particular take on life, on development, and on the world. Never once did I even hear His Majesty use the phrase ‘economic growth’! So I guess we were content to think of ourselves as distant and isolated ‘odd balls’ in a world obsessed with growth and materialism. In the last few years, however, we’re somewhat embarrassed to find our remote little country the subject of increasing scrutiny and envy by a world deeply dissatisfied with its way of life.

To be honest, we spent some years shying away from the responsibility of presenting GNH in acceptable terms and translating it amply into practical action by simply taking refuge in the vision, concept, and the term itself. I now know that this option no longer exists. For the world and for all living beings with which we share this planet, as much as for ourselves, we have no choice but to demonstrate that we are worthy of the scrutiny to which we are subjected, by practising what we preach. And 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.

In short, I now know that what we do here in this room this week is not important only for this little Himalayan Kingdom, but for the world, for humanity, and for so many non-human species whose very survival depends on what we as humans do. We're deeply aware that what we are trying to do here is unprecedented. There are no road maps. While individual schools in different parts of the world—at least eleven of which are represented right here in this room—have created brilliant and transformative curricula and learning environments from which we'll learn a lot this week, no country has ever attempted to transform its entire educational system along the lines we propose. So I genuinely believe that what you generously contribute to Bhutan this week must also have a transformative effect on educational systems, and thus on society at large, far beyond our borders.

Because I am now so concerned to see words translated into action, I want to ask you please to spend no more than a day on defining and articulating our shared vision and goals, and then move right into the “how to,” based in the hard reality of where we presently are. Of course we have to start with vision. Without that, we'd have no clear sense of purpose or direction, and we'd quickly drown in a sea of disconnected and incoherent ideas—however good and even brilliant they may be.

But we in Bhutan have now spent several years trying to define, understand, and wrap our minds around what we ourselves mean by ‘Gross National Happiness’, and I believe we have come some way in that endeavour. What began really as an intuitive and felt sense has now been articulated, expressed, and even measured in some depth and detail:

- First we have now clearly distinguished the ‘happiness’ component in GNH from the fleeting, pleasurable ‘feel good’ moods so often associated with that term. We know that true abiding happiness cannot exist while others suffer, and comes only from serving others, living in harmony with nature, and realizing our innate wisdom and the true and brilliant nature of our own minds.
- Second, we have defined GNH as a development path that judiciously balances sustainable and equitable economic development with environmental conservation, good governance, and the dynamism and wisdom of our profound and ancient culture.
- Third, we have even developed a GNH index that measures key conditions of wellbeing like physical and mental health, community vitality, work-life balance, living standards, civic engagement, and the ecological integrity on which the whole human endeavour depends.
- And fourth, we have identified education as the glue that holds the whole enterprise together. If we are ignorant of the natural world, how can we effectively protect it? If we don't know that smoking, junk food, and physical inactivity are unhealthy, how can we have a healthy citizenry? If we are ignorant of politics and of national issues, how can we cast an informed vote? If we are ignorant of the extraordinary teachings of Guru Rinpoche, Zhabdrug Ngawang Namgyal, and other great masters who taught and

practised right here in Bhutan, how can we appreciate our legacy, embody our own culture, and serve the world?

This brings us right to our present endeavour and challenge. 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.

So, from Wednesday through Saturday, let's focus on how we can do this given the practical realities we face? What does a GNH-infused science curriculum actually look like? How can we learn math and history and language and even sports so that they fully reflect GNH values? How can genuine community service and meditative disciplines be practically integrated into our learning centres? How can we physically design our schools so that they embody GNH principles? And how do we assess teachers and students in ways that are less draconian, stressful, and competitive than our current standardized exams?

One reason I am urging such a practical focus is my own growing sense of urgency and immediacy that itself stems from three key factors:

1. So far, we have managed to conserve our forests, wildlife, and natural environment rather more successfully than many other nations; our culture is still relatively vibrant; and we have been blessed with a century of enlightened leadership, peace, and harmony. But as Bhutan moves rapidly from a traditional value-oriented society to a modern economy, we ourselves are in serious danger of going off track in ways that are clearly visible to us in Bhutan (and increasingly even to casual visitors). I remember rather nostalgically, and not so long ago, how the road to the Dzong was brimming with people walking to and from work in the mornings and afternoons, cheerfully chatting and socializing. Going to work was a joyful ritual of social interaction—an opportunity for making and nurturing friendship. They're mostly gone now, replaced by cars, a status symbol, burning fossil fuel—those who walk now see themselves as 'have-nots'. These and other highly questionable changes are happening at a dizzying rate.

The sad thing is that even those who want to appear well off by owning a car very often cannot afford it, and take out large loans that expose themselves and their families to unnecessary risks. A recent survey here in Thimphu found that 75% of those who drive to work do not drive more than 3 km—the minimal daily walking distance considered essential for good health. It is truly frightening to see how rapidly the materialist ethos has grown from just a few years ago, and it is precisely that rapidity that engenders my sense of urgency in wanting to see GNH principles and values embodied quickly in our educational system.

2. Second, my sense of urgency stems from the very nature and magnitude of our shared endeavour here—which is immense, unprecedented, and with the dauntingly high objective of transforming the consciousness of our people and nation. If we had the luxury of time, we would spread what we have set out to do this week over many years and several dozen workshops. But we don't have that luxury, and we therefore run the serious danger of setting our goals so high and wanting to do so much that we fail to take a practical first step. Even if we are not fully satisfied that we are doing everything we deeply want to do and see, may I please entreat you this week not to sacrifice modest steps in the right direction at the altar of unattainable goals and overly ambitious leaps that may backfire and delay real progress. To my mind, the greatest risk in our upcoming discussions this week is that we become trapped by the enormity of our task, and substitute high-sounding pretension for real action. If, on the other hand, we can produce some concrete and tangible changes in our educational system in the next year that clearly and truly express GNH principles and values, I have confidence that the momentum of moving in the right direction will naturally carry us forward ever more rapidly, firmly, and deeply.

3. Third, my sense of immediacy stems directly from the political reality of our fledgling democracy—the youngest in the world. This government happens to be deeply committed to a GNH development path. But terms of office in a democratic system are limited, and we don't know what the next government may do or what its priorities will be. It could easily go down the development path of almost all other countries—plundering the natural world in the name of economic growth, as communities disintegrate and our profound ancient culture becomes an antiquated museum piece replaced by McDonalds, Walmart, and such like symbols of development. It may be my own Buddhist background that gives me a deeply felt sense of impermanence, but I have a very strong feeling that if we don't seize the moment now and achieve something tangible and transformative in these three years, we may not get another chance.

Lest this talk of democratic changes of government be misconstrued as a political platform, let me assure you that my commitment to Gross National Happiness and to the vision of our compassionate and wise monarchs has nothing to do with political considerations. Quite the contrary! The only measure of success in transforming our educational system is that the frame we create is truly indestructible and that it will thereby effectively withstand all challenges from an extraordinarily seductive and increasingly sophisticated, powerful, and manipulative materialist and consumerist world. Equally, that 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.

It should be clear by now that, while much of my concern is motivated by what I see happening here in Bhutan and by my immediate responsibility to my people and to this country, there is nothing in the principles of Gross National Happiness that is not fundamentally universal. I firmly believe that if we succeed in our shared endeavour this week, and if we bring GNH effectively into our educational system here, then whatever we do is entirely applicable to educational systems in your own countries and throughout the world. Thimphu happens to be the location of our dialogue, but its echo should be global.

Although I have taken too much of your time already, and dinner beckons, please indulge me for just a few minutes more, as my passion for this subject compels me to speak my mind. I wish, now, to move from the general to the very specific to express a deep concern about our discussions this week, which I know is going to take me into dangerous territory with this group of esteemed educators. In fact, I am sure some of you will consider me old-fashioned and anachronistic in what I'm about to say.

I have listened to many educational consultants over the years who have advised us to promote 'modern' educational principles like learning by discovering rather than rote learning, about teachers being facilitators rather than authoritative sources of knowledge, about replacing fear by confidence in the classroom atmosphere, and more. You know what I'm talking about. These and other high-sounding principles espoused by the typical modern educators sound progressive, but I don't want to confuse them even slightly with what I believe our goals are this week.

For example, I think there is a place for the teacher literally as "guru" or at least as an exemplar, rather than just facilitator. I was actually heartened by several of your survey responses in which quite a few of you insisted that the most important element in any educational transformation is that the teacher must "embody" the principles and values we seek to embed in our educational system. I heartily agree. But this is much more than seeing the teacher as mere "facilitator". On the contrary, a teacher who truly embodies GNH principles and values is also an authentic and natural authority figure, to whom respect and even reverence are due. Personally, I am deeply disturbed when I hear of teachers in some western countries being abused by students and for whom life in the classroom is a nightmare.

And I do worry when I hear 'modern' educational consultants disparage memorization. Old-fashioned as it may sound, I also believe there is an important place in education for memorization, and for the discipline engendered by learning how to recite poetry or key passages from literature from memory. Efficient storage and retrieval of knowledge by way of memory are indispensable life skills.

I worry also when I hear educators reject the notion of fear in the name of building confidence. Of course, confidence and courage are very important. But so is the ability to sense fear. Without genuine, and even earth-shattering, fear of the consequences of climate change, we would blithely continue to consume, indulge, and emit greenhouse gases as if there were no tomorrow. And if you'll allow a reference to my Buddhist

heritage, I think there is nothing like a healthy fear of consequences in the next life to encourage basic decent and ethical behaviour in this one. I would go so far as to say that, with false pride and arrogance, we are headed for social and natural calamity. How much of the trouble the world is in now is the result of failing to fear the consequences of our actions? Indeed, some of our greatest teachers have taught that true confidence and genuine courage come precisely from being intimately familiar with fear. I am not sure we are on the right track when we describe fear and confidence in either/or terms.

I am now speaking very personally, of course. But I do worry that modern educational systems that unwittingly undermine values like honour, valour, loyalty, allegiance, and devotion may also fray the basic fibre of good character, subtly denigrate ethics, and thereby serve to produce consumers driven by personal success and ambition. I say this because, in my experience, there is a danger that noble holistic educational principles can be misleadingly invoked to disparage discipline, belittle teachers, and promote a false ‘feel good’ ethos that encourages self-indulgence but has little to do with serving others and the world. I only ask that this week we not confuse GNH principles and values with the language of the so-called ethics of modern education.

Before you dismiss me as a totally old-fashioned stick-in-the-mud, let me assure you that I place as much, if not more, importance on evaluating teachers and school administration as on evaluating students. I am hoping that you can devote a session this week to discussing how teachers and school principals should be evaluated according to GNH guidelines. What kind of teacher conduct is in accord with GNH values, and how might a staff meeting be conducted according to GNH principles? What GNH-inspired targets and activities might be expected of a teacher in the course of a day’s work? And what instructions might we give to our school inspectors to assess schools on GNH lines?

And while we are on assessment, how can we evaluate the degree to which GNH principles and values are genuinely internalized? What is the point of being a model student during school hours if he is a rude vandal on the street? And what is the point of cleaning up a school and making it spotless if that same garbage is then dumped in a pristine natural place? A genuinely GNH-inspired educational system would ensure that these values are so deeply felt and internalized that they manifest simply and naturally in all situations—in and out of school.

And finally, how about assessing and evaluating ourselves and our own behaviour? If “learning by doing” is the way to go, as I am sure we all agree, then the time has come to practise what we preach. To that end I am truly delighted that we’ll bring our profound and ancient contemplative traditions and practices right into this dialogue by beginning each day with a few minutes of meditation to clear our minds, and end each day by dedicating the merit of our work to all beings. Many thanks to Dr. Simmer-Brown for writing—especially for this workshop—the beautiful dedication of merit that’s in the back of our delegate books. That small daily reminder that our work only exists to serve others is, I think, the very essence of Gross National Happiness.

And we won't only talk about ecological literacy and sustainability education. We'll practice it this week. I am so pleased that we are making a special effort to source and serve food that is sustainably grown by local farmers—thus not only reducing food miles, fossil fuel use, and greenhouse gas emissions, but also supporting our local economy. We are serving more vegetarian than meat dishes, thus not only saving lives but reducing the ecological footprint of the food we eat. And we are reducing waste, plastics, and energy use. Please help us reduce food waste by taking just what you will eat onto your plates, and please separate your waste into the labelled baskets provided.

And most challenging of all, I spoke earlier of some of the woes of our growing car culture. If you live within 20 or 30 minutes of the venue, why not leave your car at home this week and walk here? If you live further away, Kunzang and Nima on our staff have kindly arranged pooled transportation and special bus pick-ups that will save greenhouse gas emissions and might even promote convivial interactions. Please avail yourself of this wonderful service, even if just as an experiment. Yes—some of this involves a change in habit and even a different sense of time—leaving just a little extra time to get here and back. But maybe we'd be modelling through our actions the very learning and behaviour we want to engender in our educational systems. Our actions could even lay the perfect ground for our new government initiative to give away bicycles to those who undertake to walk to and from work. We're erecting bicycle stands in choice locations, and we want to turn Thimphu into a pedestrian and bicycling city. That's education and learning too!

I am excited about what we are about to do together here this week that my only regret is that this workshop clashes with our National Assembly sessions. In our new democracy, it's imperative that I'm in the National Assembly as much as possible. But I will join you here whenever I can, and I've already arranged to receive daily briefings at the end of each day on what's happening here, so that I can keep very closely in touch.

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. But our true challenge is to translate this aspiration into action. There will be only one criterion to evaluate the success of our week together—and that is if we can look back 6 months and a year from now and see precisely the concrete actions and benefits that emerged from it. May our efforts be crowned with success, and may you have a wonderful and enjoyable time here in the Kingdom of Bhutan.

TASHI DELEK !

8 December, Day 1: Keynote address, Getting to know each other, and Defining vision and values

Judith Simmer-Brown’s “blog” written for Naropa University: *This was the first full day of the workshop, and we are all beginning to settle into our work together. Ivy Ang, the facilitator, worked very hard today, managing a central group of 50, monitoring the 120 observers and multiple videographers, transcribers, recorders, and staff. I can see that in such an endeavor, the first day of working with such a large group is challenging, especially if people are unfamiliar with large group collaborative work. Some people want to talk all the time, others who have a lot to offer say too little, and keeping everything on track takes discipline, clarity, kindness, and firmness. Ivy was great.*

The day began with a short keynote by Vandana Shiva, the renowned Indian eco-feminist, who spoke of the dangers of the force of consumerism and commodification on the ecology and quality of life throughout the world, backed up by powerful statistics about the shocking loss of clean water and access to food even as there are so many more billionaires everywhere. Her main challenge is to the unquestioned goal of “growth” she sees everywhere, which cannot be currently supported without the additional use of fossil fuels and other nonrenewable resources. Fantastic! She is amazing, a dynamo of economic and culture critique, backed up by years of research and activism. She is here only for a day, as she is off to Copenhagen. As she said, she had to give up three conferences and rearrange her schedule, but “Copenhagen is completely stuck, and Bhutan is the way forward!”

The purpose of the day was to get to know each other and to become familiar with the central objectives of the workshop, preset by our group in the answers we gave to questionnaires months before the workshop. The Prime Minister and Education Minister and most of the Ministry of Education were present for most of the day. What I learned today is how the international participants and the Bhutanese present understand Gross National Happiness. It is really inspiring to me, as it accords so much with Tibetan Buddhist perspectives on happiness, with a modern development twist. It is based on the view that all beings want to be happy and want to avoid suffering—the only problem is that habitually they pursue the opposite, things that bring pain. With clarity, practitioners resist the temptation to seek happiness in material gain, pleasure, power, distractions, or addictions. Instead they have the possibility to cultivate real happiness, both the happiness found in the mind in meditation and the wholesome happiness of community, kindness, peace.

In our little breakout groups today, I happened to find myself working with a group of six to eight Bhutanese as the only foreigner, having vigorous discussions about what a GNH community would look like. [The Bhutanese] men and women have a strong sense of belonging, compassion, love of community, and wonderful humor. They vigorously interact and refine their thinking, and politely moved freely between Dzongkha and English. Several were monastics, the rest lay government officials, teachers, and principals, and they spoke with some formality, but with such intimacy and respect. What

is learned is how much they valued care for each other in community as they gave examples of how they respond when a baby is born or someone dies in the community.

Mindfulness meditation instruction – Judith Simmer-Brown

Each morning we plan to spend 5 minutes practicing mindfulness meditation together before we start the programme. I will give a very brief instruction for those of you who may not do this practice.

The posture is very important so that our mind can remain awake and our heart soft and open. If you are sitting in a chair, both feet are firmly on the floor, and if you are sitting on a cushion on the floor, your ankles are loosely crossed. The spine is upright and straight, hands rest lightly on the thighs, the arms and shoulders and all your muscles are relaxed yet alert, the chin slightly tucked and gaze is slightly downward looking a few feet in front, eyes are relaxed but open.

Become aware of your breathing in its natural state, and follow the out-breath with your attention as it dissolves into space. If you find yourself distracted and having discursive thoughts, recognize that, and bring yourself back to the awareness of your breath.

Let go of the past—the past has gone; don't dwell on the future—the future has not yet come, we rest freshly in the present moment.

Participants and observers then practiced mindfulness meditation for five minutes.

Session 1 – Keynote address, Getting to know each other

Morning, before tea break

Introduction of Keynote speaker Dr. Vandana Shiva: Aum Sangay Zam, Secretary, Ministry of Education

(Following is the extended, written introductory text. The oral introduction was shorter.)

We are deeply honoured to have with us today to open our *Educating for Gross National Happiness* proceedings, the recipient of the Right Livelihood Award—sometimes called the Alternative Nobel Prize—world-renowned physicist, ecologist, and activist, **Dr. Vandana Shiva**.

Identified by Time magazine as an environmental “hero”, and by Asia Week as one of the five most powerful communicators in Asia, Dr. Shiva is without question one of the world's most renowned environmentalists. In fact, her work, inspiration, and action are so closely aligned to the principles and values of Gross National Happiness, that I have no

hesitation right here and now to add to her remarkable array of awards and honours by designating Dr. Shiva a “GNH hero” too.

Dr. Shiva founded and directs the Research Foundation for Science, Technology, and Natural Resource Policy in New Delhi—which is a participatory research initiative that emphasises the importance of diversity and the ecological value of traditional farming—and she is an Associate Editor of *The Ecologist* magazine.

She has campaigned nationally and internationally against 'biopiracy' and the patenting of indigenous knowledge, and for biodiversity, which she sees as intimately linked to cultural and knowledge diversity. Dr. Shiva also pioneered the organic movement in India and established the Navdanya movement to provide direction and support to environmental activism.

Navdanya is a women-centred, participatory process movement for the protection of biological and cultural diversity that is actively involved in the rejuvenation of indigenous knowledge and culture. It has created awareness on the hazards of genetic engineering, and defended people's knowledge from biopiracy and food rights in the face of globalisation and climate change. Navdanya has helped set up 54 community seed banks across India to conserve seeds, trained over 500,000 farmers in seed sovereignty, food sovereignty and sustainable agriculture over the past two decades, and helped create the largest direct marketing, fair trade organic network in the country.

Navdanya's biodiverse and highly productive 8-acre organic farm in northern India has rejuvenated the soil once left barren and desertified by years of eucalyptus monoculture and now produces more than 600 varieties of plants, including 250 rice varieties, 30 wheat varieties, and diverse varieties of millet, pulses, oilseeds, vegetables and medicinal plants.

In 2001, in partnership with Satish Kumar (editor of *Resurgence*, founder of the Small School, and also one of our key workshop participants) and with the Schumacher College in the UK, Dr. Shiva also founded a learning center, Bija Vidyapeeth (School of the Seed), as part of Navdanya. The school promotes a vision of holistic solutions rooted in deep ecology and democracy as an alternative to the materialism, unsustainability, and conflict of the current world order. The school offers a unique opportunity to explore and practise the art and science of sustainability based on ecological principles.

Dr. Shiva has authored many books including:

- *Soil Not Oil: Environmental Justice in an Age of Climate Crisis*;
- *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace*;
- *Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply*;
- *Ecofeminism; Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*;
- *Water Wars: Pollution, Profits, and Privatization*;
- *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge*; and
- *Monocultures of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity and Biotechnology*.

Among Dr. Shiva's many awards—in addition to the (Alternative Nobel) Right Livelihood Award—she has also received the Order of the Golden Ark, awarded by his Royal Highness Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands for outstanding services to conservation and ecology, the Commemorative Medal awarded by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand on the occasion of the Celebration of the 18th World Food Day, the United Nations Environment Programme's Global 500 Award, the Earth Day International Award, and the 2009 World Award given by Georg Kindel and Mikhail Gorbachev.

And since this workshop is mounted in close collaboration with a Canadian partner, GPI Atlantic, we should mention that Dr. Shiva received her M.A. in the Philosophy of Science at the University of Guelph in Canada and her Ph.D. from the University of Western Ontario, also in Canada.

Clearly Dr. Shiva's work and life have an enormous amount to offer us as we embark on our ambitious project to bring GNH values and principles into our educational system. In particular her work in education in creating the Bija Vidyapeeth (School of the Seed) is a model of GNH principles in action. We are so grateful that she has taken time out of her extraordinarily demanding schedule to come to Bhutan and to join us today to deliver the opening keynote address of this workshop. We could not wish for a more eminent and suitable person to help us launch our endeavour here. Please welcome Dr. Vandana Shiva.

Keynote address: Dr. Vandana Shiva

Note: (?) indicates that, unfortunately, the word could not be deciphered.

The beginning of Dr. Shiva's address reflects the somewhat chaotic activities and levity happening in the room immediately prior to her address when there was much discussion about whether Dr. Shiva wanted to sit or stand, and then, where she should stand.

[*Laughing*] This shows that every moment is education—including what's a good location and direction to be able to share.

I'm very grateful because what you are doing here is not just for the future of Bhutan. It's really for the future of a world that is very, very stuck. I had to make a choice—do I go straight to Copenhagen, as I was supposed to, or do I cut it out by two days, skip three conferences in Copenhagen and come here. And I thought this was so important. I can't, of course, let down my fellow ecological movements in Copenhagen, especially at this time where the official system is collapsing, and we do need a civic response—but your work here, and our collective work, I think, is the way forward. Why is Copenhagen so badly stuck? It's stuck because it's based on a series of false assumptions. The entire negotiation is based on the assumption that GDP and GNP represents and reflects the quality of life.

Just yesterday in the *Times of India* this was reiterated in a column called “Learning with the Times.” They are basically talking about conflict between rich countries not maintaining their commitments and the Kyoto Protocol. And it goes on to say, “Emissions are directly related to the quality of life. And industrial production and, hence economic growth, also has a direct link with it.” So the assumption is GNP/ GDP leads to quality of life; you cannot have growth in GNP and GDP without the additional use of fossil fuels and nonrenewable energy; and fossil fuels will always be available cheap, and the costs for all of this will always be externalized.

The reality is very different. We can see that the increase in GNP is not leading to quality of life. India is such a good example of this. In the decade and a half of chasing unregulated growth, we have started hitting 9% growth—it went down to 6% because of global slow down. But in this period, two indicators should wake anyone up. India has emerged as the capital of hunger. We have the largest number of malnourished children. Our children are growing stunted. That means the future generations are getting lost. So the growth, in effect, took away the fundamental right to food of women and children and the poor, because it wasn’t focused directly at food provisioning. It was focused on growth with the assumption that somehow this growth would get food to people.

But the other indicator is even more shocking. *Forbes* just put out a list of the hundred new billionaires of India who control the economy of 1.2 billion people. Now that 9% growth—that’s where it has gone—to create those billionaires. The billionaires have become billionaires by getting the land of the poor every day, either in the tribal areas or from some farmers who are fighting the land grab. The global land grab is amazing—half of Madagascar was taken over by a Korean company. The Saudis are taking over Cambodia and Vietnam. And we’re talking millions and millions of hectares.

I just did a march with the peasants of Orissa from the mangrove areas. Posco, a Korean company, is trying to set up a steel plant in Vedanta, which has nothing to do with Vedanta. Posco is basically a new name for an old company, which has become one of the big players, especially in aluminium. And now they want to set up a university—it’s called the Vedanta University—on the most fertile land between Puri and Konark—the most sacred area of that civilization—10,000 acres. And if you look at the map—and I looked at the map very carefully—I realized that it wasn’t about learning. It was about getting the last remaining fresh water and sweet water reserves of Orissa. The rest of the water is saline or it has disappeared. So the rivers and lakes are what is really the issue.

That growth is not getting us anywhere when it comes to the planet. And it is not getting us anywhere when it comes to the people—ordinary people having enough food to eat and enough water to drink.

What is going to happen in Copenhagen? There are two probable options and one less probable one. The less probable one is there will be a Kyoto Two. Does that mean the climate gets saved? No. Because if you look at Kyoto One there was to have been a 5% reduction by the rich countries, and emissions actually grew by 16% in this period. And why did this happen?

Yesterday's *Times of India* is a perfect resource for all of this. On the page after this whole thing of "Learning for our Times," which says you can't have a quality of life improvement without burning more oil and more coal, is one that is even more fascinating: "Carbon credits bring Mittal a one billion pound bonanza." For those who don't know who Mittal is, he is the biggest steel plant owner of the world. The company is now called Arcelor Mittal because he bought up the French company too and all the Eastern European companies, etc. So how does he become one billion pounds richer? Because Kyoto has allowed trading in pollution as the solution to emissions. And this trading in pollution was based on governments allocating rights to the polluters—giving the right to pollute—and the polluters then trading with others who were slightly reducing their pollution.

The two biggest gainers of the so-called "clean-development mechanism," as it's called, are steel and sponge iron plants in India, and if you go to (?) or Orissa or (?), they just pockmark the entire area. And they are hugely polluting. Around every sponge iron plant is gold dust (?). Crops don't grow, the rivers are dead, the forests are dying, and people are dying. In the records and on paper, it's clean development mechanism. Sponge iron pollutes but is called clean. Mittal gets a credit for continuing to pollute. He was given credits for 90 million ton pollution rights, whereas his capacity is 68 million tons. So he was given more credits because he has the largest number of lobbyists in Brussels. And these credits get him, today, one billion pounds, because the whole system wants to push up the whole value of carbon, as they say, to 30 pounds—right now it's at 12 pounds. So he has a billion. If it goes up to 30 pounds—you can just calculate. The objective of the emissions trading is a one trillion dollar economy out of continuing to pollute—out of polluters getting paid.

And I think that is part of a very serious problem. So if we have a solution in Copenhagen, it will be more of this. It will be more emissions trading. Kyoto Two will be more emissions trading with more countries brought into the act. But the two more probable outcomes are that there will be no agreement [or an agreement that is not legally binding. No agreement] in fact is a better outcome because at least the United Nations Framework Convention survives. An international treaty is still there to say the community of the world got together in 1992 at the Earth Summit and made a commitment to stop allowing the climate systems of this planet to collapse.

And at the Earth Summit, when I first heard about Bhutan in the preparatory process to the real conference, the Dutch—who were very active at that time but for some reason have slowed down on the environmental front—wanted to come and help Bhutan. I remember my friends in the environmental ministry in the Netherlands saying, "We offered them a study on sustainable development of Bhutan." And the Bhutanese just turned around and said, "We'll study you." And then they produced a study on how unhappy the Dutch were. And we are talking about 1992—such a long time ago. And look how the Gross National Happiness has come so far—from that simple recognition that Bhutan is not the problem for non-sustainability. It is rich countries, it's the

industrialized countries, and it's the consumerist lifestyle. So if there is no agreement, at least the old agreement of '92 survives.

If there is an agreement, it will not be a legally binding agreement. It will be an agreement to dismantle what we have—an international treaty—a legally binding treaty, and have, in its place, political statements. This was declared by Obama in Singapore when he was there for the ASEAN meetings, the APEC meetings. And, if you notice in the last week, first China said they had 45% reduction and then India went on board and said they had 25%—they're not talking about *emission* reduction. A new category has been created called *emission intensity*, and basically, they are referring to per unit growth in GNP. What is the contribution of emission reduction? What they are saying is: "We will not reduce growth. We will not change our indicators of what our societies are for, the ends of society? We will continue to assume that plundering the earth is the human end. And all we will do, while we put more automobiles on the road, while we dig more coal, is increase our efficiency standards slightly." And that is what emissions intensity is. Overall emissions will continue to rise and every one of the powerful economies is agreeing to the commitment to continue to pollute and to continue to work to destroy.

You must have noticed that this declaration has thrown the entire Indian political scene into disarray. First the negotiators—the negotiators say: "Where did this come from?"—because it's come mysteriously from somewhere—this new concept of emissions intensity. And then the Parliament is saying: "But we had a very clear position—that we stick to a legally binding treaty, we stick to the developing country solidarity. How are we suddenly joining the U.S. camp to dismantle what we have?" So it is a mess in every sense of the way. We are not going to be able to move in that direction, and it's wrong in two fundamental ways. We are dismantling all that we have—we don't have much—it's not a strong treaty, but without it we have chaos. And climate chaos that governs by political and legal chaos doesn't help us very much. And, unfortunately, through this commitment to destroy, we also are committing the world to non-sustainability.

For coastal people it means more cyclones, more threats of sea level rise. And for Himalayan communities it means glaciers melting, slowly the water is disappearing. We've just finished a participatory study for the western Himalayas from Ladakh to (?), and villages are being washed away in Ladakh. And in our area, where the ecological movement started with Chipko, the women were saying: "The forests give us water, so stop cutting the trees," and "We hug the trees." So we have forests and we have water. Today, 70% of our water sources have dried up in the (?) where we ask people to report—70% of drinking water sources. For women in (?), their cattle are absolutely precious—part of their extended family. They are having to sell off their buffalo, which they bought for 55,000 rupees, for 2,000 rupees, because there's no fodder for them now with the extended drought. So it's a life and death issue today. It's not just an issue of what will happen in 100 years, which is what models talk about. Models talk about what will happen when sea level rises and glaciers melt 100 years down the line. People and their life experience tell us what is happening today.

And it's already too serious an issue to be left to this kind of (theatre ?). I call it the reality show of global politics—you know, how you have people locked into houses? I don't know how so much money gets made out of that nonsense, but it does. It's big. And I think it's so timely that this workshop on Gross National Happiness is being done, because I think it's *the* only place where a shift can move, happen. When things get stuck, something has to give. And I think what has to give is this absolutely wrong idea of growth. When I was doing my early work on why women were so marginalized, why the resources that women depend on for the sustenance economy were getting destroyed so rapidly, constantly it was growth that came as the reason.

Then I started studying: what is this thing called growth? I'm a physicist by training. I realized that the definition of growth is based on creating a "production boundary". And the production boundary basically says that if you produce what you consume, you are not producing. So a forest recycling its nutrients and water doesn't produce. When it gets converted into square foot of timber, suddenly there is growth. A stream flowing clean and free does not produce growth. Coca Cola bottling up the water, or a dam diverting water to somewhere else and leading to water conflict, suddenly you have growth. The very idea of growth is based on first denying and destroying nature's economy, and then denying and destroying the sustenance economy of people. And these are the larger economies. What nature produces is so much bigger than all of our manufacturing—just see the world of pollinators, how much work they do.

One of the very early studies our foundation did, and which became the first case in India for a legal ruling on ecological grounds, was on the limestone mining in (Ber Abu ?). Limestone is usually a very, very good aquifer. But for the miners, it was just limestone. So when they took the limestone away, they said they were contributing to revenue. By the time we had got women involved in doing the studies—they mapped out the springs that had disappeared, they mapped out the water that we were losing—we did a simple calculation. Letting that mountain be was contributing 200 billion rupees worth of (?)—just letting it be. Whereas mining it out was giving a few million rupees of royalty to the government. And that's the basis on which the courts ruled—the Supreme Court of India ruled. When commerce destroys life, then commerce must stop, because life has to carry on. This is a very simple ruling, based on Article 21, the right to life article in the Indian Constitution. And I think now that the Bhutanese Constitution has the amazing concept of Gross National Happiness embodied as a fundamental right, I think all kinds of new issues flow out of it.

Agriculture, of course, is the place where you can see these contradictions come up all the time. The more growth we have when agriculture is measured in conventional terms, with that production boundary—which means that every farmer should be buying their inputs, and every farmer should be selling what they grow—then you have growth. But in the process you have indebted farmers, and we've had 200,000 farm suicides in the last decade.

Even more tragic, you have hungry farmers. For the first time humanity has achieved an amazing situation—that those who produce food can't eat it themselves. The statistics

talk about a billion people who are hungry now—more than half of them are food producers and farmers, because they are using inputs that cost a lot, they are growing commodities they have no use for—they are growing cotton, they are growing Round-Up resistant soya beans. Even if they grow rice, they must sell the rice to pay back the creditors and the moneylenders. So they don't eat it themselves. Or if they do eat it, they constantly take on new debt.

But there's a deeper debt and that's the debt to nature—the debt to nature in terms of the species destroyed, the debt to nature in terms of the use of ten times more water to produce the same amount of food—because efficiency and productivity in the growth paradigm do not measure the input of resources or energy. They only measure the human input, and treat human beings as a burden. The point is we are not short of people on this planet. Normal rationality says you maximize the productivity of the most scarce input. We are short of land, we are short of water, we are short of energy now. And that's what we should be maximizing now. But what do we have? An agricultural system that uses ten times more energy as input than the food it produces. And yesterday the Prime Minister made reference to this. And this one tenth of the energy that is embodied in food is then fed to cattle, and then we get 100th of the original energy as protein from animals. Half of the food grown in the world is now going for cattle feed. A large proportion is now going for making fuel for cars as biofuel. A tiny proportion is going to feed people.

But even that is not food anymore. Round-Up resistant soya and BT-toxin corn were never meant to be food for human beings. Because along with the growth paradigm is the paradigm of commodification—that nothing has intrinsic value, nothing needs to be evaluated for its quality, nothing needs to be evaluated for its contribution for the maintenance of ecosystems or the maintenance of our bodily health. All that matters is that something should be traded, and the commodity is totally substitutable. The same thing that goes in a car creates a diet for imprisoned animals or food for hungry people. And it's not an accident that this system has created a billion people without food on the one hand, but two billion people with diseases of poverty, obesity, and diabetes. And this too, His Excellency had addressed yesterday about the junk food diet.

I was recently in a very important debate at the FAO, and the leading scientist—not a food scientist, he's an oncologist, but everyone today has to address the food crisis—said let's just recognize that in the future we won't be growing food. We'll be eating pills. But to me the idea of not being able to relish the taste, and knowing that the body can't be cheated by pills... I long ago had a fascinating technology mission and Arun Bunker is here—he was part of that mission. Sam Pitroda came to India for that. Sam is a brilliant scientist who used to work for Bell Telephones, I think. There's a magazine called *Gentlemen*, which I don't normally read, but it was given to me, and there was a cover story about Pitroda's dream of the future. And Sam Pitroda said, "I'm going to introduce efficiency in Indian society. I think it's highly inefficient." The human being is a highly inefficient machine. Why should we go to the toilet twice a day? We should have a perfect system where we have no waste. Can you imagine constipation throughout your lifetime? I mean we are supposed to generate recycling off the energy and food of this planet.

Satish [Kumar] and I were sharing yesterday the (Gita ?) which says that everything is food—everything is something else’s food—and the food becomes rain and the rain becomes food—everything is a miraculous cycle of renewal. And we are stuck in the mechanistic idea of reality, of throughput, input–output, and if you want efficiency, stop the output. When what we need is lowering the input and maximizing the output. The earthworm does that. The earthworm is a miracle creature. The earthworm gives us more nutrition at the end of its feeding than it takes in. More phosphate, more potassium, more nutrients of every kind—which is why composting in general is such a vital value.

So we definitely need to make a very radical shift, and people here at this conference all are doing it. And I think the convergence of this is vital. So we need a new text, for sure. But how will those texts be written? I think those texts will only be written for participation. We need learning beyond the text. We need learning by doing. And that’s what the Schumacher College is about, and I think that’s what the Barefoot College is about, and that’s what we’re trying to do at Bija Vidyapeeth—to really have a learning by doing, and the learning by doing in ways that show people. And not just young people because I believe for sustainability and for Gross National Happiness, learning is something that all of us have to be engaged in—including the formal education system, but also including the everyday learning that we have to have to be active living agents.

In this learning by doing I think the key shift has to be moving away from a fossil fuel age into what I call the biodiversity age—recognizing the gifts of life we receive from the planet, having the ability to combine the best of ancient knowledge with the best of new holistic emergent (finds ?) to see how much we could do by reducing our consumption and maximizing our quality of life.

I’ll just give you three examples where we’ve got children involved. You know, Coke and Pepsi addiction is such a normal thing in our times. And because the ads are all over, including in Bhutan, kids think that this is the hep thing to drink. And one thing you can do is keep making them worry about what’s going to happen to their bones, and how they’re not going to be able to play their games. The other thing is to let them have the taste of a wonderful drink. Look at all the fruits. I remember when we didn’t have orange juice. Druk was the only orange juice and Druk was so delicious, and in my view, it’s still the most delicious—if there’s an option that is what I will order. We created a movement called Pana, which is the name for an indigenous mango drink in India, to let children taste, but we made the children talk to their grandmothers and prepare the recipes and write the recipes. A little book we have called *Pana* was written by children. And after that, suddenly pana became respectable—before it was just something that grandmothers drank at home. And I think Coke and Pepsi—now it’s cool to drink fresh lime, it’s cool to drink lassi, it’s cool to have a pana. And that shift can only happen when people start to realize that this is better. Not that it’s a punishment, but that it’s a better way to be and a better way to live.

The other—we celebrate Holi, and Holi became terribly toxic, only toxic chemical colours were used. So my director said that we’ve got to do natural colours. As children

we used natural colours. So we did the research and collected from wherever we could to get communities to prepare natural colours for Holi. And it exploded as an economy in the country. So many tiny units, including (Pune Jain ?), now produce natural colours for Holi. So it takes a tiny little trigger.

We also do a grandmothers' university, because I really believe that if you have to move from a fossil fuel age to age of biodiversity you have to talk to the people who never lived in a fossil fuel age in the first place, and who know everything about biodiversity. They know what healing plants are. They know how to cook 500 recipes out of one wild herb. That's the knowledge we can't afford to lose. And if you look at the ads in the newspapers what does the (Kellogg ?) attack—a grandmother, what does a Maggi Noodle attack—the grandmother. So the grandmother is really a resource for education for Gross National Happiness, because the grandmother thought of her children and grandchildren's happiness.

Children learn biology in school, but they don't learn biodiversity. They don't learn what's in their neighbourhood. So we work with schools to have forest walks with a grandmother. We let the children document it, because the grandmother doesn't know how to read or write. The kids are very smart at reading and writing, but they don't know how to recognize a plant. But the grandmothers can now suddenly be reservoirs. And the children came back to me and said, "We were convinced we were poor, but after we created our community biodiversity register, we suddenly realized that we have so much wealth in our village." And once they realize how important it is they say, "Now I can start doing this with this medicine plant. I can set up an ayurvedic unit, I can set up a juice unit." And economic options of our future generations start to emerge out of the gifts of nature that we are not being allowed to see, because we are being asked to only look at the oil deposits in the Middle East, over which everyone is fighting, or the coal mines. Don't look at the rest. Don't look at what's in our forests and what's in our farms and how we could make that better.

The appreciation for the natural world, as you said yesterday, Your Excellency, I think is vital. And it's vital for happiness because I personally don't think that anything is more exciting and inspiring than just sitting and being aware of the bounties of nature—a river flowing clean, a forest not destroyed, and soils rich with humus. These are nature's gifts. I'm sure in this workshop this can happen and will happen. In every one of these recognitions is a mathematics lesson, is a physics lesson, is a biology lesson, is an economics lesson, is a geography lesson, a geology lesson—take any discipline we teach. But appreciating the gifts of the natural world can teach every one of these disciplines in a richer and better way.

We were gifted in the subcontinent with the McCaulay system of education. And the McCaulay system of education basically said, "Here everyone has everything they need." Just like Bhutan today has everything you need. You can't sell them books. They won't buy them. To sell them books, you have to sell them inferiority—that what they have isn't good enough, what we bring them is more desirable. And all of the advertising on TV today is selling, not goods, but inferiority. And a vital part of the Gross National

Happiness is a sense of respect for who we are—who are ancestors were—and a sense of dignity and self-(substancy ?)—that we can produce what we need. And what we don't need, we will trade in fairness and with mutual respect, not through mutually-assured destruction. I think we are at an absolute threshold.

And thank you so much to the Education Ministry for that tiny little seed that was put into our invitation letter, because it's a metaphor of what's happening today. What the work in Bhutan is doing is creating the seed for the global human transformation that begins with the individual, expands to the community, to the country, and to the international community. The other option is the (kamasha ?) that we will witness at the formal level in Copenhagen. Of course, on the last day, all the big leaders will turn up, and will give a perfect media spin to let the world believe that something brilliant came out and now we don't have to worry. I think what the Gross National Happiness education is doing is offering the potential of a shift from cultures of carelessness to cultures of care—because we are educated in careless. We are educated in how to use fertilizer carelessly rather than compost, how to spray poison carelessly rather than do agriculture that controls pests.

And for this, we give seeds to schools and ask children to take care of them. We ask children to become seed-keepers and seed-custodians, and to just grow a plant. To have the care to grow a plant brings to education another element. And I think gardens are a place for this new education. A shift of culture from consumerism to cultures of creation and production, because everywhere we are being told it's primitive to be able to make your own clothes. Buy the cheap, horrendous things that decay in one wear. You know, you're lovely boots probably last forever. One pair of boots from China, half-a-mile walk and they're gone. Life skills and local economy skills—which means all the traditional skills because traditionally we didn't do things just for waste. We created beauty in everyday life. Satish will probably talk a lot about this. Shift from cultures of alienation and disconnection to cultures based on awareness of interconnectedness.

As the crisis grows, what I see is, in our part of the world, young girls working more and more and more to fetch water, to cope, to do those five jobs in a day to somehow bring a little income, and the boys either playing cricket or else just hanging around. And I think we need to solve this problem of boys hanging around. It definitely needs a response.

Cultures of appropriation to cultures of sharing—and that's where nature's vital gifts come in. And cultures of privatization—the patenting of seed, the privatization of water—to the cultures of the commons. I think the commons have to be a very vital part of education for Gross National Happiness. From cultures of waste to cultures of conservation, and, I think most importantly, from cultures of passive acceptance of destruction to cultures of engagement to make the shift, and cultures that generate courage to disengage from the destructive—that we call (subtere ?). And I think we need (subtere ?) in every day of our lives. And we need an education that teaches children that, ultimately, the buck stops with them. They have to make the choice of whether they will be part of destroying this planet, or whether they will part of protecting it and rejuvenating it. You are a seed bank. Just like we make community seed banks in

Navdanya, the work in Bhutan is a seed bank, a gene bank, for another world that is possible, and together we will make it happen. Thank you.

Introduction of Ivy Ang, Workshop Facilitator: Dr. Ronald (Tashi) Colman

(Dr. Colman is in the Educating for GNH Workshop organizing group and Executive Director of GPI Atlantic in Nova Scotia, Canada.)

Dr. Shiva will be with us all day, so during the tea breaks and lunch break there is an extraordinary opportunity to engage with her personally. I'd just like to say that Dr. Shiva has been one of my global heroes for many, many years. She is not only a brilliant physicist, but she is one who is not afraid to bring her work down to earth, and to work literally in the trenches. Last night watching Dr. Shiva and His Excellency the Prime Minister engaging on the stage, I thought that if one of the things that comes out of this workshop is just that—these two extraordinary human beings and these two extraordinary minds connecting together—then there is hope for the world. So I genuinely hope that this connection that was created last night on the stage continues for many, many years.

We're going to move now directly into the actual meat of the workshop. Dr. Shiva will be with us all day as part of that—by the way, in terms of what Dr. Shiva said at the beginning—I have some sense of what she went through to get here, and what she gave up. It's really an acknowledgement of the potential of this workshop that she put aside three major conferences to come here. So I really want to thank you so much.

We're going to go right to the trenches and begin our workshop endeavour together. In doing so, I'd like to introduce our workshop facilitator. Our facilitator has a lifetime of experience in working with large organizations in a transition from vision to implementation and practical action. That's what she does. She moves them from a vision and a goal to how to put it into action. So it seems that we could not find someone with a better skill set than Ivy Ang to facilitate this workshop.

I had the pleasure of witnessing her in action earlier this year. She's been a close student of Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche for many, many years, and she was requested by him to facilitate a gathering of the world's top Tibetan to English translators from all around the world—most of whom who had never met together, each of whom does remarkable work, but each of whom has their own particular teacher and their own lineage—Gelugpa, Nyingma, or Kagyu, or Sakya, or a whole bunch of other things—and are literally living in their own silos. An extraordinary group of people—brilliant—but to get them to work together was difficult. And Ivy brought that week-long gathering of this very disparate group of people, most of whom had never met, to a week that ended with one of the most extraordinary and historical undertakings that centuries from now will go down in history. This is because this group of people agreed to translate the entire Buddhist literary heritage into English—an amazing undertaking. Only a tiny fraction of that heritage currently exists in English—maybe 5%. The entire Kangyur, the entire Tengyur, and not only as an aspiration, but as a plan, with commitments, with pledges, who's going to do what, who's going to translate what next, how are they going to work

together. An organization now exists to make that happen—a one-year goal, a five-year goal, a 10-year goal, and a 25-year goal.

And when His Excellency had the vision for this particular workshop, he saw that's what we need—a one-year goal, a five-year goal, a 10-year goal. Ivy has the capacity to do that, but she's going to be tough, so please don't blame her. Blame me because I asked her to come. But in order to move from the realm of conceptuality to the realm of action is going to require some tough movement forward. She's remarkably skilled in this and I think we could not be in better hands. So she'll be centre stage, and from now on, all the direction will come from her. So she's kind of the boss. Please give her your cooperation throughout the week. I'm very delighted and honoured to welcome Ivy Ang to lead our workshop for the week.

Introductory remarks: Ivy Ang, Facilitator

Thank you, Dr. Tashi.

I'm really quite gentle so don't be scared. Your Excellency and everyone, welcome to our very first day together in circle [*All of the participants were seated in a circle in the middle of the room. The observers were seated outside of the circle, on three sides of the room.*] I feel so blessed to be here with all of you today. And I have a profound sense of gratitude to the leaders of Bhutan for making this gathering a reality. And to each and every one—participants and observers alike—in this room, I thank you for your time, energy, and your open heart.

We have an extremely ambitious agenda, and I think we heard His Excellency say that he will use you mercilessly—so will I. In that sense, we're fierce. We do have that sense because we are embarking on a great adventure. Bhutan has a very, very bold vision—Gross National Happiness is a revolutionary idea for the world. And it reminds me of Martin Luther King who said, "I have a dream. I have a dream." Or simply John Lennon's song, "Imagine there are no countries, nothing to kill or die for." So Bhutan's Gross National Happiness imagines that, and today we begin that imagination of *how*. I think the *what* has been defined, pretty much. So we begin that wonderful journey with you all. I am not the boss—you are. We are going to co-create that together.

So let us, in the next five days, model some of the basic values of Gross National Happiness. Let us listen to each other deeply, suspend our judgment as much as possible. Let us speak courageously and authentically from our hearts, like Dr. Shiva, and with respect. Let us unlearn, deconstruct, and learn together. And let us take care of each other as we would like our children to do every day—in the next five days, because our journey is as important as our end goal.

With that, I'd just like to say a few words about the circle. Intuitively I feel a lot of you are very familiar with this. We have the concentric inner circle of the participants who will actively co-create the concrete plan by Saturday. And we also have the outer circle of

the very important observers who will also have their perspective. And so I would like to, at this point, join the circles in terms of some basic rules for the participants and observers.

Before I do that, I'm so sorry, I have two partners here to help me—Meg Hart who will be assisting me in some of the breakout groups, and Kevin Ang who is the graphic reporter for the information you will be able to see on the LCD screens as we proceed through the workshop. Can everybody see one screen or the other, including the observers?

Ivy next described the guidelines for participants and observers, which included the following:

Guidelines for participants

1. All cell phones (including on vibrate) and electronic equipment must be turned off during workshop, to create a safe and open space in the circle.
2. No photography when workshop is in session.
3. We will use first names, except for the Prime Minister and Education Minister, and please wear name tags at all times.
4. Please speak one at a time, and we have to give you the mike.
5. Please pay attention to the time signal from the facilitator, which she will try to do infrequently. This means to please wrap-up your point to give others a change to speak. The role of the facilitator is to move us to the end goals.
6. Except for emergencies, all participants are expected to attend all sessions.

***Media:** Ivy then asked for information on the video recording process. Dahlia Colman, media relations coordinator, said that the recording was for archival purposes and that the participants should not be concerned about the footage being aired widely. Print and radio journalists would be present during some proceedings, but all other video and film journalists will only be at specific events such as the opening and closing ceremonies.*

Ivy suggested that the following guidelines for observers—who will play a very important role—were necessary because she could not facilitate 200 people. However, the observers will also be able to discuss the issues in breakout groups, and submit their opinions in writing, and the Education Ministry will take all of these into consideration. In fact, this will give Bhutan two sets of input. (What actually happened during the workshop, however, was that the work the observers did was so valuable that many of the observer groups were asked to give presentations—along with the participant groups—to the plenary group.)

Guidelines for observers

1. Observers will be listening, observing, witnessing, and holding the circle energy.

2. Please do not participate or ask questions during the sessions.
3. Attendance is optional.
4. Observers will have their own breakout groups upstairs.
5. Except for emergencies, please enter and leave only during breaks, not during sessions.

Ivy asked if there were any questions about the guidelines, but there were none. She then suggested that they move right to the program.

Getting to Know Each Other

The approximately 50 participants spent the next part of the session until tea break getting to know each other. Each of them offered responses to two questions, which were placed on the screens:

1. *On behalf of Bhutan, what's the **one** outcome you would like to see by the end of Saturday?*
2. *Please share something about yourself that is not on your biography and is not about your work, which lights you up and makes you happy.*

Ivy explained that the purpose of this action was to put the voice of each participant into the circle “so that we begin to open up to each other and understand a little bit about who we are and who we are being in the circle.” The participants were asked to give their first name before answering the questions.

In the beginning one of the participants used the time to expound on this views, which prompted Ivy to repeat the instructions and ask the participants to answer the two questions as succinctly as they could, adding, “There is a reason to my madness.”

A few of the (slightly edited) responses are given below to illustrate this process.

- My name is Gregory Cajete and I'm a Tewa Indian from Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico. Being very much in the spirit of Bhutan in this place, I would like to see the creation of a mandala of process that clearly visualizes, in a very succinct way, what needs to happen to create and deliver the Gross National Happiness curriculum into the country. And what I would like to share about what lights me up is walking along my river, which is the Rio Grande river—one of the widest rivers in the southwest— and watching the process of life as it unfolds within the context of that very beautiful place, which is similar to many beautiful places here in Bhutan.
- My name is Tshering from the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature. Because

I have an environmental background, I would like to see an environmental outcome at the end... I would also like to see the Buddhist ethics and philosophy entered into the education system of Bhutan, if not *how*, at least to see that the process is started at the end of the workshop. What makes me happy is that I'm a nature photographer, so when I'm up on a high pass and am very close to nature photographing flowers, that's the happiest time.

- Good morning. My name is Steve and I'm from the Shambhala School in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I think I would just very simply say that I would hope that the Ministry feels that something practical and useful that can actually be implemented comes out of this particular workshop. But I would also add to that I hope that whatever collective and bond is formed and level of communication that is established within this group would continue beyond this workshop, so that when it's finished, we don't just disperse to the four directions and wonder whatever became of that. So I hope there will be some continuation. In terms of something that makes me happy, I would say, personally, a genuine and simple connection with nature and the earth—I love to dig in the dirt, to make things, grow things, and just having that sustainable notion in my personal life is a real source of happiness for me.
- My name is Deki Pema and I'm with the Election Commission. I share the belief that this is a very important and vital workshop and milestone on the journey and I hope that at the end of this week that we will have a pragmatic and practical roadmap that we can all relate to, and we know what is coming next and what our own contributions are going to be. The second one—this is not something that I get to do very often, but last month I went on a pilgrimage. I went to two very sacred places in eastern Bhutan—one where we had to walk three days to get there, and the other where we had to walk two days to get there. Both of these place are just amazing—the energy is so vital, pure, and alive. And we have practitioners—spiritual people on the path—who've been there 17 or 18 years and who are committed for a lifetime. I felt really reassured and warmed by the thought that our small country has the opportunity to pursue the spiritual path in that manner. And then when I come to this workshop and see that we have this effort being put in, in so many ways—it's so beautiful and heartwarming. And that's something that I really wanted to share. Thank you.
- My name is Shenphen and I work primarily with youth in Bhutan, particularly with drug addicts and HIV-positive people. What I would like to see is Bhutan's curriculum for youth being rooted in the tradition of Buddhist values, so when they travel to other places such as New York, London, Taipei that they stand out, that they are not overwhelmed by materialism, but they can be world citizens. That when they travel and study overseas they can be shining examples to the world because they are rooted in their values. What lights me up, I was going to tell Deki, is a cup of nice coffee in the morning—organic, of course, and locally grown. But I think it's seeing the youth that I've seen as drug addicts on the streets, coming to rehab and coming out clean and finding a job. Looking out of a shop in Thimphu

and seeing them walking along the street and smiling because they have their lives back, and society's caring for them and looking out for them, and that we are not stigmatizing them, and they are being integrated into society. So just looking out a window of a coffee shop, seeing the youth that I saw two or three months or half a year ago taking drugs and lost in the world, walking along smiling and influencing others positively—that lights me up.

- **Honourable Prime Minister:** By the end of Saturday, I would like to see all of our distinguished participants from abroad drained out, exhausted, but deeply satisfied having inspired and having left a set of clear guidelines for the Minister of Education, for the Secretary of Education, for the various members of the Education Ministry, and in particular, for the curriculum experts and the officials in terms of how GNH values can be infused and embedded into our curricula—a very clear set of guidelines. A little ambitious, but I hope we can achieve that. In terms of what lights me up, what I do every morning is open my window into my garden, and I get lit up by the fruits of my labour, enjoying the beauty of nature that is in my garden, and, as my friend here, has said, I love to see people smiling and holding hands. My wife says that holding hands is something to be done in private, but I like to see it being done in public too.

Tea break

Session 2 – Vision and goals

Morning, after tea break

Facilitator: We're running a little bit late, and I think we can catch up. The next part is reviewing the long-term vision and the short-term goals. First, we want to thank everyone who responded to the pre-workshop survey, the five questions—that really helped a lot. And for those who didn't, we still thank you for your energy, holding those five questions. Again, Dr. Tashi has done a great job working with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education.

The vision part could be the easy part for us, really, because a lot of work has been done pre-workshop. So let us review the 25-year vision together, which is on the screens.

25-year Vision – draft

The principles and values of Gross National Happiness are deeply embedded in the consciousness of Bhutanese youth. These youth will see reality clearly, will not be trapped by the lure of materialism, and will care deeply for others and for the natural world.

That is the long-term vision of 25 years. If you substantially have no comments—and we are not here to wordsmith for the Kingdom of Bhutan, though they may want to

wordsmith it—if you all think this is good to go for the 25-year vision, then we will move on. So, I'll pause for any substantive comments at this point.

Participant comments on the 25-year vision included:

- Students should be involved in imagining new possibilities going beyond the materialistic world.
- In 25 years the youth will be adults so we should say “Bhutanese people”.
- In 25 years time it will be too late and the target time needs to be shorter.

Facilitator: Let me just say this on behalf of the Bhutanese leaders who approved these statements. The vision is really just the aspiration out there, longer term, and the steps coming down are really important. So perhaps what we should do is keep going down to one year, and then come back up to see if it meshes together. So let's do that.

10-year Vision – draft

In 10 years Bhutan's entire education system, from kindergarten through tertiary level, effectively transmits deep critical thinking and reasoning, ecological literacy, the wisdom of the country's profound, ancient culture, contemplative learning, a holistic understanding of the world, and genuine care of nature and for others.

Do we have substantive comments that would fundamentally alter this?

After each comment, Ivy said that the substantive comment was “duly noted” or “recorded”. She also mentioned that the comments would be taken back to the Bhutanese leaders, and that she wanted to remind everyone that it was the decision of the Bhutanese leaders that we do this exercise, and that we give them substantive input to change the statements. Later she reminded people that, at this point, they should still be focused on the larger picture—the “what”—rather than the “how”. She commented that, for the most part, participants seemed to be in agreement with the 25-year vision, but that there were more suggestions for the 10-year vision.

Some of the participant comments on the 10-year vision included:

- Should we only include school-age children? I think we need to address the society as a whole. As a teacher, it is difficult to teach children if the whole society doesn't address this vision.
- Perhaps the media should be added because it has a strong influence, is mainly concerned with profits, and is going in the opposite direction of education. How can Bhutan change this?
- The words “and service” added after “genuine care” would give a more active component.

