

Report on the Training Programme: *Empowering EMOs: Policy to Practice*

The training programme “*Empowering EMOs: Policy to Practice*” was conducted for the Education Monitoring Officers (EMOs) from Bhutan with the objective of strengthening their professional capabilities in monitoring, evaluation, and educational assessment. The two-week programme was designed to ensure that EMOs are fully equipped to undertake their mandate of improving the quality of education through systematic evaluation, evidence-based reporting, and effective intervention planning.

The sessions began by strengthening participants’ understanding of teacher performance assessment. EMOs were introduced to structured approaches for evaluating pedagogical effectiveness, professionalism, instructional quality, and classroom engagement. This component enabled them to develop a nuanced understanding of teacher competencies and how these influence student learning outcomes. The training further expanded into school performance assessment, where participants explored tools and methodologies for evaluating overall school functioning, leadership effectiveness, resource utilisation, infrastructure adequacy, and the general learning environment. This segment helped them appreciate the interconnected components that determine the effectiveness of a school as an institution.

A substantial portion of the programme focused on student performance evaluation. EMOs were trained to assess holistic learning outcomes using both quantitative and qualitative methods aligned with Bhutan’s philosophy of wholesome education. They examined approaches for interpreting performance indicators, identifying learning gaps, and capturing broader developmental competencies beyond academic scores.

The role of District Education Officers (DEOs) was also addressed in depth. Participants gained insights into evaluating the support structures provided by DEOs and learned to analyse whether district-level interventions adequately address challenges faced by schools. This helped them understand how district governance, resource allocation, and supervisory practices influence school performance and student learning.

Another core component of the programme focused on strengthening stakeholder collaboration. EMOs were prepared to assess and ensure effective coordination among teachers, school leaders, DEOs, parents, and community members. Discussions highlighted the importance of shared responsibility in school improvement and the need for smooth communication channels among all stakeholders.

Building on the assessment components, the programme also trained EMOs in intervention design and implementation. Using examples from real-world school and district data, participants learned how to analyse identified gaps, design targeted interventions, and support schools in executing corrective measures. This was followed by sessions on the Education Index, where EMOs were introduced to the technical knowledge required to periodically calculate and update the national Education Index. The training covered data collection protocols, indicator selection, computation methods, and reporting formats essential for informing policy decisions.

To broaden their perspective, the programme introduced EMOs to the evolving 21st-century global educational landscape. Participants studied international frameworks such as the OECD Learning Compass and UNESCO's global competency frameworks, with a focus on how these can be integrated into national Monitoring & Evaluation processes. These discussions helped EMOs align their work with emerging global standards and strengthen Bhutan's engagement with international best practices.

The programme also incorporated cultural immersion activities, enabling participants to contextualise their learning in culturally grounded experiences while strengthening peer relationships and cross-cultural understanding. An exposure visit to the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi, provided them with first-hand insights into how policy, planning, and practice come together in large-scale education systems. This visit allowed EMOs to observe institutional mechanisms for research, planning, monitoring, and capacity building within the Indian education system.

Overall, the training successfully enhanced the professional skills, analytical capabilities, and practical orientation of the Education Monitoring Officers. By bridging policy frameworks with ground-level realities, the programme prepared EMOs to objectively monitor, assess, and report on the quality of education across Bhutan. It also strengthened their ability to design evidence-based recommendations and implement context-specific interventions that support the continuous improvement of schools and districts. The training reaffirmed the crucial role of EMOs in shaping an effective, equitable, and future-ready education system for the count