

Promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Schools Building on What Children Value and Aspire to Do and Be

CURRICULUM MAPPING REPORT



Curriculum Mapping Report

Context

As part of the project, *Promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Schools Building on What Children Value and Aspire to Do and Be*, 21 capability indicators were identified using the Capability Approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011) to assess how Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) principles are in the school curriculum. A survey was subsequently developed and administered to students and teachers to examine their understanding of these capabilities and the extent to which they are reflected in teaching and learning practices.

The findings revealed that students from Grades 1 to 10 demonstrated varying levels of understanding across the 21 capabilities. Their responses were scored out of 50 points, scaled to 1, and ranked to identify key areas of strength and concern. The analysis indicated that students showed strong understanding in Nutritional Well-Being, Love and Care, Respect, and Education, suggesting that these areas are well-integrated and reinforced through both curriculum content and classroom practices. Such findings are consistent with Nussbaum's (2011) argument that education plays a foundational role in developing empathy, respect, and human dignity, which are essential components of GESI promotion.

Students also demonstrated awareness of Social Relations and Leisure Activities, reflecting an appreciation for relational and participatory aspects of well-being. This aligns with Sen's (1999) perspective that freedom to relate and participate meaningfully in society is essential for human development.

However, lower understanding in Freedom from Economic or Non-Economic Exploitation, GESI curriculum, Mental Well-Being, Autonomy, Aspiration, Plan/Imagine/Think, and Religion and Identity points to domains where curricular and pedagogical emphasis remains limited. This gap echoes Unterhalter (2023), which note that school curricula in developing contexts often focus on cognitive outcomes while neglecting affective and ethical dimensions of equity and inclusion.

Teachers' perceptions supported these patterns. They reported that students are most knowledgeable about Participation and Education, followed by Life/Physical Health and Respect, indicating that these themes are relatively well integrated across grade levels. In contrast, teachers highlighted Mental Well-Being, Time Autonomy, and Nutritional Well-Being as areas where understanding and curricular focus remain weak. These findings echo Booth (2017) and Ainscow's (2016) view that inclusive education requires not only physical access but also attention to emotional, psychological, and social inclusion in learning.

The overall average student awareness score of 80.33 suggests a generally strong foundation in understanding capabilities, yet with identifiable thematic gaps. Both teachers and students consistently ranked Education, Love and Care, Respect, and Participation as the most visible and valued capabilities. Conversely, Spirituality, Mobility, and Freedom from Economic or Non-Economic Exploitation ranked among the lowest (Ranks 19–21), highlighting the need for greater emphasis on personal agency, moral reasoning, and protection rights within the curriculum.

Overall, the findings suggest that some capabilities are effectively integrated into the curriculum, others require deliberate and structured incorporation. Since students clearly value these capabilities, this report highlights the need for their stronger integration into the curriculum to better align with students' values and aspirations. Curriculum planners and educators specifically the Centre for School Curriculum Development (CSCD) may consider enhancing their explicit inclusion within curriculum design and classroom practices to ensure these valued dimensions are more meaningfully reflected in teaching and learning. Doing so will not only enhance students' understanding but also strengthen Bhutan's broader vision of education that nurtures well-being, equity, and inclusion (Royal Education Council [REC], 2022).

Our Proposal

Building on these findings, the following examples suggest possible ways in which selected subjects could integrate these capabilities to promote equitable learning opportunities and support the holistic development of students. While these suggestions are based from the findings of the situational analysis, their adoption can be determined by curriculum developers according to contextual priorities and feasibility.

Capability Indicators	Proposed Subject(s)	Suggested Grade / Age	Integration Strategy
Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation	Economics/English	Grades 1–10	Include case studies on labour force participation, gender wage gaps, gender responsive budgeting, protection rights, and ethical labour practices; use of debates and texts that highlight these issues. English-stories about fairness, respect and sharing to help children recognize exploitation and justice in lower classes. Exploring child labour, gendered work, fair wages and social inequalities through project-based learning in higher classes.
Autonomy	All subjects /Health and Physical Education/ History or Civics Sciences	Grades 4–10	Encourage student-led projects, peer evaluation for higher grades Exploration of autonomy in relation to democracy, identity and moral choices in higher classes. Designing personal fitness plans, provision of personal time with accountability and responsibility, avoiding junk food and setting self-

			improvement plans in lower classes (HPE/Science).
Religion and Identity	History/Dzongkha	Grades 1–10	Explore diversity in religion, traditions, and social harmony through comparative storytelling. For example, introduce festivals, symbols and traditions through stories for lower classes and explore identity, inclusion, respect and values shared across different religions in higher classes.
Mental Well-being	Dzongkha / Health and Physical Education/Biology/Science	Grades 1–10	Integrate mindfulness activities, guided in-class reflections to build emotional literacy. HPE-Personal health, relationships, emotional regulation and resilience. Bio-Nervous system, brain-mind connection, stress physiology, etc. Lower grades (Science)-healthy eating, avoiding junk food, avoiding screen time (negative consequences of overstimulation of brain). Some others could include: biology-brain's role in emotion; stress management and mindfulness in HPE.
Aspiration	All subjects	Grades 5–10	Include vision boards, goal-setting activities, and career conversations linking subject areas to real-life aspirations. Interview parents/community members about their work and dreams. Connect science projects to sustainable community aspirations.
Plan, Imagine, Think	English / Science / Maths/ All subjects	Grades 1–10	Incorporate creative writing tasks that promote imagination and reasoning; use inquiry based activities to promote creativity and innovation. Project-based activities to facilitate analysis and

			problem solving skills. Combine art, science and social issues to promote design thinking. Include research based activities on key economic challenges, emerging issues, and cross-comparative analyses of policies, practices, and outcomes in Economics.
GESI Curriculum	Including the above capability indicators will help align the curriculum with GESI principals, thus promoting the integration of GESI throughout the curriculum.		

Conclusion

This report provides evidence-based insights intended to support the CSCD in strengthening the integration of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) principles within the national curriculum. The analysis highlights that while several capabilities such as respect, love and care, education, and participation are already well embedded in current teaching and learning practices, others, including autonomy, mental well-being, and freedom from economic or non-economic exploitation, remain less visible. By aligning the curriculum more closely with what students value and aspire to become, the school curriculum can foster a more equitable and holistic education system that empowers every learner to realise their full potential and participate meaningfully in Bhutan's social and economic development.

Addressing these gaps through thoughtful curriculum design and subject-specific integration could further enhance the inclusiveness and transformative potential of education. Incorporation of these capabilities across learning areas will help ensure that the curriculum continues to foster not only academic knowledge but also nurtures empathy, ethical awareness, and social responsibility among students.

References

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