- I'm not comfortable with the word “transmit”, which is directional. It implies that values are injected into the children, rather than that learning values happens in an environment that evokes the values.
- I would add the words “deep commitment to participatory democracy”.
- Karma Tshiteem, Secretary of the GNH Commission, said that the statement doesn't capture the vocational model, or the monastic and other forms of education. He also said that they should be careful with mainstream educational experiments, and that they should try some of the suggestions such as including meditation in the classrooms in a few schools for one or two years and then evaluate its success, because experimenting with mainstream education could be disastrous.
- Vandana Shiva said that the Secretary had made a good point about including all forms or multiple channels of education, and that all of them need to be addressed, including the everyday learning in society. The monasteries actually transmit Buddhist values, and their inclusion would add to the symmetry. Vocational learning is also important in teaching life skills—how to live and create work and value to society—and it should be at the heart of education, rather than treated as secondary.
- One participant said that he thought the vision should include being mindful of one's actions and a realization of interdependence, so that students would realize that their actions affect others and their own happiness.
- Michael Rutland noted that a multiparty democracy can change, and the educational system should equip children with the skills needed to make choices. Young people should have the skills to make the very important choices in the interests of GNH.
- A monastic commented that in the monastery they have both the ultimate goal of enlightenment and the conventional, relative truth, which would correspond to GNH. In order to achieve that, the monastery includes three wisdoms: wisdom of learning, contemplation, and meditation. He said that he was not asking people to go to the monastery, but this mind-training is very important, and it is very important to train the young mind in these three wisdoms.
- One participant suggested that they add the word “creative” so that it reads “critical and creative thinking and reasoning”, because it is important for students to have the imagination and creativity to create new possibilities we cannot dream of now.
- Satish Kumar commented that the emphasis seemed to be on head, and that if we could include head, heart, and hand, that would create a balance.
- Greg Cajete commented that one of the important elements that needs to be explicit is the element of structure or orientation, and that he hoped—as a first step—that

the group could create a mandala of process since that construction is key to a lot of organizational issues that are coming up from the various perspectives. The mandala would clarify what is in the centre, such as Buddhist thought and perspective in a contemporary sense, and orient it within the four directions, which would illuminate how to structure the vision, curriculum, etc.

- GNH is at the core of the educational system, but students also need practical competence, and the economic development pillar, which is not in the text, is also important to a comprehensive vision.
- David Orr said he had two points. This first was it seems that you have to make a choice about basic pedagogy—whether it’s drawing the child out or educating with what’s referred to as the “banking model”. So you have a choice to make—what is this child who comes into the school? Typically if they are well-fed and well-attended, they are happy and school makes them miserable. So there is a choice here of what the child is.

The second point is that in the western view, critical thinking is very important and comes in part from people like Francis Bacon, the great philosopher and theorist of science, who thought that we ought to be about the “affecting of all things possible”. So, it seems that the world has abandoned the tried and true—that science can affect radical change in the nature of biology and biological systems, but then it’s done. And we now stand poised and ready to do all kinds of other things. That’s critical thinking run amok. So the second issue here is not critical thinking. Rather, it’s thinking critically about the act of thinking itself. That’s another step beyond, and people can begin to reflect on reflecting mind itself.

- Art-ong Jumsai Na Ayudhya said that teachers, who are already burdened, must be very worried with adding too many new things, so he’d like to suggest that we could keep it simple. Simply call the whole thing GNH, then impregnate GNH into the curriculum, and let the curriculum be directed by the Ministry of Education—what is needed for this country, whether it be the economy or ecology or so on—all that can be in GNH.
- A national participant commented that when we talk about GNH we are talking about four pillars of equal footing, and when we implement it, the social economic policy should not dictate the whole policy. So we need to understand that.

Ivy said that she had an observation to make. She thought that the participants were trying to re-create a 10-year vision with 50 people, and that that is impossible. It is not something that she knows how to do, unless there are five days to craft a vision. Our charge is not to re-do the basic vision. It might take ten other workshops to deal with systemic changes to the educational system. Also, she did not think that the Prime Minister wanted them to spend the next day, even, to completely re-do the vision. She promised, however, to take all of the input, which is substantive and valuable and noted, back to the Prime Minister. The organizers will come back to plenary with final vision

statements that have incorporated some key participant ideas. They now have some alignment on the 25-year vision, and a lot of input on the 10-year vision. She then suggested that they move down to the shorter visions so that they can get to the next steps, including an understanding of how GNH values are lived.

- Satish Kumar said that he found the discussion to be very helpful and he wanted to make a few comments that he thought would be relevant: Gross National Happiness here must not be “goody-goody”. It must be relevant, particularly when Bhutan is entering into democracy, because students must be taught to make a choice. But it must not be the western way of democracy—full of corruption and lies. In the Buddhist manner, it is through small deeds. You don’t have to advertise Buddhism as a religion, but as an awakening. We are working in a capitalistic society—we cannot help it. But even within capitalistic societies there are changes happening that are tremendously moving, such as top business people caring about the environment, labour force, colleagues, and meditation. GNH is happening at the right time and needs to look at alternative political, economic, and intellectual pursuits that have been dominated by the West. Ultimately, it has to be liberation of the self, and this is where Buddhism is very strong if you want to prepare educated students especially for democracy. Don’t deny the Buddhist help there—you have to bring the essence of the teachings of Buddhism that are relevant. There are many Buddhist studies in the West, but Bhutan could be the centre of Buddhist studies. As well, education at the lower levels ultimately has to be spiritual.

Facilitator: Thank you. Shall we move on to the 5-year vision and take a collective look at it?

5-year Vision – draft

Bhutan’s school system has excellent curricula, classroom materials, and well-trained teachers in all the above areas.

This refers back to the 10-year vision, and “all of the above areas” refers to “deep critical thinking and reasoning, ecological literacy, the wisdom of the country’s profound, ancient culture, contemplative learning, a holistic understanding of the world, and genuine care of nature and for others.” This is kind of the concept down to the 5-year goal. Would you like to comment on this?

The participant comments on the 5-year vision included:

- Zenobia Barlow commented that she had taken Greg’s suggestion and made a mandala that arrayed the 10-goals, and in the past, traditional dimension the critical thinking, ecological literacy, contemplative learning, wisdom, ancient culture was very deep. But in the present dimension—the action, materialization, actualization domain—there was almost nothing practical. We haven’t really envisioned what the embodiment could be. In community and relationship, there is always genuine care for others, but we haven’t really posited a social domain. Satish suggested

awakening Buddhism as a participatory or other variety of democracy. So I would say that in the community domain and in the policy and actual practical domain, we haven't really clarified and articulated our goal.

- Satish asked in five years, which is the time of action, what are the strengths of Bhutan that can be unfolded? Right livelihood, which is a Buddhist idea that has economic and all the things in it, could have a key role in the centre, and could move the western economic ideas of getting jobs, etc., which has failed, away from the capitalist and socialist systems to something much more Bhutanese. So in the goal statements, he would like to put something of the nature of right livelihood—which has charity, economic, etc. in it—that is something more essentially Bhutanese than what we have.
- Vandana Shiva said that very often the remark is that you need competence, but in the search for competence there are kids who are never going to find employment, and they are made to believe that there is employment. So the issue of right livelihood is the path for development too. It's not just the path for caring for nature and others, it's the path for appropriate development in all countries now, even in America. They are not generating jobs either.
- Cheryl Charles commented that one concept that is missing in the goals is the idea of the “learning environment”—we need the places and the spaces.
- Michael Rutland said: I would rather have excellent teachers teaching a bad curriculum, than have poor teachers teaching a good curriculum. So I would like to put the emphasis on the outcomes for this week on what can we do to help teachers become better teachers. No matter what initiatives come out of this workshop, we need to remember that they are mediated to the students through the teachers, not—with great respect—through educational administrators, educationists, or the government. If well-trained teachers are not there, what hope is there for success for any initiatives that come from this week? Therefore, I would like to ask that a lot of focus goes on the teachers. I know there are principals here, but I thought it would be rather nice to see some real teachers sitting in this circle.
- Zenobia commented that, after having created an education for GNH mandala, one thing she noticed that is missing is ecodesign. How are we going to apply this ecological and Buddhist understanding to technology, and what technologies are Bhutan going to choose? It's going to shape the future of this country and its landscape, so making smart and wise decisions about what you construct here and how you use energy, I think is going to be a critical educational strategy.
- Mark Mancall recommended that the 5-year, 10-year, and 25-year words should be changed to “steps”, because Bhutan is a poor country. The kind of material resources required for any one of the stages was beyond the ability of anyone in the room to ante-up, and that the stages will be dictated by what the resources will be at any given time. Keeping the wording as it is will raise expectations that Bhutan will

not be able to achieve in that period of time.

- Satish commented again: I think we should de-professionalize teachers. This idea of professionalized teachers is an industrial, capitalist idea. If you really want educational happiness, then Bhutanese people have lots and lots of very good teachers—there are elders, parents, farmers, craftspeople, and we have to think in terms of apprenticeships. There is no need for professional, certificate-holding teachers. We have many credentialed teachers in England, and they are lousy teachers. And elders who have experience of life, you can select them. Vandana Shiva organizes a grandmothers’ university. They have a lot of wisdom.

Facilitator: Thank you. I think some of these ideas are really great and we are going to put them in the container. We must have a session on teachers. I hear you, but we must separate the “what” from the “how”, so let us finish the “what”—whether we call them steps, goals, visions, we can decide that later.

- I’m concerned about the issue of access, and I’m not clear whether equal access for all people is embedded in these goals.

Facilitator: OK, so let us have the word “access” to propose.

- I have a problem with the term “well-trained”, which sounds too mechanistic, and would like to propose using the words whole and wise teachers, I think it would be more in the spirit of Gross National Happiness.

Facilitator: OK, to summarize, we have from the mandala to the simple, embedding GNH to all the other good ideas that we have taken in both for 10 and 5 years. Oh sorry, there is one more hand.

- A national participant commented: I was thinking that before we discuss these texts of the idea of 25-year vision and so on, we have to come to some agreement of what GNH means. We have different definitions and meanings of that. So we need to understand what the values and principles of GNH are. Right now I think we are jumping to the next step assuming that we all define GNH in the same way.

Facilitator: Thank you. I think you are absolutely correct. I think we should complete the 3-year and 1-year goals and start the GNH discussion. My warning is just that we are not going on to a complete discussion of something so broad that we cannot handle. It need to be concentrated on education and understanding the context. Let’s do the 3-year and 1-year visions:

3-year Vision – draft

Development of curricula and classroom materials in the above areas are in partial use in 50% of Bhutan schools, 50% of Bhutan teachers have received effective training in these areas.

1-year Vision – draft

Multi-year funding from international development agencies has been secured for project implementation and pilot testing for curricula, classroom materials, and teacher training has begun in three example schools (urban and rural).

So this relates to how do we get funding to do whatever plans we have developed? This is 1-year and is fairly intuitive.

- UNICEF representative Gepke Hingst: I have one comment to make about intention. In the goal or vision, there is not much about child participation in it. A child is not an empty box, and you might want to reflect inherent knowledge children have themselves.

Facilitator: Thank you. I think we need to wrap up before lunch. And if you have any other comments, we can come back to it.

Announcements were fairly lengthy and included:

Please don't think that anything will be glossed over, because everything is being recorded in a number of ways, and there will be a detailed study of everything that is said in this room, so every remark is important.

Session 3 – Experience of GNH Values and principles

After lunch

Facilitator: The next topic is dialogue on GNH principles and values—what are they? We are going to start this session with hearing stories of how GNH is currently lived in Bhutan. So we would like to particularly invite the Bhutanese participants to start by sharing your thoughts on that. It could be a story or just your thoughts on how is it being felt and lived today in Bhutan. We would also particularly like to hear the point of view of the students.

- *Dewan (student) spoke first, but, unfortunately, his comment was not audible.*
- Dorji (student) commented that GNH means having inner peace. When someone asked her recently, as a student, what is GNH, she said, “Taking away exams would be GNH for me.” GNH is reflected everywhere and she wants a learning environment where students can feel happy and satisfied from the inside.
- One participant said that GNH means having an end of, or a reduction in, suffering. Anything that increases suffering is a reduction of GNH. In order to have happiness, it has to be enjoyed personally by mind, by the inner self. Therefore, in

order to have happiness, we have to know more about ourselves. Then we can help others. If you have more anger within yourself, it reflects in the world in larger ways, which can then produce results like global warming. The pride element reflects on the water element and brings floods. If there is more desire then the mind is disturbed and that reflects on the heart element, which is shaken, and this also brings suffering. To explain further, of course, would take much more time.

- The next participant commented that there are two kinds of happiness. One is temporary and one is permanent—complete liberation. But we are not talking about that. Gross National Happiness is based on certain things. If individuals are happy, then all people are happy. It is most important for the individual person to first try to understand the nature of his or her own mind and to experience happiness, and then we can expand to others. So I try to understand myself, the nature of my mind, and experience the happiness. The nature of my mind is no different from the minds of all of us here. It is like illusion, like watching TV—we see colours and experience fear. When the TV is off, there is nothing else. It is the same thing with the mind. If you check, it is empty. We are waiting for something to drop from the emptiness. Life is like TV—all illusive, not real. But this is mistaken by many of us. We hold onto this as real and permanent. But it is not permanent and not independent. Because of this mistake, we are all falling into *samsara*. If we realize this we develop compassion, and then we can have happiness in the world. But if we just straight away try to bring global happiness, it is not possible. We have to know our mind—what is our mind. If you do not know your own mind, then you do not know anyone’s mind, and then happiness is far away.
- Another participant said, “I don’t know if this has to do with Gross National Happiness. I come from a remote village. My experience of GNH is the joy that I share with my village. I lost my father when I was 6, but my mother and many families in the village helped to send me to school. There were a lot of expectations, and I tried my best. Now when I go back to the village, or whenever my people come to see me, there is much joy and happiness and I give what I can. We eat together and share ideas. It gives me happiness. This is a type of happiness. It is not happiness because I have things. The people in the village have joy when they see me, and know that I did well and that they helped. It gives them pride that I am from their village. And that makes me happy and that kind of happiness is leaning toward what we call GNH.”
- GNH on a national level is absence of disease, poverty, and war. If these three are not taking place in the country, then that is happiness. On an individual level, if one is not ill and is well, if one is wealthy in the sense that one can survive, and if one is living harmoniously with friends and family, that is individual happiness. Happiness comes from a positive mental attitude and is based on the altruistic mind that we call compassion. The other thing is not harming others, non-violence. So GNH is a based on how we can preserve and promote this kind of altruistic mind, and share that with the rest of the world.

- The next participant said that he would like to give a little of the background of GNH: Individual happiness leads to collective happiness and this can be explained in the story of the four friends, who were honest and respected each other and whose actions led to happiness in their region. In the same way, His Majesty, the fourth King defined GNH in this way. As a practitioner and a member of the monastic body, my experience and studies link this special developmental philosophy to what is known as the dual system of governance started by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in the early 17th century when he codified the laws and set up the system of governance in the country. What he said is that happiness has to be developed in each individual. The idea behind that for a monk or nun is that the focus should not be totally on the individual forever. They have to work for the community, and for the people, and the country, and they have to put the interests of these areas before themselves. Monks need to work on their own path, but monks also work for the country by performing religious ceremonies and looking at the needs of the people. On the other hand, the civil servants and politicians also have to work with Buddhist dharma values—human values of compassion, loving kindness, and giving benefit to others. By having these qualities in oneself and serving the government and the people, the system is imbedded each individual. So when each individual has that value system, that produces collective happiness in the country.
- Art-ong commented: I must congratulate the young lady who said happiness in GNH is inner peace. I think that is the best definition of happiness in GNH. Happiness has many meanings. Real happiness must be inner peace—it must come from within. So how are we going to achieve that? When we say, “I want peace”, in order to have peace we have to get rid of the “I” and the “want” and then we will have peace. When we have attachment to ego—the “I”, we blame everything else. If we are angry and don’t like something, we say, for example, it is the oxygen that makes us angry, or the carbon dioxide. But it is only vibration of air. We don’t need to get angry anymore if we don’t have the word “I” or ego attachment. Then we become humble and peaceful. Then we have the word “want”. The more we want and the more desire we have, the more disappointment we will have in our life. Without that desire there will be less want and less disappointment. So when you get rid of the desire, you have inner peace, and that is the real happiness in GNH.

Facilitator: The question still remains. How are GNH values lived in Bhutan by the local people?

- Michael Rutland told a story of his early years in Bhutan when he agonized over packing six chests to take back to England—only three of which eventually arrived. Then he noticed that his teacher had only packed a very small satchel, and said, “What else do I need?” The story illustrated the truth of impermanence and the understanding that nothing lasts forever, including material possessions—an understanding important to realizing the values that are important. He also thought that suffering was a fact of life and that children needed to be taught how to deal with suffering and failure. He would often build failure into his classes so students

could learn this lesson. He commented that people in Bhutan help each other a lot. For example, when someone dies, family and friends come together to help someone deal with the grief of their loss. Civil servants at their office gather around and take collections for the cremation, the Ministry might lend vehicles for the cremation, and so forth. Finally, he said that students who study in England are often anxious to return to Bhutan, but not for any higher level of material comfort. When asked why they want to go back, they say for family, friends, and the red-hot chillies.

- The next participant said that, to his mind, GNH is about putting policies in place to create an environment where people have access to basic facilities—homes to call their own, free health and education systems. It is also about strong family bonds that they have in Bhutan, the peace and security they enjoy, and trying inculcate in the people a strong civic sense and spirit of volunteerism. As Mahatma Gandhi said, “There is enough in this world to meet everyone’s need, but there is not enough in this world to meet everyone’s greed.”
- The next participant commented: Gross National Happiness from my personal perspective is authentic in the sense that it is not your individual happiness that we are talking about. When we are increasing the Gross National Happiness in the country, we are thinking about everybody else. Thinking about others comes first. In terms of GNH, we should take care of others, and that is an application of GNH. Hydropower might not make financial sense, but it has made many people happy and that makes sense, so perhaps the investment was worth it. So His Majesty the fourth King was thinking in a Gross National Happiness way.
- I was on a visit to one of our primary schools in our community. I asked a little child, “What are you going to do after your studies?” She said, “I’m going to play.” The best thing I could do was retreat as fast as possible.

At this point, Bunker Roy said that he’d like to present some provocative challenges to the Education Minister. He said that a lot of us are looking to Bhutan for answers to the future and hope that Bhutan won’t go down the same path as a lot of other countries. This is the time to make some fundamental changes to the system so that Bhutan can be a model for the rest of the world. He commented that globally, after studying in university, students don’t want to go back to their villages. So you have to have an educational system that makes people proud to go back, and not feel that it is a punishment. Is it possible to turn the whole educational system around to make sure people want to go back? For example, the gentleman who talked about his village being proud of him didn’t go back to live in his village. Maybe the Education Minister can tell us how to make people proud to go back.

The second issue that Bunker thought was very important was certification and how to get rid of this big problem:—Why do people need a certificate to be happy? Unfortunately, happiness for students is presently too closely linked to certification.

The third issue was a plea not to equate what is happening with GNH in rural areas with what is happening in urban areas. Happiness in rural areas is when you can have medical facilities and lights in a village. This is the immediate happiness we can address and it is crucial.

The Hon. Education Minister remarked that the answer to Mr. Roy's three questions is dependent upon the outcome of the workshop, and that he hoped these questions will be answered by the end of the workshop. Later in the workshop the Hon. Education Minister addressed the three questions directly.

- The next national participant who spoke had been a teacher in Bhutan for 33 years. For her, GNH was a state of being that includes belief systems and values. GNH is peace, which comes from inside—from the thought process and mind. Everything comes from mind. When she has attended GNH workshops in the past, she has gone back to her school wondering how to instil this into the students. She didn't know if she'd been successful, but one of the students was recently asked what he planned to do after school. He answered that he wanted to be an educated farmer and go back to his village. And that was part of GNH.
- Aum Pek Dorji said that she thought a cover story on a magazine called *Material World* quite a few years ago expressed GNH. There was a picture of an American family with all of their many possessions displayed outside on their lawn, and one of a Bhutanese family with all of their possessions displayed. The Bhutanese family had an altar, a cow, and very few other things, but they didn't seem to be unhappy. Now progress has changed so that, especially in urban areas, people want more things. Also the television has moved into the altar room and people are devoting less time to traditional spiritual practice and more time to watching television. Now women think they are the wrong shape and size, not smart enough, not middle-class enough. For Pek, GNH is confidence, expansion of mind, and lack of fear, in the Buddhist sense of warriorship. She gave an example of the boom in filmmaking after television was introduced. Teachers, students, workshop-owners, and others suddenly thought that they could make films, and they did it without fear and without the need of a certificate. This also has been changing as more certification is required. People now think they have to be graduates. Also, there is a great deal of money and effort going into building a wonderful university infrastructure, but more emphasis needs to be placed on the early years of education.

Sonam Wanchuk, international participant, commented that in Ladakh the experience is very similar to that in Bhutan. Young people in the villages often feel inferior and not happy because they compare themselves with people in the city—people in the city are happy and they are ignorant. One way that has really made an impact—that is helping to change this in parts of Ladakh—has been to demystify the working school system, which has produced mass failure. To help the village young people regain their confidence, they hold youth camps that help the students see that the people in the city have their own problems such as the environment and families breaking down, and that help them appreciate what they have in the villages. They have a day where students meet western

tourists, who help to demystify what students think is in the West. This helps them to understand what is going wrong in the world and to appreciate what they have, and makes them more confident and at peace with themselves. This is very important in helping to make young people happy. About 95% of those who come to the youth camps have previously failed 10th grade exams, but they become more confident very quickly after the camp experience. Some have seen that they could achieve what they want to do, and have gone on to become great journalists, filmmakers, administrators, etc. They realize that they are not that poor, and others are not that bright. So that demystification brings confidence and happiness.

- A national participant said that the workshop discussions made it seem almost as if, in order to have a GNH society, they have to have people who are enlightened. But if they can have an educational system that gives people the ability to see “enlightened self-interest”, then people can make choices. For him, GNH is very simply the Bhutanese way of life, not just in Thimphu, but a way of life in villages as well. It includes important things like respect for the wellbeing of elders—the wellbeing of my mother and how happy she is. It is also coming together in times of hardship, naturally sharing warm hospitality, deciding to give something no matter what you have. We are in danger of losing these qualities when we take on the western individualistic model. But we hope we can retain the good values we have received from our parents, while also taking the good things that modernization has to offer.
- Another national participant said that to him, GNH is being content with what you have, inner peace, and being sensitive to traditions and the culture. In his large village in central Bhutan people wanted electricity so that they could work longer hours on the farm. When they had electricity then they wanted rice cookers, water boilers, and food cookers so that it would be easier for them to cook their food. Then they wanted TVs, refrigerators, and a farm road. After that they wanted the farm road to be paved with cobblestones, and then they wanted power tillers, because the neighbour was buying a power tiller. They pressured the city to give them what they wanted. Now that the road has cobblestones, some of the villagers have bought cars and others want them. It would be wrong to think that happiness is still there in rural areas. If you ask rural people what they want they will tell you they want televisions, cars, and all these things. Human desires, whether in rural or urban areas, have no end. So GNH is trying to be satisfied with what you have and not being greedy.
- Michael Rutland, saying that he was taking courage from Mr. Roy in bringing up difficult questions, commented that he believes that the whole issue of certification in Bhutan is a big problem. He thinks that the examination system is designed to produce failure. He said that the primary purpose of exams is to sift out the small minority of those students who can go on from class 10 to 11, and from class 12 to university. Those who cannot do so experience a sense of failure. Parents will sacrifice an enormous amount to pay to send their children to private schools so their children can be successful. This produces a high proportion of students who

have a loss of their own personal wealth. He'd love to see the school system stop talking about class 10 "dropouts"—an appalling word—then children think of themselves as dropouts. At the end of class 10, actually the child has been taught to do nothing except how to move on to class 11, and similarly class 12 students have been taught to do very little except how to move on to university. The whole attitude is far too focused on certification. For example, no matter how able you are, how much wisdom you have, how well regarded you are in your local community, you cannot even be a candidate for the national assembly unless you have a university degree. When I questioned this I was told, "Ah well, if somebody has a university degree, they will not be so open to corruption."

Facilitator: Thank you all for courageously speaking from your heart. I think this will anchor us for the next discussion asking: how would GNH manifest if we were to have GNH-value graduates? How would GNH manifest in the self, in the family, in the workplace, in the community, and as a good citizen of Bhutan. So we will hold all of our wonderful ideas in our heads and come back from tea break in a half an hour.

The session concluded with a tea break.

Session 4 – Characteristics of a GNH graduate

Afternoon, after tea break

The final session of the day was devoted to defining the ideal characteristics of a GNH graduate within specific contexts in society. Participants were instructed to self-divide into 5 breakout groups to discuss GNH characteristics within five contexts: self, family, workplace, community, and citizens. The 5 groups were to subdivide further into two groups each, and then discuss their specific context for five minutes to decide three to five character/ behavioural traits that a person who has gone through a GNH educational system would exhibit within that context. The two groups discussing each context were then to re-combine and decide on the top five traits across the two groups, e.g., the two family groups would re-combine and chose which of the characteristics that each group had chosen were the most important. After this process, the combined groups, which did not always limit their characteristics to five, then presented their results to the plenary group.

The characteristics of GNH-educated graduates within the five contexts were identified by the breakout groups as follows:

Self context

The GNH graduate will be:

1. Resourceful/ creative,
2. Confident,
3. Reflective,
4. Upright, and
5. Compassionate or sensitive

Family context

The GNH graduate will:

1. Recognize that the family is the best and most fundamental school, and recognize that the family is a learning situation without condescension,
2. Love—pure or unconditional love (kindness and respect),
3. Show responsibility within the family that would be intergenerational and have a quality of mutuality,
4. Show respect and appreciation for the indigenous value system and gratitude for that,
5. Offer their intelligence in helping to make informed decisions, and
6. Have a high sense of gratitude—reciprocate what the family has given you with profound gratitude.

The group also thought that the family was not just the nuclear family, but it should also include the immediate neighbourhood and surroundings, which could include trees, rivers, etc.

Community context

The GNH graduate will:

1. Participate in community activities and services willingly,
2. Participate in cultural events, and committed to vitalize local culture and local wisdom,
3. Stay involved in the community even if they leave,
4. Show mutual respect for each other and take care of each other,
5. Take care of community property and its environment,
6. Promote equality and justice in the community, and
7. Nurture and care for the community.

Civic/ citizenship context

The GNH graduate will:

1. Be well-informed, aware, and actively engaged in democratic activities,
2. Be resourceful and creative in solving problems,
3. Be honest, resistant to corruption with a strong sense of justice,
4. Practice right livelihood based on ecological consciousness with a strong value for the dignity of labour, and
5. Be not only citizens of Bhutan but also citizens of the Earth—the values of GNH go beyond the borders of Bhutan.

When the breakout groups self-divided no group discussed the workplace context. Therefore, at this point, the participants divided into 5 groups of 10, and each of these groups discussed the workplace context for five minutes. The groups then presented their results, which had duplicate characteristics. There was a strong sense of the workplace as another type of community. The characteristics of the GNH graduate in the workplace context included the following:

Workplace context

The GNH graduate will:

1. Choose right livelihood and ethical work practices,
2. Practice right attitude—showing up, doing your part, taking responsibility, acting cooperatively, not competitively, being a team player,
3. Practice right conduct in relation to others—resolving conflict nonviolently, showing respect, kindness, compassion,
4. Be an inspirational role model, a change agent, a leader—pro-active, problem-solving, and promoting equality between genders and managers, democratic workplace,
5. Have joy in work through humour, creativity, spontaneity, and imagination,
6. Be competent and productive with pride in work, diligent, have integrity, conscience, good time management, and ongoing learning and training, and
7. Be mindful of the full costs of production, minimize harm to earth, air, water, animals, and people, and create a nature-based workplace.



Facilitator: Thank you. Everyone has done a great job and we have done a lot of work today. There are announcements first and then the dedication of merit.

Among the announcements, Tashi Colman described the symbolism of the tiger, lion, garuda, and dragon masks that were hanging on the four pillars in the workshop room:

Tashi Colman: A couple of people have asked about the colours of the masks in the room since they thought these might not be entirely accidental. So since we are talking about vision today, it might be the right time to say a word about that. I want to thank Gwen Colman for her insight in relating the four pillars of Gross National Happiness to some profound meditation teachings. When we were looking at spaces to hold the workshop, we realized that the four pillars might obstruct the vision of some of the observers, but on the other hand, four pillars right in the middle of the room has some significance as well.

Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche taught a lot about *tak, sing, chung, druk*¹—tiger, lion, garuda, dragon. He associated *tak*—the tiger—with the quality of humility because of the way the tiger so carefully treads in the forest—the quality of mindfulness, carefulness, and treading lightly on the earth. So the tiger mask represents the pillar of environmental conservation—the sense of humility, respect for the natural environment, the mindfulness of living carefully on Earth.

But that doesn't mean that we have to be ashamed of who we are. *Sing*—the snow lion—represents the quality of human dignity and the pillar of cultural promotion—the joy of expressing who we really are as human beings. So the humility and respect for the environment, and the joyfulness of being who we are and fully expressing our culture are the first two masks. The tiger is associated with the colour orange, and the snow lion is associated with white.

Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche said that *chung*—the garuda—represents outrageousness. This is the pillar of a sustainable and equitable economy—outrageous because the economy with its conventional principles is completely turned on its head. It is an economy based on contentment, rather than an economy based on greed and desire. So he described the garuda as living in the sky and, literally, everything is already there. The garuda is born fully-grown, so there is no need to grasp for anything. Everything already exists fully-blown. So this pillar represents an economy based, not on greed, but on the richness of the world as it already exists. The garuda is associated with the colour red.

Druk—the dragon—is associated with the colour blue in those teachings, and represents the quality of wisdom. Wisdom, of course, is the pillar of good governance. So the tiger, lion, garuda, and the dragon—*tak, sing, chung, druk*—in a way could be taken to represent the four pillars. I think it was Greg who first mentioned that we are actually

¹ The Bhutanese spelling is *tak, sing, chung, druk*. However, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche and others spell tiger, lion, garuda, dragon as *tak, seng, khyung, druk*.

conducting this conversation within a mandala, and indeed the colours on these four pillars were not accidental. They were deliberately chosen.

The second substantive remark concerned the workshop process:

There is a process here that we should make quite explicit. Your comments from the day were very carefully noted, and the statements of the visions and goals have been rewritten taking your comments into account. After this session, those rewritten statements will be shown to Honourable Prime Minister, Education Minister, Education Secretary, and Director of the Royal Education Council for their feedback, and we will bring that back to you tomorrow. So there is actually a process where the things that are going up on the board are very quickly being brought to the leadership, and the statements of visions and goals are being reformed and will be brought back to you tomorrow.

So please don't think these statements you are making are flying off into thin air somewhere. The whole purpose of today was to address the fact that it's not possible to talk about a GNH-infused education system without some sense of direction and goal, and an understanding of what we mean by embedding GNH principles and values. The entire day has been devoted to trying to understand what that means. Tomorrow we come immediately down to earth, and we will begin talking about the entire educational system of Bhutan as it currently exists.

The day ended—as did all the days—with the group recitation of the Dedication of Merit, which was written especially for the workshop by Judith Simmer-Brown.

Dedication of Merit for Educating for Gross National Happiness

*May the benefit of our endeavour
Extend to all the inhabitants
Of the Kingdom and of the world.*

*May all beings overcome the darkness of ignorance,
Find enjoyment of learning and clarity of insight,
And live in harmony with each other
And will all elements of the natural world.*

*May we all find happiness in our service
To others everywhere.*

9 December, Day 2: Context – What’s working, what’s not working

Judith Simmer-Brown’s “blog” written for Naropa University: *We got down to the nitty-gritty of our work today, and the participant group has begun to develop a bit more of a group mind. The euphoria of being here is transitioning into a kind of common commitment to be of help to this country. Everyone is so inspired, but there is also a sense that we are sobered by the realities Bhutan is facing as a country.... In plenary sessions and break-out groups, we are tackling [some of these realities]. This morning’s impassioned address from the Education Minister was so articulate and beautiful.... He spoke of how we have split mind and heart, fact and feeling, employability and humanity, etc.—and the necessity of the education system healing that split.... Then an American who has been teaching in Bhutan for decades gave a very different address, more hard-headed and pragmatic, with a very strongly individualistic perspective re: democracy, justice, the evils of urbanization, etc. This juxtaposition generated incredible heat in the room, the Indians and Thai veteran activists like Sulak Sivaraksa and Satish Kumar and Bunker Roy challenging the American teacher, and the intensity built for everyone. What a challenging group this is.*

Mindfulness meditation instruction – Judith Simmer-Brown

We’ll begin again with sitting so the reminder of straight posture is very helpful — keeps one awake and fresh. Some of you may be already used to practicing with your eyes closed, but also many of you—at least the way I practice—is with the eyes open and downward, looking gently at a spot downward in front — the sense of open heart, loose jaw, eyes are resting in their sockets so there is not a staring quality of the eyes, the hands are on the thighs, and then very gently, as the breath goes out—we don’t manipulate our breath—we follow the breath with our attention. The past has gone, the future has not yet arrived, we rest freshly in the present moment.

Participants and observers then practiced mindfulness meditation for five minutes.

Session 1 – Current state of education in Bhutan: Opening remarks – Hon. Minister of Education & Director of Royal Education Council. Discussion.

Morning, before tea break

Facilitator – Ivy Ang: This is the second day of our workshop and it is indeed a workshop. And today it will accelerate a little bit more than yesterday. So we will debrief first of all about the meeting with the Honourable Prime Minister and the Minister of Education yesterday. Very briefly, we actually reviewed all of your input yesterday on the vision and the goals from the long-term 25-year vision to the one-year vision, and the Honourable Prime Minister and Education Minister gave very insightful guidelines for us to follow. I will go through that in detail after the presentation of the Honourable Minister of Education this morning. Basically, there will be a slight change in direction, but I think

it will make sense to all of you because, from your feedback on the survey, you all felt that teacher education is primary for embedding GNH into the education system. So the change will be very sympathetic with what you are all thinking about. So that's the first thing I want to say, and again, I promise that we will go through the co-creation process and involve all of you.

The second very important announcement that I want to make is that we've had feedback from the observer group that there are a lot of questions about your involvement, and we want to say that we are very aware that there are enormous qualifications and brain power that we want to capture and we do intend to do that. So when we break out, you will be doing the same thing as the participants. You will be breaking out as well. And you will have the same 5 minutes as the participants to present to the whole group at the end. And you will go through the same process of electing your spokesperson. So we will go through that process later.

In the interests of moving on, given the time, I would like to invite His Excellency, Minister of Education, to start this morning.

Remarks: Hon. Minister of Education Lyonpo Thakur Singh Powdyel

Good morning. I would like to thank our facilitator and Dr. Tashi for making this space available to me and to Professor Mark this morning. I would like to share three small aspirations. The first part is not quite an aspiration, but is a little story. And the second part I would like to share some of our concerns in education in general and perhaps concerns as they relate to education in Bhutan. And the third part may be some of our aspirations proper.

When I think of GNH values I am reminded of a little story and I'll share this story with you. A visitor to a school asked the principal, "Where in your time schedule do you teach religion?" And the reply was, "We teach it all day long. We teach it in arithmetic by accuracy. We teach it in language by learning to say what we mean. We teach it in history by humanity. We teach it in geography by breadth of mind. We teach it in handicraft by thoroughness. We teach it in astronomy by reverence. We teach it in the playground by fair play. We teach it by kindness to animals, by courtesy to servants, by good manners to one another, and by helpfulness in all things."

I'm not sure how many of these attributes are featured in our line-up of attributes yesterday but somebody believes that teaching accuracy is a value—a religious value at that—learning to say what we mean, learning about humanity and history, breadth of mind, thoroughness, reverence, fair play, kindness, courtesy, good manners, helpfulness. There is one more. We teach it by showing the young that we, the elders, are their friends. If these attributes are to be the preoccupations of our academic disciplines and teaching in general, I'm sure they would certainly be an aspiration of a GNH education. I truly believe that humanity has benefited from this mission called education. I think our world has become a much better place thanks to our teachers and scholars. And I think

that society and humanity in general have truly benefited from all efforts that have gone on in the name of education. Yet I feel that not everything is well. We feel that there are several threats and challenges facing the education systems generally, as well as our education system. Sometimes I am tempted to call these challenges the seven blunders of modern education.

There is an educationist called Parker Palmer—thinker and actor. He talks about paradoxes and has four of them. He says today we separate head from heart, and the result is that we have bloodless facts that make the world distinct and remote, and ignorant emotions that reduce truth to what one feels today.

We separate fact from feeling—that’s another paradox. And the result is that we are minds that do not feel and hearts that do not know how to think. We might consider this as a threat that so easily also afflicts us and our education system. I’m afraid we are already facing some of the consequences of these paradoxes. We separate head from heart and the result is that we are minds that do not feel and hearts that do not know how to think.

How can we have an education system, a GNH system, where we have an integration of head and heart? We separate fact from feeling—I mentioned that—and the result is that we have bloodless facts that make the world remote and ignorant emotions that reduce what one feels today.

Yet another paradox is that we separate theory from practice with the result that theories have little to do with life and practice—and practice is uninformed by understanding. So how does education—and GNH education at that—integrate theory and practice so that learning becomes much more worthwhile?

The fourth paradox is that we separate teaching from learning, and the result is that we have teachers who talk but who do not listen, and students who listen but do not talk. How can we create a space for both the teacher and learner so that both teaching and learning both become joyful and meaningful experiences?

I am mindful of the three big questions that Dr. Bunker Roy posed to me yesterday. He may have felt that I was being too evasive. Perhaps my response was dramatic, but also very honest. I certainly felt that I wasn’t then prepared to respond to those questions, and perhaps the space was not appropriate either. But today I’ll try to respond to some of those. And I did respond to some of them over the dinner table last night but I’ll elaborate some of them today.

I’ve added three blunders to Palmer’s four. So I call them seven blunders of education. I was too scared to add more, so for the moment perhaps we might keep them at seven. I feel that today we have what we call Faustian science. I’m sure learned members of the audience are aware of Dr. Faust’s archetypal searcher after knowledge. Even when he had discovered perhaps the ultimate in knowledge, he was not able to appreciate the most precious object that is the soul. So we have Faustian science and Faustian technology, but

sadly what we are missing today is Faustian music. Yesterday I was reading an article published in the United States and it talks about how smart the younger generation is in exploiting the potentials and tricks of technology, but how deficient they are in appreciating and understanding some of the profounder values that should come together with teaching and learning. So I believe it is fair to say that today we have Faustian science and Faustian technology but no Faustian music. And the result is that the learner becomes technology savvy, but also loses a sense of self and of surroundings. In GNH we are talking about a harmonious relationship between the self and the surroundings. How do we bring this about?

The next paradox or blunder is that we overplay the need to sharpen our brains and skills, and underplay the necessity to build faith and character. But GNH is very important to not only sharpening brains and skills but also to building faith and character, because if the paradox continues, the result will be that the learner necessarily becomes more career conscious but less character conscious. Being career conscious is important, but I think it is even more important to be character conscious.

I'll just mention the last one and not load any more on you. We promote the spirit of competition at the cost of cooperation and collaboration as a consequence of education. We feel that we must be ahead of everybody and the child must be ahead of everybody. So the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, which should be the result of education, is weakened. And the result is that the individual largely becomes an efficient machine devoid of personal sensibilities. What kind of a GNH graduate are we thinking about? Yesterday we had a large number of attributes that we imagined should actually be the characteristics of a GNH graduate. We promote this spirit of competition at the cost of cooperation and collaboration with the result that the individual largely becomes an efficient machine devoid of personal sensibilities.

At the cost of sounding unkind to our own children in education, I will just quote an example. I think our students won't mind—we are all a family. The 20th of November was observed as the international day for the celebration of the rights of the child. But because the examinations were coming quite close, we pre-poned the observance of the day, and had a marathon the week before. As the marathon was concluding, one of our runners reported to the officials organizing the marathon that one of the runners had fallen down on the road and suggested that somebody should go and attend to him. I overheard that and thought it was very good of this child to report this little incident that he was a witness to as he ran past the student who had fallen down. And I thought to myself that it was important for this child to complete the race and cross the finish line, but I also thought maybe our system had not prepared this child well enough so that he could stop and help his fallen friend and perhaps come along together. So competition was important—he had to complete the race. But I would have thought that a much more valued response would have been for this child to come together with the other. I know this child didn't realize that at this point in time. He was focused on completing the race. But I think in a GNH environment we would like the children to win together—both the fallen and the one who hasn't fallen. This real example is given to explain the paradox—competition and collaboration.

In the face of these subtle and obvious challenges, perhaps a GNH approach that we are all thinking about would be the way forward. I believe in the positive power of education, otherwise I wouldn't grow old staying in education and being a teacher. And also in creative genius—this is so abundantly available in young people. As a teacher I have long celebrated the goodness and the creative talents of young people all around. I feel a good system combines the position of the head with the passion of the heart—the discriminating facilities of the intellect and the embalming influence of affections. I think what we are looking for is a third space in which the head and the heart meet, a third space in which fact and feeling meet, a third space in which theory and practice meet, a third space in which teaching and learning meet, Faustian science and also Faustian music meet, brains and skills, faith and character meet, and competition and collaboration work together.

I've been spending a lot of time with students and teachers, and one of the things I've been emphasizing—maybe I'm wrong—is an educated person in the GNH sense of the term—even otherwise in education generally—should have at least two qualities. There could be many others, but at least two I believe an educated GNH graduate must possess and display, practice. I shared these yesterday in the group, but in the final lineup, they weren't featured. But since it was a democratic setup, I didn't impose my will. One of these qualities is usefulness. I think that the experience of education must give the learner or student a sense of being useful to himself or herself, useful to society, useful to their family, useful to the country or the world at large. And whatever is being taught or learned should also be useful. If I'm learning history or physics, what use do I see in the learning of my physics or my mathematics? So what use is there in my learning of the different subjects that I learn in school? And when I look at myself, as a result of the education that I am going through, am I becoming a more useful person—useful to myself, to my family, to my community, to my neighbourhood, to my nation at large? Yesterday the Prime Minister was talking about student visiting a family member who is sick, and trying to do the community service that he or she can do. So usefulness. I think this is a very important aspect of an educated person.

But being simply useful is not adequate. I'm also thinking that a person educated in the GNH sense of the term should also be graceful. So gracefulness is another attribute I feel a GNH graduate should display, because sometimes people could be highly qualified and highly educated, but they might be quite deficient in some of the finer aspects, some of the sensibilities we would like displayed by an educated person—the courtesies that perhaps are necessities, the sensitivities that are especially necessary in order to live together in a society, particularly in a democratic setup. So, being graceful to each other, being courteous to each other, knowing how to relate to each other is extremely important. So usefulness and gracefulness could perhaps be thought of as some of my aspirations.

And I think this workshop is happening at a very fortuitous moment because in the Ministry of Education we are actually working already to review our curriculum, particularly in science and social studies. We've already made some progress in English

and mathematics and the national language of Dzongkha, but a lot of work needs to be done there as well. So the workshop and its outcome should perhaps help us to do what we can, and see what we need to do to integrate some of the ideas we have been talking about so far, and the ideas we will be taking about in the next couple of days in the building of our curriculum. So I think the ultimate theme—the idealism to reaffirm and reinforce the true identity of the learner—is so important. The learner is more than a pupil—the student is an individual, and how in the course of education, in teaching, do we protect that identity of the learner?

What is the learner bombarded with? In our welcome address we mentioned that today children are bombarded with all kinds of influences. Does the centre hold? Is the identity of the learner protected? How do we secure the identity of the learner? We may have a sponge that absorbs all kinds of information but is that going to secure the identity and the honour and the self-respect of the learner? I think this is so crucial. So ultimately, education should give a sense of purpose, sense of worth, and sense of the self to the learner. And I feel it is so important to protect and to secure the identity of the learner.

And how about the integrity of the learning process? What do we put on the table? What goes on the table? What goes into our curriculum? Maybe in the course of this workshop we may not be able to talk so much about the curriculum itself, but what should go into the curriculum that the children are presented with nine months each year. What is the integrity of this curriculum? Is it worth pursuing? Is there any use in that? What are the great ideas in the curriculum? What is the usefulness of the curriculum? So, the integrity of the curriculum. What do we offer to the child? This is very important, indeed.

And also the authenticity of the experience of learning—how authentic is learning? Some years ago Allan Bloom, a famous American educationist, wrote a book called *The Closing of the American Mind*. I think all societies need an Allan Bloom to remind us of how minds are getting closed. Here he argues, he bemoans in fact, the fall in the way the younger generation approaches education. Perhaps we might provide a curriculum in the process of learning that is no more than ice cream—sweet and delicious. But if you have ice cream for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, it might not give us much nutrition. An ice cream curriculum or a cafeteria curriculum is popular—a lot of students would like that. But there are a lot of students who would like a respectful, demanding, intellectually engaging experience of learning. How do we build that? I think this is so important. I am arguing for the identity of the learner, the integrity of the learning process, and the authenticity of the experience of learning.

I think what we are all looking for is the fulfillment of a wish as expressed by Rainer Maria Rilke that you have at the back of your delegate book.

Ah, not to be cut off,
not through the slightest partition
shut out from the law of the stars.
The inner—what is it?
if not intensified sky,

hurled through with birds and deep
with the winds of homecoming.

This is authentic. This is real. This is meaningful. This is the kind of experience as authentic as the birds and the deep and the winds of homecoming. This is the kind of experience we are looking for. This is a tall order.

But the whole idea of education is that things are possible. I believe that education is built on the principle of the possible and the positive and the good and the hopeful. A lot of things are not going well, but that is the very reason why we have schools, and teachers, and learners, and the Education Ministry. And all of these people are engaged in the mission of education. If we believe that things are not possible, that it was not possible to improve things, we would not be here. We believe that education is the theme to bringing about development, improvement, and goodness in society. It is possible. So that is why I believe we should be able to resolve the contradictions, the challenges—education can.

As a matter of fact, when we talk about educating for GNH, we are not talking about anything new. What we are talking about is truly discovering the essential nature of education. All good education is GNH. If we are able to provide an authentic, good, meaningful experience, that already is GNH, and it is my hope and my prayer, as a happy consequence of this workshop, we will be able to reconcile some of these contradictions and move forward. I'm sorry to be much longer than I should have. I apologize to the Professor. You should have had the next half hour and I intruded on the time and I apologize. Thank you so much for your attention.

Facilitator: Thank you, Your Excellency, for a very inspirational talk. It sets the tone for the day.

Remarks: Director of the Royal Education Council, Professor Mark Mancall

A lot of what I have to say has already been said in my little essay that I think was distributed to you, so, God forbid that I should repeat it. And instead, I'd like to raise some specific issues that should be on the agenda of our conversations.

Let me begin by saying that I come from a school of thought, perhaps, or at least a perspective that so far I've heard a little of, but not very much, in the discussions. I firmly believe that education is not a detached phenomenon in society. Education is one part of a dialectical relationship between society itself—social structure, economic activity, and all of those things—and the world of mind, or the world of the soul—whatever expression one wants to use for that side of the equation. But we mustn't lose sight of the very strong realities that do exist. Whether one believes that these realities are given in nature itself or they are an aspect of samara, depending on ones' own philosophical perspective, we do live in a certain kind of society and education is part of that society. Change comes from the result of a dialectic interaction between education and the life of the mind on one hand, and real society on the other. Theory and practice is not just about theory and

practice in education, it's about education and social practice. So I want to pay some attention to that dichotomy this morning in my remarks, expanding upon what I wrote and trying to inject some ideas about that.

Let me also remark at the very beginning that what I am about to say is totally random. I have things listed as they occurred to me in the course of our conversation yesterday. There is no rhyme or logic to the order in which I am going to raise these issues, which may be a testimony to my own intellectual laziness.

One of the things that I felt very strongly was not really thought about or discussed yesterday was the question of education for democracy. We have just started in the very recent past—a year and a half, two years ago—on the process of democratizing Bhutan. To the degree we were prepared for this is a question for another discussion, perhaps in another venue. But it is a fact, and I think that one of the subjects that needs to be thought about is how do we start educating—let alone the adults—the children to grow up in a democratic society. And what do we mean by a democratic society? It's fine to talk about head and heart, but we also have to talk about the political processes through which decisions concerning—not just education, but also economic change, economic development, and so forth—are going to be thought about in our society in the coming years. So I feel very strongly that the question of education for democracy is crucial.

Another field we haven't talked too much about here—although the work has been mentioned occasionally, particularly in the afternoon yesterday—is the question of education for justice. How do we inculcate in the next generation a sense of justice and of the need to struggle for justice? Let me take a leap one way or the other, rightward or leftward—depending on how you think about it. Bhutanese society is not a society of equality. The reality is that it is a class society in the very classical sense of the term, and our educational system reflects that class society. It is also a society in which we have a certain degree of very intense urbanization and a high degree of extension of our population into remote areas.

By and large in my opinion, my experience of Bhutanese educational thought, we really are thinking about urban society, with a certain kind of extension into rural society. But the fact remains that the majority of our population is rural, and the concerns of the farmers, the peasants—whatever you want to call them—in the countryside and their children have to be central to our thinking and it's not an abstract question. What should the curriculum be in rural areas, not just in Thimpu. And I think that's a very serious question. And it may not be that the curriculum has to be the same for every place. We really need to think about that kind of problem.

How do we educate for equality in a society that is an extraordinarily unequal society? And if you just look at it in the next few days and at people's behaviour, you'll see how unequal our society is. The real question is how do we educate for equality? How do we talk about it in the classroom? How does the teacher talk about equality in such a way that the student comes away elevated—not just by the feelings that have been expressed in the course of the seminar so far—but also elevated by the sense of worth in terms of

social values. Not just “selfness”. I’m fascinated by the emphasis of “selfness”, because selfness, in my opinion, is a very un-Buddhist concept. I’m very much interested in the question of solidarity—of being part of society—and that requires equality—social, economic, etc. How do we educate for those kinds of things?

Volunteerism. How do you educate for volunteerism? Not just for occupation in society, not just for becoming involved with the village life, but actual volunteerism. We’ve had enough examples in the last year of our national existence that we have too little volunteerism in our society. Too few people have volunteered to do too little in times of national crisis. How can the educational system contribute to the motivation and organizational volunteer activity to solve certain problems that need solutions. How do we get kids out in times of national crisis, for example, or to get adults out to help with earthquakes or with floods or what have you. I think this is a very important consideration.

Corruption. We pride ourselves on being the least corrupt country in South Asia, which doesn’t mean very much given the level of corruption in South Asia. Are we fifty-fourth in the world, or something of that sort? How do we educate about corruption in our society? How do we educate our children to know that corruption is not acceptable? We have a very active anti-corruption commission, which is involved in dealing with corruption at the present, but we need to deal with corruption at the future if we’re going to develop a healthy society. And corruption may be a spiritual corruption, but it’s also a material corruption. And if we don’t deal with the material side and educate civic education, civic responsibility, then all the mantras recited and all the prayers in the monasteries is not going to eliminate the kind of corruption, inequality, etc. that we face in our daily lives.

Jobs. We may well have a society—and I said this towards the end of my little paper—in which the education system is the highest dream that everybody in this room has. If we don’t produce jobs for students who graduate from our education system—no matter how good that system is—they will be a discontented element in our society, and they will be right to be discontented. So no consideration of the education system, in my humble opinion, is valid if it does not include post-education life. I’ve been a teacher for more years than anyone in this room has been alive, and I have students here to prove it, but my point is that without jobs, it doesn’t matter how spiritual and educated you may be, you also have to provide food for your stomach, for your wives, for your children, for what not. We need, as educationists, to pay attention to that.

Michael [Rutland] raised yesterday the issue of certification, by which I think he meant the exam system, and I feel as strongly as he does about this. Without a radical change in the exam system we will continue to replicate everything that has been going on until now. The exam system is one of the key things we have to reconsider. The exam system allows, for very bright children, a degree of social mobility. There is no question about that. But by and large, the exam system replicates and reproduces the class structure of society. Power and wealth to a large extent in Bhutan depend on being a part of the bureaucracy or part of the upper class, landowners, what have you. And the exam system

replicates that constantly, and people are caught by that, demoralized by it. They go into psychological depression by it. The exam system has to be rethought and, if nothing else, as resolution from this body urging the authorities to reconsider the exam system would itself be, in my opinion, a major achievement.

Village life. There is always a romanticism about village life. In the same way as there is a kind of romanticism about Bhutan, which I feel very often when I listen to what's going on here. I keep arguing we have to be very hard headed in our analysis our own country. I think that's extremely crucial. It's fine to talk about people staying in the village, but they won't stay in the village if we don't do something to make them stay in the village—to give them reason to stay in the village. I personally believe, being involved in the education process in one way or another, that we can do a great deal to keep children in the village. I would like to see us create the best schools in the countryside, and make it obligatory to live in the countryside for your children to go to those schools, and then they would rather stay in those schools than migrate to Thimphu. But if we don't think in those terms, the kids will continue to migrate to Thimphu and we will continue to have the kinds of problems we have. Village life is not to be romanticized. Someone said that the life of the peasant is dull. And they come to the bright lights of Thimphu not just because of economic advantage, but we have a movie theatre, and we have other things, and it's nice to come to Thimphu. We have to do a lot about village development if our children of the next generation are to stay in the village, and education has a role to play in that, in my opinion.

Bureaucracy. One of the greatest diseases in Bhutan is bureaucracy. Unfortunately, we don't have a magic pill to dissolve the tumour in the body politic. I think we need to think about that in education as well as elsewhere. I don't have the solution to bureaucracy. Max Weber pointed out that bureaucracy was sort of the death of society, and he himself, in fact, went mad partly because he couldn't contemplate the issue of bureaucracy. It's a very big problem. We haven't really discussed the problem of bureaucracy in education as well as everything else. It is absolutely essential that that be on the agenda of any reform programme for education as well as for the rest of society.

All right, I want to finish with just a couple more points. Number one in my fifty final points. One of the things my office does is try to find statistics, not because we love numbers, but because statistics tell us something about society—not everything—but something. One very important statistic that at least seems to be absent—and if it isn't I ask Madam Secretary to let me have these statistics—is some estimate of the number of hours children in the countryside walk to get to school. That's an important datum. We can talk all we want about educational reform, but if the children are walking one, two, three hours to get to school, and then going back uphill a little bit longer to get back home, they are exhausted when they get to school. Their attention is dissipated. The same with teachers. There are some places, I understand, where teachers are walking to get to school. Imagine any of you who have been a teacher walking three hours to get to school, or two hours, or even an hour to get to school, and still being bright and alert as a teacher confronting your students. There are solutions to these problems. We have to have the

courage to confront those problems. They are not simple. But we have to be able to confront those kinds of problems.

Two last points. I have many more, I am just editing myself. I hope nobody will leave this conference in the belief that Gross National Happiness is a substitute for Gross Domestic Product or Production. GNH is a way of thinking about Gross Domestic Product. Without capital accumulation—and this I tried to say at the end of my article—even the process of change becomes impossible, even as we talked about it yesterday. You have to be able to fund basic changes. You have to be able to fund workshops to get the teachers there to learn something. You have to be able, should we reach that point, to fund such things as new schools, or fund textbooks, or even fund gurus to come and teach Buddhism. Living part of my time in America, I'm aware of how expensive Buddhism is to people living in America. But my point is, don't deny the importance of Gross Domestic Product. The only question is, what is it appropriate to do to gain growth? Not growth itself, and we're a very poor country here in Bhutan, and you're living in a nice hotel, but, believe me, most people have never been in this hotel. It's very important to remember the importance of Gross Domestic Product in all of this.

There's so much else. Let me conclude with one last point and that is that it's very nice that all of you foreigners are here, and we're very happy that you're here and we are very happy to host you here, but you aren't the first ones. And I think somebody should pay tribute to Father Macky, a Jesuit who was here long ago and who established what is now Sherubtse College. And other members of Catholic orders established Punaka High School, and so forth. A tremendous contribution was made, and, to me, what's very important about that contribution is that, while it may have begun with foreigners, it became Bhutan as time went on so that right now Sherubtse is a Bhutanese college. Punaka High School is a Bhutanese high school. So whatever suggestions come out of this group, remember that if things go well, you won't recognize them as being foreign in another 10 or 20 years because they will become Bhutanese in time, and that will be a success for us. We will forget what the origins are and the culture, etc. will be our own. I'm finished.

Facilitator. Thank you, Mark. We can always count on you to be brilliant, provocative, and have lots of insight, so thank you.

Comments, debrief from organizers' meeting with the Hon Prime Minister, Minister and Secretary of Education, and Director, Royal Education Council, student survey, and further discussion

Sulak Sivaraksa and Satish Kumar offered equally provocative remarks concerning Mark's presentation, which was followed by the Facilitator's explanation of the organizers' debriefing meeting with the government and education leaders the previous evening, including the revised vision statements and three-year and one-year goals, and a general discussion before tea break.

