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Promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Bhutan through the launch of Learning Innovation Knowledge Exchange (LIKE) Club



Policy Problem

Findings from Situational Analysis Study indicated limited awareness and understanding of key concepts and capabilities essential for advancing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in schools. These gaps restrict children's opportunities to participate fully and meaningfully in both school and society.

INTERVENTIONS

To address the gaps, the project established Learning Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (LIKE) Clubs in five partner schools. A LIKE Club Activity Book was developed to promote Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) through activities aligned with all 16 Children's Valued Educational Capabilities (CVEC). While the Activity Book addressed all 16 capabilities, additional learning activities were developed for capability areas that had lower levels of awareness

and understanding among students, ensuring targeted support for the most critical gaps. Teachers and focal teachers were trained to facilitate these activities through classroom teaching and LIKE Club programmes. Schools were also supported to integrate GESI principles into school policies and practices, creating more equitable, inclusive, and gender-responsive learning environments.



- Across schools, 14 capability-based activities implemented.
- Activities addressed CVEC, including Love, care, and respect, Education, Autonomy, Participation, Aspiration, Mobility, Mental well-being, Economic and non-economic exploitation, Shelter and environment, Social relations, Plan, Imagine, think, Physical health, and Religion and Identity.

Results

- The Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) findings demonstrated consistently high levels of student engagement and interest, with the majority of LIKE Club activities receiving ratings of 9–10 out of 10 for both interest and enjoyment.
- Classroom observations showed improved collaboration, empathy, participation, and understanding of gender equality and social inclusion.

Likewise at the end of the year long intervention, a 4 point Likert scale survey was rolled out and the findings revealed that the LIKE Club positively contributed to students' learning, skill development, well-being, inclusion, and behaviour change in all five schools. Higher average mean scores in four schools suggest that stronger implementation leads to greater student outcomes. These findings support the national institutionalising of the LIKE Club, alongside teacher capacity building and the integration of GESI into school policies, to strengthen inclusive and gender-responsive education across Bhutan (Table 1).

Table 1:*Learning, Awareness, Skill development, Values and Wellbeing, Inclusion, Identity and Participation*

Item	Mean (S1)	Mean (S2)	Mean (S3)	Mean (S4)	Mean (S5)
Learning and awareness					
1.I understand the purpose of the LIKE Club.	2.8	2.9	3.7	3.5	3.7
2.I have learned about gender equality and inclusion.	2.7	3.2	3.6	3.6	3.6
3. I understand the importance of fairness and respect.	2.8	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.8
Average Mean	2.8	3.2	3.7	3.6	3.7
Skill Development					
1. I feel confident sharing my ideas.	2.7	3.0	3.6	3.3	3.6
2. I can think critically about problems and solutions.	2.7	2.9	3.6	3.4	3.6
3.I work well with others and respect different opinions.	2.8	3.5	3.8	3.8	3.8
4. I can identify unfair or unequal situations.	2.7	3.0	3.7	3.5	3.7
Average Mean	2.8	3.1	3.7	3.5	3.7
Values and Well-being					
1. I take care of my physical health and well-being	2.7	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.8
2. I show love, care, and respect towards others.	2.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7
3. I feel safe and respected in my school environment.	2.7	3.5	3.7	3.7	3.7
Average Mean	2.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7
Inclusion, Identity, and Participation					
1. I respect people from different backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs.	2.9	3.4	3.8	3.8	3.8
2. I feel comfortable expressing my identity in school.	2.9	3.3	3.7	3.8	3.7
3. I actively participate in LIKE Club and school activities.	2.8	3.1	3.7	3.5	3.7
Average Mean	2.9	3.3	3.7	3.7	3.7
Behaviour changes and impact					
1.I treat others more respectfully after joining LIKE club.	2.7	3.3	3.7	3.7	3.7
2.I try to include others and avoid discrimination.	2.6	2.9	3.7	3.7	3.7
3.I apply what I learn from LIKE club in my daily life.	2.7	3.3	3.7	3.7	3.7
4.LIKE club activities have helped make my school inclusive.	2.8	3.5	3.7	3.7	3.7
Average Mean	2.7	3.3	3.7	3.7	3.7

Policy Recommendations

- Institutionalise the LIKE Club in all schools across Bhutan.
- Strengthen teacher capacity nationwide to implement GESI-responsive teaching and learning.
- Embed GESI principles into school policies and practices across all schools.

Conclusion

The evidence indicates that the LIKE Club is effective in advancing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Bhutanese schools. Institutionalising the LIKE Club beyond the five partner schools, while embedding capability-based learning into school policies, teacher professional development, and co-curricular programmes, can help ensure that all students develop the knowledge, values, agency, and opportunities needed to thrive and participate fully in school and society.

Contact information

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Sponsor

The project is funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) under the Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (GPE- KIX) through Promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Building on What Children Value and Aspire to Do and Be project.

Disclaimers

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of IDRC or its Board of Governors.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by the Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange, a joint endeavour with the International Development Research Centre, Canada.