Sulak Sivaraksa from Thailand spoke at length and suggested that this workshop has the potential to answer all of Mark's issues, which are challenging. He suggested that emphasizing the essence of Buddhism and creating a new lay sangha in Bhutan, as well as looking to the Siam model, which has both failed in some areas and achieved success in others, would be helpful. In terms of Buddhism, once you confront the first of the noble truths—the truth of suffering—then you can find the cause of the suffering and eliminate it through the noble 8-fold path.

He reiterated that Mark had said that Bhutan needs education for democracy and equality. Western democracy concentrates on liberty—which results in the freedom to choose Coca Cola or Pepsi—but does not concentrate on fraternity, which is essential. According to Victor Havel, former head of the Czech Republic, fraternity may be the key to the survival of democracy. Sulak noted that equality, fraternity, and liberty from delusion were implemented by the Buddha in the sangha, and he asks if a new lay sangha can be created in Bhutan through education, where equality can be found at the grassroots, and compassion, humility, wisdom, and interrelatedness can be emphasized. If we focus on skillful means, or in Buddhism, upaya, these qualities can be implemented if we are less egotistic. He thought that the corruption in Bhutan was small compared with that in Thailand, America, and China, and that Bhutan need not be too concerned about bureaucracy and hierarchy.

In addition, Sulak explained that Thailand has gone wrong in many areas but has achieved success in others, and that Bhutan can learn from the Thai example. For instance, Thailand is proud that it has never been colonized, but it still wants to compete with the West, wants to be industrialized, has forsaken traditional culture in large part, and has allowed Buddhism to become merely ceremonial, but the people have rebelled against that model. Since the 1970s, they have had a rural doctor association whose doctors are proud to stay in the countryside and have developed a strong grassroots movement that is influenced by Buddhist culture.

Sulak also suggested that Bhutan could work and build good friendships with Thai people who are implementing this grassroots movement, as well as with the best of western buddhists—with a small “b”—who are working with how to be awakened with compassion, humility, and interrelatedness—which would help achieve and answer the GNH challenge meaningfully across GNH pillars.

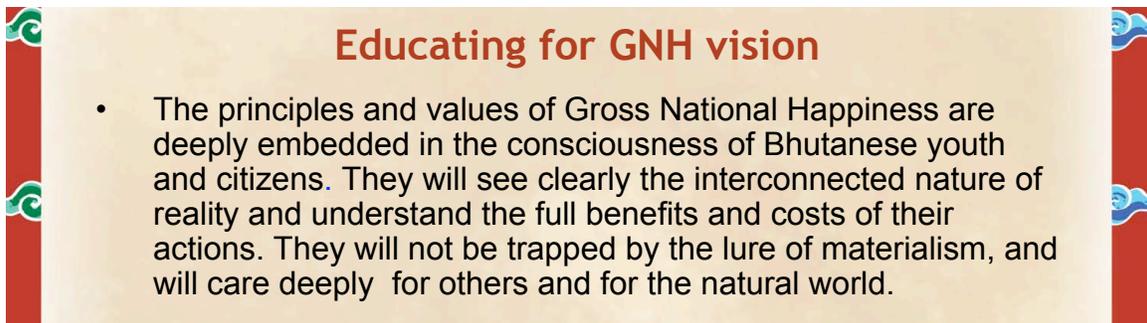
Facilitator: Thank you. So, the next step I'm thinking is to actually go through, if its ok with everyone, what's working just to record some of what's all been said and what's not been said, as well as—two buckets—what's working and what's not working that's not been addressed so it will inform the breakout groups as you go through your co-creation. So, with that, I think I would—(Ivy addresses Satish Kumar) I'm sorry, you had a question?

Satish Kumar then spoke very bluntly as he argued that Mark, as Sulak had also said, had made a lot of assumptions and radically changed the whole context from the context set by the Prime Minister, Vandana Shiva, and the Minister of Education. He called the

idea of everyone needing to seek jobs a kind of “urban romanticism” and that, instead, we need to go for an “elegant simplicity”. He said that it is a complete romanticism to expect that everyone can be given jobs by someone else because there are no jobs—we have to teach children and young people to create, not seek, jobs. The idea that everyone can be given jobs will destroy creativity, imagination, ingenuity, and humanity. Satish again criticized Mark for putting “the whole context in a completely reverse gear”, and suggested that when we go back to the workshops we have to think whether “we are going to pursue the context set by the Prime Minister, and Vandana Shiva, and the Minister of Education, or are we going to go for this job-seeking, romanticized urbanism?”

Facilitator: Thank you. Thank you. You know, this dialogue is really, really good. May I just say something. I think we need some grounding before I open it up to the floor. Instead of going forward on what’s working and not working, I think we need to share the debrief of yesterday to hear the directions from the Ministers in terms of what they want, because we’re here to do what Bhutan wants. So let us look at it in that context. [Kevin Ang, an assistant facilitator, puts up slides on the GNH vision.] So, I would need support from the debrief group who was there to augment what I’m going to flash-up on the screen.

There was a sense of urgency from the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Education that once we anchor the vision, which I think has very little disagreement from this group, that we need to come down to three-year and one-year goals—or call it Stage one—because time is running out and there is some urgency to get some very practical and simple ideas to move forward. So let us look at the context that they have set. The vision really did not change that much, but it incorporated some of your ideas from yesterday:



Educating for GNH vision

- The principles and values of Gross National Happiness are deeply embedded in the consciousness of Bhutanese youth and citizens. They will see clearly the interconnected nature of reality and understand the full benefits and costs of their actions. They will not be trapped by the lure of materialism, and will care deeply for others and for the natural world.

So that is the beacon and the guiding light. That is the “What”. Is there any substantive—and I’m going to emphasize the word “substantive”—objection to that?

Zenobia Barlow remarked that she is concerned about environmental conservation and sustainable and equitable development, which require knowledge and skills. She argues that maybe 90% of the challenges facing Bhutan will require people of great moral character, but in addition people are going to need knowledge and skills and she finds those missing from the vision statement.

Facilitator: Ok, maybe we can go to the “How”, which probably will address some of these concerns, but not all of them. And beneath the “How”, which I don’t know that we can do today, would be the Bhutanese deciding on the strategies of what Zenobia is talking about. And I’m not sure we can wrap that up today. So let us go through the “How”, which is really detailing the four pillars:

- **HOW:**
Bhutan's entire educational system will effectively cultivate GNH principles and values, including deep critical and creative thinking, ecological literacy, practice of the country's profound, ancient wisdom and culture, contemplative learning, a holistic understanding of the world, genuine care for nature and for others, competency to deal effectively with the modern world, and preparation for right livelihood.

I think you can see there, that while it’s not all-inclusive, it incorporates a lot of your feedback from yesterday. So that is the proposed “How” at this point.

Some of the comments that followed concerning the vision statements included the following points, which the Facilitator noted (after every comment) that they will be taken back to the debrief team:

- One of the pillars is governance, which the participant assumed meant democracy, but the word “democracy” does not appear in the statement.
- Concerning “the principles and values of Gross National Happiness are deeply embedded in the consciousness of Bhutanese youth and citizens”, one participant thought it was incorrect to say “embedded in Bhutanese youth” because GNH principles are inherent in all human beings in the world, but are not always recognized or manifested. Both causes and conditions are necessary for anything to manifest. GNH is like a seed, which is the cause, but it requires other conditions in order to manifest.
- We are doing exactly what the Prime Minister asked us not to do—looking for words. He is looking for action points and suggestions about how to turn the education system around. I think we’ve covered it enough.

Facilitator: Thank you. That’s exactly what I was going to do. Thank you. So, if it’s OK, while I will allow space for comments, I think yesterday we’ve gone through this. We’ve taken and incorporated your substantive input, and it’s been approved by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education, who is sitting here, and we will take that input and leave it the way it is. Could we move on? [Responding to a participant who said he had two words] Two words. Two relevant words.

- The participant remarked that the two words should be “nurtured and manifested” rather than “embedded”.

Facilitator: Ok. We will take that back. In due respect to everyone, we are going to move on. You could see me at break time if you are really unhappy about this.

Let’s just go through the three-year goals actually set by the government and education leaders. This is the direction:

- **3-year goal:** Bhutan's school system has GNH-minded teachers and a GNH-infused learning environment, and access to these by all Bhutanese children and youth.

Now, don’t look at the words missing because it was probably done at 10:30 last night. So forgive that and look at the essence of it. The direction is—rather than focusing on changing the entire curriculum at this point—that, as you all have said at one point or the other, the leadership of the schools and the principals and the teachers are really the key. And actually we have heard from the youth participants as well, and they have done a fabulous job in summarizing what they see is working and not working, and have given some solutions (and I will pass that around). And it is very simpatico with the idea of letting us change from the top—the leadership. In the States one would say that in corporations if something is wrong we would look to the leadership, the head and the team. So let us say that that is the direction that the leadership and Ministry have asked us to take in the breakout groups.

I’m going to move on to the one-year goals before I open it up. The “how” is that:

- **How:** All of Bhutan's teachers have received effective education in these areas.

The “areas” mean the GNH four pillars.

- **1-year goal:** All Bhutan’s school principals have received GNH-inspired education.

Then for the one-year goal, they would like us to start thinking about the educational training programme for school principals for the first year—starting now. Now is after the workshop, after your co-creation. They would like to take that into consideration and implement it. They really want simple, practical, non-costly ideas, of which there are plenty, like introducing meditation in every class. There are tons of ideas in this room

already, and I repeat that I personally am moved by the need for urgency I heard yesterday. It's the first debriefing meeting that I've ever had with those leaders, and I would tend to say that we need to follow their guidance. That is what I mean when I say let's get some grounding. Thank you for your reminding the group that we need to come down to earth and do the practical stuff. We can wax for a long time at the high level. That's not to say it's not precious thoughts. We just need to do the work now.

So I will now open it to the floor in terms of the three-year and the one-year goals. Do you have substantive differences with that guidance?

- One national participant suggested that, while she agreed with the goals and the shift in focus to teachers and principals, that there was one area of the curriculum that she would like highlighted and that is education for democracy. She noted that the Constitution was signed last year in 2008, and that the implications of the democratic processes, laws, rules, and regulations need to be discussed with the children, especially in relation to how these affect their lives. She asked that education for democracy be part of the short-term goals.

Facilitator: Ok. We will incorporate that into the guidelines for the breakout. Thank you.

- Another national participant remarked that he didn't know if the international participants knew this, but that the status of teachers in Bhutan is not very high. Usually if someone gets lower points they go for teaching and it is not usually something they choose out of passion. However, there are wonderful teachers in Bhutan, but in order to implement GNH it needs teachers who have passion. He thinks that the Royal Government needs to raise the status of teaching in Bhutan so that people actually want to become teachers and want to implement these goals for the country. "Otherwise we will have great ingredients, but a blunt knife to cut them and to prepare them."

Facilitator: Thank you. That was really important and I think given that we are co-creating the programme—it says "draft" in the beginning—we will take that very important input and perhaps put a session in there as well in terms of addressing that.

- One participant suggested that when developing the curriculum to educate the principals and teachers that it would be important to include the participation of the children who often have refreshing and simplified ideas. Another important thing for the three-year goal is how to involve parents and community, including the wisdom embedded in the grandmothers, as Dr. Shiva was saying yesterday.
- Another participant suggested that it is extremely important to raise the awareness of the parents and communities so that they can appreciate the values and principles of GNH and what the education system is trying to accomplish. Without this deep understanding—and also because of overcrowded schools—wealthy and influential parents may send their children out of the country for education, with the result being that the children will have little knowledge of, and pay little attention to,

government schools and GNH values later on. So one of the goals should be to give the entire population of Bhutan a good understanding of what value-based GNH life is, how education can deliver this, and how it is useful to them.

- A third participant noted that Bhutan seems to be being sucked towards this “giant hole called modernization,” which this group and the government is concerned does not happen. The participants are being asked to talk about technical issues and teacher training, and that’s fine, but there are bigger issues that surround this, including several that have been mentioned this morning. The participant suggested that we keep a second dialogue going in the breakout groups and a listing of some of the bigger issues that pertain to this. For example: Is this going to be “top-down” delivered to schools? How do we get what we call “buy in” to the people to whom it’s delivered?

Mark raised a number of practical concerns that shouldn’t be swept under the rug and ignored. Teacher training is an issue, and teacher pay, and teacher morale, and teacher prestige, but there are bigger issues here as well. Television is one of the most powerful teaching devices in the country. How does that factor into GNH goals? If there is dissent in what we do, how will that dissent be felt? Will dissenters be able to register their voice? There are a number of issues. The suggestion is to keep the discussion at two tracks—the practical concerns about teacher education and so forth, but also perhaps a second list could be kept of larger issues that have to be dealt with, if this is to be successful over the long term.

The final point is that Mark raised serious issues about GNH and GDP. Poverty can undermine a good bit of what we intend to do. That does not mean we need to define GDP the way we define it in the United States, but it is an issue that can’t be ignored.

Facilitator: Thank you. I just want to say point well made and taken, and I do not think that people would want to sweep these things under the carpet. I think the dual track and what’s working, what’s not working—we want to record everything possible for Bhutan that they definitely need to consider. So I don’t know whether that session can happen before or after the breakout group. But I would like to give more air time to the students before we proceed. I would like to hear from them. But let me assure you that there will be a container for all the important and provocative issues that have been identified.

National students:

- Good morning. The reason I see that the status of teachers is low is because I think it should be blamed on them. At the start of the session when we introduce ourselves they say, “I wanted to become doctor,” “I wanted to become an engineer, but since I couldn’t become one I ended up here.” When they say that, when we hear that, that teaching is the last option, we are not inspired to become one and the respect for them goes down. I think that education should look into raising the

status of teachers, even if that raise is not in accord with the values and principles of GNH.

And if I could say something about what's not working in our educational system, it's that—I think it's not wise of me to say this in front of the curriculum designers and the Secretary and Minister of Education here, but I will—I don't think that the education system in Bhutan is job oriented. I don't know what this kind of system really looks like, but if I don't qualify for further studies, I'll end up nowhere. And friends who didn't get through exams are just hanging around in the town not doing anything. Actually, I know nothing of which I can make my livelihood. If I can give a small example here, to be frank, I don't even know the full 13 names of the arts and crafts of Bhutan. If you are taught some of the arts and crafts of Bhutan, then, I think, I can at least practice those and make a reasonable livelihood. And I think it would be a gift to the world, a gift of unique art to the world. Thank you.

- I have a lot of thoughts that I have tried to put into words. Please bear with me. Well, I was just thinking that everybody is talking about curriculum here, what should be taught and what shouldn't be taught. But the thing is the educational system in Bhutan is graded on exams. Most of the persons teach how we are sent to the next grade depends on our written exam. And to be honest, I studied something in grade 10 last year. I finished my exams and that's over. I don't remember a thing if somebody asked me about it this year. Why can't the educational system be made in such a way that, yes, it will help us in the future. For example, when I was small I knew all of the 13 skills because we were taught that in our lower grades, but right now, when I'm supposed to be much wiser, I cannot even name one. Why is that so? Is it because I'm just given written exams? I'm not doing it practically. It's in my mind for a while, but later, it's just washed away. I just wanted to know how the educational system can be changed so it will be there with me for a long time—even when I'm in my 60s, when I'm a grandmother. If my grandchildren ask me, then I can answer. But right now, I don't think that's possible, because what I've learned last year I've just forgotten this year. That's it.

Facilitator: Thank you to both of you. This is really critical. Actually, I would like to, at this point, pass out the feedback from the students. There are 14 participants in this survey. Thanks to Dahlia who has compiled the summary of the feedback. I think it's critical that you all read it during the workshop.

The following feedback from the student survey was distributed:

Student survey: Prominent Problems in Education Identified by Student Participants

1. Teaching must be a **respected** and desirable position (in order to attract intelligent and committed teachers).

2. There are too many students in classrooms (i.e. the maximum–40 students is already too much and is often exceeded).
3. There is a shortage of teachers in rural areas and a shortage of Science and English teachers everywhere.
4. Corporal punishment must be banned.
5. There should be student representation (elected by students, or students and teachers, not only selected by teachers, like captains).
6. Sufficient textbooks should be provided (i.e. there are no textbooks for math 11 and 12).
7. The school syllabus needs to be modified – a lot of information is useless to us and is memorized purely for exams. School syllabi must be shortened to allow time for other activities.
8. Teachers should have fewer responsibilities outside of the classroom (i.e. school matrons and wardens should not be part of the teaching faculty).
9. Students should not have to choose between the three streams of Commerce, Arts, or Science in class 10.
10. Exams are not an effective way of measuring students' progress or intelligence and are extremely stressful for students.
11. On Wednesdays, rather than classroom learning, there should be community service, agricultural activities, and student club activities nationally (this sometimes happens in the East).
12. There must be greater accountability in schools—financial transparency for school management and school captains.
13. School Captains should receive peer-counselling training and there should be well-trained school counsellors that are not also teachers.
14. Safe Internet access should be made available to students.
15. Every school should have a hygienic cafeteria, sufficient water in the toilets, and a well stocked library (especially with classics like Shakespeare).

A Few Solutions

1. More schools; most schools are overcrowded, if we have more schools it will help with rural student access, school accountability, better student – teacher relationships and the general wellbeing of the student.
2. Alternately to exams, students could be graded on class participation, completion of assignments, and independent projects.
3. School environment would be very much helped by some greenery and students could learn more values education (a subject rarely taught), and ecology, by taking care of their own potted plant over the course of the school year.

Facilitator: I think rather than a dual track, and we can do that, we can also go right into recording all the important “what’s working, what’s not working” first before we break out, and we will just delay the breakout. I see hands all over the place so I’m just going to go around.

- Michael Rutland praised the two students and commented that the participants have heard “from the horse’s mouth.” With regard to the goals and the achievement and also answering the sort of questions that have been put by the two students with regard to the goal of teachers, Michael remarked that he believed that one profoundly fundamental group of people has been forgotten, and Mark had referred to them.

Before discussing this group and as an aside, he also mentioned that he had a totally different understanding of what Mark had said with regard to things like jobs and urbanization from the other interpretations. He thought that Mark was actually advocating people staying in villages, and when Mark said “jobs” he didn’t mean people employed by somebody else, he meant a way of earning a livelihood.

The participant commented that the response of teachers in Bhutan when they see goal three would be a big sigh. “Oh dear, yet another training course.” Always, the solutions to all these problems seem to land on the heads of teachers. Michael believes that teachers are the fundamental delivery agents for education, values, GNH, and attitudes, but also that “you can’t just unload the whole cart of apples onto the heads of teachers without looking at the context and environment in which they work,” which is determined by the group of people that have been forgotten in the workshop—which are the bureaucrats. It’s the bureaucrats who first need to be infused with GNH values, and these values need to be manifested in the way the bureaucrats manage the teachers. He thinks that teachers in Bhutan are “appallingly managed”, and are demotivated by the way they are managed.

So he requested that we also talk about what the bureaucracy needs to do, which is to look at itself. Any bureaucracy contains an enormous amount of inertia, which has to be overcome, and contains people who have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo for two reasons. First, to change the status quo is more work, and second, if you change the status quo you are often threatening something that that particular bureaucrat has been responsible for introducing. So Michael asked again that “the role of bureaucracy be looked at before what needs to be done to the teachers”.

Hon. Minister of Education: I think maybe I should put things in perspective. There seems to be some misunderstanding that this is the only solution. Here, I think the reason we came up with this was to be more focused, because while we appreciate getting the feedback and input from all the educators here about the various aspects, we thought to derive the best benefit we would have to focus the discussion. But we are fully aware that there is a strong need to raise the status of teachers, to motivate, and there are many other things that we have to do, especially concerning the bureaucracy. I totally agree that the way we manage them in the selection, recruitment, promotion, deployment, training all need to be looked at. And we are fully aware of this and we are working on it.

Of course, if you have the time and could work on it, we would be very happy. In the breakout groups, if you could have a dual track—one focusing on the training part and

the other on what sort of things you could have in place to raise the status of teachers and how to motivate them and how they should be managed—we would like that. If you have time in the next four days we would really appreciate recommendations on that. But we thought that, given the time constraints, it is better to be focused. But definitely, I would like to assure you that this is not the only solution.

I think yesterday when we had our debriefing there was an urgency expressed that the government has another three years. Therefore, in three years, they would like to see something concrete done. But in parallel other things also are being done. We are fully aware. And if I were to deliver some things about the community being also brought on board, engaged—I think when you design the training we would like to see how teachers and schools can engage the community. So I feel that may be covered there also. Definitely bringing the community in is very crucial. Therefore, I would like to request that when you recommend what sort of training, or the content that should go in, perhaps you could see how the schools can engage the community.

- The next participant noted that, after he had listened to the students, he feels that teachers are very important. He commented that there are three types of teachers—the first teacher is one who inspires, that is very important. “Obviously your teacher does not inspire you so you cannot really learn properly and you forget things because they do not inspire you.” The second type of teacher is one who explains everything. The third type of teacher is the one who complains—“that’s what you’re getting. He is complaining that he would prefer to be a doctor but not a teacher.”

The best teachers are the teachers who inspire. That means GNH has to be embedded in the consciousness of teacher himself. In order to inspire, he has to be the perfect example. So going back to the vision statement when it talks about GNH being embedded in the consciousness of youth, it has to go to the teachers first. Teachers cannot impart GNH unless it’s part of their consciousness. So teachers are the most important persons in starting this whole programme. Without that they cannot embed the consciousness of GNH in the youth.

But in education, you have a triangle, really, with the children on top, and on one side of the triangle you have the teachers and on the other side you have the parents who are also teachers at home. If parents are ignorant of GNH, if they do not help in the process, there are bound to be a lot of failures. Parents, teachers, and the youth. The participant asked that this be added in the first page of the vision statement.

Facilitator: Thank you. We are going to have to wrap up in five minutes.

- The next participant pledged to be very brief. She commented that she fully supported the need to reach out to parents, and as a parent with children in schools in Bhutan, she has often felt left out of the whole equation. For example, when education introduced values education into the school there was very little

consultation with parents, who kept asking teachers what values they were teaching the children?

She also noted that in Bhutan, the family has a lot of influence on children, and if family members do not understand GNH—and she said “most of us do not”—it is not going to work. Also, a big divide has been created by secular education between the elderly and young. When you talk to elderly people in rural areas their first comment is, “I don’t know anything. I’ve never been to school. Ask my children. They are educated.” So it is important to bring parents into this whole effort if it is to succeed.

And quickly, she had a response to the gentleman bringing up issue of television. What does not work in the current educational system is the lack of media literacy. There is a thriving media environment in Bhutan, but it is largely global, with little local Bhutanese content targeted at youth and children. That is a major issue and media literacy must be incorporated, although she doesn’t know if it can be done it in one or three years.

At a recent talk on media literacy given at the College of Education, all the teachers were concerned with how they can ensure quality education if they have to keep integrating new ideas like media literacy. But the response was that we cannot wait until we develop an excellent curriculum. We can integrate it if we understand a little more about what is happening in Bhutan and can try to do things in small ways right away.

Finally, she suggested that a recommendation to the government be that similar exercises be conducted across the various Ministries—especially the business and private sector, which is a gap that we are not touching on. If the people in charge of the industries and businesses are not in synch or do not understand GNH, there are problems.

- The next participant, who is a teacher in Bhutan, mentioned that the trend that happened in Ladakh is also happening in Bhutan. The wealthy people send their children out to international schools in India and elsewhere in third countries. The rural families’ children in Bhutan do not receive the education that wealthy children receive abroad, and that is an important issue to discuss, and the Ministry should address at the first GNH policy formulations.

In her own education, she had only a few teachers who approached education from a knowledge, rather than the exam, point of view. It is very hard to attract passionate people who want to become teachers from the heart. People basically opt for teaching because they need a job and want to survive. Good teachers are disheartened. Teachers are demotivated and want to find other careers and greener pastures. So it’s very important to address this now, and as Mark said, it is very important to create the best schools in the village to produce the best results. In the villages, teachers are struggling with everyday survival and practical issues such

medical care, transportation services, the food they receive, and the salaries. Their lives are difficult. As the saying goes, “A hungry man knows no religion.”

Facilitator: Thank you very much. OK, there are five hands that I see. We will devote the next session after the tea break to continuing this discussion. Before we have any breakout on teacher education we will get to all the contextual issues that are important like democracy, rural school, teacher motivation and compensation. Let’s get it all out and documented, and let’s take that in our hearts and minds when we break out. So I would suggest that the next session is not going to be a breakout, and we will stay in this group and we will get at all the issues. So I don’t think that if I gave you three more minutes it would help. So let’s get all of it aired. [*To one of the participants:*] Do you have two words?

- Participant: Two words. The Secretary mentioned that we need to keep our one to two to three years goals very simple. And I think that is enough and we do not have to discuss many things. I think many people around here who are suggesting issues have not really understood the realities of the field. Therefore, by including democracy or child or human rights, it’s not going to help us. I think just these simple goals will achieve these things because under GNH the pillars and values will cover all these things. To me, I feel these simple goals are good enough, and all these things people are sharing here will be automatically covered. Everything that happens has a reason and people without reasoning are complaining. I feel that teachers in this room now must be embarrassed by the feedback that people are giving. People who are not teachers do not know what kind of things are happening. Thank you.

Facilitators: OK, OK. We are doing both. We are not disregarding giving the Ministry what’s needed, while also not disregarding what people are saying that’s important in context. So with your forbearance, I am going to close this session because I need to take a break and I think you need to take a break. Thank you very much. Let’s come back at 11:35.

Session 2 – Discussion continued

Morning, after tea break

Facilitator: I’d like to invoke what His Excellency Minister of Education said that resonated with me—GNH-infused grace. I’m going to ask both participants and observers to practice that very useful trait, grace. There has been some feedback—so we are checking in—that people who have not had a chance to speak be given more priority. And please, I can’t watch the hands all the time because I am surveying the room and holding the conversation. So allow me and forgive me if I didn’t see your hand, but I notice that some people have not spoken and we want your voice in the room.

And I ask the people who speak a lot to allow that to happen. So I'm asking for grace. Also, if you don't get a chance to speak or you feel that something really needs to be heard or fed back, even though you don't need to say it, give it to us in writing. I think the students modeled the feedback process brilliantly. They met, they summarized it, they gave it to me, and it circulated—you all have it. I'm not suggesting that's the way you do it. But if you feel that your point is missed, then it could be a way to handle it as well. So, I am just asking for grace to do that in this group—that you allow the ones who have not spoken to go first.

OK. Then let me address the observers group. I know that you have a lot to offer and your role at the beginning, as we said, is observing, witnessing, and that you will have a chance to input. So, I hear that there might be feedback about issues such as if handouts are given there are not enough handouts, that participants get them first. We apologize. Please accept our gracious apology. We can send electronic copies as well. So please just bear with us. I have to say it's true, it's not the same. So just be patient and we will get all the feedback, particularly for the observers group, hopefully in writing a lot, and you will also get five minutes to present if we do breakout groups. So we are co-creating that, as you can see, as we are in the circle. Tashi, would you like to add something?

Tashi (Ron) Colman: We did get a request to circulate the students' feedback and, of course, we will do that electronically. But I do want to remind the visitors who asked me for that that about the reality that has been referred to a couple of times here recently by Mark. I have been in a lot of meetings with the Education Ministry in the last couple of months and it is a reality, for example, that Education Ministry actually has no budget left for paper for this year. That's just the way it is. There is no money in the budget any more for paper for the Ministry. So we do have to be mindful of the larger context. We will distribute things electronically. For those few copies that went around, someone actually went out to the photocopy shop and at our expense quickly ran off a few copies because we thought that was crucially important for people to have immediately. But we just can't keep producing lots of paper. I just wanted to explain.

Facilitator: Thank you. Again I thank you for your gracious understanding and patience with this process and that's what we are practicing here and thank you for the inspiration on grace. Sometimes my eyesight is not so good and I can't see all your names, so if I don't say your first name, forgive me, because I can't see it and I don't know you all yet. So when you get the mike say your first name because it helps me and everybody else. So with that, would you model that?

- Karma commented that he had two observations on this morning, which had produced a thought-provoking and lively dialogue. The first was that sometimes things seemed to be black and white, while in Bhutan there are actually a lot of shades of grey, and there are good things happening that need patience to see their manifestation. And second is that the teacher training that is being implemented is only a beginning, not an end. The goal is to change behaviour, which does not happen overnight. It needs small doses of input over time before it can be fully transmitted to students in the classrooms.

Facilitator: So a question of process. We decided before the break to take one full session to complete the contextual piece. I see a lot of hands. I'm wondering whether it would be more useful—because you worked so well yesterday in groups—for you to work in groups where you can get really succinct and then present those contextual issues. We can put them up and then talk. How about that? Honestly, if I opened this up, half an hour later we wouldn't get to what you want to do, which is to say what you want to say. And you are so good at working in groups that it's easier to get that all out at one time, and I'll ask Kevin to put it up on the slides so you'll have it and the Bhutan government will have it and then we can proceed. In the interests of moving to a concrete outcome, I'm going to propose we do that.

Hon. Minister of Education: Thank you. The facilitator actually suggested that we form breakout groups and start getting back to business. But since we are talking about context still, I feel that I need to make a couple of points here, particularly based on some of the observations that we've heard in the course of the last hour or so before tea break. I most heartily and gratefully acknowledge all of the comments that everybody has made, including our students. I would like to assure our students that you must be absolutely free and open here. This is the reason we have invited you and there should be absolutely no reservations or hesitation of any kind. I have absolutely no difficulty about any kind of questions, nor does the Ministry as a whole.

I think that extremely important and probing questions have been asked here, and very helpful suggestions and recommendations made. In the interest of setting the context, I would like to suggest that education be considered as more than a means to an end, which is important. Many people feel that the end of education is employability, and they are not just talking about employment today, they are talking about employability. I get worried and every so often I find myself quarrelling with the employment agencies that they shouldn't expect our school and college and university graduates to be ready-made for jobs the day they graduate from schools and colleges. Our students are in school, college, or university for more reasons than simply finding a job. Of course, that is very important, but I think very often when we think about sustainability we are thinking about education also as a business that has to be economically sustainable or cost-effective.

I think we are looking at education from a more sublime, a more idealistic perspective. Education cannot but be idealistic. It cannot but be sublime and everything else that follows is, in fact, a support, or perhaps a by-product of education. So I would like to appeal to the house to look at education not only as a means to an end, but also as an end in itself because education is good, because education by itself is virtuous. It makes people good. It makes societies good.

Otherwise, if we look at education the same way that everybody else is looking at it, we are going to talk about the same systems that have not worked all that well. We are going to see that all countries have become standard, and Bhutan is going to be no different. So we would like to look at education from a slightly more elevated, a slightly more

sublime, perspective. And I think that will take care of all the other concerns that we expressed so well.

I wanted to actually add one other paradox to what we were talking about in the morning. There is employability versus humanity, but as I said, I didn't want to add any more paradoxes then so I left it at seven. But I think there is an obsession today, especially in the market, about seeing young people as market products. And the language used is whether the students and graduates are marketable—the metaphor of the market—whether they are sellable. These are the terms often used. And I certainly feel that we would like to see education a little differently.

And the other thing, of course, concerns comments made about what is happening in the system. My colleagues and myself often awaken at one o'clock and think about what the teachers are doing. I've been to some of the most remote corners of our country and I've seen what are teachers are doing. So I feel that, with all the imperfections that are there, my fellow teachers are doing a heroic job given the circumstances. And because the nature of education is positive, because the principle of education is normative, I believe things can be improved. And I'm so grateful to all of you for the suggestions that you have made. That is the reason I have stayed away from the Parliamentary Session to be with you. Thank you so much, indeed.

Facilitator: So I have a proposal. Arbitrarily we have two buckets about what's working and what's not working so we want to get it all out in the room. So what's working—there must be a lot of things that are working. So can you think of all of those things that are working in the current education system or in Bhutan? I'm sure a lot of it is working brilliantly, so let us not forget that. It is important to note that part in one group.

And then maybe the other half of the group will work on all the issues that have been brought up that are not working. So I'm going to divide this group straight down the middle. I'm going to suggest that you divide yourselves in half again. I know it's a big group but bear with it. Choose somebody who can speak as spokesperson again. I think you will need at least 10 to 15 minutes and I'm going to give you that. There's a suggestion of mixing the local Bhutanese people with the international people. Could some of you move, exchange? Thank you.

And for the observers, if you'd like to do your own work, please feel free to do it and I'll take your responses in writing. You'll have to organize yourselves. We're not asking you to report out. Let's be clear.

The participants and observers then broke out into groups to discuss further contextual issues for 15 minutes.

Breakout group feedback reports

Facilitator: We're going to start with what's working. Will the first group please begin.

Group 1:

- The State commitment to education is very high. That means the education policy is a priority.
- The English instruction is very successful.
- There is access to equal and free education, including the informal education system.
- The national curricula is applicable to all schools. If there is a change, all schools can adapt it and there is not going to be a conflict.
- The engagement of citizens as critics of the education system is very positive. Everybody is aware of the education system and wants to criticize or support it.
- Allocation for resources for education is the second highest in the country.
- The teachers are very receptive to change.
- There is tremendous openness to look at what is not working.

Group 2:

- The teachers are tremendous change agents, much more than a doctor, engineer, or bureaucrat. The teacher is a very critical point in changing the mind-set of people because they are the people on the front line.
- Teachers also act as psychoanalysts, role models, and mentors.

Group 3:

- There is a strong sense of self and pride in young men and women in Bhutan.
- There is articulation and grace in language.
- Bhutanese generally seem to be self-directed, enterprising, and innovative. An example is people who are into film making even though they may not have formal training, as such, in films.
- There is still a lot of family bonding and community bonding, but there are concerns that this might be changing.
- In the 50 years since the first schools were established, we have come a long way, which is exhibited by the fact that this workshop is taking place. Education has made a definite contribution to society.
- The relationship between teacher and students are generally good, meaningful and mutually beneficial, if not ideal.
- Good leadership provided the choice of English as the medium of instruction, which started when the first schools were established. The leadership provided by Their Majesties the Kings has emphasized education and GNH and is very good.
- Women speak up just as openingly and as well as men, and this must be attributed to something right with the education system
- In the past, there was less distraction in terms of television, but this may be something that is changing now. We've had time for family and reflection.
- Points that need attention include: substance abuse which relates to children who are no longer in the school system, although they should be; media literacy; the opportunity to be reflective, to be meditative, and to offer time for silent moments (a farmer ploughing his fields actually does it in a meditative way and there are so many means of ways, especially in a rural setting, for people to find these silent moments, which are perhaps not there in a formal education system).

Facilitator: What's not working. Who's the lucky spokesperson here?

Group 1: Areas for improvement (rather than what's not working)

- A large percentage of youth in Thimphu could not pass class 10 and cannot see a way forward, so they are actually hanging out in bars, because there is no vocational training.
- There is a lack of recreational facilities like parks and the city is not humane enough to look after these youths.
- Community college systems work abroad, because they provide issues that are missed in the formal education system, and they could be implemented in Bhutan. They create space for youth to let their thoughts flow and see their way forward.
- Youth who are not academically inclined do not see their way forward, and the solution for that is to equip them with basic electrical, plumbing, carpentry, automobile repair, and other professions. This will give them humanity as well.
- There is a problem in recruitment and remuneration system for the teachers, and we need to look at this issue.
- The Bhutanese bureaucracy has no faith in Bhutanese professionals, because if you look at this workshop there is not an adequate representation of teachers who are in the front line.
- The leadership structure in schools is a typical representation of bureaucracy, which is hierarchical, and there is no profound interaction between the student leaders, the school management, and the teachers, and the teachers feel disempowered. The solution is to create a flatter structure that does away with hierarchy, and then there is profound interaction at the end of the day or the end of the year.
- Maybe the morale of teachers is sinking day by day.
- The top of classes do not choose teaching as a profession.
- Teachers need refresher courses, with follow-up.
- Principals, once they reach the career level of P1, need to resign and they come back as teachers, but they feel disempowered and useless because there is no sense of earned respect and there is no authority attached to it, which is sad at a senior age.

Group 2:

- Teachers – profession here is not perceived as being attractive. Reasons why include: there is not much recognition; there is little career advancement opportunity; compensation is low; often facilities are poor; living conditions are not good; teachers are not managed with great support or training opportunities.
- Curriculum – too much content, exam driven, reform is from the top down, approach tends to be information-based not experiential with the hand and heart idea, low capacity and resources to support it, heavily academic and not skill based, not relevant and it should be a useful one but it's not so designed, tends to be chopped into parts and doesn't come together into a coherent whole. Two kinds of curriculum include what students experience, but equally important is what's

offered to teachers and their preparation and ongoing support, isn't all that different from curricula in a lot of other places and GNH consciousness is not infused in the curriculum, which overloaded with content, not Bhutanese values.

- Infrastructure – problems with facilities in the remote areas, no living quarters, classrooms are not conducive to learning, urban schools are often overcrowded, differences between urban and rural schools, not enough budget for maintenance and many other things, constraints, decentralization is without authority, decision-making, accountability, empowerment at the local level. Grants could be directed to the local level.
- Community – parents tend not to be engaged enough especially in the rural areas where they feel they don't know enough to interfere with how school is going, in urban areas parents are too busy.
- Overall education. Should be focusing on humanity and what is a human being. With respect to the Education Minister, we don't need to keep the paradox between employability and humanity—it should be all one.

Group 3: (student spokespersons)

- Management of teachers – no respect for teacher, job not attractive
- Curriculum is too vast, some things are there that are not necessary and don't help students
- Some things need to be in curriculum like life- and self-management skills
- No extra money for activities, which students should actively participate in.
- It's important how the teacher feels when entering the classroom. GNH has its roots deep within Buddhist philosophy, which means that ultimately life is inner happiness and is derived from the relationship we have with others—our parents, teachers, and friends. We choose a teacher who enters a classroom smiling, in a happy mood, rather than a teacher who shows us all the frustrations of his personal life.

.....

- Participant: We've heard a lot about demoralized teachers, and I work with communities and grassroots people, and a lot of students say that they would like to be teachers. I call them the "positive deviants" and we need to look at why they want to be teachers instead of looking at what is not working. A second point is that Karma Ura has done a very interesting analysis of textbooks and what is working and not in the curriculum, and that could be included here.
- Participant: No one raised the issue of certification. Is it a problem?

Facilitator: What we did not do and won't have time to do is to clarify what's missing, which does not mean what's missing in the curriculum. When I do what's working, what's not working, the third bucket, "what's missing," means what have we missed in either bucket that is important, not trivial. So what's missing—we can do that now or

later. What's missing is like you said, "Certification is that a problem?" Can we actually record that?

- Participant: We have worked on three major areas—English, Dzongkha, and mathematics—and have made system-wide reforms. In the languages, the changes have been to make the curriculum current, to focus on communication skills, and to test those skills, rather than just content, in the exams. In mathematics, conceptual development is supported by procedural practice. If these reforms are not working, it reflects my previous comment that behavioural change takes time and thinking that giving teachers only one workshop will deliver the change is not adequate. This is only the start and teachers need to be supported further.

Facilitator: I was told we need to break, so two more comments.

- Participant: Someone said that introducing English and Dzongkha right from kindergarten is a good thing. To me, from a child's psychological and learning point of view, it is not right because children at the age of 5 and 6 are full of questions and are very inquisitive. But the fact of introducing a new language, which they don't understand, stops this inquisitive mind. The questioning mind is being stopped and therefore, to me, introducing English and Dzongkha, which is not the mother tongue for almost 90% of the population, is probably not right. Maybe our students are not doing very well. They learn the language but they are not able to pick up economic skills because of that.

Facilitator: OK, could we give the mike to Mark, and then that's it.

- Mark: Two years ago I did an experiment with a group of teachers. I said, "If you could only teach five subjects in class 10, what would they be? The idea of limiting to five created a furor. And we had a big debate that lasted most of the day about what those five should be. And then I said, "Suppose you could add one more subject, what would that be?" And that created another furor. My point is that it isn't a matter of correcting the curriculum in each subject. As the students said, the curriculum has too much in it for the students to absorb in any depth whatsoever. So it's not a matter of correcting the Dzongkha or the English. It's a matter of looking at what the students should be studying and trying to look at the curriculum in those terms.

The second point I'd like to make is that—and this is a delicate point—His Majesty keeps telling us over and over again that the level of English is declining, the level of math is declining. Practically every speech he gives on education he remarks on that. So I, being who I am, decided I'd test that out. So I went and looked at some of the exam papers. These are exam papers of people sitting for the graduate and I've got to tell you that over the last couple of years there has been such a decline in the level of English—not only could they not write English sentences correctly, they couldn't organize their thoughts in a reasonable fashion. That says to me that we aren't doing well enough in the teaching of English. My Dzongkha is primitive,

to say the least—about the level of a lizard. So I’m not at all able to read the Dzongkha exams, but judging from the English exams, we really can’t afford to be self-satisfied. We have to set standards for ourselves and try to reach them. And that, to me, is what educational reform, in part, is about.

Facilitator: OK, I think Tashi has a few announcements and we will break for lunch after that.

Tashi (Ron) Colman: This is the last time today when we will be together as a group. We’re going to spend the whole afternoon in breakout groups today, where a lot of important work will get done. I know your stomachs are rumbling but I have to do the whole day’s announcements now so please bear with me for a moment.

The announcements concerned:

Breakout group for participants, which should have about 10-12 people and a relatively even mix of national and international participants. Breakout groups for observers.

The breakout group guidelines in the blue book are no longer valid because of the change in direction from curriculum to teacher training, so other guidelines were passed out. Reporting back to the larger group will take place tomorrow morning.

Dedication of Merit for Educating for Gross National Happiness took place within each breakout group at its conclusion.

Note: A summary of these December 9 afternoon breakout group discussions begins below, as part of the December 10 proceedings when these breakout group recommendations and conclusions were reported back to plenary.

10 December, Day 3: New plans, breakout group reports, and discussion

Judith Simmer-Brown’s “blog” written for Naropa University: *Only a few more days of the workshop, and while it feels that we are not really accomplishing that much, the way the work is being structured and facilitated, we are told that we have done a lot. This morning, Tashi [Ron] Colman, organizer of the workshop and the Executive Director of GPI Atlantic, which is based in Nova Scotia, Canada, explained that the leadership team has met between each session, several times a day, with four of the Bhutanese leaders: the Prime Minister, the Education Minister, the Education Secretary, and the director of the Royal Education Council.*

This is a very interesting group: [The Prime Minister and the Education Minister are] highly educated and articulate Bhutanese men who have won our hearts. The [Education Secretary], Sangay Zam, is a brilliant, pragmatic, and articulate Bhutanese woman, who appears to implement much of the work of Education. She is beautiful, sensitive, and strong, a real warrior woman. She has been in government for almost 30 years, for many years in Finance, and most recently was the Secretary of Customs and Revenue....

The fourth person of the Bhutanese leadership [the president of the Royal Education Commission] is Dr. Mark Mancall, an American professor who has been teaching in the Bhutanese educational system for a number of years. [He brings] a more predictable emphasis on GNP, jobs, growth, and so forth. I think he brings a great alternative voice to the team....

Anyway, this group has already begun to implement some of the work we have done! They have announced a nationwide conference for all the school principals, 541 of them, January 21–27, to introduce them to the changes that will be made in the schools, based on the work of our workshop. As the day went on, there seems to be some thought that there might be three regional groups meeting separately at that time to make sure that the rural principals are not overwhelmed by the urban ones, etc. The details will be worked out.² Today they asked us to design specific workshop activities related with the subject areas we represent, and to be as practical as possible about foci that can be implemented with little cost but with practical result.

I was in the Meditation breakout group. The emphasis was how to bring GNH principles into the classroom based on our area. I worked with a group of half Bhutanese, half international participants, and it was so satisfying.... The first thing we did was to each speak about our experience and vision for meditation in the classroom—and when we concluded it was amazing, because it appeared that we all agreed about what should be done, and how it should be done.

² The dates were later changed to divide the principals into three groups meeting for one week each between 19 January and 12 February, 2010, along with district and assistant district education officers, teachers college lecturers, and heads of university departments (for a total of about 700 divided between the three groups).

We created an introductory mindfulness (not meditation) retreat for school principals and teachers, with lots of practice interspersed with discussion of how mindfulness could contribute to Gross National Happiness. The workshop (we couldn't call it a retreat) included many applied mindfulness exercises, presentation of age-appropriate ways for introducing mindfulness to children, and discussion of how to lead the schools in mindfulness-based curriculum.... The consensus of the group was that such a workshop must be run by a "neutral" person—not a monk or a hierarchical authority, but someone with deep experience in meditation who had the backing of the government.

Mindfulness meditation instruction – Judith Simmer-Brown

We'll begin again with sitting with our body in upright posture, alert but relaxed. Place one's attention on breathing, especially on the out-breath. We let our planning go, the future has not yet come. We rest freshly in the present moment.

Participants practiced mindfulness meditation for 5 minutes.

Session 1 – Introduction to new directions, action plan, and breakout groups

Morning

Review of the deliberations and new directions: Tashi (Ron) Colman

I'd like to take a few minutes this morning just to review where we are—we're at a very interesting point in our deliberations and, in a way, a turning point. I want to summarize where I think we are at this point and then flash up something that could very well determine the rest of the workshop from here until the end. I hope you agree.

So, the first day we focused on vision and that's necessary, because unless we have a sense of direction or purpose, some star that shows where we are heading, it is difficult to do anything practical. Otherwise we would be running off in a hundred different directions and often at cross-purposes. I know it's difficult to go through phrasing—this word and that word—but on the other hand, the Royal Government of Bhutan does have to articulate that vision clearly and present it to teachers, teachers' colleges, and to the general public. The word-smithing that took place, in a way, is absolutely essential in order to be able to define clearly where we are going, what our goal is. That was very useful and important.

The second day, yesterday, I think of as letting everything bubble up and rise to the surface. So in the space that we created with our early morning meditation, everything was on the table—people's inspiration, people's discontent, what's working, what's not working. Everything somehow came out yesterday and, just watching and listening, I felt a lot of gratitude to our facilitator for just letting it all happen. Everything came out, and

I'm so grateful that people seemed uninhibited in expressing what was on their minds. No one seemed to be holding back even slightly, so that was quite delightful, and a credit to everyone here that the atmosphere has been created where people feel free enough to do that, where no one was squashing anything. I don't know how other people felt, but I was on the edge of my seat during the whole discussion because it was so dynamic.

Along with that process there has been something else going on as well, and this is what brings us to where we are today. For me, and I think for other people in the room, it is rare in the world to be working so directly with the top leadership of government paying close attention. That's very rare. I've spent my whole career in the nongovernmental world, and we always have this sense that we are knocking on some distant door from very far away, hoping that someone, somewhere in the ether, will catch a word of what we are saying. And having tiny victories. It doesn't compare to the fact that Honourable Minister of Education is sitting here paying close attention, and Honourable Prime Minister is paying attention to everything.

Yesterday, there were a series of briefings and telephone conversations with the Prime Minister. Madam Secretary of Education also has been paying very close attention, taking into her heart and mind everything that's being said here—and on the spot transforming it into policy. That's quite a remarkable experience in the world—that we can express what we express, and then see our top policy makers listening intently and asking what can we do with this? There is some remarkable intersection we are experiencing of bottom up—the kind of thing that happened yesterday—and then the leadership happening that's also required to implement that.

So that brings us to where we are today. And it really is a credit to the dynamism of the interaction that has occurred in this room that we've come, at the morning of the third day, to where I actually couldn't even have hoped that we might be even at the end of the workshop. But we are at a remarkably different point this morning than we could have anticipated two days ago. We think of what an outcome might be. You'll see in a second that the degree to which our top policy people have actually begun to try to implement this. So everything that you see here has come directly from what has occurred in the workshop in the last two days. Had it not been for this workshop, I think we could safely say that we would not be able to move to the stage we are at right now.

Yesterday, Honourable Prime Minister and Education Minister, Madam Education Secretary, and Director of the Royal Education Council Mark Mancall were involved in a series of back and forwards discussions, meeting, telephone calls—all of this went on until about 11 o'clock last night, and then resumed again this morning until about 5 minutes before we started our meeting just now. The Prime Minister was actually just giving feedback on this—I don't know if any of you saw me typing just now—but this is actually hot off the press, so to speak.

There is now an emerging action plan. I want to review that with you because if we feel comfortable with this, this could determine what we do for the remaining three days. So let's just go through it. This is now a proposal that has been carefully reviewed by

Honourable Prime Minister, Education Minister, Secretary of Education, and Director of the Royal Education Council. I'm simply in the role of passing along here what they have come up with.

There are two phases that are now emerging. Phase One can be seen in the following slides:

Educating for GNH — Emerging Action Plan

...And what we need now from workshop participants to make it happen

As proposed by:

Hon. Prime Minister, Education Minister, Education Secretary, Director REC

— Based on workshop proceedings to date (8–9 December 2009)

DRAFT Statement — wording subject to approval

Phase One

What: Bring all 541 Bhutanese school principals and representatives of the two teachers' colleges to either Paro or Punakha for one week preparation / initiation into Educating for Gross National Happiness.

When: 20–27 January 2010.³
Facilitator training and preparation: 22 Dec. 09 – 15 January 2010

How much: Nu. 5.2 million = about \$US 120,000 (estimate by Director, HR Department, Ministry of Education.
• Proposal to development partners (Friday 11 Dec.)

Who: Hon. Prime Minister, Education Minister, Education Secretary, Director REC, and key national workshop participants

How: This workshop will craft daily / hourly program for 20–27 Jan. 2010

³ The dates were later changed to divide the principals into three groups meeting for one week each between 19 January and 12 February, 2010, along with district and assistant district education officers, teachers college lecturers, and heads of university departments (for a total of about 700 divided between the three groups).

Description: Given the urgency and immediacy of our objective to bring GNH principles and values into the educational system without delay, the Royal Government of Bhutan will initiate this process in the coming 2010 academic year. The immediate goal—during this present 2009–10 winter vacation—is to prepare all Bhutan’s school principals and teachers’ college representatives for this transition. The 20–27 January 2010 principals’ and teachers’ college workshop will produce concrete plans to initiate GNH practices in all the country’s schools and to prepare teachers for this transition.

Phase One Guidelines

- Bring vision statement + GNH graduate description from this workshop (after final review by HPM, EM, ES, and Director REC).
- Challenge to school principals and representatives of the two teachers’ colleges in January: How will they achieve this vision in their own schools and colleges? Message: **You** can make this happen.
- Ask the principals and college representatives to define as specifically as possible:
 - What they will do?
 - How they can inspire a GNH way of thinking in their own teachers?
 - How can they bring in the broader community?
 - How can the Ministry, Dzongkhag and other institutions support them?
- Process: Not force this down their throat, but use our own workshop process, including breakout groups, so that they themselves come up with the best methods of bringing GNH into their schools.
- January 2010 workshop outcome: Specific commitments and resolutions from school principals on what they will do.
- Next steps 2010 academic year:
 - School inspections/ visits to see what is happening in different schools to honour workshop commitments.
 - Survey school principals to identify what is working, what is not, what achieved, and what problems encountered.
 - Organize follow-up workshop in 2010 academic year to assess how new practices are working, identify problems, introduce curricular innovations, etc.
- Our Dec. 7–12 workshop process:
 - Plan 20–27 January principals’ workshop on daily and hourly basis.
 - Conduct 10 December breakout groups on the 5 broader learning environment topics with this January principals’ workshop in mind.

- Additional expertise group: eco-literacy/ sustainability education to come up with what they can offer in this practical application phase.

- **Caveat:** It was agreed that capacity to mount 20–27 January principals’ and teachers’ college workshop is dependent on this workshop’s deliverables.
-

Tashi Colman: The implementation is going to begin immediately, namely two weeks from now. There is going to be a training that is going to begin at the end of this month for the purpose of training facilitators who will include national participants in this room, actually, with a view to bringing all 541 school principals from throughout Bhutan together next month—January 20–27, to be precise—either in Paro or Punaka for initiation and preparation into this new paradigm of educating for Gross National Happiness. So immediately, what we are doing here will be passed along to all of the school principals in this country, as well as representatives of the teachers’ colleges. So they will come together.

Honourable Prime Minister, Education Minister, Education Secretary, and Director of the Royal Education Council will all actively take part in that January principals’ gathering. So the principals will have the opportunity to meet directly with the leadership and also with people in this room who will act as facilitators. I know they didn’t know that until now, but you know what you’re going to be doing for the next few weeks. And it’s actually immediately—I have to say that I’ve never seen this in government before, ever. And I’m not a spring chicken. But immediately Madam Secretary requested the Director of Human Resources Department to come with pen and paper and calculator to calculate the cost of bringing all these people together. A budget was created yesterday afternoon, and a dollar figure was put on this—what would it cost to put this into practice. This proposal will be presented to development partners—many of whom are here as participants and observers.

Therefore, what we would like you to do, please, is actually create the programme for this January 20–27 gathering. The way that this was put was, “Please create a day by day, hour by hour, schedule.” Just imagine—the days can be broken out into many different breakout groups with different topics, and actually this can make this workshop happen.

These are the actual words of the Honourable Prime Minister:

Given the urgency and immediacy of our objective to bring GNH principles and values into the educational system without delay, the Royal Government of Bhutan will initiate this process in the coming 2010 academic year. The immediate goal during this present 2009–10 winter vacation is to prepare all Bhutan school principals and teachers’ college representatives for this transition. The 20–27 January 2010 Principals and Teachers’ College Workshop will produce concrete plans to initiate GNH practices in all the country’s schools and to prepare teachers for this transition.

That's the statement in his words. Now he said, this isn't enough. This is simply step one. We also have Phase Two.

Phase Two

- What:** Develop the more substantive and complex curricular, extra-curricular and class materials, readings, activities, and methods required to bring GNH principles and values fully into the educational system, and design and initiate appropriate teacher education programs for this purpose. Include College of Education so that new teachers are trained in the new methods.
- When:** Development in 2010 academic year (February to December, 2010) for full implementation in 2011 academic year. Winter 2010–11: full-fledged country-wide teacher education programs for all teachers. College of Education will ensure that teachers graduating in Nov. 2010 will receive effective GNH orientation before graduation.
- How much:** 3-year budget to be developed by HR Dept., Ministry of Education
- How:** Involve whole Education Ministry curriculum design team, and international resource people
-

The understanding of Phase Two is that immediately after this workshop a second, more complex phase will be initiated, which will take place throughout the 2010 academic year. And this phase involves developing the curricula materials, classroom activities, and readings that are required to implement this in practice. And during this year, the Curriculum Design Division of the Education Ministry will be involved, with the Prime Minister, Education Minister, Education Secretary, and Director of Royal Education Council—and hopefully, international participants in this room will be willing during this 2010 academic year to offer their expertise and their resources and skills developing the kinds of materials that could then produce, by the 2011 academic year, a more complete, substantive implementation of a GNH-infused curriculum and educational programme.

And also during the 2010 academic year, there will be training for teachers country-wide, which will culminate the following winter in a series of intensive workshops for teachers in different parts of the country. So it will begin with the principals and teachers' college representatives, and then, based on the substantive work that occurs throughout the 2010 academic year, will translate into full-fledged teachers training programmes in the next winter. So by the beginning of the 2011 academic year, this programme will actually be in effect in substantive form.

Madam Sangay Zam, Secretary of Education, said that she will now move to preparing a three year budget for this full implementation so that it is immediately translated into

action. As mentioned, this will involve the whole curriculum design team, international resource people and so forth. What happened in the first day, including the feedback that was received and the revisions made to the vision statement, is now very important because this will now be the starting point for the principals and teachers' college representative meeting—initiation, preparation—bringing them into this mindstream in some way.

So the vision statement and the description of what a GNH graduate would look like becomes the starting point. And the challenge presented to them is: You are the people who are going to realize this vision and come to fruition, so how will you do that? And that's the substance of that workshop.

These are, in a way, our guidelines. Madam Secretary was emphasizing yesterday that we should, in some way, replicate what has been going on in this room. In other words, rather than forcing some agenda down the throats of these principals, we should let it come up from within the group. So we should challenge them. What will you do? How can you inspire a GNH way of thinking in your teachers? How can you involve the broader community? I'm just quoting directly now from what Aum Sangay said. What kind of support from the Ministry do you need to make this happen? These would be the kind of challenges given to the principals—but allow this process, including breakout groups and so forth, so the actions are, in large part, generated from the workshop that happens in January itself.

And the outcome will hopefully be very specific commitments and pledges—during this year, I will do a, b, c, d, and e in my school. And as Professor Mancall was saying yesterday, there may be different requirements and priorities for a small rural village school and an urban school. The commitments might not be completely identical among all the principals so they will reflect the particular circumstances in which they exist. So there will be distinctions in region, circumstance, and so forth.

The last steps in the 2010 academic year following the principals workshop would be a series of things: school visits to actually find out to what extent these commitments are being honoured, what is actually happening. It would be a very different view of what a school inspection is usually like. There would be a survey done, perhaps, similar to the kind of survey we circulated here, but asking very specifically, what's working, what problems have you encountered and so forth. This would be a dynamic process. This is not something that is a rigid, one-shot deal that says how you do it. On the contrary, this would be an evolving process that would occur over the year.

And, hopefully, there are people from overseas from the 16 countries represented here who would be willing to continue working. This is just the first step. This is a very manipulative exercise here that is designed to suck you in, so that you can't escape now, so hopefully you can participate. And just for logical reasons, we had to limit the number of participants, but there are people in the observer group with tremendous qualifications and expertise. That became very clear during the breakout groups yesterday. What we got

from the observer groups was so high quality. So perhaps there are people in this larger room who can participate and help.

Then there will be a follow-up gathering of the principals and teachers' college representatives during the 2010 academic year so that they can personally gather to assess progress and move forward.

So what we are going to try to do—hopefully, there won't be any strenuous objections—is actually create this workshop for principals. Today is the day when we really want to start drawing on your *particular* experience. For example, the people who have experience with sustainability education and eco-literacy, what can you offer this gathering? So this is after the vision and the kind of bubbling up and putting everything on the table, which occurred the first two days. Today is the day, I think, the Honourable Prime Minister's expression of "exploit mercilessly" actually begins. So today is the day when we begin the merciless exploitation process. This is where your expertise now really has to come into play in the most specific, practical form, hopefully. So this is why I just mentioned here we can really draw on that expertise today.

And now I really need to add this. This is the very last point. I'm sorry to explain this in detail, but I think this is quite a critical point. There is a big caveat to all of this, and that is that none of this will happen unless this workshop here produces the workshop programme, because this is an incredibly short time line. Governments don't usually work like this, you know, in my experience. Government usually refers it to some committee, and then the committee deliberates for two years, and then there's a change in government or some deputy minister gets replaced, and whatever starts as a good intention goes nowhere. So this is a breathtakingly short timeline, literally. You should have seen the changes in the colour in Dr. Mancall's face as we looked at this timeline, yesterday. I think shocked is an understatement. What we are trying to accomplish here is happening in an incredibly short time.

So now there is an extraordinary responsibility that has descended on us. This cannot happen unless this workshop produces this workshop programme for January 20–27. Because immediately, in two weeks from now, the training of the facilitators is going to begin—actually in about 11 days from now—literally, this will begin. If we can't come up with this—if we end up with just vague and conceptual ideas, you know, this would be nice, that would be nice—then it's not possible to mount this. So that's the basic challenge. I'm just translating what happened yesterday, that's *all*. So maybe I could turn it over to our facilitator who could lead a discussion on this. That's the basic outlay.

Facilitator: Thank you so much for that intro.

Feedback from the Dec 9 curriculum-related breakout groups

Facilitator: I just want to say thank you, everyone—the entire room, for yesterday’s work. There was some tremendous work that came out of it, a lot of golden nuggets. Because of time, we are going to have one group only present. We reviewed it very carefully with the core team, and we’re going to present one group that models what the Ministry would like to have going forward. That is actually the language group from the observers group. I would like them to present first and then we can go on to the breakout. And all the other groups’ works will be posted in the far area, and then you can peruse and look at the wonderful work that you have all done. And, of course, we’ve all submitted it to the Ministry of Education, so nothing will be lost. We just want you to really take a look at one group’s work as a model. Do you have a question?

Participant: There was one group that did the workshop on training of principals, and this applies directly to what is going to happen. So I think we should be given the chance to present this.

Facilitator: You all did. Let me also say something, which I should mention, but forgot. The observer’s group did not have the 45 minutes conversation of how you should do this. They looked at my guidelines on that, x and y axes, and they were upstairs so they just did it. So today, obviously, we need to just do that, given the very specific guidelines. But we are all doing it for the principals workshop. Every group did that, so we’re just going to showcase the language group, right now. Is there a spokesperson for the language group? Terrific. Could you please present?

[A note on the breakout groups:

Some of the most productive specific outputs of the 7–12 December Thimphu workshop came from the small breakout groups that met on December 9, 10, and 11. In addition to the language group presentation, some of the written recommendations of these groups were targeted to the upcoming principals’ workshops, and representative samples are therefore reproduced below by topic area.]

1. Language

- This group began by identifying GNH values that are already in the curriculum but are not made explicit. It was suggested that a key strategy for principals and teachers is simply to make those GNH-based values more explicit than at present.
- The group recommended specific teaching techniques that foster mindful listening and creative storytelling and writing. For example, they could share stories of positive and negative school experiences with one student listening to a partner’s story and then sharing that story with the larger group (which requires careful listening). The group can then analyse which elements are common to the positive and to the

negative experiences in order to link successes and failures to GNH principles. Stories can then be selected for writing exercises and illustration.

- Inspired local community story-tellers can be invited into the classroom. These might include grandparents or recognized authors like Kunzang Choden. The group also recommended silent reading time, book-making (with student-made books included in the school library), and identifying stories and folk tales that embody GNH principles (like using the Four Friends story to demonstrate the value of collaboration).

Language group 1

Workshop focus:

It is given that GNH values are already in the curriculum. The task is for principals and teachers to identify strategies to make it explicit.

Activities:

1. 5 minutes of reflection/ mindfulness
2. Each participant answers three questions on paper (5 minutes) and shares answers:
 - a. How do you define GNH?
 - b. How do you embody GNH?
 - c. How do teachers and students recognize it in you?
3. Principals and teachers identify their successes and challenges with GNH values in the classroom.
4. Modeling exercise: How do you identify and pull up from students their knowledge of GNH?
Activity: Everyone acts as students. They form small groups and brainstorm a list of descriptive words or statements. The whole group reconvenes and shares their lists. As a group everyone prioritizes their top 5 values.
5. Prior to the workshop the principals should review the curriculum for GNH values that currently exist and identify where they can be included.
 - a. Participants review their homework
 - b. Break into pre-themed groups (like individuals, workplace etc.) and identify 5 bench marks (for example: unit on identity covered by mid-semester)
 - c. Identify activity or experimental exercise that allows students to integrate value.

Language group 2

A member of the group, who was from the GNH Commission, began the presentation with a short preamble that the group wrote:

The Honourable Minister of Education said that education should give a sense of purpose, worth, and self. This workshop has been designed to give Ministers and

staff, principals, and teachers a sense of purpose, worth, and self through opening hearts and minds.

The presenter said that the group recommended a mix of staff, principals, and teachers in groups saying that they believed “a maximum mix is magic”. She then presented ideas for two language workshops:

Language workshop suggestions:

Language workshop 1: Heart, hand, and head/ mind

1. Group divides into pairs and each person shares a storey of when he or she had a great experience and a not so great experience in school.
2. Groups of 8 come together and they tell their partner’s stories, which requires that they have had to listen carefully and perhaps write it down.
3. The group of 8 looks for elements that are common in the stories and for how success and failure connect to GNH.
4. Each group of 8 shares the common elements with the larger group
5. The group looks for ways to apply this exercise to the classroom, e.g., encouraging children to tell stories, write and illustrate text

Language workshop 2: Improving the culture of reading

1. Bring in an inspired storyteller (e.g., parent, grandparent, Karma Ura or other Bhutanese authors) to the classroom and to relate personal stories and feelings about reading and writing.
2. Brainstorm effective strategies that encourage the culture of reading,
Examples :
 - a) Silent reading time
 - b) Bookmaking and books go in library
 - c) Identify stores/ folk tales that embody GNH principles (the Four Friends – e.g., collaboration – cooperative learning

The final presenter, who was from the Royal Institute of Management, presented a simple mandala of factors involved in education for GNH from the language perspective, which centred around the child:

Education for Gross National Happiness



Facilitator: In recognition of the language group, can we have all who participated in the group please stand? Thank you so much for the good work.

A student participant said that the group thought that there was not a problem with the English curriculum, which had been changed recently. However, there was a problem with students forgetting what they had learned. So they suggested that the teachers could be made more aware of this, and have the students relate what they had learned the day before.

Four other participants also added comments about:

- (in the interests of alliteration) using the word “home”(in the larger sense) instead of “community” in the mandala (which was subsequently changed),
- the importance of using mandalas and an explanation of the meaning of a mandala representing knowledge in the Aztec tradition,
- the need to include speaking and listening, which represents a personal exchange, in addition to reading and writing,

- the fact that the new curriculum for English, math, and Dzongkha actually does include four strengths: writing and language, listening, speaking, and reading and literature. They are all there, but maybe need to be operationalized. Are teachers educated to be able to use these? Also, there are detailed teachers' guides that are intended to be suggestive, rather than prescriptive, and teachers are asked to bring their own experiences and other things to the classroom. The texts are full of values, but only teachers have access to these guides, not students. Maybe a re-evaluation of the guides is needed.

Hon. Education Minister: We must be running out of time, but I thought since we were talking about the context, I must share a fragment of a story. My visit to the schools was a little ill-timed—it happened at the end of the school year. However, I thought that I must meet the students, and I did. And there was this child, just under 10 now and graduating in a couple of weeks, who hasn't touched a computer. She said it so soulfully that she kept me awake all night. And even to this day, this young kid has not allowed me much peace.

I think, when we are talking about school issues, it is the urgency we are talking about. I'm sure the honourable members of the audience would know of the famous Chilean Nobel Laureate, Gabriela Mistral, who said something to this effect, "The child's name is today—his bones are forming just now and everything else about the child is happening just now. Everything else can wait, but the child cannot." This is the urgency that the Prime Minister articulated, the immediacy of the task we have at hand. The children will not wait.

That is why we are to begin with the leadership in the school, and move on to the teachers who are also leaders. When we are talking about school leadership, we are talking about leadership of a very special kind. We have, in the school, a large number of children, running into hundreds. We have quite a lot of teachers. And all these children look up to the leadership of the principal, the teachers look up to the leadership of the principal. So we are thinking about almost a super human being, but with flesh and blood. I think when you are trying to internalize and translate Gross National Happiness principles, we would like the leadership of the schools to *embody* the values and the ideals of Gross National Happiness.

Dasho Karma talked about lighting the fires. Those of us who have been with the children, especially in schools, are confronted with these glowing, powerful eyes staring at you. How is the school able to respond to the needs of the children? What distance do we cover between the child and us? I think it is basically this urgency. The child is going to move on, and how quickly are we able to respond to the needs of the children? I think it is this need, this urgency, that we would like to address, especially when you are preparing the programme for the training of the principals, and if we can move on from there, to the programme of the training of the teachers.

But as you have made such a wonderful beginning, my heart expands to see and hear all that is happening here. And I cannot thank you enough for what you have been doing. I

think we are making tremendous progress. Once again, I would like to submit that what we are looking for is leadership that is inspirational, leadership that can guide, and not only administer and manage, but truly guide and inspire. Thank you.

Other curriculum-related breakout groups from Day 2 (Dec. 9) presented written material on the results of their group discussions, which included the following:

2. Math

It was widely acknowledged that a key challenge is to use a GNH approach in teaching without compromising the content or rigour of existing curricular materials.

As a direct result of the December workshop discussions, this will be explicitly demonstrated in the principals' workshops in relation to the math curriculum. Household budgeting and management, which is rarely taught well anywhere in the world, will be used to demonstrate how all existing mathematical functions, from simple arithmetic to percentages, interest rates, algebra, and calculus) can be taught while conveying the importance of prioritizing household needs and expenditures rather than giving in to desire and consumerist impulses. Wider GNH-related economic implications can also be conveyed, including the impacts of consumer debt, and the importance of acknowledging social and environmental benefits and costs in accounting. This approach supports the living standards domain of GNH.

3. History

- This breakout group focused on use of local resources in teaching history in order to bring history to life and make it more personal and relevant for students than textbooks alone could do. Examples included tracing students' own family and local community history, inviting community elders into the classroom, and using participatory research and community mapping methods in addition to critical and analytical thinking.
- It was recommended that the cultural context of historical events could be emphasized rather than simple events, and that facts could be balanced with exploration of legends, folklore, and values from the monastic traditions. The group noted that the teaching of history should support the cultural pillar of GNH.

Observer group history recommendations

1. Design

Workshop participants should identify historical facts that illustrate GNH values.

2. Methods

Start teaching history from a local context using elders as resources and broaden the scope to balance facts, legends, folklore and values from the monastic traditions.

3. Activities

Workshop Participants establish their own family and local community history (culture, economic, environment, artistic) from which to extract GNH Value.

Workshop participants identify the skills the students should acquire through the study of history. (For example: participatory research, community mapping and critical/analytical thinking.

Facilitator: Thank you. So we are actually going to move right into the next breakout groups, but before that there are a couple of things to say. We already have an example of what the Ministry of Education would like to come out from the next two breakout groups, and I will say that I would love for you all to self-organize. I know Dr. Tashi put you in groups, and if you'd like to follow that, that's fine. If you don't, that's also fine. I think Tashi and I agreed to that. You could organize according to your expertise area, or you could organize as a diversity of mix because magic is in the mix. And the observers' groups are totally self-organized. Do you have a question?

Participant: One observation I made yesterday was that there were some groups that were heavily international, and others that were heavily Bhutanese. It seemed to me that would produce some rather odd results. So I'm wondering if there could be some principles in our self-organization in terms of some kind of balance of experience, and national and Bhutanese, and such, just to make a more integrated result of our work.

Facilitator: Absolutely, I agree with that, but I don't want to be dogmatic about. The point is well taken, so make sure you have a diversity of perspectives.

Participant: One point which hasn't really come up here I think ought to be kept in mind as we deliberate. Meeting right now in Copenhagen are the leaders of countries around the world. Climate change is happening much more rapidly than had been thought even two or three years ago. So the students coming through Bhutanese school, or schools anywhere, are going to face a world that is very different than the world we have known. The sense of home that Satish referred to is changing dramatically. So one of the questions before us, I would hope, would be how will they cope with a world in which many of the things that we take for granted—the hydrologic cycle, temperature regimes, ecological patterns—will change in their lifetime in ways that we can't fully anticipate. So they will need, not just an immune system to western modernization, they'll need a robust sense of self in times that will, quite likely, be more chaotic than anything humans have ever known.

Participant: I think that we developed a very inspiring vision statement, and as someone who does a lot of curriculum development and implementation, one of the biggest mistakes is that we develop a vision and then it does not get implemented into the next layers. So I wish we could all have that vision statement in front of us as we proceed to do the next level of work. The work on mandalas has actually made me think that people who do all of this beautiful mandala work could turn the vision that we have created into a mandala that we could keep in front of us so that we make sure it gets put into everybody's group.

Facilitator: We are happy to provide that as soon as possible. We will give you the vision statement when you break out into groups, if that will help.

Participant: When teachers had an audience with His Majesty, the fourth king, he would mention that the most important work of the teachers is to make our children able to use their minds for the benefit of others and themselves. That is the most important task of all the teachers. In the Ministry of Education we struggled with how to do this. In the work expressed by the language it group, it came out subtly, and it is heartening to see.

Participant: While I applaud this whole process we are putting into place, I am still very concerned about the children who do not go to school. What have you planned for them? Do you have something in place, a roadmap, that can be put in place and actually implement that too?

Madam Secretary: We are actually talking about 12% of students out of school. And we also have non-formal education. When you train the principals, one of their responsibilities is also to ensure that all children in their community come to school. So maybe, in the design, you could also include that commitment.

Participant: In a discussion with the Education Minister over dinner, he said that there are formal and non-formal education tiers, but that a third tier—an informal tier—actually needs to be taken seriously.

Facilitator: OK, I am going to take two more comments, and then let's begin and we'll come back and we'll discuss more. Could you keep it succinct?

Participant: I think that the most important thing to help in this GNH is to have the right vision, and it should be a simple one, not a difficult one. To make it simple, what we need in our vision is transformation of children and students into good human beings. I think this is the most essential part of all of this. Otherwise, we'll be starting to teach GNH as a different subject, as a new subject. We don't want that. And to do that, the Minister of Education has said very clearly, we need principals who can inspire and talk from the heart to the heart and effect the transformation of the teachers. The teachers have to be role models of goodness if we are going to transform the children. I think this is the heart of GNH education.

Mark Mancall: Very briefly, I'd like to remind everybody that whatever comes out of these groups has to be aimed at Bhutan and that means it has to take account of the realities of Bhutan. The primary reality is that Bhutan is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, society, and therefore, the principles that are to be inculcated in the various levels must be universal, rather than rooted in any particular tradition.

Facilitator: Thank you.

Participant: Could you please restate what our assignment is before we break out?

Facilitator: This is in the blue book. The main areas we should focus on are: sports, art/ music, service, meditation/ contemplative practices, ambience/ physical environment, with the addition of ecoliteracy/ climate change.

Tashi Colman: The present vision statement has been modified to reflect comments made here. For example, one of your amendments was to include the issue of access to all, which was added based on the feedback that arose. Also, I share David's concern and that's why the people who were put in the science group yesterday were deliberately put there because they were all the sustainability and the eco-literacy people. So maybe that group wants to meet separately today because you didn't break into a specific eco-literacy group yesterday. Third, we got such good material from the observer groups yesterday, so please organize yourselves into these groups.

The first five areas were identified by the Education Ministry as being particularly important for learning issues. In the breakout groups, please try to bring your deliberations on this with the notion of an actual programme for the school principals and teachers' college representatives in January. Within these areas, how would you bring these concretely and genuinely into that January gathering.

Facilitator: It is now 10:15 and you can continue through two sessions until lunch. You can break for tea and bring the tea back to your group. After lunch we will reconvene in the larger group. (*Spaces where the groups were to be held were then reviewed.*) I have the utmost confidence that you can self-organize. We will see you after lunch. Thank you.

Session 2 – Broader learning environment breakout group reports to the larger plenary group and discussion

After lunch

The observer and participant groups reported their suggestions for the principals' and teachers college representatives' workshop to the larger plenary group. It was recognized that learning takes place not only through textbooks and curricular materials, but more broadly in families and communities, through the media and a wide range of extra-curricular activities, and through the atmosphere and ambience (both physical and

psychological) of school environments. Several breakout groups on Dec. 10 explored how these various dimensions of the broader learning environment might best reflect GNH values and principles.

1. Visual Arts, Dance, Drama, and Music

Two breakout groups considered the arts in education as pivotal to strengthening the GNH base of the country's education system and the cultural pillar of GNH in particular. This was discussed from two fundamental perspectives:

- a) Enhancing study and practice of the arts as separate disciplines, particularly to continue the practice of the 13 traditional arts; and
- b) Integrating the arts more effectively into all other disciplines and subject areas to enhance learning in those areas, to bring those subjects to life, and to make the learning experience more vivid than cerebral book learning alone can do.

Both these approaches are discussed below:

a) The 13 traditional arts

Provocative question in the introductory lead-in to this breakout group: Will the 13 traditional Bhutanese arts survive into the next generation? What would be lost if they were to disappear from daily life or preserved only as museum pieces? -> Explanation of both their aesthetic value and also of more profound connections of the arts to ancient wisdom, culture, nature, and contemplative and creative traditions—with specific examples of each.

It was suggested that Dasho Karma Ura might be excellent person to give a provocative 20-minute introduction on this subject, ending with the question posed to principals: What can Bhutan's educational system do to ensure these arts are dynamically preserved and practised, and how can they be effectively integrated into regular curricula?

This breakout group recommended that these 13 traditional arts be displayed and performed on two evenings at the principals' workshops. As well, traditional Bhutanese music might be played in different circumstances, like participants' entry and exit from plenary sessions, during meals, etc. to bring the atmosphere of the traditional arts into the environment of the principals' workshop.

(b) Integrating the arts into different disciplines

As one example, it was suggested that subjects like math, often considered “dry” and “boring” could be made much more vivid and enjoyable through introduction of music, stories, and movement. For example, one educator suggested that a thief stealing things could be used to teach subtraction; and that movement exercises could be used for elementary school children to teach basic arithmetic (adding and subtracting children

from different groups in the classroom). One educator suggested that chanting and kinaesthetic movement could be effectively used to teach multiplication tables, and clapping exercises can be used to teach fractions.

Similarly, science students can learn about molecules through movement; and students can build visual models like the solar system.

Drama can be used to act out historical scenes — for example dramatizing the contributions of each King. Stories from the language curriculum could also be acted or presented visually, and folk tales acted out to teach ethics and morals.

One school principal noted that his school also uses movement and aesthetic appreciation in relation to nature, allowing times for students to wander aimlessly and silently in natural surroundings and then to bring back an object from nature to which they are particularly attracted. Those objects are then silently arranged by the class into a mandala, which is collectively contemplated.

One of the breakout groups suggested specific classroom activities using the arts, some of which have been very successfully used in Bhutan youth assemblies. For example:

1. Creating sculptures and inventions from waste, litter, and recycled/ re-used materials;
2. Performing mimes, skits, and tableaux, and inventing dance moves;
3. Writing new lyrics on a GNH theme to existing tunes and songs;
4. Having local healer come to classroom to illustrate healing through movement.

Group 1

Workshop: Connecting head, heart, hand and home through art and music

- Ice breaker for creativity: “What is happiness”
 - Answer given through four perceptions—visual, music, dance, and drama (learning by doing) through expressions of happiness
- Participants break into four groups and explain what happiness is to them:
- Visual: Create a recycled sculpture
 - Music : Write lyrics to an existing song
 - Dance : Invent a dance move (happiness dance)
 - Drama: Perform a skit, mime or tableau

Performances will start each day of the conference

Participants will come back together and then ask why arts are important

“ Why are arts important?” – culturally and educationally

- Small groups have a “visual discussion” about:
 - Create safe environment for expression
 - Develop experimental learning
 - Make new connections
 - Share through collaboration

- Understand creative process through higher order thinking skills
- Experiencing healing and meditation qualities
- Connecting self, others and environment.

Integrated Lesson Plans:

- Participants break into groups for different subject areas.
- Decide on content area of their subject and how they could teach it through it each art form.

Examples:

- Maths: Use chanting and kinesthetic movement to teach multiplication tables, use clapping to teach fractions.
 - Science: Build models like the solar system.
 - History: Act out “trench warfare” to understand World War I
 - Language: Expresses a poem through painting, design a word portrait of an historic figure
 - Ethics: Act out folk tales to teach morals
 - Democracy: Screen or create a film on diversity
- Participant will share with whole group and discuss how to implement in their schools

Group 2

(In space, there are displays of 13 traditional Bhutanese arts. Bhutanese music playing in background (e.g. Hemalay)

1. Music stops – let’s all sing along
2. Presentation:
 - a) Explain what the arts are – broadening the concepts, explaining aesthetic quality, explaining contemplative, creative and nature based connections, ancient wisdom and cultural connections
 - b) How this ties to GNH
 - c) Arts as both separate disciplines and integration into and enhancement of all disciplines
 - d) Scientific support of arts as critical element of learning (e.g. studies that show that students who learn music are better at math)
3. Direct experience of arts
Groups of 20-25 arrange themselves into a visual representation of GNH
4. Examples of subject-specific arts activities – Presentations to whole group.
Groups (above) of 20-25
 - A. Science – learning about molecules and their behavior through movement
 - B. Math – elementary addition and subtraction
 - a) Creating stories that illustrate and acting them out
 - b) Problems through children’s movement

Break - lunch and aimless wandering in nature (same directions)

- C. History – represent some significant contribution of each King through drama/ movement time line.
- D. Language Arts – take story e.g. “The Giver” or any story from curriculum and either:
 - Act it or
 - Write a song about it
 - Or write a poem or
 - Do a visual presentation of it

Aimless wandering again – outdoors and bring back object from nature

Create group mandala out of objects together - no talking

Meditate on mandala

Standing around it in circle – process day in groups

Each person shares 1-2 impressions or learnings (1 min each)

2. Meditation/ Mindfulness

The importance of creating a contemplative, uplifted environment was emphasized—e.g. through proper arrangement of cushions and chairs, plants, thangkas, no clutter, etc.

Short introductory talk to principals about the benefits of mindfulness practices and meditation, emphasizing, for example:

- Stability of mind
- Clarity of perception
- Rousing compassion
- Enhancing concentration
- Increasing sensitivity towards others, the environment, and oneself
- Calming effect on individual and classroom

10 minutes of guided mindfulness meditation practice will be preceded by basic instruction and followed by a short discussion and a few questions (10 min), alternating practice and questions/ discussion for the 45-minute period.

Meditation in action: Mindfulness practice will be encouraged in the course of the full school day, and brought into the principals’ workshops through experiential mindfulness exercises such as walking meditation, and experiencing the five senses fully—e.g. really tasting a piece of fruit, resting the mind on the sound of the gong, gazing at the vastness of the sky or at an object like a candle or flower. These exercises will be followed by brief discussions.

Aside from the 5-minute meditation sessions at the beginning and end of each day of the principals’ workshops, this breakout group recommended that mindfulness practices and exercises be woven into other sessions of the six-day workshop, so that the atmosphere

pervades the entire proceedings. For example, there could be 2–3 minutes of meditation at the beginning of each session, a gong ringing in all sessions, a bow to begin and end discussions.

It was also suggested that mindfulness and contemplation exercises relevant to specific subjects being discussed (e.g. math, language, sport, ambience) might be developed by Lama Shenphen in collaboration with the subject teacher, both for principals' workshops and for use in their own schools. When they return to their home schools, principals can also confer with their staff about methods to incorporate contemplative practices into the school culture.

Group 1

The group decided that the word “meditation” was too religious, so they stayed with the word “mindfulness.” They would like to see mindfulness introduced to all schools and classrooms in Bhutan, and that it be presented, not as a religious practice, but as an educational pedagogy. It would be applicable for students of all religions, but it would be acknowledged as part of the ancient tradition of Bhutan. They felt that it could not be introduced without getting the teachers and principals on board, so the breakout group designed a workshop for principals and teachers. Also it is important to integrate *experience* with the principles of mindfulness so teachers and principals develop confidence and understanding from the inside out about how mindfulness helps learning.

The group approached mindfulness as a multi-day program, which would be like a mindfulness retreat.

Day 1: Introduction to mindfulness

Morning

- Begin with a brief explanation of what mindfulness is, including an introduction of what mind is
- Actual periods of 20 minutes of mindfulness practice interspersed with the introduction of mindfulness – Emphasis on posture, eye gaze, breath, what to do when thoughts arise, etc.
- Discussion, questions and answers alternating throughout the day

After lunch

- Explain how mindfulness is a learning pedagogy, how it helps learning, giving a lot of examples interspersed with periods of practicing mindfulness

Day 2: Focus on mindfulness and GNH

- Continuing to practice mindfulness with periods of discussion about how mindfulness brings an inner experience of GNH, and an experiential sense of how the principals experience happiness would be drawn from the group

Day 3: Mindfulness in everyday life

- Focus on the 5 modes of living: waking, bathing, walking, eating, and sleeping

- Day would be devoted to applying mindfulness to all the activities of life, so it wasn't just a 5 minute thing in the morning but people could practice it in many different ways
- Introduction of mindfulness practices associated with eating, drinking, walking, cleaning, and simple movement perhaps like sports activities such as tossing a ball, pointing out that mindfulness is necessary for the simplest acts of everyday life like driving, etc.
- Can also introduce the mindfulness bell – every 15 or 20 minutes strike a bell that brings people back to mindfulness (like Thich Nhat Hanh uses)

Day 4: Teaching mindfulness in an age-appropriate way

Morning

- Ask principals how they would teach mindfulness to 6, 9, 12, and 15 year olds, and they developed some ideas about how that might work:
 - With younger children you use visual and auditory stimulus,
 - As they get older you begin to introduce short periods of sitting and begin to show application of mindfulness to other activities like art or sports, etc.

Afternoon

- Focus on how mindfulness could be brought into all of the subject areas and ask the principals to come up with examples about how mindfulness might be adapted in the study of all the areas in the curriculum,
- Introduce basic exercises to show how that works

Day 5: Articulation and speaking about mindfulness

- Principals practice how they would articulate to their schools what mindfulness is and what it has to do with learning so that can actually practice giving words to this and showing how it expresses the qualities of GNH, which would also be a chance to practice mindfulness. This would test their understanding and commitment to this.

Follow-up workshops: on more advanced practices such as compassion practice, tong-ten, loving kindness practice and other practices for opening the heart

A specialist might emerge from the school who will become expert in teaching mindfulness, but it is important to immerse principals in the experience of mindfulness so they know, from the inside out, what mindfulness is.

Group 2

Mindfulness Workshop on GNH

1. Create contemplative, uplifted environment. (Cushions, chairs, plants...)
2. Welcome and short (3 min) Guided Mindfulness/awareness meditation,
3. Brief self introduction (if necessary)
4. Principals are invited to reflect in writing on the following questions: (5 -10 min)
 - I. What is your understanding on mindfulness/

- II. What might be the value of introducing mindfulness in your school?
- III. What is your personal experience of mindfulness in your own life?
(*There are no right or wrong responses*)
5. People are invited to share their reflections.
6. Short talk about the benefits of mindfulness, meditation (drawing on participants' response in 5).
- E.g:
 - Stability of mind
 - Clarity of perception
 - Rousing compassion
 - Enhances concentration
 - Increases sensitivity towards others, environment and self.
 - Has a calming effect on individual and classroom.
7. Mindfulness meditation, Basic Instruction and guided practice (5 min) and Q & A/discussion (10 min) – alternate.
8. Facilitator will select an experiential mindfulness exercise. E.g. Walking meditation, 5 senses (tasting, fruit, resting the mind on sound of a gong, gaze at vastness of sky, object. e.g. candle, flower) *Followed by discussion*
9. Mindfulness practice/exercise will be woven into other sessions of the 5-day workshop. E.g. 3 min of mindfulness at the beginning of each session, gong ringing in sessions, 1 min silence.
10. Mindfulness/contemplating exercises relevant to the specific subject will be developed by the mindfulness facilitator in collaboration with the subject teacher.
11. Principals return to their home schools and confer with their staff about methods to incorporate contemplative practice in school culture.

3. Creating GNH Ambience and Atmosphere

Group 1

The group defined ambience as the “human (incl. emotional and spiritual), physical, and ecological environment that all people (students, teachers, administrators, and visitors) experience within and around the school.”

It was suggested that each school create its own vision statement, which might adapt elements of the broader nationwide Educating for GNH vision statement to its own conditions and circumstances. For example, an elementary school would phrase the vision statement in simple language that all children could easily understand. This vision statement could be beautifully written and framed, and prominently displayed as a constant reminder.

This breakout group suggested the following possible format for the principals' workshop breakout groups on ambience:

1. 5 minutes silent meditation to arrive in the present moment

2. 1 minute recollection on what you want to achieve in this workshop
3. Visualize your present school and people and environment.
4. Recall childhood memories of your childhood school and list 3 things you liked about your childhood school environment and three things you disliked and would have changed in that environment.
5. Share these childhood likes and dislikes with the person next to you.
6. Share with the group all the positive attributes identified in exercise, and either list these or draw them in a mural (if a graphic artist is present in the group)
7. This would be followed by the group brainstorming an ideal/ optimal school ambience that could be created at low cost, with ideas groups into four categories:
 - a) human ambience (including emotional, spiritual, participatory)
 - b) physical ambience (e.g. cleanliness, structures, classroom arrangement)
 - c) ecological ambience
 - d) aesthetic ambience
8. Based on this, they could create a check-list or survey to take to teachers, students, and parents in their own schools to assess their present school environment and what the teachers and students would change. This checklist and questions can be shared with the group. (Also: How might parents be engaged in building a more positive ambience?)
9. Following this, the principals can list specific and practical changes they wish to make in their school ambience now and in the future.
10. The breakout group can close with a silent reflection and visualization in which principals imagine their school, people, and environment in the changed situation.

This breakout group also had a more in-depth discussion on human ambience, and suggested that principals might first list ways in which their school's learning environment presently reflects a top-down vs participatory culture, and then consider how they could move towards a more participatory culture, including through changes in school communications, in the psychology of the school administration, and in bringing this more participatory culture into the classroom.

This breakout group also suggested *sample questions for discussion among principals in their ambience breakout groups*. In reviewing the breakout group recommendations, it also suggested that such questions might be the simplest and most useful way of leading principals' breakout groups on school ambience: For example,

- 1) What can I do to beautify my school and its environs at minimal expense?
- 2) What can I do to encourage and enhance teacher and student creativity in this area?
- 3) How can the physical surroundings of my school/ community be incorporated into the curriculum?
- 4) What can I do to encourage more participatory activity at all levels in my school, and thus go beyond the conventional passive learning situations?
- 5) Which television/ film characters (if any) do you believe exemplify GNH principles, and how might these be used as models? Which do not?
- 6) How can my school be a constructive change agent for the surrounding community—for example in adopting ecological practices like waste reduction, composting and

recycling, organic gardens (already in place in many schools), solar energy, serving locally grown (vs imported) food, using local, sustainably produced materials in school supplies, building inexpensive, ecological compost toilets using sawdust, ashes (Ladakh school model), etc?

In addition, the group created a mandala to reflect ambience issues in the school and community.

Group 2

Purpose: Principals and teachers can create learning environments that “encourage the natural gracefulness & goodness of all beings.” This can be applied to school classrooms, and—to the extent possible—will be modelled at the principals’ workshops themselves.

Workshop Environment:

- Plants
- Paintings by children on the walls
- Small rug areas surrounded by books
- Nature table (table at entry to elementary classroom with graceful arrangements of seasonal natural materials)
- Photos of natural environment
- Coloured chalk drawing reflecting seasons

Suggested Activities:

1. Bring the classroom into nature for periods of the day
2. Create space for movement and meditation (move desks to walls)
 - a) Movement (dance/stretch)
 - b) Meditation
 - c) Breathing exercises—deeper breathing to release stress, improve focus and relaxation
3. As an example of using student artwork to enhance the learning environment, one school principal described his school’s use of clay and beeswax activity:
 - d) Tell a story that reflects natural world
 - e) Sculpt characters or forms from story with clay or beeswax
 - f) Artistic display of the art work
4. Inspire principals (and teachers) to realize they CAN do simple things like these—i.e. empower them to go beyond the conventional classroom set-ups to enhance ambience and create warm and welcoming child-friendly learning environments. It was suggested that principals themselves don’t need to feel pressured to have all these ideas on aesthetic arrangement themselves nor to make them happen alone. They themselves can empower teachers and students to play an active role in rearranging the learning environment, classroom, and common areas of schools to be aesthetically pleasing) and invite suggestions and active participation from teachers & students on aesthetic arrangement.

5. It was suggested that—at the principals’ workshops—principals might divide into groups to share existing best practices, and to brainstorm ideas for enhancing the learning ambience, including by subject area.

6. Other areas discussed by this breakout group to create a GNH-infused learning environment included:

- a) positive disciplining;
- b) improving the physical conditions of toilets, running water, and other basic necessities with emphasis on cleanliness and hygiene (e.g. a rota system for students to clean these facilities); and
- c) addressing specific gender needs: for example, the UNICEF representative Gepke Hingst remarked: “In the country schools, when girls get their periods, they stop coming to school because of the lack of privacy”.

4. Community and National Service

Serving others is seen as a key element of GNH through which the joy of giving can be transmitted. However, the service must be effective and useful. Therefore, a three-fold approach to service learning has been suggested:

- 1) Investigate, analyse, understand (e.g. study conditions of village)—sharpen investigative and analytical skills from an ethical perspective and identify problems in the community that presently cause suffering – e.g., poverty, environmental degradation, alcohol abuse, sickness, suffering dogs or other animals;
- 2) Identify solutions or at least things that can help;
- 3) Be the agents of change.

A suitable introduction to this breakout group session might be for Lama Shenphen to describe his daily (and nightly) life in Thimphu working with addicts, as a model of community service based on the three principles above. As well, the introduction should reference best practices in SUPW (socially useful productive work) currently existing.

It was suggested that in schools every Wednesday might be dedicated to community service, which would also break up the school week and reduce the time spent sitting behind desks. One even more radical suggestion was for grade 11 students to spend a full year or part of the year (e.g. 7–8 months) engaged in national service, serving the larger society, and learning disciplines based on scouting, camping, marching, and other practices.

One objective (aside from service to others) is also to transmit the dignity of all labour by making a contribution to the community and to the school through menial labour (e.g., cleaning latrines). How could teachers inspire students, and how can we incorporate this into the principals’ workshop, through rota or other contribution?

Other forms of community engagement:

Community and national service was seen at the December workshop as one part of the larger context of (a) school-community relations and (b) citizenship training.

For the latter, Bunker Roy suggested that each school have a student parliament to encourage participation in decision-making; training in civic engagement; and participation. This would complement training in civic literacy and political knowledge so that students could learn experientially what it means to cast informed votes. These two forms of learning (enhancing civil literacy and experiential student parliament) can be combined so that the latter is used to demonstrate both the pros of informed decision-making and the flaws of uninformed decision-making. In short, the school can be a laboratory for democracy.

On wider school-community relations, Manish Jain (based on his own work) suggested establishment of a Wisdom Council as an effective way to link schools with their communities. This Council would include representatives of Indigenous knowledge and skills, local monastic community representatives, three generations of community members, parents, teachers, and students.

Functions of the Wisdom Council would include educating for the local economy, and empowering informal community-based teachers whose work would connect the school and students with local artisans and trades-people. Thus, instead of just a one-way community service relationship, it would be a two-way relationship of mutual respect in which students would also go out and acquire skills from local sources of knowledge, and at the same time contribute to their communities.

This approach was reinforced by Dr. Vandana Shiva, who advocated that students develop life skills that would make them useful in their local communities, by contrast to the present situation where the only skills for which students are presently trained are those required by universities and the civil service.

The Wisdom Council can also help develop youth camps that forge further links with local communities. They are essentially a way of joining formal and informal education so that students are drawn to positive models of learning in their own communities. This process encourages the support of local economies and counters present trends to globalization and homogenization of cultures.

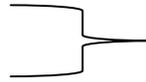
Workshop: Hands, Hearts, Minds and Speech in Service

Serving others is a key element of GNH. This workshop is designed to look at what is happening and suggest positive changes to promote the joy of giving.

Activities:

1. Mindfulness/meditation – 5 mins.
2. Discussion on community services in Bhutan

- a) Traditional form of services
 - b) Modern form of services
 - Sharing thoughts
3. Personal stories of traditional and modern services they have done and discussion on the joy of serving others. (in groups).
4. The need of services and clubs in schools (Discussions).
5. What's working and what's not?
6. Challenges
7. Fun activities, to provoke thoughts



with resources & movies

Workshop on SUPW (Socially Useful Productive Work)

A. What does SUPW mean?

Break into groups of 8 to discuss

1. What is in the power of names?
 2. What are pros & cons of SUPW?
 3. Create a new name using SUPW
 4. Create a new name with new initials
 5. Design a national contest for students to suggest a new name for SUPW and design a posture.
8. Could all the schools take up the “working ones”? – From what age should students begin community service?
9. Talk on “magic of inspiration”
10. How to inculcate values of community services.
- How could teachers inspire students?
11. (Pre-activity: Principals and teachers would have already thought of new activities for community services).
12. What values might be inculcated at the end of the year.
13. With what values might the children graduate from their schools?

5. Sports

This breakout group noted that sports by its very nature can enhance the physical and mental health components of GNH. The group then discussed in detail two basic principles of bringing a GNH quality further into school sports activities:

- a) **Inclusiveness** means that all students are given the opportunity to participate, regardless of ability. Games might include mandatory substituting of players in both teams, so that the best players do not dominate the whole game.
- b) **Non-competitiveness** in teamwork can be achieved through cooperative games, especially with younger children. Among older students, one technique is for teams to exchange some players in a competitive match to reduce group/ class/ or school ego. For example, one school principal described a tournament in which

each school brought a certain number of players, but the teams were then created with a mix of players from the various schools with an equal range of abilities.

Workshop on sports for principals

Framework:

1. What is sport?
2. Why sport?
3. How does sport enhance GNH?
4. How would you implement sport program in your school?
5. Play a sport, and do a reflection
6. Recommendations

Every one recognizes the importance of every student, regardless of ability (or disability), to be able to develop beyond the educational curriculum through participation in co-curricular activities.

The importance of co-curricular activities are to develop life skills, habits and interest beyond the classroom. Therefore, there should be maximum participation:

1. Opening activity
Warm-up exercise (5 mins):
Play a circle game with a ball – saying values while you are in possession of ball.
2. In groups, share the most popular activities and the least. Identify demographics of participants (gender, class, ability), justify/brainstorm why?
As a group, share the summaries + findings.
3. In small groups arrange by school grade level, draw up an annual plan for each co-curricular activity + it's GNH values.
 - i. list values
 - ii. Identify where + when and how they would be covered in the calendar year.
 - iii. Include assessment + benchmarks
4. In groups, talk about challenges of:
 - i. including all co-curricular activities at their school
 - ii. including all studentsIdentify strategies to overcome these challenges.
In the whole group, each group presents its findings.
5. As a group, set a 1- and 3-year set of 3 goals for their school's co-curricular activities that address GNH values.

6. Ecoliteracy/ Science

Ecoliteracy is taught in the Bhutanese schools through geography, biology, social science and other subjects, but perhaps it could be looked at more holistically. This breakout group challenged the way science is currently taught (which too frequently is based on a

mechanistic view and exploitation of nature) and recommended approaches to science based on observing and learning from nature and a holistic, integrative approach more consistent with GNH and Buddhist principles and values.

The ecoliteracy breakout group pointed out that “it isn’t the people who are scientifically illiterate who are wrecking the earth; it’s the scientifically literate people who are ruining the planet.” In other words, science is wrongly (and dangerously) taught. We need to challenge the misleading way in which science is currently taught, and ask: “What is science from a universal GNH standpoint? How can science be taught in a way that inspires reverence for the world and for the ecological environment that sustains us?”

At this critical and crucial historical juncture, students need to understand the realities of climate change and of an economic growth paradigm that has created both global warming and global inequality (in which one billion are over-nourished while one billion are malnourished), and we literally have to change the way Science Education is taught. In other words, accepting the existing textbook paradigm and curriculum won’t work. We need a new approach entirely—one that values indigenous knowledge, that teaches sustainability and economics accurately in terms of its impact on the earth, and that draws on ancient Bhutanese wisdom that knows how human beings can live in harmony with nature.

The group identified three pressure points for the principals’ workshop to explore:

1. The relationship of ecology/ science to local knowledge
2. The relationship ecology/ science to economy, right livelihood, and new careers for a local economy
3. Zero-waste lifestyles, especially in local communities, what is the waste we are creating in our own lives, and how can we reduce this.

To this end, this group recommended explorations into the real, living science present in local knowledge and communities, including the science in the home (like the use of food, energy, and waste in ways that do not harm the earth). How did our grandparents deal with ‘waste’ and how do we deal with it today? Here the group referenced the “empty plate policy” that we want to profile at the principals’ workshop.

The group recommended hands-on exercises that would work even with younger children, like asking them to identify three products that we use and consume, and which we think are necessary to our everyday lives, which come from the global corporate culture? The true costs and impacts of these products can then be explored. The students can then explore the kinds of alternatives that could be used, which are not dependent on unsustainable industrial production to fulfill these same three functions? What kind of science and technology can be used in Bhutanese villages to improve lives without sacrificing the environment (e.g. explore and understand solar energy from both a scientific and a practical point of view)?

From there, the students could be encouraged to explore different forms of “right livelihood” and new GNH-based careers that support the local economy. They can be

asked to identify 10 such livelihoods and new opportunities and to create an action plan. In this way, science education can support not only the ecological but also the economic pillars of GNH. This exploration can begin right at school—how, for example, can we create a zero waste school, what would be the daily practices in such a school, how can we reduce waste immediately, and how can students become actively involved in such a project?

Other recommendations from the ecoliteracy groups and comments from participants to bring GNH principles into science learning included:

- A recommendation for concrete lesson plans and activities, including showing the movie “The Story of Stuff”, weighing the lunchtime waste of a week (suitable for a math project) and examining and understanding its contents, collecting and displaying the waste generated in a week, and making toys and useful objects out of waste products. And the group recommended a workshop for science teachers to transmit these and many other creative activities that can be used to transmit scientific principles and methods that are more accurate and more in line with reality than the methods and approaches currently used. We had some of the world’s best and most reputable environmental educators at our December workshop, and they are well equipped to lead such a workshop.
- Other potential topics discussed by the group as examples of the “new science” are close examination of current consumption patterns and systems, including food systems? From how far away did the food we are eating come? What are the supply chains? What were the impacts of producing and bringing it here? What is the economy of food production and consumption?
- What is the science behind the threat of potential glacial lake outburst floods in Bhutan, and how can glacial melting affect not only this country but all those downstream of the glacier-fed Himalayan rivers? How has climate change changed the water supply, and how might the changing water supply change the agriculture of the local environment? How can energy be saved and what is the science (and economics) of alternative energy forms?
- How can we build a Bhutan that is truly resilient 20 years from now when our children will face a very different world? And how can GNH present a different economic strategy for resilient economic development? How can we value solutions inherent in indigenous knowledge and local wisdom? This breakout group described GNH as an “immune system” to globally destructive tendencies.
- Bhutanese science teachers can be educated to lead exciting and inventive projects to examine and chart changes in local ecological systems. In this process, science teachers can actively draw on local resources and knowledge. For example, local elders and farmers can be invited into the classroom to describe changes they have seen in their own lifetimes and to share that experience with the children. What changes have they seen in sowing and harvesting times, in the pattern of rains, for

example? How have households dealt with changes in the water supply? What actions can be taken to prevent floods (so students can appreciate the vitally important hard manual work and personal sacrifice of labourers this past summer moving rocks at Bhutan’s glacial lakes to prevent GLOFs)

- Local elders can be recognized and acknowledged as “Honorary Teacher Ambassadors”. This process therefore supports not only the economic and environmental pillars of GNH, but also community vitality and the knowledge and wisdom embedded in cultural traditions.
- Raising questions like the above can engender real curiosity in children and a passion for science. Even more importantly, they can engender confidence in realizing that solutions are possible and that the knowledge of those solutions is near at hand. These and many other key questions are the potential basis of a new GNH-based science curriculum. To create this new curriculum and to accept that science education must change to acknowledge present realities like climate change, Bhutan’s school principals and teachers first have to become genuinely skeptical about the so-called science education that we now have. From honestly examining these truths, hope will arise and a new science education path will unfold, along with recognition that we already have the resources and knowledge to begin implementing that without delay.
- A science curriculum example could be demonstrated at the principals’ workshops through the use of school vegetable gardens to teach important scientific principles while at the same time conveying the interdependent nature of reality, the impacts of environmental degradation, the benefits of ecologically friendly practices, and the value of local wisdom and indigenous knowledge—all of which are consistent with GNH principles and values.
- “Bringing the classroom into nature and nature into the classroom”. Value of learning in nature through class projects, field trips, and research, including using indigenous local knowledge to identify Bhutanese medicinal and other plants in nearby forests. A best practice is that of Mr. Wangchuk, former principal of Ura secondary school, who founded nature clubs, used local resources to teach himself, published a book on the wildflowers of Bhutan, and is now producing a second book on medicinal plants. Mr Wangchuk will be invited for the introductory session to this breakout group in the principals’ workshops.
- Increasing the environmental studies component of science curricula; and learning scientific principles and functions through hands-on activities. Examples raised by this breakout group included: creating sustainable systems within schools so that schools become models for their communities (e.g. zero waste management practices, use of solar energy, water conservation, using renewable and low impact resources for school supplies); involving school children in care and management of community forests and “learning the significance of a forest from a spiritual point of view” (Khenpo Phuntsok Tashi); and having school children participate in

planting, harvesting and other farming practices. It was suggested that principals encourage science teachers “to look outside their doors”.

- Dr. Vandana Shiva had referenced a school in which the children studied biodiversity by identifying and compiling a list of all the plants in their community. That exercise, she reported, brought the children to realize how rich their own community was. Dr. Shiva recommended that children learn how sane human behaviour can be modelled on nature’s own examples (like the earthworm giving more nutrition than it takes in by contrast to India’s industrial agricultural system that uses far more energy than the food it produces.) Dr. Art-ong described how the children in his school grew their own rice and noted that his school was entirely self-sufficient in food.

Observer science group key points

1. Teacher training should also be focused on the education of GNH.
2. Bring teachers and parents in deciding the curriculum for students
3. Getting suggestions and valuable inputs from grass root levels.
4. Learning in nature practically through projects, researches and field trips.
5. Study of evolutions of science to mankind with respect to cultures.
6. Alternative assessments besides examinations.
7. Reduction in curriculum and teacher training on integrated knowledge.
8. Study of science should be religiously and culturally supported.
9. Involve students to actively participate and witness nature.

The facilitator next opened the following 20 minutes to the floor for comments, and noted that she would especially like to hear from the Bhutanese delegates. Some of the comments included:

- Bhutan has a large, untapped reservoir of traditional, indigenous knowledge. What is required is to empower people who have that knowledge, which will bring that knowledge into a respectful place and ground it.
- In terms of how the principals workshops are structured, it is important not to have too much content and endless activities so that people won’t have time to integrate it. So, the most important issues should be chosen.
- It is important for all in Bhutan to know the history of monastic education, which is based on Buddhist principles and was set up in 1683. So, there is a long history of institutionalized education in Bhutan. Right now the monastic system has 47 primary schools, 11 secondary schools, 2 undergraduate schools, and 1 graduate school. The purpose of education in the monastic system is to inculcate human principles in the students such as loving kindness, compassion, caring, sharing, bodhicitta, which are all based on Buddhist principles. The outcome of this education is that most of the graduates—and many do not remain as monks—become good human beings, as well good farmers, businessmen, teachers,

community leaders. This is what the result of a GNH education is inspiring. However, the monastic system lacks good facilities and teaching skills exposed to the 20th century. If these two could be rectified, then the monastic education would be a result of what we are discussing here.

- The participant had three questions:
 1. The workshop suggestions have created material for months of workshops. What is the most important priority to focus on?
 2. Since most of the material presented here takes specialized skills, how will the content be facilitated?
 3. What kind of additional help do you need from the participants/ observers to make this really useful for Bhutan?

The facilitator asked that the answers to those questions be put on hold until after the rest of the comments had been heard.

- With the principals, should we use the word “meditation”, which has a monastic connotation, or “mindfulness”, which is softer?
- I would like to caution us on our approach. In the past, we have tried new ideas and innovations to the educational system in Bhutan and some of these have failed, because teachers are resistant to change and it is difficult to change their behaviour. So I would recommend that our approach be very practical and doable so that the 500+ principals can digest what is given and be able to take it back to their teachers.
- I think you have to raise the self-esteem of teachers first before you talk about indigenous knowledge, which they often think is old-fashioned. Otherwise it is very difficult to get indigenous knowledge accepted into the curriculum.
- What Bhutan is embarking upon is unprecedented. A tsunami of the seductions of modernization and economic growth is coming toward it and what it is attempting is not simple—although it can be simply delivered—it is very difficult. What you need is a defence mechanism against what’s coming. It has been said that the weakest link in a culture is teenage boys. When you can get teenage boys to value indigenous knowledge, you’ll have succeeded.
- We need to give the teachers some of the things that they do not know, such as meditation instruction. But the teachers here are very well trained and do not need more lesson plans, etc. What they need is empowerment to teach GNH values and concepts and that’s it.

Madam Secretary: I think first and foremost I have to respond to our own national participants. There seems to be some confusion or some misunderstanding on the purpose of the workshop. In no way are we trying to change behaviour through this workshop. This is more to initiate and to raise awareness. Some schools may already be doing some

of these things and some schools may not. So this is bringing them on board. We are sharing our national aspiration and vision, and telling them that this is our responsibility now. The captive audience is with us. We can make a difference, and how can we do it? Together we are trying to come up with a design. And the reason why we targeted the principals is because they are the leadership at the school and they can make a difference.

We are not saying that we are unhappy with the way things are being done. We are stock-taking. Is there a gap between the national vision and what they are doing in the field? If there is, then how can we bridge that gap? So please don't look at it as trying to change the behaviour of our teachers. I think that has to be clearly kept in mind. Once that is kept in mind then I think everyone will support having this workshop. If the purpose is clear in your mind—we can't change anyone's behaviour in the short-term, then this is an initiation and an ongoing thing that we will have to evaluate. There will be ongoing discussions. And schools can do it the way they feel comfortable with it. So that is one clarification I need to make.

On the other side, on Judith's questions about what you can do, you can do a lot. We have a whole pool of expertise here, and some can contribute immediately. There are curriculum specialists here—maybe we need to review our curriculum—there was a lot of feedback from the students that it was content heavy. Maybe we could form a group and people with the expertise could help us review it and see where the areas that we could do away with are—where do we need to update. So I foresee that we would require a lot of help.

Coming back to the design. In the interests of time, we did not present everyone's work. Basically, we took the ones that had a more general proposal, because we have no intention of burdening our teachers on science, etc. We are looking at maybe 3–5 days for the workshop and we have about 541 principals, whom we will divide into three groups of about 180 each. We would like to cover more of the general things, such as what a principal can do to create that GNH environment. Then a survey would be carried out and, based on that, we would launch the teacher training program. That is the idea. General issues like teacher self-esteem are things we can bring in here—and a few examples, questions, to ignite and stimulate discussion to reflect on what they are doing, and to do it mindfully and consciously. That is the whole intention of this workshop. I don't know if my Minister would like to add something.

Hon. Minister of Education: I think the Secretary and the Minister are working on exactly the same wavelength. So, I don't have anything else to add. Indeed, as we explained in the morning as well, we would like to start with the school leadership, because of the many reasons that we have already mentioned.

I'll just make a small observation on the presentations that have been made so far. I was trying to put these beautiful presentations—the result of discussions, deliberations, and breakout groups—into a kind of sieve, to sift them through this sieve, and I normally use what I call a tri-junction of three elements—you might call it the triple gem of teaching. I like number three—supposed to be very auspicious.

So, I think there was a lot of talk about meditation and mindfulness, and often people would get the impression that it would be quite an arduous task to go through this new, proposed, envisioned GNH curriculum or workshop content for our school leaders. And there was mention in ecoliteracy that explained the need for another very important aspect of spirit, but it didn't go quite to the end of the possibility of that word—spirituality. So the triple gem, or the tri-junction, is that in the act of teaching learning we would like to make sure that there is the interplay of the intellectual self, the emotional self, and the spiritual self.

I think two dimensions are wonderfully captured. I got the feeling that the intellectual dimension was perhaps embedded or assumed to be present, but maybe it would be helpful to make the intellectual self a little more obvious. Otherwise, what could happen is that there might be a slight impoverishment of the total being, or the outcome that we would like to achieve. So perhaps a more fulfilling outcome would be a harmonious interplay with the intellectual, the spiritual, and the emotional self.

I think the intellectual self is so important because all the many academics that we present to the learner provide that space in which the intellectual self grows. But sometimes that could build a kind of ego that needs to be moderated by the spiritual self, because the world outside the self is so much bigger. The egoistic self, which too much of an emphasis on the intellectual self could create, needs to be moderated.

But the emotional self is very important as well because the learner needs to relate himself or herself with the surroundings, with the environment, with the ambience that we are talking about. The greater the possibility of the relationship between the learner and the environment, the more beneficial is the act of learning. So, even as I expect that the intellectual self is embedded in the presentations, I would like to appeal to the effect that there be a more harmonious balance of the triple gem—the intellectual self, the spiritual self, and the emotional self. And then we have a very well-rounded, properly integrated learner as an outcome of a GNH curriculum. Thank you.

Tea break

Session 3 – Discussion

Afternoon, after tea break

The Facilitator asked the principals in the audience to comment on the workshop.

Jigme Dorje, Principal, Changangkha Lower Secondary School, thought the workshop was timely because it was appropriate to what they are trying to do concerning GNH in the schools. He thought that the principals workshop was a good idea, but that it should be done on a consultative manner, rather than having a facilitator dictate it. Then principals will take it positively, and the objective would be achieved. Therefore, the success depends on how the workshop is conducted, but all of the individuals will

respond to it differently. In addition, there should be follow-up to the workshop, and reinforcement, continuity, and monitoring. Schools facing difficulty in imparting knowledge in line with GNH need to be identified. He also thought that it was very important to put all of the teachers and principals on board with GNH values and principals.

Pema C. Wangdi, Principal, Yangchenphug Higher Secondary School, said that she had only been able to attend a few sessions, but it seemed very encouraging. “Of course, we become nervous and wonder if we will be able to do it. During the upcoming workshop we will have a lot to discuss when all the principals get together. We always keep the children in the forefront, so if it is going to benefit them, we will never say we can’t.” She commented that the most important thing is that they get the support they need in order to transmit this big concept. So, they are looking forward to this workshop.

Thubten Gyatsho, Director, Paro College of Education, commented that at the beginning we were not sure how GNH could develop as a common vision, but it has become clear. He thought that the workshop here has been very consultative. In terms of translating the vision into the classroom, we went step by step from the vision to something very concrete, and this will help the child with GNH. But he had one reservation and thought we should be cautious in the approach because it might be the result of other initiatives that have not worked well because of a lack of follow-up.

Karma Zangmo, Principal, Motithang Higher Secondary School, said that she was looking forward to the principals workshop and had high expectations. She is also looking forward to the support, and feels the principals can make a difference. The workshop would be an opportunity for the principals to share what is happening in their schools and their views, and to clarify doubts and concepts they may have about GNH.

Facilitator: Thank you. With that I think we can go on to the next topic. Madam Secretary, would you like to start that discussion?

Madam Secretary: Thank you. I think that since we’ve worked so hard and so well, we have some spare time so we thought that we could use it productively. We have talked about taking GNH to the formal school system. We also have a very successful non-formal system—we have close to 688 centres and over 13,500 participants, and it’s growing every day. So we thought we could also focus on them and see how we can take GNH to them.

In the morning there were a lot of views expressed about bringing the community on board. Through the non-formal education system we can engage them much more. Most of the non-formal participants are actually young mothers. So if I could describe the way we do it a little bit—we have young mothers who come with young children so we also have an early childcare program at the non-formal centres. And we also have curriculum that we have tried to build around giving them life skills. It is only geared towards numeracy and basic literacy, and then giving them life skills like vocational training—sewing, farming, about hybrid seeds, things like that. In the non-formal education, it

would be easier to address infusing GNH principles into the curriculum, and the impact would be immense and far reaching because most of these participants are mothers who have a huge family system. The mother plays a very important role, and often she's the role model and also contributes in the decision-making process within the family and within the community. Ivy was suggesting that maybe you could have other breakout groups and come up with some suggestions about how we could take GNH to them—maybe design a course or workshop. That was one area where we would like your help.

The other aspect is also out-of-school youth, youth leavers—we also need to bring them on board. Maybe we could also design something for them, some recommendations.

A lot of proposals have been made but only a few were presented. I just wanted to assure you that all the inputs we have received will be very useful. We will look at all the recommendations and proposals we have received, and come up with a final design. So these will go as inputs into the course content. Because of time constraints, we could not have everyone present. But I wanted to assure you that your work will be used and will be very beneficial. Thank you.

Facilitator: Since we worked so hard, we are actually ahead of time so I'm asking the audience what you would like to do in the next 15 minutes. Would you like to comment on non-formal education, get your ideas and leave that with Madam Secretary? What would you like to do? I'm taking suggestions.

Responses included:

- To discuss the students' set of wishes, especially the issue of corporal punishment. I have heard there is no corporal punishment, but the students said that is not the case.
- To discuss the possibilities of apprenticeships with elders experienced as crafts persons, builders, etc.
- Manish Jain said that in Rajasthan many children don't go to school in the morning because of domestic chores, so Shikshantar: The People's Institute for Rethinking Education and Development (of which he is Coordinator and Co-founder) runs about 150 schools at night for 7,000 children. The curriculum is to teach them more about their village, how village institutions work, the dignity of living in a village and how they should value that. These schools are monitored, supervised, and administered by a 12-year old Prime Minister, who was voted into office by children aged 6–14, and her cabinet of children (the Ministers). When the Prime Minister got the World Children's Prize from the Queen of Sweden, it was the first time she had been out of her village. The Queen asked Manish where this young girl got her confidence from—she was not dazzled by anything—and the girl looked the Queen straight in the eye and said, "Please tell her, I'm the Prime Minister". This concept could be introduced in Bhutan.

- Another participant said that she wanted to bring up another issue that the youth had brought up that had been mentioned, but had not really been discussed, and that was the examination system. Only a few students go on to the 12th standard and to university, and others end up on the streets. Teenage boys have been called the weak link in the culture. The exam system is setting up a whole generation of disenfranchised youth and that will have a huge effect on society. So the exam system needs to be addressed and another way must be found to support and route young people into a variety of possibilities.

Madam Secretary: I think tomorrow we also have a session on assessment, and we have requested our Board of Examinations, who look after assessments, to be with us.

Facilitator: How about the question of corporal punishment, it seems to be in the air. Honourable Minister of Education?

Hon. Minister of Education: We do have a policy that no corporal punishment is allowed in schools. That is the policy, but I guess there are stray incidents where they do resort to corporal punishment. This issue was discussed in many of our meetings with the school administration, and some of the feedback we got was that it is sometimes used when there is no alternative way of penalizing children for not behaving themselves. In the Prime Minister's speech, His Excellency mentioned facing the consequences, so maybe from the policy-makers' side, we need to come up with some alternative ways of children knowing the consequences of their actions. Otherwise, without that in place, our school system is resorting to the traditional way of doing.

Participant: I think that this is a very good way to transform the wrathful forms, to subjugate the evil spirit. The punishment is very good. I think so.

Hon. Minister of Education: As a policy, we do not have corporal punishment in the system. However, in some corners there could still be some instances of it. A couple of years ago there was a study conducted in the United Kingdom to seek views from parents about whether corporal punishment should be reinstated. The result was that 60% of the parents wanted corporal punishment brought back. I have been visiting schools rather frequently and in at least three schools that I visited in the East there were students who felt that one of the reasons for the decline in the standards of education and the discipline in the schools was the withdrawal of corporal punishment—and the fact that teachers today do not enjoy the kind of respect that they did in the past could also be attributed to some of the interventions that the government has put in place, including corporal punishment. These are children speaking and not teachers.

So, even though we are not thinking actually of reinstating corporal punishment, we feel that in a system such as ours, there would have to be some ways of bringing the recalcitrant back into the orbit, and perhaps also to insure an environment for studies. I've discovered that all good students and serious students want discipline in the class. If there is no discipline in the class, it is the good students who suffer and the teachers who cannot teach.

So in the interests of good performance, raising the achievement levels of students, and the overall discipline, security, and peace in the system there has to be an element of fear. This does not mean that one would have to beat children or impose corporal punishment, but some way of infusing an element of fear. Fear is the beginning of wisdom. Perhaps it will be the desire of the Ministry of Education not to have to inflict any kind of pain on any child, but many teachers say that it is the children who invite the stick and not the school or the teachers. I would hope that we would be able to institute, perhaps as a result of this workshop, a way to achieve both discipline and a more responsible way of lively behaviour in the school as well as good performance. Thank you.

- The movie we saw, *Freedom Writers*, is one teacher's story that shows the power, not of fear, but of love and her capacity to give of herself, which transformed kids who were hoodlums and murders and full of violence and hatred. She gave affection, respect, reverence, compassion, and she's a model for teachers across the world.

Hon. Minister of Education: Actually, I think I began on a wrong note. I wanted to share a real story. The first year I went to Sherubtse College, a college in the East, after a couple of weeks I asked my first students to write an essay on a topic relevant 10 years from now. A week later I handed out the papers to them and one of the students got up and said, "Sir, you are very strict." And I said, Perhaps you didn't get the marks that you expected, and I'm sure that you will get better marks next time."

Then the day continued and I went back home in the evening and I had a visit by six students to my little quarters. I opened the door and asked them to sit down but they wouldn't until after a lot of goading. They wouldn't say why they came, but I insisted. And after a long effort I got them to speak. They said, "Sir, we came to apologize." I told them they had no reason to apologize. "What did you do? I don't remember you doing anything wrong." Then one of the students said, "Sir, our friend was very rude to you today." That was Sherubtse College in 1986. Today I do not know how students behave when they meet the teachers or when they happen to brush against a teacher.

So this is the kind of value we were talking about yesterday—talking about respect, relationships between students and teachers. So this was an extremely powerful experience for me, and some of these people have risen very high in the system today. Incidentally, I have never had to beat a child so far. I wish I had beaten some of them that have become ministers. That was the time I remember between teacher and student relationship. Thank you.

Dorji Tshomo Tshering, Student Participant: With due respect, when the student observers and participants gave those points, we all knew very clearly that there is a policy that says no corporal punishment in schools. And I know some students do misbehave and do invite the beating to themselves. But then I feel, and my friends agree with me, that this idea has to be changed now. I have a very nice principal who just spoke a few minutes ago. She is a very good example. Madam has never used sticks, but she has

dealt with students who have misbehaved. Madam is a very good example, and students do not fear her, but they respect her and open up to her. That is what I feel a teacher should do. Corporal punishment should be there, but on a small scale. I won't mind. Even I got beaten up when I was small and scored very badly. And yes it helped because I studied very hard after that. But I do not feel that corporal punishment is a nice way to treat your students. I scored well but I do not have respect for that teacher—I fear that teacher. And if a student is instilled with fear, I don't think that will help. I don't think corporal punishment should be there for students.

Dewan Giri, Student Participant: I think corporal punishment exists, not in urban centres—not at least in my school, but to some extent in rural areas. I'm changing the topic, but I'd like to propose something for the workshop for principals. I think the principals should be trained in such a way that when they come back to their schools they should inculcate GNH principles and values in the students not through lectures, but through experience. Students enjoy being taught through experience rather than from lectures. I think we all have the values and principles of GNH within us and we just need to discover that through experience. And I think that GNH is less about measuring, but more about learning through experience.

Facilitator: With due respect to all the hands, I'm going to end today with an invitation for His Excellency the Prime Minister to say a few words to us, please.

Hon. Prime Minister: On what subject?

Facilitator: On anything you would like. We'd like to hear from you, since you were kind enough to join us.

Hon. Prime Minister: Thank you very much, Ivy. I really don't have anything to say, except that I regret very much not having been able to participate as much as I would have liked. I've already explained why I am not able to do so. But from what I hear from all the participants that I've spoken with, it has been a very satisfying, very stimulating, and a learning experience for everyone. I've met people whom I consider the most learned in the field of education, and I've heard some of them also say that they have learned so much more. Every day, I think, is a learning experience, and as long as our mind is open, there is so much more for any one of us, for every one of us, to understand and to learn, and then to be a better human being, and to be more effective in whatever it is we are required to do or we have undertaken to achieve.

Hearing what I have today, in the course of this one hour, you have covered a lot of topics and that is very impressive. And also what I hear is that, as diverse as the topics that you have covered might have been, you have also been quite focused. And it seems that most of you have derived some satisfaction in seeing that the topics that were raised did end up with some kind of conclusion. I had a brief discussion with the Education Secretary just before this session began and she told me of her own satisfaction. Whatever has been discussed here, and even in cases where people felt that their opinions and views may not have been taken into consideration and may not be reflected, she

wanted you to know that she has noted them, that others have noted them, and that they will find a place in the development of our curriculum, in the improvement of our education system, regardless of whether they are reflected in the formal documentation that may emerge at the end of this workshop.

I've also been told that most of the participants and observers have been deeply impressed by the quality and the ability of our younger generation. I've been told, when I walked in the door this afternoon before tea break, that one of the students—Rohit—is quite ready to take over my job as Prime Minister. That is indeed most heartening. When I hear views like that I think it says a lot about the kind of education system we already have, and the quality of the teachers that we have. Dorji spoke about how much she loves and admires her teachers and the principal of her school who is here—I hope it is not because of fear of her caning that you have given her the credit.

But we do have a good education system. It's just that we don't want to become complacent. The challenges that we face, the threats that we face as a country, as a nation, and as individuals in this country are many. The world is getting more and more complex. The globalized world is faced with all kinds of threats and challenges, many of which can be addressed through the education system, through the set of values and principles that GNH espouses.

I have no doubt that by the end of tomorrow, by Saturday, all of us will have a reason to be very satisfied and be very happy with what we have been able to achieve as a group. And what I was very delighted to hear this evening is that it has been a truly consultative process, which no doubt is a process that is the contribution of Ivy, our facilitator. I think you are doing an excellent job. But, all in all, let me say that each time I come here it has been a very, very inspiring experience, a heartening experience, and I'm happy. I'm deeply moved by the manner and the way in which each of you has shown and demonstrated your commitment to helping us. Thank you very much.

Facilitator: Thank you, Sir. So thank you again, everyone in the room. And we will see you tomorrow.

Dedication of Merit

11 December, Day 4: Alternative school reports, Breakout group recommendations – alternative assessment tools, critical/analytical thinking, non-formal and informal education

Judith Simmer-Brown’s “blog” written for Naropa University: *This morning there were about 12 short presentations, supposedly on alternative assessment. The assessment presentations were from school principals and education professors—but most of them spoke mainly about their school, rather than assessments, per se. Still, it was great to hear a little about some alternative schools, most of them in India and Thailand.*

Our group’s assessment topic revolved around Bhutan’s reliance on a daunting single exam in the 10th standard, and then again in the 12th. The entire future of a teenager is determined by this exam and only a small percentage get the grades required to continue school and then qualify for high-level jobs. This is so stressful and demoralizing, and we are hearing from everyone—students, teachers, and administrators—that this exam needs to be examined. Also, the exam is based on memorized material, and does not determine creative or critical thinking, the depth of personal experience, etcetera. It’s a system inherited from India (and indirectly from the UK) that never worked well there as well.

The best part of the day for me was the breakout in the late morning. There had been growing concern that the development of the intellect had not been discussed much, and my group on Critical Thinking was formed to address that. The group of 15, half Bhutanese, started out discussing critical thinking with a western flavor. I spoke about the critical thinking traditions of Buddhism, from Nagarjuna and Dharmakirti, and how that training was preserved in the monasteries, though it was often taught in a rote manner, except in the debate traditions of the shedras. Quickly we developed a consensus: critical thinking was renamed “analytic” thinking, it was lacking in the Bhutanese curriculum, inherited from India etc., and that it was essential for Gross National Happiness.

If students could learn to think for themselves, they could develop a more personal relationship with the material and the confidence to carry their education into their lives. We agreed that analysis was urgently needed in relationship with the media, and thought that perhaps critical thinking could be brought into Bhutanese schools in the “Trojan horse” of a media literacy program that is currently being developed. Why were things presented this way on TV? What statements have fallacies, what are distortions, what are lies, and why are they presented in the commercial, show, etc?

This afternoon we talked about non-formal and informal education, and recommended vocational training and non-certificate training programs, and that they be placed under the Ministry of Education. Currently there is little such training in Bhutan, even though it is a predominantly agricultural, rural country. Some of the most impassioned members of our group, from India especially, had fantastic things to say about this—some neo-

Gandhians. What was great was that the Prime Minister and Education Minister, on the spot, agreed to work on this. Where else does such a thing happen?

The Prime Minister also was signing stacks of letters and resolutions while sitting with us, and he stopped to read a declaration letter to the Copenhagen summit, in which he declared that right now statistics show that Bhutan has a negative carbon footprint, and he was committing the country to continue this and challenging other countries to try to match Bhutan. He spoke about this beautifully—a remarkable man.

Mindfulness meditation instruction – Judith Simmer-Brown

It is very important that the spine be straight, otherwise the mind cannot be awake. There is a sense of relaxation and open heart. As we follow our breathing it is almost as if we are sitting in a cold room and the breath goes out like vapour from our nose and mouth and dissolves into the room. And as we go out with the breath we dissolve and rest our mind in space. The past has gone, the future has not yet come, we rest freshly in the present moment.

Participants practiced mindfulness meditation for 5 minutes.

Session 1 – Alternative school reports

Morning, before tea break

Facilitator: Time flies when you are having fun. I can't believe that it's the fourth day already. The programme says that we will begin with a panel discussion, but that has been changed. We are going to start this morning with presenters who will go through alternative assessment tools that they have found worked with their schools. We have asked them to keep it to four minutes each, in the interests of time and wanting to open it to the floor for comments after that. You will hear a gentle bell at four minutes. That means to wrap up your points. I really know that you can talk more than four minutes on the tools. However, I think you can share the information also electronically with the entire group, so pick the best points that you want to make. I saw a lot of memory sticks flying this morning so know you have it on memory sticks. So I'm really asking you to keep it to four minutes, and Meg will remind you with a very gentle bell. And I may walk toward you if you don't stop, and try to take the mike, gently, from you. So I ask your forbearance for that.

Highlights from presentations from the founders, directors or teachers of/in 11 innovative schools that are based on educational approaches seen as consistent with GNH principles and values are given below. Most of the schools use alternative forms of assessment.

Shirley Blair, Director of the **Shree Mangal Dvip School**, Kathmandu, Nepal, founded by Thrangu Rinpoche. The school was created to preserve the language, culture, and Buddhist way of life of Himalayan people, and is based bodhicitta and the hope that

children acquire wisdom along the way. There are over 700 children, starting with age 8, who are taught a full curriculum (dictated by Nepal), and who also practice meditation and prayer for 1½ hours per day. The younger children are asked if they want to participant. About a third of the children are monks and nuns.

One child is given the Thrangu Excellence Award—the highest award—annually, and this is given to the child who displays the greatest uncalled for kindness, and who tries hard on studies, learning Tibetan, practices bodhicitta, and is involved in community and cultural life. There are three results days per year and merit awards are given for best effort. In addition, there are performance reviews, but these are only for advice to the children on how they can improve. When some of the children who used to be “little nuisances” were asked what makes them happy there, one child said, “Dharma classes. They help us to be compassionate. That makes happiness.”

Sally Booth, Associate Director of Research, Curriculum and Professional Development at the **Ross School** in East Hampton and New York City, NY, USA, which also has international schools. The motto is “Know Thyself in Order to Serve”. The integrated curriculum is based on cultural history as a core and all of the other subjects are integrated with that. It starts in 3rd grade and all of the grades after that build from there. For example, in 7th grade the students study the ancient Maya as the cultural core, which includes art, architecture, politics, etc.; in science they study Mayan astronomy and agricultural techniques; visual arts – murals and make cups; modern languages – the change from native language to Spanish; health and wellness – make tamales and learn to play Maya ball; performing arts – perform a play based on Mayan myths; media – interview Mayan immigrants who work on their campus, film them, and show the film of local TV. There are about 4–5 units per year.

Harvard University Graduate School of Education studies have found that the children have more brain networks and are more able to apply critical thinking, and integrated thinking better than children taught with the “silo” approach. The students take standard tests such as SATs, but they don’t grade them on that. They grade them (distinguished, proficient, satisfactory, unsatisfactory) on rubrics that are related to hands-on projects (e.g., for English, history, and art the students studied nature myths, wrote their own, and illustrated it). The school believes that if the student is failing, the teacher is failing, and in such cases adds extra time to enrich the experience between student and teacher.

Steve Mustain, Director of the **Shambhala School** in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The primary through secondary school is a secular school based on Buddhist principles, especially the principle that all human beings possess a fundamental basic goodness that is unconditional. The elementary school has an arts-based and integrated curriculum, and the upper school has a strong academic curriculum with arts enrichment.

In terms of assessment, the school is small and the teacher knows the students very well, so assessments—recognition, need for support, etc.—happen in a day-to-day informal fashion. In the upper schools, students are given grades on their assignments, but there is no formal exam process. They had tried an exam processes, but found that the exams had

no relation to what the children were actually learning, and students went from being cheerful and joyous learners to being extremely stressed and uptight. Actual assessments happen three times a year and are presented to be understandable by parents as well as to students, and to be recognizable to universities that students may apply to. They list objectives under each area of study and students are evaluated on a percentage basis within each of the objectives. The parents receive a thorough description of what is happening in each area, and are given comments written by the teachers. A rubric was created that could be used in grades 10–12 that could be acceptable to universities.

Luigina De Biasi, Co-founder of the **Alice Project schools** located in Sarnath and Bodhgaya, India. The schools have more than a 1,000 students. It is important for students to know both their inner and outer worlds. They ask the students to go inside to increase their awareness and accept and love themselves. It is also important to see the space between thoughts, and between thoughts and emotions. This reduces the movement of the mind, and the students become peaceful, more tolerant, good learners, and understand the interconnectedness and unity of all beings and elements in the universe. They practice meditation every morning (different types for different religions), and during the day they stop their activities every 45 minutes, after hearing a bell, and are then silent for a period of time. This is important in creating a peaceful atmosphere in the classroom. The schools develop visualization, concentration, and memory starting in primary school.

Manish Jain, Coordinator and Co-founder of **Shikshantar**: The People’s Institute for Rethinking Education and Development, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India. They call it an “unlearning centre,” to try to help heal people from the damage that school has done to them, including shame about their traditional knowledge. There is a lot of space for critiquing science and modernization to try to understand what has gone wrong with those systems. The third kind of unlearning is to get out of the mindset of learning for jobs and to realize that we can create our own meaningful work in the world. There is a commitment to the informal learning system, respecting holders of sacred knowledge and wisdom and bringing them into the learning system. There is also a commitment to local culture, economy, and ecology, and a commitment to wisdom, which needs three generations—who all are learners in the school.

There are different forms of assessment. They have organized a range of organizations, businesses, etc. in the city who have removed the need for credentials in order to hire. Many of them now say degree or equivalent portfolio experience is needed. Self-assessment, peer assessments, and assessments of teachers by learners are used. There is also a strong commitment to apprenticeship so mentors do their own assessments. There is interface and feedback coming from family and community to elaborate how the students are useful in these areas. The principle is that it is important to open oneself to listening to different kinds of feedback, which is important for the development of the brain and spirit.

Sanjit Bunker Roy, Founder and Director of the **Barefoot College** in India, which has trained village women to be solar engineers. They started with **night schools** for children

who have been out of school, emphasizing democracy, traditional knowledge, citizenship, and how to make rural children better citizens. The curriculum of the night schools is informal and concentrated on making children aware of institutions in the village, including how they work. Also children are taught to respect the knowledge that other people have. The teacher is not the only important person in the school, but farmers, midwives, etc., who are brought into the schools, also have something to say and represent traditions that needs to be kept alive. Puppetry is important in bringing knowledge, skills, and information to children. Every three years 7,000 children have an election where they vote for leaders of a children’s parliament, and they institutionalize a forum where they interact with the policy-makers. Children assess themselves and have a tremendous capacity to give feedback on what’s needed, assessments, etc.

Prapat Niyom, Founder of **Roong Aroon School** in Thailand. The school is from kindergarten through upper secondary, is Buddhist-based, and balances external and internal processes or contemplative practices. It is holistic, promotes deeper learning, learning by doing, and communicative learning with the community. It also cultivates mindfulness, spiritual arts, and meditation.

They have operating system manuals for the teachers to use to help them design learning units, which the teachers also use to assess the students. They use a thematic approach in three semesters. Teachers choose the topics and integrate subjects into that. The assessments are based on cognitive achievements and learning skills (50%) and value and attitude achievement (50%). Guidelines are given to the teachers to help them use these targets for assessment. Reports are given to the parents, who also give feedback.

Art-ong Jumsai Na Ayudhya, Chief Administrator of **Sathya Sai School**, Thailand. The children come from rural areas all over Thailand, and no fees are charged. They “use GNH completely—100%” and it is applied to all subjects. The children, teachers, and administrators are happy.

(At this point, electric power was lost—there was a whole-city blackout—so the following is based on notes, rather than audio files. The rest of the presentations were conducted in darkness.)

The school produces its own electricity from wind energy, solar energy, and garbage, and have zero emissions. They use self-sufficiency principles and are self-sufficient in most areas. Students participate in everything, are vegetarian, and grow their own rice and many vegetables.

In terms of evaluation, they use the Indian curriculum, but only give 30% importance to that. For the other 70%, everyone takes part in the evaluation of the children—the children evaluate themselves, and friends, parents and teachers also evaluate the child. The objective is to make children good human beings. They don’t place emphasis on academics, but 100% of the children are accepted into university. The school has received many awards for being a top school, environmental friendly school, best Buddhist school, etc.

Meg Hart, Board Member of the **Siddhartha School**, in Northern NSW, Australia that was founded by Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche. The school is a primary school with plans to expand to higher grades, and is based on Buddhist principles. The curriculum was developed in consultation with the Shambhala School, and has been formulated to meet the needs of the child, not just academically, but socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Through an awareness of cause and effect, the school seeks to empower its students by teaching them that they are vital in the shaping of the world they live in and by encouraging both personal and universal responsibility. In addition to academic excellence, the school cultivates appreciation of qualities such as kindness, intuition, humour, courage and wisdom. The school’s challenge is to bring GNH values into an Australian secular system to nurture a whole human being.

Most of Meg Hart’s short presentation, however, was devoted to a description of two schools in southern India that she has been asked to visit by Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche as models of good education that are fully in line with GNH principles, practices, and values. These are **Kalakshetra** in Tamil Nadu and **Kalamandalam** in Kerala, both of which have existed for several decades, are deeply rooted in the traditional Indian dance and music of their regions, and which produce some of India’s best practitioners and performers of the traditional dance and art forms. The students do this while at the same time studying a full academic curriculum, including math, science, and the rest. The schools—one founded by Theosophers and the other by a great Indian poet—also convey the dignity of manual labour, as students gather dung for cooking fuel etc. and they practice principles of ecological sustainability. While academic performance is assessed—and the students in these schools do very well in these fields—the key form of assessment is related to accomplishment in the traditional dance, music, and art forms.

But what Meg Hart conveyed most passionately and convincingly in her presentation was the *quality* of students in both schools. They are, she described, remarkably “refined”, elegant, and dignified in their poise, posture, as they walk, and in their overall bearing and behaviour. These schools, by rooting education in traditional dance and art forms taught by masters in these fields, are not only preserving and promoting traditional culture (one of the four key pillars of GNH); they are also educating for full and whole human beings, which produces a much deeper, longer-lasting, and more beneficial effect than systems that focus on scholastic achievement, employability, and such narrower objectives.

Arun Kapur, Executive Director of **Learn Today**, India, which founded Greater Valley School, Vasant Valley School, and others. He spoke about his book, *Transforming Children Empowering Children*, and said that what we understand about the purpose of education is that education needs to help children actualize their potential. This is a first step in counteracting the worldwide process of children becoming over-schooled but under-educated. The schooling needs to be *wholistic*—with the emphasis on the word “whole”—that is generally spelled “*holistic*” like a hole in the ground, but which leaves out the whole.

For a lot of people, assessment means to try to find what a child is successful at. However, the ideal assessment should be the first step in the learning process, rather than the last step, so that it helps map the learning process. Examinations have a role to play as a barrier to cross, rather than something that moves students forward. Self-assessment is best, as well as assessment by parents. Learning Today tries to assess curriculum, and children play a role in designing it themselves. The curriculum should help them have a sense of dignity, and self respect and the rest follows. It is important to get them to think of themselves as *wholistic* people. Then they can assess their own strengths and shore up their weaknesses, which is a fairly easy process.

Richard Brown, Co-Chair, Department of Contemplative Education, **Naropa University**, Boulder, Colorado, USA. Naropa University, which was founded by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, is engaged in assessment from a contemplative perspective, which is concerned with the depth of meaning and how one can work with that. The mandala of learning is formed by the five Buddha families or qualities. The first, clarity of intellect, is concerned with the logical precision of both mind and speech. At a deeper lever it is about understanding more about the nature of thought itself, the nature of reality, and impermanence. Students see that thoughts arise and fall, and can understand when they are being dogmatic or rigid in their thoughts, and when they are being flexible, open, and accommodating—a second quality. The third quality, communication and aesthetics, is associated with the fire involved with the warmth and dancing element of spontaneous imagination and insight. The fourth and fifth qualities are concerned, in part, with resourcefulness and effective action. Student self-assessment is important, and teachers assess students based on an assessment rubric of each of the qualities.

(Because much of Richard Brown’s presentation was lost due to the electricity blackout at that time, the following statements were taken from Naropa University’s mission statement on its website, <http://www.naropa.edu>, “*Naropa recognizes the inherent goodness and wisdom of each human being. It educates the whole person, cultivating academic excellence and contemplative insight in order to infuse knowledge with wisdom. The university nurtures in its students a lifelong joy in learning, a critical intellect, the sense of purpose that accompanies compassionate service to the world, and the openness and equanimity that arise from authentic insight and self-understanding. Ultimately, Naropa students explore the inner resources needed to engage courageously with a complex and challenging world, to help transform that world through skill and compassion, and to attain deeper levels of happiness and meaning in their lives.*”

The website also describes “contemplative education” as follows: “*Contemplative education is learning infused with the experience of awareness, insight and compassion for oneself and others, honed through the practice of sitting meditation and other contemplative disciplines. The rigor of these disciplined practices prepares the mind to process information in new and perhaps unexpected ways. Contemplative practice unlocks the power of deep inward observation, enabling the learner to tap into a wellspring of knowledge about the nature of mind, self and other that has been largely overlooked by traditional, Western-oriented liberal education.*”

Bhutanese Board of Examinations representative: A Bhutanese Board of Examinations representative who could not be present until today because grade 10 and 12 exams were taking place, spoke briefly about the assessment process in Bhutan. Unfortunately, her presentation was not recorded because of the loss of electricity. Basically, she said that Bhutan used both formal and informal assessment tools and that the purpose was to find out what students have learned and if can apply this in their daily lives. In addition to exams, Bhutan also uses rubrics, student self-assessments, and teacher observations, and one of the challenges is for teachers to conduct holistic assessments.

She said that the main issue is how to assess students in a way that promotes happiness, rather than what type of assessment to use. They try to make the assessments fair. However, if students do not get the results they want, they are not happy. It is important not just to assess rote learning. Critical thinking also needs to be assessed. Students find it difficult when they are asked high-level questions because they are used to just vomiting what has been taught. When they are asked critical thinking, evaluative questions and questions involving their opinions they say, “But our teacher never taught us these things.” Finally, she commented that if Bhutan can create fair assessments that include critical thinking questions and evaluations and that result in all people being happy, then they will have the GNH in the assessment process.

The final 10 minutes in the morning session were devoted to participant comments, which also could not be recorded:

- Money becomes an issue. Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa commented that Schumacher College and Naropa University started well, but they have become part of the capitalistic system. Some presentations were marvellous, but the impression was that students were expected to be “goody-goody”, and since students can be corrupted by universities, they also need to learn about the shortcomings of the larger system of which they are part.
- It was delightful to listen to the stories, and the winter principals’ workshop should not just be based on uniformity and standards, but should draw wisdom from the alternative schools, all of which are alternative examples in line with GNH principles.
- A national representative wished to see whether the participants can form a small pattern within the kira the Education Minister is trying to weave. If each of the Bhutanese participants can work with one school—chosen with the Education Minister—that would help give Bhutanese education diversity, since each school is slightly different from whole but will all be working toward GNH.
- A national participant said that she agreed that corporal punishment is bad, and that they have also looked at other ways of discipline that can address the whole child. Punishment should be there for misbehaviour, but also for better learning and growth, but some 5th and 6th grade students have said that the stick should be used

on the bottom for misbehaviour and not as part of the learning process, so it is important to look at the social context of Bhutan where discipline is very important.

- A Bhutanese student said that he wanted to clarify that the students never said they wanted to do away with exams. They do want exams in order to connect with learning, and that nobody will learn anything except from experience so exams do need to be there. But exams are stressful and are taken from the textbooks. They should also have other tools to see if they are becoming street smart as well as book smart.
- The other Bhutanese student participant said that she meant to say that they shouldn't be only graded on exams. Also she thought that corporeal punishment is not so bad—it used to be OK if they got a beating, but now it's not OK.
- A Bhutanese monk commented that the purpose of education should first be that every school should try to make students into better human beings. That should be stressed before academics. Then students will do better in all areas, be calm, and sensitive to learning, and the pace of learning will be faster.
- Mark Mancall said that there are different types of examinations. Exams in Bhutan are a form of punishment and psychological torture, and they need to rethink the types of exams so they can be constructive. Also, he has only been hearing about happy students. In his classes he wanted to produce students who were discontent. Education ought to be a critical training, not a narcotic and he hasn't heard enough of that here.

The electricity was restored.

Breakout groups were formed to discuss alternative assessment tools, intellectual rigour and critical thinking, and non-formal education in the period after tea break, and participants were asked to return to the plenary group after lunch.

Session 2 – Breakout group reports

After lunch

1. Alternative assessment tools

Unifying theme = “no failures”!

The breakout group explored alternative methods of assessment, at least to complement the current standardized exams that Royal Education Council Director Mark Mancall characterized as “draconian”, and that many workshop participants felt were contrary to GNH principles and values in their fostering of competitiveness, narrow focus on cerebral learning alone, creation of undue stress, and undermining of self-esteem among those deemed ‘failures’ in that system.

One key theme that emerged from these discussions was that a GNH-based educational system should have “no failures”. The term *failure* was not just used literally to denote those not making a passing grade. In the broader sense, failures also included all those who failed to achieve the requisite Grade 10 percentage required to go on to Grades 11 and 12. It also included all those in Grade 12 (the majority) whose grades were inadequate to ensure them a desired (preferably civil service) job, or entry to university.

It was widely agreed both that this method of assessment is far too narrow and geared to only one form of accomplishment, and also that the consequent loss of self-esteem among those failing to “make the grade” could have socially deleterious consequences, including unemployment, alienation, substance abuse, low self-esteem, and family problems. By contrast, it was felt that a GNH-based system would recognize the inherent worth and value of each individual and help foster and recognize the unique talents and contribution of each student and citizen.

For example, a student who does not perform well in standardized exams may have enormous talent in the arts or music, or be highly skilled with his or her hands, or be a dedicated meditation practitioner, or be a natural healer, or have a heart of gold continually serving others—talents and contributions not recognized by the current standardized exam assessment system. Too often, such talents and contributions are therefore lost to society in a system that brands those failing to make the grade in the conventional system as failures.

It was therefore suggested that a key unifying theme for the principals’ workshop discussions on assessment might be the simple question: ***“How can a GNH-based educational system best ensure that there are ‘no failures’?”***

There were several breakout groups on this controversial subject of assessment, and key recommendations from those breakout groups are combined here. Many of these clearly require more detail from the schools and principals who use these methods. These can hopefully be posted on the new Educating for GNH website, along with further information about the schools that are based on holistic principles and educational approaches consistent with GNH values.

While there was widespread agreement on the flaws and inadequacies of the existing “draconian” exam system, there was no clear agreement on the best alternatives. For that reason, breakout group recommendations are simply listed below just as presented by the groups in their summary reports in the hope that the principals’ workshops might further this discussion productively to produce concrete and practical alternatives that can be applied in Bhutan without delay, and also to solicit interest in obtaining more information on these various methods used in the alternative schools.

In addition, following this breakout group summary, we have added some thoughts on GNH-based self-assessment offered by the Honourable Prime Minister in a post-workshop reflection on this subject.

Summary of breakout groups' recommendations on assessment

Basic Principles

- Broader tools will assess more of the whole child rather than just intellect, which is the sole focus of current exams.
- More frequent assessment tools lessen the anxiety that students experience when faced with a final exam that will determine their future. Such more frequent assessments also give a broader (and thus more accurate) picture of overall student performance. It was therefore recommended that both the importance *and* the consequences of the final exam be reduced by having more frequent exams during the period.
- **Ongoing** assessment is seen as a key alternative to over-reliance on final exams.
- No failures: Everyone has a unique contribution and capacity that must be recognized and acknowledged through a reformed assessment system.

Alternative Assessment Tools

Following are examples of tools and resources and frequency used by some of the alternative schools represented at the December workshop:

Tools

- Personal diary/ journal
- Essay
- Performance assessment
- Presentation assessment

- Portfolio
- Merit Bank
- Bonus encouragement

Resources and Frequency

Continuously
 With teacher comments
 End of term, conclusion of project
 Presentation (team work or exhibition)
 Student's notebook
 Accumulate good activities
 For example, at the Shambhala school, every student is given a special name at that end of the year that represents their inherent quality and element, e.g., Blossoming Confidence, Emerging Jewel

Guidelines/Principle

- Self assessment (student)

- Classroom Observation (teacher)

Examples/Implementation

- Set up criteria for this
- team work engagement in class
- Flow (or pace)
- Reflection in group
- Rewards participation
- Teacher after class report/ record

-
- Peer Assessment (fellow students)
 - In-service day report by teacher
 - Criteria and guidelines established to record improvements and positive/ negative progress
 - After school
 - Parent-teacher meetings
 - Parent-teacher-student conferences
 - Teacher-student meeting
 - Before the family meeting
 - But set objectives as guidelines to assess improvements
 - No marks for K-PP
 - Individual education programs for specific students with particular needs and talents
 - Narrative assessment
 - Morning circle
 - Teacher will observe and respond to prepare learning awareness
 - Oral Exam
 - Warrior Exam (oral) in presence of class
 - Used in Shambhala school to cultivate confidence. The form requires students to be fully present and awake, and to demonstrate knowledge of content mixed with personal experience.
 - Informally between teacher and student
 - Interview/ Dialogue

It was noted that all these methods can be applied in such a way as to honour the basic principle of “No failures!”

One of the assessment breakout groups produced the following *recommendations*:

- Minimize the percentage of final grade attributable to written final exams.
- Include in assessment and increase weight assigned to class activities, projects, and participation. Emphasis does not always have to be intellect alone, but assessment should include participation and other activities, including quizzes, debates, games, music, community service, carpentry, etc.
- Include projects and research in assessment.
- Continuous assessment
- Peer Assessment
- Self Assessment

This group also identified key *challenges* and issues that are a constraint to successful implementation of desired alternatives:

- Large class sizes (40–50 students), which make it difficult if not impossible for teachers to give ongoing assessments, and which are also a constraint to knowing students well.
- Vast syllabi with considerable irrelevant and useless material
- Potential lack of transparency in the assessments, and students not being adequately informed
- Financial constraints and frequent changes of teachers
- Lack of authentic learning that penetrates deeply, but present rewards to those who can ‘vomit’ up material for exam purposes
- Disparities in criteria set by BBE and CAPSD.

Honourable Prime Minister on Weekly Self-Assessment: Post workshop – 26 Dec. 09

Every Friday afternoon at every school in Bhutan, students, teachers, and administrators should reflect on their week through a GNH lens, assessing what they achieved in the past week and resolving what they intend to do the next week. Ideally, this reflection would happen in small groups to promote an atmosphere of intimacy—perhaps beginning from a full school assembly and then breaking out into smaller groups.

This self-reflection, ideally in writing, can be at five levels: personal, class, school, family, and community. For example, at a personal level, a student might reflect on having strengthened a friendship or reconciled a strained relationship. At the class and school level, a reading in English class may have conveyed a GNH value, and a science lesson may have stimulated an action to protect the school environment. A student might recall exchanges with parents, both positive and difficult, and helping someone in the community or picking up litter in the village. These reflections can then move to practical aspirations for the next week.

This self-assessment should also be undertaken by teachers and principals, and can be accompanied by more objective indicators like changes in instances of substance abuse and in discipline, and improvements in teacher-student and teacher-teacher relations. At the school level, there could be assessment of how administrative problems were resolved during the week, whether relations among faculty improved, and whether leadership encouraged more participation.

Ideally, these short written reflections, which might involve both contemplation and analysis, could be shared and read by teachers on a weekly basis. Each student, teacher, and principal might be encouraged—at the end of the Friday reflection—to list three aspirations for the following week. They might even be encouraged to match aspirations to the GNH pillars—e.g., one thing they will do to protect the environment, etc.

HPM also stressed the importance of introducing techniques of time management (at which he says most people are very bad)—the tools and discipline to structure a day.

He said that 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 an *approach* that infuses 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, the HPM said, 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 to both teachers and students that makes study less burdensome and more enjoyable.

2. Critical/ analytic thinking

Previously, the Hon. Education Minister expressed his concern that the GNH-inspired initiatives being proposed not compromise, but rather enhance, the intellectual, scholastic, and academic integrity of education. This view was widely endorsed and supported by workshop participants, and it was remarked that discernment, clear thinking and analysis, and intellectual rigour were vital hallmarks of GNH and of a GNH-infused education system. It was widely agreed that critical/ analytical thinking must be integrated with the overall approach to teaching in all subject areas, especially in the higher grades.

To this end, it was agreed on to create separate breakout groups on the teaching and enhancement of critical thinking skills. As a direct follow-up to this discussion, Prof. Henry Rosemont of Brown University, who has decades of experience in teaching logic and critical and analytic thinking skills, kindly prepared a specific exercise for the principals' workshops to demonstrate how these skills might be taught in the Bhutanese educational system (see below). It was recognized that this approach is directly in line with the teaching of media literacy, and is consonant with the GNH-inspired view that students must learn to see through the materialist and consumerist messages with which they are increasingly bombarded. The breakout group outcomes and Dr. Rosemont's critical thinking exercise are described below.

The first breakout group in this area defined critical and analytical thinking as the capacity to rely on one's own reasoning powers, to think ethically, to discern reality clearly and make sense of the world, to recognize that there might be many approaches to seeing a particular problem and to appreciate the value of debate both within one's own mind and with others, and to act pro-actively and creatively based on one's reasoning ability.

The group noted major challenges to bringing this approach effectively into the education system. These include a strong traditional respect for authority (whether right or wrong)—an attitude that is changing but is still strong; a lack of exposure and access to critical media and related materials; a shortage of Bhutanese teachers with training in

logic and related skills; large class sizes that inhibit careful and detailed feedback to students; and inadequately developed media literacy skills.

This does not mean that these skills are more developed in the West, where the self-centred individualist mythology and fallacy hold sway. As an exercise, it was suggested that the individualist fallacy could be challenged by exploring the differences between private and public behaviour. Small groups of four might list one word attributes of how members feel and act at home compared to how they feel and act in public and outside the home. The group could then review these lists, analyse why such differences exist, discuss the benefits and costs of each situation, and diagram the two sets of relationship.

The second breakout group in this area defined critical thinking somewhat differently as analytical thinking and intellectual rigour. Of importance was the ability to read texts critically, to understand the underlying context, and to recognize that everything has an ideological basis and to identify the particular ideology. The group suggested that students of critical thinking be able to apply it to all fields, including ethics, art and music, and that the holistic GNH framework is consistent with a critical thinking approach since it is based on the interconnected nature of reality. The group suggested that critical and analytical thinking skills can be introduced into curricula early through informal logic and language exercises, moving on later to formal logic and its application to math and science skills.

The group remarked that Bhutan is fertile territory for the effective transmission of critical and analytical thinking skills, since these are already deeply ingrained in Buddhism in the form of logical questioning, reasoning, and debate. The rationale for questioning and not accepting conventional and illusory assumptions is deeply present in Buddhist texts. As well, it was noted that Bhutan is culturally a confident society that should not be threatened by deep questioning.

Despite this, analytical thinking and teachings on the interdependent nature of reality are largely absent from both school text books and classroom teaching and learning. Children and students often do not even understand that plagiarism is an academic crime. Instead, sadly, there is a culture of reproduction and unquestioning rote learning. The group therefore stressed the need to “un-learn” these conventional habits, starting with bureaucrats whose own education has largely been through rote learning.

Breakout group members identified other major challenges including the reality that the flaws of top-down classroom teaching and learning are compounded by large class sizes of 50–60 children, which does not allow the kind of dialogue and questioning that fosters analytical thinking. As well, current assessment modalities do not promote analytical thinking.

The breakout group further remarked on the negative consequences of failing to ask questions and challenge conventional assumptions, since these modalities are associated with lack of curiosity, suppression of analytical and creative thinking, and fear, rather

than fostering the free expression of mind and enabling humans to reach their full potential.

This breakout group suggested the following strategies to overcome these challenges and to foster a free, questioning, and analytical mind:

- Principals and teachers can provide an enabling environment in their schools in which students are encouraged to question without fear, to challenge conventional assumptions, and to dialogue among themselves in class. Teachers can be encouraged not to rely too heavily on textbooks as sources of ‘truth’.
- Media literacy is an excellent tool to foster analytical thinking. For example, students could be led through comparative analyses of two newspapers reporting the same event from different angles.
- Children can be taught that plagiarism is a form of theft and is therefore unethical and contrary to Buddhist teachings.
- Buddhist teachings (including elements of the shedra curriculum in monastic education such as the Middle Way teachings) can be applied to secular education to foster the questioning mind that is inherent in and central to Buddhism.

Critical/ analytic thinking exercise for principals workshop

The following exercise in critical/ analytic thinking, which is grounded in logic, was prepared by Dr. Rosemont. Participants are first asked to read closely the article “Rural Teachers Overburdened,” in the *Bhutan Observer* for Friday, December 11, 2009, and then to address the following questions, individually and collectively.

1. After reading the article, do you believe the headline well describes what the article is about?
2. If you agree with the author’s position, how would you have headlined the article? If you disagreed, how would you have headlined the article?
3. Identify (at least) 3 clear indicators that the article is more an opinion piece than strictly news reporting
4. Find an example of overgeneralization in the article.
5. Identify (at least) 2 examples of faulty logical reasoning, in which the author’s conclusion does not logically follow from the premises (presumed facts) that he has stated. That is to say, find arguments where you can accept the author’s statements of presumed facts as true, but believe his conclusion, based on those statements, is false. (See also questions 10 and 11 below). Hint: to find the conclusions of an argument, look for statements that come after words like “therefore,” “hence,” “it follows,” and “thus,” or that come before words like “because.”
6. Find a mixed metaphor in the article.
7. If you agreed with the author’s position, write a paragraph that further supports that position.
8. If you disagreed with the author’s position, write a paragraph that attacks it.

9. Does the author use any important words ambiguously or misleadingly? If so, which ones?
10. Returning to the concept of the logical form of arguments: If all x is y, and all y is z, must all x be z? Why?
11. How about the negative form: If no x is y, and no y is z, is it true that no x is z? Why?
12. Locate an argument made by the author that is difficult to challenge, whether you agree with it or not.
13. Based on your work in this exercise, list some ways you believe logic might be linked to: a) natural languages; b) the sciences; c) creative thinking; d) mathematics.

CRITICAL THINKING – Group 1

Definition:

- own reasoning
- analytical/thinking (including ethical thinking)
- to be able to discern things from your own perspectives
- recognizing that there might be many approaches to seeing a problem
- Pro-active
- Creative
- Recognizing debate within and without oneself.
- making sense of world

Note these challenges:

1. Bhutanese culture traditionally bows to authority. This is changing, but it is still present.
2. Lack of exposure to media and materials. Lack of accessibility to materials, especially in rural areas.
3. Shortage of Bhutanese teachers who are aware of Bhutanese context and system.
4. Classroom size too big
5. Language

Outcome: A clearer sense of what

Activity:

- Encourages vs what
- Inhibits (Critical thinking)

How do we change when we go from a private person (at home) to a public person?

1. Break into small groups of four.
 - a. List one word attributes of how you feel, and how you act at home

- b. List attributes how your behavior changes in public
- c. Compare
2. As a group, review lists and discuss why there are these differences
3. Discuss benefits and deficits of 2 situations/risks?
4. In groups, diagram what the home or public relationship looks like?

For Lower Grades

Procedures:

Activity One**: (Principals backup into grade, subjects, age groups)

- ✓ Story telling (Language, Maths, Arts, Dzongkha, History)
- ✓ Games (language, Maths, Dzongkha)
- ✓ Outside classroom activities (Dzongkha, English)
- ✓ Songs

**brainstorm on curriculum

Invite parents based on volunteerism (if possible)

Methods:

- ❖ Written Exams (minimize %)
- ❖ Extracurricular activities (include in assessment and increase weightage)
- ❖ Projects and Research
- ❖ Continuous assessment
- ❖ -Peer Assessment
- Self Assessment
- Assessment on participation (e.g.: quiz, debate, games and etc.)

Existing issues

(Issues that are constraint to successful implementation of desired alternative)

- Large class size
- Vast syllables
- Financial constraint
- Authentic learning
- Transparency on assessment
- Frequent change of teachers

CRITICAL THINKING: Analytical thinking and intellectual rights – Group 2

Existing situation

Critical Thinking is misunderstood. Define the phrase – Analytical Thinking

Deeply ingrained in Buddhism in the form of logical questioning thinking. Rationale of questioning and not accepting everything is present.

Analytical thinking in terms of analysis and synthesis is absent in our school textbooks and classroom teaching and learning.

Children and students do not understand that plagiarism is an academic crime.

There is a culture of reproduction as a result of Note learning, need to un-learn starting with bureaucrats who have undergone their education through note teaching.

Top down classroom teaching-learning complied with big class room size of 50–60 children does not foster analytical thinking.

Assessment modalities do not promote analytical thinking.

Culturally

Bhutanese society is a confident society. Asking questions is associated with anti-curiosity and suppresses analytical thinking, creative thinking. It does not foster free expressions of mind but instills fear.

Strategy – Suggestions for Principals

1. Exercise, comparative analysis between two newspapers – as the basis structure of arguments, remarks, looking at forum etc.)
2. Assurance of providing enabling environment to teach analytical thinking without fear.
3. Teaching children to differentiate between things
4. Institute the support-teaching school inspectors, bureaucrats and teachers are analytical thinking.
5. Make note of analytical thinking, teaching go side by side.
6. Media literacy, analytical thinking.
-broad mind & good analytical attitude.
7. Use textbooks with lots of analytical questions for children make children engage in dialogue among themselves of class and teachers not to carry text books.
8. Teach children that stealing is bad and link with plagiarism – use Buddhism
9. Use questioning mind based on Buddhism – monastic education shedra
10. Education to earn living

Critical Thinking

Ability to read text critically

Understand underlying context

Everything is ideological, identify the ideology

Follow, argument, be able to develop their own application to art and music

GNH as alternative way of thinking about ethics, etc.

Not just being wise

Not rote learning

Learn logic, start early on issue of arguments

Start as informal logic and language acts

Then move to formal logic – Maths and science skills

3. Non-formal and informal education

While the focus of both the December 7–12 workshop and of the upcoming principals workshops is on school education, the December workshop recognized explicitly that learning also (and often primarily) occurs outside schools—informally in families, peer groups, and communities, and through the media, internet, and other means, and also ‘non-formally’ in courses such as Bhutan’s highly successful literacy programs geared to mothers in rural areas. Thus, ‘non-formal’ education is defined as coursework that occurs outside credentialed or degree-awarding institutional frameworks, while ‘informal’ education is defined as learning that occurs outside coursework altogether.

The December workshop therefore emphasized the vital importance of extending the *Educating for GNH* initiative into the informal and formal education sectors, the Education Secretary gave an introductory presentation on this subject on Dec. 10 (see above), and a breakout group focused on this potential on Dec. 11. A summary of this group’s significant observations and recommendations is provided here.

The non-formal and informal education breakout group explicitly praised the Ministry of Education for doing laudable work providing literacy training for adults in centres throughout the country, having graduated 140,000 Bhutanese thus far. They noted that the award-winning program is committed to raising the current adult literacy level from 53% at present to 70% by 2013.

Notwithstanding these excellent successes, the group reported that there is still a large number of Bhutanese citizens without adequate formal education, who need alternative learning models to feel productive and to enhance their self-respect and self-esteem. The group remarked that the present cut-off point for the national 10th grade exam, coupled with insufficient slots for vocational training and/or insufficient family resources to send a child to private school, is leaving many young persons without hope or options, with often devastating social and cultural consequences.

The group reported that blue collar workers (such as carpenters, masons, painters, and plumbers) and those who choose to work with their hands somehow feel as 2nd class citizens because manual labour is insufficiently valued in Bhutan.

As well, members noted that the monastic curriculum, which already contains GNH values and principles, appears to be devalued and to be falling behind what is needed in the 21st century. It was noted that consideration could be given to incorporating this monastic curriculum into the general curriculum with due consideration to what might be missing that would be of benefit to current student monks.

Based on these observations and challenges, the group made the following series of recommendations.

Non-formal education breakout group recommendations

- a) Consideration should be given to moving the oversight of vocational training from the Ministry of Labour to the Ministry of Education to help create more diverse choices to provide more attractive alternatives and opportunities to students who complete the 10th grade but do not continue to grades 11 and 12.
- b) The status of blue-collar workers and artisans should be elevated through substantial increases in their stipends, and through a focused media campaign celebrating work of the hands and recognizing the country's remarkable wealth of traditional knowledge and skills. Such a paired initiative would serve to raise the self-esteem and dignity of blue-collar and manual labour and encourage those with such talents to take this path without regret.
- c) The curricular needs of monastic communities should be examined and reviewed, with a view to utilizing aspects of the monastic curriculum more effectively in secular education and conversely to evaluate what aspects of the monastic curriculum may need modification and updating for present times. Students might be engaged in active surveys of the monastic and secular communities in an effort to bridge the present and growing gap between the two sets of curricula.
- d) Alternatives to the present "certificates" should be examined and ways developed to recognize mastery other than through a diploma. Such alternative forms of recognition might serve to enhance respect for key aspects of indigenous knowledge and skills.
- e) A major recommendation of this breakout group is to establish a pilot Community College/ Barefoot College, endorsed and supported by the Ministry of Education, that would spread the Barefoot concept (especially Barefoot Women Solar Engineers) all over Bhutan. This initiative would use the present Bhutanese Barefoot College village solar engineers as teachers to teach an initial 100 more students to be solar engineers in the short term, and at the same time:
 - i) Teach the value, dignity, and utility of practical skills;

- ii) Be grounded in the community;
- iii) Celebrate indigenous knowledge and wisdom and the holders thereof;
- iv) Teach literacy, numeracy, and discernment through a pilot media literacy curriculum.
- v) Stress the critical importance of a vital and vibrant local economy.

The Community College/ Barefoot College recommendation was strongly endorsed by the group. Karma Yeshey offered a caveat: that this college should be sustainable, and Bunker Roy indicated that funding was already being considered for a 3-year pilot and that this initiative *would* be sustainable. As well, it was noted that all the principles embodied in the Community College/ Barefoot College model fully reflect GNH values and principles. Such an initiative would therefore represent an outstanding extension of the *Educating for GNH* project to non-formal education that would provide widespread societal benefit.

Breakout group members remarked that—over and over again, from all sides—they had heard concerns about the abandonment of villages for the bright lights of Thimphu, and out-migration from the countryside and small towns to the capital. Accordingly, they applauded the Ministry of Education for locating magnet non-formal education programs in the countryside, strongly endorsed a continuation of that focus and direction, and urged its expansion with initiatives such as those recommended above.

4. General recommendations

In addition to the subject-specific breakout group outcomes and recommendations listed above, one breakout group submitted seven specific recommendations for Ministry consideration:

1. Recognizing the wisdom inherent in the Buddhist teachings and their close relationship to GNH values and practices (like mindfulness), the group recommend greater collaboration between Bhutan's monastic and secular education systems.
2. The group proposes that vocational education, which currently operates under the aegis of the Department of Labour, be brought into the Department of Education to encourage integration with GNH educational principles and approaches.
3. The group proposed two workshops for principals and teachers on (a) integrating science learning with development of ecological consciousness, and (b) a critical assessment of modernity.
4. The group recommended that the school calendar be reconsidered, and that school facilities be solar heated so that children can stay in school during winter months, and go to their homes during the spring and autumn seed sowing and harvest seasons. This would provide opportunities to integrate the school curriculum with the country's

agricultural heritage by giving students home assignments in agriculture-related math, science, yield surveys, and statistics.

5. The group emphasized the importance of improving living and teaching environments and facilities in villages to inspire teachers to want to teach there, and suggested recruiting and training teachers to return to their native villages to work.
6. In order to support right livelihoods and the proliferation of “green” jobs in line with GNH principles, the group encouraged the diffusion of knowledge about local economies and training in food production, energy, and other skills essential to support local economies.
7. The group suggested that the educational system encourage respect for non-conventional knowledge systems based on local wisdom and indigenous knowledge, and recommended that “Honorary GNH Teachers” like respected village elders be acknowledged, recognized, and encouraged to teach in the education system.

Comments and discussion

The Facilitator then opened the discussion up to the floor for comments. Following a summary of the comments below, which was presented on slides, is a more detailed account.

Education for Gross National Happiness

Non-Formal & Informal Discussion

1. The solution is GNH. It's so simple. They will be full of peace and be successful.
2. Nature based experiences should be integral to all subjects. It's fundamental for children to make that connection, in order to grow up and take care of each other and the world.
3. Learning to think logically is essential to both non-formal and informal based schooling.
4. At a very young age, kids could witness upwards of 18,000 human beings being killed on television.
5. The whole enterprise of education is a community process. You really have to emphasize how you're going to revitalize indigenous knowledge within the context of the community. A traditional community crumbles in the face of the loss of knowledge.
6. A group of students started a theater group, and were able to communicate their problems through theater pieces.
7. Bhutan is changing very fast. We need to have an organization/institution that takes care of informal education.
8. Informal system needs to be revived and given mainstream visibility. We need to concentrate on the rural areas. I would like to propose a group to help operationalize this solution.

Education for Gross National Happiness

Non-Formal & Informal Discussion

1. We have so little media content directed at the young. The lack of community is evident in the apathy directed at the troubled youth. Propose that Thimpu become a pilot program as a GNH city that involves business and all aspect of society.
2. Propose a tie-in between formal an the informal system. Elder children helping younger children instills a care for society as a whole.
3. We need more of Lama Shenphen, to leave a positive legacy; roping in business partners to care for each other. Build small scale industries where youth are employed and are connected to their families and homes.
4. Real democracy is not when people can choose their rulers, real democracy is when people can choose their teachers. We have forgotten the value of traditional ceremonies. We need a Ministry of Informal Education.
5. Building a GNH city: Who is making these new buildings? Propose an end to construction of ugly buildings. Instead, have a sustainable method of building that utilizes local hands and materials.
6. A monk returning to his village and became a youth teacher, giving them recognition. It helped them to become successful students.

Education for Gross National Happiness

Non-Formal & Informal Discussion

1. We do have youth leaders. Our education system and education ministry is doing well. If our education system had failed me, I would not be among such learned people. It is just time for changes.
2. Working in Thailand, Laos and Bangladesh as a social worker through the Catholic system, I agree with everything that you are doing. I've never seen this before. You make policy changes in this room! I can't believe it, I'm so excited!

- One national participant noted that it is comforting that the directions of the new curriculum for English and mathematics are right, since all of the suggestions given in the analytical and critical thinking reports have been incorporated in these subjects. But all of the suggestions are contained in the teachers' guides, not in the

textbooks. So the suggestion is for the Ministry to look further at the teachers' guides with the textbooks to see how further improvement might be included in the school system. The intentions and practices are right, but some of the teachers may be using the guides and some may not, so the teachers may need more support.

In addition, all of the schools practice continuous assessment. Formative assessment is asked for, but what they see often is summative assessment and the accumulation of that is used to decide whether the student gets to the next class. They intend that the assessment is conducted for diagnostic purposes to see if the student is learning or not, so interventions can be put in place so that nobody fails at the end of the year. Yet, so many do fail at the end of the year. But he proposes that continuous assessment is used in a formative way throughout the year, and the success of that would be the number of students who do not fail.

Also, the intention of the curriculum is that the teachers take the students through the processes of developing project work so they gain skills and learn, and there is no question of plagiarism. Although the intention of the curriculum seems to be right, it is not always getting into the classrooms.

- Based on her experience at Shree Mangal Dvip School in Kathmandu, Shirley Blair offered the suggestion that — to help reduce class size and teacher shortage — students who are ahead can help those who are falling behind, and urban children can tutor rural children during holidays. Also, children can take a gap year after grade 10 to do community service and learn in that way. This is done in the Shree Mangal Dvip School in Kathmandu.
- A national participant wanted to emphasize that alternative assessments, not tests, should be conducted throughout the year. Also formal recording and submitted assessments on small children could be eliminated so that the children don't feel judged.
- Art-ong noted that everything we are suggesting here on assessment should point toward GNH, but so far 90% is about cleverness and about critical thinking about material things, but not so much on the heart. He would like to get people to focus more on GNH and loving oneself and the world.
- Judith Simmer-Brown commented that one of the themes that came out of the critical/ analytic thinking group was that it was important to recognize that it might be difficult to change the whole culture of the school system in this way, not knowing exactly where to start. One way to do this is to join an understanding of the analytic cultures of Buddhism together with those of the West so that analytic thinking doesn't look like a foreign import, but actually is part of an ancient Bhutanese tradition. For example, the three prajnas (or wisdoms) of hearing, contemplating, and meditating can be understood in terms of, yes, memorization or rote as a first step, but also contemplating deeply and understanding the logic and the way things work together, making things personal. So critical thinking is one of

the elements that mean that students can understand what they learn in school on a very personal level that applies to the details of their lives.

A lot of thought has to go into this. It can't be added just by doing a workshop and then expecting that it's done. It requires new materials, new pedagogies, and all kinds of things, and perhaps it could be started at the top levels with the bureaucrats and principals. One idea that was discussed was to begin with the unit on media literacy that is being created and using that to get critical thinking quickly into the classroom, and that could then be expanded.

Also there is a very deep and profound teaching in Buddhism of interdependence that is close to what we can speak of in analytic thinking, and it carries with it a sense of appreciation as the foundation. Critical thinking isn't criticising. It isn't tearing things down, so it doesn't go against GNH values. But there can't be real appreciation unless one can see the truth and the reality of how things work. That is impossible without analytic thinking—if one just takes things in passively, as the student says, one forgets. So it is only brought into one's experience through a process of analysis. [This is by no means 'critical thinking about material things' alone nor separate from the heart, but is a path to opening the heart].

- Bunker Roy suggested that someone who can write plays could write a simple script about the values and principles of GNH. The play might have a sense of humour—maybe people being critical of themselves—and be performed by a group of students who have left school. The group could go into rural villages all over the country where there is no TV or printed word. That would have a tremendous impact on parents in understanding and internalizing GNH. The principals could work on this at the January workshop.

Gandhi is almost never talked about in India, but Bollywood produced a film that had crooks who wanted to get close to a girl, and the girl wanted someone who knew about Gandhi, so the crooks had to read about him. And the amount of printed material that came out about Gandhi after that was more than had been printed in many years. So that was a powerful way to teach about Gandhi. So converting GNH into a simple script and getting people to go to the communities would be a good way of spreading the knowledge about GNH.

Madam Secretary: I think anything is possible and I will note your recommendation. All of the recommendations are being noted, and when the workshop is over we will review and categorize all of the recommendations and see what is feasible and not feasible.

- One Bhutanese participant remarked that there seems to be a gap between the critical thinking embedded in the curriculum and the examinations, which show a low understanding of critical thinking. So the suggestion is for the principals to conduct a study about why this is so, and what is going wrong. There are a lot of assumptions about teachers not doing their jobs, but maybe this isn't true.

- Pek suggested that we need to encourage media to include GNH values in their reporting and in their production of content. Just as we are trying to reach parents, students, and the community, the media is also important to reach because it creates a lot of the reality for us today. The Bhutanese media has been responsive to changing times, such as being critical of politicians, but it needs critical thinking as well to question the dominant paradigms, the market, and what's happening in the world.

Also, the gap between knowledge and behaviour might be tied to service learning. It reminds her of how Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche recently said that children need to learn the consequences of their actions. We need to know why it's important to do something such as turning off the lights—why we need to do certain actions is not because the teacher is standing over us. Maybe service learning should be put in terms of citizenship—that it is our responsibility to take positive actions, and that in assessments, more weight should be given to students to provide service. This is mainly a problem in urban areas, because service is stronger in rural areas. We have no community in the urban towns, and there is a need to groom civil society in an urban context.

- The Board of Examinations representative noted that her colleague had mentioned that there must be something wrong because there are gaps between the curriculum and the exams. Critical thinking is being put into the curriculum in a few subjects, like English language and mathematics. But the most important thing is that learning critical thinking should start in the classroom. When teachers use various levels of questioning involving various levels of thinking, then students get used to thinking in that way. In the Board Exams we encourage this by using questions from various levels and taxonomy of thinking. But if students are not used to answering questions on various levels, when they write the exam it is too late. So the point is that critical thinking is encouraged everywhere, but more emphasis should be given in the classroom. We need to flesh out the details of how teachers could do that. So we need to strengthen the process.
- Jack Miller noted, “You brought up Gandhi, and Gandhi listened to what he called ‘the still, small voice within’. And I think it’s so important that critical thinking be linked to the still, small voice, or the heart, or what the ancients called ‘the thinking heart’. If the critical thinking is not linked to the thinking heart, it’s going to cause more suffering. Thank you.
- Henry Rosemont commented, “As Dr. Miller just noted, logic can have heart too. The only way to teach analytic thinking is to have teachers trained in analytic thinking, whether you call it analytic thinking, critical thinking, or whatever. The teacher has to be trained in logic. I’ve sketched out two courses in logic for every teacher education program—one in informal logic that links very closely to the language arts and to linguistics, and one that develops more formally into symbolic notation. It still continues to use a natural language base within the symbolic

notation, and that can go very quickly into the teaching of mathematics and science. And for use of examples, the textbooks for these can be very small.

“What you want to do with the teachers is to show how they can link work in logic with work in science and mathematics and into linguistics, as well as doing logic. You can use logic in the media that other people have been talking about to point out the different kind of fallacies, the misleading statements, the outright lies, and the different patterns of fallacies that are used in the media and in different kinds of texts.

“To learn to think analytically, you have to learn to look at the *form* as well as the content. A certain number of fallacies have to do with words, and a number of other fallacies have to do with the form of the argument. And people have to be trained to do that. You can’t just say lets take apart this paragraph in this particular newspaper, and then do another one tomorrow, because this stays anecdotal. Is the same fallacy in this advertisement the same as in that one or is it a different one? How are the different? So you can be doing logic with heart to teach language, linguistics, mathematics, science, and also to tell the students the very best antidote to being seduced by the misleading, dishonest things they will see on television and other elements of the media. So it’s my strongest recommendation for here is requiring two courses in logic of every teacher in Bhutan.”

- The next participant wanted to “put in a plug” for student questions. There is a simple technique that’s used from preschool through graduate school called KWL [What do you think you **know** about the subject; what do you **want** to know; what did you **learn** about the subject?]. This is to begin each unit of study asking the students, “What do you already know about this subject?” and “What questions do you have about this subject?” If it’s done at an authentic level, then students are actually answering their own questions and their interests are tied in. At the end of the unit of study—it could be a day or a week or a month, however long—the teacher asks, “What did you learn?” and “What did you think you knew that was true and false?” and “What questions do you still have that you can pursue further?” It’s simple technique, but many teachers use it and it ties into the heart of the student’s own interests.
- A national participant commented that there are problems with youth particularly in the urban centres, and what he thought was missing was the informal part of education, which is so powerful. This would involve what happens in the streets, what happens in the community, whether there are libraries and other resources, Internet cafes, bars, what-have-you. And the Prime Minister is addressing this. Even if it is not the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to look after the informal part of it in the urban centres, if one of the Ministries or agencies took responsibility for this, then they would probably develop these communities. That would help the students to live in a more educative, positive environment, and then you could put resources into and address certain elements. For example, the public library mostly remains small and nobody is really looking after it, but it is so

important and a lot of children go there. In the recommendations, if this was noted, and if it was taken care of, many of the problems could be addressed.

The Facilitator commented that after tea break an hour would be devoted to non-formal and informal education because it seems to be very important to people and to the Ministry.

Session 3 – Non-formal and informal education comments continued

Afternoon, after tea break

Facilitator: Just so we are all in agreement, the definition of non-formal education is learning within an institution outside of formal education, and informal education is learning outside of a formal structure and has no certification, such as learning through youth programs, youth centres, apprenticeship, and everyday learning.

The facilitator asked that the discussion begin with Lama Shenphen, who has been working with youth who, if not for him, would be hanging out in bars or would be addicts. After Lama Shenphen's presentation, the remainder of the session was devoted to comments from the participants. The comments and suggestions for non-formal and informal learning were extensive and varied and included issues such as emphasizing the study and experience of nature, teaching logic and critical thinking in villages, especially in language classes, reducing television viewing and creating more Bhutanese television content for children, respecting and supporting indigenous knowledge, supporting training and programs for youth who leave school after Grade 10, having youth teach literacy in their villages and care for younger children, creating more community structures in the urban areas, and valuing the informal education system that can serve as an "immune system" defending against destructive, modernist values.

Lama Shenphen Zangpo: I was sent to Bhutan about two years ago, primarily to work with youth. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche doesn't give much instruction—he just drops you in the deep end—so I didn't really know what to do. It was a matter of feeling the pulse, as they say in traditional medicine, seeing what the kids needed and how we could facilitate that. We started a centre called Deer Park, which comes under Rinpoche's mandala of activities. It's called a Centre for Art and Contemplation, so we are avoiding Buddhist terms, because it's not really a Buddhist centre. It's about helping youth find their way in life, finding their confidence. So we can do that through art and contemplation, which is the cup that holds the essence. Without the outer form you can't digest the inner form.

So far we've just got a few programs going that try to use the dharma—Guru Rinpoche said the dharma should be like gold, it should form itself to the needs of the people at the time. Rather than forcing something, if a person needs a spoon, the gold becomes a spoon. If a person needs chopsticks, the gold becomes chopsticks. We don't have any

formal idea about which directions to go. We are just seeing what the youth need and filling that gap.

One of the gaps that seemed to be most urgent was the one dealing with addicts. There are a lot of youth, as we discussed earlier, that do migrate to Thimphu looking for work, but they cannot find work often. One of the reasons I agreed to come to this is that I wanted to press the point that there are a lot of youth falling through the system. If they don't get class 10 standard education, then they don't see a way forward. They feel stuck. They do have vocational training in Bhutan and I hear it's excellent, but it's limited. Although it's available for class 10 standard, in reality I understand that mostly only those with class 12 standard get into it. So the youth at ages 16 or 17 feel very lost.

Getting them off drugs is a little difficult, but it's not impossible. There are not hardened drug addicts in Thimphu and they are not aggressive. Getting them out into detox, getting them into rehab, we can manage that because Bhutan has a wonderful rehab run by YDF, which is based on compassionate values, Buddhist values, and it is a wonderful place. But when they come back to Thimphu they say, "Lama, what am I going to do?" And I can't really say what they can do, because there isn't much opening for them to do anything. So then 6 months later, I look out the window and I see the same guy lying in the clock tower or the street—he's relapsed. Or they call me—last night I got a call telling me that one of our guys has relapsed. I know why he has relapsed—because he couldn't get a job, he couldn't get training to get a job, so he can't get on the road to recovery. And I feel that that is something very urgent.

At the moment, it's not noticeable in Thimphu because the drugs are not hard drugs. They are not taking opium or anything of that nature. They take prescription drugs or marijuana so it's not causing a crime wave. But the amount of kids that are stuck in that situation is quite high. And if it isn't addressed, opium and hard drugs are available a few hours up the Himalayas and it's only a matter of time. If they start getting them, the price will be very high and they'll start stealing, robbing, and then things will go out of control. So I would like this to be something for the Royal Government to consider before it does get out of control. I saw in Europe 30 years ago there were similar problems at this level and they didn't address it. And now it is a little out of control and I wonder if they can get it back.

From my side, what I try to do is work with the youth to see what triggers them. That side I can't deal with—I can't give them work. But I can see where the depressions are, where the loneliness is, and try to give them options, if they are stuck and can't find a way forward, to look at the loneliness. Buddhism is one of the best mediums for looking at the mind—it is about mind. Even if you don't have a job and are on the streets, if you really are good at practicing meditation and can look at the mind, you won't get drawn to addiction. You won't see loneliness as necessarily bad—you may be able to look at it and learn from it.

My part of it is to basically meet the youth in the city who have trouble and first discuss with them what their problems are and try to guide them in a way to help them

understand that taking drugs is not a way forward whatever their problems are. Intrinsically everyone knows that drugs are not going to be a solution. So when they understand that, we take them by the hand, basically, to the hospital to meet the doctors, take them to detox, visit them in the hospital, and take them physically to rehab. And then we discuss their problems to ensure that the triggers that started the last time, don't trigger again.

So that's what we try to do because I think that Buddhism is probably the best-placed of all solutions to deal with drug addiction or triggers of drug addition. And I think it's also the best for government policy, because if a country is having problems with drugs—and all countries are having trouble with drugs and Bhutan probably less than most countries—then something is going wrong in society.

From a Buddhist point of view, we understand that nothing comes from nowhere. If you have a piece of paper, it comes from a tree, which develops through sunlight, water. So anything that develops comes through many reasons or causes, not just one. If a country is having problems with addiction or alcoholism, then we can assess that it is not just coming from one cause. In this instance of drugs, there is a triangle—there is the drug itself, the user, and environment. In the West they focus mostly on the drug by banning it and the user by punishment or putting one into jail. As a Buddhist society, we can also understand that environment is an important part of the equation. We can prove that, as we've talked about in critical thinking, and from Buddhism we can look at that too.

The youth today, the babies, if you like, are not born with greater propensities to be drug addicts than they were 30 years ago. It's not that their genes have changed and they are more attracted. They are exactly the same as 30 years ago. What has changed is the environment. It's like a farmer who is planting seeds, and if the seeds are the same seeds that have been passed down through generations but are failing, you can't blame the seeds. You have to look at the soil. And as a Buddhist country and society we have to look at that.

From my experience in Thimphu, the environment is very nurturing, the families are very close, and people look after themselves. But there is this gap. If youth can't make it through class 10, they often give up. I've actually had youth crying to me saying, "I can't go forward. What can I do? I come from a little village, I come to Thimphu, I'm a drug addict. How can I go forward? I don't have any means to go forward in my life"—and at 16 or 17. I think we can try a little bit to address that problem, so we can nurture the youth and give them the means to push themselves on and get their lives back.

Facilitator: Thank you, Lama Shenphen. Thank you for what you do. We are now open to the floor for ideas on either the non-formal or informal that could work for Bhutan.

- Art-ong remarked, "Let me say that the solution is GNH. It's so simple. If you really have GNH running through the school system, you wouldn't have drug addicts or failures, because the children will be full of peace, have concentration, can study better, and will be successful in whatever they do. You won't have

dropouts. So I still say GNH is the solution. In our school, we don't have any drug addicts, and we use GNH all the time.”

- Cheryl Charles commented, “One part of the goal of GNH is to have children care for nature, for the natural world. I haven't heard a lot of how to do that. I recommend that nature-based experiences be included in all classes and to take the classroom to nature. Children need that bonding in their formative years in order for them to grow up and be the kind of caring adults who will care for each other and the earth itself. This affects children who are falling away and losing their way. To get that grounding, literally, will help him or her throughout life.

“One of the reasons the Prime Minister has invited us here is because of the rapid rate of change in the world. Some of that is driven by the impact of new technologies. There have been enormous changes in the last 30 years, and these have escalated in an extraordinary way in the last 10 years. You see kids all over attached to electronics. These are worldwide changes. A study that came out last year looked at mothers in 16 nations. When asked how the children spent most of their time when they weren't in school, they said they were watching television. Only a small percentage spent time outside relating to the outside world.

“This leads to the goal of caring for nature. If you don't connect with it, it is difficult for it to be a part of one's life. So one recommendation is to integrate nature into all subjects and skill areas. The learning environment needs gardens in every school—I understand that this is the case in rural settings but not necessarily in all urban settings. It's going to get more and more important as kids are disconnected and the trend continues. So we need to watch what is happening, and we can't take it for granted that children are going to go home after school and play outdoors and get that kind of free play that fosters their imagination, nurtures their creativity, assists them in working together collaboratively. So children need hands on, meaningful experiences outside, and experiential education needs to be grounded in the real, living world itself.

“The American Academy of Pediatrics in the US recommends no television from birth to age 2 because it doesn't allow for the fostering of creativity and cognitive development that we need, and also we need to limit television access as children grow up. It is exciting to see new technologies coming to the villages of Bhutan, but educate the mothers in after school programs or evening classes so the child won't turn to television. Technology is good, but we need to keep grounded in natural world.”

- Henry Rosemont commented, “I'll follow up a little bit on Cheryl's excellent remarks. After the nature class, I want to push again that a logic class is as applicable to the non-formal and informal as to the formal. Learning to think logically is a prerequisite for acquiring skills at a later age in order to be able to return to school, to go from an informal back to formal or however to advance their education.

“Using logical principles is the quickest way to overcome illiteracy. Because logic is rule-governed—and you move from natural language, which is rule-governed, to the rule-governed nature of logic—you have a built-in science, and not just with algebra and geography. In the village areas and in the informal and non-formal you can start teaching what a scientific method is like by having youth or the older people as they are becoming literate also constructing a grammar of 19 languages that are spoken in various parts of Bhutan. They are all native speakers of their language and there are ways of saying, ‘Can you say this in your language? Can you say that?’ No, yes. ‘Why can you say it in one and not the other? Are these paraphrases of each other, and if so, what is the rule that allows you to transpose one to the other?’ By the basis of logic, this is a way of bringing language and thought processes right out in front of people. You can do it in kindergarten, with grandmothers building solar panels, and with everyone in between. End of sermon. Thank you.”

- Shirley Blair said that when she was teaching in the West in 1975, she noticed an increasing violence in the students. She looked into this and discovered research that found that from birth to high school graduation in 1975, children saw 18,000 murders of human beings on television, and this didn’t count murders of other beings. This sets a template in children’s minds and it is extremely harmful. There is so much that is unwholesome on television in Bhutan, and she urged the Bhutanese government to counteract this in some way, maybe through village dramas.
- Gregory Cajete added that much of informal education occurs in the context of community. There is a saying that community is both the message and the medium. What that means is that the whole enterprise of education is a community process. Modern society has created an institution that is called school, which, by its nature, has a history and a baggage, particularly from the western forms of education. The whole idea of community as being the primary source of values and relationships, and understanding the nature of what it means to be a human being in a human family, arises primarily through processes of community. And that is also where indigenous knowledge arises—through the context of community in a variety of different kinds, in informal ways.

When television or aspects of western society that are connected to a market-driven philosophy or psychology come into play, the fabric of the community that holds the community together and makes it strong is caused to unravel. He commented that it is important to emphasize also how you are going to begin to revitalize and help people to maintain the indigenous knowledge traditions from where they come. “It takes a village to raise a child” is the African saying, but it could be said for any indigenous group. So informal education begins within that context.

In the US, he has seen that when indigenous people begin to internalize television and the values that are propagated through it, gradually there is an interest in

moving out of the community into the cities where things are more glitzy and entertaining. They begin to become conditioned to being entertained, rather than wanting to understand something about themselves, their inner sense of self. There is actually a whole process that happens to people as they begin to move away from community and move towards mass society. He thought that this is starting to happen in Bhutan as students move away from community. When this begins to happen in a traditional society, they also move away from the opportunity to learn the stories of the community, the art forms of the community, the values that are communicated within that community. So there is a gap that begins to unfold. If you have many youth moving away from the community, eventually, the community begins to die.

This phenomenon is repeating all over the world, consistently. So he asked the Bhutanese to think about that process because it is happening all over the world when traditional societies meet the western mass society of television, and it will happen in Bhutan even more frequently. Ways to address this include supporting the cultural practices within the communities, supporting the grandmothers and their knowledge, and supporting the forms of traditional knowledge within the communities. So he asked that this be considered, as informal education is considered part of the Gross National Happiness movement. How you would be able to help communities maintain themselves as wholesome communities?

- Luigina De Biasi said that the Alice Project schools have evening class for 3 hours a night for 1,200 children who have to work in the fields during the day. They learn how to read, write, and calculate, but they also have the opportunity to practice meditation and yoga. Some of them started a theatre group and they go to villages to explain different problems about television and other things. The children, especially women and girls, also learn practical things such as the repair and use of machinery so that they can help the economic aspects of their families. So she wanted to emphasise that meditation can be joined with that.
- Vice Chancellor Dasho Pema Thinley commented that, as Lama Shenphen pointed out, there are drug and alcohol problems in Bhutan, and that Bhutan is changing so fast that they have not yet been able to put a cushion in place for youth. Informal education and creating community in urban centres are very important. They need to create institutions or organized agencies, such as Lama Shenphen has created, and at present, there are no institutions responsible for informal education and building communities. Most of the good trades are coming from the informal sector, but the sector needs support and investment or there will be problems. Informal, non-formal, and formal education are all connected. As Lama Shenphen was saying, students in school always look out and wonder what to do after. There is not enough cushion between school and work. There is not enough training in areas where they are more capable. He said that this is an area where they are failing, and if they do not take care of it, they will have lots of problems.

- Shirley Blair commented that the students who have Grade 10 education are literate and numerate, and one suggestion for useful work so that they could regain their sense of worth is that they could go back to the village to teach literacy and numeracy to the grandmothers, who in turn could teach them wisdom. It would knit them back into society, and knit the generations. Not much training is needed—they do it in their school in Nepal. It takes two to three weeks of training, and she knows a master trainer in Scotland who would be happy to come to help with this.
- Bunker Roy commented that it is clear, from all the comments in the past few days, that the informal system needs to be brought back into the mainstream and given more visibility. Also the people who come out of that system should not be made to feel inferior, or that they couldn't contribute to Bhutanese society and don't have a skill to offer. He proposed that a working group under the Ministry of Education look into how to expand the informal learning processes all over Bhutan. It should concentrate much more on rural areas to make sure, first, that migration doesn't take place into Thimphu, and a major problem is how to control and contain that. If you can provide professional, suitable, informal skills in rural areas, there is no reason why anyone should go to Thimphu. So, he asked if such a working group could be formed. Some of the people in this workshop could give more ideas on how to operationalise something like this on a much larger scale, so that the youth who have not gone further than the 10th class can feel that they are part of a solution and not part of a problem.
- Aum Pek Dorji commented that until recently children learned values from parents, grandparents, and teachers. But this has changed and children are learning global values from television. TV has taken over and the habit of reading has dropped. Also there is so little content on television that is Bhutanese, especially for the young, although the BBS is trying to address this. The Ministry of Education has a media unit and can do a lot to contribute to the creation of good content for young people.

She said that in Thimphu there is a real lack of a sense of belonging and lack of community. When they see problems they don't know what to do. She proposed to make Thimphu, as a pilot project, into a GNH city. This would include going beyond formal education to look at non-formal and informal sectors, and rope-in everyone, including people in business, banking, and the environment. She also hoped that the government would begin to implement GNH exercises—beyond education—across the board, and try to reach out to the community and civil society they are trying to build as well.

- A national participant remarked that it is a question of reaching out to the youth who have fallen out of the mainstream, as Lama Shenphen mentioned. The Ministry of Education has a department devoted to youth, and that they could do some soul-searching and see how they could reach out further. So some of the solutions might lie in that department.

- Art-ong suggested that in the formal system, GNH can help to instil love and compassion in the older children so that they care for the younger ones and take care of them. If this is instilled in the hearts of the older children, then, when they are older, they will also feel for those younger ones who have fallen out of the mainstream, and they will want to go out and serve and help. When children help children, it works far better than elders telling them what to do. This works very well in his school where the older ones work very hard, going out and helping others. And, again, GNH is the solution.
- A national participant said that she worked with the formal counselling support system in the schools with youth who have behaviour problems and use drugs, and that it doesn't work as well as the support system offered by Lama Shenphen. She thought that the youth identified with him because he also has no (formal) job, and no permanent home, and he can empathise with them. But Bhutan needs more Lama Shenphens because he gets overstretched, tired, and burned-out. So she suggested that Bhutan needs more alternative support centres, and unlearning centres such as those in Rajasthan, and that it needs to get business people involved since they all need to support each other. It is also possible to build small-scale industries where youth are employed, and where they can be connected to their own communities, families, and support systems, and in turn support the local economy.
- Manish Jain commented that a wonderful Gandhian educationist who passed away last year said that real democracy will happen when people can choose their teachers. This is important and informal education gives us the space to choose our teachers. When he thinks of informal, he thinks of the kind of learning that happened with himself and his family as they cared for his bed-ridden grandmother for two years. He thinks of spontaneous conversations that he has had with people on Indian trains during long trips, and the time and informal interactions people have with their spiritual leaders, and what he learns from playing with his daughter, and walking in the forests and learning from the trees, and the birds, and rivers. So he feels that there is a space of learning that we have forgotten to value properly.

Formal schooling does not give any value to these things. People often say that children can't participate in the life of the community or the family—such as going to weddings and funerals where they learn to open their hearts with compassion—because they have no time—they have exams. There is no Ministry of Informal Education yet anywhere in the world and this is the most important part, he thinks, of GNH. All of these spaces—our nature, apprenticeship, joint families—these are, as David says, our immune system, which is being devastated. If we would like to challenge the consumerist, western, industrial, military, destructive culture, we can't just have a one-hour session. He thought that this conversation is so important that he didn't want it to become just a side note. He also said that what Lama Shenphen is talking about is very important, but he is talking about the immune system, which is something different. And if we can give it proper time, he would appreciate it.

- Madhu Suri Prakash asked what it would take to preserve the beautiful buildings and building tradition in Thimphu, which might include making a law that no building in Thimphu should be an ugly, industrial building, that buildings should not be taller than two stories, that they should be built by local artisans and not Indian engineers, etc. This could help make Thimphu a GNH city with lovely, original, sustainable buildings, and would create lots of GNH jobs.
- A national monk proposed a project that would not require much funding. When he was a student in the 1980s, one of his teachers suggested that students should go back to their villages and develop their own communities in whatever way they could. During the vacation, he went back and the first day he called all of the children and youth together—about 22 of them—and began to teach them. During the morning session he taught them Dzongkha, and after breakfast he taught them English, math, and different subjects. After lunch he taught them how to play, dance, do archery, make arrows, and in the evening they ended with prayer. When he went back the next year he heard that all of those students did so well in school—and later many of them became teachers and other professionals. And he continued that for many years. After he became a monk, he went back to his village after many years, and found that there were very few successful students—almost none were finishing secondary school. He suggested that Bhutan could take this example and form youth teachers, and give them recognition from the government. They would appreciate doing this and it doesn't need a budget at all.

Facilitator: I apologize for going overtime a little bit, but it's such a heart-felt subject. So I'm asking for an extra 15 minutes so that we can have a couple more comments. I also have an unusual request from an observer who is a social worker who would like to speak on this subject. I'm going to take Dorji first.

- Dorji Tshering (student) commented that they do need youth leaders, but Bhutan does have youth leaders and she has been one of them and received honourable mention at the youth festival. They did presentations to the youth from all over the country, came up with many issues, and discussed it very well. So she wanted people to know that they do have youth leaders, and they get recognition and certificates (*amidst laughter*: "Sorry, Mr. Bunker Roy, but then it helps us when we look for jobs in the future").

And she wanted to add that the education system is actually doing very well. Her sister, who is in grade 6, had asked her if the education system had failed and if that was why they were talking about the curriculum. She later told her sister that she herself had been a good student and had done well, and that if the education system had failed she would not be there among such learned ones giving her own opinions. She has only studied in Bhutan, and has never gone abroad to study, and she is doing so well ("I'm not boasting"). Dorji thanked the Education Ministry because she was happy that she could be part of the workshop. She didn't want people to have the misconception that they didn't have youth leaders and that the

Education Ministry wasn't doing well, when actually it is. But there is always room for change.

Facilitator: We are making one exception [for an observer to address the floor], because the subject is so important.

- Xuyen Dangers (observer) is a professional social worker with Church World Service in Laos, who has worked in Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, and Bangladesh for many years. She came to the workshop with the Mekong GNH network, which has been working together for about five years. She works with a rehab centre in Laos that treats heavy drug users—in 1999 there was only glue sniffing in Laos, but now amphetamine and drugs are prolific. They have brought artists, yoga, and meditation to the rehab centre, and many of the drug addicts have been transformed and are now productive.

Xuyen had been inspired by reading the speeches of the Bhutanese King and Prime Minister, and at first felt sad when she came to Bhutan and saw youth drinking on the streets and other problems and wondered why this was happening. But she realizes now that Bhutan is just beginning to apply the theory of GNH to its practice. She spoke passionately about her amazement that the Prime Minister and other leaders were so wise and accessible. She has never seen that in any country. In conclusion, she said that she remains so inspired by GNH and would like to offer her services to work with the youth in Bhutan.

Facilitator: The audience is now waiting to hear from the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education.

Remarks: Honourable Minister of Education Lyonpo Thakur Singh Powdyel

This is the command of the Prime Minister, so I start first. I have been a teacher a quarter of a century and I am still one, and today the size of my classroom has increased. In so many ways I feel that whatever is being expressed today and where ever we have been heading over the past four days, somehow, directly concerns my own life so far, my belief about education, and my philosophy and convictions about education. And in many ways they have either been challenged or confirmed in this gathering. I have a rather naïve feeling that education is an answer to the problems of the world and society. Maybe this is a bit too much to take on, but again, if education does not do what it needs to do, who and what will? I think that is the biggest challenge confronting us today. I am of the firm belief that if there is any service that is dedicated to making other people succeed, it is education.

When we hear of “fallen youth”, which was the expression used, it is frightening. I have often thought that maybe an expression to use to talk about some of our youth is that they are members of what used to be called in the United States “the lost generation”. But again, I was too frightened to use this term. It goes to one extreme and I don't think we

have gone to that extreme yet. However, even if one youth fails, that is one failure too many. Even if one young boy or girl does not succeed, that is one failure too many. So, I feel that as the educationalists that all of us are—including our Honourable Prime Minister who has been one of the finest teachers we have had for everybody in the country—education cannot accept the fact that things are not possible. Education is built on the premise that things are possible. That ignorance can be replaced by knowledge, that darkness can be dispelled by light. That is the principle on which education works. But, as we've seen, this principle often seems to be so powerfully challenged. Somewhere along the line, rains have started beating us. And I think we need to all work together.

There have been some wonderful suggestions as to what is possible and desirable. I'm so happy that I have vindicated my response to Dr. Bunker Roy's question the other day when I said that we'll get some responses to his third question, particularly, about how we are going to keep the young people back in the villages and, sure enough, we have the answer today. And I think it's all very positive, as Dorji was saying. Even though there are problems, even though things are not perfect, I feel there is a lot of possibility.

There was a stirring article released in the media this morning. In response to a question, "What happens if a GNH curriculum fails?" I said, "A GNH curriculum cannot afford to fail, because education cannot afford to fail, because if education fails nothing will succeed. However, we feel that if education succeeds, nothing will fail." That's why we are so empowered and inspired by the wonderful contributions that everybody has made. These are big challenges, but, I think, wonderful opportunities to put our minds and hearts together. And even if we are not able to achieve everything that is recommended, I think we will have made progress in the right direction. We will have to keep watering the plant that we are sowing, and I'm very sure that next time round, when we meet again on the ground floor of the Phuntsho Pelri Hotel, I am sure that there will be far better stories to share.

And once again, I'd like to say what a great delight it has been to listen to all of the powerful observations, resulting from your own revelations and discoveries. This has been a wonderful learning experience for me, and I'm sure that it has been so for all of my colleagues in the Ministry of Education. I cannot thank you enough for the wealth of information and insights that we have been receiving. I think it's wonderful to be a part of this great mission. Even if nothing happens, I think we will have been a part of this great mission together. And it is a mission every bit worth advancing. Thank you so much again.

Remarks: Honourable Prime Minister Lyonchhen Jigmi Yoser Thinley

Thank you, Ivy. You have just handed the microphone again to a politician—we love microphones and we hang onto them. Two letters have just been brought in here to be signed by me, and I have just signed them. I thought I should share some of the content with you. I won't read the entire letter. The first letter is addressed to the Prime Minister

of Denmark, who is playing the host to the Copenhagen Conference, COP 15, and the other one is addressed to the President of COP 15. These are two letters forwarding a declaration that I have just signed today on behalf of the people of Bhutan, and I thought it might be of interest. I'll read the more important part.

The Royal Government of Bhutan, on behalf of all its citizens, makes this commitment to our children and their children with the conviction that climate change is a reality, and that actions need to be taken now, rather than later, to address its disastrous consequences. We believe that addressing the challenges posed by climate change requires the commitment of all countries, regardless of size, geography, economic, or military strength, and that it is the moral responsibility of the leaders of the present generation to save the planet for future generations. In spite of our status as a small, mountainous, developing country, with so many other pressing social and economic development needs and priorities, we feel that there is no need greater or more important than keeping the planet safe for life to continue. Therefore, we commit ourselves to keep absorbing more carbon than we emit, *(this is a pledge we are making)* and to maintain our country's status as a net sink for greenhouse gases. Our most recent estimate of the annual greenhouse gas emissions is around 1.5 million tons per year, against a sequestration capacity of 6.3 million tons.

That's about one-third. So we are sequestering so much—4.7 million tons of greenhouse gases emitted by people outside Bhutan.

This makes us, perhaps, one of the few countries in the world to have a negative carbon emission. While making this sincere commitment, we call on the global community *(and this is the catch)* to come forward with a mechanism to reward our resolve to fulfill this commitment and support us to undertake appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures to adapt to climate change.

Thank you. This is a very big commitment that we have made, and hopefully this will inspire other recalcitrant and less willing countries to also come forward.

But coming to the subject of non-formal and informal education, again, it has been very educational for me. I have learned a lot. I have heard a lot. Very interesting views and opinions have been expressed. Non-formal education, all seem to agree—nobody disputed—is important. And as to how and what kind of role it should play, it is very interesting again. Some thought that non-formal education is a means to create and revitalize community and, hence, it would have a very strong role in the cities, where, in fact, there is so little of community, and, hence, the irony of living a lonely life amidst crowds.

I remember not so long ago when I used to talk about the threats of globalization and consumerism, and sighted the example of how I lived in a huge apartment building in the United States where people did not know their neighbours who were living in the same building and entering through the same gate, going up and down in the same elevators.

They did not even know people living on the same floor. I thought that such a situation would never come to pass in a country such as ours. And today, here in Thimphu we do not have those big apartment buildings—not nearly as big as the apartment buildings that you see in many countries—but even in our small apartment buildings we have families who do not speak to each other, much less support each other when needs arise. This is the situation. People living in urban areas, in Thimphu, do not consider Thimphu their home and their community. That is a reality. Many of us who live here, and will probably die here, feel that our home is somewhere else—the place where we were born, where there was community life, where there were relationships. But I think we could make Thimphu our home as well.

And how do we go about doing this? You seem to suggest that non-formal education is a way, non-formal interaction. Supportive systems could be built through non-formal education. It would be interesting as to how we can do this and you have come up with suggestions. You have talked about how non-formal education can be imported by various people—you have talked about leaders. You have talked about “unemployed Lamas” who can be very engaging and useful non-formal teachers, especially to those people who suffer from the disease of substance abuse. And you have talked about non-formal education to help prepare children who have dropped out early without any skills that are employable. Yes, I agree with that.

We’ve talked about the role of student leaders, and I was very happy to hear Dorji talk again about the fact that we do have student leaders. As to how much of their efforts have been spent on building communities and in helping those who need help outside the education system is a different matter. And I think we can talk about this. In fact, I wonder whether non-formal education should be considered as being separate from the formal education system. I think non-formal education and informal education can exist side by side with formal education. Formal education can be enriched so much more by incorporating non-formal and informal education. It can happen. It must happen. And some of the efforts can facilitate greater learning and the promotion of GNH values for students within the formal education system, and some of the efforts to educate and to impart GNH values can support those outside by those who are inside.

Informal education teachers in the form of grandmas and parents are important, and we have to recognize that. I have no doubt that in the last three days you have discussed the role of parents. In fact, I heard one of the students speak about the role of parents as teachers—was it Rohit on TV last night? Parents have absolved themselves of the responsibility of educating—providing holistic education, value education, transferring values—and leave much of it to the teachers. And it is sad that this, to an extent, is compelled by economic interests, by the demand and desire to earn more. So we have both the parents in the urban areas going out to work. We have the problem of latchkey children in Bhutan as well—giving the responsibility of parenting to people you don’t know, whom you really cannot trust.

Not too long ago I was in Kuwait as the Foreign Minister, and I was speaking with the Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister just before meeting with the Prime Minister who was

then also the Foreign Minister. And during the conversation what came up was values. I was talking about GNH. And he said that in Kuwait it is a very sad situation: “We pride ourselves as being a people who are very conscious and mindful of conserving and preserving our culture. We wear these robes. But wearing these robes, I don’t really know what is really growing, especially with respect to our youth. The children who will wear the same robes will think very unlike the Kuwaitis they ought to be, because the Kuwaiti parents don’t have time to rear their children. The children are brought up by the Sri Lankans, by the Filipinos, and by many people coming from different value and cultural systems.” So we have the same problem here in Bhutan. How do we overcome that? How do we raise this consciousness? And, of course, as somebody said, GNH *is* the answer—GNH in terms of a value system that creates in us this consciousness and awareness that we can be content with lesser things.

At the conference in Brazil, I had the pleasure of meeting a lady who has written a book on voluntary simplicity—living a simple life voluntarily, not because of the economic crisis, inflation, or costs—simply choosing to live simply. And if you choose to live simply, you can be happier. If you choose to live simply, you will not envy what others have. And if you don’t envy what others have, then you will not be driven to engage yourself in all kinds of exertions and labour that really gives you nothing in the end. And there was this person who talked about how we labour so much—from morning to night. We suffer all kinds of psychological depressions and stress to earn more, and then, nearing retirement and after retirement, we spend all of the money that we have saved to recover from the stress and depressions and the costs and toll that has taken on our body. That is how it is.

When we talk about GNH, we talk about how to create this consciousness in our children through formal as well through non-formal education. So basically, what I’m suggesting, and what I believe, is that non-formal education is important and has been used and is very productive here, especially in terms of promoting literacy among a growing number of people in the country. It is gratifying to hear a hitherto illiterate person saying on television, “Oh, there was a time when I would board the bus with a ticket and then be embarrassed by somebody saying, ‘You are sitting in my seat,’ and then I realized that I couldn’t find my seat because I was illiterate and I had to be shown my seat. But today I can read labels and I certainly won’t be embarrassed by anybody because I can read the number of my seat.” So we are doing so much about this. Non-formal education—what you are asking for is support from the government, and I think the Education Ministry and the government will support the development and expansion of non-formal education systems.

There was also a suggestion that community vitalization and creating communities and groups here in the city, for instance, would be a good solution for some of the problems of rural-urban migration, and I agree. But here in the city itself, in large population centres, when we think about these things—setting up non-formal education processes and systems and arrangements—we again think about the government. But I do feel that we have reached a stage, especially in a place like Thimphu, where the initiative and major efforts must be made by citizens. If we see people and children drunk, if we see

children suffering from substance abuse, engaging in violence, whatever, I think it should create concerns of the nature that will lead us to take action. There are so many of us here who do have the time and the resources and the ingenuity to be able to create the arrangements to be able to bring people together. I think there is a lot of willingness, but leadership is lacking within the informal, non-formal, civil society sectors. The government is supportive of civil society—we have created a civil society organization. As long as you can justify and give reasons for what you want to do by stating that it is for the good of society, you can register. And after registering, you can be active, and we will support you. And not only will we support you, but there is also a lot of the international community's generosity that is available, so we can tap on this as well.

Well, finally, architecture. I had the pleasure of being her chauffeur when 25 years ago I was the Director of Education, and Madhu joined me on a tour studying and inspecting the school system and the college. Architecture is very important, and we are doing our very best to preserve our architecture and all manifestations of our cultural heritage—both the tangible and intangible. With respect to architecture, I want to inform you that the government policy is that we must understand the essential Bhutanese architecture, the soul of Bhutanese architecture. Once we understand that, then we can exercise complete freedom and creativity and liberty. So Bhutanese architecture must evolve also, but its soul and essence must remain. And you will see that this is the case more in the more recent buildings that are coming up, and certainly we are more on the traditional architectural side. If you were to go stay in Bumthang, where not because of government policy but by the desire and decision of the people themselves, you would see that Bumthang has traditional Bhutanese architecture in all the buildings.

Likewise we are trying to promote this, but there are compromises to be made for various reasons. For instance, in Thimphu we can't afford to build two story buildings any more because of space. We have to allow higher buildings. So there are such considerations. But I just want you to know that all forms of cultural manifestations and symbols of Bhutan are dear to us and provide one of the most important ingredients of happiness. Happiness has a lot to do with the sense of identity and belonging, which in turn gives a sense of security and confidence in oneself. So wearing gho and kira is not just to show the people that we are different. It is to tell ourselves that we are not only different, but we are a special people. And we are. And thank you for wanting to help us stay special. Thank you.

Facilitator: Thank you. I think we'll end on that very inspiring note this evening.

Announcements

Dedication of Merit

12 December, Day 5: Next steps, Final comments and reflections

Judith Simmer-Brown’s “blog” written for Naropa University: *The final day of the workshop was mostly a review of what we had done and reflections and appreciations. I think everyone was invigorated and alert. In the morning, Ivy asked the group to contribute “what was missing” [from our discussions] and that brought a rather disjointed series of reflections that I found quite interesting. About half the conversation revolved around forests, their importance for Bhutan and for education, with examples from the US and Japan, where children made relationships with trees and communicated with them. The examples were beautiful and moving, and many Bhutanese responded to this, speaking of the ancient tradition of villages having their own forest to guard and protect. Khenpo spoke of three kinds of trees in Bhutan: the tsokshing, or life-force tree; the ta-shing, or sacred tree; and the lu-shing, or the naga-tree, associated with the power of water. The whole discussion was very moving.*

Richard [Brown] spoke of the potential of online education as a way to reach the remote regions of Bhutan for principal and teacher training—a very important point. The source materials and comments so far seemed to refer only to western university education, or its imports to Asia, rather than referring back to the noble Indian universities, like Nalanda, Vikramashila, and Odantapuri. I added that it is very important for Bhutan to recognize the ancient power of its own traditions, tracing back to India, rather than thinking that the good things in education are always imported.

The Secretary of Education outlined the ambitious implementation plan that she has developed, and it made us all gasp. She is on fire, and plans to take the recommendations so far and distill them into a plan that can become a blueprint for change in Bhutan. It is amazingly satisfying to see at least a plan that has come directly from our conversations. In a “council-style” set of appreciations to close the conference in the afternoon, there were many in tears and with voices breaking, indicating the powerful connection we have all developed with each other over the course of the workshop. It’s true, by the end, a very international group of brilliant, accomplished, and passionate people—quite disjointed—came together in such a beautiful way!

Mindfulness meditation instruction – Judith Simmer-Brown

We’re going to really do it today. Good posture, but gentle relaxation of the muscles, straight back but resting, gentle eye-gaze, and we place our attention on breathing out, out into space, no need for memories, the past is gone, no need for planning, the future has not yet come. We rest our minds freshly in the present moment.

Participants practiced mindfulness meditation for 5 minutes.

Session 1 – Further comments

Morning before tea break

Facilitator: I will make you a promise. There will be no more breakouts or work. I know that some of you may have things that you have not quite expressed or finished, and if I took the mike from you, I'm sorry. We are going to devote this first hour to anything that you want to express or elaborate—things that you felt you didn't time to share with the group. So we are going to have an open hour from 9 to 10 for everyone who would like to speak to do that. We won't even ring the bell. I would just ask you to sense everyone in the room, and you'll know when it's time to wrap up. And then the next hour we will have Madam Secretary go through some next steps of the implementation plan coming out of this conference, and that will take us to tea break. *(In actuality, there were so many comments that Madam Secretary's remarks were postponed until after the tea break.)*

After that we will all come back together and do some reflections, and that is again open—reflections of the workshop and reflections for the group that we can all take with us. Today we are definitely are going to finish early. I don't know how early. It depends on how much has been left unsaid. So, I'm really open, but I know there is a deadline of 3:30. I promised Jambay that I'll have you out between 3:00 and 3:30 so they can set up the room for tonight's closing ceremony. So we will bear that in mind. I wouldn't dare break a promise to Jambay. So, with that, let us open it up to the floor. I will await your hands. Thank you.

The comments were extremely varied and reflected the participants' areas of expertise and interests. Some of the topics included:

- *the importance of the forests and of students having a direct connection with nature, primary school environmental studies in Bhutan, interconnectedness, ambience and colours in the classroom, spirituality and the inner dimension, expressing and learning from failures, integrating school work with activities outside the classroom, use of the Internet to broaden knowledge and views and to increase teacher resources and support systems, teacher and principal ownership of the curriculum and school processes, teacher education, early childhood education and parent education, civil society, Bhutan's ancient educational roots, language and culture, media literacy, and youth leadership and knowledge of GNH.*

During the comments, Ivy reminded the participants that she was letting people who had not spoken speak, so that everyone who wanted to speak could get a chance.

- The first participant noted that, worldwide, there is a trend that children are disconnected from nature, and Bhutan can serve as an example of reconnecting children. The participant recommended that *direct* experience in nature be included in the curriculum of every subject taught from kindergarten through the highest grades. Also, she recommended that places and the design element are important

and that natural materials can be brought into the classrooms. As well, outside teaching areas with natural vegetation can be created.

- Yoshiharu Nakagawa commented that in Japan there is a holistic education association, and that some of the teachers involved with that created a school forest project where they created a small forest in the playground. Every kind of school activities occur in the forest, such as writing poems, science, math, drawing, and integrated curriculum. A small boy who had behavioural problems said that he would like to receive a letter from the forest. So all of the children wrote letters imagining that these letters were coming from the forest. This small boy wrote a very reflective and compassionate letter and after that his behaviour began to change. The whole community, including parents, was involved from the beginning of the project and it takes care of the forest. This has also been introduced into Korea where hundreds of schools have school forests.
- Jack Miller said that he had seen the school forest project as well and was impressed that the children talked to the trees and wrote poems to the trees, and so they have a living relationship with nature and it's very inspiring. He spoke about a word that he hadn't heard enough about during the conference, and that was interdependence or interconnection. He hoped that the curriculum that comes out of the workshop would emphasize how we are all interconnected. It is so important for us to see that—all education is about relationship at every level of our life—from relationship to ourselves, to others, to the earth, and to the cosmos. The curriculum should allow students to see themselves in that relationship, because that is where awakening comes from, and that is where, he believes, love comes. When we see that we are interrelated, that is when compassion and love arise.
- A participant commented that during his group discussions on ambience they discussed the importance of colours and what they do to change the behaviour of students and everyone in the school. He requested that Dr. Art-ong share what he had said about that with the larger group.
- Art-ong said that colours are very important in our lives. Red colours produce excitement, for example. You don't have red colours in hospitals, where you have the other side of the spectrum—blue, green, and violet, which calm the mind. In nature there is a lot of green, and it is calming. So it is important to use calming colours in schools. If a child comes to his school and is very aggressive, they give him a green desk and that calms him down. But if a child is shy, they give him a red desk and that will make him braver and he will talk more. So we have to be aware of the effect of colours on the human mind, and this is especially important in education.
- A national participant said that she wanted to let people know what is happening in Bhutan in relation to the forests. Traditionally, each village had its own forest and cared for it, but this had been taken over by the government in recent times. However, the government has been rethinking that and the Forestry Department is

now giving ownership of the community forests to the communities. Over 200 communities now have community forests. The communities decide what they want and how to protect the forest. Children are taking part in that, not through education, but because they belong to the community. There is an interconnectedness, and the government is encouraging this by recognizing the strength and power of the communities. And maybe education can capitalize on that and make a formalized effort to help the children appreciate the forest as well as the community, through the forest.

- Khenpo Phuntsok Tashi commented that there are three kinds of trees in Bhutan: the *tsok-shing*, or life-force tree, which is private or belongs to the community; the *ta-shing*, or sacred tree; and the *lu-shing*, or the naga-tree, associated with the plentitude and power of water. These traditions were interconnected for many centuries. During special months people are not allowed to cut or climb the trees. He thought that it is a good idea to bring the students to the forests, which he has seen happening in the past few years. On June 2, every student in the country takes part in planting thousands of trees. This is Forest Day and also the 4th King's Coronation Day. However, he wondered whether the teachers and students actually know the significance of the forest. According to the Buddhist perception of forests, Buddha became fully enlightened under the trees, and gave his first teachings in the forest, and he passed away under the forest. So many meditators practice in the forest. In Bhutan, they have a very large percentage of forest land—more than 60%—and Bhutanese people are happy to be in the forest. It is important for students to learn the significance of the forest from both the spiritual and social viabilities point of view.
- The next participant expressed that it is important to have a path and a process and go step by step so we can digest, go inside ourselves, and experience what we are learning. It is especially important in primary school to start with the inner world.
- Bunker Roy said that he was impressed by what Sulak had said about not talking enough about our failures, so maybe they should talk more about that. An example from his work with the Barefoot College was that one of the women went back to her village and was intimidated and couldn't remember anything, so they thought that was a failure. But, they sent a formidable grandmother solar engineer to her village, and when she saw her, she remembered everything and was able to solarize her village. He thought that it was important that like-minded people get together—the collective education that they get by working together is very important. So he requested that the group talk about their failures as well, so they don't think that they are always successful.
- A participant commented that a lot of things have to be learned outside of school, and what students learn in school can be applied to real situations. In her school in Thailand, the children joined the village marches with the monks to promote river protection—they marched for 12 days. In the villages, they tested the quality of the water and gave the results to the people and offered suggestions of what to do to

improve the quality. Another example is that the students worked with people to bring elephants back to their habitats. So it is good to integrate the subject matter with the reality, and students can also learn from the people at the same time. This kind of engagement is very fruitful for the school as well.

- Another participant made the point that it certainly is important to value indigenous knowledge, but that the students also want to know about the world and the Internet is opening up these possibilities. Through the Internet, students learn other points of view, are exposed to other cultures, to social movements around the world, to what's happening in Copenhagen, to cultural survival movements. The outside world can help people in Bhutan to combat ethno-centrism and prejudice. Her students are more open and knowledgeable about social justice than she was at their age because of the Internet.

Also, the pillar of democracy is an important part of GNH that hasn't been directly discussed in the workshop yet. She wanted people to know that she had been told that voting machines were being brought into the Bhutanese classrooms to help teach the children about democracy, and she was impressed by this and thought that democracy was happening in a wonderful way in Bhutan.

- Michael Rutland noted that the community forests were successful because there was a sense of ownership, so the people care. Perhaps Bhutan now has too much central government and people say there are too many rules and regulations. He suggested that a greater sense of ownership of the schools and student bodies be given to both principals and teachers. He said that teachers and principals stayed for too short a time in the particular school to have this sense of ownership. The length of time of a teacher and principal in a particular school can be used to increase this sense of ownership, and this will lead them to seeing their school as a little community forest.

In the medium or longer term, he wanted to see a situation where the teachers and principals didn't only feel as sense of responsibility for their school as a community, but also felt a sense of ownership and responsibility for their curriculum. He thinks that Bhutan is a country where people have been used to being told what to do and this is the atmosphere within teachers in the school. The curriculum and the way the school is run, in effect, are directed from above. He asked if it could be possible to have a national curriculum that was 60% of the curriculum and let the school and teachers devise their own curriculum for the remaining 40% that was relevant to the situation of the school. The teachers would get together and they would have this responsibility in a way they felt was appropriate to their situation. So he was arguing for greater sense of ownership through less centralized control.

- Richard Brown commented that the principals who had spoken at the workshop thought that it was important to have ongoing support, and not just a one-time workshop. He also thought this was very important, and that having online

resources and conversations for teachers and principals in Bhutan could be very helpful in this regard. In their contemplative education program at Naropa, they have a distance education program where students get support from online coursework. At Naropa, they also have been working towards making those media actually contemplative by giving students the space to include their personal experiences, heart, questions, and critical intellect, and by integrating resources into the online discussion so it is not purely on one level. So, he thought that these kinds of resources might be useful to support teachers and principals in Bhutan as well.

- Sulak Sivaraksa mentioned that Khenpo's comment about the forest being important for the Buddha reminded him of Rabindranath Tagore who said that in the East, civilization comes from the forest, whereas in the West, civilization comes from the city. He thought that the workshop has to be clear about how the East and West can learn from each other. But the mainstream West is dominated by the Newtonian, Cartesian approaches. The individualism, egoism, competition, mechanism overcomes the forest and everything, but at the same time the West has now realized its mistake. Even education, in fact, was the result of western imperialism that gave the message that you have to go to school. His friend, Ivan Illich said that in the middle ages people were made to go to church once a week, but now young people are made to go the new church five days a week. And he was also reminded by Mr. Havel of the Czech Republic who said that nowadays we know so much, we learn so much, but we know very little about ourselves. So he wanted to remind the house that education here should try to be with the forest, try to be with agriculture, and the trees. Know yourself, know the forest, know mother earth, know the community. Copenhagen may be important, but you cannot push everything to the young people. They should not learn everything, but they should learn about themselves and their community, and empower them to be proud.

And he thought that the Bhutanese at the grassroots level can also learn from those who come from the Mekong region. After the GNH meeting, these people of the Mekong have now become very empowering spiritually and educationally—far from the mainstream. If Bhutan goes in that direction, it will be unique, not imitating the West blindly, but getting the best of the West beyond the Newtonian, Cartesian approach. Then Bhutan can produce real education with GNH, with roots in the forest and spirituality and real empowerment.

- Aostre Johnson thought that it was important to think about a holistic curriculum and what that might mean. It is important to look at the strands that were created in the vision statement, and those become the major skills that have to be intentionally integrated throughout the rest of the curriculum. And then there is a lot of content. In order to develop all the strands like creative thinking, critical thinking, ecological thinking, etc., some of the curriculum content has to be removed to make room for teachers to develop their own authentic projects and methods. There has to be some shared content—things we want everyone to know—but there has to be room for teachers' creativity. There hasn't been much talk about actual teaching methods. In the curriculum document, it is important to recommend the different

types of teaching methodologies that fit with the type of holistic curriculum that is being advocated. These include lectures, but also it includes all these other integrative, hands-on approaches. All of that can be articulated in the document, and there can be room for both creativity and consistent standards.

Yesterday Aoste met with the programme coordinator for early childhood education for Bhutan, which she hasn't heard much about during the workshop. She thought that it was incredibly important to include this area in GNH and it could be done by creating parent-child centres so that the parents are learning along with the young children. Also international money could be attracted to support the early childhood movement.

In addition, she wanted to emphasize critical media literacy. The advertising industry is spending billions of dollars trying to figure out how to get to the children, and they are brilliant at it. A movie called *Consuming Kids* discusses how television submerges children with the message that in order to be happy they have to buy things. The first curriculum in the US has become the media. Critical media literacy has to be intentional. There are simple methods for primary through graduate school of asking "how was this media constructed, how are the advertisers targeting you, what methods are they using to try to get you to think you are not good enough?" The Centre for Media Literacy has sophisticated curriculum and amazing materials to use for this. And this is so connected to the idea of sustainability.

- Benjalog Namfa works in the Ministry of Education in Thailand as the Director of the Bureau of Academic Affairs and Educational Standards. She wanted to share her experience about the process of moving from policy to implementation. In her office they are responsible for about 31,000 basic schools. They are trying to support the principals, who are the leaders of the schools. If the principal is not understanding and confident enough it is not possible to change the schools, and they need training. In Thailand they are using Dr. Prapapat's and Dr. Art-ong's schools, which are private, as examples of the kind of things they want the public schools to try to eventually implement. But they are starting with a small number of schools.

She thought that to include GNH in the schools, it would be helpful to have both a general track and a fast track. Perhaps about 50 principals could first be trained on the fast track, and then they could each expand to help a network of maybe 10 other schools. The 50 principals could be helped to make concrete examples happen in their schools. It could happen in a variety of ways—you could focus on the forests and environmental issues, etc. Then the other 450 principles could use these examples. She thought that emphasizing GNH has to happen within a whole-school development and in a holistic way, which is not easy. So the 50 principals really need mentors working closely with them, to help them decide the curriculum, lesson plans, etc. Bhutan has a strong system of professional days, and what the

first 50 principals do could then be implemented later in of all the schools through these professional days.

Also, she suggested that the government could put something about media literacy in the newspaper every day, and the teachers and students could use this and it would help educate the whole community.

- Aum Pek Dorji mentioned that the few early childhood situations in Bhutan are private and parents have to pay fees to take their children there, except for a couple in Bumthang that are supported by a civil society organization. She suggested that the teachers' colleges pilot early childhood programmes attached to the college that would train teachers. The trainees could experiment with many of the ideas that have been discussed by working in a live classroom situation. Also, many parents in Bhutan don't understand the importance of early childhood education, and they don't see play as part of the educational process. So it is also important to reach out to parents to teach them good parenting skills and how to cultivate young minds.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister called for more leadership in civil society in grooming this community that they've been talking about. The culture for democracy is still being developed, and the people still have a reliance on government. The idea of civil society is so new that most people don't understand what it is and what it can do. So she said that the government can do a lot to expand the space for the civil society to emerge, and that will take some time, and they will still need to rely on the government for a while. Most of the Bhutanese are inspired to make a difference but they do it in small ways, so until they can get the collective effort strengthened, they still need the government to help facilitate the civil society.

- Judith Simmer-Brown commented that one of the pillars of GNH is promoting Bhutanese culture and sometimes, particularly in reading the source materials in preparation for the workshop, it seemed that the notion was that all the good ideas about education come from outside of Bhutan. In all the preparation materials there was not one mention of Nalanda University in India. Nalanda University provided an incredible model for liberal arts education and the sense of educating the whole person that came from India from the 4th through the 10th centuries. She thought that it was so important for Bhutan to take pride in the ancient traditions in which Bhutan is rooted—traditions of learning and critical intellect in all the areas that they have been discussing during the workshop—arts and music, medicine, math—all of those things came from the ancient heritage from which Bhutan was sprung.

She also thought that if the Bhutanese curriculum does not acknowledge that heritage that has been lost, then there is a sense of poverty in always needing to pull in outside experts in order to discover its own heritage. That creates an incredible message for teachers, children, administrators, and the Ministry of Education to always feel that they must refer to others. In the preparation materials, there were articles about the development of the western university, and it completely broke

her heart that there was not an exposition of the beauty of Nalanda University and the other great Indian universities, such as Vikramashila and Odantapuri. This whole series of universities created a foundation for learning that was Buddhist-based, but non-sectarian and broad, and that brought in many people from different religions and traditions from 15 countries all over Asia who came to attend these great Indian universities. And this was the heart of the incredible, powerful Mahayana tradition of Indian. She thought that Bhutan must make every attempt to return to its own educational roots in order to not convey a poverty-stricken message about education to its own people and its own children.

- The UNICEF representative for Bhutan, Dr. Gepke Hingst, wanted to inform everyone about what is happening with early childhood development (ECD) in Bhutan. In supporting the Ministry of Education, UNICEF has incorporated ECD messages and assisted parents as part of non-formal education, especially in rural areas. So she thought there were many outlets where you can have ECD messages and methods integrated so the parents get them. There is also a pilot programme going on where daycare centres in the rural areas are connected with non-formal education. The idea is to expand that as soon as the programme has been assessed. There is also an ECD policy that has been approved by the Ministry of Education and it is waiting for the approval of the Cabinet. UNICEF is also supporting the government to create the ECD programme, along with others such as Save the Children, and other Ministries and private daycare centres will be involved. Some of the messages coming out of this workshop may also be incorporated so the timing is good.

Also at the moment, the Ministry of Education is developing its youth policy in connection with out-of-school youth, and the Department of Youth and Sport will be instrumental in implementing the plans. This is another area where the civil society should work with the Ministry of Education to implement the youth policy, with the participation of the children. The youth policy has used the GNH approach, although not all of the ideas suggested here are incorporated.

- A Bhutanese national participant commented that Bhutan has a strong conservation policy, that government interventions are there, and the concept needs to be well-ingrained in people, most importantly children in the schools. In the school curriculum, during the late 1980s Bhutan reformed the primary school curriculum and until then most of the textbooks were from India. Then they reformed the NAPE curriculum—New Approach to Primary Education, which has four subjects—English, Dzongkha, mathematics, and environmental studies – EVS, which is the most important. The programme is for pre-primary through grade 3. EVS is associated with an effort of taking children closer to nature. The main emphasis is to teach children to learn by doing—taking them outside of the classroom and showing them nature. But how the teachers teach is very important. Sometimes when teachers taught about vegetables or flowers, for example, they would bring actual vegetables and flowers to the classroom and show them the real

thing. However, in those cases, the teachers could teach better by taking the children outside to the vegetables and flowers, rather than vice versa.

EVS has a lot of components such as science, history, geography, and culture—all the elements are there. The students visit monasteries during the festivals, go out into the forests, have projects such as vegetable and flower gardens, and all that. Bhutan has been teaching EVS for the last 25–30 years. For the first 15 years it was taught in English, but since then it has been taught in Dzongkha. They have had a good experience teaching EVS, and he thinks that it has had a strong influence on the conservation policy today. Everyone is very aware of the importance of the environment. As you know, Bhutan has a huge forest cover. In fact, in eastern Bhutan there is forest everywhere and you wonder where the people are.

- A participant asked if the EVS is still as robust and strong as it once was.
- The national participant said that, as far as his observation goes, it is still going on in a similar manner, but because it is taught in their own language, the children seem to enjoy it more and learn more. One of the problems is that, for grade 3, there are certain words that Dzongkha does not have such as scientific terms. Another problem is that one teacher teaches all the subjects and sometimes that teacher may not know Dzongkha very well. In those cases, there may be problems. Otherwise, it is going on very nicely.
- Related to comments made in sessions before this one, another participant wanted to bring the topic of teacher education forward. One of the most important aspects of this initiative is that it is going to be delivered within the contexts of the teachers themselves, and it relies on their ability to implement some of the ideas of GNH—and this is a formidable thing they are being asked to do. If they are not committed, then the initiative will have variable success. He said that it is important for the Bhutanese to look at how they go about creating a different kind of curriculum for teaching teachers than they probably have in effect right now. The long-term effect of this process depends on how they educate teachers for GNH within their colleges of education and how they are going to attract teachers into this process. There is a psychology to this that must be imparted to the formally-trained teacher from the beginning. Also empowering and engaging the informal teacher in a realistic, respectful, and direct way is important for the GNH initiative to be successful. Those two things need to be discussed in the future in the appropriate context—how to go about making teachers that have instilled in them the GNH philosophy and are empowered psychologically to be able to deliver that, in terms of both the formal and informal settings.
- Picking up on Judith’s comment, a national participant wanted to say that they have a few schools in Bhutan dedicated to imparting cultural studies—the school of the 13 arts, a school in Trashiyangtse, and an institute that focuses more on the theoretical aspects of culture, which is the Institute of Language and Culture Studies that is one of the colleges of the Royal University of Bhutan. He thinks that

the workshop will not be complete if they don't talk a little bit about the culture pillar. One important aspect of culture is language, specifically Dzongkha. Dzongkha has been facing an uphill task against English education. Some Bhutanese are more proficient in English than in Dzongkha and the newspaper the other day had an article about the costs of teaching Dzongkha. He would like to hear from the participants about how other countries promote their national language in the school system in the face of dominance by English.

- National student Dorji said that she wanted people to know that the Ministry of Education has already taken measures to involve youth in GNH. In the youth leaders forum, they did a presentation to the youth from all over the country and the topics discussed were: the preservation and promotion of culture, young people representative and youth policies, preservation of natural resources, preparing youth for employment, honesty and integrity versus corruption, what is your responsibility, spirit of volunteerism, involvement in young people through consultation. So she wanted to say that the youth are aware of the four pillars and how they should contribute in their own simple ways. And it sounds like people think that youth haven't been involved at all before this workshop, and that is not the case. She read part of the information the youth prepared on the preservation and promotion of culture for the leaders forum:

We believe that the revitalization of Bhutanese historical texts and literature would reinforce Bhutanese knowledge and understanding of our rich cultural heritage and legacy. This would, indeed, go a long way in increasing our knowledge and understanding of our age-old cultural value system so that our younger generation can become agents of cultural preservation.

The youth need to continue to respect and practice Bhutan's many customs and traditions and discourage adoption of western way of life. Strict rules and regulations on the dress code to be enforced while visiting dzongs, temples, offices, and formal gatherings. Establish historical and cultural museums.

She commented that people have been saying that the youth should be told this and the youth should be told that, and she wanted everyone to know that the Education Ministry has taken some measures, that the youth are fully aware of what is going on, and the youth are getting full support from the Ministry. She thought the people were not really clear about what the youth are actually doing. She offered to show people the youth leaders forum booklet created by the Ministry of Education during the break, which would give a broader picture.

- The national participant commented that both the national and international participants shared the same understanding of GNH. However, when the emphasis is on the head, then there is less emphasis on the heart. We need to use the heart first. GNH should be assessed by whether one has become a good person, and if one is committed to becoming a good person. And we all need to look at ourselves.

So we need a genuine commitment, instead of talking, talking, talking, which is never ending.

Also, the use of Dzongkha has declined tremendously, and now most of the Bhutanese are speaking in English, even among their parents and friends. He said that the wants of the people have increased so much—we think we need so many things—if you just look at hair alone, we need shampoos, hair oil, things to make hair curly, straight, so many things. And so many things are imported. When we cannot produce anything in Bhutan, we import it. When we have to import everything, we also import the languages, the ideas, the concepts—all are imported. And because of this, the language faces a big challenge. So he asked if the participants had any other comments about how to improve and preserve the language. Only one period a day is taught in Dzongkha, and students don't know why they should study it because they have to get jobs and there are no jobs for that. Language is also very important for GNH because some of the concepts have no words in English.

- Madhu Prakash commented that India is the richest country in the world in terms of languages—it has one third of the languages of the world, and these are also disappearing, thanks to the educational system. English has been made the national language. Many diseases are coming from Delhi to Thimphu. So the question is whether Bhutan can rapidly develop vaccines to protect itself.

She said that Sulak and Bunker have been asking us to reflect on our failures, and that she sees herself as a living, walking failure. She can write, read, and reflect in English, and while she learned Hindi until the 12th grade, it was just for one period of the school day, so she doesn't know it. Her knowledge of English and experience in the English-speaking world has come with a phenomenal poverty in all the regional languages. Her mother, who did not go to college, can still speak four native languages with ease, and write in them. So this reveals that we should be very humble about the kind of linguistic knowledge that we are promoting and see the hidden cost of that. India is a classic case, and the United States is the worst example of creating homo-mono-linguists. But in India, at least, they do still have the advantage of hearing different sounds and it is easier to pick them up. India is proud that it has flooded the country with English because it can attract more industry, but there is so much misery there and a growing gap between the rich and the poor, not to mention the degradation of nature. So her hope is that Bhutan would be wiser than India.

- Henry Rosemont said that language is the bearer of culture, and if the language goes extinct, the culture will also go extinct. So he thinks that it is very important for Bhutanese culture that Dzongkha be kept alive. One way to keep it alive is to teach creative writing and have students write creatively in Dzongkha, which is also a way to get students to think logically. They can also work to construct a grammar of Dzongkha—it is rule-governed, and if they are native speakers they are their own database. They can tell what the grammatical and ungrammatical patterns will

be. Teachers can be trained in a manner of weeks to get students to work that way. Quite a lot of that has been done on the Navaho reservations in the US and Gregory could speak more about that. He thinks that working with Dzongkha should be a very high priority for the Ministry of Education, along with other dialects in the villages. They could be encouraged to try to develop their grammars as well and do some creative writing. He believes that cultural diversity is as important for the survival of humanity as genetic diversity, and any time a dialect becomes extinct we are all the poorer for it.

With respect to teachers, going back to the theme that Michael raised about having to have ownership, and what Gregory was saying about the importance of teacher training, he said that teachers have to have control over their own work, and they need to have something to say about the curriculum. He suggested that the Ministry of Education focus should be on revising the teacher education programme now, and working only *generally* with the curriculum, so the teachers can have much more of a say in creating the specifics of the curriculum, once they are better trained. A recent study commissioned by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which resulted in it saying it was going to revise its funding guidelines, did surveys in a number of school districts in the US. In every district, the variation in student performance was far greater within schools than between schools, and the reason was teachers.

- Along the theme of failures and of how-bad-can-it-get scenarios, Steve Mustain commented that one of the phenomena happening in North America is called that of the “bubble-packed child”. This is a syndrome where children are so pampered and protected by both their parents and the culture around them that everything possible is done so that the child doesn’t experience anything painful— there are no sharp edges, no demands are put on the child, everything is handed to the child, they don’t have to do anything for themselves, they don’t have to contribute, particularly to the family. The family structure is set up in a way that is centred around providing for the child and its comfort.

It’s quite prevalent that in schools, for example, if a child, especially an older one, is punished for doing something bad, it is not uncommon for the parents to hire a lawyer who will come to the school to defend the child. The school then has to renege on the consequence so it doesn’t go on the permanent record of the student. This can happen with marks as well. If a child disputes a mark, and the family hires a lawyer to plead the case, the mark has to be changed on behalf of the student.

He said that the reason he is mentioning this is that this can begin to impact the way a school begins to structure and think of itself. One of the things that happens is that parents begin to expect everything from the school. They come to the school and say: Why haven’t you taught our children this and that? So now the parents demand that the school provide things that have traditionally been taught by the family. That is something to keep an eye out for. He said that when both parents are working and ECD becomes a necessity, it begins to make him nervous that parents

aren't teaching their children, and the child's sphere of existence becomes limited. So that is a story of failure, and a cautionary word to keep eyes open as the culture moves into this new era.

The Facilitator said that there would be more time for comments after tea, and there were about 10 minutes worth of announcements, so they would have the announcements next and then a tea break. Also Madam Secretary would speak immediately after tea break.

One very important announcement concerning the Golden Youth Award is included below in response to requests for the information.

Tashi Colman: Some of the international participants had asked what an appropriate gift would be. We had sent out a little note saying that there is a new scholarship fund that was set up the year before last by Her Majesty Ashi Tshering Pem Wangchuk, who is the President of the Youth Development Fund. Two years ago she established an award called "The Golden Youth Award". The interesting thing about this award is it's not only an award for academic excellence, but is also for someone who demonstrates all-round capabilities of a good citizen, which includes community service and volunteering—someone who demonstrates the exemplary qualities that we have been talking about this whole week. The first recipient of the Golden Youth Award is actually studying now in Nova Scotia, Canada, and he is a wonderful young man. *(Later remark, GPI Atlantic had nothing to do with this decision.)*

So for the first Golden Youth Award, Her Majesty did ask us directly if GPI Atlantic could help raise the funds. We did manage to do that from one of our own donors for the first award, but, quite honestly, we have been so involved with the preparations for this workshop, and raising money for that, that we did not manage to raise those funds this year. So some of you had asked, and that would be a wonderful gift, I think—especially since this is about education—if you're so moved. There is absolutely no obligation, but this is simply in response to questions about what would be an appropriate gift. I think a contribution to Her Majesty's Golden Youth Award would be a wonderful gift. This is supposed to be an ongoing, annual award.

For those who are American citizens, those gifts are tax deductible. You can make out a check to: The Bhutan Foundation, and write Golden Youth Award in the memo section of the check. For those who are Canadian citizens, the donations are also tax deductible. Please make a check to GPI Atlantic and again write Golden Youth Award in the memo section of the check. I don't know anything about tax deductions in other countries. And we will collect the checks. So for anyone who wishes to do that, that would be a wonderful gift.

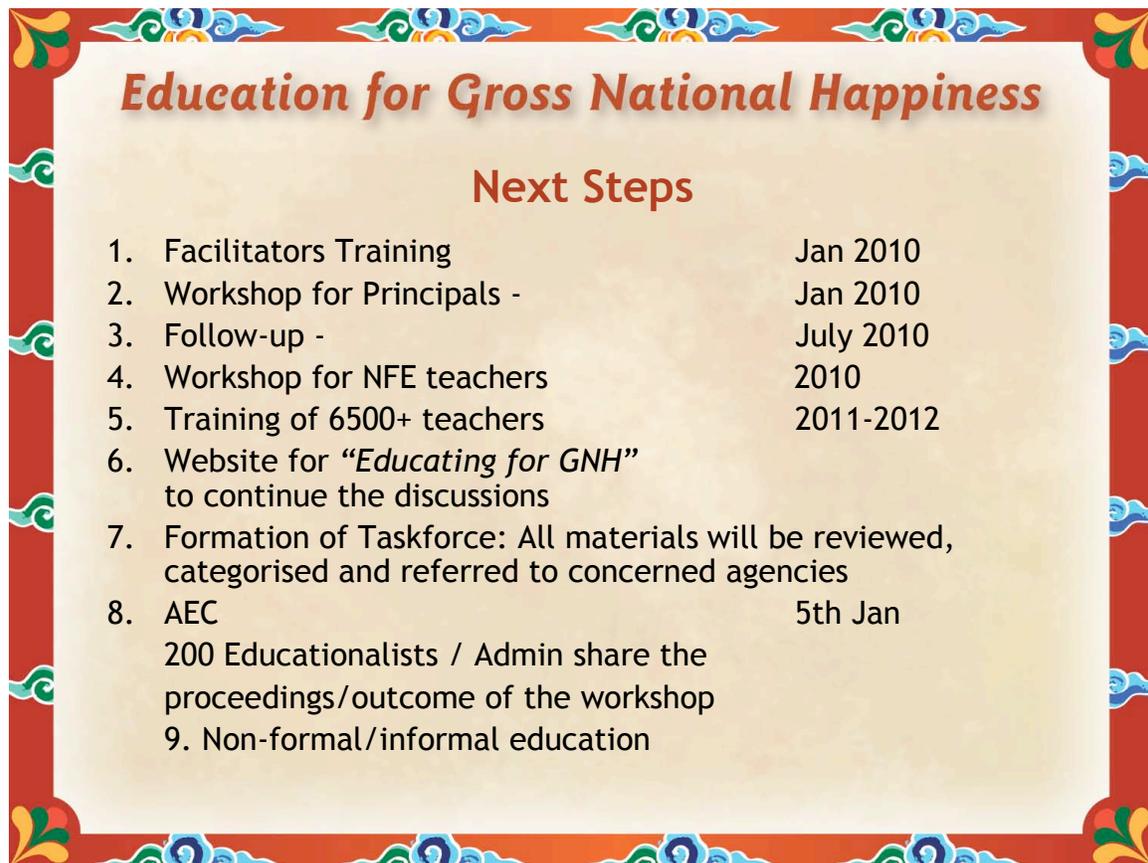
A participant suggested that they take some of the films they had seen here back to their communities or create other opportunities to make their communities aware of what is happening in Bhutan and the Award, collect money from that, and make on-going annual scholarship contribution.

Tashi: That is very interesting, because it doesn't have to be only a one-time thing. If enough money is raised, then it could be several scholarships going for several different purposes according to that particular young person's abilities and capacities. Clearly, if we are successful in this, and if the Golden Youth Award takes off, there are endless possibilities. So right now there was just enough for one person, but, ideas like this would be more than welcome, I'm quite sure.

Session 2 – Madam Secretary's remarks on next steps, comments continued

Morning, after tea break

Next Steps: Madam Secretary Aum Sangay Zam



Education for Gross National Happiness

Next Steps

1. Facilitators Training	Jan 2010
2. Workshop for Principals -	Jan 2010
3. Follow-up -	July 2010
4. Workshop for NFE teachers	2010
5. Training of 6500+ teachers	2011-2012
6. Website for “ <i>Educating for GNH</i> ” to continue the discussions	
7. Formation of Taskforce: All materials will be reviewed, categorised and referred to concerned agencies	
8. AEC	5th Jan
200 Educationalists / Admin share the proceedings/outcome of the workshop	
9. Non-formal/informal education	

Good morning. Now we get down to the practical details, I think. First of all, we've had a wonderful week so I will not spend too much time on reviewing what we have discussed. Before I start, I think I need to clarify one misconception. We promised ourselves that we would not be defensive, but I think I have to set the record straight regarding the transfer

of teachers. There seems to be a misconception that we have frequent transfers of teachers and principals, but we have the other problem of not transferring them frequently enough. If some of you have read the papers, you might have read that some teachers have been in the same place for over 20 years, and some teachers in rural areas might want to come to the city. And it's only in very isolated cases where teachers may leave in the middle of the year. The Ministry has a policy that transfers take place only in between academic years. Maybe in some cases, because of illness or other reasons, you may have teachers leaving. So I thought I should set the record straight.

Anyway, coming back to the next steps—these are the outcomes of all the discussions we have had. We have heard many good recommendations, and what has dawned on us is that when it comes to policies, I think, we are quite good. Our policies seem to be in synch with a lot of things that are happening elsewhere. I think our weakness lies in the implementation. Definitely there is a gap between what we aspire to achieve and what actually happens in the field. So therefore, although there are many things that we need to do such as looking at curricula and other aspects, we thought the straightest and quickest way to achieve what we want would be to go straight down to the principals and the teachers. I think that this would have an immediate and quick impact, but that does not mean that all else is forgotten. Other things will also happen in parallel, as I mentioned earlier.

So this is what we have drawn up. First and foremost, we have the facilitators' workshop for people who are going to be helping us conduct the workshop. We are hoping that we will have a good mix in the facilitators' training. We will definitely invite the Royal University of Bhutan, the Royal Institute of Management, maybe some of our own principals, people from the civil society—if you are interested and have the time—and also maybe even some of the international participants. So if there are people who can contribute to the training of the facilitators and are interested, please let us know.

Then, of course, we will have the workshop for the principals. We have 541 principals and we will probably break them into three groups, depending on the level of the school—because you also have to ensure that the situations, such as the working conditions and things like that, are uniform. The Prime Minister has committed to come and address the workshop personally to set the tone. This workshop is not one where we are going to tell them what to do. First, we are going to go share the outcomes of this workshop. All the recommendations that we have received will be compiled into a document, which will be given it to them. Then we plan to ask them to work out and design a plan for their own school, including how they could go about implementing some of the recommendations that they think are relevant and important. There will also be follow-up workshops for the principals during the year.

We also have what we call head teachers' meetings. We have 20 districts in Bhutan and have biannual meetings for head teachers from these districts. During those meetings we plan to find out how things are working, look at problems they face, and the type of support they require from the Ministry.

Then we also thought that we needed to include a non-formal education component for teachers, and there was a lot of discussion about looking at the non-formal education sector. In the non-formal education sector, we have around 688 centres, and we encourage students from the same localities to go back and teach the non-formal classes in the centres. We thought that we might need to also have a workshop for them, which would be done throughout the year. We have regional-cluster workshops and we can conduct these workshops within that.

In the system we have about 6,500 teachers. In the next two years—2011–2012—we also hope to include every teacher in both the private and public schools in the training.

After this workshop is over we will be forming a task force with members, again, from some of the national participants here, to ensure continuity on what we have started. It will review all of the materials that have been generated, and all of the ideas that have come out of this workshop, and will try to categorize them in terms of what the Ministry itself can do, and maybe what some other government agencies that are involved might do. In those cases we will forward recommendations to the other agencies and ask them to look into it. We will also follow up on all of this. The task force will also help us to design the details of the structure for the principals' training. We are hoping this task force can meet on Dec. 20, and we have been having some informal discussions of this. If anyone has ideas on who should be on the task force, you can share it with us and we will be happy to look into it.

Then we have the annual education conference coming up—we have a lot on our plates. It starts on Jan. 5th and over 200 educationists will participate. Participants are the 20 district education officers and many principals and policy makers, and we also intend to share the outcomes of this workshop with them, to sensitise them and to bring them on board. We have many other issues to discuss so we will mainly be giving them information. Issues like assessment will also be discussed there.

Then there were some recommendations about forming a task force for non-formal and informal education and we plan to discuss this. So, as you see, it's a very ambitious plan.

Oh, Dasho Pema's most important idea of a website we thought was very good, because this is one way of continuing the discussions that have been started. Also, as the Prime Minister said, we can continue exploiting all of the knowledge that is available here. We hope to have this website in place as soon as possible. The reason why we do not have a timeline for that yet is because we do not have the capacity in the Ministry, and we were wondering if there was anybody who might want to help us in setting up this website. We would be there to provide the content, and things like that, but we may not have the expertise for the technical part of it. So this is something that will be there and we hope that the discussions will continue there.

That is basically it, in a nutshell, but there are many other things, and other things will arise from this. Especially—you've talked about curriculum reform—I feel that once the teachers and principals are fully into the GNH values and principles, they will then be

coming back to us with recommendations as to how we can update and review our curriculum. That's when the issues of curriculum reform should come in—only after everyone fully understands the principles and values. I feel a little hesitant about going straight into the curriculum before people really understand what we are talking about. Like someone said, the teachers and principals must be involved in designing the curriculum, and this is what we intend to do. That is the way we do it now, actually—task forces are formed, and these are basically comprised of teachers who give their input.

To wrap up, I think we have a very ambitious plan, but we are confident that we should be able to it. I am also happy to report that UNICEF has already agreed to partially fund some of the activities. So I will leave it there. While it is ambitious, we are quite confident that we can do it with all of the support we hope to get from everyone. Thank you.

Tashi Colman continued the announcements from before tea break. He first mentioned that two generous, individual donors have also agreed to help fund some of the preparatory work leading up to the workshop. He asked for help with the website, which would include “best-practices” from the schools, and which could be easily accessed by students, teachers, and principals. Jambay suggested that Bhutan is working on an education-portal and they could have a separate window for that, but could also use the help.

Next, on many occasions, everyone has wished that we could have heard more—especially more practical examples. He asked that the participants regard the workshop as a seed. What is needed from them now are further materials in all the areas that they have raised and have not been able to lay out in greater detail, especially things that could be used directly in the principals workshop in January. Tashi also asked that they quickly send more information and curriculum material, or whatever might be relevant. He asked that a distillation—a pre-digested format that is as ready to use as possible—of their knowledge and experience of being educators be given, especially for things that couldn't be included in depth during the workshop because of time.

He made this plea for the information to be digested material in concrete form because there is such a short time frame before the principals workshop and they won't have time to review large reports, etc. For example, when someone has said “this should happen”, could they translate this into making it happen? When Dr. David Orr says this is the kind of speech the Prime Minister should make, can you actually write that speech? Or when someone says that there should be a focus on media literacy, the next question is how. Please give us the media literacy module of how that could be done. How do the national facilitators who are in this room work with the principals on learning how to dissect that media article to separate the chaff from the truth? Also video clips or something visual would also be good. He said that this was a plea to send information on whatever your particular field is quickly in the next two or three weeks, and to make the next implementation phase into a team effort.

Facilitator: OK, we are now open for airtime and I have promised six people that they could speak first.

- Zenobia Barlow said that she wanted to comment on the change process. She thought that the vertical dimension of training that the Education Ministry was embarking on was very important and that one can't get very far without it. However, the horizontal dimension that has been mentioned is also important. This can happen through empowering teams of passionate teachers and principals and giving them the smallest amount of time to actually process what you're asking them to deliver, and giving them time to reflect and plan what they want to accomplish, imagine how to implement it, and develop models—because teachers actually don't have much time. In her experience, she has found that this is relatively inexpensive, and has the biggest payoff. So her recommendation is to have a horizontal process paired with the vertical process.

Zenobia also said that she had sent some boxes of books to Bhutan that hadn't yet arrived, and she wanted to mention two books that her organization, the Centre for Ecoliteracy, had produced, which could possibly give some ideas and inspire people. The first, *Smart by Nature: Schooling for Sustainability*, provides a lot of innovative possibilities based on what people are doing without huge resources. The second, which is in a series, is called *Big Ideas: Linking Food, Culture, Health, and the Environment*. It is a curriculum framework for kindergarten through high school, which provides teams of teachers with the kinds of materials that give them ideas for all kinds of possibilities. They are also working on a new book concerning energy and waste.

- Dasho Pema Thinley said that what he had to say is out of context now, but it might be part of the next steps. All of the things that have been mentioned earlier are all included in the Bhutanese schools, but sometimes they are taught mechanically without enough reflection. For example, they have agriculture, gardening, social forestry programs where students plant trees, social work, etc. However, they may need to review the curriculum and ask the teachers and students to reflect on why things are included and how they are connected to everything else—to life. He had a little different view of EVS than had been expressed. In the past there used to be Field Trip Days. For example, teachers used to take the students to the monasteries where students interviewed the monks, looked at the murals and studied their symbolism, and then made presentations when they came back to the classroom, etc. But today, field trips are very rare. He thought that connecting the curriculum to the local culture was very important, especially in the face of daunting international and media cultures, and was something to be considered later on.

Also, assessments may need to be broader. They have continuing assessments, but teachers need to interact more with the individual students, whom they actually know. You are not doing the assessment for the class, but you are doing it for the individual child, and that changes the mode of teaching and understanding of the child. So they could reflect on being more focused on the child.

In terms of early childhood education, he asked if this is another activity they are going to take away from the family? Is the family breaking down? While early childhood centres are necessary in the urban areas, how can the trends be resisted? How can they support the parents so that families can be involved in the early years education, and the relationships can be strengthened? This has to be carefully thought about. Of course, they have to face the reality that in the urban areas, especially, both parents work. Then the centres have to be in safe places where the children can learn. Teachers have to be trained. In the university they have revamped the primary teacher training programme, and suggest that primary teachers actually specialize in that area instead of moving up to the secondary schools. They have pre-primary classes in Bhutan, so these have elements of early childhood education in them. However, they don't have much experience in that area and could use some help with the new curriculum.

Finally, he agreed with the Ministry of Education's intention to prioritize the list of recommendations, because it is quite large, and he also agreed that the teachers would need to work on the curriculum, and that non-formal education needs to be reviewed at some point.

- Bunker Roy wanted to address some words of advice and caution to the Minister of Education. He had heard that many well-to-do Bhutanese parents aspired to send their children to the Doon School in India, which they thought would give them a good education. He said, with all due respects, that he is a product of the Doon School, and in the eyes of the Doon School, he is a failure. This is because out of the 50-year history of the Doon School, only two or three people have gone back to the village. So, he didn't recommend that anyone send their child to the Doon School if they were thinking of Gross National Happiness as a way of educating their child. They call it the "Doom" school. There are some very good schools in India that follow the GNH principles, such as the Krishnamurti schools.

He was also concerned with the civic society movement in Bhutan, which is still in its infancy. In 1984, his Doon School friend who reluctantly became Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, asked him to draw up a Code of Conduct for the civil society. The first thing Bunker told him was to please not expect government to draft a plan for civil society, because the government knows nothing about how civil society works and grows. He has heard that the government has taken the step of trying to formulate policy for civil society, which is a great danger. He suggested that civil society in Bhutan should get together and write its own policy and submit it to the government to tell it how they would like to work. That Code of Conduct could incorporate the principles of GNH, which would be unique—no other country in the world has a civil society that includes anything like GNH as part of its policy.

When Bunker did draft the first policy statement on civil society for the government of India in 1984, the bureaucrats threw it out. They couldn't

understand the language; they thought it was too progressive and radical; and they just didn't agree to it. They said, "This is impossible, forget it." It so happened that Bunker was having dinner with the Prime Minister that night, and the Prime Minister said that the draft looked very good and progressive. He asked who was against it, so Bunker pointed to the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission (who is now the Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh) who was sitting on the other side of the table, and said if the Prime Minister would tell him to say yes, then the four pages would be accepted. So, the Prime Minister did that, the pages were accepted, and Bunker became Public Enemy #1. In that policy statement he did say that it is not the role of government to draft a policy for civil society, and he hopes the government of Bhutan does not make that mistake.

He asked the Minister of Education if the Ministry can have any working group for the informal education sector that they might be thinking of create a space for civil society to draft its own statement and submit it to government. Maybe the government would not accept it, but the attempt and process is very important. Now India includes governmental and international funds for civil society in its budget, which the civil society decides how should be spent, and this includes over \$500 million dollars for village groups all over the country. It would be good if Bhutan could study the process that happened in India and adapt the good parts, so they don't make the same mistakes.

He also suggested that the principals workshop be held outside of Thimphu so people don't have to come to Thimphu all the time, that the urban and rural principals work separately so that the rural principals will speak more, and that task forces for non-formal, informal, and formal education be separate, but work in tandem. He also suggested that the community college that will open in February 2010 be formally included as part of the next steps. Finally, he suggested that space be made at the workshop to include the issues of reverse-migration and certification in the discussions.

- Manish Jain noted that his comments also are a response to issues from other sessions. He said that Shikshantar is part of a larger movement started by Gandhi in 1940's when he initiated a basic education plan, which was similar to and based on the values of GNH and more. He wanted to share what they have learned, and what they have learned as part of the larger movement. There were thousands of schools based on Gandhi's plan but now there are only a few left. He thought that it was important to look at other people's work such as Gandhi and Tagore in India who have contributed profound thinking along the lines of GNH. One of the things that Shikshantar has tried to learn is how do we move from a schooling society to a learning society. Schooling society represents a closed system.

In the workshop they have been using the language of schooling—of teaching and training—and very little of the language of learning, particularly self-directed, self-organized learning, which is a diverse, messy process that is difficult and complex for Education Ministries to handle, and that is part of the problem. They also have

not talked enough about the economy, particularly the political economy. Satish and Sulak have brought it up, but he wanted to emphasise three pieces of that. The first is the unlearning piece, which is necessary if we want to rethink economy.

The other two things that he didn't think they had talked enough about were wisdom and entrepreneurship. A structural and spatial characteristic of wisdom is three generations in meaningful action. This is very complex and needs to be given much more attention, especially in relation to economy because wisdom needs to guide economy. In the idea of wisdom in relation to creating an open system, there were a couple of concrete proposals. In every school there should be a wisdom council created of elders, teachers, and indigenous teachers to bring in the indigenous knowledge. This is both to open the school up and to open it out.

Another idea would be to have a community media. They started talking about media literacy in his school about 10 years ago, but have shifted that to talking about community media—that people can generate a whole range of media forms in their own local languages. Imbedded in those are modes of logic, critique, creativity, and many other things. So the question is how can we support that in relation to wisdom, because that's how wisdom will find its expression.

The word “entrepreneurship” has now acquired a capitalist connotation, but what Satish was talking about was people creating their own jobs, their own meaningful work in the world. And that takes a very different mind than what the schooling mind creates. He thought that the forms and the structures that the workshop has worked on up to this point have not given enough thought to entrepreneurship—or resourcefulness. How do we inspire that way of thinking? Social entrepreneurship, or GNH entrepreneurship, is something that we need to give much more thought. The non-formal/ informal is there, but it is the last point on the list and he thought it should be the first point.

He thought that they had underestimated the power of the global economy, and they need to think about entrepreneurship and wisdom in relation to that. And they had also underestimated the power of the local economy and how it can be supported. If you want to support a process of localization—which is local economy, culture, and ecology—you need to radically re-gear it and open it up. The last point he added, which is what Bunker keeps saying, is that we need to radically rethink the whole idea of certification. Nothing will go very far if we don't deeply rethink what we mean by certification in our society, and who is certified, and what does it mean if you are not certified. Do you exist in society? Do you have a voice? So unlearning, wisdom, entrepreneurship and rethinking certification are essential things to moving forward.

- Art-ong commented that he had something very important that he would like to suggest for the next steps—for all the training that will be taking place. He feels that GNH must be inculcated into all of the lessons and classes. It doesn't matter what curriculum you have as long as GNH is inculcated in them so that it goes into

the minds of the principals, teachers, students, and parents. So, first is vision and it is very simple—to produce a good human being. It doesn't need to be complex. Then, in order to talk simply like that it is important to find out what values are associated with a good human being. If we can define the values then these are the values that we are going to inculcate into the training, teaching, syllabus, and everything that we teach in the school.

The most important value of a good human being is love and compassion. This is the foremost value that has to be inculcated. Without that we are not human beings. If we don't have compassion we are like an animal. He commented that if everyone and the Ministry agreed, then that should be put into practice.

The second value he suggested is peace—we must be a peaceful person, which is part of GNH. Always be filled with peace—whatever happens or any problem you may have. There may be a lot of problems with global warming, for example, there will be problems in villages and so on. People must have peace—otherwise you cannot solve problems. If you are worried and excited, then nothing can be solved. That is part of being a good human being.

The next value he suggested is truth. We must understand the truth. Truth is something that does not change from one moment to another, from today to tomorrow. We search everywhere and we can't find anything that lasts forever. Truth has to last forever. This world is 4,500 million years old, and the sun in 4,500 million years from now will expand 60 times and the earth will be burnt up. If there is a beginning, it must have an end. And that cannot be the real truth. What is truth? We search everywhere and study science. But we are looking only at what is outside of us. Science is a study of the environment—everything that is around us. But how can it be true science if we don't study what is within? Many speakers talked about this. So we have to start looking within. Then we start to discover the real truth—who we are, what is a human being. We can only find out about our true self if we look within. Then we start to understand the truth. What is the truth? He said he won't talk about that now, because it would be a long lecture. So truth is another thing that will help us to discover ourselves. We must know ourselves.

Next value he wanted to propose for all the workshops and training is right conduct—our behaviour. It must be based on love and compassion. In other words, we do everything for the benefit of others, rather than for ourselves. We do this because we love other people. We have compassion for our world, ecology, and so on. All this has to be done.

The fifth value is that of nonviolence, *ahimsa*—solve all problems through nonviolence and peaceful means. When children have problems and want to fight each other, that is not the way. We must infuse this value of nonviolence, *ahimsa*.

All five human values must be there—that is part of GNH. And if we agree on the values, then we know how to do it—how to inculcate values into all of our training.

We talk about so many things, and it is so complex, and we don't know how to do that. But here there are only five things that we need to inculcate into the training so that teachers and principals have these qualities and values in them. And then parents should have these values also. And the students must have these values. Then you truly have GNH coming up in Bhutan. These five values should be enough for all the training because they contain everything.

This is all about training the principals and teachers and how they can inculcate these five values in the children—love and compassion, peace, truth, helping others, and nonviolence. The principals are the role models and change agents for teachers, students, and parents, and they have to use the three Hs—head, heart, and hand. They have to be able to touch the heart of others. They can also learn to inculcate these values in whatever subject the Ministry of Education asks them to teach. Once you know the principle of how to do that, it's very simple—anyone can do it.

They need to understand the learning process and understand the mind model—how to use the mind. We are not going to follow the mostly brain-based learning in the West. Then they need to build in some immunity to the outside world. They have done that in his school and students who are now in the outside world are still carrying GNH values. Lastly, they need to have assessments of GNH—they need to assess, not knowledge of GNH, but the values of GNH that have emerged in the training. He also commented that they train teachers in this way in Thailand, where they go through this process, and invited Bhutanese teachers to attend these trainings at no charge.

- The next national participant said that he had some pointed comments on the next steps. He thought that they had an end in sight in terms of the vision, and towards that vision they have the next steps drawn up—to which they will have to devote effort and financial resources. He thought that an important element is missing, and there are various expectations on what this should be. His opinion is that somewhere, based on the vision, deconstructing that, they have to be clear about just what it is that they are trying to achieve. That has to show up. Otherwise it could be just a long checklist of a lot of things that they could probably do. However, the question should be whether they have achieved the end—which is trying to transmit the various kinds of values that they are talking about.

This requires them to identify those values and that end, and agree on some kind of metric so they can measure whether it is actually having an impact on the students. It is one thing to do a whole series of training for the principals, but eventually they need to see how it is translating to students. Otherwise it can be an open-ended experiment that can carry its own risks, because while they are doing this they also want to make sure that their numeracy and literacy are up to scratch with what they think are the best standards in the world—even as they try to have a much more holistic education system. So he requested that somewhere in the next step plans that they have a metric for measurement—both for seeing whether they are on track

in terms of carrying out the planned activities, but most importantly, for seeing how it is translating to the students.

- Dewan Giri (student) commented that he is concerned, like Bunker Roy, about the migration of youth from rural to urban areas. For them, having no reason to stay in their rural area is a good reason to leave their place. We need to find some reasons to help them stay there. His cousin said he wanted to come to Thimphu so that he could “become like you all”. Dewan understood that because people in rural areas only have a third of the opportunities, facilities, and learning resources that are available in urban areas. He thought the Ministry of Education is working on that, but for the present, there are a lot of differences between what the rural and urban people enjoy.

Lunch break

Session 3 – Final reflections and expressions of appreciation

After lunch

Madam Secretary discussed forming a task force that will be focused on structuring a workshop for the facilitators and then for the principals, and asked for indications of participant or observer interest. The first meeting will clarify the extent of involvement that is needed. They plan to create a core group, and then others can join in as their time allows. A number of people, including students and principals, volunteered to attend the first meeting. Madam Secretary said that they will discuss the date for that meeting and will notify people by email.

Facilitator: With the remaining time, I’m going to request that this be our debriefing and reflective time. Let me remind you that if you have *a lot* to say, and I know you do, please put it in writing, summarise it, and give it to Tashi Colman, who is on the task force and will be here for the next few months. We do want to hear every voice in the circle—as we began the circle five days ago, we would like to end the circle with every voice in the room. Just share with the group what you took from the conference, or what you put in—whatever thoughts you have. This is our goodbye to the group until we all meet again. So I will pass the mike around.

Ivy also asked that the participants keep their remarks to less than a minute. However, even though Ivy asked that people be brief, they still took the time they needed to express their appreciation for the workshop—sometimes with shaky voices, laughter, and heartfelt tears. Ivy remained patient and allowed everyone the extra time. As one participant remarked, “Family farewells are always emotional circumstances.”

Both international and national participants expressed their genuine thanks to each other and to the Prime Minister and Ministry of Education for inviting them and for making the week so enriching and productive. Many expressed how much they had learned from each other. The international participants also expressed their deep gratitude and

feelings of humbleness for the opportunity to visit beautiful and magnificent Bhutan, and to experience the wisdom, generosity, kindness, warmth, and grace of the Bhutanese people. One participant said that she felt her mind had been expanded and her spirit stretched, and another humorously added that the pleasure of being there had far outweighed the lack of pleasure in getting there.

The international participants were especially impressed by the flexibility and responsiveness of the government, which they had not witnessed anywhere else in the world, and were filled with respect for this effort. They appreciated being able to experience the educational context of Bhutan, and to contribute to the practical and realistic potential outcomes in the pursuit of infusing GNH into the educational environment—formal, non-formal, and informal. Many invited the Bhutanese to visit their own schools and organizations, and repeated that they hoped to contribute more in the coming months and years, and to keep the connections alive. They said that their aspiration was for GNH to expand not only in Bhutan, but also beyond, and they hoped to bring the GNH seed back to their 16 countries. All agreed that Bhutan is, indeed, a very special country.

The national participants graciously thanked their international counterparts for their generous contributions of knowledge and expertise, and found it inspiring to see people engaged in unique educational models in other parts of the world that resonated with GNH. By including many of the alternative ideas into their educational system they hoped that children would experience more joy and be in synch with GNH ideals. A number of participants expressed the fact that their educational system has achieved tremendous progress in the past years, and today produces outstanding students and teachers, but that they still needed to fill in the gaps and had “miles to go” to reach their ultimate objectives.

In particular, one national participant emphasized that teaching the reality of such things as the four noble truths and interconnectedness in a way that will help both teachers and students understand and communicate the deep ideas and principles of their curriculum subjects, rather than presenting subjects in a mechanical way, will go a long way towards making people happy, and they need to expand on that. Another remarked that they needed to teach children human insights, GNH values, and how to understand and use their minds. They thanked the international participants and observers for helping them to go to the next level, and were appreciative of their expressions of commitment and goodwill.

National participants also experienced the workshop as a powerful process that resulted in an important series of steps and practical actions that will help to infuse GNH into all of Bhutan. They saw education as the key to many challenges, and a powerful way to bring out the goodness in people and to instil GNH values—which is their desire and intention. The workshop was one of the first signs that the vision of GNH is beginning to take root in practicality, and that GNH is giving them a foundation for survival in a large, globalised world. They were confident that the GNH seeds would grow into a

healthy plant, and again thanked all of the participants and observers for their contribution to this endeavour.

A few of the participants presented quotations to express their feelings: One mentioned that Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, the founder of Naropa University, always said that education should be the union of discipline and delight—and that was what he was feeling in Bhutan. Another commented that a verse from the Upanishads summarized what had been done: “I am rich and well-born, Who else is equal to me, I will sacrifice, I will give, In that I shall rejoice.” Another said that when Confucius’ disciples asked what he most liked to do, he replied: “What I most enjoy doing is bringing peace and comfort to the aged, sharing relationships of trust and confidence with my friends, and loving and protecting the young.” He thought that attitude had been paramount and a deep concern of everyone during the week. Finally, a participant offered an aspiration and Dedication of Merit that comes from the Shambhala Buddhist tradition:

*By the confidence of the Golden Sun of the Great East
May the lotus garden of the Rigdin’s wisdom bloom
May the dark ignorance of sentient beings be dispelled
May all beings enjoy profound brilliant glory.*

Facilitator: I will take half a minute to say thank you to everyone. I want to say that my cup overflows, as well. I don’t want to take a lot of your time. Thank you for all your precious teaching. I want to say thank you to the observers in particular for your grace, for supporting me through this. Thank you to the Ministry for your leadership and your vision. And I couldn’t have done this without my partners, Meg and Kevin, who is sick today. I also want to say thank you to the unsung heroes in the back room—Jambay, Nima—I don’t know all of your names—but I feel a deep sense of the Bhutanese—it’s more than warmth, it’s joy—you have it. And I love you all, and thank you. Thank you.

Madam Secretary: I will not give a long speech, but I think it in no way lessens the heartfelt gratitude that I feel for all the contributions that you have made. I want to thank you all for giving us a week of your time, for sharing so generously with us—so openly, and with so much keenness for sharing your experience with us. Thank you so much. A lot of offers have been made for support, and you can be sure we will take you up on those.

I also need to thank Ivy because we would not have gotten where we are if she had not so ably facilitated this whole workshop and directed us to our desired end. So I would like to say thank you very much. I enjoyed working with you. Since I will not get another opportunity, this is also a good time to thank all of my colleagues in the Ministry of Education—under the leadership of the Director General who was the focal person for organizing this whole workshop, and also Jambay and many of my other colleagues—they organized the whole Ministry because we all feel committed to this and think that we must try and do the best we can. They have put in every effort. So I would like to

thank all my colleagues for the endless hours that they put in to make this workshop happen.

Of course, we have to thank the Prime Minister—it was his initiative to have this workshop. This is a wonderful idea and we are all excited about this. I've always felt that if anything has to be done, it can only be done through the education system. So we would like to thank the Honourable Prime Minister for this initiative.

I would also like to thank Ron and his team—Dr. Tashi has been working on this for a long time. Then, of course, finally I have to thank my Minister—without his guidance a lot of the important details would not have happened. The Honourable Minister was involved even with the logo, which was designed by Nima Tshering from our curriculum area with Lyonpo's inspiration. I would like to thank Lyonpo.

I just wanted to thank everyone, both the participants and observers, and I hope, like you have all assured us, that this is not the end—this is just the beginning. So I hope that we will continue to interact and you will continue to support us. From our side, I think I can safely say, on behalf of the Minister and my colleagues in the Ministry, that we are fully committed to making sure that we build on what we have achieved in the past—to put in place an educational system that reflects our national aspirations. Thank you very much.

Honourable Minister of Education: What I would like to say has been so beautifully articulated by my colleague, Madam Aum Sangay Zam, Honourable Secretary. I have been instructed by my colleagues in the Ministry to give a vote of thanks later, so I think that there will be a little space there to perhaps express my thoughts. At the moment I would like to share this little space with somebody else, if they would like to take the floor. Thank you very much, indeed. It is wonderful to be a witness to this wonderful celebration of sentiments, emotions, as well as visions. Thank you very much, indeed.

Dedication of Merit

12 December, Day 5: Closing ceremony and remarks

Judith Simmer-Brown’s “blog” written for Naropa University: *This evening was the “closing ceremony,” designed to mirror the opening. We all dressed up and there was the kind of palpable excitement that was there before—but this time, shared more naturally with the group as a whole. The Prime Minister, Education Minister, cabinet members, and members of the Parliament were there.*

Before the evening program, I was asked to make a few remarks at the ceremony, and I felt thrilled to be able to articulate the auspiciousness of the moment. I spoke about the happiness found within the mind, and that it was precious, but not enough—with the dark age, the forces of materialism, warfare, and environmental degradation, more concerted effort to create conditions for happiness was required. I spoke about the sacredness of Bhutan that had been able to promote happiness because of its reverence for the dralas, its connection with life-force, and its resulting lungta, or windhorse. We have found this all the more compelling because of our own loss of life-force, and our discovery that service to others, reconnecting with sacredness, and collaborating in the solving of life issues was a way back to this sacredness. I praised the leadership, expressed my confidence in their ability to accomplish this task, and then spoke of three things I thought were needed in order to ensure the success of this endeavor: mindfulness meditation in the classroom to promote confidence in inner happiness; critical thinking as a method to discriminate what to accept and what to reject; and the continuity of compassionate leadership—including the power of having a Dharmaraja king who really cared for his people—to ensure that the will for GNH could continue. It was gratifying to be able to speak in this way, and to find that my remarks were received warmly by the participants and observers.

The PM spoke too, and I’m amazed at how each speech I’ve heard from him is insightful, warmly human, and thought-provoking. He spoke appreciatively about the workshop, but spoke of being “embarrassed, frustrated, and discontent.” That woke us up! He was embarrassed that such renowned world experts were often cut off after 4-5 minutes speaking during the workshop; frustrated that he could not effectively use everything we each had to offer; and discontent, which stems from the reality that we are not separate from the world. What a powerful way to end our time together! The last thing he said was that we could all sleep well tonight, knowing that we have actually, literally, helped Bhutan. He is one of the most amazing speakers and individuals I’ve ever met.

Master of Ceremony Mrs. Phuntsho Lham:

To a successful conclusion, we start the evening with the Honourable Secretary of Education, Aum Sangay Zam, who will welcome our guest and participants, and also present the report of the workshop.

Closing Remarks: Honourable Secretary of Education, Aum Sangay Zam

Honourable Prime Minister, Excellencies, representatives of the international agencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, and students. On behalf of the Ministry of Education, our workshop partners, the Office of the Prime Minister, and GPI Atlantic, I have the honour and pleasure to welcome you to the closing ceremony of this important workshop. Truly it has been a productive week that will hopefully bring us closer to realizing the vision of a great monarch and to changing the lives of every young person in this country for the better. I hope it is a week whose ripples will also be felt far beyond our borders, because what we did here is directly relevant to all beings.

Above all, for us in the Ministry of Education, it has been a week that has deeply energized all of us, renewed our sense of mission and purpose, and united us in a common endeavour to bring Gross National Happiness into our educational system. Therefore we are particularly grateful and encouraged that all our honoured guests have joined us this evening, not only for your personal support for this endeavour, but also because your presence acknowledges the vital importance of education in securing this country's future.

For those who did not participate in the workshop, I am delighted to report that this was definitely not a conference with its usual statements, speeches, and presentations. Instead, we had some of the world's best educators join us for a genuine heartfelt, and very practical conversation on **how** we can bring GNH effectively into our educational system. In addition to the distinguished international participants, we also had 75 leading Bhutanese participants, including many of our students who participated actively, and contributed positively to the discussions during the workshop.

I'm also delighted to report that the participants, both national and international, have been open, frank, and genuine in sharing their opinions. Many thanks and congratulations to Ivy, our facilitator, for encouraging that openness and for firmly moving us forward toward practical objectives and outcomes.

Indeed, the outcomes of this workshop have given us confidence to undertake an immediate and far-reaching action. Next month we will gather all our principals along with lecturers of our teachers' colleges for a consultative workshop to share the outcomes and recommendations of this meeting and to prepare them to implement GNH in their schools in their own creative ways. We will use this very structure and format of this present workshop, including the breakout group recommendations, when we meet with the principals and college leaders next month. We will circulate the current workshop outcomes and proceedings to all the principals, representatives from the colleges of education, and the heads of the upcoming workshop in order to generate and stimulate ideas and to prepare them for the gathering.

Following this workshop, we will undertake a systematic follow-up with all the principals to assess progress and discuss problems faced, and to find out how the Ministry can support them in this splendid endeavour. We are confident that it will not take long for

every school in the country to be fully imbued with the GNH approach and atmosphere. However, that is not all. We will immediately move into a second phase in the 2010 and 2011 academic years to develop a GNH-inspired classroom and teaching learning materials, and to train all teachers in the new approaches and methods. It is also our intention to expand this endeavour rapidly in 2010 into the non-formal education sector.

Based on our extraordinary exchange this week, we have already developed basic short-term and three-year budgets, along with the immediate implementation plan, and have approached some of our development partners for support. To this effect, I am pleased to report that we are grateful to UNICEF for their assurance of their support for some of the activities.

We also decided during the workshop to create a new website devoted to Educating for GNH where we can share with our workshop participants, principals and teachers, the best practices in this country, and also to post information about all of the wonderful model schools we heard about yesterday morning from all of the participants.

A national task force comprised of members from the Ministry of Education, Royal University of Bhutan, and Royal Institute of Management and Civil Society will be constituted to implement the entire plan.

Many, many thanks to all our invited guests for being here tonight, and for the support and encouragement your presence demonstrates. And special thanks to our international visitors for sharing your vast knowledge and experience so openly and passionately, and for your splendid insights that have directly sparked this action plan. As we launch this ambitious endeavour, we will need all the help we can get from those in this room—both national and international. We genuinely hope that the friendship we developed this week will sow the seeds for ongoing partnerships. That, in turn, will bring us ever closer to realizing our beloved king's vision for Gross National Happiness in practice.

Thank you and welcome to the evening.

Master of Ceremony Mrs. Phuntsho Lham:

Thank you, Madam.

She has been Professor of Religious Studies at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado since 1979. In that capacity, she has taught Bhutanese monks in her classes, and been involved in discussions on the applicability of the Naropa model to educational reform in Bhutan, both for monastic and laypersons. She is co-editor of the forthcoming book titled *Meditation in the Classroom: Contemplative Pedagogy for Religious Studies*, which contains a collection of articles on this subject. She has practiced Tibetan Buddhism for 38 years, and is an Archarya at the Shambhala Buddhist lineage of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. She has also been involved in international Buddhist–Christian dialogue for the past 25 years, and has been an active participant in the contemporary North American

discussions surrounding Buddhism in the West. Please welcome Dr. Judith Simmer-Brown.

Remarks: Dr. Judith Simmer-Brown, Participant

Members of the Government, Madam Secretary of Education and the Education Ministry, my colleagues the international participants and observers, the national participants and observers, teachers, principals, students. I'm delighted to be able to speak tonight to thank everyone for making this such an incredibly powerful and special, meaningful workshop. It's rare in one's life that one can participate in a way that feels that it makes an actual contribution to peace and happiness in the world. And so I feel incredibly honoured to have been a member of this assembly, and especially honoured to be able to speak tonight.

In my training as a Buddhist practitioner, I have, of course, learned that true happiness is found within the mind. And this is a very important lesson. It has served me well in my life, but in this dark age, as they say in many Buddhist traditions, where there are forces of globalization and consumerism, warfare, and environmental degradation, happiness in the mind is not enough. We must make a concerted effort as a society to find ways of making it possible to trim back these forces, and no individual alone can do this. It requires society. It requires collaboration. And in this particular environment we have an opportunity to work together, first for the benefit of the Kingdom of Bhutan, but also for the benefit of the world.

Today, in our farewell, the members of our assembly spoke about the magic of Bhutan, and certainly, I have felt this as well. As someone said, it's hard to put into words what the magic is here. There's a sense of joy. There's a sense of power. There's a sense of incredible community. And what I have learned from my Buddhist teacher is that we call this *lungta*—a quality of connecting with life-force. Throughout the world, we have lost much of our life-force through these forces of greed, hatred, and delusion, through materialism, through warfare, through environmental degradation. And we are incredibly honoured to be invited to a kingdom where these forces are being actively combated, and the *lungta*, the life-force, of the nation is still alive and awake. And when we come here we can feel—feel actually physically and mentally—the quality of *lungta* of this place. And it brings great humility to us that you would even think that we would have anything to offer to your wonderful kingdom.

You have now inaugurated GNH as a way to protect the *lungta* of your nation, to honour the *dralas* of your world, and you have asked us to help. There's not much we can do, but we can say that we are soulmates with Bhutan. All of us who have come here have found the truth of what you have found. We have found that it is only by getting together as a society that we have the possibility of retrieving and reconnecting with the life-force that's available to us, and to help you do the same.

I have tremendous personal confidence in your project at this point, because of the enlightened leadership that I observe in your country, because of the confidence and vitality of your people, and because of beauty and the articulate passion of your students, your teachers, and your principals. So I feel a tremendous joy to have been part of this project, and feel a tremendous sense that you can do this, and I am committed to helping.

You have challenges, of course. How do you draw on the ancient traditions of your country while opening to the diversity of your peoples and the forces of modernization—choosing carefully what will bring your people along. Can you nurture the curiosity about the world in your young people without overextending and polluting that curiosity with these forces in the world? How can we help inoculate them—I think that’s the word that David Orr used—against a kind of naïve power of these forces in the world?

There are two keys that I see, or actually three keys, that I see in this. First of all, I believe in the power of meditation practice, just a little bit, to trust the happiness found in the mind. I think without some kind of mindfulness discipline, it’s very easy to believe that happiness is found outside of oneself, and it’s very easy to fall prey to the forces of our world. So it is my aspiration that you find a way to bring mindfulness into the classroom in Bhutan to teach the young people that this ancient way is actually a modern way—that many contemporary people in North America and Europe are turning to your ancient tradition as the key to our happiness. We hope that your young people will come to understand that is really hip in America to be Buddhist, and that being mindful is a very potent tool in the classroom for learning and for developing a sense of connection with life-force.

The second key I would like to mention is what we called “critical intellect”, or in my group we called it “analytical intellect” because I don’t think it has to be critical. That is, how can we develop the precision of mind so that we can discriminate between those things that lead to suffering versus those things that lead to happiness. I think this is a much bigger challenge. I think it is much easier to bring mindfulness into your classroom than to cultivate the analytical intellect to engage the students personally in developing judgment, clarity, and decision-making about the choices of their lives. The culture of analytic intellect will be challenging, but it is extremely important—important to inoculate against naïve connection being overcome with the forces of the world.

And the last point—and I credit this to the presentation of Sonam Wangchuk from Ladakh last night—it’s also key that you keep enlightened leadership in power here in the kingdom. Now that you’re a democracy it’s possible that something else could happen. Now there is enlightened leadership in the kingdom. You have a Dharmaraja—you have a king who deeply cares about his people. You as the government care deeply about your people, and you have the support. You have a very precious opportunity to engage this very important project of Gross National Happiness for your country and as a beacon for the world.

I am incredibly honoured to have been part of this project. I believe that this is something that you can do. And I know that I speak for many here that we will help you however we can. Thank you.

Master of Ceremony Mrs. Phuntsho Lham:

Thank you. Next I would like invite a student observer, Miss Kezang Yuden of Motithan Higher Secondary School to give the workshop impression.

Remarks: Kezang Yuden, Student observer

I would like to quote Sir Isaac Newton: “If I’ve seen farther than others it is because I was standing on the shoulders of giants.” Honourable Prime Minister, Education Minister, Ministers, Madam Secretary, foreign dignitaries, distinguished guests, and friends—in short, our giants. Good evening.

I’m Kezang Yuden of Motithang Higher Secondary School, and it gives me enormous pleasure in presenting to you the impressions of the whole programme on behalf of the student observers. I would like to inform everyone that I’m quoting the exact words of the student observers and their views without any glossing-over so that I can humbly present to you our genuine and honest impressions of the workshop.

According to Tshewang, he feels this workshop was a wonderful experience for him as an observer. And ever since the opening keynote address by the Prime Minister until the very end today, he has learned a lot and was tremendously inspired.

According to Chimmi Dema, she said, “I’m looking forward to going to school with the holistic and contemplative approach and study, intimately with nature, and would like to see GNH principles to be infused in the curriculum. I am thankful that I had a voice amongst all the big officials and experts in asserting my view and opinions.”

A very concerned Ugyen Samdrup said, “From my perspective, the workshop Educating for Gross National Happiness is very prominently crucial for each and every individual. Having rightly stated by His Majesty, the fourth Druk Gyelpo, GNH is more important than GDP. So, I would like to say that happiness is more important than what and how much we produce. But we can never compromise GDP for GNH. This workshop has given me an ample amount of knowledge and ideas. I’m confident that the different ideas and wisdoms imparted by all of us will definitely help in transforming our educational system from good to best.”

This is what a very sweet and gentle girl, Tshering Choden, had to say, “This whole programme about GNH being infused into the educational system was very productive, not only for the youth, but also for the adults present here as well. I am glad that we got the opportunity to come out of our shells and experience a new atmosphere, which

presents both traditional and practical wisdoms. What I enjoyed the most about this programme was that I learned that even adults with experience and wisdom can sometimes brew up very funny stories and go out of topic sometimes. All the adults in this programme are working so hard, cracking their skulls to help us. And knowing that makes me feel very warm. It feels nice to be looked after by caring and loving adults. This is what I'm taking away from this programme. This feeling I'm feeling right now, about being helped and helping others, of promoting humanity, of being charitable—I cannot put it into words. Maybe this is GNH. Maybe this is happiness—because this programme has made me very content with what I have, and most importantly, to become a better person, within.”

Rohit Adhikari, our would-be Prime Minister, says, “At this critical juncture, where the whole world is falling prey to the negative impacts of globalization, and especially at an age where Bhutan’s course of development might be deviated from civilization to westernization, the government of Bhutan, and in particular, the Education Minister and the Prime Minister have taken an overwhelming leadership to organize this Educating for GNH Workshop. Bhutan’s development has been constantly guided by the philosophy of GNH since the 1980s, and we have heard Their Majesties always say, “The future of our nation lies in the hands of our youth.” So what a wonder it is that we blend the philosophy of GNH in the young minds. Also, I personally feel that this workshop was truly incredible, and I can clearly imagine a bright and successful future for Bhutan. I’m referring to quite a future—maybe even thirty years. Never had I thought that, as observers, we would be so involved. Never had I thought that I would get an opportunity to meet so many great people so closely and work with them. But we will have to understand that the implementation of whatever we have discussed will take a long time. So to expect to see dramatic changes happen very soon is just like counting our chickens before they hatch. But I assure, and I commit to at least take the initiatives and permission from my principal to institute mindfulness in my school, or at the very least, in my own class, in the next academic year.” And he would also like to thank everyone for participating, and inspiring him to be a politician some day.

And lastly, as for me, it has been a wonderful and fruitful programme. In the teenage language, I would say, “The programme was awesome. Rad! It was cool! Unreal!” At the beginning, I had no idea what GNH was, nor did I actually care. But now, looking back on these few days, I’ve learned more about GNH than I’ve learned in a whole year in civics class. Now that I understand the importance and value of GNH, I feel extremely lucky and honoured to be a part, and to contribute to, such a historic, decision-making process in the education system. Now when I go back to school, I can proudly tell all of my friends that I played a part—even if it is a miniscule part—in the changes and transformation in our school and education system. I offer my deepest gratitude to all of the participants as well as observers for helping and paving a bright path for us and our generations to follow. I’m sure that now I don’t have to sham sickness to avoid school, and I will enjoy and treasure my times of being a student. Lastly, I would like to quote the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama. “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We, we are the ones we have been waiting for. We are the ones that we seek.” Tashi Delek.

Master of Ceremony Mrs. Phuntsho Lham:

Thank you, Kezang. The workshop has generated ideas to help teachers transform their own lives with the energy of mindfulness, with the hopes of transforming classrooms into communities of mutual understanding, love, peace, and compassion, which are cornerstones of GNH. And now to speak to us on the closing remarks of the conference, please welcome His Excellency Honourable Prime Minister Lyonchhen Jigmi Yoser Thinley.

Closing Remarks: His Excellency Honourable Prime Minister Lyonchhen Jigmi Yoser Thinley

Great educators who are assembled here, Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen including students. First of all, my deep appreciation and gratitude to Ron Colman for the wisdom and the indefatigable energy with which he has guided and supported in the coordination and in the management of this workshop. Together with him, I would like to also thank his family, Gwen Colman, Dahlia Colman—a great GNH ambassador, indeed—and to GPI Atlantic researchers who have supported this workshop.

And, of course, this workshop would not have been possible without the generosity of the sponsors, many of whom are here today. Thank you very much, indeed.

And then, kudos to our facilitator, Ivy Ang, who somehow magically and graciously opened up the space to allow that expression within an atmosphere of complete respect, safety, and warmth, while at the same time moving us firmly forward and never compromising the need for practical action and implementation. Striking such balance is a magical skill, so if Ivy is looking for a job—I have some thoughts, like maybe chairing our Cabinet meetings.

And thank you all for accepting Ivy's invitation to express yourselves with such grace, openness, and forthrightness. Without your honest and open expression, we would not have accomplished what we have, and we would definitely not be moving forward with determination as we clearly are going to. For me, one of the most inspiring elements of this week's deliberations has been the participation of our wonderful youth leaders—speaking out without fear or hesitation, speaking their minds so honestly and openly and respectfully, and at the same time listening and learning so intently—contributing extraordinary wisdom from a perspective no one else could have offered. I have often felt and said, wisdom is not the preserve of the old. Thank you.

At the end of such an extraordinarily fruitful and happy endeavour, is it possible that I should have any reason to sound a discordant note? But I must confess that I do have cause to feel deeply embarrassed, frustrated, and discontent.

I'm going to be totally honest about those feelings here, because one of the remarkable characteristics of this workshop has been its complete openness—not holding anything back, putting everything on the table, and expressing our deepest aspirations and concerns.

We have had such good fortune in this country to have been blessed with a century of truly enlightened and selfless monarchy caring only for the benefit and wellbeing of our people and our country, that I think all Bhutanese—not least myself—had the gravest of doubts, about our very recent transition to democracy. It was our beloved Fourth King, His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuk, who looked to the future and recognized that in this day and age, the transition to democracy was inevitable. Had he not insisted, we certainly wouldn't have done it—I can say that with certainty! The irony of Bhutanese democracy is that it came not by the will of the people but by the will of the King alone! In an act of supreme selflessness, His Majesty abdicated at the youthful age of 52 and turned over his sublime office to his remarkable son—now our country's first constitutional monarch—who demonstrates the same qualities of selfless wisdom and compassion as his father with complete respect for our new democratic processes. How fortunate we are!

Why this little interlude on democracy and monarchy in the midst of our education workshop? Simply because—quite frankly, it's taking all of us a while to get used to this democratic idea, and the doubts have not entirely dissipated. But observing this participatory process in this room—and the seemingly natural and effortless interplay between that bottom-up bubbling of your extraordinary knowledge and experience on the one hand, and action and leadership on the other hand from our Honourable Education Minister and his able colleagues in the ministry—and particularly watching and hearing these young students, I am fired with enormous hope both for our fledgling democracy and for the future of our country. I have truly this week (and maybe somewhat belatedly) witnessed personally the wisdom of our King's insistence on this democratic transition.

In short, as the world's youngest democracy, we have learned a lot this week about genuine participatory process—or as Ivy puts it—“co-creating” a brilliant, compassionate, and eminently practical outcome. This workshop may have been about bringing GNH into our educational system from a substantive point of view. But I think we have also learned something this week about how to do that! And we have learned a lot more—about open participation in our new democracy, about how to cross our usual bureaucratic barriers, about how to mobilize an entire Ministry enthusiastically behind a common objective, about how to join practical action in our fledgling democratic government with our highest and most noble objectives completely transcending party politics, and much more.

That little comment on democracy and process is necessary context for coming back to my feelings of embarrassment, frustration, and discontent. And I shall express these feelings honestly and openly.

First the embarrassment: I am still awed by the extraordinary knowledge, talent, and experience gathered here. We have here experienced founders and principals of schools that practice the very educational approaches we want to adopt. And we have distinguished professors and authors of multiple books and articles in several languages in the most highly regarded educational journals, whose writings are used as standard texts in top universities in courses on ecoliteracy, sustainability, Indigenous knowledge education, contemplative education, and holistic education. I am quite well aware that you are in huge demand to give the keynote addresses at prestigious international conferences in the international capitals of the world. And here in this tiny corner of the world, we have the nerve to cut you off after three or four minutes when you try to say a word or two. This is very embarrassing!

My only excuse is that we knew, when we started on this path, that to undertake a transformative task of this enormity—unprecedented in the world and literally with no road map—we could only do it if we had the absolute best advice and experience in the world on our side. So we went right to the top! We invited you because—to create a truly GNH-infused education system—we need nothing less than the wisest and most experienced advice available in the world. As we part company this evening—I sincerely hope only temporarily—please accept my sincere apologies for not fully and properly acknowledging and allowing expression for the depth and breadth of what each of you have to offer. There is only one solution to this that I can see—that you remain closely connected and involved with this initiative, so that we continue to draw on your generosity, knowledge and experience as we move forward. We have only just begun!

Secondly, frustration! We have listened to and been moved by such a long strand of pearls of wisdom. Over and over again, we have wanted to go further and deeper on dozens of issues, and yet at the same time, we simply had to get everything out there and on the table, and we have often sacrificed the depth and breadth we now need. This comes right back to my opening remarks, where I mentioned that ideally we need a series of many workshops spread over many years so that we can deeply explore each of the important cans of worms that we, in fact, did. To give just a very few examples of which there are literally dozens:

- We need a detailed and full-fledged exploration of ecoliteracy and sustainability education;
- We need one on the ecological and physical design of schools appropriate to a GNH education curriculum (we have one of the world’s experts in this area in this room—Dr. David Orr);
- We need an extensive investigation into age-appropriate methods of meditation, mind-training, and contemplative education applicable to schools, and we need to

- spread the awareness that profound meditation teachings and practices do not belong simply to a sectarian religion relevant only to red-robed monks, but are part and parcel of our cultural treasury that can show our youth and all human beings the clarity, insight, and open heartedness that are their natural inheritance;
- We definitely need not one, but many workshops that look at assessment methods that are compatible with GNH principles and values;
 - We need many workshops that explore how to integrate the vast treasury of our Indigenous knowledge into our so-called ‘modern’ curriculum. Again, we have one of the world’s most knowledgeable and experienced people in this room, author of multiple curricula and books on culturally-responsive curriculum design — Dr. Gregory Cajete — right here with us, who could this week have led an entire exploration in this area.
 - And we need many sessions in which our model alternative schools are the full focus of attention. We could have entire workshops exploring the relevance of Dr. Art-ong Jumsai Na Ayudhya’s school or Dr. Prapapat Niyom’s school in Thailand, or of the Ross School, or Shambhala School, or Alice Project school, or Shree Mangal Dvip, Thrangu Rinpoche’s school, to mention a few, and many others from which we have so much to learn.

I could go on, but the point is clear. There has not been one spark of fire here this week, but very many! It is so frustrating we have not been able to allow our tinder-dry brush of eager learning to spread into a wildfire of extensive and in-depth investigation on all the vital issues raised in this workshop. Each of you here is a treasury of knowledge and experience who could, in your own right have led vitally important in-depth workshops in your particular areas of knowledge and experience. Maybe this week’s gathering undertook an utterly impossible task, and it is still beyond me how Ivy so skillfully managed to balance open expression and the airing of all key issues with enough depth and solid substance to move us forward effectively to action.

But actually, it is the immediacy and urgency that I expressed in my opening remarks—and which I know have been echoed by many here, like Dr. David Orr, in characterizing the frightening globally warmed world that our children will inherit—that urgency and immediacy are the only excuse I can offer for our failure to explore in depth all that needs to be explored and for our biting off more than we can possibly chew in a single week.

And the only antidote that I can offer actually depends entirely on you. If you stay involved and connected with us, and if we can go further and deeper together, we will definitely attain the depth and breadth that have largely eluded us this week, and that will allow all your sparks of wisdom to ignite a firestorm of understanding, wisdom, and action to move us quickly and deeply to our desired goals. Please think of this week as only a beginning. That is the simple truth. If we can keep the A-Team on board—and you are the A-Team!—we can surely maintain our pace of forward movement without sacrificing depth, and attain our goals fully and completely, without compromising integrity.

Thirdly, discontent! In our bygone days and even centuries of remote Himalayan isolation, we Bhutanese were perhaps more content than we are now—even blissfully ignorant of the shallow, materialist greed that was consuming the rest of the world and destroying communities, Indigenous peoples, and the planet’s most precious natural resources. Here, in a corner of the high Himalayas, our pristine old-growth forests, mountains, and rivers, abundant with wildlife and unparalleled natural wealth, healing medicinal herbs and majestic aesthetic beauty, were truly our home—providing comfort, solace, and all the necessities of life. We were blissfully unaware of the rape of land and people in distant places.

But we can no longer feign ignorance even if we wished. Our Himalayan glaciers are melting at such an alarming rate—not due to any particular action of our own—that we are faced with potentially devastating glacial lake outbursts that can destroy entire communities in our fertile valleys. This is not theory. It’s started to happen! And we know that, as this glacial melting continues at a rate so much faster than even the most eminent scientists could have predicted, it is not only our own lives and livelihood in Bhutan that are threatened, but those of the billions of people downstream—nearly half the world’s population that depends on our Himalayan rivers. So now we have to give explicit expression to what used to be just natural instinct—as in our climate change declaration that I read to you yesterday and just dispatched to Copenhagen, that the Kingdom of Bhutan solemnly vows always and in perpetuity to remain a net carbon sink—never to emit more greenhouse gases than we can absorb.

In this world, how can we not be thoroughly and utterly discontent? Even if we were to achieve everything here in Bhutan that we have set out to do in this workshop, we would still have to feel entirely discontent. I’ll feel discontent until every one of your own countries convenes all its school principals, teachers’ college instructors, and teachers to engender the very values and actions we have discussed in this workshop. So my discontent stems very simply from the reality that we here are not separate from the world. Of course, our ancient Buddhist teachings on the interconnected nature of reality, have always told us this. But somehow, our geographical and even self-imposed isolation here in the high Himalayas for a long time appeared to provide an escape route of perhaps illusory contentment that enabled us to avoid facing the reality we can no longer avoid today.

In this case, the only antidote I can think of is simply that, here in Bhutan, we do what we have set out to do in this workshop with complete integrity—as fully and genuinely and whole-heartedly as humanly possible—and then hope that others pay some attention, draw some inspiration, and do it on their own home turf. Margaret Mead once said that the only way change ever happens is through the inspiration of a small number of dedicated people. Maybe—and I hope it is not too presumptuous to express this hope—the same might be true for a small nation like ours.

I have never ever believed in preaching or telling others what they should do. In fact, that would be utterly presumptuous in our case, because the truth is that I see the world

reflected in the very developments that scare me right here at home—like the rapid replacement of a convivial pedestrian culture by a car culture to which I referred at our opening ceremony. So it is quite literally true that all we can ever do is try to act decently ourselves, set as good a personal example as we can, and to acknowledge honestly when we fall short, as we so often do. But I know that my own discontent, and hopefully that of all our people, will not dissipate so long as our eyes and ears are open to suffering anywhere in the world.

And so I am left this week with deep embarrassment, frustration, and discontent! At the same time, I promise you we will do the very best we can with the treasure you have left us. We are blessed with wonderful and inspired leadership in our Education Ministry—a Minister, Secretary and Director of Education who deeply understand and appreciate what you have given and who are fully committed to the GNH-inspired education path we have now charted. We will study carefully all you have said and offered, read the proceedings, use the outcomes of all the breakout groups, and put all this into action as best we can.

But please know that this workshop has already been transformative in so many ways. I have seen many in our own leadership present in this room—who maybe entered this Phuntsho Pelri basement with considerable skepticism early in the week—embrace this GNH-inspired path forward as a direct result of their experience here this week. I can't put my finger on exactly what inspired them. It may even have less to do with substance than with the palpable dynamism in this room throughout this week. I felt that wonderful energy personally every time I came in to join you. But I have also had detailed daily briefing sessions to catch me up on all I missed due to the National Assembly sessions. And I know from all I have heard that you have been on the edge of your seats for a good part of this past week. That dynamism doesn't happen from being "nicey-nice"—in the words of one of our esteemed participants—but from being as open-hearted and honest as you have been. That atmosphere itself is a model of the GNH-inspired education system we want to see.

When we meet with our school principals and teachers' college instructors just six weeks from now, I am determined we will bring this very atmosphere to that gathering. We will begin with the heartfelt assumption that the principles and values of Gross National Happiness exist deep in the hearts of all our school principals and teachers. We will elicit from them the wisdom that is already in their minds and invite them to put that wisdom into action in their own schools. What is different now is both the invitation we are extending as a result of the inspiration from this workshop, and the extraordinary resources of knowledge and experience you have shared with us this week that provide—which are now available to us—the means for implementation. What we now need to do—with your further assistance—is to pass all this along to our principals and teachers.

Allow me to conclude by going back to square one, returning to our initial aspiration—our discussion on how might a GNH-educated graduate manifest in practice? At the end of our week together, it still feels somewhat easier to describe what such a graduate is not. We know that what we want to see is very different from the economic animal that

conventional educational systems so often seem to nurture, where success is measured by money, career, acquisition, fame, power, and self-aggrandizement.

Knowing how different our vision and goals are, we know with certainty that what we want to see is nothing less than transformative—graduates who are genuine human beings, realizing their full and true potential, caring for others—including other species, ecologically literate, contemplative as well as analytical in their understanding of the world, free of greed and without excessive desires—knowing, understanding, and appreciating completely that they are not separate from the natural world and from others—in sum manifesting their humanity fully.

I suppose the ultimate test is that a GNH-inspired education graduate will sleep soundly and happily at the end of each day knowing that she or he has given all to their families, to their communities, and to the world. If we and our young do not have this firm commitment, there is literally no future. In the end, a GNH-educated graduate will have no doubt that his or her happiness derives only from contributing to the happiness of others.

I do know one thing without the shadow of a doubt. You workshop participants and observers have manifested just that quality and understanding for this entire week—the very quality and understanding we want most to see in our GNH education graduates. Without that quality and understanding deeply rooted in your hearts and minds and work and lives, there would be nothing to have kept you in this room all week, let alone on the edges of your chairs, nor would you have even thought to undertake this arduous journey for the purpose of assisting and advising us.

By my own assessment tool, just described, you are indeed models of the GNH graduates we want to see. And therefore, as successful graduates, you all deserve the well-earned reward of the soundest and happiest good night's sleep tonight. May your own example and generosity this week spread—like the wind-borne seed that greeted you in your hotel rooms on arrival—not only to every classroom in the Kingdom of Bhutan but to the far corners of the world.

May your remaining days here in the Kingdom of Bhutan be filled with joy and may you have a safe and easy trip home. On behalf of His Majesty, of the people of Bhutan, and particularly of our young citizens in whose hands our future rests, THANK YOU!

TASHI DELEK

Master of Ceremony Mrs. Phuntsho Lham:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Now I present to you the Honourable Minister of Education Lyonpo Thakur Singh Powdyel to give the Vote of Thanks.

Vote of Thanks: Honourable Minister of Education Lyonpo Thakur Singh Powdyel

I have the difficult job of attempting to do the impossible. Here is the poverty of words to convey the fullness of the heart. My job would have been so much easier if we'd had a more fashionable, tangible arrangement to achieve a trade-off of a kind. But you chose to give us your all—body, mind, and speech—this gift is priceless. First of all I would like to pay my tribute to His Excellency the Honourable Prime Minister, Jigme Yoser Thinley, who has been the principal advocate of this noble, alternative way of looking at Gross National Happiness all his life. I would like to thank you for your vision, constant guidance, and reassuring presence in spite of the many commitments that vie for priority in the office of the Prime Minister. I would like to offer my deep gratitude to all our honoured guests, the Honourable Cabinet Ministers, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Your Excellencies, Members of the Parliament, guests from home and abroad, Dashos and Aums, colleagues and students, representatives of the mass media, ladies and gentlemen for honouring us with your presence this evening.

Educating for Gross National Happiness has been a joint effort in the true sense of the term. I am aware of the possibility that I might leave out some names of individuals who have been instrumental in the organization of this workshop. If that were to happen, please know that it will have been so by accident, and not by design.

GPI Atlantic has brought to bear on this workshop their full force and worked tirelessly to scour the world for relevant materials that support holistic education and pathways for genuine development. I would like to thank Dr. Ron Colman, the Executive Director of GPI Atlantic, and GPI Atlantic Senior Researchers Linda Pannozzo and Karen Hayward for all being at the heart of this initiative that began over a year ago. Here is a man who does not sleep. He has lost 10 kilograms of his weight, while I have gained 15 kilograms. I cannot thank you enough, Dr. Colman and family, for what you have brought to bear on the organization of this unprecedented workshop.

Education luminaries and wonderful human beings from 16 different countries converged in Thimphu to co-create our country's educational future with some of our finest Bhutanese educational practitioners this past week. I would like to offer our deep gratitude to all of you and to our truly observant and active national and international observers, including our wonderful students. I would like to acknowledge the generous support of all the agencies and individuals who gave us of their time and service.

The office of the Prime Minister, the Royal Bhutan Police, the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, particularly in the person of Kunzang—I hope you are around here—the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature, the Centre for Bhutan Studies, the Royal Education Council, the Bank of Bhutan, Druk Air Corporation, Thimphu City Corporation, Women Warriors of Bhutan, Miss Dalia Colman and Mrs.

Gwendolyn Colman, the Management of the Phuntsho Pelri—incidentally, Phuntsho Pelri means “the peak of endowment” even though we were at the basement level.

I would also like to thank the mass media, particularly because over the past week, they have given an extensive coverage of all of the deliberations that have been happening here. And I would like to hope that this trend grows even further. Our Thimphu school children and teachers who gave us the joy of dance and music, as well as the gift of the GNH song that we had the opportunity of listening to on the day that we opened the workshop.

Unspoken here, but expressed deeply in my heart, I would like to thank everyone who has been a part of this great effort, including Ms. Ivy Ang, who had the difficult job of providing coherence and intelligibility, so well alluded to by the Honourable Prime Minister— coherence and intelligibility to the deep and enlightened discussions, and the many-faceted observations that we witnessed over the six days here. We would like to thank her for the splendid way in which she led our deliberations and brought them to a neat conclusion. I would also like to thank her most able assistants, Kevin Ang and Meg Hart.

The daily meditation and the Dedication of Merit led and composed by Dr. Judith Simmer-Brown set the right atmosphere to begin and end our day, as did her early morning meditation sessions, and Ms. Joyce’s yoga sessions. I would like to thank you for this wonderful contribution. The individual contributions in the form of books, movies, and documentaries added a special dimension to our workshop. To all of you who made this very general contribution, I would like to offer our very deep, deep appreciation.

Our workshop would not have been possible if it were not for the generous support of our funders, development partners and well-wishers. I would like to acknowledge and put on record the generous support of the foreign agencies and individuals: UNICEF Bhutan Country Office, the Alerce Trust – Edinburgh, Scotland, The Maitri Trust – Edinburgh, Scotland, Education Program Development Fund and the World Bank, The Tributary Fund – Montana, the International Development Research Centre – Ontario, Canada, as well our own GNH Commission and the Royal Government of Bhutan. Individual contributions also came from Roxanne and Matt Buchwitz, Bill Eddy, Cangioli Che, and Ted and Leslie Maziejka.

Finally, I would like to commend the excellent teamwork and the deep sense of responsibility presented by my colleagues in the Ministry of Education. This workshop gave me a deeper sense of the talent and potentials that each of my colleagues has. We said, “We can”, and you have proved it. I am very proud of you all, my colleagues.

Standing benignly, over and above all of us, is the larger than life image of the gift-giver, Drukgyul’s King of Destiny, His Majesty, the fourth Druk Gyalpo, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, who gave to Bhutan and the world the ideal of Gross National Happiness as the sublime goal to aspire for. Thank you, our beloved King, for always being the light on

our way. And by his side, or in front of him, His Majesty, our fifth King, Druk Gyalpo, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, who's every action and daily behaviour epitomizes and manifest the most sublime qualities and attributes which we aspire to be embedded in the graduates of our GNH-infused curriculum. Thank you, dear King, for always being there.

As a happy consequence of this unprecedented workshop, deeply significant recommendations have been made for the Royal Government and the Ministry of Education to consider. We have no illusions about the magnitude of this challenge before us. But let me assure you we are committed. As a matter of fact, this challenge is no different from the challenge that the pursuit of Gross National Happiness, itself, presents. But this country has chosen the difficult, but wise path, to follow. The GNH approach is a less dramatic, but a more painstaking, path to follow than the GNP path. But it is the more desirable path to follow, especially in the light of the limits that the conventional measure of development has demonstrated. In most of the same way, a GNH mode of education is more challenging than the normal, well-trodden path. But, this is what it takes to keep the heart of the nation in its right place.

In so many ways, this workshop has actually been a vindication of the need to discover and to advance the true essence of education, which after all is a process that gently draws the human mind to look for and to love what is true and good and beautiful and useful. It has been an opportunity to reconnect the role and the soul. Education has come home to its true self.

Witnessing the round of reflections this afternoon, sitting at the back of the hall, a certain scene from Plato's Republic came to my mind. Socrates in the Republic talks about the founding of the ideal state. He is describing the ideal society to Glaucon, one of the characters there. Glaucon is one of the skeptics who Pek made a reference to this afternoon. So this Glaucon says to Socrates: "Socrates, I do not believe that such a City of God exists anywhere on earth". Socrates counters: "Whether such a city exists in heaven or will ever exist on earth, the wise man will always live after the manner of that city, having nothing to do with any other, and in so looking upon it, will set his own house in order".

We have all shared in the dream and design of this GNH City. We thank you for the largeness of your heart and the gift of your time and efforts. We all have a stake in this City because we have a stake in the future of our children and our children's children.

I would like once again like to express our deep appreciation to our Honourable Chief Guest, to Your Excellencies, Dashos and Aums, our guests, colleagues and students, ladies and gentlemen for your very kind presence here as well as for your encouragement.

As the curtain falls, I believe that a new brave world is opening up. I would like to hope that the GNH vision would be our North Star to take us to our desired destiny. Once again, I would like to say that what a great honour to have had this galaxy of luminaries

from all around the world to guide us and to help us, and also for the assurance of future support and contribution. Together, I'm sure our goal of creating a GNH City, one nation at a time, will succeed. Thank you so much, and we would like to wish you the very best of luck in your journey back home, and that you do in your life and in your profession.

Tashi Delek

Master of Ceremony Mrs. Phuntsho Lham:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

In appreciation of your generosity in sharing your remarkable knowledge and experiences with us, which has enabled us to come up with concrete and practical outcomes that we can translate into actions, we have gifts to offer in appreciation to our international participants, observers, and facilitators from His Excellency the Honourable Prime Minister. Now I would like to call upon the names and may I request the Honourable Prime Minister to do the honour.

As their names were called, the participants, observers, organizers, and facilitators went to the front of the room to accept a treasured gift directly from the Honourable Prime Minister, which was a beautiful book of photographs of Bhutan by Harald N. Nestroy—a gift that will spark warm-hearted memories for years to come.

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Judith Simmer-Brown completed her blog with the following description of the rest of the charming evening:

We had a lovely dinner afterwards, preceded by a reception in the hotel lobby, much like the evening of national dances several days ago. It was friendly and warm, and the professional dancers were doing the same basic dances as before—when suddenly the Prime Minister and the Bhutanese educational leadership motioned to us all, and we all were dancing in two or three concentric circles, round and round, rhythmically raising and lowering our hands, trying to imitate the beautiful and natural mudras. Everyone joined—Bhutanese, all the international visitors, the young students. So moving and touching, while the Bhutanese sang the songs heartfully. The songs had a kind of “sad-joy” feeling, and it was a great way to express our connection with each other as we embark on our journey home, always remembering Bhutan, GNH and the challenges ahead.

Dedication of Merit for Educating for Gross National Happiness

*May the benefit of our endeavour
Extend to all the inhabitants
Of the Kingdom and of the world.*

*May all beings overcome the darkness of ignorance,
Find enjoyment of learning and clarity of insight,
And live in harmony with each other
And will all elements of the natural world.*

*May we all find happiness in our service
To others everywhere.*

Tashi Delek

Addendum: Observers' comments and recommendations

As observers to the 7-12 December *Educating for GNH* workshop participated in the breakout group sessions but did not have opportunities to address the full plenary, an observation box was placed at the venue so that they could offer their own recommendations. In order that these observer recommendations are part of the workshop record and proceedings, they are produced below, with occasional responses and comments added.

1. We want to do everything in school: farming, forestry, community, sports, extra curricular activities, modern education etc. to develop our children into good human beings well grounded in their own community but able to relate to the global community at large. Will the teachers and students not be overloaded? Aren't we trying to squeeze too much into this....?

Response: Informed of this concern about potential overload and burden, the Honourable Prime Minister said to workshop organizers on 26 December, 2009:

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.

2. One observer urged "Immediate steps to reduce the inequitable distribution of health before implementation of GNH."
3. Another observer recommended: "The steering committee needs to distil the overabundance of information and input and fast track action to create money, time, place and energy to synergize the enormous task into attainable steps by assuring clarity and transparency to the principals who will import this to their teachers."

Response: The organizers agree with this good suggestion, and are taking the following actions to begin to address this need:

- a) First, in his address to the school principals on 21 January, 2010, at Paro College of Education, the Honourable Prime Minister listed several very specific and practical actions that principals can take to strengthen all four pillars of GNH in their schools. A transcript of these recorded remarks will be made and distributed.

- b) All school principals at the three principals' workshops in January-February 2010 are creating concrete proposed action plans on bringing GNH into their own schools, tailored to the specific conditions and circumstances of their own schools. Please see the end of this section for an outline of the action plan form they filled out on the final day of their workshop (more space is allowed for each response on the actual forms). They will take these action plans back to their schools to discuss with teachers and students, and will modify them accordingly. They will then send in their completed action plan to the Ministry of Education for the purpose of monitoring and support.
 - c) The Minister of Education has asked that a short, practical 'guidebook' be prepared for principals and teachers, distilling the essential points of the workshops and giving specific practical examples of GNH-based actions that principals and teachers can implement. As well, the Ministry has committed to preparing practical GNH-based classroom materials, resources, and activities during 2010-11.
4. Another observer commented: "Respond to the urgent requests of the students to tell teachers that their attitude to the profession of teaching is so important to the students. Workshops are necessary on the ROLE of the teacher as role model and on the incredible influence they have."

Response: While workshops on this specific theme have not yet been planned, this issue of the vital importance of teachers as examples and models was a key theme at the first Educating for GNH principals' workshop held in Paro on January 19-24.

5. The following very detailed suggestions were offered by one observer for the organization of future *Educating for GNH* workshops designed for training teachers in the new approaches:
- Employ wholistic educators to help design workshops. This will encourage us to practice the methodologies we teach and are advocating.
 - Inject space into the conference.

Space is equally important form: (Feminine and masculine principles)/ways to implement this could be: more brief 5 minute meditations injected throughout discussion etc.

Designate 1 afternoon or simply 2 hours to see the local environment. Many people chose this anyway on Friday afternoon—they needed it and it refreshed them.

- Texture the workshop: This requires more thought. However, ideas include:

20–30 minute sections. 5 minute meditation, 20–30 minutes discussion, break out into quads or more for 30 min, regroup, and pull together threads from groups.

- Ask participants to use mindfulness in a ½ hour walk – I felt a need for fresh air, sunshine and the larger Thimphu world—small sound bytes are fine. (This related to the environmental aspect that was mentioned).
- Overall we tend to cram things into space because of the urgency we feel to get all our ideas out. However, every creative process is birthed from space and when this is forgotten we are ignoring the essence of wholistic education. Speed is different than manifestation. And the unity of space and activity is a win/win for manifestation.
- Implement a few more contemplative modalities.

Sample of Schedule Proposal

- 5 min meditation guided
- 20–30 min presentation
- 20–30 min: Break out groups — discuss ideas in groups of 4–8 people that reflect on presentation
- 20–30 min: pull threads from each group and group process
- Short break of 20–30 minutes: contemplative walk (this requires trusting participants)
- 5 min meditation to regroup
- 20–30 min: group discussion or presentations from educators
- Workshop/breakout 1- 2 hours to get ideas on paper and inform

Facilitator Workshop and Principals Workshop

Please use more games, songs, poems, practical examples, story telling, meditation, drums, and dance because they will give a practical exercise of actual GNH examples (teach what you preach)

- I agree that workshops for principals and teachers be held in rural communities – outside of Thimphu.
- Have good facilitators to take teachers out to the field for practical experiences to learn about culture, the environment....
- I feel that in the GNH pillars, social service, social work, and social development are not mentioned enough, especially how to teach the disadvantaged people, the psychological social problems. It seems in Bhutan there is a lack of understanding on real social work and what social workers could do in this regard.
- I'd like to see each school's children go out to help clean the streets of Thimphu.
- The country's officials: Please support this initiative to make Thimphu more beautiful.
- Please reduce food sold in plastic wrappers.

- Please do not sell food with plastic wrappers in schools.
- Please serve more Bhutanese food in hotels, restaurants, and in markets.
- Please bring GNH views to waste management — bring recycling into the City garbage collection authority.

.....

Partial response: While the facilitators at the first *Educating for GNH* principals’ workshop held in Paro on January 19–24 favoured longer breakout group sessions than the 20–30 minute segments outlined above, they did adopt one key element of this observer’s suggestion for workshop schedules. 90-minute breakout group sessions were divided into two parts: First, four groups of about 7–8 participants spent about 45 minutes discussing the key themes and issues introduced in plenary. For the second 45 minutes, these four groups of 7-8 came together in a group of about 30 to “pull together the threads” from the smaller groups (in the words of the above observer), and to identify the key points that would be presented by the group of 30 to the full plenary of 227 participants.

Response ctd: In addition to daily pre-breakfast meditation sessions, plenary discussions at the principals’ workshop daily began and ended with 5 minute meditation sessions. As well, many breakout groups also began with 2–3 minutes silence, and it was recommended that morning tea be a quiet tea to allow a more mindful and contemplative ‘meditation in action’ approach. In these ways, some of the above observer’s suggestions were in fact incorporated into the principals’ workshop schedule.

Concerning suggestions on taking principals into the natural environment, our December workshop participants appreciated being offered visits into the natural environment before and after the workshop itself. As suggested by the observer above, the principals’ workshops are all being held outside Thimphu — at the Paro College of Education.

In line with the observer’s recommendation, a full morning session was spent at this principals’ workshop specifically on community service. Lama Shenphen gave the introduction in plenary, describing his work with Thimphu street youth, working with youth to clean the dog pound weekly, painting the hospital, and planting trees. In their breakout groups, the principals then approached service learning through the three-fold approach of (a) investigation of key issues in their community; (b) analysis of potential solutions; and (c) action to remediate suffering. They presented some inspiring best practices to the plenary. At the end of the workshop, the principals collected Nu 90,000 among themselves as a donation towards Lama Shenphen’s work. In short, as the observer above recommends, community service this time was central to the principals’ discussions of bringing GNH into their schools.

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6. Another observer remarked that “GNH needs to be more physically visible in the streets of Thimphu. Pride, ownership, action, and “Walking the Talk” of GNH is not

visible,” according to this observer. The observer recommended that local theatre is also a great way of spreading the message of GNH. As well, this observer remarked:

- “The monastic body must be involved to bring in their wisdom and good intentions to help counsel the out of school youth.
 - Several scholarships for students from under-privileged backgrounds should be provided rather than providing one scholarship for study abroad, which is expensive.”
7. Another observer commented that bringing GNH into schools should include the “physical visibility of the Mandala Mission Statement” and goals, acting “as lanterns, beacons and guiding lights [that] need to be in all entry ways to schools and classrooms.”
 8. One observer commented that “yoga is not only a physical exercise, it brings balance to body, mind, life... It is an important tool to meet beautiful values (non-violence, truth, non-greediness, contentment, interconnection etc...) and therefore is completely in line with GNH.”
 9. Another observer remarked that the workshop featured “so many good ideas from similar people who seem to think alike”, particularly in supporting environmental conservation rather than economic development. This observer commented that “we needed to have people with different ideas and principles — some who would not necessarily agree with us. For example, the GDP people, BCCI and the modern business sectors. This is important to refine our approaches and plans. This is a big risk, therefore, we need to be more balanced to ensure that economic development happens (to finance our new approaches).”
 10. One observer focussed at some length on the importance of GNH in assisting children to realize a sense of “coherence with nature.” The observer commented further:

“As teachers, our role is to help children actualize their own potential to become successful human beings. Most of our problems today are caused because we increasingly live our lives in competition with nature. We as teachers, therefore, should help students to understand and appreciate nature and develop an attitude of living in coherence with nature, not in competition with nature. This means, a logical, orderly and aesthetic relationship between people and nature.

“Coherence with nature does not mean living the life of an ascetic, but living a life that is considered successful even in modern society today—being successful in any profession and yet also living in harmony with nature. That is true success. This makes success that much more satisfying, and thus makes harmony with nature a rational decision and not just an emotional response. Thus coherence and rationality imply neither subjugation by nature nor subjugation of nature—we do need nature to

actualize our dreams and become successful but we need to use nature with responsibility, and be aware of the impact that all our actions have on nature.

“Once students understand and internalize this, a rational consequence of this understanding is the development of compassion towards all sentient beings. Students will understand that they need to live their lives in such a manner that not only do they not cause suffering but if possible work towards removing the suffering of other sentient beings/ nature.

“Thus there is a balance of the head and the heart—compassion becomes both an emotional response and also a rational response.

“This is the attitude and mindset that all teachers and students need to internalize. Only if teachers internalize this attitude, can they then pass this on to the students. To develop this mindset in students, when they learn Physics, Biology, History or Economics, they must do so in the context of the laws of nature. Therefore, the teaching/ learning process in the school must help them to develop an understanding about their parents and about phenomena that exist in nature. And if there are 175 teachers, there will be 175 correct ways of developing and passing on this understanding to their students.”

Partial response: The 19–24 January, 2010, principals’ workshop included a specific module and exercise on the use of school vegetable gardens both to teach science and simultaneously to develop a deep appreciation for and connection with the natural world, while drawing on local farming skills to learn practically how to grow food. The Hon. Prime Minister suggested a wide range of practical actions, including field trips into nature, which could nurture a deep eco-consciousness among students. At the end of the workshop, the principals collectively made a pledge to create “green schools” as a key collective action that could move them all towards realizing GNH in their own schools.

Educating for GNH: Proposed Individual Action Plan — 2010

Name:

Position:

School (if applicable):

Level (primary, lower, middle, or upper secondary):

District and region:

In 2010: I will undertake the following specific actions to bring GNH more deeply and effectively into my school and work. (— Use back or additional paper if you need more space, and note that it is not necessary to fill in each category below. You may also add your own categories at the end):

Meditation and mind training:

Curricula: (Any or all of the following: science, environmental studies, language, history, social sciences, etc.)

Community service:

Sports:

Arts and culture:

Ambience / physical and psychological conditions and atmosphere:

School management practices:

Classroom citizenship and discipline:

Critical thinking and media literacy:

Assessment:

Students —

Teachers and administration —

Weekly self-assessment / reflection —

Engagement of teachers and students in Educating for GNH and transmitting this week's learning in our work place:

Network and share experiences with fellow principals, lecturers, and DEOs:

Will you craft a GNH vision statement with your teachers, students, and fellow staff and post it prominently in your school or workplace?

YES _____ NO _____

Will you engage your teachers, students, and fellow workers to sign onto this vision statement to signify their own commitment?

YES _____ NO _____

Will you engage your teachers, students, and fellow workers to sign onto at least one concrete shared GNH-related pledge?

YES _____ NO _____

If yes, what kind of pledge will you consider?

OTHER:

Addendum: Participants, Observers, and Organizers

National Participants

1. Dasho Tashi Phuntshog, Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat
2. Dasho Sherub Gyeltshen, Secretary, Dzongkha Development Commission
3. Aum Sangay Zam, Secretary, Ministry of Education.
4. Dasho Karma Tshiteem, Secretary, GNH Commission
5. Dasho Kinley Dorji, Secretary, Ministry of Information & Communication
6. Dasho Pema Thinley, Vice Chancellor, Royal University of Bhutan
7. Lopen Gembo Dorji, Secretary General, Zhung Dratshang (Central Monk Body)
8. Professor Mark Mancall, Director, Royal Education Council
9. Lopen Lungtaen Gyatso, Director, Institute for Language and Cultural Studies
10. Mr. Thubten Gyatsho, Director, Paro College of Education
11. Mr. Karma Yeshey, Director, Department of Adult and Higher Education, MoE
12. Ms. Naina Kala Gurung, Principal, Phuentsholing MSS
13. Mr. Dorji Thinley, Dean of Academic Affairs, Paro College of Education
14. Aum Siok Sian Pek-Dorji, Professional Director, Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy
15. Lama Shenphen Zangpo, Buddhist monk, Deer Park, Thimphu
16. Mr. Michael Rutland Esq OBE
17. Ashi Kunzang Choden, Writer
18. Khenpo Phuntsok Tashi, Director, National Museum of Bhutan
19. Mr. Thinley Pelden, Vice President, Bhutan Chamber of Commerce & Industry
20. Aum Deki Pema, Election Commissioner, Election Commission of Bhutan
21. Mr. Karma Wangchuk, Secretary General, Bhutan Olympic Committee
22. Mr. Dorji Tshewang, Offtg. Chief Curriculum Officer, CAPSD
23. Mr. Chhewang Rinzin, Managing Director, Druk Green Power Corporation
24. Ms. Tshering Lhamtshok, Programme Coordinator, Royal Society for Protection of Nature
25. Ms. Sonam Chuki, Lecturer, Royal Institute of Management
26. Mr. Wangchuk Rabten, Specialist, Curriculum and Professional Support Division
27. Mr. Karma Yeshey, Curriculum Officer, Curriculum & Professional Support Division, MoE
28. Ms. Dorji Tshomo, Student, class XI, Yangchenphug HSS
29. Mr. Dewan Giri, Student, class XI, Motithang HSS

Ex. OFFICIO

1. Hon'ble Prime Minister
2. Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Education
3. Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Labour and Human Resources
4. Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Agriculture
5. Hon'ble Lyonpo Sonam Tobgay
6. Hon'ble Ambassador of India.

International Participants

1. Zenobia Barlow is co-founder and Executive Director of the Center for Ecoliteracy, Berkeley, California, USA
2. Richard Brown is co-Chair, Department of Contemplative Education, Naropa University, Boulder, Colorado, USA
3. Judith Simmer-Brown, Ph.D., is Professor of Religious Studies, Naropa University, Boulder, Colorado, USA
4. Gregory Cajete, Ph.D., is Director of Native American Studies and Associate Professor in the Division of Language, Literacy and Socio-cultural Studies, College of Education, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, USA
5. Satish Kumar, Ph.D., is the current editor of Resurgence Magazine, is Founder and Director of Programmes of Schumacher College, Devon, UK, and founded the Small School
6. Cheryl Charles, Ph.D., is President of the Children & Nature Network (C&NN), Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA
7. John P. Miller, Ph.D., is Professor of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto, Canada
8. Yoshiharu Nakagawa is Associate Professor, Department of Humanities, Graduate School of Science for Human Sciences, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan
9. Sanjit Bunker Roy is Founder and Director of the Barefoot College, India
10. David W. Orr, Ph.D., is the Paul Sears Distinguished Professor of Environmental Studies and Politics at Oberlin College in Ohio and James Marsh Professor at the University of Vermont, USA
11. Sally Booth, Ph.D., is the Associate Director of Research, Curriculum and Professional Development as the Ross Institute in East Hampton and New York City, NY, USA
12. Sulak Sivaraksa is the Founder and Director of the Spirit in Education Movement (SEM), Thailand
13. Aostre Johnson, Ph.D., is Professor of Education at Saint Michael's College, Colchester, Vermont, USA
14. Valentino Giacomini and Luigina De Biasi are Founders of the Alice Project schools located in Sarnath and Bodhgaya, India
15. Madhu Suri Prakash, Ph.D., is Professor of Philosophy of Education at Pennsylvania State University's College of Education, USA
16. Shirley Blair is Director of the Shree Mangal Dvip school, Kathmandu, Nepal
17. Henry Rosemont, Jr., Ph.D., Visiting Professor of Religious Studies, Brown University, Rhode Island, and Distinguished Professor of the Liberal Arts Emeritus at St. Mary's College of Maryland, USA
18. Steve Mustain is Director of the Shambhala School in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
19. Sonam Wangchuk is Co-Founder of Students Educational & Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SEMCOL), Ladakh, India
20. Vandana Shiva, Ph.D., recipient of the Right Livelihood Award (the 'alternative Nobel Prize') has pioneered the organic movement in India and established Navdanya, the country's biggest network of seed keepers and organic producers.

21. Manish Jain is Coordinator and Co-Founder of Shikshantar: The People's Institute for Rethinking Education and Development, Udaipur, India
22. Prapat Niyom is Founder of Roong Aroon School, Thailand
23. Benjalug Namfa is Director of the Bureau of Academic Affairs and Educational Standards, Thailand
24. Art-ong Jumsai Na Ayudhya is Chief Administrator of Sathya Sai School, Thailand

National Observers

1. His Holiness Jangtrul Rinpoche
2. Dasho Sangay Dorji, Dzongkha Expert, Dzongkha Development Commission
3. Ms Claire Vandervaeren, Resident Representative, UNDP
4. Mr. Parsuramen Armoogum, Director & Representative, UNESCO, New Delhi
5. Mr. Brian J Hunter, Country Director, Save the Children (Nepal Country Office)
6. Mr. Dorji Tshering, Director General, Department of Culture, MOHCA
7. Mr. Tshewang Tandin, Director General, Department of School Education, Ministry of Education
8. Dr. Tashi Samdrup, Director, Council for Renewable Natural Resources Research of Bhutan
9. Mr. Chencho Dorji, Director, Department of Youth & Sports, Ministry of Education
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11. Mr. Karma Tshering, Director, Royal Institute of Management
12. Ms. Kezang Doma, Registrar, Royal University of Bhutan
13. Dasho Leela Pradhan, Chairperson, Education Development Committee
14. Dasho Dr. Jagar Dorji, Member, National Council
15. Dasho Tshering Dorji, Member, National Council
16. Aum Pema Choden, Executive Director, Bhutan Broadcasting Service
17. Mr. Jaganath Sharma, Manager, Radio Programme, Bhutan Broadcasting Service
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22. Mr. Karma Wangdi, Proprietor, Voluntary Artist Studio Thimphu
23. Mr. Phuntsho Wangdi, Chief Editor, Kuensel Corporation
24. Mr. Kinley Tshering, Chief Editor, Bhutan Times
25. Mr. Nedup Zangpo, Chief Editor, Bhutan Observer
26. Mr. K.B Lama, Chief Editor, Bhutan Today
27. Mr. Tashi Dorji, Chief Editor, Business Bhutan
28. Mr. Sonam Tashi, Chief Planning Officer, PPD, Ministry of Economic Affairs
29. Mr. Sudan Shana Perera, Programme Manager, UNDP
30. Mr. Wangchuk, Manager, Rehabilitation Center, Serbithang
31. Ms. Françoise Pommerate, Consultant, ILCS
32. Mr. Jit Tshering, Senior Lecturer, Royal Institute of Management

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34. Mr. Lam Dorji, Sr. Research Officer, Center for Bhutan Studies
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36. Ms. Dorji Wangmo, Programme Officer, Youth Development Fund
37. Ms. Kunzang Wangmo, Programme Officer, Human Resource Department, MOLHR
38. Mr. Phuntsho Wangdi, Dzongkhag Education Officer, Thimphu
39. Mr. Ugyen Tshering, Dzongkhag Education Officer, Haa
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46. Ms. Karma Choden, EMO, Education Monitoring & Support Services
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48. Mr. Omnath Baraily, Curriculum Officer, Curriculum & Professional Support Division
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50. Mr. Ambar Rai, Curriculum Officer, Curriculum & Professional Support Division
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International Observers

1. James Tyler Jr. is a photographer who documents children learning in the real world for the Center for Ecoliteracy, California, USA.
2. Elaine Orr is a teacher in the Oberlin School District and is past president of the Oberlin Community Services Council

3. Mingmanas Sivaraksa, Spirit in Education Movement (SEM), Thailand
4. JoAnn Rosemont, Learning Disabilities Instructor, St. Mary's County, Maryland Public Schools (ret.)
5. Constance Rosemont is Executive Director of Red River Theatres, Concord, New Hampshire, USA.
6. Jean Mustain is founder of the Turquoise Lake Preschool and consults on teacher training and curriculum development at the Shambhala School, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
7. Betsy Gaines Quammen is Founder of The Tributary Fund (TTF), Montana, USA
8. Silver Donald Cameron, Ph.D., is an award-winning and prolific author, playwright, journalist and columnist residing in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
9. Kent Martin is Executive Producer, National Film Board of Canada's Atlantic Centre, and Treasurer, GPI Atlantic, Nova Scotia, Canada
10. Kerstin Martin is a midwife and past president of the Canadian Association of Midwives, Nova Scotia, Canada
11. David Gait, Maitri Trust, Edinburgh, Scotland
12. Angus Tulloch, Maitri Trust, Edinburgh, Scotland
13. Loredana Marchetti, Ph.D., Senior Programme Specialist, Canadian Partnerships Program, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ottawa, Canada
14. Adrie Kusserow, Chair, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, St. Michael's College, Colchester, Vermont, USA
15. Ross McDonald, Ph.D., is Professor of Management, University of Auckland, New Zealand
16. Khwankhao Sivaraksa, Spirit in Education Movement (SEM), Thailand
17. Bhuripat Jittivitikal, Spirit in Education Movement (SEM), Thailand
18. Valerie Lorig teaches at Shambhala centers and at Naropa University, Boulder, Colorado, USA
19. Curtis Koren is Executive Director of Vermont Intercultural Semesters (VIS), Vermont, USA
20. Shafik Nanji is Co-Director and Science and Mathematics Curriculum Consultant for Newton Tutoring Services in Halifax and an educator at Armbrae Academy, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
21. Michael Cluett is a GPI Atlantic Youth, Halifax, Nova Scotia and recent recipient of the Red Cross Young Humanitarian Award
22. Meg Hart is Co-founder of CNM Associates, is on the board of Siddhartha School, Australia
23. Kathleen Baertschy is Head of English at Concordian International School, Bangkok, Thailand, and has taught at International Baccalaureate schools around the world
24. Chatchawan Thongdeelert works in rural development in northern Thailand, and is founder-director of local wisdom school in Chiang Mai
25. Supawadee Petrat is Coordinator of the Collaboration for the Young Generation in Mekong Region Program (CYM), Bangkok, Thailand
26. Somkid Mahissaya is Deputy Director of Thai Volunteer Service Foundation (TVS), Bangkok, Thailand

27. Nitaya Kijtewachakul is a lecturer at the Mahasarakham University in northeastern Thailand
28. Kimseng Meas is Director of Sahamakum Teang Tnaut (STT), Cambodia
29. Xuyen Dangers is a professional social worker with Church World Service in Laos
30. Rattana Chusaeng is the Field Coordinator of the Creative Youth Group in Thailand
31. Man Seung Sherman Tang works with Partnerships for Community Development, China
32. Mei Ling Freda Ng is engaged in community-based projects in Southwest China
33. Naw Moo Paw works in community development projects in Burma
34. Hans van Willenswaard is Project Director, School for Wellbeing; Bangkok, Thailand
35. Wallapa van Willenswaard is Managing Director, Suan Nguen Mee Ma Publishers books for transformation, Bangkok, Thailand
36. Nancy Beck is Director of Connections, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
37. Gisele Labatut is Senior Program Officer (ret.), International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada
38. Jean-Michel Labatut is a Development Sociologist working at the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada
39. Jane Carpenter, Associate Professor, Naropa University, Boulder, Colorado, USA, presently working with R.U.B. in Bhutan
40. Dara Padwo-Audick is President of Creative Strategies, Falls Church, Virginia, USA
41. Kent Bicknell is the Principal of Sant Bani School, Sanbornton, New Hampshire, USA
42. Michael Givel is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science, University of Oklahoma, USA, and is presently the first U.S. Fulbright scholar in Bhutan

Organization/ Research team

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Meg Hart. Assistant facilitator, Educating for GNH Workshop
Kevin Ang. Graphics Design, and assistant to the workshop facilitator
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Linda Pannozzo. Senior Researcher, GPI Atlantic, Nova Scotia, Canada
Karen Hayward. Senior Researcher, GPI Atlantic, Nova Scotia, Canada
Gwendolyn Colman. Youth Program Director, GPI Atlantic, Nova Scotia, Canada
Dahlia Colman. GPI Atlantic, Nova Scotia, Canada, media relations
Midori Sakurai. Japanese translation for Educating for GNH Workshop

National Organizers

Tshewang Tandin. Overall Coordinator for the GNH Workshop
Chencho Dorje. Assistant overall Logistics Coordinator

Jambay Wangchuk. Secretariat for the GNH Workshop
Karma Jurmi. Communication among organizers
Nima Tshering. Graphic design, sourcebook and name tag printing
Nima Gyelshen. Protocol and ground transportation arrangement
Phuntsho Lham. National participants coordinator
Bumika Ghalley. Visa processing and approval for filming
Lhaden Loday. Accommodation, food and venue arrangement
Pema Yangden, Accommodation, food and venue arrangement